ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge that we are here today on the land of the Guringai People who are the traditional owners of this land and are part of the oldest surviving continuous culture in the world.

We pay our respects to the spirits of the Guringai People.
WHAT IS A WORLD SURFING RESERVE?

World Surfing Reserves formally recognises the world’s most significant surfing locations – those that have outstanding surf breaks as well as a rich surfing history and culture. World Surfing Reserves is an international program based on models established by UNESCO’s World Heritage Program and National Surfing Reserves Australia. World Surfing Reserve’s board of international experts forge partnerships with local surfers and environmentalists to select, enshrine, and help protect valuable and historic surf spots.

World Surfing Reserves eligibility is based on a strict set of criteria: outstanding quality and consistency of waves – a world class break; a marine environment that is protected and preserved; a long and rich surf culture and history; and broad and strong community support. Those eligible then go through four phases: nomination, selection, dedication, and management. The World Surfing Reserve’s board provides a blueprint for the local community to follow in achieving the dedication and ensuring the ongoing management of the reserve, integrating the principles of preservation, sustainability, stewardship, and cultural celebration.
Manly-Freshwater was declared a National Surfing Reserve in September 2010, under the NSW Crown Lands Act 1989, accorded by Crown Lands NSW.

Manly-Freshwater National Surfing Reserve was then nominated to become the Manly-Freshwater World Surfing Reserve in recognition of the area’s surf quality, its long and rich surf history and culture and strong community support. The nomination was approved by the World Surfing Reserve Executive on 3 February 2011. The dedication ceremony has enshrined this recognition.

The on-going stewardship of the Manly-Freshwater World Surfing Reserve will be provided by the Manly Council’s Harbour Foreshores and Coastline Management Committee in consultation with Warringah Council. This committee manages the beach through the plans set out in the Coastal Zone Management Plan for Manly Ocean Beach.

Manly - Freshwater is the first World Surfing Reserve dedicated in Australia and third in the world, after Malibu (USA 2010) and Ericeira (Portugal 2011).
Like all those who treasure Manly’s sparkling surf and golden sand, whether they be lifelong residents like me or those who have adopted it as their new home, I am deeply proud that it has forever been enshrined as our nation’s first World Surfing Reserve.

In acknowledging this great honour we are reminded how fortunate we are to share one of nature’s most precious gifts. We are also reminded of the contribution these priceless assets have made in shaping Australia’s sporting and social heritage. Indeed, in shaping our iconic lifestyle!

No one could deny the role Manly people and events have played in pioneering and developing our nation’s unique and envied way of life.

It is not by chance that Manly is recognised as the birthplace of Australian surfing. Countless pages of our nation’s history indelibly record the reasons why.

As early as the 1880s the exhilarating art of body surfing was being taught at Manly by a young Melanesian, Tommy Tanna. It was here that the Sly brothers pioneered the forerunner to today’s surfboat when they used their 7-metre fishing boat to patrol Manly beach way back in 1903. They were also the first to advocate that, for greater safety, swimmers should be encouraged to stay in groups rather than be scattered all along the beach.

The first body surfing contest was held here in 1908 and the first recorded attempt to ride a surfboard took place here in 1912 when C. D. Patterson, a member of North Steyne Surf Life Saving Club, challenged the waves on a solid board he imported from Hawaii. The list of national and world champion surf lifesavers and board riders who have called Manly home would more than fill this booklet. So too would the list of Australian Olympians.

In fact it was a local Olympian, Cecil Healy whose incredible sportsmanship saw him certainly sacrifice an Olympic Gold Medal when he demanded that Olympic officials allow the legendary Duke Kahanamoku, who had been disqualified, compete in the final of the 100 metre freestyle at the 1912 Stockholm Games. The Duke took the gold and Healey the silver, forging a lasting admiration of Australians by the great Hawaiian.

Perhaps the sport of board riding, and the culture that has blossomed with it, really came of age in Australia when Manly hosted the first World Surfboard Riding Championship in 1964. Local surfer Bernard ‘Midget’ Farrelly won the men’s title and Phyllis O’Donnell the women’s, thereby etching their names in surfing history.

Our three Surf Life Saving Clubs, Manly, North Steyne and Queenscliff, together with neighbouring Freshwater would rank amongst the nation’s most powerful, admired and efficient voluntary organisations.

