

**ACTIVITY:** Body Boarding

**CASE:** [GSAF 2006.12.02](#)

**DATE:** Saturday December 2, 2006

**LOCATION:** The attack took place in the Indian Ocean at Wharton Beach at Duke of Orleans Bay, east of Esperance and about 800 km south of Perth, on the coast of Western Australia.

*33°55'S, 122°35'E*

**NAME:** Zac Golebiowski

**DESCRIPTION:** He is a 15-year-old male from Mt. Gambier, South Australia.



*Zac Golebiowski*

### **BACKGROUND**

**WEATHER:** At 06h00, Esperance recorded an overcast sky, air temperature 58°F [14°C], dew point 44°F [7°C], humidity 49%, sea level pressure 30.30 inches [1026 hPa], and wind direction was East at 5.8 mph [9.3 km/h]. By 09h00, the air had warmed to 64°F [18°C], humidity was 37%, dew point and sea level pressure were unchanged, but the wind direction was East-Northeast and it had freshened to 10.4 mph [16.7 km/h].

**MOON PHASE:** Waxing Gibbous, 89% of the moon's visible disk was illuminated. Full Moon, 5 December 2006

**DISTANCE FROM SHORE:** 40 metres

**TIME:** 07h30 – 07h40

**NARRATIVE:** Zac was in the water with his 18-year-old brother Sam, and friend 15-year-old Joe Redman, when he was attacked.

**INJURY:** The boy's right leg was severed just above the knee, part of his left calf was removed by the shark and the leg was severely lacerated.

**FIRST AID:** A New Zealand couple, 26-year-old Amy Worling and 32-year-old Pete Hickmott, were about to start fishing when they heard the boys yelling for help. "We ran down to the beach and one of the young boys down there said 'we need a car'", said Amy. "Pete and Joe ran to get the car and I helped Sam pull Zac out of the water. I knew he would need some bandaging so I grabbed a hoodie and a towel that were sitting on the beach. I helped get him on to the beach and then helped tie the hoodie around his leg and put the towel over him."

The three men helped Zac into the back of the couple's station wagon, where Amy used an extension cord as a tourniquet, tying it around Zac's severed right leg. "I was talking to Zac, trying to keep him talking to us and keep him focused on staying awake," she said. "He said 'can you please not talk to me'. He just wanted to stay calm and zone out. We also sang to him." The group drove to the nearby Duke of Orleans Caravan Park and called emergency services, saying they would start the hour-long drive towards Esperance and meet them along the way. When the group was about 10km before Esperance they were met by the St John Ambulance paramedics who transported the teen to the hospital. Zac was conscious and talking to ambulance officers throughout the ordeal according to 25-year-old Jan

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Golebiowski who was at the beach with his brother when the shark struck and traveled with the group to Esperance Regional Hospital. Then Zac was flown to Perth by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and admitted to Royal Perth Hospital in a serious but stable condition.



