

# NSW ministers lose battle over council Liberal candidates

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Two NSW government ministers have lost an argument with their local Liberal members over whether the party should stand endorsed candidates for election to the newly amalgamated Northern Beaches Council.



*NSW Health Minister Brad Hazzard is against the proposal to run endorsed party candidates at the council elections. Photo: Dominic Lorrimer*

At a formation meeting of the Liberal Party's local government conference for the area on Wednesday night, members overwhelmingly voted in favour of running endorsed party candidates at the council elections in September.

This is despite Health Minister Brad Hazzard, the member for Wakehurst, and Education Minister Rob Stokes, the Member for Pittwater, both speaking strongly against the proposal.

Mr Hazzard and Mr Stokes declined to comment on internal Liberal Party matters.

However, sources at the meeting say Mr Stokes said he held a philosophical objection to the idea because party politics is a matter for parliaments, not councils.

Mr Hazzard is understood to have raised the fallout over a bungled development plan for Manly Oval as an example of the problems that can be associated with endorsing local government representatives.

The incoming MP for Manly, James Griffin, [attracted criticism during last weekend's byelection campaign over his role in the project](#) while deputy mayor.

The Liberals suffered a 24 per cent primary vote swing against them in the seat, slashing their two-party preferred margin from more than 24 per cent to 10.5 per cent.

Despite the opposition of Mr Hazzard and Mr Stokes, the meeting voted two-thirds in favour of the motion, which will be voted on by the NSW Liberal Party state executive.

It is understood the former Manly council branches voted most strongly in favour of the motion.

Northern Beaches Council was formed from the merger of Manly, Pittwater and Warringah councils and is under the control of administrator Dick Persson.

Elections are to be held on September 9.

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/nsw-ministers-lose-battle-over-council-liberal-candidates-20170413-gvkh1a.html>