

Although section 21AA has not yet commenced, Aboriginal people are allowed to take fish for cultural purposes. The New South Wales Government recognises the customary significance of the aquatic environment for Aboriginal people and the importance of fishing for the economic wellbeing of many communities. In support of this, we are developing cultural fishing management plans supporting fishing-related economic opportunity for Aboriginal businesses and delivering projects to protect cultural values and to support communities to fulfil their roles as custodians of New South Wales waters. Interim access arrangements allow for extended take-and-possession activities as well as the shucking of shellfish adjacent to waters where the resource is being taken. Cultural activities sought to be undertaken outside of prescribed rules may be able to be supported under a special permit or order. The Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, the responsible Minister, is advised on cultural fishing matters by the Aboriginal Fishing Advisory Council, which is made up of Aboriginal people including representatives of the Aboriginal Land Councils and native title bodies.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE (12:28): I ask a supplementary question. I thank the Minister for his considered response. If it is true, as he notes, that Aboriginal people are allowed to take fish for cultural purposes, how is it that dozens and dozens of First Nations peoples have had prosecutions brought against them in the last two years by Fisheries NSW for engaging in Aboriginal cultural fishing?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (12:28): I appreciate the question, but I remind the honourable member that it really should be referred to the Minister for Agriculture and Western New South Wales, who has responsibility for the matter. I strongly support the right of Aboriginal people to continue cultural fishing and I support the work that the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries is doing to enable Aboriginal cultural fishing. I understand that a local management plan approach is currently being explored to address in greater detail the specific needs and aspirations at a community level, and I urge all parties to support this approach.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH (12:29): I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate both answers with regard to section 21AA of the Fisheries Management Amendment Act by advising the House whether he will now advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people for the commencement of section 21AA with the agriculture Minister?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (12:29): As the Minister responsible for Aboriginal affairs, I always do whatever I can to advocate for Aboriginal people to all my colleagues. I appreciate the suggestion from the Hon. Mick Veitch but, ultimately, it is a matter for the Minister. I will, of course, continue to advocate to him about all matters that are relevant to Aboriginal people, just like I do with other Ministers.

CREATE NSW AND COVID BUSINESS INTERRUPTION INSURANCE

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (12:30): My question is directed to the Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts. Why has it been reported that Create NSW is tasked with developing an insurance scheme for major entertainment events impacted by COVID, like Bluesfest? Was it because Minister Stuart Ayres failed to do so?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (12:30): No, it is just because Create NSW does such a good job. I am happy to tell the House about what a good job it has been doing about COVID-19 and the—

The Hon. Walt Secord: The arts community does not say that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I beg your pardon? I heard the Hon. Walt Secord say something.

The Hon. Walt Secord: I said that the arts community does not feel that way.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is most certainly not the case, but the honourable member will hear more about that at the end of question time.

The Hon. Walt Secord: That is what they are telling me.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I don't think so. I would be happy to get out all the letters and read them onto the record, but I don't have to. The member could just go to a Musica Viva concert on Monday to hear the artistic director stand up before a thousand people and say that the New South Wales Government has supported the arts during COVID more than any State Government in the country. You can say what you like, Walt.

The Hon. Walt Secord: Point of order—

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You can bloviate it is much as you like, Walt.

The Hon. Walt Secord: My point of order is that the honourable member is misleading the House.

The PRESIDENT: There is no point of order.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is not a point of order.

The Hon. Walt Secord: In western Sydney—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is not a point of order. Sit down!

The PRESIDENT: Order! The member will resume his seat. I call the Hon. Walt Secord to order for the first time. Has the Minister concluded his answer?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: At this stage, yes.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM (12:32): I ask a supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate on the good job that Create NSW is doing? Given that the former Treasurer promised this on the Easter weekend when the Government cancelled Bluesfest, when will it happen?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (12:32): Is the honourable member referring to the festivals funding that we have already announced?

The Hon. John Graham: No, the insurance scheme.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Good, thank you. On 17 October 2021 I announced that the New South Wales Government is establishing an Event Saver Fund that will provide support to major festivals and events—

The Hon. John Graham: Point of order: My point of order is about direct relevance. That is an entirely different fund and the Minister does or should know that. I am asking about the insurance scheme that the Government has repeatedly referred to.

The PRESIDENT: I did not get a flavour for where the Minister was going. The Minister will continue his answer.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The Hon. John Graham was a bit quick off the mark. The Government is establishing an Event Saver Fund that will provide support to major festivals and events that are impacted by COVID-19 cancellations or postponements in 2022. We know that insurers are not providing coverage for COVID-19-related event cancellation, which may affect event organisers' confidence to schedule major events. The affordability and availability of insurance is a national issue, with affected businesses largely operating in all States, and in many cases across multiple States. Further, key policy levers and regulatory responsibilities related to insurance lie with the Australian Government.

I am advised that New South Wales Treasury is currently assessing all those issues and exploring ways to address them as relevant, including at interstate forums. The Event Saver Fund is only a temporary measure that will act as a precursor for a COVID business interruption insurance package that is being considered by Treasury. The New South Wales Government is consulting with the industry on the development of guidelines for the Event Saver Fund. Details of the insurance package will be announced shortly.

The Hon. WALT SECORD (12:34): I ask a second supplementary question. Will the Minister elucidate the part of his answer where he said that Treasury is working on a COVID insurance scheme? What is the timetable for providing details on that scheme?

The Hon. DON HARWIN (Special Minister of State, and Minister for the Public Service and Employee Relations, Aboriginal Affairs, and the Arts) (12:35): I answered that in my previous answer.

THE ROCKS ALFRESCO DINING

The Hon. LOU AMATO (12:35): My question is addressed to the Minister for Finance and Small Business. How is the New South Wales Government helping recovery in The Rocks through its new approach to alfresco dining?

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Is that where we are having our date?

The Hon. DAMIEN TUDEHOPE (Minister for Finance and Small Business) (12:35): Are you going to join me?

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey: Where's my invite?