

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

2012–13 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARINGS

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE
TAKEN AT PERTH
TUESDAY, 6 JUNE 2012**

**SESSION TWO
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES**

Members

**Hon Giz Watson (Chair)
Hon Philip Gardiner (Deputy Chair)
Hon Liz Behjat
Hon Ken Travers
Hon Ljiljanna Ravlich**

Hearing commenced at 4.02 pm

HON NORMAN MOORE
Minister for Fisheries, examined:

MR STUART SMITH
Director General, sworn and examined:

MR THU LANG VO
Chief Financial Officer, sworn and examined:

DR BRETT MOLONY
Acting Executive Director, Research, sworn and examined:

The CHAIR: On behalf of the Legislative Council Estimates and Financial Operations Committee, I would like to welcome you to today's hearing. Before we begin, I must ask you—that is, the public servants—to take either the oath or affirmation. If you prefer to take the oath, please place your hand on the bible in front of you.

[Witnesses took the oath or affirmation]

The CHAIR: You will have all signed a document entitled “Information for Witnesses”. Have you read and understood that document?

The Witnesses: Yes.

The CHAIR: This hearing is being held in public although there is discretion available to the committee to hear evidence in private either of its own motion or at the witnesses' request. If for some reason you wish to make a confidential statement during today's proceedings, you should request that the evidence be taken in closed session before answering the question. Government agencies and departments have an important role and duty in assisting Parliament to scrutinise the budget papers on behalf of the people of Western Australia. The committee values that assistance. These proceedings are being recorded by Hansard. A transcript of your evidence will be provided to you. It will greatly assist Hansard if when referring to the *Budget Statements* volumes or the consolidated account estimates, members give the page number, item, program, amount, and so on in preface to their questions. If supplementary information is to be provided, I ask your cooperation in ensuring that it is delivered to the committee clerk within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. Should you be unable to meet this deadline, please advise the committee clerk immediately. The committee reminds agency representatives to respond to questions in a succinct manner and to limit the extent of personal observations. For the benefit of members and Hansard I ask the minister to introduce his advisers to the committee, and for each adviser to please state their full name, contact address and the capacity in which they appear before the committee.

[Witnesses introduced.]

The CHAIR: I give the call to Hon Jon Ford

Hon JON FORD: I refer to the first table under “Major Spending Changes” on page 179, and the third line item headed “Fisheries Services — Cost and Demand Pressures”. How are these cost and demand pressures defined in the context of these budget papers?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I might get Mr Smith to give you the technical explanation, but fundamentally this is to restore the base funding that the department has been short of since you were the minister I suspect.

Mr Smith: It actually covers quite a range of things including the monitoring, compliance and research functions. Across that range of activities the different functions we deliver are subject to increasing pressures, particularly in the north where you have things like fuel costs and accommodation costs, which have gone up significantly. They are a significant portion of our budget in some of those areas, and so the costs associated with delivering those services have been increasing at a much faster rate than the costs of, for instance, fisheries offices in the metropolitan area. It is general cost and demand pressures rather than a specific item.

Hon JON FORD: Would that take into account any compliance activities with regards to the proposed marine parks?

Mr Smith: No. It does not relate to the marine parks. The marine park funding has been provided separately by the government. These relate to existing services and the budget going into the forward estimates for the existing services.

Hon JON FORD: Is there anything in this specific budget with regards to compliance activities from fisheries within the marine parks—patrols or—I looked for it and I could not find it.

Mr Smith: I do not believe it is separately identified. In last year's budget there was a line item which relates to the capes marine park where we received a separate allocation, and that has been incorporated into the general compliance budget for this year.

Hon JON FORD: Would I be able to get a breakdown of what is budgeted for specific marine parks or proposed marine parks, if any?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Yes, we can take that on notice.

[*Supplementary Information No B2.*]

Hon JON FORD: I thank the minister for that because I know —

Hon NORMAN MOORE: It is not cheap.

Hon JON FORD: And it can be quite complex when you are using dedicated patrols and other things.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: If you can hang on, we might be able to give it to you now. I will get Mr Vo to read it out. We actually do have those figures with us so I can give them to you now.

Mr Vo: The figures for the capes marine parks are—obviously we work in conjunction with DEC. For the budget solely for the Department of Fisheries, we have a funding of \$3.26 million, and that breakdown in the four years estimates.

Hon JON FORD: What about some of the proposed ones like Camden Sound?

Mr Vo: Yes, the Camden Sound is a separate funding as well. The capes marine park I mentioned earlier was the royalties for regions funding. The Camden Sound submission in total was \$6.2 million and the Eighty Mile Beach submission was worth about \$2.25 million.

Hon JON FORD: It was not cheap. Just below the fisheries services line item there is one that says "Northern Fisheries Protection—Enhanced Education and Compliance Services in the Pilbara, Gascoyne and Mid West Regions". I have a question here that actually makes sense; what does this mean? Does that mean more FTEs or more patrols, or are you targeting the tourist caravan park at Eighty Mile Beach for instance?

[4.10 pm]

Mr Smith: The line item for northern fisheries protection relates primarily to additional FTE positions. In the first two years of funding there will be two additional community and education

officer positions, one in the Pilbara and one in the Gascoyne. From 2014, we anticipate having an additional four fisheries officers located primarily in Karratha, and also a compliance manager, who will also be located in Karratha. In the meantime, we are also looking at expanding the capability in infrastructure in Karratha with a storage facility. The existing facility is very rundown and basically needs to be replaced, so we have received some funding for that. While that is being built, we are also looking at extending the office in Karratha to accommodate the additional staff.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: As you will be aware, we probably never had enough staff in the north, and there is significant pressure on fisheries in the north of Western Australia. This is an attempt to recognise and deal with the growing pressures on the fisheries off the Kimberley and Pilbara coast. Interestingly though, in order to get more staff we need more space. We have had to find money to increase the size of the Karratha office to fit the new staff in and to upgrade a shed that we own in the light industrial area for parking boats and so on. It is a matter of spending some capital up front to enable us to facilitate the appointment of more staff to look after those northern fisheries. I have to say that we need to do a lot more work in the north. I do not think we have as good an understanding of the pressures on the northern fisheries as we perhaps do off the metropolitan coast.

Hon JON FORD: I would agree with the minister on that. I positioned myself next to the fish cleaning area—a strange thing to do—at the 80-mile beach caravan park and I was amazed at the number of fish coming in there, and most of those were caught by Victorians and Queenslanders.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: That would be right.

Hon JON FORD: I refer to the efficiency dividend line item on page 179, indicating expenditure of \$766 000 in 2012–13, \$1 014 000 in 2013–14, then in the out years the estimate is \$1 295 000 for 2014–15 and \$1 654 000 in 2015–16. How do you expect to achieve the dividends in the 2012–13 budget estimates?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I will get Mr Smith to give the member a detailed answer. At the moment we have not finalised how we will achieve those savings. We have had discussions about what we might consider, but right now we have not reached an agreement. Perhaps Mr Smith might like to tell you what he has in mind.

Mr Smith: It will come down to the process we are using to determine priorities in the department. We have introduced a new process, which we refer to as “Fish Plan”. It identifies all activity within the department and lists all the projects. At the start of the financial year we sit down with our stakeholders from the commercial and recreational fishing sectors and determine the priorities. Those projects that are lower down the list and are below the line after taking into account the efficiency dividend will have to be cut or at least deferred. We do not yet know which activities they will be because they will be the lowest priorities of the projects that we have in the department. I would anticipate that the impacts would be spread across the compliance, research and policy areas in the department.

Hon JON FORD: Are the budgeted figures guesstimates or derived from normal budget escalations or a specific target?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: They are a percentage of the consolidated fund contribution.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I refer the minister to page 179, the two line items for shark mitigation strategies; one refers to shark research projects and the other to the shark response unit. Could the minister give an overview of those strategies?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I will ask Mr Smith to give you the details of how the money is spent, but it is an allocation that we made to the Department of Fisheries as a result of three or four fatalities in reasonably short proximity to each other in recent times, and the general fear in the community that there is an increased number of sharks and that there is a more hazardous environment in the ocean these days than ever before. This money is to find out as much as we can

about shark behaviour so that we might develop some strategies to mitigate against people being taken by sharks.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Note (b) refers to an additional \$9.9 million of expenditure between 2011–12 and 2015–16 approved for additional shark patrols and is included as part of the department's administered statements. Does that mean that it will cost \$9.9 million to deal with the issue of keeping our beaches safe in summer?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I will ask Mr Smith to respond on how the money is actually going to be spent.

Mr Smith: The two line items the member referred to relate to money coming directly to the department and retained in the department for our activities, which I will elaborate on in a second. That formed part of a bigger package of initiatives by the government. The majority of that money went to increasing helicopter patrols in the metropolitan area and in the south west, which is what note (b) refers to. I refer now to the department's funds, both the shark research projects and the shark response unit. The unit has been established within the department and is headed by Mike Burgess, an experienced Fisheries officer. It has been increasing the response capability of the department around the coast. By that I mean that equipment has been deployed to each of the offices so that in the event of a shark attack it can be deployed from the local area rather than having to be transported from Perth. If there is an order to set hooks and lines to catch the shark, for instance, the staff in those offices are also being trained so that they can go out and tag sharks and manage the equipment, if it has to be deployed.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Can I get a bit of clarification before you go ahead? So that \$9.9 million expenditure is really for the Department of Fisheries component of this, but there is a broader sum of money, which is held by other agencies, that also forms part of a more comprehensive program to deal with this whole issue of sharks and safety on our beaches; is that correct?

