

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER INDUSTRY — ROUNDTABLE EVENT

940. Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Fisheries:

The rock lobster industry has expressed concerns to me that the minister has stifled communication with relevant representative groups regarding ongoing and unresolved issues affecting fishers. Will the minister participate in a Western Australian Fishing Industry Council–convened cross-industry roundtable event and address issues, including the lack of long-term licence security and delays in passing on the \$195 000 in levy funds raised last year?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for the question. As the member knows, there were some disagreements with the industry on how we would progress in developing a domestic lobster supply—something that I think most Western Australians would have seen as a very good thing. The government has put that plan to one side. Since then, we have been continuing to hold discussions with the western rock lobster industry as per normal. The department of fisheries has continued to meet regularly with the industry. Just last week, the department held its usual industry meetings in Fremantle and Geraldton. A range of the industry’s issues that the member just talked about were discussed. I continue to meet with the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, the peak body that represents all commercial fishers in this state. From my perspective, it is business as usual. There has been no request from WAFIC to convene the meeting that the member has referred to. We are happy to talk to the industry and continue to talk to the industry on a whole range of issues, and we remain willing to do so.