

MARINE PARKS AND RESERVES

Statement by Minister for the Environment

MR D.A. TEMPLEMAN (Mandurah - Minister for the Environment) [9.10 am]: Members will be aware that the Labor Party's 2001 and 2005 election policies outlined clear commitments to create a world-class marine parks and reserves system around Western Australia's 13 500 kilometre coastline. Since 2001, new marine parks and reserves have been created at Jurien Bay - the first new marine park for 13 years - and in the waters surrounding the Barrow and Montebello Islands. The government has also expanded the Rowley Shoals Marine Park 260 kilometres west of Broome, and has extended the Ningaloo Marine Park so that the entire 290-kilometre length of the reef is in protected waters. A marine management area has also been created around the Muiron Islands to the north of the reef. Management plans for the Montebello and Barrow Islands and Rowley Shoals Marine Park and reserves were released last month. The government has also put in place a zoning scheme at Ningaloo that matches the Great Barrier Reef in levels of protection. These initiatives have been supported through allocating significant additional funding to the management of marine parks, as well as \$21 million for scientific research through the Western Australian Marine Science Institution. With respect to other proposed marine parks and reserves, the current position is as follows.

Dampier Archipelago and Cape Preston: The government is currently finalising matters relating to native title, port boundaries and areas subject to a state agreement act. The Department of Environment and Conservation, with the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority, will finalise a management plan for approval by government before the establishment of the conservation reserves.

Walpole and Nornalup Inlets: An indicative management plan was released for public comment last year. The Department of Environment and Conservation and the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority are currently finalising a management plan for approval by government before the establishment of the park.

The public consultation process for the proposed Capes Marine Park between Geographe Bay and Hardy Inlet on the south west coast is now complete and DEC is preparing a final plan with the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority.

In all three cases, it is expected that we will be able to create the new marine parks and reserves during the remainder of this year. In addition, the management plan for the Shoalwater Islands Marine Park next to Rockingham is being finalised and will be publicly released in the coming months.

The temperate waters off the Western Australian coast are one of the world's 18 key marine biodiversity hotspots and are ranked the second highest area for the number of species that occur nowhere else. The Carpenter government's marine parks and reserves initiatives will help ensure that the richness of our marine environment is protected for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.