Mr Smith: It is the other way around.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The \$9.9 million is the whole lot?

Mr Smith: No, it is part of the whole lot and goes to cover those aerial patrols. Those funds go to surf lifesaving, but the money comes through our department's account and is passed on to them.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: For example, the spending for the shark research projects shows \$650 000 in the 2013–14 and 2015–16 budgets, and \$150 000 in the 2014–15 budget. If we look at the next line item, the shark response unit, that is \$450 000 in 2012–13, 2013–14, 2014–15 and 2015–16, which is around \$2 million. The line item for shark research projects is about \$1.5 million—you might give me the correct figure on that. Is my calculation about right?

[4.20 pm]

Mr Smith: Correct. The money from the department plus the money that is going to the additional helicopter patrols should come to in the order of \$14.5 million. I can elaborate on what that money in the department is for.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Have you got a written breakdown somewhere that we can have? Have you got a breakdown of how that whole \$9.9 million is going to be divided and, in particular, how those two items fit within that context?

Mr Smith: I might ask Mr Vo to elaborate on the \$9.9 million and then I will come back and elaborate on the department's money in turn.

Mr Vo: It is \$13.65 million over five years. In 2011–12 we have got some money coming in for the three items mentioned. The three items that you mentioned earlier were the shark research projects and the shark response unit. That is the total amount, but the \$9.9 million that comes to the

Department of Fisheries is called administered expenditure, which means that money comes from Treasury to us and we manage that function. Another word in plain English is post office, if you like. Treasury money comes to us and we make the payment to Surf Life Saving WA on a quality basis. Also on top of that, we do manage in total four years at \$1.9 million. I refer you to the balance sheet items on page 189 under “Expenses”.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: For shark hazard mitigation.

Mr Vo: That is right; it is called “Other”. It states “Shark Hazard Mitigation—Payments to Surf Life Saving Western Australia for Helicopter and Beach Patrols”.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: In 2012–13, you will be paying them \$2.416 million.

Mr Vo: That is correct, and that is the breakdown of the two amounts—\$1.98 million per year. That is from the total of \$9.9 million in entire payments and also the \$1.9 million over four years from 2011–12 onwards. That is made up in the 2012–13 financial year of \$2.4 million.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Do you have a breakdown of what this total policy costs on an annual basis—that is, this amount together with the other amounts? In other words, how much does it cost on an annual basis to actually implement these policies to keep the beaches safe?

Mr Smith: Maybe if I get Mr Vo to just add up those figures with the two line items on page 179 and while he is doing that calculation, I will quickly run through the other items.

In terms of the shark response unit, I have mentioned the increased capability around the coast. They are looking at community engagement programs in other jurisdictions. South Africa has a particularly good one that we are looking at adopting here. The unit is also considering technologies like shark shields to see whether or not they are effective, because there is quite a bit of debate about that. They are working with Surf Life Saving on alerts through mechanisms like Twitter so that we can get messages out there as quickly as possible. We had contemplated developing our own system.

The CHAIR: That does not help if you are in the surf! I do not normally take my phone with me when I go swimming!

Mr Smith: It is actually SMS. In fact, it is actually proving useful. A lot of surfers will have a mobile phone with them and when they get out of the water, they report it for others in the regions.

Hon JON FORD: Beware that fin behind you!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: They might be taking photographs underwater with the camera.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: And post it on YouTube—here is me losing my leg!

Mr Smith: I think I will continue on at this point. They are also currently working on a licensing regime for shark cage operations. There are not any in Western Australia at the moment, but we have had inquiries. We do not think the community would be particularly supportive of shark cage tourism ventures, so we are looking at having a licensing regime, which would allow us to regulate that activity if it ever happens, and also a ban on chumming of waters at popular beaches, where some people seek to attract sharks to beaches to catch them, particularly overnight. It is not the sort of activity that you would want at popular swimming beaches, so we are looking at how we could regulate that.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: How do people attract sharks to the beach?

The CHAIR: Chuck in stuff that they like to eat.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Why would somebody want to do that?

Mr Smith: They fish for sharks off the beach. They are the sorts of things that the shark response unit is doing.

In terms of the research funding that is identified there, that covers four research projects that we are working on. One is a desktop review of shark netting, particularly around Australia but also the experience overseas. The second project is actually tagging for acoustic receivers. There is actually an array of receivers out from Perth. The first one is off City Beach about a kilometre offshore. They are located about a kilometre apart, stretching out well past Rottnest. There are another three arrays in the south of the state. That array records when a tagged shark swims through them. The tags are effective when the shark swims within about half a kilometre of them, so you place them a kilometre apart. That is part of a much bigger project happening with CSIRO and also our counterparts in South Australia who have tagged sharks as well. They have actual aggregations of sharks in South Australia so it is easier for them to tag the sharks. The purpose of that study is really about understanding the migration patterns and life cycle of the sharks, rather than intending to tag every shark and report them as they come to the beach. However, we also have it connected into surf lifesaving, so if a tagged shark does happen to swim past a receiver, surf lifesaving is automatically alerted within two minutes. I understand that 99 sharks have been tagged so far, the majority of those in South Australia but some in Western Australia. We find it easiest when there is actually a whale carcass floating down the coast. The sharks get into a bit of a frenzy on the carcasses and we are able to pull alongside them, because the sharks are actually tagged using a long stake and they are inserted into the dorsal fin.

Hon JON FORD: Very, very long!

The CHAIR: I do not want that job!

Mr Smith: Yes; it does raise some OH&S issues that I have to manage! Out of that study, for instance, we now know that there are actually two stocks of white sharks—it is white sharks that we are targeting for this—in Australia. One resides on the east coast and one on the western and southern parts of the country. It is not one stock that swims right around the country. That in itself was unknown. Also, some of these tagged sharks have been detected in South Africa, so we know some of the migration patterns. I am probably going into a bit too much detail.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Can I just stop you there and ask you about the tagging? On 27 April 2012 in the *Busselton–Dunsborough Times* it said that this month-long program of capturing and tagging white sharks in the capes region had failed to tag any sharks to date. I am just wondering how long this tagging program has been in place for and where, apart from down there, are you attempting to tag these sharks and how many have been tagged to date. Can you give us the actual numbers?

[4.30 pm]

Mr Smith: The tagging program is part of a bigger program that has been running for over two years. Over that time I understand that 99 sharks have been tagged in Western Australia and South Australia through that program. The reference in the *Busselton Dunsborough Times* was probably part of the —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Sorry, how many in Western Australia?

Mr Smith: It is in the order of a dozen; I do not know exactly, but —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Can you give the actual figures for the committee and we will take that on notice.

Mr Smith: I certainly can, yes. It is in the order of 10 to 12. The funding allows that research program to continue for another two years.

[*Supplementary Information No B3.*]

Hon NORMAN MOORE: If I can make a point here. It is very difficult to find them.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: To find them?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Yes. As Mr Smith was saying, in South Australia they aggregate and they are more around in one spot, whereas here it is very hard to find them.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I have got a few ideas where we could find some!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: There are some people who think that there are resident sharks at Dunsborough and resident sharks at various locations, and we have had anecdotal evidence of that and sent Fisheries vessels to try to find these so-called resident sharks, but they do not find them. It is not as though we are not trying to find them and tag them.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: The sharks are eluding you!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Yes they are; the sharks are very clever. Perhaps there are not as many around as people think there are.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: That is all very interesting, is it not?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Yes, indeed.

The CHAIR: Even if you found it, you might have some trouble persuading it to be tagged!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: That is also the case. For those of you who worry about wales, some of them actually do die and their carcasses are a very easy meal for great whites and that provides opportunity for the boat to come up close and tag them, but it is not an easy exercise by any means. The research is very important for us to get to understand them better. It goes a bit beyond that, if I may, Stuart, just mention this. We are also looking at whether there are any particular times of the day or the year or season when there are more attacks or more sightings than at others to see whether there is any correlation between those factors. That is part of the research that is ongoing.

Mr Smith: If I can add a little bit there, the minister has stolen my thunder a little. He has mentioned the third and fourth research programs. The third one is a program for tagging what some people have referred to as rogue sharks. It is really to find out whether there is such a thing as a rogue shark.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Is that a gummy shark?

Mr Smith: No; they would be white sharks. If there is such a thing, I suspect it is more a case of a resident shark for certain times of the year. But some local communities have suggested there is a resident shark, so we have been working with those local communities, in some instances taking them out on vessels, to say, “Where are they? Where are they frequenting? If you can sight it while we are out there, we are happy to tag it; we are equipped to do so.” So there is that project.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Do they think that there is something in the shark behaviour that is akin to a dolphin, because you get dolphin pods that go to certain areas and hang around those certain areas? No?

