

**Submission
No 61**

MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES WATERS

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Submission to comment on 'Inquiry into management of sharks in NSW waters'

As a concerned Australian citizen whom in 2014 witnessed the horrific slaughter and suffering of sharks off the coast of Perth Western Australia .I find the measures that have been in place in NSW for many years to be outdated and backwards. A country as clever as Australia really should be at the forefront in conservation and harm minimisation of our natural environment, inclusive of the Oceans that surround our lucky country.

Lucky perhaps, unless you are a shark just doing its shark thing, passing through NSW waters. Quite unlucky too for many other, perceived non target/innocent species (as in won't bite you by mistake!) are captured in these lethal nets. Many of these 'non target' species are facing declining populations in a more and more polluted ocean. We are killing left right and centre, indiscriminately with measures that do not even protect swimmers.

I understand wanting to protect beach goers from shark encounters but nets that are full of holes, do not exclude sharks and entangle and kill anything caught are not the answer. I get that tourism is a money spinner for the economy and many coastal towns rely on tourism to boost their economy. Money cannot replace a life lost to a shark incident but money spent on education and environmentally friendly alternatives would be an investment to ensure people had the best possible protection. The fact that eco tourism & shark tourism is big business all around the world is another possible alternative to increasing eco tourism in NSW.

"With over 400 species of sharks inhabiting almost every aquatic ecosystem, divers and wildlife enthusiast are enjoying and paying good money to view sharks in their natural habitats. Operations to take tourists to view, dive or snorkel with sharks and rays are located across the globe.

A recent study found that shark tourism companies operate in 83 locations in 29 countries (Gallagher and Hammerschlag 2011). Divers are very interested in seeing sharks alive and healthy in the ocean and are willing to pay a lot to see them (White 2008). In Fiji, Vianna et al. (2011) estimated that 78% of all divers visiting the country in 2010 engaged in shark-diving activities."

<http://www.sharksavers.org/en/education/the-value-of-sharks/sharks-and-ecotourism/>

Unfortunately, often a shark incident occurs at a remote beach, and there is no way they can all be protected by nets or eco friendly barriers- so those ocean users are aware of the risks and in the aftermath, their family never want to hunt the shark down. I believe the majority of Ocean users respect that they are entering a place where they are visitors, a place that they could not survive long without their boat or board. There are risks, of course. A swimmer is far more likely to drown than be taken in a shark incident- teaching ocean safety is far more responsible than killing marine life that can live nowhere else. Non lethal measures such as an eco barrier can give peace of mind to the average beach goer, families of children and the community in general.

<http://www.ecosharkbarrier.com.au/>

To those on the committee of this inquiry please be a responsible, informed voice for shark conservation in NSW. They keep our oceans healthy- we need healthy oceans and healthy balanced ocean ecosystems.

"As apex predators, great white sharks play an important role in marine environments, and their decline can have fundamental structural impacts on ecosystems through numerous top-down processes. In Australian waters, this species' numbers have been depleted over the last few decades as a result of the implementation of beach safety (shark) meshing nets on coastal beaches, by-catch in a range of commercial and occasionally recreational fisheries and prior to protection they were heavily targeted by gamefishers (NSW DPI 2005). Their natural rarity, low natural mortality, low reproductive rate and other life history characteristics make their populations highly vulnerable to the impacts of fishing. As a result of this decline and very low potential for population recovery, white sharks are now listed as a vulnerable species in NSW."

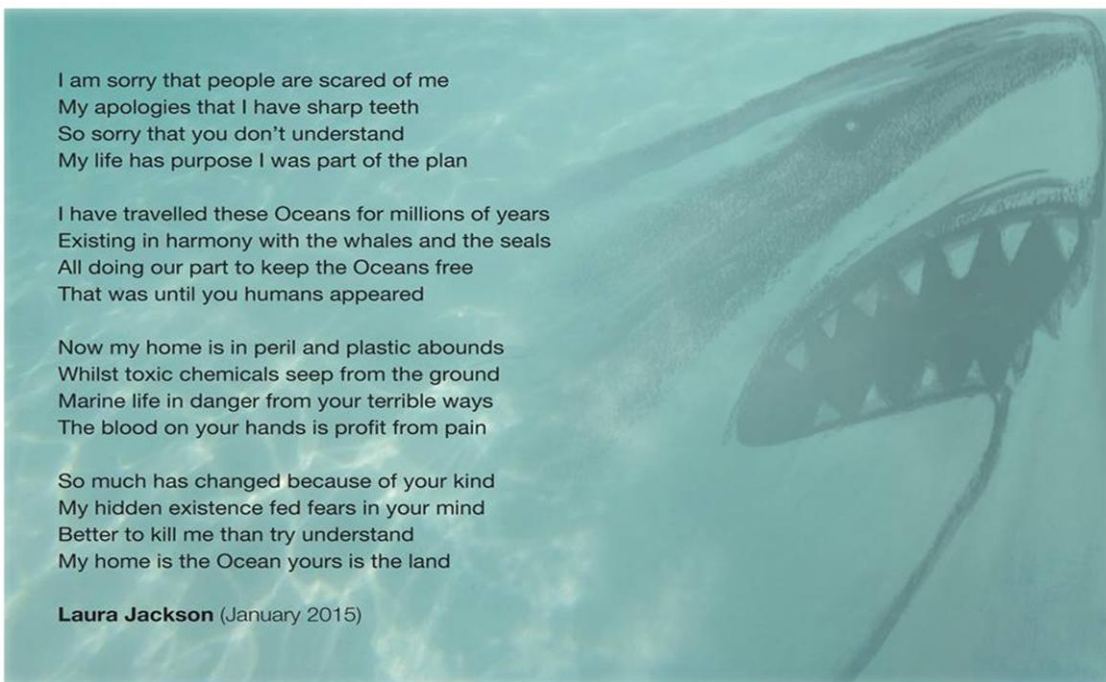
http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/576298/Beaches-and-Headland-Ecological-FFreport_146.pdf

My submission only touches on a few of the alternatives.

Alternatives should be seriously considered along with an end to all culling (which happens weekly in the NSW nets for part of the year). We really as a nation/planet cannot afford to keep treating sharks as our enemy and using the ocean as a dumping ground. A shark incident is a completely random event & cannot be predicted. Shark incidents are often fatal due to one bite- adult Great White shark prefer seal & whale blubber to human flesh, that is why they do not always eat the human. If sharks really wanted to eat people no one would ever go into the ocean- ever.

“Mr West said shark attacks were random events and no two were the same. “No-one can predict when and where they will occur” Mr West said.”

<http://www.magic1059.com.au/breakfast-show/matt-and-gracie/breakfast-blog/50164-horror-year-of-shark-attacks-explained>



Please consider the bigger picture of a sustainable future management in regards to solutions to allow coexistence. Killing sharks will not save anyone & the meshing programme gives no actual protection at all for swimmers and impacts severely on fragile marine life, not only sharks.

Thank you,

Laura Jackson