



# TIM OWEN MP

## MEMBER FOR NEWCASTLE

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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Tuesday 15 November 2011

#### **NEWCASTLE TO SHINE IN GLOBAL SURFING SPOTLIGHT**

Today at the new Surfhouse at Merewether Beach, Local Member for Newcastle, Tim Owen announced Surfest 2012 has successfully achieved ranking as a six-star World Qualifying Series Men's and Women's event, as part of the Australian Surfing Professionals (ASP) World Tour.

Mr Owen said this is great news for Newcastle and takes Surfest to a new level.

"On behalf of the NSW Government, through Destination NSW, I am extremely proud to have played a role in ensuring continued support for such a prestigious event in 2012, which showcases the best of NSW's surf and coastline.

"It is wonderful to see big sponsors have joined to support the event and help it achieve six-star status amongst the World Qualifying Series.

"Destination NSW's support of the event includes funding for a seven day webcast; two days of live streaming on FUEL TV over the final weekend; a one hour documentary to be distributed internationally and the development of an iPhone app.

"This will promote Newcastle and the NSW Coastline to surfing fans across the globe.

"Over the years Surfest has already attracted some of the world's top surfers and now with the new six-star status we can expect the event to become bigger and better," he said.

Four-time world champion surfer Mark Richardson said the upgrade of the event rating will attract the world's best surfers to Newcastle.

"And now to host a six-star men's and a six-star women's event at my home break, Merewether Beach, is unreal," he said.

Surfest is a key international surfing event on the NSW Events Calendar, driving tourism, attracting investment and generating economic benefit for the local community and the State.

NSW Minister for Tourism and Major Events, George Souris said Tim Owen was instrumental in securing funding for the event which has ensured the six-star rating.

"Strengthening major events like Surfest forms a key part of the NSW Government's strategy to rebuild the NSW economy.

"Surfest is a world class event for participants, visitors and locals, and a great opportunity to enjoy Newcastle's beach culture on the NSW coastline.

"I strongly encourage surf lovers to experience Surfest and all the great attractions on offer in Newcastle and the Hunter region," Minister Souris said.

Surfest 2012 runs from 7 - 18 March, 2012.

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