Mr Smith: No—not so much like that. There is a suggestion that they might frequent a part of the state every year for a period. The work we have done so far, if anything, is disapproving rather than proving that theory, although it is too early to draw any conclusions. For instance, there were two sightings by the local community very recently down in Albany—about three weeks ago—of the same-sized shark within 24 hours. For the second sighting, we managed to get the person who had sighted the first shark on board a vessel and we found the other shark, and he was able to say, “No, that’s definitely not the same one I sighted. Because of the markings on the fins, it is not the same one.” This one had been involved in some sort of fight or something and had come off second best.

Hon JON FORD: Was it a birthmark or something?

Mr Smith: Perhaps. It may be that there are two sharks frequenting the area, although that appears to be unlikely and there have not been further sightings of the sharks there.

The fourth study is a correlation study in which we are actually looking to compare where we have had sightings and attacks of sharks in the state with factors such as the time of day, the time of year, the weather conditions, the water temperature, the fish abundance in the area at the time, whether there were seals around, whether there is a seal colony or whether whales were present at the time. This sort of information, I think, will be helpful for the public because we cannot remove the risk: if you go in the water, there is a risk of sharks being present. But we might be able to say to people, “If you want to minimise your risk, these are the sort of conditions when the risk is lowest. If you choose to swim in these conditions, you are facing a heightened risk.” So that is the purpose of that study.

The CHAIR: I thought a lot of information was already known, as a swimmer, particularly times of day and certain conditions and that sort of information. I would have thought that that was already pretty readily available.

Mr Smith: It is available, but it is about aggregating that, and it is already throwing up some interesting findings. For instance, there is certainly a view that swimming on an overcast day at dawn and dusk represents a heightened risk in terms of attacks; that is not borne out by the facts at all. But in terms of sightings, I have not yet seen the results from that. It may disprove some myths and it should provide us with better information about what the real facts are on sharks.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Mr Smith, can you just explain to me the process of tagging? When you get a shark, what do you do to it? I am not going soft on sharks, but they might be eluding us because we might use barbaric processes with which to tag them; I do not know. It would be interesting to know, I think, for the public record, because a lot of people do not understand. When you talk about tagging sharks, what exactly do you do to them?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not think it is a learned issue with sharks, just yet.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Sorry?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not think it is a learned response just yet, because not every shark is getting a tag. When you get tagged once, that is all you need to do. Perhaps you can just explain that to them—or even Dr Molony might.

Mr Smith: I will have a go at explaining and maybe Dr Molony will clarify if my description is not as accurate as it should be. There are a couple of forms of tagging and there are a couple of types of tags, but the ones we use most frequently, and the sort I have been referring to in these research projects, are certainly the acoustic receivers. They are several inches long—so this order of size. They are attached at the end of a longpole about 6 feet long. Typically, if the shark is feeding on a whale, we will bring the boat alongside the shark, and if it is feeding on a whale, it is so focused on the feeding that it does not seem to mind having a boat pulled alongside it. One of my officers will then go to the side of the boat with this six-foot long shaft with the receiver in the end and a hook, and they lean over the side and basically inject the tag into the dorsal fin of the shark. So, it remains there in the dorsal fin. There is another type of tag that we are not using. To deploy those, you actually have to catch the shark and bring it on board. You make an incision on the underside of the shark, and you insert the tag into the shark. You then stitch it back up and release the shark back into the water. It is a different sort of tag; it does carry some additional risks. It is not as though the other form of tagging does not carry sufficient risk, so we are not using that alternative form.

Hon JON FORD: Is that a union issue?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Occ health and safety.

Mr Smith: It may well be! It is a management issue, I can assure you, in terms of my own concerns for the safety of staff.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: She obviously wants to be an elasmobranchologist!

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Who?

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: You.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: No.

The CHAIR: Members, I am just aware that I have a few other people on the list and we have spent quite a lot of time on sharks, as much as I am fascinated by them too!

Hon NORMAN MOORE: If you want a thorough briefing for a week on sharks, we are happy to do that! It could be a career for you after you retire.

The CHAIR: I will take the prerogative as the Chair to throw in another question that I think you might want to take on notice. The amount of money that is going to life saving WA for increased litigation, I am interested in what that is for. I notice, for example, that the surf lifesaving people at City Beach—I am there every morning—do not go anywhere near the water, let alone use the tower to observe what might be in the water. I am interested to know exactly what that contract is. What do they get paid to do with regards to sharks? The story around our swimmers is that if there was a shark, they would not go anywhere near the water—they would just leave you to it! That might be —

Mr Smith: You might be doing them a disservice there!

The CHAIR: Possibly.

[Supplementary Information No B4.]

[4.40 pm]

Hon ED DERMER: I am afraid that I am still interested in sharks. Both the minister and Mr Smith have used the term “aggregating”. I would like to learn a bit more about that. I would be puzzled if you had the same species of shark in one part of the world where they tended to school together and another part of the world where they did not. Perhaps you can enlighten us more, Mr Smith.

Mr Smith: I might get Dr Molony to help me out here; he is the scientist. An aggregation of sharks is just where they congregate. Working on the assumption, which Dr Molony can correct if I am wrong, it is probably similar to other species of fish, for instance. In Cockburn Sound there are aggregations of snapper during the spawning season, so you will have a mass of them essentially in a ball as part of the spawning process. I would imagine the sharks are aggregating in the same sort of manner. I understand it is around Port Lincoln in South Australia, but I do not know for sure on that. Dr Molony, perhaps if you can clarify.

Dr Molony: My director general is correct. White sharks, like all fish, will aggregate to breed. We are not talking about thousands of fish. We are talking in the order of tens or dozens. It is suspected that the population that frequents the Western Australian coastline does aggregate around Port Lincoln to breed and then they disperse for most of the rest of a year or their life. They are quite solitary animals. It is rare to see more than one at a time. There is another known aggregation in New South Wales for the other population. But we are not talking aggregations of the same magnitude as pink snapper in Cockburn Sound, for example. We think there is another aggregation in South Africa as well.

Hon ED DERMER: So biologically it is the same population of sharks; it is just that they aggregate in a certain location. So they are aggregating when they are in that location, and they are behaving individually when in they are in other locations.

Dr Molony: We think there are two populations in Australia, an east and west coast. We think the ones that frequent the west coast are aggregating perhaps at Port Lincoln and then dispersing around the rest of their range. They may aggregate again around South Africa. They are just different behaviours at different locations.

Hon ED DERMER: So the other population would have a different aggregation point for breeding purposes.

Dr Molony: Yes; they do not frequent this side. So the New South Wales aggregation will not frequent this coastline.

Hon ED DERMER: Thank you.

Hon KEN BASTON: The fourth dot point on page 180 of *Budget Statements* refers to water temperatures up to four degrees above average that affected the west coast and the Gascoyne regions of Western Australia's coast in 2011. This combined with the flooding in Shark Bay and the serious impacts on components of the stocks targeted by several commercial and recreational fisheries. The major effects were found on scallops and blue swimmer crabs in Kalbarri and the Shark Bay region. My question is: what have been the effects of these impacts on the commercial fisheries of the regions? What management action has been taken? How long is it anticipated these actions will remain in place?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I can indicate that in respect of the Shark Bay crab fishery, that has been stopped for the time being. As you would be aware, Peter Jecks is very active in that fishery. We have had to terminate catching of crabs in that area but allowed them to go further out. I do not know that that has been very successful. There is a view that the flooding event of the Gascoyne River may have had been responsible for that happening. There is also a very significant reduction in the scallop catch in Shark Bay, which has been most unfortunate. Also, abalone along the coast has been affected as well. So there is the effect of the flooding of the Gascoyne River, which we assume to be the main reason for the problems in Shark Bay, and then there was this marine heatwave, which was a sort of a pulse that went down the coast, which had a significantly adverse effect on the abalone fishery down the coast. They are unfortunate. Hopefully, they are only temporary aberrations as opposed to anything permanent. You might like to add to that.

Mr Smith: As the minister said, we have ceased crabbing activity in Shark Bay. That was the trap fishery initially, but the trawl fishery that is now operating in those waters is also not allowed to retain the crabs. We are doing surveys during the season, and we have indicated that, if those surveys suggest that crabbing can recommence, we will allow it to do so, but at this stage we are not in that position. The abundance of crabs within Shark Bay seems to be improving quite significantly, recognising that crabs are fairly short lived and tend to grow pretty quickly anyway, but at the moment they are of a fairly small size and certainly not sufficient to allow commercial fishing to occur in Shark Bay, so they are not currently allowed to fish for it. But this flood event that occurred, the pattern of behaviour in terms of crab stocks appears consistent with past floods that have occurred in Carnarvon. In those experiences, typically the flooding seems to flush the crabs out into the ocean and out into deeper water, so catches initially are better than normal in Shark Bay before falling off quite significantly. That is what has happened again here. We are optimistic that the situation will turn around fairly quickly.

Hon KEN BASTON: Have you got any idea what fairly quickly is—years?

Mr Smith: As I say, the abundance of crabs seems good, but they are small, so I would be optimistic that we will be able to open the fishery again next season, possibly even late this season—but failing that, next season. In terms of what sorts of volumes we will be able to allow to be taken, we do not know yet, but I would think they would be reasonable volumes.

