

Division 16: Primary Industries and Regional Development — Services 6 and 7, Fisheries, \$147 913 000 —

Ms M.M. Quirk, Chair.

Mr D.J. Kelly, Minister for Fisheries.

Mr R. Addis, Director General.

Ms H. Brayford, Deputy Director General, Sustainability and Biosecurity.

Ms M. Taylor, Chief Financial Officer.

Mr B. Mezzatesta, Executive Director, Operations and Compliance.

Dr W. Fletcher, Executive Director, Fisheries and Agriculture Resource Management.

Mr M. Chmielewski, Senior Policy Adviser.

Ms N. Arrowsmith, Chief of Staff, Minister for Fisheries.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day. It is my intention to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall be examined only in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

[8.40 pm]

I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 1 June 2018. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice through the online questions system.

I give the call to the member for Kalamunda.

Mr M. HUGHES: I refer the minister to page 189 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2, and in particular the line item "Shark Hazard Mitigation Initiatives" in the table "Spending Changes". Can the minister outline the initiatives that make up the state government's shark hazard mitigation strategy?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am sure that this is an area of some interest to the chamber. When we came into government, we undertook to pursue programs backed by science, rather than simply spend taxpayers' money on programs to make it look as though the government was doing something. The principal program that we have implemented since coming into office is the shark deterrent subsidy. Soon after we came into government, we approved one device—the Freedom 7 device—which was university-tested by the University of Western Australia. That research was done under the previous government. We put in place a \$200 subsidy for that device. So far it has been very popular and 1 700 Western Australians have taken up that device. One criticism that some people have had is that it is inconvenient for surfers to use. We encouraged other manufacturers to look at devices that may be more suited to surfers. The \$400 000 per annum that the member referred to in the budget will allow us to extend the subsidy to other devices. Just yesterday, I announced that the government was approving a second device—the Surf+ device—to be eligible for that subsidy. That device is specifically suited to surfers and attaches to a surfboard. It has been rigorously tested by Flinders University in South Australia. Those devices will become available tomorrow, so surfers will be able to go in to surf and dive shops and access that subsidised device.

The subsidy program is in addition to all the other things that we do. We provided \$6 million to Surf Life Saving WA to continue its work. That money was not in the budget that we inherited from the previous government. We have given it additional money to extend the aerial patrols, which people are fairly keen on, for an extra seven weeks this season. In addition, that funding will allow Surf Life Saving WA to use drones for the first time in the work that it does. We have extended the satellite receivers for the shark monitoring network to Esperance. We have funded an additional shark enclosure at Mandurah. The local council is still working out where it will put it. We have made funding available for beach emergency numbers, which will enable local governments that wish to participate to number their beaches so that emergency services will be able to get to the scene of an emergency quickly, whether it is a shark attack or a heart attack.

Contrary to what opposition members have said, a comprehensive range of programs are in place. The subsidy scheme is a world first. We firmly believe that surfers can get the best protection available through some of the decisions that they make. They can take an individual university-tested personal shark deterrent with them

wherever they go and be protected in the most remote corners of Western Australia. I thank the member for the question. I know it is a matter of keen public interest. We are very happy to continue to pursue new technologies to give people the maximum amount of protection we can when they are in the water.

Dr D.J. HONEY: How many people would the additional subsidy cover in terms of the total number of devices a year?

Mr D.J. KELLY: We have already announced that 2 000 subsidised devices are available and 1 700 of them have been taken up. Approximately 300 are left. On the basis of the second device being added to the scheme, we have said that we will extend the subsidy scheme by an extra 1 000 devices. So that is 3 000 devices in total. We have always said that that is not necessarily the total number of devices that we will make available. As the member will remember, we initially announced 1 000, which were quickly taken up by members of the public. So we made a decision to extend it by another 1 000. We have now extended it to 3 000. Assuming that those 3 000 are taken up by the public, we will then decide whether it is in the public interest to extend that subsidy scheme.

