

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2006

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F01

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Harvest Strategy Policy

Hansard Page: 118 (31/10/06)

Senator Sterle asked:

Would it be possible to provide a copy of the draft policy to the committee? That is all right, but would it be possible to provide a draft copy?

Answer:

The Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee will be provided with a copy of the draft *Harvest Strategy Policy* and a copy of the draft *Harvest Strategy Policy Implementation Guidelines* when these are released for consultation by the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2006

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F02

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: 119 (31/10/06)

Senator Sterle asked:

Is information on the number of boats that were taken out of each fishery on there?

They were all in the same fishery, were they?

Can you provide us with the details of what fisheries they came out of?

Answer:

There are only two operators that are now taking advantage of the \$25,000 boat scrapping incentive in the first round of the buyback. Of the two boats that will be scrapped, one relates to the Eastern Tuna and Billfish fishery and the other relates to the Western Tuna and Billfish fishery.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2006

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F03

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: 120 (31/10/06)

Senator Sterle asked:

Senator Sterle—Were any concessions bought back from fishers who were not actively fishing?

Answer:

Information on the 4 target fisheries in the tender is as follows:

1. In relation to the Northern Prawn Fishery (NPF), the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (the Department) ‘purchased’ a total of seven (7) NPF boat statutory fishing rights (SFRs) in the first round of the tender, and all of these fishing concessions had been active last year.
2. In relation to the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery (SESSF), the Department purchased a total of one hundred and forty two (142) SESSF SFRs, of which, sixty eight (68) had been used last year. This is not to say that all of the fishing concessions that had not been used were held by fishers who were not active. Some fishers hold a diversified portfolio of fishing concessions, and each one might not be used each year.
3. In relation to the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery, the Department purchased five (5) of the one hundred and fifty two (152) fishing concession packages in the fishery. Whilst the packages may have been purchased from active and inactive fishers, the scallop concessions have not been active due to the current closure of the fishery to allow stocks to re-build.
4. In evaluating tenders in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF), consideration was given to the future allocation of fishing capacity under a new plan of management – the future allocation is related in part to historical fishing activity. In this way, the Department was prepared to pay more for permits that were historically active.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F04

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Siewert asked:

Before the buyout announced in 2005 how many licences were there in Australian Commonwealth fisheries?

Answer:

Approximately 1600

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Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2006

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F05

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: Written question

Senator Siewert asked:

In what categories were they?

Answer:

See attached table for a list of fisheries.

[F&F 05 attachment]

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F06

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Siewert asked:

How many licences were bought out, and what portion of the announced funds have been spent to date?

Answer:

Approximately four hundred (400) licences have been purchased for \$89.42 million from an available pool of \$148.636 million.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F07

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Siewert asked:

How are the licences being valued?

Answer:

Licences are being purchased through a voluntary tender process. As it is a tender process, the fisher is required to determine the price being offered. In some cases, the offered amount may be equivalent to the amount required for an operator to exit the industry, less the money the operator is likely to receive for selling other parts of their business which cannot be tendered. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has placed parameters around maximum prices it is willing to pay.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F08

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Siewert asked:

How much quota was bought out?

Answer:

The quantities of quota Statutory Fishing Rights bought back by the Department are summarised in the table below:

Fishery	Class of Statutory Fishing Right (SFR)	Quantity of SFRs
Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery	Redfish Quota SFR	112,822
	John Dory Quota SFR	30,889
	Silver Trevally Quota SFR	74,912
	Jackass Morwong Quota SFR	106,064
	Royal Red Prawn Quota SFR	103,296
Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery	Commercial Scallop SFR	17,500
	Doughboy Scallop SFR	17,500

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question No: F&F09

Division/Agency: Fisheries and Forestry

Topic: Commonwealth Fisheries buyout

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator Siewert asked:

Is the Department/Authority concerned that the buyout is simply concentrating ownership of fishing assets in a smaller number of hands, and not actually reducing pressure on fisheries?

Answer:

By reducing the number of fishing concessions in fisheries, the economic operating environment in Commonwealth fisheries will improve. The end result will be fewer people fishing for the available resource. The buyout will allow operators to exit their fisheries entirely or rationalise their fishing operations.

The complementary measures under the Securing our Fishing Future package to improve biological sustainability include the introduction of new fisheries management measures by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority.