



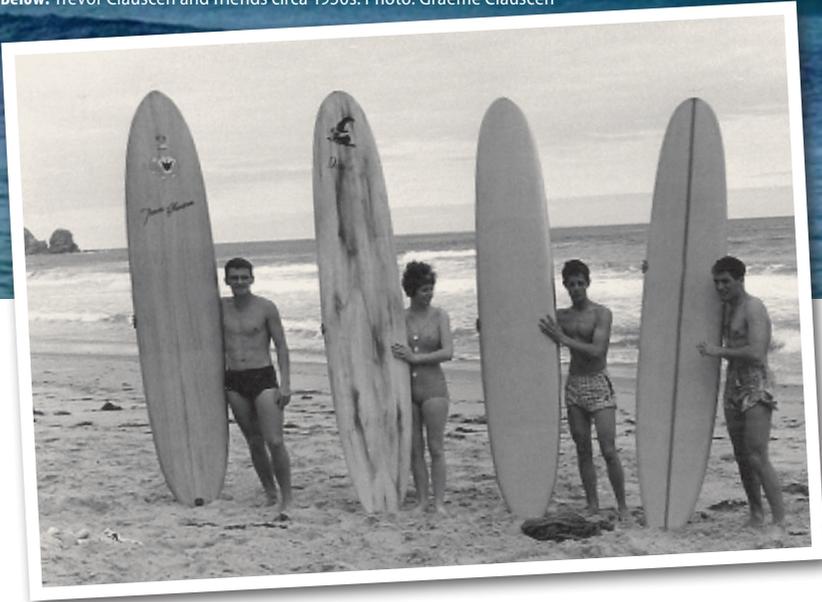
Phillip Island **National Surfing Reserve**

A message from the Minister

Victoria is blessed with a magnificent coastline and a superb natural environment. It also boasts an equally proud surfing history and culture. Surfing unites young and old and creates a shared respect and desire to protect the beaches that provide so much joy to so many.

I am honoured to officially launch the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve – the first for Victoria and a worthy recipient. I commend the community effort required to achieve such an accolade for the State of Victoria.

Main image: 'Magic Lands', Cape Woolamai. Photo: Graeme Burgan
Below: Trevor Clauscen and friends circa 1950s. Photo: Graeme Clauscen



First published March 2013.
Second edition: March 2017.



**The Hon Ryan Smith MP,
Minister for Environment and
Climate Change and Youth Affairs
March 2013**

Front cover: Glyndyn Ringrose, Express Point. Photo: Andy Biddington.



Phillip Island

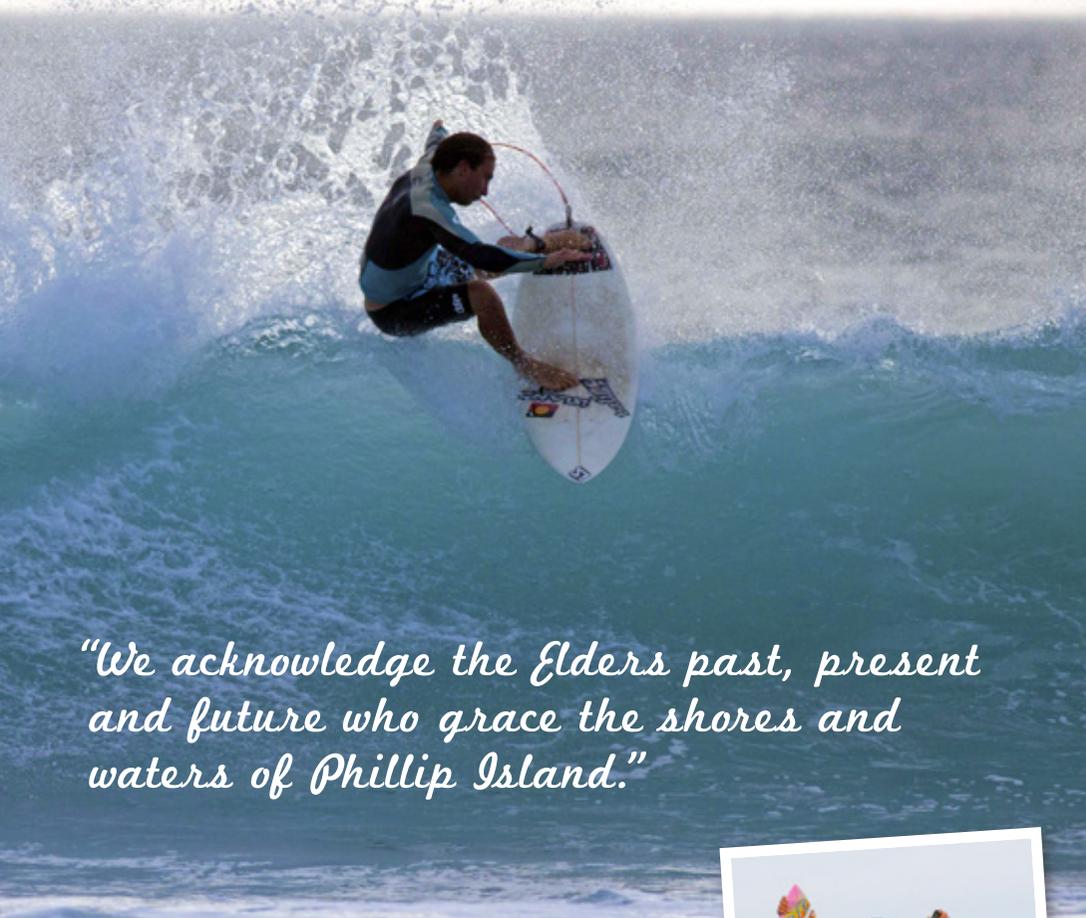
National Surfing Reserve

Contents

Foreword	2
Boonwurrung / Bunurong Country	4
Story of an Island	5
Nature Island	6
Surf Life Saving	8
The Laid Back Surfing Life	10
The Board Riding Club	14
Island Comps	16
Surfing Stars	17
Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve	18
Woolamai	20
Smiths	22
Summerland	24
Cat Bay	26
Our Story	28
Acknowledgements	28
Sponsors	28



Boon wurrung/Bunurong Country



"We acknowledge the Elders past, present and future who grace the shores and waters of Phillip Island."



Wominjeka Boon wurrung barerarerungar

Welcome to Boon Wurrung Country

The traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung extend from the Werribee River through inner Melbourne, along the Mornington Peninsula and South West Gippsland coasts to Wilsons Promontory and as far inland as Dandenong.

Our creator spirit is Bunjil the wedge tail eagle. Bunjil taught the Boonwurrung to always welcome guests but required promises of our visitors/guests: not to harm the children of Bunjil or the land of the Bunjil, and in return you will have safe passage.

The Boonwurrung Country covered the land along the coast starting from the Werribee River, Inner Melbourne as far inland as Dandenong along the Mornington Peninsula, Western Port Bay, Phillip Island all the way down to Wilsons Promontory.

The Boonwurrung consisted of six clans, known as the Yallukit Weelarn, Ngaruk Willarn, Mayune Baluk, Boonwurrung Baluk, Yownergerra and the Yallock Balluk. Other Kulin tribes visiting the country of the Boonwurrung were required to speak the language of the Boonwurrung. This is explained as the spiritual base to the Boonwurrung Country.

