

SUPPORT FOR UNITED STATES MILITARY

Urgency Motion

THE PRESIDENT (Hon John Cowdell): I received the following letter this morning -

Dear Mr President

At today's sitting it is my intention to move under SO 72 that the Council consider as a matter of urgency the impacts on the people of Western Australia as a consequence of the State Government offering Fremantle to the US Navy as a de-facto Indian Ocean naval base (for "Sea-Swaps"), the current intensified military action around Lancelin and the implications for offering such support to the US military at this time.

Yours sincerely

Dee Margetts

Member for Agricultural Region

The member will require the support of four members in order to move the motion.

[At least four members rose in their places.]

HON DEE MARGETTS (Agricultural) [4.03 pm]: I move the motion.

This matter is urgent for a number of reasons. Obviously, the international situation with the United Nations in relation to Iraq is at a very delicate stage, but this urgency motion concerns the impact on Western Australia of potential decisions or announcements that could be made this week. In the meantime, the United States military has made a bid to secure some commercial contracts for US Navy vessels to be maintained by the naval facilities of Western Australia at Fremantle, and the Western Australian Government and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, I suppose driven by the Premier himself, and by what some people consider to be 30 pieces of silver. At the same time, we have seen a considerable increase in military activity in the existing military training area north of Lancelin, despite the fact that to everybody's great relief it appears that the federal Government has ceased its wacky idea of acquiring an extra 36 000 hectares - a huge amount - to increase that training area to enable the United States military and others to carry out bombing swathes and major sea-to-air bombing exercises. Training activities have nevertheless increased considerably. Part of what I wish to speak about today is what people in Western Australia are experiencing now and are likely to experience if this Government considers that it really is a good idea to have a de facto US naval base located in Western Australia. My colleague Hon Jim Scott, if he has the chance, will speak about issues as they impact upon people in the Fremantle area, but I would like to give members an indication of what is now happening around the Lancelin defence training area and how it is affecting people.

I have received a copy of a letter concerning an event which occurred on 31 August 2002 and which was sent to the Navy public affairs officer. It states -

Reason for Complaint:

1. Noise disturbance to residents

On the 31st August there was loud shelling all afternoon which was still ongoing when we went to bed at 7.30 pm. It was extremely irritating and caused severe distress to our dog but at that stage did not prevent us from sleeping.

However at 11 pm we were awakened by a very loud explosion or shell. This loud shelling then continued for approximately half an hour and prevented us from sleeping.

2. Possible Emissions Causing Health Impacts

We are also concerned about what type of emissions result from the shelling, as on that particular night I suffered breathing difficulties and a strong wind was blowing from the direction of the RANIA.

I believe that stands for Royal Australian Navy Impact Area -

I would appreciate if you could supply me with information, preferably MSDS -

I believe that stands for multiple sensitivity data sheets -

on what volatile compounds are released upon firing and/or impacts of these shells.

The Navy public affairs officer passed this letter to the lieutenant commander gunnery officer, who responded as follows -

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My records indicate that there was indeed a firing that commenced at 11:05pm. I can offer no definitive reason for those particular projectiles being louder than any of the others of the same type fired between 9:00 and 11:00pm. The projectiles fired after 9:00pm were what we refer to as illuminants and, as such, the shell has time to burst in mid air and release a flare that floats to earth over the course of about one minute on a small parachute.

The officer offered his contact numbers in case there were other inquiries. I understand that at various public meetings concerning the proposed extension of that training area, the Navy representative said that the Navy was there to help members of the community and indicated that there were places people could go if they had complaints about the noises and the disturbances associated with armaments practice. The letter I first read out was followed on 20 September with a letter from another constituent, who wrote to the same officer, because he had obviously found out the name of the appropriate contact. The letter states -

Living in Lancelin for the last month or so has been like living in a war zone. A significant escalation in training activity by all three services has seen the town under virtual siege and a serious impact made on the quality of life in the area.

