

Michael Daley elected NSW Labor Party leader, promising to 'press the reset button'

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Maroubra MP Michael Daley has secured the leadership of the NSW Labor Party, and pledged to "fix the planning system in NSW" should he be elected Premier in March.



New NSW Opposition Leader Michael Daley and Deputy Leader Penny Sharpe speak to media. CREDIT: DOMINIC LORRIMER

The newly elected leader laid out his vision for government as one "built on four pillars", naming investment in education and hospitals, easing the cost of living, jobs, and overdevelopment as his core priorities.

"We will make Sydney more liveable and stop unfairness and overdevelopment in the planning system," Mr Daley said.

Mr Daley comfortably defeated Kogarah MP Chris Minns in the leadership vote 33 to 12 on Saturday.

Penny Sharpe, an upper house member and Labor's environment spokeswoman, was elected deputy unopposed.

Mr Daley addressed voters directly in his first press conference as Labor leader, promising to "press the reset button" in the wake of former leader Luke Foley's spectacular fall from grace.

"I'm not here to save the furniture. We are here to win the 2019 election," Mr Daley said.



*Michael Daley hugs his wife Christina after the NSW Labor party leadership ballot.
CREDIT: DOMINIC LORRIMER*

With just four months until the state election, Mr Daley's speech resembled an election pitch. He declared there to be "something horribly wrong at the heart" of the NSW Liberal government, describing his opponents as "a government of bankers, by bankers, for bankers."

The Berejiklian government was quick to launch its attack on Mr Daley as representative of NSW Labor's old guard, highlighting his erstwhile connections with corrupt former MPs Eddie Obeid and Ian Macdonald.

"This is just recycled state Labor," said senior NSW minister Brad Hazard.

"The new leader of the state Labor sat in the caucus room with Eddie Obeid and around the cabinet table with Ian Macdonald. He was part of the team that spent half a billion on light rail that never got built, sacked 2000 nurses and closed schools across the state."

Ms Sharpe said environmental issues would be "core business" for the Labor party in the lead up to the March election.

"We have to save our environment," Ms Sharpe said, naming climate change and land-clearing issues as key priorities.



Michael Daley and his new Deputy Leader Penny Sharpe leave the NSW Labor party leadership ballot. CREDIT: DOMINIC LORRIMER

Mr Minns congratulated his opponent as he exited the caucus room after the vote.

"It's a great day for Michael. I know he's going to be the next Premier of NSW. I'm convinced of that," Mr Minns said.

Mr Daley is from the Labor "right" faction and has held a range of ministry and shadow ministry positions since he was elected to NSW Parliament in 2005, when he replaced former Premier Bob Carr in the seat of Maroubra.

He has held the shadow planning portfolio since March 2016.

Upper house backbencher John Graham, who is from the same left faction as Mr Foley, is a leading contender to be promoted to shadow cabinet.

The leadership contest was triggered by Mr Foley's resignation on Thursday, after [ABC journalist Ashleigh Raper released a statement](#) in which she said he had put his hand down her underwear at a Christmas party in November 2016.

Mr Foley denied the allegation and threatened to launch defamation proceedings in the Federal Court.

After initially vowing to stay on as the member for Auburn, he will now quit state politics altogether at the next election.

Rose Jackson, assistant general secretary of the NSW Labor Party, could be parachuted into the seat by the Labor Party's national executive in a bid to avoid a messy preselection process.

Ms Jackson told the *Herald* she was "definitely considering" putting her name forward for the seat.

Upper house MLC Lynda Voltz also confirmed her interest, and urged the party to conduct a rank-and-file preselection process.

"There has always been a view in the left that local branch members have a vote in the preselection," Ms Voltz said.

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