

Cheers, jeers for land-use package

By LENORE TAYLOR

The Government had something for everyone in its land-use package announced yesterday.

Industry applauded the decision to establish an independent tribunal to advise the Government on land-use decisions and criticised an upgrading of the Australian Heritage Commission.

Conservationists applauded the latter decision and criticised the first.

The Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, and the two ministers who have long been at loggerheads on the issues, the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, John Kerr, and the minister responsible for the environment, Senator Richardson, made the announcements yesterday.

Mr Hawke said the new Resource Assessment Commission aimed to make the process by which the Government received advice on land-use matters "predictable and understandable" for all interested groups.

Commissioners on the RAC will be nominated for each inquiry by the Industries Assistance Commission and the Australian Science and Technology Council, but the decisions will still be taken by the Government.

Intensive lobbying by conservationists, unions and industry over decisions will continue, and Mr Hawke agreed that the new process would not mean that all groups would agree with the Government.

Industry groups such as the Australian Mining Industry Council and the National Association of Forest Industries welcomed the RAC decision, but the national director of the Wilderness Society, Alistair Graham, slammed it as "a set-up to promote the case for exploiters".

NAFI had argued for the IAC itself to conduct land-use assessments, and this is believed to have been argued in Cabinet by Mr Kerr.

Mr Hawke acknowledged yesterday that there had been concern that an "economic, industry-oriented body" like the IAC would not be "independent" when conducting assessments. He said there could be no question of the independence of the new commission.

But conservation groups do not believe the commission will be independent and are concerned that the bodies responsible for choosing the RAC commissioners will not sufficiently represent environmental as well as economic interests.

Mr Graham said the RAC would clearly make its decisions on economic grounds, which meant it would ignore environmental values, which were hard to put a money figure on.

Senator Richardson said the RAC would look at "some environmental questions", and pointed out that since the RAC could be asked to look at a whole industry Australia-wide, or at a whole region, EIS's would not always be possible.

But at least one Government spokesperson confirmed the conser-

vationists' fears yesterday, saying that the RAC was never intended to look at environmental questions.

A spokesman for the Minister for Resources, Senator Cook, said the RAC was an economic advisory body and "never intended to do environmental assessments".

"The RAC is one half of the equation, and the other half, environmental advice, will be provided by the existing arrangements, such as environmental impact statements," the spokesman said.

It remains unclear what issues the Government intends referring to its new body. The Tasmanian forests, the Queensland wet tropics and the Coronation Hill mine in the Northern Territory were all ruled out because they "would be resolved" by the time the RAC legislation was in place. Pressed for an example, Senator Richardson said the RAC could look into the sand-mining industry, or other ore bodies in the Kakadu area.

The national president of NAFI, Brian Gibson, said he thought the Government should refer the Tasmanian forests and the wet tropics to the RAC.

Senator Richardson announced that the Australian Heritage Commission, which administers the national estate, would have its funding almost doubled, with an extra \$2 million per year, as well as other changes. This decision was welcomed by the conservationists.



Picture: KATE CALLAS

John Farnham arrives at the National Press Club yesterday.

The Voice dumps Melbourne and nobody cares

By TONY WRIGHT

John Farnham says he doesn't like making controversial statements. But yesterday, the Australian of the Year, prize yodeller and former plumber from Melbourne dropped a line that will go down like a lead zeppelin in his home town.

Asked what he thought of Melbourne winning the right to bid for the 1996 Olympic Games, Farnham declared, "This thing started in Athens, it's the centennial [of the Games in 1996] and I believe it should be held in Athens."

Cripes, you could just about hear John Elliott howling from the MCG that the blond upstairs should be ridden out of town on a brewer's cart, but the crowd at the National Press Club thought it was just wonderful.

Indeed, Farnham could have said anything at all and the crowd at the Press Club would have cheered, stamped the floor and blown kisses in ecstasy. In truth, that's about what happened.

