

Surfrider Foundation Australia National Environmental Policy

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The following policies establish the general position of Surfrider Foundation Australia on a number of key issues relating to our Mission Statement:

Surfrider Foundation Australia is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the protection and enhancement of Australia's oceans, waves and beaches for all people, through CARE: Conservation, Activism, Research and Education.

Surfrider Foundation Australia members, staff, Directors and supporters will have close regard to the following policies through C.A.R.E. and when developing or promoting a public position on a specific local issue, which may or may not be sufficiently addressed here.

Conservation of Coastal Landscapes

Coastal Development

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates the following.

- Development should be excluded from open space, areas of native vegetation and vacant crown land that is contiguous with coastal foreshores and estuaries.
- Development in the coastal zone should be limited to infill and consolidation of the existing development footprint
- Population caps in coastal areas are not appropriate due to their potential to exclude less wealthy and disadvantaged groups from living in coastal areas. Population pressures must be recognised and planned for at a national, state and local scale to ensure sustainable and equitable development is attained and the coastal landscape and ecosystems are conserved.

Beach and Foreshore Access

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates the following.

- Continuous and appropriate pedestrian access that caters to local demand and minimises impacts on coastal ecosystems and cultural heritage should be formally established and maintained along the entire Australian coast by means of the necessary planning, regulation and works.
- In line with the above policy, Surfrider Foundation Australia strongly encourages authorities to provide, enhance, maintain and promote 'barrier free' access to beaches and public coastal lands for less mobile people (i.e. the elderly, infirm, or physically challenged).
- Land tenure and management practices that restrict environmentally and culturally appropriate pedestrian access along the coast should be redressed.
- Surfrider Foundation Australia respects the right for people to enjoy beaches with their dogs where this activity is permitted. However, the impact of irresponsible dog owners (not their dogs per se) on the habitat quality of beaches, particular for ground nesting birds, is well documented, and therefore SFA advocates the following.
 - No reduction in the number or extent of beaches where dog walking is currently restricted by the relevant authorities.

- Extensive education campaigns on the environmental and social sensitivity of beach environments to dogs, especially in remote areas, and the ways in which dog owners can minimise these impacts.
- Provision and maintenance of dog-poo bag dispensers and bins where demand is high.
- Increased regulation and enforcement of environmentally and socially responsible dog walking and exercising on beaches.
- Provision of ongoing and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of dog access provisions to ensure their limited impact.

Shark control program

Surfrider Foundation Australia has serious concerns regarding the indiscriminate killing of sharks as well as the accidental capture or injury of other marine animals (bycatch), and notes there is conflicting evidence regarding the effectiveness of sharknets and drumlines in *actually* reducing the risk of shark attack, particularly in recent years.

However, Surfrider Foundation Australia recognises the political complexities and risks that would be associated with any moves to reduce the extent of shark control programs, and after many years a large proportion of beach goers now expect shark control programs to be in place and are under the impression (real or false) that current shark control programs reduce their risk of being attacked.

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates the following.

- Increased research on the effectiveness of shark control programs and ways of reducing (bycatch), as well as creating a greater understanding of sharks that inhabit the inshore areas of Queensland.
- Formal recording and public reporting of the numbers and types of marine animals that are caught in all sharknets and drumlines
- Developing a suite of shark attack prevention strategies to reduce the preserved needs for nets. This to include improve observations activities via shorelines and aircraft and increases in seasonal education and awareness campaigns and activities to ensure bathers reduce their own risk of shark attack
- Broad and regular (e.g. every summer) education campaigns that cover
 - The ways in which shark nets and drumlines work and don't work (i.e. catching and killing sharks rather than acting as a 'barrier fence' as is so often misunderstood by beachgoers)
 - A summary of shark and bycatch catch rates
 - The inherent risk of swimming in waters inhabited by sharks, regardless of control programs
 - Encouraging beachgoers to avoid swimming
 - during dark or twilight hours
 - in waters near effluent outlets
 - in or near river mouths after heavy rain
 - in or near congregations of baitfish
 - in areas frequented by people fishing

Coastal Biodiversity

More than 80% of Australia's population lives within 50 km of the coast, and the fertile soils associated with coastal area and floodplains have encouraged the

establishment of large areas of intensive agriculture (i.e. cropping and improved pastures).

