

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

NINGALOO REEF COASTLINE

Motion

MR B.K. MASTERS (Vasse) [4.33 pm]: I move -

That this House condemns the Premier for -

- (a) his Government's waste of money in the way the decision to refuse the Mauds Landing marina proposal was announced, and in the ongoing expenditure seeking community input into planning issues affecting the Ningaloo Reef area which in effect is political advertising for the ALP;
- (b) failing to provide specific and detailed reasons for the rejection of the proposal, contrary to the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1986;
- (c) failing to provide or commit funding for essential management and infrastructure along the entire Ningaloo Reef coastline; and
- (d) being misleading in representing the views of the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority on the EPA's attitude towards the Mauds Landing proposal.

This motion does not condemn the Government or the Minister for the Environment; it specifically seeks to condemn the Premier for various actions that he has undertaken in relation to the Mauds Landing development proposal and for his involvement in many aspects of the Government's smokescreen relating to its false claim that the Ningaloo Reef has been saved. It is my view that the Premier is Western Australia's equivalent of Shane Warne. Shane Warne is very clever at spin, bearing in mind his 491 test wickets - he will probably take a lot more - but what is happening when neither Shane Warne nor the Premier are on the field? When we look at what they are doing when they are not spinning, so to speak, I think we will understand that both the Premier and Shane Warne are doing things with their messages - in Shane Warne's case by SMS messages on the phone and in the Premier's case in a whole range of other ways - that are less than honourable. For example, the Premier in so many of his activities blames everyone but his own Government for the Government's inability to solve problems and to deal with the important issues of the State. Instead, the Government and the Premier go off and spin into all sorts of different, irrelevant and largely illusory issues.

I do not want to talk in any detail about Shane Warne's apparent lack of -

Dr G.I. Gallop: I was a leg spin bowler, and I can bowl a wrong'un too.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: "You're a better man than I am, Gunga Din!" - at least on the cricket field!

I do not wish to comment on Shane Warne's apparent long-term commitment to his wife, but I note that the Premier in this case should in theory be married to both the union movement and to WA's working class. However, the Premier and the Australian Labor Party - this Government - are now wedded to anyone who will deliver them green votes and to anyone who is associated with the antidevelopment chardonnay-sipping socialist set. They have left their roots behind. I could make some puns about that, but I will not. Unfortunately I have to accuse the Premier of being WA's equivalent of Shane Warne.

Mr P.B. Watson: A winner!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The member for Albany should think about what he is saying. Like the famous cricketer, the Premier's spin is now being shown for what it really is - a distraction from his real job, which is to govern Western Australia for the betterment of all Western Australians. Unfortunately, on this issue of Ningaloo and Mauds Landing the Premier is spinning, spinning, spinning on a -

Mr R.N. Sweetman interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Maybe a stump, but he is on a very sticky wicket. I am pleased to say that finally the media is starting to understand the rules by which he plays his game. The Premier's rules do not have the interests of the entire community of Western Australia at heart. The Premier tried to spin us a story that Ningaloo has been saved, when the truth is that all the threats, all the risks, and all the existing impacting activities - with just one exception - remain exactly as they were prior to his announcement last month or the month before that the Mauds Landing marina proposal would not go ahead. The one exception is the perceived risks posed by the Mauds Landing proposal, and I grant that those perceived risks have now been removed by the Premier's announcement that the Mauds Landing marina development will not go ahead. All the other threats and impacts remain unchanged to this day.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: What is your assessment of the reality of the risks posed by the resort development?

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I will speak to that at some length. The Premier should be condemned for four reasons, which are outlined in the motion. I will go through them one by one. The first point is -

- (a) his Government's waste of money in the way the decision to refuse the Mauds Landing marina proposal was announced, and in the ongoing expenditure seeking community input into planning issues affecting the Ningaloo Reef area which in effect is political advertising for the ALP;

Let us look at what the Premier did when he decided to publicly announce his and his Government's decision to knock the Mauds Landing marina development proposal on its head. The Premier got on a plane, along with a number of journalists - I do not know how many, but more than one as I understand it -

Mr C.J. Barnett: Two planes.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Two planes - he had that many journalists with him - and flew to Coral Bay at a cost of I believe around \$9 000. That is not a large amount of money in the overall scheme of things -

Mr R.N. Sweetman interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The member for Ningaloo said by way of interjection that it would not have cost much to send him a fax, as the member for that area, to let him know that the Premier would be in his electorate on that day. More importantly, the Premier could have made that announcement from Perth. That would have required no planes and no additional cost. However, he did not do that. He decided to do his own bit of spin-doctoring and get a nice bit of publicity out of it and waste taxpayers' money. The Premier also wasted a lot of his time. To many people that may not seem a great deal. However, I recognise the time pressures on the shoulders of any member in this place, particularly the Premier. I would have thought the Premier would have had better things to do with his day - matters of state even - that would be of importance to a large number of people in this State. The Premier should have allocated that time to those important issues rather than go out of his way to fly to Coral Bay. How many hours did it take the Premier to fly to Coral Bay, stay there for a while and then fly back to Perth? My estimate is five hours. Is that unrealistic? Five hours of the Premier's time was basically wasted.

Mr C.J. Barnett: For how long were they on the ground?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I thought it was about an hour and a half.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The members of the media wandered around for a while and were then told they could take their photos because the Premier was splashing around in the water, and that is what happened.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: In making that announcement the Premier also wasted the resources of the media. I do not know how many media representatives went to Coral Bay; I presume it was a few. It is sad that it appears today that long gone is the period of investigative reporting that characterised the media some decades ago. I say that in spite of the fact that Mike Southwell won a Walkley Award on issues that I thought then and still think now were largely spurious. In our western democracy the media plays a very important role in keeping both the Opposition and the Government honest, among other things. The fact that there were a significant number of media representatives on one or both of the planes that the Premier took to Coral Bay - wasting their time, in my view - to spin them a story that the Premier could have done quite safely from here in Perth says a lot also about the media, and the media representatives should hang their heads in shame as well. Although the cost of \$9 000 to charter the planes may not seem a great deal of money, the time and effort involved in doing all the things associated with that announcement was a complete waste of time. More importantly, the Premier has not denied that \$350 000 is being spent by his Government on its community input effort into what is happening at Ningaloo. How could that money have been spent on management activities on the ground had it not been spent on what were largely newspaper advertising and related activities? Let us assume first of all that it would have been fair and reasonable to spend \$100 000 on media advertising to try to get people to make submissions on the Ningaloo coast management plans and development proposals. Some people would say that is a lot of money. However, I have picked that figure for the sake of the argument. That would leave \$250 000. That money could have been used by the Department of Conservation and Land Management to employ three full-time rangers, plus pay for their vehicles and on-costs and operating costs for a full 12-month period, not just the one or two months of the peak tourist season when there may be 8 000 or 10 000 people who desperately need to be managed properly in that 280 kilometre Ningaloo Reef area. Those rangers could have been employed to make sure that four-wheel drive vehicles do not go into the dunes and destroy vegetation, that people and vehicles do not disturb wildlife such as turtles that are nesting on the beach, and that litter is properly managed and not just thrown away.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
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Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Do you accept that all of the research shows that these days the vast majority of people receive their information via the medium of television and that if we want to communicate with the community and let it know about the future directions paper we need to -

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Does the minister know what it means to be too clever by half? The reality is that what the Government is doing in its media campaign is saying nothing useful to those people. Those people have to go to the web site or some other printed source of information -

Dr G.I. Gallop: That is what it tells them to do! The web site has had 349 000 hits!

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It is clearly working.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Then why is it that the Environmental Protection Authority can afford to put only a little advertisement in *The West Australian* every Monday to tell the public of Western Australia what is happening with development proposals, licensing and a range of other things?

Dr G.I. Gallop: This is an area for which we intend to get World Heritage listing. It is fairly important.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I do not see the connection.

Dr G.I. Gallop: You do not see World Heritage as important?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I do not have a problem with World Heritage listing. In my view there is strong community support for World Heritage listing. However, that is a separate issue from the Mauds Landing management plan, the bombing range and a range of other issues. Almost every person in Western Australia accepts the environmental values of the Cape Range-Ningaloo Reef area. In saying that the Government is advertising in order to gain community support for World Heritage listing, the Premier is trying to be too clever by half. He is trying to preach to the converted. If the Premier wants people to have meaningful input into his management plans and other important activities that are being planned or talked about in that area, he should not spend money on advertisements in which he glorifies his achievements - even though he has not achieved anything to date - and at the bottom of which, as almost a throwaway line, he tells people they should go to a certain web site to check out what is happening in the area. An amount of \$350 000 is a gross waste of taxpayers' money. I have just been saying how \$250 000 would provide for the employment of three full-time rangers at Coral Bay or in the Ningaloo Reef area who could do wonderful on-the-ground management works such as protect the dunes against damage from four-wheel drive vehicles and protect a range of wonderful wildlife from inappropriate disturbance by four-wheel drive vehicles, boats or guns. There is even an argument that it would have been appropriate for the Department of Conservation and Land Management to sit down with some of the owners or lessees of the pastoral stations and say it realises this is their land or lease at the moment and it will not get back management control of that land for some time, but it wants to work cooperatively with them in achieving common goals that will improve the management of the whole Cape Range National Park and Ningaloo Reef Marine Park area, such as closing tracks, removing litter and a range of other things.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: That work will happen.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I am saying the Government has wasted \$250 000 and an opportunity to start that work now or a month or two ago.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We need to have a plan.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: No. If the minister were to talk to any one of the 10 000 people who go to Ningaloo every year, they would give her a list as long as her arm of the absolutely damned obvious things that need to be done to protect and improve the environment in that area.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: A plan is essential; there is no argument with that.

Dr G.I. Gallop: The Leader of the Opposition does not agree with that.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: A management plan for Ningaloo Reef?

Dr G.I. Gallop: He just said that we don't need one.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: We do not need one to start doing the good work. We can start doing that good work right now; we do not have to wait for a management plan. I point out that indigenous landowners have one of the pastoral station leases and I would have thought it entirely appropriate for the Department of Conservation and Land Management to go to those people and ask how it can work better with them to manage their section of the pastoral lease with high environmental values -

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: That is what we are going to do. The direction paper sets out all the possibilities -

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I am not saying that the Government should not do it. However, the minister keeps talking about it in the future tense; I am talking about it in the past and present tenses. At least a quarter of a million dollars has been wasted by the Government on advertising and spin doctoring relating to its having saved Ningaloo Reef. In my view that is a waste of money. The Government should have started spending it a month or two ago, immediately after the Premier made his decision about the fate of Mauds Landing. There is no doubt that the \$250 000 component of that \$350 000, if not the whole of it, has simply been spent on political advertising and is essentially a waste of money.

