



W A V E R L E Y  
COUNCIL

# **COUNCIL MEETING**

## **URGENT BUSINESS**

**7.00 PM, TUESDAY 19 AUGUST 2025**

Waverley Council  
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**URGENT BUSINESS**

**10. Reports**

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## REPORT CM/10.1/25.08



**Subject:** NSW Government Shark Management Program

**TRIM No:** A09/0347

**Manager:** Sam McGuinness, Executive Manager, Environmental Sustainability

**Director:** Fletcher Rayner, Director, Planning, Sustainability and Compliance

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### RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

1. Notes the correspondence attached to the report from the NSW Minister for Agriculture, the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, on a proposed shark net removal trial.
2. Recognises the need to balance marine biodiversity with community safety in any shark management strategy.
3. Reaffirms Council's support for the removal of shark nets provided that alternative technologies are deployed prior to removal to ensure community safety.
4. Notes that the proposed trial is a NSW Government-led initiative and that any trial location selection should be determined by the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) based on best practice scientific research.
5. Writes to the NSW Minister for Agriculture, the Hon Tara Moriarty MLC, advising her of this resolution.

#### 1. Executive Summary

This report responds to correspondence from the Minister for Agriculture dated 29 July 2025, which invites Council to participate in a shark net removal trial at one local beach during the 2025-26 summer season. The Minister has requested Council's response by 22 August 2025.

Consistent with its previously adopted positions, Council supports a transition to non-lethal shark management options that do not impact biodiversity including:

- Surveillance drones.
- SMART drumlines.
- Shark listening stations.
- Training of Council lifeguards in drone operation and surveillance.

This report requests Council to reaffirm its support for the removal of shark nets on the provision that alternative technologies are deployed prior to removal to ensure community safety, and that any selection of a trial location should be determined by lead agency, the Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

## 2. Introduction/Background

The NSW Government's Shark Management Strategy incorporates several mitigation technologies, including:

- Drone surveillance.
- SMART (Shark Management Alert In Real Time) drumlines.
- Shark listening stations.
- Shark nets.

In the Waverley local government area (LGA), all four technologies have been deployed to varying extents. Shark nets, introduced in 1937, are installed seasonally at Bondi and Bronte beaches. Each net is 150 metres long and 6 metres high, positioned at a depth of approximately 10 metres between September and April. These nets cover only a small portion of each beach (Bondi: 1,000 metres; Bronte: 220 metres and Tamarama: 90 metres) and can be bypassed by marine life.

Since 2022, regular drone surveillance has been undertaken from Marks Park by Surf Life Saving NSW by DPI.

On 29 July 2025, the Minister for Agriculture invited Council to nominate one beach in the LGA to participate in a trial without shark nets during the 2025-26 program (see Attachment 1). The letter did not include details regarding the scope of the trial, DPI's expectations of participating councils or specific criteria for nominating a beach.

A further letter from the Minister on 14 August 2025 (Attachment 2) confirms that the trial is only for the 2025-26 shark meshing season. The letter also states:

*The proposed trial responds to Council's feedback on behalf of their community to the 2024 Preferences Survey. The measure of success will be Council's feedback to the NSW Government on the levels of community support in their LGA for the continuation of the trial.*

## 3. Relevant Council Resolutions

Meeting and date	Item No.	Resolution
Council 10 December 2024	CM/7.11/24.12	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approves the response to the NSW Shark Management Program survey, as set out in the report.</li> <li>2. Supports the removal of shark nets from Waverley's beaches, as detailed in the survey, on the condition and to the satisfaction of Council that the NSW Department of Primary Industries significantly increases both the use of drone surveillance, including funding Council's professional lifeguard services to fly drone shark surveillance, and the deployment of SMART drumlines to increase the safety of beach users.</li> <li>3. Notes that the final decision on the NSW Shark Management Program will be made by NSW Department of Primary Industries.</li> </ol>

