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Media Release

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Sydney Councils Unite Against Shark Nets to Protect Marine Biodiversity

Coastal Councils across Sydney have taken a united stand against the continued use of shark nets, citing their devastating impact on marine biodiversity and the availability of modern, effective alternatives.

This collective decision reflects a growing commitment to safeguarding marine ecosystems while ensuring public safety at Sydney's iconic beaches.

Shark nets, introduced nearly a century ago, have long been criticized for their indiscriminate harm to marine life.

These nets, which are designed to reduce shark interactions with swimmers, often entangle and kill non-target species, including dolphins, turtles, rays, and critically endangered grey nurse sharks.

Recent data reveals that over 90% of marine animals caught in shark nets are non-target species, with majority suffering fatal injuries.

In response to these concerns, Sydney Councils are advocating for the removal of shark nets and the adoption of innovative, non-lethal technologies.

"Shark nets are outdated and ineffective," Sydney Coastal Councils Group Chair, Councillor Shannon Welch said.

"We now have access to advanced technologies that not only protect swimmers but also preserve the rich marine biodiversity that defines our coastal waters.

It's time to move forward with solutions that reflect our values and our responsibility to the environment."

Among the alternatives being championed are SMART (Shark-Management-Alert-in-Real-Time) drumlines, which are designed to catch, tag, and relocate sharks away from swimming areas.

These devices have proven to be highly effective in reducing shark interactions without harming marine life.



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Other measures, such as drone surveillance, shark listening stations, and personal shark deterrents, are also being implemented to enhance beach safety while minimizing ecological impact.

The positions of Northern Beaches, Waverley, Randwick and Sutherland Councils align with growing public support for sustainable shark management practices.

Community consultations and scientific research have highlighted the urgent need to retire shark nets in favour of modern alternatives that prioritize both human safety and marine conservation.

The SCCG and its member Councils are calling on the NSW Government to take decisive action and implement a comprehensive shark safety program that eliminates the use of shark nets.

By embracing innovative technologies and fostering coexistence with marine life, Sydney can set a global example of responsible and forward-thinking coastal management.

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