

Maroubra Beach: National Surfing Reserve

27 March 2006 Mr GARRETT (Kingsford Smith) (8.59 p.m.)—I rise to draw to the attention of the House a special ceremony that was held on 19 March this year, which was the dedication of Maroubra as a National Surfing Reserve. This dedication followed meetings by a national reference group comprising officials of the New South Wales state government, Surf Life Saving New South Wales, tracks magazine, the National Parks Association of New South Wales and, in particular, Professor Andy Short from the University of Sydney and Brad Farmer, convener of the group whose work in progressing the nomination—I commend his work to the House—is outstanding. National Surfing Reserves recognise sites of cultural and historic significance in Australian surf culture. The subsequent support of Randwick council, the local community and Surfing NSW, of which I am proud to say I am a patron, meant that the nomination of Maroubra, which identified Maroubra Beach as the traditional home of the Bidjigal people integral to the historic, environmental, spiritual and cultural heritage of Australian surfing, was able to proceed. **Maroubra Beach was eminently qualified to be nominated in this way and to receive the nomination and be dedicated.**

People have been surfing in the Maroubra area and on the beach since the early 1900s, which is after the people from the Dharwahal nation would have surfed there. One of the first surf lifesaving clubs in Australia, it was formed in 1907, and we believe it was also the site of the first Australian surf carnival, which of course has gone on to become not only a great spectacle but a repository of the skill and dedication of the volunteers of the surf lifesaving movement. Some 20,000 rescues have been performed in and around the Maroubra Beach since then.

In 1963, Australia's first surfboard riding club was formed. At Maroubra, the beach and community are intertwined. Maroubra has produced a number of champions over the years; others surf for the fun of it. At the dedication ceremony a Maroubra Beach Surfing Walk of Fame was also launched. Those recognised were CJ 'Snowy' McAlister, Bernard 'Midget' Farrelly, Robert 'Nat' Young and local and legendary waterman and iron-man champion Barry Rodgers.

Surf lifesaving clubs and the various board riding clubs are an extremely important part of the Maroubra community. This includes the Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club, the South Maroubra Surf Life Saving Club, the nippers and, from their early inceptions, the Maroubra Surf Riders Club, the Maroubra Surfers Association and associated board riders clubs. Those activities and those organisations continue their activities to this day.

Whether surf champions we may or may not be or occasional visitors to the beach, most Australians live within spitting distance of the mighty ocean. Our coastline stretches as a zone of beauty, community and productivity, and the surfing experience, sometimes referred to as 'going up north again' or 'going south again', 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 of surfing. It is an integral part of the Australian way of life.**

The dedication of Maroubra Beach as a National Surfing Reserve is the first dedication of its kind for a beach in New South Wales and only the second in Australia to Bells Beach. I take great pleasure and delight in recording for the House today the dedication of Maroubra Beach as a National Surfing Reserve.