

**BROOME AQUACULTURE CENTRE — BARRAMUNDI RELEASE**

*Statement*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.32 pm]: I rise tonight to bring to the attention of the house a worthwhile event that I was invited to attend in Broome last Saturday. It was the release into Dampier Creek of 500 juvenile barramundi that are about 30 centimetres long. These fish were bred at Kimberley TAFE's Broome Aquaculture Centre from stock that came from Dampier Creek; hence, they are of the same genetic stock. The Kimberley TAFE aquaculture centre has produced thousands of fingerlings. Most of those have gone to Marine Produce Australia at Cone Bay, which I believe is quite a successful aquaculture project.

**Hon Norman Moore:** And growing.

**Hon KEN BASTON:** Yes, and growing; the Leader of the House is right.

The 500 one-year-old barramundi were surplus to requirements, and it was felt by the TAFE college that since the original breeding stock had come from Dampier Creek, it was quite a good thing to restock the fishery with these 500 one-year-old fish. Bearing in mind that the fish have lived all their life in a tank about five metres in length, it was quite daunting for them to be released into the wild. Their artificial diet was cut out and they were fed baitfish, which they would have to live on in Dampier Creek. Interestingly, I am told that by Christmas these fish will be 55 centimetres in size, so we can see advantages for the future if this project is successful. This is one of the first projects in which fish have been released north of Shark Bay, so it is quite a historic occasion. These fish were not tagged; it was deemed unnecessary by the Department of Fisheries. However, in any future releases, the fish will be tagged so that the efficiency of the release can be monitored and its success can be evaluated.

I congratulate all those involved in this project, in particular Jeff Cooper, the aquaculture and marine coordinator at Broome TAFE. I also thank the volunteers and staff he organised for donating their boats to deliver the fish to the creek. Jeff Cooper is also the president of the Broome Fishing Club. The boat that I was assigned to was very aptly named *Quick Release*. It was owned and skippered by Rob Gray. The fish were quite slippery little things. We had some practice beforehand in how to release a fish. As a keen fisherman, minister, it was quite a lesson for me in how to release a fish. I am used to catching, keeping and cooking them! On this historic occasion of releasing these fish into the wild, these gentlemen took the opportunity to show me the disadvantages of launching and retrieving a boat on the boat ramps of Broome. Of course, I should say that people do not launch a boat of some five or six metres without at least one person getting wet above the waist! I thank Jeff and his team for a very successful launch. His dedication comes through loud and clear when I talk to him. I think this project will be the start of sustainable fisheries in recreational areas. I commend the aquaculture centre for its work.