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**Climate Change  
Adjournment Speech  
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Climate Change is now fixed in the consciousness of the Australian people. Working together to find the responses to best manage this phenomenon is perhaps the greatest human challenge of our time. Successful outcomes will come from leadership – visionary and responsible leadership that can inspire and unite all sectors and all communities to take on this global struggle together.

It will not come from leadership that divides communities, induces fear or encourages the Australian people to feel threatened or powerless in the face of the very real challenges to our sustainability that are already emerging as consequences of climate change . Nor will it come from isolating coal producing communities through the full onslaught of wedge politics - John Howard style.

I declare some particular personal interests in this issue.

Firstly, I represent here the city of Newcastle - a city built on coal. 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.

Secondly, I'm from coal mining stock. In fact I am the only member of this parliament whose grandfather, a miners federation man, took part in the great 1929 Lockout and the Rothbury Riots in the Hunter – the most violent industrial dispute in this nation's history where 10 000 coalminers marching on the locked-out coal fields were confronted by armed police in an ensuing battle that saw one miner shot dead and martial law imposed in peacetime Australia. I understand the coal mining heritage, the courage and camaraderie of miners, the strength and resolve of mining communities forever used to the challenges of coal mining.

I give this warning to John Howard - underestimate the miners of the Hunter or their unions at your peril. Beware of inflaming coal mining communities for they are not easily fooled by ruthless government scare-mongering. But they easily recognise the self-interest of those who would exploit miners. They prefer a different way. Mining communities and their unions have always been aroused by social responsibility – the fairness and equity route to prosperity is their creed – not fear and self-interest.

They understand that taking climate change action and coal mining are not incompatible endeavours. They know that it's not a case of one or the other. 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. Far better to work hand in hand to find the best and fairest solutions.

So Prime Minister, they'll keep mining coal and stoking the economic boom you've squandered, but they sure wish that you had been doing your job as well as they've been doing theirs. Get off their backs and get out of the way, because it's time for better leadership in this country.

Thirdly, just like the people of Newcastle and the Hunter, I love this planet too.

A recent Hunter Valley Research Foundation survey found that people in my region believe that climate change is real and that it will have a direct impact on their lives in the next 20 years. But crucially, they also responded that they believe that we – each and every one of us – can have an impact on slowing climate change.

That's why the Hunter's community - its workers, miners, unions, industry and research institutions are already working together to find solutions to climate change and a sustainable energy future.

The University of Newcastle - a national leader in clean coal research, is working with the help of the Newcastle Port Corporation to investigate CO2 abatement through chemical looping.

The University's Priority Research Centre for Energy is researching ways to reduce, even eliminate CO2 emission from coal power generation through oxyfuel technologies, more efficient combustors and heat exchangers.

CSIRO's Energy Technology Division - based in Newcastle - is working in conjunction with the Centre for Low Emission Technology on coal gasification, gas cleaning, processing and separation technologies, and carbon sequestration.

The CSIRO Energy Centre at Steel River, our nation's flagship, is a showcase of energy efficiency and also of vital work into renewable energy at the National Solar Energy Centre in Newcastle.

So Prime Minister, we acknowledge that we are all part of the problem that is climate change, but at least the people of Newcastle and the Hunter are trying to be part of the solutions.

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 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!