

FISH AGGREGATING DEVICES

33. Hon COLIN de GRUSSA to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the McGowan government's announcement of \$1.5 million to expand the recreational fish aggregating device—FAD—program.

- (1) What is the primary purpose of that funding?
- (2) Can the minister table the scientific advice on which that decision was made, particularly that FADs lead to a net increase in overall pelagic fish availability?

Hon KYLE MCGINN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following answer has been provided to me by the Minister for Fisheries.

- (1) To support the recovery of demersal fish stocks in the west coast bioregion, the McGowan government is investing \$1.5 million to expand the popular FADs program by an additional 12 new FADs, bringing the total to 40 FADs deployed annually across Western Australia to provide alternative fishing opportunities for recreational fishers.
- (2) FADs consist of buoys or floats that are moored to the ocean floor using an anchor system. The primary function of a FAD is to attract baitfish, which use the FAD as shelter and in turn attract pelagic fish. FADs are used widely throughout the world to concentrate pelagic fish, as it makes them easier to catch. Recfishwest recently completed a successful multi-year FAD trial across WA and concluded that a FAD program be adopted as a permanent and ongoing part of the WA fishing landscape. This FAD trial assessed FAD performance on five factors including ability to aggregate fish, cost of purchase and logistics, logistical difficulty, holding ability and availability.