

BARRAMUNDI RESTOCKING — LAKE KUNUNURRA

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [12.11 pm]: I rise to brief the house on barramundi restocking passing one million at Lake Kununurra, a special milestone of the Lake Kununurra barramundi restocking project. I was fortunate to join the local community as we recently released our one millionth juvenile fish. Barramundi is Australia's most recognisable estuarine sportfish, with many recreational fishers travelling to northern Western Australia to try to catch one. Local recreational fishing and Indigenous communities have long pressed for the restocking of barramundi into Lake Kununurra, and eight years ago their dream became a reality when the first fingerlings were released. North Regional TAFE in Broome has managed the broodstock collection, breeding and restocking program on behalf of the state government. This work has been undertaken in collaboration with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development; the Lake Kununurra Barramundi Stocking Group; the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions; the Miriuwung Gajerrong Rangers; and Recfishwest. This is a community-driven project that I am proud to support as minister, and the local restocking group should be particularly commended for its efforts.

The McGowan government's \$6 million recreational fishing COVID-19 stimulus package announced last year has supported enhancement projects such as this one around Western Australia, as well as a statewide recreational fishing tourism campaign. Our government has committed to fund a further three years of this exciting program, supporting the fishing mecca in the East Kimberley, and we are likely to hit the two millionth barramundi stocked during this time. Recreational fishing helps boost regional economies and local tourism, with 750 000 Western Australians going fishing every year.

The project has transformed Kununurra into a world-class fishing destination, enticing recfishers to head up north to stay and spend on local job-creating fishing trips in the Kimberley. It is a unique experience, with the lake winding through a series of cliffs, waterfalls and tropical bushland and one not to be missed.