

How to Provide for Surfing as a Legitimate Activity in Regional Plans

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By

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Chapter One: Introduction

The surf is one of God's greatest gifts. The surf is a natural resource which can be exploited by thousands of surfers at any point in time but unlike other natural resources it does not get used up or destroyed it endures through time for future generations.

(Anonymous cited in Pearson, 1979, 102)

The above quote above captures an element of indestructibility of surfing, or more correctly 'surf'. However, today this can be seen as somewhat only one side of the story. The other side is a scene in which globally surf break wave quality, and thus surfing, are under threat from a range of activities in the coastal environment. With this picture in mind I have articulated the following topic question which captures the focus of my research; *"How to provide for surfing as a legitimate activity in regional plans"*.

Researchers Background

There are a number of reasons why I am researching the above question. The initial desire to research the topic, providing for surf surfing, stems from my involvement in surfing, or more correctly body boarding. Growing up in Northland 10 minutes drive away from a quiet surf break bordering a sheep and beef farm, is fundamental to my choice of topic. Normatively, then I am interested in surfing such breaks which have relatively few issues that could detract from my experience of wave riding. Shifting away from such an atypical setting and surfing beaches with poor water quality made me think more critically about surf breaks.

However, it was not until last year that I started exploring further into the realms of surf break protection. An interview I had with a surfer, who mentioned getting sick after numerous surfs from sewage overflows from an under-capacity treatment plant, and who held a range of other concerns regarding the degradation of surf breaks around the country, was also significant in my decision to address providing of surfing as a legitimate activity in regional plans.

When researching academic literature on surfing it became apparent that few works (with the exception of Short & Farmer, 2007; Lazarow, 2007; Nelsen *et al*, 2007; and Scarfe, 2008) addressed or even mentioned, providing for surfing as a recreational activity. This near absence of literature has also provided inspiration to research the topic in question. Finally, on reading the Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) my interest and desire to attempt to work in this void were cemented.

Report Structure

In terms of structure, this report is broken into the following chapters;

- 1 Introduction & background
- 2 Methodology
- 3 Literature review
- 4 The legitimacy of surfing
- 5 Issues and existing tools in New Zealand
- 6 Recognising and providing for surfing: Australian cases
- 7 Possible solutions to provide for surfing in New Zealand
- 8 Conclusions and recommendations

Chapter two introduces and discusses the three specific methodologies used as part of this research; interviewing, discourse analysis and a case study. In terms of the former, ethical considerations are also covered.

Chapter three provides a literature review to set the academic scene of the research and position the report within the existing works relevant. It is important to note that given the relative infant nature of the research topic existing works are limited to a small collection of authors.

Chapter four aims to display the changing legitimacy of surfing to set the context. First the historic legitimacy is established followed by a coverage of the changing views of and on surfing. Second and following setting the historical context I move to address the

contemporary relevance of surfing by focusing on the value of surfing and more specifically surfing trips.

Chapter five moves then to address the issues and the specific 'tools' within New Zealand to recognise and provide for surfing at the Regional Council level. Here the focus is placed on identifying surfer specific concerns regarding wave quality. A shift is then made to address how regions have gone about addressing surfing in their plans and other statutory planning documents.

Chapter six moves to address how surfing, and surf breaks, are recognised provided for in Australia. Australia has been seen as being 'ahead' of New Zealand in recognising iconic surf spots and has the only standing framework world wide under which surf breaks are awarded symbolic and formal recognition. Within this chapter issues are identified with the Australian approach and its limited applicability in New Zealand is addressed.

Chapter seven covers possible solutions to providing for surfing in regional plans. Here the importance of baseline information is addressed alongside the concepts of scheduling, surfing reserves and swell corridors.

Chapter eight concludes the report and provides a list of recommendations on how to provide for surfing in regional plans with a key focus on the scheduling of breaks as areas of significant conservation value or areas with outstanding natural value.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Introduction

The three specific methodologies I have utilised are Foucauldian discourse analysis, for the purpose of identifying the legitimacy of surfing; interviews, with two people who have expressed a range of concerns regarding wave quality which are used throughout this report; and a case study on how the Taranaki Regional Council have addressed surfers concerns. The approaches are described and discussed in detail below.

Discourse Analysis

In order to map and (re)establish the legitimacy of surfing as a recreational activity I intend to draw on the method of discourse analysis. Importantly to avoid confusion the discourse analysis I intend to utilise stems from the Foucauldian strand opposed to the more ideological like approach of discourse analysis which descends from a Marxist critique (Lees, 2004). The Foucauldian approach can be described as a 'method of investigating rules and structures that govern and maintain the production of particular written, oral and visual texts' as apposed to the Marxist one which focuses on binary power relations (Waitt, 2005, 90). Using discourse analysis thus requires one to look not only at what is present in texts but also what is absent.

Discourse analysis is a preferred approach for a number of reasons. Foucauldian discourse analysis is a suited approach as it gives voice to marginalised groups, or those who have been depicted in such a way. Importantly discourse analysis makes explicit such alternative viewpoints which under other approaches can go unheard (Thorpe, 2008). In other words discourse analysis has the potential to add diversity in framing the world not in black in white terms but as a more complex mosaic of interconnected power, language and knowledge (Foucault 1977 cited in Lees, 2004). However discourse analysis' 'requirement' to look deeply into a range of 'texts' can problematically, yet vitally, bring complexity. Discourse analysis requires one to be able to look at a range of sources with a fresh and critical gaze (Waitt, 2008; Waitt, 2005 and Thorpe, 2008). In short the methodological approach of discourse analysis requires one to challenge dominant discursive structures produced in particular (con)texts.

More practically I consider discourse analysis a suitable technique given I have utilised it in a previous study which, in part, looked at surfers. Furthermore the technique has also been applied within academic fields to surfing, and other 'alternative' sports. The existing attempts at using discourse analysis to analyse surfing tend to focus on gender (for instance Waitt, 2008). Moving beyond surfing to skateboarding and windsurfing, sports heavily influenced by an influential on surfing, Wheaton and Beal (2003) look at how ideas of authenticity are challenged in the sports. In a discursive approach Wheaton and Beal (2003) offer an insight into readings and interpretations of various niche media advertisements, in sport specific magazines for instance, which reveal the importance of authenticity in the sports. As one will see below similar tensions exist over the authenticity of surfing (Booth, 2001). I intend to look into a range of 'texts' to identify discursive structures which have illustrated surfing as legitimate or on the contrary 'illegitimate'. Chapter four addresses dominant and alternative discourses of surfing's legitimacy tied together under a narrative history of surfing. Beyond chapter four I depart from discourse analysis to focus on providing for recreational surfing which requires a more analytical and case study based approaches.

Interviewing

I have also conducted semi-structured interviews with two submitters on the proposed NZCPS to gain a deeper understanding into the involvement and the views held by concerned surfers. I have also aimed to utilise interviewing as it sits well with discourse analysis' strong emphasis on looking into multiple sources and forms of 'texts'. Furthermore, the interview technique is one I have employed before and which I understand, in terms of its methodological limitations and ethical implications. However, with this in mind my intention of utilising interviews is not to make broad generalisations but rather gain a deeper insight into one group's/individual's thoughts on providing for surfing.

In terms of ethical considerations, all informants were offered the opportunity to remain anonymous. All gave consent for their individual names and positions to be used as their views were typically publicly available. Interviews, being carried out by telephone, were also conducted in a way in which there was little possibility of harming either the participants or myself. Along with the gaining the informed consent of all participants

each was informed of the intention of the research and sent an information sheet on how interviews were to be conducted. Furthermore, this project has been approved by Massey University Research Ethics and was assessed as being of 'Low Risk' and has been conducted in line with the Massey Ethical Code of Conduct for Involving Human Participants.

Case Study

To provide a deeper insight into providing for surfing in New Zealand a case study of the Taranaki Regional Council's approaches of addressing surfers concerns is included. The Taranaki Region deserved a case study as it is the only example of the recognition and provision for surfing in statutory regional planning documents. In addition the case study is utilised as it provides the only proposed model for the recognition and protection of surf breaks at the regional level that is currently applicable in New Zealand.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter three main methodologies beyond desktop analysis, have been utilised for the purpose of this research. Discourse analysis was chosen for a number of reasons, including that it provides a critical 'lens' on which to reflect on the legitimacy of surfing and in doing so gives voice to those who often go unheard. Interviewing is another chosen technique as it provides added value throughout this research. In terms of ethical considerations interviewing has been approved by Massey University Research Ethics as of 'Low Risk' and all participants were well informed of the purpose of this research and their rights in participating. Meanwhile, the case study technique was employed to provide a deeper assessment of the only existing example of surf breaks being integrated into regional council planning document.

Chapter Three: Literature Review

Introduction

Given the limited academic literature published on surfing, the literature I draw on is not strictly that from the planning field, yet is on planning's fringes. For instance, the works I have used tend to be from sociological and geographical perspectives as the former contributes to a planners understanding of how the world functions spatial, and the latter adds to a planners appreciation of communities and society in a broader sense. The literature utilised can however be broken into four areas; first that which provides a base for the historical legitimacy of surfing, second that which covers potential impacts on surfing wave quality, third that which will serve to address the value or legitimacy of surfing and four that which moves into the provision or protection of surfing as a recreational activity. In terms of temporality most of the works have only been published very recently which has made accessing them problematic.

Background Literature

Booth's (2001) work provides a historical backdrop to my research. He provides an insight, not only into the development of surfing in Australia but also the roots of surfing and first Western views and comments on surfing in Hawaii in the late eighteenth century by Captain James Cook who was impressed by the skills displayed on lengths of wood. At this stage surfing was the sport of kings and the more general populace (Booth, 2001). For my research this helps illustrate surfing's legitimate and long origins and history.

