

Question on Notice

No. 188

Asked on 18 February 2020

MR J COSTIGAN ASKED MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND FISHERIES (HON M FURNER)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister advise when drumlines for sharks will be introduced to the Whitsundays and provide a guarantee that these so-called ‘smart’ drumlines are just as effective as traditional drumlines?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for the question.

The Shark Control Program (SCP) operates at 86 of Queensland’s most popular swimming beaches – none of these are in the Whitsundays.

The Queensland Government has been working with the Federal Government to restore SCP equipment to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park (GBRMP). In the Mackay-Whitsundays region, drumlines have recently been returned to Blacks Beach, Eimeo Beach and Bucasia.

It is a requirement of the GBRMP permit that the Queensland Government trial SMART drumlines. This will occur at an existing SCP beach to compare it to traditional drumlines.

There is no intention to deploy traditional drumlines in the Whitsundays, as this is not allowed for under the current GBRMP permit.

The Queensland Government is continuing to work closely with tourism and other community groups in the Whitsundays to improve swimmer safety. This includes continuing to implement the Government’s five point plan and implementing additional measures following the announcement of an additional \$1 million to support swimmer safety in the Whitsundays, which includes:

- continued research to improve our understanding of shark biology, ecology, population status and behaviour in the Whitsundays;
- trialling technological advances in shark control measures such as near real-time alerts (e.g. through a sightings app) or drone surveillance; and
- signage and more education.