

WESTERN ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY — EXPORTS — CHINA

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

I refer to the catastrophic effect the closure of the Chinese market has had on the western rock lobster industry.

- (1) Has the government undertaken any analysis to quantify the impact of the loss of the Chinese market on the industry; and, if not, why not?
- (2) If yes to (1), has the scope of any such analysis included an assessment of the ongoing financial viability of individual licence holders, the sustainability and overall viability of the industry across a range of product pricing and alternative market scenarios or the impacts on local businesses and regional economies which support the rock lobster industry, or an investigation of financial, regulatory or general industry assistance measures?
- (3) What is the government's response to the Western Rock Lobster Council's request for a waiver of the deferred gross value of production access fees?

Hon KYLE MCGINN replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question.

- (1)–(2) The government acknowledges the impacts of the China trade disruption on the west coast rock lobster fishery. Preliminary estimates, as evidenced by the prices paid to fishers throughout the season, suggest that the value of the industry could have halved from an annual gross value product of over \$400 million. The government is monitoring the situation, but the full extent of the value reduction resulting from the China market closure will not be known until later this year.

The state government continues to work very closely with the western rock lobster industry to assist the industry to minimise the economic impact of the loss of the Chinese market on fishers, and continues to provide support to assist with market diversification opportunities. Assistance to the industry includes the initial introduction and enhancement of the back-of-boat sales mechanism, which resulted in significantly more rock lobsters being made available to the local community, restaurants and seafood wholesale and retail outlets at prices comparable with or exceeding the export price paid to fishers.

- (3) The government has not yet responded to this request as it is still under consideration.