Booth (2001) illustrates that later in early twentieth century, under a missionary zeal surfing, was damned as an un-pure pastime largely due the liberal, mixed and sparsely clothed characteristics of surfers of the time. In terms of my research question, by this stage surfing had now been re-interpreted not as a graceful/legitimate sporting activity but as one synonymous with immoral behaviour. Booth (2001) notes that later in the twentieth century surfing had become a popular, and subsequently professional, sporting pursuit. In a similar light and in reflection on surfing's history Lanagan (2002) notes

surfing has been through a cycle where at times it has been a popular and legitimate past time, whilst in others it has been seen as a practice with related social undesirability.

Literature on the Impacts on Surfing Wave Quality

A number of chapters from Scarfe's (2008) thesis on the management and protection of surfing breaks are important for the purpose of this literature review. Scarfe's (2008) work is significant as it brings together a range of works on surfing and has provided direction for the purpose of this research.

Beyond providing a sense of direction and synthesis Scarfe (2008) also adds value in that he identifies a range of activities which can adversely, or even positively, affect surfing conditions or more appropriately for this research activities within the Coastal Marine Area which can impact on surfing conditions. Scarfe (2008) mentions a range of impacts from the blocking of swell to dredging and the construction of wharfs or piers.

Current Legitimacy and Value of Surfing

Nelsen, Pendleton and Vaughn (2007) aim to dismiss the traditional stereotype of surfers as lacking any worthwhile contribution to society, a perception they see stemming from the 1950s and 1960s (and clearly earlier) and a (re)production of such ideas in the mass, by providing an insight into the tangible economic value of surfing at a high quality surf break Trestles Beach in California, North America.

Nelsen *et al.* (2007) collected data using an internet-based survey conducted over the northern hemisphere summer of 2006, their findings indicated, contrary the common stereotype, surfers at Trestles Beach were not young (average age of 35.6 years old) were well educated (42% of respondents had at least a college degree) and typically worked full time (72% of respondents). In reference to my work, such findings, although may be different throughout surf breaks around the world indicate a step to challenging dominant discourses of surfing being represented simply as an alternative pursuit or that restricted to youth and the unemployed. The notion of surfing as a purely youthful pursuit has been further undermined recently in New Zealand media, with notions of surfer

conflict being noted with elderly surfers (Calman, 2008). In addition the anti-authoritarian aspect of surfing is challenged by a national police surfing championships held annually (Surf2Surf, 2008a).

Moving beyond demographic concerns Nelsen *et al.* (2007) illustrate some of the tangible economic impacts of Trestle Beach surfers. Using both the findings of their survey, an average spending of US\$40 per visit, and a more conservative figure from a previous study, Nelsen *et al.* (2007) indicate that the impact on the city of San Clemente from surfers visiting Trestles Beach could range from US\$8 million to US\$13 million per year. Again, although situated in a different context, surfer's economic impacts on local and regional economies from surfing certain breaks should not be downplayed.

The work of Lazarow, Milller and Blackwell (2007) is also central to this report in making a case for the value of surfing. Importantly Lazarow *et al.* (2007) provide an overview of the existing works which have estimated the value of surfing at specific locations and those which have addressed the value of a surf session. In terms of specific reference to New Zealand only one peer reviewed article was identified (Lazarow *et al.*, 2007) which illustrates the economic impact of surfing trips, in the case of a Orewa study, is up to NZ\$42 per trip.

Alongside this, in a broader sense, Lazarow *et al.* (2007) also illustrate that participation in surfing is significant with global surfing numbers being estimated to be above 18 million people in 2007. To relate this to New Zealand in 2001 135,000 or 10% of male adults participate in surfing making it the 10th most popular active leisure activity for adult men behind walking, gardening, fishing and home based exercise (see Table 1). This figure is considerable given that rugby union only had 5,900 more male adult participants in the same year (Sport & Recreation New Zealand, 2001).

Table 1: Top 10 Active Leisure Activities for New Zealand Adults

Men	%	Number	Women	%	Number	All adults	%	Number
Walking	61	803,100	Walking	81	1,157,600	Walking	72	1,958,500
Gardening	52	675,300	Gardening	67	956,900	Gardening	60	1,630,500
Fishing	36	472,100	Swimming	38	547,200	Swimming	36	994,800
Swimming	34	448,100	Exercising at home	35	498,500	Exercising at home	31	852,000
Exercising at home	27	354,400	Exercise classes/gym	19	272,800	Fishing	25	674,300
Exercise classes/gym	19	249,300	Aerobics	17	237,100	Exercise classes/gym	19	522,100
Running/jogging	18	236,800	Fishing	14	199,800	Cycling	15	411,300
Cycling	17	223,000	Cycling	13	187,900	Running/jogging	14	388,100
Tramping	14	182,300	Running/jogging	11	150,500	Tramping	12	322,800
Surfing/body boarding	10	135,000	Tramping	10	140,000	Aerobics	10	286,000

(Source: Sport & Recreation New Zealand, 2001, 33)

The work of Lazarow (2007) is also significant in terms of the value of surf breaks. Lazarow (2007) looks at the social and economic value of recreational surfing to South Stradbroke Island (Queensland, Australia) and Mallacoota (Victoria, Australia) and how breaks in these areas are under threat. Like Nelsen *et al.* (2007), Lazarow (2007) illustrates the need to consider 'surfing as an important recreational pursuit' with real economic and social value in the decision-making process. In other words to both Lazarow (2007) and Nelson *et al.* (2007) see surfing, not as simply a hedonistic or idiosyncratic pursuit, but one with a tangible value or output.

Importantly, for the purpose of my research, Lazarow (2007) focuses directly on recreational surfing instead of the value of surfing tourists or competitive surfing as in the case of the Mundaka example above and the work of Augustine (1995) who touches on the importance of competitions in the Aquitaine Region of Southern France. Lazarow (2007) commences by noting that surfing has not been able to use the weight of economic or social welfare to argue for the maintenance of, or improvements to, surfing amenity. Lazarow (2007) aims then to illustrate that surfing does have tangible (economic) an intangible (social) benefits which justify the protection of surf breaks, an objective that I share, in order to provide for recreational surfing as a legitimate activity.

Beyond the economic impacts of surfers spending at the South Stradbroke Island and Bastion Point breaks, Lazarow (2007) looks at the non-market, social value of surfing in the two locations, which further justify the need to recognise surfing. At South

Stradbroke Island there is social aesthetic value in surfing as an escape, albeit temporarily, from city life. At Mallacoota, surfing the Bastion Point break has been noted by local residents as an aesthetic experience shared by many local residents as well as a 'co-learning experience' across an age range of three generations surfing often at once (Lazarow, 2007, 17). Such non-market/social values identified by Lazarow (2007) are also vital, and alongside the economic value of surfing, help make a case for surfing not only to be viewed as an anti-authoritarian hedonistic pursuit, as has often been the case, but as a legitimate recreational activity with social benefits/value. In reference to my research such benefits can be articulated to re-establish the legitimacy of surfing and provide a justification as to why providing for quality surfing conditions is important.

Providing for Surfing as a Legitimate Activity

Only one academic article was found which had a focus on recognising and providing for surfing and surfing spots. Farmer and Short (2007) provide an overview as to the history and the steps involved in creating National Surf Reserves in Australia. Farmer and Short (2007) illustrate that surfing reserves are not a new concept by noting the surfing reserve at Bells which was designated in 1973 and is recognised as a heritage site (Heritage Victoria, 2008). From here Farmer and Short (2007) move to the steps involved in establishing National Surfing Reserves. These steps can be simplified to the following;

1. The establishment of a National Surf Reserves Committee to guide the over all process
2. Surfer and surfing reserve defined by national committee
3. The creation of a list of possible surfing reserves based on the definition of a surfing reserve and 'other criteria' of which is not mentioned
4. The selection of sites
5. Get locals on board to take ownership
6. Local Committee established to act as a trust/reserve management board.

Farmer and Short (2007) also discuss the first surfing reserve dedicated under the National Surfing Reserve programme at Maroubra Beach, NSW in March 2006. This reserve was purely symbolic, being recognised by a city council funded plaque, booklet and city council support of the 'reserve' (Farmer & Short, 2006). However, the Maroubra

reserve has no seaward component and is not enshrined under legislation. Farmer and Short (2007) also cover the second National Surfing Reserve dedicated in January 2007 at Angourie, which extends beyond the symbolic with the reserve encompassing the actual surf site. An area spanning from the high water mark to 500m seaward was gazetted as a Crown Surfing Reserve, as enacted through the Crown Lands Act 1989, and is managed by a local committee appointed by the Minister of Lands (Farmer and Short, 2007). This is a key point for my work in recognising and providing for surfing as a legitimate recreational activity.

In further reference to my work, Farmer and Short's (2007) article is significant in that it identifies and documents the only existing formal frameworks under which surf breaks are recognised and provided for. Clearly in relation to New Zealand there are issues with dedicating Crown Land as a surfing reserve given claims to the foreshore and seabed. In addition recognising a surf break as a Foreshore and Seabed Reserve would be contrary to the purpose, being for the exercise of Kaitiakitanga' for which such reserves are established. As addressed later there is limited potential for such surfing reserves in New Zealand under existing reserves legislation.

Conclusion

In summary, notwithstanding the limited academic literature on surfing, the works reviewed above provide a strong base for the following chapters. For example, Farmer and Short (2007) provide the only review of Australian National Surfing Reserves, on which this report builds on. To take a step backward the work of Booth (2001) provides historical context, meanwhile Scarfe (2008) offers a coverage of the potential threats to surfing wave quality. Alongside these works Lazarow *et al.* (2007), Lazarow (2007) and Nelson *et al.* (2007) provide detailed assessments of the value of surfers to particular locales.

