

CITY BEAT

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OBVIOUS ERROR

PROPERTY boss Warren Ebert (illustrated) has an "obvious" pet hate.

The Sentinel Property Group chief executive has implemented a fine system among his 70-strong team where anyone caught using the words "obvious" or "obviously" in any discussion at the office, or with clients, is slapped with a \$2 fine.

We hear more than \$300 has already been collected from those foolish enough to mention the O words, with all funds donated to the Salvation Army. So why so much "obvious" hate?

The former taxi driver turned property tycoon says the word obvious has become a scourge in the modern language and has little or no connection to its intended meaning.

"You are saying the other person is an idiot because it may be obvious to you but not to the other person," Ebert tells your diarist. "We have one young fellow who cannot help himself and was fined six times in 30 minutes."

We hear Ebert is getting pretty fanatical about the word – even fining employees he took on a barramundi fishing trip to Darwin last week. Are other words likely to be banned? "Not at this stage," he says. "I don't want a palace revolt." Obviously.

LIGHTS OFF

BE PREPARED for more blackouts and brown outs across Australia as winter approaches. That's the warning from Brisbane-based gas explorer Blue Energy, whose chief executive John Phillips says the lack of investment in gas exploration meant Australia will continue to have energy shortages. Phillips says there

were warning signs four or five years ago that there would be gas shortages ahead, pointing out a story in this newspaper on that very topic.

Customers, including manufacturers, had the opportunity back then to lock in lower prices, but that horse has well and truly bolted. Phillips says an obvious (sorry Warren)

solution is exploitation of gas in the Bowen Basin, where Energy Blue has reserves. He says the Bowen Basin needs connection to the east-coast market via a pipeline that could be built for about \$300 million. Phillips points out that half of the gas used in Australia is for mining and manufacturing, contributing \$196 billion to the economy and employing 946,000 workers. By 2020, Australia's LNG exports will make up 20 per cent of global exports.

LENDING PIONEER

FROM little things, big things grow. Nobel Laureate and micro-finance pioneer Muhammad Yunus will deliver the annual Griffith Lecture on April 11 where he will outline his famous three zeros theory – zero poverty, zero unemployment and zero net carbon emissions.

It will be Yunus's only Brisbane engagement and he will be at Griffith University's Nathan campus earlier in the day to look over the new Yunus Social Business Centre. The YSBC aims to enhance business, social entrepreneurship and responsible leadership values at Griffith Business School while strengthening links with students and the community.

Yunus established the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh in 1983, providing small loans to poor people so they could escape poverty. Similar banks now operate in more than 100 countries.

