

Hold on to your hats

Fowler may look a safe Labor seat but support is growing for a local independent



MIRANDA DEVINE

You would think the Labor Party might have learned its lesson about Kristina Keneally by now. She was the worst premier in living memory, installed as the last puppet leader of Eddie Obeid, the Labor powerbroker who wound up in jail for corruption.

Her woeful 15 months in office at the tail end of Labor's 16-year reign in NSW ended with the worst political defeat in Australia's post-war history.

The people spoke again when Bill Shorten tried to parachute his "girl" into north shore Bennelong for the 2017 by-election. The electorate which once turned its back on John Howard resoundingly rejected Labor's "star candidate".

That didn't stop Keneally from staging a weirdly euphoric election night performance. "I am here tonight to claim success for the Labor movement", she said, mystifyingly.

Now she's back at it again.

Having been given a Senate berth after her Bennelong defeat, Keneally has been parachuted into one of the safest Labor seats in the country.

Fowler, in western Sydney's ALP heartland, has a near unbeatable 14 per cent margin, so is the perfect vehicle for Keneally's mismatched ambitions.

Having once pretended to slum it in Lane Cove, now she's eating bánh xèo and making out like a Liverpool local after renting a flat there for the past six months.

It's a long way from her bucolic waterfront home on Scotland Island — 55km to be precise — but it may as well be another planet.

As ultra-safe as Fowler is, Keneally might not get the easy win she expects because popular local Dai Le, 55, the deputy mayor of Fairfield City council, has entered the race as a local independent.

A Vietnamese refugee who arrived in Australia with her parents at age 11, and grew up in Bossley Park, near the Vietnamese capital of Cabramatta, she has more in common with the multicultural community than her fellow "migrant", the Las Vegas-born Keneally.

"We are insulted that Kristina Keneally thinks that she can speak on our behalf when she has never lived here and didn't go through what we



went through the past two years," Le says.

During last year's unfairly harsh lockdown, while the hardworking people of Cabramatta, Canley Vale, Lansvale, Bonnyrigg, Chipping Norton, Warwick Farm and Bossley Park were suffering curfews and heavy-handed Covid testing, Keneally was enjoying WFH zoom calls in her island paradise.

Le and the Fairfield mayor Frank Carbone were about the only politicians who spoke up for western Sydney at the time.

"Our community was marginalised, demonised and treated like second class citizens," Le says.

"Nobody was defending us from either party. A lot of migrants who have escaped from communist countries told me it felt like we were living in a communist country. They were scared.

"It might be forgotten by the government. But it is still front and centre for people here."

Voters waiting in line on Tuesday at a pre-poll in St John's Park

expressed scepticism that an outsider from the northern beaches could represent them.

"It's an insult" said Joe, 66, from Mount Pritchard, of Keneally's candidacy. "She was the worst premier."

Josh, 28, said he was so confident of Le's prospects that he placed a bet on her. "I think it's going to be closer than \$3. If you're not from the area you shouldn't be here. She'll be a front bencher somewhere and never come back."

Iraqi-born Albert Dawood, 51, was a rare voter who didn't care if Keneally was a local. "I just vote for which one is good in my opinion."

He was just happy to be voting. "It's a free country — everyone can vote for who they like, not like in Iraq."

Jules, a local in her 30s, was more turned off by the "mean girls" saga in which Keneally was accused of ganging up on the late Senator Kimberley Kitching.

"I'm not sure if it's true but I don't like the bullying."

Of the election in general, she said: "It's not going good for Labor", referring to Anthony Albanese's inability to answer questions on the unemployment and cash rates.

"They asked him questions and he can't answer."

But things are not much better for the PM, she said.

"A lot of people around here are angry with Scott Morrison. When they call him 'ScoMo' they do it in a negative way, like 'Scummo'. I don't think he knows."

Labor is planning to harness that anti-Coalition feeling by painting Le as a closet Liberal because she previously ran for the state seat of Cabramatta as a Liberal before turning independent when she was suspended from the party for running for mayor against the Liberal candidate.

But Le has thrived as an independent and has been joined on the hustings by her number one supporter, the popular Mayor Carbone, a former Labor politician turned independent, who describes her candidacy as a "two for one" deal.

"It's important we have one of our own representing us," he said on Tuesday, helping Le hand out how to vote cards at St John's Park Anglican Church. "I can assure you we can speak for ourselves out here in the west."