This wasn't your average Press Club crowd, you understand. This was John Farnham's crowd — pubescent girls clutching copies of his *Age of Reason* album, women who left puberty behind shortly after 1967 when he released the immortal *Sadie the Cleaning Lady*, a scattering of chaps trying hard to give the impression they were forced to be there.

Farnham was the guest of honour at a luncheon sponsored by FM-104.7 and Coca-Cola, an event organised as part of his "tour of honour" as Australian of the Year. About 400 fans purchased tickets for \$35 each. This was clearly not for the food — it was to gain proximity to the

Presence, and to hear pearls of wisdom drip from The Lips.

However, the crowd had to wait. First, John Farnham performed a duty that has become what he considers one of his most important contributions. He had a private meeting with 10 young people who, for one reason or another, are underprivileged or disabled — kids from Barnardo's, Camp Quality (for cancer sufferers), the Quarry remand centre and several suggested by youth workers.

The meeting was away from the cameras, and no reporters were allowed — it was a time for Farnham to talk to the kids, hug them and tell them how important they were, according to John Newcombe, who attended yesterday's lunch.

By the time Farnham strode into the Press Club banquet room, the crowd was in full gear and full voice. Autograph books, albums and any handy pieces of paper were thrust at him, and he began signing his name with the practice born of long years.

"What's it like being famous?" asked one of the fans. "Fantastic," beamed Farnham ("Yay" cried the fans). "One of the best things is you get cuddled a lot." ("Whooooo-ooo-oo" yelled the crowd).

Still, the idolaters would not be totally appeased until Farnham sang. To sing from a rostrum in a banquet room without the benefit of a band is not the sort of thing most performers relish, and few could carry off such a thing successfully. But Farnham was his People, and he is The Voice. So he sang a verse or two from *You're the Voice*, and the crowd clapped and sang along, and all was mighty fine with the world.

The Canberra Times' Editor-in-Chief retires

The Editor-in-Chief of *The Canberra Times*, Ian Mathews, has retired after 25 years with the newspaper.

Announcing the retirement yesterday, the newspaper's managing editor, Ian Meikle, paid tribute to Mr Mathews' long and dedicated service to both the paper and the community.

"In his 16 years as chief editorial executive, Ian Mathews served a remarkable 13 as editor and the past three as editor-in-chief," Mr Meikle said.

Mr Mathews began his career in Britain and joined *The Canberra Times* in March, 1963, after a short period as a reporter with *The News*, Adelaide. During his career with *The Canberra Times* he also held the senior positions of chief sub-editor, news editor and assistant editor.

"Whilst I am personally sorry to lose Ian's experience and wisdom, we take comfort from his legacy of a strong editorial team that will continue, under the editor, Crispin Hull, the journalistic excellence Ian has helped foster on *The Canberra Times*," Mr Meikle said.

"Under Ian Mathews' leadership the paper has won the UN Media Peace Prize or a Citation for nine successive years, 1979-1987, and national awards for newspaper design, while staff on the paper have won five Walkley Awards and a Graham Perkin Journalist of the Year Award."

Ian Mathews either supervised or wrote more than 5000 editorials in his time at *The Canberra Times*. He built up the reputation that *Canberra Times* editorials have for being well-reasoned, independent and wide-ranging.

He had a long and conspicuous commitment to freedom of the Press which often translated to freedom for *Canberra Times* reporters to pursue issues and opinions which he personally disagreed with or were contrary to the newspaper's editorial policy.

"This is the real strength of a real



Ian Mathews

editor," Mr Meikle said. "Ian Mathews has a commitment to accuracy and fairness. If *The Canberra Times* is wrong it publishes a correction. This, although seemingly a small point, provides an insight to the maturity and professionalism of the organisation Ian Mathews has helped to shape."

"He can take justifiable pride in the strong, credible, fair and reliable attributes that characterise both locally and nationally *The Canberra Times* of today."

