

Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Shane Love; Mr Paul Papalia

Division 50: Fisheries, \$49 371 000 —

Mr N.W. Morton, Chairman.

Dr K.D. Hames, Minister for Health representing the Minister for Fisheries.

Ms H. Brayford, Director General.

Dr L. Joll, Acting Deputy Director General.

Mr B. Mezzatesta, Executive Director, Regional Services.

Dr R. Fletcher, Executive Director, Research.

Mr K. Van Dongen, Executive Director, Corporate Services.

Mr P. Robinson, Chief Financial Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard staff. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available the following day.

It is the intention of the Chair to ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and answered and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item program or amount in the current division. It will greatly assist Hansard if members can give these details in preface to their question.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, rather than asking that the question be put on notice for the next sitting week. I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information he agrees to provide and I will then allocate a reference number. If supplementary information is to be provided, I seek the minister's cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the principal clerk by Friday, 19 June 2015. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge the question on notice with the clerk's office.

I now ask the minister to introduce his advisers to the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

[11.50 am]

The CHAIRMAN: Member for Bassendean, I just want to advise you, first, that you are not actually officially a member of the committee until 12 o'clock, so I will preference people who are on the committee with their questions.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Mr Chairman, members who are not on the committee normally sit behind the Chair, but they are able to be given questions just the same. We are very comfortable if you want to give him questions, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I understand. That is fine. There is agreement; that is okay.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I thank the minister very much. I refer to spending changes on page 565 of the *Budget Statements*. A number of things are listed under the line item heading "Agency Expenditure Review", and in particular there is the recreational fishing initiative with savings of \$3.2 million. Can the minister confirm that that reference in the budget was to a reduction of funding to the recreational fishing initiatives fund of \$800 000 a year? Given it was an election commitment to maintain that fund at 25 per cent of fishing licence revenue, what is the justification for the reduction of money into that fund? If the government has now backtracked on that part, can the minister tell us where the \$3.2 million in savings will come from if not from reducing the money to that fund?

Dr K.D. HAMES: As the member can imagine, I very quickly discussed this with the minister when I saw him yesterday after I saw that to get his assurance that money was not being taken from the election commitment of 25 per cent and he reassured me that was the case. I am handing over to the director general to get a more detailed answer.

Ms H. Brayford: One hundred per cent of recreational licence fees are reinvested in recreational fishing. That money is put into the recreational fishing account under the Fish Resources Management Act. Of that, 15 per cent goes to Recfishwest to support its role as the peak body representing recreational fishing in Western Australia and 25 per cent is contributed to community projects through the recreational fishing initiatives fund. The discretion for spending is with the minister on advice from Recfishwest about the best value of those projects. As part of the 2014–15 midyear review, recreational fishing came under some scrutiny when the Economic and Expenditure Reform Committee requested savings in the order of \$1.9 million across

recreational fishing compliance, management and research, and also as part of our agency expenditure review there was an \$800 000 reduction in recreational fishing initiatives fund for 2015–16 and the out years, as the member indicated. The minister has clearly requested that full funding be retained to the recreational fishing initiatives fund and other savings be identified within the department to address our overall savings requirements. We are yet to settle those areas, but in the immediate term we will address the deferral of non-essential expenditure and after that there will be two main areas, and both of these will be done in liaison with Recfishwest. One will be a structured review of our service delivery in recreational fishing, merely around efficiencies. We will consider things such as having a close look at our recreational fishing survey program, which are quite high-cost items, to see how we might be able to better deliver those services in a more efficient manner. We will also look at things such as communication with the public, because that is also very important. We will work with Recfishwest on identifying where we might be able to achieve some efficiencies while still maintaining service delivery across the recreational fishing sector. We will also work with Recfishwest on the fund itself and how we can best ensure it continues to deliver very good programs for the community.

Mr D.J. KELLY: The director general has essentially said that the department will talk to Recfishwest about other ways this funding reduction can be achieved. My question, and what everyone is asking, is why did the government not do that straight up rather than simply making a cut to the recreational fishing initiatives fund funding, which is a clear broken election promise. Why did the government not do that, rather than doing as it is now, which is to talk to Recfishwest about other ways savings can be achieved?

