

**Submission  
No 41**

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

Name: Name Suppressed  
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*Partially Confidential*

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## **SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NSW WATERS**

I have been a swimmer, surfer and lifesaver at North Coast beaches for the past 50 years and I wish to make comment to the Inquiry about the unprecedented shark activity that has been taking place off North Coast beaches in the past year.

There have been two fatal attacks by white sharks; three other attacks which resulted in severe injuries; a number of close calls; and numerous shark sightings close to swimmers and surfers. It is fact that there are more white sharks swimming close to shore this year in this area. The NSW Government has no Shark Control Program in place in the North Coast area.

The NSW Government has been running a Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program (SMP) since 1937 for beaches in the Newcastle to Wollongong part of the State. They net 51 beaches in 6 regions. 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 minimising impacts on non target species.

But what about the rest of the beaches in NSW outside the Newcastle to Wollongong area ?

Aren't the lives of locals and tourists using the North Coast beaches worth protecting from shark attack just like those using the beaches in the Newcastle to Wollongong area ?

There are 129 surf lifesaving clubs operating on NSW beaches but only 51 of these clubs have Government shark management strategies in place – less than 50%.

In the 2014-15 year the SMP annual performance report stated that there were 18 reported shark incidents in NSW – all of which took place outside of the Shark Meshing regions.

This indicates two things:

- i) The SMP works well in reducing shark incidents on beaches in the Newcastle to Wollongong area
- ii) There is a clear need to extend this program to beaches outside of the Newcastle to Wollongong area and in particular to the North Coast beaches that have been experiencing the shark incidents.

The current NSW shark management strategies are clearly inadequate in protecting bathers and surfers in the North Coast region. It is time for this discriminatory Government shark management program to be extended to include North Coast beaches.

In stark contrast the Queensland Government runs a similar shark management program at 85 beaches from Coolangatta to Cairns – they cover the whole of the State. Queensland has 58 surf lifesaving clubs. So not only does every club have Government shark management strategies in place but another 27 beaches not patrolled by surf clubs also have shark management strategies in place.

The Queensland Government places a higher value on the lives of its citizens outside the major population centres than the NSW Government does. It also places a higher value on the safety of its tourists than the NSW Government.

The NSW Government is currently running a white shark tagging program in the Ballina area. In the first week of operation back in September they tagged 4 sharks; in the second week of operation they tagged another 4 sharks. Reports indicate that one of these sharks have moved north into Queensland and a third has moved down to the Port Stephens area. That leaves 6 of the 8 tagged sharks still in the North Coast region. Most of these sharks are females and they will shortly give birth to more sharks this increasing the population of white sharks in the area.

The third week of tagging is currently underway now and after 3 days on the water they have tagged another 3 female white sharks all close to 3 metres in length. Clearly the white sharks are still hanging around this area.

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 the Byron Bay to Yamba area. They need to have a selective cull of the menacing white sharks that are continuing to roam the surf breaks of this area.

The recent shark summit at Taronga Park Zoo looked at a range of shark deterrents and detectors. The report produced from that summit recommended that .....*"consideration should be given as to how best to integrate emerging technologies, were they trialled successfully, into the NSW Government's overall suite of bather protection measures. ....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 in the Ballina area where there is a lot of shark activity. They don't need to be trialled off Bondi or Manly where the shark meshing program is already in place.

The swimmers and surfers of the North Coast of NSW are just as entitled to get shark protection from the NSW Government as are the swimmers and surfers of the Newcastle to Wollongong area of NSW. They give everyone protection in Queensland. It's time for it to happen in NSW.

Thank you for allowing me to make this submission to the Inquiry.