

SHARK DETERRENT DEVICES — SUBSIDY

**787. Ms E. HAMILTON to the Minister for Fisheries:**

Can the minister update the house on how the McGowan Labor government is continuing to improve community safety and help provide protection for vulnerable beach users through its scientifically proven personal shark deterrent program?

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

I thank the member for the question and her ongoing interest in this area. Yes, I can advise the house that this week, I announced that state government will make another 1 000 rebates available for personal shark deterrents that have been approved by the department. Since we introduced this program in May 2017, over 3 800 Western Australians have taken advantage of this \$200 rebate and have purchased a personal shark deterrent. Over 3 800 Western Australians have taken up this program. I am really pleased with the take-up. The acceptance amongst the dive community has been absolutely outstanding. The majority of those rebates have been to people from the dive community; however, since last year, when we approved a device specifically designed for surfers, over 600 surfers have now purchased a surf device. That take-up is despite the fact that members opposite have refused to support this rebate scheme. The member for Vasse described —

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Vasse! Please, you are doing so well.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** You were doing so well!

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** The member for Vasse described these university-tested devices as like waving a toothpick at a shark. But despite that negative commentary, over 3 800 Western Australians have taken up these devices. They have made the decision to take a degree of personal responsibility for their own safety. They can now take their device to the most remote surf location in Western Australia, their secret dive location and know that they have additional protection.

**Ms L. Mettam** interjected.

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

**Mr D.J. KELLY:** Of course, this is not the only thing that we are doing in this area. We have re-funded the helicopter patrols for Surf Life Saving WA for another year. They will be expanding their drone patrols this year as a result of that funding. We have expanded the shark-monitoring network to include Esperance and the capes region. For the life of me, given the history of these matters, I do not know why members opposite never extended the shark-monitoring network to the Margaret River region or to Esperance. Gracetown has had a lot of shark activity over the years. We have put satellite receivers in that location. We now have a partnership with Surfing WA, for which we have provided additional funds for jetskis; a specific surfer first aid program that it is rolling out with our support; and, importantly, something that goes under the radar a bit, there are now 730 BEN signs—that is, beach emergency numbers—at Western Australian beaches. These signs give each location a unique identifier, so if there is a shark attack or some other medical emergency, people can give that number directly to emergency services, and emergency service officers are not wandering up and down the coast trying to find out which car park they need to attend. When we launched that, the ambulance officers said to me, “That will definitely save lives.” That is at 730 locations. We hope to have 1 000 BEN signs by the end of summer.

We continue to tag great white sharks. Just recently, in Cockburn Sound, we tagged eight great white sharks as part of the snapper season. We have the Sea Sense community education campaign, and, of course, we have the SMART drum line trial in Gracetown, which continues to roll out in a very smooth and professional manner. Members may want to call the range of things that we have rolled out a comprehensive shark monitoring or shark mitigation package. We can never completely eliminate the risk, but, as a government, we are getting on with the job.