

ITEM 15 QUESTION WITH NOTICE - WHALE AT SCARBOROUGH

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY

Councillor Jess Whittaker

QUESTION

“What was the financial cost to Wollongong Council for the recovery and disposal of the whale that was drowned in the Coledale shark net and ended up on a rock platform at Scarborough? Please include all costs in relation to staff time, equipment, contractor fees, and disposal fees.

Has there been an offer from the State Government to assist with these costs?”

ANSWER

Landowners / Land managers are responsible for managing Marine carcasses that wash ashore in NSW.

Council engaged the services of a specialist salvage contractor with the experience and equipment required to safely retrieve the 4.7 tonne Juvenile Humpback Whale that came ashore at Scarborough Beach on the evening of Monday 27 October 2025.

This task not only required specialist staff and equipment but was complex and high risk in nature with the carcass shifting on a slippery rock shelf, wave movement, tidal conditions and the presence of multiple sharks in the nearby vicinity.

Service	Cost
Contractor service to service, retrieve and transport the carcass to the Wollongong Waste and Resource Recovery Park	\$42,295.00
Staffing costs (overtime supervision). Remainder of staff time during regular hours.	\$300.10
Fees Wollongong Waste and Resource Recovery Park	\$2,260.10
Fee exemption approved (NSW EPA Waste Levy)	-\$811.77
Total Cost	\$44,043.43

The Necropsy undertaken on the animal by the Taronga Australian Registry of Wildlife Health (the Registry) indicates the animal’s likely cause of death was drowning due to entanglement from shark netting managed by the NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD).

At the time of publishing this paper, the General Manager has written to the Hon. Tara Moriarty, Minister for Agriculture, Minister for Regional New South Wales, and Minister for Western New South Wales seeking funds to cover Council’s costs.