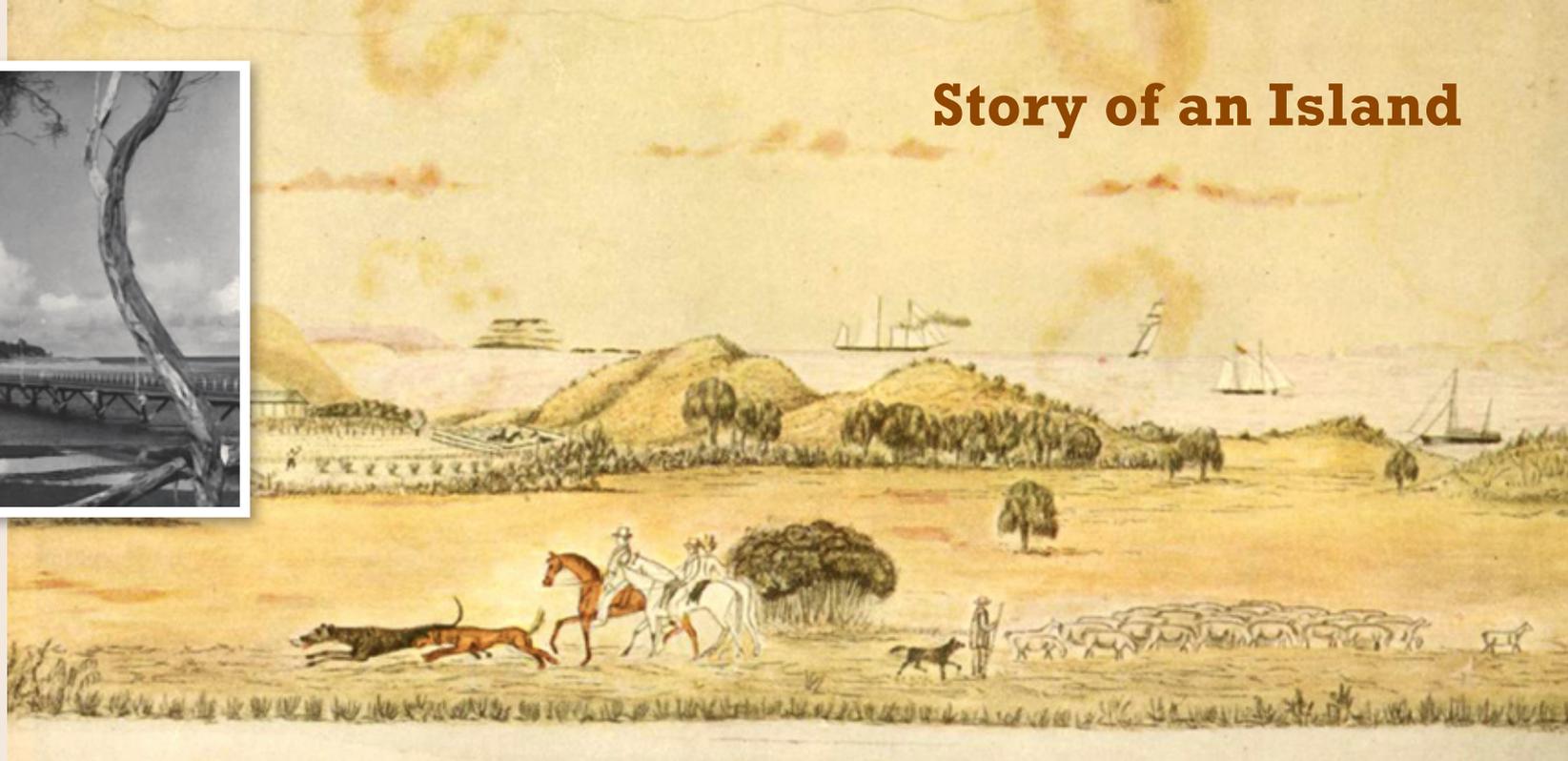
Left: Jordie Campbell, five times Victorian Indigenous surfing champ often tackles the Island's waves. Photo: Steve Parker

Bottom left: Surfing's Aboriginal spirit is captured in the board art of local surfer Steve Parker.

Below: Local artwork by Steve Ulula Parker from Boon Wurrung, Yorta Yorta Erub descent.



Story of an Island



Top Left: The first bridge to Phillip Island was completed in 1939. Image: The Rose Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Left: Summerland Beach 1934. Photo: Museum of Victoria

Above: Sketch of Head-Station of W.+J. McHaffie of Phillip Island, by W.F.E. Liardet, 1973 bequest to the Ian Potter Museum of Art, University of Melbourne.

George Bass rowed down Australia's east coast in 1798 in a whaleboat and named Cape Woolamai 'Snapper Head' as he thought the cape looked like a snapper fish head and Woolamai (wolomi) meant snapper in the language of the Eora Tribe around Sydney. In 1801, Lt Grant entered and named the bay of 'Western Port' as it was the western-most port he had seen.

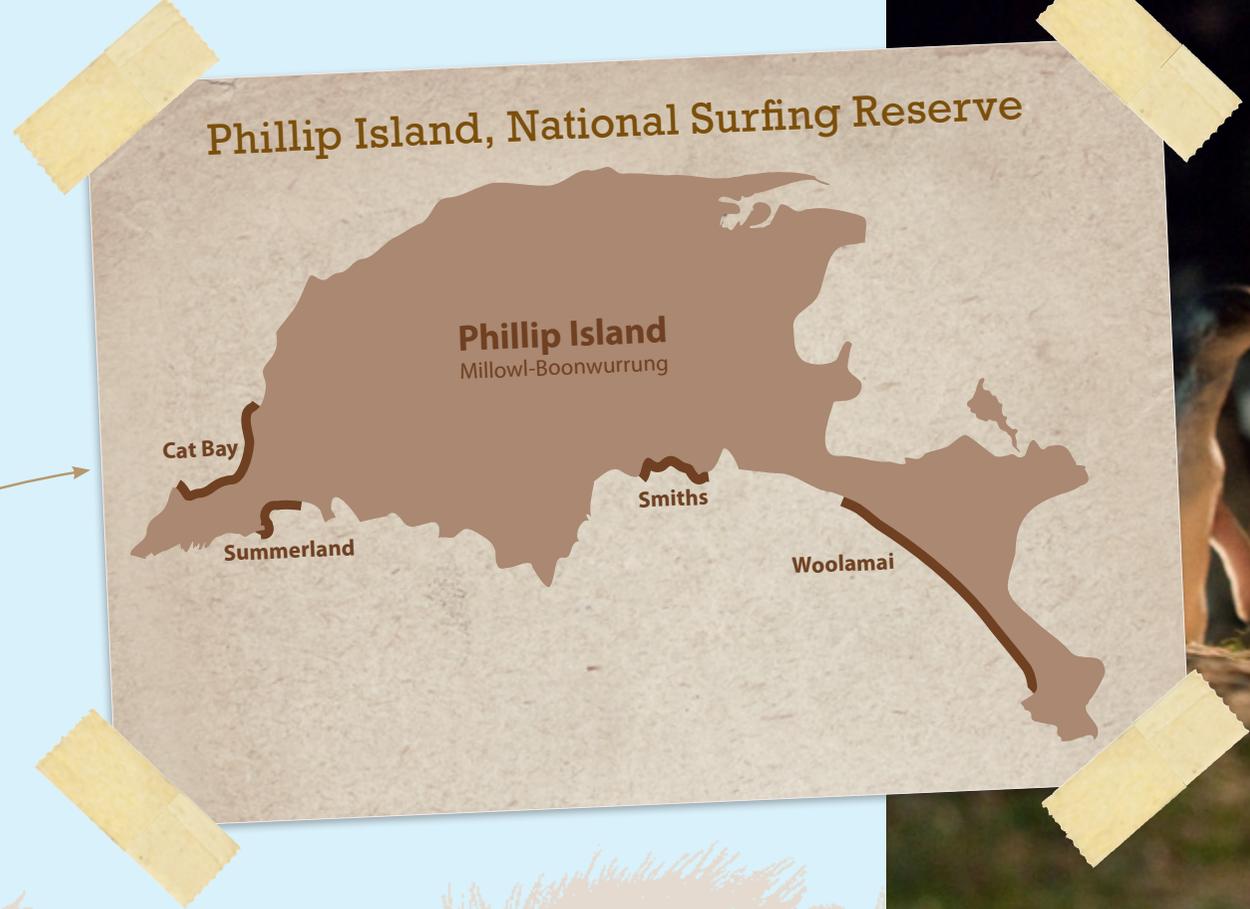
Settlers arrived in the 1840s and cleared the land for farming. The rugged coast claimed many ships and wrecks are dotted around the shore. In the early 1900s, the Island became a holiday mecca with visitors arriving by ferry to enjoy the many guesthouses and beaches and to watch Little (Fairy) Penguins by torchlight. The Island's magnificent beaches were an instant attraction as bathers and early surfers took to the beaches at Cowes and Summerland – both areas were already in the sights of property developers.

