

MARINE PARKS

Motion

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [2.07 pm]: I move —

That the Council supports —

- (a) a moratorium on the creation of any further marine parks in Western Australia; and
- (b) an investigation into the access to and management of the current marine parks in Western Australia, including allowing shore-based fishing in sanctuary zones.

The call for marine parks is an easy sell. The marine ecosystem is a unique and diverse environment so, of course, we all want to protect it and keep it in good health for future generations. Unfortunately, this sense of responsibility to protect the marine environment is exploited by groups that want to lock up great swathes of our oceans. The usual modus operandi to promote a marine park is to show what a wonderful place our oceans are under the sea. We have seen this with groups that have been promoting the great Kimberley marine park; a giant wrasse on television has spoken to the public about what a wonderful place this is in the Kimberley—of course, it is—and told us that we need to save it and the only way to save it is with a marine park. Those sorts of advertisements are very emotive and politically charged. One of the concerns is whether the marine park is the correct way to go. A little while ago an article in *Australian Geographic* put out an emotive call for marine parks and referred to the great Kimberley marine park to rival the Great Barrier Reef. This is the sort of emotive language used —

EVERY WINTER, THE OCEANS of Western Australia stir as thousands of humpback whales make their arduous journey from Antarctica. The whales travel north for the tropical waters of the Kimberley, seeking a refuge where soon-to-be-mothers can birth their young, and supervise their first adventures in the world.

Upon reaching the Kimberley this population of humpbacks, one of the healthiest in the world, can be found recuperating in the waters of the newly formed Camden Sound marine park, part of the Great Kimberley Marine Park, announced by the WA government earlier this year.

Of course that sounds wonderful, but whales are protected anyway, so whether or not they are in a marine park, they can raise their young and recuperate in our north.

The reality is that marine parks are not necessarily the only solution or good value for money for marine conservation. I will lay out my reasons for that in practical, non-emotive terms. Firstly, overfishing is touted as one of the main causes of marine degradation; however, fishing and fish stocks are easily managed both recreationally and commercially. Our Department of Fisheries has one of the world's best practices for fish management, and it manages thousands of kilometres of our coastline, including inland waters. The real threats to our marine environment are pollutants such as oil and chemical spills, run-off from urban areas, plastics and invasive introduced pest species. These threats of course do not recognise any lines on a map, so calling them marine protected areas and drawing lines on a map will do little for marine conservation.

There was an article headed “\$33 million dumped at sea” in *The Coffs Coast Advocate* in New South Wales in 2010. The article states —

A LEADING scientific voice on world fisheries claims the NSW Government has wasted \$33 million in taxpayers' money creating marine parks that have failed to conserve fish numbers.

...

“This \$30-odd million spent over the past three years would have been better used addressing the real issues impacting on fish stocks,” Professor Kearney said.

“The issues of introduced pests and diseases and habitat degradation from on-land activities, such as pollution and inappropriate coastal development instead of locking up areas to fishing.”

Drawing lines on maps, calling them marine parks and spending a lot of money creating them is not the ideal or only way to protect our marine environment. We need to establish exactly what we are trying to achieve with our marine conservation. In the video documentary *Drawing the Line*, it was reported that there is an estimated 1 750 threatened species in Australia. Approximately 70 of those are marine life and of those 70, 60 are highly mobile and do not recognise the boundaries of marine parks. If it is apparent that marine protected areas offer limited benefit, what is the economic cost of establishing and maintaining MPAs that could be better spent on other conservation? In Western Australia, there are currently 13 marine parks—Barrow Island Marine Park, Camden Sound Marine Park, Jurien Bay Marine Park, Marmion Marine Park, Montebello Islands Marine Park,

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Ningaloo Marine Park, Ngari Capes Marine Park, Rowley Shoals Marine Park, Shark Bay Marine Park, Shoalwater Islands Marine Park, Swan Estuary Marine Park, Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park and the newly formed Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park. The proposed marine parks are Roebuck Bay marine park, North Kimberley marine park and Horizontal Falls marine park. I accept that these marine parks are multiuse areas in which to conduct recreational fishing and commercial fishing, but there are often areas within those marine parks that are sanctuary zones or no-take zones, where there is no fishing at all, and there could be some limitation on spearfishing.

I asked a question without notice on 18 February about how much the marine parks cost to manage, and the answer was just under \$10 million, which I was a bit surprised at, because other states such as South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland quote a much higher figure to manage their marine parks. A Department of Parks and Wildlife website article, which I downloaded today, states —

Additional funding in the State Budget for the management of new marine and national parks in the north Kimberley will boost funding for conservation in the region to an unprecedented \$80.5 million.

A further \$18.5million from Royalties for Regions (over four years) has been allocated on top of the \$63million ...

Hon Adele Farina: Did you get a wrong answer to your question?

Hon RICK MAZZA: I am not saying that I got the wrong answer at that time, but this article suggests that \$80.5 million is proposed to be spent on marine and terrestrial parks in the Kimberley. The issue is what is the break-up? Is it 50–50 or 75–25? I am unsure, but I suggest that it will far exceed the \$10 million that the government is currently spending on managing our marine parks, because every marine park requires full-time equivalents, vessels, vehicles, accommodation and all the other things that go with managing marine parks such as administration costs et cetera.

In my research on this issue, I could not find any plausible scientific need to create more marine parks. In fact, it was interesting to note that WA Fisheries estimates—this is an important point members—that outside our designated marine parks, the waters are already four times the world standard for a marine park. If the waters outside of marine parks are already four times the world standard for a marine park, why are we going through the expensive exercise of creating more marine parks? I go back to my opening remarks. A lot of that is because groups are exploiting the community’s sympathetic sentiment towards the environment and are using highly politicised and emotive campaigns to drive more marine parks. In fact, Recfishwest stated in its position statement at the last state election that ongoing access by recreational fishers to sustainably managed community-owned resources in WA is being threatened by marine management policy made under political pressure rather than being backed by reliable science-based assessments, and that decisions around the real impacts of recreational fishing need to be balanced and based on science and fact. I think that is a pretty fair statement from Recfishwest. That is how it views the way these marine parks and sanctuary zones are being driven. We should not be creating these costly reserves if there is little measurable environmental benefit simply because well-funded groups are driving very emotive and effective campaigns to pressure government.

The real worry is that once the legislative structure is in place for marine parks, and there is the ability to increase the no-take zones or sanctuary zones within those marine parks, that legislative structure can be used to further other people’s ideals of how things should be managed. There is a very real fear within the fishing community right now that there is the prospect of a biodiversity bill making its way here. It is touted that under that biodiversity bill, the Department of Fisheries will be absorbed into the Department of Parks and Wildlife. The fishing community is very concerned that, if that takes place, environmental interests will supersede the fisheries department and a very experienced, very credible and very well organised department such as the Department of Fisheries could be overruled. In the past, Fisheries has worked very hard to use good scientific research and has balanced the recreational interests, the commercial interests and the environmental interests, which is a bit of a balancing act and, at times, can be quite controversial and quite hard to keep in order. I think, universally, the fisheries department has done a very good job of maintaining that balance and managing our fisheries to world’s best practice standards.

One of the major concerns amongst the fishing community is that once environmental interests take over or have undue influence over our marine parks, we might find a curly haired prawn in one section of a marine park. Of course, that is a rare and endangered curly haired prawn, so we have to lock up that area. The next we know we will find a bit of striped seagrass, which is very rare indeed, so we will have to lock up that part of the marine park, and so it goes on. Members might say, “That’s a bit alarmist; we can’t see that happening.” I can tell members right now that in South Australia, they have just gone through this in a major way. Quite a few articles have been published recently—in fact, very, very recently. An article in *The Advertiser* reads —

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Marine Parks Management Alliance claims South Australia's plan to set up 19 marine parks could cost between \$107 million and \$122 million a year ...