I turn to the second point of the motion; that is, that this House condemns the Premier for failing to provide specific and detailed reasons for the rejection of the proposal contrary to the requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1986. I thank the former Minister for the Environment, the member for Kingsley, for pointing out to me that on page 55 of the Environmental Protection Act 1986, section 45(8) reads -

If an agreement is reached or a decision is made under this section that a proposal may not be implemented, the Minister shall forthwith notify the persons referred to in subsection (5)(a)(i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) in writing accordingly.

Can the Premier tell me whether he has written to the proponents and told them exactly why he has knocked back the proposal?

Dr G.I. Gallop: Yes.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Before or after the media event?

Dr G.I. Gallop: I cannot remember, but I will check that for you.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I would like to continue on the motion.

Several members interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Tim Winton would be very upset if he saw this behaviour.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members, I have called repeatedly for order. The member for Vasse is trying to be heard and he has the call.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I realise that I am only the shadow Minister for the Environment -

Dr G.I. Gallop: Whom are you representing in this Parliament? That is what I would like to know.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The people of Western Australia of course.

Mr P.B. Watson interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I cannot let that interjection go by. When was the last time the member for Albany was at Ningaloo?

Mr P.B. Watson: It is not my electorate.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I did not ask him that question. When was the last time he went up there and saw the huge number of environmental problems that demand incredibly urgent action on the part of the Government? Is the member saying that he has not been up there and is not aware of the environmental problems? I cannot blame him for wanting to be aware of what is happening in Albany, but if he wants to interject on me, I encourage him to at least make the interjection relevant.

Mr P.B. Watson: Have you been up north and seen some of the Aboriginal people and their health and things like that?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Over the years, yes.

Mr P.B. Watson: When was the last time?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: May last year when I was at the Port Hedland Regional Hospital with the former Minister for Health.

Mr P.B. Watson: I mean right up north in the outback communities.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Mr C.J. Barnett: How did you get there?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: He probably ran there.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I am talking about the second point of the motion, which condemns the Premier for failing to provide specific and detailed reasons for the rejection of the proposal. Even though I am only the shadow Minister for the Environment, over the past two and a half years I have been very disappointed in the way this Government has failed to keep me informed of its decisions. It is not unreasonable to expect that the shadow Minister for the Environment would be kept informed of a broadcast e-mail, fax or publication or an open letter to the people of Western Australia on matters that are relevant to his or her portfolio responsibilities. Nothing has come across my desk apart from the media release, which I got from the Internet. Just an hour or so ago I went to the Premier's web site and I found a page entitled "Premier announces decision on Coral Coast Resort". There are no decisions of any substance on the page, so I looked a bit further and at the bottom of the web page it said to please visit www.ningaloo coast.wa.gov.au for more information, so I did that. I found another page on that web site entitled "Coral Coast Resort Decision". Again I looked for the reasons that the Premier had rejected the proposal and I saw at the bottom of the page under "Downloads" a link to the Premier's "Open Letter to the People of Western Australia". I had not heard about this open letter before, so I was very interested to read it. I had a look and it actually is an open letter to the people of Western Australia. Did the Premier put this letter in a full-page advertisement in *The West Australian* by any chance to let everyone know about it? There is no response from the Premier. The open letter starts with -

Dear Western Australians,

CORAL COAST MARINA DEVELOPMENT

Then there is a page and a half of comment. Unfortunately, this open letter to the people of Western Australia misrepresents the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority, as did the Premier's media release of 4 July.

Several members interjected.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: At the bottom of the first page of the Premier's open letter he says -

... after considering the appeals, the EPA Chairman advised that the proposal should not be approved for implementation.

I hope the Premier will listen to this because the sentence I have just read out misrepresents the position of the Chairman of the EPA. Does he want me to read it again or did he hear it?

Mr C.J. Barnett: I would like you to.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: It says -

... after considering the appeals, the EPA Chairman advised that the proposal should not be approved for implementation.

Dr G.I. Gallop: That is right.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: It is wrong, and I will point that out later.

Dr G.I. Gallop: You are wrong.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The Premier has not heard my argument yet, so it is a bit hard for him to say that.

Mr C.J. Barnett interjected.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: That is true. Interestingly, the second page of the Premier's open letter to the people of Western Australia almost touches on some of the reasons he may have decided to knock the Mauds Landing proposal on its head. It is worthwhile for me to read out two or three sentences. The letter continues -

I was also not confident that there are adequate management requirements to mitigate impacts arising from the proposed Coral Coast Resort.

In the next paragraph he says -

In my view, the critical issues relating to the proposal arise from its scale and form, and its location in a sensitive environment. The environmental risks and management needs for the proposal have not been

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

demonstrated to be environmentally acceptable. There is also uncertainty as to a suitable mechanism to achieve adequate long term management in relation to the proposal.

Those comments might be the Premier's view, but I think he is being somewhat misleading because the way in which he has written this letter seems to suggest that those are the views of the EPA, the Chairman of the EPA and the appeals committee. As I will discuss shortly, that is anything but the truth. In my view, not only has the Government failed to meet the legislative requirements of the Environmental Protection Act 1986 -

Dr G.I. Gallop: Will you tell us what decision you would have made? You have all the evidence now.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Not only has the Government treated the -

Dr G.I. Gallop: Will you tell us what your decision would have been? You are the shadow minister.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: With some courtesy, the decision has been made.

Dr G.I. Gallop: What decision would you have made?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Those opposite are in government.

Dr G.I. Gallop: You will not say.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: We are now assessing the background behind and the reasons for the decision the Premier made. The Premier wants to know what we would do. He will have to wait until closer to the election to read it in our environmental policy. I presume it will be part of the environmental policy - we will have to wait and see.

The Premier has misrepresented the Environmental Protection Authority, the Chairman of the EPA and the appeals committee. Until that open letter was published, the Premier was effectively slapping the face of the proponent, Coral Coast Marina Development Pty Ltd, by not, as I understand it, bothering to send it a letter prior to his announcement. I feel that the Premier was also less than courteous to me by not arranging to send that letter to me. The lack of detailed reasons - the second part of the motion - is deplorable, especially when we consider that this is the first time the Premier has been charged with a very significant environmental decision-making responsibility. He took over that responsibility from the Minister for the Environment because of issues I will not go into.

I turn to the third point in the motion, which asks this House to condemn the Premier for -

failing to provide or commit funding for essential management and infrastructure along the entire Ningaloo Reef coastline;

During question time I asked the Premier when he would get serious about committing money to the area. His response was that the Government had committed money. He said that it had committed \$14 million for a boat harbour, \$7 million for sewerage and \$4 million for something else. The reality is that virtually none of that money has been spent.

Dr G.I. Gallop: Exmouth and Carnarvon.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The Premier is right. I thank him for reminding me.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: When did the Government spend the money in Carnarvon?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: It is for the land development on the other side of the fascine.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: Carnarvon has not had a cent spent on it since 1999.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: There will be an extension to the boat harbour. It is a \$2 million project that is under construction. Have you not been up there for a while?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: That is in Carnarvon. Can the minister explain how -

Mr R.N. Sweetman interjected.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It is a \$2 million development on the boat harbour.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: It has not started yet. It is fishermen's money.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Is it under construction or under consideration?

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It is under construction.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): The member for Vasse has the call.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: This is an interesting debate.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

The ACTING SPEAKER: Please restrict your comments to the Chair.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The money that has been allocated has not yet been spent on the ground to any significant degree. In addition, the Department of Conservation and Land Management is so underresourced that it cannot even meet a commitment it made some months ago to base three full-time equivalents at Coral Bay over the eight-week peak winter tourist season. As has been pointed out elsewhere, although CALM made a commitment for three people, at the end of April a national park ranger retired and his position was not filled and a temporary ranger's position was not filled when he was taken away from Coral Bay either at the end of June or in early July. The end result is that the only CALM officer at Coral Bay at the moment is a nature conservation officer. I understand that a nature conservation officer has few, if any, enforcement powers under the Wildlife Conservation Act or the Conservation and Land Management Act. In other words, for a significant part of the peak winter tourist season, the only CALM officer in the Coral Bay area was an education officer who could only take tourists by the hand and suggest that they should do something to protect the environment or not do certain things to damage it. CALM's law enforcement abilities were very severely diminished over the key tourist period of the recent school holidays.

I will not count my chickens until they cross the bridge.

Dr G.I. Gallop: What about giving us your position on Mauds Landing?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The Premier talks about all the things he will spend money on but the reality is that much of that money has yet to be spent to any significant degree.

Mr P.G. Pendal: I do not think chickens cross bridges.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I knew what I meant!

Mr P.G. Pendal: I knew what you meant. The poultry growers association might have some complaints.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I think that industry is still regulated, so maybe it wants to cross a bridge or two.

The fourth point of the motion calls on this House to condemn the Premier for -

being misleading in representing the views of the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority on the EPA's attitude towards the Mauds Landing proposal.

It might take a couple of minutes for me to develop my argument on this point. I read with interest the Premier's media release of 4 July 2003 headed "State Government rejects Ningaloo Reef marina project". It states in part -

Dr Gallop said the Environmental Protection Authority chairman had recommended earlier this year that the project not be approved.

I thought I was fairly up to date on what had been said publicly about the project, but I could not recall the EPA chairman saying anything along those lines. I wrote to the Premier outlining what he said in the media statement and asked -

Can you please advise me where and when the EPA chairman recommended against the development proposal at Maud's Landing, and provide me with a copy of his advice?

I thank the Premier for his reply, which was fairly prompt. The Premier's letter stated -

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 July 2003 regarding the Government's decision on the Coral Coast Marina Development project at Mauds Landing.

The quote that you refer to in your letter relates to the *Appeal Grounds and EPA Advice*, which forms Appendix 3 of the *Coral Coast Resort - Appeals Committee Report, July 2003*.

I have enclosed a copy of the report as per your request.

The Premier's office included a copy of appendix 3 but not the report itself. Nevertheless, I was grateful for the response. I read appendix 3, and I have the document here. Nowhere in this document, except in one case -

Dr G.I. Gallop: Except in one case. Come on!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The Premier should listen. Nowhere in this document, apart from one case, did the EPA or its chairman say without qualification that it did not recommend approval of the project. There are about 15 or 20 instances in which the Chairman of the EPA or the EPA made reference to the words "we do not recommend approval of this project". In every instance the use of those words was conditional, and mentioned the need for the Government to contribute money to make the project environmentally acceptable and subject the Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park to good, effective management activities. Every single

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Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

reference, bar one, was qualified. I believe the Premier misled the people of Western Australia and this Parliament by suggesting that the EPA chairman earlier this year recommended without qualification that the project not be approved. The chairman never said that on the public record. He might have said it to the Premier privately, but I have no knowledge of that. What I have read on the public record indicates that the EPA and/or the Chairman of the EPA will not support the project if the Government will not provide the money to make it environmentally acceptable. Let me give an example of the spin doctoring the Government has applied to this process.

