

SURFING RESERVES – RECOGNITION FOR THE WORLD’S SURFING BREAKS

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As surfing expands as a sport it has spread to most of the world’s surf breaks as well as pushed the limits in the size and power of waves surfed. While technology and exposure has seen surfing mushroom in all directions, the core of the sport – the wave breaks, have largely been taken for granted. This attitude of the expanding surfing sector does not however guarantee the future sovereignty of the breaks for surfing, as seen by the loss or contamination of some breaks; nor does it protect the adjacent environment from inappropriate development as has and continues to occur in many surf tourist destinations. This paper presents the status of a three-tiered approach to formally recognizing and preserving surf breaks and their adjacent environment as surfing reserves, at a regional, national and world level. The approach has had considerable success in Australia and is now beginning to be taken up globally.

Keywords: surfing reserve, surfing, coastal reserve

INTRODUCTION

As modern long board surfing enters its second century and the short board passes its half-century anniversary, surfing has matured as a sport and pastime. The surfing industry has reached mega-proportions with an influence in style far beyond the beach, while surfing itself is assisted by technology, advances in board types and design and with the increased skill and risk levels of leading surfers has pushed the limits in the location, size and thickness of waves being ridden. Likewise technology now enables us to fashion waves of choice on multi-purpose surfing reefs and indoor surf breaks (Black and Mead, 2009). However despite all the achievements in surfing over the past century, the prime focus of it all – the waves and their surrounding environments have been largely ignored in terms of their well-being and sustainability. The waves, the breaks, the reefs and access to the surf have been taken for granted, regarded as something fortuitously provided by nature that takes care of itself. Unfortunately, the same decades of the short board revolution in surfing, have been paralleled by a worldwide surge to the coast, certainly by surfers but also by the hundreds of millions who find it a better place to live, work, invest, build, speculate and in places, modify, to enhance their past-time or profession. In the process the very coast, the very surfing breaks, and access to those breaks has been and continues to be compromised, threatened or lost. The response from surfers has usually been vocal but ineffective and the outcome predictable as Point Cartwright (Australia), Harrys (Baja), Ponta Delgrada and Jardim do Mer (both Maderia), Fongbin (Taiwan), Corona del Mar, Dana Point, Long Beach and Stanleys Reef (all California), Copacabana (Brazil), Petacalco (Mexico), Male Point (Maldives) and Le Barre (France) all fell victim to some form of coastal construction; while The Cove (Washington) and Singleton Swash (North Carolina) were buried by sand; and 60 km of coast near Recife (Brazil) is now off-limits to surfers (Corne, 2009; www.savethewaves.org). Elsewhere many breaks are being overwhelmed by coastal over development, population pressures and the associated shadowing, pollution, sewerage and stormwater. As Scarfe, et al. (2009) state “Despite their large numbers worldwide, surfers as a coastal interest group have largely been ignored during coastal management decision making.”

Farmer and Short (2007) recognised the problems facing some iconic surfing breaks, as well as the general low level of recognition and appreciation by surfers and the broader public of surf breaks. In 2005 they decided to act and established National Surfing Reserves (NSR) in Australia whose aims are to formally recognize outstanding surf sites for the benefit of past, current and future surfers; and to take measures to maintain and where possible, enhance the integrity of these sites for use by all. In Australia, NSR is a proactive organisation aimed at dedicating all iconic Australian surfing sites over a ten-year period commencing in 2006. Some of the sites are heavily developed urban surf breaks, others are near pristine remote desert locations. All are however well known throughout Australia and much of the surfing world.

This paper reviews the nature and role of surfing reserves, the progress made since 2005, and the growing interest in surfing reserves in Australia and globally.

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SURFING RESERVES

A surfing reserve is designed to formally recognise surfing sites and in doing so provide a focus for the ongoing reservation and protection of those sites for surfing, and where appropriate or possible to assist in the management/development of the adjacent land area in a sympathetic fashion. A surfing reserve represents one mechanism to redressing both the casual attitude of surfers to their surf breaks and to the increasing threat to some of those breaks. They are not a panacea for all the threats to the coast and surf, but they are a proactive step to recognise and preserve these sites before they become threatened or compromised.

