

**Submission
No 53**

MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES WATERS

Name: Ms Samantha Lynch
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Dear committee,

In regards to your inquiry on the management of sharks along the NSW coast, it is important to firstly note that, there is very little scientific knowledge known about shark behaviour (Hart 2014). In order to understand shark behaviour, significant research is currently needed.

This inquiry is a result of the shark attacks that have occurred along our NSW coast this year. However, In Australia, on average 1.1 people are killed by a shark attack every year (West 2015). Only 1 person! In the past, fears have led decision makers to implement temporary policies and strategies that are aimed at reducing the abundance of sharks, in the hope of reassuring the community (Weltz et al., 2013; Neff 2012). However, many of these shark attack mitigation strategies lack a sufficient scientific basis (WA EPA 2014), have been largely unsuccessful in protecting humans (WA EPA 2014; Neff 2012; SSPS 2006), and are potentially detrimental to shark populations. For example, the Western Australian 'Bait and Kill' policy, implemented in the summer of 2014, which killed 172 tiger sharks (*Galeocerdo cuvier*) over a three month period (WA EPA 2014).

Given that global shark populations are facing increasing threats from over-exploitation, there is an increasing need for more robust justification for strategies that involve such undesirable ecological consequences (WA EPA 2014; Weltz et al., 2013).

The current NSW meshing program was implemented almost a century ago, and is unchanged since the summer deployment in 1957. Science and technology has advanced, why haven't we?

70% of marine species caught in the shark nets each year, are Non-target species, most of which are protected by Australian legislation. In addition to this, Sharks are predicted to be extinct by the year 2030, with current rates of over - exploration (Reese 2014). Sharks are an essential species to the marine ecosystem.

Committee, when making your recommendations on the management of sharks, please take into consideration the principles of ecological sustainable development. Suggest, that more research is needed into shark behaviour, and human and shark interactions. In order to manage a problem, it must first be understood. Research is needed in shark behaviour, migration patterns, environmental conditions and food supply. Suggest, that Shark mitigation strategies which should be implemented be sustainable, and ecologically friendly. The spotters program, the bubble barrier or the shark barrier have sufficient scientific evidence suggesting, that they would decrease the risk to beach goers from shark attacks. Most importantly, tagging sharks will provide valuable research, which could be used to implement future mitigation strategies (West 2011, Peddemores 2014; BRUCE 2015).

NSW, lets evolve with science.

Kind Regards,
Samantha Lynch.