

SHARKS — ATTACK — PREVENTIVE MEASURES

**574. Hon RICK MAZZA to the Attorney General representing the Minister for Fisheries:**

Given the tragic events during recent weeks in which another two lives were lost to sharks while people were engaged in customary and conventional aquatic activities, can the minister advise of any initiatives being considered to prevent further attacks?

**Hon MICHAEL MISCHIN replied:**

On behalf of the Minister for Fisheries, I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

There have been 14 shark-related fatalities in Western Australia since 2000. The recent two fatalities are extremely unfortunate, and the government's thoughts are with the families and friends of those who have experienced these terrible losses. Understandably, this unprecedented concentration of fatalities continues to have a significant impact on people's perceptions of the ocean and their enjoyment of water-based activities. Since 2008, the Liberal–National government has committed over \$30 million to a comprehensive shark hazard mitigation strategy that includes beach and aerial patrols, jetskis for surf lifesaving, watchtowers, community engagement and education including the SharkSmart website, a serious threat policy, tagging and tracking studies, research into nonlethal detection and deterrent technologies and beach enclosures. The Liberal–National government is committed to addressing its duty of care to minimise the risk of shark attacks by supporting existing measures, investigating ways to enhance and expand these measures, and researching new approaches as they become available.

The government's commitment to public safety was reaffirmed in the 2016–17 state budget with \$1.54 million of funding for Western Australia's integrated shark hazard mitigation program. The funding is to ensure the maintenance of real-time satellite-linked detection receivers for the shark monitoring network, and it includes a capital works allocation of \$495 000 for the replacement of up to 18 prototype receivers with the latest versions. With more than 860 sharks already tagged, including more than 220 white sharks, the world-class detection network is providing invaluable information on the presence of potentially dangerous sharks off our popular beaches. The budget funding will also enable the Department of Fisheries to continue tagging more sharks when opportunities arise. The SharkSmart website's functions will be maintained to provide a valuable information source for all water users on current shark alerts, detections, sightings and other details. The \$1.54 million budget commitment will support an ongoing strategy to raise community awareness of high shark risk areas, how to take protective measures and how to report shark sightings. The department will also provide hazard monitoring and a response capacity in the event of a shark attack and the identification of a serious threat or whale carcasses.

The Liberal–National government has also allocated a further \$400 000 towards beach enclosures in 2016–17, of which \$200 000 would be for a new enclosure at Quinns Rocks and the remainder will be used to supplement funding committed last year for an enclosure at Sorrento. The government has now funded five beach enclosures.