Dr K.D. HAMES: In response to the member's statement, it was a not a broken promise, because it has not occurred. Something needs to occur for promise to be broken, and my understanding from the minister is that that was not his intention. I will hand the rest of the question to the director general to answer.

Ms H. Brayford: There were two elements to, I guess, the budget considerations. One was the midyear review deliberation about the savings measures in recreational fishing and the other was the unrelated agency expenditure review process and the need for the department to deliver savings in appropriation and expenditure as part of that review. The recreational fishing initiatives fund was put up as one component of that across a broad range and, as I explained, the minister has said that all funds should be retained within the recreational fishing initiatives fund. I should say that in the past all the recommended projects from Recfishwest have been supported by the minister and we will continue to do that.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I understand the need for further questions on that, but further to that answer, just to get to the core issue, I will refer to something that was probably discussed in health. Health now consumes 28 per cent of the total state government expenditure.

Mr D.J. KELLY: With respect, Mr Chairman, we are not here to talk about the health budget. We have limited time, so if the minister can stick to answering the question.

The CHAIRMAN: The minister is finishing the answer.

Dr K.D. HAMES: It is still my answer. It is not question time; it is estimates and in estimates I can give an answer as I want.

The key point is that all other agencies outside health and education have a tough job and with their budgets it is critically important that they find ways to make savings. That is never easy, but as we may see on what I suspect will be the front page of tomorrow's paper, it is actually critical that the government make savings. I just want to put behind the answer that there is a need to make savings in all departments.

Mr D.J. KELLY: If I have it right, we heard from the director general that there was going to be a reduction in the recreational fishing initiatives fund, but the minister who is with us today has told us that that was not the intention of the fisheries minister. Is it the case that the fisheries minister did not know what was in the budget in respect of this matter and that he was not aware that the budget that he signed off on contained a cut in funding to the recreational fishing initiatives fund?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I understand that the minister was aware that it was an area proposed for cuts, and I have nothing further to say on that.

Mr R.H. COOK: My question refers to spending changes on page 565 and in particular compliance costs. Obviously those expenditure changes demonstrate that \$400 000 will be taken out in each year of the forward estimates. How will that be achieved and what are the implications for the compliance costs outcomes such as safety, illegal fishing and so on?

Ms H. Brayford: That is part of an ongoing reform process in always looking at a business and how it is developing, the community impact and so forth. A decision has been made to amalgamate regional services in the midwest and Gascoyne regions—that is, the Geraldton and Carnarvon offices—and that will form a new midwest–

Gascoyne region. That change will expand the flexibility and ability to move compliance resources into areas of higher need. It does not reduce in-field compliance services in that area at all, but provides for greater flexibility to move resources, particularly the field resources, into the areas of need in respect of fishing activities. It is an amalgamation into a new midwest–Gascoyne region and there are some efficiency gains in that.

[Ms W.M. Duncan took the chair.]

Mr R.H. COOK: Are each of those allocations for \$400 000, so \$1.6 million, to be achieved in the midwest region alone? What are the reductions of full-time equivalents in the midwest region as a result of that restructure that the minister has discussed?

[12 noon]

Ms H. Brayford: Mr Mezzatesta may be able to provide some further information. In essence, that relates to a regional manager’s position. Generally, in each of our regional offices, we have a regional manager and then a suite of compliance managers and fisheries and marine officers, and also in some cases education officers and policy officers. This will be an amalgamation so that there will not be a regional manager in the Carnarvon office. That work will be realigned with the midwest regional manager. The main saving is in one FTE in the context of a regional manager. Mr Mezzatesta may have further information.

Mr B. Mezzatesta: Yes, the director general is correct. The bulk of that \$400 000 is not a cumulative amount. It is \$400 000. The aggregate of the savings is one FTE. There are some additional savings that we will accrue through some savings and some rentals up in the Broome region because we are moving out of a lease rental arrangement for our storage facility into a government-owned one.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Can I just clarify what Mr Mezzatesta said. The total of \$400 000 is not the wage of one FTE; it has other components within it. Otherwise I am changing jobs!

Mr B. Mezzatesta: I will confirm that that is not solely the wage of one FTE.

