

RECREATIONAL SKIPPER TICKET

124. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:

Can the minister provide the house with a report on the progress of the recreational skipper ticket, which is an important recreational boating safety initiative?

Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:

I thank the member for the question and recognise that as a former naval officer the member has a great interest in this area. I also recognise the valiant work that you did, Mr Speaker, above and beyond the call of your duty as the Speaker, to attempt to bring some people in the boating industry to a sane position on this matter. From today, everyone in Western Australia who operates a powered vessel with a motor of more than six horsepower will be required to have a recreational skipper ticket. We have been rolling out this regulation over the past two years, and today is D-day. The Department for Planning and Infrastructure's marine and regional transport officers, the Department of Fisheries' marine officers and the water police will be enforcing this new requirement.

Mr Speaker, you will well understand that in 2003 when we proposed to introduce these compulsory competency standards, certain sectors of the commercial industry resisted it, particularly the Boating Industry Association of Western Australia and Boating WA. Obviously, they were fearful that they would lose business. I am pleased to report that the number of recreational vessels in this state has increased by more than five per cent each year, so the standards have certainly not had a negative impact on sales. There has been strong support for this initiative from the boating community throughout Western Australia. Boat owners recognise that their safety and the safety of their passengers are reliant on others on the water having some basic idea of the rules of navigation.

I can report that 84 500 tickets have been issued over the past two years and that another 3 000 tickets are being processed. There has been a strong take-up. I congratulate all those who have been involved in introducing this initiative—including you, Mr Speaker—and I thank the recreational boaters in Western Australia for their very responsible take-up of this initiative.