<p>Council 21 February 2023</p>	<p>CM/7.12/23.02</p>	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Approves the response to the NSW Shark Management Strategy survey attached to the report.</li><li>2. Notes that Council will be receiving a report about the use of drone technology to assist with shark management.</li><li>3. Attaches a covering letter to its response referred to in clause 1 above that:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Explains that Council has left sections of the survey blank where:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) A response is not possible in the limited time frame, as community engagement and research would be required to provide an informed community response.</li><li>(ii) Council is asked to comment on the effectiveness of the current program and technology mix, which is difficult given the very limited data available on shark interactions.</li></ol></li><li>(b) States that Council:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(i) Does not support the use of shark nets due to the indiscriminate way in which they kill and harm marine life.</li><li>(ii) Is concerned about the use of funds in the current Shark Management Program on shark nets, as this may impact the availability of funds to use on more effective shark mitigation measures.</li></ol></li></ol></li><li>4. Consults its lifeguards to seek their opinion on the shark nets, and that their comments be included in any report to the State Government.</li></ol>
<p>Council 16 August 2022</p>	<p>CM/6.1/22.08</p>	<p>That Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Notes:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) The resolution of March 2021 that Council supports shark management options that reduce or eliminate impacts upon marine diversity.</li></ol></li></ol>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b) That this includes no longer supporting shark meshing.</li> <li>(c) That shark nets, introduced in 1937, are identified as a key threatening process under the <i>Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016</i> (NSW).</li> <li>(d) That Waverley has two shark nets, one at Bondi and one at Bronte, but no nets at Tamarama.</li> <li>(e) That these shark nets, which are 150 metres long, six metres high and sit at a depth of approximately 10 metres, do not provide comprehensive coverage, given that Bondi is 1,000 metres long and Bronte is 220 metres long.</li> <li>(f) That research by the Department of Planning and the Environment shows that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Fewer sharks are tagged in the Sydney region than for other areas, such as the North Coast.</li> <li>(ii) Between 2009 and 2019, in the Sydney Region, 19 sharks dangerous to humans were caught in netting, of which 14 died, while 140 non-target sharks were caught as well as six species of marine animals, including 15 turtles and one dugong, with most animals dying.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(g) That Council adopted a mayoral minute in December 2019 declaring a State of Climate and Biodiversity Emergency.</li> <li>(h) That since February 2022, the Department of Planning and the Environment places and removes daily six SMART drum lines off Waverley beaches, which are designed to intercept and release target sharks that come close to shore.</li> <li>(i) That the summer season is soon to commence.</li> </ul> <p>2. Investigates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The development of a shark patrol using drone technology operated by Waverley's professional lifeguards.</li> </ul>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b) The training and logistical requirements to successfully operate such a patrol.</li> <li>(c) The appropriate drone technology suitable for shark spotting.</li> <li>(d) Budgetary impacts, costs and sources of funding, including applying for any potential grants that may be available.</li> </ul> <p>3. Receives a report as a matter of urgency.</p>
Council 16 March 2021	CM/7.7/21.03	<p>That Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Supports shark management options that provide the most effective means of protecting swimmers and that reduces or eliminates impacts on marine biodiversity.</li> <li>2. Endorses the response to the NSW Shark Management Strategy survey attached to the report.</li> <li>3. Notifies all surf clubs, precincts and the Chamber of Commerce of the existence of the survey, including the link.</li> <li>4. Arranges a Councillor workshop to discuss the outcomes of the Shark Management Strategy at an appropriate time.</li> </ul>

#### 4. Discussion

In 2024, DPI provided an information pack outlining shark net performance within the Waverley LGA. Between 2022 to 2024, no white, bull or tiger sharks, the primary target species, were caught in the Bondi or Bronte nets. However, multiple non-target species were entangled and died, including: critically endangered Grey Nurse Shark (*Carcharias taurus*) at Bronte in April 2024 and Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*) at Bondi in April 2024 and at Bronte in February 2022.

In contrast, nine target sharks were successfully captured and released using the SMART drum lines over the same period, indicating greater efficacy and lower ecological impact.

Council's December 2024 resolution reaffirmed its support for non-lethal shark mitigation and requested increased investment in these alternatives by DPI.

The Minister's recent invitation to participate in a shark net removal trial is consistent with Council's adopted position. However, no trial objectives or monitoring frameworks have been provided except for stating that 'the measure of success will be Council's feedback to the NSW Government on the levels of community support in their LGA for the continuation of the trial.'

