

Telecom research head quits

By STEVE LEWIS

LESS than five weeks after being appointed to lead Telecom into a new era of research and development, Dr Bruno Sorrentino has resigned, throwing the company's technology operations into further turmoil.

Dr Sorrentino's resignation as managing director of Telecom Research Laboratories was announced to research staff on Tuesday by the group managing director, network and technology, Mr Doug Campbell.

The news sent shock waves

Unions claim the real agenda is to do away with laboratories and contract out

through TRL, the nation's biggest hub of telecommunications research.

Dr Sorrentino's resignation comes as Telecom pushes ahead with a plan to develop a sharper focus on research. Central to this is the formation of a structure combining the information technology group with the research labs.

Research staff have expressed concerns that Telecom is using this exercise as a camouflage to reduce its inter-

nal research activities. Union representatives claim Telecom's real agenda is to do away with the laboratories, or severely downgrade them, and contract out about half of the research to US firms.

Dr Sorrentino was to play a critical role in the development of a new research plan. Telecom insiders claim his resignation throws this process into some doubt.

There were also reports from within Telecom yesterday that Dr Sorrentino's resignation was related to an investigation of his history of research publication.

A spokesman for Telecom said the company had "no comment" on the reason for Dr Sorrentino's resignation.

"In the short term, research and technology operations will report direct to Mr Campbell," the spokesman said. Dr Sorrentino could not be contacted for comment.

Telecom Research Laboratories, based in Melbourne, is critical to the development of new technologies.

Ironically, the company was showing off its latest developments in these areas this week to federal politicians and senior bureaucrats in Canberra. Dr Sorrentino was most recently group general manager of Technology Ltd and chief information officer of the ANZ Bank. He has 30 years' experience in research and management.



TURMOIL: Dr Sorrentino, joined five weeks ago