

SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD WEEK

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [12.26 pm]: For lovers of seafood, this week is Sustainable Seafood Week, which is an opportunity to raise awareness of and celebrate Western Australian sustainable seafood, the seafood industry and the restaurants and chefs that champion our wonderful Western Australian produce. Western Australia has a strong track record with sustainable fisheries, with world-class science informing effective fisheries management. On that, I would like to acknowledge the excellent work done by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development. To benchmark our fisheries against best practice and assist industry development, the WA government has supported our fisheries to be independently assessed against the Marine Stewardship Council sustainability standard, which is widely recognised as the gold standard for sustainable fishing practices.

The Western Australian rock lobster fishery was the world's first to enter the MSC process and is now the longest running fishery in this program. We also have the world's first joint commercial and recreational fishery in the MSC, recognising the importance of blue swimmer crabs in the Peel–Harvey estuary. To date, 90 per cent of the value of the WA commercial fishing sector is certified under the MSC as sustainable. Across all WA fisheries, the most recent state of the fisheries report shows that 98 per cent of our fish stocks were assessed as not being at risk through exploitation. Aquaculture is also an important part of the sustainable seafood landscape, which is a growing industry full of opportunity in Western Australia.

Sustainable seafood is not just about the commercial industry. Our sustainable fisheries also support a wealth of recreational opportunities, providing the ability for people to enjoy the outdoors and get great fresh fish from our oceans, rivers and estuaries. The sector is an incredibly important drawcard for our regional areas, supporting tourism, local businesses, and jobs. Throughout Sustainable Seafood Week, I encourage people to look at buying some of the great sustainable seafood and at the recreational fishing opportunities on offer. I would also like to reiterate my appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our commercial fishers and all those in the seafood industry who contribute so much to the Western Australian economy.