Dr G.I. Gallop: The overwhelming weight of evidence is against it.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: It was not evidence, Premier, but supposition, emotion, feeling, thought -

Dr G.I. Gallop: Are you in favour of it?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I do not have an opinion on it because I am not the person who has made the decision to knock the project back. I am not the person who, by making that decision, has denied the opportunity for significant and urgent funds to be made available for the management of the land-based national park and the marine park.

Let me quote, just for a start, page 1 of appendix 3 of the "Coral Coast Resort - Appeals Committee Report, July 2003". The section is headed "Appeal Grounds and EPA Advice". This is the document that the Premier sent to me and advised was the document on which he based his Mauds Landing rejection. The first time the EPA used the words "should not be approved for implementation" is at the bottom of the fourth paragraph on page 1. I will read not only the few words the Premier took selectively from the report, but the full section. The EPA stated -

... without an adequate management system implemented by Government to protect the values of NMP and adjacent coastal lands, the proposal should not be approved for implementation.

Do members want me to read it again?

Ms K. Hodson-Thomas: Read it again.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I thank the member for Carine. It reads -

... without an adequate management system implemented by Government to protect the value of NMP and adjacent coastal lands, the proposal should not be approved for implementation.

Qualified references are found throughout this document to "should not be approved", but there is no way that anyone in the world - except maybe the member for Ballajura - could interpret the EPA advice other than that the Ningaloo Marine Park and Cape Range National Park desperately need management input; in other words, this proposal is a way for the Government to put money into the marine park and land-based national park while approving the Mauds Landing marina development. The Premier has gone out and deliberately misled the people of Western Australia by forgetting about the conditions attached to the EPA recommendations and statements; he simply quoted very selectively a few words to argue his case. On the third paragraph of page 9, the EPA comments on its report to the appeals committee as follows -

If the Government, as a matter of philosophy and practice does not wish to provide the resources necessary to develop and implement a rigorous and legally sound management framework for this proposal, then the proposal should not be allowed to proceed.

How many quotes or examples does the Premier want me to extract from the document to highlight the fact that he has selectively quoted and misrepresented the position of the EPA and/or the position of the Chairman of the EPA and/or the comments of the appeals committee? I could list others, but I do not wish to do so. I will refer to an exception, however. The Premier may recall that a few minutes ago I said that 20-odd references in appendix 3 outlined the EPA's view that, only subject to conditions, the project should not go ahead. Any reasonable person would interpret that as the project should go ahead subject to these conditions; this is because urgent management activities are needed to protect the entire Ningaloo Marine Park and the national park. I now refer to the one exception, which is on page 46 of appendix 3 of the report. So that I cannot be accused of quoting selectively in the way the Premier has done, I cite the one exception. The fourth last paragraph on page 46 of appendix 3 states -

In view of these matters, the EPA's overarching advice to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage was that the proposal should not be approved for implementation, even with the conditions set out in Bulletin 1073.

The same paragraph continues -

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Making the proposal environmentally acceptable would require a significant involvement and investment by Government into the management of the NMP on an ongoing basis.

In other words, in the one exception I found - one which the Premier could potentially say that he actually quoted and represented with some honesty the Chairman of the EPA - it states that the proposal can be made environmentally acceptable. Does the Premier and the backbench hear that statement? The EPA said that the Mauds Landing marina development proposal could have been made environmentally acceptable. I challenge members to read appendix 3. My yellow tags on this report represent about 20 different places where the message from the EPA is clear: it does not say it supports the Mauds Landing proposal, but -

Dr G.I. Gallop: What was its overarching advice?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I thank the Premier; come in spinner! The fourth paragraph and the last sentence on page 18 very accurately summarises the EPA's overall position. I read it for members -

The EPA's recommendation 10 specifically relates to a whole-of-Government commitment to long term management and implementation of a management system for the NMP in order to make the proposal environmentally acceptable.

That was the challenge the EPA threw on the Premier's shoulders as he fulfilled the role for the Minister for the Environment.

Dr G.I. Gallop: Are you saying we should have approved the project?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: No. I indicate where I think the Premier has misled the people of Western Australia. Worse than that, the EPA has recommended repeatedly where there is an urgent need for management action to protect the wonderful World Heritage value area, and the Premier has missed an opportunity to put that into effect.

Mr M.P. Whitely: If you are such a fan of the EPA, if you get into government and are Minister for the Environment, would you abide by the EPA determination in the case of the Mundijong mineral sands mine? Can you give that undertaking now? Are you a fan of the EPA and would you back its determination in those circumstances?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The member's question shows that he does not understand the role of the EPA. He used the word "determination"; it makes recommendations, not determinations.

Mr M.P. Whitely: Would you obey the recommendation?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: How does one obey a recommendation?

Mr M.P. Whitely: Will you follow the recommendation? I'm sorry. Stop ducking the question!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The member will like this: the answer is yes and no. If I happen to be the next Minister for the Environment should there be a change of Government -

Mr P.G. Pendal: It's highly likely.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I thank the member for South Perth. In that case, I will assess every case on its merits, and part of that assessment will give full and due consideration to the recommendation of the EPA. Did the member hear that?

Mr M.P. Whitely: Your hypocrisy is astonishing!

Mr B.K. MASTERS: The member for Roleystone has had his day. He has shown once again that he does not understand the environmental protection assessment process in Western Australia. I thank him for that contribution because he has shown yet again his lack of understanding. Just in case I got it wrong and the member for Roleystone was not referring to appendix 3 of the appeals convenor's report but, in fact, to the report issued by the appeals committee, of which appendix 3 is part, I downloaded the report from the Internet - the Premier's office did not send it to me. Throughout the document - in only five places this time - are very significant and important qualifications that state that if the Government is not prepared to put its money where its mouth is and properly protect the Ningaloo Marine Park and the Cape Range National Park, only then should the Mauds Landing marina development be knocked on the head.

Dr G.I. Gallop: Hang on, where does he say that?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Thank you; come in spinner.

Dr G.I. Gallop: Come on! He never said that anywhere.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
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Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Computers are wonderful things and the Premier should learn how to use them.

I loaded this appeals committee report onto my screen and then searched for the words “should not be approved”. I found them in seven places in the document. The Premier in his media release of 4 July said that the project should not be approved, and I found those words on pages 4, 5, 7, 10, 13 and 22 of the report. The document uses the words “should not be approved for implementation” twice on page 7. Again, the issue is not about taking those words in isolation but about putting them in context. The appeals committee report said -

The EPA advised that although the thrust of the EPA’s advice was that the proposal should not be approved for implementation, the *Environmental Protection Act (1986)* sets out that the EPA should provide a set of conditions that would need to be fulfilled by the proponent if a decision is made by Government to allow the proposal to be implemented.

Dr G.I. Gallop: If, if, if! That is absolutely fundamental.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Just a minute. In other words, Premier, it means if a proposal can be made to be environmentally acceptable.

Dr G.I. Gallop: No - if the Government makes a decision. You are misreading it.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: No. If a proposal can be made environmentally acceptable and there are overwhelming benefits to the environment away from the development of that proposal site, why on earth would the Government not accept those conditions?

Dr G.I. Gallop: Is that your view?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: No, I am asking the Premier. In a media release on 4 July he stated unequivocally that the Chairman of the Environmental Protection Authority had recommended against the proposal. The whole issue is that he had not.

Dr G.I. Gallop: The quote is there. Read it yourself.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: Exactly.

Mrs D.J. Guise: Am I to understand that what you are saying is that it is acceptable from an environmental standpoint to accept that there will be environmental damage in one place because you have a reason to hold out for something else?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: No, that is not what the EPA said and it is not what I am saying. The EPA said that if a package of measures was implemented to protect the Ningaloo Marine Park and the Cape Range National Park, the Mauds Landing development proposal would be environmentally acceptable.

Dr G.I. Gallop: Is that your view?

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I have not determined a view yet. In the fullness of time, meaning closer to the election date, the Premier will find out what I think about the subject. Again, in about seven places in this appeals report on the proposed coral coast resort -

Dr G.I. Gallop: I think we know what the Liberal Party thinks, but maybe not what you think.

Mr C.J. Barnett: The Labor Party started the proposal when it was previously in government. The Premier was a member of that Labor Government in the late 1980s and early 1990s when it started and progressed the project.

Dr G.I. Gallop: We have done the right thing and you know it.

Mr C.J. Barnett: That is a little detail you just forgot. It was a Labor Party initiative and you were a cabinet minister in the Lawrence Government at the time. You continually forget that because you cannot be truthful with the people of this State. I tell the people of this State the truth, unlike you; you just spin.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): I call to order the member for Cottesloe. The member for Vasse has the floor.

Mr B.K. MASTERS: I agree with the comments of the Leader of the Opposition but I will not dwell on them now.

I have made the point that on four grounds this Premier should be condemned by the House. He should be condemned for wasting money in the way he announced the decision to knock back the Mauds Landing proposal. He should be condemned also for spending \$350 000 on advertising for so-called community input when a lesser sum of money would have been more than adequate. The conclusion therefore is that the money has been spent for blatant political purposes. The Premier should be condemned also for treating the proponents

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
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of the development with less than common courtesy by flying to Ningaloo, making a public statement and sometime later then either writing to them direct or sending them a copy of his open letter to all Western Australians, which is not the normal way of doing things. The Premier stands condemned also because to date he has effectively failed to provide essential management and infrastructure funding along the 280-odd kilometres of the Ningaloo Reef coastline and the adjacent marine park. As I have taken some trouble to point out, in my view he has misled this Parliament and the people of Western Australia through a misrepresentation of the views of the Chairman of the EPA, who at no stage unequivocally said, "We don't want Mauds Landing" but in every single instance said, "If you are prepared to commit the money, the Mauds Landing project can be made environmentally acceptable and there will be enormous environmental benefits to the whole of the Ningaloo Marine Park and the Cape Range National Park." The Premier has missed that opportunity. Although he might be a good spinner, his fielding and catching is pretty poor. On that basis, I believe the House should condemn the Premier for his actions.

DR G.I. GALLOP (Victoria Park - Premier) [5.27 pm]: I will deal with each point raised by the Opposition. First, in relationship to the consultation process, I am pleased that the member for Vasse has included this in his motion because it gives me the opportunity to inform the House of an outstanding success in public participation in modern Western Australia. I am talking about the invitation to and consultation with the community to participate in the planning of the Ningaloo coast. Our Government has a real commitment to community engagement.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You are reading your speech again.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I prepared very careful speech notes on this matter because it is an important subject. This Government does not take a top-down approach to the development of Western Australia; it invites the public of Western Australia to participate.

