

COCKBURN SOUND — FISH STOCK LOSSES

1457. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Were anoxic—low oxygen—conditions a likely cause of recent fish deaths in Cockburn Sound?
- (2) If yes to (1), what are the known potential causes of low oxygen levels in the sound?
- (3) Is it likely that warm ocean temperatures were also a factor in the fish deaths?
- (4) If yes to (3), can the minister please give details?
- (5) What evidence is there that elevated or unusual salinity levels were a factor in the fish deaths?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Low oxygen levels may be a contributing cause to the recent fish deaths.
- (2) Low oxygen levels can be caused by algal blooms and eutrophication.
- (3) Warm ocean temperatures may be a contributing factor to the fish deaths.
- (4) Surface temperatures of Cockburn Sound at that time were higher than is normal for this time of the year.
- (5) No available data for the period shows elevated levels of salinity in the sound.