*The shark thought to be involved in this attack*

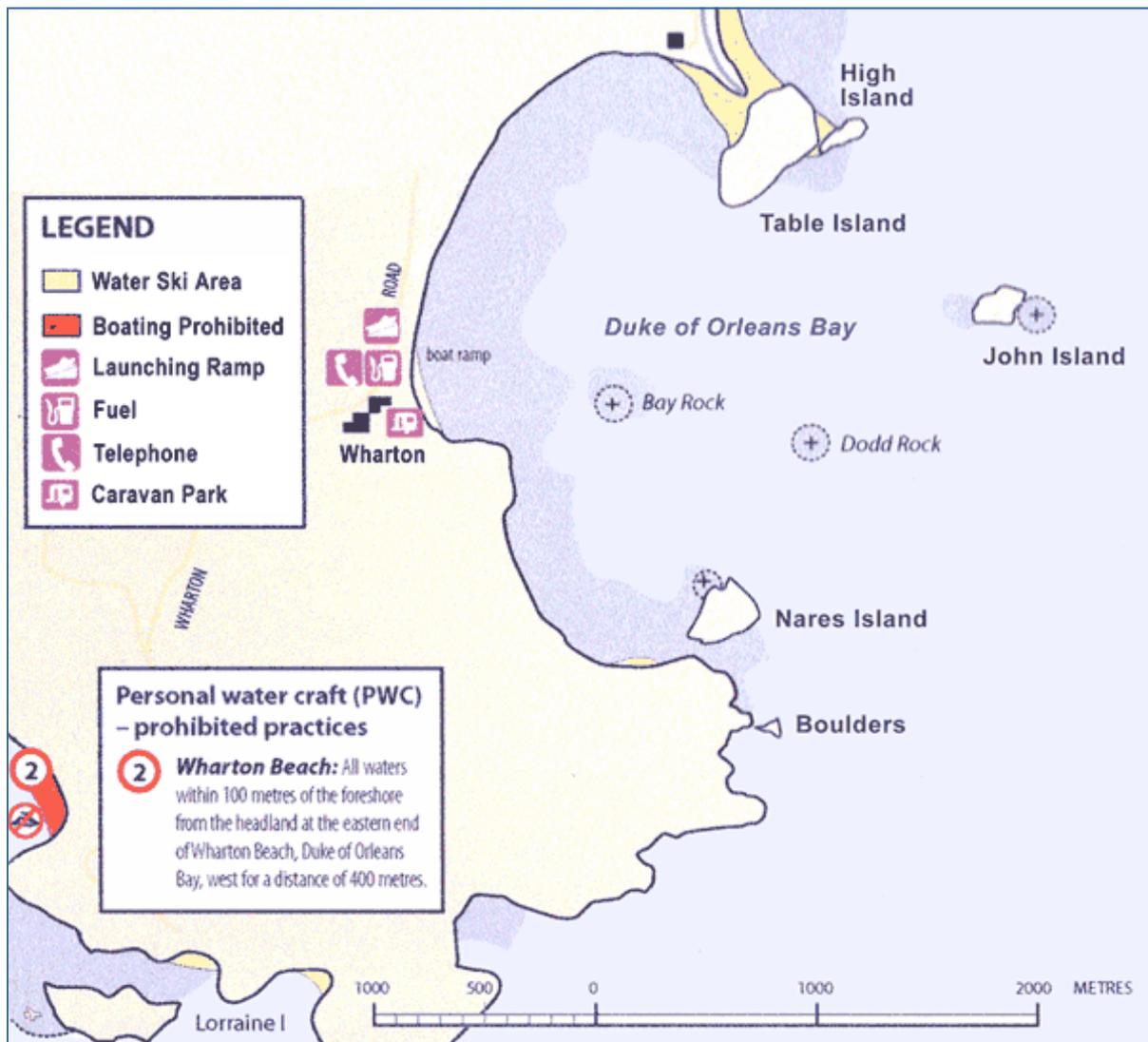
Acting Sgt Laurie Seton, from Esperance police, said swift action by the rescuers saved the boy's life. "They kept the blood loss to a minimum and that has probably made the difference between him having his life saved and being in a relatively stable condition, to being much worse off," he said.

**TREATMENT:** The shark remained in the area for several hours after the attack, but rough weather prevented police and fisheries officers from getting close to the shark. According to Zac, his leg washed up on the beach a few days later, still with the wetsuit on it.

