

**Submission  
No 37**

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

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## IMPACT OF SHARKS ON TOURISM ON THE NORTH COAST OF NSW SURVEY SEPTEMBER 2015

Since the recent increased incidence of shark attack/s and or sightings on the North Coast, the NSW Government announced an inquiry into the management of sharks in NSW waters. The impact of the shark attack/s and or sightings on tourism was the major term of reference for the inquiry. The increased media attention surrounding the issue led to the North Coast Destination Network (leading regional tourism authority) being asked to make comment on the impact. Without any industry consultation it was difficult for NCDN to confidently report on the impact or not of the increased incidence of shark attack/s and or sightings on tourism.

An eight question survey was prepared based on previous flood related crisis management with 89 respondents from across the North Coast responding. From the 89 responses, 67% reported no impact on their tourism business.

It was clear from the report that the negative publicity and continuous discussion about the Sharks, shark sightings and attacks from the NSW State Government ie surrounding the inquiry, talk shows, radio talk back etc was the main concern from tourism operators.

The key recommendations from the industry survey was not to cull sharks and develop a ecological way to manage sharks in NSW waters. It was also identified that a key aspect of the crisis surrounding the shark attacks/sightings on the North Coast extended to beach safety. It was recommended that the North Coast Destination Network work with the State Government to implement a beach safety campaign in time for the busy summer holiday period with the clear message to swim at patrolled beaches.

The detailed results of the survey are outlined in the following document.

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# IMPACT OF SHARKS ON TOURISM ON THE NORTH COAST OF NSW SURVEY SEPTEMBER 2015

## 1.0 BACKGROUND

Since the recent increased incidence of shark attack/s and or sightings on the North Coast, the NSW Government announced an inquiry into the management of sharks in NSW waters. The impact of the shark attack/s and or sightings on tourism was the major term of reference for the inquiry. The increased media attention surrounding the issue led to the North Coast Destination Network (leading regional tourism authority) being asked to make comment on the impact. Without any industry consultation it was difficult for NCDN to confidently report on the impact or not of the increased incidence of shark attack/s and or sightings on tourism.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

NCDN created an eight question survey distributed to tourism industry operators from The Tweed to Great Lakes. Industry had two weeks to complete the survey where results were collected through survey monkey. The sample size required to determine valid and reliable data was 50. The total respondents included 89.

To supplement the survey, a facebook page was created to where key tourism industry people were asked to comment. The results of the facebook page have been submitted separately.

