

Liberal warns of risk

By Phillipa Prior

THE Labor Party moved to shore up its economic credentials yesterday while Kalgoorlie Liberal president Tim Larcombe warned a vote for the ALP could lead to a lower standard of living.

Mr Larcombe said militant unions and Peter Garrett as Environment Minister would threaten the prosperity of the mining industry if Labor won tomorrow.

However, visiting Kalgoorlie to support Labor candidate Sharon Thiel, Shadow Resources Minister Chris Evans said earlier that Labor had addressed the mining industry's concerns. He claimed the party's IR policy was winning votes because the current system exploited workers.

"(The opposition) has been very specific by a couple of organisations ... but not all mining companies employ people who are on AWAs," Senator Evans said.

"Woodside doesn't have an AWA – not one – and no one has said Woodside's success has been held back by its lack of AWAs. The mining sector

started growing long before AWAs came in. Even advocates of AWAs understand that what's driving wage levels in the mining sector is demand for labour ... they also know that the award conditions over the years have underpinned those conditions."

Senator Evans put aside arguments between Kevin Rudd and John Howard about when and if the resources boom is going to end, instead saying WA should look at how it could take of advantage of it while it lasts.

"Basically, WA doesn't get its fair share of Commonwealth revenue in terms of what it puts in ... the Commonwealth gets a lot of revenue off Pluto, Gorgon and the North-West shelf but we don't get any more than our per capita share back," he said.

"This is about building on the boom and ensuring the next phase of development and also building community around that mining boom ... about social infrastructure as well as roads and ports.

"One of the things that's holding

back the current development is the fact that people don't want to live in some communities because they don't have the facilities like education."

Mr Larcombe warned the GST rate could be increased and property values might fall under a Labor Government.

"Scaremongering? Will never happen?" he asked.

"History has a nasty habit of repeating itself.

"I've heard an alarmingly large number of people saying they're going to vote Labor simply because it's time to give someone else a go.

"This isn't a game of backyard cricket, it's the Federal election, which will decide who leads our country. I urge people to look beyond the spin and think very carefully about the consequences of who they vote for."

Meanwhile, Senator Evans said Kalgoorlie could be the first regional centre to host Labor's new Cabinet on its first sitting in Parliament if the opposition wins tomorrow.