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Subsea 7 causing concern in the gulf



Tom Zaunmayr

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Cape Range National Park and the Exmouth Gulf. Picture: Pilbara News

Exmouth's outgoing commissioner has warned the town risks losing resources companies to Onslow and Karratha if residents continue to show hostility towards new projects.

Ian Fletcher's comments come as anglers and conservationists shape up for a scrap over Subsea 7's interest in setting up an underwater pipe building facility at Heron Point in the Exmouth Gulf.

Trawling aside, the Exmouth Gulf is largely untouched by industry, and its shores are popular with anglers.

Mr Fletcher passed a motion to put rezoning of the land required out for public consultation last week.

“What I have done is started a process, I have not approved Subsea 7 to occupy that space,” he said.

“If the proposal stacks up, what it will do is provide diversity and real jobs for Exmouth which will be there all year.”

Mr Fletcher said organisations and individuals would get the chance to make submissions to the Environmental Protection Authority.

Cape Conservation Group president Denise Fitch said she was concerned a zoning change could open the gulf up to more industrial development.

“Every aspect of its construction and operation will have a significant impact on our community and its special environment,” she said.

North West Central MLA Vince Catania said any decisions regarding major projects should be made by an elected council.

“It is disappointing the commissioner has rushed through this public consultation,” he said.

“Any decisions in relation to Subsea 7, or any long-term alteration of the environment, should be in the hands of elected members.”