



Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**


**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 19 September 2019

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

**Shark Control Program, Federal Court Decision**

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries) (9.50 am): I rise to update the House on the status of the Shark Control Program in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Our Shark Control Program has a long and successful history. Queensland's Shark Control Program has been in operation since 1962 and there has only ever been one shark related fatality at one of those beaches in all that time. That is an enviable record. It is important that members of the House and the wider community are aware of the facts of the status of this program as there is misinformation in the community over the Federal Court decision. It is bureaucracy gone mad.

The requirements laid out around a federal act are impossible to implement. The conditions require that any sharks found on the drum lines must be safely removed. We will not put the lives of our staff or contractors at risk in handling sharks. Ultimately, this decision based in federal law changes the rationale of the program to prioritise shark life over human life. As I informed the House yesterday, this decision relates to Commonwealth legislation. I had previously written to the Commonwealth outlining Queensland's concerns and in July met with the new environment minister, Sussan Ley, and the envoy for the Great Barrier Reef, Warren Entsch MP, as well as phoning the minister yesterday afternoon, and I am awaiting her return call. Yesterday I wrote again to the Commonwealth environment minister but am disappointed by early reports that say—

The LNP slammed the Government, insisting there was nothing in the ruling that compelled the removal of drumlines.

As I have outlined, it is not possible to leave the drum lines in and meet the permit conditions. The Queensland government has always put the safety of human lives first and until yesterday I genuinely believed there was bipartisan support on this position. It is disappointing that the Leader of the Opposition—who is on the record as saying, 'Our position couldn't be more clear—people before sharks'—is now supporting the Commonwealth requirement to ensure man-eating sharks are now released alive. Only the Palaszczuk government remains resolute in supporting the Shark Control Program to protect our reputation as a safe tourism destination.