As a consequence of this coastal concentration of population and agriculture, extensive areas of coastal native flora and fauna communities have been lost, damaged or fragmented as a result of clearing for development and agriculture, introduction of plant and animal pests, and alterations to the natural fire regime. Similarly, riverine, estuarine and marine ecosystems have been affected by agricultural and urban runoff, sewage discharge, recreational and commercial fishing, and in some cases simply high concentrations of recreational use.

In order to protect and enhance remaining coastal terrestrial, riverine, estuarine and marine biodiversity, Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates the following.

- a series of managed reserves that are extensive, representative and linked wherever possible
- adequate resourcing for agencies charged with reserve management to
 - ensure maintenance and support enhancement of native flora and fauna
 - provide facilities for environmentally and culturally responsible use of natural areas
 - partner with landholders and other land managers to coordinate biodiversity conservation
 - Enforce relevant Government legislation and regulation

Mining and dredging

Terrestrial sand mining

Large stretches of Australia's coastal lands and dunes are or have been mined for mineral sands. This has resulted in extensive clearing and fragmentation of coastal vegetation communities, weed infestation and related impacts on fauna and coastal processes. Disturbance of important Aboriginal cultural landscapes has also occurred.

In order to minimise environmental impacts from terrestrial sand mining and maximize the limited coastal lands that are available for environmentally and culturally responsible public recreation, SFA advocates

- no further expansion of areas being exploited for mineral sands beyond those currently in operation
- existing sand mining operations should be closely monitored and environmental management and rehabilitation measures heavily enforced
- government levies on sand mining operators to provide funds directly for expensive coastal management initiatives such as resumption of private lands

Offshore sand mining

Surfrider Foundation Australia strongly opposes any exploration or exploitation of offshore sand sources for the purpose of supplying commercial quantities of building materials. While it is conceivable that offshore extraction could provide an important source of sand for future coastal nourishment campaigns, this should not be approved until comprehensive and long term investigations conclusively show that there is no adverse effect on the ecological, aesthetic or surfing values of a coastline.

Dredging

Surfrider Foundation Australia only supports dredging activities that have been demonstrated by a transparent and scientifically rigorous process to be necessary for the maintenance of safe navigation channels and/or to assist with flood mitigation. However, dredging can have adverse impacts on water quality and estuarine/marine ecosystems, and lead to unexpected changes in the movement and accumulation of sediment thereby altering the nature and quality of surf breaks. Surfrider Foundation Australia aims to protect the natural and surfing environment from any actual or potential impacts from dredging activities.

Personal Water Craft and Tow Surfing

Surfrider Foundation acknowledges the large and important role that personal water craft (PWCs), i.e. jetskis, play in modern surfing, for both towing and accessing waves. However, Surfrider Foundation Australia considers that PWCs can, if used irresponsibly, unduly harm the marine environment, disturb paddle surfers and wildlife and cause pollution, with fumes, noise and fuel spills.

The Surfrider Foundation supports the introduction of regulations that would require all PWCs to use 4 stroke engines that reduce petrochemical discharge by up to 97% as well as greatly reducing noise pollution.

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates the right of paddle surfers to surf any break unhindered and undisturbed by tow surfers and PWC's. If a towing team arrives at a break where surfers are successfully paddling in, they should not commence towing.

Integrated Water Management

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates integrated water management, incorporating the following fundamental principles:

- Minimising system losses from water supply schemes (i.e. leakage);
- Managing demand for water through socially sensitive pricing mechanisms, promoting responsible practices and encouraging adoption of water efficient infrastructure and appliances;
- Decentralising water supply via rainwater tanks and stormwater harvesting where resource efficiencies can be obtained;
- Maximising water recycling rates for irrigation, and indirect and direct potable reuse;
- Discharge of advanced tertiary treated effluent to the environment only when all cost effective means of recycling have been eliminated; and
- Minimising of unmanaged environmental releases of untreated sewage via damaged pipework as a result of leakage or system overloading due to inflow of surface water or infiltration of groundwater.

Environmental Release of Effluent

Surfrider Foundation Australia strongly opposes the release of treated effluent into natural surface waters (natural wetlands and lagoons, and rivers) and ocean waters either via near shore outfalls or deep water outfalls. There is widespread and very clear epidemiological and anecdotal evidence that demonstrates increased health risks to swimmers and surfers using surface waters and ocean waters in areas that receive treated effluent.

