

**WISALTS BANKS
SHARK DRUM LINE PROGRAM**

Statement

HON RICK MAZZA (Agricultural) [9.42 pm]: I know that everybody is pretty keen to go home after the long and tortuous debate on the Mental Health Bill —

Several members interjected.

Hon RICK MAZZA: Absolutely tortuous. I am sorry.

Last Friday, I travelled to Aldersyde, a little siding to the east of Brookton. The reason I travelled to Aldersyde was to go to a farm demonstration of a system called WISALTS banks. That is a method of looking after the land whereby trenches are dug along the face of hills and down to the bedrock, plastic is put down, and the trenches are then filled back in so that as the water comes down the hill, it is retained and does not pour down to the bottom of the hill, where salt degradation builds up, along with waterlogging and other sorts of things. I was very impressed by that process. I was also very impressed by the industrious nature of the farmers in the wheatbelt, who are doing the best they can to look after their land. This process is very environmentally advantageous, although fairly expensive. It was very satisfying to see that system demonstrated, and, as always when we go to these places, the Country Women's Association put on a pretty good event, with lemonade, and scones with jam and cream, and all that sort of thing, which is irresistible. I am very pleased that our farmers are looking after the land in the way they are.

As always when we drive out to the country, I switched on ABC talkback radio. As we know, Hon Lynn MacLaren came into this chamber during members' statements last Thursday to deliver the news that the Environmental Protection Authority had given a negative report on the shark drum line program. When I turned on the radio, the first person to come on was the Premier, to express his disappointment at the EPA report and the fact that the drum line program would cease. Of course, all sorts of calls came in. One caller rang in and said that if people know the dangers, they should not go into the water. I do not know about others in this chamber, but as a young person growing up in Western Australia, one of the real joys of living in this state was being able to go to the beach with friends and family, and swim and surf and dive in the ocean—all those sorts of things. In those days, we really enjoyed the experience, and we never gave a second thought to being attacked or eaten by a shark; it was something that happened many generations ago, and it was not something that we thought about. But obviously things have now changed dramatically, and there is a whole host of theories as to why things have changed.

Others also got to talk on that talkback radio program. I will read from the transcript of the audio clip. This has been condensed, so excuse me if the speech is a bit broken. The first was Barry Carbon. The clip reads —

Barry Carbon, former EPA head; disappointment with the EPA decision yesterday; number one thing in protecting the environment is to look after the safety of people; in this report they say the safety of people's not their business; shark recovery program over the last 20 years has increased the number of sharks; by-product of this has been the risk to the public; drum-lines work; has great admiration for the courage that the Premier has shown in the face of lots of opposition; remembers what it was like to travel to the beach as a young person, believes this joy is being taken away due to a decision to choose to have more sharks off our coast; claims the powers that be in WA have gone and hired well known shark protecting campaigners to get their independent views about shark controls; you get exactly the answer you'd expect to get from those people.

This is the former head of the EPA expressing his disappointment at the report.

Another caller was Gary —

Gary, Dunsborough surfer; disappointed with Paul Vogel's decision on the drum-lines; probable that there will be another attack from now until summer; sharks active in this area around now; drum-lines should have already been in place; ...

Another caller was Bruce —

Bruce, supporter of the shark policy; disappointed with the decision to end drum-line program; EPA should be held responsible for any deaths.

There will be a lot of people in the water this year, regardless of shark attacks. There has been a lot of talk about putting shark barriers in little isolated places. But we have a lot of coastline. There are a lot of lovely places where people can go and swim. But we cannot afford to put up shark barriers in all those places. Meelup Beach and Yallingup do not lend themselves to having a shark barrier because of the wave action in those areas. So people will be limited to where they can swim if they do not want to be eaten by a shark. I am very concerned

that the lifestyle that we have always loved and enjoyed in Western Australia is under some threat. How we deal with that, I do not know. Drum lining has been proven to work in the east, and I believe that, given the right time of the year, it could work here, too. We will be faced with the possibility this summer that someone will be taken by a shark, or that two or three people will be taken by a shark, which was unheard of 20 years ago. When that happens, who will be to blame? I think Bruce has a point—the EPA and the anti-shark campaigners will be complicit in that.

House adjourned at 9.48 pm
