



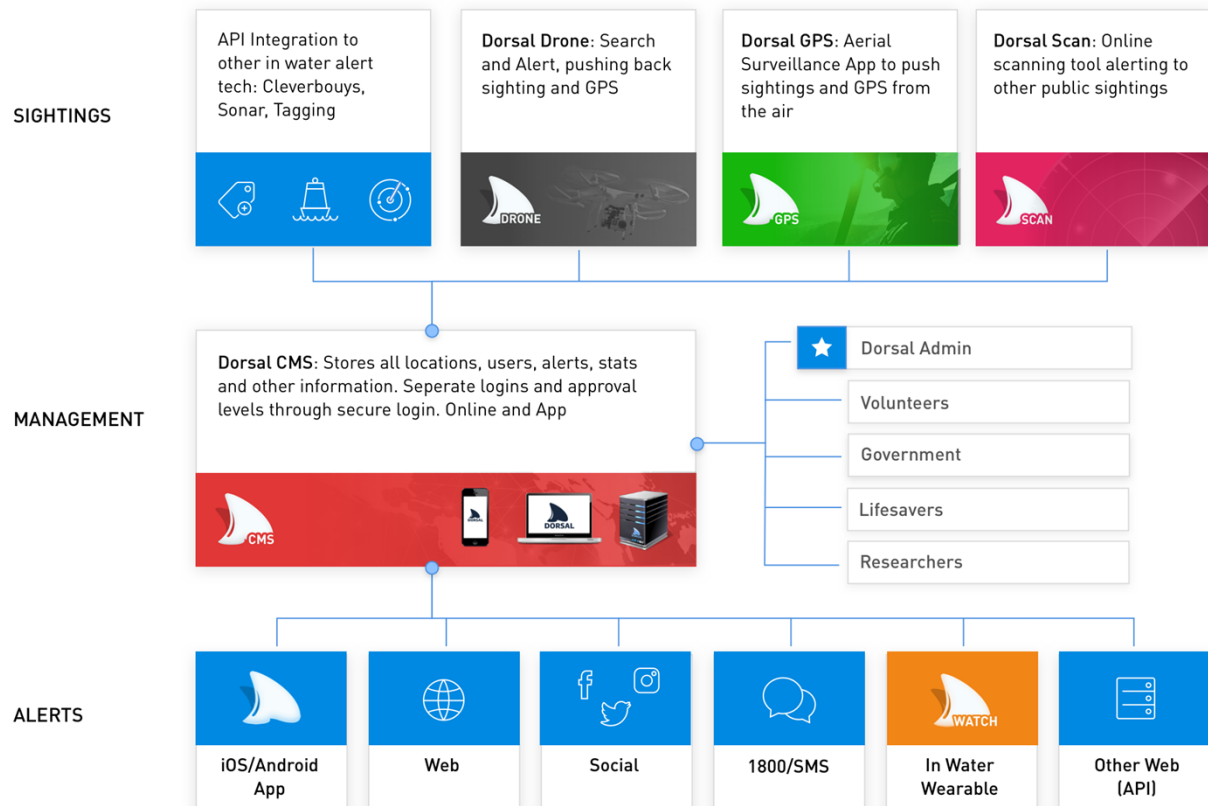
Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committees on Environment and Communications
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

13 March 2017

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Standing Committee on Environment and Communications regarding current Shark Management strategies. As the founder of Dorsal and having been exposed to all sides of the equation, I felt compelled to provide a submission referring to **current, emerging and future mitigation and deterrent measures**; specifically, as it relates to the dissemination of shark sightings to the public.

