

FISHERIES — SOUTHERN ROCK LOBSTER FISHERY

279. Hon DARREN WEST to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Who created the excessive latent effort in the south coast crustacean fishery and why was it left to industry to remove this latent effort?
- (2) Was a voluntary adjustment scheme created to buy back latent effort in the southern rock lobster fishery; and, if not, why not?
- (3) Was the minister aware that the new management plan for the south coast crustacean fishery, authorised by him, is based on alleged falsified returns that are still the subject of an inquiry?
- (4) Has the minister obtained legal advice about the legality of applying catch history retrospectively to authorisations that had never imposed minimum catch or effort requirements; and, if yes, what was this advice?
- (5) Has the minister conducted an assessment of the fairness, or otherwise, of reducing the fishing entitlement of commercial fishers in these fisheries without compensation in circumstances when the reduction was due to no fault of their own?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

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

- (1) The levels of access in zones 1 and 3 of the fishery have not changed. The levels of access in what are now zones 2 and 4 of the fishery developed over time as is normal with the emerging understanding of fishery resources. As the understanding was reached that the levels of access in this part of the fishery were too high, it became necessary to reduce levels of access and this was done in a way that reflected fishers' engagement in and dependence on the resource in those areas.
- (2) No. A voluntary adjustment scheme was not created as all fishers that hold a fishing boat licence with condition 105 or a rock lobster pot regulation licence have retained access to the new south coast crustacean fishery.
- (3) No. If the member has evidence of fraudulent catch returns, he should provide that to the Department of Fisheries.
- (4) No.
- (5) I took into account matters of fairness, including points made by an independent access and allocation panel when making a determination of access and entitlement.