Chapter Four: The Legitimacy of Surfing

Introduction

Drawing on the literature reviewed above, and also more popular sources, this chapter aims to identify and trace the legitimacy of surfing through *discursive structures*.

Surfing as Outside Planning's Gaze

Before illustrating why providing for surfing is now a legitimate planning problem, it is important to note how surfing has often been viewed as an illegitimate pursuit with little value. Surfing, following surf bathing, has traditionally been seen by dominant mainstream views as problematic. In the late nineteenth century, missionaries in Hawaii condemned surfing's mixed bathing and lack of suitable attire (Booth, 2001 & Pearson, 1979). A perceived hedonism surrounding surfing was noted early on by one missionary who wrote

'When a good swell was running many daily domestic tasks would be left undone as entire communities would enjoy themselves in the surf' (Un-named Missionary cited in Pearson, 1979, 31)

By the early twentieth century only a handful of surfers remained with sport nearly faded out completely (Pearson, 1979). More recently surfers have been positioned by others, and often themselves, as on the fringe of society. Booth (2001), in reference to 1950s - 70s Australia, has illustrated that often local authorities and the Surf Lifesaving Association (SLA) condemned surfing and what were seen as its associated drunken crowding of public spaces amongst other things, and pushed surfers to restricted areas of beaches. Of interest surfing has also been juxtaposed as the antithesis to the disciplined surf lifesaver role model despite the fact they both use the surf. By the mid-1970s moves were also made to prevent young transient surfers from getting the employment benefit (Booth, 2001).

The situation was similar at popular New Zealand surf spots where swimmers were being injured by heavy loose boards. Surfers with their weighty boards and often obvious 'rowdy' behaviour were in conflict with surf lifesavers and local authorities who were responsible for keeping the beaches safe. Alongside this, those in positions of authority saw surfers as anti-establishment hooligans. By April 1967 Auckland's East Coast Bays Borough Council banned surfing at all beaches under its jurisdiction except for a 100-yard-wide surf lane which was positioned in an area which has less surf than more popular beaches in the area (Williamson, 2000). Only one surfer was ever fined for surfing outside the designated area and soon after the by law was declared illegal given it was outside the Councils jurisdiction (Williamson, 2000). More recently Greater Wellington Regional Council (2008) via a proposed bylaw is looking to ban surfing, and all other activities excluding body boarding and swimming, from an area of Lyall Bay Beach which is a calm spot for learner surfers. A number of surfers are concerned that if the bylaw is passed they will be pushed to already crowded parts of the beach thus potentially resulting in overcrowding (Surf2surf.com, 2008 & Williamson, 2008).

Not only have non-surfers depicted surfers as on the fringe of society, but so have surfers through their comments and actions (Booth, 2001 & Booth, 1995). For example one surfer noted that fellow surfers should position themselves as rebels who often go against the grain in contemporary society and 'encourage surfing to be publicly damned... People don't have to fear us they just have to not want to be us' (Stedman cited in Booth, 2004, 107)

However, these views, or discourses, of surfing must be seen in context. The missionary disgust about surfing practices can be seen alongside the common western views of mixed bathing and miasmatic discourse of disease during the early twentieth century. Likewise, the stigmatisation of surfing by local authorities and surf lifesaving associations should be seen in the wider context where a number of counter-cultures were in conflict with a dominant middle class ideology of self discipline. Alongside the historical context, the motivations today to ban surfing from areas of beach, justifiable or not, tend to revolve around perceived safety issues at popular urban beaches.

The Value of Surfing

From the above, surfing has often been depicted in dominant discourses a pursuit sitting outside of the market economy and even mainstream society. However a case can be made for surfing as a valuable activity both economically and socially. The value of surfing can be seen in both the general as a profitable industry and marketing tool, and more specifically in relation to specific surf breaks.

Booth (2001), amongst others, notes that the surfing manufacturing industry by the mid 1990s was worth an estimated \$US8 billion dollars per annum and reached most countries on the planet. Scarfe (2008) notes this figure is likely to have increased to well over \$US11 billion. Not only does the surfing industry reach many countries around the world but it also now permeates land locked cities and towns as a popular marketing tool. Even in Palmerston North, which is over 70km from the nearest recognised surf break, surf retailers are located on popular shopping boulevards and in malls. However recent works by Nelson et al (2007) and Lazarow (2007) indicate that while the surfing industry boasts multi billion dollar profits, it is likely to significantly under account for the total economic value of recreational surfing.

Notwithstanding the traditional stereotype of surfers as lacking any worthwhile contribution to society, there is a tangible economic value to surfing which can be particularly high at top quality surf breaks. Nelson et al's (2007) study on Trestles Beach in California, North America demonstrates the high value of individual surf trips. Nelsen et al (2007, 32) note,

'Despite the popularity of surfing it is often challenging for the sport to be taken seriously in coastal management decision. Part of the problem lies in the fact that little is known about surfers and their impact on local economies.'

The above quote alludes to a key point directly related to my research; that is the fact little is known about the impact of surfers on local economies and its link with the legitimacy of surfing as a recreational activity. In other words if little is known about surfing and its potential benefits then little will be done to recognise and provide for the activity. Additionally surfing has not been able to use the weight of economic or social

welfare to argue for the maintenance of, or improvements to surfing quality (Lazarow, 2007).

Recent works have attempted to fill the void in literature on surfing by assessing the economic impacts of the recreational activity. Nelsen *et al.* (2007) illustrate the value that surfing can bring to a local economy. Using both the findings of their survey which indicated an average spending of US\$40 per visit, and a more conservative figure of US\$25, Nelsen *et al.* (2007) conclude that the impact on the city of San Clemente from surfers visiting the high quality Trestles Beach alone could range from US\$8 million to US\$13 million per year.

Like Nelson *et al.* (2007), Lazarow (2007) illustrates that surfers provide a significant economic value, contrary to traditional stereotypes. Lazarow (2007) assesses the market value of recreational surfing to South Stradbroke Island (Queensland, Australia) and Mallacoota (Victoria, Australia) both of which are under threat, the from activities in the coastal environment. The total amount spent by surfers at South Stradbroke Island is calculated at approximately \$AUD 20 million per annum. Meanwhile for the more remote Bastion Point break the average yearly spending of a local surfer on a particular break is noted to be \$AUD 3078. With 75 local surfers the total expenditure of locals surfing the break is calculated at \$230,850 (Lazarow, 2007). Table 2 over page illustrates the economic impact of surfing to South Stradbroke Island and Bastion Point.

Table 2: The Economic Value of Surfers Visiting South Stradbroke Island and Bastion Point

Question	South Stradbroke Island	Bastion Point
Number of surfers per year	11,500 approx	75 (number of resident who are surfers)
Number of surf visits per year	64,000 approx	Not yet estimated
Average amount spent per surfer on surfing each year	\$AUD4365	\$AUD4397
Average amount spent per surfer at specific beach break each year	\$AUS1775	\$AUD3078
Total amount spent by surfers on surfing at specific surf break each year	\$AUS20,000,000 approx	\$AUD230,850 approx

(Source: Lazarow, 2007, 17)

Works covering the economic value of surf breaks in New Zealand come from impact assessments of artificial surfing reefs which are built with the intention of improving wave quality. The three studies are on Orewa Beach, Auckland; Opunake, Taranaki and Mount Maunganui, Bay of Plenty. Of these the Orewa Beach study is of the greatest value as it refers to the value of surf trips. In terms of reference to New Zealand Lazarow *et al.* (2007) refers to the Orewa study carried out by the New Zealand Tourism Research institute in 2004 as part of the proposed Orewa artificial surfing reef where the value of surfing visits was estimated to be NZ\$42 per trip per day. From personal experience this figure seems realistic. On an average surf trip surfers would spend money on food and petrol.

Beyond the economic impacts, surfing has a range of social values. At South Stradbroke Island and Bastion Point, Lazarow (2007) assesses the non-market, social value of surfing. At South Stradbroke Island there is social aesthetic value in surfing as an escape, albeit temporarily, from city life. At Mallacoota, Bastion Point surfing has been noted by local residents as an aesthetic experience shared by many as well as a ‘co-learning experience’ across an age range of three generations surfing often at once (Lazarow, 2007, 17). One interview respondent also noted the social and physical health benefits of participating in surfing (Pers. Com., 2008b). Alongside the economic value of

surfing trips, the social values identified by Lazarow (2007) and others build a case for surfing to be viewed not as an anti-authoritarian hedonistic pursuit as has often been the case, but as a legitimate recreational activity with a diverse range of benefits.

A Planning Problem Emerging: Incorporating Surfer Concerns into Planning

With the historic 'illegitimacy' of surfing in mind, increasing concerns of surfers and the proliferation of concerned surfing groups, surfing as a planning problem, in a contextual backdrop of increasing environmental awareness, is coming to the fore. Below I outline a number of overseas examples to set a broader context. These examples are only a few of the many situations where concern has been voiced by surfers.

Internationally there has been increasing concern regarding the quality of surf breaks with issues ranging from water pollution in urban and rural catchments to adverse effects from dredging and landward earthworks. Perhaps the most ground breaking instance for the recognition of surfing was the victory of Surfrider Foundation, an international organisation focused on surf break protection, in *Surfrider Foundation v. Louisiana-Pacific Corporation and Simpson Paper Company Incorporated* 1991, a case in regard to the disposal of liquid wastes from two Californian Pulp mills. The two mills accused made over 40,000 violations of the Clean Water Act 1984 (Chatterjee, 1991). The findings led to clean up fines in excess of US\$150 million and requirements including the extension of effluent outfalls and alterations to the chemicals used in production to keep a surf-zone effluent free (*Surfrider Foundation v. Louisiana Pacific Corporation and Simpson Paper Company Incorporated*, 1991).

