

Second Reading

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN [11.28 a.m.]: I move:

That this bill be now read a second time.

The Shooters Party is pleased to present the Marine Parks Amendment (Moratorium) Bill 2010. 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 the period five years commencing on the commencement of the proposed Act.

The Government released that review, along with a similar review of the Jervis Bay Marine Park, at its first appearance before the Select Committee on Recreational Fishing. The Government's submission also contained the 2009 document entitled "Marine Park Science in NSW: An Independent Review". When the two documents are considered together, it is clear that the former—that is, the zoning plan review—should have been informed by, and indeed been carried out in accordance with, the recommendations in the latter. In all the 11 recommendations in the independent review deemed to be of primary importance, the scientific panel urges 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 states:

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

Yet a reading of the Solitary Islands Marine Park—Zoning Plan Review clearly shows that the Marine Parks Authority's recommendations to the Government to expand a sanctuary zone to include some intermediate reef areas is based purely on the fact that the reef is there. That is completely at odds with the clear recommendation made by the Government's own scientific panel. Clearly what is needed is breathing space for the Marine Parks Authority and the Department of Fisheries to carry out the research priorities recommended by the Government's own independent scientific panel. The public exposure period for analysis of the Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay marine parks zoning plan reviews concludes this month. That is, firstly, why I have brought on the bill now.

Secondly, we are in the middle of taking evidence for the upper House Select Committee on Recreational Fishing, the terms of reference of which include an examination of the efficacy and efficiency of marine parks. The committee will not report until late November and the Government will then need to consider any recommendations that flow from it. That will probably push any real determination of policy into the next Parliament. That is another reason I have brought on this bill now. Thirdly, there is enormous division in the community about marine parks and their value. We have heard in this Parliament of two petitions with more than 20,000 signatures opposing the creation of more marine parks.

Mr Ian Cohen: Did you collect them?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: No, I did not.

Mr Ian Cohen: Who collected them?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: I think the Hon. Duncan Gay collected 4,000 or 5,000 and the Warringah Anglers Fishing Club collected 16,000. For these reasons this bill needs to be supported by both the Government and the Opposition.

Mr Ian Cohen: What about your role as chair of the committee?

The Hon. ROBERT BROWN: That is exactly why I am introducing this bill. If the Hon. Ian Cohen were to listen to the debate he would understand that that is exactly why I am doing it. This bill will allow the incumbent Government and an incoming government to undertake the necessary work to assess existing marine parks in accordance with the recommendations of the Government's own scientific panel. The bill will also allow for the completion of the select committee inquiry into recreational fishing and time for the Government to assess any recommendations that flow from that inquiry. One of the recurring themes in the scientific literature and in government reports is the amount of time required for any measures designed to protect marine diversity to become evident. This bill will allow time—that is, five years—not only for the recommended research to be undertaken but also for changes in the marine environment across a range of protection methodologies to become evident. I commend the bill to the House.