

Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park — Statement by Minister for Environment — Motion

Resumed from 10 August on the following motion moved by Hon Helen Morton —

That the statement be noted.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I thank the house for the indulgence it has shown me over the past couple of weeks in postponing this part of the debate to enable me to make some comments. When this ministerial statement came up for debate, I was away from the house on urgent parliamentary business. I made it known to the Whips that I wished to contribute.

It is universally acknowledged that the work on getting the Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park in place was effectively done by the Labor Party when in government. These things are not to be rushed. I say that as somebody who would like the process to be a little speedier than it is. I say that because I think that the establishment of marine parks all around our coastline is one of our absolutely urgent priorities over the next few years, in order to conserve the resources that we currently have in our oceans and rivers. Nevertheless, as things stand at the moment, it is a lengthy process to put a marine park in place. I pay tribute to the various Labor ministers for environment, and fisheries, who did the groundwork on this particular proposal. I recall, as I am sure all members on both sides of the house do, that it was Hon Donna Faragher, when she was Minister for Environment, who made the announcement that this marine park had been gazetted. That was a great moment. It is a beautiful part of the world, and it is long overdue for the protection that it now has under this arrangement.

That is the happy part of the story. We then get into more troubled times, because what happened after the gazetting of this marine park is that we went for months and months, which turned into years and years, with the Barnett government doing absolutely nothing about establishing more marine parks, even though—again, I cannot imagine anybody on either side of the house denying the fact—the groundwork had already been done on two very important marine parks. Cape to cape was the first one, and the second one was the Dampier Archipelago. All the consultation had been done. That goes back many, many years, certainly for the cape to cape process—a process that I followed very closely as a member for the South West—but also in relation to the Dampier Archipelago. So it was a source of some mystification to people on this side of the house that we saw no announcement, budget after budget after budget, about those marine parks being properly funded to get the establishment and maintenance of them up and running.

Then, of course, the Camden Sound announcement cut across our bows. I think it is appropriate to use marine metaphors when talking about marine parks. What we had about a year ago was the announcement that the government was going to fast-track Camden Sound marine park. Nobody is yet sure about the science that backs up that proposal, because neither the previous environment minister nor the current environment minister have been able to furnish any substance. They have both been asked on numerous occasions to explain the references in the budget documents to protecting multiple values in connection with Camden Sound marine park, and both of them have completely stumbled when they have been asked to enumerate what those multiple values might be.

I have a suspicion, and it is a suspicion that is shared by people on this side of the house, and by a very large cross-section of the community that takes an interest in these things, about Camden Sound and the other announcements in relation to the Kimberley. That includes Eighty Mile Beach. I have never been quite sure why Eighty Mile Beach is packaged up as part of the Kimberley science and conservation strategy, because Eighty Mile Beach is actually in the Pilbara. Nonetheless, that announcement was made about a year ago. It came at a remarkable time, because as we know in this place, and as anybody who has been anywhere near Broome in the last 12 months would know, the government's handling of the establishment of a liquefied natural gas processing precinct at James Price Point has been so badly handled that the Broome community is now a very troubled and very divided place about the merits of that proposal. I say "very badly handled" by the Barnett government because, of course, the Barnett government did what Labor would never have done and walked in with its hobnail boots and announced that whether or not there was consent from the Aboriginal traditional owners with interests in that area—that is, the Jabirr Jabirr–Goolarabooloo people—it would proceed with a process of compulsory acquisition were that consent not forthcoming; and from there, it has all been downhill. But right in the middle of some of those most difficult times came this announcement that the government was going to establish marine parks all around the Kimberley coastline. It was blatantly obvious to everyone observing the process that what had happened was that the Premier had bailed up the environment minister of the time and said, "Quick; do something. Come up with something that will take the heat off us in terms of this Kimberley process."

Hon Donna Faragher: This is so tedious! You go on about this all the time! It is just pathetic!

Hon SALLY TALBOT: If Hon Donna Faragher has a contribution to make to this, I do not know whether she will have the chance to speak again now, given that she was the minister who tabled this statement, but I am sure she will have a chance to do so later.

Committee interrupted, pursuant to temporary orders.

[Continued on page 5960.]

Sitting suspended from 4.15 to 4.30 pm