

TOURISM — INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

**1127. Hon RICK MAZZA to the minister representing the Minister for Tourism:**

The latest figures from Tourism Research Australia's international visitor survey show the number of international visitors to WA fell by 1.8 per cent, international visitor expenditure declined by 9.9 per cent and the number of international visitor nights was down 4.4 per cent in 2017–18. Western Australia was the only state to experience a decline in international visitor numbers and expenditure. Given how close we are to the summer period, can the minister advise the following.

- (1) What research, if any, has been undertaken on the effect shark attack incidents in Western Australia over the past 15 years have had on deterring visitors to our state?
- (2) If yes to (1), what countermeasures has the minister taken to offset any negative impacts that shark attacks have had on Western Australia's reputation as a safe place to visit?
- (3) Does the minister have any research to support anecdotal reports from recreational fishers, fishing charter operators and tackle stores of increasing shark numbers in north western waters resulting in increased bite-offs, which is discouraging fishers from visiting northern coastal towns and affecting businesses in those locations?
- (4) If yes to (3), what measures is the minister taking to counter any negative impacts that shark numbers and bite-offs are having on tourist visitors to these towns?

**Hon ALANNAH MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of the question. The following information has been provided by the Minister for Tourism.

- (1) Research undertaken by BDA Marketing Planning on behalf of Tourism Western Australia in 2018 shows that only four per cent of potential visitors from key international markets cite dangerous local wildlife as a barrier to visiting WA. This result is no different from when the same question was asked three years ago, in 2015. Other research—coastal precincts research phase 1—undertaken by Kantar Public on behalf of Tourism Western Australia earlier this year asked visitors what they knew about Perth's beaches prior to visiting, and only one in 10 spontaneously mentioned sharks. The natural beauty of WA's coastline is significantly top of mind. The same research showed the coastal activities that visitors are most interested in experiencing are watching the sunset, walking along the beach, and having a snack or meal.
- (2) Tourism Western Australia continues to promote the state's positive attributes in interstate and international markets, such as its natural beauty, regional attractions and the wide variety of experiences available. Visitors to Western Australia are seeking a wide range of things to do, and Tourism Western Australia promotes these through its travel, trade and public relations activity, and through cooperative marketing with airlines and agents.
- (3) No.
- (4) Not applicable.