

**AQUATIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AMENDMENT BILL 2021**

*Second Reading*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

**MS C.M. COLLINS (Hillarys)** [3.01 pm]: As I was saying before, many organisations in the Hillarys electorate are impacted by the fishing sector. Perhaps no place best displays the diversity of the local marine environment, which is the subject of this bill, than Aquarium of Western Australia in Hillarys does. It is the largest aquarium in Australia and captures species found across 12 000 kilometres of our coastline and houses more than 4 000 marine species. The fishing sector is a major contributor to both the local and export economy of Western Australia. The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation released modelling in November 2019 showing that commercial fishing and aquaculture contributed \$989 million per annum and supported 6 000 WA jobs, of which 2 900 were direct roles in the fishing industries.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Hillarys, if you do not mind me interrupting you, at the moment there are quite a few conversations going on in the chamber. Some of those could be best had outside. The member for Hillarys is giving an excellent speech and I would like to hear that speech, and I would like Hansard to record it easily.

**Ms C.M. COLLINS:** As such, it offers a significant contribution, both directly and indirectly, to the economy of WA and, therefore, needs to be protected for our long-term benefit. I, for one, am much more interested in eating fish than in anything else. An obvious beneficiary of a well-managed sea environment is the hospitality industry. There are many restaurants and seafood eateries in the Hillarys harbour area, such as Seafood Nation, as well as all up and down the coastline. These restaurants, bars and cafes, employ many hundreds to cater for both locals and tourists enjoying the best the WA fishing industry has to offer. To conclude, the amendments proposed in this bill will support and strengthen sustainable management of WA's recreational and commercial fishing zones through closer cooperation, more centralised data gathering and increased regular research updates. Importantly, it attempts to bring together under the one roof several previously loosely connected agencies and stakeholders in our marine environment through better management. I believe this bill offers more substantive safeguards to guarantee that we, as Western Australians, can enjoy all the bountiful waters on our doorstep and what they have to offer to future generations here in WA.

**MS S.E. WINTON (Wanneroo — Parliamentary Secretary)** [3.03 pm]: I rise to make a contribution to the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill 2021. I am going to try to krill it! Before I begin, I would like to give a special shout-out to Dave and Margaret Whiting, Ronnie Anderson, Theresa Hartridge, and David and Avril Smith, who have just joined me in the members' dining room prior to my speech today. I am happy to tell members that many of us enjoyed the wonderful seafood of Western Australia that was on offer, and I particularly enjoyed the salmon and the barramundi.

I begin by congratulating the Minister for Fisheries for his elevation to this important portfolio and commend him for acting so quickly to get this bill in front of us. He is "fantastic". I do not need to tell the member for Bunbury how important the state's fisheries and habitats are. As the member for Bunbury, he is lucky enough to represent a very blessed electorate. The Bunbury region straddles the west and south coast marine areas of Western Australia and is home to some of the state's most important commercial fishing activities, including western rock lobster production; the west coast gillnet and demersal longline fishery, which includes dhufish, bream and baldchin groper; and the west coast purse seine fishery, which includes sardines, pilchards and anchovies. Not only is the minister's electorate home to much of the state's commercial fishing activity and therefore one of the major creators of local jobs, my research tells me that Bunbury has a higher-than-average participation rate in the state for recreational fishing, exceeded by only the Pilbara and the Kimberley. In fact, Recfishwest tells us that one in three people go fishing, so Bunbury punches well above its weight. Minister, I fish too. I used to fish a lot more than I do now, but certainly I have spent a lot of time in various parts of Western Australia, particularly three years in Fitzroy Crossing and two years at Cocos Island, and fishing was very much a part of my everyday life during that period.

I want to spend some time on explaining the importance of this bill, and I will try not to flounder! Why is the member for Landsdale not here? She would be so impressed with me. I am not as spontaneous as her. I wish I had her gift. My puns are researched by my daughter, who is listening upstairs.

As the minister highlighted in his second reading speech, the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill makes changes to the Aquatic Resources Management Act 2016 and, in effect, enables the act to become fully operational. Of course, the Assembly passed an almost identical bill in the previous Parliament, but we ran out of time in the other place. In my contribution on the Legislation Bill, I said how it is quite obvious why in many instances we ran out of time in the other place, particularly when a member there took 21 hours on one single bill that he was going to oppose from the start. Those 21 hours might have been used to pass the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill in the previous Parliament. Never mind; here we are and instead I have an opportunity to contribute to it. The only difference between this bill and that version is the inclusion of an amendment that was based on the

debate had in the fortieth Parliament, and that is around the requirement to do a review of the operation of the ARMA in five years.

