

BIOSECURITY — PRAWN WHITE SPOT VIRUS

133. Hon KEN BASTON to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Fisheries:

Is the Department of Fisheries considering any changes to biosecurity measures to help protect WA's prawn fishery from white spot virus, which has recently devastated prawn producers in east Queensland?

Hon DARREN WEST replied:

I thank the member for some notice of the question. On behalf of the Minister for Fisheries, I give the following answer —

Following the outbreak of white spot syndrome virus, I am advised that the Department of Fisheries, as the lead agency, took immediate action to help prevent the spread of the virus to Western Australia. Measures included a prohibition on the importation of live and uncooked prawns from affected areas, and this prohibition remains in place; the testing of imported prawns from Queensland already in WA; inspections of prawn consignments from the eastern states; raising public awareness of the virus outbreak and the importance of not using food prawns as fishing bait; and the introduction of stricter consignment labelling requirements. The import restrictions continue to be subject to review.