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates:

- Treated effluent should be released to the environment only after all possible means of releasing or recycling it have been identified and eliminated through a comprehensive and transparent process that involves the community. (Other

means of environmental release include deep well injection or aquifer recharge, however these have their own pollution problems associated primarily with contamination of ground water.)

- Prior to any environmental release treated effluent is 'polished' to an advanced tertiary treatment or Class A level by means of micro-filtration, ultra-filtration, activated carbon, ozone disinfection, UV disinfection, and/or treatment in a managed wetland or lagoon.
- Chlorine use, often required by regulatory authorities, should be kept to a minimum by high levels of pre-treatment (as noted above) and advanced chlorination methods such as Chlorine Dioxide should be used rather than Sodium Hypochlorite dosing.

Desalination

Desalination plants are energy intensive and adversely affect marine life as a result of direct entrapment of animals in their intakes and/or the polluting effect of their discharge which a concentration of the salt and contaminants from the feed water.

Surfrider Foundation Australia does not support desalination as a water supply option.

Stormwater

The common approach to managing stormwater involves simply mitigating flood risk by removing water from developed areas as quickly and efficiently as possible. As a result, natural waterways are converted to engineered channels that offer poor habitat value and pollutants are transported directly to surface waters (wetlands, lagoons and rivers) and ocean waters where they reduce water quality and aquatic ecosystem health.

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates the adoption of Water Sensitive Urban Design principles, including:

1. Protect natural systems (creeks, rivers and wetlands) within urban catchments.
2. Protect water quality by improving the quality of stormwater runoff draining from urban developments.
3. Integrate stormwater treatment into the landscape by using stormwater treatment systems in the landscape that incorporate multiple uses providing a variety of benefits such as water quality treatment, wildlife habitat, public open space, recreational and visual amenity for the community.
4. Reduce runoff peak flows from developments by on-site temporary storage measures (with potential for reuse) and minimise impervious areas.
5. Add long-term value while minimising development costs.
6. Reduce potable water demand by using stormwater as a resource through capture and reuse for non-potable purposes.

Artificial Surfing Reefs

The Surfrider Foundation opposes any degradation or depletion of existing artificial or natural wave-riding resources due to the development of man made structures or activities in the coastal zone. In all cases any development that proposes the loss of these resources must be opposed and stopped.

Surfrider Foundation Australia recognises that artificial surfing reefs may help to alleviate overcrowding pressure on natural surf breaks. Investment in such works may be one way to address the extreme imbalance of public funding support received by surfing relative to other popular sports in Australia, and lead to a level of public funding that is more commensurate with the level of participation in surfing and the tourism, recreation and public health benefits that it generates.

However, marine structures of this type are very expensive and have significant environmental risks associated primarily with the uncertainty of their effects on complex systems of near shore hydrology and sediment movement. Therefore, Surfrider Foundation Australia does not support the construction of artificial surfing reefs solely for the purposes of surfing amenity.

Surfrider Foundation Australia supports provision of surfing amenity as a secondary design feature of offshore structures that are built for some other primary purpose, most likely coastal erosion hazard mitigation.

Aboriginal Australia

Surfrider Foundation Australia recognises that Aboriginal people are the traditional custodians of the land we all share.

Surfrider Foundation Australia promotes the principle that as individuals and a community we must respect Aboriginals as traditional custodians of the land and recognise the profound cultural importance that land has for them.

Surfrider Foundation Australia will endeavor to consult with local Aboriginal people to incorporate their views into all campaign strategies, and ensure that the activities of Surfrider Foundation Australia are appropriate and supportive of their rights, values and wishes.

Coastal Erosion Hazard Mitigation

The coastal zone is a dynamic environment characterised by a variety of processes that lead to erosion and accretion of the shoreline across a range of time scales. As a result, public and private infrastructure in areas subject to coastal processes is exposed to a number of risks associated primarily with storm damage in the immediate term and changes to the position and stability of the shoreline in the medium to long term.

