

**COCKBURN SOUND — FISH STOCK LOSSES**

*Question without Notice 1409 — Answer Advice*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Fisheries)** [4.46 pm]: The answer to the other question, which is C1470, showed it came from Hon Darren West to the Minister for Fisheries but was asked by Hon Rick Mazza.

- (1) The department responded on the same day that it received the first notification of this event via a call to its fish watch reporting service.
- (2) All reports of new fish deaths have been promptly followed up and investigated. Every effort has been made to obtain recently dead fish and water samples. In some cases, the fish had been dead for a number of days and were therefore not in a condition to be tested.
- (3) We have a range of technical post-mortem results on those fish suited to analysis. More results are expected from fish recently obtained for sampling. Results of the multi-agency investigation obtained to date comprise histopathological examination of tissue sections by skilled veterinarians from the Department of Fisheries; bacterial examination of dead fish; chemical residue analysis of tissue; and screening for biotoxins resulting from potentially harmful algal blooms. Results to date are not conclusive as to a single definitive cause. Recently obtained fish are currently being subject to further analysis and investigation.
- (4)–(5) A broad range of fish species are known to have been affected to date, including pink snapper, estuary and stripy catfish, flathead, Port Jackson shark, leatherjacket species, scorpion fish, north west blowfish, porcupine fish, and puffer fish. We have also had reports of some squid, cuttlefish, jellyfish and starfish being affected. Current advice from the Department of Health is that the area is suitable for fishing and that seafood from Cockburn Sound is fit for human consumption.