

SHARK DRUM LINE PROGRAM

106. Hon KEN TRAVERS to the Minister for Fisheries:

I refer to the government's shark mitigation program.

- (1) What method was used to determine 72 as the correct number of baited drum lines to be deployed?
- (2) How many target sharks over three metres of each species did the government plan to catch this summer and how many have been caught to date?
- (3) What is the estimated cost of a full summer of operation based on the costs incurred so far this summer?
- (4) Of the seven fatal shark attacks in the past three years, how many involved a tiger shark?
- (5) Upon what research did the government base its decision to include tiger sharks in this program?

Hon KEN BASTON replied:

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

- (1) The government committed to the use of up to 72 baited drum lines on the basis of coastline to be covered, the need for a less extensive program than the over 300 drum lines in place in Queensland, and materials available for the construction of the drum lines, specifically the specially designed hook, to minimise bycatch as far as possible, which was not readily available.
- (2) A number was not identified on the basis that this program had not previously been implemented in Western Australia and therefore it would have been impossible to identify this number in advance.
- (3) The deployment of drum lines in the south west commenced on 25 January 2014 and it is anticipated that the full cost for 2013–14 will be approximately \$500 000. On this basis, and pending the review to be undertaken following the initial implementation of the program, the costs for 2014–15 are likely to be in the range of \$1 million to \$1.3 million. As for the metropolitan deployment of drum lines, a final cost for 2013–14 will be determined at the end of the initial implementation and this, along with the costs associated with the south west deployment, will inform us what the indicative costs are for 2014–15.

Hon Ken Travers: Sorry—you don't have an idea?

Hon KEN BASTON: It has not been done before. This is it. We are doing it now.

- (4) Of the seven fatalities in Western Australia in the past three years, it is understood that several were confirmed white shark attacks and the remainder were suspected white shark attacks. However, tiger sharks have been associated with shark attacks in Western Australia and fatalities in the rest of Australia.
- (5) Tiger sharks are clearly recognised by shark scientists and researchers as one of the species most responsible for shark attacks around the world and in Western Australia. They are prevalent along the Western Australian coast and known for their aggressiveness.