As I pointed out by interjection to the member for Vasse, the Ningaloo Reef is a very special part of Western Australia. It is highly valued by the community. It is so valued, in fact, that we intend to seek World Heritage listing for the Ningaloo Reef and the Cape Range National Park. We want the people to be involved in this important subject.

The Government visited the area and looked at what the now Opposition did when it was in government, which was a disgrace. Report after report went nowhere. Coral Bay was allowed to grow without appropriate services and infrastructure. Urban issues were impacting on the reef and the coast. As soon as we came to government, we began to address those issues. Of course, those issues relate to effluent disposal and boating movements. As members know, the Government is proceeding with a sewerage scheme in Coral Bay, and it is currently examining the options for boat-launching facilities in that area.

Another hallmark of this Government is that it is not about quick fixes. Although the Government moved quickly to address these serious impacts, at the same time it made a commitment to a long-term vision for that area - a plan for sustainable development along the Ningaloo coast. Of course, the cornerstone of that is community consultation. I have no hesitation in saying in the Parliament, on talkback radio or throughout Western Australia generally that the current Minister for Planning and Infrastructure has initiated major community consultations on contentious issues. She should be applauded for the way in which she is overturning the traditional, conservative and insular approach taken to planning in Western Australia under the Liberals.

I am not aware of any other community consultation process undertaken in regional Western Australia that has been so comprehensive and successful. I gauge our success on the basis that there have been 15 716 visits to the web site, and of course there have been a lot more hits than that. Members should listen to this: 1 850 future directions papers have been mailed out, and another 1 000 copies are being printed currently. That shows the interest in this region that exists in Western Australia and the commitment that people have to proper planning for the area. The Government has invited that participation through the advertisements that have been shown on television.

In addition to the web and media coverage, there will be public information sessions that will commence in Albany on 18 August.

Mr P.B. Watson: I'll be there.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The member for Albany will be there. That will be followed by an information session in Bunbury. The member for Bunbury is not with us at the moment.

Government members: He is.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
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Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Where is he? My apologies to the member for Bunbury. He is in the Chair. The member for Bunbury has taken a lot of interest in the future of the Ningaloo region. I am sure that the meeting in Bunbury will be excellent. There will be an information day in Carnarvon on 26 August, followed by others at Coral Bay and Exmouth. A special meeting has also been arranged with all the Aboriginal interests in that area. This Government is consulting the people on this important area. The consultation has been an outstanding success, and every dollar spent on the television advertising has been worth it.

I will deal with the second issue, which is the management and infrastructure funding in that area. I find it extraordinary that the Opposition has the gall to raise the issue of our commitment to infrastructure. I have already mentioned the Government's commitment to a sewerage scheme and a boat-launching facility for Coral Bay. It appears that the member for Vasse considers that up to \$7 million for sewerage and \$2 million for a boat-launching facility is insignificant. The previous Government never committed or spent money or did planning for Coral Bay's future; this Government has.

It is not just a question of Coral Bay; it is a question of the whole coast. Members should go to Exmouth and Carnarvon today to see the Labor Government's commitment to those areas. Exmouth has the marina development, which is a \$16.2 million project managed by LandCorp that builds on the service infrastructure of the Exmouth boat harbour, international passenger terminal and visitor centre. Carnarvon has been boosted by the \$11 million investment in the Northwater residential precinct, a \$2.8 million 100-metre land-backed wharf and a \$4.7 million Aboriginal heritage and cultural centre. The Government has also funded the repair and improvement of the Carnarvon jetty. All of that is important infrastructure for that region.

Mr B.K. Masters: How will that save the Ningaloo Reef?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The member does not understand the Ningaloo Reef, does he?

Mr B.K. Masters: Explain to me how -

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The member cannot work it out. Does the member not think that residential and resort development in Carnarvon and Exmouth will help to save the Ningaloo Reef?

Mr C.J. Barnett: No.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The Opposition has a problem. The problem is that it wants Mauds Landing. That is the truth of the matter. Hon Norman Moore, a member for the area, has made that clear. The Liberal Party wants the Mauds Landing development. Why will it not come clean and tell the people of Western Australia that that is its position?

Mr R.N. Sweetman: How much did you spend there?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: We are committed to a triple-bottom-line approach to government; that is, an economic, social and environmental approach.

Mr C.J. Barnett: I remember your sustainability report. I have never seen a load of rubbish like it.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition is in the Dark Ages when it comes to planning.

The Government wants to have appropriate development for that region, and it will make sure that happens. The Government has made a commitment to market the region, to provide infrastructure for the region and to preserve the environment, which is the key to the future of the region. Of course, that is where the Government differs from the opposition parties.

I will deal with the question of Department of Conservation and Land Management resources. The member for Masse - sorry, the member for Vasse -

Mr R.N. Sweetman: No, that was the last member.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: That was the last one; that is right. The member for Vasse has obviously forgotten that when Labor came into office there was the magnificent allocation of one half of one ranger for the Coral Bay area. We have upgraded that to a full-time marine reserves officer and a full-time marine park ranger. In addition, a specialist officer was engaged from mid October 2002 to mid April 2003 to assist in turtle management activities, and additional officers are located in Coral Bay during the school holidays. Perth-based specialists regularly visit the region to deal with management issues, and three new officers will be appointed to service the Exmouth district. This will bring the full-time equivalent allocation for the district to 20.5, at a cost of \$1.8 million. Yet the Opposition comes into this place and talks to us about human resources to make sure that we protect that area properly. The Government has the runs on the board; the Opposition did nothing. From the

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Liberal Party's record in government and its continuing comments in opposition, it is clear that it does not understand the environment and the needs of the area and does not have a commitment to it.

The Government is looking at another issue as part of the planning, and it will be keen to get public comment on it. What type of management structure will be needed for that area? There is the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority model and the Rottneest Island Authority-type model. The Government is examining various models so that it can protect that area for the future. That is the question of infrastructure and resources.

I will deal with the environmental assessment procedure. First, had the member done his homework, he would have found that the Premier, as delegated minister on matters in relation to appeals on the proposal, gave both specific and detailed reasons for the rejection of the proposal. The reasons for the decision were detailed in letters to the appellants, and all relevant persons were notified of the decision in accordance with the Environmental Protection Act.

I will deal with the Environmental Protection Authority. When I commented on this issue when announcing our decision, I said a couple of things. The first thing I said, which was very important, was that the overwhelming weight of evidence in the reports presented to government was that too many risks were associated with the Mauds Landing development. That was the overwhelming advice that was given. On the specific question of the EPA, I received a letter from the chairman after he released his first report. In that letter he said -

At my media conference held on the day of the release of the EPA report I expressed the combination of the key EPA recommendations about the proposal and the need for an off-site environmental management system in the following terms:-

“The short answer to the question being asked of the Environmental Protection Authority is that the proposal as it stands should not be implemented, -

Members should listen to this -

even with the conditions set out in Appendix 4 of the EPA report.

The chairman goes on to state, and the member for Vasse quoted this -

Making the proposal environmentally acceptable would require significant involvement and investment by Government into the management of the Ningaloo Marine Park.”

Mr B.K. Masters: And you weren't prepared to make that investment.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Hang on. The member should just wait. I refer to the advice given by the EPA to the Government in the appeals process.

Mr B.K. Masters: Can you quote a page number?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: It is page 2 of the advice of the Environmental Protection Authority in the appeals process. It is quite a long quote. It states -

When considering the appeal grounds and advice provided below it is important to note the EPA Chairman's summary of the EPA's overarching advice to the Minister for the Environment and Heritage that:

‘... the proposal as it stands should not be approved for implementation, even with the conditions set out in Appendix 4 of the EPA report. Making the proposal environmentally acceptable would require significant involvement and investment by Government into the management of the Ningaloo Marine Park’. The area requiring intensive management would include coastal lands adjacent to the Ningaloo Marine Park (NMP) - areas that are beyond the proponent's authority to manage. The overarching advice is a summary of Recommendations 10, 11 and 12 in EPA Bulletin 1073.

The EPA Chairman wrote to Premier on 17 December 2002 setting out a summary of the EPA's overarching advice and information about the appeal approach.

Although the thrust of the EPA's advice was that the proposal should not be approved for implementation, the EP Act sets out that the EPA should provide a set of conditions that would need to be fulfilled by the proponent if a decision is made by Government to allow the proposal to be implemented.

Several appellants misinterpreted the EPA's overarching advice, considering that the EPA had recommended conditional approval be granted to the proposal. I trust that the summary provided above clarifies and articulates the EPA's position in relation to the CCR proposal.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

That is it; it is very clear. This is the way the Environmental Protection Act works. The Environmental Protection Authority gives advice. At the end of the day, the Government can make the decision. The EPA stated that, on the basis of what it had, this development should not be approved, but if the Government of the day decided to make another decision, these sorts of conditions should be applied. The opposition spokesman misrepresented the advice of the EPA. The overwhelming weight of environmental advice is against Mauds Landing. That is clear from all of the documents that have been produced and from the advice of the EPA. The opposition spokesperson is misinterpreting what was said by the EPA, and the quotations I have provided today clearly show that.

Mr B.K. Masters: You are spinning again.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I have quoted the documents. Why did I make the decision that I did?

Mr B.K. Masters: For the green votes, of course; not to protect the environment. If you wanted to protect the environment, you could have read that EPA report and accepted that it -

Dr G.I. GALLOP: As I said to the people of Western Australia, I am not willing to risk the Ningaloo Reef, but members on the other side are. That is the difference between the two sides of Western Australian politics on this issue. The proposal for development was adjacent to the Ningaloo Reef and the Ningaloo Marine Park. The Ningaloo Reef is the largest fringing coral reef in Australia and one of the longest fringing barrier reefs in the world. The Ningaloo Marine Park is an icon of state, national and international significance. The area of Mauds Landing is located on the shores of Bateman Bay in the southern sector of the Ningaloo Marine Park. The area adjacent to the project site is a recreation zone under the Ningaloo Marine Park management plan. That is the context of the area we are dealing with.

The large scale and form of the proposal, including an inland marina, represents a major environmental impact in a coastal area adjacent to a marine park. Potential threats to the marine environmental values of Ningaloo Marine Park arising from the proposal included fishing pressure, boat strikes, disturbance to wildlife, habitat degradation and pollution. I read the report. Did the shadow Minister for the Environment? Did he read all of those reports indicating those threats?

In his advice the EPA chairman reported that the proposal as it stood should not be approved for implementation, even with the conditions set out in appendix 4 of the EPA report. This was another very important consideration that entered my mind: there was concern about the adequacy of the baseline information, the capacity for management of human-use pressures associated with the proposal and its potential impacts on Bateman Bay and the wider Ningaloo Marine Park.

