



MINISTER FOR PRIMARY INDUSTRIES
MINISTER FOR ENERGY
MINISTER FOR MINERAL RESOURCES
MINISTER FOR STATE DEVELOPMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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Simple rules to help swimmers avoid shark attack

Beachgoers are again being reminded to exercise care when swimming in the ocean.

Minister for Primary Industries Ian Macdonald said while the likelihood of shark attack is extremely low, swimmers need to be aware that sharks are a natural part of the ocean environment and remember that when we enter open waters, we are entering their domain - not a swimming pool.

“The NSW Government has a beach meshing program in place in an effort to protect beachgoers from the small risk of shark attack on our beaches,” he said.

“This initiative has helped provide a safer environment for beachgoers since 1937 – with only one fatality recorded on a netted beach during that time. At the end of the day the beach netting program is highly successful but there are no 100 per cent guarantees.

“The fact remains you are more likely to die driving to the beach than be taken by a shark.”

Minister Macdonald said there were some measures beachgoers can take to further reduce the small risk of shark attack.

“One of the simplest things all swimmers can do is to remember to stay between the flags when you’re swimming at the beach, this is the best place to swim because the area is patrolled and observed by life guards who are there to ensure the safety of our swimmers.”

Other steps to improve safety at the beach include:

- Don’t swim too far from shore – this will isolate you.
- Swim in groups as sharks are more likely to attack an individual.
- Avoid swimming when it’s dark or during twilight hours when sharks are most active and have a sensory advantage.
- Avoid waters with known effluents or sewage and areas that are used by recreational or commercial fishers.
- Avoid areas with signs of baitfish or fish feeding activity – diving seabirds are a good indicator of such activity.
- Do not rely on sightings of dolphins to indicate the absence of sharks – both often feed together on the same food.
- Exercise caution when swimming in water between sandbars or near steep drop offs – these are favourite hangouts for sharks.