- The SAS camped in town for weeks with their land operations vehicles parked or driving around town constantly.
- On Saturday 14 September at 9.30 am a series of 17 large explosions which I believe were caused by Naval bombardment. The effect of these explosions, compounded by the prevailing north-west wind had my home shaking and the windows rattling.
- Also on 14 September an aircraft flew over my home at such a low altitude as to frighten my wife into hysterical uncontrollable crying as a result of the fright it gave her as she was in our back yard. I ran from inside the house believing a crash was imminent to see the aircraft flying north at an altitude of no higher than 100 feet.
- On Thursday 19 September, 2002 my family was woken by huge explosions from the Naval Gunnery Range. These blasts shook my house and rattled the windows and crockery. I counted thirty four blasts between 0615 and 0632 hours, twenty five of which I would describe as the worst I have experienced in the eight and a half years I have lived in Lancelin. The situation was not compounded by wind direction in this instance as there was no wind.
- At 1620 hrs and again at 1652 hrs on 19 September a C130 transporter flew over the Lancelin beachfront homes from north to south at extremely low altitude. Standing in my back yard looking over the roof of my single story home all I could see of these planes was the extreme tip of the tail-plane. I am familiar with the height of these planes and their tail loading feature and would estimate their altitude at no more than 75 - 100 feet. This is an obscene disregard for the safety and welfare of the people of Lancelin.

In July, the parliamentary secretary heading a parliamentary delegation visited the United States and the US military. I asked who formed this delegation and which organisations or departments were represented. I also asked what the delegation actually offered to the US military. Those questions were considered to be so difficult or lengthy that they had to be put on notice. We do not know and we have not been told of who formed that delegation that went to the US and what the US was told.

This next bit of information that I will reveal is a ripper. It is a response by a Lieutenant Commander Gunnery Officer - who also wrote the first response - to a Mr and Mrs Snow. The letter stated -

Dear Mr & Mrs Snow,

As you will recall, I replied to your initial complaint of 14 September 2002. My reply was made in a spirit of cooperation and goodwill and contained in a private communication -

This person is being paid to be in this position by taxpayers -

It has come to my attention that my facsimile number appears to have been obtained by another member of the public as that person has sent a facsimile directly to my number. As you are the only recipients of my private letter, and the only persons in receipt of my facsimile number I can only suggest that only you could have passed on that information.

The details I gave you in that private letter were for your information only. However that information appears to have been passed on to others and, I suspect to the editor of the Wanneroo Times newspaper. This situation dismays and disturbs me greatly. Your actions are, I believe, in breach of the Privacy Act and I request that you refrain from releasing any details passed to you in confidence. I further request

that any plans to release any portion of my letter, whether as a direct quote or as being attributed to me be rescinded immediately.

The public affairs officer of the Navy had passed Mr and Mrs Snow's letter to the person he believed was the most appropriate for the public to contact about this enormously disturbing anti-social activity that is going on.

Hon Jim Scott: Was it his home phone number?

Hon DEE MARGETTS: No, it was his office number and his work facsimile number. The person writing this letter is paid to be in that position with taxpayers' money.

Hon Kim Chance: Perhaps he is a private public affairs officer.

Hon DEE MARGETTS: Obviously very private.

As you can imagine, the obviously very scary Mrs Snow, who suffers from a multiple sensitivity disorder, did not take this matter lightly. Her reply to that letter stated -

Dear Sir

I do not appreciate the threatening tone of your recent fax!

Neither your letter of the 10th September or indeed the correspondence I just received are labelled CONFIDENTIAL. My understanding is that any letters sent to me not labelled confidential becomes my property upon receipt.

Mrs Snow finished the letter by saying that the information she received was absolutely not confidential.