In those marine parks are 83 no-catch sanctuary zones, and in those 83 no-catch sanctuary zones is major commercial and recreational fishing, so, of course, everyone is up in arms. Businesses are going broke and people are being disadvantaged so much so, in fact, that an upper house member, the shadow spokesperson for the environment, Michelle Lensink, introduced a private member's bill into the upper house earlier this year to place a moratorium on some of those sanctuary zones and stop them from being declared. Her bill was passed in the upper house but was defeated in the lower house last month by one Independent vote. That is how close that came. It is a very real issue for South Australians. As I say, South Australian waters are pristine and I am sure its fisheries are managed as well as our fisheries are. It seems ludicrous to lock up all those areas without any real environmental benefit or outcome. South Australian fisheries are in real turmoil.

It is interesting to note that in "Fisheries Research Report [Western Australia] No. 169" written by J.W. Penn and W.J. Fletcher it states —

The report notes that in WA coastal waters there is already more than a forty year history of marine management using targeted large and small-scale spatial closures to various fishing activities to ensure sustainable harvesting of fish stocks and the protection of their environment. Most of WA coastal waters have had significant levels of protection, either by closures or controls on the fishing methods that can directly affect marine habitats, to a degree that elsewhere they have been described as being an 'MPA'.

That is where that rating of four times the world standing comes in. We already have a very well managed fishery, so I do not know why we are spending all this money setting up and managing marine parks when we are very doubtful of the outcome of that.

A lot of members may be surprised to hear that Australia, a seafood loving country, imports 70 per cent of its seafood. When I first read that, I was a bit taken aback and thought that it was surely a mistake; we must produce 70 per cent, but no, we import 70 per cent of our seafood. We have a relatively low population, massive amounts of coastline and pristine waters and we import 70 per cent of our seafood. Much of it is from countries that do not have the robust marine environment management we have in Australia. We are kind of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

In the video documentary *Drawing the Line* it was reported also that something like one million tons a year of our pelagic fish, such as tuna and mackerel, come from New Guinea. Australia produces only about 300 000 tonnes. We have to wonder why we are not producing more of our own seafood. Notwithstanding there are good stocks of tuna and mackerel in Australia, in fact in the same documentary video it was stated that a breeding pair of mackerel will lay a million eggs. Of that million eggs 500 000 will hatch and of that 500 000, 100 000 will survive. The article states that a mackerel fishery is extraordinarily easy to manage. Why we are cutting back on the amount of that sort of seafood is a little bit hard to understand. Sure, in Western Australia at times we have had a couple of issues with fisheries management. Fisheries such as the pink snapper fishery in Shark Bay were under enormous pressure for a long time even though there were great schools of pink snapper. Our Department of Fisheries managed that fishery back to the point at which last year it moved the bag limit from one to two. At one stage, I think it was so bad that Shark Bay ran a ballot system. Now there is a bag limit of two a day. Once a fishery recovers like that, the fisheries department gives back.

We have also seen crabs in Cockburn Sound, for example, which fishery was also under pressure. That was not so much from too many crabs being caught; it was more due to the quality of the water in Cockburn Sound. Management techniques have been also put in place there that have seen that fishery recover and open to crab fishing again. A lot of the new fisheries management initiatives that have been put in place over these last few years must be credited to Hon Norman Moore when he was Minister for Fisheries. Some changes were made due to a little bit of concern at the time, but it seems to have played out quite well, so much so that the recreational crayfishing season was extended last year and the boat daily catch limit was increased by 50 per cent. The boat catch limit now is 24, up from 16. There has been quite significant recovery with that.

Members might also not know that the Western Australian rock lobster is our largest live export in the state. It is larger than sheep and cattle exports and worth some \$400 million a year. Live rock lobster export is a major industry and one that we have been managing well.

Hon Helen Morton: How do you measure that? Is it measured by dollar value, numbers or what?

Hon RICK MAZZA: With more crayfish, there is a better dollar value. Certainly, the commercial fishermen who maintain their licences under a quota system are doing quite well.

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Besides rock lobster fishing, commercial fishing over all is worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the Western Australian economy. We could certainly increase that effort somewhat with aquaculture and farming some of those species I mentioned earlier such as mackerel and tuna. But it would be prohibitive to put aquaculture into a marine park because the red tape would be enormous; it would be pretty hard to do. Of course, the value of recreational fishing in Western Australia has been estimated at well over \$1 billion. If required, we have the technology to restock prize fish such as Western Australian dhufish, pink snapper or mullet but there seems to be some resistance from environmental groups to restock. I am not quite sure what that is about.

Whenever a government considers establishing a marine park, serious thought needs to be given to the social impacts, the economic cost and the real environmental outcomes. I think that is one of the major points. I think the environmental outcome we are trying to achieve is being distorted. Our fisheries department has been managing our oceans very well to be rated at four times the world standard. I do not know that any of our oceans are under enough pressure to warrant more marine parks being declared.

It is also interesting to note our now federal Minister for the Environment, Greg Hunt's comments on a disallowance motion last year when he said —

... let me begin with a simple proposition: we support marine parks where they are based on appropriate science, appropriate consultation and the outcome is a balanced outcome. What we do not support is a lockout of mums and dads and people who will go fishing recreationally, the ability of families to access their local areas. That is the problem with what has occurred here.

I am not sure what problem he was referring to in that debate, but he recognised that we should not be locking out people from recreational fishing activities if there is no science to support that.

A couple of weeks ago I was fortunate to meet with Dr Patrick Moore, a cofounder of Greenpeace and now a campaigner of sensible and sustainable environmental management. It was a very interesting hour with Dr Moore. In his book *Confessions of a Greenpeace Dropout* Dr Moore describes the unfortunate tendency among environmental activists to characterise the human species as a negative influence on the earth. His Wikipedia profiles states —

In 2005, Moore criticized what he saw as scare tactics and disinformation employed by some within the environmental movement, saying that the environmental movement “abandoned science and logic in favour of emotion and sensationalism.”

That is why I moved this motion. It is not that I do not believe we should protect our marine environment; I am concerned that we are going about it the wrong way and in the process we are locking out recreational fishers and commercial enterprises and the environmental outcome of that is probably questionable, if any at all. It is a very unfortunate fact that a lot of these activists put the welfare of humans last in a lot of these environmental programs. How can we spend millions of dollars managing marine parks, locking out the community from legitimate commercial and recreational interests when the environmental outcomes are questionable at best?

New South Wales recently placed a five-year moratorium on its marine parks, allowing some access to some sanctuary zones for shore-based fishers. This was in response to the blind creation of marine parks without solid scientific evidence or valid environmental outcomes. An ABC news item on this issue stated —

The NSW Government has lifted a ban on recreational shore fishing in sanctuary zones within its marine parks.

...

The new approach to managing NSW's marine estate has been criticised by the Greens, who claim the State Government has taken the science out of marine park zoning, but not the politics.

But the Minister for Primary Industries, Katrina Hodgkinson, says that's the most ridiculous thing she's ever heard.

“For once it's actually going to be based on science and based on the advice of expert independent panels rather than just the government being able to willy-nilly draw lines on maps for its our political purposes,” she said.

New South Wales has recognised that the blind creation of marine parks and the money expended on those marine parks without solid science to measure the environmental outcomes is not a wise way to spend money on environmental management. In WA, sanctuary zones prohibit any fishing at all. However, in WA some of these areas could allow shore-based fishing. Most shore-based fishing is grandpa and the kids going down to the beach, catching a few herring or tailor from their favourite spot on the beach and then going home for a feed. Shore-based fishing is a very low-impact activity. I know that recreation fishers have made a lot of complaints

that they are locked out of their favourite spots and they are no longer able to fish where they have been going for many years, but, as I said, there is some doubt about whether that achieves a good environmental outcome.

In conclusion, Western Australia needs a bit of a rest period in this blind creation of marine parks and sanctuary zones in this state. A moratorium could be put in place so that solid scientific research can be conducted to look at achieving good environmental outcomes and at other things we can do besides drawing lines on a map and creating expensive marine parks. Our fisheries department is doing a very good job and if it were absorbed into another department with a change of name and focus, as often happens, that would be detrimental to fisheries management and recreational fishing. We should be taking a deep breath, having a rest period and putting in place a five-year moratorium during which we can consider the cost versus the benefit of the outcomes. I commend the motion to the house.