The CHAIR: I might just do a follow-up on that area as well. In terms of that four degree temperature change, what work has been done to ascertain whether that is a one-off event or whether it is a pattern or, dare I suggest, climate change? Obviously fish stock and the marine environment can reflect fairly quickly those temperature changes. What sort of work has been done to ascertain and then forecast from there what the impacts are going to be?

Mr Smith: The study into that heatwave event forms part of a much bigger study that has been going on for several years. That study is funded through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation. Its genesis for our department's involvement was primarily for the rock lobster

fishery, looking at changes in environmental conditions and what impact that might be having on things like the settlement of puerulus in the rock lobster fishery. That study is incorporating this heatwave event, because it is working with other organisations—I understand, groups like CSIRO and the Bureau of Meteorology looking at both meteorological information and oceanographic data to try to get a much better handle on what is the cause for the heatwave event and, as you say, trying to predict when these sort of things will happen in the future. And then for us, it will be a question of: are there actions that we can take to mitigate, or do we need to adapt to these events if it is beyond our control? Or is it just a one-off thing due to a particular coalescence of environmental conditions which are not likely to recur?

The CHAIR: When will we know the result of that work?

Mr Smith: Some of those results have been published already. It is ongoing study. I do not know the full extent of it. Dr Molony may be across it, but for our department it is led by Dr Nick Caputi. Dr Molony, are you able to elaborate at all? Otherwise, we can perhaps take something on notice from you.

[4.50 pm]

Dr Molony: Briefly, there is a fisheries research report on the website that describes the impacts as best we could collate them for the recent heatwave event. With the previous Western Australian Marine Science Institute or WAMSI there was a series of projects that looked at the IPCC scenarios on heating and what that might do to distribution of various fisheries species, and that work is also available on the website. The work that Dr Caputi is currently involved in with CSIRO, Bureau of Meteorology and funded by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation is ongoing. I think it is about halfway through a four-year project at the moment.

The CHAIR: In terms of the rock lobster sector, what is the indication? Is the temperature a significant component of the low puerulus count or not? That was obviously a good question.

Dr Molony: That is a very good question. Temperature is only one outcome of any change in the environment and it is one that is usually relied upon because it is the one that is easier to measure and it is easier for the general public or other stakeholders to understand. It is also tied up with a range of other variables. If you increase the temperature, for example, in the water, you decrease dissolved oxygen levels. While we measure temperature, it may actually be a proxy for something else. When it comes specifically to rock lobster, there have been different environmental situations in recent years that correlate with a lower puerulus larval count. One of the strongest one is prevailing wind and prevailing wind is also related to times of year, which, unfortunately, is related back to temperature. Was that a roundabout enough answer?

The CHAIR: It might be wind, but the wind is also temperature driven.

Dr Molony: We might measure temperature, but it is actually the wind. I can defer that and get more information from Dr Caputi's team.

[*Supplementary Information No B5.*]

The CHAIR: Any further information on that would be useful, thank you.

Hon JON FORD: I do not know that I need to refer to any specific line item in the budget on this one.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I do not!

The CHAIR: Give it a go.

Hon JON FORD: At page 179, "Outcomes, Services and Key Performance Information" there is reference to "Relationship to Government Goals". It is a general question. I was wondering if you were able to tell me how many compliance activities in regards to recreational fishing were carried out last year or during the year and how many do you plan over the next year?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: How many activities?

Hon JON FORD: Yes, formal activities. So, specific road block activities or—I am not talking about walking down the boat ramp and having a look into a boat. I am talking about planned compliance strategies.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Can we take that on notice?

Hon JON FORD: Just specifically for —

Hon NORMAN MOORE: But you are really interested in some planned event where you might have a road block or a particular group of compliance officers go to one place and do an exercise or something as opposed to doing a normal job, which is compliance as a regular part of the operation.

Hon JON FORD: If you had a program that targeted my favourite, which is holiday caravan parks.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: We will see if we can find that for you.

[Supplementary Information No B6.]

Hon JON FORD: How would you rate a success or otherwise? Is it on the amount of people you are in contact with and therefore raise awareness or how many arrests—how many Mick Murrays you get?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: There are not enough jails for people like Mick Murray!

Hon JON FORD: I do apologise to my colleague.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: As the minister, I will say they have been spectacularly successful, but I better get Mr Smith to tell you the facts.

Mr Smith: We do not look for any one measure. In fact, I would probably discourage people from looking for any one measure of compliance success. In the past, there may well have been a focus on enforcement and things like education were seen as a separate activity. I think, personally, that they are part of a broader compliance package. So, I would say things like the number of contacts are actually important, but it is equally important that they are positive impacts. It is about in the short term you need to come across—the way I approach it is for recreational fishers, for instance, the vast majority of the people will do the right thing if they know what the rules are. So, one of the things we are doing is looking to simplify the rules, first of all, to make sure that people can understand the rules. Then you want to actually educate people about what those rules are, so the number of contacts can be important in that regard, but so too are things like our schools education program.

At the same time, you have a group of people who will do the right thing if they think there is a reasonable prospect of them getting caught. For that particular group, the success of our compliance activity comes down to whether or not there is a sufficient presence out there or the belief that there might be a sufficient presence. So, some initiatives like our mobile patrols, which are very prominently coloured and supplement the fisheries capability that we have in the regional offices, is important because it can be the obvious presence in a town. Even though that is probably not going to lead to many actual enforcement actions, it helps deal with that category of people.

Then there is a group of people who do not believe they are going to get caught or, if they do believe that, they do not really care. It is for those people that it is important we have a strong enforcement capability. For some of that activity, a very small proportion but some of it, there is organised crime involved. For those people, we have a serious offences unit which has covert capability and which has been very successful. They have run two operations in the past 12 months, one focusing on rock lobster and one focussing on finfish and they have been successful in securing prosecutions. Once again, the fact that we have prosecutions does not necessarily mean that we have been effective across the whole compliance spectrum. So, I would say you need to look at all those aspects really to get a picture for how well we are doing in terms of compliance.

Across that whole picture I think we are doing well and the initiatives that we have introduced through things like the mobile patrols have been very well received by the public. If anything, the message I get most consistently from the community is that they would like to see more fisheries officers. There seems to be general support for what we are doing.

Hon JON FORD: I think there is. I refer to page 180, “Significant Issues Impacting the Agency”, third dot point, about quota management for the WCRL fishery. Are there any specific compliance activities? One of the fears that was raised with me from time to time was a fear that a quota system would bring in particular compliance challenges. I was wondering if you have seen any evidence of that being realised.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Perhaps if I could just make a general comment about the quota system first and ask Mr Smith to elaborate on the question you focused on.

We made a very difficult decision to go to quota and you would remember in your time that it was an issue that divided the fishermen. Now that we have gone down that path and at the same time reduced the catch by half, it has put enormous strain on the fishery, but at the same time is in the process of changing the culture of the fishing community. So, the race-to-fish mentality is gradually disappearing and being replaced by a more business-like approach to fishing, which is that you catch your quota at a time when you can maximise your returns. What is tending to happen is that the returns are being maintained at a higher level, because they are only fishing when the market is likely to provide a higher price, and input costs have gone down, because they are no longer fishing every day and trying to get the biggest and fastest boat to beat everybody else.

[5.00 pm]

The returns for individual fishermen, albeit for half the number of crayfish being caught, are going up and their costs are going down; however, there is a lot of work still to be done in respect of this. A program is being implemented, which is called “Fish Eye” and is about electronic management of the fishery, on which I will get Mr Smith to elaborate. It is a significant reform, which will mean that we can manage the quota system far more efficiently than we can at the moment. Some paper-based activities are being undertaken with records and so on. You will appreciate that each fisherman gets X number of kilograms of rock lobster per unit in the fishery, and at the moment it is difficult to trade because of the recording system in place now. We are hoping ultimately that at any point in time people can trade some of their quota. That will help to ensure that they do not go over their quota and that those who are a bit short can get it from somewhere. That is part of the Fish Eye initiative that is being half funded by the fishing industry and half by government, which will be an absolutely major reform of the way in which we manage our fisheries. Mr Smith can give the detail of that.

Mr Smith: In terms of moving from input controls to quota, it is fair to say that the area of biggest risk shifts under those two models. The risk in terms of a breach of reporting arrangements or theft from the fishery and so on moves away from fishers more towards the processors; if there is going to be large-scale defrauding of the system, for instance. It is more likely to occur, for instance, in something like misrepresentation of weights and therefore the likelihood of that occurring is probably at the processing end, particularly with a vertically integrated processor, for instance. So, our allocation of resources within the fishery has shifted. We are doing less compliance in terms of individual fishers, particularly at sea, and spending a lot more time at the processors and at the landing weights, and we have shifted out some of the compliance measures that are in place now. We have introduced voice recordings for fishers to report when they are coming into port, when they are leaving and so on. One of the consequences of those various measures has been an improved relationship between fishers and the fisheries officers. I do not know whether that is because the focus is less on them and more on the processors, but we have found the processors very good to work with as well. At the moment it is still very early days for quota. We are not detecting any major leakage from the system. That undercover operation I mentioned actually found

the biggest problem there to be amongst recreational fishers. The measures we have put in place for the commercial sector also appear to be effective when we talk to other jurisdictions. The other jurisdictions around Australia and overseas, for instance countries like New Zealand, have said that they would love to have some of the arrangements that we in Western Australia have put in place; things like taking the higher of the two weights, whether it be the fisher or the processor weight. That has caused some issues with some members of the fishery, but by the same token it is seen as the strongest mechanism for ensuring compliance. When it is put to people in the fishery that the only people who stand to lose out of that are those who are seeking to breach the laws, it seems to be accepted. The feedback we are getting seems to be very positive about the measures, both from fishers themselves and from other jurisdictions. I think our level of compliance with the move to quota is probably higher than it was under input control. But, as I say, it is early days and I would not want to get too over-confident about this, because as people learn the system there will be some people looking to get around the system. The longer it is in place, the more time they have to understand it and find ways around it, so we need to be vigilant.

