



**BONDI BEACH**

# SHARK NETS DON'T WORK

## Experts say they should be removed



Main picture: Ralph A. Clevenger/Fuse

**Shae McDonald**

EXPERTS are calling on shark nets like those that caught two great whites at Bondi Beach last week to be removed because they do nothing to reduce attacks.

The University of Sydney's Dr Christopher Neff (pictured right) said there was "very little evidence" nets prevented shark bites.

"There are no decisions governments can make that will reduce the risk. Shark bites are an ungovernable event," he said.

Dr Neff said at the very least shark nets should be removed along the east coast for two months every year.

"In September and October they catch 50 per cent of all the great white sharks,"

he said. Sea Life Trust general manager Claudette

Rechtorik said NSW, Queensland and South Africa were the only places in the world that used nets.



"The ocean is a vast territory and to think we can control it to protect ourselves is farcical," she said.

"You enter the ocean at your own risk ... it's just the same as when we enter a car or a plane."

A dead shark was pulled from the Bondi nets (pictured above right) last Wednesday before the carcass of a second great white was retrieved on Saturday.

Later in the day the sighting of a shark in the bay led to an evacuation of the packed beach.

The community took to social media to express its outrage at the ongoing use of shark nets.

Paul Sharp described them as "stupid", while Ben Mitchell said the ocean belonged to the sharks.

Dr Neff said the comments reflected a cultural shift in Australia that focused on the conservation of sharks rather than their killing.

"Australians are now at a

point where they're sharing the ocean with all marine life, whether it's whales, seals, dolphins or sharks."

Marine Discovery Centre head marine biologist Will Jones last week told the *Courier* shark nets should be removed because they were

"19th century tools for 21st century problems".

"The nets are not a barrier, they're basically fly paper," he said.

A Department of Primary Industries spokesman said it was "monitoring" new technologies, but "to date no viable alternatives to shark nets has been found".

Ms Rechtorik said she was working with the State Government to come up with a more humane solution.

"We're proposing more public education," she said.

Dr Neff said education that included informing people of the times of day to enter the water, swimming between the flags and in groups, was the best way to



reduce the incidences of shark attacks.

#### WHAT YOU SAID

"If you're so scared of sharks don't go into their natural habitat." **Becye Dawn Jenkins**

"So sad it's their home not ours. Humans have a lot to answer for." **Mivie Azzi**

"We know the nets don't stop sharks. We as humans feel safer with the nets in place that's all." **Cheryl Tisdall**

"We are in their territory. Take the minuscule risk, or go to a pool." **MsAmy Victoria**

"hate seeing this poor shark tangled dead at the bottom of the ocean due to a man made net ... makes me really sad." **Leza Boardman**



**Should our beaches have shark nets? Tell us on Facebook.**