**Communiqué**

# Fifth MEETING OF THE SHARK-PLAN REPRESENTATIVE GROUP

The Shark-plan Representative Group (SRG) met for the fifth time on 13 December 2017 in Canberra.

The SRG meets annually to review, monitor and report on the implementation of Australia’s Second National Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (Shark-plan 2).

Members noted the progress of jurisdictions in a number of areas including: shark stock assessments; developing and implementing fisheries harvest strategies; updates to recreational fishing guides; revisions to rules relating to sharks and rays; and illegal, unregulated and unreported shark catch. Non-jurisdictional SRG members also raised matters including product traceability, Wildlife Trade Operations reaccreditation in Northern Australia and public communications around Australia’s shark conservation measures.

Current research programs to better understand the status of Australia’s shark populations were discussed at the meeting including:

* The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation’s project ‘Shark Futures: A Report Card for Australia’s Shark and Rays’. This will provide public access to a consolidation of the latest information on shark and ray species.
* The National Environmental Science Programme which has funded projects to: support the conservation and recovery of Australia’s threatened and migratory marine species including some sharks; develop recovery plans for euryhaline and white sharks; determine research priorities for shark conservation; and assess the management of human-shark interactions.

The 2017 jurisdictional data is available on the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources website.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences is currently finalising a Shark Assessment Report (SAR) in conjunction with the SRG and other stakeholders which is expected to be published in early 2018. This will provide a comprehensive national overview of shark management and conservation arrangements in Australia.

The SRG considered the outcomes of a departmental review of Shark-Plan’s effectiveness and reaffirmed the importance of Shark-plan as an effective reporting and networking tool for fisheries managers and other stakeholders on shark management in Australia. The Group agreed to retain Shark-plan in its current form while streamlining reporting to better focus on outcomes. The review of Shark-plan will be published shortly on the department’s website along with the SAR.

The next meeting of members will likely be held at the end of 2018.