

AERIAL SHARK PATROLS

472. Mr P.D. OMODEI to the Premier:

I refer the Premier to the Liberal Party's repeated calls to reintroduce aerial shark patrols of our beaches during the summer period. Will the Premier now agree to reintroduce these patrols, which I understand had previously been conducted by Edith Cowan University aviation students at no charge?

Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:

I am very pleased to report to the Parliament that on Monday, cabinet agreed to the reintroduction of aerial shark patrols this summer. I thank the Minister for Fisheries for the submission that he made to cabinet on this matter. Cabinet has made the decision to fund daily aerial shark patrols from 15 October until 6 March next year to ease public fears about shark attacks. The patrols will fly between Mandurah and Two Rocks and will spend up to eight hours a day in the air during peak times, such as weekends and the Christmas period. The flights will carry an independent observer, who will spend more than 500 hours flying over the coast this summer. The aircraft will maintain VHF radio contact with the Water Police. A typical flight will span the metropolitan coastline, concentrating on the busiest and most populated beaches between Fremantle and Mindarie. A research program to collate and assess all data collected will cost \$16 500, bringing the total budget for the program to \$172 000. I say to the people of Western Australia as they look forward to summer - today is, of course, the first day of spring - that these aerial patrols are important and will provide a sense of security for Western Australians who use our beautiful beaches. However, we need to remind ourselves of the commonsense precautions that must be taken: swim between the flags at patrolled beaches wherever possible; avoid the water at dusk and dawn; -

Several members interjected.

Dr G.I. GALLOP: Well, that is good advice - do not swim among large schools of fish, or near seals; and avoid areas in which animal, human or fish waste enters the water.