

Communications Minister Daryl Williams said yesterday.

Labor has pledged, if it wins government, to ban junk food advertisements during children's TV shows to help cut the rate of childhood obesity.

Consumer and medical groups have backed the plan but the Government has refused to support it.

Top travellers

CANBERRA (AAP). — Former Governor-General Zelman Cowan and former National Party Leader Ian Sinclair have topped the travel lists of former MPs and political leaders.

Of the five living former governors-general, Sir Zelman cost taxpayers \$27,603 for the last six months of 2003, of which \$26,229 was for Concars and taxis.

Mr Sinclair, who led the National Party in the 1980s, spent \$11,554 on domestic airfares as part of his life gold pass that goes to former MPs.

Politician mourned

HOBART (AAP). — Like all deaths caused by smoking, that of former Tasmanian Premier Jim Bacon was a tragic waste, his grieving sister told mourners at his state funeral yesterday.

The 54-year-old lost a four-month battle with inoperable lung cancer on Sunday.

Victoria's secret

MELBOURNE (AAP). — Victoria is taking over from NSW and Queensland as the most popular destination for international travellers visiting Australia, a travel survey has found.

The survey shows that in the 12 months to March 2004, NSW and Queensland recorded a decrease in overseas visitor numbers, while Victoria experienced growth.



JOHN COUTIS has overcome severe disability to become the darling of the international public speaking circuit. He will present the awards in Lismore on Tuesday night. INSET: The Wallaby World Cup jumper that's open to bidding.

Dose of inspiration for kids

By ADAM HICKS

A MAN who has shared a stage with General (Stormin') Norman Schwarzkopf is coming to share the stage with the Northern Rivers' finest youngsters at the Kids in Community Awards.

John Coutis, whose tenacity, positive thinking and never-say-die attitude helped him overcome severe disability and become the darling of the international public speaking circuit, will present the awards on Tuesday night.

His very presence is an honour, according to Australian broadcaster Alan Jones.

"This is a young man whose own adversity and tri-

umph over it are personal inspirations to everybody. He speaks superbly, he has a clear mind, he has a wonderful sense of humour and he's generous with his time and talents. In a world which too often dwells on the negatives, John Coutis is a young man who triumphs over them," Mr Jones told his 2GB radio audience.

But you don't have to be a kid to see him.

Seats for the evening are still available but today is the last day to buy tickets.

Tickets cost \$13, which includes a buffet dinner and entertainment, and are available over the counter at the Lismore Workers Club.

The evening will also feature former Wallaby Ben Darwin announcing the highest bidder for the autographed jersey.

The jersey is signed by all members of the 2003 Wallabies World Cup squad and potential buyers have until Tuesday to get their silent bids into *The Northern Star*.

As of yesterday afternoon, the leading bid was \$1500.

A price that avid collector Chris Condon said was way under value.

"If it goes for \$1500, it's an absolute steal," Mr Condon said.

All money raised through the auction goes to the Kids in Community organisation.

More than 100 people are nominated for awards.

Windfall of \$16,800 for Casino SES

By HELEN JACK

IT was like winning the lottery for Casino State Emergency Service unit controller Bill Higgins when he found out the State Government had allocated \$16,800 to the unit.

The funds were part of the Government's Budget handed down yesterday and will go towards a new emergency response vehicle.

Mr Higgins said he had not been notified of the windfall.

"We've been asking for bits and pieces all the time and now we won't have to spend all the money we have raised for a new vehicle," he said.

"Now we can use that money on our new headquarters and new equipment."

Mr Higgins said the unit had two vehicles but one needed replacing.

"Ideally, we would like a dual cab truck to carry extra personnel and gear, something a little bigger than the ones we've got and one with a little more grunt."

Mr Higgins said life would be made a lot easier for all the volunteers in the unit.

Women tricked into prostitution

CANBERRA (AAP). — "I felt so dirty."

Those were the words of an Asian woman smuggled to Australia for what she thought was a waitressing job, but which turned out to be working as a prostitute in a seedy Sydney brothel.

She was among a handful of women who told their stories to a parliamentary inquiry into the trafficking of women for sexual servitude.

Without a brothel-by-brothel census, the numbers are impossible to pin down.

But every year as many as 1,000 women are brought to Australia to work in the sex industry, mostly from Asia, particularly Thailand and China.

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