

more councils act responsibly more will follow and the economies of scale the member for Geraldton referred to will be achieved.

In relation to Geraldton, the board will be talking to the City of Geraldton and the Shires of Greenough and Chapman Valley. I hope these councils will adopt a progressive approach and work with the board to achieve a positive outcome. If an agreement cannot be reached, the status quo will be maintained and that will not be in the best interests of the ratepayers of either the City of Geraldton or the Shire of Greenough.

The ACTING SPEAKER (Mr Ainsworth): Grievances noted.

MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

MR PENDAL (South Perth) [5.30 pm]: I move -

That the Bill be now read a second time.

This Bill reflects the involvement of the Parliament of Western Australia in a venture which has had important repercussions for the State's maritime archaeology and heritage. For more than 30 years divers and archaeologists have been engaged in the search for, and discovery of, those vessels which went down off our coast centuries ago, long before the world solved the mystery of the unknown south-land. To give the issue some perspective, barely 25 years from now this State will be in a position to mark the 400th anniversary of the sinking of the first-known of these ancient wrecks, the British vessel the *Tryall*, which foundered off the coast, near the Monte Bellos in 1622.

This Bill, which I hope will receive multi-partisan support in both Houses, has its genesis in the terms of reference of the Select Committee on Ancient Shipwrecks established by the Legislative Assembly on 3 November 1993. The committee was to inquire into, and report on, among other things, the possibility of incorporating the names of the discoverers of Western Australia's ancient shipwrecks into a register, possibly by way of an amendment to the Museum Act of 1959.

Such an unprecedented move - that is, to enshrine citizens' names in an Act of Parliament - was very much to the forefront of the motivation of the select committee and its establishment in 1993, which followed an earlier upper House Select Committee on the *Batavia* relics and which reported in 1992. There had long been the belief that the discoverers of the *Tryall*, which had been wrecked in 1622, the *Batavia* wrecked in 1629, the *Gilt Dragon* in 1656, the *Zuytdorp* in 1712, and the *Zeewyk* in 1727, had achieved wonderful things for Western Australia's and Australia's heritage. However, the view had also developed that these discoverers had been denied recognition by public officials, and perhaps even wider society.

The Select Committee on Ancient Shipwrecks, comprising the member for Victoria Park, Dr Geoff Gallop; the then member for Floreat and now Churchlands, Dr Liz Constable; the member for Bunbury, Mr Ian Osborne; the member for Fremantle, Mr Jim McGinty, and I, set out on a task of determining a number of difficult, related issues. These included whether any previous recognition had been accorded to discoverers; posthumous recognition; and other forms of recognition.

In its second interim report tabled on 2 June 1994, the select committee recommended that the Maritime Archaeology Act 1973 as distinct from the earlier-mentioned Museum Act be amended by way of a Bill sponsored by the select committee to incorporate into it, as the third schedule of the Act, a register of discoverers of ancient shipwrecks.

Subsequent to this, the committee's final report reinforced the view that the register should be created within the schedule of the existing Act. Thus members will find the proposed schedule contains the names of all those men and women who we believe should be recognised within the register.

These persons, in alphabetical order, are: Greg Allen, Harry Bingham, Tom Brady, Eric Christiansen, John Cowen, Graham Cramer, Max Cramer, Ada Drage, Henrietta Drake-Brockman, Hugh Edwards, Naoom Haimson, Alan Henderson, Graeme Henderson, James Henderson, Colin Jack-Hinton, David Johnson, John MacPherson, Neil McLaghlan, Bruce Melrose, David Nelley, Tom Pepper, Phillip Playford, and Alan Robinson.

The work of each has been of incalculable benefit to the State. In the case of the *Tryall*, the research skills of the eventual discoverers were put to the test because the Captain, John Brookes, falsified the records of the wreck, thus throwing people off the scent of its location for many years. Eric Christiansen's patient research over a six-year period in the 1960s, and the significant input from the late John MacPherson, led to the wreck's discovery.

The discovery of the *Batavia* in 1963 climaxed a fascination for many as far back as Malcolm Uren's expedition in 1938, and his book in 1944. Bruce Melrose's aerial surveys taken between 1957 and 1963 played another key part

in the eventual discovery, but he was pipped at the post by Max Cramer's party, prompting the select committee to observe that Mr Melrose "... played Scott to Max Cramer's Amundsen ..."