In essence, this bill facilitates the transition from fisheries being managed under the Fish Resources Management Act to being managed under the Aquatic Resources Management Act. This bill will allow for the replacement of the Fish Resources Management Act and the Pearling Act so that the Aquatic Resources Management Act will be the primary legislation for the management of Western Australia's fisheries and aquatic biological resources. The principles that underline the Aquatic Resources Management Act are to ensure the ecologically sustainable development of Western Australia's living aquatic biological resources and ecosystems by protecting these resources from over-exploitation and the threats posed by diseases and harmful imported organisms while encouraging the development of industries and activities associated with their use. A key feature of this legislation is that it is based around the aquatic resource—that is, the actual species themselves; for example, king prawns or snapper—rather than the traditional approach based on a fishery or fishing activity. This provides a structured approach to providing secure fishing access rights for all sectors but with resource sustainability at its core.

We often talk about the mining and resource industry as being one of our biggest assets. Western Australia has the longest length of coastline in Australia, some 20 000 kilometres, and with that comes an abundance of marine resources. The member for Southern River's approach to his speeches has inspired me. We have an abundance of delectable and fantastic species out there and I want to take this opportunity to do a shout-out to them. I would like to recognise the western striped grunter, the humphead Maori wrasse, the passionfruit coral trout—one of my favourites—the onion trevally, and the old wife. That one is an old favourite but perhaps might not be so politically correct anymore. I also recognise the eyebrow tuskfish.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** Member, will you take an interjection?

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Just let me get through my list. I know that the member wants to mention one of his favourites, but perhaps he can wait until the end.

I also want to mention the snubnose dart, the blackhead puller and, my favourite, the blue bastard. I could have gone on and on, but the fact is there are more than 2 500 species of fish off our fantastic coast and even if I were as good as the member for Southern River, I reckon I could not mention all 2 500.

**Mr T.J. Healy:** My only suggestion would be that it would be difficult to print a copy of *Hansard* and deliver it to those fish without laminating it, and that might cause an environmental problem.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** It would depend. But they know that I have called them out, so perhaps next time when I am out fishing, they can say thank you by biting on the end of my line!

**Ms J.J. Shaw:** I feel an "Inside Cover" coming on, member.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** No—but, seriously, our state's fisheries contribute over \$1.6 billion to the state's economy every year. The commercial fishing industry is worth \$633 million, as was referenced in 2017–18, the pearling industry is worth \$52 million and the aquaculture industry is worth \$27 million. I hope that one day we are able to stand in here and put a bigger number on aquaculture, but I will talk more about that industry in a moment. Then there is our recreational fishing industry; some of the species that I named may or may not end up on the end of the line of some of the 750 000 people who drop a line in this state every year—the one in three of us who go out and have a fish. That industry is worth an incredible \$2.4 billion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been tough for many industries and sectors in our economy, and, of course, the commercial and recreational fishing industries have been affected more than many. As part of the COVID-19 recovery plan, there has been significant investment to support our industries and allow them to grow. Of course, last year, as part of the recovery plan, we delivered over \$6 million in a support package to Western Australia's booming recreational fishing industry, which is, as I said, worth more than \$2.4 billion to the state's economy. That package was designed in partnership and collaboration with Recfishwest, which is fantastic. It included new artificial reefs, a boost to finfish stocks to increase fishing opportunities in the metropolitan area and a new statewide marketing campaign to drive more locals and tourists to Western Australia's iconic fishing locations.

I want to mention briefly a specific initiative within that, which is the Kununurra barramundi stocking program, which will see an additional 200 000 juvenile barramundi put into Lake Kununurra. I can tell members that when I was in the Kimberley in the 1990s, I do not remember seeing many barramundi in that waterway. There were plenty of barramundi in the Fitzroy River, but not so many in Lake Argyle. The only thing that I used to be able to catch were catfish. There is nothing wrong with catfish, but they certainly do not compare with barramundi in either the sport of catching them or in eating them. In doing research for this speech, I read that as a result of that restocking program, which has been going on for a while, one metre-plus barramundi are being caught there already. I dream of getting to the Kimberley again one day and catching another barramundi 30 years after I caught my last one.

I return closer to home and to my electorate. Of course, my electorate is not blessed with any coastal areas, but that does not mean that fishing and recreational fishing is any less important to the people of Wanneroo. As I said, one in three people go fishing, and in Wanneroo I certainly think that it might be a bit more than one in three. I want to mention one local project that the minister announced recently with the member for Joondalup—that is, the \$1 million artificial reef that is being installed offshore at Ocean Reef. It is a fantastic initiative. It is the seventh purpose-built artificial reef to be built and will create more easily accessible recreational fishing opportunities. It is important to note that that reef was funded through the Recreational Fishing Initiatives Fund. The money that recreational fishers pay for annual licences to drop a line or to get a cray or to go and get some marron out of a dam down south is being used to provide infrastructure for fishers to use in the future. I think that is a fantastic idea.