It appears that we are already under siege in Western Australia, even though Lancelin is not expanding at this stage. Lancelin is still considerably bigger than the current US defence training area in Puerto Rico that has been causing enormous social and environmental problems. I am concerned that not only has there been an immense escalation of bombing activities in an area that recently set up a gravitational wave centre at enormous public expense from the Commonwealth Government, but also it appears that the people from this area are being treated like mushrooms. I am outraged that we are being subjected to this siege. If this State Government, courtesy of the Premier and the parliamentary secretary, signs up and offers the port of Fremantle for a sea-swap operation, I put on record that that offer will indicate that Perth has an Air Force base - RAAF Base Pearce - in close proximity and an international airport that would meet the needs of US planes sending equipment to US ships. Mr McGowan's report to Parliament indicated that the US Navy would require specific rules of engagement to be put in place around facilities such as the Australian Marine Complex. The US Navy would need to know under what rules it could potentially hinder access to the base and stop small boats from accessing or coming close to US navy ships. This is the city of Fremantle and HMAS *Stirling* we are talking about and this is what we are signing up to. The area north of Perth is already under siege from Australian military training. What on earth will we experience if we have a regular naval presence in Western Australia that will need an area in which to train? Even if Lancelin does not expand at this stage - thank goodness - where will those crews train? We can certainly assume that they will be training. The indication is that Qantas will be involved in the logistics. It is also very important, in the current context of the war on terror, that the US Navy has places in the Indian Ocean region in which to conduct repairs. There is no doubt that this current sea-swap proposal is part of the general plan involving Western Australia in a military operation directed towards the US military proposals in the Middle East. Admiral Moore from the US has said that rules of engagement should be prepared to dictate how security will operate around US warships in maintenance positions in Cockburn Sound. I indicated that I thought we could accommodate the requirements of the US Navy. However, Admiral Moore was of the view that rules should be put in place so that personnel could operate in confidence. What has been offered to the US Navy? This is the big secret that has not yet been disclosed by the Premier, which is a disgrace.

Points of Order

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: At the conclusion of the speech, the member quoted from a chain of correspondence between Mrs Snow and a navy officer. Under Standing Order No 48, in order to make a response, the member must table that correspondence.

The PRESIDENT: Will the member table that correspondence?

Hon DEE MARGETTS: I am happy to do so and I am sure Mrs Snow will also be happy.

[See paper No 240.]

Debate Resumed

President; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon Simon O'Brien; ; Hon Jim Scott; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Frank Hough; Hon
Barbara Scott

HON JIM SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [4.19 pm]: As a member of another region affected by this proposal, I am extremely concerned about what the State Government is offering to the US naval forces. There has been no discussion with the community of Western Australia. It seems that Geoff Gallop's consultative Government is prepared to put at risk the urban communities of Western Australia, because we know full well that, even if it has to do so unilaterally, the United States is preparing to attack Iraq. I am sure that our compliant Prime Minister will see to it that Australia is involved. If US ships are based in the area, the risk of being attacked will continue to escalate.

I have a long history in this House, and I thought I had gleaned the real reason behind the offer to the US Navy. I stated that \$200 million - \$80 million from the federal Government and \$120 million from the State Government - was being spent on a facility at Woodman Point. An article in the September-November issue of *Prospect* describes the facility as a -

World-class centre targets resources sector.

Target is probably a good word in the context of the debate. Hon Peter Foss will remember that he called me an idiot because the information that I relied upon when stating that this was a no-go project was provided by a parliamentary intern.

Hon Frank Hough: Did he prove that you were an idiot?

Hon JIM SCOTT: He did not prove anything. The report that I tabled in Parliament - a well-compiled report that used all the Government's data - clearly showed that Western Australia would suffer a huge loss unless a major project was built at the facility every year. The report revealed that the facility would be an expensive white elephant because the oil industry would use it only if it were cheaper than facilities that could be used overseas, particularly facilities in Asia. Of course, we now know that the State Government cannot get a principal fabricating industry to use the facility. A big fabricating industry is required before smaller fabricating industries can be built. As predicted, the State Government cannot find anyone to use the facility. It is a similar situation to that which occurred in Oakajee, because no-one was firmly committed to Oakajee. After outlining the great benefits of the marine complex, an article in the September-November edition of *Prospect* states -

As well as resources sector construction, the Australian Marine Complex is well placed to bid for naval work, with a key Royal Australian Navy base, HMAS Stirling, also on Cockburn Sound. An opportunity to win major maintenance programs with the US Navy, a regular visitor to the State, also exists.