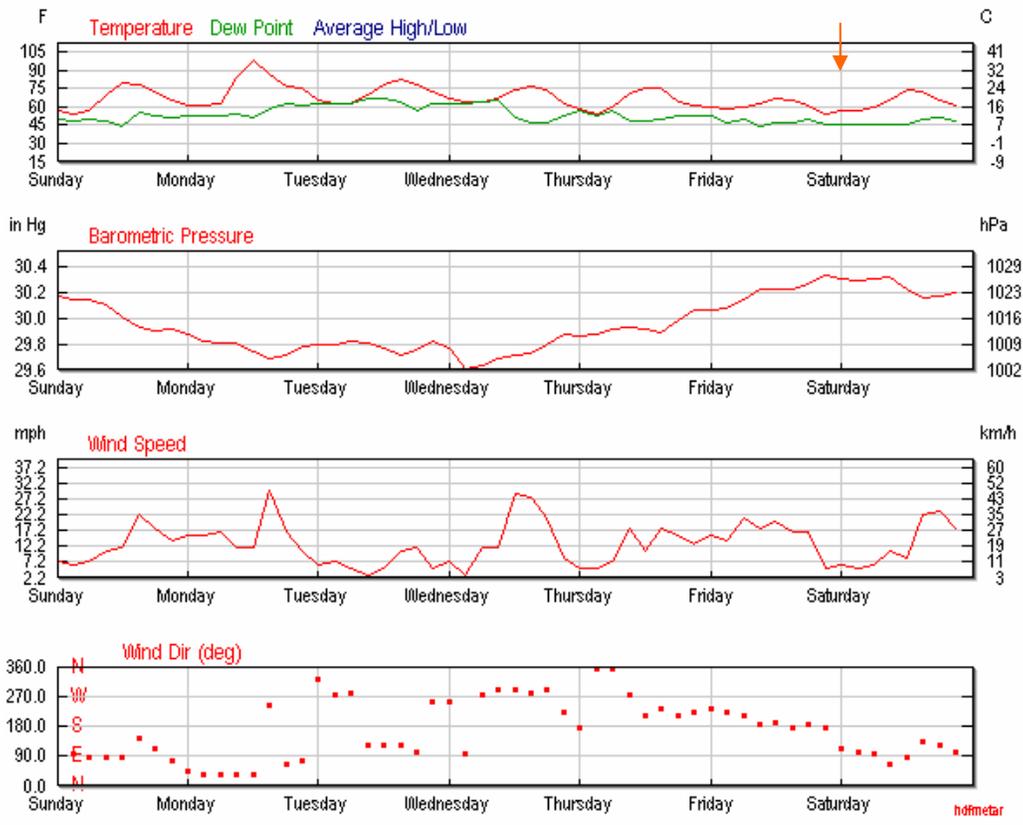
**SPECIES:** According to witnesses, the incident involved a white shark about five metres in length. The beach was immediately closed and a helicopter located the shark which continued to circled Zac's surfboard for more than three hours. Authorities later lost track of the shark. Police were believed to have recovered Zac's board with shark teeth embedded in it.

**SOURCES:** Adelaide Now / Sunday Mail, 3 December 2006,  
<http://www.news.com.au/adalaidenow/story/0,22606,20862943-5006301,00.html>

**CASE INVESTIGATOR:** Phil Kemp, Global Shark Accident File



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*Weather at Esperance for the week ending 2 December 2006*

## Shearer happy to be away from spotlight after helping save shark attack victim

By Debbie Porteous

It's been a funny old few weeks for Pete Hickmott.

Three weeks ago, he and girlfriend Amy Worling stepped into the spotlight when they helped save the life of a 15-year-old Australian surfer after he lost part of his leg in a shark attack in remote Western Australia.

The pair helped drag the teen from the water, tourniqueted his bleeding stump with an electrical cord and then drove him to the nearest town. The media circus that ensued was something the 32-year-old shearer from Roxburgh will never forget, understand or want to experience again. Back home yesterday, Mr Hickmott, who has been hailed as a hero, and nicknamed "Pete Irwin the shark hunter" by his Australian shearing buddies, was enjoying a day off work because of heavy rain.



*Pete Hickmott*  
Photo / Craig Baxter

He returned home from his annual three-month shearing trip to Australia on December 22 for his summer shearing season here. Ms Worling, 26, is finishing her working holiday as a bar worker in Australia and is expected back in Roxburgh at the end of the month.

Zak Golebiowski's right leg was torn off from the knee by a great white shark as he surfed at Wharton Beach in Western Australia on December 2.

Mr Hickmott said he and Ms Worling had just arrived at the beach to do some fishing about 7.30am when they heard screams for help. They looked over, saw a pool of blood and immediately drove to the water's edge to help Zak's brother and friend drag the semi-conscious teen from the water. With no cellphone coverage, the couple knew they had to get the teen help as quick as they could.

Ms Worling tied a hoodie sweatshirt around Zak's stump and then used an extension cord as Mr Hickmott started driving the 60km towards the nearest town, Esperance. They were met by an ambulance 10km out of the town. "We just did what we had to, we were pretty much in the middle of nowhere and the only ones around. I kept expecting to see a helicopter coming over the hill but we were miles away from anywhere," Mr Hickmott said.

