



# MEDIA RELEASE

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**Ian Macdonald**

Minister for Primary Industries, Minister for Energy,  
Minister for Mineral Resources, Minister for State Development

## **Shark Meshing Program review placed on public exhibition**

The State Government's draft review of its shark meshing program goes on display today with Primary Industries Minister Ian Macdonald urging interested members of the public to make submissions.

Minister Macdonald said the meshing program had a proven track record of success but the review (the first since 1972) was a chance for the people of NSW to comment on proposed management arrangements.

"This Government is in the business of listening and I encourage the public to play an active role in determining the future direction of the shark meshing program," Minister Macdonald said.

"In November 2008 the NSW Government introduced changes to enable the program to be managed through Joint Management Agreements and associated management plans under the State's threatened species legislation.

"As part of that process, the NSW Government committed to undertaking a review of the program and its environmental performance – the draft review goes on display today for public comment."

Minister Macdonald said since the meshing program commenced in 1937, there had been just one fatal shark attack at a meshed beach. Prior to that there were 24 fatalities recorded in Sydney waters alone over the period 1900-1937.

"The review recommends a range of options including an education campaign to be rolled out this Spring focussing on how the public can reduce risk of shark attack, for example by avoiding swimming in schools of baitfish, murky water or bathing at dawn and dusk," he said.

"It also explores signage at local beaches warning of shark danger."

Some of the key recommendations of the Rees Government's review include:

- The establishment of a strategic research and monitoring program
- Increased frequency of net checking to further reduce environmental impacts
- A major review of the NSW Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program to be completed every five years

- The preparation of publicly available annual reports and review reports following any attacks resulting in fatalities or serious injury.
- An ongoing assessment of the impact and risk of the Shark Meshing Program on marine species
- Ongoing involvement of the State's threatened species scientific committees.

Minister Macdonald said the review was not a knee jerk reaction to recent attacks, but had been months in the planning.

“It is part of an ongoing and comprehensive review of the management arrangements for the program that the Government has been considering for some time,” he said.

The report into the NSW Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program will also list official shark attack incidents recorded since 1791.

A copy of the review of the NSW Shark Meshing (Bather Protection) Program can be found on the Department of Primary Industries website [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au) and hard copies will also be available for view at major NSW Fisheries offices from tomorrow.

The public exhibition period ends on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2009.

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