

SHARKSMART APP

976. Ms E. HAMILTON to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the launch of the SharkSmart app at the weekend as part of the government's Sea Sense campaign. Will the minister explain to the house how this new app, which marries up with the existing SharkSmart website, will improve safety for Western Australia beachgoers, and how has this announcement been received by the surfing and beach-going public?

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for her question and her interest in this issue. Yes—on Sunday, I went down to Sorrento Beach with representatives from Surf Life Saving WA and Surfing WA. They joined me to launch our SharkSmart app. The SharkSmart app means that, for the first time, people will be able to get all the information they need in the palm of their hand before they go to their favourite beach. We have a website that gives a lot of information about shark sightings, shark activities and what facilities are at individual beaches. Now, for the first time, that is available through an app. It is a free app that people can download. People can identify their favourite beaches or a number of beaches that they might want to go to on a regular basis and they can get regular notifications pushed through to them—alerts telling them of important information that might be of interest to them before they go to the beach. I am really pleased at how this has been received. We only launched it on Sunday. I am told that over 2 000 Western Australians have already downloaded the app, and I am told it is trending in the top 10 educational apps in the app store. It has been very well received.

Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup: I am surprised the minister knows what an app store is!

Mr D.J. KELLY: I am sure the member for Dawesville will have downloaded it by now! In all seriousness, I hope the member for Vasse downloads it as well, because it gives a beachgoer all the information they need before they go to the beach. That is in conjunction with other things that we have done. I could talk for hours, if members like. Members opposite are not interested in this topic, but I will tell Mr Speaker.

This is a serious issue. Mark Lane, CEO of Surfing WA, was at the press conference. He said that he thinks we are probably safer in the water now than we have been in the last 10 years. Surfing WA has a partnership with the state government for the first time; we have given Surfing WA some additional funding for jet skis and first aid training and it now promotes the initiatives that we have put together. We entered into that partnership 12 months ago. Surfing WA was there on Sunday. We have worked with it on the development of this app. Surfing WA is very pleased with what we are doing and Surf Life Saving is on board with what we are doing. Surfing WA has a partnership with the state government for the first time. Those organisations recognise the breadth of the things that the Western Australia government is doing, and the CEO of Surfing WA thinks that people are safer now than they have been in the last 10 years. I know that members opposite need to be critical—I just wish that they would get on board.

Another statistic that we put to the media on Sunday is that 3 900 Western Australians have taken up a personal shark deterrent, yet that initiative continues to be criticised by members opposite. I wish they would look at the range of things that we are doing. The beach enclosures are fantastic. The helicopter patrols that do the flyover are fantastic. The jet skis are fantastic. The app and the personal shark deterrents are all part of what we are doing.

On Sunday, we also launched the next phase of our Sea Sense campaign, which will run over the next two months, to make sure that Western Australians are aware of all the things we are doing, so that when they go to the beach they can be as best prepared as possible and will have a great summer.