

AQUACULTURE — ALBANY

147. Ms R.S. STEPHENS to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's significant support for Western Australia's emerging aquaculture industry.

- (1) Can the minister outline to the house how stage 2 of the Albany aquaculture zone and the Albany shellfish hatchery expansion project will support the growth of WA's aquaculture industry?
- (2) Can the minister outline to the house what these initiatives will mean for regional jobs and the local economy of Albany?

Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:

- (1)–(2) I am delighted to update the member and the house on the continued investment by the McGowan Labor government in the development of aquaculture industries in Western Australia. In late November 2021, I joined the member for Albany to announce that the McGowan government would invest an additional \$1.8 million to deliver an overall \$2.5 million expansion and upgrade of the Albany shellfish hatchery. I have to say that when I was down there, I never met a more hardworking member in the regions. Everybody who we met, the member knew. She knew the issues, knew what was happening with aquaculture, and has been a tremendous help in helping to deliver this project. I congratulate the member.

Development of the Albany shellfish hatchery has underpinned the success of the zone that was created down there and provided the confidence necessary for investment made by industry since it commenced operations in 2018. The expanded and upgraded hatchery will support current and future operators in the area. That includes the recently announced stage 2 of the Albany aquaculture zone. That zone is now made up of a 500-hectare area in Oyster Harbour, and around 310 hectares in Princess Royal Harbour and King George Sound combined.

In addition to this investment, government has also funded the development of two floating nurseries, called FLUPSYs, short for floating upweller system—Fisheries has got its own acronyms!—at a cost of \$125 000. These are very innovative. A FLUPSY is about the size of a small boat pen but can reduce the cost of production of juvenile oysters and provide overflow capacity in times of high demand. Not only are we developing the industry, but also innovation is being driven into it. I am pleased to inform the house that WA's first FLUPSY is now operational in Albany, and the second is destined to support ongoing research and development work at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development's Hillarys facility.

Madam Speaker, the Aquaculture Council of WA will now directly receive \$200 000 a year for the next four years to help support industry growth. It is an exciting time for the aquaculture industry in Western Australia, with domestic and global demand for protein increasing, and a state government committed to helping industry grow and succeed. The McGowan government recognises that aquaculture is a growth industry for WA, with great opportunities to diversify our state's economy, create direct and indirect jobs, and support coastal towns.

There is a potential to create an additional 1 200 direct and indirect jobs in regional WA as the shellfish aquaculture industry continues to grow. In Albany alone, the expanding industry is already producing over seven million akoya oysters a year and has seeded oyster farms with over 30 million rock oysters.

Madam Speaker, I still have a little romance left in me! I have still got the spark!

The SPEAKER: I am not sure we needed to know that!

Mr D.T. PUNCH: I am pretty confident that Albany is going to be a great tourism destination for those weekend getaways of oysters and fine great southern wines. So if the Minister for Tourism is listening, have a look at Albany, have a look at what Fisheries is doing and have a look at the great opportunities of the oyster industry.