I now go to those baseline issues, which are the issues that those opposite would have ignored if they were in government. This very interesting advice was given by the authorities in that area about the research that would be needed in the marine park to make sure that we did the right thing.

Mr B.K. Masters: Are any of these reports signed by Barry Wilson, out of interest?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I hope that interjection is recorded. We know where the member is coming from. This document presents the view of the research requirements identified by the department for this area -

Mr B.K. Masters: Which department?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The Department of Conservation and Land Management. There are nine areas of baseline research that the department said should be done in this area concerning our knowledge of the environment. Those opposite wanted to put at risk Ningaloo and the marine park that surrounds Ningaloo in the interests of "development". This is the baseline information we needed -

- improved inventories and baseline datasets for marine wildlife to support a better assessment of the ecological significance of Bateman Bay for marine wildlife;

- more detailed mapping of marine habitats to identify marine communities that are sensitive and/or vulnerable to direct impacts such as diver and anchor/boat damage;

- improved inventories and baseline data sets for human in the marine and terrestrial area to facilitate and improved assessment of existing and potential threats;

- development of predictive models for the levels and type of human activities in the area (marine and terrestrial);

- improved baselines of local populations of 'site-attached' targeted fish species to assess their vulnerability to increased fishing effort;

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

improved inventories and baseline datasets of toxic contaminant concentrations in water and sediments;
introduced marine pests survey;
improved understanding of the oceanography of Bateman Bay -

That is where those opposite would have put this development -

to better assess the fate and potential impacts of oil spills, toxic contamination etc resulting from the
development; and

more detailed analysis and prioritisation of key threatening processes to better focus ongoing research
and management priorities on the major issues.

That is what CALM advised the Government about the baseline information in this area. We are not willing to
risk the Ningaloo. It is very clear where we stand on this issue.

Mr B.K. Masters: I do not doubt that all that baseline work needed to be done, but the question is how does that
relate to the approval of a Mauds Landing development?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: That is the Opposition's approach: we will approve the development today and do the
research tomorrow! That is what the member is saying. This is the man who wants to be Minister for the
Environment in Western Australia.

Mr B.K. Masters: You don't understand.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: I understand the member's philosophy only too well.

In summary, the critical issues relating to the proposal arise from its scale and form, and its location in a
sensitive environment. The environmental risks and management needs for the proposal have not been
demonstrated to be environmentally acceptable. There is also uncertainty as to a suitable mechanism to achieve
adequate long-term management of the proposal.

The Government of Western Australia, with me as the delegated authority, discharged its functions properly and
in the interests of the people of Western Australia and the sustainable development of our State, without putting
at risk our icon, the Ningaloo Reef and the marine park. It depresses me that the Opposition and others in our
community have denigrated the activities of individuals such as Tim Winton and Luc Longley. I will tell
members why it depresses me. As members would know, Luc Longley is internationally famous for his great
skill and capacity in basketball. He is a Western Australian. When Luc Longley retired from the National
Basketball League, he came back to Western Australia and took an interest in our State and its future and he
participated in public debates on the forests and Ningaloo, and they denigrate him!

Mr C.J. Barnett: Who denigrated him?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The member for Vasse denigrated him in his speech.

Mr B.K. Masters: I did not mention Luc Longley.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Then who was the member talking about?

Mr B.K. Masters: No-one.

Several members interjected.

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Members may laugh, but the Premier has just accused the member for Vasse of denigrating
Luc Longley, a very famous and well-respected Western Australian. The member for Vasse did not denigrate
that individual, and I ask the Premier to withdraw.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr A.J. Dean): There is no point of order.

Debate Resumed

Mr B.K. Masters: I interjected to say Tim Winton.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Premier has the floor.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: So it is Tim Winton, is it?

Mr B.K. Masters: But I did not denigrate him at all.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Then why did the member raise the subject of their participation? Why did he mention them?

Point of Order

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Mr Acting Speaker, there is a point of order before the Chair and I request that you deal with it.

The ACTING SPEAKER: I have ruled on it. I have said there is no point of order.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I could not hear it, Mr Acting Speaker. No-one could hear it because the Premier was shouting. I would appreciate it if you would explain and restate your ruling.

The ACTING SPEAKER: There is no point of order. The Premier has the floor.

Debate Resumed

Dr G.I. GALLOP: We have a vigorous democracy.

Mr C.J. Barnett: This is another example of Labor's democracy - you can say something and it is okay.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I interpret that as a slur on the standing of the Chair. I call the Leader of the Opposition to order for that, and if he persists with that point of view I will have no hesitation in going one step further.

Mr C.J. Barnett: Okay.

Points of Order

Mr A.D. MARSHALL: Point of order.

The ACTING SPEAKER: On what? Not on my ruling?

Mr A.D. MARSHALL: Not on your ruling, Mr Acting Speaker, but on the unsatisfactory situation that Luc Longley's name has been denigrated in *Hansard*. It would not be a correct mention in *Hansard* for the member for Vasse to be said to have denigrated Luc Longley. There should be a counter in *Hansard* to say that that did not occur. It is a denigration that is open to public comment.

Mr J.C. KOBELKE: That is not a point of order, Mr Acting Speaker. I also ask you to consider that it is a breach of standing orders to make a point of order quite frivolously when there is no point of order. Also, it is an abuse of standing orders to use the standing orders in order to enter into the debate. I believe the last two points of order were such an abuse.

The ACTING SPEAKER: The member for Dawesville does not have a point of order. It is the same point of order that I have already ruled on twice and now am ruling on for the third time. There is no point of order, and the member for Dawesville is verging on the trivial.

Debate Resumed

Dr G.I. GALLOP: It has been clear in Western Australia in recent days that the participation of well-known Western Australians such as Luc Longley and Tim Winton has been subject to criticism. Have I been living in the same State as members of the Opposition? Luc Longley and Tim Winton have been criticised. We should not be criticising people for participating in debates and for caring about the future of our State. The member for Vasse knows only too well the implications that he made in his speech, but he is now trying to weasel his way out of them when the debate is getting a bit willing. I think it is very good, Leader of the Opposition, that these people are participating in the debates.

Mr C.J. Barnett: What did I say?

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition should look at *Hansard*.

Mr C.J. Barnett: You have made accusations against the member for Vasse and you do not have the courage to repeat them.

The ACTING SPEAKER: Order, Leader of the Opposition!

Dr G.I. GALLOP: The Leader of the Opposition does not have the courage to apologise to the Acting Speaker for what he did. We know where the Leader of the Opposition stands. He does not even have the courage to apologise to the Acting Speaker for his behaviour.

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Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Mr C.J. Barnett: I am making no reflection on the Acting Speaker. I am reflecting on you for making an accusation about Luc Longley.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: There we go! He is misinterpreting history again!

The Government of Western Australia has made a good decision. The Government of Western Australia is now consulting with the people about the sustainable development of the Ningaloo coast. The Government of Western Australia is spending a significant amount of money on infrastructure development along the Ningaloo coast in Coral Bay, Exmouth and Carnarvon. We remain committed to a sustainable future for that area. I am very proud to be part of a Government that makes good decisions based upon the future - not a Government that is caught up in the sort of philosophy and approach to planning that was not relevant even in the 1950s. However, that is where the Opposition is caught up. The Opposition is caught up in the past. We are in the future, and we will take Western Australia into the future. It was a good decision and it was made properly, and we are following it up with consultation on the proper and orderly development of that area.

MR R.N. SWEETMAN (Ningaloo) [5.55 pm]: As the member for the Ningaloo area, I want to make a few comments on this matter. I know others also wish to speak on this matter, so I will endeavour to be brief. I wish to refer to the Premier's lack of manners with regard to the local member. I thought the protocols for ministers, who are supposed to represent all of the people all of the time and who take an oath to that effect -

Dr G.I. Gallop: The two local shire presidents were there. You should have been there, and I apologise to you.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: The apology is accepted. However, had it not been for the fact that Howard Sattler rang me at six o'clock in the morning to tell me that the Premier would be flying to the Coral Bay area that day, I would not have known that the decision was to be announced that day. If I had been in the area on that day and had not had to fly to Perth, I probably would have gatecrashed the party anyway. However, I had to be in Perth to honour the contribution to mining that has been made by George Savell, and I was happy to accept and go ahead with the appointment to be at that luncheon.

In order to consider the argument about Mauds Landing, Coral Bay and Ningaloo Reef justice, we need to go back a way. I can go back to 1984, when I was elected to the Shire of Carnarvon to represent the Babbage Island ward. The council of the Shire of Carnarvon had been dismissed in 1983, and I went into a new restructured council in May 1984. Within a month or two of my being elected to the Shire of Carnarvon, we got a state government-commissioned report that had been done by Rory O'Brien, who worked for either the Department of Conservation and Land Management or the agency that later became CALM. He had done a report on the Bills Bay area in particular and other areas adjacent to Coral Bay. His strongest recommendation to us as the local shire was to place an immediate moratorium on development and shut down Coral Bay within five years. The Shire of Carnarvon at that time had a lot of reasons that it wanted to agree with Rory O'Brien and that state government-commissioned report. Coral Bay was a thorn in the side of the Shire of Carnarvon at that time and I guess it has continued to be in the nearly two decades since that time. There were problems with the enforcement of by-laws, with planning approvals and with the stakeholders in that region, such as Mr Brogan and Mr Monk, who were very difficult people to deal with as a shire. There was also extreme frustration within the Shire of Carnarvon about the very narrow rate base in Coral Bay. The rate base in Coral Bay was something like \$1 000 or \$2 000, yet the ratepayers in Carnarvon were contributing between \$100 000 and \$120 000 a year to the upkeep of Coral Bay. A lot of reasons, and I guess problems, were encouraging the shire to look seriously at placing a moratorium on development and at the ultimate closure of Coral Bay. However, separate from that, we accepted very good advice about the degradation of the reef and the beach and dune areas around Coral Bay.

Some six months after the Shire of Carnarvon adopted that position and applied a moratorium, with the ultimate closure of Coral Bay, the first of the development applications came in. I recall it fairly vividly. It was from Mr Bill Brogan, who wanted to do something else on his park there, and the shire advised him that there was a moratorium on development and it would not be issuing any planning approvals or building permits. In record time he won on appeal to the minister. The shire upheld the recommendation of the report commissioned by the State Government, the first application to develop was knocked back by the shire and it then went to the State Government. The same minister involved in commissioning that report in the first instance then turned around and contradicted the recommendation that the shire, as the local community group responsible for the Coral Bay area, was quite happy to accept. It was very clear after that to the shire that it had to change its position. It was clear that it would never be able to enforce a moratorium or ultimately close Coral Bay. The shire then worked with the members of the local Coral Bay community, who were quite few in number compared with the number today, and put in place some basic management plans for both the onshore and offshore environment, navigable waterways, safety areas and reserve areas in which there would be no fishing, as well as policies for fishing the reef. All of a sudden the area was being looked after a lot better than it had been previously. As a consequence,

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

it stood the test of time for probably the next five years, and perhaps even as long as 10 years, before the real pressure from visitors started to tell.

