

CAPE-TO-CAPE AREA FISHERY

417. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

I have two brief questions on the fishery that encompasses the cape-to-cape area.

- (1) Regarding the recently announced proposal for the three exclusion zones of Hamelin, Gnarabup and Cowaramup Bays for commercial rock lobster boats, will the commercial boat owners still be able to use the moorings in Cowaramup Bay that they established at considerable expense?
- (2) When will a management plan be established for this fishing zone?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes. The prohibition is a prohibition order under section 43 of the Fish Resources Management Act. To be concise, it is an order prohibiting fishing by anybody - that is, recreational or commercial fishers - from a vessel exceeding eight metres in length. It really affects only commercial fishers. It prohibits only the act of fishing from a vessel of that size.
- (2) The second question relates to a new management order or a modification of the existing order. I discussed this matter with representatives of the Shire of Augusta-Margaret River and we reached agreement on most of the issues that are causing difficulties. In terms of the excessive number of vessels fishing the region, the answer will be found only in a more comprehensive management restructure such as a management order. Although I was reasonably quick to introduce the changes under section 43, there is general acknowledgment that this simply addresses a safety issue and does not address the broader questions that have been raised with us. An amendment to the management plan or the development of a specific management order will probably take some time. I indicated in the meeting with the shire that it could take anything between one and two years to be finally resolved. That is because management plans deal with people's property rights, so changes to them involve broad periods of consultation, some of which result from statutory provisions and some of which are conventions within fisheries legislation that we like to adhere to. That includes one imposition of my own - the 12-month rule - which requires fisheries managers to consider the necessity of not introducing the effective changes without a minimum of 12 months' notice. We sometimes have to set that rule aside to deal with urgent matters. However, fisheries managers are generally expected to at least consider that rule. It will take some time to do. We have to be very careful as we are dealing with a matter of fairness. It also gives us an opportunity to consider the need for capital works, which might also form part of the answer. We discussed with the shire the possibility of additional boat launching ramps, larger car parking areas and in one case the rerouting of one road away from its contact with a caravan park.

Hon Barry House: Would that extend to a marina in Augusta?

The PRESIDENT: Order!

Hon KIM CHANCE: An active local member might argue that, Mr President, but it goes beyond the original question.