

# Unions flag 'nasty' war over NSW power sale

By Nick Ralston and Paul Carter



**THREAT:** Morris Iemma faces a WorkChoices-style campaign against his power sell-off.

Unions have warned NSW Premier Morris Iemma his plans to sell off the electricity sector will damage his Government in the same way WorkChoices helped bring down the Howard government.

Unions NSW secretary John Robertson warned of a "nasty" campaign against the move to privatise the electricity retailers and lease out generators, saying unions will turn on Labor unless it scraps the plan.

In the same way the Federal Government had no mandate to introduce its WorkChoices legislation, the NSW Government had no mandate to sell off its power assets, he said.

"It's analogous to WorkChoices on a number of levels - firstly, ideology overriding political judgment."

"The sorts of ads that are now being run are very similar to the ones the Howard government ran on WorkChoices."

"Political history [in Victoria and South Australia] shows you lose elections when you privatise electricity."

About 300 electricity union delegates yesterday voted at Sydney's Trades Hall to launch a public awareness campaign to mobilise support and to pressure politicians to abandon the sale.

Treasurer Michael Costa fired back at the unions, accusing them of running a "nonsense" campaign and insisting privatisation "will go ahead".

Mr Costa said unions had abandoned their core business of protecting jobs and employment conditions and were instead preoccupied by campaigning against foreign ownership.

"Running One Nation-like campaigns about foreign ownership

is extraordinary, given the globalisation we see, where unions themselves are investing almost a third of their assets globally," he said.

"It's a nonsense campaign and it's one that does a disservice to the people that are running it."

Mr Costa said if unions were worried about foreign investors, they should use their superannuation funds to buy into the power sector instead of investing the funds overseas.

He also described as "absolute nonsense" news reports that talks had already taken place with Chinese coal company Shenhua Energy about the Government's power privatisation plans.

"I and the Premier haven't met with any Chinese buyers of our electricity assets, it's absolute nonsense."

"The Chinese delegation is out looking at clean coal technology."

"It's a big jump from looking at clean coal technology to claiming that we're going to sell to foreign ownership."

NSW Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell has again refused to say if he supports privatisation.

"It's clear that the union movement has decided to dig in, it's unclear whether a deal will proceed," he said.

"It's unclear what the details of that deal may be, it's unclear whether or not Labor can manage the process." **AAP**



**TREKKERS:** Dario-Andri Schwörer and Sabine Schwörer-Ammann with their children Andri, 1, and Salina, 2, at Bonython Primary School. Pictures: MARINA NEIL

## Swiss family banks on changing minds

By Nick Craven



**ON THE ROAD:** The family travels using only non-polluting means.

After traversing threatening seas and scaling treacherous summits around the world, husband and wife globetrekking Dario-Andri Schwörer and Sabine Schwörer-Ammann reached Bonython Primary School yesterday to discuss climate change issues.

Mr Schwörer said the Swiss pair had been travelling since 2002 as part of their attempt at a world record expedition - Top to Top - which aims to reach seven seas and seven summits by environmentally friendly means. "We only travel with nature's force, meaning with our muscles, wind and solar energy," he said. "We are using only our legs and arms with biking and climbing, and when we cross the ocean we use the wind on our sailboat."

A mountaineer and climatologist, Mr Schwörer witnessed the ice melting in the Swiss Alps during the late 1990s and decided it was time for change.

"But we also wanted to collect and record good examples of climate protection. Not only big solar plants, but things that individuals do - something on a small scale in their neighbourhood."

"We are not Green Party people - we are sports people doing something for our planet. We are not trying to go back to the Stone Age. We can keep our lifestyle like it is."

You only have to adapt to the new technology, and the technology is here."

The couple will ride to the summit of Mount Kosciusko today to mark the halfway point of an expedition that has included numerous brushes with death, as well as the births of their children Salina, 2, and Andri, 1, who now accompany them.

Mr Schwörer said the journey's highs and lows had only strengthened his optimism for the future. "We have travelled to 40 countries and seen that our planet is still beautiful," he said.

"It gives us a lot of satisfaction when we see the children's smiling faces after our presentations and their motivation to fight for our planet. We are very optimistic that our planet has a good future."

## Murder charge against mother

By Roderick Campbell

A woman wanted over the alleged murder of her infant son more than two years ago in Bathurst was arrested in Canberra on Tuesday and extradited to NSW yesterday.

Barbara Doolan, 28, of no fixed address, appeared in the AC Magistrates Court yesterday after being arrested on a warrant obtained by police from Bathurst.

Subject to a mental health clearance from staff at the Canberra Hospital, Doolan was remanded in custody by Magistrate Shane Madden, who ordered her to appear in the Queanbeyan Local Court later in the day.

Doolan was receiving treatment in the ACT for an unspecified mental health condition before her apprehension by police.

Detective Sergeant Bruce Grassick told Mr Madden that Doolan had been charged with murder arising from an incident in Bathurst in July 2005, in which her young son was found face down in a bathtub.

Doolan had left the house to collect a male friend who then accompanied her back home.

The fully-clothed child had been retrieved from the bath.

Police had been called but Doolan would not give them or ambulance personnel access to the house. Police had made a forced entry.

More than 90 minutes was spent trying to revive the child, Sergeant Grassick said.

Asked by Mr Madden why it had taken more than two years to charge Doolan, Sergeant Grassick said police had conducted numerous inquiries in a bid to determine the cause of death.

It had taken considerable time to gather the necessary expert forensic evidence, he said.

Mr Madden said Doolan should receive psychiatric care upon her return to NSW.

He would not make a final extradition order without a report from ACT mental health officials.

Doolan, who was legally represented, did not apply for bail or oppose the extradition application.



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