

PERSONAL SHARK DETERRENT SUBSIDY SCHEME

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.J. KELLY (Bassendean — Minister for Fisheries) [9.12 am]: I rise to inform the house that the McGowan government's world-first personal shark deterrent subsidy scheme has reached a significant milestone, with more than 4 000 rebates now claimed by Western Australian ocean users. The uptake of rebates has increased following a successful digital advertising campaign aimed at raising awareness of the personal shark deterrent rebate scheme, particularly amongst the surfing community. Although divers still lead the take-up of the deterrents, the number of surfers taking advantage of the rebate continues to grow. The top 10 locations for the purchase of the surf device were Mandurah, Karrinyup, Scarborough, Albany, Floreat, North Beach, Hillarys, Busselton, Dunsborough and Ocean Reef. The top 10 locations for dive device rebates were Bunbury, Mandurah, Safety Bay, Busselton, Albany, Hillarys, Success, North Coogee, Ocean Reef and Karrinyup.

More than 50 per cent of those who have claimed a rebate were from the south west, followed by those in the metropolitan coastal suburbs and the great southern. There are still 1 000 rebates available after the McGowan government increased the number to 5 000 in late September. The program gives ocean users a \$200 rebate when they purchase the Ocean Guardian Freedom+ Surf bundle and the Ocean Guardian Freedom7, both scientifically proven devices, from a registered retailer.

The rebate scheme is just one facet of the McGowan government's comprehensive shark hazard mitigation strategy, which was recently expanded to include the state's first official shark warning app—SharkSmart WA. The app provides near real-time information on shark activity, including current alerts and warnings, to ocean users. The new app can be downloaded for free from the App Store or Google Play. Our stakeholders, including Surfing WA and Surf Life Saving WA, endorse this app, as do thousands of Western Australians. In under two weeks, more than 5 000 Western Australians downloaded the app.

With the warm weather coming and summer not too far away, it is important for all Western Australians to start switching on their "Sea Sense". Our comprehensive shark mitigation strategy has something to help all ocean users. For surfers and divers, there are personal shark deterrents; for swimmers, there are beach enclosures; and for all other water users, there is the shark monitoring network, and beach and helicopter patrols.

This summer I urge all water users to enjoy the beach safely by switching on their "Sea Sense".