



## LO5 Shark Response

### Policy Objective

- Provide direction for responding to shark attacks and shark sightings, as well as the broader approach to safety warnings and information provided to the public.
- Guide the administration of the Shire of Ravensthorpe Local Government Property Local Law 2010, under which a sign may be erected to regulate, prohibit or restrict specific activities on the beach or in the water and the giving of directions to swimmers to leave the water if a shark is suspected of being in the vicinity of the beach.
- Provide management, from a practicable and resource capacity perspective, while also giving the public the option of making an informed decision about personal safety with regards to entering the water after a confirmed shark sighting / attack.

### Policy

The Shire's actions will be guided by the following considerations:

- Public warnings and beach closures are a strategy intended to reduce the likelihood of shark-human encounters, noting however complete protection from sharks in the ocean environment, can never be guaranteed;
- Sharks are very mobile and are capable of travelling large distances in a short period of time;
- Authorised Officers should access credible information to inform response strategies – primarily from Water Police, Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development; and
- The contents of this policy are deemed manageable from a practicable and resource capacity perspective, while also giving the public the option of making an informed decision about personal safety with regards to entering the water after a confirmed shark sighting/attack.

### Scope

This policy applies to beach areas under the care, control and management of the Shire of Ravensthorpe, excluding privately owned land and land in National Parks.

### Strategy

#### **Criteria of Evaluation**

All Shark sightings are to be reported to Water Police on 9442 8600.

The Shire will mobilise Authorised Officers to respond to a confirmed shark sighting reported by Water Police where it meets ALL of the following criteria:

- Type: White, Bronze Whaler, Tiger or Bull Shark. Size: 2-3 metres in size.
- Location: Sighted within 500m of shore, and within Shire managed coastline.
- Or
- Size: Greater than 3 metres in size.
- Location: Sighted within 1km of shore, and within Shire managed coastline.

Where the shark species is unconfirmed but meets the remaining criteria, the Shire will also mobilise as outlined below.

Due to the minimal risk associated, if a shark reported is less than 2m in length, the Shire will monitor but maintain normal operations.

#### **Beach Categories**



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In determining the level of shark response, the following Beach Categories and summary response protocols have been established:

- **Category 1** – Easy road access, regularly populated, car parking and amenities provided.
- **Category 2** – Access available, not regularly populated by crowds, car parking available, no amenities.
- **Category 3** – Remote, limited access, no amenities, not thought to have crowds of 10 persons or more.

**Response Activities – Confirmed Shark Sightings**

- **Shark Sighting at Shire Managed/Controlled Beaches (Category 1):**
  - For shark sightings meeting the above criteria the beach will be closed for a minimum of 1 hour, and remain in place for 1 hour after the last confirmed sighting;
  - Beach closed signs will be installed by Authorised Officers at key car park and beach access points; and
  - Alert beach goers where possible.
- **Shark Sighting at Shire Managed/Controlled Beaches (Category 2):**
  - These Shire controlled beaches will not be formally closed in the event of a shark sighting. Instead, warning signs, displaying relevant information of public interest will be erected at key car park/beach entry points;
  - Where a reported shark is greater than 3 metres in size and less than 500m from the shore, an Authorised Officer will attempt to notify the public up to 1km each side of the relevant beach area of the danger;
  - Where it is identified that the public is in clear immediate danger from shark threat, an Authorised Officer will endeavour to notify the public via the use of a dedicated speaker/siren system, where available and practical;
  - These beach signs will remain in place for a minimum of two hours from the time of reported sighting, not from the time of arrival at the site; and
  - Where the sighting occurs at dusk, or Rangers are responding to other priority matters, warning signs will stay in place for the remainder of that day, to be removed the following day.
- **Shark Sighting at Shire Managed/Controlled Beaches (Category 3):**
  - These Shire controlled beaches will not be formally closed in the event of a shark sighting. Instead, permanent warning signs, displaying relevant information of public interest will be erected at key car park/beach entry points;
  - Where a reported shark is greater than 3 metres in size and less than 500m from the shore, an Authorised Officer will attempt to notify the public up to 1km each side of the relevant beach area of the danger.



