

Protect call for one third of coast

DANIEL MERCER

ONE of WA's foremost marine scientists has called on the State and Federal Governments to lock away as much as 30 per cent of the Kimberley's coastline in conservation sanctuary zones.

Citing scientific consensus, University of WA Centre for Marine Futures Professor Jessica Meeuwig said the Kimberley's coastline was internationally significant and up to a third of it needed protection from fishing and resources exploration.

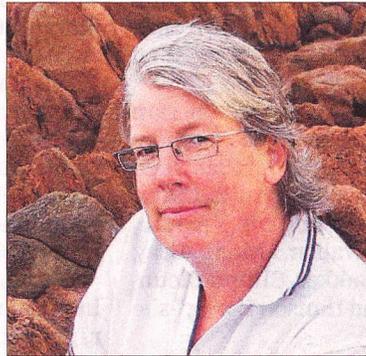
Her comments came as Premier Colin Barnett indicated the State

Government's planned marine park at Camden Sound could be extended along coastal waters in the Kimberley towards the Northern Territory border as part of a broader push to conserve the region.

"Camden Sound will be made a marine park and we are looking at extending it across the top of the Kimberley," Mr Barnett told environmentalists outside Parliament House.

"We are going to ensure there is a connected system of parks on the land as well as in the sea.

"This will be one of Australia's greatest national parks and hope-



Prof Jessica Meeuwig.

fully ... the decision (will be) made by the end of the year."

But Professor Meeuwig ques-

tioned how serious the government was about conservation in the Kimberley, saying the proposed Camden Sound marine park would be meaningless if the government allowed mineral exploration and fishing activities to continue.

She said at least 20 per cent of all waters off the region's coastline should be declared sanctuaries to exclude such activities and the government should aim at locking away as much as a third.

She said more than 30 per cent of the Ningaloo and Great Barrier Reef marine parks were declared sanctuary zones and this should

act as a precedent for the Kimberley.

Areas that needed particular protection included mangroves, sea grass beds and coral reefs.

This was because they were important feeding and spawning grounds for many marine animals.

Environment Minister Donna Faragher announced in last month's Budget that a marine park at Camden Sound – an important humpback whale nursery – would be established in 2011 but has yet to reveal how much of whether any will be made a sanctuary zone.

November flow

THE Water Corporation has nominated a November date for the completion of Broome's next wastewater treatment plant.

Being built at a site next to the Broome North housing development, the \$19 million project will double the town's wastewater treatment capacity.

The plant will be able to treat almost 1.3 billion litres of water a year, although initially will treat less than a third of that.

Water Corporation North-West manager Kerrie Chapman said the new facility was slated for completion in November and would largely provide services for the 13,000 residents who are expected to move into Broome North over the coming years.

She said the plant would be expanded in stages and would eventually have a capacity mirroring the existing facility south of Broome.



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