And what could be more fitting, for me as Chair, than to welcome official dignitaries and great names of the surfing world joining us to celebrate together the dedication of Manly-Freshwater Australia’s first World Surfing Reserve.
When Freshwater Beach and surfing are mentioned together, the name Duke Kahanamoku immediately comes to mind. Duke is the Grandfather of modern surfing. Over the course of his lifetime, he was also a surf lifesaver, a record-breaking swimmer, a five-time Olympic medallist, a Sheriff, a businessman and even a movie star.

But when he came to Sydney in the summer of 1914-1915 he was simply a young Hawaiian water man who happened to have two Olympic medals to his name - one gold, one silver. After visiting a number of beaches, he chose to take to the waves of Freshwater to show the locals how surfing was done in Hawaii.

Duke’s three hour exhibition is part of the folklore of world surfing history. It sparked a love affair with surfing in this ocean-loving nation that continues today and is rightly being recognised in Manly-Freshwater’s dedication as a World Surfing Reserve.

It’s important here not to forget that the original saltwater people of this area, the Guringai, possessed an enormous affinity with the ocean - one that Duke probably could have related to. As we celebrate this recognition of Manly-Freshwater we acknowledge that there is a great deal we can learn from the legacy of both the Guringai and Duke in terms of the respect they held for the land and the water but also for the people around them.

This legacy of respect they started has continued over generations here in Freshwater, and we should recognise and thank the numerous local residents who have dedicated their lives to surfing, surf lifesaving, environmental conservation and the enhancement of beach culture. It’s no mistake that this area has produced so many world champion surfers. The surfing culture and ethos is central to all our lives.

Back home in Hawaii, Duke is remembered as the “Ambassador of Aloha” - Aloha meaning affection, peace, compassion and mercy. Here at Freshwater we embrace that spirit of Aloha and we look forward to generations of people, locals and tourists alike, enjoying all the beauty that Freshie has to offer.
BRAD FARMER AND
PROFESSOR ANDREW SHORT OAM
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
WORLD SURFING RESERVES

Foreword

This publication marks 100 years of board surfing in Australia with Manly-Freshwater beaches the birthplace of Australian surfing. To this day they remain the most popular surfing beaches in the nation and eminently worthy of being declared Australia’s first World Surfing Reserve.

Manly and Freshwater beaches and their surrounding surf breaks encapsulate all that is required for a World Surfing Reserve – consistent quality surf, rich surfing history, strong community support and a magnificent coastal environment.

First and foremost is the surf spread along four kilometres of beach and rocky shore, which receive regular consistent beach breaks together with reef and point breaks that are surfed in bigger swell. There are always waves at Manly-Freshwater and always surfers from dawn to dusk out in the surf.

Second, is its very long and rich surfing history, dating back to the 1880s when a Pacific Islander showed locals how to body surf, followed by the first official surf bathing in 1902, the first surf life saving club, the first recorded board surfing, Duke Kahanamoku’s famous surfing demonstration here in 1914 and the first World Surfing Championships in 1964. To this day Manly continues to be a focus of surfing and surfing competition at all levels.

Third, is the Manly-Freshwater community, which is the most beach and surf focused in Australia, with four surf life saving clubs and several board clubs, representing a community that lives for its magnificent stretch of sand and headlands.

Finally, is the local environment, which is in part, protected by an aquatic reserve and national park, both of which attract visitors from around the world.

Manly - Freshwater has led the way in Australian as well as world surfing, and now richly deserves to be celebrated as a World Surfing Reserve, the first in Australia and third in the world.
Manly-Freshwater World Surfing Reserve is located just 10 kilometres from Sydney City centre. Its boundaries extend along the shoreline for four kilometres between Northern Freshwater Beach Headland and Fairy Bower, joined by a line 500 metres seaward of both headlands (map). It includes Freshwater Beach, Queenscliff - North Steyne - Manly Beaches together with the smaller Shelly Beach around to the Bower. The Reserve offers the following surf breaks:

Freshwater is a partly sheltered beach break that has dependable surf and is very popular during Summer, with the best surf in Autumn. Works best in offshore northwest winds with some shelter from northeast winds. The optimum swell directions are from the east - northeast. The beach break provides left and right handers. Good surf at all stages of the tide.

