

WESTPORT TASKFORCE — CONTAINER PORT — PINK SNAPPER

809. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the government recently endorsing the Westport Taskforce's recommended location and design for a future container port in Kwinana and announcing that the operation of the port will commence in 2032. Considering that Cockburn Sound hosts the largest known spawning aggregations of pink snapper in the west coast bioregion, which are critical to sustaining adequate breeding stocks, I ask the following.

- (1) What research has the government undertaken on the impacts of the construction and operation of Westport on the pink snapper spawning grounds that will be impacted by the proposed port development?
- (2) If the government has conducted research into the impacts of the port on the vital pink snapper spawning grounds, will the government table that report?

Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question. The following answer has been provided by the Minister for Fisheries, but I do comment that we take these issues extremely seriously.

- (1) The environmental work that was undertaken by the Westport Taskforce as part of its stages 1 and 2, including option identification and multi-criteria assessment, was overseen by an environmental workstream chaired by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation, with membership including the Western Australian Marine Science Institution, Recfishwest, the Cockburn Sound Management Council, the City of Cockburn, and Perth NRM. This group identified the impact of port development on marine flora and fauna as one of the key issues that will need to be addressed in more detail, and the shortlist of options was developed with these environmental concerns in mind.

The Westport Taskforce commissioned a study by BMT Group on hydrodynamics within Cockburn Sound and an environmental risk assessment by WAMSI. A summary of the hydrodynamic modelling undertaken and the dredging volume estimates is included within the "Westport Future Port Recommendations Stage 2 Report". The McGowan government is investing \$29.5 million as part of the next stage of Westport for environmental studies, modelling, impact assessment and mitigation. This will include a specific research program into pink snapper, a greater understanding of the impacts of port development on pink snapper and investigations into a range of resilience-building opportunities with the aim of increasing the overall resilience of the Cockburn Sound ecosystem. Development of a new port will be subject to a full and rigorous environmental approval process.

- (2) The two studies referenced in the answer to (1) will inform the next stage of environmental analysis. We will review the documents with a view to tabling them.