The first bridge was built in 1939, opening up the eastern end of Phillip Island where it links the mainland at San Remo. This encouraged the next wave of visitors to arrive.

The pace of Island life changed when the bridge was built. In the 1950s and 60s, farmland began to be subdivided and rough and ready housing estates sprung up across the Island. Roads made more of the coast accessible and the intrepid first surfers began to discover new breaks.

Over the following decades, the Island saw many changes as more and more people discovered its beauty and superb waves.

Nature Island



Phillip Island is a nature and wildlife haven with over 100 kilometres of spectacular coastline, large tracts of woodland and wetland and abundant wildlife.

For thousands of years, colonies of Little Penguins, Short-tailed Shearwaters, Australian Fur Seals, dolphins and over a hundred species of birds have lived on and around the Island – and still do to this day.

Island residents have always valued the environment and many forward-thinking locals donated land for wildlife and nature conservation. Surfers are instinctive nature lovers and have always appreciated the natural environment that is the source of their sport and passion.

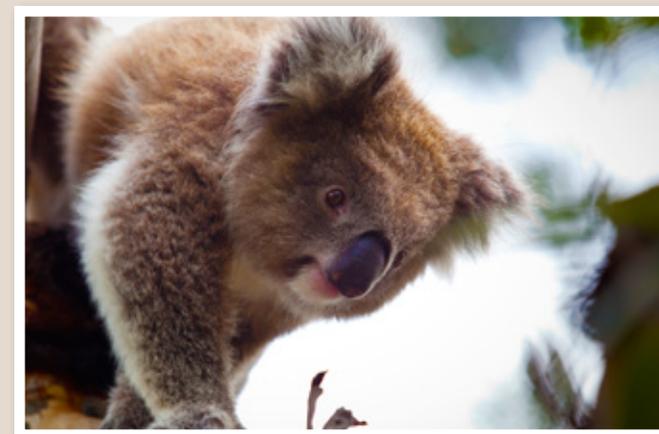
Phillip Island Nature Parks was formed in 1996 to manage over 1,805 hectares of Crown Land on Phillip Island including much of the coastline and beaches. The Nature Parks is a not for profit organisation and its rangers and researchers care for the Nature Parks which contains significant vegetation communities and populations of Little Penguins, Hooded Plovers, Short-tailed Shearwaters, international migratory birds and key mammal species including koalas and Australian Fur Seals.

The beach areas within the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve are within the Phillip Island Nature Parks.

Since the Nature Parks was formed in 1996, many projects to enhance beach environments, access and safety have been undertaken to ensure that, in conjunction with our community and visitors, our coast remains protected for generations to come.



Above: Little Penguins nest on the Summerland Peninsula.
Top right: Australian Fur Seals breed off Phillip Island's coast.
Right: Phillip Island supports a protected population of koalas.
Left: Nature Parks ranger, Graeme Burgan talks to the surfers of the future.
All photos on this page Phillip Island Nature Parks.



Surf Life Saving



Above: Surf rescue boats are not just a men's sport, here the Woolamai Beach SLSC female crew take to the waves. Photo: Ivan Webb, WBSLSC.

Right: The Woolamai Beach SLSC proudly display the club colours in a march past at a competition in the late 1960s. Photo: Graeme Clausen.

With the influx of tourists in the 1920s, two locals were employed as lifesavers at the sea baths in Cowes. The Phillip Island Royal Life Saving Club was formed by Neil Hamilton in 1929 and disbanded in 1964.

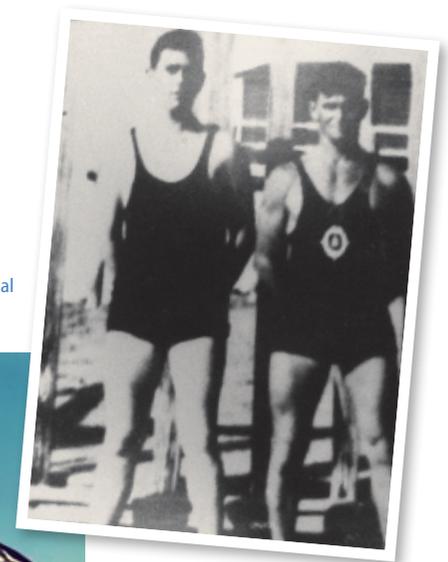
In 1959, three lifesavers from Victoria's west coast came to Phillip Island with a dream of establishing a Surf Life Saving Club. They toured the Island's south coast and were taken to Woolamai beach which had just been opened up to vehicular access due to the establishment of the Woolamai Waters housing estate. Before vehicle access, intrepid body surfers travelled to the area by tractor with local farmer Harry Cleeland.

In June 1959 the group wrote to the local Council about their chosen location for the Club. Their letter ended: "desolate and barren, no electricity, water supply or camping ground but one day Woolamai could be made into something good."

A meeting between Club Members, Council and Surf Live Saving Victoria was held at Cowes in July 1959 and the Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club was formed. A Nissen Hut was purchased from a Migrant Camp at Royal Park in Melbourne and set up at Woolamai Beach to serve as a clubhouse.

Right: An image of the first lifesavers at Cowes Baths in the early 1920s.

Photo: Phillip Island Historical Society.



Club patrols started in December 1959 and the first Surf Carnival was held in December 1960. The Club competed in surf boat competitions and in 1963 Woolamai hosted the first Surf Board Carnival run by the Surf Life Saving Association in Victoria. In the same year the Club also started classes for local children and visitors to learn how to swim. This Nippers program still continues today.

