



## Greens lose ‘a tireless champion of public education’

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The NSW Greens have lost their most prominent MP with the death of John Kaye after a short battle with cancer.

Dr Kaye was the intellectual leader of the NSW parliamentary Greens, with a particular interest in public education, renewable energy and a ferocious opponent of privatisation of public utilities.

He was the most media savvy of the seven NSW Greens MPs, and was widely respected across the parties for his intellect, policy knowledge and attention to legislative detail.

He was a member of the hard-left faction of the party, sometimes derisively called the Watermelons or the Eastern Bloc, and worked

for senator Lee Rhiannon as a policy adviser when she was in the NSW parliament.

He narrowly missed out on being elected to the Senate in 2004 but became a member of the NSW upper house in 2007.

Under NSW electoral law, he will be replaced by a nominee of the NSW Greens who will serve out the remaining seven years of his term.

Dr Kaye had a bachelor of engineering and a masters in engineering science from the University of Melbourne, and a PhD from the University of California,

Berkeley.

Before entering parliament he was a teacher and researcher in electrical engineering at the University of NSW, specialising in sustainable energy and greenhouse issues.

NSW Opposition Leader Luke Foley, who in his former role as Labor leader in the NSW upper house, dealt extensively with Dr Kaye, called him warm, honest, direct and smart.

“He has been one of our state’s most formidable and effective politicians of the last 10 years.

“His profile in the state’s political and parliamentary debates belied his official role as an upper house member from a minor

party. He made an impact by dint of great intellect and sheer relentless energy.”

NSW Premier Mike Baird called him “very much a friend” and an inspiration.

“He was a formidable advocate of the causes in which he believed. Despite our political differences I regarded him as friend.”

Fellow Greens MP David Shoebridge said Dr Kaye was one of the reasons he had entered politics.

“John was a tireless champion of public education, leading the national debate on education funding with an unflagging commitment to TAFE and public schools.

“Public schools and TAFE col-

leges in this state are stronger, better resourced and more prominent in the national debate

due to the work of Dr Kaye,” Mr Shoebridge said. “A lifelong commitment to public endeavour and social justice saw John campaign across the state in opposition to the privatisation of the state’s electricity sector.”

Former Greens leader Bob Brown said Dr Kaye was a “champion of public education, pursuer of the corrupt, friend of the poor and dispossessed”.

Former Liberal Party staff member John Macgowan, whose job was to shepherd legislation through the NSW upper house, and therefore negotiated with him many times, said: “John Kaye was that rare breed of politician who could always be relied upon to do the right thing, to put common decency first.”

Dr Kaye is survived by his partner, Lynne.



**John Kaye**