At the core of a surfing reserve is a break or breaks that surfers feel is worthy of recognition and worth protecting. This normally means the site will have a core of local surfers or surfers who are closely associated with the break. Some sites will be urban where a lot of surfers live nearby and by default associate with their home break irrespective of the level of wave quality. Others will be more iconic sites with quality waves where surfers are prepared to travel to surf, and not only locals but others, feel strongly about the break. Then there will be the truly iconic sites known the world over for the quality and consistency of their waves. In order to accommodate such a range of surf breaks from the local average waves, to nationally and internationally recognised breaks a three tiered level of reserves: regional, national and world, has been developed. The criteria for each are listed below. A Regional Surfing Reserve (RSR) must fulfill the following essential criteria:

1. Reasonable quality and consistency of the waves (i.e. a regional-class surfing break);
2. A place considered special by the local surfing community;
3. Long-term usage of the beach and wave environment by local surfing community, e.g. long-term surf lifesaving club (SLSC) and/or boardriders club with significant history.

Using these criteria there could potentially be more than a hundred RSR's in Australia, though they would only be dedicated if there were strong support from the local surfing and broader community. Some Australian breaks that have expressed interest and may fulfill the criteria are Moffat Beach, TOS (The Other Side) South Stradbroke Island, (QLD); Duranbah, Scotts Head, Catherine Hill Bay, Dee Why (NSW); and Yanchep (WA). However, there are presently no RSR's in Australia.

A National Surfing Reserve (NSR) must fulfill all three of the following essential criteria (with Australian examples):

1. Persistent quality of the waves (i.e. a national/world class surfing break) (e.g. North Narrabeen, Snapper Rocks, Jakes);
2. A place considered sacred by surfers (local and national) (e.g. Angourie, Crescent Head);
3. Long-term usage of the beach and wave environment by local and national surfing community, e.g. long-term surf lifesaving club and/or boardriders club with significant history (e.g. Maroubra, Killalea).

Based on the above criteria it is anticipated there will be about 25 NSR's in Australia and more than a hundred worldwide.

A World Surfing Reserve (WSR) would have to fulfill all three of the following essential criteria:

1. Exceptional quality and consistency of the waves, i.e. a world-class surfing break (e.g. the North Shore, Jeffreys Bay);
2. A place considered sacred by surfers throughout the world (e.g. Waikiki, Malibu);
3. Long-term usage of the beach and wave environment by local, national and international surfing community (e.g. Bells Beach, Margaret River, Manly).

With these criteria we would only expect a handful of WSR's in Australia and a few score worldwide.

The above proposes a three tiered approach to surfing reserves, with criteria based on surf quality and consistency; its standing in the wider surf community; and the level of local support. A RSR can be applied to almost any recognised quality surfing break that has the backing of the local surfers and local authorities. NSR's and WSR's however require greater quality of surf, site renown and levels of support. Using Australia as an example where there are over 12 000 beach systems, plus hundreds of recognised surfing locations (Farmer and Young, 1986), it is expected that up to 100 sites could fit the criteria for RSR's, about 25 for NSR's and only a handful as WSR's.

The size of each reserve depends on the quality and range of associated surf breaks. Some will be relatively small just extending along the coast for a few hundred metres, while others will occupy

several kilometres of coast. All will however extend from the shoreline out at least 500 m seaward to ensure the breaks themselves are included. Some existing NSR extends 1000 m offshore to include all the breaks (e.g. Manly-Freshwater). Others extend into the inlet mouth, which impacts the surf quality (e.g. North Narrabeen).

NATIONAL SURFING RESERVES IN AUSTRALIA

Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve (Fig. 1) was proclaimed on 6 June 1973 (<http://www.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/bells.htm>). The listing on the Victorian Heritage Register (VHR number H203) states “Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve is a landscape that is socially significant as an international icon of Australian surfing culture. Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve is socially and historically significant as the location of the world’s longest continuous running surf competition. The Bells Beach Easter competition has world-renown and in terms of prestige and aura is often referred to as ‘the Wimbledon of surfing’.” Bells Beach is however a land-based reserve and is yet to be recognised as a National Surfing Reserve under the national system.



Figure 1. Bells Beach (upper) and Winkiepop (foreground) both backed by the Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve, dedicated in 1973 (Photo: A D Short).

Following Bells, nothing happened in Australia until 1993 when there was an unsuccessful two-year attempt to have South Stradbroke’s TOS (The Other Side) dedicated a Surfing Reserve (England and Farmer, 1993). Then nothing again happened until 2005. In that year Farmer and Short established National Surfing Reserves (Australia) (Farmer and Short 2007).

