

# Beach Emergency Numbers (BEN) Sign Program

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Beach Emergency Numbers (BEN) Program?

The Beach Emergency Numbers (BEN) Program is a coding system designed to improve emergency incident response times and locating the closest beach access points by installing signs with unique numbers.

### What do the BEN signs look like?

BEN signs are approximately 860mm x 465mm and have been created with a consistent look across Western Australia. Signs are reversible to incorporate both the BEN and beach closure signs.

Signs are made from 1.6mm marine grade aluminium sign plate, with a cast vinyl digital print with a two-part epoxy spray as the finishing process. The aluminium frame and cable tie design reduces the risk of sign corrosion.

An example of the signage is shown below:



### How does the BEN system work?

Each sign contains a unique BEN code assigned by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) Geospatial Services, which has been integrated into Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) systems used by emergency services.

Each unique code contains a "J" prefix and a one to three-digit code suffix. The prefix denotes the location within the City of Joondalup area while the suffix indicates the distance along the coastline from where the Local Government Authority intersects with the coastline, typically from the northern or western boundary. As an example, "J101" translates to the City of Joondalup, 10.1km from the City's northern boundary.

The system will enable those who manage the beach to implement beach closures earlier with accurate beach location information.

### How should I use the information on the sign?

Provision of specific location information will be vital when emergency services are deployed in the event of shark attacks or other beach emergencies, and for reporting shark sightings.

Beach users are encouraged to become familiar with the BEN signs and take note of the unique code on the beach access point they use, when visiting the beach.

Scenarios where users can reference BEN signs include:

- Reporting shark sightings (contact Water Police on **9442 8600**)
- Reporting a beach emergency (contact Police on **000**)

Note: Where possible, callers should wait at the beach access point until emergency service personnel arrive.

## **How many BEN signs have been made and where will they be located within the City of Joondalup?**

The City has commissioned 65 BEN signs, located at each beach access point and boat ramp within the City of Joondalup.

BEN signs are placed in locations which:

- Have a beach access
- Contain a high usage of visitors;
- Contain public facilities;
- Have adequate mobile phone coverage; and
- May have had past incidents that could have benefitted from the BEN signs.

A detailed map of the locations can be found on the City's website.

## **How are these signs funded?**

In December 2017, the WA State Government launched a grants program to provide financial assistance to Local Government Authorities (LGAs) wanting to introduce emergency response signs along beaches with public access.

The City of Joondalup applied for grant funding from the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) and received a total of \$22,000 to install BEN signs at each beach access point within the City of Joondalup.

The maintenance and replacement costs for damaged or stolen signs will be incorporated within the City's Capital Works Budget.

## **Who do I contact for further information?**

For further information on BEN signs, please contact the City's Infrastructure Services Customer Relations Team on **9400 4255** or email **[info@joondalup.wa.gov.au](mailto:info@joondalup.wa.gov.au)**