



Labor

**LABOR'S
PLAN**
to strengthen
**MAYORAL
LEADERSHIP**

A message from **LUKE FOLEY, NSW LABOR LEADER**

Local councils play a vital role in communities across NSW.

Councils deliver important local services and maintain infrastructure that we rely upon everyday.

A Labor Government that I lead will implement a broad range of reforms to strengthen local government. We will make all Mayors of Sydney councils directly elected, for four year terms, to lift the standard of mayoral leadership.

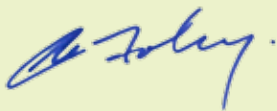
Labor will establish a new Congress of Mayors, under a powerful Greater Sydney Commission, to focus on regional and metropolitan wide priorities.

While local councils face many challenges, for the past four years the Liberals and Nationals have failed to take meaningful action to improve local government.

The Liberals and Nationals have fixated on pushing councils to merge, spending millions of taxpayer dollars on reviews and consultants that could have been spent directly to improve local services and infrastructure.

Labor's reform agenda for local government will give residents a greater say in how their community is governed and empower councils to be partners in the delivery of jobs, services and infrastructure.

Yours sincerely



Luke Foley
NSW Labor Leader



Labor's Plan to **STRENGTHEN MAYORAL LEADERSHIP**

ALL MAYORS OF *Sydney councils* **WILL BE DIRECTLY ELECTED**

Labor will change the way that mayors are elected in metropolitan Sydney, so that all 41 mayors of Sydney councils are directly elected for four year terms.

The Greater Sydney Commission will then establish a 'Congress of Mayors' which will bring all mayors together, to work in partnership with the NSW Government. This will require mayors to adopt a regional and metropolitan wide focus, to develop and implement coordinated policies to create jobs and improve services across Sydney.

At present, only 14 of the 41 councils in Sydney use the direct election model to elect their mayors. The other 27 councils use a model in which mayors are elected by their fellow councillors for terms that last only one year.

Labor's plan will:

- Give local residents a greater say over who represents them and how their council is run;
- Empower people to run for the office of mayor and seek a mandate from their community for specific projects and plans;
- Give those dealing with local government – local residents, businesses, and the State and Commonwealth Governments – greater certainty regarding the political leadership and priorities of councils;
- Make the method of election for mayors consistent across all Sydney councils, which will make it easier for voters to participate in the electoral process; and
- Create a new forum, a Congress of Mayors, which will bring together the directly elected leaders from every council in Sydney to work with the NSW Government's Greater Sydney Commission to develop and implement plans to strengthen Sydney's future.



CASE STUDY: PARRAMATTA COUNCIL

Despite being one of Australia's major economic and cultural centres, Parramatta Council's Lord Mayor is only elected for a term of one year.

Over the past 10 years, Parramatta has had nine different Lord Mayors.

This instability means there has been no consistent leadership for Parramatta, and no certainty for businesses looking to invest and create jobs in the area.

Labor's plan will end this uncertainty and empower voters to directly choose their mayor, just as they already do for their State and Federal Members of Parliament.



Labor's commitment: **NO FORCED AMALGAMATIONS**

For the past four years, the NSW Liberals and Nationals have fixated on council amalgamations as a silver bullet for the challenges facing local government

NSW Labor will not force councils to amalgamate.

NSW Labor does not believe that amalgamations are a silver bullet for the issues that face local government in NSW.

There is little empirical evidence to support the claims of amalgamation proponents that larger councils are more efficient or effective compared with smaller councils.

A NSW Labor Government will work in partnership with councils that wish to consider voluntary amalgamations. Amalgamation proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

NSW Labor will impose specific requirements that any councils considering an amalgamation must meet. Five key requirements for Labor to support any voluntary amalgamation proposal are as follows:

- Councils considering voluntarily merging must prepare a business case to be considered by both local residents and the NSW Government.
- An independent cost-benefit analysis of any merger proposal must be undertaken and publicly released for scrutiny by the community.
- The community must be adequately consulted regarding the details for how the new council will be structured and how it will operate.
- There must be no overall reduction in service levels or job losses as a result of the merger.
- The community must have the final say regarding any merger proposal.

NSW Labor will request the Electoral Commissioner to undertake regular reviews of council boundaries and to recommend any minor adjustments which may be required, for example where a new housing development may make a boundary adjustment necessary.

