

RECREATIONAL FISHING

1063. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the McGowan government's delivery of more world-class fishing opportunities for locals and tourists. What opportunities have been delivered, and what does it mean for Western Australian jobs, particularly in our regions?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for the question and for his continuing interest in jobs growth in regional Western Australia, and in particular in Bunbury. Last week, I was very pleased to be down at Fremantle with Recfishwest and a number of representatives from various fishing clubs and tackle shops to announce expenditure of over \$400 000 on a number of fish aggregating devices that will be deployed off the WA coast. There are currently six off Perth and we will be deploying another six off the metropolitan area. There will then be 20 of these devices deployed throughout regional Western Australia including—Mr Speaker, you would be interested to know—off Albany, Bunbury, Cape Naturaliste, Geraldton, Exmouth and Broome. These floating devices attract small baitfish, which then attract larger sportfish such as marlin. They really enhance the fishing opportunity. They will be deployed up to 50 kilometres off the coast, in the metropolitan area, to the west of Rottnest, so a medium to large boat will be needed to access them. It is very exciting for the sportfishing community. We know that recreational fishers spend a considerable amount of money when they go on their fishing trips. The member for Scarborough looks a bit quizzical about this; she has probably never heard of these.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: She runs a tackle shop.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I know.

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

Mr D.J. KELLY: She has woken up!

Mrs L.M. Harvey interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I know you are fishing for a compliment!

Mr D.J. KELLY: The work that we have done with Recfishwest indicates that recreational fishing delivers almost \$2 billion each year into the Western Australian economy, much of it in regional Western Australia. As a government, we are committed to looking for new opportunities through the recreational fishing initiatives fund to enhance that experience. I was talking to Recfishwest at the press conference last week and it is extremely excited about this program. The representatives from tackle shops who were there, again, were extremely excited about this development. As I said, there will be an additional six aggregating devices off the metropolitan coast, and 20 more throughout regional Western Australia. They will be closely monitored over the next two or three years to see how they operate and how the fishing opportunities develop off those devices. Sportfishers throughout WA can look forward to some excellent enhanced opportunities. It is not just a great fishing experience, it is actually growing jobs in regional WA.