Dorsal Background

- Dorsal is a free, community based national shark sighting and alerting solution
- Provides a central portal for the public and official channels to report sightings and have them broadcast to the wider community within seconds
- End to end system including Front-end website, backend CMS, Web Scanning and alerts module, iOS and Android Apps (Public, CMS and GPS) and Social Media feeds (Facebook and Twitter)
- Started off as a side project after the fatal attacks on Tadashi Nakahara in Ballina and Damian Johnson in Tasmania in 2015. In both incidents, similar sharks had been seen in the area in the previous 24hrs, but no alerts were raised to warn the wider community
- More than 'just an app', Dorsal is a full management solution cutting across all data inputs, data sorting and data exporting. Key elements are highlighted below:





Dorsal by the Numbers

- Launched 20 October 2015
- 1000 man days development
- 300,000 Australians use Dorsal to stay up to date on shark sightings
- 100,000 app downloads, consistently rated 5 stars
- 4758 total reports from across Australia:
 - 9.33 reports per day
 - 4037 published from across Australia
 - 721 reports not verified/published
- 1200 Twitter followers, including all major media outlets and personalities
- 12 dedicated Facebook pages with 290,000 Likes
- 1100 beach locations

Issues with current shark management environment

- Extremely sensitive issue with passionate views on both sides of the ledger
- All current measures extremely costly with no guarantees of success
- Fragmentation of approach and dissemination of information inconsistent
- Alerting process inconsistent – NSW no public sightings, WA pushes through all public sightings verbatim
- Distrust amongst various stakeholders, limited incentive/care to work with other partners
- No centralised platform to co-ordinate all the various approaches and most importantly keeping the public informed

Centralised platform for National Shark Management

- As Australia's shark problem transcends all state borders and with the transient nature of Australia's beachgoers, we strongly believe that a core component of any future shark management strategy should be the development of national portal to bring all elements together and enable the efficient reporting, validation and alerting of shark sightings, no matter which corner of the country they occur
- Current shark management programs are separated by state and bodies, each with different reporting procedures, broadcasting solutions and levels of efficiency
- While the implementation physical deterrents and research should be undertaken by the state bodies and those responsible for on the ground/in water management, a centralised national platform should be implemented for keeping the public alert and informed
- Key elements under a best practice National Shark Management Platform include:
 - All existing localized alerting programs (Tags, Clever Bouys, Aerial Surveillance, Drones) would be integrated to the Platform and automatically push out to local areas
 - All public reports to Local Authorities captured and uploaded to the Platform for broadcasting, ensuring everyone is informed even when not at the beach
 - All public reports via the Platform to flow through to Local Authorities on the ground for investigation and verification
 - A national code based threat level to be developed to better inform the public of risk of each sighting – ie, older sightings and significant distance offshore reduces risk rating
 - Access to reports and sightings across all mediums: Web, Apps, Social Media, SMS, 1800 number and wearables (in and out of water)
 - Educational component to improve awareness of shark risk
 - A fluid and consistent national database for shark research
- The benefits of a National Platform includes:
 - Costs savings at the State level as they no longer need to manage and upkeep existing systems
 - More investment in physical shark deterrents and management on the ground
 - Consistency in threat reporting and management
 - Central portal for public for education and alerting
 - Structured data for R&D and analysis across the country, include shark migration patterns
 - Increased users and public engagement



The desired outcome of this submission is to open the dialogue with relevant stakeholders around the creation of a National Shark Management Platform that collates, verifies and broadcasts sighting and risks to the broader public. While this is only a small piece of the wider shark management puzzle, we believe it is one of the most important as it has the power to bring together all elements and provide the public with a reliable, centralized portal to stay updated and informed.

We thank you for the opportunity to submit our thoughts on future shark management and would welcome the opportunity to discuss in further detail as part of any future hearings or enquiries.

Kind regards,

Allan Bennetto
Dorsal

More information on Dorsal:

Web	www.dorsalwatch.com
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/dorsalaus/
Twitter	https://twitter.com/DorsalAus
iOS App	https://itunes.apple.com/au/app/dorsal-shark-reports/id1045887929?mt=8
Android App	https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=io.fruitful.dorsal&hl=en