

AQUACULTURE SECTOR — POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT

**302. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Fisheries:**

What is this government doing to support and encourage Western Australia's emerging aquaculture sector; and what is the potential for this industry to boost employment in this state?

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

I thank the member for the question. One of the commitments that we made as a government was that we were going to boost jobs and diversify the Western Australian economy, after the rather abysmal job done by members opposite. In opposition we identified one of the potentials in this state that has been underdone.

**Mr A. Krsticevic** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Carine, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** As I was saying, one of the areas that was underdone by the previous government was the area of aquaculture. When I was shadow minister, one of the complaints I constantly got from the industry was that it did not get the attention it believed it deserved from the previous government. It always felt that the government was focused only on the area of mining, and while mining and resources will always be important in this state, one of the things the previous government failed to do was diversify the economy. Under the leadership of the Premier, last week we got all the key players in aquaculture together. We held an industry consortium and sat down with the key players, both here in Western Australia and with some players from interstate, and talked about what we can do as a government to really boost that industry. It is an industry that needs strong government leadership, because there are areas of trial and error in getting new ventures off the ground. It is important, if we look around the world, that there be strong government leadership.

Last week, we announced \$1 million towards a new fish health laboratory at Watermans Bay so that the industry can be confident fish hygiene and biosecurity issues will be properly managed. Environmental approval for the midwest aquaculture zone was also announced last week, which will give the midwest a great boost. At the consortium, we heard that the announcement of one zone was great, but if we really want to attract the big players, they want to know where the next zone will be. I have asked the department to immediately begin work on the next zone because it has real potential for thousands of jobs in Western Australia. We will work really hard to grow this industry in WA. Fisheries is now part of the larger Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. Believe it or not, this government's Minister for Fisheries will actually work with the Minister for Regional Development to get this going. That could not happen in the previous government because one minister was in the National Party and the other was in the Liberal Party. We often hear of people wanting a whole-of-government response to things; the previous government could not manage a whole-of-cabinet response! I am very pleased to say that I will be working hard with the Minister for Regional Development to get this industry up and running.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Name one fish they're going to breed!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** You want me to name one fish—you would know; you would know! The constant response from the former government —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Minister! Members! Through the Chair, please.

**Mr P. Papalia:** When are you going to ask a question of the minister?

**The SPEAKER:** I am going to ask you a question —

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The other issue that we are going to —

**The SPEAKER:** Excuse me, I am on my feet! Minister for Tourism, I am asking you a question; I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The other issue we are going to deal with is the future of the Australian Centre for Applied Aquaculture Research facility in Fremantle. It is an absolutely outstanding facility that produces juvenile stock for aquaculture throughout Western Australia. For eight years, the previous government did nothing to secure the future of that facility.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Despite doing world-class work, it felt unloved by the previous government.

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Absolutely.

We are going to secure the future of that facility because without juvenile fish stock, there is no aquaculture industry in Western Australia. We are going to get on and work with the key players in that industry. We are going to diversify and grow the economy. We are going to create more jobs here in Western Australia, which is something that members opposite failed to do.