

MARINE PARKS

Mr GRIFFITHS (Goyder) (15:10): I wish to update the house on the continuing debate occurring around South Australia on marine parks. I do thank the minister for convening a briefing in the house this week. It was attended by a wide variety of members, certainly the majority being from our side of the house, who are just trying to find out some of the scientific background behind the preliminary determination of the lines for the sanctuary zones.

While Mr Chris Thomas from the department certainly has a very slick presentation, unfortunately all of us left that meeting even more frustrated—completely frustrated about the fact that the real concerns of communities are not being listened to. I understand from the scientific data provided that day that there is a level of varying areas in which they wish to achieve some level of coverage, and that is how they have put some lines on maps.

I am very confused, though, when I hear that you can put lines anywhere and make suggestions anywhere you like, and that there will be slippages on the date when the marine sanctuary zones and the marine parks need to be declared. These are the words of the minister himself as reported in the press last weekend. However, we on this side, representing people who are very frustrated indeed about marine parks, just want to continue to raise this within the chamber. All would be aware that it is out there in the media all the time. People are continually ringing talkback radio.

Mr Pengilly interjecting:

Mr GRIFFITHS: As the member for Finnis says, they will continue to do this, because this is something that is touching at the heartstrings, really, of thousands and thousands of South Australians. We know that there are probably about 270,000 recreational fishers in our state. We know that many of those people travel extensively for an opportunity to go fishing.

I confirm again that members on this side of the house certainly support the principle of marine parks, but our concerns are with the declaration of the sanctuary zones. The people across South Australia also support the principle of marine parks, but the great frustration that is shining through is that people who travel for recreational fishing feel as though opportunities are going to be taken away from them and the people who live in the communities that are relatively close to the marine parks and the proposed sanctuary zones are going to suffer severe economic distress in coming years. That is the point that we want to enforce.

The briefing on Wednesday morning indicated that the state has seemingly set a policy that 10 per cent of marine waters be declared as sanctuary zones. To do that, given that the marine parks make up some 43 per cent of the marine waters, you have to target in the vicinity of 25 per cent of each of the marine parks to become a sanctuary zone. Around that, you have a habitat protection zone so that is a different layer of protection again that will be in place. However, declaring that one quarter of each of these 19 marine parks has to be set aside as an area in which no fishing activity can take place, especially if you are a community that is close to that, is devastating.

As part of the presentation, we were told that there is a preference for large sanctuary zones to be declared and not to have a multitude of smaller zones. My immediate comment to that in the meeting was, 'Well, obviously, you don't live close to one of the communities that are actually close to these sanctuary zones.' It is those towns that are really very fearful of their future.

I will relate this back to the electorate of Goyder and the impact that that is potentially going to have. There is a group of people who have worked an amazing number of hours in the last six weeks or so to prepare an alternative solution for Marine Park 11, which is the Port Victoria, Balgowan and Chinaman Wells area. Those people have looked at the 14 key principles upon which the sanctuary zone declarations have been devised. They have come up with an alternative suggestion—a far reduced area—because for them it is the principles that are the key driver, not the policy that seemingly exists about a 10 per cent sanctuary zoned area. Those people want an answer to that and they want to know can the same principle flow through to every marine park so that we can get some positive outcomes, and so that there will be areas set aside but there will be an economic and social future in this.

The minister stated on Wednesday that the economic and social impact study will be done soon. It will become part of the draft marine parks plan that will go out for further public consultation. I asked him what priority he will attach to that economic study because if that proves—and I am sure it will—that there will be significant economic detriment to the communities where the marine parks are planned, surely that has to flow through to a much smaller area being declared as part of the sanctuary zone.

I know members on the other side of the chamber are also being contacted on this. The recreational fishers will not give up on this fight. We know that there is a rally at Burnside on 5 April and that will be the start of it. I am confident that the Burnside Town Hall will be full that evening. It will make the voices become one, and it will only galvanise the community even more to fight the sanctuary zones.