The couple had not seen the boy since he went to hospital but understood he was recovering well and had been allowed home for Christmas. Australian police, paramedics and the teen's family have all publicly praised the couple, saying their quick thinking saved the boy's life, while Ms Worling has had a call from Zak's mother thanking the couple.

A man of few words, Mr Hickmott was proud of his girlfriend's efforts. "She done well. I expected her to start screaming but she was as calm as. Amy thought of the extension cord. Bloody smart all right." Their first experience at being the subject of media attention had been overwhelming.

**SOURCE:** Debbie Porteous, Otago Daily Times, Thursday December 28, 2006  
[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c\\_id=1&objectid=10416975](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=10416975)



*Bethany Hamilton (GSAF 2003.10.31.a) paid a visit to Zac Golebiowski, as he limped back on to the beach for the first time since his shark accident. Bethany lost her left arm to a shark and Zac lost his right leg and a chunk of his left calf to a shark on December 2, 2006. The teens talked about surfing and sharks.*



### Shark survivor back in water

SHARK attack survivor Zac Golebiowski is back surfing 18 months after his right leg was torn off by a white pointer.

Zac, who turned 17 yesterday, recently returned to the water with four of his older brothers at a beach near Esperance, in WA. "The first couple of times I went out -- every shadow I saw I was just crapping myself," he said. "But my brothers helped relax me and overcome some of the fear."

Zac was surfing at Wharton Beach, 60km from Esperance, on an overcast afternoon in 2006 when he was attacked by a 3.5m shark. "I'd just got a wave and was paddling back out and from what I can remember it came from the side in a split-second. It was just chomp and that was it. It took my leg clean off above the knee. My leg washed up on the beach a few days later, still with the wetsuit on it. Sometimes I forget about it, wake up and see my prosthetic leg against the wall, and think 'ah, geez'. You can't look back at what's happened and try and change it. I'm getting on with my life."

**SOURCE:** Jordan Marchant, Herald Sun, July 27, 2008,  
<http://www.news.com.au/heraldsun/story/0,21985,24081791-662,00.html>

### Surfer's proposal shaped by shark

When Zac Golebiowski thought of asking for his girlfriend to marry him, he imagined a beach proposal where he got down on one knee and proposed.

But after Mr Golebiowski lost his leg in a shark attack in 2006, that was no longer possible. On Saturday, when his girlfriend Jodie Edinger became his wife, it did not seem to matter. The couple tied the knot in front of 120 guests at a vintage-inspired ceremony in Mandurah's Kingdom Hall.



*Newlyweds Zac and Jodie Golebiowski*

It has been a difficult seven years for Mr Golebiowski, who lost his right leg above the knee to a great white while surfing near Esperance. If not for the speedy actions of his brother Sam and some quick-thinking beachgoers who applied a tourniquet, the then 15-year-old would have died.

The part-time photographer had not had a girlfriend since the attack until he met Ms Edinger. He thought nobody would marry him after his leg amputation. "I wake up now with Jodie in my life and can't wait to get into the day," Mr Golebiowski said. "Before, there was so much negativity."

He rehearsed the romantic beach proposal for months. "I wanted to do the traditional thing and get down on one knee, but obviously I didn't," he said. "Instead, I made a booklet of photos from our 18 months together, then asked Jodie to marry me."

Unable to resist the call of the waves, Mr Golebiowski returned to the surf on a body board, and is seen hopping down to his local break several times a week. "It's in my blood and I'll always do it," he said. "But the thought of getting bitten again plays on my mind so I'm always careful about

Picture: Megan Powell/The West Australian

what conditions I surf in."

And his new wife said she would not dream of holding back her new husband. "I think it's important for him because it's the one sport he can do," she said.

"I don't worry about him in the water."

**SOURCE:** The West Australian, December 16, 2013,  
<http://au.news.yahoo.com/thewest/wa/a/20345818/surfers-proposal-shaped-by-shark/>



Picture: Nic Ellis/The West Australian

*Zac Golebiowski in Esperance*