I will go back through the process and my involvement as a councillor at the Shire of Carnarvon. I recall that in 1987 the proponents of the Mauds Landing development - Coral Coast Marina Development Pty Ltd - Ken Ryan and Richard Hay, briefed the council on a proposal for a concept they had for an area called Mauds Landing. Interestingly, even in 1987 they gave us reasons for selecting the Mauds Landing area, some three kilometres north of Coral Bay. It was a fairly impoverished landform, known locally as birrida country. It was marshy country and it would not carry one sheep to 1 000 acres. It was pretty ordinary country. That was the land-base component of the Mauds Landing development. The marina section was half a kilometre to three-quarters of a kilometre long. It really would have been an inland development, but I accept that there would have been interaction with the marine environment, because of the navigable waterway from the marina, through the channel and the breakwater, and ultimately into the ocean that is couched within Ningaloo Reef. Ultimately there would have been interaction. The council saw Mauds Landing, as did the State Government at that time, as its best chance to get something right from the ground up. At the time the proponents briefed the Shire of Carnarvon about what they wanted to do at Mauds Landing, they had entered into a memorandum of understanding with the State Government, so they had done their groundwork. They did not just come to us on a whim for our support to do this. They had already been in direct consultation and dialogue with the minister, the Government and the Cabinet of the day and had certain approvals under that memorandum of understanding to achieve certain things. In return for that, the Government was obligated to give certain commitments on the basis that the proponents got the approvals and achieved those milestones in certain time frames. The rest is history.

It has taken from 1987 to 2003 for it to be finally killed off once and for all. However, that does not alter the fact that I remain a supporter of a Mauds Landing-style concept or development - call it what members will - because it is still the lesser of all evils. I guess we can refer to Coral Bay as the sum of all evils. That is what I find so paradoxical about this argument. We have spent all our time listening to the arguments and submissions and, on occasions, even the wild rantings of people trying to stop the Mauds Landing development without even a reference to Coral Bay. I still think it is not too late. If I was the government minister, I would be doing something about closing down Coral Bay. It is not too late and I think spending \$7.5 million on a sewerage system at Coral Bay is just plain stupid. It is too big. There are already too many visitors to the area. In my mind, they need to be settled somewhere else and given compensation in another area. Already the reef is under enormous pressure and some of that is natural pressure. The member for Carine visited the area last year as someone who was very open minded and objective in trying to arrive at a conclusion on whether to support the resort or save Ningaloo Reef. We dived over the coral. We had to swim a long way. Fortunately, the member for Carine and I are very strong swimmers and we made it across all the dead coral. We had to swim out about 250 metres before we could see anything alive. That is just a natural phenomenon - a natural calamity. It happened in 1989. Some very significant tracts of coral in Bills Bay died. Unfortunately, the coral kill of early 2002 was much more significant. Coral dies if the conditions are not right when the coral spawns; in other words, if the swell and the wind come from the wrong direction, it can trap the spawn against the beach. How much spawn is trapped, how much oxygen is taken out of the water and, consequently, how much coral dies depends on how prolific the spawn is. As the spawn died, decayed and took the oxygen out of the water, all the fast-growing corals died. Fortunately, some of the slow-growing corals such as the brain corals and some of the plate corals survived, but all the elkhorn and staghorn corals died. They had been dead about three or four months when the member for Carine and I dived over the coral. Even then they were starting to fall. It was an absolute tragedy. For a distance of 200 to 250 metres from shore the garden was basically dead and starting to collapse. Nothing looks worse, especially to someone who had dived over the area when it was pristine and had all its colour and marine life around the coral formations. It was quite eerie to see these grey and dark brown chunks of dead coral falling to the ground. As devastating as that coral kill has been, it will probably be back in 20 to 25 years, so it will not take hundreds of years to be restored. In the short time between that calamity and when we dived over the reef, there had been some rejuvenation. Some of the polyps had lodged on some of the dead coral and was starting to grow. Although they were only millimetres long, at least it was an indication that the reef was on its way back.

I need to dwell on Coral Bay a little longer. I understand the sewerage plant is being designed to cope with a population of 4 000 people. Of course, that is residual population and visitors to the area. It is also my understanding - I think these are the latest figures - that there are something like 1 841 bed places in Coral Bay at the moment. We need to presume that once the sewerage goes in, those 1 841 bed places will increase to close to 4 000. That is the reality of the matter. Basic maths tell us that they are planning for a permanent or semipermanent population in Coral Bay of another 2 200 people.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Mr P.G. Pandal: Who are the people making those plans?

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: The Government. There is a district plan in place. Most of the land in Coral Bay is still leasehold, because normalisation has not taken place. The pub is on one of the very few freehold sites in Coral Bay. Separate from that is leasehold land and subleasehold land. The people who wanted to build houses and holiday shacks up there 30 years ago thought normalisation would take place within five or 10 years, so they were happy to build on a subleased piece of land. They presumed that not long after they built their houses, they would have the titles to the land on which they had built. Over a long period things have not evolved at the rate everyone anticipated they would. There has been a strange structure in place, in which two very dominant landlords, Mr Brogan and Mr Monk, own most of Coral Bay. With a district plan in place, and once normalisation takes place, a whole lot of infill can occur within the leasehold and special leased blocks that are still there.

I will be kind to the Government and say that the reason it did not look at what could happen at Coral Bay was an oversight. An oversight must also have been the reason that people like Tim Winton and his crusaders did not concentrate on Coral Bay. Mauds Landing has been the icon. Those people feel that now that the development has been knocked back, they have saved Ningaloo Reef and can go away and die happy. It could not be further from the truth.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It is just rubbish. You are normally a sensible person. You are talking complete rubbish.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: Can the minister give an undertaking that Coral Bay will not have a population of 4 000 people?

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I can give you an undertaking that we are planning for the orderly development of Coral Bay.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: That is what we are worried about.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: I am sure you are.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: We are extremely worried.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: It has not been orderly. During the eight years you were in government, you did absolutely nothing. Thanks to your efforts, we have Soweto by the sea. You were the member for eight years. You did nothing.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: At the next election I will have been a member for eight years. For four years I was a government backbencher. I took ministers, including the Minister for Water Resources, to Coral Bay on several occasions. I did not want the water resources minister to fall into the same trap as the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure. There is no way in the world the Government should construct a \$7.5 million sewage treatment plant in Coral Bay. It should install a package plant, which on our estimations at the time could have been done for \$1.8 million, or \$2.4 million at most. Those in the existing development could afford to pay the rates associated with that. By that I mean the settlement could repay the debt within a reasonable time under cost recovery. Such a plant also would help place a clamp on the further expansion of Coral Bay. That was absolutely central in my mind when I tried to persuade the minister to not go down the road of installing a massive sewage treatment plant. I still think that is the best way to go.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: Make a submission.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: It is a very big mistake to spend \$7.5 million building an enormous effluent plant that will cater for a population that is twice as big as that of the Coral Bay settlement site.

I speak about some items the Premier mentioned and relate those to an article that appeared in my local paper, *The Northern Guardian*, on 9 July. In question time today and in his later address to the Parliament, the Premier made reference to things the Government is doing to accommodate the influx of visitors into places like Carnarvon and Exmouth. He has referred to the expenditure of \$11 million. That originally threw us for a while because the first mention of it by the Government did not refer to the Northwater development in Carnarvon. Many people in Carnarvon got pretty excited because they thought they would get an \$11 million development. As the local member, I started to think that the Government was looking at the town as I do and that it was a fantastic, great and clever idea to contribute the money. I was almost half pleased that the Premier had knocked back the Mauds Landing development. However, it was not to be. The money relates to the Northwater development. I think the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure will be very fair in her assessment of the Northwater development. Has the Government put even one dollar into Northwater?

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We acknowledge that it was a project that commenced under your Government.

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: All the money was expended under our Government. The first stage of a four-stage development has been fully serviced. About 23 of 34 blocks have been sold. However, to date the Labor Government has not done any work on the expansion of that development. Although most people thought the \$11 million would be new money to the town and region, Carnarvon has already received its entitlement.

In question time today the Premier referred to the Learmonth international airstrip. One of the reasons I would have liked the Premier to table the document he referred to in question time is that I think he used an erroneous figure in relation to the cost of that project and the amount of state money that went into it. For the House's benefit, my recollection is that the project cost something like \$5 million, about \$4 million of which came from the trust fund resulting from the sale of Navy houses. Less than \$1 million of that money was state government money. Further, the project was completed in 1999, prior to the election of the Gallop Labor Government.

The Exmouth marina is an interesting project. The first part of it cost \$17.5 million, about \$4 million of which also came from the trust fund. The rest was state government money delivered through the Department of Transport and LandCorp. I think it was a shared development, but I do not want to be too exact about that. I thought that stage 2 would cost \$10 million or \$11 million, but the Premier has said it will cost \$14 million. That is a very huge capital work for Exmouth. I do not begrudge it that. However, as I say to a few Exmouth people, sooner or later we must get this place to hunt. I hope we ultimately get something for all the effort and public funds that have gone into the place.

I refer to the \$10 million for Coral Bay, of which amount between \$7 million and \$7.5 million is for sewerage. The rest of the money is for the boat ramp. We have had money rolling in the budget, as has the member for Armadale since she became minister, including the same money which has been in the budget year in and year out, and which has been topped up as we go. We hope that one day we will get the boat ramp. For what it is worth, the boat ramp should be built at Monk Head, regardless of what the Government is looking at doing at North Bills Bay and the Bateman Bay area.

[Leave granted for the member's time to be extended.]

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: I now refer to some of the media coverage. The media have been willing participants in the protests that have taken place against the Mauds Landing development. The information coming from the media could not have been more stark than that shown on the commercial television stations after the Premier made the announcement. The television coverage that night was quite extensive. However, I have noticed that whenever Mauds Landing gets coverage we do not see pictures of Mauds Landing either in part or in its entirety. We see only a glimpse of a nice white beach and we are left to assume that that beach is Mauds Landing. Perhaps, from time to time, the footage has been of the beach at Mauds Landing. However, most of the time that we hear Mauds Landing mentioned the coverage cuts to the coral, the manta rays, the dugongs and the whale sharks, all of which are not within a bull's roar of Mauds Landing. That is the reality of the situation. Adjacent to Mauds Landing is deep water. Mauds Landing used to have a jetty and sailing ships would come in and take out the wool. One of the reasons that the proponents thought that Mauds Landing was a good place for a development - apart from the fact that it was anticipated that it would become a town site - was its previous development. The coverage has been mischievous, and without ridiculing people's right to protest, we want them to be objective and honest in the way they argue their case. The media must be chastised for the part they have played in the ultimate overturn of the application to develop Mauds Landing. When Mauds Landing is mentioned, in a split second we get vision of something that is not Mauds Landing. Perhaps the media should be asking whether Coral Bay should be closed because of what is happening and then show vision of live and dead coral. Perhaps then people would travel in armies and droves to protest about the maintenance of Coral Bay, let alone its expansion.