The Labor Party supported the complex despite the evidence that it would be an expensive white elephant. It supported the complex because of the pressure that was being applied by one of the unions -

Hon Barbara Scott: Are you saying it is a target?

Hon JIM SCOTT: The State Government cannot get anyone to use the Jervoise Bay facility and, therefore, it is trying to encourage the US Navy to use the facility for the repair and maintenance of its warships, particularly because it is on the verge of blowing up civilians in Iraq in order for George Bush to maintain the US's dwindling oil supplies. To avoid a huge embarrassment over the Jervoise Bay facility - the Labor Government knows it cannot get anyone into the facility - it is chasing blood money. Clearly, it has not considered the data to the same extent as I have. The State Government is quite happy to take blood money in order to get the complex up and running, because it knows it is a financial disaster. The money should not have been spent in the first place. I object to the fact that the little adventure undertaken by the Premier and the member for Rockingham will put the people of the south metropolitan region at risk. As Hon Dee Margetts pointed out, huge restrictions will be placed on the community in its use of the ocean area in Cockburn Sound, and probably Fremantle, particularly if the US goes to war with Iraq. Areas will be shut off and restrictions will be placed on boating. All types of security restrictions will be brought into effect. The State Government must know - perhaps it does not know because it did not think clearly about the Jervoise Bay project - that such problems will arise for the community. The State Government should have consulted with the community. It must also realise that the polls indicate that the vast majority of people in Australia oppose a war with Iraq -

Hon Murray Criddle interjected.

Hon JIM SCOTT: Anyone who reads a newspaper or listens to the radio is aware that the community objects to Australia's involvement in a war with Iraq. The Labor Government has been handling some of the issues reasonably well. On radio this morning I commended the Premier for conducting talks with the Muslim community and showing that -

Hon Peter Foss: They are the only people he talks to; he will not even talk to the people of Mandurah.

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Hon JIM SCOTT: Although he is doing a good job in that respect, he is not talking to the rest of the community about the risk it will face. If anything tears the Premier's consultative program to pieces it will be the issue that we are debating. This is the big one; it is something that should be discussed by everybody. Indeed, even federal Parliament is talking about Australia's involvement in a war with Iraq. That makes for a bit of a change. It has obviously noted the community's concern and is trying to determine a better way forward. Even the Prime Minister has backed away from his more aggressive statements. The proposal should die very quickly.

HON KIM CHANCE (Agricultural - Leader of the House) [4.29 pm]: Many issues have been raised in this debate, particularly those that affect Lancelin and the Royal Australian Navy. Although Lancelin is in my electorate, many of the issues are matters for the Navy and the federal Government to deal with. The Western Australian Government cannot influence this issue. The US Navy has been visiting Western Australia for over 100 years. However, the US Navy is not the first navy from North America to make an official visit to Western Australia. One of the earliest visitors was a warship from the Confederate States of America, which was connected with the Fenian outbreak from the Fremantle Roundhouse.

Hon Peter Foss: I think it was from Boston.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Was it? I have misled the House again!

Joint training arrangements bring both costs and benefits to Western Australia. Over the years, it has been a source of enthusiastic debate. The two issues raised that are relevant to the Western Australian Parliament are the nature of the sea-swap program and the direct actions of the member for Rockingham on visits by the US Navy. Our concern for the residents of Lancelin makes this an issue for this Parliament. The activities of the bombing range at Lancelin are under commonwealth control. Like Hon Dee Margetts, I welcome the decision by the Commonwealth Government not to expand the bombing range. To suggest that the Western Australian Government has influenced the use of the Lancelin facility by the US Navy in any way is to misunderstand the capacity of the Western Australian Government.

