

AUSTRALIAN HERRING — RECREATIONAL BAG LIMIT

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [9.11 am]: I am pleased to announce that following the successful recovery of the state's Australian herring resource, the recreational bag limit will be raised from 12 to 20 on 1 October 2022, just in time for the summer fishing season. Recfishwest requested the increased bag limit following the 2021 fisheries science stock assessment, which indicated that management action to recover the resource had been effective in rebuilding the stocks of Australian herring in Western Australia.

In 2015, a recovery plan was put in place to protect the herring stock, reducing the total herring catch by 50 per cent for both the commercial and recreational sectors. This included a reduction in the recreational bag limit from 30 to 12 and the closure of the commercial G-trap fishery, which at the time caught the majority of Australian herring.

The increased recreational bag limit is the second management change I have approved since the stock recovery, with commercial G-trap fishers permitted to catch up to 70 tonnes in 2022, enabling commercial fishers to supply herring locally and build on food markets. These changes align with the main objective for the herring resource, which is to support quality recreational fishing experiences and commercial fishing operations focused on the supply of herring for human consumption. Increased access to herring will improve fishing experiences for WA's recreational fishing community and will benefit regional economies through employment opportunities, tourism and increased local supply. Good science and sustainable management remain the key to protecting quality recreational fishing experiences and enhancing the supply of Australian herring for local consumers. This recovery and improved outcome for fishers is a direct result of industry and recreational anglers fishing for the future to ensure that the fishery is healthy into the future. It is a demonstration that recovery strategies work. They are not permanent measures when a fishery can be recovered back to sustainable levels. I commend the commercial and recreational fishers for their role in successfully recovering the Australian herring stock in WA. They are now enjoying the benefits of truly fishing for the future.