

## **Surfing Reserves – state, national and world**

Andrew D Short & Brad Farmer  
National Surfing Reserves (Australia)  
Executive Committee, World Surfing Reserves  
[andrew.short@sydney.edu.au](mailto:andrew.short@sydney.edu.au)

National Surfing Reserves (NSR) was founded by Brad Farmer and Andy Short in late 2004 and held its first meeting at the then patron's Peter Garrett's Maroubra office in February 2005. The aim of NSR was to establish a series of NSR's around the Australian coast that formally recognized sites of surfing significance and to assist in their long-term preservation for surfing. The NSR criteria included the consistency and quality of the waves; the long and close association of the local surfing community with the break; and the full support of the local surfers. Since then NSR's have been dedicated at Maroubra (2006), Angourie and Lennox Point (2007), Crescent Head and Cronulla (2008), Merewether, Killalea and North Narrabeen (2009), with Manly-Freshwater and Western Australia's Margaret River, Yallingup and Jakes (Kalbarri) set for 2010, while several Queensland sites are underway. .

In NSW the Department of Lands formally gazettes the reserves, which extend from the shoreline 500 m seaward and from a few hundred meters to a few kilometres alongshore. As a gazetted reserve the NSR's can have a Board of Management to oversee the future of the reserves.

In 2010 the NSR National Reference Group consists of Farmer and Short, patron Wayne 'Rabbit' Bartholomew, and representatives from the Department of Lands, Surf Rider Foundation, Surf Life Saving Australia and an a representative from an established NSR. Potential NSR's submit a nomination to NSR and if approved normally take about 12 months to prepare a booklet on the break, a plaque and arrange the dedication ceremony, usually in cooperation with the local council and the Department of Lands.

In Australia it is envisaged there will be a total of about 25 NSR's. This leaves many hundreds of good, but not classic sites unrecognized. While nothing is being done at present, it is planned that they may become state or regional surfing reserves, so as to recognize their importance to the community and need for preservation as a surfing site.

In late 2008 NSR held a meeting with the USA 'Save The Waves' organization, out of which evolved the concept of World Surfing Reserves (WSR). Following ongoing discussions between these two groups during 2009 WSR came into being in December 2009. The first three WSR's are scheduled to be dedicated in 2010 one in Hawaii, one in California and one in Australia. To be eligible as a WSR, the site must be a world-renowned surfing site, with a rich and strong surfing history and involved community. While Australia may eventually have 25 NSR's, it is expected only a handful will be eligible to be considered a WSR,

likewise internationally it is anticipated the number of WSR's will quite limited, reserved for the 'best of the best' in world surfing.

Surfing Reserves, whether a regional, national or world all have the same aims – to formally recognize the site and its importance to surfing at a regional, national or world level; and in doing so to assist in the long-term preservation of the site for surfing.



*Brad Farmer, Bronwyn Bishop MP, Jodi McKay MP and Andy Short at the North Narrabeen NSR dedication, October 2009.*

### **Prof Andrew Short OAM**

Andrew Short is a surfer and marine scientist specializing in coastal processes and beach dynamics. He has degrees from Sydney, Hawaii and Louisiana State and has worked on the coasts of North and South America, including north Alaska and Hawaii, Europe, New Zealand and the entire Australian coast. He is presently Honorary Professor in the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney; Adjunct Professor in the Griffith (University) Centre for Coastal Management; Senior Coastal Scientist (part-time) with CoastalCOMS.com; Deputy Chair of National Surfing Reserves (Australia); and on the Executive Committee of World Surfing Reserves. He also runs his own consultancy called Coastal Studies and serves on the NSW Coastal Expert Group and the Eurobodalla Coastal Management Advisory Committee. He lives on 17 acres at Moruya Heads and more importantly he has recently switched to stand-up paddle boarding and enjoys the long rides at the Moruya River mouth (a manmade break) and other usually empty breaks around the area. His extensive contribution to both coastal science and beach safety was recognised on Australia Day 2010 with an Order of Australia Medal.