



**Abalone farms at Elliston
30 January 2006**

Fear and ignorance are being used by pressure groups in an endeavour to stop abalone farming at Elliston, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said.

“Comments that sea lions will be adversely affected are mischievous to say the least. In fact, there is more scrutiny and understanding of the sea lions than ever before,” she said.

Mrs Penfold said in-sea abalone farming is a very clean green form of aquaculture as the animals are not artificially fed and the baskets that hold them are rigid.

“As with all new industries, the best systems are evolving with improved methods to hold the baskets now being used.

“Like all aquaculture, in- sea abalone farming is subject to a high level of regulation and official scrutiny,” she said.

Mrs Penfold who was commenting on statements made by Senator Bob Brown said it was ludicrous that comments by someone in Tasmania who has not looked at the project and who has never spoken to the company could be taken seriously.

“All thinking people are concerned about the environment. This is not a prerogative of any particular party or group,” she said.

“Abalone farming has caused much closer scrutiny of the sea lion colonies, and that is a positive that may not otherwise have occurred.

“The industry also provides jobs in a community where there are currently few opportunities.”

She said Elliston District Council has just over 800 ratepayers to fund all the works and services that the council is called on to provide, including maintenance in a number of conservation and national parks.

She said the fear and ignorance being used to stop progress was similar to that abounding at the start of the industrial revolution a couple of hundred years or so ago.

“A better way forward for this minority group would be to focus on working with Australian Bight Abalone Limited so that the district prospers and grows, thus making more funds available for the protection of the environment.

“Knocking development without just cause – as is being done in this instance – could lead to a reduction in services and works, and that would be a tragedy for the whole district and the local environment,” she said. ENDS