We as a government recognise the importance of fishing and the key role it plays in contributing to our economy and to the lifestyle and health and wellbeing of the one in three who go fishing. Members, there are good days and bad days when you go fishing, but even on your worst day it is always a good day when you get back home. It leaves you with a fantastic feeling even when you come home with nothing.

I briefly talked about the aquaculture industry before, which I think is worth about worth \$28 million to the economy. It is the world's fastest growing food production sector and is set to overtake captured fisheries as the major source of seafood. We in Western Australia are in the prime seat to be world leaders in this industry. This industry will play an increasing role in assisting us in diversifying our economy and in creating new jobs in regional areas. We demonstrated our commitment to and support of this growth industry when we released in November last year the *Aquaculture development plan for Western Australia*. We are committed to creating further aquaculture zones that will attract investment opportunities to expand this important industry. This initiative is critically important. I remember at question time the Minister for Local Government talking about the government's focus on cutting red tape. This is really a part of that process, because in identifying aquaculture zones, we identify the land and water areas that will provide for investment-ready zones with strategic environmental approvals and management policies already in place. That will encourage investors to come in, because they will not have to wait for years and years ploughing through bureaucracy or red tape to get their ideal aquaculture industry started.

Other initiatives that the government has implemented include—of course, the member for Geraldton would know this—an investment of \$8.7 million to build the Geraldton finfish nursery, and, member for Albany, the establishment of the Albany shellfish hatchery in partnership with Aquaculture Council of Western Australia.

At this point I will briefly touch on the good work that we did in the previous Parliament and highlight the good work of the previous Minister for Fisheries, the member for Willagee. As I mentioned, many of our fishing sectors have been hard-hit during the COVID-19 pandemic, none more so than the \$400 million rock lobster industry. The government moved quickly to introduce new measures to include a mechanism that would boost local supply when that industry all of a sudden—there is a fish pun there, but I cannot think of it—had the legs pulled out from under it and had no market to sell to.

**Mr D.A.E. Scaife:** It was at risk of sinking.

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Thank you, member. They were at risk of sinking—brilliant!

The minister and the government acted very quickly to boost local supply to make crayfish more accessible to locals. That scheme was very successful and allowed many people to enjoy crayfish when they might otherwise not have.

A lot of good things have come out of the COVID-19 pandemic in many sectors. There have been examples of us rethinking where our produce goes. I know that the rock lobster industry has worked hard with the government to think about what other markets it can send its produce to, rather than sending it to one single market, which can lead to trouble when things like COVID-19 happens.

I also want to take this opportunity to highlight the important work undertaken by the former Minister for Fisheries, the member for Bassendean. In particular, I want to take a couple of minutes to highlight his work on our government's shark mitigation strategy. It is an approach that I am proud of and that puts science and research front and centre in the decisions we continue to make to ensure that we protect our beach-going lifestyle while also paying respect to the white sharks. Although we know that the risk of shark attack is low, the McGowan Labor government has implemented one of the strongest evidence-based shark mitigation programs in the world. Our approach focuses on the need to keep the community safe and give confidence to people who love to go to the beach while also respecting the white shark as a species that is categorised as vulnerable under federal environmental law. I am very proud that this government pays respect to that.

It was quite interesting earlier when Dr Honey asked a question of the Minister for Environment about environmental vandalism. He was part of a government that, prior to 2017, dealt with perceived problems with sharks by standing publicly holding a huge hook saying that it would hunt them all down and kill them. On the one hand, the Liberal Party wants to be the environmental protector and champion, but when we look back on its record in government, we see

that in all facets—whether it was fisheries or environmental vandalism by bulldozing the Beeliar wetlands before we had a chance to stop it when we came to government in 2017—its record does not stack up.

I am proud of our holistic approach to our shark mitigation strategy.

[Member's time extended.]

**Ms S.E. WINTON:** Our holistic approach to our shark mitigation strategy includes upgrading the state's shark monitoring network continuously and we are investing heavily in that area. It is important that we continue the research and the science and continue the personal shark deterrent devices rebate scheme. Already some 6 000-plus people in the state have used the scheme to buy shark deterrents to not only be safer in the water, but also, very importantly, feel comfortable and confident to enjoy their lifestyle in the ocean. We have increased aerial surveillance and developed the SharkSmart WA app and website. We have beach enclosures and the shark response unit. As I said, it is the holistic approach to this important issue that provides confidence to our community and is aligned with the best science. It will continue to provide us with the best information as we move forward in protecting not only the white shark but also all species off our coast.

In summary, going back to talking about the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill, that is what this bill is about; it is a holistic approach to managing our aquatic resources. We see increasing challenges in seeking to ensure that we manage our resources sustainably. We have expanding populations, coastal development, advancing fish technologies and biosecurity threats that all add pressure to our aquatic environment and fisheries. Managing this important resource so that it is sustainable and can sustain a growing industry that provides jobs and prosperity for people in Western Australia, as well as recreational opportunities for people like me and my grandchildren, is vitally important and I believe this bill will do that.

