

ILLEGAL FISHING BOATS — KIMBERLEY

1251. Hon SOPHIA MOERMOND to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Environment:

I refer to the recent increase in illegal fishing boats from Indonesia off the Kimberley coast.

- (1) How is the state government monitoring the conservation impact of the boats?
- (2) On the basis of these monitoring strategies, what conservation impact is being observed?
- (3) What is the relative role of the state and federal government in responding to the illegal vessels?
- (4) What resources does the state government have to respond to the illegal vessels?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Environment, I provide the following answer.

- (1)–(4) Under the Department of Home Affairs, the Australian Border Force, through the Maritime Border Command, is the lead agency for dealing with foreign fishing vessel activities. The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is actively involved in interagency collaboration through response planning and joint patrols with commonwealth and other state government departments operating in the Kimberley region. DBCA responds to reports of illegal fishing activity in marine parks by travelling to the locations to confirm the reports and notifying relevant authorities.

DBCA has undertaken monitoring of the Rowley Shoals to investigate the impacts of foreign fishing vessels on marine biodiversity. Anecdotal evidence suggests a decline in sea cucumber, or trepang, across all three atolls that make up the Rowley Shoals Marine Park. Illegal fishing vessels present a conservation risk with respect to fishing and hunting pressure, impacts from reef walking on coral as well as the risk of rubbish and illegal dumping. State resources are generally deployed to areas of highest risk.