NSR (Australia) consists of a seven member Board (formerly the National Reference Group NRG) with representation from surfing organisations, government and coastal research (Fig. 2). The Board developed a background paper to NSR’s, which outlines the criteria required for consideration as a NSR, together with information on the nomination process and how to arrange the dedication of a reserve.

The local surfing community, which is usually a boardriders club or a group of long-term local surfers must initiate the nomination processes. This is regarded as an essential part of the process, as the Board feels strongly that it is the local surfers who should organise and ‘own’ the reserve. The NSR website (www.surfingreserves.org) provides information on the reserve criteria; how to nominate a

reserve; and if the nomination is accepted, how to organise a dedication ceremony. This involves the local surfing community holding a public meeting and then forming a Local Steering Committee (LSC) with office bearers to undertake three major objectives. First, to design a dedication plaque, for which the Board provides a template (Fig. 3a); second, to produce a NSR booklet that outlines the history and importance of surfing at the site (Fig. 3b); and then to arrange the actual dedication ceremony in collaboration with the relevant local and state authorities (Fig. 3c). These three steps usually take up to a year to achieve. As part of this process the Board allocates a 'buddy' to each local NSR committee to assist, advise and attend meetings as required or requested.



Figure 2. Members of the NSR Board: Graham Harding, Brett Williamson (CEO, SLISA, non-member), Andrew Short, Brad Farmer, David McPherson, Chris Tola and Norm Farmer, 2011 (Photo: B Farmer).

The NSR criteria and nomination, selection and dedication process is now well developed in Australia with those sites dedicated to date in Australia listed in Table 1. In Australia the reserves includes the main break or breaks being nominated and the surrounding ocean. They extend from the shoreline at least 500 m seaward and far enough alongshore to include all relevant breaks (Fig. 4). They presently range in extent from 600 m of coast and 50 ha in size at North Narrabeen, to 7.2 km of coast and 400 ha at Lennox Point. They do not have a land component, though signage and plaques are located on the adjacent land area. The New South Wales reserve (NSW) legislation (Lands, 2008) also acknowledges surfers as the primary user group within the NSR zone.

The reserves introduce no new regulations and exclude no existing users. It is considered that existing local and state regulations are sufficient to control potential concerns like pollution, litter, use of jet skis, etc. Many people ask what impact a reserve can have on the adjacent land area and development. While the reserve has no direct bearing on adjacent land use, the fact that a site is dedicated a NSR provides substantial support in any debate about adjacent land use and development. The local NSR committee can act as a powerful local interest group in contributing to any discussion regarding local coastal management. They can also use the fact that the area is a NSR to argue against any development considered inappropriate at such a location.

Some reserves, such as Angourie have never had a contest and don't ever want one, nor do they ever wish to see a building from the surf; others wish to restrict or ban the use of jet skis; while others such as North Narrabeen and Lennox have been involved in active management of the adjacent land area.

Eleven NSR were dedicated in Australia between 2006 and 2010, with two more to be dedicated in 2011 and a third in the nomination phase. Each has been driven by the local surfing community and just as each break has had its own unique characteristics and crew, so too has the nomination process

and dedication ceremony. One thread that has bound all the nominations and dedications together has been the enthusiasm of the local surfing community, as it has had to meet to seriously reflect on its past, its strengths and its future, much of which is documented in the dedication ceremony booklets (MBNSRC, 2006; ASRSC, 2007; CHNSRC, 2008; LPNSRSC, 2008; CBNSRSC, 2008; MNSR, 2009; KNSR, 2009; NNSR, 2009; MFNSR, 2010).

What cannot be documented however is the proud feeling it generates within the surfing community as they fully realise just what they have out there in the surf, and what they are now able to enshrine and help protect for future generations of surfers and beach users. Long standing conflicts between user groups, such as surfers vs surf life savers, have also been resolved or softened, with urban Merewether and Cronulla two good examples of many capacity building relationships for whole-of-community goodwill.

Table 1. Australian National Surfing Reserves – dedicated and future.