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## Response Activities – Confirmed Shark Attack

- **Shark Attack at Shire Managed/Controlled Beaches (Category 1, 2 and 3):**

- Where a shark attack/fatality occurs, the relevant beach will be formally closed by an Authorised Officer(s) for the remainder of the day;
- Upon deliberation with WA Police and Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, the beach may either be re-opened to the public by an Authorised Officer the following morning, or remain closed for another 24 hours;
- Beach closed signs will be erected at key car park/beach entry points as soon as practicable to notify beach goers of the potential danger;
- An Authorised Officer will also walk the relevant beach area one kilometre each side of the attack to notify beach goers of the potential danger; and
- Where it is identified that the public is in clear immediate danger from shark threat, an Authorised Officer will endeavour to notify the public via the use of a dedicated speaker/siren system, where available and practical.

### Promotion of Relevant Information Sources:

The Shire will promote to the public relevant information sources to assist education, awareness raising and informed personal decision making:

- Report Shark Sightings to Water Police on 9442 8600;
- <http://www.sharksmart.com.au> – Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development information portal; and
- Shire of Ravensthorpe website/media releases.
- Where shark related sightings are a frequent occurrence, that is, more than 4 times in one given year in one location, or in an area of known shark attack/fatality, the Shire may consider installing permanent static signs to notify the public of the potential risk; and
- Permanent signage may contain relevant information provided by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and Surf Life Saving WA outlining safer water use practices/considerations.

### Jurisdictions and Role Clarification Related to Response Protocols:

- Shire Authorised Officers will respond to confirmed sightings within Shire designated beaches;
- The Shire will support other agencies such as the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions, WA Police, Surf Life Saving WA and other local government authorities to respond to shark threat within their jurisdictions where resources and capacity is available;
- WA Police are the controlling agency for shark fatalities on behalf of the coroner. The Shire will assist with any other support where applicable;
- Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development is responsible for any actions related to the attempted capture and or destruction of a potentially dangerous shark(s);
- In the event of a shark related fatality, a debrief will be organised by the Shire post event, inclusive of response and support agencies, as well as the public (where relevant), to review and refine response protocols/areas of improvement.

### Prioritisation of Response Activities:

Shire Rangers/Authorised Officers will respond to shark sightings as a matter of priority except where currently engaged in or mobilised to respond to the following:



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- Fire/Emergency;
- Dog attack on Person; and
- Stock on Road;

Shire Rangers/Authorised Officers will respond to shark attacks as a matter of priority except where currently engaged in or mobilised to respond to the following:

- Fire/Emergency.

Where priority activities divert Shire resources from dealing with immediate shark matters, secondary support resources will be activated as soon as possible to assist from the following:

- Other on-duty Shire Rangers/Authorised Officers;
- WA Police and other Emergency Service agencies (where relevant); and
- Neighbouring Local Governments.

### Definitions

- *Authorised Officer* – means a person authorised by the local government under s9.10 of the *Local Government Act 1995*;
- *Confirmed Shark Sighting* – means a shark sighting reported to the Shire of Ravensthorpe by the WA Government Shark Monitoring Network.

<b>DOCUMENT CONTROL BOX</b>		
<b>Custodian:</b> Executive Manager Projects and Regulatory Services		<b>Decision Maker:</b> Council
<b>Compliance Requirements:</b>		
<b>Legislation:</b>		
<b>Industry:</b>	<a href="https://www.sharksmart.com.au/">https://www.sharksmart.com.au/</a>	
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a	OCM 21/07/20 – Item 13.2	Comprehensive policy register review.
b	OCM 19/07/2022 Item 12.1.2	Comprehensive Policy Register Review
c	OCM 17/12/2024 Item 12.1.2	Policy Reconfirmed – No Amendments
d	OCM 15/12/2025 Item 12.1.1	Comprehensive Policy Register Review