"It was through this open commitment to the basic belief in honest journalism that has seen, under his direction, some of the country's finest writers, reporters, photographers, artists and newspaper executives blossom in the creative environment of *The Canberra Times*."

"And I know that the staff, both past and present, and many thousands of readers, will join me in wishing Ian and his wife, Joyce, a long and happy retirement."

Private cars for public servants

By STEPHEN QUEST

It is either a long-term election ploy or the Hawke Government is now going through a period of reconciliation for its staff-cut sins against the Public Service.

It has nothing to do with Level 1 Administrative Service Officers, but it is a gesture that is sure to go down well with those in the Senior Executives Service who have been the target of profiteering when doing the grocery shopping in government cars.

Reliable government sources say Cabinet has approved private cars paid for by the public purse for the SES. Cost: about \$10,000 a year for each car.

Unlike most government cars,

which bear the dreaded "Z", the SES cars will have civilian numberplates so the family can do its shopping in peace.

A government spokesman declined yesterday to confirm whether Cabinet had approved the new SES service. But he said there was a policy that allowed senior officers to use departmental cars to drive home, and the Government had been considering "a wider degree of access for private use".

Asked why the "Z" had to go, he said, "... where cars have been made available for private use in other public services, it's pretty common practice that they are not marked as departmental vehicles." This helped "minimise the confusion".

Greiner threatens security of tenure

SYDNEY: Senior NSW public servants would face the axe if they did not perform under a radical new Greiner Government plan to shake up the public sector.

Premier Nick Greiner told the annual meeting of the Employers' Federation in Sydney that the state's 1000 senior public servants would be put on notice next week.

"Essentially we're prepared to pay them more to give them

more authority, more capacity to manage," he said.

"On the other hand, we're going to take away that security blanket of security of tenure which has been the hallmark of public-sector employment in Australia," he said.

There would be a radical change to the way the top managers in the Public Service were paid, with an emphasis on performance pay, he said.

"In other words it's a matter of shape up or ship out," he said.

IN BRIEF

Award for egg rebel

SYDNEY: Rebel Sydney egg farmer Paul Galea has won the Australian Small Business Association Free Enterprise Award of the Year.

ASBA NSW branch president Dr Peter Catts said the ASBA State Council believed Mr Galea had stood up for his principles and suffered enormous financial, emotional and personal loss.

Man burnt

SYDNEY: An unidentified man was burnt to death yesterday in an overnight caravan park at Eden, on the NSW south coast, police said.

Kakadu fees

Visitor fees would be introduced at Kakadu National Park from January, the Minister for Arts, Sport, the Environment, Territories and Tourism, Senator Richardson, announced yesterday.

Bundy celebrates

BRISBANE: The anniversary of the city of Bundaberg and the drink that made it famous will be celebrated in the area this weekend.

Lotteries

Jackpot Lottery 3402 drawn at 10.15pm yesterday. First \$100,000 No 115559. ntp. Tempe, second \$10,000 No 10422. ntp. Vauluse, third \$5000 No 10422. ntp. Auburn. Consolation \$500 No 115557, 111559. The jackpot of \$200,000 was not won by No 114343. The jackpot now stands at \$240,000 in Jackpot Lottery 3403 which will be drawn on Monday. Tatts 2 numbers drawn yesterday 40 and 29. Division 1, 18 winners \$200 division 2, 3145 \$3.

Justice Wilson resigns

By ROD CAMPBELL

Justice Sir Ronald Darling Wilson will retire from the High Court on February 13 to work full-time as President of the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Attorney-General, Lionel Bowen, said yesterday that Justice Wilson had submitted his resignation to the Governor-General, Sir Ninian Stephen, on Monday. It is understood that the Government was informed at the same time.

The Government will now embark on a process of consultations with state governments before deciding on a replacement for Justice Wilson. A decision is not expected before January.

