

SOUTH COAST MARINE PARK

903. Mr P.J. RUNDLE to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the draft consultation for the south coast marine park and accusations that the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions has mapped the reserve with little regard for local impact on community or industry—a point made by the minister’s own department.

- (1) Does the minister agree that the current plans for the south coast marine park, which are backed by a United States lobby group, are not in the community’s best interest?
- (2) Has he raised concern with the Minister for Environment directly, given his department’s comments that based on the draft zoning scheme, it will likely result in the loss of several south coast fisheries and impact the livelihoods of numerous fisheries?
- (3) Why has this consultation process been delayed by more than six months?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for his question. The member is a specialist in hearsay. He is a bit like a bottom feeder, crawling around trying to find some piece of information to use in a very sad way. All I have heard from the opposition has been fearmongering designed to cause anxiety and upset. At the end of the day, I cannot help but be cynical and think that this is not about the fishers, but is all about votes. It is trying to grab votes in cheap, nasty and divisive way.

The Minister for Environment has outlined the process. I have yet to receive the information that requires my concurrence or otherwise to take the process forward. When that process comes to me and moves on, there will be a four-month consultation period in which I expect everyone with an interest—conservationists, fishers, recreational fishers and community members—to have a good look and decide what they think fits and does not fit with their community.

I draw the member back to his earlier comments and I certainly thank him for enlightening me about the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I know that the members opposite are very quick to note the work of the Marine Stewardship Council and take its advice on sustainability. Where is the Marine Stewardship Council based? It is in the United Kingdom.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Order, please!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: When the member wants to come in here and talk seriously about fisheries, ask some sensible questions or take the offer of briefings on the sustainability of fisheries or whatever, I am more than open to having that conversation. However, he should not come in here with half-truths, hearsay and innuendo that are all designed to simply grab a headline and cause angst in a community that does not need to have angst. It will have its say.