**The ACTING SPEAKER (Ms K.E. Giddens):** Member for Wanneroo, I thought you were going to find yourself in deep water there, but I was pleased you did not take the bait!

**Ms S.E. Winton:** Very good.

**MS L. DALTON (Geraldton)** [3.23 pm]: Excellent!

I rise today to speak in favour of the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill 2021. As we know, the focus of the Aquatic Resources Management Act is to ensure the ecologically sustainable development of Western Australia's living aquatic biological resources and ecosystems by protecting these resources from over-exploitation and the threats posed by diseases and harmful imported organisms, while encouraging the development of the industries and activities associated with their use.

I support this important bill because my electorate of Geraldton is a fishing town. Indeed, Geraldton is the beating heart of the crayfishing industry in Western Australia. The humble western rock lobster has become an export commodity worth hundreds of millions of dollars per year and fishing has been an integral part of our economy for generations. Pioneers of the industry helped to build our city from humble beginnings into an economic powerhouse for the midwest. People such as Bert Boschetti and his family have left an indelible mark on the fabric of our city. Their vision and tenacity have helped create wealth for our state, industries that did not exist, jobs and careers for people.

As members can imagine, coming from a fishing town means that everyone has an opinion about how our fisheries should be managed. Around Australia and the world, we have seen what happens when poor practices have led to wild fish stock numbers collapsing—industries fold, jobs are lost and coastal towns dwindle away. This is one of the many reasons I support this bill before the house. Our continued careful management of marine resources is vital for our future. If I can stay on western rock lobster as an example for just a moment more, tough resource management decisions in the past have delivered a healthy fishery today. Since 2000, due to the hard work of the industry, fishing families and the fisheries department, and government legislation, the western rock lobster industry has been certified by the Marine Stewardship Council for sustainable fishing practices. It was the first fishery of its kind in the world to achieve this recognition of sustainability. That is why having world-leading aquatic resource management is very important to my electorate of Geraldton. That is one example from a fishing community of how good legislation, good management and great industry buy-in of those ideals can make for sustainable outcomes for wild fish stocks and local economies. In 2021, we might think that founding new fishing industries would be a thing of the past, but innovators are still creating new ways of using the ocean to provide food for the world and industries for communities. Indeed, I very often get visits from certain people in our electorate to discuss these opportunities.

I speak now of the move towards aquaculture in the midwest. The work of local leaders in the field must be acknowledged. People like Erica Starling at Indian Ocean Fresh Australia show that the midwest could support aquaculture and that finfish like yellowtail kingfish provide not only a great source of protein but also employment and new industry. If we are to protect our wild fish stocks and their marine environment, we have to diversify and modify our production methods or risk overfishing and the collapse of ecosystems. Just like the idea of exporting

live lobsters in the 1980s, fish farming has its critics and aquaculture has had to overcome some serious hurdles to show that it is environmentally sustainable. That work continues today and only with good science and research, along with sound regulation and legislation, can we be sure that aquaculture will be a long-term contributor to the seafood industry.

As the member for Wanneroo has just stated, the McGowan Labor government has committed to build a new finfish nursery in Geraldton to foster aquaculture in WA. Geraldton will become a reliable source for breeding stock for aquaculture projects around the state. This is an exciting opportunity for my community. A new industry being established means new jobs, new opportunities and the chance to be part of the change to global seafood production and supply. Let us face it, the world loves seafood. If Western Australia wants to remain a major supplier of this primary product, we must do all we can to ensure that the state government's management of our aquatic resources is up to date, fit for purpose and relevant to today's realities.

Well-managed fisheries mean more than just export dollars; they mean healthy environments and capacity for recreational fishing. That helps industries like tourism grow. For many Geraldton locals, being able to get the dinghy out of the shed, as I do often on a weekend when I can, and put out their amateur craypots around local reefs, means crayfish on the home menu for family and friends.

**Mr P. Papalia:** With your licence.

**Ms L. DALTON:** It is with my recreational licence, and it obviously makes us very popular at Christmas time. Although recreational fishing is already one of the biggest shared pastimes for Western Australians, the leap into tourism is well underway. People from around the country and around the world can now experience the entire crayfishing process from baiting and setting a craypot to pulling it up and enjoying the catch, thanks to our McGowan Labor government. In the same way that charter fishing boats have enabled tourists to get out and catch a prized fish like the famous blue bone groper, local lobster and tourism operators have used a sustainable fishery to create new tourism ventures and priceless experiences for their customers. This shows how good management of aquatic resources leads to great outcomes.