Those being talked about as possible successors include Justice Michael McHugh, of the NSW Court of Appeal, Dr Gavan Griffith, QC, the Commonwealth Solicitor-General, and Melbourne-based QC's Ron Castan and Stephen Charles.

Justice Wilson, the second most senior judge on the seven-member High Court Bench, took over as president of the Uniting Church in May for a three-year term. He is the first

lay person to occupy the post. The position is regarded a full-time job but Justice Wilson insisted on a number of occasions that he could meet the requirements of both positions. Despite this, his resignation was not a complete surprise and has been talked about as a possibility for some time. He told *The Canberra Times* in May, shortly after his installation as president, that he had no plans to retire early.

It is understood that Justice Wilson's decision to retire was based on a combination of factors: his new role as church president, the extensive travelling he is required to undertake between Perth and Canberra, and a desire to spend more time with his family.

Justice Wilson, 66, who lives in Perth, was first appointed to the High Court in 1979. He was the first Western Australian appointed to the court. He has been the senior puisne judge since Justice Mason became Chief Justice last year. He is seen as one of the court's hardest working members and is certainly its most polite. While conservative, the judge is also regarded as a fine

lawyer in an academic sense. He was due to retire in August, 1992, when he will turn 70, the compulsory retiring age for High Court judges. He is also a Chancellor of Murdoch University.

The judge's resignation will allow the Government to become the Labor Government to appoint the High Court judges as well as a Justice. It appointed Justices Tooley and Gaudron last year and now has a unique opportunity to shape the future composition of the court for many years.

Justice Wilson was the Western Australian Solicitor-General between 1969 and his appointment to the High Court, a decade later, to replace Justice Kenneth Jacobs. He is also a former Crown prosecutor. He was educated at Geraldton District High School, the University of Western Australia (where he graduated with first-class honours in law) and the University of Pennsylvania (where he obtained a Master of Laws).

Rare opportunity in judge appointment. — Page 12

If it's a bargain at \$5.50 what is it at \$3.99?

Seaview Rhine Riesling 1987 ***
With fresh, clean, smoky/citrus nose and some development showing on the open flavoursome palate, the panel all agreed that this wine will improve further. Possibly the bargain of the tasting, although the vintage is due to change. \$5.50

Wine and Spirit magazine, November 1988.

Seaview Rhine Riesling 1987 really is a great bargain. We've endorsed it from the time it was released last November. And the judges at the Melbourne Wine Show awarded it a gold medal.

The good news for our customers is that Farmer Bros bought the last 1,000 dozen of this lovely, crisp dry white. Price is still a bargain \$3.99 a bottle.



Hurry for the last of this \$3.99 gold medal winner

Champagne prices crash

Minchibury Champagne is just \$2.99 and Seaview \$3.99 when bought by the dozen at Farmer Bros. Prices are \$3.49 and \$4.49 for single bottles.

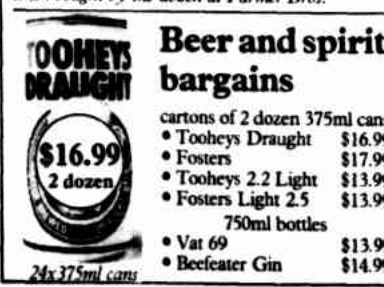
If your taste runs to something a little richer and finer try Farmer Bros Cuvée Clare 1987. It's a superb Methode Champenoise made for Farmer Bros by Brian Croser of Petaluma at his Bridgewater Mill cellar. Price is a modest \$7.99 a bottle.

Free tasting today

Taste Australia's best bubbles today at Braddon and Belconnen. Taste 1986 Croser, 1985 Seppelts Great Western Vintage Brut and Farmer Bros Cuvée Clare 1987.



Minchibury \$2.99 and Seaview Champagne \$3.99 when bought by the dozen at Farmer Bros.



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• Fosters Light 2.5 \$13.99
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5000	211.02	457.21	82.85	179.51	57.97	125.61
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