If I can just elaborate a little on Fish Eye, since the minister suggested it.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Please do.

Mr Smith: Fish Eye is a major IT initiative that we have been pursuing for about 18 months now. That initiative will move a lot of things to an IT electronic platform, so that will extend our capability enormously. It will also see some existing systems replaced. Things like our existing licensing system for both the recreational and commercial sectors will be replaced by Fish Eye with a lot more capability in terms of delivering services; that is, both receiving information and also getting information out to users. Catch and effort statistics will be able to be provided electronically to the department, whereas at the moment people are filling in log books and catch and effort forms and sending them in manually and then we retype them in. There is a risk in terms of each time you type it, you might get the wrong number and so on, so that should actually lead to better quality information. The information will be easier to extract and this will enable us to link up databases, so the research information we have should also be improved, which will lead to better management of the fisheries. Importantly for the rock lobster fishery, the Fish Eye system will enable quota trading for fishers. For instance, you might have a fisher coming towards the end of the season and they have some issue with their boat and just cannot get out onto the water. They will be able to trade their remaining quota to other fishers; or if they are doing particularly well, they may choose to acquire quota from other fishers.

But it is not just the commercial sector that will benefit. I think the fishers in the recreational sector will also get some substantial benefit from Fish Eye. They obviously share this view because they actually approached us saying they would like to contribute some funds to the project. I cannot think of another occasion when I have had an industry association come to a government department I have been in offering to put money into a project that government has initiated. They have said that they would like to do that because they see the potential for this to give effect to a number of things they would like, such as voluntary log books that they have been seeking for a long time. They think Fish Eye can actually be the platform that will deliver that in a more effective way than the tools that are currently available, so they think the uptake will be much higher using Fish Eye. The Fish Eye system is due to take effect from 15 January next year. It will not be fully implemented from 15 January, but it will be operational for, particularly, the rock lobster fishery. That is when that fishery will start the next season, so it is timed to coincide with that, and the parts that that fishery needs will be operational by that date.

Hon JON FORD: The black market seems to me to be the biggest risk.

Mr Smith: Yes.

Hon JON FORD: How are you managing that? I suppose there is the enhanced risk that people tell me they worry about in regard to quota. It was always described, which I thought was interesting, as

the flashing torchlight on the beach. Is there any evidence of that or have you put in any special effort to see if that is occurring?

Mr Smith: Yes. I will not outline what our covert area is doing.

Hon JON FORD: No, no.

Mr Smith: I have mentioned that it had an operation looking at rock lobster and that the recreational sector is the area in which they have had prosecutions to date. That has been made public, so it is already in the public domain. The measures we have put in place, for instance in the shift in focus more towards the processors, is in some respects directed at the black market. If there is going to be a significant black market, then it is going to involve substantial quantities leaking out of the system. And if that is going to occur under a quota system, I would think it would require some complicity from a processor typically, or you are going to have to have a transfer at sea from a vessel. But even then, if it is an individual vessel with relatively small volumes, the potential for large volumes is greatest with the processor. So that is where we focus, although there is also some activity on the compliance side in terms of the potential for offloading product at sea.

[5.10 pm]

Hon BRIAN ELLIS: I am interested in all the activity that is happening at the Abrolhos Islands under “New Works” on page 184 and “Works in Progress” on page 183. Can you give me a rundown of the necessity for the replacement of the jetties on a number of islands, and the other works that are in progress particularly on the airstrips?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Under the new works program this year we have been able to get some money for some significant upgrades to infrastructure on the Abrolhos Islands, which is necessary. Some of the jetties there you would not walk on because you would end up sharing the ocean with a great white. The main ones are East Wallabi Island, which is where the airstrip is, and the location of a potential tourism facility in due course. That jetty is not adequate for what may be necessary to happen on that island in the future. So we are replacing that jetty at East Wallabi, and similarly with the Rat Island jetty, which is where the Department of Fisheries facility is located. It is in very bad condition and needs to be upgraded to meet the needs of ongoing work by the fisheries department and research people who use that facility. Beacon Island is where the Batavia wreck massacres took place. Hopefully when we get enough money that will give us the capacity to remove the shacks that are currently on there, and there are some funds in the budget to remove those shacks. There is also a fisheries facility there that needs to be removed. The intention ultimately is for the museum to turn it into a heritage site and to do some research into the burials that are actually on the island. There are probably some shacks that have been built on top of graves because nobody knew they were there. Once we clear the island of what has been built on it, the museum will be in a better position to rehabilitate the island from the point of view of it being a heritage site. The jetty is in very bad condition and that needs to be replaced if we are going to allow tourists to visit the heritage site that the museum will manage. It is a very significant project. One of the problems is that it is not cheap because every bit of building that is on the island will have to be taken off by hand. You simply cannot get machinery onto those islands, and you would not want to at Beacon anyway. It will be a fairly expensive manual operation to clear out those shacks on Beacon Island.

Clearly, the Abrolhos Islands are a very significant part of the rock lobster fishery, and it is important that the facilities that are available there for fishermen are in good condition. We are outputting a couple of million dollars into the Abrolhos this time around to improve that infrastructure.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I refer to the “Service Summary” on page 180, and “Compliance and Education”. I am really interested in the compliance component of that. Can you give me a bit of an overview of those areas that you actually check for compliance?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I will get Mr Smith to tell you the operational side of his agency and what they do by way of compliance.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes, and where you spend most of the compliance dollars; is it in tracking down people who are fishing without a licence or —

Hon NORMAN MOORE: A whole range of things.

Mr Smith: The bulk of the money is tied up in salaries for fisheries officers. The work of a fisheries officer will involve a combination of focus on the commercial sector and the recreational sector. It will vary from location to location around the state depending on what sort of fisheries you have there. In the metropolitan area, for instance, when the abalone season is on those Sunday mornings, there will be a concentration of activity at those beaches. So it is very much a focus on the recreational sector.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: So what else apart from abalone in the recreational area?

Mr Smith: In the metropolitan area?

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes.

Mr Smith: They will also look at things like the crab fishery, prawns in the Swan, finfish in the Cockburn Sound and beyond —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Are they looking for people who do not have a licence or who take too much resource?

Mr Smith: They will look at a multitude of things. I have been on a land patrol and a sea patrol. When I have been on land patrols, what we typically do if we are dealing with recreational fishers is we will go up to them and talk to them, inspect their catch, and see whether or not they have a valid licence depending on what they are fishing for. If everything is in order, we will also seek to give them some promotional material, and even if things are not in order we seek to make it a positive experience. Sometimes people do not have everything in order and on those occasions they can be hit with a fine or an infringement notice. If it is a serious offence, we might look at taking further action. We have that with land patrols. Sea patrols are pretty similar —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: How many prosecutions has the department got going at the moment? Would you have that information with you?

Mr Smith: I do not actually have that information with me, and as soon as you said that I thought that that is probably something I should have predicted. Yes, we can provide that information.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Can you take it on notice and can you give me the prosecution details by category of offence; if you are prosecuting you must have it categorised under different —

Mr Smith: Whether it is a licence infringement or a —

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Like this one was prosecuted for crabs and this one stole some fish, but it would be general categories.

[Supplementary Information No B7.]

Mr Smith: Just to clarify, what you are after is the nature of the offence; so whether it is a fish that is undersize or whether it is a failure to have a valid licence.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Yes. I am after not only that, but also the number of prosecutions. Can you provide the prosecution details for 2009–10, 2010–11 and 2011–12?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: It is the retrospective budget again.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Minister Moore, I need to educate you. We cannot look at the future until we understand the past; it helps to inform the future.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Can I say in respect to that—I have not seen the figures—the point Mr Smith makes is that instead of whacking people in jail, we are trying to develop a positive relationship with fishers because we want them to understand why we have the rules. We do not want to be vindictive but we need rules to have a sustainable fishery. There may well be people who, if it was a driving offence, might get charged, whereas with a fisheries officer we try to get them to understand the situation first. However, there is some totally unacceptable behaviour by some people that requires them to be prosecuted, and that is a last resort in a sense.

[5.20 pm]

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Do some of these people become recidivist offenders?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not know.

Mr Smith: There are some individuals who are more serious offenders than others.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: We will not mention Mr Murray's name!

