

WEST COAST DEMERSAL SCALEFISH RESOURCE

**552. Mr R.S. LOVE to the Minister for Fisheries:**

I have a supplementary question. Given that there are now more than 15 000 signatures on a petition calling for a review of the government's policy, will the minister consider alternative proposals that better balance community and fishery outcomes?

**Mr D.R. Michael** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Balcatta, no, thank you.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:**

I have looked at the petition, which is essentially asking me to abide by the requirements of the Fish Resources Management Act. I will just remind the member what the act says. It states —

- (a) to develop and manage fisheries and aquaculture in a sustainable way; and
- (b) to share and conserve the State's fish and other aquatic resources and their habitats for the benefit of present and future generations.

Section 4A applies the precautionary principle—the member might not have heard of that. It states —

In the performance or exercise of a function or power under this Act, lack of full scientific certainty must not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to ensure the sustainability of fish stocks or the aquatic environment.

The first thing we have to address is the sustainability of the resource. Then we can look at all the implications for how that is managed. Of course I feel a great deal for tackle shop owners, recreational fishers and members of the marine charter industry. I know how that industry functions. But what they are not helped by is all the misinformation and carry-on, particularly from the shadow Minister for Fisheries.