

Fairfield Councillor Dai Le to run against Kristina Keneally on behalf of ‘insulted’ locals

A pair of popular Fairfield councillors are harnessing local fury over “years of neglect” to whittle down Labor’s stranglehold on their Western Sydney electorate.



Lachlan Leeming

The Vietnam-born former refugee who will lock horns with Kristina Keneally in Fowler says her community feels “insulted” over [Labor parachuting the Scotland Island-local](#) into the key Western Sydney battleground.

Popular Fairfield Council deputy mayor Dai Le will run as an independent in a grassroots campaign playing on locals’ fury at the instalment of Senator Keneally into the safe Labor seat, as well as “years of neglect” from federal government.

“The party didn’t think there was someone good enough here to represent our community ... Anyone has the right to nominate – but I think the Labor Party having Kristina represent our local area has really showed their disconnection with our community,” Ms Le told The Telegraph.

The local businesswoman was born in Saigon, fled the war-torn city in 1975 and spent four years in refugee camps with her family being resettled in Australia in 1979.

Ms Le, who lives on the border of the Fowler and McMahon electorates at Smithfield, said there was still simmering anger left over from the area – one of the [most diverse in Australia](#) – being among those hardest-hit by last year’s



Picture: Jeremy Piper

Vietnam-born former refugee and Fairfield deputy mayor Dai Le is taking on Labor's candidate as an independent.

"During Covid, our community got locked down to make the privileged parts of Sydney feel safe," Ms Le said.

"Where was Kristina Keneally when we were at our lowest? And now, coming here and having the hide to say I'm here for the Fowler community? I can say the rest of the community and myself feel insulted."

Fairfield Mayor Frank Carbone told The Telegraph he was yet to decide if he too would run as an independent, in a move which would draw even more of the local vote.

It's understood if he does run, the [two Independents would preference each other](#) in a move aimed at whittling down Labor's 54.5 per cent stranglehold on the seat.

"Regardless if I run or not, I'll always be supporting Dai and she'll be supporting me," Mr Carbone said.

Mrs Keneally's early attempts to make inroads in the seat took an early hit with the NSW senator announcing on Tuesday [she had Covid-19 and was isolating](#).

The senator tweeted she had "woken up feeling rotten and tested positive for Covid" – making a point she was "isolating at home in Liverpool".

Her instalment last year [ousted local Vietnamese Australian lawyer Tu Le](#), who had the backing of retiring MP Chris Hayes.

A spokeswoman for Ms Keneally said the Senator "has been living in Fowler since last year, where she has been warmly welcomed and, as a former NSW Premier, is well known in the community".

"Senator Keneally is a strong and experienced representative for the people of South West Sydney and, if elected, for the first time Fowler will have a voice at the most senior, ministerial level of Government," she said.