Mr Smith: There are some people who take some degree of delight in bragging about their breaches of laws, and we have no hesitation in targeting those individuals in some operations. They are the people that we would be particularly interested in prosecuting and that we go after. There are other people who unknowingly breach the laws. The existing laws are, in my view, too complex and we are seeking to simplify them. We are not out to prosecute people who are trying to do the right thing but inadvertently get it wrong. It can be difficult, for example, for a couple travelling around Australia who might enter the state up in the Kimberley, because as they travel around the coast the rules change enormously. We have something like 13 different sets of rules around the coast. We have a project at the moment looking to reduce that down to four different categories of rules, and other simplifications for those sorts of people. But there will still be a group of people—I think the ones you are referring to—who do not really care what the rules are; they just want to go out and be able to do whatever they want, irrespective of the community's best interest. They are the ones I want to target and the ones we go after.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: I would imagine they would be problematic for your officers trying to deal with them.

Mr Smith: They can be. Some of them can be quite aggressive with our officers; however, they are trained in how to deal with that.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: You would not want to get a cranky fisherman who has been waiting for a herring for a few hours who is then charged with something or other! You would have to be bit careful.

Mr Smith: Our officers do have to be careful. There are occasions when they have set up operations and then approached the people and found out that those people are known criminals with a record. They do deal with these sorts of people. Fortunately, they do an exceptionally good job. I would like to think that is at least in part due to the training we provide but also the selection of the people that we appoint to those positions. Our processes are very rigorous and include things like psychometric testing, which we introduced in recent years. That has been effective in seeking people not only who can handle situations in which people might be particularly aggressive, but also with strong interpersonal skills, a real connection with the community, the water and so on. We are seeing that sort of recruitment activity paying dividends in the relationship that our fisheries officers have with the community members they come across. They still have to deal with some individuals who are difficult and aggressive, but they understand that is their job and they certainly do not hesitate pursuing those individuals.

Hon LJILJANNA RAVLICH: Have you ever had anyone trying to impersonate a fisheries officer by perhaps donning a fisheries uniform?

Mr Smith: I am not aware of any such instance of that happening.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: Still on compliance and education, I refer to the table on page 181. The second line shows the income stream across the years. Does that income come directly from appropriations or does anything come from compliance measures—that is, funds raised from compliance issues that go straight back into your department?

Mr Smith: We do not retain things like fines; they go back into general revenue, I understand, for the government.

The CHAIR: I might just slip in a couple of questions myself. I refer to the major spending changes shown on page 179, specifically to third party sustainability certification for commercial fisheries. In a statement back in March, the minister committed \$14.5 million to this program over the next four years, with initial funding of \$6.5 million. I could not find that in the budget papers, but perhaps I am missing it.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: It is down as a major spending change. I need to find where it is located elsewhere in the budget. The Chair may be aware of what the strategy is, but perhaps while we are finding that I will tell members.

The CHAIR: Exactly how much is that and how is that going to be spent?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: It would be included in some other part of the budget. Basically, we are concerned that we need to be able to demonstrate that our fisheries are being sustainably managed. There are international organisations that carry out assessments of fisheries around the world and give them accreditation on the basis of their sustainability. The rock lobster fishery is the first in the world to receive this accreditation from the Marine Stewardship Council, and it continues to maintain that accreditation. It is our view that people want to be assured that our fisheries are being sustainably managed, and they do not necessarily believe the fishing industry or the Department of Fisheries when they say that they are being sustainably managed. We have taken the view that having some international third party accreditation of our fisheries should give people confidence in the way our fisheries are being managed. It will also, hopefully, put to one side some of the arguments that people are putting forward that say we should stop catching fish in very large areas of the ocean when we are able to demonstrate that the fishing activities that are taking place in the Western Australian fisheries are sustainable. “Sustainable” means that you can continue to catch at managed levels without in any way adversely affecting the quantity of fish in that particular fishery. That is a very important policy initiative in my view; indeed, it is probably the first time anywhere in the world a government has sought to go down this path. We have not necessarily chosen MSC; there are others that provide similar accreditation, and we are currently negotiating with MSC and others to see if either one or both of them can deliver on our objectives.

The CHAIR: Minister, it seems that definition of sustainability is not a definition of environmental sustainability, but of fishing sustainability.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: You are quite right.

The CHAIR: It is a different thing.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I am not the Minister for Environment. People argue that the marine environment is being adversely affected, so we should stop catching fish because we do not have sustainable fisheries. We are saying that we will manage our fisheries in such a way that we are not destroying the fish stocks in those marine environments. That is what our job is. If there are other factors affecting the marine environment, there are other agencies that do that.

The CHAIR: That is not what I understood the act implied; I thought it was ecological sustainability.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I am trying very hard to save the fisheries that we have from people who would close them down on the basis of some perceived ecological damage that is being done to those parts of the ocean by fishermen. It is my view that the accreditation we would be seeking to

achieve will, at least to the extent that we are able to, inform the public that an international third party organisation that accredits fisheries on the basis of fishery sustainability has so accredited our fisheries.

[5.30 pm]

If you do not think that is good enough, that is for you to decide, and if you think we should have marine parks all along the coast, that is for you to argue. But I just happen to think that people and industry should be protected as well. We think that we can have sustainable fisheries in Western Australia, and we are prepared to go to the trouble of having it accredited by a third party. I would have thought that you might have been appreciative of that.

The CHAIR: I might ask Mr Smith if he has some more details about the implementation, if possible.

Mr Smith: Yes. This initiative is \$14.56 million over the four years. It is essentially in two parts. There is one part which represents capacity within the department. That works out, on average, to be \$2 million per annum, although it is cashflowed differently there. That particular money is expected to be allocated to our research area and our fisheries management area. I will come back to that to explain why that money is there. The other money, \$6.56 million, is allocated to three primary areas. The first one is around \$1.5 million, which is to cover the pre-assessment process for third party certification. The second component is \$4.5 million, which covers the application fee for the certification process for the fisheries. If we go with MSC or with others—the minister mentioned there are others, such as Global Trust, which has a process which we have also been looking at—those fisheries all have application fees. For those two that I have mentioned, the cost of application is similar for the two processes. It varies between fisheries, depending on the size and complexity, but the costs for the different schemes are similar. There is a further half a million dollars which funds the initial audit for each of the fisheries. It is expected that all the commercial fisheries will be put through the pre-assessment process. Then we anticipate that it will actually be the commercial fisheries that are the applicants for the full certification and that the government will fund that application. That is how that money is broken out.

The CHAIR: And that is \$4.5 million.

Mr Smith: That is correct, yes.

The CHAIR: What does that actually get used for?

Mr Smith: That covers the cost of applying and paying for the certifying body. I will use MSC as an example, but I would not want to suggest that that is who we are definitely going with. In the case of MSC, for that particular scheme, MSC accredits independent organisations around the world to conduct the assessments to determine whether or not a fishery can be certified. Those accredited organisations come into a fishery. They are typically international organisations. They will fly people in for a period. They will talk to the various participants in the fishery and they will spend time with our department, looking at things like the level of research that is available for that fishery and if it is adequate to form judgements about whether or not this fishery can be certified. If it is not then they look at what sorts of conditions could be attached to certification, so there would be a conditional certification. Alternatively, they may look and say, “No; this fishery is not in a position where it can be certified due to gaps in the information or the research that is currently available” and then a decision will have to be taken as to whether or not we fill those gaps. There are a whole range of factors that get taken into account there. At the same time, they will also want to talk to the fisheries managers to determine what management settings are in place for that fishery and more broadly. You mentioned the ecology and the environment. They consider those factors as part of the assessment. We have to provide input into that. For instance, they would review the management plan for each commercial fishery. It is a very thorough process; in fact, the certification process that they do can be independently audited as well. We find that there is a substantial call typically on our

research staff and on our fisheries management staff, but they will also look at the compliance capability of the organisation, because there is no point having good research if you do not actually use it to form a management plan. Equally, you could have the best management plan in the world, but if you do not have any compliance activity, it is a pointless exercise.

To get back to that \$2 million per annum, we anticipate that that will fund 10 staff. In terms of FTE, it will be in the order of five in the research division and five in our aquatic management division, which is the area that looks after the management plans. That figure was calculated based on our experience with the western rock lobster fishery, which has had certification for quite a few years now. We know what sort of call on our department resources it is each time a fishery is certified and when it comes up for recertification. That was based on having all the commercial fisheries in Western Australia certified.

The CHAIR: How will the certifiers be identified and selected?

Mr Smith: The certifying bodies are independently accredited by the MSC. We do not have any say, and would not wish to —

The CHAIR: But you were saying that you might not pick MSC; you might pick another.

Mr Smith: Yes. The MSC organisation does not do certification themselves; they accredit others to come in. For instance, organisations that might have been weights and measures-type organisations can seek to be accredited.

The CHAIR: Perhaps the question needs to be cast slightly differently. How will you decide which certifying organisation you pick rather than the certifiers themselves?

Mr Smith: We are still in discussions with the fishing industry about that, bearing in mind that they are likely to be the applicant and we will fund the application. Having said that, I am inclined at the moment to a model which would have the department go out to tender for certifying bodies to tender for the business and, from that, to select a panel of certifying bodies. For instance, there might be three certifying bodies that the industry could then choose from to decide which one they use. Rather than the department saying, “You must use this certifying body”, they would have the option of several, because the capacity of an individual certifying body just is not there to do all of them anyway. I think that would still comply with the government tender guidelines, but I have not yet spoken to our procurement staff about that either, so that is another consideration. However, I think a model like that could well work.

