

SHARKS — HAZARD MITIGATION

**994. Mr D.T. PUNCH to the Minister for Fisheries:**

Can the minister update the house on the unprecedented measures that the McGowan Labor government is taking to protect Western Australians at the beach this summer through its comprehensive shark mitigation strategy?

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Members! Member for Dawesville, I call you to order for the first time. I am very interested, because we have sharks in our pool down there.

**Mr D.J. KELLY replied:**

I thank the member for Bunbury for his question. With summer only a few days away, I thought it timely to update the house on our most recent initiatives in this area. We recently announced the Sea Sense campaign, which has two objectives: firstly, to ensure that Western Australians are aware of the recent initiative that we have put in place for this summer, and, secondly, to encourage everyone who goes into the water over summer to make good decisions to ensure their safety. The Sea Sense campaign encompasses a few new initiatives.

**Mr J.E. McGrath** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for South Perth—little chatterbox.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** I am very pleased to say that we now have an agreement with Surfing WA, the peak surfing body of Western Australia. It has come on board to work with the government on this issue. As part of that agreement we are funding Surfing WA with \$120 000 over three years. That will provide it with a new surf ski and some drones to enable it to provide additional surveillance at some of its events. It will also fund the Surfers Rescue 365 program, which is a first-aid program that it wants to roll out for surfers in WA. We are very pleased that Surfing WA is now on board with what we are doing.

The second announcement we made is that we have established an independent scientific panel to look at new or possible initiatives. As members would be aware, a lot of ideas come to government about what we should be doing in this space. For the first time we will have the Chief Scientist along with three other local and interstate eminent scientists who have made themselves available to consider new options that come forward. Again, we are trying to get less opinion and more science into what works in this area. We have committed to developing an app by the first half of next year to enable people to get real-time notification of conditions at their local beach when they want to go for a swim. There also has been an update of the SharkSmart website, which, for the first time, will provide much more information around such things as the location of beach enclosures, for example. But there is a lot more user-friendly information on the SharkSmart website.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** Did you buy them a surf ski or a jet ski?

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Scarborough, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** That was about two minutes ago. Just for the member for Scarborough's benefit, we are providing money for a jet ski.

**Mrs L.M. Harvey:** You said a surf ski, which is a totally different thing.

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Sorry. I take it back. It will provide a jet ski and some drones. Get them a surf ski as well! If the member for Scarborough would like to get a full briefing on the program, I am happy to do that.

Finally, the fifth thing that we announced was an update of the whale carcass protocols. For the first time, the whale carcass protocol will apply statewide. Believe it or not, under the previous government different whale carcass protocols applied in different locations in Western Australia. It is one of the reasons for the confusion that existed under the previous government about how to manage this issue.

We are very pleased—especially with the partnership that we have developed with Surfing WA—that we are working cooperatively with the surfing community. It complements the things that we already have in place. As I indicated earlier during question time, nearly 2 500 Western Australians have taken up our offer of a subsidised personal shark deterrent. They are backed by science and, as much as members opposite want to make a joke of these things, they save lives.

Beach emergency number signs are now being rolled out at beaches across Western Australia. If we ask the first responders, they say that they will save lives. Whether it be because of a heart attack or a shark attack, those BEN signs will save lives. Members opposite see this as an opportunity to score points. We want to make our beaches as safe as possible. We want to do what the science tells us. If we do that, we can improve safety in Western Australia.