Date	Location	Comments
1973	Bells Beach ¹	World's first 'surfing recreation reserve', a land based reserve behind the world famous breaks and contest site
2006	Maroubra	Developed urban beach, with beach, reef and point breaks
2007	Angourie	Pristine point break, local development pressure
2008	Lennox Point	Several reef, point & beach breaks, considerable local development, Australia's largest NSR as of 2011
	Crescent Head	Iconic long board point break, bordered by reserves.
	Cronulla	Large embayment with reef, beach and point breaks, heavily utilized urban site comprises 11 surf breaks
2009	Merewether	Beach, reef and points breaks; main Newcastle surfing location; home to Mark Richards
	Killalea	Once remote quality beach break known as "The Farm", now encircled by residential development. Extends southward to include Mystics surf break.
	North Narrabeen	World famous for its long lefts, heavy rights and big bombie. A favored contest site and heavily utilized urban break; home to Damien Hardman and Simon Anderson
2010	Margaret River	The west's most famous reef break and big wave contest site.
	Kalbarri (Jakes)	Best of the Kalbarri reef and point breaks.
	Manly-Freshwater	Freshwater is where 'The Duke' introduced modern long board surfing to Australia; Manly site of one Australia's first surf life saving clubs (1903); first international surfing contest in 1964; Australia's most popular surf beach; and also home to the big waves of the Queenscliff Bombie, the Bower and Deadmans.
Pending/ Proposed	Shellys Point	Also known as Aussie Pipe & Summercloud Bay. The first indigenous NSR.
	Point Sinclair	The iconic desert break & still pristine. See Reid (2010) better known as Cactus
	Formby Bay	Encapsulates the southern Yorke Peninsula numerous surf breaks
	Burleigh Heads	Famous long right and World Series contest site
	Currumbin Alley	Right hand point-inlet mouth break
	Kirra Point	Queensland's best right-hander made famous by through the surfing of Michael Peterson and Rabbit Bartholomew.
	Snapper Rocks	Temporary home to 'Superbank", and famous for its long rights in its own right. All four point breaks (Burleigh, Currumbin, Kirra & Snapper) may become 'sites' within a possible Gold Coast length 'Reserve'
	Red Bluff	Iconic desert break with long lefts and hardy local community.
	Tombstones	Most famous of the Gnaraloo reefs breaks, remote desert site.
Future	Noosa	Home to a series of pristine right breaks, set in lush sub-tropical national park.
	Yallingup	Considered the birthplace of Western Australian short board surfing, famous for its long lefts, now preferred long board site.

¹ Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve covers the landward side of the beach, and is not yet part of the National Surfing Reserve system.

