

**FISHERIES MANAGEMENT — “STATUS REPORTS  
OF THE FISHERIES AND AQUATIC RESOURCES OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA 2013/14”**

*Statement by Minister for Fisheries*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Fisheries)** [2.07 pm]: Western Australia has a long history of sustainably managing our fisheries; they are among the very best managed fisheries in the world. This has been achieved by the government working collaboratively with the commercial fishing industry, the recreational fishing sector, and the wider community. In the year 2000, our western rock lobster fishery was the very first fishery in the world to receive the Marine Stewardship Council eco-label accreditation. That world-class fishery has been re-certified twice, and many of our other fisheries are currently in the process of also seeking MSC accreditation.

An essential requirement for good fisheries management is an ability to regularly and scientifically monitor and assess fish stocks. In other parts of the world where fish stocks have been seriously depleted, the causes are usually that there are no strict, long-term monitoring and assessment programs in place, there is poor management, or compliance programs are inadequate. The WA Department of Fisheries has some of the very best fisheries scientists and managers in the world and effective compliance arrangements, and every year the department releases status reports on all of our key fisheries and aquatic resources. These reports outline the most recent assessments of the cumulative risk status for each of the aquatic resources within WA's six bioregions, using an ecosystem-based fisheries management approach. This world-leading approach details all the fisheries and fishing-related activities within each of the bioregions. This includes analyses and reports on the activities and processes undertaken by the department to manage broader aquatic environment, such as habitats, ecosystems and aquatic pests.

The latest status reports, “Status reports of the fisheries and aquatic resources of Western Australia 2013/14”, released on 27 January and published on the department's website, shows that we are sustainably managing our fish stocks and managing the broader environmental impacts of fishing. The reports indicate that the vast majority of stocks that support WA's significant fisheries continue to be in a healthy condition, except in circumstances in which they are being affected by adverse environmental conditions. Approximately 97 per cent of commercial fisheries are now targeting stocks where current management controls are either maintaining or achieving an acceptable breeding stock level from the effects of fishing.

This is very good news. The motto for the Department of Fisheries is “Fish for the future.” We are all striving to have good fish stocks for ongoing viable commercial fishing and for the recreational sector as well. These reports demonstrate we will have strong, healthy fisheries well into the future. I commend the excellent work done by our fisheries scientists and managers in preparing the latest reports, and I thank everyone in the commercial and recreational fishing sectors, as well as the wider community, for their support in once again achieving a great result.