

SHARK DRUM LINE PROGRAM

280. Mr D.J. KELLY to the Acting Premier:

I have a supplementary question. Why should the Western Australian public accept school funding cuts when the government has appeared to give this pet project a blank cheque?

Dr K.D. HAMES replied:

It is clearly not a blank cheque. The projects were put out to tender. Those tenders were awarded, those organisations were put in place, and funds were provided for the Department of Fisheries to do its component of it. Groups in Western Australia are protesting against drum lines, yet those same organisations totally ignore and make no comment about the fact that for 50 years Queensland has had drum lines that have smaller hooks and a greater by-catch and New South Wales has nets. The drum lines have been put in place to protect the citizens of Western Australia not as a total solution but to aid in the reduction of attacks by sharks on people in Western Australia. We are spending a large amount of money on other aspects of that policy, particularly research into shark repellents, research on sounds that may repel sharks and research on wetsuit designs that may repel sharks. We are working very hard to protect the public of Western Australia and we will continue to do so.