As the member for Kalamunda has pointed out, \$400 000 is allocated to the scheme in the budget across the forward estimates. If we wanted to, we could extend the scheme for the next four years. We do not want to say that this subsidy will always be there, because the member knows what it is like—if people think something will always be available, they tend to think that they do not have to buy it now and they can buy it next week or next month. We want people to get the protection delivered by these devices as soon as possible. To try to encourage people to buy them now, we have said that a limited number of them are available. They are available tomorrow. We want people to buy them tomorrow and surf with them on the weekend. It is not correct to say that we will make only 3 000 available. If we approach that 3 000 mark, we will then decide whether to extend the scheme. It would be great if those 3 000 are snapped up quickly, because that would mean people are getting that additional protection when they go into the water. How long the subsidy is in place and how many devices are made available will be decided as the subsidy program progresses.

Dr D.J. HONEY: If we went to 3 000 subsidies, what percentage of metropolitan beachgoers does that represent?
[8.50 pm]

Mr D.J. KELLY: To be honest I have no idea, but I have not looked at that because it is not really relevant. This device is targeted at surfers. The ordinary beachgoer in the metropolitan area would not need one of these devices because the statistics show that a beachgoer who goes for a swim is very, very safe. Since 2000, of the 15 fatal shark attacks that people get interested in, arguably only two people were swimming at the beach; the remainder of the fatalities related to surfers and divers. I would not say to someone who is going for a swim at Port Beach that they should buy one of these devices. They are not directed at them. Swimmers who go in the water for a swim are already very safe. If, however, they want additional protection, there are a number of beach enclosures people can swim behind. They can swim behind a shark-proof barrier. There are enclosures. People can swim between the flags. I do not know the last time there was a shark incident when someone was swimming between the flags. It is extremely rare. It would be very misleading of the member to say this subsidy scheme is ineffectual because it covers potentially only a small portion of the beach-going public. It is not intended to cover those people. They are already protected by the other suite of measures in place—surf lifesaving patrols, aerial patrols, drones and beach enclosures; a range of things. The total number of beach users is not a useful or meaningful statistic in relation to this program.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I have a follow-up question, Madam Chair.

The CHAIR: Before you do that, you should be mindful that that question probably does not fit squarely within the one ministerial portfolio. So can you be a bit more specific when you ask questions.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Thank you, Madam Chair. I might say, minister, that two of the swimmers who were killed swimming at the beach were in my electorate. Two people have been killed by sharks in my electorate swimming at the beach.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am absolutely aware of those two fatalities, Ken Crew in 2000 and, I am sorry, I cannot remember the name of the second gentleman. Arguably, he was on his morning swim. I think his practice was to swim a reasonable distance offshore. Tragically, it appears as though he was taken. I do not discount that swimmers need to be protected.

Dr D.J. HONEY: That was not my follow-up question. My follow-up question is: what percentage does that represent of surfers?

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is difficult to determine. I met with Surfing WA today to discuss these matters. I think its competing membership is a couple of thousand. It has a social membership that is considerably bigger, but its annual report, for example, does not provide an estimation of surfing participants. I suppose I would caution the

member if he is going to say that 3 000 covers only a certain percentage of surfers. I am saying that if by Monday morning the 3 000 has been snapped up by surfers over the weekend, there is a very strong chance that we would extend the subsidy because that would show that surfers were taking up the device. Money is in the budget across the forward estimates. What will damage this program, member for Cottesloe, is people such as members of the opposition going out and say that these devices are ineffectual. The member for Vasse is on record as saying that the first device was like waving a toothpick at a shark. I heard her say that on radio. It has been universally tested by the University of WA. It is effective at deterring sharks. I do not want a repeat of the tragedies, some of them in the member for Cottesloe's electorate, because people think these devices do not work. If we ask people why they do not use these devices, one of the reasons they give is that there are lots of them in the market. How do we know whether any of them work? We have introduced a subsidy, part of which is —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Point of order, Madam Chair. The minister is taking up time. We have questions to go through. He could not answer the member for Cottesloe's question.

The CHAIR: Because it is too broad, member. I did counsel him to narrow it down a bit. The minister is winding up, I am sure. The member for Geraldton is next.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I say to the member for Cottesloe and other members opposite, do not discourage surfers from taking up these devices, because by doing that they will cost lives. They will cost lives if they discourage people from taking up these devices, so just think about that.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I refer to the table "Service Summary", in particular expense 7, "Agricultural and Fisheries Natural Resource Management" on page 192 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. Is the department responsible for protecting the great white shark under the Fish Resources Management Act or another piece of legislation?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The great white shark—correct me if I am wrong—is protected under federal legislation, principally, but there is also protection under the current Western Australian legislation. It is a combination of both.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Is it covered under the Fish Resources Management Act or another Western Australian act?