Ms A.J. MacTiernan: We're not proposing any expansion of Coral Bay, but I will set that out.

Mr R.N. SWEETMAN: It is inevitable that it will happen unless the Government compensates people. There is a district plan, and people have the right to do it as soon as normalisation takes place. I would be very happy if the minister could convince me otherwise.

MS A.J. MacTIERNAN (Armadale - Minister for Planning and Infrastructure) [6.18 pm]: I want to briefly set out some of the broader issues and the approach that the Government has taken to get the planning for the Ningaloo Reef area right. It became evident to us very soon after we got into government that there was no real strategic development for the entire Ningaloo coast. We were conscious that, regardless of the decision that was made in relation to Mauds Landing, an enormous amount of work had to be done to get proper management up and down the coast and that the Mauds Landing project would not resolve the problems in the way often touted. Around 340 camp sites have been identified up and down that coral reef. Some of the semi-permanent camps, which are there for up to six months of the year, have no sewerage and, by and large, no waste disposal. Four-

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

wheel-drives have been seen carving up the dunes up and down the coast. As I said, regardless of the decision made about Mauds Landing, a detailed plan had to be undertaken for the entire area. We recognised that more than 150 000 people visit that area each year and, as I said, many stay for a very long time. That poses a real threat to the longevity and health of the area, particularly the reef. We recognised that people wanted that access, and that many people who would not be attracted to a Mauds Landing-style development wanted to enjoy that area. Most of these 340 or so unmanaged campsites are either accessed through or situated on pastoral leases. We immediately commenced developing scenarios for the entire coast. We very deliberately extended it from Carnarvon to Exmouth, because we recognised that Carnarvon's future had to be woven into a plan for the Ningaloo Reef. Carnarvon has the potential to be a gateway to Ningaloo, and it needed to be developed in relation to the entire coast. We saw Carnarvon at one end and Exmouth at the other offering real potential for providing anchorage for both ends of the coral reef. Even while the future of the Ningaloo area was still unresolved, we began planning for that entire coast. We started work on this report, entitled "Future Directions: Sustainable Tourism and Land Use Scenarios for the Carnarvon-Ningaloo Coast" in late 2001. Very comprehensive work was done. We put it together with the work that had already been done, updated the research and came up with five scenarios. One of those scenarios involved Mauds Landing so, once the Mauds Landing decision was made, that scenario was eliminated. It is a comprehensive plan that identifies all the different possible sites for tourist activity up and down the coast. It gives people the opportunity to give their views on each of those scenarios. It is appalling that none of this work was done under the previous Government. No real comprehensive thinking was going on about the future of that area. All the eggs were put in the Mauds Landing resort basket, as though that resort, if it were approved, would solve all those other problems, as the member for Ningaloo has admitted.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: It was a start, from the ground up.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I am not sure that it was a start because the style of tourism that predominates up and down that coast is of a very different kind from that which was to be offered at Mauds Landing.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: The kind we have now is the "rip up the dunes" kind. There are 1 200 campsites up and down the coast.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: That is what I am saying. Those people will not be corralled into the sort of resort that was being proposed at Mauds Landing, and we must accept that. We have to recognise what people want out of the place, and see how we can provide for that diversity of tourism opportunities in a managed way.

I will make some comments about Coral Bay, because the member for Ningaloo is making some suggestion that the Government is proposing a massive expansion there. I ask the member to have a look at the scenarios set out for Coral Bay

Mr R.N. Sweetman interjected.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: I will go through it with the member. Under the existing scenario, in terms of its current legal limit and looking at the number of workers, tourist beds and day visits, it is about 2 500 occupants. However, at peak, it is actually about 4 500. The actual current peak operating in Coral Bay is 4 500. Our top proposal, the most expansionary proposal, is scenario C; that is, not to allow Coral Bay to go beyond its existing peak and to be capped at 4 500 occupants. None of our scenarios entertains a level of development above the current actual, which is not the current legal limit on occupancy.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: How will you stop it? That is formalising the situation although people are camping on the periphery in shrubs and such places. They will be in camp sites in town. You'll have about 6 000 campers.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: It has not been signed off yet. It will be managed and not be the free-for-all it is today. That is part of the plan. The Government understands that people want access, but it is just not possible to allow it to be the current free-wheeling, free-for-all. Otherwise, it would destroy, as the member well knows, the very thing that attracts people to the area.

One of the other three scenarios is a total of 2 500 visitors capped at its current legal limit, but less than the current peak usage. Another option is set at 3 000 visitors and capped below the current peak usage. There is no plan for the area to expand beyond its current actual. It is recognised that all of the things the member says about Coral Bay are correct, and there must be more intense management and a proper town structure plan for the area. That does not exist. Before that decision can be made and that work can start in any detail, a decision must be made on these scenarios. One cannot look at Coral Bay in isolation any more than Mauds Landing can be considered in isolation. It must be part of an overall plan for Carnarvon to Exmouth. I assure the member that that is being done. The "Future Directions: Sustainable Tourism and Land Use Scenarios for the Carnarvon-Ningaloo Coast" paper sets out the various scenarios as options. The Government will determine by no later

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

than mid next year which of those scenarios will be the accepted policy, and it will ensure that the various statutory instruments and management regimes are put in place to deliver those scenarios.

Mr R.N. Sweetman: That means you will impose your will as with Mr Monk and violate planning and local shire by-laws. There is hardly a by-law that has not been significantly violated over time, and they remain violated to this day.

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN: Undoubtedly, it has been the wild west up there; the Government accepts that. The approach being adopted now is to determine which of these scenarios to implement. The statutory plans will be put in place to implement the chosen scenario, and to make sure it is enforced. The member knows that the Government is determined - as I have shown with the pastoralists - to ensure that it does not act unreasonably or destroy anyone's livelihood; however, it will not encounter or condone wholesale breaches of the law. A decision must be made about will happen in the area, and then get it normalised and install the proper statutory planning instruments, and we must ensure it is consistent with the overall strategy for the area. The member is right: once it is done, there must be a preparedness to ensure that the laws are implemented.

DR J.M. WOOLLARD (Alfred Cove) [6.30 pm]: I do not support the motion; in fact, I congratulate the Premier on the decision he has made on Ningaloo Reef. I am very pleased that the Government has listened to the thousands of people who want Ningaloo Reef to be protected now and in the future.

I do have a few concerns arising out of the Premier's media statement. The Premier has stated that the Government is committed to the protection and proper management of the Ningaloo coast. He has said that the Government is considering the creation of a new body along the lines of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. If the Government creates such a body, the same thing will happen to Ningaloo as has happened to the Great Barrier Reef. Western Australia has an icon that we must look after. I have been to the Great Barrier Reef. People must travel on a boat for an hour in order to snorkel on some parts of the reef, whereas at Ningaloo people can walk out into the water with small children to see the fish and the coral. It really is a very beautiful place. I would be concerned if a similar body were managing the wonderful area of Ningaloo Reef.

I am also a little concerned at the Premier's media statement that the Government is looking to consolidate the conservation estate by extending the current marine park to the north and south of its present boundaries and extending some of the Cape Range National Park to the east. Although I think it is a wonderful idea to extend the marine park northwards, southwards and eastwards, I hope that during that process the State does not end up with a divided, hybrid park. When looking at the framework for the review of the Ningaloo Marine Park, the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority considered a number of options among which were, firstly, no change to the park zoning scheme; secondly, amend the zoning scheme based on ecological criteria; and, thirdly, consult with key users and stakeholders to develop amendments to the zoning scheme that address ecological deficiencies while considering impacts on key social values.

My concern is that with the Government looking at the impact of key social values, I would hate the community to be involved in another battle in six or 12 months because of some other proposed massive development in the area. It is a good idea that the Government give the community the opportunity to make submissions on how it would like the Ningaloo Marine Park to be cared for. I hope that the Government will make those submissions publicly accessible, because another concern is that although the Government is calling for submissions, in the meantime the planning process is going on in another room.

The minister commented on different scenarios for the area, and the Premier mentioned the number of hits on the web site created by the Government for Ningaloo Reef. Many people are currently giving serious consideration to what they would like to see there in the future. It concerns me a little to hear the minister talking about different scenarios, almost as though there will be a length of time for submissions to be made and examined while the Government meanwhile makes its own decisions.

I am pleased that the Government decided to protect Ningaloo Reef and rejected the proposal that was on the table for Mauds Landing. I congratulate the Government for that, as I congratulated it for its decision on old-growth forests. It was part of the deal under the Regional Forest Agreement that old-growth forests be saved and I hope the Government will come good on its promise to save high-conservation forests. I hope that the Government's media statement on Ningaloo Reef amounts to a promise that the Government intends to fulfil; that is, it will allow an appropriate time to properly analyse submissions from the community and that people, particularly those who question the Government's credibility, will be allowed to examine those submissions.

Mr A.D. McRae: Are you supporting or opposing the motion?

Dr J.M. WOOLLARD: I am opposing the motion. The Government has made a very good decision in asking for community consultation. However, one concern I have is that as it has been a big battle to save the area,

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

involving thousands of people in the community, I want the Government to do something to protect the area. The Government has said that it will devise a plan. I do not know whether a covenant can be put on the land or what can be done to ensure that the community does not have to go through the same battle again with the next Government, if this Government loses the next election. The Government has the opportunity, now that it has stopped the development, to give the land more protection than it has currently. I hope the Government will listen to the community's submissions and, through one measure or another, ensure that there is no opportunity for the development that has been rejected to be put on the table again in two or three years. I hope that the Government will ensure that the protection is not just for now but for the future.

MR J.N. HYDE (Perth) [6.38 pm]: I also oppose the motion and I congratulate the member for Alfred Cove for her opposition to it. Rather than trying to introduce legislation quickly into the Parliament, the safest remedy would be to re-elect the Gallop Government. That, member for Alfred Cove, will preserve Ningaloo Reef.