More recently In the United Kingdom Surfers Against Sewage (SAS) have pushed for the improved treatment of sewerage, storm water and the disposal and recycling of household wastes. Their concerns regarding the possible shadowing of swell path from a proposed wave energy production off the Cornwall coast, still requiring planning approval, led development agencies to produce a scientific report on the impacts on wave size (Anonymous, 2007). Such a move may indicate that surfers are becoming considered a legitimate party in planning issues.

Surf Break Recognition in Australia

Closer to New Zealand, every day concerns regarding the future of surf breaks have motivated a group of Australians, led by Brad Farmer with the support of the countries now Environment Minister Peter Garrett and the New South Wales (NSW) Minister of Lands Tony Kelly, to create National Surfing Reserves Australia in 2005 with the purpose of recognizing and protecting surfing areas of national and local significance (Farmer, 2006). Currently there are five National Surfing Reserves, the first at Maroubra on the 19th of March 2006 and the most recent being that in Cronulla which was dedicated on the third of September 2008 (New South Wales Department of Lands, 2008 and Farmer, 2006). The Australian model deserves more detailed coverage and as such sets the basis for a following chapter of this report. The following chapter brings the focus back to New Zealand and addresses issues regarding wave quality and existing tools in New Zealand to address surfers concerns.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided an overview of both the historical and present legitimacy of surfing. It is clear that discourses or views of surfing have often painted the activity as illegitimate pursuit taking place outside of mainstream society. However this chapter has also introduced the present case or discourse of surfing as a legitimate activity with economic and social benefits.

Chapter Five: New Zealand Surfing Issues and Tools

Introduction

This chapter aims to address the existing ways or tools by which surfing has been recognised and provided for and to introduce two key issues which can affect surfing wave quality. In terms of structure national level recognition of surfing is addressed first before moving onto issues which are followed by how regional councils have addressed surfers concerns which is supplemented by a Taranaki Region study.

National Level Recognition

Whilst the current New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 1994 does not make reference to significant natural features with recreation value or more specifically surf sites surfing groups have drawn on its provisions to argue for the recognition and protection of surf breaks. Policy 1.1.3 for instance was used by Surfing Taranaki to argue for the inclusion of surf breaks in the proposed Regional Policy Statement. Policy 1.1.3 sets out national priority to protect features which are important to the natural character of the coastal including seascapes and significant places or areas of cultural significance.

However, nationally New Zealand and has only recently seen the issue of providing for surfing, in a formal planning sense, come to the fore with the release of the Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) 2008. The NZCPS has the purpose of setting out a policy framework for the coastal environment under which local authorities must give effect to under s67(3)(a) of the RMA. The importance of surfing/surf breaks is set out in proposed policy 20 as follows;

'The surf breaks at Ahipara, Northland; Raglan, Waikato; Stent Road, Taranaki; White Rock, Wairarapa; Mangamauni, Kaikoura; and Papatowai, Southland (sic) which are of national significance for surfing, shall be protected from inappropriate use and development, including by:

- (a) *ensuring that activities in the coastal marine area do not adversely affect the surf breaks*
- (b) *avoiding, remedying or mitigating adverse effect of other activities on access to, and use and enjoyment of the surf breaks'*

(Department of Conservation, 2008a)

More specifically the RMA s32 evaluation of the Proposed NZCPS, which aims to justify the policies inclusion, notes that surf breaks are a finite resource which can be adversely affected by inappropriate use and development in the coastal marine area including structures in a breaks swell corridor and alterations to the seabed. Equally the policy is to guide consideration to the effects of activities on wave quality and more generally the enjoyment of the listed areas (Department of Conservation, 2008b).

The Department of Conservation, who have the duty of producing the NZCPS have justified the inclusion of Policy 20 above, on a number of grounds including that surf breaks produce significant economic benefits and are finite resources (Department of Conservation 2008b). The Board of Inquiry established to review and report on the Proposed NZCPS raised the question as to why surf breaks were singled out for specific mention under s42(A) of the RMA. The response from the Department of Conservation policy group was as follows;

'Substantial submissions identifying surf break protection as a sustainable management issue and advocating a policy response in the NZCPS were received in response to the Issues and Options paper for the NZCPS review. To that extent Policy 20 is a consequence of the process demanded by section 46 of the Act, which requires comments to be sought and considered before an NZCPS is prepared. It was accepted that the issue was genuine and merited a response and the reasoning is summarised in the section 32 report.'

(Speden & Marshall, 2008, 28)

The above quote points to the genesis of the policy. Two of the 'substantial submissions' are seemingly those of Surfbreak Protection Society (2006) and Surfers Environmental Advocacy (2007) who were both active in pushing for the recognition for surf breaks

early in the process each making submissions on the initial DOC 'Issues and Options paper' released in 2006 which set the basis of public input in the proposed NZCPS. Surfbreak Protection Society (2006) initial submission highlights surf breaks as natural features worthy of protection and points to the need to include a list of surf breaks; meanwhile, Surfers Environmental Advocacy (2007) submission stresses the importance of specific breaks, a number of which now set the basis for Policy 20.

Views on Policy 20

The views on Policy 20 of the Proposed NZCPS are mixed, as evident in submissions. Support largely comes from individual submitters, surf rider clubs and environmental groups. A number of these submitters consider that Policy 20 is a step in the right direction for recognising and protecting surf breaks yet consider it is limited to a narrow range of breaks which omits other high quality breaks and popular breaks for surfers who do not have the skill level to surf those identified in Policy 20. Or in other words the listed breaks provide for experience surfers yet rarely are inviting for those learning the sport (Surfbreak Protection Society, 2008 & Pers. Com., 2008b). Interestingly within this 'group' is Auckland Regional Council who support Policy 20 and wish it to be broadened to allow for regional councils to include breaks within their regions. Gisborne District Council also wish to see Policy 20 extended to include breaks in their region.

There is however opposition to Policy 20 as evident in Tables 3 and 4 below. A number of Regional Councils, including those without listed breaks within their boundaries, see that the policy is too specific and seek its deletion. These concerns however are typically aimed not only at Policy 20 but at the Proposed NZCPS on the whole. For instance Taranaki Regional Council see the policy as singling out one activity, yet also are concerned with a range of other policies in the NZCPS for their specificity.

Table 3: Views and Relief Sought of Regional Councils with Policy 20 Listed Surf Breaks

Regional Council	View	Relief Sought
Northland Regional Council, Taranaki Regional Council	Concerned with favouring one coastal activity over others	Delete policy 20
Otago Regional Council,	Surf breaks could be included under other areas of the proposed policy statement without amendments (for instance 19(a))	Delete Policy 20
Environment Waikato	Surf Breaks could be included elsewhere with amendments	No relief sought

Table 4: Views and Relief Sought of Regional Councils Without Policy 20 Listed Surf Breaks

Regional Council	View	Relief Sought
Environment Southland	Concerned with favouring one coastal activity over others	Delete policy 20
Environment Bay of Plenty	Surf breaks could be included under other areas of the proposed policy statement without amendments (for instance 19(a))	Delete Policy 20
Northland Regional Council	Surf Breaks could be included elsewhere with amendments	Delete Policy 20
Gisborne District Council * & Auckland Regional Council	The list is too narrow	Extend policy 20 to include a more diverse range of breaks

Note: * Gisborne District Council is the business name for the Gisborne Unitary Authority.

Rebuttal

There are a number of reasons why surfing, or more correctly surf breaks, deserve specific mention. For one surfing is a coastal dependant activity and reliant on specific sites or breaks. Other coastal activities are typically not so site specific. For instance swimmers can occupy most beaches provided bottom conditions and water quality prevail, likewise those yachting or fishing are also not so specifically reliant on certain sites or, as will become evident, 'rare geographic features'.

As illustrated above, and by Rennie (2008), surf breaks are also scarce. In New Zealand there is approximately 18,200kms of coastline and only 470 recognised surf spots (Scarfe, 2008). Thus there is only one surf spot every 39km, with a number of these breaks only being surfable a day or two a month, and in some cases a year. In other instances beaches are nearly inaccessible. There are a combination of features that make a high quality surf break and together these are rare (Rennie 208 & Scarfe 2008). For instance a beach may have significant fetch to attract large swells; however, there may be an absence of adequate seabed conditions to form surfing waves. As Rennie (2008) notes it is common place in planning to provide for rare features or species of which surfing can be depicted as; however, unlike species one cannot simply breed new surf spots.

Alongside being rare surf breaks are also sensitive to human impacts. Surf breaks and wave quality may naturally remain relatively stable over a period of decades, yet with human intervention may change over the course of a matter of weeks or months (Scarfe, 2008). As has been noted in Hearings on the Proposed NZCPS

'Increasing pressures in the life of the NZCPS will lead to damage and destruction of surf breaks. There is therefore a need to consider a level of protection if the natural character is to be preserved.'

Rennie (2008, para. 50)

Dredging, mining and the shifting of sand for instance have been a constant threat to a number of surf breaks around the world as they impact directly on surf quality. The quality of one of Europe's best breaks at Mundaka Bay, Spain was compromised by dredging operations carried out for the purposes of boat building in 2003 (Ward, 2006).

By 2005 the Association of Surfing Professionals (ASP) World Championship Tour leg held at the break was cancelled due to a lack of a working sandbar. As a result there was a down turn in visitors producing a significant impact on the local economy (Save the Waves Coalition, no date and ASP, 2008).