Note: Most NSR reserves extend from the shoreline 500 m seaward

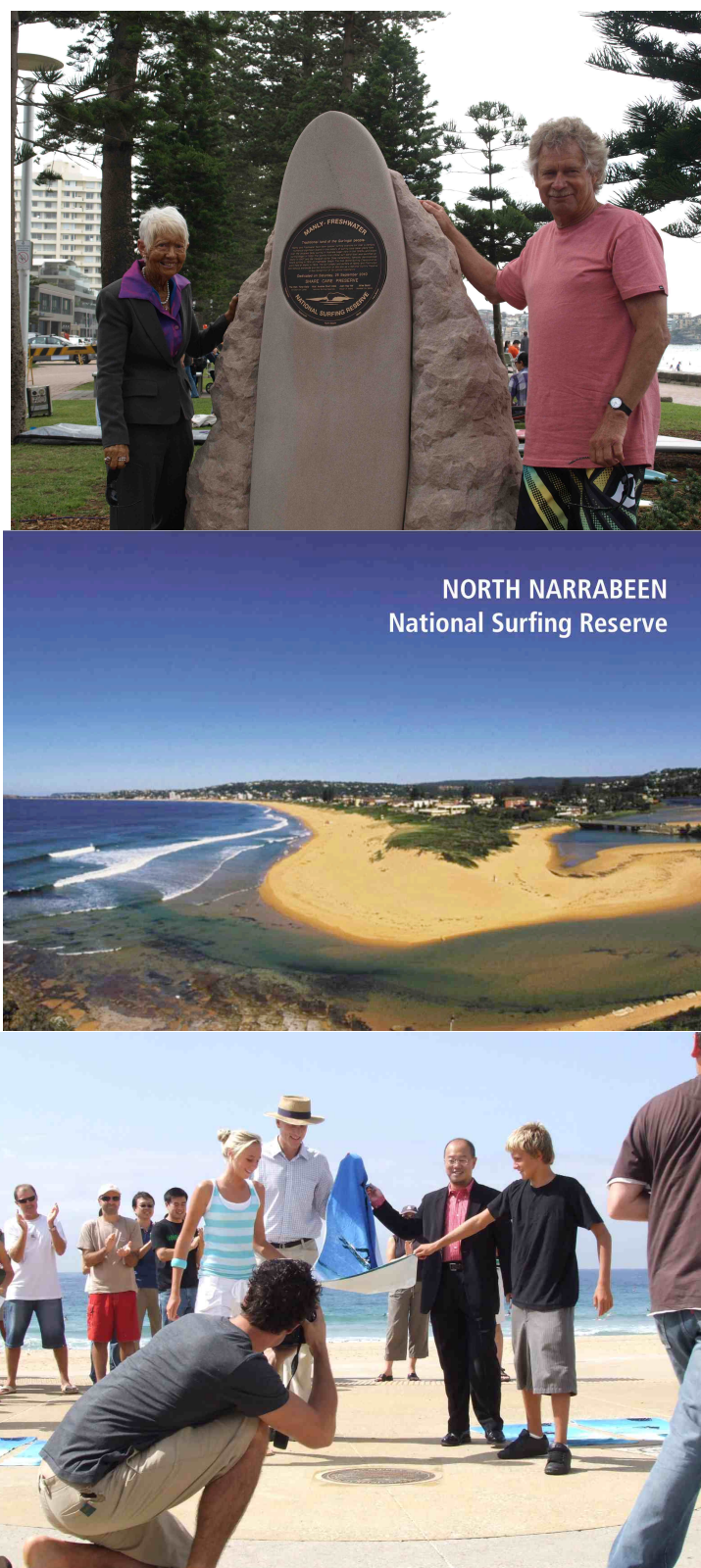


Figure 3. (a) Manly-Freshwater NSR plaque set in a sandstone surfboard and flanked by Phyllis O'Donnell and Midget Farrelly, respective winners of the women's and men's first International Surfing Contest at Manly in 1964 (Photo: S Tracey); (b) North Narrabeen NSR booklet cover; and (c) the Maroubra NSR dedication with Peter Garrett MP, Randwick City Mayor and young local surfers unveiling the Maroubra NSR plaque March 2006 (Photo: A D Short).

NSR's have evolved from the first dedication at Maroubra beach (Fig. 3c) into a highly organised and structured process. In NSW the reserves are fully supported by the State government and are gazetted by the Land and Property Management Authority (LPMA), which controls all Crown Land along the coast. In NSW the Minister for Lands or his nominee has officiated at all reserves dedicated since 2007 (see Lands 2008) (Fig. 5).

WORLD AND OTHER SURFING RESERVES

In 2009 the NSR Board responded to two quite different demands for additional types of surfing reserves. First, within Australia it was realised early on in the process there were many surf breaks that have a strong local surfing community but which lacked sufficient quality or consistency of surf to be dedicated an NSR's. To accommodate these breaks the term 'Regional (or State) Surfing Reserve (RSR)' was proposed.

At the other extreme are breaks that could be considered 'World Surfing Reserves' - the best of the best. The concept of WSR came about during 2008 in response to inquiries from the United States and particularly Save The Waves (STW) organization (<http://www.savethewaves.org/index.asp>). In response STW organised a roundtable meeting at Half Moon Bay (near Mavericks) on 5 December 2008. Brad Farmer the co-founder of NSR spoke at this meeting and suggested the term WSR for those very special breaks, the best of the best.

In March 2009 STW called for nominations for WSR's. One hundred and twenty-six nominations were received from 34 countries indicating the very high level of interest. WSR's Vision Council (VC) reviewed the nominations in August with final approval from the WSR Executive Committee (EC). The WSR VC is made up of 25 representatives from a wide range of surfing nations such as Australia, Hawaii, the USA, Great Britain. At present the WSR EC has seven members from the USA, Europe and Australia.



Figure 4. Map of Cronulla Beaches NSR, showing eleven significant surf breaks including four surf life saving clubs (Source: CBNSRC, 2009).

Following a selection and vetting process Malibu in California was selected to become the world's first WSR. Malibu submitted a detailed nomination in January 2010. At Bondi Beach (Australia) on 13 March 2010 Kelly Slater accepted the role of Ambassador for NSR and WSR and announced Malibu's

nomination had been accepted (Figure 6). Malibu was dedicated Malibu WSR on 9 October 2010 (MWSR 2010) (Figure 7, Table 2).