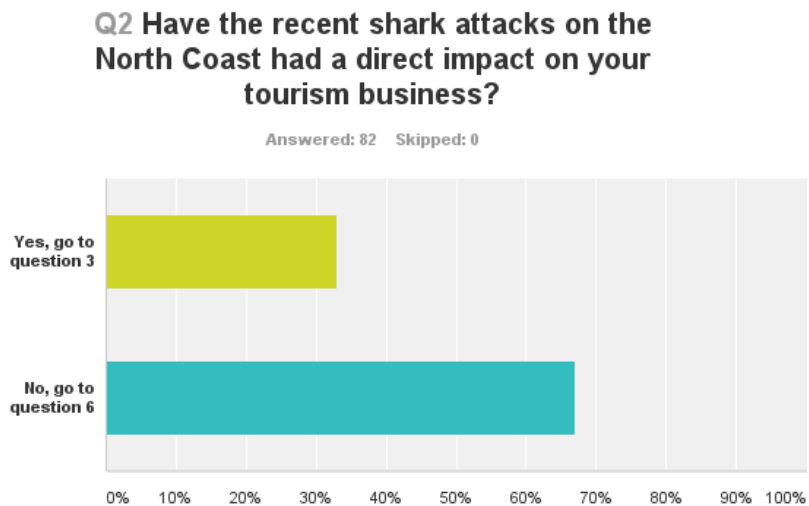
## 3.0 RESULTS

### 3.1 Results at a Glance

- 89 respondents
- 31.7% of respondents were hotel, motel, self contained or BnB, 16% were waterbased activity based
- 67% of respondents have said that they have had no direct impact from the shark attack/s and or sightings
- Of the 33% who have described an impact reported that there had been a 33% increase of beach safety inquiries from visitors already on holidays, 22% reported direct booking cancellations and 38% responded to “other” which included group booking cancellations of surf schools, 50% downturn in surf accessories from retailer
- Of those who reported income loss median was \$25000
- Only 29 responded to the question what should NCDN do? Most popular answer was to manage and minimise the negative PR from media, promote beach safety and swimming at patrolled beaches and promotion of hinterland activities
- 72% of respondents were aware of
- Most of the commented centred around ecological approach to manage the shark, particularly no netting or culling.

### 3.2 Analysis of Results

Question 2. Have the recent shark attacks on the North Coast had a direct impact on your tourism business



Question 3. Since the recent increased incidence of shark attack/s and or sightings, has your business been impacted by one or more of the following?

#### Shark Impact on North Coast Tourism

Since the recent increased incidence of shark attack/s and or sightings, has your business been impacted by one or more of the following?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Booking cancellations	22.2%	8
Less forward bookings to other years/seasons	5.6%	2
An increase of visitors inquiring about beach safety, opening and closing of local beaches	33.3%	12
An increase of visitors inquiring about non water based activities	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)	38.9%	14
<i>answered question</i>		<b>36</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>46</b>

Question 4. Please estimate the loss of business received as a result of the recent Shark Attacks? You can answer in either dollars or a % or both.

### Shark Impact on North Coast Tourism

Please estimate the loss of business received as a result of the recent Shark Attacks? You can answer in either dollars or a % or both.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
In dollars?	25.0%	8
In %	53.1%	17
Other	37.5%	12
<i>answered question</i>		<b>32</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>50</b>

Question 5. As the peak regional tourism authority on the North Coast, what would action/activity would you like to see the North Coast Destination Network do as a result of the Shark Attacks?

As the peak regional tourism authority on the North Coast, what would action/activity would you like to see the North Coast Destination Network do as a result of the Shark Attacks?

Answer Options	Response Count
	29
<i>answered question</i>	<b>29</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>53</b>

Number	Response Date	Response Text	Categories
1	Sep 22, 2015 5:13 AM	Promote the non beach attractions to our region more	
2	Sep 20, 2015 11:57 PM	Stop making a huge fuss about it	
3	Sep 19, 2015 3:20 AM	Support local business	
4	Sep 18, 2015 1:50 AM	MORE PROMOTION OF AREA ALWAYS HELPS	
5	Sep 16, 2015 4:10 AM	Nothing	
6	Sep 15, 2015 9:40 PM	Stay calm	
7	Sep 14,	cull	

- 2015  
7:23 PM  
Sep 11,  
2015
- 8 4:02 AM Sharks are sharks and will do what sharks do! Other than educating tourists on awareness there isn't much you can do?  
Sep 10,  
2015
- 9 10:32 PM Positive re enforcement that we have or will have patrolled beaches and we work closely with them on days of operation  
Sep 10,  
2015
- 10 11:40 AM maintain people swim between flags  
Sep 10,  
2015
- 11 2:32 AM plane patrols, and culling  
Sep 10,  
2015
- 12 1:31 AM shoot them!  
Sep 9,  
2015
- 13 6:20 AM The ocean is the sharks home. common sense is what is needed  
Sep 9,  
2015
- 14 12:59 AM Education  
Sep 9,  
2015
- 15 12:34 AM just warn people of swimming in the sharks natural habitat!  
Sep 9,  
2015
- 16 12:00 AM Ask the media to avoid sensationalism in their reports. The latest report: A puncture wound in the from a small shark (8" across mouth)and the Coffs Advocate has a huge Great White as a picture  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 17 11:04 PM Nil  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 18 7:59 PM The more we discuss it publicly the more it will stick in peoples minds. We need to promote other Estuary activities such as kayaking, paddle boarding etc. and wait till the media gets tired of printing  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 19 4:23 AM Educate the public regarding sharks & water safety  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 20 4:00 AM Support initiatives that warn lifeguards/people of nearby sharks. Support research into shark activity system (not destroy it). If we cull sharks now, it could have a detrimental affect on our eco system  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 21 3:42 AM Promote TLPC as a safe holiday destination. Not support shark nets.  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 22 3:19 AM Shark nets  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 23 2:55 AM Contact relevant authorities for information on any actions if any planned and communicate this to members?  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 24 2:42 AM Collectively work together to assist in a plan to best manage the attacks.  
Sep 8,  
2015
- 25 Thers a lot of businesses such as Air T& G that are angling to make money from this, people with media but also a decisive response to the increased Shark activity needs to be made. Spotting s