"We don't need someone from the northern beaches to speak for us."

"Me and Dai work hard. We're independents. We're not scared."

Despite Labor's seemingly unassailable margin, Carbone is confident Le can win.

"We only need 33 per cent of the vote," he says, predicting the rest will come from preferences via the Liberals and Clive Palmer's UAP.

Le won 25 per cent of the vote in the state seat of Cabramatta when she ran as an independent in 2019 against Labor's Nick Lalich, the then Fairfield mayor, who was forced to preferences to save the safe Labor seat.

Carbone says he can bring Le another 10 per cent of his personal vote in Fowler, giving her a fighting chance.

It's a David versus Goliath battle, for sure.

But if Fowler punches Labor on the nose on May 21, western Sydney won't be taken for granted any more.

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Feed the people meat and their health will benefit

Looking back, the school lunches I gave my kids, I realise now, were pretty crap. There was so much processed food.

Muesli and yoghurt "health food" bars, oat slices, biscuit and cheese dips, cereal rice bars, mini bags of popcorn and sticky "fruit straps" that even then I knew were bad but were a favourite with the kids. I would also make sandwiches and include real fruit like bananas or grapes for fruit break. But these would come home squashed, while the telltale wrappers for the colourfully packaged snacks were all that was left in the bottom of their bags.

My children would have been better off with just plain ham, cut from a bone, than those supermarket snacks.

But that's not what the NSW Cancer Council is preaching nowadays, despite decades of research coming out about how real foods like meat are so much better health-wise.

Their suggested lunch box alterna-



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tives include plenty of complicated recipes of refined carbohydrate foods like chocolate muffins made with flour, noodle cakes, peach bread and "oaty biscuits" with half a cup of sugar and golden syrup.

Curiously, outgoing NSW Liberal MP Catherine Cusack tweeted last week complaining about The Daily Telegraph's coverage of the NSW Cancer Council's attack on ham sandwiches and meat.

Attaching a picture of our front page, she said: "Very ambitious use of ham sandwiches to distract public attention from interest rate."

The interest rate figures hadn't even been released at that stage. Why

shouldn't a light be shone on how meddling governments and NGO agencies are trying to control what we eat?

The NSW Cancer Council advice prompting the story came from a blog called "Make Monday this month meat free". Trading on the goodwill and respect the agency has garnered over decades, it has jumped on the bandwagon of using climate change to demonise meat. "Did you know it can take 30 bathtubs of water to produce just one beef burger?" it claimed.

This old claim by anti-meat activists has been previously debunked — in fact the figures used include rainwater that falls on land grazed by cattle, which would fall regardless.

The bigger scandal is how health advice from governments with their faulty food pyramids and agencies captured by vested interests have contributed to a worldwide obesity crisis over decades. There's now a growing body of researchers, journalists, authors, law-

yers and medical people pulling together the data and historic research to argue the Western world has got it horribly wrong with all the processed food, laden with sugar and glued together with unhealthy industrial oils.

In fact there's also a growing body of evidence supporting a thesis that in fact meat is fundamental to the human diet and those turning to a meat-based diet have solved metabolic and immune system diseases.

On the issue of eating meat, despite the best efforts of the odious Klaus Schwab controlled World Economic Forum to get us all to eat bugs due to climate change, there's also a growing band of researchers saying it is vital for our health.

Dr Paul Saladino theorises that plants aren't as healthy as they seem, as they have evolved thousands of defensive toxic chemicals because, unlike animals, they can't bite or defend themselves. He says anthropological re-

search shows humans grew bigger brains from eating meat.

Then there's first person accounts from people like popular US podcast host Joe Rogan and Mikhaila Petersen, daughter of Canadian psychologist Dr Jordan Petersen. She tells a compelling story how she solved an horrific childhood affliction of juvenile rheumatoid arthritis by going carnivore.

At an Oxford University debate this year she stood at the lectern with a split-cut skirt and pointed to her legs — and matter of factly explained how she lost her ankle and hip at age 17 because of the disease, which has now gone into remission after changing her diet.

Allowing a free, robust exchange of ideas, research and debate about diet is essential.

Those who want to shut it down and allow bureaucrats and governments behind the scenes to dictate our food choices, are serving up a poisoned chalice for future generations.