The Houtman Abrolhos Islands are a special part of the Geraldton community and our history. Once again, that history is filled with stories of fishing families, hard work and natural bounty. The way the fisheries around the islands are managed and now fished by our professional fishing industry is vastly different from the early days. The management of the commercial fishing industry and what is in the water has been crucial to ensuring the Abrolhos Islands maintain their unique beauty, biodiversity and sustainability. The Abrolhos Islands are slowly opening up for more tourism, with public submissions into how to best do that now open. The careful management of marine resources and fisheries will play a huge role in maintaining what is in the water, so that people will still want to visit. Updating legislation, changing terminology and streamlining management might not sound like the most important things that could happen for tourism in Geraldton, but the careful ongoing management of our precious marine resources and environment absolutely is.

Geraldton is just one historic fishing community in a state with over 12 000 kilometres of coastline. From Esperance to Wyndham, there are many coastal communities that also rely on sound aquatic resource management. The vast Indian Ocean is our constant companion. I hope that everyone in this house is willing to do what we should to ensure that it will always be a healthy, well-managed environment. A giant ecosystem that provides our fishing industries with the natural resources and locations for aquaculture requires our careful stewardship. It is crucial that we get this right so that generations to come can enjoy the same benefits and opportunities that the pioneers of our past have had. It would be tragic to look out over the blue waters of the Indian Ocean off Geraldton and know that we did not do everything we could to ensure its ongoing ecological integrity, consequently protecting our own community and economic interests. There is no doubt that we can balance the needs of industry with the needs of nature.

Acting Speaker and members of the house, I thank you for the chance to speak in support of this bill and I hope other members will see how important this legislation is and vote to support the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill 2021.

**MR C.J. TALLENTIRE (Thornlie)** [3.31 pm]: I rise to speak to the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill 2021 and offer my support for it, but I will raise a few issues of concern with the Minister for Fisheries.

My primary area of concern is that the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill honours only those who are extractive users of the aquatic environment and gives them a seat at the table; indeed, it gives them funding for their advocacy work and various projects that they might undertake. We see that Recfishwest obtains about \$2 million a year. It has a steady flow of money of about \$1 million-plus going to the recreational fishing initiatives fund and another \$800 000 a year through various grants. The \$1 million from the fund can be applied by Recfishwest to various projects around the place. I will come to some of those projects and put a little context around the scale of various Recfishwest projects. The key point is that we have a fairly serious imbalance. A non-extractive user of

the marine environment, such as a diver, a snorkeler or someone who just likes to go in the water to observe fish and who sees that coral trout on a reef and values it just for its aesthetic beauty, does not have the same seat at the table as someone who wants to catch that fish. They do not have the same resourcing as someone who wants to catch that fish. This is an inequity in our system and is something that we have to work on.

I have mentioned that this inequity is between extractive and non-extractive users. I will let the minister concentrate on what I am saying. I have mentioned that this is an imbalance between extractive and non-extractive users, but I add that those who are extractive, are in many cases polluting. This is an area I am really concerned about. As a member who represents a riverside suburb—the Canning River flows through my electorate of Thornlie—I am acutely aware of pollution from discarded fishing lines and the disgraceful and horrific results that can occur when fishing line is jettisoned and discarded and ends up killing all kinds of marine life. The public will be most aware of dolphin kills. Just a week ago, the front page of the *Canning Examiner* carried the headline “Totally gut-wrenching”. I will quote from the article, which was referring to a dolphin. It reads —

The calf was found to be in an exhausted state with fishing line wrapped around its pectoral fins and peduncle (the area between the dorsal fin and tail).

...

The calf belonged to one of the Swan Canning Riverpark’s resident dolphins, Akuna. Members of the Canning River Residents Environment Protection Association (CRREPA) were all deeply disturbed by the incident.

This is a fantastic group but gets no support money like Recfishwest or any of these other groups; it gets only a little handout occasionally through various Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions funding arrangements, but basically survives off volunteers’ goodwill. The article quoted one of CRREPA’s members, Murray Radestock —

“It is time to not mince words—the death of Akuna’s calf is totally gut-wrenching for all those who care about animals and our marine life, ...

“It’s extremely disappointing for all those who put in a huge effort —

That huge volunteer effort —

to care for the nature of the Swan River basin and its foreshore, and who go to extraordinary lengths to try and prevent such deaths and injuries from occurring.

That is just one example. I did a quick scan of the local press. Mandurah has a similar situation. In Mandurah, very sensibly, the Estuary Guardians group said —

“We know the majority do the right thing and care (some are even our strongest advocates for clean waterways) but we do say to the fishing community, let’s try and reach [those] who don’t,”

This was in connection to an event in December 2020, when another dolphin mother was killed. It is just not good enough. A chain is only as good as its weakest link. If the recreational fishing community’s weakest link is these terrible people who jeopardise the whole reputation of the fishing industry, especially the recreational fishing community, as members of the community we rightly have to question their social licence to carry on like that. I ask: why have we not found a mechanism to provide good funding at the same level as Recfishwest gets to go to those who are non-extractive, non-polluting users of our aquatic resources, because their values are just as high? In fact, I am looking at some of the Mandurah papers about yet another dolphin death. This time it was Mandurah’s resident dolphin calf, Luca, that died from a fishing line entanglement. The question posed in that article was about the damage to our tourism industry. People go to Mandurah to see the dolphins. The article reads —

Mandurah Cruises director Myrianthe Riddy said it wasn’t good for tourism and it wasn’t a sight that visitors should be confronted with.

