

**Submission  
No 29**

## **MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES WATERS**

Name: Name Suppressed  
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*Partially Confidential*

## Inquiry into management of Sharks in NSW waters

### Submission – Ballina Area

#### **1. Adequacy of Management Strategies**

The local response from Council, Police and Surf Life Saving Australia in Ballina has been a credit to all involved. The aerial patrols and incident response protocol have been an important immediate measure – and have been valuable in highlighting the extent of the problem. But they only provide a snapshot of ocean activity at the time of the patrol, and the level of resource use and cost is clearly unsustainable.

#### **2. Measures to prevent attacks**

In my view, the reasoned approach taken by the NSW Government in assessing all available technologies was well conceived and appropriate. My hopes were that these initiatives would identify measures which could be quickly implemented to increase safety in a manner which minimised the environmental impact.

However, as reported at the Ballina Shark Forum held at Lennox Head on 16 October 2015, the review of emerging technology and the Sydney Shark Summit did not recommend any solution for immediate roll out.

At the forum we were told that the NSW Meshing Program operating at metropolitan beaches between Wollongong and Newcastle has just undergone a significant investment in upgrading the dolphin warning system, and of the enormous scientific value it creates. We were also told that it had worked to effectively protect ocean users for almost a century.

The equivalent Queensland program was introduced more than half a century ago in response to regular attacks at their beaches. Despite massive increases in beach use (in particular at the Gold Coast) there have been no fatal shark attacks at protected beaches since the introduction of the program.

Compare this to the increasingly dire statistics of our region with two fatalities, two near fatalities and countless other incidents in the last 12 months alone.

These solutions work. They are real and available now.

If implemented, a meshing/drum line program would give the region breathing space while emerging technologies that are more in line with the conservation values of the state and the region are developed, tested and hopefully proven to work. It would give us the chance to let our children swim in the ocean without having to risk their lives. It would let parents go for a surf without the fear that they may not make it back. It would give tourists the confidence to holiday here. It would give the local surf industry a future. It would mean the other local businesses still have customers. It would mean young families who chose this region for its beautiful beaches and world class surf will stay and deliver much needed skills and diversity to the community.

It is untenable for the NSW Government to continue to use and invest in a proven life-saving and apparently value adding solution in metropolitan areas, but to refuse to implement it in a regional area because it is considered outdated. If Meshing cannot be supported here, where people are being killed and maimed, surely it must be removed from all NSW beaches.

People in this region have waited patiently for the NSW Government process to play out, despite the impact these attacks have had on the community, and the real potential for further attacks. We don't have the luxury to go on waiting for the perfect solution. We do not want to see another family destroyed because we chose not to act.

Please help our community by extending the NSW meshing program to our region now.