	2:37 AM	area, a helicopter that spots a shark then has emergency services running. Most sharks don't attack and this scenario is based on the assumption every single shark spotted is about to kill.
	Sep 8, 2015	
26	1:26 AM	No idea
	Sep 8, 2015	
27	1:11 AM	Employ a drone to safeguard Byrn Bay - to show tourists we are smart about protecting them
	Sep 7, 2015	
28	11:33 PM	Immediate destination marketing into high yield markets
	Sep 7, 2015	
29	11:27 PM	Reassurance that it is a rare event

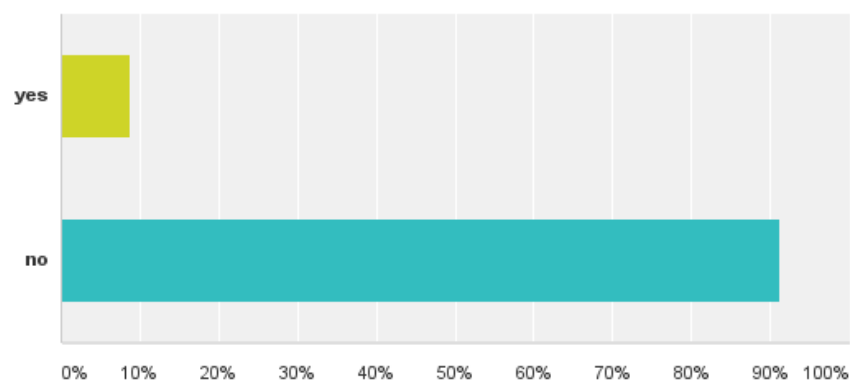
Question 6. Are you aware that the State Government has just launched a Management of Sharks NSW Waters (Inquiry)

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
yes	8.9%	7
no	91.1%	72
<i>answered question</i>		<b>79</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>3</b>

Question 7.

### Q7 Will you be preparing a submission to the inquiry on the impacts of tourism due to the recent shark attacks?

Answered: 79 Skipped: 3



Question 8.