Mr V.A. CATANIA: The minister stated that the department is trying to move around fisheries officers based on where the need or demand is. Given that Carnarvon still has a fishing fleet and that the Gascoyne from Shark Bay—which has its own fisheries office—up to Exmouth has quite a large boating and fishing population, how did the department make the determination of joining the Gascoyne–midwest office together based on so-called “where the demand is”?

Ms H. Brayford: I will make a comment before passing to Mr Mezzatesta. We have seen a reduction in some of the service requirements in that Carnarvon and northern region around shifts in the resources sector, particularly from the construction phase now into the production phase. That has resulted in some decline in numbers of people who often undertaking recreational fishing. That has been a shift that has been quite important. Mr Mezzatesta may have more information.

Mr B. Mezzatesta: I will provide a point of clarity. We are not proposing to move the numbers or locations of any of our fisheries and marine offices. They will remain exactly —

Mr V.A. CATANIA: Apart from the manager?

Mr B. Mezzatesta: The regional manager is the only position that will be removed from the structure, and that management will occur from the midwest regional manager’s position. The comment the director general made earlier was that the Gascoyne region had 10 fisheries and marine officers spread across three district offices. It was the smallest of all our regions, and we thought that by joining it with the midwest, we grow to about 30 officers within that region, and they can be deployed according to seasonality. As the fishing activity occurs in any particular location, we can actually move officers to where the need is. That was the comment made earlier about flexibility. It is very similar now in structure. The midwest Gascoyne region will be about the same size as what we have in other regional offices.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I refer to page 570 of the *Budget Statements* under the heading “Completed Works” the asset investment program and the “Information Systems Development Entitlements Management System”, which I understand is also referred to as the Fish Eye system. How much has the Department of Fisheries spent on the Fish Eye project since it began? Which fisheries are now using Fish Eye, and how many are not? Can the minister tell us—I understand he might want to give this by supplementary information—how many commercial fishers have logged in and used the Fish Eye system each week since it has been rolled out? What are the total annual running costs of the Fish Eye system?

Ms H. Brayford: In 2011–12, the government provided a budget of \$11.4 million to fund the development of a new integrated licensing and catch and effort system—as the member said, known as Fish Eye. That money has been expended on that project and a number of elements of that project have been delivered, including a new

Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Shane Love; Mr Paul Papalia

licensing system, an integrated catch and effort system used by fishers in the west coast rock lobster fishery and with abalone—and I will come back to that to answer the member's question further. This has included the development of mobile applications for the submission of catch returns for the lobster and abalone fisheries, and some components of online applications for what we call temporary transfers of entitlement. That money has been expended into that system, which has largely been delivered as expected. To answer the member's question around the fisheries, the Fish Eye system was rolled out initially for the west coast rock lobster fishery, which is our largest fishery and has the largest number of transactions, particularly as it has moved from an input management system to an output or quota-based management system in which fishermen are required to report what they are catching daily or on a fisher trip. Rock lobster was rolled in as the priority. More recently, we have implemented the Fish Eye system for abalone. Those are the two fisheries in Fish Eye at the moment—noting there is capacity with the new licensing system for other fishers to also do things like commercial fishing licences and so forth. Rock lobster picks up the largest suite of transactions and that is in Fish Eye. In terms of how many fisheries are not in Fish Eye —

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is everyone else.

Ms H. Brayford: It is everyone else, and we are looking at priorities now for rolling other fishers into Fish Eye. I think there are a couple currently being looked at, one being the marine aquarium fish fishery, for example. That is being done as we move the fisheries into new management systems. Mr Mezzatesta may have some of the data that the member has requested. I will have to defer to him.

Mr B. Mezzatesta: I do not have the statistics.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Is the department willing to give that information by supplementary information?

Dr K.D. HAMES: We are willing to do that, but I just need clarification of what exact information that is.

Mr D.J. KELLY: It is the number of commercial fishers who have logged into and used the Fish Eye system each week since it has been rolled out, and the budgeted annual operating costs for the Fish Eye system over the forward estimates.

