

COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHERIES — SANCTUARY ZONES EXTENSION

**547. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Fisheries:**

I refer to the commonwealth marine park disallowance motion to extend sanctuary zones that would have locked out commercial and recreational fishing in parts of Western Australia being defeated in the Senate today. Does the minister support the attempt by his federal Labor colleague Western Australian Senator Louise Pratt to destroy commercial fisheries and the benefits recreational angling brings to fishers in the north west and south west of our state?

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

I thank the member for the question. I am not aware of comments made by Senator Pratt today. I am not aware of a motion that was apparently moved today in the Senate in respect of this matter.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member, you asked a question. Listen to the answer.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** It is good to see that someone from the Nationals WA is here today; I understand attendance in Parliament is optional for the National Party this week. It is potentially an extension of the school holidays.

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** I am not aware of what went on today in the Senate and the motion that was apparently moved by Senator Pratt in respect, I am told, of commonwealth marine parks. A range of marine parks were put in place by the previous federal Labor government. They have since been pared back, changed and altered by the current federal government. That is a decision it has made. The member may have noticed that I have not made any statements in respect of that decision. He would have noticed, though, that I have been working quite closely with the industry. Threats were made by the federal environment minister to effectively close down fisheries on the south coast because of failures by the previous government to protect the Australian sea lion population. That was a problem that went on for more than a decade. I recently announced some very well-crafted exclusion zones around those sea lion colonies that, in my view, will prevent the federal Minister for Environment and Energy effectively closing down that fishery.

I do not sit around listening to the proceedings of the Senate; I have far better things to do. I have a far better relationship with the commercial fishing industry than people on the member's side had. A series of Liberal–National government fisheries ministers essentially did nothing because they saw the fisheries portfolio as something they did after four o'clock on a Friday afternoon.