

SHARKS — HAZARD MITIGATION

652. Mr M.J. FOLKARD to the Minister for Fisheries:

Before I start, I would like to welcome the politics and law students from Peter Moyes Anglican Community School in my electorate of Burns Beach.

I refer to the McGowan Labor government's comprehensive shark mitigation strategy. Can the minister outline to the house how this government —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I will hear the question in silence. Start again.

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: I refer to the McGowan Labor government's comprehensive shark mitigation strategy.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr M.J. FOLKARD: Can the minister outline to the house how this government continues to investigate measures that will keep Western Australians safe, including aerial patrols by Surf Life Saving WA?

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse!

Mr D.J. KELLY replied:

I thank the member for his question and I thank him for the service that he provides as a hardworking member of Surf Life Saving WA. I know he is going through the process to requalify for another year in the surf, protecting people at the beaches. I thank the member for his hard work. Before I answer that question, I want to acknowledge the hardworking members of the West Beechboro Primary School P&C, who are also in the gallery today. I hope they have a good time; they are listening intently!

I just want to update the house on what we are doing in the area of shark mitigation. It is an issue that the opposition has taken a considerable amount of interest in.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY: Today we began the public consultation for the SMART drum lines trial that was announced in Gracetown. We now have an online survey for people to complete. They can comment on two options we are putting forward for a trial to be conducted in the Gracetown area.

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: I will come to the member for Vasse in a minute, so she might want to listen to this!

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY: I have a lot to go through here so members opposite might want to let me finish.

Point of Order

Mr S.K. L'ESTRANGE: Mr Speaker, the minister said he has a lot to get through. This is not brief ministerial statements; this is question time.

The SPEAKER: That is not a point of order.

Questions without Notice Resumed

Mr D.J. KELLY: We have announced the beginning of the public consultation on the trial. We are giving people the option to comment on two proposals for the trial. We are also giving people the option to comment on proposed locations for new satellite receivers in the capes region. Along with the Shark-Management-Alert-in-Real-Time drum lines trial, we have committed to extending the shark monitoring network to the capes region. The previous government never did that. For all their interest in this issue, members opposite never extended the shark monitoring network to the capes region or the Esperance region when they were in government. We are doing both. As part of the SMART drum lines trial, members of the public can also comment on our proposal to extend the shark monitoring network to the capes region. This measure complements the other things that we have implemented in recent weeks. The Premier and I announced the beginning of aerial patrols for Surf Life Saving WA. Again, they will start three weeks earlier than they have in previous years. The funding is in excess of \$3 million. The funding was not in the budget that we inherited from the previous government. Again, for all their interest in this area, members opposite

did not go to the last election with secure funding for Surf Life Saving's aerial patrols. With the Deputy Premier, I also launched the first BEN—beach emergency number—located in Kwinana. The Deputy Premier and I unveiled the signs that will uniquely number beaches in Western Australia, so in the event of a shark attack or a heart attack, people will be able to contact emergency services rapidly. We are doing a range of things in this area.

I want to point out some comments made by the member for Vasse. So far, over 2 000 Western Australians have availed themselves of the subsidy we have provided for personal shark deterrents that have been universally tested to show that they are effective. Unfortunately, the member for Vasse and other members of the opposition are still out there discouraging people from purchasing personal shark deterrents.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members!

Mr D.J. KELLY: On 31 August —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, I call you to order for the third time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: On 31 August, the member for Vasse tweeted —

The State Govt must stop wasting taxpayers \$ on subsidising a personal deterrent ... & leave it to the ind to invest in personal safety.

What is her problem with us encouraging members of the public to purchase a personal shark deterrent that has been proven to be effective?

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: I do not know whether you have noticed I am on my feet. I call the member for Darling Range, the Minister for Women's Interests and the minister for —

Mr F.M. Logan: Housing.

The SPEAKER: Not housing, no—the Minister for Emergency Services.

Mr P.C. Tinley interjected.

The SPEAKER: And the Minister for Housing!

Mr D.J. KELLY: On the same day as that little tirade on Twitter, the member for Vasse said that taxpayers do not subsidise bike helmets, so why should they subsidise a commercial product? The member for Vasse does not realise that we mandate bicycle helmets, so they do not have to be subsidised. We do not subsidise seatbelts because we mandate them. In a whole range of areas, the member for Vasse is completely wrong in the way that she deals with this issue. Research done under the member's government —

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I am on my feet; I call you to order for the first time.

Several members interjected.

The SPEAKER: Members, I thought this was a serious issue, but obviously you want to joke about it.

Mr D.J. KELLY: If the next person who is attacked by a shark is not wearing a personal shark deterrent, members opposite will have to ask themselves whether their position did anything to discourage them from taking up those devices. Ever since we introduced the subsidy —

Mrs A.K. Hayden interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Darling Range, I call you to order for the second time.

Mr D.J. KELLY: Ever since we introduced the subsidy, members opposite have been out there criticising it. The member for Vasse said that personal shark deterrents —

Ms L. Mettam interjected.

The SPEAKER: Member for Vasse, you are on three calls. Do you want to go home early? Is the surf up?

Mr D.J. KELLY: I heard the member for Vasse say on radio that personal shark deterrents are like waving a toothpick. Member for Vasse and Leader of the Opposition, over 2 000 Western Australians have taken up personal shark deterrents because of the subsidy that we introduced. The people who have bought those devices have a much higher level of protection than they did previously when they go into the water. I urge members

opposite that whatever else they advocate for, do not discourage people from purchasing those devices, because they have been shown to work. If members opposite care about human life—that is what they say is most important around this issue—they should stop discouraging people from buying those devices.