Number	Response Date	Response Text	Categories
1	Sep 23, 2015 11:16 PM	The shark attacks have had minimal impact but customers do say they will not be swimming in the ocean until it is safer and something is done about the sharks coming close to shore.	
2	Sep 22, 2015 5:13 AM	the media hype has a detrimental affect	
3	Sep 20, 2015 11:57 PM	Its had a huge impact on my business. Surf accessories down 90%	
4	Sep 19, 2015 3:20 AM	The state government needs to be very public about it's activities and results in this area.	
5	Sep 18, 2015 1:50 AM	NON CULL POLICY IS WELCOME AND IMPORTANT FOR OUR REPUTATION	
6	Sep 16, 2015 4:10 AM	It's still more dangerous driving on the Pacific Highway. I believe life is a risk no matter what you do, so just take as many precautions as you can (surfers/swimmers) and live with the consequences.	
7	Sep 15, 2015 9:40 PM	do not cull sharks.	
8	Sep 15, 2015 5:04 AM	We need nets for every ones safety I love sea Life I also Love my friends and Husbands safety more !	
9	Sep 11, 2015 4:02 AM	Maybe there is a Shark Tourism opportunity ;)	
10	Sep 10, 2015 1:31 AM		
11	Sep 10, 2015 12:04 AM	Difficult to quantify any impact on bookings. We suspect there will be a slught impact however we believe any negative impact will decline over time .	
12	Sep 9, 2015 10:49 PM	Riverside park focused on waterskiiers, no noticeable impact as yet	
13	Sep 9, 2015 7:06 AM	They need to get Vic Hislop or someone like him to just kill the sharks. I hate the waste of the Inquiry when the solution is very simple - kill the sharks, just like we would any pest I think this is the most stupid survery I have ever come across. I am from a family of licensed fisherman and are fully awarte of the dangers of the shark. However if you are in their territory that is the risk you take.	
14	Sep 9, 2015 6:20 AM		
15	Sep 9, 2015 5:24 AM	Some areas are stopping fish guts etc being thrown back into the ocean, limiting predators from coming close to the shoreline.	
16	Sep 9, 2015 2:54 AM	I Think surfers and swimmers must take some of the responsibilty for their action and not swim or surf at first light or dusk or if there is a lot of bait fish in the area	
17	Sep 9, 2015 12:07 AM	Summer will tell us if there is any real impact from the shark attacks.	
18	Sep 9, 2015 12:00 AM	Mike Davey at Jetty Dive Centre. As a Dive Operator we have no problems with continuing diving however, the "once a year" diver may have concerns and not dive. We have good signs of no large predator sharks at the Solitary Islands dive sites, and would like to get some "good shark" the media. Any support would be appreciated.	



19	Sep 8, 2015 11:04 PM	There is more Media coverage not more attacks? Hard to tell if it will affect future bookings as some people wont enquire and this could be due to so many different factors such as the shark attacks or budgets etc. I hope it doesnt impact the local industry as i believe we have alot more attractions and positive areas then a few bad incidents.
20	Sep 8, 2015 10:48 PM	This is a joke. the "attacks" are occurring in earlymorning and late afternoon when for as long s remember we have been told to avoid going in the water for exactly this reason. So our solution encroach on our environment and potentially affect dolphins and whales which are also big bus those in tourism. This is being blown out of all proportion
21	Sep 8, 2015 11:09 AM	It is so narrow minded of us, more people are killed by bees and coconuts falling!! this is their territory...
22	Sep 8, 2015 8:47 AM	We are well away from Beaches and have received no negative feedback from guests or potential guests
23	Sep 8, 2015 4:40 AM	We are swimming in the Sharks territory - more education on times to avoid the water & avoiding swimming in schools of fish would be advisable.
24	Sep 8, 2015 4:23 AM	
25	Sep 8, 2015 2:55 AM	Thanks heaps
26	Sep 8, 2015 2:34 AM	Tourism isn't all about the beach. Ground water issues associated with gas are my concern
27	Sep 8, 2015 1:11 AM	I hav elong suggested the use of drones. Whatever measures (tagging etc) are pointless as they don;t allow real time tracking. We only need to see them! Sharks are an apex predator and help keep the marine ecoloy healthy and in its natural balance. Culling sharks will cause environmental problems, and is height of pig ignorance
28	Sep 8, 2015 12:37 AM	
29	Sep 7, 2015 11:27 PM	No culling

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 NCDN prepare a submission of the survey results to the Legislative Assembly Committee who are conducting the inquiry into the management of sharks in NSW waters
- 4.2 NCDN request support/funding to develop a campaign on beach safety and importance of swimming at patrolled beaches
- 4.3 NCDN concentrate PR and Media efforts to highlight hinterland and non beach activities available this summer
- 4.4 NCDN to coordinate PR and Media approach on understanding sharks ie stories on the findings of the current tagging of Great White Sharks program and interesting facts