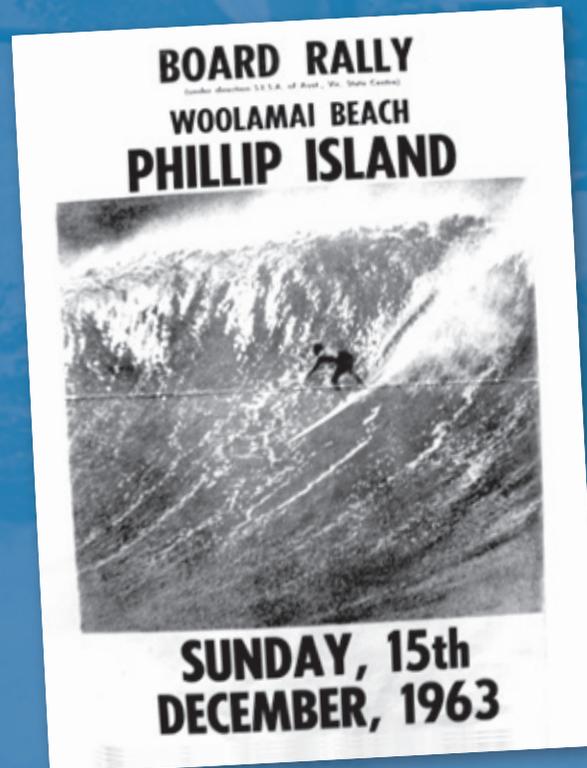
The old Nissen Hut, where many memories were made, was replaced by a new clubhouse in 1971. This building was superseded by the current clubhouse, designed by architect Gregory Burgess, which was awarded the Victorian Community Facility Design Award for its design and innovation in 2002.

In 1980 Woolamai was the first Victorian Surf Club to open up to female members with four girls obtaining their Surf Bronze Medallion.

In 2009, Club member Trevor Clauscen achieved the very significant milestone of 50 years of continuous patrols. The Club also celebrated '50 years on Patrol' with the total number of lives saved at 2576 and growing every year...

"As a member of the Woolamai Beach S.L.S.C. for over 50 years I have surfed Woolamai as a body surfer, on a long board, a knee board, a wave rider and as a Sweep of a Surf Boat in competition - and for fun. These days I have to pick my day, carefully, but the excitement and challenges remain."

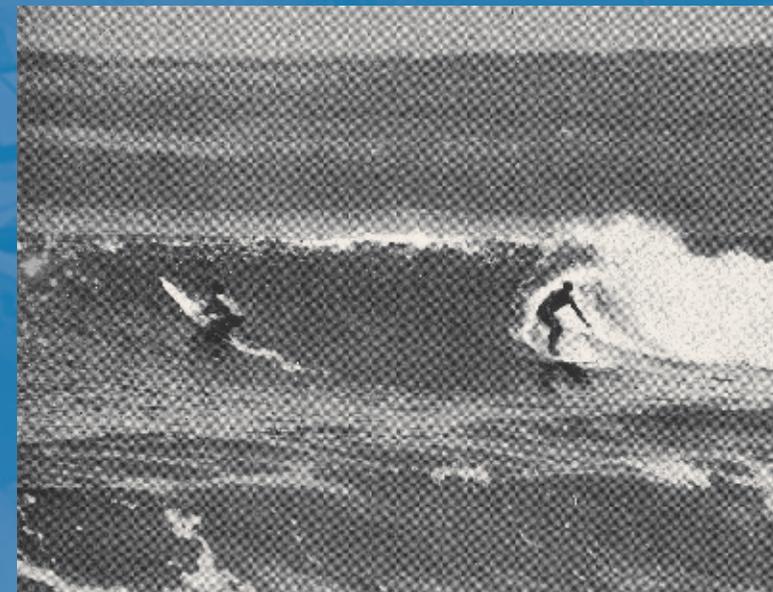
Trevor Clauscen - lifesaver of over 50 years



Right: Surf carnival poster, 1963, Phillip Island Board Riders Club.

Far right: Flynn's was one of the last breaks to be discovered and surfed in Cat Bay. Dave Fincher at Flynn's early 1960s.

Photo: Ian Wilson.



The Laid Back Surfing Life – Early years to now



Riding the waves came early on Phillip Island. Back in the 1920s, visitors arrived at Cowes via ferry and stayed at the many guesthouses.

'Dogga' Luke at Woolamai 1962, Dogga is one of the Island's pioneering surfers.
Photo: Ian Wilson

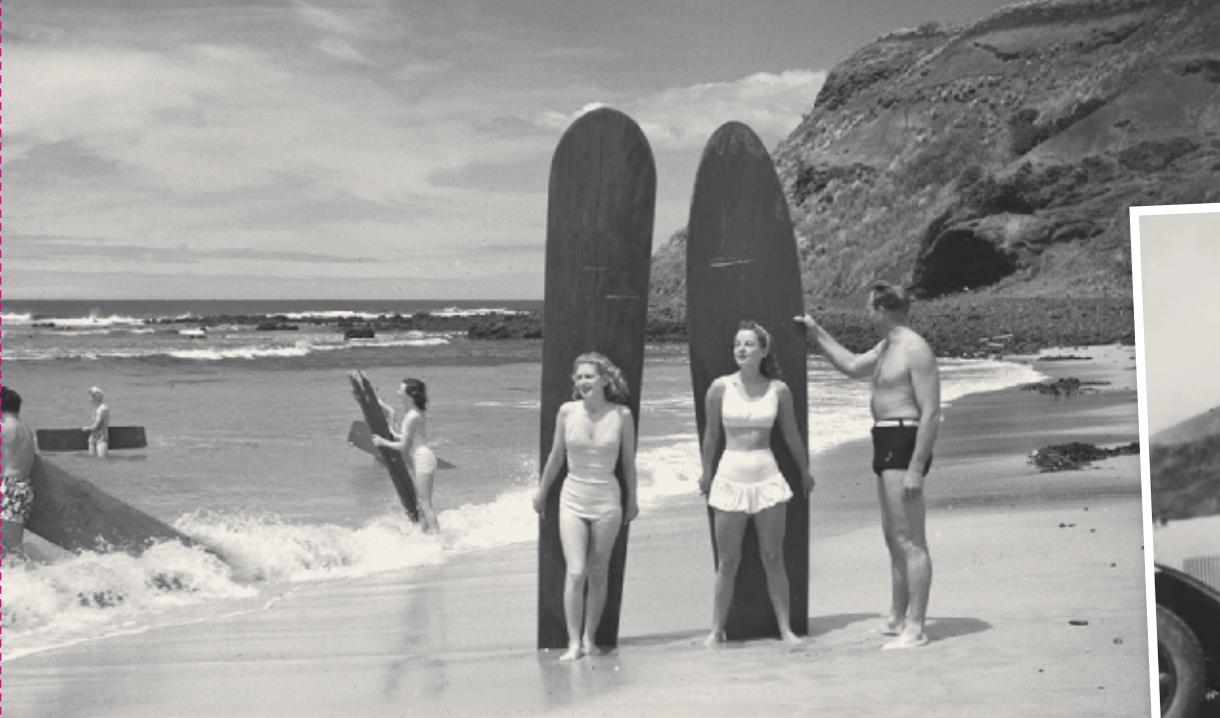
Summerland Beach was the site of the beginning of surfing on Phillip Island in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Bodysurfing was a popular sport, especially at Summerland Beach where the guesthouse owners hired out early forms of wooden, spoon-shaped boards to holidaymakers. The Sambell family and patrons at the guesthouse used the steam-bent timber boards to 'surf' the waves. The boards were kept in a surf-hut especially constructed for the purpose made out of tea tree with a thatched roof of reeds from nearby Swan Lake. Very few of these boards remain intact today.

