

**COMET BAY FISHERY**

*Statement by Minister for Fisheries*

**HON KEN BASTON (Mining and Pastoral — Minister for Fisheries)** [10.04 am]: In 2013, I approved the establishment of a voluntary fisheries adjustment scheme targeted at buying back all commercial fishing licences for zone D of the south west trawl fishery. Zone D of this fishery is located in the near-shore water of Comet Bay off Mandurah. Fish caught in this zone have included whiting, prawns and crabs that were mainly sold into the Mandurah and Perth markets. The protected waters of Comet Bay are also highly valued by the recreational fishing community. After considering the views from the committee of management for the voluntary fisheries adjustment scheme, an offer was made to the one owner of all three zone D licences. I can advise that the owner accepted the offer and has since surrendered all licences to the scheme in return for compensation paid under the provisions of the Fisheries Adjustment Schemes Act 1987. It was pleasing that this voluntary buyout scheme had the full support of the affected commercial fisher and the recreational fishing sector. The outcome will deliver positive benefits for the community given the high value of Comet Bay. The area is not just a significant community resource for the local community, but also highly valued by a large number of visitors from across WA, Australia and overseas. Mandurah with a population of 80 000 has over 280 000 visitors each year, contributing about \$234 million and around 1 200 jobs to the local economy. The WA government's vision for Comet Bay, which provides a stunning ocean backdrop for Mandurah, is that it now remain a recreational resource for the entire community.