

1st March 2017

Committee Secretary,
Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications,
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

To Whom It May Concern:

RE: An inquiry into the efficacy and regulation of shark mitigation and deterrent measures

Surfrider Foundation Australia is a not for profit sea-roots organisation dedicated to the protection of Australia's waves and beaches through Conservation, Activism, Research and Education - C.A.R.E.

Surfrider Foundation Principles

“SURFRIDER recognizes the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the planet's coasts are necessary and irreplaceable. SURFRIDER is committed to preserving natural living and non-living diversity and ecological integrity of the coastal environment.”

The full list of Surfrider Foundation Principles can be found at www.surfrider.org.au but it is worth stating the first principle,

The Surfrider Foundation Australia National Campaign Policy as relating to sharks and last reviewed in June 2014 states:

Shark control program

Surfrider Foundation Australia has serious concerns regarding the indiscriminate killing of sharks as well as the accidental capture or injury of other marine animals (bycatch), and notes there is conflicting evidence regarding the effectiveness of sharknets and drumlines in actually reducing the risk of shark attack, particularly in recent years.

However, Surfrider Foundation Australia also recognises the political complexities and risks that would be associated with any moves to reduce the extent of shark control programs, and after many years a large proportion of beach goers now expect shark control programs to be in place and are under the impression (real or false) that current shark control programs reduce their risk of being attacked.

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates the following.

1. Increased research on the effectiveness of shark control programs and ways of reducing bycatch, as well as creating a greater understanding of sharks.
2. Formal recording and public reporting of the numbers and types of marine animals that are caught in all shark nets and drumlines.
3. Developing a suite of shark attack prevention strategies to reduce the perceived needs for nets. This to include improve observations activities via shorelines and aircraft and increases in seasonal education and awareness campaigns and activities to ensure bathers reduce their own risk of shark attack.
4. Broad and regular (e.g. every summer) education campaigns that covers:
5. The ways in which shark nets and drumlines work and don't work (i.e. catching and killing sharks rather than acting as a 'barrier fence' as is so often misunderstood by beachgoers)
6. A summary of shark and bycatch catch rates
7. The inherent risk of swimming in waters inhabited by sharks, regardless of control programs
8. Encouraging beachgoers to avoid swimming :
 - a. during dark or twilight hours
 - b. in waters near effluent outlets
 - c. in or near river mouths after heavy rain
 - d. in or near congregations of baitfish
 - e. in areas frequented by people fishing

Surfrider would be pleased to provide a representative at the Sydney hearings should you desire our input.

Yours Sincerely,

Brendan Frawley

Chairman - Surfrider Foundation Australia