

Media Release

International Surfing Symposium

13-17 March 2017



12 months after the Gold Coast was endorsed as the 8th World Surfing Reserve, the host organisation, Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve Inc., has announced an inaugural event to continue to promote ocean conservation.

Following the Byron Surf Festival, the International Surfing Symposium will be held from 13-17 March at the Currumbin RSL. The inaugural event is conveniently located at the gateway to the famous surfing beaches of the southern Gold Coast, home to the WSL World Tour Surfing opening, the Quiksilver and Roxy Pro.

“This is the most exciting time of the year at the Southern End of the Gold Coast when the waves are pumping and the world’s best professional surfers are in town,” said Andrew McKinnon, Chairman of Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve Inc.

Better known as AndyMac, the voice of the surf on SEAFM & GOLDFM radio, a position he has held since the inception of SEAFM in 1989, AndyMac is still as passionate as ever about protecting and preserving our fabulous Gold Coast beaches and famous Southern Points from Burleigh to Snapper Rocks.

“It’s natural step forward to invite an eclectic group of well-known keynote speakers from academics, coastal engineers, international surfing conservationists, surfing champions and industry reps to address the challenges and future issues we face. Whether it be climate change, overcrowding, beach erosion, the use of recycled products for surfing equipment, shark shield technology or future surf sustainability themes that can make a difference.”

The International Surfing Symposium will host a two-day conference on Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th March from 9am - 4pm at Currumbin RSL. Registrations will include morning and afternoon refreshments and lunch and can be booked online via the host’s webpage www.goldcoastworldsurfingreserve.com.

The Symposium has support from State & Local Governments, universities and the private sector.

“We are very fortunate that we have both Queensland Government support through Tourism and Events Queensland and the City of Gold Coast’s Local Stewardship Committee support for the World Surfing Reserve, who have agreed to work together on this brand new event.”

Dr Steven Miles, the Qld State Government Minister of the Environment & Heritage Protection and Minister for National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, said he strongly supported the Symposium, which he hopes to attend.

“It was one of Labor’s election commitments to work with City of Gold Coast Council and the community to secure the World Surfing Reserve, which was great news for the region and the environment,” Dr Miles said.

“It was fantastic recognition for everyone who worked so hard to have the Gold Coast beaches declared a surfing reserve, but more must be done - not only on the Gold Coast.”

“Queenslanders understand that plastic litter especially is a major threat to our waterways and our precious coastal marine environment - and it is important issues like this that continue to be put under the public microscope,” Dr Miles said.

The Gold Coast’s first two World Professional Champions, Peter Townend (1976) and his fellow Cooly Kid mate Wayne ‘Rabbit’ Bartholomew (1978) are amongst a stellar list of keynote speakers. The original Cooly Kids will reflect on their amazing surfing careers and where it all started.

Bartholomew is the No 1 Patron of the Gold Coast World Surfing Reserve and said, “A fantastic initiative by GCWSR, the inaugural International Surfing Symposium will not only gather the sport, lifestyle and culture of surfing luminaries, but bring to the Gold Coast many of the world’s experts in coastal conservation and surf sustainability.

We face many challenges over the next 20 years and this Symposium will have a collective brains trust second to none.”

Other notable speakers include Patagonia Ambassador Dave ‘Rasta’ Rastovich, an eco surfing global professional surfer who will join with long time Gold Coast legendary surf craftsman Dick Van Straalen to discuss the state of the ‘Yewion.’

Peru’s first World Champion, Felipe Pomar (1965), arguably the fittest surfer on the planet, has joined the list of speakers. At 73 years of age, Pomar is still charging 20ft waves and will talk about how you can add another 20 years to your surfing life.

From the oldest to the youngest speakers, will be local Australian Junior representative 15-year-old Pacha Light. Pacha is a Surfrider Ambassador for Gold Coast Tweed Surfrider Foundation and was recently appointed as an Ambassador for SEABIN, working on the eradication of plastics in the ocean.

The Program Director of Save the Waves (the World Governing Body of World Surfing Reserves) Nick Mucha from Santa Cruz, California will make his maiden voyage to the Gold Coast and address the conference about how WSRs can make a difference in terms of environment and the value of surfing.

Griffith University has taken on a big role with highly respected academics such as Professor Ralph Buckley, considered to be Australia’s leading academic on surfing, presenting at the Symposium.

Dr Neil Lazarow, who wrote his thesis on the economic value of surfing, is a coastal social scientist and is on the international panel known as the Vision Council, will be amongst the speakers representing surfing’s finest academics. Other speakers to present include Mark Price, CEO of Firewire Surfboards, Lindsay Lyon of Shark Shield, Dan Fitzgerald of Sustainable Surf and well known author, surf writer and journalist, Tim Baker.

The Symposium will also provide night time entertainment. On Wednesday 15th March, Save the Waves will present their International Surfing Film Festival, including a documentary on how Gold Coast was endorsed as the 8th WSR and the Dedication Ceremony, amongst a diverse range of short 15 minute docos over a 4 hour period with music breaks.

Local Gold Coast singer/songwriter Felicity Lawless and her Band will wrap up the International Surfing Symposium with a rocking live music gig, including some special guests on Friday night, 17th March, 2017 at the Soundlounge, Currumbin RSL.

There are over \$5,000.00 worth of prizes to be won during the Symposium including Virgin Atlantic flights for 2 to Bali courtesy of Orbit World Travel, a Brand new Firewire Surfboard of choice, a Yulex Patagonia wetsuit, and a Shark Shield protection kit.

All events are open to the public.

For further information and registration for the International Surfing Symposium and associated social events, visit www.goldcoastworldsurfingreserve.com.

Photos supplied for publication - please credit photographers.

1. Snapper Rocks to Coolangatta “Super Bank” line-up - Photo by Sean Scott.
2. Rabbit Bartholomew, Qld Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Andrew McKinnon at GCWSR Dedication March, 2016 - Photo by Luke Sorensen.
3. Surfrider Foundation & SEABIN Ambassador 15 year old Pacha Light - Photo by Adrian Bort.
4. International Surfing Symposium poster.



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