

HUON AQUACULTURE

**775. Ms J.M. FREEMAN to the Minister for Fisheries:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to diversifying the Western Australian economy, growing new industries and creating jobs across WA. Can the minister update the house about how the government is driving growth in the aquaculture industry and encouraging businesses such as Huon Aquaculture to invest in Western Australia and create jobs across the state?

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

I thank the member for Mirrabooka for her question. Last Friday, the Premier and I announced that Huon Aquaculture has taken up a 2 200-hectare lease in the midwest aquaculture zone. This will be a game changer for aquaculture in Western Australia. WA's production of aquaculture is only about one per cent of the nation's production. Compared with other states, especially Tasmania and South Australia, we are really underdone. When we came to government we committed to diversifying the Western Australian economy and we identified aquaculture as one area in which we saw great opportunities; the announcement we made on Friday is part of bringing that work to the next level. To have an organisation like Huon Aquaculture set up in Western Australia is a great coup for the state. Most people will know Huon for its salmon production in Tasmania. It is one of the big producers of salmon. It started off as a small family operation and is now a publicly listed company producing top quality produce. A lot of people would not know that Huon has been trialling yellowtail kingfish in New South Wales and it has determined that Western Australia is the best place to set up a large-scale yellowtail kingfish aquaculture operation. It employs hundreds of staff in Tasmania and that creates thousands of jobs throughout the economy. Huon believes that it can build a business in Western Australia that will rival the scale of what it does in Tasmania. The benefits for the midwest are simply enormous. I have not seen the member for Geraldton out there yet congratulating us for bringing home this —

**Mr I.C. Blayney:** You could have invited a few locals.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** I remember that I got invited to a lot of announcements when the previous government was in place.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Let us not be churlish about who got invited where, let us hear members opposite say that this is a fantastic initiative for the midwest region. It is a fabulous initiative.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** People have said to me that the state government must be paying a subsidy to lure a great company such as Huon across to WA. I want to make it clear that this is an absolutely commercial arrangement. We put out an expression of interest for the new midwest aquaculture zone. Huon put in an expression of interest and we have negotiated lease fees that are comparable to the lease fees that it pays in Tasmania. There will be not only jobs, but also revenue coming back to the state. That is pretty rare in Western Australia. Under the previous government, peppercorn rents for these arrangements were pretty much what was envisaged. We have negotiated a commercial arrangement with Huon with lease fees that rival what it does in Tasmania. It is a fantastic initiative and will be a game changer in the midwest.

I want to finish off by congratulating the founders of Huon, Peter and Frances Bender, who were today announced as the Australian Farmer of the Year for 2018 by ABC Rural. For the first time ever a salmon farmer has been named Farmer of the Year. Congratulations to Peter and Frances. We look forward to Huon coming over here, creating Western Australian jobs and delivering on WA Labor's commitment to diversify the Western Australian economy.