

MINISTER FOR MINES AND PETROLEUM — RESPONSE TO MEDIA RELEASE

Statement

HON LYNN MacLAREN (South Metropolitan) [5.28 pm]: I rise to make a statement in response to the Minister for Mines and Petroleum and Leader of the House, who expressed to me today that he was very disturbed by a media release from my office; his view is that I have somehow misrepresented his comments.

Hon Norman Moore: Not somehow.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I seek to provide four points of clarification.

One of the points is that I think I need to defend the honour of sauvignon blanc. The minister seemed to feel that sauvignon blanc was somehow less than other wines, particularly chardonnay. I wanted to address that because his comments were mainly about the coexistence of viticulture and tourism with mining in the Margaret River region. I can assure the house, following research on this, that the Margaret River region is very good for sauvignon blanc; in fact, Leeuwin Estate in the Margaret River region has contacted my office today, as have many people from the Margaret River region following the media release and the minister's comments. Leeuwin Estate in particular wanted to assure me that it has a very good sauvignon blanc and, in fact, there are 23 wineries in the Margaret River region that offer fine sauvignon blancs, so we can rest assured that the sauvignon blanc region in New Zealand is well challenged by the Margaret River region.

The Minister for Mines and Petroleum wanted to know what I meant by "where mining can happen". What I meant was that there are some places where mining can happen. This is something he is very concerned about with the Greens. As the minister knows from his 33 years in Parliament—or something like that—opposition parties really do not have time to go around singing the praises of mines that are in the right places or of polluting industries that are better than average. We have more than enough to do dealing with mines with problems and polluting industries not doing the right thing. That is what is taking the time, attention and advocacy of the Greens. I will not take that opportunity to list places where mining can happen, although we might uncover them in months to come.

We were also contacted by people in the Hunter Valley region. The minister tried to draw parallels with the Hunter Valley along the lines of "where people make perfectly good wine and also have perfectly good coalmines". We were contacted by a particular woman, Sharyn Munro, who lives in the Hunter. She was very concerned to let us all know that the famous Hunter wines and infamous coalmines are not in the same part of the Hunter Valley region. She asked me to advise the leader that he was "talking through his mining hat". I thought that was a kind of a funny thing to say.

Hon Norman Moore: Did she read *Hansard* or did she read your press release which left out most of what I said?

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I am not sure what she read, but she was aware that the minister was championing the coexistence of mining with the viticulture industry, and I think that is fair enough.

Hon Norman Moore: With respect, if you read what I said in *Hansard*, I said I do not know whether they can coexist, but you did not bother to do that.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I want to make two more points to the minister. I know that the minister often remarks about Hon Robin Chapple when he mentions his website. There was someone who wanted to draw attention to the minister's website and the photos and press releases put out by the minister, because he did very good work and he really should be commended for it. That work is to save the hairy marron from extinction. But a chap called Phil who reads the Margaret River NO COAL!tion website remarked that the upper reaches of Margaret River where the hairy marron breed are potentially at risk from the coalmine, as the minister pointed out yesterday.

Hon Norman Moore: And that will be assessed by the EPA, as well you know. It may be a reason why the mine does not proceed.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: Finally —

Hon Norman Moore: We saved them from extinction, which was more than you ever did. You tried to make them extinct.

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: I made a comment about the Margaret River region being pristine.

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order! Let us hear one member at a time. That is Hon Lynn MacLaren

Hon LYNN MacLAREN: The minister questioned my comment about the Margaret River region being pristine. I guess in my view it is pristine in the sense that it is clean. Certainly by world standards, and even by Australian standards, the beaches are clean and the air is clean, and that is part of what drives the economy down there. When I used the word “pristine”, I did not mean to indicate it was in its original state. I indicated that it is clean. I hope that we can maintain some of the marine environment there, even though it too is under threat by oil exploration.

Finally, yes, I agree with the minister that people should be pointed to the *Hansard* because anyone who is under any misapprehension that the minister tried to reflect the Margaret River in any ill light will see clearly in the *Hansard* that he does indeed value the region and that he did make several points about the importance of the region. The *Hansard* in its full state should be something that people refer to. Anyone who might have got the mistaken impression from my media release that the minister was dissing, I guess, the Margaret River region would do well to read the complete *Hansard*. But I think it is fair to say that as the Minister for Mines and Petroleum, he was dually championing the ability of the mining industry to coexist in an area with viticulture, horticulture or whatever. That is the point on which the minister and I disagree. I was clearly stating that in my view, and in the view of the many people in the Margaret River region who have contacted my office, the two will not coexist in Margaret River. So we yet again call on this government to oppose any suggestion of a coalmine in this region.