



Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**


**MEMBER FOR BANCROFT**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 November 2018

**MOTION**

**Shark Control Program, Inquiry**

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (5.12 pm): I rise to oppose this motion moved by the member for Gympie. In response to the Leader of the Opposition, who said, 'We don't need talk. We don't need letters,' it is very clear that they do not need science. They do not need facts. They have their own version of reality and they are going to stick to it. They are the same when it comes to dealing with issues of climate change. Any science that they say is tinged with green ideology they reject. It does not matter how well it is based on fact. They are immune to the facts.

It is clear that the LNP would rather play politics with the recent shark attacks in Cid Harbour than seek out the facts of the matter. It is like the motion yesterday. They will pull out one issue. It does not matter if they have a track record on it. They will ignore the facts or reasons. It is just a political opportunity for them. That is what it is.

Simply put, until the recent contribution of the LNP, the Shark Control Program had bipartisan support from both sides of politics. The fundamentals of the Shark Control Program are the same now as when the LNP were in government. There has been no change. The same equipment and the same techniques are being used.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Member for Nanango, you have just made a contribution. I ask you to hear the member.

**Mr WHITING:** There were no drum lines in Cid Harbour under the LNP. There were no drum lines in Cid Harbour under Labor. Why might that be? The reason for no drum lines is this: safety. Have a look at the Shark Control Program, which is conveniently available on a website for them to look at. There is information on swimmer safety. On the page on swimmer safety there are a few facts, and I will read them out for the benefit of the LNP—

- Swim or surf only at patrolled beaches—between the flags and where shark safety equipment is in place
- Obey lifesavers' and lifeguards' advice, and heed all sign and safety warnings
- Leave the water immediately if a shark is sighted
- Do not swim or surf after dusk, at night, or before dawn when sharks become more active
- Do not swim or surf in murky or silt-laden waters
- Do not swim in, or at the mouth of, rivers, estuaries, artificial canals and lakes
- Never swim alone
- Never swim when bleeding
- Do not swim near schools of fish or where fish are being cleaned
- Do not swim near, or interfere with, shark control equipment
- Do not swim with animals.

That advice comes from that website. Let me restate that drum lines do not make an area automatically safe. After two fatal attacks on the Gold Coast drum lines were not put into the canals on a permanent basis. Why is that? Because canals are too dangerous for swimming. It is the same for Cid Harbour. Drum lines or no drum lines, it is too dangerous to swim in Cid Harbour, in canals or in river mouths. The government listened to the experts, and the experts have said Cid Harbour is too dangerous to swim in. There is no doubt that drum lines will catch sharks. After the last attacks, sharks were caught using drum lines—but, drum lines or no drum lines, there are still sharks in Cid Harbour.

Swimmer safety must be paramount. That sometimes means saying that these areas are just too dangerous to swim in, yet it seems that the LNP are more focused on ignoring the experts and listening to their own in-house expert my colleague the member for Whitsunday. They do not want to listen to experts on fisheries. They do not want to listen to experts on climate change either. As I said, if they feel that the science is tinged with green ideology, they will automatically reject it. That is a big mistake.

In terms of this motion—to give a quick recap—the existing program works and, as we have heard, Labor put in additional funds this year. The existing locations are on the website and these are the same as they were under the LNP. In looking at alternatives—also on the website—there are investigations into other equipment options but not at the expense of swimmer safety.

In terms of resources, Labor has put additional funds into the program, unlike the LNP, which cut 28 per cent of Fisheries staff. There were so many cuts, yet they still cry for more money to be spent and for more staff to fix any of their perceived problems. Drum lines are not suitable in all locations, and Cid Harbour is not safe for swimming, drum lines or no drum lines, and this was made clear after the first attack.

My final point in terms of shark catch numbers is that it is clear that the LNP is scientifically illiterate. The Shark Control Program catch numbers fluctuate and shark catches are not based on who is in government.

*(Time expired)*