

**Submission  
No 50**

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

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# Management of Sharks in New South Wales Waters (Inquiry)

In relation to shark hazard mitigation methods used in NSW, I am vehemently opposed to any method that puts sharks or any other marine life at risk. In relation to this, I make the following points:

- There is no firm evidence that nets decrease the risk of shark/human interactions, as sharks can often swim around or underneath nets.
- Nets trap and kill many non-target marine creatures including those that are endangered.
- Populations of sharks have been decimated over the decades and many species are now endangered. Hence, the further killing of sharks is environmentally irresponsible, especially since sharks are particularly important for the health of the ocean.
- Community opinion has largely evolved in recent decades and what was accepted in the early to mid 20<sup>th</sup> century is no longer considered appropriate. That is, many people in Australia expect non-lethal methods of controlling shark risk. For example, a survey conducted by the WA government in 2013, revealed that 80% did not want shark risk controlled through lethal methods. Furthermore, the recent shark hazard mitigation trial in WA provoked massive public opposition and the proposal to continue the program was ultimately rejected by the EPA.
- Many experts, conservationists, and marine scientists have actively opposed lethal methods for controlling shark risk. For example, Australia's own CSIRO in relation to the WA government's intention to continue killing sharks stated clearly that non-lethal methods should be used instead.
- There are many non-lethal alternatives to control shark risk that have been used in Australia and around the world which should be further developed and used instead. These include the Eco Shark Barrier, Shark Spotters and personal deterrents such as shields and specially patterned wetsuits.
- Controlling risk through lethal methods seems more about protecting tourism rather than human beings, however there is no empirical evidence to suggest that tourism is damaged in the long term. Indeed, one could argue that eco-conscious tourists might boycott an area if they are opposed to the methods being used.
- It must be stressed that the risk of injury or death due to shark attack compared to other risks is minuscule. The perception of risk is greater due to disproportionate media coverage. Responding to this small risk by targeting and killing sharks is a gross overreaction and is environmentally irresponsible.

In closing, non-lethal methods in addition to public education is the most appropriate and environmentally responsible response to a risk that is very small.

Della Grunwald