



Sydney University Press

Media release – Beaches of the Australian coast

A series of seven books covering every beach on the Australian coast are now available from Sydney University Press. The books are a result of a 14 year project to document every one of Australia's 10 685 beaches. The Australian Beach Safety and Management Program (ABSMP) led by the University of Sydney's Andy Short has generated a GIS-based database on each beach system, including its locations, dimensions, beach types, wave and tide conditions. Information on associated headlands, backing dunes and drainage, together with usage data such as level of access, parking and basic facilities is also included. Based on wave, tide and local conditions, each beach is also given a beach hazards rating, together with comments on its suitability for swimming and surfing. This information is used by project partner Surf Life Saving Australia to assist in beach management.

In undertaking a project of this magnitude Short accessed the beaches by land, sea and air. Most of the eastern, southern and western beaches are accessible by vehicle. However across the top end and in some parts of the south the University boat 'CSU 3' was used to access the beaches, including all beaches between Cairns and Broome. The Wollongong-based Australian Aerial Patrol was used to fly and photograph every beach on the coast, as well as several major islands. In all 10 685 mainland beaches and another 833 on 30 inhabited islands were documented. Over 3000 beach sand samples were collected and analysed.

Professor Short has written one book for each state/region, with New South Wales the first to be published in 1993, followed by Victoria in 1996, Queensland, 2000, South Australia 2001, Western Australia 2005, Tasmania 2006, and the final "Beaches of the Northern Australia Coast: The Kimberley, Northern Territory and Cape York" due out this March. Short is also working on a second edition of the NSW book for release later this year.

The description of each beach covers its name, location, physical characteristics, access and facilities, with specific comments on its surf zone character and physical hazards, as well as its suitability for swimming, surfing and fishing. Based on the physical characteristics each beach is rated in terms of the level of beach hazards from the least hazardous rated 1 (safest) to the most hazardous 10 (least safe). The seven books total over 2500 pages and contain over 2000 original figures which include numerous photographs, which illustrate all beach types, as well as beach maps and photographs of all beaches patrolled by surf lifesavers and many other popular beaches.

The ABSMP approach to beach management is now being used by in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Hawaii, Brazil, Dubai and Israel to improve beach knowledge, management and safety.

Latest release - Beaches of the Western Australian coast: Eucla to Roebuck Bay

By Professor Andrew Short

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Price: \$A59.95 plus postage

More information

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