

SHARK DRUM LINE PROGRAM

11. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Premier:

I have a supplementary question. If the Premier is so convinced that the drum lines make our beaches safer, why has he ordered that they be taken away from Cottesloe Beach a full five days before the Rottne Channel Swim?

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I think that is obvious. Surely the member for Bassendean understands that point.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Nobody can hear anything.

Dr M.D. Nahan interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Riverton, I formally call you to order for the first time today.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I want to hear the question; we can hear nothing.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I would have thought members were all aware that drum lines —

[Interruption from the gallery.]

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am sure all members know that drum lines and nets—we do not use nets here because there is high bycatch of any indiscriminate —

[Interruption from the gallery.]

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Sixty-six sharks having been caught, there has been no bycatch at all; no dolphins, no turtles—none at all!

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: None at all!

In response to the supplementary question, if the opposition will just listen —

Mr B.S. Wyatt: There must have been—you released most of them!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: There was no bycatch.

The SPEAKER: Member for Victoria Park, you might be taking an early rest, so just calm down.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: The only creatures that have been caught on these hooks are sharks; no other animal, no other fish.

Mr D.J. Kelly: Answer the question.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am answering the member for Bassendean's question.

Members would be aware that drum lines have been used since the 1930s in New South Wales, since the 1960s in Queensland and since the 1950s in Southern Africa. There is a sharp difference in the number of fatalities between New South Wales and Queensland compared with Western Australia. In New South Wales and in parts of Queensland there are nets. People might think nets close off beaches—they do not. They are at the base of the ocean and they trap everything—anything and everything. We deliberately decided we would use only drum lines.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I call you to order for the first time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: So, having looked at all that —

Mr W.J. Johnston: Are you scared of answering the question?

Mr C.J. BARNETT: I am answering the question.

Mr W.J. Johnston: No, you're not.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: So therefore we decided that in Western Australia we would only —

Mr W.J. Johnston: So why take them away? That was the question.

The SPEAKER: Member for Cannington, I do not need a running commentary; I call you to order for the second time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: It was decided not to use nets, only drum lines, to use large hooks—in fact larger ones were specifically made to minimise other catch or smaller sharks or anything else—and it was decided to put them one kilometre offshore. In Queensland they are far, far closer to the shore. There were a variety of reasons for that. They are one kilometre out. Only about 10 days ago there were sharks larger than three metres off Floreat, Cottesloe and Leighton. If they are caught one kilometre out, it would seem to me that they are also travelling between that kilometre and the beach.

With respect to the HBF Rottnest Channel Swim, clearly a baited hook is going to attract sharks.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for West Swan, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: Members do not have to be rocket scientists to know that a fish will swim to where the bait is—that is how fish are caught. The Rottnest swim will be on Saturday morning—I will start it again—and there will be around 2 000 swimmers. As if anyone would leave baited hooks in the pathway of the swimmers! That would be totally irresponsible, and at the request of the Rottnest Channel Swim Association those hooks have been removed from Cottesloe and North Cottesloe well before the swim. I would have thought that was the most obvious point; it amazes me that the opposition should have to ask a question on that.