

**Submission
No 16**

MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES WATERS

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Dear IIDR Committee members,

I am writing to you to respectfully request your consideration to the following issues raised in my submission when conducting The Management of Sharks in New South Wales Waters (Inquiry).

Are shark nets an effective method of public protection?

As far as I am aware there is no credible scientific research whatsoever to support the claim that shark nets act as a reliable barrier apparatus. Given that the mechanism affords incomplete envelopment of beachside waters any shark in the close vicinity may simply manoeuvre its way over, under or around the net.

Although there has been a decrease in shark attack fatalities in areas that have implemented netting procedures this statistical data correlation is less likely due to equipment effectiveness and more likely related to the incidence and availability of immediate medical/first aid intervention.

Are shark nets detrimental to marine ecosystems?

Both scientific and anecdotal evidence indicate that shark nets have an indiscriminate and calamitous effect upon the ocean's wildlife. Many species, such as endangered cetaceans, turtles, seabirds and harmless sharks, have perished whilst becoming entangled in these devices.

I suggest that the continued use of this non-selective, haphazard and, quite frankly, archaic practice will be an unwelcome legacy borne by future generations of people worldwide.

Alternatives to shark netting: why and what?

Shark nets act as little more than primitive and clumsy culling devices that destroy not only apex predators (which are vital to the maintenance of balanced, and delicate, marine ecosystems) but many other "non-target" animals. For this reason I believe that it would be a prudent measure to consider more sensitive and, importantly, effective, options.

The Eco Shark Barrier, the CSIRO initiative and the Shark Spotters Program, to name but three, could all prove to be viable, productive and successful strategies in the safe management of the waters adjacent to the beaches of NSW.

Public welfare is, of course, a salient concern. As stated earlier, shark nets engender a false sense of security whilst, at the same time, posing an extremely high risk of extinction to many other types of marine fauna.

Australia is home to more than a quarter of the world's shark species and is perfectly placed to become a global leader in the innovation of environmentally friendly, and scientifically sound, non-netting operations.

Thank you for taking the opportunity to read my submission.

Mr Scott Sanders