



Niall Blair
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Lands and Water

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 14 August 2015

INCREASED SURVEILLANCE AND TAGGING TO HELP REDUCE RISK OF SHARK ATTACKS

Minister for Primary Industries, Niall Blair, has announced increased surveillance and shark tagging will start today, as part of a suite of measures in response to a number of recent shark attacks along the NSW North Coast, to help reduce the risk of further attacks.

The NSW Government will invest \$250,000 for the campaign ahead of predicted warmer spring and summer conditions.

"I am acutely aware of the concerns of communities on the North Coast following a spate of recent shark attacks – we want to make sure we do everything we can to help keep swimmers and surfers safe in our waters," Mr Blair said.

"Let's not forget the ocean is the domain of the shark, however, this Government is taking action to gain a better understanding of the local risks and how they can be reduced to help inform and protect the public.

"Within the Department of Primary Industries (DPI), we have world-renowned shark experts who will be temporarily based on the North Coast and leading this important work."

Parliamentary Secretary for the North Coast Chris Gulaptis said: "The campaign will involve on-water surveillance by experts as well as a targeted research program up and down the North Coast, which will involve tagging and tracking of local sharks, and significant investment in educating the public to be SharkSmart".

This will determine shark behavior in local waters through scientifically sound research, which will provide a pivotal piece of the picture when it comes to understanding the shark population and their interactions with humans.

The NSW Government's focus on the North Coast includes:

- North Coast Local Waters Shark Tagging Project led out of Ballina by DPI's internationally respected shark biologist, Dr Vic Peddemors;
- deployment of DPI Fisheries boats to include assessment of local conditions to inform research – in particular the presence of schools of bait fish that are known to attract sharks to the shoreline, current and water temperature trends;
- North Coast SharkSmart public education campaign beginning October;
- partnership with local surf clubs – every Surf Life Saving NSW club along the North Coast will be supplied with SharkSmart campaign materials and information;
- fast-tracked lookout towers funding from the Towers Grant Program;
- maintain strong linkages with the Ballina Shire Shark Mitigation Advisory Group; and
- the State Government has allocated \$100,000 for a review of new shark control technologies including deterrents and barriers, which will be completed next month.

The Deputy Director-General of DPI Fisheries, Dr Geoff Allan, will oversee the North Coast initiative, reporting to the local community and the NSW Government in early 2016.

MEDIA: Siobhan McCarthy | Minister Blair | 0407 791 802