

# Media Release

**The Hon Martin Pakula MP**

Minister for Industry Support and Recovery

Minister for Trade

Minister for Business Precincts

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events

Minister for Racing



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## RIP CURL PRO RIDING BACK TO BELLS BEACH IN 2022 – AND BEYOND

Victoria's world-famous Rip Curl Pro will return to iconic Bells Beach in 2022 under a new three-year agreement secured by the Andrews Labor Government.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula announced the deal with the World Surf League to continue the tradition at the renowned break near Torquay following the cancellation of this year's event due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

The key leg in the WSL World Tour will return to its traditional home from 2022 and until at least 2024.

The Rip Curl Pro is a key date on Victoria's annual major events calendar around the Easter weekend, having first been staged at Bells Beach in 1961.

The competition brings the world's best surfers and many visitors to the Surf Coast, helping drive businesses and jobs in the area and boost the local economy. Past winners have included Australian legends such as Mick Fanning, Layne Beachley, Stephanie Gilmore and Joel Parkinson.

The impact of the pandemic and the need to protect the health of Victorians meant that it was not possible to guarantee dates for the Rip Curl Pro in 2021.

Given the priority of accommodating returning Australians in hotel quarantine, the Government was unable to provide the WSL with a guarantee regarding quarantine places to enable the event to proceed at Easter.

The WSL subsequently sought a guarantee that competitors and officials would be able to enter Victoria from New South Wales regardless of the COVID infection circumstances that might prevail at that time. Based on public health advice, the Government was not in a position to provide an undertaking of that nature.

The Rip Curl Pro is supported through the Labor Government's Major Events Fund, which brings marquee events to Victoria and helps showcase everything our state has to offer.

The Major Events Fund was bolstered by \$152 million across four years in the *Victorian Budget 2020/21*, part of more than \$500 million in extra funding support provided for the tourism industry.

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Martin Pakula

*"The Rip Curl Pro is known around the world and loved at home – and it's great that it will be returning to Bells Beach in 2022 and for at least two more years after that."*

*"No one is happy that we can't host the event this year, but the public health advice was clear and protecting the health of Victorians is non-negotiable."*

### Quotes attributable to World Surf League Asia-Pacific General Manager Andrew Stark

*"It's disappointing that circumstances will not allow us to surf at Bells Beach this year, but we are excited that this new three-year agreement will ensure the continuation of one of surfing's most historical events."*

*"We thank the Victorian Government for their understanding throughout this incredibly challenging time and look forward to the Bell being rung for a long time to come."*

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