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CUNNINGHAM

EXAMINER

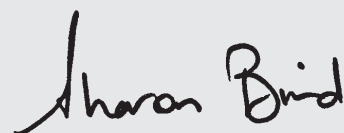
OCT/NOV 2006

Welcome to the October/November issue of the Cunningham Examiner.

It's purpose is to keep you updated on issues affecting our local community.

I want to hear from you too. If you want to promote a community event or just make a comment, my contact details are:

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Skills crisis: Howard did nothing. Labor's plan to tackle the problem

For 10 years Prime Minister John Howard has denied that Australia was facing a skills crisis.

Last week Mr Howard finally conceded that consistent warnings by the OECD, Reserve Bank, Treasury, a range of business groups, and the Labor Party were spot on – and he threw \$800 million at the problem.

Australia, especially regional areas like the Illawarra, are facing a skills crisis and unacceptably high youth unemployment.

Skills in traditional trades are in such short supply that they are forcing up interest rates and inflation.

Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for Wollongong show that youth unemployment is now 43.1% – the highest rate of youth unemployment in 10 years.

While some of the Howard initiatives are welcome; most are simply too little, too late and simply ignore young people.

Kim Beazley and Labor have a comprehensive 5-point plan to increase and maintain the skills and training levels of Australians, including young people. The plan includes:

- Providing apprentices with a \$2000 tax-free Trade Completion Bonus to help them finish their apprenticeships;
- Providing trade apprentices with \$3200 to help with up-front TAFE fees – effectively abolishing the TAFE fee;
- Overhauling the New Apprenticeship Scheme to focus on traditional trades;

- Upgrading workshop facilities in schools; and
- Doubling the number of school-based apprenticeships.

Mr Howard presided over a worsening skills crisis for 10 years. He sat on his hands and did nothing about it. Kim Beazley and Labor have the answers.



Local Federal MP Sharon Bird and Labor's Shadow Treasurer Wayne Swan during a visit to Port Kembla. Infrastructure and skills are critical to our future growth.

Sharon Bird's office has a wide range of free, informative kits, factsheets and DVDs – see back page to order.

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Michelle Radford presents \$24,800 to Joanne Mackay Breast Cancer Foundation

Michelle Radford handed over the remaining \$24,800 which was raised to help fund her breast cancer treatment to the Joanne Mackay Breast Cancer Foundation.

Following the recent approval of Herceptin on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the Michelle Radford Trust was left with \$24,800.

This follows the Illawarra community's outstanding efforts in raising money for Michelle's treatment.

The Trust Fund has donated the remaining money to the Joanne Mackay Breast Cancer Foundation.

The Foundation was set up by former St George footballer Brad Mackay following his late wife's battle with breast cancer.

Joanne's parents, Maureen and Jim, and her good friend, Ann Brown, were on hand to receive the cheque.

The Foundation will use the money to help women with breast cancer who are also experiencing financial difficulties.

They will receive advice from local breast care nurse, Gloria Swift. The money will help woman with bills they are unable to meet during their treatment.



Michelle's 'team' of fundraisers included Michael Halloran from the Illawarra Credit Union, Kerry Blackwell from Helensburgh IGA, Wendy Lepree from Pepies General Store, Libby Cross from Helensburgh Lions Club, local Helensburgh fundraiser, Bede Parkes, and good friends Jan and Noel Hill and Karen Carpenter.

Action needed now on global warming

Sharon Bird recently hosted a showing of former US Vice-President AL Gore's movie *An Inconvenient Truth* at the Wollongong Greater Union Cinema.

Climate change is global problem – emissions are simply heating up the atmosphere, changing weather patterns, tidal flows, melting glaciers, causing natural catastrophes and changing the world's landscape.

We faced a global crisis like this before – the hole in the Ozone – and by working together, across country boundaries, across governments, across business and industry and the community – and by changing our own individual habits – we started closing the Ozone hole.

Just this week the CSIRO released a detailed report on the Australian drought. Rather than being a seasonal challenge, drought conditions in Australia are becoming permanent.

Al Gore's movie lays out the scientific information and assessments on climate change. Virtually all of the world's scientists have concluded by consensus that climate change is taking place because of the unacceptable levels of emissions.

To help tackle the problem Australia must:

- Invest in renewable energy;
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60 percent by 2050;
- Ratify the Kyoto Protocol;
- Establish an emissions trading scheme, invest in clean technology;
- Install solar panels in 10,000 public schools; and
- Bring hybrid cars to market and increase the use of public transport.

The Howard Government refuses to adopt these measures as Australia's contribution to helping fight this global challenge.

A copy of initiatives the Labor Party intends to implement to address the climate change is available by contacting Sharon's office on 4228 5899.



Sharon Bird visiting Future World which has excellent exhibits with practical ideas for energy-saving in the home.

Recognition Awards for Older Australians

In recognition of the contribution made by older Australians, I asked for nominations for Recognition Awards as part of National Day for Older Australians which coincides with the annual observance of the United Nations' International Day for Older Persons on 1 October 2006.

I recently wrote to all Pensioner and Veteran Associations in my electorate of Cunningham asking them to nominate two people who they believe have made a contribution to our community.

The work of many of our older Australians is quite often unrecognised and I believe the National Day for Older Australians is a great opportunity to say thank you for their energy and commitment to our community.



Sharon Bird congratulating Reg and Marj Doherty on their recognition awards.

