

Meeting Minutes:

Oceans for All (Noosa Shark Net Working Group) Meeting: Trial of Replacing Shark Nets during Whale Migration Season

Date: 26/09/25

Time: 8:00am

Location: Noosa Boardroom

Chair: Sandy Bolton MP

Minute Taker: Jack Drew

Attendees:

In-person:

Chairperson: Sandy Bolton MP, Member for Noosa

Mayor Frank Wilkie,

Humpback and Highrises & Whalesong, Erin King

Noosa Biosphere Reserve, Anna Macklin

Noosa Boating Fishing Alliance Inc., Andrew McCarthy

Noosa Heads Surf Life Saving Club, Stephen Mawby & Graham Reid

Noosa Malibu Club, Rick Espiner

Noosa Parks Association, Tony Wellington

Noosa Today, Margie Maccoll

Noosa Wave, Geoff Aquino

Noosa World Surfing Reserve, Trevor Back

Ocean Swimmers, Nicholas Stewart

Peregian Surf Life Saving Club, Leigh McCready

Sea Shepherd Sunshine Coast, Jonathan Clark

Sunreef, Dan Ladd-Hudson (representing Taylor Ladd-Hudson)

Sunshine Beach Surf Life Saving Club, Russel Quinn

Tourism Noosa, Sharon Raguse

University of the Sunshine Coast, Bonnie Holmes

Whalesongs, Erin King

Wildlife Noosa, Julie Osbourne & Chantal Montinani

Online:

Cooloola North Shore Coast Care, Natasha Cassidy

Hastings Street Association, Ben Orton

Oceans for All, Caz Lansdown w/ Jarrah Small attending in-person

Surfrider Sunshine Coast, Jennifer Sharpe

Welcome:

Sandy Bolton MP: Initiates the meeting, thanking all who attended on behalf of Caz Lansdown and Oceans for All who were away and joined later by Teams. Acknowledged that it had been two years since the original meeting of the Shark Net Working Group and the task of all representatives to obtain a position from their groups on trialling the removal of shark nets during whale migration season, with this meeting a follow-up to the email from Oceans for All in August requesting they declare a position. Reiterated the meeting was not a debate as there had been ample time and information provided since the initial meeting, it is a recording on stakeholder positions as per the email sent out to ascertain a unified position to take to state government regarding the trial.

Overview of Shark Net Summary Provided:

Sandy Bolton MP: Noted from the information compiled that Queensland is the only state maintaining year-round shark nets, with no conclusive evidence of their effectiveness. The KPMG report recommended removing nets during whale migration season and that alternatives to shark nets, such as drones, have been trialled and are considered effective as now permanent.

Council's Position and Advocacy:

Mayor Frank Wilkie: Outlined the rationale behind Noosa Councils proposal to state government for a trial, including the independent KPMG Report into the Shark Control Program, highlighting the ineffectiveness of shark nets and their high bycatch rate. Noted that in July council passed a mayoral minute endorsing recommendation 3.2 of the KPMG report for a trial of removing shark nets during the whale migration season and support for a trial in Noosa. The council has written to Minister for Primary Industries, Hon Tony Perrett MP, and received a respectful yet firm response from the state government who reiterated their position on the Shark Control Program. Asked if there were any questions.

Sea Shepherd Sunshine Coast (Jonathan Clark): Asked about assessment criteria for the trial removal of nets.

Mayor Frank Wilkie: Suggested the trial may assess the effectiveness of alternative measures like drones and aerial surveillance and to gather data to inform permanent changes. The mayor noted he is not an expert and that the assessment criteria for the trial would be decided by specialists.

Representatives' Statement and Positions:

Noosa Parks Association (Tony Wellington): NPA made a submission opposing the use of shark nets across the state. Supports trial.

Noosa Boating and Fishing Alliance (Andrew McCarthy): Although they recognise the evidence regarding catch rates and bycatch, they are against until community organisations that spend time in the water, Life Saving Clubs, Local Swimming groups, are supportive.

Cr Amelia Lorentson: As a Noosa Councillor, position is based on community consensus.

Sea Shepherd Sunshine Coast (Jonathan Clark): Emphatic that shark nets should be removed. Supports trial.