The CHAIR: Was the certification of the western rock lobster a tender process? I cannot remember.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: It has been a long time since that was done.

Mr Smith: That particular one is one where the industry has been the applicant and the funder, so they selected the party themselves.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I should make the point that this is not necessarily going to be an ongoing cost to government. My view is that we should initiate the certification process and get it established, but because every five years it has to be recertified if you go with MSC, there is a cost attached to that. My view is that industry should be paying that from then onwards.

The CHAIR: So the expectation is that once the process is set up, the industry will continue to fund it themselves. Just before I go to Hon Liz Behjat, and still on this issue, I am curious how the western rock lobster fishery continues to be certified as sustainable given there has been another poor year in terms of puerulus settlement.

[5.40 pm]

Hon NORMAN MOORE: We put in place management strategies to reduce the catch to reflect the evidence that is available in terms of the number of little rock lobsters that are in the ocean. If you

look at the history of rock lobster fisheries since they have been collecting puerulus along the coast, the catch is very closely reflected with the puerulus count four years down the track when those puerulus become adults. We have been using that as a measure of the sustainability of the fishery and it has been a successful process. For reasons that no-one can quite fully understand yet—there may well be a multitude of reasons—the puerulus numbers have been down for the last few years. There is some indication of some slight improvement at the present time. However, in response to that, we have halved the catch, which demonstrates that in response to a particular circumstance, we have put in place management controls and measures that we believe will deal with that particular problem. I think that demonstrates that the fishery is being well managed.

The CHAIR: What is the current thinking on the lack of puerulus?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I think, as Mr Smith was saying a while ago in respect to all these ocean issues, there may well be a combination of factors. I do not know definitively what the issue is yet. I do not think anyone knows.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: There are too many whales eating the puerulus.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Some people have made a have joke of that, including me! I am as anxious as anyone to know.

The CHAIR: I wondered whether Dr Molony would have a current view on that.

Dr Molony: There are two main reasons why there is lower recruitment. The first is that there are possibly fewer brood stock of breeding animals out there. The second is that there are enough breeders but the larvae are not surviving and returning to where they should. It has been ruled out that there is a problem with the brood stock because the brood stock at the moment is at record levels. The certifying body has come through and the management levers that have been pulled have addressed the things that the department can manage, which is brood stock removal. It comes back to why there is lower than expected larval survival. We think there are enough larvae being produced but their lifecycle is such that when they go hundreds or thousands of kilometres away, it is hard to track them. The thinking at this stage is that the prevailing currents and winds are not there at the right time. As the minister said, in some areas the settlement in this season, although it is still lower than the long-term average, is better than it has been in the last couple of years.

The CHAIR: By what quantum?

Dr Molony: I can take that on notice and get that information for you.

[Supplementary Information No B8.]

The CHAIR: Is it likely to be related to temperature?

Dr Molony: Back to the temperature again!

The CHAIR: I notice how warm it is when I go swimming these days, and it is a lot warmer than it has ever been. That is just a personal observation. We have jellyfish in City Beach too.

Dr Molony: And we had whale sharks off Albany late last year. One theory globally is that the temperature is not necessarily any warmer than it has been but is remaining warmer for longer or is out of sync with other cycles. In the interim while we get an answer to the supplementary questions, I draw your attention to the website where there is up-to-date puerulus information available to the public once it has been verified.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: I was not being facetious when I said whales are eating the puerulus. One of the theories is that there are a lot of things out there eating them.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: There certainly are a lot of whales going up and down the coast.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: I think Mr Smith has answered the questions I was going to ask, but I just want clarity about the certification process. When MSC certifies an applicant, the catchment lasts

for five years. How long does it take to get to that point from the beginning of the process? Say it is MSC—we will not pre-empt that—and they start the process, how long before someone is handed their certification?

Mr Smith: The process varies between fisheries because it depends on the complexity and how long the certification process takes. Once they have completed the process, the actual decision on whether to award them certification happens quickly. I understand that it is not something that will be delayed by months or anything like that. The timing issue is the certification assessment. That can happen fairly quickly—within a few months—but there are instances when it has taken years for a fishery to secure even conditional certification.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: So they are certified for five years and then they need to be recertified. The minister said that that is when he would expect the applicant would bear those costs and that the government would do only the initial certification costs and not the ongoing certification?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: That is right.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: So you go through this whole process and those commercial fisheries that are in existence get certified and all those costs are borne by the government. When a new fishery comes into the market and it needs to be certified, will the government pay for its first certification or will there be a cut-off at a certain point and the government will say, “Anyone new coming into the market will pay for it themselves”?

Mr Smith: There are a couple of things. The government’s initiative covers the things that I have mentioned. I would not suggest that industry does not make any contribution. Going through the process itself incurs some costs, time and resources to industry, for example, so they do make a contribution and there are other initiatives as well that we are talking to them about, such as fisheries in transition. However, in terms of recertification—sorry, I have forgotten the question —

Hon NORMAN MOORE: It was about any new fisheries.

Mr Smith: If a new fishery was established, we would cover it through the funds that are available. There may be scope for some savings through the process. For example, we have been talking to the certifying bodies about how they would deal with fisheries in Shark Bay because the trawl fishery, for instance, takes a significant portion of the crab catch and there is a Shark Bay crab fishery that uses traps. We have suggested to the certifying bodies that in a fishery like that it would probably make sense to certify the Shark Bay commercial fisheries, or something like that—a collection of them—recognising that you could not certify just one part of the crab fishery—for instance, the trawl component—and not at least consider the trap also. If there are some fisheries like that, there will be savings and those savings would be available for other fisheries that wish to seek certification, such as new fisheries, for instance. I envisage that any existing commercial fishery or any that are likely to come into existence in coming years will be able to be covered by this project.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: What happens during the five-year period of the validity of the certificate so far as the monitoring goes? Who does that? I am assuming you do not just give someone a certificate and leave them alone for five years and do not go near them; the certifiers themselves or the government or fisheries have to do spot checks. Will that happen; and, if so, who will bear the costs of that?

Mr Smith: For the certification process an annual audit is done by the certifying body. Part of the package is that the government will fund the initial audit and it will be the responsibility of industry to cover the costs of the subsequent audits. It is important to also understand that a fishery that goes through this certification process is already going to be the subject of management action by the government. It is being managed; it is a managed fishery now. The department conducts research, has management settings in place and does compliance audits on the fishery. That will continue irrespective of whether or not the fishery chooses to go through this process. We see this particular project as dealing with the sorts of things the minister mentioned about adding confidence to the

community. Perhaps I can use the example of the western rock lobster fishery because it is a real example. The department has been managing that fishery for many years.

[5.50 pm]

With the puerulus settlement down, the department continued to manage that and the minister took some very substantial action in reducing the catch, for instance. Those actions were taken, and when the certifying body for MSC came in to do its review, it found that the measures that the minister had announced were proving to be effective and appropriate and that the fishery is sustainable. So I see certification as a mechanism that the community can see and accept as an independent verification of the quality of the management that is occurring, rather than it replacing any management that is currently there. The management that we do includes annual consideration and monitoring of fish stocks.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: I think that is probably a really good way to go, having been involved in another industry that applied for Forest Stewardship Council certification at one stage and what that means and the rigmarole you have to do to get it. But once you have got it and you can use that, I think people now actually look for products that have that certification as well, so I think that is a really good move.

Mr Smith: Yes, and that additional money for the department, the \$2 million per annum, is really about adding capability because this initiative is not about replacing any management action or compliance or research activity that we currently do with this scheme; this scheme is in addition to everything that is already done.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Can I just add another dimension to this? There is another component to this strategy. It is not just about public confidence in the management of the fishery, but it is also a recognition of the commercial reality that is developing around the world; that is, some of the major retailers in the world are now demanding that the fish they sell have to be certified by an independent body such as MSC. In Australia, Coles are going with WWF in respect of that, which is basically MSC, and suggesting that in time they will only sell MSC-certified or WWF-certified fish. That is a reality in the commercial world and by giving our fisheries the capacity to get that certification, it just means when their fish goes into a retail store, it will have the tick of MSC or whatever it is. They will therefore have access to that retail opportunity, and when people buy the fish there they will know that it has come from a certified fishery.

Hon LIZ BEHJAT: I think it is great—well done.

Mr Smith: Perhaps if I can just put on the record a little bit about some of the alternative schemes, because we have spoken a fair bit about MSC and we have considered alternative schemes. The main competitor to MSC in the market is Global Trust. That is a slightly different scheme. It is not really a true third party certification scheme because Global Trust is a certifying body; it, in fact, can certify fisheries on behalf of the MSC. But it takes the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization standards for sustainable fisheries and considers a fishery against those standards. It will say, "Yes, this fishery meets it", or, "No, it won't." It does not pass that responsibility to an independent third certifying body, so it is not a true third party scheme in that sense. But it has other strengths; for example, Global Trust is ISO accredited, whereas the MSC is not because the MSC standards, for instance, are more prone to changing—just the nature of the structure that they have, which I will not bother going into at the moment. The main point I wanted to get across is that there are different schemes available in the market. MSC is one of them, but there are alternatives that we have also considered, and they have strengths and weaknesses as well.

The CHAIR: Are all the Western Australian fisheries intended to be included in attempts to get certification across the board—the whole lot?

