

Our ref: CTS 18722/25
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25 SEP 2025

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
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Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to the petition received on 26 August 2025 by the Queensland Legislative Assembly No.4262-25 regarding the Shark Control Program (the Program).

The Crisafulli Government's Shark Management Plan 2025 to 2029 (the Plan) and increased investment of an additional \$88.2 million into the Program represents historic change, with the single biggest improvement and strengthening of the Program since it started in 1962.

It sets out how the Crisafulli Government will reduce the risk of shark attacks at specific beaches across Queensland, putting human safety first. The Plan combines proven safety measures like shark nets and drumlines while prioritising research, education and innovative technologies like drone surveillance at more beaches.

Prioritising Queenslanders' safety also protects our international tourism reputation, with our beaches the envy of the world and the centrepiece of our \$33 billion tourism industry.

The Plan and increased investment into the Program is being delivered following the Government's consideration of recommendations from the KPMG Shark Control Program Evaluation Report (the Report), as well as feedback from Queenslanders, scientific experts, Surf Life Saving Queensland and local government. Any recommendation or measure that prioritises human safety first, above all other factors, has been adopted in line with the Crisafulli Government's priority. Any assertion that this report has been ignored is not only misleading, but completely untrue.

The Report concluded that there was an ongoing need for the Program and found that the implementation and operation of shark control equipment, specifically traditional drumlines and nets, likely contributed to substantially lower shark attack incidences at Queensland beaches where the gear is operational.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is responsible for delivering the Plan through a four-pillar approach, comprising operations, research, trials, and education and engagement.

Priority initiatives include the following:

- **Shark nets and drumlines will be serviced daily (weather permitting) all year round (compared to servicing occurring as little as 182 times per year under the previous Government)** – this significant investment in Program operations will ensure equipment is working as effectively as possible. It is anticipated this will improve identification of and response times for non-target species caught in this equipment

- **Shark control equipment optimisation** – the location and configuration of shark control equipment will be optimised which will include expansion to new locations, ensuring protective measures are deployed where they are needed most. The use of traditional drumlines and nets is in accordance with the findings of the KPMG Report which found that these methods were most effective at reducing the risk of shark attacks. The expansion of the Program is subject to further detailed assessment and consultation before sites and equipment is confirmed
- **SharkSmart drone program** – shark-spotting drones will be rolled out to more beaches, becoming a permanent fixture of Program operations, complementing traditional measures like nets and drumlines. In collaboration with Surf Life Saving Queensland, the current trial at 10 beaches will be expanded to 20 beaches by 2026–27, with an ongoing commitment to explore innovative solutions to improve the effectiveness of the drone program
- **Research** – population assessments will be delivered for key target shark species including a scientific evaluation of the impact of the Program. Research into improved whale deterrent technologies and best practice marine animal release practices will minimise environmental impacts of the Program during the whale migration period. The tagging and tracking of target sharks will continue through key research collaborations to improve our understanding of shark behaviour
- **New technology and innovation** – the Program will develop and implement a framework for the systematic identification, trial and assessment of new technologies and management practices. These technologies would require independent investigation regarding their effectiveness on Queensland's target species, and suitability for our unique environmental conditions before they will be considered as part of the Program.

Catch alert drumlines will be only used where required under current Federal legislation or approvals. Current trials at Cairns, Mackay, and the Capricorn Coast will continue and expand to other areas within the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park in accordance with permit requirements

- **SharkSmart Education Program** – public education will continue through a refreshed SharkSmart campaign with new strategies to address high-risk activities.

The Plan sets a clear and strong direction for the future management of the Program, with human safety central to its operation.

Until alternatives are proven effective at reducing the risk of shark attacks, the Program will continue to use mesh nets and traditional drumlines. Research and trials into other mitigation devices or strategies will continue. It is important to note that approximately 60 per cent of the additional funding announced for the Program is for research, trials of new technology, education, and the SharkSmart drone program.

I thank the petitioners for bringing their concerns to the attention of the House.

Yours sincerely



TONY PERRETT MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Member for Gympie