

Big swing follows hospital and anti-merger campaigns

Julie Cross and Penelope Bradley

EDUCATION Minister Rob Stokes has retained the seat of Pittwater, despite a 9.7 per cent hit to the electorate's primary Liberal vote.

His closest rival The Greens candidate Miranda Korzy, who won 15.1 per cent of the area's primary vote, said a lot of sitting MPs would have lost their seat with such a swing against them.

Ms Korzy who campaigned heavily on bringing back acute services to Mona Vale Hospital, said the result should serve as a warning to Mr Stokes.

She also vowed not to give up on Mona Vale Hospital.

"We are not going to give up on fighting for the issues that matter," she said.

Mr Stokes secured 72.5 per cent of the vote after



Liberal MP Rob Stokes



The Greens' Miranda Korzy

preferencing. When asked whether the election result meant the Save Mona Vale Hospital campaign was now dead in the water, he would only comment: "The results speak for themselves".

However, he conceded community campaigns, such as Save Mona Vale Hospital and those unhappy with the council merger, did contribute to the swing against him.

He said a negative campaign to "put the Liberals last" on preferences also had an effect.

But he added there were also twice as many candidates on the Pittwater ballot, which hurt everyone.

"All three main parties saw a swing away from them on primaries — mainly because more candidates ran in this election," Mr Stokes said.

With postal votes yet to be counted, Labor's Jared Turkington won 12.4 per cent of the primary vote with 5479 votes.

The other parties took 14.4 per cent of the vote, with a total of 6360 votes.