

**Submission
No 5**

MANAGEMENT OF SHARKS IN NEW SOUTH WALES WATERS

Organisation: Far North Coast Shark Action Group
Date Received: 14/10/2015

NSW Government Inquiry into the Management of Sharks in NSW Waters

Submission from the Far North Coast Shark Action Group

FAR NORTH COAST SHARK ACTION GROUP

Who we are

In light of the recent unprecedented spate of shark attacks on the Far North Coast of NSW, a group of concerned community members have come together. The aim of the group is to ensure that action is taken to reduce shark attacks at the beaches across our region, and to provide a voice for the community to policy makers and government organisations.

We are parents, business owners, surfers and water lovers who have seen the direct and devastating effects that the recent attacks have had not only for those individuals and families involved, but also for the wider community we are all a part of. The impacts both socially and economically are being felt widely, with kids frightened to go in the water, and the thoughts of fewer summer visitors weighing heavily on the minds of local businesses.

Our concerns

Evidence from the recent aerial surveillance program within the Ballina/Byron Shires has identified high numbers of white sharks in our local waters. Laws protecting white shark populations were introduced more than 15 years ago. With this protected status there is a responsibility placed on government to reduce the risk of serious injury and fatalities within the community.

What we want to achieve

Improved ocean safety for our children, visitors, and all ocean users by urgently implementing a shark attack mitigation program that is both available now and has had proven success in other areas, such as those currently in operation in metropolitan NSW and Queensland.

Current mitigation measures in place

Currently the NSW government protects the public with the use of shark nets exclusively on metropolitan beaches. There are no current mitigation measures in place across Northern NSW. While we support the current NSW Government tagging program, it does not reduce the risk of shark attacks in the short term.

Supported short term mitigation measures

- We support a netting and drum line program as an interim measure to reduce the risks of further attacks, with a focus on using current best practice design to minimise by-catch.

Our hopes for the medium and long term

- Support for DPI tagging as a means to create a future data source to help inform long term solutions.
- Further research and development of alternative technologies which could potentially replace nets and drum lines as a long term solution.
- Trialling these alternative technologies locally in conjunction with, but not in place of proven and effective short term measures.
- Support for the long term replacement of a netting and drum line program, when proven long term technologies have been successfully identified which also minimise the impact on the environment.

For more information on the North Coast Shark Action Group please contact us via email on: [REDACTED]

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