HON HELEN MORTON (East Metropolitan — Minister for Mental Health) [2.35 pm]: I rise in my capacity as the minister representing the Minister for Environment. Much of what Hon Rick Mazza has said relates to fisheries and my colleague the Minister for Fisheries will obviously talk on that aspect of the motion. I will provide some clarification and confirmation of some information that Hon Rick Mazza has provided on marine parks generally—what they are and what they are not, and what we can do in them. I will start by saying that the government will not support the motion moved by Hon Rick Mazza. As the member mentioned, WA currently has 13 marine parks totalling approximately 2.2 million hectares across approximately 12.6 million hectares of Western Australian state waters or about 17 per cent of state waters. These marine parks protect some of the state's most environmentally significant areas while providing for sustainable use and enjoyment. As I indicated, the government does not support a moratorium on marine parks. Marine parks enhance the protection of our unique environment and ensure continued access for recreation, tourism and commercial activities, including recreational fishing.

Hon Rick Mazza commented on the government's release of the Kimberley Science and Conservation Strategy on 17 June 2011 with an unprecedented commitment of \$63 million over five years towards its implementation. A key component of that strategy is the creation of new marine parks at Camden Sound, Eighty Mile Beach, Roebuck Bay and North Kimberley, with the Lalang-garram–Camden Sound Marine Park and North Kimberley marine park comprising the Great Kimberley marine park. The Liberal Party's conservation and biodiversity policy for 2013 further commits an additional \$18.5 million to expand the Great Kimberley marine park to include a new marine park at Horizontal Falls and an extension of the North Kimberley marine park to the Northern Territory border and the creation of the new Kimberley national park. We have already created the Camden Sound Marine Park to help protect one of the great humpback whale calving grounds and nurseries, as well as the Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park, which is an internationally recognised area under the Ramsar Convention for the protection of migratory and other shore birds. Plans are well advanced for a marine park to be created in the waters of Roebuck Bay at Broome and planning is underway for the Horizontal Falls and North Kimberley marine parks. The Kimberley marine park will become a recognisable destination for visitors in the same way as the Great Barrier Reef and will underpin cultural and ecotourism in the region. Marine parks in Western Australia are established under the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984. They are vested in the Marine Parks and Reserve Authority and managed in accordance with a management plan and associated zoning schemes. The new marine parks in the Kimberley will be jointly managed by the Department of Parks and Wildlife and the traditional owners in close cooperation with agencies, including the Department of Fisheries. Joint management of the parks will create opportunities for traditional owners to be involved and employed in managing their country, which will deliver important socioeconomic outcomes for these communities. In addition to conservation, marine parks are available for a number of uses, including sustainable recreational fishing, commercial fishing, tourism, pearling, boating, and diving in appropriate zones. To manage these uses within a marine park, parks are zoned into areas for special purposes or general use. All marine parks have significant areas open to recreational fishing and thus provide ongoing access for this important activity, which is valued by many Western Australians. I might add that I am not one of them. I do not go fishing.

Parts of some marine parks are set aside as sanctuary zones that are look-but-do-not-take areas managed for conservation, nature appreciation, scientific study and non-extractive uses, as well as ensuring that fish stocks are available for the future. Commercial extractive activities and recreational fishing are not permitted in these areas. Sanctuary zones make up eight per cent of WA's marine parks. We are talking about marine parks making up 17 per cent of our waters and the sanctuary zones are eight per cent of that 17 per cent.

The public has the opportunity to provide input to proposed marine parks and their zoning scheme by commenting on the indicative management plans. Management plans guide management of marine parks and reserves and are developed with stakeholder and public input, including a statutory minimum three-month public comment period. The plans provide certainty to the community of what can be undertaken in marine parks and

when and where this can occur. A cursory investigation of marine park management plans in Western Australia will reveal that special purpose shore-based fishing zones exist alongside sanctuary zones in various marine parks, including the popular Ningaloo and Ngari Capes Marine Parks.

The Liberal–National government does not support the motion and is committed to the creation of marine parks in Western Australia, which will leave a significant and enduring legacy of conserving our environment, one which all Western Australians can justifiably be proud while also ensuring that the economic potential of the state is realised, and that our keen recreational fishers have ongoing sustainable access to recreational fishing.

HON ROBIN CHAPPLE (Mining and Pastoral) [2.43 pm]: I rise to speak to the motion and I thank Hon Rick Mazza for putting it forward. It might surprise him that there are some elements of his motion that I will touch on with which I agree.

Hon Rick Mazza: You always surprise me.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I try to, Hon Rick Mazza; I really try to!

Hon Rick Mazza made a point about a comment by Recfishwest that science should assess these areas. I just happen to have with me a 1964 document entitled *National Parks and Nature Reserves in Western Australia*, put together by the Australian Academy of Science Committee, the recommendations of which are, in essence, what we still use today to establish national and marine parks. It is a very detailed report and goes through all areas of Western Australia and looks at their biodiversity values. In 1993 a document produced by Conservation Reserves of Western Australia, known as the “Red Book”, basically defines the early work of the Australian Academy of Science. It went through the whole of Western Australia piece by piece, and looked at many of the developments and a number of proposals, of which there were several thousand in the report, that should be made into either land-based national parks or indeed marine-based national parks and islands around them. To say—I support the government here—that the decisions around national parks are to a large degree political is disingenuous of the scientific community and those communities within it, such as the now Department of Parks and Wildlife, formerly the Department of Conservation and Land Management, that actually went to great lengths to establish these parks. As the honourable member mentioned, the former Leader of the House and then Minister for Fisheries Hon Norman Moore, who took over the role of fisheries, became quite an advocate for no-take zones and the management of our fish stocks. It is not correct to say that marine parks basically prohibit fishing in this state, because, in fact, in most of our marine parks we are allowed to explore for oil, mine and carry out recreational fishing, and there is only a limited number of what are called no-take zones. However, we need to understand the broader concept of why we try to protect our fish stocks. I turn to a document referred to as “The general situation of world fish stocks” put out by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization. This is big-picture stuff, and I understand that it might not drill down to the nuances of what Hon Rick Mazza is talking about within this state.

A snapshot of the global situation of the 600 marine fish stocks monitored by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization show that only three per cent are underexploited; 20 per cent are moderately exploited; 52 per cent of fish stocks are fully exploited; 17 per cent are overexploited; and seven per cent are depleted. That is globally. The Australian or Asia Pacific region can be broken down into two zones—zone 71 and 51. When we start to look at those two zones—I will go into this because I will come back to explain the reasons—in zone 57, which is the eastern Indian Ocean, the major species of fish caught are crockers and drums, ranging from fully exploited to overexploited; ponyfish, ranging from fully exploited to overexploited; *Stolephorus anchovies* ranging from fully exploited to overexploited; Indian mackerels, ranging from fully exploited to overexploited; scads, ranging from fully exploited to overexploited; banana prawns, ranging from fully exploited to overexploited; and giant tiger prawns, ranging from fully exploited to overexploited. I will give the tonnages of those shortly. Then when we look at the western central Pacific, which is zone 71, where we refer to the lizard fish, the ponyfish and the giant tiger prawn, again ranging from moderately exploited to overexploited in all three cases.

I am a fisher, and I fished for many, many years in the Pilbara, at my secret creek. I caught barramundi.

Hon Alanna Clohesy: Where, where?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: It is a secret, I am not naming it.

Over the years I have caught a whole range of fish, including rock cod and all sorts of fish. I must admit that when I started fishing up there, some of my colleagues would say, “Do you want to come out on the tinny with me today? I’ve got a couple of sticks of dynamite!” Yes, that was how they used to fish in the Pilbara in the 70s. Go down the creek, chuck a stick of dynamite in, get your fish.

Hon Adele Farina: And they’d eat them?

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Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Oh, absolutely. It was the simple way of getting a heap of stock. I never participated in that; I just did not like the idea of going around in a boat full of sticks of dynamite.

Hon Peter Katsambanis: It wasn't enough of a challenge for you!