However, should Policy 20 be deleted Policy 19(a) would also direct councils to recognise in a broader sense 'outdoor recreation in the coastal environment' through the maintenance and enhancement of such natural sites. As noted in Tables 3 and 4 regional councils, as evident through submissions and media articles (Wairarapa Times, 2008 & The Press, 2008), are more accepting of recognising and protecting surf breaks as long as they are not directed to one recreational activity over another.

Issues in New Zealand Regarding Wave Quality

The Proposed NZCPS reference to surf breaks may be new, however surfers around the country have long been concerned with a range of issues which can affect wave quality and surfer enjoyment at a range of breaks beyond the limited Policy 20 list. There are a number of other factors which may adversely affect surfing experience, such as access and water quality, but for the purpose of this research focus is on surfing specific matters or those which effect surfing wave quality.

Swell Corridors

Structures in the Coastal Marine Area (CMA) have the potential to adversely affect wave quality, yet also improve it. For instance, as Scarfe (2008) identifies, a boat launching ramp built in the 1960s, cut the Manu Bay Raglan break short by about 100m and at Saint Clair Dunedin the construction of a seawall has also adversely affected wave quality. More recently surfer concerns have seen conditions applied at the Environment Court for a mussel farm consent in Pegasus Bay Christchurch requiring swell height monitoring. This case was the first formal recognition of swell corridors. Further, the section 32 analysis which accompanies the Proposed NZCPS recognises swell corridors as important to protect the quality of surfing waves. Recently the Taranaki Regional Council (2008) has scheduled surf breaks and recognised their swell corridors in the final draft of their Proposed Regional Policy Statement.

Seabed Alterations

Like structures, the altering of seabed conditions also has the potential to adversely affect wave quality at surf breaks. Seabed conditions at a surf break can be directly or indirectly affected by the shifting or removal of sand or other marine sediment in a breaks' vicinity. For instance in reference to the Manu Bay case, dredging of sand was also another key factor which reduced the break's quality (Scarfe, 2008). There are also more contemporary and popular concerns regarding dredging. For instance SPS and a West Coast group, Kahuna Board Riders Club, are concerned about the potential impacts of removing sand from Cobden Beach (Radio New Zealand, 2008). The former has also argued in the Environment Court for the recognition of the Whangamata surf break in relation to proposed dredging activities for a proposed marina and as a result conditions as part of the consent require monitoring of the sand bar which contributes to the break's uniqueness (Pers. Com., 2008b).

Alone the above do not directly dictate wave quality. In order to provide for the surfing experience there has to be a functioning surf break with a combination of characteristics of which together are rare. Bottom conditions require both adequate swell and wind conditions to provide surfing waves.

Regional Level Recognition

Regional Councils have been noted, on the whole, as doing little in their plans to recognise or provide for surfing or wave quality (Surfbreak Protection Society, 2006 & Pers Com. 2008a). To date there have only been two regions, Taranaki and Waikato, in which surfing sites have been integrated in to Regional Council documents. Surfers often feel that Councils, and people who do not surf, perceive surfers are a small group. Furthermore those who do not surf have little conscience of surfer's patters and the breaks they surf. Studies on South African Beaches have noted the different patterns of surfers than other beach goers with the number of surfers being most significant in the early morning (Preston-Whyte, 2002). In short as one correspondent noted 'Councils have still not grasped what surfing is and how surf breaks affect places socially and economically' (Pers Com. 2008b).

Environment Waikato has an existing surf zone created under the Regions Navigation Bylaw (2006) which encompasses a number of popular surfing spots with local and international significance including Manu Bay, Whale Bay and Indicators in Raglan and a zone off Whangamata Beach. This Bylaw places a focus on separating incompatible surface water activities such as busy boat channels and surf take off zones, yet the location of the Bylaw zones do not all coincide with the actual use areas (Pers. Com., 2008b).

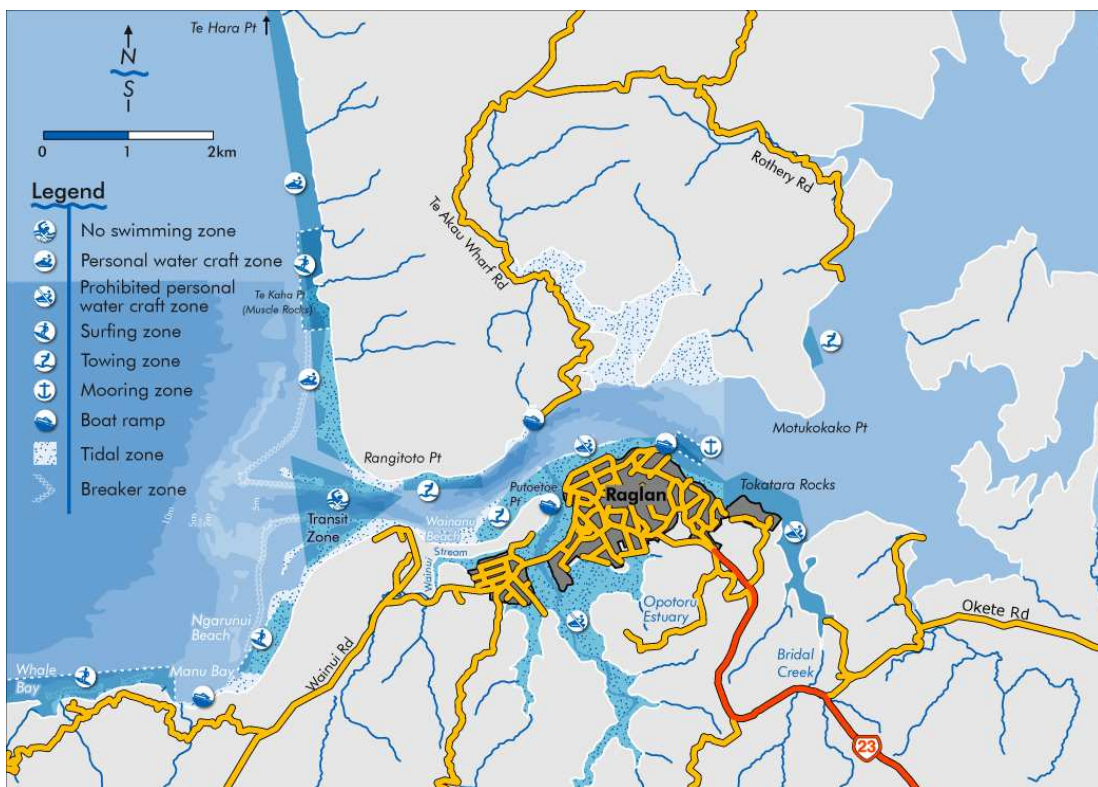


Figure 1: Map of Raglan showing designated surf zones (Source: Environment Waikato, 2006, 45)



Figure 2: Map of Whangamata showing a designated surf zone (Source: Environment Waikato, 2006, 61)

Taranaki Regional Council Case Study

The following is a case study covering the only existing example of a specific mention of surf breaks in New Zealand regional statutory planning documents.

Background

The Taranaki Region has the second largest number of surf breaks per kilometre of coast in the world behind Oahu Hawaii (New Plymouth Surf Riders, 2008). Moreover the Taranaki Region has a large proportion of surfers in relation to its population, having eight percent of New Zealand's surfing population and only approximately two percent of New Zealand's population (Sport and Recreation New Zealand, 2001)

The Taranaki Region does not often attract the same level development as more popular coastal regions. The Taranaki Regional Council (2004b) recognise that there few pressures from development in the Coastal Marine Area (CMA), in comparison to other regions, partly due to one of the very reasons which makes the area so attractive to surfers, that is the wave action evident along its coastline. In the Taranaki Region there are active surf riding clubs including New Plymouth Surf Riders and the regional body Surfing Taranaki who have strong links to Surfbreak Protection Society and have raised a number of concerns regarding the CMA from dredging to the potential future effects that aquatic energy generation and other structures in the CMA could have on surf breaks (Pers. Com., 2008a & Pers. Com., 2008b).

The Taranaki Regional Council (TRC) from as early as 2004 have openly recognised the importance of surf breaks in a number of there planning documents. Noting in one that

'...parts of the coastline are particularly prized for their scenic and amenity values. Some parts, due to the quality of the beaches, fishing or surfing conditions, are prized for the recreational experience or values that they offer'.

Taranaki Regional Council (2004b, 52)

Taranaki Regional Council Views on the Proposed NZCPS

As noted above TRC submitted against Policy 20 seeking that its deletion. At face value this may seem surprising given the repeated rhetoric in a number of their documents on the importance of the coast for surfing, and more specifically the national recreation value of Stent Road, a Policy 20 surf break, as mentioned in the Councils coastal inventory (Taranaki Regional Council, 2004a&b). However, like the other councils this relief sought is base more on the prescriptiveness of the policy statement general (Taranaki Regional Council, 2008b).

Taranaki Regional Coastal Plan

Like many plans, the operative Taranaki Regional Coastal Plan (1997) sets out areas of outstanding coastal value or what are commonly known as 'Areas of Significant Conservation Value', included in this list are areas containing rare geological and geographical features (see Figure 3). Despite there being room for the inclusion of surf breaks such a list as identified by Rennie (2008), most popular surf breaks in the region happened to fall outside of coastal areas market as being significant and are classed 'open water coast'.