I oppose the motion on a number of grounds. I was puzzled to hear the Government criticised because it has sought input to planning issues. Government is about transparency and consultation, particularly in a major issue such as this. A result so far of 350 000 hits on the web site is indicative of the interest that the people of Western Australia have in this issue. The Government considers this issue in a sustainable context. It does not consider going 250 metres offshore for a swim for the benefit of a couple of opposition members to be the sum total of the environmental impact on the area. The entire catchment area of Ningaloo is important because it indicates the health of the reef. Those matters are all interrelated. For that reason, I support Hon Tom Stephens in the upper House for his work on this matter over a number of decades. Under the previous Government he was involved in a parliamentary committee in the other place when an attempt was made to do to Turquoise Bay what has been proposed recently for Mauds Landing. Hon Tom Stephens led the charge to prove that Turquoise Bay was an inadequate site for development. This whole area is an inadequate site for development. His most recent utterings have been against the potential for that area to be used as a bombing range. That area is within the catchment area. That is an important issue.

Recently I visited the Philippines and began negotiations with people involved in environmental matters in the areas of Donsol and Sorsogon, which are located in the north west of the Philippines. That is where the whale sharks from Ningaloo Reef go for their summer holidays. The whale sharks swim back and forth between the Philippines and Australia. I assumed - perhaps with western cultural imperialism - that we were doing the right things. I believed the old stories of whale sharks being speared and eaten in Asia. However, the Philippines has instituted environmental rehabilitation programs and the respect shown for the management of the catchment areas exceeds that shown for catchment areas in Western Australia. We are catching up with the Third World countries. That is what the Gallop Government has found in a number of areas. The local fishing and tourism industries, but more importantly the local residents in Donsol and Sorsogon, are working to protect the whale sharks through responsible ecotourism and coastal resource management. The project in Donsol aims to create a model for whale shark conservation that can be replicated in other parts of the Philippines and that can benefit tourism, fishing boat operators and others. The WA Government is also trying to do that in a sustainable manner.

The whole catchment must be considered, including the reef's ecosystem and impacts from tourism and fishing people whose livelihoods depend on the area. If that is not done, there will be chinks in the cone of protection. Future Western Australians will want to visit this wonderful tourism and ecological resource. A sustainable and properly managed response is needed. Through its accountability and by seeking community input, the Gallop Government is trying to achieve that. It is no good if Parliament makes laws and regulations and people on the ninth floor of Dumas House set regulations in place without community support. More importantly, if the community does not understand what the Government is doing, the Government must explain what it is doing. For example, it must explain why it is improper to throw dynamite into fish breeding areas and reefs, why it is improper to leave rubbish on the coast and why it is improper for untreated sewage to flow into these areas.

Fishing catches in the Philippines have been reduced in the past. It is not the case that the fish are not there or that the neighbours are pinching the fish. Mangroves have been cut down for charcoal and the forests have been denuded. The environmental impact has meant that there are 20 per cent fewer fish in the area near the mangroves than there were five or 10 years ago. The people in those villages - impoverished areas - have found that by replanting mangroves, their fish catch is increasing from a kilo a night to three kilos a night, and it is well on its way to the sustainable level of five kilos a night. Local government areas in the Philippines are establishing their own marine protection zones. Communities there understand, in a transparent way, how not only subsistence in a food sense but also the local ecology and the entire sustainability of the community and its social structures are dependent on the environment. Therefore, they have healthy fish, healthy whale sharks, a healthy reef, a healthy environment and a healthy community that can sustain not only itself but also future

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall;
Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye
Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

generations. It is paramount that the community of Western Australia is informed and aware of what is needed and planned. What are the opportunity costs of limiting development? What are the opportunity costs and the impacts of limiting tourism to specific areas? What are the opportunity costs and the benefits of ensuring that the reef is not damaged by primary impacts, let alone secondary and tertiary impacts?

The other part of the motion with which I disagree is that the Government has failed to provide or commit funding for essential management and infrastructure along the whole Ningaloo Reef coastline. Clearly, the Government has provided funding. It believes that Exmouth should be the major centre in that area. That is where the deep harbour should be located. The Government sees a great need for ecotourism. There is a sustainable level at which tourism and ecotourism can be provided for and developed along that coast. Clearly, there must be a transparent and consultative approach. Three hundred and fifty thousand Western Australians have already contacted the Government and put forward their views. It is only by listening to those views, engaging in them and treating those views of our residents and constituents with the respect they deserve that the Government will be able to come up with the best sustainable outcome for Western Australia.

MS J.A. RADISICH (Swan Hills) [6.47 pm]: I will make a few brief points on the motion we are debating today. First, I reject the motion in its entirety; I do not support it. However, I support the protection of the Ningaloo coastline. It is an issue in which I have been interested for quite some time, and I welcome the decision wholeheartedly, as do many people from the Swan Hills electorate. I am sure that everybody in this place has received representations on this issue from members of their communities. Although my electorate and many other electorates are located far away from the Ningaloo coastline, there is certainly a high level of interest in that pristine area of our environment and a great awareness of the problems and opportunities that exist in that north west region. That level of interest and awareness exists not only within the metropolitan area and Western Australia generally but also on a national and international level. It has been reported that people in Europe know more about the Ningaloo area than do some Western Australians. That may be true. However, that is certainly a strength upon which we can build in the future as we develop the management plan and a way forward for this area.

I congratulate the Premier on his efforts to secure World Heritage listing for the Ningaloo Reef. That is an extremely positive and bold step forward. I have had the privilege in my short time to visit one or two World Heritage sites in other places around the world. They are absolutely awe inspiring and magnificent. Those World Heritage sites have been developed and built upon to be managed and to ensure their long-term future and sustainability, and also to develop the economies of the local areas in which they are located. That is something we can work towards in Ningaloo. Part of the motion we are debating refers to an alleged waste of money on community consultation. I reject that proposition because it costs money to involve people in government decisions. That is not news to anyone. If the Government wants to discuss all the details of that environment and related tourism and infrastructure implications with the community so that people can respond with submissions in an informed way, it costs money to get the details to members of the broader community. We have spoken about proper community consultation. As I said earlier, that costs money. The Government does not choose to spend money in a frivolous fashion. It costs money to involve the community but I view that as an investment in our future to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to provide input to the Government's decision making and the way forward.

It is also contended that the decision to reject the Coral Coast Marina Development Pty Ltd proposal was not based on any specific or detailed reasoning. That is a completely ludicrous proposition. The Environmental Protection Authority report and the appeals committee's findings are available for all to see on the Internet and other places. The Premier made his decision on that basis. I reject the contentions in the motion we are debating.

Ningaloo has come to prominence in the past few years but it is a precious place in the State that has been enjoyed for a long time by many Western Australians. When I first heard about it as a child it was a well-kept secret. It was a secret place to visit up north to go fishing for three weeks at a time and enjoy the natural environment. It is good to some extent that the secret has been unveiled so that more Western Australians and others are encouraged to visit that part of the State and enjoy what is there. It is up to the Government to manage that influx of people and their interrelationship with the permanent residents to make it a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship on a long-term basis.

Without question guidance is needed for the future development of Ningaloo. Strong management needs have been outlined by a number of members, including the member for Ningaloo, the Premier and others. I encourage everyone who has an interest in economics, tourism, environment, people and populations to get involved. These different aspects of our society come together over Ningaloo and how we manage our way forward. The Premier's decision was about balance; government is always about balance. It is concerned with the balance

Mr Bernie Masters; Deputy Speaker; Acting Speaker; Dr Geoff Gallop; Mr Colin Barnett; Mr Arthur Marshall; Mr John Kobelke; Mr Rod Sweetman; Ms Alannah MacTiernan; Dr Janet Woollard; Mr John Hyde; Ms Jaye Radisich; Mr Tony McRae

between leadership and responsiveness. The Premier exercised leadership and responsiveness. Leadership was shown in respect of the environment and managing the fragile ecosystems in the area and not allowing the huge development proposal to proceed. Responsiveness was shown to the Western Australian community, which put its hand up in a collective fashion and made its feelings known about what it wants to happen at Ningaloo. I congratulate the Premier on his decision. It is now only one month until public submissions to the Government close. The closing date is 12 September. I encourage all interested parties to put forward their comments so that the community and the Government can work together to develop proper management and infrastructure for Ningaloo in the future.

MR A.D. McRAE (Riverton) [6.54 pm]: In the time remaining I wish to register some of my concerns about this motion and to also provide a quick snapshot of my experience on Ningaloo Reef during my one and only visit there last year. I will start with that visit, because that will add some character to what I want to say about the processes that are involved and why I think this motion from the Opposition is mistimed and misplaced in its intent.

Like the member for Swan Hills, when I first came to Western Australia 23 years ago I had heard of Ningaloo Reef, or this fabled reef off the far north coast of the State, but I could not imagine precisely where it was. My knowledge of the geography and the ecology of the Pilbara and the Murchison-Gascoyne region through which this coastline extends was not great at all. My visit in September last year to Ningaloo was a revelation. It is one of the most beautiful pieces of coastline I can imagine, where the desert meets the ocean and a near shore reef. It has a unique arrangement and proximity of features in the landscape, both marine and terrestrial. I dived in the water at Coral Bay where a multitude of boats now moor and are pulled up onto the beach. I would not say I am a great diver, but I am a passable snorkeller.

Mr P.G. Pendal interjected.

Mr A.D. McRAE: I am differentiating between the skills of a seriously good diver using scuba gear and a snorkeller. When diving on the near onshore remnants of the mooring, I saw widespread devastation from anchors from the over-mooring, unlicensed mooring and the mooring of boats in inappropriate places. I also saw high siltation of the near coastal reef. The little outbreaks of coral that are struggling to survive and grow will, I suspect, not go through a full lifecycle, but will be broken off or covered in silt well before they can generate into larger formations. I then went down to the channel that runs south west from Coral Bay - an area that is marked for snorkelling. Even that area, which has warnings to boats using that stream, and which has been reasonably well marked for controlled access because it has a good south to north current that carries snorkellers like me who need a bit of assistance across the surface of the near-shore coral reef, had been damaged by boats mooring prior to the time when there was a form of regulation and doing fishing where it was pretty easy to catch fish. From there my family and I journeyed up the coast to Mauds Landing. We got out of the boat, walked there and had lunch. We then went out to the break in the reef that was described by previous speakers as being the access point from the ocean to the inner shore portion of this area. I dived a number of times from the boat and it was pretty clear to me that this is a jewel that cannot be put at further risk. It has been taken to the brink. This Government has made the right decision, using the right processes, and with overwhelming community support, to preserve this area for generations to come and to ensure that this absolute jewel of a landscape has a sustainable future.

I also reject this motion because it suggests that we should not be engaging the community in consultation. The motion suggests that somehow spending money engaging the community in consultation is a waste or that it is overtly political. How can any Government of any political persuasion engage the community without talking to it directly?

Debate interrupted, pursuant to standing orders.