

3.5 BEACH CLOSURE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

This policy provides a clear direction for the Shire to inform members of the public of Dangerous Aquatic Species sightings and attacks via beach warnings and closures.

OBJECTIVES

1. Outline Shire procedure for beach safety warnings and closures in relation to sighting and / or attacks of Dangerous Aquatic Species in the Jurien Bay Marine Park.
2. To inform the general public to make an informed decision about personal safety with regards to entering the water after a confirmed Dangerous Aquatic Species sighting and/or attack.
3. Guide the administration of the *Shire of Dandaragan Property Local Law*, under which a sign may be erected to regulate, prohibit or restrict specific activities on the beach or in the water and the giving of directions to swimmers to leave the water if a Dangerous Aquatic Species is suspected of being in the vicinity of the beach.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Shire is committed to providing a safe and welcoming place for residents and visitors.

The Shire's actions will be guided by the following considerations:

- Warning the public and closing beaches is a strategy to reduce the likelihood of human encounters with Dangerous Aquatic Species, however complete protection can never be guaranteed.
- Some Dangerous Aquatic Species i.e. sharks are very mobile and are capable of travelling large distances in a short period of time.
- Authorised Persons should access credible information to inform response strategies.
- The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions is responsible for Dangerous Aquatic Species response protocols associated with beaches/coastline under its jurisdiction.
- The Department of Communities is available to provide referrals to counselling services for impacted community members where required.
- The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is responsible for any actions related to the attempted capture and or destruction of a potentially Dangerous Aquatic Species.
- The WA Police is the hazard management authority for Dangerous Aquatic Species fatality on behalf of the coroner. The Shire will assist with beach closures, media coordination, as well as community recovery initiatives where relevant.

DANGEROUS AQUATIC SPECIES RESPONSE CRITERIA

The Shire will mobilise Authorised Persons to respond to a confirmed Dangerous Aquatic Species sighting as result of being notified by relevant deemed

authorities/parties of a confirmed sighting and/or attack within 1km offshore of beaches under its management adjacent to the Jurien Bay Marine Park.

Authorised Persons will respond to such notification by implementing the following procedure:

- Erect “Dangerous Aquatic Species (*species common name*). Beach Closed” signage at Shire known popular beach access points.
- Alert beach users where possible, subject to resource availability.
- The beach will be closed for a minimum of 1 hour.
- Beach may be re-opened 1 hour after the last confirmed sighting, or in the case of an attack re-opened the following morning, or remain closed for another 24 hours, determined by consultation with relevant authorities.

DEFINITIONS

Key terms and acronyms used in the policy, and their definitions:

- Authorised Person means a person authorised by the local government under section 9.10 of the *Local Government Act 1995* for the purpose of administering the *Shire of Dandaragan Local Laws*.
- Dangerous Aquatic Species means any aquatic species known to have caused significant ill-health, injury or death to recreational coastal water users as determined by the World Health Organisation, i.e. Sharks.

Policy Number	3.5
Adopted by Council	
Amended	