

MAYORS MESSAGE 458

Regional Impact Assessment Study is incomplete.

As a consequence of the Marine Parks Sanctuary Zones being implemented the State Government made the commitment to complete RIAS reports for our area plus Kangaroo Island and Port Wakefield. This was in order to assess any impacts on local areas by the new zoning.

An initial report was prepared by Associate Professor Michael O'Neil however this was extremely limited in value because only three months of data was available when the initial report was prepared. The report made it very clear that more access to data was required to make adequate recommendations.

The required data is held by the South Australian Research and Development Institution (SARDI), however they have not been prepared to release it even though it is many months overdue. In an attempt to obtain the data Council wrote to Minister Hunter asking him to instruct SARDI to provide the data so that the report could be completed.

The letter to Minister Hunter quoted the advice from the report that clearly showed that updated data was needed to make the report relevant and accurate.

In return a reply was received saying that the report had been done and that it showed that there were no impacts on Ceduna from the sanctuary zones which totally ignored the quoted details about the fact that the report was not able to be properly completed.

Just in case Minister Hunter failed to read the letter seeking some cooperation it read in part:

"Drawing conclusions regarding the impact of SZs on the three study regions is a difficult task given the short time frame for preparing the RIAS and therefore limited availability of data and trends."

This leads to at least three questions, these being:

- 1) Does Minister Hunter think that we are stupid or is he simply uncaring about keeping a clear commitment from the State Government?
- 2) What is SARDI hiding – why are they withholding data which is overdue and is really the property of the fishing industry which provided it in the first place?
- 3) Was the promise of completing the RIAS sincere or simply a subterfuge?