



Media Release - 15 February 2007

HOWARD'S CLIMATE CHANGE SCAREMONGERING WON'T WORK IN THE HUNTER

Federal Member for Newcastle Sharon Grierson today called on the Prime Minister to stop scare-mongering over non-existent threats to coal-miners jobs and start being part of climate change solutions already being undertaken in the Hunter.

Speaking in Parliament today, Ms Grierson said that working together to find the responses to climate change required visionary and responsible leadership that can inspire and unite all sectors and all communities to take on the global struggle.

"It will not come from leadership that divides communities, induces fear or encourages the Australian people to feel threatened or powerless," Ms Grierson said. "Nor will it come from isolating coal producing communities through the full onslaught of wedge politics - John Howard style."

The Port of Newcastle exported \$6 billion worth of coal during the 2005-06 period. 11,000 people in the Hunter are directly employed in coal mining, with estimates of a further 30,000 spin off jobs.

"Coal is part of our history, our present and our future. We'll keep mining coal and stoking the economic boom John Howard has squandered. You can't turn off coal like a tap and you can't halt global climate change by closing down coal mining in the Hunter."

As Labor Leader Kevin Rudd has said, Australia needs a responsible long term strategy on climate change which protects our environment, protects jobs and builds new jobs for the future. What we can do to protect our coal industry in the future is invest in clean coal technologies.

Ms Grierson pointed to the research into areas like clean coal, CO2 abatement, oxyfuel technologies, coal gasification, efficient building design and solar energy being undertaken by organisations like Newcastle University and the CSRIO energy centre.

"Our region is leading the way in research and development into the range of solutions we need if we are going to tackle climate."

"I call on the Prime Minister, Australia's greatest climate change sceptic, to stop the fear-mongering and become part of our region's solution, starting with approval of our Solar Cities bid - a project which would see up to a further \$15 million invested in renewable energy projects in our region."

"Or as we would say in the Hunter, put up or shut up!"

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