

Campbell loses but gains new role

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JOHN Howard has moved to strengthen the Government's standing on the key issue of climate change ahead of the federal election by ousting senator Ian Campbell from the high-profile environment portfolio.

The portfolio was renamed the Department of Environment and Water Resources, with rising star Malcolm Turnbull appointed as minister to match wits against Labor's rock star-turned politician, Peter Garrett.

Water shortages amid the worst drought on record have made climate change and the management of Australia's precious resources key issues with voters as the Government prepares for its election campaign. "I think it is an effective concentration of the firepower of the prominent people within the Government," Mr Howard said. "There is no doubt

issues relating to climate change and water are going to be important."

Senator Campbell, who was moved to the Human Resources portfolio, denied he had been demoted. "It might be less high-profile, but Human Services has a much bigger budget — \$100 billion — and it is bigger in terms of the number of lives you touch," he told *The Australian*.

The 47-year-old West Australian, who was elected to the Senate in 1993, said he was excited to be returning to an area of government in which he had a keen interest. As Human Services Minister, Senator Campbell will oversee six agencies — Centrelink, Medicare, Child Support Agency, CRS Australia, Australian Hear-



Siewert

ing and Health Services Australia.

"Getting the delivery of these services right is very important," he said from Rottnest Island, west of Perth, where he is on holidays.

One of the key challenges for Senator Campbell will be implementing the controversial Access Card, the \$1 billion card set to replace the Medicare card.

Environment minister since July 2004, Senator Campbell had a rocky last few months in the job, with contentious decisions including the blocking of the proposed Bald Hill wind farm in Victoria over an alleged threat to the orange-bellied parrot and rejecting a bid to place Burrup Peninsula Aboriginal rock art on the emergency National Heritage list.

Greens senator Rachel Siewert said: "I can't say I am sorry to see him go. I think that he has made some very poor decisions and has handled a number of issues inappropriately."