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is protected under the Fish Resources Management Act, which is state legislation. The member will be aware that federal legislation takes precedence over state legislation. Even if we were to remove the protection we have under state legislation, the great white shark would still be protected under federal legislation—it would still apply. We do not have the capacity to remove that protection under federal legislation. That is a decision the federal government needs to make.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Given that it is, I think, a threatened species—it is categorised as a threatened species, I assume—is it fair to say there is an obligation on the department to allocate human, financial and research resources to improve the population of the species?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I will ask Mr Fletcher if he wants to deal with that.

Dr W. Fletcher: My understanding is that it is in the vulnerable category, not in the threatened category, but it falls into place where there are generally national plans of action on this. There has been a national plan of action on white sharks, I think, since it was listed back in the 1990s, so there has been a program of both research and/or still an understanding of trying to limit the level of interaction and mortality associated with white sharks since that time.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Does the department have an obligation to allocate human, financial and research resources towards trying to increase the population of the species?

Mr D.J. KELLY: As the member can imagine, the department has a range of obligations, and we make assessments across a range of priorities where they lie. I think the member heard from Mr Fletcher that there are already national plans in place, which outline what needs to be done or what is expected. I think that is the best answer the member will get.

[9.00 pm]

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Do you have a reliable estimate of the number of great white sharks off the Western Australian coast?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I think the most reliable scientific report currently available is the CSIRO report, which was released recently. That identifies or makes some estimates on two populations—an east coast population and a western population. There is a misapprehension, member, which I think the member for Vasse has fallen into the trap of. It is being assumed that the western population means the population off the west coast. The western population extends from Victoria all the way to the member's neck of the woods, around Geraldton.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Wilsons Promontory to Kalbarri.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is the best scientific research. It is interesting that on the basis of that research some people are saying that WA is the shark capital of Australia, and even of the world. But, based on that research, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia all the way to Kalbarri is the shark capital. People just have to be careful how they characterise that research. That is the best scientific research we have to estimate numbers of great whites. That report is on the public report and I recommend the member read it.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I have.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I refer to the asset investment program table on page 198 of budget paper No 2, specifically the Waterman's research facility. An amount of \$600 000 was booked in for that for 2017–18 and \$400 000 for 2018–19, and then it is defunded. Can the minister inform me what is happening with that facility or where that money is going to?

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is part of the plan I have outlined to boost aquaculture in Western Australia. Aquaculture is a growing opportunity for Western Australia so we have committed to refurbish the fish health laboratory as part of the ongoing research into aquaculture. I will be happy if someone from the department wants to outline the plans. Heather Brayford, would you like to give more details on what our plans are?

Ms H. Brayford: The main purpose of the Waterman's facility is around aquatic animal health and to provide fish health services to the developing aquaculture industry, as the minister mentioned, with a focus on applied research and development and laboratory services to service the growing industry in respect of particular fish health issues. A team of qualified fish health scientists will be based at that site.

Dr D.J. HONEY: Given the importance of that facility, I would have thought there would be ongoing spending requirements for that past 2018–19. It appears as though any expanded programs will not occur after that time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The funding the member has identified is for capital works to bring the facility up to the required standard. Once it has been brought up to the required standard as an asset investment program item, additional funding is no longer required. It then becomes a question of operating the facility. That is why that is there. It will cost \$1 million to bring it up to the required standard and then the facility will be off and running.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I refer to table "Relationship to Government Goals" on page 191 of budget paper No 2, volume 1. Service 7 is agricultural and fisheries natural resource management. Given the closure of the Gascoyne demersal fishery for pink snapper off the islands near Carnarvon, which everyone in Carnarvon and in the Gascoyne generally supports, will the fisheries department consider providing any support or resources to rebuild the pink fish stocks through Cockburn Sound or in the Gascoyne itself?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am glad the member has come around to supporting what we are doing here. I remember him asking me a rather aggressive question —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Don't change the question.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I cannot hear you.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The original proposal was to ban fishing entirely.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am answering the question the member asked. I think the question he asked in the chamber was a premature reaction to the consultation we were having.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Which got the boundaries changed.