*Rips and rocks are hazards.*

Queenscliff is a reasonably exposed beach break that has reliable surf, particularly during Autumn with offshore northwesterlies. Picks up all swell with best swell angle from the northeast. Waves at the beach break both left and right. Good surf at all stages of the tide. Often crowded.

*Beware of rips and rocks.*

Queensie Bombie (or Queenscliff Bombora) is a reef/bombora break, located 300 metres offshore that breaks in bigger swell, working best with the east northeast waves. It breaks left and right with good surf at all stages of the tide.

North Steyne and Manly is an exposed beach break that has quite reliable surf, with wave height decreasing to the south. Very popular during Summer, with the best surf during Autumn with west to southwest winds. Works best in a northeast swell, with waves breaking both left and right.

*Beware of rips.*
South Steyne is a sheltered right-hand reef-point break that works occasionally in higher south swell. It is sometimes crowded here. 

*Hazards include rips and rocks.*

**Fairy Bower** is an exposed right hand rocky point break that usually has waves and can work at any time of the year and hold waves to several metres. Works best in easterly swell with southwest winds with good surf at all stages of the tide. When the surf is up, crowds are likely. 
*Take care of rocks in the line up.*

**Winkipop** is an exposed right-hand point break around from the Bower. Works best in large south through to east swell. When the surf is up, crowds are likely. 
*Take care of rocks.*

Around Fairy Bower, it is really four breaks that on very big swells can join together as one. Way outside is **“Deadmans”**, a tow in take off, then **“Winkipop”** a suck up over a shallow reef that leads eventually to **“Surge”** rock which sucks up the wave about two thirds of the way around the Point. The next section was named the “Racetrack” by past legend ‘Snowy’ McAlister, it is also sometimes referred to as “**The Bower**.”
The Manly and Freshwater areas of Sydney, Australia are the home of the Guringai people who are the traditional owners of this slice of surfing paradise. The scalloped beaches found here were home to the coastal clans of the Guringai people for at least 20,000 years before the arrival of Europeans.

The water skills and ability in the surf of the Guringai people, underscores the Northern Beaches of Sydney as the beacon of Australian beach culture, where beach bathing, body surfing, surf life saving and board-riding all began in this country. Living primarily along the ocean foreshores, the Guringai used the sea as a provider of food, as well as for many water related activities such as swimming, canoeing and fishing which were integral parts of their culture. Their interaction with the ocean was so close that the Guringai people are considered to be “Saltwater People”.

From about 1890-91 onwards, Tommy Tanna, a Melanesian body surfer, started teaching body surfing at Manly Beach. In February 1903, the Manly branch of the Life Saving Society was formed and began training life savers. The Sly Brothers, who were local fishermen, patrolled Manly Beach in their fishing boat from 1903 onwards.

In November 1903, the prevailing Victorian-era values and laws changed and liberated Manly beachgoers to be able to swim during daylight. Thereafter hundreds of people began taking to the surf in daylight hours during the 1903/04 Summer at Manly Beach. This was the first big wave of our nation’s beach users – the gate had been opened to a whole new world of fun and enjoyment on the beach.
Since 1906, Manly Beach has been known as “Surf City” – where people come to have some simple fun. Manly is just seven miles from the Sydney CBD – but is 1,000 miles from care! It is a place for our Aussie larrikinism and our beach culture egalitarianism.

The Freshwater Surf and Life Saving Club was established in December, 1908. On 26 January, 1912 during its Australia Day Surf Carnival, Freshwater Beach saw displays of stand up and headstand surf board riding by Australian surfer Tommy Walker.

A visiting Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku, in his Summer of 1914/15 surfboard riding demonstrations at Freshwater Beach – “lit the fuse” to ignite and popularise surf board riding in Australia. He first rode his Hawaiian surfboard at Freshwater Beach on Thursday 24 December 1914. His famous three-plus hours of demonstration board riding, including tandem riding it with the then 15 year old Australian teenager Isabel Letham, occurred on this beach on Sunday 10 January 1915.