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Yes!

Anyway, as time went on, I would roll up at the Hedland tip and see 5 000 to 10 000 salmon laying on the tip, and I realised that this method of fishing was not really sustainable. Indeed, when one of my favourite creeks—called Catfish Creek, of all things—was earmarked to be used by the then Leslie Salt Company for an intake, I fought long and hard to retain the creek so I could go fishing and that is most probably what led me, to a large degree, into my studies of the environment. I fought long and hard to protect that creek, and eventually was successful, but in the meantime I had given up fishing to a large degree—I do still fish, but I have given up fishing to a large degree—because I had seen some of the errors of my ways. However, I never actually again went fishing in the creek that I ended up protecting.

To return to where we are at the moment in Western Australia, marine parks and reserves have been progressively established in Western Australia since 1987, and we have done a reasonable job. However, in comparison with the recommendations made in the Red Book, it has not been that good.

Hon Rick Mazza: Who wrote the Red Book?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: The Red Book was produced by the Environmental Protection Authority in 1975 and was based, as I say, on the work of the Australian Academy of Science, so it is science, not some greenie or anybody else.

There are 13 marine parks in Western Australia. We established the management of five marine parks under the Kimberley science and conservation strategy, and I will come back to that in a minute. The Lalang-garram–Camden Sound Marine Park was established on 19 June 2012, and Eighty Mile Beach Marine Park on 29 January 2013. There is also the proposed Roebuck Bay marine park, the proposed North Kimberley marine park, and the proposed Horizontal Falls marine park. Horizontal Falls is an interesting place because the interaction between fish stocks and humans there has reached an incredible level. People can now swim with lemon sharks there and feed them without having their hands chewed off; also the batfish up there have got to a stage where they can be handfed, and it is an incredible tourism adventure to go into Horizontal Falls with the tour guides. There are also proposed marine management areas in the Pilbara, Dampier Archipelago and Regnard Bay. The proposed Dampier Archipelago marine management area has been on the cards for at least the last 20 years and has been a long time coming. There are major reasons why we need to create that management area, and I will talk more broadly about some of the whale movements shortly.

New research from the University of Tasmania shows that properly designed and managed marine parks are extremely effective in boosting fish stocks and restoring biodiversity. One of the things we need to emphasise is the corollary between coastal marine parks and the sustenance of pelagic deep sea fish. The reason for that is that the smaller fish stocks, the baitfish for the larger fish, develop in the shallower coastal regions. We also get a lot of the fry of the larger pelagic fish using those using coastal areas. Therefore, if we are to look after—as I think Hon Rick Mazza said—the welfare of humans, we need to accept that our fish stocks, which are currently being overfished, need to be better managed so that we will have fish stocks and food into the future. We know from studies carried out in the eastern states that significant numbers of fish stock are taken by recreational fishers. I again point out that most of our marine parks in Western Australia allow recreational fishing, so that is not precluded.

As I say, studies from the University of Tasmania show that the need is greater than ever to safeguard whole communities of marine species. This is vital as threats such as development, pollution and ocean warming continue to affect marine life around the country. New research from the Australian Institute of Marine Science links the increased presence of CO₂ in our oceans to changes in the behaviour of fish species, and shows the widespread threat of climate change to the marine environment. Again, those members who fish will know that we have seen movement of many of our fish southwards down the coast; we have mud crabs as far south as Rockingham, with the translocation of many of fish species moving down the coast due to the changes in temperature and the Leeuwin current.

More recently, the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists—I keep reiterating that science has a lot to do with this—released in November 2014 a document titled “Blueprint for a Healthy Environment and a Productive Economy”. Under the heading “Commit to a duty of care to do no harm” on page 3, it states —

Communities and businesses would uphold a duty of care that would apply to all landholders, on both private and public land, to do no net long-term harm to the nation's land, water, coastal, marine and biodiversity assets.

In essence, that is science again. On page 4 the document states —

Healthy coasts, estuaries and beaches provide habitat for plants and animals, buffer the effect of storms on nearby communities, and give people a place to enjoy the benefits of nature.

Healthy oceans provide food, a place for recreation, and habitat for marine plants and animals.

I do not think that varies to a large degree from what Hon Rick Mazza has been saying about the benefits of these areas to the community at large.

I turn now to some of the myths about marine parks, the first of which is that marine parks lock out fishers. Having looked at marine parks and assessments about whether fishers are locked out, the no-take zones in marine parks are usually less than 20 per cent or less of the total area. Another myth is that marine parks spell the end of recreational fishing. In fact, marine parks mean great things for fishing, now and into the future, because they are the one place where we can actually allow fish stocks to rejuvenate, not only for recreational fisheries, but also for fisheries at large. As the UN has already identified, given the decline in fish stocks, we need our breeding grounds to enable fish stocks to be maintained or to gain recruitment. Another myth is that the proponents of marine parks are a bunch of extreme greenies whose views are not supported by the community. The Jervis Bay Marine Park in New South Wales was established in 2008 —

Hon Rick Mazza interjected.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: New South Wales. The honourable member mentioned New South Wales, I think. In public surveys conducted, 84 per cent of the community supported the establishment of the Jervis Bay Marine Park. I think the community supports the views not of greenies, but of science, and that is what I keep referring to. The reasons for the community support for the marine park were that future generations could enjoy the park, 42 per cent; it supports a diverse array of marine animals and birdlife, 40 per cent; it provides important nature habitats, 40 per cent; it provides important locations for recreation, 11 per cent; and it is an important part of a lifestyle, four per cent.

The NSW Greens' website page titled "Marine Parks Mythbusting: Get the Facts" reads —

In 2004 the Coffs Harbour City Council wrote a letter to a peak environment group stating they had seen 'significant benefits to the tourism industry flowing from the Solitary Islands Marine Park (SIMP) as well as benefits to the community through additional recreational marine pursuits and the SIMP is widely recognised as a major draw card to the region.'

The webpage continues —

Myth: Greens want to ban all fishing and other activities. They want to 'lock up' our oceans.

I recently talked about the international science being discussed by the United Nations. The webpage continues —

International science is calling for a minimum of 20%, to as much as 50%, of all oceans to be protected from fishing.

That is because of declining fish stocks. The webpage continues —

This is essential to protect fish stocks and allow them to recover, and if we are to ensure that our grandchildren can enjoy the type of fishing and seafood we are so lucky to enjoy today.

In 2008, 18 per cent of stocks in NSW were overfished or experiencing overfishing and the status of 42 per cent of stocks was uncertain.

It is interesting that there have been some very important case studies, because we have seen the two sides to the argument in NSW.

As someone who used to fish in Port Hedland harbour, in Stingray Creek, it was nothing in the old days to go out in a tinnie and catch two or three mulloway, or "kingie" as they are called. I was talking to some people up there the other day and I asked what the catch rate was these days and whether they were catching any kingie out there. They said they caught one the other week; kingies and mulloways are still out there. I recounted the story of when a friend of mine, Hiko Walsh, went out in his tinnie and caught himself an undue level of feed and ended up swamping his boat because he had about six or eight of the kingies in the 11-foot dinghy and drowned it. That was overfishing, but the stocks were there; they are not today. As somebody who fishes, I know it is more difficult today than it was 30 to 40 years ago along that Pilbara Kimberley coast. I wanted to put that on the record. I still do not use dynamite.

Hon Simon O'Brien: You catch them with your bare hands, do you?

Extract from Hansard

[COUNCIL — Wednesday, 19 November 2014]

p8302c-8317a

Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Ken Baston; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Mark Lewis

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Absolutely; *Crocodile Dundee* stuff, mate—definitely! Sorry, I called the honourable member “mate”; I do apologise for that.

Hon Simon O’Brien: We’re all friends here.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I think it is important to put on record the Greens’ policy, which is —

The Australian Greens policy is to ensure that Marine Protected Areas (or Marine Parks) have legislated targets of a minimum of 30% ‘no take’ areas per bioregion by 2012.

Hon Rick Mazza: Of the marine park?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Of the marine park; not 30 per cent of the whole coast.

