

7.2 LMM 27/08/2024 - BRINGING THE WORLD SURF LEAGUE TO NEWCASTLE

MOTION:

That City of Newcastle:

1. Notes that the World Surf League (WSL) Challenger Series is one of the most prestigious surfing competitions in the world, drawing top-tier athletes and thousands of spectators to their events.
2. Recognises that Surfest is a truly iconic event to Newcastle, and this year celebrated its 38th Anniversary as the largest festival of surfing in the Southern Hemisphere.
3. Notes that Surfest Newcastle, with support from City of Newcastle, has been in discussions with the WSL to upgrade Surfest to Challenger Series status, which will further elevate its profile on the international stage, attracting top surfers from around the world and enhancing the prestige of Newcastle as a premier surfing destination.
4. Notes that upgrading this series represents a significant opportunity for Newcastle and the broader Hunter region, promising to bring substantial economic, cultural, and tourism benefits.
5. Recognises Newcastle has a proven track record in drawing massive crowds to major events, most recently with the record breaking Women's State of Origin, and in November when more than 100,000 people flocked to the city to enjoy the spectacular Newcastle Air Show.
6. Support, and advocate to the NSW Government, The WSL in collaboration with Surfest, to secure the Challenger series event in Newcastle for 2025 and beyond. Acknowledging the strong advocacy and interest in bringing the Challenger series competition to Newcastle, by Surfest founder and Freeman of the City Warren Smith and thank him for his decades of dedicated service delivering this iconic event for our community.

ATTACHMENTS:

Winners Ferreira and Moore say they've loved Newcastle as the World Surf League carnival bids farewell

By [Ian Kirkwood](#)

Updated April 11 2021 - 9:59am, first published April 10 2021 - 5:30pm



Pictures by Herald photographer Jonathan Carroll, reporter Ian Kirkwood and the World Surf League's Matt Dunbar and Cait Miers

IT was a COVID-driven one-off event but the Newcastle Cup has gone so well that there were fingers crossed all over Merewether this afternoon that the World Surf League Championship Tour could somehow return to Newcastle.

Four time world champion Mark Richards, on stage for the presentation to winners Italo Ferreira and Carissa Moore and runners up Gabriel Medina and Isabella Nichols, said afterwards that the elements had come together to make for a special event. Richards said Merewether had turned on contestable waves and the feedback from the surfers was that they had enjoyed the competition and been blown away by the reception from Newcastle in general, and from the crowds on the beach.

The Newcastle Cup was sponsored by Rip Curl and the company's co-founder, Doug "Claw" Warbrick had come down from his Gold Coast home to watch the event, and his

posse of Rip Curl sponsored surfers.

On the men's side, Rip Curl backs Medina, home-town giant killer Morgan Cibilic, Conner Coffin and Owen Wright, with Wright's sister Tyler, and Brisa Hennessy, on the women's.

WSL regional manager Andrew Stark was another keen observer, with the privately owned business working closely with the NSW government on this contest and the next event on the tour, the Rip Curl Narrabeen Classic, starting on Friday.

Newcastle Deputy Lord Mayor Declan Clausen joined Richards, Warbrick, the WSL's tour head Jessi Miley-Dyer and lead commentator Joe Turpel on the presentation stage after the event, as the top four surfers received their trophies.

Lord Mayor Nuatali Nelmes told the *Herald* afterwards that the event had "showcased Merewether and Newcastle to a global audience of more than 10 million people".