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McKew claims PM's seat



Maxine McKew points the way.

Photo: AP

Paul Bibby

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Maxine McKew has declared that [Bennelong](#) is a Labor seat for the first time, in a press conference outside her campaign headquarters at Eastwood at midday.

Ms McKew, who is 2500 votes ahead in the seat, declared: "The people of Bennelong have spoken for change.

"This is now a Labor seat for the first time," she said.

"We feel we are comfortably ahead with a swing in every booth but one."

But she said she was stopping short of officially declaring the seat hers.

As of 12.30pm today, she was leading Mr Howard with 51.66 per cent of the vote on a two-party preferred basis.

She required a 4.13 per cent two-party preferred swing to win the seat but had achieved a swing of 5.79 per cent away from Mr Howard.

Ms McKew said she had targeted conservative voters in the campaign for Bennelong but denied she had won the seat on the back of a growing Asian vote.

"My strategy was to go after Liberal voters - not Chinese, Korean, Italian or Armenian. I want to clear

We feel we are comfortably ahead with a swing in every booth but one

that up before we get an urban myth about Chinese and Korean voters."

The victory was also a win for grassroots campaigning over the "buckets of money" Mr Howard and the Liberal Party had pumped into the seat, she said.

"Mr Howard and the Liberal Party spent \$20 million in the campaign for Bennelong ... all we promised was a child-care centre."

She said she had spoken to Kevin Rudd this morning about her future in the party but would not comment on whether she would take up a portfolio or become parliamentary secretary to the Prime Minister, as had been reported.

"We'll have to see how things pan out, things will become clearer later in the week.

"Obviously there is an urgent need to deal comprehensively with climate change.

"People want things fixed, they want hospitals fixed and they want schools fixed. I made Kevin aware that there were some real needs in Bennelong, particularly educational needs."

- with AAP

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