Hon Rick Mazza: What percentage of our oceans do you believe we should have as marine parks?

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: I believe that is up to science; it is not up to me.

Hon Rick Mazza interjected.

Hon ROBIN CHAPPLE: Ah, this is where we differ: I actually listen to science; I do not have a view. If we go back to the science told to us by the Australian Academy of Science in 1962, it suggests we need most probably about another 100 per cent of what we have in terms of marine parks. Then by the time the Red Book came out there was quite a large swathe. After this session I will pass the Red Book over so that the member can see the proposed areas. We need to understand what we are trying to achieve in this matter.

I return to the creation of marine parks in the Kimberley, and these comments are more directed at the government than Hon Rick Mazza. The Premier recently commented that the Kimberley is one of greatest untouched wilderness areas in the world, rivalling the Great Barrier Reef. Those comments were spot-on. Members who have looked, dived and swum in those areas will know that the biodiversity is exceptional. One of the problems I have is that we create marine parks, but also allow oil exploration and extraction, and mining—we have mining tenements for diamonds over those areas—and we have seen with the mines around Cockatoo and Koolan Islands and places like that, significant damage done to the marine ecosystem around those areas. That usually comes from dredge getting over the coral reefs and killing off the coral reefs, which then, in turn, affects the general regional biodiversity and affects incrementally the corollary of all fish species in that region.

I thought it was important to mention that in the other house a question was asked of the Minister for Environment on 23 September 2014 by Jan Norberger, MP. He asked for an update on the Liberal-National government’s marine park program and the significant benefits it is providing to the environment. The minister replied —

Four new marine parks have been established since 2008.

...

Walpole and Nornalup Inlets, and Ngari Capes Marine Parks have been established in the south west. Two marine parks have also been established up in the Kimberley —

Being Eighty Mile and Camden Sound. The minister stated that another three marine parks will be created, including at Roebuck Bay and Horizontal Falls, which we already knew. The minister then stated —

When we came into government, there was a total of 1.5 million hectares of marine park and reserves in our oceans in this state; indeed, by the end of this term, as we roll out our Kimberley science and conservation strategy, we aim to have more than five million hectares under marine parks—a more than 200 per cent increase through the Kimberley science and conservation strategy! Significantly, not only will there a 200 per cent increase in the marine conservation estate within Western Australia, but also these parks are being jointly managed with local traditional owners, particularly in the Kimberley, providing significant opportunities for training and for employment on country for Aboriginal people. Marine parks provide a variety of environmental, economic and social benefits. Far from sterilising these areas, the Liberal-National government sees marine parks as a responsible way of activating these remote wilderness areas.

The environment minister claimed that the government is putting in place a bold vision for the Kimberley’s long-term conservation. He said that when the first of the marine parks to be established—Camden Sound—was gazetted in 2012. If we go back to the 1993 “Red Book Status Report on the Implementation of Conservation Reserves for Western Australia” and look at what was proposed, we see that many of the areas have been left out. So far, no zoning orders have been issued within that park, and the iconic Montgomery Reef, which was to be the centrepiece of the park, is still outside the marine park boundaries. That is an exceptional area. I do not

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know whether anyone has ever seen the work that has been done to film that area. The reef is exposed by low tides and a massive waterfall system rolls over it when the tide comes in. There is a little sandbar in the middle on which we can land a chopper and head out to the edge of the reef to experience the absolute wonder of that area. When we get to that point, we can see the biodiversity; the fish species gather either side of the reef to catch the influx of fish; it is almost a feeding frenzy. It would be a fisherman's delight to fish from that sandbar. We have to take a chopper to get there; we can get there by boat, but I have seen a number of rubber duckies come to grief on that very sharp reef, so that is not the way to go. There will be no zoning areas for that. The iconic region was identified to become part of the marine park under "System 7" for the Kimberley, as was Middle Island and West Island in the Lacepede Islands. One wonders why they have not become part of a marine park. It will be interesting to note whether the exploration going on in those regions and the potential development of the oil and gas industry in those areas has anything to do with them not becoming part of a marine park. As I said, so far no zoning laws have been issued and the Montgomery Reef is still outside the area. Interestingly enough, again, the experimental fishing of the commercial barramundi fishermen, the fishing efforts in the Prince Regent River and the prawn trawlers in that general area are causing significant concern. They are not recreational fishers; I make that point. Major commercial fishers are also moving into that area, which can have a significant impact on a very important and biologically diverse area.

The zoned areas in Camden Sound Marine Park in the Kimberley include a general-use area that covers 55 per cent of the marine park. In that general-use area, basically, anything goes. Commercial fishing, recreational fishing, dredging, oyster harvesting and whatever we want to do in that area is permissible. It is a national park, but everything is permissible. Unfortunately, that is one of the things that we tend to do here in Western Australia with national parks, whether they are land-based or marine-based; these areas are left open to mining, oil and gas exploration and even driftnet fishing. It is important that if the government goes down the path of establishing marine parks, it understands the need, at a global level, for the establishment of these parks.

I come back to that important point again: these parks are the breeding stock for the fry and the small fish predated on by the larger pelagic species, which are already under threat. If we somehow do not allow juvenile fish stocks to regenerate—the fry and feedstocks—it will mean a lot to humankind in the long term, because without those breeding areas, our bigger fish stocks and our bigger fishing industry will be affected. An interesting point was made to me a few years ago by a Canadian guy from near the Bay of Fundy, where they have done quite a bit of research into the number of trawlers in the area. I think the number of fishing boats has doubled or tripled and three-quarters of the fish stock are being caught. That gives us an idea of the decline of fish stock in the oceans. The Barnett government's—I will use his word—"bold" vision for marine conservation in the Kimberley has overlooked the Lacepede Islands and Adele Island, which are both prospective areas for oil and gas, yet were identified as most significant in both the original Australian Academy of Science documentation of 1962 and indeed the "Red Book Status Report on the Implementation of Conservation Reserves for Western Australia" of 1993.

The establishment of managed marine areas in the Kimberley will no doubt provide many commercial opportunities for the Department of Parks and Wildlife and respective native title owners, and provide much-needed funding for more research in the region. I commend the Minister for Fisheries at this point, because I understand he is having some quite detailed discussions with the traditional owners about managing some of those areas. In the Kimberley that has been a major step forward; we are working with traditional owners to assist them in an economic pursuit. I really commend the nature of what the minister has been doing in those negotiations, but at the same time we should not forget that overfishing could potentially harm the fish stock. I understand that in most cases fish pens will be used, which will not have a broader impact. However, we need to remember what happened with the fish pens in Esperance where diseased sardines brought in as bulk feedstock from outside the area wiped out the Esperance fisheries for a number of years. We have to be very careful about how we do these things.

We really have to make sure that unsustainable fishing, commercial or otherwise, will not harm the conservation values of these areas. The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is internationally recognised and is close to the hearts of many Australians. We recently received comments from world leaders about their concerns about how we manage that area. I am more than positive that the Kimberley is an absolutely outstanding area, although little researched and little evaluated, and will eventually become as important, if not more important, for biodiversity of fish stock than even the Great Barrier Reef. One of the reasons is that the Kimberley has a suite of small islands and hundreds of thousands of kilometres of coastline. With island populations in the Dampier Archipelago, the Recherche Archipelago and, indeed, the Kimberley, there are massive interactions between pelagic and non-pelagic fish and reef fish and deep-sea fish, and between all sorts of things. Biodiversity and mingling of species is extremely important to the wellbeing of oceans.

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I have to make some comment on the Great Barrier Reef. Although it is not a Western Australian issue, quite clearly dumping millions of tonnes of dredge in that area is an appalling idea, but we have seen that in Western Australia too. We need to note that much of the Rowley Shoals is affected by the iron ore deposits coming out of Port Hedland harbour. The overspill from the ships gets carried out in serious currents, and in the stiller waters around the Rowley Shoals and places such as that, the deposition falls into the ocean and affects those reef systems.

