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Minister for Primary Industries
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Be safe, be SharkSmart in the water this summer

The NSW Government today unveiled the next stage of the shark safety public information campaign, SharkSmart, which is designed to help surfers and swimmers be more shark aware this summer, Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald said today.

“SharkSmart is the state’s first public education campaign designed to inform beach goers of how they can reduce their risk of an encounter with a shark,” Minister Macdonald said.

“The SharkSmart brochure is an easy-read, informative guide that clearly outlines some common sense measures to increase safety in the water.

“The safety check list includes avoiding the water at dusk and dawn when sharks are most active, not swimming or surfing near schools of baitfish and avoiding murky water.

“Many families are currently enjoying school holidays on NSW’s beautiful beaches and the distribution of the SharkSmart brochure is designed to coincide with this peak time.”

Minister Macdonald said the brochures will be distributed to all NSW Surf Life Saving Clubs and the Australian Professional Ocean Lifeguard Association (APOLA) and compliments information available on-line.

“The brochure will be available electronically at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/sharksmart with a suite of information for the public about sharks, their habitat and nature,” Minister Macdonald said.

“The website includes an on-line order function to allow community groups, tourist information centres or organisations like Sydney coastal councils to order copies of the SharkSmart brochure.”

Minister Macdonald said more than 100,000 brochures would be printed and distributed free of charge.

The SharkSmart campaign is designed to complement the highly successful Shark Meshing Program which is in place between September and April each year.

“Since the NSW shark meshing program began in 1937, there has only been one fatal attack on a meshed beach,” Mr Macdonald said.

“Before the program was in place, there was an average of one fatal shark attack every year in NSW waters.”

“There are no 100 per cent guarantees against shark attack, but the meshing program has greatly reduced the number of fatalities,” he said.