Hon Dee Margetts: There must have been some sort of offer.

Hon KIM CHANCE: It is beyond the capacity of the Western Australian Government to make such an offer. The Government or its agencies may have referred to the availability of Lancelin.

Hon Dee Margetts: What was offered?

Hon KIM CHANCE: Hopefully, I will be able to shed some light on that. It is beyond the capacity of the Western Australian Government to offer the US Navy or anyone else the use of commonwealth facilities at Lancelin.

Hon Dee Margetts interjected.

Hon Norman Moore: If Hon Dee Margetts stopped interjecting we might get an answer!

Hon KIM CHANCE: She interjected at a crucial point; it was so disappointing!

The Lancelin facility is used only about 15 days a year. The facility has been used by Australian, American and, presumably, British and other military forces, for decades.

I presume that Fremantle and HMAS *Stirling* are also part of this equation. The motion refers to Fremantle -

Several members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! Members should not interject; it distracts the Leader of the House from addressing the motion.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Exactly; I would hate to get to the point of making a crucial statement and run out of time!

This year, three US Navy support ships have used RAN facilities. Work undertaken on those ships was done by Australian workers. It created jobs for Western Australians through multimillion dollar contracts. It is important for us to understand what is sea swap. It is a new concept that is being trialled by the US Navy. I am told that the object is to allow the US Navy to keep its vessels in theatres of operation longer.

Hon Dee Margetts: It is a small-scale test; it is a foot in the door.

Hon KIM CHANCE: Yes. The program envisages US Navy vessels visiting ports in the region and exchanging crews. The original crews will return to the United States by air and the new crews will sail the vessels to their areas of operation. There are clear savings for the US Navy; crews are able to return to their home bases far more quickly. It provides savings in fuel and maintenance. As a result, the morale of crews will improve. Through sea swap, crews will take their traditional rest and recreation shore leave. The impact on Western Australia tourism from visiting US Navy ships cannot be underestimated. The average US serviceman spends

Extract from Hansard

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about \$200 a day when on leave in Perth. That amount is significantly higher than that spent by the average overseas visitor. I calculate roughly that about 22 000 United States service personnel visit Western Australia annually. That compares with about 500 000 overseas visitors each year. Therefore, one in every 25 overseas visitors to Western Australia is a US Navy serviceman. Service personnel represents a significant proportion of visitors to Western Australia.

The member for Rockingham did not offer Fremantle to the US Navy as either a de facto or a de jure naval base. It is beyond the power of the Western Australian Government or anyone speaking on its behalf to do that. As previously described, the concept of sea swap is totally different from that of a naval base. No vessel will be in port for more than 10 days; no major work will be carried out on vessels. No vessel will be permanently based in any sea-swap port. All arrangements relating to the sea-swap initiative in Australia are between the Australian and United States Governments; they do not involve Western Australia. The member for Rockingham offered the facilities of HMAS *Stirling* and, presumably, Fremantle - although I do not know for sure - as an alternative to other ports in the region. He said that Western Australia is the sort of place where the US Navy could do this sort of thing.

Hon Simon O'Brien: Was that on behalf of the State Government or private enterprise?

Hon KIM CHANCE: I do not know. He said that it was something that could be done here; the US Navy already knew that. If the US Navy does not do it in Western Australia, it will do it in Singapore or Darwin. The member was only pointing out that the US Navy has been visiting Western Australia for about 100 years and that the visits should continue. The fact that it may also generate work for contractors working on US Navy vessels must be seen as a benefit. He specifically did not offer Western Australia as a US naval base, either de facto or de jure. The Government has recognised the economic benefits that sea swap offers.

