

## Question time - MARINE PARKS – 16 July 09

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:27):** In light of the last question, my question is to the Minister for Environment and Conservation. In determining the boundaries for Marine Park 6 adjacent to the Lower Eyre Peninsula, will the minister be adopting advice provided by the Marine Park 6 pilot working group established by his department? At the government's invitation, representatives of the Lower Eyre Peninsula recreational and commercial fishing industries and local government provided through this pilot group an exhaustive submission that was supported by extensive input from highly credentialed scientists. There is a strongly held belief in the community that their findings and recommendations will be ignored.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (14:28):** I am more than happy to take into account the advice that emerges from the working groups that I have established. I would also be grateful to know what the Liberal Party's position is on marine parks, because the honourable member has stated that there is actually no good reason for marine parks. So, he clearly does not actually agree with marine parks. We have the former minister for the environment, who is urging us to actually get on with marine parks, saying that they are such a great idea. I must say that I am a bit puzzled about who the shadow minister for the environment is. I do not think that that has been clarified.

**The Hon. P.F. Conlon:** I think they're all in the audition phase.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** That's right. What emerged in the course of discussions about marine parks is that all parties to the debate—the environmental group and the industry group representing both aquaculture and other wild catch fisheries—really came to a pretty clear consensus, and that is that the idea of actually talking about and consulting on outer boundaries by themselves was not really the most effective way of dealing with it. Who actually imposed that amendment on the government's bill in the upper house? It was those members sitting opposite. They amended the legislation in the upper house to have us consulting on outer boundaries which do not change any of the rights and responsibilities.

**Mr VENNING:** I rise on a point of order. The minister is debating the issue.

*Members interjecting:*

**The SPEAKER:** Order! No, I do not think the minister is. I will listen more closely to what the minister is saying, but I do not think that he has strayed into debate.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL:** Thank you, sir. It is a very important to understand the context of the question, because of the frustration of all groups (the conservation sector and the industry sector) which have been consulting on outer boundaries ahead of the process of zoning. What people want to know about is what you can do within the parks.

Why are we consulting on outer boundaries? We are consulting on outer boundaries because those members opposite, and their colleagues in the upper house, imposed on us an amendment to do so. So, I have to try to deal with the legislation that I have been presented with, which is to try to graft a process on to that, which is to have some preliminary looks at what the zoning would look like.

That was what both industry and conservation groups put to me. They said to me, 'Let's have a preliminary exercise to look at what the zoning might look at so that we can consider the outer boundaries in that context,' and I, of course, agreed to that. They are very confident that they can reach agreement. Indeed, I must say that in the far West Coast there has been substantial agreement, and that will obviously be very influential in the way in which we choose to configure those outer boundaries.

In the South-East there has also been a fair measure of agreement about these matters, and that will obviously influence our thinking. In the area that the member asks about, that is, the Port Lincoln area, park No. 6, there has been a very wide divergence in

points of view between the various sectors. The working groups have not been able to come up with an agreed position, so that puts me in the position of having to consider the competing contentions, which I will do, and make a decision based on those competing contentions.

I must say that I think that all groups that have participated in the process have found it to be valuable. Despite those opposite trying to whip up community concern and fear around the marine park process, despite the most intemperate remarks stating that recreational fishers will be locked out of almost half the state's waters (a complete misrepresentation of the position), despite the fact of the former shadow minister urging interested parties, particularly local governments along the coast and recreational and professional fishing associations reliant upon marine-based activities for their viability, to actively campaign against the current proposals—despite all that—those groups have actually been in active dialogue with the government and we will come up with a sensible solution which will deliver world class marine parks, but also strong viable commercial industries, while also protecting the lifestyles of recreational fishers.

### **MARINE PARKS**

**Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders) (14:33):** My question is also to the Minister for Environment and Conservation on the same subject. Has the government considered the economic cost to Lower Eyre Peninsula communities as a consequence of declaring 2,627 square kilometres of the region's coastline a marine park, and will an economic impact statement be done?

The Lower Eyre Peninsula is home to many of the state's most popular recreational fishing tourist destinations that underpin the economy of the local communities. These communities are heavily dependent on recreational fishing and all its attendant benefits to commerce, industry, accommodation, hospitality, entertainment, as well as various services, including banking and health, and they are also dependent on a critical mass of visitations.

Real estate is also affected by the popularity and viability of these destinations. Local councils in the Lower Eyre Peninsula believe that Marine Park 6, if adopted as proposed in January 2009, will devastate the local economies.

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (14:34):** I thank the honourable member for her question. In relation to her specific questions the answers are yes and yes. In relation to the marine parks, I will make this prediction: in the future the professional fishing interests across South Australia that make their living out of fishing within marine parks will actually be using them as a marketing tool in the future.

### **MARINE PARKS**

**Mr PEDERICK (Hammond) (14:35):** My question is to the Minister for Environment and Conservation. In the event that the government implements the Marine Park 6 boundaries, as proposed in January 2009, or something similar, does it anticipate compensating commercial fishermen for the loss of a large proportion of their traditional fishing grounds?

**The Hon. J.W. WEATHERILL (Cheltenham—Minister for Environment and Conservation, Minister for Early Childhood Development, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation, Minister Assisting the Premier in Cabinet Business and Public Sector Management) (14:35):** The question really demonstrates the member's complete lack of understanding of the marine park process because he suggests that the declaration of the boundaries in the manner suggested has some impact on fishing. Of

course, the declaration of the boundaries does not have any effect on anyone's rights to do anything.

The zoning process, which will be undertaken over the next couple of years in detailed consultation with the affected activities, will grapple with that question. Of course, the 100 per cent result, if we can achieve it, is to have no effect on any industry, and that is certainly our desire. We have given substantial commitments to all the industries affected that, as far as possible, their activities will not be affected by the marine parks process.

For example, with respect to all aquaculture zones, which provide for existing and future aquaculture activity, it has been made clear that no sanctuary zones, which would have the effect of precluding those activities, will be in any of those areas. In relation to the wild catch fisheries, we have also given commitments that we will try to zone in a fashion that will cause no or minimal effect in relation to their industries.

It is not in our interest to carry out a zoning process that has any effect on industry. We want to make sure that we have not only a thriving recreational sector, which has its own economic benefits, but also a thriving commercial fishing sector because, as we heard earlier from the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, this is a very important industry for our state.

We need to ensure that we have not only a thriving fishing industry that creates prosperity for future generations but also a marine environment that is capable of providing enjoyment for future generations. One should not underestimate the economic importance of protecting our marine habitat, as our marine environment, of course, is a source of tourism and an opportunity to create prosperity for those regional communities the member says he is concerned about.

Within the legislation, we included the capacity to compensate any fishing interest that has been affected or displaced effort that has occurred as a consequence of the marine park process; we hope not to have to use it, but it sits there as a commitment to the commercial fishing interests that they will be compensated should that occur. However, our objective is to make sure that we carry out the zoning process in a way that avoids that effect.

To assist those opposite to understand the marine park process, it is not about having large areas that exclude all activities. The size of a marine park is deliberately designed so that we can protect the marine environment in a way that does not necessarily involve the preclusion of people fishing in the whole marine park. They are multi-use marine parks, and the lion's share of the marine parks will, in fact, be habitat protection, which will have no implications for the lion's share of any fishing.

So, it is a complete misunderstanding and a misrepresentation by those opposite to suggest that the marine park process is damaging to the vital interests of the commercial or recreational fishing sector.