It was the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne that changed the nation's surfing scene. Americans brought malibus to the waves and, after seeing the boards in action, surf life savers and body surfers wanted to ride them as well.

Guys such as Dennis Harris, John and Ian Merry began stand-up surfing at Summerland and Cat Bay. They did not have much success at Cat Bay due to the size of the boards and the conditions at low tide. Dennis Harris was innovative in designing and producing the first modern foam and fiberglass surfboards on Phillip Island.

The next wave of the Island's intrepid surf pioneers was a mixture of Melbourne and local crew. Guys like Yardo, Johnson, Dogga (Graham) Luke, Dave Fincher, Terry and Bob Hosking, Jim Howard and Terry Klemm started to surf Woolamai. The Melbourne crew would hitchhike to the Island and sleep overnight in the Nissen Hut at Woolamai, often using the boards that had been left inside by the lifesavers.

In the 1970s surfing on Phillip Island really started to make an impact to the social fabric of the community. It was often the surfers and some fishermen that helped keep the takeaway food shops and pubs going over winter.



Surfing became a profession and an obsession and many guys moved to the Island to be closer to the waves. They'd find work to supplement their passion, renting old farmhouses for a few dollars a week and just living on brown rice, beer and surfing. The new influx of athletes was also enjoyed by local footy teams that recruited this young fit crew.

Many surfer tradesmen employed apprentices who surfed - that way they could 'sneak' in a surf during the day when conditions were good - then do overtime to complete their job later! It's a popular saying that: if you need a tradesman on the Island, go to Woolamai car park when the surf is on!

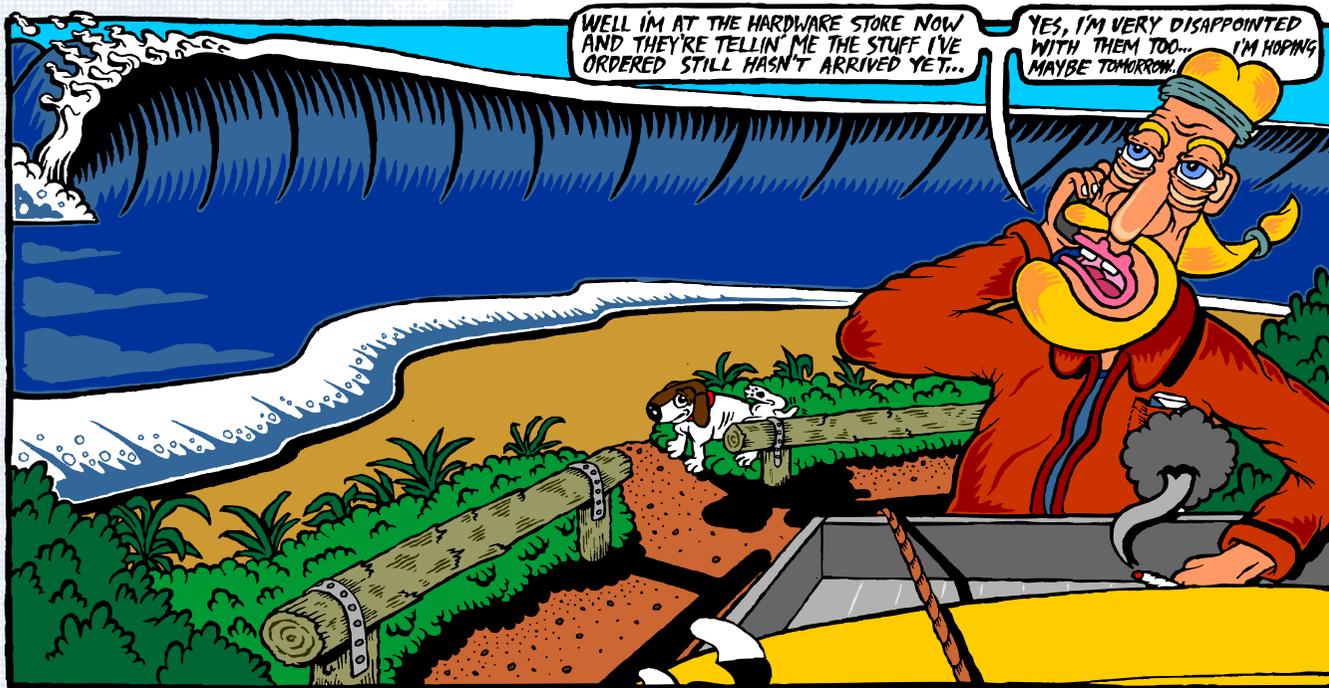
Originally the boards came from Sydney, but then guys started to use Melbourne-based shapers like Terry Klemm (Klemm Bell). Matt Ryan and Tommy Tyrell started making boards in their backyard in the late 1960s to have something to surf on. Things got serious when an engineering workshop in Cowes came up for rent. They paid \$17 a week rent and started making and selling boards (the shop was often closed when the surf was up). It was the start of a surf industry with surf shops opening across the Island. Many legendary shapers have and still work under current Island brands such as Island Surfboards, Full Circle, Islantis and Outereef.



Above: Arriving for a surf at Summerland Beach in 1928. Roy Newman is holding the boards with May Newman and the Sambell girls. Photo: Merry family.

Top left: Early stand-up surfboards on Summerland Beach 1949. Victorian Railways Collection, State Library of Victoria.

Left: Dennis Harris with the first board he made on Phillip Island in the late 1950s. Photo: Graeme Burgan.



ALOHA · BARRY WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER © URL · 11

The transition from long to short boards was rapid, starting in the late 1960s and transforming the surfing scene. As boards evolved, new breaks were discovered as surfers 'bush bashed' into places like Barry's Beach to find a wave. Access to some of the south coast beaches was difficult up until the middle to late 1980s and surfers often had to slide down muddy embankments and cliffs in winter and there was no formal infrastructure for parking or toilets. Money from the first Motorcycle Grand Prix in 1989 allowed the local Shire to develop access points and infrastructure at Ocean Reach, Surfies Point and Forrest Caves. Since then, Phillip Island Nature Parks (the current land manager) has improved infrastructure at these highly used beaches.

"It used to be called 'Blokies Island' because in the winter there'd be a lot of guys surfing and not too many women around. That's pretty much how it got its reputation. But now all the guys that came to surf have eventually settled and had families. Now their kids are surfing - it's a hotbed of surfing talent."

Matt Ryan – Co-founder Island Surf Boards

Above: Aloha Barry cartoons sum up Island surfing life, by Darren 'Curl' Marks.

Right strip: 'A good bottom turn is needed to set up for a barrel at Express Point.' – Matt Ryan. Photo: David Rogerson.

