

16 JUL 2018

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**Minister for Environment; Disability Services
Deputy Leader of the Legislative Council**

Your Ref: 3031 & 3033/2015
Our Ref: 62-07224

Ms R V C Fogliani
State Coroner
Level 10, Central Law Courts
501 Hay Street
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Ms Fogliani

I refer to the letter dated 22 March 2018 from Ms Dawn Wright, Manager of Listings, and received in this office on 3 April 2018 regarding the death of Chunjun Li and Jiaolong Zhang. I apologise for the delay in responding.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) has been actively working with a wide range of stakeholders in relation to the safety of rock fishers along the coast of Western Australia for several years. DBCA also supports Recfishwest in the implementation of the State Rock Fishing Safety Strategy, which Recfishwest manages.

DBCA is actively involved in improving the safety of rock fishers through a variety of means including the installation of safety devices at key locations, educational and informational signage and community engagement activities. DBCA has also been working with key stakeholders in the Albany area including volunteer marine rescue, the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD), Surf Life Saving WA and WA Police.

DBCA supports the wearing of life jackets by rock fishers when fishing from rocks and has supported the free life jacket loan program coordinated by Recfishwest for many years. In addition to this, DBCA has also included safety messages regarding the wearing of life jackets when rock fishing on signage and other information material.

DBCA is continuing to work through its response to the recommendations of Coroner Vicker and will progress discussions with relevant Government agencies and other key stakeholders as a priority.

As you may be aware, on the 29 April 2018, the Premier, Hon Mark McGowan MLA confirmed that the Minister for Fisheries, Hon Dave Kelly MLA was investigating whether existing legislation could enable the mandatory wearing of life jackets at certain locations while rock fishing on a trial basis. Salmon Holes was specifically identified as one such potential location.

DBCA has confirmed that it is willing to participate in a whole-of-government trial. While there is currently no existing legislation that could enable such a trial, it is likely that regulations, requiring people to wear life jackets while rock fishing on *Conservation and Land Management Act 1984* (CALM Act) lands, could lawfully be made.

DBCA continues to liaise closely with DPIRD, which is the lead agency on behalf of the State Government in respect to progressing the trial.

Yours sincerely

Hon Stephen Dawson MLC
MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT

11 JUL 2018