

SHARKS — HAZARD MITIGATION

Statement by Minister for Fisheries

MR D.T. PUNCH (Bunbury — Minister for Fisheries) [9.12 am]: I am very pleased to advise the house that the McGowan government has implemented one of the most comprehensive, evidence-based shark mitigation programs in the world. Although the risk of interacting with a shark is low, the safety of water users remains a high priority. The connection between Western Australians and our ocean playground is strong because we have some of the most stunning beaches and pristine waters anywhere in the world. Being able to safely swim, surf, dive and play in the waters of our expansive coastline is something that should be undertaken with confidence and comfort, without the fear of interacting with sharks. One of the key strategies behind the shark mitigation program that provides confidence to water users is the SharkSmart WA app, which delivers timely and up-to-date notifications of shark activity, including current alerts and warnings, informing people of shark activity and beach conditions. The SharkSmart app was launched in October 2019 and works seamlessly alongside the SharkSmart website to deliver near real-time information on shark activity, including current alerts and warnings. I am pleased to inform the house that the SharkSmart WA app has been downloaded over 100 000 times, which is a great achievement and demonstrates the community's desire to make informed decisions about entering the water. SharkSmart users' top five beach spots are Cottesloe, Mullaloo, City, Scarborough and Leighton Beaches. Supported by Surf Life Saving WA, helicopter patrols and conscientious members of the public reporting shark sightings to water police, along with the 37 shark monitoring network receivers, WA ocean users can switch on their sea sense when they head to the beach.