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Ex-garbo promises clean-up in NSW

By Ross Peake
National Affairs Editor

The future of NSW and its Government are in the hands of a novice Labor MP after an extraordinary day of political bloodletting on Macquarie Street yesterday.

After just 18 months in Parliament, former water minister Nathan Rees was sworn in as Premier last night after a dramatic session in which Morris Iemma quit politics and former treasurer Michael Costa was blasted out of cabinet. Carmel Tebbutt was sworn in as the State's first female deputy premier.

The 40-year-old former garbage collector and greenkeeper insisted Mr Iemma was not pushed, but praised his courage for doing the right thing and resigning from the leadership.

Earlier yesterday, Mr Iemma's powerful right-wing Centre Unity faction had turned on him over his plan to dump several senior figures from the ministry, and the former premier said he would not lead a cabinet "foisted" on him.

"They didn't want to do it my way - they can get on without me," Mr Iemma said, as he became the first NSW Labor premier to be dumped in 117 years.

Mr Rees - the member for Toongabbee - pledged to restore public confidence in the state Government and said people were right to feel angry about failures in health and transport.

"You are right to feel frustrated, you are right to feel annoyed, you are right to feel disappointed, on occasions, you are right to feel angry," he said. "On that basis I say this to you - we need real change, and that real change starts today. Be under no illusions, we understand how disappointed the community has been with many of our efforts."

INSIDE



QUICK CHANGE: Nathan Rees succeeded Morris Iemma yesterday.

- Labor's big repair job
- Garbo top of the heap
- Costa goes out swinging PAGES 4 AND 5
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Conceding he was short on parliamentary experience, Mr Rees said yesterday that he had plenty of life experience, including working as a "garbo".

"I've done lots of different things since I've left school and it's that life experience that people value probably a little more than parliamentary experience," he said.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said Mr Rees had what it took to deal with the challenges facing the state Government.

"I look forward to working closely with Nathan, Carmel and the NSW Government on our shared challenges in education, health, climate change and water," Mr Rudd said.

Before entering Parliament, Mr Rees was chief of staff to disgraced former minister Milton Orkopoulos, who is serving a nine-year prison term after being convicted of child sex and drug offences.

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History arrives with the future in tow



FIRST LADY: Quentin Bryce at Parliament House yesterday with grandchildren Georgette and Rupert Bryce-Parkin. Photo: GRAHAM TIDY

By Lynne Minion

The winds of change swept into Parliament House yesterday in a purple dress and patent leather Mary Jane heels, as Quentin Bryce, the former Governor of Queensland, was sworn in as Australia's first female Governor-General.

Ms Bryce, 65, was inducted during a ceremony in the Senate before an audience including Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, his wife Therese Rein, government ministers, senators, a collection of feminists and her five grandchildren, who embraced their trail-blazing granny in the chamber.

The Prime Minister made note of Ms Bryce's merit when he said there could be "no person more qualified" for the position, while acknowledging it was a watershed appointment.

"For the first time in the 107-year history of our federation, we're also swearing in a truly wonderful woman as Australia's Governor-General," Mr Rudd said.

"It took us 107 years but we got there in the end."

Opposition Leader Brendan Nelson hailed the appointment as an achievement for all Australians, saying, "we are a better people and we will be a better country for it".

History came in the petite and immaculate form of a woman of firsts: one of the first women admitted to the Queensland Bar, the first female law lecturer at the University of Queensland, and now the first female head of state.

Choosing to wear the colour of the suffragettes can hardly have been a coincidence, and the strong advocate of equality, who has served as a member of the Fraser government's National Women's Advisory Council, the Queensland director of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner, began her tenure with a promise "to be alive, open, responsive, and faithful to the contemporary thinking and working of Australian society".

In her first speech as the country's 25th governor-general, Ms Bryce thanked those who inspired her towards the highest post in the land.

"I speak now of the people who have brought me to this day," she said.

"... People from all walks of life, the prominent, the powerful, our sung and unsung, our most vulnerable and disadvantaged."

Quentin Alice Louise Bryce was born in the western Queensland town of Longreach and spent her early childhood years in Ilfracombe, population 200. She married Michael Bryce in 1964 and in the intervening four decades raised a family of two daughters and three sons while achieving her career dreams.

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Debate on 2020 targets heats up

By Rosslyn Beeby and David Alexander

Electricity prices will rise by 40 per cent by 2020 and petrol by 5c a litre within two years as a result of emission reduction targets outlined yesterday by economist Professor Ross Garnaut.

The rise in electricity prices would be "a big hit" on families, but the Government should be able to compensate people on less-than-average incomes to leave them no worse off, he said.

Australia should aim to cut its greenhouse emissions by 10 per cent by 2020, moving to 80 per cent by 2050, the Rudd Government's key adviser on climate change told the National Press Club.

But the Rudd Government has quickly distanced itself from Professor Garnaut's latest draft report, which sets out a timetable of targets and trajectories for reducing Australia's greenhouse emissions.

Federal Climate Change Minister Penny Wong reaffirmed the Government's commitment to cut emissions by 60 per cent by 2050, describing it as "a very substantial" target. Professor Garnaut's recommendations on emissions targets would be considered with "a range of other matters," she said. "We respect his advice, we'll listen to his advice, but ultimately it is for Government to make its decisions on these matters."

Scientists and environmental groups, who had hoped Professor Garnaut would recommend a target of up to 40 per cent by 2020, dismissed the 10 per cent target as too low to be effective.

Australian Greens leader Senator Bob Brown said, "The weak target of reducing emissions by 10 per cent below 2000 levels by 2020 would lead to an over-allocation of carbon permits in the same way that the over-allocation of water entitlement has led to the Murray-Darling Basin crisis."

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Pope's view - Page B6

WEATHER

CANBERRA: Mostly fine, 15
 Chance of rain: 40%
 Wind: S-SE, 15-25km/h
 UV index: 5 (moderate)
 Outlook: Mostly fine

SYDNEY: Showers easing, 16
 MELBOURNE: Mainly fine, 18
 Details: Page C8

Stanhope staffer denies pressuring WIN as executive sacked

EXCLUSIVE

By Jessica Wright

The chief of staff of WIN TV news has been sacked and a political reporter stood down after a senior member of Chief Minister Jon Stanhope's staff complained to the station about a story on government-owned fleet management company Rhodium. John Roe was sacked from his



position at the Canberra news station at 11 am on Thursday after just three months in the position. Long-time Legislative Assembly



reporter Geraldine Nordfeldt has been suspended from covering local politics just six weeks out from the ACT election.

COMPLAINT: Jeremy Lasek, left, Geraldine Nordfeldt and John Roe.

Meanwhile, WIN is exploring its legal options after a defamation case was brought against it by board members of Rhodium.

The Auditor-General's department issued a damning report on Rhodium Asset Solutions earlier this year which found there had been excessive and inappropriate spending by the company and poor management practices.

Mr Stanhope's chief of staff, Jeremy Lasek, who is a former WIN

news director, confirmed to *The Canberra Times* yesterday that he had met WIN station manager Corey Pitt and Roe.

But he denied he had placed pressure on the news station to temper its political coverage.

"I speak with news directors and executives from across the city and have done so on a weekly basis as part of my job," he said.

"I had discussions with WIN management about a story that made

serious allegations against high-profile people in Canberra and I saw it as my place to inform them [WIN] of this. Certainly I had discussions with the station, but any action taken has been on WIN's behalf."

Mr Lasek also denied using any influence as a past news director of the station in his current role as an adviser to the Stanhope Government.

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