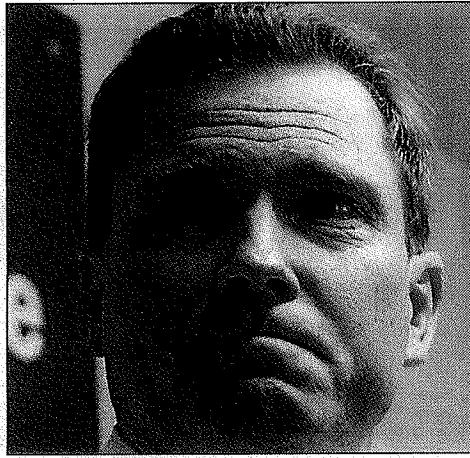


# Face of Premier under the pump



## Body language suggests fatigue and job doubts

By **LISA CARTY**  
NSW POLITICAL EDITOR

NATHAN REES narrows his lips, furrows his chin and dips his head. He turns away and, with a decisive movement, uses his hand like an axe to point to a new questioner.

The NSW Premier is holding one of his regular media conferences and, almost always, there are moments when he seems quite annoyed.

He sticks his tongue out and licks his lips. His mouth points down and he looks like a sulky little kid caught out doing something naughty.

Mr Rees's increasingly distinct body language – particularly his facial expressions – are not a good sign, voice coach Michael Kelly, founder of Kelly Speech Communication, says.

At the request of *The Sun-Herald*, Mr Kelly analysed video footage of the Premier in action and looked at a range of recent photographs.

His verdict is likely to make Mr Rees grumpy.

Mr Kelly said that Mr Rees's pursed lips and furrowed chin indicate he is under a lot of pressure and knows he does not have the skills required to do his job effectively.

"This is his default facial expression and it means he is thinking, 'Hey I'm doing the best I can with limited skills,'" Mr Kelly said.

"It's like, 'I don't have the nous to handle tricky situations so the best gambit is to shut down as many questions and discussions that I can so I don't get myself into trouble, and don't make myself look bad or incompetent.'"

While his blocked tear duct – which he spoke of early in his leadership – accounts for the occasional watery eye, Mr Kelly said Mr Rees's eyes also revealed "deep, strong emotion" as well as sadness and a "hint of sheepishness".

"His eyes show he is feeling, 'I wasn't really up for this job in the first place, but since it was thrust upon me I had to do it.' His pressed lips with furrowed chin indicate regret. 'I wish I could say something else but can't.' This is in sync with his eyes.

"The pressed lips and furrowed chin mean he wants the conversation to end. He's thinking he has said what he is going to say on the matter and he doesn't want to say anything else."

In another image, Mr Rees looked "shell-shocked – as if he had taken too many hits", Mr Kelly said.

"And in another he is looking very tired, as if the stress is taking a toll on his stamina."

Mr Kelly carefully analysed television footage of Mr Rees's media conference last Monday at which he was quizzed about changes to his ministry.

"Here is a man under much pressure, struggling with his emotions as shown by quick unmeasured answers to questions, watery eyes, the pressed lips and furrowed chin," Mr Kelly said. "The two downward head nods mean, 'This is the way it is. I want this discussion to end. Let's move on.'"