Mr D.J. KELLY: You have no idea! You have absolutely no idea!

The CHAIR: Minister, can you just respond to the question. Draw a line and move on.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I know you are thinking about how to answer the question. Just go ahead and answer it.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am sorry, Chair, I have forgotten what the question was. Could the member repeat the question?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Are you going to put any resources into restocking the pinks?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The partial closures are part of that, but I would be happy for someone from the department to give more details.

Ms H. Brayford: There is no specific proposal to restock snapper into that area. The fish will be monitored in accordance with the measures put in place to protect the spawning stock. We will monitor that over the time, as we always do with the vast majority of our fisheries, but at this stage there is no specific proposal for restocking.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is Cockburn Sound still being restocked with pink snapper?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The restocking that the member is referring to in Cockburn Sound is a snapper guardian program that is funded through the recreational fishing initiatives fund. It would be open to Recfishwest or anyone else to seek restocking anywhere in Western Australia, and that application would be considered in a round of funding that happens each year. The snapper guardians program is not something that is paid for generally; it comes out of the recreational fishing initiatives fund.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I note that the commercial fishery has dropped its quota from 277 tonne to 50 tonne.

Mr D.J. KELLY: About an 80 per cent reduction.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The minister will be well aware that commonwealth licences are able to still operate off the Gascoyne coast, which concerns the commercial fishery as well as the local rec fishers because of the impact they have. This ban does not affect those commercial licences. Has the minister written to the —

The CHAIR: There are about four questions there.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: No, it is not. It is the same question.

The CHAIR: “The minister will be well aware”, “has the minister written to” —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: That is the lawyer in you!

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is called logic and being able to count with all your fingers.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: This is a serious issue because it is about our pink stocks.

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is a serious question.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Has the minister written to the federal fisheries minister to also ask him to put a ban on those commonwealth licences from taking pinks off our waters?

Mr D.J. KELLY: My advice from the department is that the department is not actually concerned about the impact of that commonwealth licence. The department can provide the basis for that assessment. The department’s advice is that it is not concerned about it. I think the member wrote me a letter about approaching the federal minister. I think that is a useful thing to do because the federal minister should be aware of our concerns here in WA. I want the federal minister to similarly ensure that that commonwealth licence is not impinging upon stocks in Western Australia. I am not sure whether that letter has gone off to the federal minister yet, but I have asked for that contact to be made. It is like a double protection. The department here tells me it is not a problem, but I want to make sure that the federal minister is also aware of our concerns here in WA.

Heather, do you want to provide advice on what you think the impact of those commonwealth licences is?

[9.10 pm]

Ms H. Brayford: The member was talking about the commonwealth deepwater trawl fishery that operates outside the 200-metre depth contour. It has been in place for some time. My understanding is that a different suite of species is taken in that deepwater trawl fishery at a fairly low proportion of the stock we are interested in in this case. At officer level we are working with the commonwealth around that fishery and looking to develop what we call joint harvest strategies to ensure that we can have regard for the various mortalities across the state fishery and the commonwealth-managed fishery.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There is concern at a local level that these commonwealth-licensed trawlers are taking a considerable amount of pink snapper out of the fishery. I ask the minister to have a look at it and to send that letter off, because I think it has an effect on the 50-tonne quota. Some are saying that at the end of the day there may be only 30 tonnes left, given what the commonwealth-licensed trawlers are taking.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am happy to do two things. One is to offer that if any locals have concerns about the commonwealth licence holder and want to get some information from fisheries about the impact of that operation on the local stock, I am happy to facilitate that. I am also happy to ensure that that letter goes off to the federal minister to make sure that his eyes are looking at the situation as well.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Does fisheries have access to the commonwealth-licensed trawlers once they reach the boat harbour and offload their catch to see exactly what they catch?

Ms H. Brayford: Not specifically, because they are commonwealth-licensed vessels. However, as the minister said, we can work with the commonwealth to check the data and the likely impact.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: So no-one is physically seeing what these commonwealth-licensed trawlers are actually catching once they are at the small boat harbour?

