

**Submission
No 77**

MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES WATERS

Organisation: Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore Surf Life Saving Club Inc.
Name: Mr Craig Nowlan
Date Received: 28/10/2015

Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore SLSC Inc.

Established 13 September, 1933

SLSA Club of the Year 2012

SLS NSW Club of the Year 2012

SLS NSW Club of the Year 2014



19 October 2015

The Committee Manager
Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development
Parliament House
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000



Our Club is a SLS NSW Quality
Club – Bronze Level

Dear Sir Madam

Re: Management of Sharks in New South Wales Waters (Inquiry)

Reference is made to the abovementioned enquiry and on behalf of the Ballina Lighthouse and Lismore Surf Life Saving Club I would like to make the following submission to the enquiry.

As a background the Ballina Lighthouse and Lismore Surf Life Saving Club was established in 1933 and has a proud history of serving the local community since that time. In 2012 and 2014 the Club was awarded the NSW Club of the Year and in 2014 was awarded the Australian Surf Life Saving Club of the Year which demonstrated the Clubs capacity to provide a high level of professionalism and service to the local community. In 2014/2015 the Club had a membership base of 567 junior, senior, associate and life members.

As you would be aware the Club is made up of volunteer members who dedicate their time and efforts to ensure that other members of the public can enjoy the fantastic coastline which we are a part. We like many within the community acknowledge that the ocean is a hazardous environment which is to be respected even in the best of conditions.

We advise that the Ballina Lighthouse and Lismore Surf Life Saving Club and the local community have been significantly impacted by recent shark attacks in our region. Ballina's economy is heavily reliant upon tourism and large numbers of the local population enjoy pursuits such as swimming, surfing and diving.

A number of our members were at the frontline of these incidents which has had a traumatic effect on them personally as well as our broader membership. Our members were involved in the post incident search of the waters in an effort to identify the sharks, the clearing neighbouring beaches of surfers and swimmers to ensure their safety and are a part of the Ballina Shire Emergency Shark Response Group which has been instrumental in the development of an action protocol for future shark sightings.

This involvement in the recent incidents has resulted in a significant drain on our members who have often taken leave from their workplace in order to attend these incidents and subsequent meetings. Similarly the use of Surf Club assets including Inflatable Rescue Boats (IRB's), All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and Club resources has resulted in a significant increase in our normal operating costs. As a volunteer organisation we are constantly seeking financial assistance from all levels of Government and the local community to carry out our day to day operations. Our involvement in the recent incidents is impacting on our ability to continue such operations.

The publicity surrounding the incidents is also having a negative impact on the overall membership of the Club. Recent statistics indicate that our membership levels for the 2015/2016 season are some 15% down as at the corresponding period for the 2014/2015 season. There are a variety of reasons cited by members not renewing their membership however advice received from a number of members indicates a reluctance to return to the water due to the level of shark activity as being of primary concern. This reduction in membership places an additional strain on patrol numbers and the level of income received from our membership base.

Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore SLSC Inc is Registered Gift Recipient ABN 64 923 973 436

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Vigilance & Service

Given the extent of concern amongst parents of our junior membership the Club has decided to undertake junior water activities in Shaws Bay which is a protected and shark free inlet some 300m to the west of the existing Surf Club. This measure has been necessary to ensure the safety of our junior members and is a strategy aimed at limiting the numbers who may have chosen not to attend "nippers" due to the shark activity. This measure also places an additional strain on our volunteers who now have to transport equipment and resources to the Shaw's Bay location.

The Club has been buoyed by recent efforts of the Government in addressing this issue. The recent funding commitment and initiatives to bolster shark deterrent technologies is supported by the Club.

We would request that the beaches of Ballina feature prominently in the initial roll out of emerging shark deterrent technologies to restore the communities' confidence in ocean activities.

The development of shark deterrent technologies for use on a broader scale will not only benefit our local community but communities around Australia and the world. The interaction of sharks on the swimming and surfing public, and aquatic industries is not confined to Australia. The development of technologies which can be exported worldwide is likely to have a significant financial benefit for the States economy.

We look forward to the ongoing investment of efforts by Government, Surf Life Saving and the broader community in measures which will provide a safer beach environment for us all to enjoy.

Ballina Lighthouse & Lismore SLSC Inc.

**Craig Nowlan
President**