The long-term future of the coastal waters in the Kimberley is quite clearly in the hands of this government and future governments. As somebody who lives in and is passionate about the Kimberley and gets out in this water, I encourage the government to continue on its path of creating the greater Kimberley park system, look at the Red Book and the Australian Academy of Science recommendations and continue with the work, but ensure that we are not going down this pathway of having Clayton's marine parks—parks in which people can do everything that they could do when it was not a park.

I am mindful of what has happened with the Horizontal Falls marine park. Pegasus Metals Ltd was looking at mining either side of the waterfall. A beautiful statement was made that Pegasus had relinquished its leases over the Horizontal Falls; however, it actually handed back one lease, which was over the waterfall itself, yet its mining tenements for copper exist on either side of the Horizontal Falls. If those mines were developed on either side of the waterfall, any tourism industry going into that area, whether by seaplane or the larger boats that move into that area—I think the income generated from the Horizontal Falls is \$18 million or more a year—would see a waterfall with a hole at either end of it. It really will not work. Again, I urge the government, when it proclaims that park, to look at the extended leases on either side of and opposite the park.

I thank the honourable member for bringing on the motion. I cannot support the motion, but I do concur when the member said that other activities, such as petroleum exploration and mining activities, should not take place in some areas within those parks, because that diminishes the parks more broadly. I do not think that we do a disservice to recreational fishers. As I say, there are no-take zones in those parks, but a lot of those parks are open to recreational fishermen. I get up to the Kimberley parks quite a bit and I work with the recreational fishers out of Derby. Getting out to some of those marine parks is pretty hazardous, so there are not a lot of recreational fishers. There are a lot of fishers on the banks of the May River and there is—excuse the expression; I was going to use another word—jolly good fishing to be had on the May River. There are many places where recreational fishers can go, either in boats or by four-wheel drive, and get a very good fish feed.

I thank the member for bringing on the motion. I hope that he has listened, and I will provide him with any of the documentation about science that he wishes to read.

HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Fisheries) [3.24 pm]: I thank Hon Rick Mazza for bringing on this motion. I have some sympathy for the motion in the sense that it has raised many issues, and that is the value of having the motion before us today. The primary purpose of a marine park is to preserve the representative and special ecosystems in the marine environment. Marine parks are just one of the many things that are used in fisheries management to ensure sustainable fish stocks and environments, as well as conserving aquatic biodiversity.

It is rather interesting to stand up as the Minister for Fisheries. I think quite a few people know that I was a very keen recreational fisherperson. I still am, but I do not get the time today. I used to fish the eastern gulf of Shark Bay for some 26 years and I know that bit of water like the back of my hand.

Hon Mark Lewis: And I pushed you around a fair bit of it too!

Hon KEN BASTON: Hon Mark Lewis did come on one trip.

Hon Ken Travers: Is that why we had a problem with the snapper disappearing?

Hon KEN BASTON: Let me finish my story.

Hon Ken Travers: It was you single-handedly.

Hon KEN BASTON: Single-handedly!

It became a World Heritage area and then it became a marine park and all these sanctuary zones were put in the area. I do not believe that these sanctuary zones were based on the science that I would like all sanctuary zones to be based on. One of these sanctuary zones was put over one of my favourite fishing spots, so I was not impressed at all. I approached the then minister, Hon Monty House, and asked him whether he had signed off on it. He assured me that he was not like Carmen Lawrence and he remembered that he had not signed off on it. However, of course, he had signed off on it.

Several members interjected.

Hon KEN BASTON: This sanctuary zone was put in there. One of the things that came to my mind at that time was that it was pointless making lots of sanctuary zones if we cannot police them. That is still my query today about the sanctuary zones in marine parks. We must be able to back them up by regulating the sanctuary zones for the purpose that they were created. This involves working with the traditional owners in the Kimberley, as Hon Robin Chapple has said. In my fishing exploits, I never used dynamite. I can imagine that the member caught many fish.

If people know where to catch fish in the Shark Bay area, it becomes easy to get them. I was convinced by the science in the end. The breeding stock in the eastern and western gulfs of Shark Bay and in the Freycinet Estuary had dropped off because the fish were caught during their spawning time. The Department of Fisheries decided to ban the catching of pink snapper during that spawning period. It was quite remarkable how quickly the snapper came back; over a 10-year period from the early 1980s, the fish came right back. The target was a 100-tonne biomass to get it back and it has exceeded that well and truly now, so much so that the Minister for Fisheries before the last Minister for Fisheries, Hon Norman Moore, listed the pink snapper allowance at two. I believe that was a very positive step. It is interesting because at the time I was hesitant to back that particular science, but I certainly backed it in the end. The scientist is a fellow called Gary Jackson, who still works for the Department of Fisheries. We often talk about the pink snapper there.

There are three different DNA-tested fish zones, even though they are pink snapper zones: eastern gulf, western gulf and Freycinet at the bottom. Interestingly, a tag system was introduced whereby people were allowed to ballot for two tags, or two fish, at \$10 a tag. It was virtually an auction system for what the tags were worth. I remember talking to Minister Kim Chance at the time and he thought they would bring \$5 but they reached \$10 a tag. Both the eastern and western gulfs have increased their stock, but Freycinet has not. Why is that? The information given to me recently is that because people pay for the tag, they size up—in other words they catch a few fish for the day and work out which are the two biggest and keep them—so the level of stock has not been successfully maintained. To see whether we can change that level of fish stock, we will still use tags, but we will not charge for them and people will still be able to catch two fish. As other members have said, the marine parks do not prohibit recreational fishing. In fact, I am told that recreational fishing can still occur in 89 per cent of the parks area. As I touched on in my opening remarks, I guess the most important issue is the location in the park of the sanctuary zones. The best area in the park, where the most fish are, might attract a sanctuary zone, and that needs to be watched.

My experience at Roebuck Bay so far is that the commercial netting licences were brought back there. That was a very popular decision by Fisheries. That is fine, but there is an element from outside who is saying that they want more of Roebuck Bay to be locked away. First of all, the pressure was to get rid of commercial fishermen and now they want parts of it locked away totally. That area is all open at present for recreational fishing. That issue in that area is something, as Minister for Fisheries, I am watching.

Hon Rick Mazza indicated that a trial season and rotational opening of a marine park could undermine fisheries. I believe a rotational area has occurred in Queensland on the Great Barrier Reef, I think. It is something I have suggested for Western Australia, but the feedback to me is that it would undermine the intent of the biodiversity conservation outcomes, and compliance and management—changing it around—could result in a significant government cost. I am still open-minded about that. I have not had the opportunity to study how the Great Barrier Reef handles rotation.

One of the other suggestions made some time ago was to start wilderness fishing zones in the Ningaloo Marine Park, which is of course a World Heritage-listed area, which is south and north of Coral Bay. It was Liberal Party policy in 2005, and involved people camping and eating what they catch, but it would be a no-take area. I believe that with shore-based fishing, that is an excellent way of letting everyone enjoy the magical wilderness experience of camping and catching fish from shore. This could apply also to the Kimberley region.

I mentioned the policing of sanctuaries at Shark Bay. I will take back a message, Hon Rick Mazza, that he considers our fisheries to be very well managed, and I am sure the department will be very pleased to hear that.

Hon Robin Chapple alluded to working with the traditional owners dealing with fish stock. He did not name it, but I presume he was referring to Marine Produce Australia, which is a barramundi farm at Cone Bay. Recently we announced extra environmental approval for people to invest in the extension of that area. That covers some 2 000 hectares, which can produce some 20 000 tonnes of fish. At present, MPA produces 2 000 tonnes of fish and we have just renewed its licence to increase production to 7 000 tonnes, which will make it fairly economical. That will leave some 13 000 tonnes. Yes, disease is always a great concern but the tides are so great up there that they create a clean-out effect. The size of the cages, which each hold 30 000 to 40 000 fish, represent a pinprick in that massive area. I think the opportunity in the Kimberley for aquaculture is fantastic. As the world's population grows, aquaculture is the way we need to head if we are to keep up the supply of fish for

human consumption. We will apply careful science in developing those areas. By the way, the area where the cages will be set will be open to recreational fishing—not in the cage, I might add—around the cages because they will take up only about five per cent of the total area when the maximum amount of tonnage comes out. I think this is a good motion by which to raise some of the issues and reflect on how far we have come with fisheries management.

