



Full Day Hansard Transcript (Legislative Council, 6 May 2011, Proof)

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Extract from NSW Legislative Council Hansard and Papers Friday, 6 May 2011 (Proof).

MARINE PARKS AMENDMENT (MORATORIUM) BILL 2011

Bill introduced, and read a first time and ordered to be printed on motion by the Hon. Robert Brown.

Second Reading

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [11.04 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

Members who were present in the last Parliament would appreciate that the second reading speech on the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill was presented but, unfortunately, the debate did not proceed further. In the meantime, a lot of water has passed under the bridge and it is time to reintroduce it. The Shooters and Fishers Party is pleased to present the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2011. The bill provides for a five-year moratorium on the declaration of additional marine parks and prevents the Government from making a regulation that would extend the area within a marine park that comprises a sanctuary zone during that period commencing on the commencement of the proposed Act. Much debate on the issue of marine parks has occurred during the past couple of years. In the final term of the last Parliament the previous Government released a review of two marine parks: Jervis Bay Marine Park and the Solitary Islands Marine Park. Also in that period we had the establishment and report of a select committee on recreational fishing. The committee's report will be the subject of a take note debate at a later date, so I shall not refer to it in detail.

The Government's submission to the select committee contained a document entitled, "Marine Park Science in NSW: an Independent Review". The document made it plain that zoning plan reviews should be informed by and carried out in accordance with a recommendation of that scientific paper. The Government adopted the paper, which made a number of recommendations that were to be enacted. Eleven recommendations of the independent review panel were deemed to be of primary importance. The scientific panel urged immediate changes to the research scope, methodologies and priority of the Marine Parks Authority research program and plan. Amongst the recommendations noted as being of secondary importance, recommendation 7 stated:

Test the key assumptions involved in using ecosystems and habitat features as a surrogate for biodiversity *per se* as a priority over the next five years.

We then proceeded with the Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks reviews, and changes were made to the zoning plans. Whilst stakeholders from the recreational fishing sector were not entirely happy with the Jervis Bay Marine Park zoning plan, generally there was broad agreement in that the original marine park declaration had been carried out with a reasonable amount of public consultation. From all the instances witnesses brought to the attention of the select committee during the public hearings, Jervis Bay seemed to have the least amount of problems.

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This bill was put before the House in order to take what was at that stage the political debate out of the marine parks issue and to allow a mechanism whereby the government of the day, and the Coalition Government now with this bill, can put beyond all doubt that there needs to be a rest period in the creation of new marine parks and extension of sanctuary zones to allow proper scientific activities to take place. The evidence is that one cannot undertake scientific assessment of something like a marine environment, even a shallow water marine environment, in a period of two, three or even five years. Sometimes that takes 10 to 15 years. So the bill seeks to put that beyond doubt.

During the initial debate the then Labor Government was supportive of the bill, and I supported it in my second reading speech. Unfortunately, it was unable to carry through with its support, for whatever reason. I note that members of the then Coalition Opposition—now the Government—at various public meetings and elsewhere expressed support for the idea of placing a moratorium on the blind creation of new marine parks. I have a sense that the Government understands the gravity of the need for science in the review of all marine parks, and certainly before the creation of any new marine parks. I am sure the Government recognises that substantial sums of money are

required to enable that research to be undertaken.

We now have a new Government looking for money to run the State but I would urge the Government, if it supports the bill, to understand that there will be a requirement to make significant amounts of money available to the bodies that have stewardship of those areas which now come under Industry and Investment NSW, so that adequate research can be funded and done, otherwise a five-year moratorium becomes a waste of time. I do not think I need say much more about the recommendation. The bill simply seeks to place a moratorium on the creation of new marine parks and extension of sanctuary zones. It is straightforward and simple. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate adjourned on motion by the Hon. Rick Colless and set down as an order of the day for a future day.