



The Hon. Tony Burke MP

T R A N S C R I P T

Marine parks

E&OE Transcript

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TONY BURKE: [Inaudible] we're getting very close now to starting releasing draft plans for the south west for the [inaudible] and so we're meeting today, conducting a final round of consultation here in Perth with the local fishing industry. We're [great] fishers and right now with the environmental organisations that have been routing for our Save Our Marine Life campaign. For a long time in Australia we've done a lot in terms of protecting environmental assets on land.

Not far from us there are spectacular environmental assets which, if they were on land would be protected for many years now, but because they're in the ocean, they tend to not have been. So the final round of consultation today before we start the formal processes to work exactly what new layers of protection we'll be able to have in the oceans.

JOURNALIST 1: When do we expect the release of the new draft maps?

TONY BURKE: The draft maps will come out in a few weeks' time. There's some final work that I need to do with my colleagues back in Canberra and so I didn't want that work to go any further without spending some time here in Western Australia working out how we can deliver a good outcome in environmental protection. And also working through different issues [inaudible].

JOURNALIST 1: [Inaudible].

TONY BURKE: I think that is something we can work through. I wouldn't be holding the consultations unless that was what we were trying to achieve.

JOURNALIST 2: What's the feeling of [inaudible].

TONY BURKE: I think everybody understands the [inaudible]. People understand the importance of building a representative network. There's also been some frustration with the process. Many, many years ago, [inaudible] and there's been a lack of certainty for a long time. And that concern has been a frustration for the commercial sector as much as it's been a frustration for environmentalists. And so I

think people on land, we're finally now just a few weeks away from being able to have [inaudible].

JOURNALIST 2: [Inaudible].

TONY BURKE: That's right, that's when we hit the ninety-day formal period of consultation. And at the end of that we'll then have the plans in place to start implementing the new systems of protection in our oceans. And that, as I say, we've got [inaudible] as you all know in Western Australia you've got a canyon not far from here bigger than the Grand Canyon. [Inaudible] environmental assets [inaudible] always been neglected. And it's a way of trying to say, how can we [inaudible] environmental protection for [inaudible].

JOURNALIST 2: [Inaudible].

TONY BURKE: I suspect the nature of any ninety-day period of consultation is everybody on every side of the argument uses those ninety days to try to push for what they believe will be a better outcome. So I suspect that's [inaudible].

JOURNALIST 3: [Inaudible].

TONY BURKE: [Inaudible] Reef is a great example of an extraordinary environmental asset. Now, I've got two roles here. One is my role to provide the environmental federal legislation. And I've got a second role as an advocate for the environment. So when I have to deal with the application, when it comes to me, I'll have to deal with that quite specifically in terms of the requirements of federal legislation.

Now at the moment the Company has referred to my Department. My Department's asked for further information from the Company to determine what process it has to go through. We've stopped the clock at the moment while the Company puts together some more information. When I get that information I'll look at the advice from my Department and we'll apply [inaudible]. That's the way to deal with that. Either way, I think we all need to acknowledge [inaudible] is an extraordinary area of biodiversity. And we do want to ensure that those environmental assets don't [inaudible].

JOURNALIST 4: [Inaudible] is that in terms of reassurance [inaudible]?

TONY BURKE: My powers under the *Act* go quite specifically to matters of national environmental certificates. So there can be occasions where there are environmental challenges that aren't covered by the *Act*. We're very much constrained by the specific issues under the *Act*. I can't really go into much further detail there without starting to pre-judge the decision.

JOURNALIST 5: [Inaudible].

TONY BURKE: It's not uncommon when you meet with the commercial sector for them to argue that the rec sector is the problem. Or the rec sector will argue the reverse of the commercial. What we want to make sure is that for our most precious environmental assets that we provide levels of protection that haven't been there previously. If that can be done in a way that minimises the adjustment or the difficulties for business or recreation, then that's a good way to do it. But I think we've got to be a little bit careful of getting involved too much in a rec versus commercial argument.

JOURNALIST 6: Referring to the New South Wales politics, [inaudible] in the New South Wales Labor party. Is that something you support?

TONY BURKE: I'm from New South Wales. I haven't seen those reports today. And I even travelled to the other side of the country and it's still following me from the events of the weekend. I haven't seen the comments you refer to. The most important thing I think is always you get the policy right. And there'll always be arguments, important arguments about the structure of the party, the method we organise and by which we organise ourselves. Ultimately, I think all that matters in a political party is you get the policy right. If you've got the policy right then you're more likely to win support from the public. And I view most other issues as distractions.

JOURNALIST 6: You lost. You didn't win a single [inaudible]. Do you still think [inaudible]?

TONY BURKE: Just look at the chronology; I've seen a few attempts to try and make the New South Wales election about the price of carbon. Look at the chronology. Three months ago, before the announcement on carbon costs being made, all the polling said Labor was heading to a result a little bit worse than what happened at the weekend in terms of number of seats. People were talking about numbers like eleven or twelve in terms of the number of seats they were going to win.

So if you're heading to a result that bad, carbon prices are announced and you end up with a result that's a bit better. I think it's a little bit much for people to be saying that that was decided on anything other than state issues. But can I say pricing carbon is something that is simply an important economic reform for Australia to be involved in. We do believe in the pricing of carbon, we do believe in making polluters pay and we believe that by doing that, we reduce their emissions. Now that is good policy and if there's a lesson federally from the New South Wales outcome it's this. If you get out there and say something's important, then you should hold your nerve, run the argument and try to deliver it.

JOURNALIST 6: But they didn't give a clear message to the New South Wales Government [inaudible]. Do you think [inaudible] will play key roles down [inaudible]?

TONY BURKE: When there's a vote like that, I think it's important that the Labor Party of New South Wales [inaudible]. I work on the basis that we all take a level of responsibility and let's see how we can rebuild and re-earn the trust of the public.

JOURNALIST 7: [Inaudible].

TONY BURKE: I think the starting point on any attempt when you go to the public and say, we want to earn your trust, we want you to vote for us. The starting point is always the policies on infrastructure. Now there can be structural arguments that can happen and they can be [inaudible] but unless we're engaging in a policy [inaudible].

JOURNALIST 7: Is that a key message you [inaudible]?

TONY BURKE: The vote for New South Wales collapsed two-and-a-half years ago at the time of the electricity vote. And there can be a whole lot of repercussions about the role of individuals about that. But the truth was, two-and-a-half years ago, the public decided [inaudible] be returned and that decision basically didn't shift for the two-and-a-half years that followed.

JOURNALIST 7: What about [inaudible]?

TONY BURKE: I don't think - and I said this on the weekend - I don't think you can have three premiers in four years and present yourself as being a stable operation. And stability is the starting point of a government. This is the first time, interestingly, that the Coalition in New South Wales kept the same leader for the entire period of opposition, they haven't done that before. [Inaudible].

JOURNALIST 7: Some would say [inaudible].

TONY BURKE: Yes I know those arguments, and I don't shy away from them. But at the same time, I think to continue to go over and over the events of a few months ago now isn't going to take us anywhere and I think I've been pretty consistent in saying the whole way through, the most important issue to get the policy right and then you can rely on the support of the public. If you don't get the policy right, then you have those sorts of outcomes.

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