The other point I want to raise is the Red Book Hon Robin Chapple raised and the Horizontal Waterfalls. Hon Norman Moore and I flew over that area and landed there and experienced the waterfalls. The location of the copper leases was then brought to our attention and one lease was right above the waterfalls. The minister decided then to do something about it. That is a legacy Hon Norman Moore left. I guess it would have been hard for him because he was the Minister for Mines and the Minister for Fisheries. It was virtually a no-brainer decision given the beauty of the falls and the benefits of attracting visitors. I do not know how many people have been there but it is a fantastic natural event that happens between the tides rising and falling with the rush of water between the narrow gaps.

I thank Hon Rick Mazza for moving the motion. As Minister for Fisheries, I assure him I will certainly watch every marine park and take note of their effects on our fisheries. When Hon Donna Faragher, who is still here, was the Minister for Environment, the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park, I think, was formed. She gave me an undertaking it would not stop any recreational fishing. A very good friend of mine went out in a boat fishing with his dog, which he always took with him. When he got back the ranger said, “I’m terribly sorry; this has been made into a marine park and you can’t take your dog or your boat out any more.” He rang me and explained the situation with a few explicit words. I approached the minister, and at ministerial level, that was not envisaged, but problems arise at the small working group level. The small working group decided there would not be any dogs on boats out there.

Hon Donna Faragher: I think I rectified that.

Hon KEN BASTON: Hon Donna Faragher rectified it very quickly when she was minister, and I thanked her at the time. We need that control mechanism at ground level to allow fishing in large areas of marine parks.

HON KEN TRAVERS (North Metropolitan) [3.50 pm]: I do not think it makes any difference on motions, but I am not the lead speaker for the opposition on this. Hon Stephen Dawson will fill that role, but I am happy to make a few comments on the motion. I can safely say that the opposition agrees with the government on this matter and will oppose the motion moved by Hon Rick Mazza. We do that because we recognise that marine parks play a very important part in the way that we manage the environment in which we live and that we as human beings have an impact on. We recognise the need for marine parks. They play a very important role in a range of areas. I need to put on the record that the opposition holds the strong view that the creation of marine parks should be based on science. I note that the minister for all things in the sea that are not mammals, also known as fish, has a view that science can be questioned when the science applies to the area in which he wants to go fishing. If we adopt that approach, it becomes problematical for us, but we understand that members on the other side of this chamber have a lot of difficulty, whether it is the way we manage our environment in marine terms or how we manage climate change, accepting what science tells them. Members can talk to any scientist, and they will concur that science will evolve as they get more and more information, but it is about a process and taking a precautionary approach and ensuring that we are not doing damage based on the information available. We do not want to do something today that we find out tomorrow we cannot correct. We are better off taking some precautions today. Even those members opposite who go fishing will recognise that we cannot take actions that ultimately lead to a complete decline of a species.

The minister referred to Shark Bay, and we all know there was a time when there was clearly overfishing. When bans were put on fishing in Shark Bay, there were still people saying that the science was wrong and that fishing should not be banned. Any sensible person would accept that if those bans had not been in place, we would have wiped out the fish stock there. The minister mentioned that it is not just about one type of snapper, as each of the different locations within that area has a different type of snapper. We could wipe out a whole species. There might be other snapper elsewhere within the broader system, but they are not the same species of snapper. Having said that, there is a sense of demonising marine parks by claiming that every marine park completely locks out every form of activity, but of course there are gradients in that. Hon Rick Mazza’s motion refers to allowing shore-based fishing in sanctuary zones. That occurs in some areas, but not in others. The reason it occurs is based on the best available science and, I reiterate, on a precautionary principle. If there is doubt and question marks around the science, we are better off taking a precautionary approach until we can determine the outcome.

Extract from Hansard

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p8302c-8317a

Hon Rick Mazza; Hon Helen Morton; Hon Robin Chapple; Hon Ken Baston; Hon Ken Travers; Hon Mark Lewis

I see that Hon Paul Brown is looking a bit quizzical. I do not know if that is about my comments or whether he is thinking about the world and what he is going to buy his family for Christmas. If he is thinking about Christmas presents for me, I am more than happy to talk to him later.

Marine parks play a really important role in helping to develop an understanding of the science about what is obtainable and achievable and what is not. It gives a good basis on which to work out how to repopulate fish stocks and how to operate nursery grounds. We can do things in a take zone that we cannot do in a marine park. Marine parks play a very important role. In the grand scheme of things, we are not talking about a massive shutting down of fishing; there will still be plenty of areas in which people can participate in fishing. I remember years ago going over to Rottnest Island and snorkelling and seeing the abundance of fish life there. People could see large blue gropers within close proximity to Rottnest Island. Rottnest Island is a managed area, and people can fish off the beach in some areas and in some areas they cannot. We have significantly damaged the fish stocks in some areas and we need to give the fish stocks time to come back. As part of that, those areas play an important role in assisting us to understand how the fisheries operate.

In talking about this matter, one of the things that the Labor government did back in 2006 was to recognise the importance of science in these matters. I suspect that Hon Stephen Dawson may be able to talk about this, because he was probably involved in some of these issues in another life and is aware of the work that was done trying to undertake scientific studies on the basis for, and role of, marine sanctuaries in marine planning. That highlights the need for a strong scientific basis in marine planning. One of the documents produced from the work of that marine scientific panel is the “Report on the Scientific Basis for and the Role of Marine Sanctuaries in Marine Planning”. It is an important document, and if members have an interest in this issue they should get it and take time to read it. The executive summary of that report states —

The Panel has examined the scientific information on the basis for and role of marine sanctuaries and similar ‘no-take’ areas from Australia and other countries, and for WA, including sanctuary zones as defined in the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984 (CALM Act), and Fish Habitat Protection Areas (FHPAs) and closures to fishing under the Fish Resources Management Act 1994 (FRM Act). The effectiveness of marine sanctuaries in achieving their purpose has also been examined. The Panel has then drawn general conclusions from this evidence and specific conclusions in relation to WA marine planning (Section G). Finally the Panel has developed policy recommendations on the role of marine sanctuaries in WA marine planning (Section H).

That report gives a good understanding of the sort of work that is needed and that has occurred and should continue to occur when we develop these areas. I do not think we should put a moratorium on the creation of marine parks as outlined in the motion, but we need to ensure that we continue the work that has already occurred over time. That report also gives a very good understanding of some of the roles and benefits of marine sanctuaries. That includes things such as conserving marine biodiversity. The “Report on the Scientific Basis for the Role of Marine Sanctuaries in Marine Planning” also states that the benefit of ecological responses to marine sanctuaries may vary from one area to another and depend on many other factors. Again there cannot be a single sanctuary; there has to be a number of representative areas so that there is that diversity, because different areas and different environments respond and deal with issues differently. Marine sanctuaries add to the resilience of marine ecosystems and their ability to resist or recover from disturbances such as climate change. Again, that is going to be increasingly the case. I know that many in this chamber may want to deny what is happening to the environment, but when a number of scientists around the world collectively hold a view that man is having an impact on the environment, is warming the environment, and that is having flow-on impacts in a range of ways, we know that areas such as Ningaloo and the Great Barrier Reef are at risk. I do not want to sound like Al Gore, but I remember as a young geography student in the 1980s, when the issue of global warming and greenhouse gases was very questionable, looking at the work then being done to try to determine whether or not the human species was having an impact on the environment.

Hon Jim Chown: Isn't that called climate change nowadays, and nobody is sure whether it is warming or cooling?

Hon KEN TRAVERS: No, it is called climate change, Hon Jim Chown, and it is called climate change because overall the world is warming.

Hon Jim Chown: There are scientific papers out there saying that it is actually cooling.