Sunreef (Dan Ladd-Hudson representing Taylor Ladd-Hudson) - Supports trial.

University of the Sunshine Coast (Doctor Bonnie Holmes): Supports trial, but emphasizes the need for careful replacement measures, as traditional drumlines can shift the problem to more endangered species.

Noosa Biosphere Reserve Foundation (Anna Macklin) - Supports trial based on science and UNESCO Biosphere values.

Tourism Noosa (Sharon Raguse): Representing over 480 tourism business in Noosa, polled members and received 160 responses overwhelmingly supporting trial.

Humpbacks and Highrises (Erin Kim): Supports trial.

Whalesongs Noosa (Erin Kim): Supports trial.

Noosa Heads Surf Life Saving Club (Stephen Mawby & Graham Reid): Supports Queensland Government's Shark Smart Program and is neutral on the trial. However, Graham noted as President of Peregian Family and Friends, they do not support the expansion of nets to Peregian Beach.

Sunshine Beach Surf Life Saving Club (Russell Quinn): Neutral on trial, wished to be recorded as abstaining from the vote.

Noosa Today (Margie Macoll): Attendance as an observer.

Noosa Masters Swimming Club (Terry Park): Supports trial.

Malibu Club (Rick Espiner): In principle support of trial. However, they stated that they need to know what alternative measures will be used to replace the shark nets and where the funds for the trials will come from before they can give their firm approval.

Noosa World Surfing Reserve (Trevor Back): Against proposed trial. Reasons: 1. Lack of consultation on mayoral minute, 2. Absence of non-biased data based on fact rather than emotion, 3. No evidence of what would replace the nets.

Wildlife Noosa (Julie Osbourne): Supports trial.

Noosa Wave (Geoff Aquino): Supports trial.

Peregian Beach Surf Life Saving Club (Leigh McCready): Neutral on trial and supports the state government's Shark Control Program policy.

Cooloola North Shore Coast Care (Natasha Cassidy): Supports trial, would like them to be replaced with smart measures.

Hastings Street Association (Ben Orton): Supports trial.

Surfrider Sunshine Coast (Jennifer Sharpe): Strongly supports trial.

Oceans for All (Caz Lansdown & Jarrah Small): Supports trial and finding safe alternatives to shark nets.

Closing Remarks:

Sandy Bolton MP: Concludes the meeting, thanking everyone and noting the importance of capturing all positions. Asked if anyone felt that there was a Noosa based water user group that needed to be contacted or included in the position statement to send through contact details to Oceans for All.

Bonnie Holmes, USC Shark Scientist: Invited all to attend her presentation at Noosa Parks Association regarding the Noosa Bull Shark Program. Stated that there was a bit of misinformation in this meeting and wanted to discuss further at her presentation.

Meeting Closed at 9:00am

Footnote – record of votes attached.

Vote Record and Tally:

*Please note: Votes from attendees who were not representing an organisation were not included in the count and instead recorded separately by the Office of Sandy Bolton MP as an indication of individual constituent support.

For (16)	Against (2)	Neutral (2)	Abstained (1)
Coolum and North Shore Coast Care	Noosa Boating and Fishing Alliance Inc.	Noosa Heads Surf Life Saving Club	Sunshine Beach Surf Life Saving Club (Stated neutrality, but specified abstain)
Hastings Street Association	Noosa World Surfing Reserve	Peregian Beach Surf Life Saving Club	
Humpbacks and Highrises			
Noosa Biosphere Reserve			
Noosa Council			
Noosa Masters Swimming Club			
Noosa Parks Association			
Noosa Wave			
Oceans for All			
Sea Shepherd Sunshine Coast			
Surfrider Sunshine Coast			
Sunreef			
Tourism Noosa			
University of the Sunshine Coast			
Whalesongs			
Wildlife Noosa			

Votes of those via email response prior to the meeting:

For (2)	Against (0)	Neutral (0)	Abstained (2)
Noosa Malibu Club			Noosa Chamber of Commerce
Noosa Thriller Brent and Min			Noosa Board Riders

Totals as of 3/10/2025:

For	18
Against	2
Neutral	2
Abstained	3