

GONE FISHING DAY

**741. Mr I.C. BLAYNEY to the Minister for Fisheries:**

I understand that the inaugural national Gone Fishing Day will be held on 16 October this year. Can the minister please tell the house how the Liberal–National government supports recreational fishing?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS replied:**

I thank the member for Geraldton for his very keen interest in the fishing sector. Geraldton has one of the largest fishing communities in Western Australia in the recreational and professional sectors; the professional crayfishing sector makes a significant contribution to the state economy.

First-up, I should start by acknowledging the massive input into the Western Australian economy that recreational fishing has. Around \$500 million worth of economic activity comes from the recreational fishing sector alone in Western Australia. Of course, of the 2.5 million-odd people in this state, about 750 000 Western Australians partake in recreational fishing every single year. It is with a lot of pleasure and enthusiasm that the state government supports the first-ever national Gone Fishing Day that will take place on Sunday, 16 October. We are doing that through two key measures. Firstly, there will be free fishing for the day. People will not require a fishing licence. Obviously, people with a fishing licence, no matter the form —

**Mr M.P. Murray:** What about the bag limits?

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** I have not even gone fishing with him today! I have not gone fishing with him, but he is on the hook already!

Several members interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** We are supporting national Gone Fishing Day in two ways. Firstly, people will not require a fishing licence. If people want to have their first crack at fishing with their families because it is such a family activity for a lot of people —

Several members interjected.

**Mr J.M. FRANCIS:** Even for marron, even for lobsters—whatever people want to do—people can go out without a licence for that day and have a go at it. Of course, if people want to go fishing either before or after that, they will have to get a yearly licence. It is a good opportunity for people to have a go for the first time. They can take their family, kids and friends out and have a go at fishing. The other thing we are doing, which is quite important, is delaying the start of the west coast demersal finfish closure. If somebody catches a dhufish or pink snapper on that day, they will be able to keep it. We will delay that closure by two days, so that 16 October will have a negligible or no real impact on fish stocks. People will be able to catch one of those species if they are off the coast of Western Australia. Importantly, it is worth noting that 25 per cent of all licence fees we collect goes back into funds specifically to help the recreational fishing sector, such as artificial reefs, restocking of river prawns and all the kinds of things that help build the stocks of species caught during the recreational fishing process. It also ensures that those stocks are more readily available.

I ask everyone to get on board—go and wet a line—and support the recreational fishing sector on 16 October. People should go and have some fun; it is a great activity to share with family and friends. Recreational fishing is a significant part of tourism in Western Australia, Minister for Tourism. People even come to Western Australia to try to catch some of the unique species off its coast. I encourage every single member of the house to go out and celebrate national Gone Fishing Day on 16 October.