Human life and safety must come before marine animals'

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THE NSW Department of Primary Industries shark net trial figures are far more positive than some people/authorities had expected for our five netted beaches. Between December 9 and January 7 only 43 marine animals were caught. Of the 43 marine animals the majority, 31, were released alive. The 12 marine casualties equate to 2.4 animals per netted beach. These included four hammerhead sharks, one bull shark, one dolphin and one turtle. This is unfortunate however human life and safety must come first before marine animals.

The proven shark net program is having a positive impact on our lifestyle - just look at the number of tourist about this season and retailers higher than expected results. It is pleasing to see it reported (Northern Star (17/1/17) that Mayor David Wright stated "at the moment I'm happy to see the nets continue" and he also stated "he went to all five netted beaches up to three times per day and "not one person criticised the nets".

Ballina Shire Council supported the installation of shark nets on the five Ballina beaches, however Angels Beach and front of the Lennox Head Hotel where our kids aged 4/5 upwards learn to surf and do so all year round, have been omitted - why is this so?

The Community for Ocean Safety and the DPI research clearly show that the majority of Ballina residents and surfers are fully supportive of the protective shark net trials. There were approximately 5000 people who completed the online surveys and the 800 plus who attended the rally. The DPI research revealed only 12% of residents and 9% of surfers feel that nets would be negative for the community.

The proven shark nets are about the protection of human life and reviving the Australian lifestyle. Every Australian should have the opportunity to swim and surf in safety until the longer term shark population management is in place.

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