

# Coalition may sell off water

By political writer  
LINDA SILMALIS

THE State Opposition has left the door open to selling off Sydney Water with the Coalition refusing union demands to guarantee continued public ownership of the multimillion-dollar state-owned asset.

Sydney Water employs around 3000 workers and has experienced declining revenues due to the recent water restrictions.

With the countdown to the March 26 State election under way, unions are demanding both parties declare their position on the future of critical state-owned assets.

The Australian Services Union (ASU) wrote to both Labor and the Coalition earlier this year, seeking assurances the utility would remain in public hands.

In a letter to Mr O'Farrell, union secretary Sally McManus said the public was concerned about the future of the state assets amid job losses in South



Unbowed: Barry O'Farrell

Australia after its government sold off water.

"The ASU wishes to know whether your party will unconditionally rule out the full or part privatisation of any of these State-owned corporations," she said.

"This is not only a very important issue for our members, but we believe the voting public need to be in no doubt as to your party's position prior to the 2011 State Election."

Ms McManus was informed no commitment would be made until the new year.

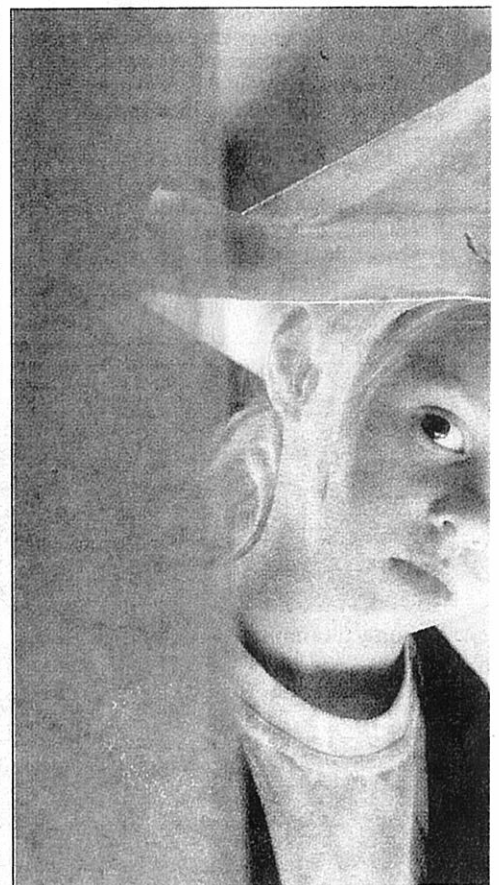
Unions will begin seeking guarantees from both parties on a raft of state-

owned assets, including State Forests, prisons, CityRail and electricity.

The State Opposition has already indicated it plans to contract out Sydney Ferries. Unions are also concerned a Coalition government will buckle to pressure to sell off electricity despite Mr O'Farrell opposing the move under Labor.

Mr O'Farrell told *The Sunday Telegraph* that he supported private sector involvement in the delivery of public services where it was in the public interest. He declined to bow to unions demands to outline the future of Sydney Water or other assets. "The NSW Liberals and Nationals intend to be upfront with the community and, if elected, we will implement the policies we've outlined ahead of the election," he said.

Mr O'Farrell said guarantees offered by Labor could not be trusted given the Kennelly Government's attempted backflip on electricity.



## They have great ideas But they couldn't implement them

The very best reasons for staying safe at work are to follow proper safety procedures and not have the devastating effect on your loved ones, both at home and at work.

So when you're at work, make sure you please your family.

For ways to make the workplace safer, contact your local WorkCover office.

To order your **FREE** *Come Home Safely Kit* catalogue no. WC02331.