Two still shots from the movie A Look Back, a history of the Phillip Island Boardriders Club.





Left: The original Nissen Hut, home of the Woolamai Beach SLSC in the late 1960s. Photo: Graeme Clausen

Above: The old road along the top of the beach into the clubhouse car park often became clogged with sand and difficult to navigate – early 1970s. Photo: Graeme Clausen

"I remember when I was about 15 or 16 the older guys would pick us up from our homes in Melbourne and bring us down the Island to surf. They always promised our parents they would look after us but actually we were their "apprentices" and ran errands for them like getting their hamburgers from Mrs B's in San Remo. That was our payment for getting a lift to the Island."

Paul (Smithy) Smith – Island surfer

"During the 1970s, you were often driving around looking for someone to surf with. There were no mobile phones – you'd just drive around to building sites looking for people. There were no wetsuits and footy jumpers actually made you colder! Our leg ropes were nylon cord with surgical rubber and string, they'd slow the impact with your board down - before they nearly ripped your leg off!"

Stephen (Psycho) Fullarton – Island surfer

The Board Riding Club



Left: 'Bottleneck Beach', on the Island's north shore, was a favorite place to gather after contests for a social get together – early 1970s
Photo: Zena Archibald PIBC

Below left: Dave Fincher and Barton Lynch at the official opening of the Board Riders Club Rooms in 1993.

Below: An early contest poster circa 1969. 'Check the surf at Woolamai'.
Courtesy Geoff Owens PIBC.



In the summer of 1963, a group of local surfers got together at the Isle of Wight Hotel in Cowes and the Phillip Island Board Riders Club (PIBC) was established, making it one of the oldest continuous board riders clubs in Australia. In those days, most members lived in Melbourne and travelled to the Island to surf after work or on weekends. Today, over 90% of members live on Phillip Island.

The Board Riders Club held their first contest at 'Foots' just off the coast of Phillip Island at San Remo and continue to run contests around the Island's beaches. Over the years the Club has had many State champions, National champions and has always had a number of team representatives in the Victorian Team at the National Titles (Aussie Titles). The Club boasts World Kneeboard Champion Neil Luke, Top 44 WCT surfer Glyndyn Ringrose, Simon McShane (won the ACC in the 1990s) and Women's Champion Nikki Van Dijk.

It was not only surfing, the Club's social life was pretty hectic too. After contests, 'beers' were held at a place called Bottle Neck Beach on the Island's calm north shore – this was the site of many a social gathering throughout the 1980s. The formal balls were also legendary featuring bands like Daddy Cool, Little River Band, Skyhooks (Graeme 'Shirley' Strachan was a member), Ariel, Jo Jo Zep and the Falcons, Real Life, Austin Tayshus and Kids In The Kitchen.

These fundraisers and some serious 1980s bank interest earned from the sale of a Club property allowed the Club to build their own Clubhouse at West Woolamai. The clubhouse was built with volunteer labor starting in 1990 and was opened in 1993 by world champion surfer Barton Lynch.

The Club has 12 life members and five Hall Of Fame members including Mal Gregson, John Mason, Garry (Dozza) Dorrington, Steve Smart and Vaughn Platt. In the mid 90s club legend Mal Gregson received the Duke Kahanamoku award and boardclub life member Craig Clark received a similar award from Surfing Australia in the late 1990s.

The Boardriders 'Supergrom Program' was created by Bob Matthews and it allowed the Island's children to have an opportunity to learn to surf in a safe environment.

The Club received a Hall Of Fame innovation award for their Supergrom Program in 1994 and was inducted into Surfing Australia's Hall of Fame with the Premier Club Award in 1999.

2013 not only marks the year of the declaration of Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve but also the 50th anniversary of Phillip Island Board Riders Club.

"The Club's super grommet contests (under 13s) are something to enjoy with over 60 kids competing against the waves and their mates. I love the comments – one day an 8-year-old surfing 1-foot waves said: "Smithy did ya see my fully sick air re-entry and barrel?" I of course said yeah."

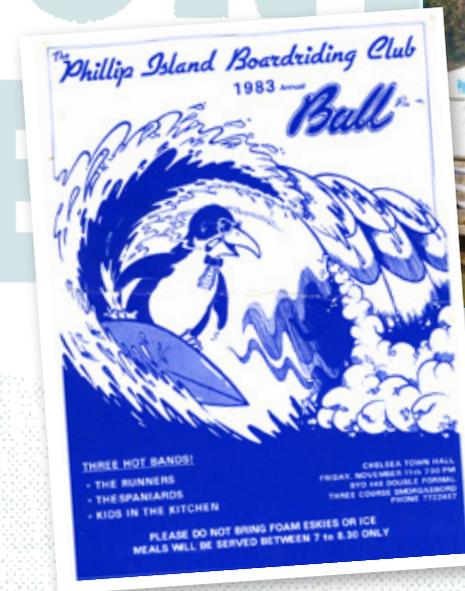
Paul Smith – Early Island surfer.

"The Club introduced many hundreds of people – boys and girls to surfing and it's a small community group of like-minded people. It's a competitive outlet that is lots of fun and family-friendly."

Zena Archibald – Club President 2013

"When the surf was bad, we would head down to Bottleneck for a 'turn' with lots of beer."

Chris Rope Rogers



Far left: Laurie Thompson's board collection. Photo: Laurie Thompson.

Left: PIBC presentation nights are legendary and so are the posters. Courtesy: PIBC

Above: Another contest day with Woolamai pumping. Phillip Island Nature Parks provide the perfect boardwalks and landings for the judging tents to help protect the fragile dune system.

Island Comps



Phillip Island's beaches and premier beach breaks have provided the venue for a rich competitive surfing history. Since the late 1950s, surfers competed in surf life saving carnivals and the Board Riders brought new events in the early 1960s. Since then, other world-class, competitive events have followed.

In 1969, the Phillip Island Board Riders Club held what is believed to be the first pro contest in Australia. The \$100 first prize was won by Charlie Bartlett from Victoria's west coast. The event was run again in 1970 with the prize money doubling to \$200 and Sydney surfer Grant (Dappa) Oliver was the winner.

The 'Alan Oke Memorial Contests' were held between 1976 – 1986 in memory of an early Board Riders Club president whose life had been tragically cut short. This event was before the early pro tour, so it attracted a high calibre of competitors – both Australian and international.

Future world champs such as Wayne (Rabbit) Bartholemew and Shaun Thomson surfed in these events. Surfers such as Reno Abellira, Rory Russell, Larry Bertleman, Gerry Lopez, Michael Peterson, Mark Warren, Ian Cairns and Cheyne Horan also surfed in this contest which ran prior to the Bells Beach Easter Classic.



The Island also hosted an Australian Championship Circuit (ACC) event; the Phillip Island Extravaganza and The Roxy Six-Star Event which ran for five years in the 2000s and featured world class women surfers.

In 2002, the World Juniors were held at the Island with future world champs Joel Parkinson and Mick Fanning winning first and second place.

In 2005 the annual Bells Beach Easter World Australian Surfing Professionals event was relocated to Cape Woolamai due to a lack of swell at Bells Beach and the abundance of A-frame breaks to choose from. The world's top 44 surfers including world champs Kelly Slater, Andy Irons, Mark Occhilupo and CJ Hopgood competed with the eventual winner being Luke Munro.