The CHAIR: That actually was not the answer.

Ms H. Brayford: The commonwealth is certainly doing that. It has a compliance process and it will be tracking and assessing the status of the catch.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Does the commonwealth report back to the department on how much of a catch of pink snapper the trawlers are actually taking?

Ms H. Brayford: At officer level we can have those discussions. We regularly talk to the commonwealth and we are happy to have those discussions.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I understand that the department is having those discussions. Does the department know for a fact how many tonne of pink snapper they are catching?

Dr W. Fletcher: My understanding is that because the commonwealth has the same confidentiality clauses in its data collection as we do, we do not necessarily get the specific tonnage, but we are told the range the tonnage is in to give us confidence that the reported catches were small. We are not able to get specific things. The commonwealth could not ask us about specific logbook catches here either.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Hence my concern. A large catch of pink snapper is obviously being taken by these commonwealth-licensed vessels. The department has just confirmed that it cannot get the data on how many pink snapper have been taken.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I think the member is being a bit careless with the information he has been given. The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is in contact with the commonwealth. The assumption is that the commonwealth licence holder will operate within their licence conditions.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Which has no limit.

Mr D.J. KELLY: My understanding is that there is no reason to believe that there is a take from that licence that is of concern to locals. If locals are concerned about the operations of that commonwealth-licensed trawler, I am more than happy to facilitate discussions at an officer level with the federal fisheries department. As I have said, I have already asked that communication be made to the federal minister to make sure the commonwealth is aware of our concerns. Given the political complexion of the federal minister, I would hope that the member would also have used his influence.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I already have.

Mr D.J. KELLY: What sort of response did the member get back?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: I have not got a response yet.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Is the member happy to make that response available to the government?

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Absolutely.

Mr D.J. KELLY: All right. That would be good. I am happy to work with the member on that.

The CHAIR: Gosh!

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I do not quite know how to follow that one.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Can we all go home now?

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Definitely not. I refer to the sixth line item, “Agricultural and Fisheries Biosecurity and Integrity” in the service summary table on page 192 of budget paper No 2. In 2018–19, the budget estimate is \$78 million. I would like to know how that is split between agriculture and fisheries. The figure will be reduced to \$49.6 million by 2021–22. How are these funds split between agriculture and fisheries and what funding cuts will be applied to fisheries from 2018–19?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Before I ask the director general to provide some additional information I want to say that when the departments were amalgamated I was acutely aware of ensuring that biosecurity in fisheries ends up being better off and not worse off, because biosecurity is the be-all and end-all. The new department has the message that biosecurity issues have to be enhanced as part of this process. I am happy for the director general to outline how that is structured, but I assure the member that it was a very clear message. It is a priority for me as the Minister for Fisheries to make sure that the very good biosecurity work done in fisheries is maintained and enhanced.

Mr R. Addis: I reinforce the minister’s answer that biosecurity, both agricultural and aquatics, is very much uppermost in our priorities. This is the first year that we have had a truly integrated budget. We are bringing together the former agricultural functions with fisheries and resource management functions where that makes sense. That is reflected in the new service categories. In the first view, that is a combination of both fisheries and agricultural biosecurity functions. I am not able to provide information about what the split is within the

\$78 million. The drop-off over the out years period reflects the overall weight in our total cost of services, which is the \$517 million in 2018–19. That consists of short-term projects funded primarily by royalties for regions, but also by other external funds. Those projects are of a short-term nature. They are mostly capital in nature rather than being part of the underlying operating base and servicing of the department. That is the bulk of the drop-off. Part of the remaining drop-off is expected efficiencies from the integration of three departments into one department. For instance, in the corporate services area we will realise efficiencies over time. There are a range of other funding reductions, most particularly from the voluntary targeted separation scheme process. There have not been reductions over and above VTSS in the biosecurity function throughout that period. The aquatics biosecurity function remains almost completely intact and in the form of the former department of fisheries.

[9.20 pm]

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: Can the director general give us an estimate of the quantity of money that can be saved in efficiencies by amalgamating three departments into one? The director general has said that expenditure can be reduced partly by reducing duplication and the number of staff in the amalgamated department. Can he put a figure on how much of that reduction can be attributed to that?

