

emphasis is always on how we look after our country, and when we talk about that we talk about it in terms of the land. Well, we need to apply the same principles to looking after our coastal waters.

This bill picks up all the petroleum products, oily mixtures, oily residues, noxious liquids, harmful substances, sewage, chemicals, garbage and timber waste. We've seen an example just recently, 2 weeks ago I think, where concerned Yolngu people came in from Dhimurru, over at Cape Arnhem, and expressed their concern about the pollution that's being washed up on their shores. Obviously if it has been happening there it has to be happening right across the coast.

I and other members on this side of the House certainly welcome the introduction of this bill. The sooner we get it into legislation and it's enforceable and the regulations are put in place, the better off we're going to be in ensuring that people out there understand what this marine pollution legislation is attempting to do and the strict fines that go with it.

I thank the officers - I know the minister is going to do that, they are his officers - who briefed me yesterday. I think the work that has been put into the bill has been good. Certainly, with any new legislation from time to time, there will be concerns raised by people out there. If they are bringing them to my attention as the shadow transport minister, I will certainly raise them with the minister. But I think there has been a fine job done. It is good to see that we can fall in line with what is happening in the other states with marine pollution legislation.

Mr MITCHELL (Millner): Mr Speaker, I rise to speak very briefly in support of this bill. The *Marine Pollution Bill* provides for the control of shipboard pollutants and their discharge into the Territory's coastal waters which, of course, has been a major concern to a lot of our people here in the Territory from all walks of life for a long time.

The new legislation will be consistent with similar legislation applying in other Australian jurisdictions and will provide for an internationally accepted maritime transport standard by incorporating 2 international maritime conventions which have been ratified by Australia. The 2 conventions are the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, commonly referred to as the Maritime Pollution (Marpol) Convention, and the Convention Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in Cases of Oil Pollution Casualties, or the Intervention Program. Marpol is recognised world-wide as the most comprehensive initiative to regulate and minimise pollution from ships and contains specific provisions to control oil, chemicals, sewerage and garbage.

The intervention convention applies where a ship has been damaged at sea and is posing an environmental threat to the coastline. This convention allows for a range of actions from moving the ship or removing the cargo to actually sinking the ship. The Exxon Valdez and similar disasters necessitated such a convention.

The sanctions contained in the *Marine Pollution Bill* provide a serious deterrent to any deliberate and negligent pollution of our coastal waters. The bill complements the *Waste Management and Pollution Control Act* which applies to non-maritime pollution and will provide for the same range of penalties by referring to the *Northern Territory Environmental Offences Penalties Act*.

I will not table it but certainly make it available for any honourable members who want to have a bit of a look at this, and it's available at the Marine Branch of the Department of Transport and Works, and it goes into a great deal of detail regarding this particular bill. Right at the end of it, it gets into the penalties that I just referred to. As the member for Arnhem alluded to, the penalties go from \$5000 for a level 4, or probably what you'd call a minimal offence, up to \$1.25m for the higher level, but of course when you take into that the sinking of the ship and other things, there's some pretty extreme measures that can be brought in by the authorities to safeguard our waters.

Authorised officers will be approved to enforce the legislation and to investigate incidents. The officers will monitor compliance with the legislation, investigate discharges, examine ships and other equipment and respond to pollution incidents.

This important legislation will provide a significant safeguard in respect of the Territory's coastal waters and its coastline. I recall only in the last week or so, as mentioned by the member for Arnhem, a newspaper article with a concerned coastal traditional owner presenting graphic evidence of pollutants washed up in his area. No doubt he, as well as others, would be very glad to see this legislation and it is timely from a point of view of his particular concerns. I've been around this coastal area of the Territory many times and many areas over quite a number of years. I recall many times in the remote beach areas finding plastic bottles, things that have been thrown over the side, plastic crates, nets with turtle and dugong, crocodiles even, as well as a number of other dead fish just floating around. A lot of that stuff in some cases was just deliberately thrown over the side - 'she's right mate, the old briny will take care of it all' - and hopefully this legislation will put a stop to a lot of that and particularly where there are instances