In the case of the *Gilt Dragon*, the committee found that the weight of evidence supported the view that on 14 April 1963, Graeme Henderson was the primary discoverer, together with James and Alan Henderson, John Cowen and Alan Robinson. I will comment more on Mr Robinson's role shortly.

The discovery of the *Zuytdorp* was by far the most complex story and I invite members interested in more detail to read the select committee's report. The key roles of the late Tom Pepper and Dr Phillip Playford are now acknowledged in a story replete with all the ingredients of a blockbuster movie, including some evidence that European settlement may well have occurred on the west coast of Australia 66 years before the arrival of the First Fleet on the east coast.

Finally, we have named six people who should be identified as the discoverers of the *Zeewyk*. Before the actual discovery of the wreckage of this ship in 1968 the approximate location had been known since 1840. The role played by the journalist, Hugh Edwards, one of the six, in turn allows us to acknowledge the positive role played by various media outlets over the years in stimulating public interest in expeditions and discoveries. They include *The West Australian*, the *Daily News*, the *Sunday Times* and TVW Channel 7.

Members looking at the proposed register will note that the name of Alan Robinson appears as a discoverer of two vessels. Including his name may go further than the report of the select committee of 17 August 1994 intended, but is by no means inconsistent with its findings. This should be explained further.

Both the *Batavia* Select Committee of 1992 and the Ancient Shipwrecks Select Committee of 1993-94 were very much driven by the earlier stated desire to recognise wreck discoverers for their unselfish and civic minded efforts which ensured that wrecks were protected and relics were retained in public ownership for posterity. Indeed, in the foreword to the August 1994 select committee report it was stated in the opening paragraph that one of the fundamental issues being addressed in the report was whether people should be rewarded for doing the "right thing" by society; that is, by reporting the whereabouts of, and protecting relics from, ancient shipwrecks.

In this regard Alan Robinson was seen by the 1993-94 select committee as presenting particular difficulties. Although he was involved in the discovery of a number of wrecks, his subsequent activities helped sour opinion against him. The select committee, nonetheless, acknowledged Mr Robinson as having given significant stimulus to the recovery of material from wrecks.

In the almost three years since the tabling of the final report of the select committee, a number of things have persuaded members of the former committee of the need to include Mr Robinson's name in the official register. First, it was never the committee's intention to "punish" Mr Robinson, or to diminish his role. Instead, it was our desire to set others apart for their exemplary behaviour. Second, members of the former committee generally take the view that it is one thing to have adversely reflected on Mr Robinson - as we were so inclined to do, with good reason, in 1994 - but quite another to give rise to perceptions that we might have been re-writing the history books.

Third, for my own part I was approached, as were some other members of Parliament, by Mr Robinson's daughter, Sandra, who sought to gain for her father the recognition she believed he merited. For some or all of these reasons, members have informally agreed prior to the introduction of this Bill that Alan Robinson should have his place alongside those others whose names will be enshrined in the Act.

Meanwhile, the great work of the divers and archaeologists continues. As late as only a few weeks ago, staff from the WA Maritime Museum discovered the resting place of the *Stefano* south of Ningaloo reef while on an expedition to find the *Correo d'Asur*, the Portuguese vessel which sank in the area in 1816.

For my own part, I am disappointed that the Government has not supported the recommendation of the committee for the establishment of a top level inquiry into early European presence in Australia to establish once and for all the facts about when and by whom Australia was first settled by Europeans. The committee saw this proposed inquiry comprising historians, prehistorians, scientific and Aboriginal groups whose task it would be to comb through the variety of documents which point to Dutch settlement in WA early in the eighteenth century. It is still not too late to undertake such a new and exciting study, something which could in fact be this State's contribution to the one-hundredth anniversary of Federation, or coinciding with the approach of the new millennium.

Meanwhile, the passage of this Bill will forever be its own tribute to many men and women who have helped put Western Australia to the forefront of the world's maritime archaeological movement. It may also be an encouragement for others to follow their lead. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate adjourned, on motion by Mr Osborne.