

# Candidate with 'hiccups'

By Matt Crossman

Embattled Liberal candidate Chris Jermyn insists he's still in with a chance to win one of Australia's most marginal seats when voters go to the polls on July 2.

But his Labor counterpart Rob Mitchell believes it's clear from the federal government's actions that the McEwen electorate isn't a priority.

Announcing \$150,000 to improve access for people with a disability and to install a permanent public address system at Sunbury Memorial Hall, Mr Jermyn said he was confident voters would see the string of campaign "hiccups" for what they were.

"It's important we put local issues on the agenda; that's the big thing here," he said. "We can play dirty, grubby politics, but frankly I think everyone is sick of that."

Mr Jermyn was firmly in the national media spotlight after he stood outside Sunbury Community Health on May 28 with Corlute signs while Opposition Leader Bill Shorten committed \$2 million for a new child health hub.

The Liberal candidate later packed up his listening post and stormed off after being unable to articulate his own party's Medicare policy to reporters.

Then, large signs above his Sunbury campaign office had to be pulled down after it was revealed they did not meet Hume council bylaws.

Last week, concerns were raised about his involvement in a media development company, which has lost millions of dollars.

"Frankly, they ran out of money," Mr Jermyn said. "As CEO, I was an employee. I wasn't on the board ... and, I'll tell you, as a shareholder, I lost more on paper than anyone else."



Liberal candidate for McEwen Chris Jermyn and Senator Scott Ryan. (Danyan Janeski)

Nine candidates will contest McEwen, including Mr Mitchell, who is the sitting MP, Romsey resident Neil Barker (Greens), The Nationals' James Anderson and independent Ross Lee. The Australian Country Party, Rise Up Australia, Animal Justice Party and Family First have also entered the field.

Mr Mitchell said Mr Jermyn wasn't wrong when he said he had a chance to take McEwen. "Just like there is every chance that the Turnbull government will be returned ... [but]

we will have to pay to see the doctor every time, there will be tax cuts for the top end of town at the expense of our kids' education, and our towns will yet again miss out on vital infrastructure, like mobile black spot fixes and better roads."

Last Tuesday, Senator Scott Ryan joined Mr Jermyn in announcing the Liberal funding for Sunbury Memorial Hall, a week after Labor committed \$2 million to a global learning centre there.