Local roll of honour

Corrimal Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association

Marjorie Jean Doherty (Corrimal)

Marjorie has served as the Secretary of Corrimal Combined Pensioners Association since 1994. She has also been a member of the Wollongong City Council Senior Week Committee for 14 years.

Reginald James Doherty (Corrimal)

Reg spent his working years in the mining industry and since retiring has devoted 19 years to Corrimal Pensioners Association. He has served as President since 1994.

Unanderra Combined Pensioners and Superannuants Association

Eric Stevenson (Figtree)

Eric has been a member of Unanderra CPSA for 15 years including 12 years as Branch Secretary. Has been a delegate to the South Coast Area Council for 13 years and a delegate to the State Council for many years including nine years as State President.

South Coast Area Council – Combined Pensioners and Superannuants

Edna Stevenson (Figtree)

Edna has served the CPSA continuously for 27 years. She is a Life Member and has been President and Secretary of the South Coast Area Council. Also held office at Bulli CPSA and Windang CPSA.

Bulli Senior Citizens Association

Terry Cole (Towradgi)

Terry is a volunteer for Bulli Senior Citizens Association, Illawarra Live Steamers and Corrimal Lions Club. Terry took on the task of Treasurer of Bulli Senior Citizens and helped to revitalise the Association.

Austinmer RSL Sub-Branch

Jan and Elaine Wilton (Austinmer)

Jan and Elaine are Life Members of Austinmer Surf Life Saving Club. Elaine has been a member of the View Club for 35 years and works for Meals on Wheels, while Jan has more than 10 years service with the Rural Fire Service in Austinmer.

Thirroul RSL Sub-Branch

Helen Boge (Thirroul)

Helen is a Patron of Thirroul RSL Sub-Branch and is an active member of the RSL, who is revered by all. Helen, with her quiet demeanour, has helped all who have needed help.

Keith Woodward (Thirroul)

Keith has lived in Thirroul for 80 years. He has been an active member of the RSL and President for many years. Has been a supporter of Thirroul Bowling Club including as a member for over 50 years. Also supported scouts, guides and football club (Thirroul JPJPS).

Older Women's Network (Illawarra)

Roma Bates (Austinmer)

Roma is a mother of five children and a grandmother of 11. She was in a horrific accident, but her fighting spirit helped her survive. She has been a daycare volunteer for over 26 years. She is coordinator for OWN and is a member of a voluntary singing group.

Joan Hilton (Towradgi)

Joan is an artist, poet and writer. She has contributed to the community, giving her paintings, teaching writing and poetry for fundraising and civic events. She was an early feminist, always supporting women's issues.

Retired Miners AWU

Glenice McDonald (Balgownie)

Glenice has been a member of the Union since 1953. She represents our union in the Combined Pensioners and Superannuants and represents CPSA on Disability Access Committee with Council and works as a volunteer for St Vincent de Paul Society.

Mary Rennick (Balgownie)

Mary is a voluntary worker with Disability Access Committee of Wollongong City Council an delegate to the Retired Pensioners and Superannuants Association of NSW.

Make poverty history

In October Sharon Bird joined 91,987 Australians and over 23 million people from all over the world to help set the Guinness World Record for the largest number of people to STAND UP for a cause. The STAND UP aimed to show support for 1.1 billion people including children living on less than \$1 a day and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.



Sharon Bird and Parliamentary colleagues at the Stand Up Against Poverty event in Canberra.

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Save Medibank Private from Howard's sell-off

Sharon Bird has launched a petition to save Medibank Private from a Howard Government sell-off.

Medibank Private, which recently announced an annual profit of \$200 million, should not be sold-off for a quick buck. But the Howard Government has increased the cost of private health insurance by 40% since 2001. Make no mistake, if Medibank Private is sold off, private health insurance premiums will increase even further.

Help stop the sale of Medibank Private – fill in the petition below.



Sharon Bird collecting signatures to stop the Medibank Private sell-off.

• SIGN THE PETITION • SAVE MEDIBANK PRIVATE ✂

Petition to the Honourable Speaker and Members of the House of Representatives assembled in Parliament to oppose the sale of Medibank Private: This petition of certain citizens of Australia registers its protest to the sale of Medibank Private and calls on the House to oppose the sale of Medibank Private.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Phone:

Email:

Please return urgently to: Sharon Bird MP, PO Box 387, Wollongong 2520 or fax to 4228 5077

Free information kits, factsheets and DVDs

My office provides information kits on many different areas. If you wish to order any of the kits below, please fill out the form below and return to: Sharon Bird MP, PO Box 387, Wollongong 2520.

To order your free copies, please tick the items you want ...



- You and Your Government
- Child Support Scheme
- Guide to Australian Government Payments
- Pensioner Kit
- Veterans Kit
- Environment Kit
- Superannuation Kit
- Families Kit
- Youth Kit
- Do Not Call (Telephone) Kit
- Banking Information
- Connecting with Computers (DVD)
- Water Safety
- Net Alert (CD)
- Goals for Aussie Kids
- Safe Toys for Kids
- Dealing with Separation (CD): Experiences, Tips and Tools
- Keeping Baby Safe
- Cot Safety
- Fire Safety at Home
- Managing Your Money Booklet
- Safe and Secure Kit
- Labor's IR Taskforce Report
- Labor's 5 Point Plan for Small Business
- Join my Email List

Your contact details

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please mail to: Sharon Bird MP, PO Box 387, Wollongong, NSW 2520.
For more information please phone Sharon's office on 4228 5899.