HON SIMON O'BRIEN (South Metropolitan) [4.39 pm]: In the limited time since I received notice of this motion, I again looked at the sea-swap proposal that Mark McGowan, the member for Rockingham, put to the United States Navy. The mover of the motion will probably find that this remark serves to confirm her opinion of me, but I say at the outset that I thought it was a very good idea for Mark McGowan to support his electorate and local industry by taking the initiative he apparently did in seeking to make sure that the US Navy ships engaging in the sea-swap program paid some dividends to Western Australia by way of extra business to shipbuilders, ship repairers and others. If he had asked or spoken to me about it, as another local member I would have offered every assistance I could in a bipartisan manner to achieve that goal.

There is another thing we need to bear in mind when considering the impacts on Western Australia of this sea-swap program. There seems to be some fear that this will turn our patch into some sort of US military fiefdom; that we are about to be taken over completely by the US war machine. I think that is grossly overstating the situation. It would be totally unacceptable if that or anything like it were on the horizon.

Hon Kim Chance: There is no truth in the rumour that HMAS *Stirling* is being renamed *Civic Bay*.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I am relieved to hear that. The Leader of the House has done his bit. The Australian Government, the current State Government and the alternative State Government would not stand for any loss of Australian sovereignty or takeover of any part of Western Australia by a foreign power, even a friendly power such as the United States or Britain.

Hon Peter Foss: Some people would regard Russia as a friendly power.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Possibly they do. Let us look at what is involved here. I refer to an article in *The Australian* of Thursday, 4 July 2002, in which Roger Martin reports on the proposal for American warships to come to HMAS *Stirling* or Cockburn Sound instead of returning to their home port, which could be as far away as San Diego, every six months. The ships would remain in this part of the world for up to 18 months. Crew rotations and reequipping and maintenance would occur in Western Australia every six months. That would mean that the vessel would not have to sail all the way to continental United States for those changes to take place. The Leader of the House outlined some of the modest but, in the scheme of things, decided commercial advantages for a limited sector. Such business would be very important for that limited sector that is involved in the sort of work we are talking about. He also referred to the flow-on benefits of having crews disembark here for some rest and relaxation before travelling to their home country. That would work in rotation, with one crew arriving as another is leaving. Of course, that is nothing we do not already know about. Every now and then, a floating city in the form of a major US carrier complete with an armada of other ships visits. We get a huge influx of tourist American servicemen for an intense few days. They spend up big and then go. It is a huge shot in the arm for local businesses.

Hon Kim Chance: It is worth about half a million dollars a day.

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Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Yes, and it also provides a lot of entertainment for people who like to protest by riding surfboards and attaching themselves to the bows of ships. According to the article by Roger Martin, the sea-swapping experiment, as it is called, is expected to begin next January when the 8 000-tonne destroyer USS *Fletcher* berths at Fremantle after a six-month deployment in the Persian Gulf. Its entire 380-strong crew will be replaced by sailors flown in from the US. A 380-strong crew passing through Perth is not a takeover. The Sydney Olympic team would have been a heck of a lot bigger than that. In fact, some pop stars in the United States would have bigger retinues than that. The USS *Fletcher* will have a turnover of 380 people. I do not know whether that is the best way for the US Navy to do it, but I do not care. I wish it well in its experiment, although I do not understand why it does not conduct its sea-swapping operations in Diego Garcia or another locality in the region. Anyway, the USS *Fletcher* is due here in January with a 380-strong crew. The 8 500-tonne guided missile destroyer USS *Higgins* will also change over its crew in Fremantle, possibly next May. It is not really a flood of maritime traffic. I think the idea that we are being taken over by the US Navy is an exaggerated concern that is being promoted to try to beat up an issue. I think the member concerned could have found a better one than this.