From the mid 2000s to today, the Island's breaks have hosted The World Kneeboard Titles, Australian Open Men's and Women's Titles, The Australian Junior Longboard Titles, numerous Pro Junior events, National Titles, State Rounds and School Surfing events and the inaugural Phillip Island Pro QS1000 in 2017. Most of these competitions were held within the surf breaks of the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve.

Main image: A number of surfers have had a long and successful amateur career at the top. John Mason was one of the first. Photo: Geoff Owens, PIBC.

Top: The Alan Oke memorial contest drew the best surfers in the world to Phillip Island in the 1970s. Photo: Courtesy Geoff Owens, PIBC.

Top right: Neil Luke charging Express Point early 1980s Photo: Graeme Burgan.



Surfing Stars

The Island has produced some elite international level surfers.

These include World Kneeboard Open Champ Neil Luke, Top 44 WCT surfer Glyndyn Ringrose, World Junior Female Nikki Van Dijk and World Kneeboarding Champion Jethro Cooney.

Phillip Island is home to Victoria's only Surfing Academy at Newhaven College and is training the stars and surfing professionals of the future.

New Waves

The first National Surfing Reserve Surfing Teams Challenge was held in 2014 and this community event has become a favourite on Phillip Island's surfing calendar.

The competition was the brainchild of Geoff Owens and the contest's team format showcases different surfing styles and ages allowing everyone to take part in the exciting competition.

Since the sad loss of Island legend Dave Fincher in 2014, the following teams have their names on the Dave Fincher Memorial Trophy:

- 2014 – Pirates Blue Captained by John Mason
- 2015 – Island Surfboards Captained by Sandy Ryan
- 2016 – Wave Pinchers Captained by Walter Hiatt
- 2017 – Archysurf Captained by Luke Archibald



Top left: World Junior Champion Nikki Van Dijk. Photo: Steve Robertson

Top middle: Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve Working Group members at the 2013 launch.

Top right: Newhaven College's Surf Academy students

Bottom left: Glyndyn Ringrose another quality Island surfer. Photo: Andy Biddington

Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve

Phillip Island is a unique, world-class destination with a rich surfing history and a wave for all kinds of weather and abilities. Some breaks are significant because of the exceptional waves and others for their history and importance in providing safe breaks for teaching the surfers of the future. Phillip Island is also special for its Aboriginal and natural values and all surfers must play a role in protecting these.

Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve comprises four breaks

Woolamai – Because of its ever changing world-class beach breaks

Smiths Beach – Includes the Island's premier barrelling reef break 'Express Point' and the mellower waves of Smiths Beach and YCW Beach where so many grommets have experienced their first wave

Summerland – The historical birthplace of surfing on Phillip Island, dating back to the 1920s. Its iconic reef break works in the largest of swells.

Cat Bay – High quality left and right hand reef breaks that allow surfing in big swells when the south-facing Island Beaches have onshore winds.



Island

Smiths

Woolamai



Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve was declared on Saturday 16 March 2013 for the surfers of yesterday, today and tomorrow...

Cape Woolamai



'Woolamai' is a unique stretch of beach with numerous quality beach breaks along the stretch of coast from Magic Lands to Forrest Caves. Sand overlaying a shallow rock reef and the seasonal winds and currents create crescent-shaped sandbanks that are perfect for surfing.

The breaks

Woolamai provides ideal surfing conditions when the swell is 0.5 to 2.0 metres with a south-east to north west wind.

There are usually defined banks in the following areas:

Magic Lands

Beach break at the eastern end of Woolamai beach with right and left breaks. This section of Cape Woolamai beach is tucked in the corner protected from the east to south-east sea breezes making it a popular location for afternoon summer surfs.

Second car park or Clubhouse

This beach break is opposite the Woolamai Beach Surf Life Saving Club and has right and left breaks.

First car park or Anzacs

Opposite the first car park at Woolamai, this beach break has right and left breaks.

Aussie Track

This beach break is 150 metres east of the Colonnades/Ocean Reach access point and has right and left breaks.

Ocean Reach or Airport Reef

Opposite the access stairs to the Colonnades/Ocean Reach beach, this beach break has right and left breaks.

Forrest Caves

Opposite the Forrest Caves car park with right and left breaks.



"Woolamai is my favourite wave always and forever. It's the best beach break in the world and I've seen a lot of them. It's just the set up – the banks. If Woolamai and all the banks are working, you can really spread out – it goes from Magiclands to the Boardriders Club and that's a lot of beach mate. It's very Australian mate – we like our space!"

Dogga [Graham] Luke



Previous page: When it's on there can be 20 quality 'a-frames' at Woolamai. Photo: Foons Photography

Left: Gary Judd ripping up Woolamai in the late 1970s. Photo: Dave Rogerson

Top right: Victorian Open Champion Carl Wright getting some air at Magic Lands. Photo: Phil Wright

Smiths





This section of coast includes the best big wave barrelling reef break on Phillip Island, Express Point. Express provides the most challenging, barrelling wave on the Island and works in conditions with two metre or greater swell, at half to high tide with a north to north west wind.

Opposite: Pulling deep into a barrel requires skill and daring. Here Sandy Ryan follows in his dad's footsteps at Express Point. Photo: Mick Burnside.

Above: Matt Ryan was exploring the depths of Express Point long before most surfers. Late 1970s. Photo: Dave Rogerson.

Right: Another barrel hunter is Steve Demos Photo: Ted Granbeau.

Far Right: Groms enjoy the training sessions at Beachcomber (YCW) Beach on club contest days. Photo: Zena Archibald PIBC.

Smiths Beach and Beachcomber Beach are used by learner schools, grommets learning to surf and the stars of tomorrow polishing their manoeuvres, because there are consistent waves in most conditions with a flat sand bottom in their sheltered small bays.

The breaks

Express Point

This right-only reef break works on a mid to high tide and is at its best in autumn and winter.

Smiths Beach

This beach break has right and left beach breaks and works on all tides.

Beachcomber Beach or YCW

A right-only beach break that works on a low to mid tide.

"It's a good hollow wave. I surf out there all the time and so do a lot of my friends. It's a social get together in a way. We just hang out and talk between sets and then a wave comes and you potentially get one of the best waves of your life. It's special."

Sandy Ryan – Island Surfer about Express

"It wasn't until the 1970s that crew really started to give Express a nudge."

Steve Demos – Island Surfer



Summerland





Summerland Beach is the birthplace of surfing on Phillip Island dating back to the 1920s and is also home to the world-famous Penguin Parade.

Summerland has been surfed since the equipment development allowed it. The point is ideally suited to longer boards and mals. The reef break to the western end of Summerland Beach, known as 'Centre-Break' is a quality low tide wave that was originally bodysurfed and then became a favourite with modern short board surfers.

Summerland has two reef breaks that work in the wintery conditions of big swells, high tides and strong north west to south west winds – when other Phillip Island waves are blown out.

The breaks

Both of these right reef breaks require a 2-metre plus swell and a north to westerly wind:

Centre Break

Just to the east of the Penguin Parade viewing area.

Summerland's Point

Directly in front of the Penguin Parade viewing area.

"Dick Plant, Jack Webster and Bert West asked the surfers to keep surfing to entertain the crowd before the penguins came in and the 'Miss Summerland beach contest was always a hit."