[*Supplementary Information No A34.*]

Mr D.J. KELLY: My understanding was that the original plan was that 50 per cent of the cost of the Fish Eye system would be recovered from fisheries as they came online. Does the department still believe it will recover what would be \$5 million or \$6 million from fisheries through that system, given that only two fisheries are using it? In particular, how much has the rock lobster fishery contributed, and how much is it expected to contribute further?

Ms H. Brayford: As part of the development of the Fish Eye system, industry agreed to repay half of the principal amount, which is \$5.7 million interest free over a 10-year period commencing in 2014–15. Payments from the rock lobster fishery have commenced, and that is at 51c per unit. That commenced in that time frame. Abalone will likely commence payments shortly, but the bulk of the transactions, as I said before, is in the rock lobster fishery. They have already commenced paying.

Mr D.J. KELLY: How much have they contributed and how much does the department anticipate that it will contribute as part of this 50 per cent arrangement?

Mr B. Mezzatesta: The annual contribution that is made by the rock lobster fishery is around \$395 000. We expect over 10 years that they will contribute almost \$4 million of the \$5.7 million.

[12.10 pm]

Mr D.J. KELLY: Are the fisheries that use the Fish Eye system happy with the way it functions? Have those fisheries raised any concerns, complaints or problems with the way the system operates?

Ms H. Brayford: This is a fairly significant information technology project for the department and there have been some teething problems with its implementation. However, the Department of Fisheries has worked through a couple of processes, one of which was the establishment of the governance board to work through implementation and development throughout the project. Since we have gone live, particularly for the rock lobster industry, there has been constant work and communication with that industry to get its feedback and work through any issues. A number of enhancements have been made to the system over time to reflect some of the feedback received, and it seems to be operating fairly well at the moment. In February we had a major power outage, which obviously affects an IT system, but that was out of the control of the Fish Eye system. There are those issues, but we are also working on developing new modules and new systems to assist industry. Mr Mezzatesta may have further details.

Mr B. Mezzatesta: No.

Dr K.D. HAMES: That is it for IT problems. Welcome to my world!

Mr D.J. KELLY: Would the department say that the western rock lobster industry is happy with the system?

Ms H. Brayford: I would not say it is unhappy. There have been some issues with Fish Eye and we have —

Mr D.J. KELLY: But would the director general say that it is happy?

Ms H. Brayford: I would say that it is more happy now than it was initially, because we have ironed out a number of those glitches. People moving from a paper-based system, with which they have had a lot of familiarity over many years, to a new integrated electronic system is likely to cause challenges with people getting used to it. However, in terms of its accessibility and people being able to lodge what we call their returns, we have certainly had some positive feedback. This is an issue that will take some time.

Dr K.D. HAMES: I think the response is happy-ish but potentially very happy.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Does the Department of Fisheries believe it has had value for money with this new Fish Eye project?

Ms H. Brayford: Moving to electronic systems and being able to capture our catch and effort data on a more timely basis and our catch data on a more timely basis certainly assists in fisheries management, so the answer is yes.

Mr R.S. LOVE: On page 566 under “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, the third dot point refers to aquaculture and the establishment of investment-ready zones in the Kimberley and the midwest. The Kimberley has had such a zone established and the midwest is due to have it established in late 2016. What does the establishment of an investment-ready zone mean and what will that contribute to the development of aquaculture going forward? Perhaps the minister might explain whether that will be further enhanced by the proposed Aquatic Resources Management Act referred to in the first dot point.

Ms H. Brayford: Aquaculture represents a significant growth opportunity in Western Australia. One area that has been identified is finfish culture—for example, barramundi and yellowtail kingfish. In the ordinary course that will always attract some interest because finfish tend to be fed with either pellets or with fish and they are often seen to create an impact on the environment. The approval process for a finfish aquaculture farm in Western Australia involves a number of regulatory regimes that involve not only Fisheries but also the Environmental Protection Act, particularly around effluent discharge and the carrying capacity and so forth of the environment. The difference with the zones project is that it identifies some areas up-front—in this case, the Kimberley and the midwest. The project carries out environmental monitoring of those zones over a relevant period and that information is then made available to the Environmental Protection Authority, which can do a strategic assessment of that information. Once the zone is cleared through the EPA, people can access the zone without having to individually go back through an environmental assessment process. Once the zone has been established that process will be reduced to about six weeks, when ordinarily it is in excess of 12 or 18 months. The investment-ready concept is about having the pre-approval—for want of a better term—and the environmental assessment having been completed for the zones. The proposed Aquatic Resources Management Act is relevant because it cements the environmental monitoring and management plans required by aquaculturalists. That is a supporting factor to the establishment of the zone and gives the community some comfort that the zone is being managed and regulated in accordance with good environmental principles.

