

FISHERIES, FINFISH AND MACKEREL REVIEWS

1278. Hon Murray Criddle to the Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

With regard to the current finfish and mackerel reviews -

- (1) What analysis of the finfish and mackerel species has been done for the committee to base their judgements on?
- (2) Why has there been a change in management of mackerel?
- (3) Can you advise what research has been done into grey mackerel and spotted mackerel?
- (4) Are these classed into the Mackerel quota issued recently?
- (5) If this change in management has been for sustainable reasons, why has there been no change to the bag limits for recreational fishers starting October 1 2003?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

- (1) The Department of Fisheries has a dedicated research facility which undertakes stock assessments of key commercial and recreational species, including mackerel and other finfish, on an ongoing basis. The results of these assessments are published in the Department's annual State of the Fishery report.
Both committees were fully briefed by relevant research scientists and any further information requested following these briefings was provided.
- (2) There has been no change to the management of the mackerel fishery as yet, but I have approved the drafting of an Interim Management Plan for this fishery.
- (3) The biology of spotted mackerel has been studied in Queensland. In addition, a recent Spanish mackerel stock assessment also provided information on catches of other important mackerel species, including grey mackerel, in WA.
- (4) There has been no mackerel quota issued.
- (5) The bag limits for key recreational finfish species including, mackerel and dhufish, applying to the Gascoyne and West Coast regions were halved on 1 October.