

Sunday, 13 April 2008

SHARK PATROLS RUNNING UNTIL END OF APRIL

Emergency Services Minister Carmel Zollo says the State Government's aerial shark patrols will continue to operate seven days a week until the end of April on days when the weather is suitable.

Full time weekday patrols officially ended on March 28, but the planes have still been going up when conditions have been right for aerial shark spotting.

"Given the erratic weather patterns, we could still see some warm days over the coming school holidays, so we'd prefer to keep the beaches covered for this extended period," Minister Zollo says.

"Weather conditions will be reviewed on a daily basis, including weekends, but it's fair to assume that, thanks to climate change we could still be in for some warm days – days that people will want to venture to the beach.

"As long as the weather allows flying – and that the water is clear enough for spotting – the planes will be going up.

"It's important to note that shark sightings have been rare so far this month, with one on April 1 and the last on April 9 – nonetheless, we would prefer to err on the side of caution."

The University of South Australia patrols will continue to run between North Haven and Normanville, from 11am until last light (approximately 6pm).

"This represents a cost of up to **\$20,000** per week – and as far as this Government is concerned, that is money well spent." the Minister says.

The State Government had provided **\$312,000** for shark patrols to run from the beginning of December 2007 until the end of March 2008:

- **\$172,000** to UniSA to operate weekday patrols; and
- a **\$140,000** grant to Surf Life Saving SA (SLSSA) to extend its patrols to include public holidays and special events.

"Surf Life Saving SA, which operated helicopter patrols on weekends and public holidays over summer, also advise me that they also continue to monitor conditions and if the weather warrants it they can increase their water patrols," Minister Zollo says.