Hon KEN TRAVERS: Parliamentary secretary, we get answers in this place that have to be corrected within less than 24 hours, too, from time to time. If the member lets me finish my point, we know that overall the world is warming. Climate change is leading to an overall increase in the temperature of the world. Because the world is a very dynamic system that may have different results in the way that is dealt with in different areas. There

may be an increase in the frequency of storms; it will change the pattern. Hon Jim Chown is right that in certain parts of the world it may lead to a decrease in the specific temperatures at those specific sites, but overall it is having an impact on the rising of the temperatures across the globe. Hon Jim Chown is right, because we are dealing with a very dynamic system and in specific areas it may create specific outcomes in the change of those climates. The bottom line difficulty is that it is evolving and changing the world's environment so rapidly, it is difficult to find models that will predict the outcome. That is all the more reason for us to take a precautionary approach. However, today is not about climate change; today is about marine sanctuaries. One of the roles marine sanctuaries certainly have is providing an increased resilience for our ecosystems as a result of that climate change.

Another benefit of marine sanctuaries is that they act as a reference area for us to be able to assess the scale of human impacts on the environment at locations where the collection of data cannot be managed from fish systems. It allows for the development of that baseline data to understand what system would work and then compare it with those areas where fishing occurs. We also need to note that the effectiveness of marine sanctuaries for conservation purposes will vary markedly depending on the match between the size and location of sanctuaries, the life history characteristics of the species in question, and the length of time the marine sanctuary has been in place. There are a range of areas in the conservation of marine biodiversity that come about because of sanctuaries. There is a benefit to fisheries, but it is less clear how they operate. Again that is something that the report discusses. Marine sanctuaries will have greater impact in certain areas than in others, because, again, just as terrestrial flora and fauna systems change depending on the nature of the system, the benefits to us change. Again, on their own they are not the sole solution to fisheries management and they need to be part of an overarching management framework. It is fair to say that the management of fishery systems in Western Australia has been well run over the years and we have generally had a good management, and marine parks are an element of that.

We also have to recognise that the marine environment is not about only fishing; different people want to use that environment differently. Some of these areas provide points where tourism can be developed. Anyone who has been to Coral Bay or any of the large number of communities up and down the coast of Western Australia, and increasingly in the Kimberley, would recognise that tourism is becoming an increasing part of the economy of those communities. One only has to visit those places during the peak times and try to look at and engage with that environment. The places that people want to go are the places that have not been impacted by fishing. Tourists love the fact that they are going into sanctuary zones. Again, it comes down to how to share these resources, whether it is sharing what fish can be taken between the commercial fishing industry that then provides the opportunity for those people who do not want to fish to access that resource and buy it to put on their plates at night, and the person who wants to go fishing as part of their recreational activities, and the person who wants to use the environment as part of their own personal enjoyment but who do not want to take anything from that environment. Those people have a right to access areas knowing that that area has had as little impact as possible. It comes back to how to share natural resources between all in the community. It is not as though we are saying that there should be no recreational fishing or, for that matter, commercial fishing, but it is about coming up with a system that properly manages the environment. It is not just about tourism; it is about recreation; it is about education. Even for aesthetics' value, those things need to be taken into account when we are determining the areas that we want to present.

I think it is very important that we do not seek to try in any way to demonise marine parks. They are a very important part of the management of the marine environment. They are a very important part of how we share those areas with the different members of our community who want to access, use and enjoy that environment. As I say, we need to ensure that whatever we do is based on science. It is not right to argue for a moratorium on the creation of any further marine parks. If the government is doing its work and is identifying, using science, other areas that should be incorporated in the marine reserves, that should be allowed to occur, and we should not try to stop it. I do not believe that there is an overwhelming need for an investigation into the access and management of the current marine parks in Western Australia; but if members believe that there is a need for that, I am relatively confident in the way things are currently operating. I certainly do not get a great many people putting the argument to me that there are any fundamental problems around access and management, but if there were to be an inquiry, it could be done as a stand-alone inquiry without the need for a moratorium. Again, given the way the motion is currently crafted, with reference to allowing shore-based fishing in sanctuary zones, I have some concerns that that could be interpreted as meaning either that fishing should be allowed everywhere, or that we do not currently allow fishing in some of those areas. The issue comes back to what the science is telling us about those areas. In respect of areas in which there is no take allowed from the shore, I feel confident that it is because the science recommended that. I recognise that there are many areas where shore-based fishing is allowed to occur, so I have some difficulty in understanding the purpose of that point within the motion.

For all those reasons, the Labor Party will not support this motion. Having said that, I welcome the fact that we are having the debate. My view on these matters is that we should always be happy to have a debate, as a Parliament and as a community. We should never lead these things without the opportunity for people to challenge and question whether we have it right or whether we need to be doing something differently. From our perspective, we think we have got it pretty right. We are going generally in the right direction, and if we continue to base our decisions around the application of science in determining these things, I think we will continue to head in the right direction. However, no-one should ever be afraid of having these debates, so for that reason I welcome the fact that we are having this debate and I do not have any problems with the member having brought this motion into the chamber. I recognise that he was elected by a particular group of people—along with a whole lot of preferences—to advocate a particular position in this Parliament. It is the role of the rest of us to choose whether or not we support that view. It strikes me that there is going to be a fairly substantial group of us who express a similar view about the general direction in which we are heading in this area, but there will always be arguments about whether we can do it better or what other changes can be made. Today's debate is just another part of that process.

HON MARK LEWIS (Mining and Pastoral) [4.02 pm]: I also would like to thank Hon Rick Mazza for bringing this motion to the house, and I agree with Hon Ken Travers: it is very important to have this debate. I would like to broaden the debate a little to take in the institutional frameworks that we have already in place to undertake resource management. I come to this debate from probably around 30 years of experience in the bureaucracy side of resource management. I have been involved in land-based resource management, fisheries-based resource management, forestry-based resource management and water resource management. I have seen a lot of resources management frameworks come and go, and I can say that we are always improving, but that we can always improve.

I also want to make it very clear that we are talking about a marine park. A bit later I will talk about other mechanisms, but there seems to be a lot of confusion here about the mechanism of marine parks. I have heard the words “sanctuary”, “reserve” and “park”, and if members were to have a look at some of the other management frameworks they would see “management plans”, “management areas” and “special purpose zones”. I was just having a side debate with Hon Phil Edman about whether Rottnest Island has a marine park; it does not. It is a special purpose zone that falls under normal regulations. There are also fisheries habitat protection areas and restrictions and closure regulations.

Over my 30 years' experience, I have had a particular problem with the range and layers of management frameworks that can be imposed on particular resources. This goes back to the fact that, at the end of the day—Hon Rick Mazza made a very good point on this—it is about bang for the buck. What is the best way to manage a resource? I have not heard any arguments this afternoon about protecting these areas; on that, I think we are all in accord, including even Hon Robin Chapple. What has disturbed me over the years is that we get things like international conventions, international treaties, World Heritage areas and National Heritage List areas. After that, we come down further to marine parks, national parks and all those other things we were talking about—sanctuaries, reserves, management plans, management areas and special purpose zones et cetera, and that all costs money. Hon Ken Baston talked about an area of particular interest to him, the Shark Bay World Heritage area, and commented about some of the restrictions placed on that area. I can tell members that it was not the World Heritage framework that gave power to that regulation; that was brought about by the normal regulation powers under the Fish Resources Management Act. It can be very offensive to those people out there in the field, who are operating under normal legislation, when we say to them that they are not doing a good enough job and that we need National Heritage List areas, World Heritage areas or an international convention to make sure they are managing those resources properly. I personally often felt it to be a little offensive when I had somebody from Spain or Geneva or wherever it was, telling me, an on-the-ground resource manager, how best to manage our country. I just think that is not only offensive, but also very costly. I can remember a number of times travelling around with Hon Kim Chance when he was Minister for Fisheries. We would get to Shark Bay or Exmouth and start talking about the management costs of the World Heritage area. Members who know Hon Kim Chance will know that he was vociferous in his objection to the management costs imposed on those places. In fact, instead of the usual one smoke and one can of Coke, it would take three smokes and two cans of Coke to settle him down!

Debate adjourned, pursuant to standing orders.