Surfrider Foundation Australia advocates planned retreat in areas where public or private infrastructure is threatened by coastal erosion hazard. Planned retreat refers to a coordinated and pro-active removal of public and private infrastructure from the coastal hazard zone prior to the infrastructure being damaged by coastal erosion and/or the infrastructure altering the natural course of coastal erosion processes while preserving coastal amenity, values and importantly public access.

Surfrider Foundation Australia's position is that people who enjoy the amenity of living within coastal hazard zone (i.e. proximity to the coast), must accept the risks associated with developing in such locations regardless of when those risks become apparent. They cannot expect public authorities to meet all costs associated protection or removal of their property. .

It is the view of Surfrider Foundation that individuals and communities who derive benefit from and enjoy the coast have a responsibility and obligation to assist in the sustainable stewardship of these areas. Governments at all levels must play a lead role in planning for conservation, funding restoration and enhancement programs and building the capacity of the community to participate meaningfully in coastal management. Without a strong partnership between government and community, coastal conservation cannot be achieved.

Surfing Reserves

Surfrider Foundation endorses the concept of a national system of surfing reserves at significant surfing locations. Surfing Reserves should be developed in conjunction with planning and land management agencies in order to formally protect the physical characteristics contributing to a breaks notable surf quality, the ecological integrity of the marine, littoral and terrestrial environment, and the social and cultural traditions of the local surfing community...

Wave Energy

Surfrider Foundation believes that technologies that utilise ocean waves, tides, currents and wind may offer important benefits as renewable sources of energy that will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and fossil fuel dependence. There are however many questions and concerns about ocean energy, including potential impacts to surf quality, marine ecology, coastal processes, public safety and aesthetics.

The Surfrider Foundation supports clean, renewable, low-impact sources of energy. Investigation and exploitation of the ocean as an energy source should only proceed in suitable locations following comprehensive assessment of potential impacts on the environment and public amenity, and should be informed by effective long term monitoring and public reporting of impacts.

Policy on Global Warming

Surfrider Agrees with the IPCC findings that global warming is a reality and that many of the impacts of same will be felt more acutely along our coasts than in many other geographical areas.

These effects will be felt both along the shore and in the water.

Along the shore there is the strong likelihood of sea level rise and the increased frequency and severity of storms.

In the water, changes in chemical composition, particularly increased acidity, will affect sea life including a wide range of shellfish and corals.

Surfrider Foundation therefore supports through collaboration with partner organisations, efforts to reduce carbon and other greenhouse gas causing emissions. We will address coastal issues with increased urgency in light of sea level rise and encourage all public and private entities to do the same.

Surfrider believes that global warming and sea level rise further reduce the efficacy of shoreline armoring and will continue to advocate and establish appropriate setbacks for coastal development based on the current predictions of sea level rise, erosion and associated trends making planned retreat our preferred first option.

Surfrider Foundation Principles

1. SURFRIDER recognizes the biodiversity and ecological integrity of the planet's coasts are necessary and irreplaceable. SURFRIDER is committed to preserving natural living and non-living diversity and ecological integrity of the coastal environment.
2. SURFRIDER promotes the right of low-impact, free and open access to the world's waves and beaches for all people. SURFRIDER acts to preserve this right of access.
3. SURFRIDER is dedicated to enhancing wave-riding opportunities in ways which will not adversely impact nearshore ecosystems.
4. SURFRIDER believes environmental education is essential to the future health and well-being of the planet. SURFRIDER seeks to develop and utilize educational materials that are informative, factual, proactive, synergistic and fun.
5. SURFRIDER strives to be accurate and nonpartisan in its communications with its members and the general public. In addition, SURFRIDER will express the unique values inherent in wave-riding — individualism, camaraderie, non-materialism, and an appreciation for human kind's historic relations with the Ocean.
6. SURFRIDER is a grassroots organization, effective through the participation of its members. SURFRIDER activities emphasize the value of an involved membership.
7. SURFRIDER encourages all commercial enterprises to adopt the Ceres Principles. Their determination to do so will favorably influence SURFRIDER's willingness to provide support. SURFRIDER will not permit sponsors to divert the Foundation from its mission or projects undertaken.
8. SURFRIDER does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, or national origin for any reason. SURFRIDER promotes the healthy enjoyment of the coastal environment for all people.
9. SURFRIDER and its representatives, affiliations and chapters agree to abide by these principles and all rules and regulations governing non-profit organizations.