



GOAT ISLAND
27 November 2002

Mrs PENFOLD (Flinders): Will the Premier advise the house whether any public notification or consultation was undertaken prior to yesterday's announcement suggesting Goat Island as the preferred location for two yellowtail kingfish farms? Goat Island is located about 40 kilometres off shore from Ceduna in an area known as Nuyts Archipelago and the Isles of St Francis, and is home to a population of about 94 000 short-tailed shearwaters and other bird species, including the brown falcon. Only 900 metres from Goat Island is a small colony of Australian sea lions, and there is some debate about whether or not this is a breeding colony. Just 12 kilometres from Goat Island on Lounds Island is a breeding ground for a colony of about 50 sea lions and, when last surveyed, 26 pups. In fact, surveys reveal that the offshore islands in the area are home to at least seven individual Australian sea lion colonies and breeding grounds, some with up to 112 pups. Some are also home to New Zealand fur seals. It has merely shifted the problem.

Hon. M.D. RANN (Premier): This will give me another opportunity to talk about piniipeds. The thing I forgot to mention yesterday was that, whilst I mentioned that they were different species but of the same family, there is an easy way for the member for Flinders to spot the difference, and that is to look to their ears, because the sea lion has ears, as well as rotated flippers. That is why they are a little more agile on the land. However, the poor, hapless, ear-less seal from New Zealand (although I must say somewhat unfairly referred to as the rabbit of the ocean, which is not true and is an outrageous defamation of the New Zealand fur seal) does not have ears as we know them: it has small punctures at the side of the head. Is the member for Flinders asking the government to kill off aquaculture on the Eyre Peninsula? Is that what you are asking for? She is nodding.

Mrs Penfold: That's what you're doing.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: What we are doing is on the best possible advice from the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries—although, of course, you would know that seals and sea lions are not fish—

An honourable member: They eat a lot of fish.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: They eat a lot of fish but they are not fish. In fact, they are preyed upon by fish, for instance, the great white shark.

The Hon. K.O. Foley: Isn't that a mammal?

The Hon. M.D. RANN: No, sharks are not mammals. I am doing my best to educate the house. We tried to get the best possible decision. We were told that this is a unique breeding colony and, therefore, we were told to move it to another area. There always have to be compromises when dealing with the pressing needs of both the industry and the environment. We have taken to heart the best interests of the environment and the state in cooperation with the company. If the member for Flinders seriously wants this government to kill off all aquaculture on Eyre Peninsula, she is dealing with the wrong government, because I am not prepared to do it. We are prepared to make balanced decisions, involving matters of judgment. The difference between us and members opposite is that we are prepared to listen to the arguments and then make a decision. That was the problem with the previous government: it could not make a decision. As for FOIs—

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order!

The Hon. M.D. RANN: —you did not really need to lodge FOIs on the previous government, because members opposite spent half their time ringing us up, all hours of the night, leaking against each other. I had to go wandering through the streets to homes in inner-city suburbs to pick up hundreds of pages of government documents.

Members interjecting:

The SPEAKER: Order! The Premier will come to order. The question was not about freedom of information.

The Hon. M.D. RANN: Thank you, sir. I am trying to be free with my information about piniipeds. I am available for a more detailed discussion at a later date.