



Melbourne's year-round open water swimming group

Lead Article – Chocolate Royals 26th May 2026



LtoR: Christina Wilhelm, Andrew Mulholland, Zoe Francis, Ian Scholes, Peter Miglic, David Waters.

Canada Day Swim 1st July 2026

by Ria Bleathman

Canada Day is the annual national anniversary of the creation of the Canadian Confederation which occurred on 1st July 1867. For our Canadian-born and fellow Iceberger Don Warner (from Ontario), his fifth annual Canada Day Group Swim took place on the Mornington Peninsula at the appropriately named Canadian Bay on 1st July 2026. The celebratory swim (water temp 13°C, air temp 12.4°C) was preceded by a rendition by the swimmers of O Canada (left).



LtoR: Andy Mulholland, Alison Blacket and Don Warner.

In 1958, Canadian Bay was used for a memorable scene in the Hollywood film *On the Beach*, directed by Stanley Kramer and based on the book by Nevil Shute. The movie starred Ava Gardner, Gregory Peck, Fred Astaire and Anthony Perkins.



Heart-throbs (above) Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner filming in 1958 at Canadian Bay close to where Don et al are standing (photo left).

For those auteurs amongst us, the following link provides a local perspective of the time when Hollywood came to Melbourne: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BX1fAY-zYsM&t=306s>

Canadian Bay is situated in Mount Eliza on Melbourne's Mornington Peninsula, approximately 45km south of the city. The Bay gets its name from three Canadians - Hodgins, McCurley and Jones - who operated a local timber sawmill in the area during the mid-19th century.



On one of my recent regular swims at Coogee Beach in April I noticed that shark bite kits (below left) had been installed along the promenade, as well as at surf clubs along the NSW coast, following a series of shark attacks in the area, some of which were fatal whilst others resulted in life-altering injuries.

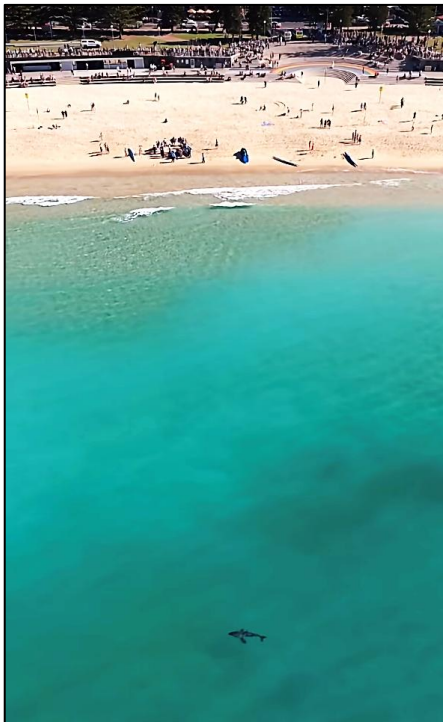


The nature of the equipment provided in the kits exemplifies the critical need to stem the bleeding and is designed for members of the public to use. These kits are also referred to as the Danny Schouten Community Shark Bite Kits, so-named after the person whose initiative it was to place such kits at beaches after his friend was the victim of a serious shark bite. Nearly 250 have been installed at beaches in NSW and WA.

According to the Shark Incident files (refer below), most people survive shark bites but what often turns a shark bite into a fatality is the delay in stemming the loss of blood and administering emergency care to the victim.

An important risk mitigation for ocean swimmers therefore is to swim close to rescue infrastructure despite the low probability of interacting with sharks.

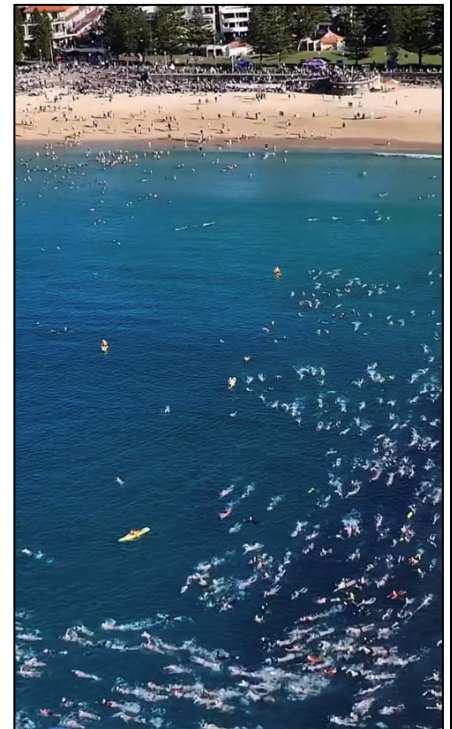
As I was preparing this article on 13th June 2026, I was horrified by news bulletins that a 34-year-old female swimmer had been pulled from the shallow water at Coogee Beach in a critical condition after being bitten by a shark described by witnesses as “the size of a car”. The badly injured swimmer was treated by an emergency physician who had grabbed the very same shark bite kit (above) I had photographed just weeks earlier and, together with surf life guards, administered first aid on the beach. The swimmer was taken to hospital in a critical condition where she remains at the time of writing. The swift and skilled response most likely saved her life.



The 13th June 2026 screen shot (left) from One Shot Creative captures the image of the victim being treated on Coogee Beach and possibly the same culprit shark still close to shore.

The image on the right is what resilience, compassion and community spirit looks like when, on Sunday 21st June 2026 more than one thousand swimmers entered the water at Coogee Beach for a swim.

The event was organised by the Randwick City Council and Coogee Surf Life Saving Club to assist the community process this traumatic event and to show support for the victim, young mother and local school teacher, Leah Stewart.



The Australian Shark Incident Files

The Australian Shark Incident Files (formerly known as the Shark Attack Files) is the pre-eminent research data base on shark bites in Australia having recorded every such incident since the first occurrence in 1791. The Files provide evidence-based information on shark incidences and thereby insights into how this risk might be managed and mitigated. Nevertheless, at these difficult times, all ocean swimmers ponder the efficacy of returning to the water; even though the likelihood of shark bites is low, the consequences can be devastating.

Iceberger Calendar

Date	Event
Sunday 9 th August 2026	Winter Classic swims. Details to follow - Greg Wallace / Rupert Hugh-Jones
Sunday 13 th December 2026	Olsen Hooper Classic. Details to follow - Ross MacDowell