Hon Jim Scott interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: That has absolutely nothing to do with it. Hon Jim Scott is more concerned about Iraq than our relationship with our US ally. In any case, I do not know why these particular aspects of Australian foreign policy are intruding into this Chamber. It is one thing to ask about the impacts of this sea swap on Western Australia's welfare -

Hon Dee Margetts: Mark McGowan offered military support for the United States' war on terrorism. That is what it is all about.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: Hon Dee Margetts thinks she is still in the Senate. She is not; she is in the Legislative Council of Western Australia. We have concerns about the wellbeing of Western Australian people to address. This House has much more productive things to do than be a vehicle for some of the clapped-out and stupid rantings of the Greens (WA), or the anarchists, as they like to proclaim themselves. I say good on Mark McGowan for attempting to promote Western Australia. I am disappointed that I cannot find out from the Leader of the House if he was doing it officially or as a private member. I am sorry the Leader of the House ran out of time.

Hon Kim Chance: I do not know. I would have answered if I knew, but I do not know.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I honestly do not see that there is any more that can be read into this. Armageddon is not approaching. Perhaps some of the panic merchants should understand that they need a cold shower.

Hon Jim Scott interjected.

Several members interjected.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: I have not yet sat down, Mr President.

The PRESIDENT: Order, members! The member has not sat down.

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN: It is fortunate that I have not, because Hon Jim Scott made a stupid interjection. I do not know whether it is a tautology to say that an interjection from Hon Jim Scott was stupid. Of course I am concerned about warfare! I addressed that matter just the other night during the adjournment debate. Hon Jim Scott should save his flipping stupid remarks for an audience that might be dumb enough to appreciate them.

HON FRANK HOUGH (Agricultural) [4.49 pm]: Hon Dee Margetts expressed two concerns. The first was about Fremantle, which I think is supposed to be HMAS *Stirling*, and she threw in Lancelin as well. I do not have any great problem with sea swaps in Fremantle. The only thing that I would perhaps like at the end of the day is for the sea swaps to occur in Geraldton. That would be fantastic. Sea swaps involve the R and R of American troops. Australia does not have an army, navy or air force to speak of. The Greens are antagonistic Trotskyites. Having a bit of an American presence in Western Australia would provide an incremental income of half a million dollars a day. This is very good foresight by the State.

My father was an American naval officer. He speaks highly of Western Australia. One of his great loves was to come to the Fremantle port. I have watched the warships come into the port. One woman who was there - I cannot remember her name; she had red hair and was a greenie -

Hon Murray Criddle: Jo Valentine.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: It was Jo Valentine. I was tempted to push her off the gangplank last time I saw her at the port, because she was an absolute nuisance. She is an embarrassment to people who call themselves Western

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Australians. The Americans on those warships have been in war zones. They do not want to come here and see boofheads standing on the gangplank and saying that they are not welcome. They are welcome here, because they spend money. They come here for R and R. They are not taking over the place. They come here to spend their hard-earned money and have ships repaired. I do not have a problem with that. That is work for Western Australians. The Greens want to get rid of everything. Next they will disallow rowing boats.

This motion is about the idea of having an American naval presence in Perth. I congratulate the Western Australian Government for supporting this idea, because it will provide jobs and build up tourism in Western Australia. The people who come here for R and R ultimately go back to the United States. There would not be too many Americans who do not have some very good words to say about Western Australia when they leave this port.

I return to the issue of Lancelin. Yesterday I received a letter from Hon Fran Bailey, which states -

Dear Mr Hough

Thank you for your letter of 12 June 2002 to the Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Robert Hill, concerning the proposed extension of the Lancelin Defence Training Area (LDTA). As this matter falls within my portfolio responsibilities, your correspondence has been passed to me for response.

On 13 August 2002, I announced on behalf of the Government that Defence would not proceed with the proposal to extend the existing LDTA and that alternate sites would be investigated. Accordingly, Defence has commenced preliminary investigations of suitable unallocated crown land.

This decision was made after careful examination of the area involved in the extension of the LDTA, and in consideration of the concerns raised by neighbouring property holders and community groups, while remaining mindful of ensuring long term viability of training areas for the Australian Defence Force.

