



The Hon. Rick Mazza MLC

Member for the Agricultural Region

Parliament of Western Australia

Shooters and Fishers Party



MEDIA RELEASE

MLC FISHING LICENCE WARNING

Rick Mazza, Western Australia's Shooters and Fishers elected representative, last night expressed his deep concern that thousands of fishers could face penalties after a failure by the Department of Fisheries, to send out 26,000 licence renewal notices.

Member for the Agriculture Region's Legislative Council, Rick used yesterday's Question Time to quiz the Minister for Fisheries about delays in sending out Recreational Boat Fishing Licence renewal notices and whether fishers would face penalties as a result.

"The Minister admitted that 26,000 fishers did not get their licence renewal notices on time," Rick said.

"I accept that these issues sometimes occur.

"What I am concerned about, in the Minister's statement is that it is the licence holders' responsibility to ensure their licences are current and that fishers may incur an infringement if fishing with an expired licence. I find that a cop-out!.

"People have a responsibility to buy a licence but as part of that fee I believe the department has an obligation to ensure that renewals are sent out on time. To suggest that people should diarise their fishing licence renewal is ludicrous," he said.

"We witnessed a similar occurrence with firearms licences in 2011. WA Police said the same thing at the time – that it is the licence holders' responsibility - but that situation took months to resolve and Police eventually had to back down," Rick recalled.

"I don't want to see fishers getting infringements they do not deserve. All fishers should check that their licences are current." he urged.

19 March 2014

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FISHERIES — LICENCES

1. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Minister for Fisheries:

Following the new process by which recreational boat fishing licences are now paid online or at a Department of Fisheries office and no longer through Australia Post, can the minister advise —

- (1) The number of recreational boat fishing licences that are issued annually?
- (2) Since the change from payments through Australia Post to online payments, has there been any delay in sending out licence renewal notices?
- (3) If yes to (2), will those fishers who have not been sent renewal notices be infringed in the event that they are found to be fishing on an expired licence?
- (4) When will the situation be rectified?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of this question.

- (1) As at 30 June 2013, the number of recreational boat fishing licences was 134 116.
- (2) The sending out of renewal notices was not linked to the Australia Post service. The Department of Fisheries recently experienced a delay of approximately two weeks in sending out notices for renewals due in the month of March.
- (3)–(4) In view of the issue in (2), approximately 26 000 fishers did not get their renewal notices on time. The situation has now been rectified and the affected fishers were recently invited to renew their licences. While the department endeavours to notify fishers four weeks before the expiry of their licences, it is ultimately the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure that their licence is current. The department may infringe a fisher without a valid licence.