Mr D.J. KELLY: The director general.

Mr R. Addis: We are in the middle of a restructure, which involves designing the future state of the new department and precisely how we will bring together the corporate services function in particular. That is the area where the most obvious efficiencies are to be gained. We are not yet able to quantify that with any confidence or accuracy, so I will refrain from providing an estimate. I would add to that that it will take some time to make those changes and therefore free up those resources. We think it would be about 12 to 18 months from where we are now.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The amalgamation of the departments was not just a question of saving money, although some are obvious—for example, the corporate services areas. One of the key reasons for doing it is that often government departments work in silos. Western Australia had more departments than any other state in Australia, so by bringing together departments that had natural synergies, some of those silos can be broken down. People talk about having a whole-of-government response to complex issues. That is not easy when the whole-of-government response people want requires 10 departments and 10 different directors general to come together with 10 different corporate plans, strategic plans and the like. Part of the decision to amalgamate those departments was to bring people together so that we could have one plan and one decision-making process and, by that method, get better whole-of-government outcomes.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: As the minister has said that he will not accept any biosecurity cuts in fisheries, that suggests that the cuts will impact even more heavily on agriculture. I point out that the value of agriculture is about 15 times the value of fisheries and obviously the employment rate is far higher. I wear two hats, so how much extra impact does the minister think there will be on biosecurity in agriculture if there will be no cuts in fisheries? The amount is being cut from \$78 million to \$49.6 million.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The response to the member's question is that we do not think there will be a reduction in biosecurity services—quite the contrary. When departments are amalgamated, often a better outcome can be achieved. Time will tell, but our plan is not to reduce our activities in biosecurity, but to improve them. By having people who work together across those areas, we can achieve better outcomes. I do not accept the premise of the member's question that there will be a reduction in services. It has been explained to him by the director general that some of that funding change is a result of some short-term projects coming together. Member, do not assume doom and gloom. I know it may be his want in opposition, but from this government's perspective biosecurity across both fisheries and agriculture is a very high priority.

Dr D.J. HONEY: I refer to the outcomes and key effectiveness indicators outlined on page 192 of budget paper No 2. I was a little perturbed by the dearth of any budget or even targets for a number of the key effectiveness indicators. Is it the intention not to have those? What is the explanation for the lack of those in the budget papers?

Mr R. Addis: As I said before, this is the first time we have had an integrated budget for the new department and these are a new set of outcomes and key effectiveness indicators so there is no historical data. There are no estimated actuals at this stage because we have not got to the end of the first year, so we are really starting from scratch this budget year with new targets.

Dr D.J. HONEY: In terms of some of the targets, the percentage increases for client satisfaction with the department's technology initiatives seem like fairly low targets. Do we have a baseline for those? I would have thought that an absolute number would have been better and in that way we could compare the increase year on year?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I think the member will find that that indicator is not within the fisheries portfolio, if I am correct. It is an agricultural focus indicator, so it is not within my portfolio area.

Mr Y. MUBARAKAI: I refer to the table of information on the recreational fishing special purpose account on page 206 of volume 1 of budget paper No 2. Can the minister outline how much of this account is quarantined to the recreational fishing initiatives fund and what benefits this fund delivers to recreational fishers in Western Australia?

Mr D.J. KELLY: Thank you very much for the question. Twenty-five per cent of that revenue is quarantined to the recreational fishing initiatives fund. We went to the last election with a commitment that that would be the case. Incidentally, another 15 per cent of that fund goes to fund Recfishwest. The recreational fishing initiatives fund provides millions of dollars to the recreational fishing sector to boost the recreational fishing experience in WA. Two projects have recently been announced, including a new artificial reef in the northern suburbs. It will be a tremendous boost for recreational fishing in the northern suburbs. We, in conjunction with Recfishwest, are going to conduct a community consultation process to determine the best location for that reef. At this point it is unlikely to be in Jandakot, but no doubt the member's constituents will benefit from it. One of the initiatives is a new artificial reef in the northern suburbs. We have also recently announced the location of a new artificial reef near the Exmouth boat harbour to be partially funded from the recreational fishing initiatives fund.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: That has been planned for quite a few years. It is not a new project.

