

**Submission
No 8**

MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES WATERS

Organisation: Yamba Surf Lifesaving Club
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AFFILIATED WITH
SURF LIFE SAVING
NEW SOUTH WALES

Yamba Surf Life Saving Club Inc.

PATROLLING MAIN BEACH, YAMBA SINCE 1908

Office: (02) 66462463

Email: secretary@yambaslsc.com.au

Website: www.yambaslsc.com.au



HON SECRETARY
PO BOX 219
YAMBA N.S.W 2464

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INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NSW WATERS

Yamba SLSC wishes to make a submission to the NSW parliamentary inquiry into the management of sharks in NSW waters.

The primary purpose of our existence as a surf life saving club is to provide a safe aquatic environment at Main Beach Yamba for our members and the public.

This safe aquatic environment is currently under threat by an increased presence of sharks in our region. Lifeguards on the Far North Coast have reported 54 shark sightings in the last 6 months. In the same period last year there were only 4 sightings. There have been five shark attacks in our region this year including two fatal ones.

Quite simply there is unprecedented shark activity in our area and it is threatening the very existence of our surf clubs and we have no government shark protection measures in place.

The NSW Government has been running a Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program (SMP) since 1937 at 51 beaches in the Newcastle to Wollongong area. It is a long running successful public safety measure designed to reduce the risk of shark attack within the Newcastle to Wollongong area whilst at the same time minimizing impacts on non target species.

Unfortunately this shark protection program does not extend to the North Coast of NSW. There are 129 surf lifesaving clubs operating on NSW beaches but only 51 of these clubs have government shark protection strategies in place. Its time the government did something about protecting swimmers and surfers outside of the metropolitan area.

The NSW government needs to take a close look at the Queensland shark protection program. They only have 58 surf lifesaving clubs in Qld. but they run their program on 85 beaches between Coolangatta and Cairns. They cover the whole of the state – not just the metropolitan area – and include beaches that do not have surf lifesaving patrols.

The recent shark summit at Taronga Park Zoo looked at a range of new technology for shark detectors and deterrents. They concluded that *...”the short list of shark detectors for potential trial on NSW beaches is limited to the shark spotter program but Smart Drumline and Cleverbuoy systems would also be suitable”.*

If the government is going to trial these new measures the trials should take place where there is a lot of current shark activity i.e. in the area between Kingscliff and Yamba. The Sydney area already has shark protection so these new measures should be trialled in areas outside of the existing shark protection program.

The white shark tagging program currently being conducted off the North Coast has shown to date that most of these tagged sharks are still hanging around the area between Ballina and Yamba. Several of these sharks have moved up or down the coast but the female ones in particular are still hanging around the spot where they were tagged.

The government needs to do more for the swimmers and surfers of the North Coast than merely tagging white sharks and determining whether they have set up their habitat in this area.

The members of our surf club and the neighbouring clubs at Evans Head and Ballina are just as entitled to get shark protection from the NSW government as are the surf clubs in the Newcastle to Wollongong area.

Every surf lifesaving club in Queensland has shark protection measures on their beach. Its time for it to happen in NSW.

Board of Directors
Yamba SLSC