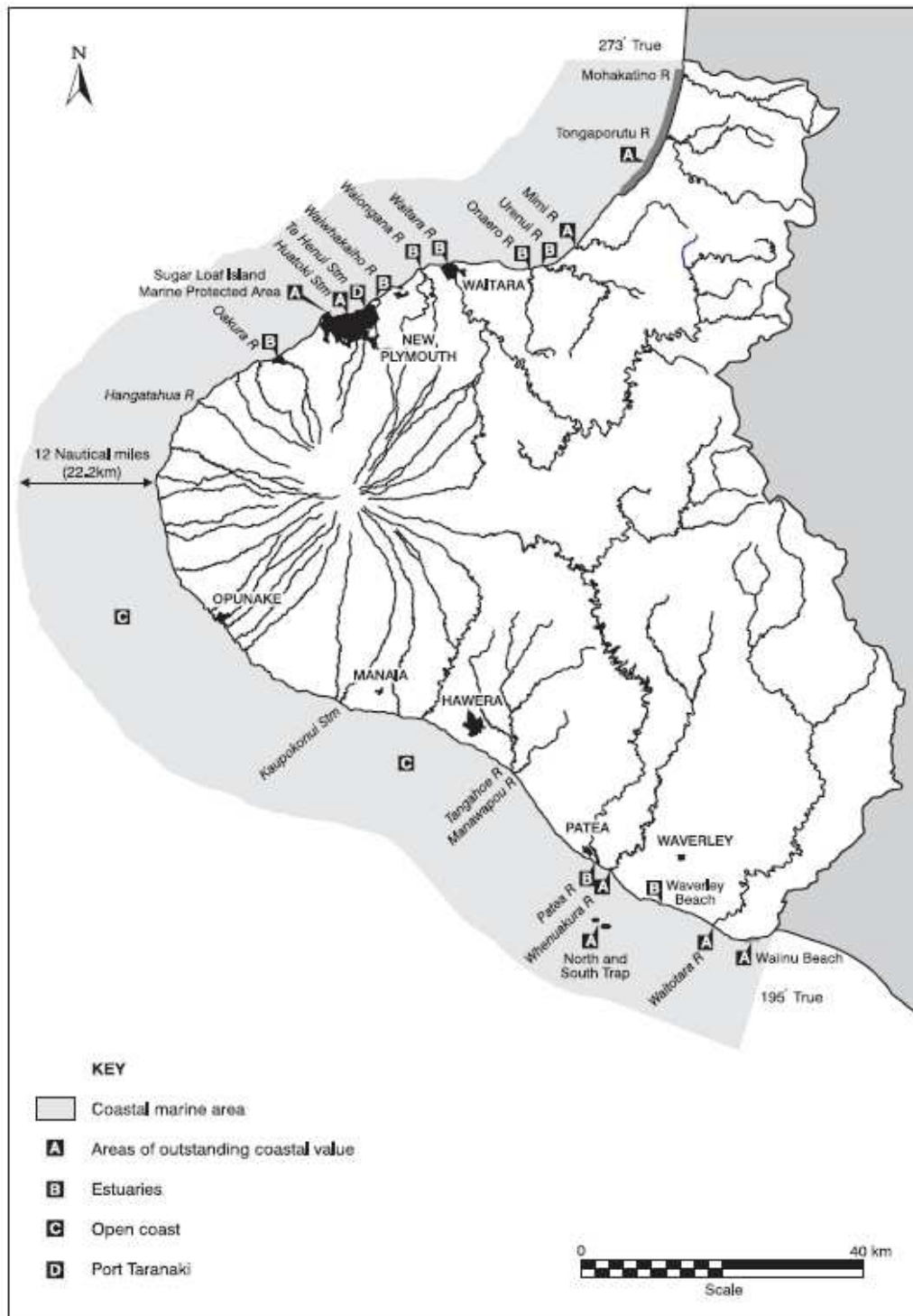


Figure 3: Taranaki Regional Council Coastal Management Areas (Source: Taranaki Regional Council, 2002)

Notwithstanding, the Taranaki Regional Council are seen as setting the benchmark according to Surfbreak Protection Society (2008) by setting out the following policy in their Regional Coastal Plan;

'Regard will be had, in making coastal management decisions, to the regional importance of the amenity values of the following areas...'

(Taranaki Regional Council, 1997, unpagged)

In reference to the proposed NZCPS the above policy importantly awards recognition to the Stent Road Area and a range of additional popular and valued surfing breaks. However Policy 3.2, along with the objectives and issues before it, makes not explicit mention or recognition of surfing or surf breaks and instead favours addressing them silently under the term amenity.

Proposed Regional Policy Statement

More recently the TRC (2004a) produced an inventory of coastal sites of regional significance as a precursor to the Regional Policy Statement. This both the inventory and the proposed RPS documents are rare in that they illustrates significant areas for surfing and other recreational activities in stead of solely the broader term 'amenity' which has become a catch all phrase. The areas or sites identified in this document are mapped and each is given a brief description of its significance. For instance again in reference to the proposed NZCPS listed area 'Stent Road' the inventory refers to the site as of nationally significant surf spot with high recreational value.

In response to submissions by SPS and New Plymouth Surf Riders the final draft of the proposed RPS, as a New Zealand first, aims to protect 81 scheduled surf breaks from 'inappropriate development' (Taranaki Regional Council, 2008a). However of importance the surf sites of significance recognised in the 2004 Coastal inventory are attached as an appendix as sites of 'regionally significant coastal value' in the proposed RPS and as such surf spots and their distinctive features such as bottom conditions and 'swell corridors' are recognised and provided for (Taranaki Regional Council, 2008a). The TRC's policy manager in reflection on the proposed RPS noted that there is 'growing

awareness and acceptance of surfing...people are looking at surf breaks as not different from any other significant natural feature or waterway' (Severinsen cited in Evans, 2008).

There is significant value in scheduling surfing breaks. One interview respondent noted that listing breaks in plans is the first step in recognising them and setting up mechanisms to ensure that wave quality is not adversely affected (Pers. Com., 2008b). This first step of scheduling would also direct and inform councils to significant natural features with recreation value within their boundaries. Also of importance should the named surf breaks remain in the Taranaki RPS, Council must give them effect in the up coming review of the Regional Coastal Plan in accordance with s67 of the RMA. Only time will tell whether these surfing sites will again be recognised in guise in the up and coming review of the Regional Plan, which is scheduled after the finalisation of the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement, in a similar light to those areas already recognised in Policy 3.2 of the current Regional Plan, or whether they will receive specific mention.

Conclusion

This chapter has traced the tools used to recognise surfers concerns and has illustrated a two important features of surf quality. It is evident that explicit national level recognition of surfing and surf spots has only come to the fore with the release of the proposed NZCPS, on which views are mixed. Meanwhile, Taranaki Regional Council in their proposed RPS has, in response to submissions, taken the lead in recognising breaks in their region as natural features with important recreation value and taken steps to protect them from inappropriate development. Notwithstanding the Taranaki Region example, regional councils elsewhere have done little to recognise surfing in their statutory planning documents.

Chapter Six: Recognition and Provision for Surfing in Australia

In Australia there have been two ways in which surf breaks and surfing have been recognised, and arguably to a lesser extent, protected or provided for. Firstly there has been the recognition of Bells beach in the State of Victoria. Secondly, and more recently, there has been the establishment of National Surfing Reserves. Both the aforementioned are described and discussed below as they provide the only available model from which in future a New Zealand system could be developed.

The Case of Bells Beach

Australia's first formal State and Local Government recognition of surf breaks as sites is seen in the surfing reserve set up for Bells Beach Touquay in 1973. The reserve is listed on the State of Victoria's heritage register as 'Bells Beach Surfing Recreation Reserve' and contains both landward and seaward components extending 400m offshore from the low water mark (See Figure 2 below). The reserve is recognised as a historic landscape of cultural significance to Australian recreational and competitive surfers. Landward the reserve is demarcated by a sculpture, mural and a sand stone engraved with the words 'Respect the ocean – Spirit of surfing' (Victoria Heritage Council, 2008, unpagged) .

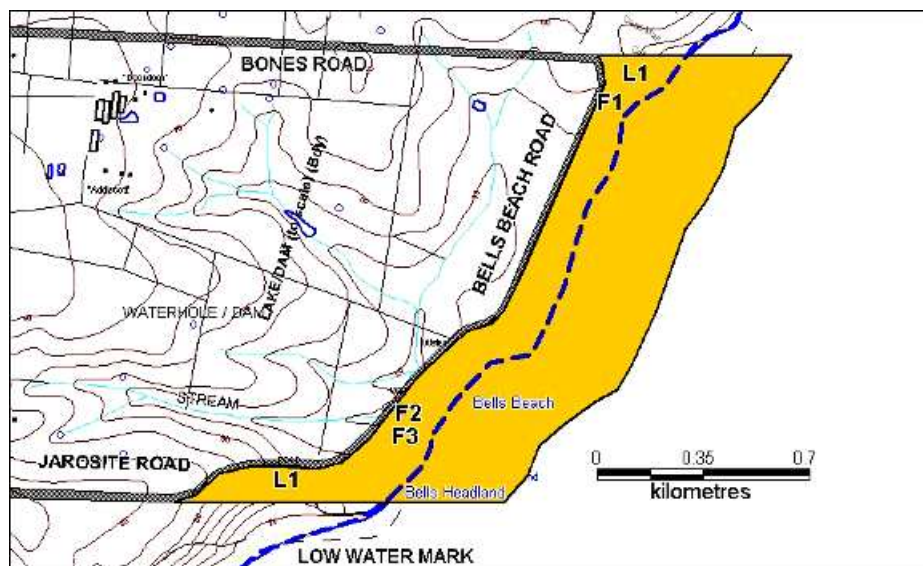


Figure 4: Bells Beach Recreation Surfing Reserve (Source: Victoria Heritage Council, 2008)

In 1995 the Bells Beach Advisory Committee was established to decide on how to best manage the reserve. The Advisory Committee consist of community groups, Surfrider Foundation and a local board riders association along with representatives of the surfing industry and local and state government. By 2004 a management document had been produced by the advisory board and adopted by the Surf Coast Shire Council (Surf Coast Shire Council, 2008).The majority of management however is focused on the land component and pressures due to the annual Rip Curl Pro surfing competition, yet is still important as it sees surfers concerns being incorporated into planning. In addition the area covered by the Bells Beach reserve has also been included in a large no take marine reserve in which surfing is a permitted activity, and under which surfing is recognised as an important activity.

