



MEDIA RELEASE – 22nd October 2010

WA Premier breaks key promise to protect world's largest Humpback nursery on Kimberley Coast "forever"

98% of Kimberley coast still open to mining, oil, gas and commercial fishing

Only 2% of the Kimberley coast will have real protection in sanctuaries under a new plan revealed by the Premier Colin Barnett, Martin Pritchard of Environs Kimberley said today.

"The scale of the proposal across the Kimberley looks good but when you look into the detail there is very little protection in this announcement", Director Martin Pritchard said.

The Kimberley coast is one of the largest unspoiled coasts in the world and is home to the world's largest humpback nursery. Every year, more than 22,000 humpback whales calve, feed and breed between Broome and Camden Sound.

The Premier has made repeated promises to protect the Kimberley whale coast, including saying he would ensure, "this pristine and beautiful part of Western Australia will be preserved forever." (3rd October 2009).

As well as only covering a small area of the Kimberley's whale nursery, under the Premier's plan only 13% of the proposed Camden Sound Marine Park will be fully protected within a designated 'marine sanctuary'. The rest will remain open to a range of extractive industries and activities.

Environs Kimberley Director Martin Pritchard said the Premier promised to protect the Kimberley's whales forever but this announcement fails to deliver.

"The Premier knows that poorly designed marine parks offer no real protection – activities like mining, oil, gas and fishing can continue in almost the entire park area. This announcement will not protect this stunning marine environment," he said.

"Only large marine sanctuaries - areas which are free from industrial development and fishing – will protect the Kimberley's spectacular marine life to breed and feed away from interference."

Mr Pritchard said ten leading WA marine scientists had already called for a large marine park with extensive marine sanctuary zones.

"The Premier compared today's announcement to the Great Barrier Reef but it has less than half the protection – the Kimberley's marine environment is of global significance and deserves more."

"If the Premier is so confident that this plan and the science is right, then we call on him to publicly release all advice provided by the independent Marine Parks and Reserves Authority on the proposed Camden Sound Marine Park."

Media contact: Martin Pritchard 0427 548 075