

AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**293. Mrs R.M.J. CLARKE to the Minister for Fisheries:**

I refer to the McGowan government's commitment to diversifying the Western Australian economy. Can the minister outline to the house how this government is investing in the development of Western Australia's emerging aquaculture industry?

**Mr D.T. PUNCH replied:**

I thank the member for Murray–Wellington for her question and for her incredible advocacy for regional Western Australia particularly and for her electorate, advocating for new opportunities in jobs and industry and supporting quality of life. I also want to acknowledge that we are doing some work with marron in her electorate and we are hoping to see restocking at Harvey Dam very shortly. We will keep that a bit of a secret for the moment!

Several members interjected.

**Mr D.T. PUNCH:** When we restock.

I am very pleased to inform the house that the McGowan government is continuing to diversify our economy and create new jobs through a further investment of \$6.5 million towards implementing our aquaculture development plan for Western Australia. Of course, aquaculture is a developing industry here in the west, with tremendous opportunities for growth as the world's fastest growing food production sector. Members may not be aware that Albany is becoming the oyster centre of Western Australia—romantic weekend to the oysters in Albany, member for Albany. There is also the opportunity for marron to be grown in the member for Collie–Preston's area. There are some great opportunities out there in regional Western Australia.

The aquaculture development plan will foster potential, supporting both new investment in industry and the growth of existing aquaculture ventures to capitalise on growing local and global demand for high-quality seafood products. There has never been a more important time to look for those new sources. The plan was developed in collaboration with industry and it was released by my predecessor, the member for Willagee, providing a cohesive set of measures to establish the foundations for aquaculture development over the next 10 years. This will address key issues that have previously presented barriers to the development of aquaculture. It will also provide opportunities for Aboriginal economic development and participation. Funding the aquaculture development plan will initiate a range of pivotal activities for the growth of the aquaculture sector, which will include alignment of research and investment, with industry growth plans for key aquaculture sectors, including marine finfish, shellfish, seaweed and freshwater species; investment in identified priority industry initiatives to investigate new innovative technologies and new species; regulatory framework reform; economic development; and further research and ongoing investment into our aquaculture development zones in the Kimberley, the Abrolhos Islands, Albany and other key aquaculture sites such as the Pemberton Freshwater Research Centre, the Albany shellfish hatchery and the Broome Tropical Aquaculture Park.

Our investment in aquaculture development over the next four years will reduce risk to new and existing industry operators seeking to enter into or expand aquaculture operations in our great state, and critically in regional Western Australia, and will complement the work we are doing to attract new private investment. An expanding aquaculture industry will also create upstream and downstream businesses, such as feed manufacturing, equipment manufacturing, processing and value-adding, particularly in regional areas. Further investment into the aquaculture development plan for Western Australia will position WA to be a global source and a provider to meet demand for high-quality sustainable seafood, will help to attract investment into a rapid-growth industry that supports regional communities and will further this government's work for a strong and diversified WA economy.

**The SPEAKER:** That concludes question time. I remind members that we will break for lunch now and will resume at two o'clock for the delivery of the state budget.

*Sitting suspended from 1.00 to 2.00 pm*