

## Hillside

### Koalas in decline

A POTENTIAL halving of the koala population in south-east Queensland over the past three years has prompted the Member for Bowman (Qld), Andrew Laming, to call for more resources to be devoted to the protection of koalas.

“The 300 that die every year under the wheels of motor vehicles and the 100 that are killed by dogs is simply unacceptable,” Mr Laming told federal parliament.

“We may well have to fence off the major roads, which are effectively killing fields for these animals,” he said.

“We need to relocate koalas away from highly built-up areas. That romantic notion that we can live together with koalas may have to be revisited before it is too late.

“We may only have years to act, not decades, and I urge the state government and the federal government as well to step forward and provide resources for highway-side fencing.”

Highway-side fencing may help save koalas. Photo: AAP Image

### Child pornography laws too lenient

AUSTRALIA’S child pornography laws are too lenient, Sussan Ley, the Member for Farrer (NSW), has told the House of Representatives.

Citing the example of an international paedophile ring that was busted in 2006 with 22 arrests, Ms Ley said the Americans convicted for their involvement have been sentenced to more than 30 years jail while the Australian was given six years with a non-parole period of 32 months.

“When I look at sentencing comparisons for the crime of online child abuse I am convinced that the US has it right and we have it wrong,” she said.

Ms Ley said she was encouraged by Attorney-General Robert McClelland’s response to a question in parliament recently, when he said “there may be scope... for federal legislation in this area... and it is appropriate to review the penalties”.

High school teachers and parents are helping change attitudes. Photo: Photolibrary

### Shared approach tackles bullying

WITH a recent study showing that over a quarter of Australian students in years 4 to 9 are bullied on a regular basis, a primary school in Western Australia has launched a new approach to dealing with bullying.

Carlisle Primary School has departed from traditional methods for combating the problem and has adopted a “shared concern approach”, the Member for Swan (WA), Steve Irons, told federal parliament.

“The shared concern approach includes individual meetings held with each of the students involved in the bullying incident,” Mr Irons said. “Each student is asked about the problem and asked to suggest ways in which he or she

could personally help to improve the situation. The person being bullied is also given the opportunity to talk. Follow-up meetings give opportunities for the students to change their attitudes.”

According to Mr Irons, parents also have a role to play, reinforcing standards that are acceptable. “Parents should not leave the standard-setting to schools,” he said.

Mr Irons said because traditional methods of tackling the problem of bullying are not working, we need to be more innovative and redefine our approach.

“Carlisle Primary School has started this process and should be commended for it,” he said.

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S TJ & NK & GV © Defective fencing and open gates can turn pools into death traps. Photo: Photolibrary

## Pools fail safety requirements

UP to 100,000 pools in Queensland are failing basic safety requirements, according to the Member for Blair (Qld), Shayne Neumann.

“Each of these pools is a potential death trap,” Mr Neumann told the House of Representatives.

He said last year “on average one little boy or one little girl drowned every week”.

Mr Neumann called for the introduction of a range of water safety measures, including assistance to schools and other education facilities for resuscitation and first aid training; a national code for pool compliance;

programs to teach water safety to children and toddlers; a national rural and regional swimming program to equip parents, carers and children in isolated communities; and an annual National Drowning and Prevention, Awareness and Memorial Day.

His proposals were supported by a number of MPs, with the Member for Gippsland (Vic), Darren Chester, saying that achievement of a 50 per cent reduction in drowning deaths by 2020, as outlined in the national water safety strategy, will require a true partnership between individuals, community groups, the business sector and governments at all levels.

“Increasing the awareness of basic first aid will save lives and it is important that these skills are regularly upgraded, particularly as new treatment methods are developed,” Mr Chester said.

The Member for Shortland (NSW), Jill Hall, emphasised the importance of children learning how to swim.

“Learning to swim can be quite expensive,” Ms Hall said. “I think it is really important that access to swimming lessons be made available to all children, because it will save our community a lot of money in the future.”

## Warning labels needed on alcohol

HEALTH warning labels should be included on alcohol products, the Member for Lowe (NSW), John Murphy, has told federal parliament.

Mr Murphy noted that one in three Australians drinks at a level which risks short-term harm, while one in 10 drinks at a level which risks long-

term harm, including brain, liver and heart damage.

“The overwhelming evidence suggests that warning labels can serve as the first step in behavioural change through their impact on the cognitive and behavioural process necessary for the behavioural change,” he said.

“Further, a meta-analysis of research evaluating the effectiveness of alcohol warning labels, conducted by US researchers Gina Agostinelli and Joel Grube, found that warning labels have the potential to influence drinking behaviour and that this potential is heavily influenced by label design.”