It is terrible when this happens. It is impacting not only aquatic life but also bird life. I mention another fantastic group, which is the Western Australian Seabird Rescue Group. Just looking at its website, I can see it gets no government funding at all, but it is constantly called out when birds have fishing hooks snared in their beaks and on their bodies, or when they have discarded fishing line wrapped around their feet so that they cannot escape predators and they die a slow death because they cannot function as wild animals. The Western Australian Seabird Rescue Group website states —

A significant proportion of birds that we rescue every year have either got caught in carelessly discarded tackle or have interacted with people fishing; often getting hooked while people are casting off.

These are some of our iconic birds—again, beautiful tourism assets, such as the magnificent pelicans, petrels, cormorants, herons and swans. All sorts of birds suffer from either snaring or entanglement, and it really is just not good enough.

I know Recfishwest has in the past been quite proud of its Reel It In project, so I looked to see just how well funded that project is. Looking at its last annual report, I saw that it got \$20 000 for a project that ended in December 2020. That is how much it thought that project was worth, but then I had a look at some of its other projects and how much it funded them to the tune of. The difference was enormous. We can compare that \$20 000 with the funding for the shark depredation project, for which it got \$320 000. I can tell members that the reason people sometimes catch fish that have been bitten off by a shark and there is only a head left when it is reeled in is that when it is being played on the line and becomes exhausted, of course it is going to get caught by a shark. Anyway, Recfishwest saw fit to prioritise the shark depredation project to the tune of \$320 000, yet it is putting only \$20 000 towards all the fishing line stuff.

An eminent marine biologist at the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, Dr Chris Simpson, said to me, “Imagine if you lassoed a gazelle out on the savanna and let it run off; it would be exhausted in no time. Of course it would get caught by lions.” It is the same with fish when they are caught on a reel. They are exhausted and unable to escape a predator like a shark.

Another project that Recfishwest was very happy to fund was the future leadership in recreational fishing project, for which there was \$108 000. Another one was the Albany Salmon Spectacular, which got \$120 000. But, again, there was only \$20 000 for a project that cleans up the pollution that can be directly nailed to irresponsible recreational fishers. I am sorry to say that they are all too common. When I see areas of the river where there are discarded fishing lines and bait bags, it really is a blight on that recreational activity and really disappointing to see. I know there are various objectives around that spend of \$20 000, but I rode past Canning Bridge this morning, where there used to be one of those yellow bins in which people are supposed to dump their fishing lines, and they were gone, or they were not there this morning, anyway. Why people cannot take their fishing lines home, I do not know. The recreational fishers I see fishing off Canning Bridge hopefully do not have any snags and do not decide to just discard their fishing lines. It really is not good enough at all. When the minister talks to representatives of these organisations, I hope he tells them that the member for Thornlie is one member who really wants to see them clean up their act. They get a very, very handsome amount of money out of the state government, and they have to do a lot better in cleaning up the waterways.

Another area I want to talk about that is quite separate from all that is marine protected areas. I know that some people in the commercial and recreational fishing sectors have been pretty negative about this in the past, but the evidence is becoming more and more overwhelming that there are benefits in having marine protected areas and marine national parks. These have to include substantial areas of no-take zones. I saw some work done by Dr Tim Langlois and Dr Jordan Goetze from the UWA Marine Ecology Group. Their latest findings are that in the no-take marine protected areas, there has been a 30 per cent increase in fish numbers compared with those in areas outside those areas. That is after a relatively short time of having these areas protected. Even better than that, there is a 50 per cent increase in biomass. In other words, if we were to weigh all the fish in the no-take protected areas, the weight would be 50 per cent heavier all up than in the areas open to fishing. That is really valuable research that confirms again the benefits of marine protected areas. There is also a benefit to commercial and recreational fishers, because the fish in the marine protected areas spill over into the take areas, providing stock for people who want to go out there and catch fish.

I know this legislation is designed to enhance and protect our reputation and get us Marine Stewardship Council blue ticks. I think more fisheries than just the western rock lobster fishery now has MSC certification, and that is good. Of course we want a reputation for managing our fisheries as well as possible, but there are some areas in which we are really not doing a satisfactory job, especially in the area of discarded fishing lines in the Swan and Canning Rivers. It is a real embarrassment. Our population of Swan River dolphins is no more than 20; we have two million people in the Perth area and we cannot look after 20 dolphins and their calves in the river. We have to do better. The thing that is killing them most of all is discarded fishing lines.

