

State Development and Regional Industries Committee

2021 ESTIMATES HEARING

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

THE HONOURABLE MICHAEL BERKMAN MP, MEMBER FOR MAIWAR, ASKED THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES:

QUESTION:

Director-General, can you advise how many non-fatal shark bites have occurred at Queensland beaches that have drum lines or shark nets in place each year since they were implemented?

ANSWER:

I thank the member for the question.

Successive Governments have recognised the vital role the Shark Control Program plays in protecting locals and tourists at 86 of Queensland's most popular beaches.

Government always puts human life and safety first.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries does not specifically collect data on shark bites.

However, a recent internal report commissioned by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries included analysis of data from the Global Shark Attack File for unprovoked shark bites in Queensland.

The report found that there are 190 records in the Global Shark Attack File of unprovoked shark bites on the Queensland East Coast between 1847 and 2019, of which 48 (25%) were fatal.

The report also found that for the period from 1962 (the commencement of the Shark Control Program) to 2019:

- 21 non-fatal unprovoked shark bites occurred at Queensland beaches *with* Shark Control Program nets and drumlines; and
- 54 non-fatal unprovoked shark bites occurred at Queensland beaches *without* Shark Control Program nets and drumlines.
- 1 fatal unprovoked shark bite occurred at a Queensland beach *with* Shark Control Program nets and drumlines; and
- 8 fatal unprovoked shark bites occurred at Queensland beaches *without* Shark Control Program nets and drumlines.

It is noted that the report did not examine incidents of provoked shark bites (for example, bites that occurred while fishing or spearfishing, etc).