



Hon. George Souris M.P
Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Hospitality and Racing
Minister for the Arts

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 10 February 2012

AUSTRALIAN OPEN OF SURFING TAKES OVER MANLY BEACH WITH SURF, SKATE AND MUSIC ACTION

NSW Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris, today officially launched the inaugural Australian Open of Surfing, set to take over Manly Beach from February 11 – 19...a nine day festival of surf, skate and music action.

“The NSW Government through Destination NSW is proud to be a foundation partner with sponsors Hurley and Billabong, in the Australian Open of Surfing, a new, global event for Sydney and NSW.

“This event brings the best of surf, skate and music to the Harbour City, embracing youth culture and promoting the unique energy of Sydney’s outdoor lifestyle.

“Locals, interstate and international visitors are going to be able to experience an event like never before, including 9 days of free entertainment featuring the world’s best surfers, skaters and live music,” Minister Souris said.

The event follows the enormous global success of the U.S. Open of Surfing, a week-long youth-focused surfing, skate, BMX, fashion and lifestyle event held annually during the summer in Huntington Beach, California.

Bob Hurley, Chairman and Founder of Hurley, event co-sponsor, said: "We are super excited going into the event.

"Never before have two great Surf Brands partnered for the benefit of the athletes, the sport and the consumer.

"This is a significant innovation in our sport. Manly will provide a fantastic venue for the athletes and the artists to showcase their magic," Mr Hurley said.

Derek O'Neill, CEO of co-sponsor Billabong International, said older professional surfers still talk about the inspiration they gained from seeing their heroes at live surfing in events in Sydney back in the 1980s.

"I'm looking forward to this event being the inspiration for the next generation of surfers and skateboarders or, for that matter, anyone who aspires to perform on an international stage.

"I think the people of Sydney will be surprised by the size and energy of the event and it is only through a collaborative approach from the surfing industry, support sponsors and the NSW Government that we can deliver something on this scale," Mr O'Neill said.

Member for Manly Mike Baird said Manly played host to the inaugural World Surfing Championship in 1964 and has a rich cultural history of more than a century of surfing.

“I was delighted to help secure Manly as the Sydney home of this new major event. It will re-affirm Manly’s position on the global surfing circuit.

“As the Member for Manly I can confirm Manly has the best beaches the country has to offer and a vibrant food and wine scene.

“I’m looking forward to a week of action and the imminent arrival of one of the biggest weekends Manly has seen in a long time with DJs and bands such as The Living End and Sneaky Sound System performing.”

Destination NSW CEO Sandra Chipchase, said the vision along with its partners Hurley and Billabong is for the event to be bold, ambitious and daring just like Sydney.

“Partnering with global brands like Hurley and Billabong has allowed us to look far beyond the traditional boundaries of a surfing event to create a significant visitor experience in Manly.

“We are leveraging the event to the benefit of NSW by developing travel packages and promoting the event to key markets, notably the West Coast of the USA and New Zealand.

“We estimate that in the first year the event will drive up to \$6 million in new money into NSW and attract more than 100,000 spectators,” she said.

Mr Souris said the NSW Government was committed to pursuing and securing major events for NSW and this was a great example of that commitment.

“We thank the Manly Council for its support and we look forward to working in partnership with them and other partners to make this event a global success.”

The action begins at Manly Beach on February 11 when the world’s best junior surfers battle it out at the Australian Open of Surfing Pro Junior.