

SHARK DRUM LINE PROGRAM

6. Hon LYNN MacLAREN to the Minister for Fisheries:

- (1) Is the minister aware of the anti-shark cull protests in WA over the past two months, including two large rallies of 6 000 and 8 000 in Cottesloe, multiple protests across Western Australia and in other Australian states, and in South Africa, New Zealand, London, the USA, Italy, Spain and Argentina?
- (2) Will the minister investigate non-lethal alternatives to shark mitigation in WA coastal waters now that communities and scientific experts have rejected the drum line strategy and it has been proven to hook at least 40 smaller “non-target” sharks after only one month in the water?
- (3) How many sharks will die before the government considers the ocean to be safe again?
- (4) Will the minister pull out the baited drum lines immediately and instead implement other measures of shark attack mitigation, including eco barriers, early warning systems and, in some circumstances, shark shields?
- (5) If the drum lines remain until 30 April, will the minister consider having the hooks monitored every hour and tagging and releasing sharks caught on the hook?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

I thank the honourable member for some notice of the question.

- (1) Yes.
- (2) The deployment of up to 72 drum lines along approximately 40 kilometres of a total coastline of 12 500 kilometres is one part of a multifaceted shark hazard mitigation strategy being implemented by the government that includes aerial patrols, equipment for Surf Life Saving WA, information to the community, a shark tagging program, applied research into shark deterrents and a trial beach enclosure. Yes, the government will continue with its investigation and research into shark deterrents, noting that they form one part of an overall strategy.
- (3) The deployment of drum lines is a public safety measure that was introduced following the seventh shark-related fatality in three years. The government does not apologise for putting people’s lives before those of sharks.
- (4) No.
- (5) No. We already have a good monitoring program in place and one that is certainly more rigorous than other comparable programs. Ironically, the data being gathered through the implementation of this part of the government’s total shark hazard mitigation strategy is contributing significantly to our knowledge and research on sharks in south western WA.