Mr Smith: The scheme proposes that all commercial fisheries will undergo the pre-assessment process, and then it will be the choice for the individual fisheries whether or not they seek certification and at what point. Different fisheries will be at different stages.

The CHAIR: So is it anticipated that all fisheries will meet that first hurdle—the pre-assessment?

Mr Smith: Well, it is not really a hurdle as such in the sense that it —

The CHAIR: That criteria.

Mr Smith: Essentially, pre-assessment goes in and looks at a fishery and says, yes, this fishery is in a state where, if it applied for certification now, it would be likely to secure it, or it would probably secure it, subject to conditions; or there are some serious gaps that would need to be addressed before it would warrant applying for certification.

The CHAIR: So my question is: how many would you anticipate will meet that criteria to go forward to certification straightaway, and how many would have to have other things change before that? You can take it on notice, if you think that is —

Mr Smith: It will just be a guess anyway until it has been through the process, and it is a very subjective process, in terms of my assessment, so I may as well try and answer it now rather than take it on notice. My guess is that for roughly half of the existing commercial fisheries we would have sufficient research information and management settings in place that it could secure certification now, maybe subject to conditions, but certification nonetheless. The other half of them would probably require some additional work to plug some information gaps, for instance, before they would be suitable for certification. There will probably also be a small number of fisheries that are not yet in the position where they would be suitable for certification, and that may be due to information gaps, and the decision will have to be taken at some stage whether or not it warrants pursuing certification for them because the cost of filling those information gaps may exceed the value of those fisheries, for instance.

The CHAIR: That was going to be my follow-up question. If there is a gap—obviously, it requires resources to fill that gap and potentially time to do the research—will Fisheries continue to put that money in there or do they kind of stop at that point and say no, it is up to that particular fishery to do that work themselves?

Mr Smith: It will depend on the nature of the gap. Some of those costs we will be able to cover, and that is partly what that \$2 million per annum is about. About half of that money will go to research, and that will be contributing to the certification assessments, but I would expect also that we will be able to use some of that money to do new research, which can assist fisheries to secure certification. If we can get some projects up through the FRDC—the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation—then there may well be opportunities to do substantial additional research well beyond the value that is already there. So, we have been talking to industry about the possibility of leveraging some of that money to assist fisheries to get through certification.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I think it is fair to say, though, that the aim of the exercise is for all the fisheries to be accredited, if it is at all possible. That is the starting point. It may be that some fisheries are so small—there are a couple of very tiny commercial fisheries—that the value of the fishery is less than the cost of accreditation, so it may well be a total waste of time and space. But we are very pleased to have been given the funds to go down this path.

Hon JON FORD: Does Recfishwest receive any funding from the department?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: Yes, \$930 000 a year from the licence fee funds goes to fund Recfishwest. I should add, in exchange for the money, they carry out a consultation role on behalf of the department. At the moment, you would be aware that they are conducting consultation into the simplification of regulations exercise that the department has started. As Stuart Smith spoke

about earlier, we are trying to simplify the regulations around the state, and we have asked Recfishwest, as part of the arrangement with us, to undertake that consultation.

[6.00 pm]

You will be aware that we got rid of the regional fishing advisory councils that used to be dotted around the place and were paid for by the state. You would be aware that we chose the legislation to not require those to be in existence. They have been replaced by Recfishwest operating in the regions as well, so there is a regional presence to provide advice to Recfishwest, and they have been accepted as the source of advice to government on behalf of the recreational fishing sector. When you were the minister you would have had about 47 different sources of advice and you had to make most of the decisions; now there is one, and they make the decisions. It is actually quite a good way to go about it really, and they are funded. Because the revenue from boat fishing licences has increased, part of that is to fund Recfishwest.

Hon JON FORD: Are there any other conditions to the funding, other than carrying out for you—survey work?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not think so. Their role is to represent the interests of recreational fishers. They do not work for the government, other than the relationship we have in terms of consultation. It just means that instead of that organisation having to go out to raise money from membership to be able to do a job on behalf of recreational fishers, and at the same time having government committees all over the state being funded by the taxpayer, it is better to put all the money into one box and give it to Recfishwest and say, “You do the job for us.” If they do not do the job properly, then we will renegotiate it. It is a bit like the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council, which gets a proportion of the fees we charge the commercial fishery—I think it is 5.75 per cent.

Mr Smith: Correct.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: So 5.75 per cent of the gross value of the fishery is paid as fees into the department, and we fund WAFIC out of that money. Again, it avoids them having to run around trying to raise money to look after the interests of the fishing industry. The industry is paying, anyway, through the levies that are imposed upon them. That then means they have an assured revenue and can employ the staff they need to employ and do their job without having to be looking over their shoulder and seeing where the next dollar is going to come from. But, if they cannot deliver by being a good advocate on behalf of their industry, then the government might think about some other measures.

Mr Smith: If I could just add one point. We do not typically tie any conditions to the funding that is provided, but I should note that in the case of consultation services, the money is provided separately to them for those services and is the subject of a separate service level agreement between the department and the representative body there. In those instances, the body will have both a representative role and a consultation role that they are doing on behalf of the department, effectively.

The CHAIR: Perhaps I might throw in a final question there. What assurance is there that Recfishwest is representative and doing consultation in a recognised process? If you want to take that on notice, I would be interested in what the contract is, I guess, between Recfishwest and Fisheries, because you are asking them to do two things. I certainly know that, historically, they are not always seen to be representative of recreational fishing interests. They represent a certain slice, I would suggest, but maybe things have changed.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I think you will find that things have changed a bit in recent times with some change of personnel and so on.

The CHAIR: That is good, but I just wondered —

Hon NORMAN MOORE: There is some change in respect of their board membership.

The CHAIR: Yes. But it is in, like, a contract? Is it written, so that —

Mr Smith: I can answer that one. Perhaps if I answer it by way of example: the statewide review that they have conducted the consultation on behalf of us for that process was the subject of a service level agreement between us, so separately funded. They are required to provide services, and that is by putting up on their website a template for submissions and a call for submissions. It is their job to collate all of that information and present it to the department, along with copies of all the submissions. That is their consultation function.

The CHAIR: Is it just a website?

Mr Smith: It is on the Recfishwest website, but I understand that they advertised that—calling for submissions—in the paper. If people contact us, we also refer them to that, and that has occurred on occasions. Recfishwest also has a representative role, so they are perfectly open to making submissions themselves through that process and we will consider them as part of it. They may well collate the results of the consultation process and put them to us, and put in a submission which counters some of the views expressed—maybe all of them, although I do not think so.

The CHAIR: Could you provide me on notice the contract or any contracts?

Mr Smith: The service level agreements we use?

The CHAIR: Yes; I guess what I am calling the contract between the Fisheries and—what Fisheries gets for the money that Recfishwest gets?

Mr Smith: Yes. Would you like a copy of the same for WAFIC as well?

The CHAIR: Yes, that would be useful.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I should also make the point though that if Recfishwest does not represent the interest of recreational fishermen, we would soon know; one thing about recreational fishermen is that they are not backward in coming forward!

The new structure means that the minister—Hon Jon Ford will be aware of this—will not have half a dozen statutory committees around the coast providing him with advice that could be all contrary to everybody else, and then Recfishwest having another point of view and it all being given to the minister and him being told, “You decide what the recreational fishing industry wants because these are the seven disparate points of view.” Under this structure we are saying to Recfishwest, “You sort out the differences between all the different groups within the recreational fishing industry and you come and tell us what the consensus position is of the recreational fishing sector, and if you can do that we will do it; we will take that as the advice.” That is instead of the minister trying to play God in all these things. It is working very well, in my view.

The CHAIR: In terms of representatives from the non-catch or non-fishing sector with an interest in fisheries, do they have a role in terms of a direct line like WAFIC does or Recfishwest does into Fisheries management?

Hon NORMAN MOORE: There are two organisations that represent the two major sectors of the fishing industry. One is the recreational sector and the other is the commercial sector; I do not know to which other groups you are referring.

The CHAIR: If you are managing fisheries for ecological outcomes as well, I have been on a fisheries management group as a conservation representative; it is not unknown in fisheries management to have representatives from the conservation or marine science section to offer input to fisheries management.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I do not have a Conservation Council employee in the Fisheries department.

The CHAIR: I am talking about the same model as you have with Recfishwest anyway.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: I have never known the conservation lobby to be backward in coming forward with its point of view.

The CHAIR: They are not being paid to do it in the way Recfishwest is.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: The money is coming from the recreational fishers through their licence fees.

The CHAIR: I think it might be time for tea.

Hon NORMAN MOORE: If you guys want to pay for a lobby group, go for it.

The CHAIR: The committee will forward any additional questions it has via the minister in writing in the next couple of days, together with the transcript of evidence, which includes the questions taken on notice. If members have any unasked questions, I ask them to submit these by email to the committee clerk at the close of this hearing. Responses to these questions will be requested within 10 working days of receipt of the questions. Should you be unable to meet the due date, please advise the committee in writing as soon as possible before the due date. The advice is to include any specific reasons as to why the due date cannot be met. Finally, on behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you very much for your attendance this evening, and we will close the hearing.

Hearing concluded at 6.09 pm
