

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2015

Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 22

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Lifting of night time fishing ban for *Geelong Star*

Proof Hansard page: 140

Senator WHISH-WILSON asked:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Did AFMA have any discussions with the Department of Environment when you lifted the night-fishing ban for the *Geelong Star*?

Dr Rayns: Yes. They were made aware of our intention to do so, and the basis for it.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: But the one-dolphin-kill policy still remains in place?

Dr Rayns: That is correct. It does.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Has there been any mortality since you have lifted—

Dr Rayns: Of dolphins?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Yes.

Dr Rayns: No, there has not. And if there were then under the current arrangement it would lead to the closure of another area of the fishery.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: What about seals?

Dr Rayns: There has been one additional seal mortality.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: When the boat came to Albany it then fished and travelled to Geelong. After it left Geelong there were other issues with dolphin mortality and the seal-exclusion device. Did the operator send away for equipment from Holland?

Dr Rayns: I think they may have done. I would have to check, but I know they have experts on board of their own who are net makers and gear designers, and they may well have sought advice and they may well have sought gear from overseas, yes. I would like to take it on notice just to check, but I know that part of their strategy was to help them improve the gear they were using.

Question: 22 (continued)

Answer:

While the Australian Fisheries Management Authority does not collect or hold information on the country of origin of fishing gear, we understand that in this case, the operator had to source marine mammal mitigation equipment from the Netherlands as it was not available in Australia.

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Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 23

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Small pelagic catch

Proof Hansard page: 140-141

Senator WHISH-WILSON asked:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Could you give us an idea of the small pelagic catch? What has happened to that?

Dr Rayns: From the *Geelong Star*?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: From the *Geelong Star*, yes. I think last time I asked you this question you said it was in cold storage. Do you know what has happened

Dr Rayns: What has happened to the catch since it has come ashore?

Senator WHISH-WILSON: Yes.

Dr Rayns: As far as I know, I am not sure it has travelled anywhere yet. I am not sure.

Senator WHISH-WILSON: When would you be sure of that?

Dr Rayns: I will have to take on notice what has happened with that fish—whether it is still in cold storage in Australia or whether it has gone to markets overseas.

Answer:

Seafish have advised that over 95 per cent of the fish landed to date by the *Geelong Star* has been exported to markets overseas for human consumption and the balance is in cold store intended for local markets.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2015

Agriculture and Water Resources

Question: 24

Division/Agency: Australian Fisheries Management Authority

Topic: Geelong Star

Proof Hansard page: 141-142

Senator WHISH-WILSON asked:

Senator WHISH-WILSON: What about offshore recreational fishing competitions? Were the locations of fishing competitions discussed between the *Geelong Star* crew and AFMA personnel as well, as areas to be avoided in case of bad publicity or perhaps interactions, if you do not mind me using that word, between rec fishermen and—

Dr Rayns: The vast majority of those competitions had finished by the time the *Geelong Star* started activities this year, so I doubt those communications have gone on, but I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

If an Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) officer is on-board and has information they think may be relevant to current or future fishing operations they can use their discretion as to what information is provided to the skipper or crew. In this case the AFMA officer informed the skipper and crew about information available about up-coming fishing competitions. However, as the skipper is responsible for the boat's operations it remains up to the skipper as to how they act upon any information provided.