

FISHERIES — SHARK MITIGATION — IMMINENT THREAT POLICY

1689. Hon Lynn MacLaren to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to a media statement, dated 27 September 2012, by the former Minister for Fisheries titled *Shark mitigation to protect beachgoers*, and also to the Government's imminent threat policy, dated 23 November 2012, and ask:

- (a) as the media statement refers to \$2 million for a new service to allow the Department of Fisheries to track, catch and, if necessary, destroy sharks identified in close proximity to beachgoers, including setting drum lines if a danger is posed, will the Minister please provide a detailed breakdown of how that \$2 million was spent, including the date by which the full amount was expended;
- (b) under the imminent threat policy, is it necessary to seek approval from the Federal Government on each occasion that an individual shark, deemed to be posing a threat, is destroyed;
- (c) will the Minister please provide the times, dates and locations on each occasion that the policy has been activated, in other words, attempts that have been made to catch and/or destroy a shark;
- (d) what is the reason why no shark deemed to be posing an imminent threat has ever been caught or destroyed; and
- (e) will the Minister please refer me to the specific section and clauses of the Commonwealth *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, Western Australian *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* and the Western Australian *Wildlife Conservation Act 1950*, that enable a shark deemed to be posing an imminent threat to be captured and destroyed?

Hon Ken Baston replied:

- (a) The funding described was provided over four years ending in the 2015–16. This funding has allowed the Department to respond where a threat has been identified and following an attack.
- (b) There was no requirement to seek the approval of the Federal Government included in the 23 November 2012 Imminent Threat policy as the action was taken in the interests of public safety and considered not to have a significant impact on a threatened or migratory species. An exemption is presently required under the Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, while the Commonwealth is assessing the WA Government's shark hazard mitigation drum line program.
- (c) The following deployments occurred under the 23 November 2012 Imminent Threat policy:
 - 4 January 2013 — Dunsborough
 - 8 October 2013 — Cape Arid
 - 23 November 2013 — Gracetown
 - 2 October 2014 — EsperanceCapture gear was also set following a fatality in 2011 and in the Metropolitan area in February 2014.
- (d) The setting of gear will not always result in the capture of a shark.
- (e) There are no specific provisions that allow for a shark deemed to be posing an imminent threat to be captured and destroyed. The Imminent threat policy was based on an exemption granted under s7 of the *Fish Resources Management Act 1994*. While the Commonwealth is assessing the WA Government's shark hazard mitigation drum line program, an exemption is required under s158 of the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.