

Voice coach speaks up



Speech analyst Michael Kelly has analysed the speech and style of local politicians with interesting results.

Picture: JOHN APPELEYARD SLT30307

Sound advice for polities

LISA CARTY

POLLIES and public speaking should go hand-in-hand, but words don't always come easy for the North Shore's civic leaders.

The *North Shore Times* asked Crows Nest voice coach Michael Kelly to review and analyse the voices of our State and Federal MPs, and one aspiring MP.

While such a task would cause angst in most people Mr Kelly, who

holds degrees in speech pathology and English, and a diploma in marketing, was thrilled.

The US-born voice voyeur said it was important for people in politics and business "to be perceived as articulate and quick in thought".

"They need a voice which makes them seem attentive, credible and trustworthy," he said. "The right voice can even make them sound as though they're physically well-presented - so even if you can't see

them, you picture them as looking good.

"These perceptions give a winning edge in politics and business."

Mr Kelly's conclusion about the North Shore's polities - and North Sydney Labor aspirant Mike Bailey - is that they're a mixed bag.

Unfortunately for the NSW Coalition, the voice of the alternative Premier Barry O'Farrell falls short of what's required for a leader.

Gladys Berejikilian



5/10

Willoughby MP, NSW Opposition transport

spokeswoman:

Slightly nasal but smooth voice with an easy rhythm. Nice but unauthoritative. Voice not great fit for a shadow minister due to lack of deeper pitches. Presents a challenge in a leadership role.

Anthony Roberts



6/10

Lane Cove MP:

Voice is smooth with an easy rhythm and vibrant energy. Earnest, with an air of the private school boy (a bit like Tony Blair). Nice for early political career, but it would need more authority if he were to assume more senior political roles.

Joe Hockey



8.5/10

North Sydney MP, Federal Workplace Relations Minister:

Big, jocular, blokey and inviting voice. Moderate pitch with loudness, speed and easy rhythm. Confident and comfortable, his voice would fit most roles.

Jillian Skinner



4/10

North Shore MP and deputy NSW Opposition leader:

Voice has a roughish quality - it's edgy, whining, instructorial, tight. It has forced energy which makes the voice a misfit for shadow minister. It has elements of jadedness.

Barry O'Farrell



5/10

Ku-ring-gai MP and NSW Opposition leader:

Voice has a medium pitch and easy energy. It tends towards light and thin. It's soft, kind, non-authoritative, distant and dispassionate. This is not the voice of an alternative Premier due to its lack of authority, and

Brendan Nelson



7/10

Bradfield MP and Federal Defence Minister:

Voice varies from vibrant to tight, "reined-in" to passionate. Can be nasal but still has smooth quality. Gives impression of control and authority, even "at attention". Voice fits his role and immaculate dress.

Jonathan O'Dea



6/10

Davidson MP:

Voice fits his role as a rookie parliamentarian because of its earnest, unsullied, idealistic and blandish features. It's a smooth voice, tending to be thin.

Mike Bailey



5/10

North Sydney Labor candidate:

Smooth voice with a medium pitch and even energy. Clear, balanced, easy, warm, light, small, dispassionate, and intellectual. He'll find difficulty in losing the staged weatherman's patter. Lacks passion needed by an influential politician.