

SHARKS — HAZARD MITIGATION INITIATIVES

**119. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Fisheries:**

Can the minister update the house on the progress of this government's shark hazard mitigation initiatives, and what attempts are being made to work cooperatively with the federal government on this issue?

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

I thank the member for Bunbury for the question and I congratulate him on his election. I can inform the house that consistent with our election commitment we have gone ahead and introduced a \$200 subsidy for personal shark deterrents that have been approved by the Department of Fisheries. That subsidy came into place on 26 May this year. I am pleased to inform the house that in the two and a half weeks that subsidy has been in place, over 350 Western Australians have taken it up and purchased shark deterrents.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Lucky rich people.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** I think that is a pretty good uptake. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has already interjected, but I think that is a pretty good indication from the people of Western Australia that they see value in this subsidy option. Two and a half weeks have passed and over 350 Western Australians have taken up this offer.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Clearly, the public of Western Australia sees the merit in this subsidy option. I do not understand why members opposite continue to rubbish this option. When we were in opposition, sure, we disagreed with the then government on whether to have a shark cull, but on every other aspect of shark policy, we pretty much accepted everything and gave our support to every bit of new technology that the previous government wanted to introduce. We supported the then government when it came to beach enclosures, drone technology, Clever Buoy or any other bit of new technology that came on the market. We did not jump up and quibble and say not to do it and that it would not work. We gave the previous government the latitude to introduce that technology to see whether it was successful. Now we are in government and we have research from the University of Western Australia that the former government commissioned that states —

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** It said it does not work 10 per cent of the time.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has just said that that research showed that these devices do not work. On 4 April last year, the University of Western Australia released its report. What did the report state about the Shark Shield, the device that we are now subsidising?

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** I quote from the press release put out by UWA that, in relation to the Shark Shield —

... it was found to prevent white sharks ... from interacting with the static bait 10 out of 10 times on their first approach.

It was only after subsequent approaches that the rate dropped slightly to 9 out of 10 times ...

That is what the University of Western Australia stated.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Deputy Leader of the Opposition, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The opposition is rubbishing the results of the research that it funded when in government. The shadow Minister for Fisheries, the member for Geraldton, was quoted in an article on 6 June as saying our approach was arrogant. He said —

“These devices have not been proven to be 100 per cent effective; they offer too little protection to too few people.”

The University of Western Australia stated that this device was effective 10 out of 10 times on the shark's first approach, and nine out of 10 times on subsequent approaches. As a government, are we going to take advice from the University of Western Australia or the member for Geraldton? Ten out of 10 times, I would take the advice of the University of Western Australia.

In respect of the attitude of the federal government on this issue, we have written to the federal government asking for it to fund further research in Western Australia, and I regret to inform the house that the federal government has indicated that it will continue to only fund research into shark populations on the east coast. That

information will be used to extrapolate population numbers on the west coast. There are two distinct populations of white sharks—one on the east coast and one on the west coast. If the federal Liberal environment minister would really like to assist people over here, he would spend some money on the population on the west coast, rather than, as usual, having the federal Liberal government spend all its money on the east coast.