Dennis Harris – manager of Summerland guesthouse and board hire 1961–62

"The family often sheltered from winds in the sand dunes just as the Aborigines had done in our early history."

Julie Box – early Summerland visitor

"Noel Nicol who ran the Nobbies Tea Rooms for eight years body surfed at Summerland in the 1950s and 60s with other members of the Harris family. The girls were among the early boogie board users at Summerland in the 1960s."

Julie Box

Opposite: Summerland on a good day can be a fun wave, but it's rare to get a 'classic' day. Photo Graeme Burgan.

Above left: Summerland point can be a long ride. Andrew Burgan lining up the middle section 2001. Photo Graeme Burgan

Above: Surf planers were all the go here in the 1930s and 1940s. Photo State Library of Victoria.

Above right: the Sambell family enjoying a day at Summerland 1929 Photo courtesy of the Merry family collection.

Cat Bay



The Cat Bay area is home to numerous reef breaks of varying standards with Flynn's Reef and Right Point being the stand out breaks. The area provides surfable conditions mainly during summer when the swell is greater than 2-metres and there is a south to east wind. With these conditions this is one of only a few locations in Victoria that provides high quality surfable waves and this area is popular for surfing competitions.

The breaks

Cat Bay is home to numerous reef breaks of varying standards with Flynn's Reef being the stand out.

The Bombe

This sand bar breaks left and works well at low to mid tide in 2 metre plus swells.

Left Point

This point break has a left that also works well at low to mid tide.

The Hump

A reef break that breaks right and left and works well at low to mid tide in big swells.

Shelley Beach

This reef break at the bottom of Cat Bay has a right and left that work well at mid to high tide in a moderate to big swell any time of the year.

Right Point

This left breaking reef works well on all tides.

Flynn's Reef

This right breaking reef break works well on all tides.



"Dave (Fincher) and I paddled out to The Bombe one day and it was the time before legropes and I lost my board and it went about half a mile away from me and all you're thinking of is when's your leg gonna get ripped off (by a shark)!"

Dogga [Graeme] Luke - early Island surfer

"Surfing is a commune with nature"

Dave Fincher - early Island surfer

"I had a Vanguard ute with a canopy on the top with a rolled up bed and my board on top. There was a tea tree 'room' at Cat Bay and later everyone camped."

Dave Fincher



Opposite: Flynn's can be a challenging wave, the middle section is always there for a re-entry manoeuvre.
Photo: Jules Elliott.

Left: Cat Bay has many breaks but the best right hander is Flynn's.
Photo: Jules Elliott.

Above: Someone has to venture out to a new spot for the first time. At Right Point this was Dave Fincher 1962.
Photo: Ian Wilson.

Our Story

It all started in December 2011. Phillip Island Nature Parks CEO, Matthew Jackson, convened a meeting in the Board Room at the Penguin Parade to moot the idea of Phillip Island becoming a National Surfing Reserve. We were all passionate about surfing, but unsure about what a National Surfing Reserve really was. Professor Andy Short from NSR came along and presented all the information we needed. The people around the table unanimously agreed to pursue a National Surfing Reserve for Phillip Island. Our journey had begun.

A public notice in the local paper invited interested community members to be involved and at our second meeting, we passionately thrashed out which exact area we would like to nominate for the Phillip Island Reserve. The group wanted to declare the whole island a National Surfing Reserve, but with further consideration, the coastline needed to be narrowed down to the top few breaks.

So, we thought it best to evaluate each proposed area against NSR's three criteria:

- 1 **Wave quality**
- 2 **A place considered sacred by the local and national surfing community**
- 3 **Long term usage of the beach and wave environment**

We also wanted to consider the environmental and cultural significance of each site.

It came down to four nominated areas: Woolamai, Smiths Beach, Summerland and Cat Bay. All four sites have unique and special reasons to be included in the reserve and they all have fantastic waves in a variety of conditions and hold special memories for all surfers who have enjoyed the waves.

In June 2011, we nervously presented our concept to the Phillip Island surfing community. Everyone agreed to support our concept and Brad Farmer said: 'go for it'. Over the next ten months, we met regularly, gathering information about the Reserve and preparing for the official launch.

Now we can say 'we did it' – our work has paid off. We hope that Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve will inspire visitors, residents and surfers past, present and future to Respect, Preserve and Share this very special island of ours that is blessed with magic waves and a pristine environment. The stuff surfers' dreams are made of...

The launch day was one that will live on in our hearts forever and, five years on, the Reserve is still going strong. The Working Group hosts the annual Surfing Teams Challenge where surfers of all ages and abilities come together. The Group has also established and maintained a surfing archive documenting the history of surfing on Phillip Island and the Surfing Reserve's journey. We are working with Nature Parks rangers to remove marram grass and restore indigenous vegetation at Cape Woolamai and support the campaign to make Phillip Island plastic bag free.

Community Working Group Founding Members

Steve Parker (Surfing Victoria and Boon Wurrung representative), Geoff Owens and Zena Archibald (Phillip Island Board Riders Club), Derek Hibbert, Eleanor McKay (Bass Coast Shire Council), Peter Merritt (Department Sustainability & Environment), Matthew Jackson, Dr Roz Jessop, Damian Prendergast, Sally O'Neill, Graeme Burgan, Jarvis Weston (all Phillip Island Nature Parks), Prof Andy Short and Brad Farmer (National Surfing Reserves), Cr Phil Wright (Bass Coast Shire Councillor), Paul Smith, Stephen Fullarton (Community), Glyndyn Ringrose & Nikki Van Dijk (Ambassadors).



In memory and honour of our mate Dave Fincher - Phillip Island surfing pioneer who launched the Cat Bay site of Phillip Island Surfing Reserve in 2013.

Phillip Island National
Surfing Reserve

Dedicated 16 March 2013

Share – preserve – protect

*We are part of a fraternity
That makes us what we are
Where gentle off-shore breezes blow
And it's grinding on the bar.*

*The sun has not yet risen
The sky is all aglow
We appear as ghostly shadows
In Mother Nature's show –*

*And we let it take us
Far from the daily grind
Lifted on a southern swell
To a place called peace of mind.*

Dogga [Graham] Luke 2013
Dogga launched the Cat Bay area of the Phillip Island National Surfing Reserve in 2013.

Special thanks to:

Sally O'Neill, Graeme Burgan,
Stephen Fullarton

Graphic design:

Nino Soeradinata (First Edition)
and Kahren Richardson
(Second Edition)

Printing: Monet Press (First
Edition) and Irwins Printing
(Second Edition)



Community Working Group founding members 2013:

Above: Front L-R Sally O'Neill, Graeme Clausen, Stephen Fullarton, Steve Parker, Phil Wright. **Middle L-R** Eleanor McKay, Zena Archibald, Derek Hibbert, Paul Smith. **Back** Graeme Burgan, Damian Prendergast, Geoff Owens
Absent: Peter Merritt, Dr Roz Jessop, Jarvis Weston, Prof Andy Short and Brad Farmer.

Founding Supporters





Share, Respect, Preserve.

National Surfing Reserves recognise iconic sites of cultural and historic significance in Australian surfing. They acknowledge the surfing way of life and link past, present and future generations with our oceans, waves and coastline.



Follow us on Facebook at [Phillipislandnsr](#)