

GASCOYNE DEMERSAL SCALEFISH FISHERY

58. Mr V.A. CATANIA to the Minister for Fisheries:

Two years ago, the minister's department promoted the introduction of fish traps in the Gascoyne after transitioning to a full quota management system and removing gear restrictions for taking demersal species.

- (1) Can the minister confirm that he has reduced the commercial catch quota of the Gascoyne demersal scalefish fishery by more than 200 tonnes only two years after his department said that it was okay to reintroduce fish traps?
- (2) Can the minister confirm that he has approved a ban on recreational demersal fishing in the Gascoyne region?
- (3) What consultation took place between the minister's department and relevant stakeholders, including GDSF licence holders, the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, Recfishwest and the local community and businesses of the Gascoyne?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

- (1)–(3) I thank the member for the question, but I think the question is somewhat misconceived. The member for North West Central asked me whether two years ago my department did X, Y and Z. Two years ago we were in opposition and members opposite were in government. I do not quite get the question that the member asked about my department doing something two years ago. I know that the National Party likes to come in here and ask questions as though all the chaos that has gone on in Western Australia over the last eight and a half years had nothing to do with it, but the proposition to introduce fish traps was put forward by the Liberal–National government. When that proposal first came to light, as opposition spokesperson for Fisheries, I think I said that we opposed it. We opposed it; the member's government supported it.

Mr V.A. Catania: I opposed it.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Now the member comes into this place questioning the decision that his government made. What the member does not understand is that his government was responsible for that proposal to introduce fish traps. We opposed it. It did not go ahead.

I have made it clear to the department, now that I am the Minister for Fisheries, that there will not be a reintroduction of fish traps in that fishery. I am quite happy to give the member a briefing on it. The member has asked questions about the reintroduction of fish traps before. It was the member in government that made that decision, not us.

The member made reference to a reduction in the quota. My understanding is that the department is in the process of having discussions with both the commercial sector and the recreational sector, and other stakeholders, about some management issues that have come about because of concerns about the stock. A working group is in place, and the fisheries department, or DPIRD as it is now called, is having those discussions. No decision has been made. Consultation is ongoing. Again, I am quite happy to give the member a briefing on the stock concerns that the department has identified.

Member, do not come in here and accuse us of doing things that you in government did yourself. It does not help you. It certainly does not help the recreational fishers that you pretend to represent.