

WORLD OCEAN DAY

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [1.17 pm]: I acknowledge that Thursday, 8 June was World Ocean Day, an annual event that shines a light on the importance of our extraordinarily diverse marine environment. In Western Australia, we have some of the most pristine and vibrant marine waters in the world, and they are rightfully enjoyed by many Western Australians and visitors each year. Our aquatic resources are in excellent condition, and Western Australia is justifiably viewed as a global leader in sustainable fisheries management. The latest state of the fisheries report shows that 96 per cent of our fish stocks were assessed as not being at risk or vulnerable through exploitation, and that is an outstanding achievement.

It is not always smooth sailing for our oceans, with fishing pressures and environmental change testing the resilience of our fish stocks, and management changes are sometimes required to ensure resources are sustainable. We have seen marine heatwaves devastate stocks of abalone, scallops and blue swimmer crabs in parts of WA. Today, these fisheries have not only recovered, but they have all received third party certification to demonstrate that they are sustainable and have science and management that meets world's best practice.

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the fishing industry are also working to continuously improve fishing practices. There are a range of fantastic research and development initiatives using new and innovative technology to help understand and reduce impacts on the marine environment. Managing our oceans and fisheries is important work. I am very proud of the work that goes on at the department to study and protect our oceans. I am proud of the passion I see in the Western Australian public, who really care about our oceans and the environment. The ocean is an important part of Western Australia. It is a key part of our lifestyle, it drives tourism along the coast and it puts food on our tables. World Ocean Day reminds us of the importance of our oceans, so that we can continue to look after them and so they can continue to provide for us and be enjoyed by us for many generations to come.