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Clover's second-in charge a pro-Cloud Arch, anti-WestConnex, former environmental protester

IS DEPUTY MOORE OF THE SAME

EXCLUSIVE
MILES GODFREY

SYDNEY Lord Mayor Clover Moore's new deputy worked for a law-breaking climate protest group and was once led away from an anti-coal protest in handcuffs by police.

Jess Miller, now charged with overseeing new housing and infrastructure after becoming second-in-command of Sydney's most powerful council, has a long history of being anti-development.

The Daily Telegraph can reveal Ms Miller, 33, once said "cars ruin everything", opposes WestConnex motorway and previously worked for an extremist environmental protest group of which dozens of members have been arrested.

Ms Miller replaces Dr Kerry Phelps, who resigned from Ms Moore's party after a falling out over the Lord Mayor's \$3.6 million office

budget. Ms Miller was also among councillors who last month voted to approve Ms Moore's office budget, along with the continuation of perks including business class flights and a chauffeur-driven car.

Ms Miller also voted to approve the \$7.8 million blow-out for Ms Moore's Cloud Arch sculpture project.

While the Lord Mayor's office refused The Daily Telegraph's requests to interview the new deputy in person, Ms Miller took a swipe at Dr Phelps in a community paper this week, saying her out-

spoken behaviour was not the way to deal with internal conflict: "We're all very different and it's always worth coming to a resolution through discussion rather than going rogue and just surprising people."

Dr Phelps replied: "I sent a message of congratulations to Jess Miller straight after her election and I wish her well."

Ms Miller, elected council in September 2016, is also deputy chair of the environment and cycling advisory committees, sits on a number of environment-based local boards and is program director at branding company Republic of Everyone.

Ms Miller was spokesman for protest group Climate Camp during a series of anti-mining demonstrations in 2008 and 2010, in which other members trespassed on private land, locked themselves to machinery and abseiled down a dam.

She was led away in handcuffs by police from an anti-coal protest in Newcastle coal port in 2008 but denies being

arrested and says she does not have a criminal record.

"I was around 24 years old ... and terrified enough about the effects of burning coal that I, along with a great many of other people, decided to protest against it," Ms Miller said.

Ms Miller has previously described WestConnex as an expensive, polluting "dud". After being elected deputy on Monday, Ms Miller said she opposes the road because of

the "cost to taxpayers to build and then use through expensive tolls, the health impacts of unfiltered smoke stacks, especially near schools, that multinational corporations are profiting off the people of Sydney, and the secrecy behind the plans and modelling".

Liberal councillor Christine



Forster said: “The Lord Mayor is bitterly opposed to WestConnex and the other major infrastructure projects the state government is getting on with ... so of course councillor Miller will do the same.”

Ms Miller denies she is anti-development but supports a funeral business that plans to turn corpses into fertiliser that can be scattered onto public parks and used to block building work. She also raised eyebrows by saying some housing planning issues “make your eyes glaze over”.

Urban Taskforce boss

Chris Johnson accused Ms Miller of having a “strong anti-development attitude which may well be popular with certain residents but doesn’t help the future residents keen to live in the Sydney council area”.

Ms Miller rejected the claim but said “in the rush to build more housing, we need to ensure it’s affordable to live in and we’re not creating the ghettos of the future”.

She also denied being anti-Christmas, despite listing “rampant consumerism” and “awkward niceties” in reply to a friend who said “I can’t believe you hate Christmas” on her social media. Yesterday she said: “I love Christmas, more so now I have a little kid.”

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New City of Sydney deputy mayor Jess Miller.
Picture: Daniel Aarons





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How she votes

HEAD IN THE CLOUD

Approved the budget blowout for Cloud Arch sculpture, increasing the cost from \$3.5 million to \$11.3 million

MOORE CASH

Approved Lord Mayor Clover Moore's \$3.6 million office budget, including 22 full-time staff

STITCH UP

Approved \$29,000 grant for an exhibition of knitted hats

ROAD TO RUIN

Approved grants of \$526,000 to fight WestConnex, including giving \$100,000 to two other councils to spend on anti-WestConnex organisers

SNUBBED

Rejected a \$5000 grant for the Anzac Day dawn service at Martin Place



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Jess Miller's Facebook photos showing her being removed from a 2008 protest, and (inset) with Clover Moore and Kerryn Phelps.