Mr R.S. LOVE: Whereabouts is the midwest zone? Does it involve the Abrolhos Islands?

Ms H. Brayford: The midwest zone that has been identified is off the Abrolhos Islands and is about 3 000 hectares. That is what is being subject to environmental monitoring and the actual zone ultimately will go through the environmental protection process.

Mr R.H. COOK: My question relates to the spending changes detailed on page 565. I really must say that I am not used to seeing so much red ink; looking at health budgets, there is usually just growth everywhere!

Dr K.D. HAMES: Exactly right.

Mr R.H. COOK: I refer to the cuts to the aquatic biosecurity program. My understanding is that this has been ongoing process of re-cashflowing and cuts since the 2013–14 budget. This budget in particular shows some cuts right across the forward estimates. My understanding is that the reason given for this in the past was that there was a sense that the ports would take up activities in aquatic biosecurity. Have the ports taken up that activity and are they reporting on aquatic biosecurity; and, if not, what have we been doing to make sure that we are filling that gap despite the cuts?

Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Shane Love; Mr Paul Papalia

Ms H. Brayford: Marine biosecurity is a relatively new function for the department. The impetus for the expansion around the marine biosecurity program has arisen in part through the expansion of the resources sector and the extensive movement of ships into Western Australia often from what we call high-risk ports such as Singapore. There was a proposal to seek cost recovery for the department's biosecurity program through a port levy or similar process and that was worked through with a former fisheries minister. Following extensive discussions with the Department of Transport and the State Solicitor's Office, it was difficult to implement that proposal as it was difficult to tie costs to actual beneficiaries in respect of the ports; therefore, that proposal has not progressed. As part of a review of our savings measures, we have now looked at a streamlined biosecurity program, which is based on risk-based approaches focusing on high-risk assets and activities—for example, the protection of marine marks, important ports, important areas and A-class reserves such as Barrow Island. We have also looked to embed our biosecurity program across the agency rather than having it dependent upon dedicated staff. So, we are also looking at having biosecurity functions across the department.

Mr D.J. KELLY: In the 2013–14 budget, about \$30 million was allocated to this task and it was announced as a major initiative. From what I can see, all that money has since disappeared. Is it correct that the program that was intended in 2013–14 has been scrapped and the department has had to move to embedding without any additional cash? Is my understanding of that correct?

[12.20 pm]

Ms H. Brayford: That program was based on the highest risk outcome for the state and was around the ports levy program. Mr Robinson may be able to give the member further information on that. In essence, we have looked at streamlining that program as part of our broader agency savings and, as I said, based on our high-risk assets and high-risk activities. We will still have about 12 dedicated staff in aquatic biosecurity running across research, compliance and policy, and we will be looking for other field officers and others to be involved in biosecurity management. We think we have a program that can deliver biosecurity for the state, noting that we have had to deal with some of our broader savings requirements.

Mr P. Robinson: I can speak to that. The member is correct. In the budget it was about \$30 million across the forward estimates period but it was predicated on initially two years of funding from government, which was subsequently extended for another half year. That was on the basis that it would give the department time to put in place the cost recovery to get the funding. It was never based on government funding across the forward estimates period; it was initially a mixture of what we call appropriation funding and then cost recovery in the outer years.

Mr D.J. KELLY: In the 2013–14 budget papers there was supposed to be \$12 million showing for 2015–16 and \$13 million for 2016–17.

Mr P. Robinson: In that budget we took the high-risk position that if there were issues within the sector, and environmental incidents, if you like, occurred, at that point we budgeted that we would need to pay out that sort of money. That was incorrect because it was a contingency rather than a forecasted cost and that was then adjusted in the subsequent budgets.

Dr K.D. HAMES: Do members have a plan for when we switch to the Western Australian Tourism Commission, or will we keep going?