I will finish by referring again to that inequity. This is something that I would be happy to talk to the minister about; we have to put our minds to getting some equity there. Extractive users of the marine aquatic environment get all sorts of financial support, but non-extractive, non-polluting users do not, like my friends at the Western Australian Seabird Rescue Group. They do not get a single cent out of government. We have to do much better than that; it is an issue of equity.

**MR S.N. AUBREY (Scarborough)** [3.47 pm]: I rise to contribute to the debate on the Aquatic Resources Management Amendment Bill 2021, put forward by the Minister for Fisheries. I am pleased to be speaking on a bill that focuses on ensuring the ecologically sustainable development of Western Australia’s living aquatic biological resources and ecosystems by protecting these resources from over-exploitation and the threats posed by diseases.

I know it is completely out of character for me to be talking about our coast, but I am, in fact, an avid beachgoer and a water baby. I grew up on the Western Australian coast and I fondly remember spending much of my childhood in our coastal waters, as I do much of my adulthood as well: from swimming at the beautiful and at times bloody

cold Middleton Beach in Albany to swimming at the glorious and at times bloody hot turquoise bay in Exmouth; from fishing off the islands of the Dampier Peninsula to deep-sea fishing in the world-renowned waters around the Ningaloo Reef, off Coral Bay; from scuba diving to the depths of the Busselton jetty to exploring the underwater playground that is Rottnest Island; from snorkelling the *Omeo* wreck off Coogee Beach to snorkelling in the safe sanctuary of Mettams Pool in North Beach in my very own electorate; from surfing at Trigg Beach, also in my electorate, to surfing Ocean Beach in Denmark; from exploring the historic pearling ghost town of Cossack in the Pilbara to exploring the south west coast while hiking the wondrous Cape to Cape Track; and from patrolling as a surf lifesaver in Scarborough Beach's crystal blue waters to patrolling the beautiful Cable Beach in Broome. These experiences have shaped who I am. They make me proud to be Western Australian. I have enjoyed my entire life on the wondrous coastline our state has to offer.

Our coastline is nothing short of spectacular. It is the lifeblood of many industries in Western Australia, and it is part of who we are as a state. Our state is the envy of the world not because of the state government's strong fiscal management, the recovery of the AAA credit rating or the fact that we have had the best economy in the world over the past 12 months, but because we have the best coastline and aquatic features in the world. This bill aims to ensure that our coastline, our ocean, our marine life and our future is sustainable for generations to come. It places ecological sustainability at the heart of fisheries management and gives the minister the ability to manage our aquatic resources and protect them from being over exploited, severely depleted, diminished, damaged or otherwise affected so as to be at threat of being ecologically unstable.

The Labor Party and this Labor government have a strong record on the sustainability of our state's aquatic resources. The McGowan government announced a further \$5 million over the next four years for the shark hazard mitigation program to help keep Western Australians safe in the ocean. The package also enables the government to increase its investment in upgrades to expand the detection range of shark monitoring receivers and includes support for beach enclosures at popular beaches and continues the rebate scheme for personal shark deterrent devices for surfers and divers, like me.

I was also pleased to find out that the funding will provide additional support for Surf Life Saving WA beach and aerial patrols, plus jet skis and drones for Surfing Western Australia event patrols. It will also support the SharkSmart WA website and app, which has more than 60 000 users, and the rollout of beach emergency number signs to improve emergency response times. As a surf lifesaver, I know how important response times are when it comes to saving people's lives on our coastline. I had the honour of representing the Premier and both Minister Whitby and Minister Punch at the 2021 Coastal Bravery Awards last month, at which I had the pleasure of meeting Rick Gerring, whose brother Ben Gerring died after being attacked by a shark while surfing at Falcon Beach. The beach emergency numbers, or BEN signs, are named after Ben. Rick spoke with such passion and heart, and I am proud that the initiative he started in honour of his brother Ben continues to be funded by the McGowan government. After originally being implemented by the City of Mandurah, this initiative has been rolled out by both state and local governments across the entire state. The only locality yet to roll out BEN signs is the City of Stirling. I encourage the City of Stirling to take up this lifesaving initiative on our local beaches in Scarborough, Trigg and North Beach.

Just last month, Minister Punch announced the extension of the commercial lobster fishing season to provide further support to fishers. Current market conditions continue to impact our state's western rock lobster industry to the detriment of Western Australian commercial fishers. The extended season will begin at the start of July and run over 18 months. It will allow commercial fishers more time to land their catch and expand into alternative markets, thereby minimising the economic impact.

