



# TIME TO ACT

"There is an incongruous reluctance from authorities to admit that the best way to deal with the growing threat from sharks is to remove some of them from the equation."  
*The West Australian*

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# Fatal attack prompts a change in strategy

■ **Angela Pownall, Daniel Emerson and Tayissa Barone**

WA's seventh fatal shark attack in three years has led the State Government to announce it is looking at how to be more "proactive" in dealing with threat of sharks.

Admitting the Government's current policies were largely reactive, Fisheries Minister Troy Buswell said he wasn't considering widespread shark culling, but there were "options we need to consider".

While Mr Buswell said he was keeping an open mind, the idea of proactive and preventive measures, such as culling sharks, is dividing the community.

"Since 2010 there have been seven fatalities involving sharks in WA - that's a high number," he said. "Four of those have been in the south-west corner.

"We are conducting a review of

the current policy that is in place. We go into that review with an open mind."

The day after surfer Chris Boyd died after being mauled by a shark in Gracetown on Saturday, Premier Colin Barnett spoke of authorities taking a "stronger, stricter stand when there is an imminent threat" from a shark.

The imminent threat order to capture the shark that attacked Mr Boyd was rescinded and Lefthanders Beach was reopened last night as the authorities admitted it was likely the shark was no longer in the area.

Gayle Tindal saw a shark stalking a pod of dolphins at Huzzas surf break, about 3km from where Mr Boyd died, at 6am yesterday and reported the sighting to the authorities.

WA's shark menace, and the possibility of a cull, was discussed at length during yesterday's Cabinet meeting.

Mr Buswell, the member for Vasse, voiced fears for 1400 people expected in Busselton for an iron man competition, including a 4km open water swim, on December 8. It is understood he was also uneasy about an inflatable pontoon off Dunsborough waters for school leavers' celebrations this week.

But no decisions were made on how to tackle the rising number of WA shark attack fatalities, with Cabinet awaiting the outcome of the policy review.

Parts of the surfing and fishing community are calling for sharks







that are 3m or more, or those which swim close to the shore, to be culled.

Yallingup fisherman George Simpson, who has been fishing for almost 50 years, said he did not believe there were thousands of great white sharks along WA's coast.

"I think there's a minimal number around this coast, they are inshore and they are the problem. If you took out 20 or 30 white you may solve the problem and it won't impact on the whole population of sharks," he said.

University of WA shark biologist Ryan Kempster said killing a shark before or after an attack was an appeasement tactic and the State Government was well

aware there was no absolute solution to shark attacks.

"A cull of any size is a waste of time and has been shown to be an ineffective way of reducing the risk of being bitten by a shark," Dr Kempster said.

"Culls have been used in the Eastern States, using shark nets, and through direct fishing of sharks in Hawaii and yet neither place has seen a decrease in the number of shark related fatalities as a result of these actions."

Esperance abalone diver Marc Payne said more research rather than culling would be useful in WA.

"We've got no idea how many sharks there are around WA," he said. "I don't see tagged sharks at

all so there are more than what has been tagged."



**Victim: Surfer Chris Boyd.**



**Spotted: A shark fin seen at Huzzas surf break yesterday morning about 6am.**  
Picture: Gayle Tindal