




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Whitsunday Island, Shark Attack; Shark Control Program

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (10.00 am): I firstly offer my condolences to the family and friends of Daniel Christidis, who died after a shark attack in Cid Harbour. It was a tragic circumstance, and I sympathise with those impacted as well as the rescuers and hospital staff who assisted in the response. We have worked directly with the Whitsunday council, the tourism industry and local stakeholders to share important safety messages for tourists and locals, and we have released a five-point plan to support this community. My office was involved in a teleconference with scientists yesterday to begin scoping out the research we need to learn more about shark activity in Cid Harbour. I can announce that a request for tender will be released in the next week. We have already committed \$250,000 to this research, and we have called on the Prime Minister to match that.

Let me clear up any misconceptions about Queensland's Shark Control Program. The government's advice surrounding Cid Harbour has not changed: people should not swim there. This was the advice after the September attacks. Drum lines were deployed after the second attack, while authorities visited each and every boat in the harbour to advise people not to swim. Following the two attacks advice was prepared, in cooperation with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, to advise tourists to be shark aware, and I table a copy of that information.

Tabled paper: Poster from the Australian Government, Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, undated, titled 'Be Shark Smart' [1865](#).

Cid Harbour was not, and is not, part of the Shark Control Program. Cid Harbour is a place of mooring, not swimming. The Shark Control Program operates at 86 beaches across Queensland. The program is using the same gear types, equipment, techniques and personnel as has been the case under all governments for years. There has not been any change in the Shark Control Program delivery, although in last year's budget the Palaszczuk government committed \$2.1 million in additional funding—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Minister, please resume your seat. Members to my left, the minister is providing a factual statement. If you wish to ask questions of the minister, please do so during question time.

Mr FURNER: The Shark Control Program covers 0.01 per cent of Queensland, where the main population lives and swims. That means that there is 99.9 per cent of Queensland that has no drum lines and no shark nets. Suggestions that most Queensland beaches are covered are wrong. Wrong, too, is any suggestion that we are winding back the use of shark control measures at beaches. To suggest otherwise could damage our tourism industry by creating unfounded fear. It is not proposed to extend the program to areas such as river mouths or harbours where we would not be able to sufficiently mitigate the risk.

It is important that Queenslanders are aware of what is being done and what the risks are from sharks. Our advice remains the same: swim or surf only at patrolled beaches and do not swim at dawn or dusk.