

Council Policy Name: Shark Hazard Response

Responsible Directorate: Planning and Development Services

Version: Current

1. PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this Policy is to guide the City’s approach in response to shark attacks and shark sightings, water safety warnings and related information provided to the public.

2. SCOPE

2.1. This Policy is applicable to beach areas under the care, control and/or management of the City.

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Patrolled Beach	a beach that has a Surf Life Saving Western Australia beach safety and surveillance service in operation
Policy	this Council Policy titled “Shark Hazard Response”

4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

4.1. This Policy links to Key Goal Area 1 – Community of the City’s Strategic Community Plan 2017 and specifically the Community Objective 1.1: a friendly safe and inclusive community with a strong community spirit.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1. The City advocates to the State Government for a consistent state wide approach to the management of sharks including shark sightings and incidents, regardless of land tenure.

5.2. The City is informed of shark sightings by the Surf Life Saving Western Australia (SLSWA) helicopter surveillance and the shark monitoring network service when available.

5.3. Shark sighting reports generally provide details about the location of the shark, size, species and in some instances direction of travel, all of which inform decisions about swimmer safety and the City’s response.

5.4. At a Patrolled Beach, a SLSWA life guard is the authorised person for responding to a shark sighting and for implementing the SLSWA response procedure; which may include sounding alarms to alert swimmers, clearing the water of swimmers and monitoring shark presence.

5.5. In the event of a shark attack fatality, WA Police are the lead agency. The City will provide assistance with the management of the shark attack and implement beach safety measures as necessary and under the direction of the WA Police.

- 5.6. Following a shark attack and a direction given to swimmers to leave the water, beaches will generally not be re-opened less than 24 hours after the shark attack occurred.
- 5.7. The decision to re-open a beach will be made by the City in consultation with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (Fisheries branch).
- 5.8. General beach safety and community awareness of shark hazards will be promoted on the City’s website and social media by:
 - a. providing a link to the State Government Sharksmart website and mobile phone app;
 - b. “providing information on Patrolled Beaches within the City including patrol dates and times; and
 - c. encouraging swimmers to swim at Patrolled Beaches or within the beach enclosures at Busselton and Dunsborough.
- 5.9. Community awareness will also be promoted by the use of temporary signage to advise swimmers and beach users:
 - a. of significant shark sightings at a specific beach; and
 - b. of increased shark activity at key locations during the annual salmon season from March to May each year.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTATION / LEGISLATION

- 6.1. Shark Hazard Response Operational Practice

7. REVIEW DETAILS

Review Frequency		3 yearly		
Council Adoption	DATE	14 October 2020	Resolution #	C2010/109
Previous Adoption	DATE	14 October 2015	Resolution #	C1510/286