In my own electorate of Scarborough, Marmion Marine Park, as my colleague the member for Hillarys mentioned earlier, was established under a Labor government. Marmion Marine Park is the state's first established marine park. Its southern end begins in my electorate at Trigg Point and extends all the way up to Burns Beach in the north. It is a proud legacy of the Labor Party that protects the aquatic life within the Marmion Marine Park. The park has great natural beauty and is one of Perth's most important areas for aquatic recreation. Swimming, snorkelling, scuba diving, boating, fishing, surfing, kayaking, kitesurfing, windsurfing and stand-up paddleboarding are all enjoyed in the marine park. The small islands in Marmion Marine Park provide an important habitat for the endemic Australian sea lion and an array of seabirds, while the clear shallow lagoons and reefs are inhabited by a remarkable diversity of marine life. At least 136 species of fish inhabit the park, including temperate and subtropical species. Ten species of seagrass can be found in the shallow waters of the marine park, while 21 species of seabirds and numerous marine mammals are regular visitors to the park.

Many groups contribute to the protection of Marmion Marine Park. I would like to make special mention of Stirling Natural Environment Coastcare. Stirling Natural Environment Coastcare is the region's pre-eminent volunteer Coastcare Australia group, and works collaboratively with the City of Stirling and state government agencies to protect and preserve the coastal environment in the Stirling area. I would like to congratulate and thank Stirling Natural Environment Coastcare for its recent work installing interpretative signage at the southern end of



Marmion Marine Park. Details of the layout of the park, its sanctuary zones and species that inhabit it are on display to promote education to preserve the park for generations to come. I would like to acknowledge Rae and Walter Kolb for their amazing work and leadership of the group and their work within our community.

Mettams Pool lies within Marmion Marine Park. It is a treasured spot for locals and families heading down for a swim and snorkel. It is important we look after it so that it can be used by generations of families to come. Mettams Pool is listed in the 2019 report by the Department of Transport, *Assessment of coastal erosion hotspots in Western Australia*. The City of Stirling recently undertook community consultation on the community's coastal values for Mettams Pool. It had an overwhelming response from more than 500 people, demonstrating the popularity and importance of Mettams Pool and the value the local and broader community place on it. I was proud to continue the legacy of protecting our aquatic resources by making an election commitment of \$200 000 towards the Mettams Pool erosion recovery project. Working with the local council, the project entails investigating and undertaking strategic sand nourishment to address the short-to-medium-term risks associated with rising sea levels and coastal erosion at Mettams Pool in North Beach, while a longer term strategy will be developed for implementation.

These are some of the many achievements of this Labor government in supporting and protecting our aquatic resources and the industries that depend on the long-term sustainability of our aquatic ecology. Once again, Madam Acting Speaker, I am sure you and others in this chamber may not find it hard to believe that as a surf lifesaver and local who lives right by the beach in Scarborough, it is incredibly important to me that we continue to look after our ocean, marine life and local beaches for all to enjoy. WA has the longest coastline of any state in the country, and although our coast is a robust part of our identity, it can in fact be a very fragile environment. No group knows this more than us surf lifesavers, as we passionately protect our communities from the risks associated with the ocean. But we also have an almost symbiotic relationship with our beaches. We watch the beach topography change through the seasons, we watch the salmon run come through, we see the banks rise and fall, we see the movement of the fish, we see the return of stingrays every year, and we see the stingers come in after a run of easterlies.

I have two Surf Life Saving clubs in my electorate—Scarboro and Trigg Island Surf Life Saving Clubs. Although I may belong to Scarboro Surf Life Saving Club, as a vice patrol captain and a club trainer, Trigg and Scarboro share a mutual beach and we have a strong relationship. I know that every one of the lifesavers from each club, like me, knows our beach like the back of their hand and would be sensitive to any negative impacts on our beach ecology. It would be the same for the Labor member for Warren—Blackwood, Jane Kelsbie; as the former president and first-ever female president of the Denmark Surf Life Saving Club, she would know Ocean Beach in Denmark like the back of her hand. The member for Albany would know Middleton Beach like the back of her hand, having been an active patrol member, director on the board and an age group manager at Albany Surf Life Saving Club. The member for Burns Beach would know Quinns Beach like the back of his hand, having been a surf lifesaver for 39 years—longer than I have been on this planet, Madam Acting Speaker! As I recently discovered, much to my bemusement, the member for Mandurah also would know Seashells beach in Mandurah like the back of his hand, as a member of the Mandurah Surf Life Saving Club and a nippers age group manager.

Surf lifesavers understand the importance of sustainable and strong aquatic ecology. The McGowan government understands the importance of sustainable and strong aquatic ecology. And I understand the importance of a sustainable and strong aquatic ecology. I am proud to be a surf lifesaver, and I am proud to be a member of this McGowan Labor government that continues to look after our coastline and ensures that I can continue to use it to sustainably swim, dive, fish, crayfish, snorkel, surf and smuggle beach sand into Parliament in my man bun.

Debate adjourned, on motion by **Mr D.R. Michael**.