

# *Camden Residents' Action Group*

*Incorporated*

<http://www.crag.org.au/>

PO Box 188 Camden NSW 2570

Email: [admin@crag.org.au](mailto:admin@crag.org.au)

Phone: 0415 617 368

## **Media Release**

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Camden Residents' Action Group (CRAG) Inc is an apolitical community group that supports true independents who will restore the community voice. It is very concerning to see that certain groups are masquerading as independent when they are clearly or potentially backers of the liberal faction and voting bloc within the current council. There is no place for party politics at the local level.

### **South Ward**

In South Ward the true independent candidates are in Group E, Eva Campbell, Keith Hart and Maryann Turner, and also Henry Lewocki who is running on his own. Eva Campbell has a long and exemplary history in Council for standing for her community and believes in sustainable and "smart" jobs, liveable communities and environmental and heritage values. Keith Hart has been a Councillor, is highly qualified and would bring a wealth of relevant knowledge and experience to decision-making. Group E understands Camden and its people and would stand against attempts to erode the heritage value of the Camden township. Current faction members, although they have no mandate, little business or resident support have pushed through and intend to push through more historically insensitive, costly "upgrades" to the town centre for reasons that are only known to them. If this faction is re-elected it intends to change the height restriction and heritage protections of the Heritage Conservation Area of the 1836 Macarthur town. This is our heritage and your future, but you have had no voice in important decisions that were made behind closed doors in 2013 and 2014, affecting the amenity, business viability and tourism potential of the old town.

Other groups running as "independent" include Group C, headed by David Funnell who ran with the current Mayor of Camden and head of the current voting bloc in 2008. Group A which claims to be independent is headed by Greg Copeland who owns a property consultancy business, which arguably presents a conflict of interest. If elected he would have to stand aside for any vote connected to any rezoning, development application or any matter involving property as the community has no way of knowing who his clients are or the sources of the consultancy's revenue stream. A perusal of the Council minutes indicates that he consistently votes with the current bloc. A councillor must not only represent the community, but also be seen to represent the community.

Group D declares itself as representing the Liberal party and includes current councillor Peter Sidgreaves who is a member of the Liberal Party, and consistent bloc voter on Council. Likewise current councillor Debby Dewberry is a member of the Liberal party, is believed to work for the current State liberal member, although this is not stated on her candidate form, and is a member of the faction and consistently bloc votes.

### **Central Ward**

In Central ward the true independent group is Group B headed by Peter McLean who is an outstanding and highly qualified candidate who regularly advises and assists local councils on a variety of issues including social, environmental practices and financial management. Peter stands for his community with aims to improve services and quality of life.

The other group running as "independent" is Group A, headed by Scott Metcalfe who is a member of the Liberal Party, as is his number two running mate, Rebecca Cook. Clearly this group is not independent of partisan politics.

The Liberal party is represented formally by Group D, headed by Therese Fedeli, who is a current member of the faction and votes consistently with the bloc. Both running mates, Brooke Logoitumua and John Ryan are also members of the Liberal Party.

### **North Ward**

In North Ward Group A is headed by Danica Sajn who stands for improving quality of life in the northern area of the municipality. Residents pay extremely high rates but are starved of services and live in uncertainty because the area is seen mainly as an area with development potential. Danica represents and will stand up for the living standard of people in the North ward, including maintenance of their roads and infrastructure.

The Liberal Party is represented by Group C, headed by the current Mayor and head of the voting bloc in Council which has been responsible for denying the community its rightful voice and making highly questionable and non-evidenced based decisions without appropriate community consultation. Her running mates are also members of the Liberal Party.

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Regardless of your political persuasion at State and Federal levels the issues at the local level have little to do with big-picture ideology, but much to do with everyday home and work life, services and surroundings. To regain your voice and a say in your future vote for the true independents:

South Ward: Group E for Eva Campbell

Central Ward: Group B for Peter McLean

North Ward: Group A for Danica Sajn

For more information see ***Know Your Candidates*** at <http://www.crag.org.au/>