Hawaii

In Hawaii following the lead from NSR (Australia) Senator Fred Hemmings proposed in February 2010 a Bill for an Act relating to Hawaiian Surfing Reserves (HSR). The two proposed reserves included the Waikiki-Ala Wai area (Fig. 8). and the North Shore from Haleiwa to Sunset Beach (Table 2). They were declared reserves using an Executive Order of by Governor Linda Lingle on 2 June 2010, with the aim of “recognizing surfing’s cultural, historic and sports significance” and to “promote protection of world-renowned surf spots.” Senator Hemmings added, “Hawaii is the genesis of surfing. We must regain the cultural and sports leadership of the world of surfing, and surfing reserves is a step in that direction.” Hemmings also acknowledged that the legislative framework for Hawaii NSR was based on the NSR Australian model. It is anticipated one or more HSR’s will become WSR’s.



Figure 5. The Merewether NSR dedication in March 2008 with the Minister for Lands Tony Kelly, Minister for Tourism Jodi McKay, Mayor of Newcastle John Tate, Mark Richards (4 times World Surfing Champion), NSR Chair Brad Farmer and LSC Chair Tim Ryan (Photo: S. Tracey).



Figure 6. Kelly Slater, flanked by Brad Farmer, accepts the role of NSR and WSR Ambassador and announced Malibu as the first WSR, Bondi Beach, May 2010 (Photo: J Allcock, Sydney Morning Herald).



Figure 7. Map of Malibu World Surfing Reserve (Source: MWSR, 2010).



Figure 8. View of part of the Waikiki Hawaiian Surfing Reserve (Photo: A D Short).

Table 2: Hawaiian, World and other forms of Surfing Reserves – present and future

Date	Location	Comments
2010	Waikiki, Hawaii	Hawaiian Surfing Reserve: Ali Wai to Wailiki - birthplace of modern surfing
	North Shore, Hawaii	Hawaiian Surfing Reserve: Haleiwa to Sunset
2010	Malibu, USA	WSR – home of Californian and modern surfing
2010	New Zealand	Nineteen surf breaks protected by NZ Coastal Policy.
Proposed	Manly, Australia	WSR: Australian NSR; site of first World Surfing Championships 1964
	Ericeira, Portugal	WSR: Focus of Portugese surfing & surf industry
	Santa Cruz, USA	WSR: Historic California surfing region
Potential	Ulawatu, Indonesia	Potential NSR and/or WSR
	G-Land, Indonesia	Potential NSR and/or WSR
	Arugam Bay, Sri Lanka	Potential NSR and/or WSR
	Jeffreys Bay, S Africa	Potential NSR and/or WSR

California

On 2 December 2010 Surfers' Environmental Alliance (SEA) and the Santa Cruz Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation submitted a formal WSR nomination for the Santa Cruz region. The WSR VC and EC accepted this nomination in February 2011, with the dedication scheduled for 2012.

Portugal

On 16 October 2010 The Town Council of Mafra (Portugal) submitted a formal WSR nomination for the Ericeira region. The WSR VC and EC accepted this nomination in February 2011, with the dedication scheduled for 2012.

New Zealand

In New Zealand following lobbying by the Surfbreak Protection Society (www.surfbreak.org.nz) the New Zealand Coastal Policy on 3 December 2010 added Policy 20, which states:

“Surf Breaks which are of national significance to surfing shall be protected from inappropriate use and development by:

- a) Ensuring that activities in the coastal marine area do not adversely affect the surf breaks and;
- b) b) Avoiding, remedying and mitigating adverse effects of other activities on access to and the use and enjoyment of the surf breaks.”

The nineteen surf breaks by region are:

Northland:	Peaks (Shipwreck Bay, Super tubes, Mukie 1&2)
Coromandel:	Whangamata Bar
Gisborne:	Makorori Point, Wainui breaks, The Island
Taranaki:	Stent Road breaks, Waiwhakaiho
Raglan:	Manu Bay, Whale Bay, Indicators
Kaikoura:	Mangamaunu, Meatworks
Otago:	The Spit, Karitane, Whareakeake (Murdering Bay), Papatowai

Indo-Pacific

In 2010 NSR appointed three Global Facilitators charged with assisting other nations in the Indo-Pacific region develop surfing reserves for their iconic surf breaks. In Indonesia working in collaboration with Conservation International and local authorities it has been proposed to develop an Indonesian NSR system, with Uluwatu proposed as the first NSR (Putra and Margules 2010). G-Land is also under consideration. In 2010 in Sri Lanka another facilitator has been in discussion with the Arugram Bay Surf Club regarding the potential of a Sri Lanka NSR at that site. In August 2010 at Jeffreys Bay (South Africa) the same facilitator attended a meeting of local stakeholders including the Supertubes Foundation to discuss the potential for an NSR at Jeffreys Bay. NSR has also been holding ongoing discussions since 2010 with members of the Fijian surfing community regarding the possibility of dedicating NSR's in Fiji.