National Surfing Reserves

More recently every day concerns regarding the future of surf breaks have motivated a group of Australians, led by Brad Farmer with the support of the country's Environment Minister Peter Garrett and the NSW Minister of Lands Tony Kelly, to create National Surfing Reserves Committee in 2005 with the purpose of recognizing and protecting surfing areas of national and local significance as National Surfing Reserves (Farmer & Short, 2006). More specifically, and in a similar fashion to the heritage listing of Bells Beach, National Surfing Reserves are set up to recognize and protect an area for use by surfers as sites of historical, cultural, and environmental significance to surfing in Australia (New South Whales Department of Lands, 2008). In a sense 'iconic' surf breaks are recognised as worthy of designation as a National Surfing Reserve. The first reserve at Maroubra, New South Wales (NSW) was declared symbolically in 2006 and is not enshrined in legislation.

Reserves within NSW following Maroubra have been designated by the NSW Department of Lands as Crown Reserves under the Crown Lands Act 1989. Thus such breaks within NSW are legally recognised alongside other crown reserves (Farmer and Short, 2006 & NSW Department of Lands, 2008). In particular the NSW Department of Lands (2008, unpagged) has indicated its commitment to recognizing the historical, cultural and environmental qualities important to surf sites by noting their desire to

'continue to support communities seeking reserve status for iconic surfing locations' and work in partnership with the National Surfing Reserve Committee.

Surf sites designated as National Surfing Reserves under the Crown Reserves Act 1989 do not however receive automatic protection (NSW Department of Lands, 2008 & Scarfe, 2008). To aid in managing a reserve a board of management or reserve trust can be established which can provide the surfing community with a voice on matters concerning the site and development adjacent or within the reserve and develop a management plan to address environmental issues within the reserve and responsibilities associated with its management (Lennox Surfing Reserve, 2008).

Lennox National Surf Reserve

One reserve established is the Lennox National Surfing Reserve which was designated on the 16th of February 2008. Located south of Byron Bay and to the North of Ballina on the NSW coast The Lennox National Reserve encompasses a number of surf sites from point breaks to beach breaks (see Figures 5 and 6). In total the reserve spans approximately 7.5km of coastal water and has an area of 400ha (Lennox Surfing Reserve, 2008). Although this reserve is recognised by the NSW Department of Lands, there is currently no protection awarded to it and to date the trust board has not established a management plan to address existing or potential activities within the surfing reserve which may affect wave quality.

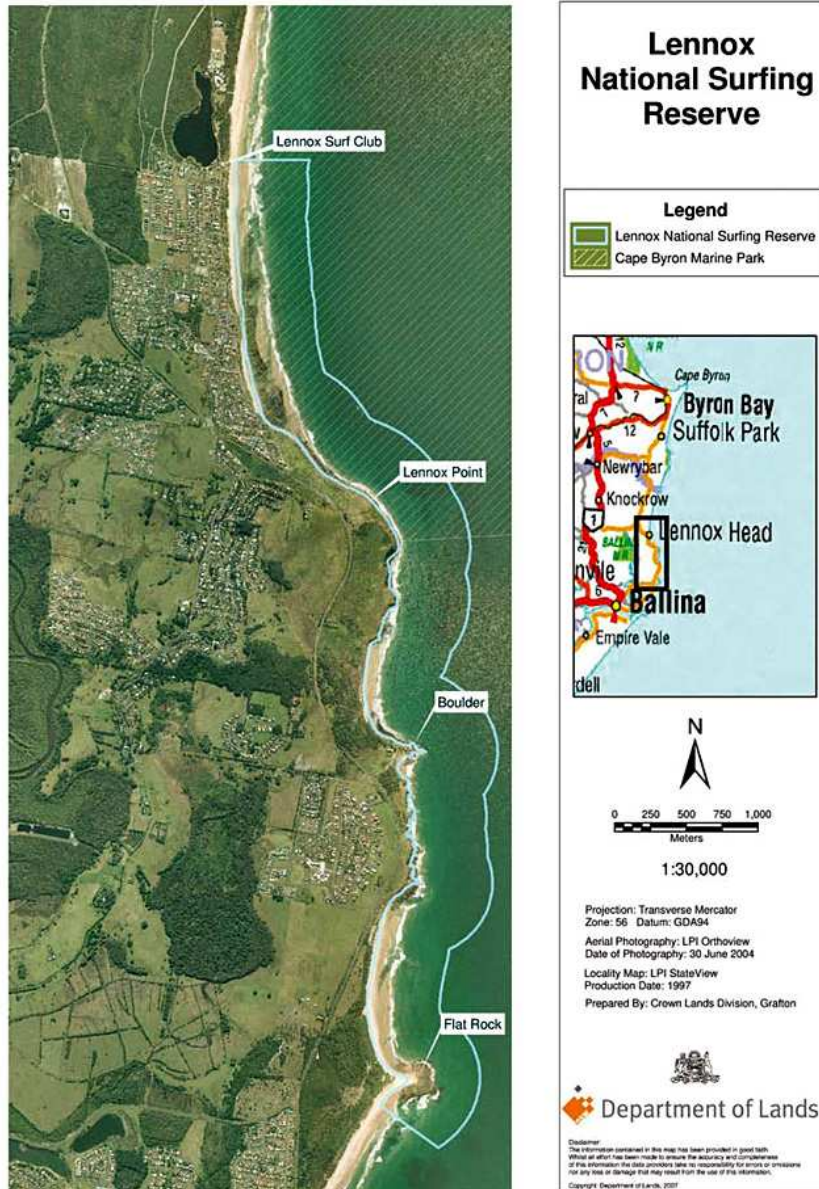


Figure 5: Map showing the boundaries of the Lennox National Surfing Reserve (Source: Lennox Surfing Reserve, 2008)



Figure 6: Aerial photograph showing Lennox Point in the centre and surf breaks further south in the background (Source: Lennox Surfing Reserve, 2008)

Issues and Lessons Learnt From Australia

A number of lessons can be learned from the National Surf Reserves scheme. Firstly the surf reserves have tended to be set up on an ad-hoc basis and initially lacked any formal incorporation into state planning documents. For instance according to Farmer and Short (2007) the first reserve at Maroubra was declared 'symbolically' and has yet to be awarded any legal protection. Notwithstanding the phrase "surfing reserve" 'tugs on the heartstrings and makes you puff up a little, can you imagine them building a marina or some other structure that would destroy the surf in a surfing reserve? I can't' (Lazarow, no date, unpagged). Along side this only breaks within NSW which have been designated as National Surfing Reserves to date have been recognised by State government. Note that there are also breaks of similar quality and significance to surfing in other States, which could require similar levels of recognition.

A positive note from as early as the Maroubra dedication in 2006 can be seen in the recognition and support of surfing reserves at the local level with backing and funding from the Randwick City Council to establish a 'walk of fame' commemorating successful local surfers and a plaque which recognises the reserve albeit symbolically (Farmer & Short, 2007 and Randwick City Council 2006). There has also been significant political

support for the National Surfing Reserves scheme which was commended in the Australian House of Parliament by the Environment Minister Peter Garrett who noted that surfing

'Is is as much a part of the growing up of young Australians and of our culture as is any other activity. As the sport of surfing has grown into a multimillion dollar business so too has the need to acknowledge the connection, the history and the culture of this activity... It (surfing) is an integral part of the Australian way of life... I take great pleasure and delight in recording for the House today the dedication of Maroubra Beach as a National Surfing Reserve.'

(Garrett, 2006, 114-115)

Political support was also noted by interview respondents as a key strength. One respondent noted the main strength of the Australian model is that it has attracted support at all levels of government (Pers. Com., 2008a).

The room for the establishment of a board of management or reserve trust in the Australian National Surfing Reserves scheme is another positive aspect of the Australian model. The establishment of a board of management, as noted above, has the potential to give surfers a stronger voice on projects which may impact wave quality at a surf reserve. However, to date, a board has not been tested with such issues and has not established any form of recognised management plan.

As Lazarow (no date) notes, while surfing reserves may be seen as a panacea for surfers to assist them in managing or maintaining surfing breaks, there is still significant uncertainty around the concept of what a reserve is, why one is needed, and who might benefit. Some reserves may be designated for the purpose of celebrating surfing, whilst others may be designated to protect and enhance surfing amenity. For instance the symbolic Maroubra Reserve clearly fits into the former category, whereas the Lennox Head reserve has been set up with more of a protectionist approach in mind given that it is partially located at large within the Cape Byron Marine Park. Other communities, as Lazarow (no date) notes, may want to first address pressing issues before going down the path of designating a reserve. As such in a number of locations local surfing

communities are weary of setting up a National Surfing Reserve. For instance in more remote locations communities have turned down the option of a surfing reserve on the concern that it may attract crowds and development thus potentially undermine the distinct qualities of the break (Lazarow, no date). In short, before promoting surfing reserves there has to be questions raised as to whether or not they are really needed and what purpose(s) they will serve in each setting.

