

**FISHABILITY WA**

*Statement by Minister for Fisheries*

**MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries)** [9.19 am]: I was pleased to recently launch the new Fishability WA vessel *Nev Thomas II*, which will increase the capacity of the very popular Perth boat program.

Fishability provides a valuable service, supporting Western Australians with disability to access recreational fishing opportunities. This helps to enhance the quality of life of the participants. It provides a platform to develop life skills and self-confidence, and breaks down isolation by providing inclusive opportunities for the disability community in Western Australia.

The Cook government has contributed \$80 000 towards the new vessel, along with \$50 000 from Lotterywest to fit out the vessel. The *Nev Thomas II* becomes the third of Fishability's accessible vessels, which now operate in Perth, Mandurah and Albany. Building the new boat has freed up the existing Perth vessel, the *Nev Thomas*, to move to Albany, which in turn will create even more recreational fishing opportunities in the great southern.

Special thanks go to my parliamentary colleague the member for Albany, Rebecca Stephens, for representing me at the launch of Fishability's Albany boat program last Friday. I would also like to recognise the City of Albany for supporting the project by making it possible for the vessel to be moored within the City of Albany boat pens and managing the access challenges whilst running a secure facility.

I am also delighted that the Cook government, with the support of Recfishwest, has provided an additional \$100 000 for Fishability over the next two years through the recreational fishing initiatives fund. This additional contribution will support Fishability to provide more opportunities to more participants in more locations.

Fishability's growing success can be attributed to the hard work and commitment of its wonderful volunteers and staff. As Minister for Fisheries; Disability Services; Volunteering, it is my pleasure to be involved in such a program and acknowledge the significant impact they have on the lives of Western Australians living with disability. Last year, Fishability celebrated 20 years of service in delivering the opportunity of enjoying recreational fishing to people with disability.

Thank you again to Fishability and its volunteers and supporters who make these great opportunities possible.

**Mr D.A. Templeman:** Have you got a toilet named after you like I have?

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** I have! I am not going to reveal the name in the house, though, member.