Mr P. PAPALIA: Probably sometime after 12.30 pm.

Mr D.J. KELLY: In last year's budget, the explanation for the removal of the money for biosecurity was an expectation that things such as biosecurity plans would be prepared by particular ports and marinas. Is the minister able to tell me whether Western Australian ports have put in place biosecurity plans? Have the high-risk ports, particularly Fremantle, Dampier and Port Hedland, got biosecurity plans? They were supposed to be in place by 2015–16. I am referring to those high-risk ports and the other smaller ports. Which marinas now have biosecurity plans? I am concerned that if this work was so important a few years ago—this issue has not gone away—are those biosecurity plans still going to be put in place even though the government has taken all the money out of the budget?

Ms H. Brayford: There are two elements to that the question; one is around the ports and the other is around biosecurity management plans more generally. The department has had a program of monitoring the ports over time. I do not have the details here but we can make that available to the member. That will also answer the question about whether they have biosecurity plans in place. I am not aware that they do but we certainly have had a monitoring program to test periodically for marine pest observations and existence in those ports. We can certainly provide the member with the detail of that. I think some research has been published in that area. The issue of biosecurity management plans is particularly relevant to the proposed new legislation because that legislation will provide for the development of biosecurity management plans for particular enterprises or areas.

Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Shane Love; Mr Paul Papalia

We will be seeking to use that legislation to move forward on biosecurity management plans, and that should achieve also some efficiencies in that area.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Can the minister clarify that he is prepared to provide that as supplementary information?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I ask the director general to clarify exactly which supplementary information she will provide.

Ms H. Brayford: We can provide some information on our port monitoring program and any results from that and whether biosecurity plans are subsequently in place for those ports.

Mr D.J. KELLY: And for marinas?

Ms H. Brayford: We can do that for marinas, although I think the member will find that our focus has been on the ports.

[Supplementary Information No A35.]

Mr D.J. KELLY: To be clear, it is not necessary for that new legislation to pass for those ports to put in place biosecurity plans. It may assist the government in encouraging the ports, but there is nothing to stop ports now putting in place those biosecurity plans prior to the legislation coming through.

The CHAIRMAN: Is that a question?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I want clarification.

Dr K.D. HAMES: That is true.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is oversight of biofouling inspections the responsibility of the Department of Fisheries?

Dr K.D. HAMES: Yes.

Mr P. PAPALIA: Is the regime for biofouling inspections therefore being impacted by a reduction in funding in the forward estimates for this activity for biosecurity? Does that mean there will be fewer regular or less comprehensive biofouling inspections due to less money?

Ms H. Brayford: A lot of the biofouling risks arise from the movement of vessels, particularly into the resources sector, so there are a few issues there. The department has its own inspectors who are able to inspect hulls and it has fisheries and marine officers with appropriate diving and other qualifications. Those officers continue to be in the department and are able to provide those inspections. We have also a number of approved biofouling inspectors from the private sector who have been through the appropriate training and they too are able to provide inspections—and do so. That regime can continue. All of this is based on risk assessment. We have a number of risk-assessment processes in place to assist us in determining the rate and level of inspection required. We recently launched—I think it will be today—a new tool called Vessel Check, an integrated electronic risk-based system to enable boat operators, particularly in the resources sector, to enter their risk profile and for that to be assessed and to do scenario analyses around that. Our capacity for inspections will be maintained, noting we operate on a risk-based approach in that area.

Mr P. PAPALIA: I do not necessarily accept the suggestion that the risk lies predominantly within the ships associated with the resources industry. All we need is one ship from a dodgy Third World country to discharge ballast —

Mr R.H. COOK: Or a dodgy First World country.

Mr P. PAPALIA: — and there is a massive disaster really. Is it possible for the minister to provide, through supplementary information, the number of qualified biofouling inspectors who Fisheries employs as fisheries officers or any other position? I would also like to know the number of biofouling inspectors who work in the state, who Fisheries does not employ—consultants or freelance or whatever they do—and to know whether that number has decreased or increased in the last two years since I understand a new qualification was created in 2013 run by TAFE.