Applicability in New Zealand

Unlike under the reserve status under the Crown Lands Act 1989 in Australia, a surfing reserve in New Zealand encompassing the seabed would not likely be established in a similar fashion under the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 given the purpose of foreshore and seabed reserves, as set out in s40, is for the purposed of acknowledging the exercise of Kaitiakitanga, that is practices in accordance with Tikanga Maori (RMA, s7). A surf reserve alone is beyond such scope and crown foreshore and seabed land and would be unlikely to gain reserve status under the Foreshore and Seabed Act. As Rennie (2008) notes there is no existing legal framework under which surfing reserves could be established given that they would be beyond the scope of Marine Reserves Act 1971 or other acts set up for conservation or recreational purposes.

It is considered by both SPS and SEA that the proposed NZCPS would provide a more robust path for the establishment of surf reserves at the regional level opposed to the ad-hoc nature of the establishment and recognition of Australian National Surfing Reserves of which is not formally adopted breaks outside NSW. Policy 20 of the proposed NZCPS is seen as having the potential to set a path to address New Zealand issues with a New Zealand solution (Pers. Com., 2008b). Put another way simply mimicking the Australian National Surfing Reserve Committees approach to designating reserves rings bells of caution.

Conclusion

In conclusion this chapter has provided an outline of the Australian National Surfing Reserves model which is the only existing way in which surf breaks are formally recognised and provided for. Critical feedback has been given on its strengths and weaknesses along with its applicability in New Zealand. Its strengths include that it has gained widespread support both politically at the national level and practically at the state and local levels. On a critical level the Australian model of National Surfing Reserves has little applicability in New Zealand given its inability to be included into existing reserves legislation. These matters will be further addressed in the following chapter.

Chapter Seven: How to Provide for Surfing as a Legitimate Activity in Regional Plans

Introduction

This chapter moves beyond an overview and critique and provides a range of pragmatic solutions for regional councils to provide for surfing as a legitimate activity. First the need for baseline information on surf breaks is discussed. Second scheduling of breaks is addressed. Third the concept of surfing reserves and its limited current applicability in New Zealand is addressed.

Baseline Information on Surf Breaks

Firstly there is a need to collect physical baseline data on breaks and their use. There is existing expertise within New Zealand to identify a range of important factors. This data could then be used as a baseline for consent applications and monitoring. Such information, as Scarfe (2008) notes, could include

1. The location of the surf spot and breaking waves
2. Information on the surfers frequenting breaks including skill level and seasonal variations in surfer numbers
3. Surfable days per year
4. Wave information such as wave height and swell direction
5. Wind patters
6. Tide patters
7. Oceanographic information such as sand size or bottom conditions

It is also vital to recognise the potential current and future threats to wave quality within the Region. For instance as has been discussed above in relation to the Taranaki Region, it faces different development pressures in the coastal environment than other regions do and different impacts on wave quality. The difference between regions is vivid. For example dredging in the Taranaki Region there has yet to be a major threat.

Meanwhile in the Waikato region there have been ongoing concerns regarding the potential impacts of future dredging on the Whangamata sand bar. There is also the need to identify that pressure on, or issues regarding to, surfing quality may vary within a region.

Swell corridors are also a vital consideration in reference to providing for wave quality and surfing given the potential for an increasing number or structures of CMA. In addition to being outside the existing scope of New Zealand reserves legislation, the Australian National Surf Reserves model has another key weakness in terms of its applicability New Zealand in that swell corridors are not recognised or provided for. In New Zealand however we have already seen the recognition of swell corridors. Importantly there is existing reference to swell corridors in the Taranaki Proposed Regional Policy Statement which has the potential to pave the way to further recognition of the importance of these to surf breaks and surfer throughout New Zealand.

Scheduling of Surf Breaks

Alongside baseline information, scheduling of breaks is a potential way in which to provide for wave quality and thus surfing. From the above discussion it is clear that Taranaki Regional Council, with pressure from SPS and New Plymouth Surf Riders has taken the a lead in recognising breaks within their boundaries by scheduling surf sites in the final draft of their Proposed Regional Policy Statement. Importantly this schedule includes a range of breaks which, depending on the conditions, are suited to a range of experience levels. As such there is an existing template to work from.

Such scheduling could be done in conjunction with local surfers and board rider clubs who often have extensive knowledge of breaks within regions. In addition there are existing sources which cover in detail the location of surf breaks in New Zealand (Morse & Brunskill, 2004). Scheduling would have the benefit of not only recognising breaks but could also help to raise awareness of surf breaks and their potential benefits outside of the surfing fraternity.

As Rennie (2008) notes scheduling of features has a long history with planning practitioners on land and has the potential to work in the CMA with surf sites. Rennie

(2008) recommends an approach at the regional level which would require significant surf breaks to be recognised as Areas of Significant Conservational Value. Again this form of scheduling although not as common at the regional level has a history at the district level, and is something that practicing planners are typically familiar with.

Surfing Reserves

In terms of the listed breaks in the Proposed New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement 2008 a form of surfing reserves are seen by many as the most applicable way of providing for them. Mainstream media is eagerly pointing to the potential for the sites to be recognised as national parks or National Reserves (Radio New Zealand, 2008b). However, there are practical limitations of such reserves in the Coastal Marine Area. Currently there is no room for the establishment of Reserves similar to those designated in Australia under the Crown Lands Act 1989. Any sea based reserve covering a surf break, for the purpose of providing for surfing, would be contrary to the purposes of both the Marine Reserves 1971 or the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 as the latter of which focuses on the practice of Kaitiakitanga in accordance with Tikanga Maori; meanwhile, the former of which focuses on the conservation of biodiversity. In short as mentioned by Rennie (2008) and Skellern (2008), under existing legislation there is little, if any, room for the establishment of surfing reserves.

Conclusion

In conclusion although the Australian concept of National Surfing Reserves is, under current New Zealand reserves legislation not a workable concept, there are a number of ways in which surf breaks and thus surfing can be provided for in regional plans. The scheduling of surf breaks and the recognition of swell corridors are for instance key ways to provide for wave quality. However in order to schedule breaks firstly baseline information should be gathered on factors which add to wave quality and their use.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion & Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter sums up the key findings of this research, illustrates possible avenues for future study and offers a range of recommendations to provide for surfing as a legitimate activity.

Conclusion

It is evident that from this research surfing has often been portrayed by dominant discourses or views in society as being associated with antisocial and irrational behaviour and having little value to society. In short surfing has had an unfortunate history and public profile.

Despite the above, there is significant value in surfing. The surfing industry has long boasted significant revenue in excess of \$US8 billion annually. Alongside this a case can be made for the value of recreational surfing which now includes increasing numbers of adult and senior surfers, demonstrating surfing is not just for the young. Lazarow (2007) has illustrated, that the value of surf trips in one New Zealand study is up to \$NZ42 or \$US32 per trip. A case can also be made for the intangible values of surfing including that it can bring a diverse range of age groups together and offer a release from the pressures of every day life.

Despite the value of surfing, it is evident that on a national level surfing has only recently made its way onto planning's agenda with Policy 20 of the proposed NZCPS which seeks the protection of six breaks of national importance. Meanwhile at the regional level, and in particular reference to Taranaki, surfers concerns are becoming recognised and integrated into regional statutory planning documents as sites of regional significance.

Australia is often seen as being ahead of New Zealand in terms of recognising and providing for surfing and surf breaks. Much of this is due to the Australian National Surfing Reserves model which has gained political support at a range of levels and is the only existing way in which surf breaks are explicitly and formally recognised and

provided for (Pers. Com., 2008a, Pers. Com., 2008b). However on a critical level, currently there has not been the establishment of any management plans to identify issues within a reserve boundary or an area adjoining it. Moreover the surfing reserves concept currently has limited, if any, applicability under existing New Zealand reserves legislation including the Marine Reserves Act 1971, the Reserves Act 1977, and provisions of the Seabed and Foreshore Act 2004. In short New Zealand has few statutory instruments when looking to protect surf breaks.

Given the limited current applicability of Australian style National Surfing Reserves in New Zealand a number of potential solutions have been identified to provide for surfing or more specifically wave quality. To address the concern that little is known about surfers and the spots they frequent, a range of breaks within any given region could be identified in conjunction with board rider clubs. Alongside this base line information on each break could be collected including potential threats to the break and a number of physical properties such as bottom conditions, swell angles and wind conditions. Much of this information is readily available in a surfing guide produced by Morse and Brunskill (2004). Finally these breaks could then be scheduled in a Regional Plan and integrated with policy, as has been the case in the Taranaki Region.

Recommendations

From the research findings it is recommended that regional councils look at recognising and providing for surfing as a legitimate activity by using some, or preferably all, of the following approaches;

1. Before provision is made for surfing surf breaks require recognition and identification
2. Base line information is required on the characteristics of surf breaks and their use
3. To provide for surfing surf sites can scheduled in regional plans as recreational areas of rare and significant conservation value and integrated into regional plan policies and rules.

With such an approach surf breaks have the potential to be recognised in planning and decision making at the regional level.

Future Research Opportunities

This research has taken place at a time when the topic is of relative youth. As noted in the research within planning surf breaks and surfing have only recently been integrated into regional planning documents and national policy. Thus simply the timing of any future research would enable a more critical and reflective approach. I understand that a current practitioner intends to carry out his PhD on a topic vary similar to mine at Auckland University starting in 2009. In short the findings and basis of this research may well have been different in a future temporal context.

Given the limited focus of this research being on the Coastal Marine Area and Regional Plans there is room for addressing a range of additional matters. For one future research on providing for surfing which spans the land and sea divide would provide a more holistic approach and extended breadth.

There is also the possibility to address future avenues for surfing reserves as the concept is not completely redundant; however, new legislation would be required in order to provide for surfing reserves.

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