If I can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

I live in that area. The bombing in the Lancelin area is unacceptable. These ships could go somewhere else, such as Geraldton. The Department of Conservation and Land Management acquired Giralia station, which is about 10 times larger than the bombing range used in Lancelin. The only concern with using that station would be the impact on the one family who lives there. Giralia station has sea access. It covers about 700 000 acres, which makes it probably two or three times larger than the Lancelin-Jurien area. The Defence Force already uses 10 000 hectares in Lancelin and hopes to increase that to 58 500 hectares. If the bombing range were moved north of Exmouth, it would not affect the residents of that area. The only people it would affect would be the one family of CALM people who live on that station. It would be an ideal area for landings and bombings. It would be well out of the way. It is most important that the ships are serviced in Western Australia. I vehemently oppose any activities in the Lancelin area. The Defence Force currently uses a 10 000-hectare bombing range just north of Lancelin. I have been in Lancelin when bombing has occurred. During these bombings, buildings shake, particularly on still nights. There is no question about that. The only concern I have is with the history of the American defence force. I am worried that bombs could be fired from American aircraft carriers in the Lancelin area. The Americans have a tendency to miss their targets. One hopes that they will not hit Lancelin or, more importantly, Ledge Point when I am on the veranda having a glass of chardonnay.

The coastal real estate of the Lancelin-Cervantes area could be developed. It is an important area for tourism. Once Hon Alannah MacTiernan eventually puts the road through from Lancelin to Cervantes, \$800 million of tourism development will supposedly occur along the coast. I would love that area to be left untouched. It is a great area.

I totally and utterly support the idea of sea swaps in Fremantle. There is no question about the additional income that businesses would receive from that. I think particularly of my future son-in-law, who is an artist and tattooist. He loves it when the Americans come into port because they will pay \$US150 for a tattoo instead of \$A150.

Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich: Are they real artists or do they copy?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: They are real artists, and they are very good too. Many businesses that have had experience with Americans know that it takes the Americans about three or four days to realise that our dollar is worth about 55c in the \$US1. By that time, they are on their way out and people have been -

Hon Dee Margetts: You're not suggesting that they are being cheated, Frank?

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I am not suggesting that. I am suggesting that businesses make a profit while they can.

President; Hon Dee Margetts; Hon Simon O'Brien; ; Hon Jim Scott; Hon Kim Chance; Hon Frank Hough; Hon
Barbara Scott

I strongly support the idea of sea swaps in Fremantle. Why does the Government not consider Geraldton? On the other hand, I strongly oppose the continued use of the Lancelin area for defence training. In her letter, Hon Fran Bailey said that the federal Government is looking at alternative sites. I hope that it does find alternative sites. Giralia station is one area that comes to mind. There must be other sites around.

Hon Norman Moore: That is in somebody else's electorate. Just be careful.

Hon FRANK HOUGH: I was keeping the business in the Agricultural Region and moving the bombing out. That was my main intention. I support American ships coming to the Fremantle port.

HON BARBARA SCOTT (South Metropolitan) [4.59 pm]: In the very short time I have left in this debate, as a representative of the region we are talking about, I am interested in that part of the motion that reads -

. . . consider as a matter of urgency the impacts on the people of Western Australia as a consequence . . .

The Leader of the Government said very clearly that this matter involves a number of issues for Western Australia. One of the issues that should not involve Western Australia is whether the United States Navy will use the area. It is a federal issue; it does not involve Western Australia. It is disappointing that Senator Greig, who is supposed to represent Western Australia, has spoken out strongly against an agreement. I hope that if agreement can be reached, we can build on the huge infrastructure and benefits that have emerged from the establishment of HMAS *Stirling* at Garden Island and the infrastructure established in the Cockburn Sound area.

The growth in the city of Rockingham, Kwinana and adjacent towns is partly due to the huge impact that the Navy has had on not only housing but also employment in that area. This project would use the present infrastructure and increase employment opportunities in an area that suffers from high unemployment.

The tourism industry is in chaos. Tourism businesses are suffering enormously from a downturn in that industry and this initiative would boost the tourism dollars for Western Australia.

Motion lapsed, pursuant to standing orders.