

News Release

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Minister for Urban Development, Planning and the City of Adelaide

Hon John Rau
Deputy Premier
Attorney-General
Minister for Justice
Minister for Tourism
Minister for Food Marketing

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SURFING WORLD TOUR COMES TO KANGAROO ISLAND

In an historic first, South Australia will host some of the world's top surfers this November after winning the rights to host an event on the surfing World Tour.

The inaugural Kangaroo Island Pro will be held at one of Australia's most picturesque beaches, Vivonne Bay, from November 4 – 9, 2011. Former world champion Mark Occhilupo is already confirmed as a starter and he will be joined by up to 150 top male surfers from around the world.

The Kangaroo Island Pro will be the first time South Australia has hosted an ASP World Tour surfing competition – the highest rated surfing event SA can currently attract on the ASP World Tour. Presented by Sealink, the event is expected to inject about \$2.5 million into the local economy in its first year.

Tourism Minister John Rau said the event would showcase Kangaroo Island and South Australia to the world.

“The Kangaroo Island Pro will provide a fantastic opportunity to promote Kangaroo Island as a wonderful surfing and tourism destination, and it will also bring a new market of tourists to this amazing island,” he said.

The six-star ASP World Tour surfing event will attract prize money of \$US145,000, the highest amount possible in its first year.

The Kangaroo Island Pro will be highly competitive with professional surfers outside of the top 32 participating in order to secure points to advance their rankings into the top group.

Surfing Australia will look at building a festival around the Kangaroo Island Pro, with details to be launched at a later date.

Camping facilities for about 5000 people will be available at the festival and Sealink will be offering packages to the event.

Competing with Mark Occhilupo at the event will be South Australia's Dion Atkinson, who is the top ranked surfer in the State and placed 39th in the world and current South Australian State champion, Teale Vanner, who is from Kangaroo Island.

“Kangaroo Island is the perfect fit for this event, as it has vast amounts of unspoiled wilderness and wildlife and beautiful beaches that produce the surf required to hold a high ranking event,” Mr Rau said.

“Visitors will be able to relax in the natural beauty of Kangaroo Island while watching some of the world’s best surfers compete.”

The South Australian Government, through the South Australian Tourism Commission’s major events arm, Events South Australia, is providing seed funding for the establishment of the event, which will be managed by Surfing South Australia.

Surfing South Australia Chief Executive, Steve Reddy, said the organization was “extremely excited to host a World Tour Surfing event on Kangaroo Island”.

“This event will provide amazing development opportunities for South Australia’s aspiring professional surfers, current professional surfers, judges, officials and volunteers.

“Surfing SA believes that this event will become an iconic Australian surfing event of which all South Australians can be proud.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The ASP (Association of Surfing Professionals) World Tour consists of the top 32 men (plus two wild cards) and the top 17 women competitive surfers in the world. This is the pinnacle of achievement for any aspiring surfer. The winner of this tour becomes the world champion.

To enter the top 32 in the World Tour, surfers need to compete in the World Tour Star series which ranges in points and prize money from one star to six star prime. The Kangaroo Island Pro is a Six Star event which will attract as many as 150 of the world’s highest ranked surfers.

MARK OCCHILUPO

Mark Occhilupo, was born in 1966 and grew up surfing in Cronulla. He started competing as a professional in the 1980s, winning a World Title in 1999. He is one of the most recognised surfers in the world. Now retired from the World Tour, he is heavily involved in the media, including being a presenter on Fuel TV. He is currently a competitor on *Dancing with the Stars*.

TEALE VANNER

Teale Vanner is South Australia’s second highest ranked surfer and is from Kangaroo Island. Teale is the current South Australian State Champion and former Australian Junior Champion. He is also surfing on the World Tour and is looking to improve his ranking.

DION ATKINSON

Dion Atkinson is South Australia’s top ranked surfer. He is currently placed 39th in the world, and needs to move up just seven spots to make it to the top 32.

For regular updates about the Kangaroo Island Pro visit www.kangarooislandpro.com.au