

SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [12.13 pm]: With a growing population and increasing demand for sources of protein, aquaculture is the world's fastest growing food production sector, with shellfish aquaculture the fastest growing sector in Western Australia. Rock oysters and akoya are being grown from Carnarvon to Albany, with significant investment in regional infrastructure and jobs.

WA's aquaculture research capacity has been strengthened with \$500 000 of upgrades completed at the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development research facilities at Hillarys. The improvements will further support aquaculture industry development across regional WA, with the creation of a small-scale hatchery to increase research opportunities to support the growing marine shellfish sector. Seawater supply to the site has been improved, and a new algae food supply system and expanded laboratory and nursery space have been provided. These are vital for shellfish seed production. Facilities have also been improved to allow shellfish breeding stock to be brought in from the wild and kept separately and securely to minimise the risk of disease.

The upgrades to the Hillarys facilities mean our shellfish aquaculture research can be expanded to include species such as scallops, driving industry diversification and market competitiveness of the state's aquaculture industry. A new research project will commence in 2023 with funding support from One Sea Pty Ltd and the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation to trial the production of southern saucer scallop spat in the hatchery. This research will be vital to support wild stocks and for potential commercial production. The upgrades have already had a significant impact on water quality, with recent successful spawning runs of shellfish from the hatchery. The shellfish team is very encouraged by this recent progress and is enthusiastic about the important role of supporting the industry's expansion.

The McGowan government understands that, for WA, the aquaculture industry represents a fantastic opportunity to diversify the economy and create jobs, especially in the regions.