

Question on Notice

No. 157

Asked on Tuesday, 18 February 2020

MRS S WILSON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE GREAT BARRIER REEF, MINISTER FOR SCIENCE AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS (HON L ENOCH)—

QUESTION:

With reference to the environmental and socio-economic success of shell fish restoration projects throughout Australia and overseas—

Will the Minister advise why the Palaszczuk Labor Government is threatening to cease the successful trial reefs in the Pumicestone Passage, particularly in view of the fact that they have been shown to increase local fish stocks up to 10 times over?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Department of Environment and Science (the department) has supported the shell fish reef restoration trial in Pumicestone Passage granting a three-year research permit in 2018.

Requests to modify and expand the research in late 2018 and late 2019 were also supported by the department with the necessary permissions granted.

The trial is scheduled to be concluded at the end of 2020, at which time the proponent will be required to submit a report outlining the success and benefits of the trial, and to inform future activities in this field. The functionality of the oyster reef structures, in particular oyster recruitment, is currently unable to be determined.

Noting the proponent's interest in retaining the infrastructure permanently and for further expansion of reef restoration activities, the proponent has been encouraged to engage with the department around the governance arrangements for the ongoing introduction of artificial reef materials or a functioning shellfish reef as a permanent part of the marine park. The department will work collaboratively with the proponent to consider the available options.

In this regard and recognising the potential benefits and the increasing community interest in shellfish restoration, the department is establishing a working group of experts in the field of oyster reef restoration along with resource managers and Traditional Owners. This working group will advise the department and First Nations peoples on a strategic approach to shellfish reef restoration efforts towards maximising the likelihood of success and realising similar benefits to those experienced in other parts of the world.