Given Council's lack of specialist scientific capacity in shark behaviour and mitigation, it is recommended that DPI determines the most appropriate beach for the trial, guided by ecological risk assessments, public safety data and monitoring capabilities.

Any removal should be first complemented by the deployment of other non-lethal shark management strategies.

## 5. Financial Impact

There are no direct financial implications for Council associated with this initiative at this stage, as the Shark Management Program is funded and administered by the NSW Government.

## 6. Risks/Issues

The risks are set out in the following table.

*Table 1. Risks.*

Risk Area	Comment
Public safety	Although rare, shark interactions carry significant safety and reputational risks. Continued deployment of proven technologies (e.g. drones, SMART drumlines) helps manage this risk effectively.
Biodiversity	Shark nets pose a demonstrable risk to non-target and endangered marine species. Transitioning to modern alternatives is consistent with biodiversity protection commitments.
Community perception	While marine safety is a State Government responsibility, the community may associate program outcomes with Council. Clear communication and engagement will be essential.

## 7. Attachments

1. Correspondence from Minister Moriarty on shark management program - 22 July 2025 [↓](#)
2. Correspondence from Minister Moriarty on proposed shark net trial - 14 August 2025 [↓](#) .



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**The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC**

Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Regional New South Wales  
Minister for Western New South Wales



Mayor Will Nemesh  
PO Box 9  
Bondi Junction NSW 1355

Via email: [will.nemesh@waverley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:will.nemesh@waverley.nsw.gov.au)

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Re: Shark Management Program

Dear Mayor Nemesh,

Thank you for taking part in the consultation of the NSW Government's Shark Management Program.

As you are aware, the NSW Government committed to seeking feedback from Councils on the Shark Management Program. This consultation sought a position from local councils on a range of elements of the program, including the use of nets.

We have considered Waverly Council's feedback and given the NSW Governments interest in facilitating local decision making where possible, we now invite your council to participate in a trial of the removal of nets from one beach in your Local Government Area for the 2025/26 program, if you wish.

Please advise if your Council wishes to participate in the trial, and if so, nominate one beach in your LGA you do not want netted in the 2025/26 program.

Please advise of Councils position by Friday 22 August 2025.

Sincerely,



**Tara Moriarty MLC**  
Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Regional New South Wales  
Minister for Western New South Wales

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**The Hon Tara Moriarty MLC**

Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Regional New South Wales  
Minister for Western New South Wales



MF25/1745

Your ref: A25/0204

Mayor Will Nemesh  
Mayor of the Waverley Council  
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Re: Shark Management Program

Dear Mayor Nemesh,

Thank you for your letter regarding the NSW Government's proposed trial involving the removal of shark nets. I appreciate your timely response.

The NSW Government remains committed to protecting the safety of beach users by reducing interactions with target shark species, while minimising harm to sharks and non-target species.

The proposed trial relates to the discontinuation of nets only at a beach selected by the Council, and will run for the 2025/26 shark meshing season. As part of the NSW Government's \$21.4 million per annum Shark Management Program, administered by the Department, the trial will not incur any direct costs to Council. Nonetheless, the NSW Government always welcomes opportunities to co-fund such initiatives and acknowledges the value of such partnerships in enhancing community safety measures.

This proposed trial responds to Council's feedback on behalf of their community to the 2024 Preferences Survey. The measure of success will be Council's feedback to the NSW Government on the levels of community support in their LGA for the continuation of the trial.

The Government will be in a position to provide further details about the potential trial once responses have been received from all three councils involved. We value your input and look forward to continuing this collaborative approach.

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I trust this is of assistance, however, I have asked Dr Heath Folpp, Director Marine Estate Management, to be available to answer any further questions you may have. Dr Folpp can be contacted on (02) 6691 9673 or by email at [nsw.sharkprogram@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:nsw.sharkprogram@dpi.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,



**Tara Moriarty MLC**  
Minister for Agriculture  
Minister for Regional New South Wales  
Minister for Western New South Wales

14/8 /2025

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