United Kingdom

In the UK Surfers against Sewerage (SAS) is the main proponent for both wave recognition and protection. In 2009 they launched their Protect Our Waves (POW) campaign to protect threatened surf spots. The campaign recognises the social and economic benefits of surf spots, to both the surfing and wider communities, and strives to protect surf spots from unacceptable levels of environmental impact, impacts on wave quality and recreational water users right of access.

In Scotland in November 2009, SAS also submitted through a Green Party Member of Parliament, (MP), a surfing reserve concept for inclusion in the Scottish Marine Bill. The concept was to recognise and help protect such surf breaks as Thurso, Tiree and Lewis. Also as a result of SAS's POW campaign (Fig. 9) recreational water users were in 2010 awarded a seat on the regional planning partnerships within the Scottish Marine Bill. Most recently SAS published their “Waves Are Resources” report (Butt, 2010), which details the resource potential of waves from surf sites to generating electricity. SAS is currently seeking nominations for sites of surfing interest (SSSI) UK wide for consideration by the new UK Marine Management Organization (MMO), which will manage the underwater portion of the UK coast.



Figure 9. UK surfers brave the winter cold in Cornwell to further the cause of wave protection (Source: Surfers Against Sewerage)

DISCUSSION

Surfing communities are by and large a loose-knit group who often communicate more in the surf than onshore. On popular breaks rank or take off rights are earned through countless hours surfing the break. The locals usually lack any visible sign of organisation, apart from the monthly club competition on some beaches.

Involving the locals in the nomination process has provided the glue to bind all the past and present history of the break and its surfers, while the dedication and gazettal formally recognises the break, its history and its significance to surfing. The outcome is a celebration of the surf and the surfers, past and present, encapsulated in a process, which will document the past and enshrines the surf for the future.

The eleven NSR's dedicated in Australia to date have all heavily involved the local surfing community, as without their support and involvement the reserve will not eventuate. The nature of these communities and those who represented them on the NSR local steering committees are as varied as the surf breaks they dedicate. The communality amongst each committee has been the obvious feelings expressed for their surf and the desire to recognise, enshrine and protect their breaks. As the number of NSR's grows, more and more surfing communities are asking if they can dedicate their local breaks.

Unlike many environmental type organisations, NSR is a pro-active movement aiming to recognise, enshrine and protect; and in doing so help the local surfing community reflect on just what is has and what is worth protecting for future generations of surfers. As a consequence there has been an incredibly positive response to NSR's and now WSR's, as not only the local surfers, but also their wider community, and in Australia local, state and federal politicians, as all recognise the benefits of NSR's.

CONCLUSIONS

Surfing has evolved considerably in the past 50 years, as the Malibu/short board revolution both changed the way we surf and the scale of waves that can be surfed. The professional circuit and a myriad of surfing websites, Iphone applications, magazines and videos brings surfing to all, with many non-surfers seeking to associate with the sport and culture through their clothing and tastes. While

surfing has made great advances with equipment, ability, clothing and more social acceptance, it has until recently neglected the very core of the sport – the waves.

National Surfing Reserves was founded in Australia in 2005 with the sole and express aim of both recognising and enshrining Australia's best surfing breaks and beaches. To date eleven NSR's have been dedicated in Australia, out of a potential 25 sites. The success of the reserve system in Australia has led to calls for an expansion of the system to incorporate breaks with a strong local surfing community but that do not have the quality of surf to rank at a national level, and to recognise worldwide those breaks that are the best of the best. For the former, Regional Surfing Reserves are proposed, for the latter, World Surfing Reserves. The first WSR was dedicated at Malibu in 2010 and more are in line to follow. It is anticipated over the following decades many surf breaks throughout the world will gain increasing levels of formal recognition and protection as they are declared surfing reserves.

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WEBSITES

www.worldsurfingreserves.org	World Surfing Reserves
www.surfingreserves.org	National Surfing Reserves (Australia)
www.surfbreak.org.nz	New Zealand Surf Break Protection Society
www.sas.org.uk	Surfers Against Sewerage (UK)

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