

MARINE FINFISH NURSERY, GERALDTON —AQUACULTURE

398. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the responsible financial management of the McGowan Labor government that has meant more money for projects that create jobs and diversify our economy. Can the minister outline to the house how the McGowan Labor government's \$7 million commitment to a state-of-the-art marine finfish nursery in Geraldton supports the growth of WA's aquaculture industry?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for the question, and given the question we have just had from the member for Moore, I think he will be interested in the answer to this—a very good job-creating project funded by the McGowan government, especially in the regions. Because of the very good financial management that this government has exhibited in the two years it has been in office, it is able to fund projects as announced in the budget. The one the member for Burns Beach has asked about is a \$7 million commitment that we have made for a state-of-the-art marine finfish nursery in Geraldton. Members will be aware that we have previously announced the midwest aquaculture zone, located in the Abrolhos Islands. Not only have we established that zone, but we have also attracted a major company, Huon Aquaculture, to set up business there. That will be a huge economic boost to the midwest region. We will have Huon there. We will have Indian Ocean Fresh, which is a great Western Australian company, all pursuing yellowtail kingfish as a major new aquaculture venture in Western Australia.

We are funding a finfish nursery in Geraldton, located at the Batavia Coast Maritime Institute. That nursery will provide the juvenile fish for Huon. Currently, the only facility capable of supplying juvenile fish is located in Fremantle. Obviously, it makes more sense for those juvenile fish to be available in Geraldton. But it also means that there are now two facilities in Western Australia that can supply the juveniles, so if there is an issue with one of them at any one time, there is some redundancy in the supply chain. We made a \$7 million commitment in the budget for that nursery in Geraldton, a huge boost to the economy in the midwest. I was up there on 17 April and met with the Mid West Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This project was very well received. They think it is a great boost for the region. I also met with the City of Geraldton. They are very enthusiastic about this investment.

I am pleased to say, member for Moore, that even the member for Geraldton last night in this place described this as “a really positive move” and “a good potential job creator”. I want to thank the member for Geraldton for the support that he has given for this project. I would just say to the member for Moore that he should listen to people in his electorate. They can see the benefits of the policies that we have to boost jobs in the midwest. People in his electorate have an opportunity to participate in this as well. Huon is a major employer in Tasmania. It has ambitions to make its operations in the Abrolhos as big as its operations in Tasmania.

I thank the member for the question. We are getting on, creating new jobs in regional Western Australia.