

Closure of a 50 Year Old Iconic Aquarium Including the Movement and Transport of Six 200+Kg Grey Nurse Sharks (*Carcharias taurus*) Aged 25 to 40 Years.

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In 2017 Merlin Entertainments, after thoughtful consideration, decided to close the 53 year old Manly SEA LIFE Sanctuary (opened in 1965 as Marineland) in Sydney Australia. Engineering reports came back indicating a cost effective rebuild was not possible due to the building core structure being beyond repair. For this reason the site was closed at the end of January 2018. Home to over 1,000 different fish, invertebrates, reptiles, and birds required careful planning to relocate them to new zoo or aquarium locations. Of these 1,000 different animals, six were 25-40 year old Grey Nurse Shark (GNS, *Carcharias taurus*) resident of the main Oceanarium. These sharks were all in excess of 3.5m and 200+ kg. It is no longer possible to obtain this species from the wild in Australia, nor is it possible to import them, in accordance with the Australian Department of the Environment Recovery Plan for Grey Nurse Shark. The movement of the Grey Nurse Sharks required the development of systems and equipment that would allow the sharks to be submerged and supported by water through all transfers, allowing swimming behaviours during transport and avoid traditional capture stress implications. Through careful planning, a few hiccups, many long days and nights, and 17 interstate transports over 1,200km, Merlin Entertainments closed Manly and relocated over 1,000 animals including the six aging Grey Nurse Sharks with zero transport related mortalities.