Mr D.J. KELLY: But the location is being delivered by us. A few years ago, member for North West Central, a previous government tried to take the money out of the recreational fishing initiatives fund, having gone to the election in 2013 promising that 25 per cent of the revenue from the special purpose account would be quarantined in the fund. In the budget that came out in the first year, that was significantly slashed. It is appropriate to remember the history of this fund. As a government, we committed to this fund. We see recreational fishing as something that is not only a recreational pursuit, but also good for mental health and for business. A lot of economic activity is generated by recreational fishing. The recreational fishing initiatives fund is not only about people having fun—which is great—but also an economic boost to Western Australia. As a government, we are committed to it.

[9.30 pm]

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The funds for this are raised through recreational fishing licences. What will be the government's increase on licences in this year's budget?

Mr D.J. KELLY: We have said that there will be a \$5 increase but no further increase for the term of —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Is that on top of the last financial year's increase?

Mr D.J. KELLY: There will be no further increase for the rest of this term of government.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: There has been a \$10 increase on licences for recreational fishing over the tenure of the Minister for Fisheries. What is the reason behind that?

The CHAIR: That is four questions, member.

Mr D.J. KELLY: He will have to take his shoes and socks off in a minute.

I think that the recreational fishing from boat licence was introduced in 2010. It did not move in cost until 2017, when we increased it by \$5 in the last budget. That increase covered the increasing costs from 2010 to 2017. For funds such as the recreational fishing initiatives fund to continue to have value, it has to be adjusted over time or it will shrivel up and die. We could have increased the fee by a small amount to match inflation and done that every year, but administratively that is a pretty inefficient way of doing it so we have increased it by \$5 this year.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: That is an increase of \$10 over the last two financial years.

The CHAIR: Member!

Mr D.J. KELLY: We have made a commitment that there will be no more increases for the term of this government until 2021. That means that since the boating licence was introduced by the member's government in 2010, it has increased by \$10 over 10 years—that is \$1 a year. The member can see the benefits that flow from that. There is more money for the recreational fishing initiatives fund and more money for Recfishwest.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: You are taxing people who fish, to be able to pay for these things to try to make you look good. It is a very hard task to make you look good.

The CHAIR: Member!

Mr D.J. KELLY: In a previous question, the member asked about the restocking of pens in his electorate. His ears twitched when I suggested that he might be able to get some money for restocking from the recreational fishing initiatives fund.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: A \$10 increase in six months —

The CHAIR: Member, do you want the answer or not, otherwise we will move on?

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is pretty disingenuous politics for the member to put up his hand for money for his electorate from the recreational fishing initiatives fund, but then complain about the fees that actually feed that fund.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: But I am not saying that the fees should go up. I am saying that a \$10 increase —

Mr D.J. KELLY: Do not be hypocritical.

The CHAIR: Member, put it in a press release. Let us get onto the next question.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am sure that the member has already done that. It will have been increased by \$10 over 10 years.

Mr I.C. BLAYNEY: I refer to the recreational fishing special purpose account on page 206 of budget paper No 2. Was there any consultation with the sector about the most recent increase in licence fees; and, if so, who was engaged and what was the feedback?

Mr D.J. KELLY: When we adjusted the fee in the last budget, we made it clear—or I endeavoured to make it clear—to Recfishwest that the government believed that licences should over time be adjusted. If they are not adjusted, as I said, the funding for great things like the recreational fishing initiatives fund will wither and die over time. I gave that message at the time of the last budget. With this budget, it should not have come as a complete surprise to people to see that we have adjusted the fee again. But as with other budget decisions, we do not talk widely to people about them because ultimately those decisions are made by governments in the budget process. That was the path followed for this budget. It is interesting to note that some of the reaction received has been negative, but when we announce something like the new artificial reef in the northern suburbs the response is overwhelmingly positive. Sometimes people do not make the link between the fees they pay and the benefits they receive. It was primarily a failing of the previous government that it did not link the two. Once it is explained to people that their licence fees deliver the restocking, the new artificial reef or the program to clean up the waterways people understand that what they have paid delivers great benefits.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: We will put up —

The CHAIR: Thank you very much, member for North West Central. If you want to sit here, I can go home.

The appropriation was recommended.