

SOUTH WEST TOURISM — ACTING MINISTER FOR TOURISM'S COMMENTS

**754. Mr P. PAPALIA to the Acting Minister for Tourism:**

I refer to the minister's recently widely reported comments, in which he said he would not surf or swim off the south west coast.

- (1) Is he aware that a local tourist operator has labelled his comments as "boofhead", while the local shire president is more worried about road safety than sharks?
- (2) Is the minister also aware that the Tourism WA chief executive has previously said that there is no evidence that shark attacks had affected visitor numbers to the region?
- (3) In light of this, would the minister now apologise to tourism operators in the south west for his potentially damaging statements?

**Mr J.H.D. DAY replied:**

- (1)–(3) What a silly question! Of course I do not need to apologise to anyone. I am aware of the view that there is no evidence to indicate that shark attacks have affected tourism numbers in the south west, and that is a very good thing.

**Mr P. Papalia:** You are the Acting Minister for Tourism and you made that comment.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** I was asked what I would do in the sea in the south west. Unfortunately, I am not noted for my surfing ability. One of my sons has that ability.

**Mr C.J. Barnett:** The Taj Burrow of the Parliament!

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** The Premier has much greater ability in that respect, as I understand; he has been undertaking lessons. I said I would not be swimming far off the coast of the south west. I said it as a personal decision as to what people do. They need to make their own decisions, taking into account all the factors and the risks that exist.

**Mr P. Papalia** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Warnbro, you can have a supplementary question.

**Mr J.H.D. DAY:** It is up to people what they do individually. It is an undeniable fact that there have been a significant number of deaths as a result of shark attacks in the south west. That cannot be denied. The government had an approach to try to deal with that. Some people accepted that and some people did not. The reality is that there is a risk and people need to take that into account themselves. Of course there are other risks on the roads et cetera. In no way was I talking down the importance or the desirability of tourism in the south west. To the contrary, if the member for Warnbro heard the rest of my comments, I said in addition to the surfing and swimming activities in the south west, there is a range of other very significant attractions. I encourage Western Australians and visitors to Western Australia to use the south west, to enjoy it and to take advantage of the substantial attributes down there. That is what I said. That is the whole story. There was nothing particularly contentious or remarkable at all in what I said.