Ms H. Brayford: We can provide data on biofouling inspectors in the private sector who are accredited for our process. We can also provide the information on fisheries and marine officers and, potentially, research officers, who can undertake those inspections, and their qualifications. We should be able to provide the trend data over probably the last three to five years the member has requested.

[Supplementary Information No A36.]

[12.30 pm]

Mr D.J. KELLY: I refer to page 565, and the estimated actual appropriation for 2014–15. My understanding from questions in last year's estimates is that that figure would be bolstered somewhat by the department

receiving some money from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to compensate for resources expended by the Department of Fisheries on the shark drum line policy. The answer that we received was that the department was in negotiations with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to finalise an amount. Can the minister tell the house how much money, if any, the Department of Fisheries received from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet or any other department to “compensate” the department for resources it expended on the drum line policy last summer?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I refer that question to the director general.

Ms H. Brayford: I understand that money has been provided by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in 2014–15. The amount is \$495 000.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Can the minister tell me how much the department believed it expended? Was that \$495 000 100 per cent of the resources the department utilised on that program, or was it a portion?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I refer that question to the director general.

Ms H. Brayford: I will ask Mr Robinson to answer that.

Mr P. Robinson: That amount was assessed to be the additional cost to the department in cash terms. The member would understand that we were using some internal resources that we reallocated. The Department of the Premier and Cabinet gave us \$495 000 in cash, which was assessed to be the amount of extra cost we incurred.

Mr D.J. KELLY: What was the value of the internal resources reallocated to that program?

Dr K.D. HAMES: The total amount was in the order of \$680 000. The member can do the maths. The total resource allocation was \$680 000 and the cash reimbursement was \$495 000. The net cost would be the difference between those two amounts.

Mr R.H. COOK: My question refers to enforcement and education, discussed on page 568. Can the minister provide information on how many recreational boat safety checks were made during the last summer, and can he provide a month-by-month breakdown from December through to April?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I refer that question to Mr Mezzatesta.

Mr B. Mezzatesta: I will have to provide that information by way of supplementary, because I do not have those statistics with me.

Dr K.D. HAMES: We will provide that as supplementary information. Can the member read his question again?

Mr R.H. COOK: My question was about the number of recreational boat safety checks carried out last summer. That is what the question said, but I will say between the months of December 2014 and April 2015. Can the minister also provide a month-by-month breakdown for those months?

[*Supplementary Information No A37.*]

Mr D.J. KELLY: I refer to the items listed on page 565 under the heading “Spending Changes”, specifically industry services. Savings of some \$520 000 are listed across the forward estimates. Can the minister outline exactly how those savings will be achieved, and what programs will be lost as a result of that cut?

Dr K.D. HAMES: I refer the question to the director general.

Ms H. Brayford: That reduction is due to savings in the area of industry services, particularly some specialist analyses for economic work done in the lobster and prawn fisheries. Now that we have developed what are known as harvest strategies for those fisheries, they set out more clearly the decision rules and the strategy to be employed. We believe that the need for specific analyses in that economic area will be reduced. The other item is a service level agreement with the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, under which the Council provides us with some consultation services with the industry on particular matters, which has been operating very well. With the agreement of the WAFIC chief executive officer, we have reduced that amount by about \$30 000.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Is that an annual reduction?

Ms H. Brayford: That is correct.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Does the government expect to receive the same level of service at a reduced price?

Ms H. Brayford: The main difference there is that under the existing service level agreement there is funding for an independent chairman to provide some governance between the department and industry, because this was the first agreement of its kind. That agreement was in the order of about \$12 000. In discussions with WAFIC we have agreed that that is probably not the best use of that money, so that is one saving that does not affect the

Extract from *Hansard*

[ASSEMBLY ESTIMATES COMMITTEE A — Wednesday, 10 June 2015]

p234b-242a

Mr Nathan Morton; Dr Kim Hames; Mr Dave Kelly; Mr Roger Cook; Mr Vincent Catania; Mr Shane Love; Mr Paul Papalia

actual services. It is really just looking at the cost of that program. It is the first time we have done it in the past three years, and we will be delivering the same services with the same level of consultation at that reduced rate.

Mr D.J. KELLY: That is very generous of WAFIC.

Ms H. Brayford: We work very closely with WAFIC.

The appropriation was recommended.