

CAMDEN SOUND MARINE PARK

994. Hon SALLY TALBOT to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Is the minister aware that the government's recent announcement about marine protected areas in the Kimberley has not been endorsed by a single stakeholder?
- (2) Can the minister explain why the criticism has been made that the Camden Sound marine park is better described as a "fishing and drilling park"?
- (3) Will the minister agree to improve these plans before they are finalised to give the Kimberley greater protection?

Hon Simon O'Brien: You're missing Donna already, aren't you? You are—so are we!

The PRESIDENT: I am not sure that there weren't a few imputations in that question as well. The Leader of the House has the call.

Hon NORMAN MOORE replied:

I thank the member for the question.

- (1)–(3) I would have thought that the indicative plan for Camden Sound marine park and the proposed additional marine parks in the Kimberley is a very good outcome, in the sense that it provides, I believe, a reasonable balance between the preservation of the environment and allowing people to have access to various parts of the ocean.

If it is the Labor Party's view that we should have sanctuary zones all along the coast, as the federal government seems to be contemplating and the Pew foundation is advocating, it might like to tell us which parts of the ocean should be closed up altogether. The irony is that there has been no overwhelming enthusiasm for this because the environment people want more sanctuary zones and more no-go areas in the ocean, and the fishing people think we have gone too far and taken away too much of their fishing ground. The suggestion that somehow or other it is a fishing park is rubbish. The fishing industry has in fact been quite aggressively opposed to the sanctuary zone, particularly the sanctuary zone part of Camden Sound.

As far as drilling goes, it is my understanding that there is no prospectivity for any oil or gas in that part of the marine park. Indeed, before those areas were determined I had them assessed to see whether that would cause some impact in respect to offshore drilling. My advice is that it is not an issue. I think that is something that should be taken into account before vast areas of land or vast areas of the ocean are tied up. It is not easy to get a balance between conservation of the ocean and allowing people to do things in the ocean such as catch fish, be they commercial fishers or recreational fishers, and indeed to allow companies to drill for oil and gas. One thing I do notice is that the people who go to these demonstrations complaining about offshore oil and gas exploration usually go in their motor cars. I wonder how they expect to drive there ultimately when the time comes that there is no oil and gas to put in motor cars!

Hon Adele Farina interjected.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Pardon?

Hon Sue Ellery: She said it doesn't mean you stick one anywhere.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: All I can say to the member is that I think we have probably achieved a fairly good balance in the sense that both sides of the argument do not like it. That is what compromises generally finish up doing in the community. I would really love to know what the Labor Party's position is in respect to sanctuary zones. When we formed government and looked at what the former Labor government had done in its eight years for marine parks and sanctuary zones, it had done very little—in fact virtually nothing. I can understand why it did not, because it is actually hard work. It is not easy to try to keep all the conflicting interests in mind. It is a difficult issue.

On top of this of course is the federal government's proposal to close half the oceans off Western Australia. Whether that will be sanctuary zones or some other form of marine parks, I do not know what it has in mind. If members want to look at the map put out by the federal government showing what it wants to do with the oceans off Western Australia outside state waters—and supported, I might add, by Pew and also supported recently by a group of academics in Queensland—they will find vast areas of the ocean closed off to fishing, which will have a deleterious effect on the capacity of our commercial fisheries to survive. If that is what the Labor Party wants

to do, that is fine—just let us know and we will have an understanding of what the alternative government wants to provide.