

Lack of consultation on shark response policy

The PSA has become aware of an email to Fisheries Compliance seeking volunteers to register to assist with the Department's new shark response policy.

The PSA had written to the Secretary of Industry on 13 November 2018 seeking clarity regarding a revised policy on this matter as members had expressed concern that it may affect them. The letter (see [HERE](#)) reminds management of the obligation to consult that is required by both the award and under the WHS Act.

Last week management advised a response was about to be provided. This has not been the case, yet the email from management requesting volunteers has gone out.

The PSA and our members in Fisheries do not take lightly any issues that impact on the safety of the public, but this appears to be another example of more being asked of an already overworked group of workers.

Management is working on the goodwill of its employees to volunteer. Whilst it advises you will be recompensed appropriately if you work outside your usual hours of work, this is still additional work for an already overworked workforce and there is a potential risk. Additionally, there has been no consultation with the PSA.

If the Government has genuine concerns about this issue it would properly resource it. Fisheries Officers have been stretched about as far as they can go. You are aware that we have been pressing management to get legal advice regarding the use of batons and handcuffs under different Acts that affect Fisheries Officers. Despite providing a commitment to do so nothing appears to have progressed after more than a year.

Expectations on Fisheries Officers by the employer exceed what is achievable. Seeking volunteers for dealing with the risk of sharks is a step too far. Members should consider the implications on their own welfare and on their colleagues before deciding to volunteer. They should ask what is next? They should consider if the seeking of volunteers is just another way for Government not to pay for what it gets from workers in the Public Service.

