

AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**951. Ms J. FARRER to the Minister for Fisheries:**

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's commitment to growing WA's aquaculture industry and creating new jobs in the sector as our economy recovers from the impacts of COVID-19. Can the minister outline to the house how the aquaculture development plan announced today will help attract new investments in the industry and support the creation of new local Western Australian jobs?

**Mr P.C. TINLEY replied:**

I thank the member for Kimberley for the question and for her enduring interest in the aquaculture industry, particularly the pearling and barramundi fisheries in her electorate. The situation that Western Australia now finds itself in is that aquaculture is at a turning point, after many, many years of people talking about it and successive governments attempting to do something about it. This has been delivered not only as a result of COVID, but also in large part by the fiscal discipline of the first three years of this government and the way it has approached the health crisis, which has allowed us to refocus and redouble our efforts to take the aquaculture industry towards its potential.

Yesterday, I was delighted to launch the "Aquaculture Development Plan for Western Australia" to expand our blue economy, if you like, and attract new investment and create up to as many as 6 000 jobs in its mature form. That is 6 000 sustainable jobs for well over the horizon and into the future. The aquaculture plan will accelerate and support the continued growth of the aquaculture industry to make sure that it is well positioned to build on opportunities as we come out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the international economy reopens. It is fundamentally important that we take the time and are not idle in this moment to create the best possible opportunities. The reason is that Western Australia, with its 12 500 kilometres of coastline, has extremely prospective areas for aquaculture and is internationally attractive for foreign direct investment. Making sure that those areas are identified and as much as possible de-risked and we get them to international markets is fundamental to the growth of Western Australia. At full production, the existing aquaculture zones will be the largest aquaculture zones in Australia, and for some species, in the Southern Hemisphere.

The Oyster Harbour leases of about 500 hectares, which I released recently—put to the market—are the first tranche of nearly 1 000 hectares of highly prospective oyster farming locations down in Albany, which will make it the largest single oyster production facility in the Southern Hemisphere. That has in large part been delivered because the government committed to common-user infrastructure that was beyond the capacity of any one commercial operator. The millions of dollars that was injected into the shellfish hatchery in Albany has exceeded expectations to the point that we need to accelerate the expansion of its capability to deliver to a hungry industry with highly corporatised approaches to ensure that we are keeping pace with industry.

It was very exciting to launch the aquaculture development zone. We are looking forward to the conclusion of the expressions of interest process. We have done a lot since 2017 to support this potential around the coastline—up into the Kimberley, down to the Great Australian Bight and all the way around.

**Mr D.T. Redman** interjected.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** We have done a lot and there is a lot more to do there, member. We declared the Mid West Aquaculture Development Zone, which has since been fully allocated for finfish. We transferred the Australian Centre for Applied Aquaculture and Research to the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development under the machinery-of-government arrangements, which has accelerated its research capabilities. We funded the construction and operation of the marine finfish nursery in Geraldton. In partnership with the Aquaculture Council of Western Australia, we established the Albany shellfish hatchery, as I mentioned. We progressed the establishment of aquaculture development zones on the south coast, with a focus on Albany. We upgraded —

Several members interjected.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** I know members opposite do not like hearing it; they have not talked about it.

Several members interjected.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** Since 2017, these things have been delivered by a government that actually cares about —

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members on the opposition side of the chamber who are saying that this is taking too long have forgotten when they were on the other side of the chamber.

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** The expectation of Western Australians is for a sustainable job not just for their kids, but for their children's children. This government is giving them the opportunity to involve themselves in a highly technical industry that will sustain that ability.

If I take too long, I apologise, but the litany of this government's successes need to be articulated in this place so that members opposite get an understanding of what good government looks like, because they did not do it in eight years. I am going to continue.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr P.C. TINLEY:** We provided \$3.9 million of funding for an aquaculture investment stimulus package, we established the DPIRD Hillarys shellfish research facility, we declared the Albany development zone and we released some administrative guidelines for aquaculture leases to make them more internationally competitive. We completed the design component of the Geraldton marine finfish nursery in September of this year; we accelerated it. We launched the aquaculture development plan, so we actually have a blueprint for people who want opportunities for their children. The McGowan government delivered it because it had the opportunity to have a vision that members opposite have no idea about.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** No more!