

PROFESSIONAL ROCK LOBSTER EXCLUSION ZONES

977. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

I refer to the planned professional rock lobster exclusion zones around surf breaks on the south west coast between Cape Naturaliste and Cape Leeuwin, as proposed by the Department of Fisheries.

- (1) Has the minister made a final decision on these exclusion zones?
- (2) If not, when does the minister intend to make a final decision?
- (3) Is the minister satisfied that there has been adequate consultation on these matters with all stakeholders, in particular the local surfing fraternity?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

- (1)-(2) No, a final decision has not been made. I have been briefed on the process by the people who carried out that process between the commercial rock lobster fishing industry and Surfing Western Australia, which represents the surfing community. Incidentally, that process was funded by government to the tune of \$18 000. Essentially, that process involved Surfing WA and the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council chartering a vessel and spending some time agreeing on the plot points of the proposed exclusion areas; that is, the surfing breaks where it is proposed to exclude rock lobster fishing. Substantial agreement has been reached on the plot points for those exclusion areas. There is an area in Gnarabup in which there is an overlay between the proposed new exclusion areas and the existing areas that I excluded under the section 43 order I issued earlier this year. As far as I know, that is the only issue that needs to be resolved. I believe that matter will be resolved quite soon because I would like to get it finally settled.
- (3) This question asks whether I am satisfied that there has been adequate consultation, particularly with Surfing WA -

Hon Barry House: No, the local surfing fraternity.

Hon KIM CHANCE: All our consultation has been with Surfing WA, as the representative of the surfers. Although I am quite satisfied that there has been adequate consultation with the surfers, my answer to that question has to be no. I am not satisfied that we have adequately consulted - but that does not apply to Surfing WA. The area I am a little concerned about and on which we have some more work to do is the recreational fishing sector. Surfing WA is seeking an exclusion in those designated areas of not only commercial rock lobster fishing, but also recreational rock lobster fishing. I understand its reasons for putting that point of view, but at this stage our consultation with the recreational fishing sector is inadequate, and I have issued instructions as recently as this morning to carry through that part of the process.