

Question on Notice

No. 69

Asked on 24 February 2021

MR C BOYCE ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES AND MINISTER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister explain how the International not-for-profit organisation World Wide Fund for Nature Australia can purchase three commercial fishing licences on the Queensland East Coast with publicly donated money on the proviso that those commercial fishing licences were to be ‘retired’ to Fisheries Queensland and how, nearly three years later, why those commercial fishing licences are still in active status with renewal fees being paid every six months?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The East Coast Inshore Fishery is a limited entry fishery, which means that no new fishing authorities can be created to provide access to the fishery. For someone to access the fishery, he or she must buy or lease an existing authority to take certain fisheries resources.

Fishing authorities can be obtained by anyone, either by purchasing or leasing them on the open market. The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries does not interfere with market processes and does not regulate who can buy an authority or whether an authority is utilised or surrendered.

To ‘retire’ a fishing authority, any fishing licence holder would need to submit a ‘surrender authority form’ to the department. A fishing licence holder can voluntarily undertake this at any time. Under the *Fisheries Act 1994*, the department is only in a position to cancel a fishing authority if the authority holder does not pay the associated fees.

No Queensland Government funding has been provided to purchase or maintain these authorities.