



The Hon. Rick Mazza MLC
Member for the Agricultural Region
Parliament of Western Australia

Media Statement

September 1, 2020

Environmental impact of Westport unavoidable and unacceptable

Shooters, Fishers and Farmers MLC Rick Mazza says the construction of a new container port in Kwinana is an unnecessary risk to the sustainability of local fishing stocks.

Mr Mazza said as per the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development website, Cockburn and Warnbro Sounds and Owen Anchorage are the site of the largest known aggregations of pink snapper in the West Coast Bioregion and are critical for sustaining adequate breeding stocks.

“It is estimated Fremantle Port has the capacity to operate for another 50 years. The environmental impact on pink snapper spawning grounds through the construction and operation of Westport would be unavoidable,” Mr Mazza said.

“Peak body Recfishwest, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) WA and the WA branch of the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) have all urged caution about moving from Fremantle. Building Roe 8, which is necessary for reducing local traffic congestion and managing container truck movements, is the better option and the environmental impacts would be far less.”

Mr Mazza recently asked a Parliamentary question about the research Government has undertaken on the impacts on the pink snapper spawning grounds that will be impacted by the proposed port development. He was told the impact of the development on marine flora and fauna is one of the key issues that will need to be addressed in more detail. Government is investing \$25.9 million as part of the next stage of Westport for environmental studies, modelling, impact assessment and mitigation.

This will include a specific research program into pink snapper, a greater understanding of the impacts of port development on pink snapper and investigations into a range of resilience-building opportunities with the aim of increasing the overall resilience of the Cockburn Sound ecosystem.

“Even with environmental studies, I am unconvinced pink snapper breeding stocks along with crabs and other valuable fish resources can be satisfactorily protected during the new port’s construction. Cockburn Sound is a valuable resource and the ecological and commercial impacts of Westport would be devastating,” Mr Mazza said.

“One has to ask why the Government is so driven to build Westport and is spending millions of taxpayers’ dollars on environmental studies when common sense suggests that the construction and operation of the port will have unavoidable impacts on this invaluable marine nursery. Is it the lure of hundreds of millions of dollars from the redevelopment of the Fremantle Port once it is decommissioned?”

Ends

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