This activity is now a national pastime and has merged seamlessly into our mainstream life. Since the Summer of 1914/15, Freshwater Beach has been Australia’s own small slice of Hawaii – with its wonderful “Aloha Spirit”. Freshwater Surf Club’s Heritage Room is now the home of the Duke Kahanamoku’s 1914/15 surfboard – the surfboard many consider to be the holy grail of Australian surfing.
In late 1956 the Hawaiian and Californian Life Guards visiting here for the 1956 Olympics, heralded the arrival of the lightweight and agile Malibu Surfboards which were a game changing innovation and sparked a surfboard design revolution here. Australian surfing legend Bernard ‘Midget’ Farrelly who saw these then new Malibus being ridden on Manly Beach in 1956, described their arrival as “like a spaceship had landed” – they were a radical shift from the prevailing surfboard design paradigm.

In June 1961 Queenscliff Beach’s legendary Bombora break was ridden for the first time by Dave Jackman. After conquering this local wave, Manly and Freshwaters’ surfers then set their sights upon the North Shore of Hawaii and its winter swells. In May 1964 the first World Surfing Championships in Australia were held at Manly Beach and were won by Australian surfers Bernard ‘Midget’ Farrelly and Phyllis O’Donnell.

Surfing mania really took hold from this time. Australian surfing magazines first appeared in Sydney in the early 1960s, stoking the phenomenal craze of board riding celebrating and defining surf culture. Along with surf movies, music, language and fashion, the magazines charted social and cultural shifts in the post-war economic boom and became iconic symbols of youth, mobility and hedonistic individualism.

The water men and women of Manly and Freshwater are the “Who’s Who” of Australian Surfing’s history and its development. Amongst their ranks are numerous World Surfing Champions, including Barton Lynch, Pam Burridge and Layne Beachley and
Australian Life Saving Champions. For those of us who won the geographical lottery and are lucky enough to call this area home – we are truly blessed. Manly and Freshwater’s local residents have a strong sense of spirit of place with their beaches and a desire to honour and protect them.

Manly and Freshwater Beaches are an essential stop for many surfing safaris up and down the Australian East Coast, for those surfers living an “Endless Summer” lifestyle – exploring and enjoying these beaches. Surfing has pushed the boundaries of Australia’s way of life and our social behaviours. It is an expression of spirit - and in a simple way – it celebrates the joy of life! Our beaches and surf culture provide a place to escape from everyday life – a freedom from others’ ideas.

The Manly – Freshwater World Surfing Reserve area is the most surf-centered community in Australia. Its residents and visitors are drawn to its beaches with their many sights and delights. For some it also offers transcendental moments - when time, their being, thoughts and everything else just disappear - their mind, body and soul can be briefly unified as one into a blissful state. They’re “Stoked”! Their spirit is set free – for surfing can be described in one word – freedom!

Manly and Freshwater Beaches are the cradles of Australian beach culture and surfing. We are very proud to now be able to make the Manly – Freshwater World Surfing Reserve a permanent reality. May ours and future generations continue to enjoy this truly magnificent World Surfing Reserve – a true surfer’s paradise!
Manly – Freshwater World Surfing Reserve is blessed with many habitats that are home to rare sea life. It includes beaches, sand dunes, bushlands, kelp forests, seagrass meadows and sub-tidal reefs.

The World Surfing Reserve boasts one of the largest resident populations of protected weedy seadragons and a number of threatened and protected species including the elegant wrasse, the black rock cod, the grey nurse shark, little penguins, long-nosed bandicoots and the eastern water dragon lizard. More than 160 species of fish have been recorded at this Reserve.

Apart from the local residents, there are many wonderful visitors including a number of transient tropical fish species, bottle-nosed dolphins and the southern right and humpback whales.

Seagulls and cormorants are the prominent sea-birds. Pelicans fly past to harbour or sheltered waterways. White-faced heron are also seen along foreshores. Terns, sea-eagles, fish-hawks and gannets are occasionally seen.

Surrounding bushland is populated by native flowering banksias, wattles, grevilleas and melaleucas including paper-bark and tea-trees.

The World Surfing Reserve also includes the Cabbage Tree Bay Aquatic Reserve and closely adjoins the Sydney Harbour National Park. The Aquatic Reserve is an area of water that is fully protected (‘No-Take’) to provide a safe haven for all marine life.
Two plaques are installed to commemorate the dedication of the Manly-Freshwater World Surfing Reserve - one at Manly Beach on a sculpture where the existing National Surfing Reserve plaque is located and the other at Freshwater Beach, near the statue of Duke Kahanamoku located on the northern headland.
Acknowledgements

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World Surfing Reserves