

MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 18th February, 2026

Byron Bay, NSW



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BRIGHTSKY AUSTRALIAN PRO ADAPTIVE SURFING CHAMPIONSHIPS SET TO TAKE OVER BYRON BAY THIS MARCH

From 22–29 March 2026, Australia’s leading adaptive surfers will gather in Byron Bay for a landmark week of elite competition, inclusion and global sporting inspiration — presented by Forward Ability Support.

Australia’s premier adaptive surfing event returns to one of the country’s most iconic coastlines, delivering an eight-day celebration of world-class competition, community engagement and inclusive ocean access.

Firmly established as the nation’s leading adaptive surfing championship, the BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surf Championships attract Australia’s top athletes alongside international contenders, with growing recognition from sporting bodies, media and global audiences.

As momentum builds toward the Brisbane 2032 Paralympic Games, the Championships are playing an increasingly important role in shaping the national conversation around adaptive sport pathways, high-performance opportunity and the future inclusion of surfing on the Elite Sport World Stage.

The 2026 Championships will once again showcase some of the world’s most accomplished adaptive surfers, combining elite athletic performance with powerful personal stories that continue to captivate national and international audiences.

Australian adaptive surfing pioneer Mark ‘Mono’ Stewart, recently inducted into the NSW Hall of Champions, is set to headline the event once more. A multi-time Australian and world champion, Stewart’s career spans decades of competitive success and advocacy, helping to pave the way for adaptive surfing’s recognition as an elite sport.

He will be joined by one of the sport’s most exciting next-generation talents, Kai Colless — the event’s youngest competitor and a powerful symbol of the future of adaptive surfing. As part of the emerging wave of para-athletes redefining the sport, Kai represents the strength, skill and determination of the next generation rising through the ranks on the international stage.

Together, the field reflects the depth, diversity and elite calibre now defining adaptive surfing globally.

A Flexible, Athlete-First Competition Format

Running from 22–29 March, the Championships are designed to prioritise athlete safety, fairness and performance by allowing organisers to chase the best possible surf conditions.

The event operates under a mobile beach format, with permits allowing competition to run from The Wreck through to The Pass, with event infrastructure set up and packed down daily. An allocated lay day within the schedule provides further flexibility around swell and weather conditions.

From 25–29 March, the BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surf Championships will be broadcast via daily live webcasts, delivering real-time access to elite adaptive surfing for audiences across Australia and around the world.

A Destination Event for Byron Bay

With its unique blend of elite sport, community engagement and coastal culture, the Championships have become a major drawcard for Byron Bay and the Northern Rivers, welcoming athletes, families, volunteers and spectators from across Australia and overseas.

The event officially opens with a Street Parade and Opening Ceremony on Sunday 22 March at 3pm, setting the tone for an eight-day celebration of sport, inclusion and connection — both in and out of the water.

Community at the Heart of the Event

Community participation remains central to the Championships. The Royal Rehab Group Come & Try Day, brought to you by Macquarie Sports, will run during the event from 10am–2pm, providing free, fully supported access to the ocean for people of all abilities — including first-time participants.

Designed to remove barriers and create genuine pathways into surfing, the session offers a safe, inclusive and professionally supported environment where participants can experience the ocean in a structured and empowering setting.

A full program of on-beach and off-beach activations will also run throughout the event, including athlete appearances, sponsor experiences and community-focused events, with several evening activations currently in development.

Building the Future of Adaptive Surfing

As adaptive surfing continues to gain global recognition, the BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surf Championships are increasingly recognised as a critical platform for the sport's future — from grassroots participation through to elite performance and international pathways.

With strong partner support, growing media interest and a proven ability to deliver world-class competition, the 2026 Championships are set to be the most significant edition yet, reinforcing Australia's leadership in adaptive surfing and its role in shaping the sport's future on the road to Brisbane 2032.

The Championships deliver meaningful outcomes across participation, visibility and high-performance opportunity — positioning partners at the forefront of adaptive sport in Australia.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

For media opportunities, interviews, photography requests or additional information, please contact:
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EVENT FACT SHEET

Event: BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surf Championships 2026.

Presented by Forward Ability Support

Dates: 22–29 March 2026

Location: Byron Bay, NSW

Format: Mobile beach event (The Wreck to The Pass)

Broadcast: Live daily webcast during Pro event (25–29 March)



EVENT OVERVIEW

The 2026 BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surfing Championships return to Byron Bay from 22–29 March 2026, delivering an eight-day showcase of elite adaptive surfing, national titles, community engagement and inclusive ocean access.

Now firmly established as Australia’s premier adaptive surfing event, the Championships attract leading national and international athletes while providing a powerful platform for advocacy, accessibility and the future growth of the sport.

With momentum building toward the Brisbane 2032 Paralympic Games, the event continues to showcase adaptive surfing as a high-performance, globally relevant discipline.

The event week includes the BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surfing Championships, as well as the Buildcare Australian Surfing Para Titles, combining national honours with international-level competition.

EVENT DATES & STRUCTURE

Friday 20 March

Athlete Classification

Byron Bay Services Club

Saturday 21 March

Athlete Classification

Byron Bay Services Club

Sunday 22 March

Official Street Parade & Event Opening – 3:00pm

Main Event Site, Lawson Street, Byron Bay

Monday 23 March

The Buildcare Australian Surfing Para Titles 2026

Main Event Site, Byron Bay

Tuesday 24 March

The Buildcare Australian Surfing Para Titles 2026

Main Event Site, Byron Bay

Wednesday 25 March

BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surfing Championships 2026

Competition Day 1 | Live Webcast Begins

Main Event Site, Byron Bay

Thursday 26 March

BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surfing Championships 2026

Competition Day 2 | Live Webcast

Main Event Site, Byron Bay

Friday 27 March

BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surfing Championships 2026
Competition Day 3 | Live Webcast
Main Event Site, Byron Bay

Saturday 28 March

BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surfing Championships 2026
Competition Day 4 | Live Webcast
Main Event Site, Byron Bay

Sunday 29 March

BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surfing Championships 2026
Finals Day | Live Webcast
Official Presentations – 5:00pm
Byron Bay Services Club

Community Program Run Daily

The Royal Rehab Group Come & Try Day, brought to you by Macquarie Sports, will run during the event from 10am–2pm daily, providing free, supported access to the ocean for people of all abilities.

Please Note: The schedule is subject to change based on surf conditions. Daily running times and beach locations will be confirmed according to conditions.

About BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surf Championships 22–29 March 2026

Australia's premier international adaptive surfing event, held annually in Byron Bay, New South Wales. Launched in 2024, the Championships marked the first international adaptive surfing contest held on Australian shores and form part of the Association of Adaptive Surfing Professionals (AASP) World Tour. Established under the leadership of six-time World Adaptive Surfing Champion Mark "Mono" Stewart, the event was created to bring elite global competition to Australia. Since its inception, the Championships have attracted athletes from more than 17 countries and feature nine classification divisions spanning physical disabilities, limb difference and vision impairment. The event incorporates athlete classification, daily community Come & Try programs, the Buildcare Australian Para Surfing Titles delivered under Surfing Australia's national framework, and the international Pro division. The Championships contribute to national and international athlete pathways, including selection toward The Irukandjis and representation at the ISA World Para Surfing Championships. Presented by Forward Ability Support and supported by major national partners, the event continues to position Australia as a global leader in adaptive ocean sport.

AUSTRALIAN PARA SURFING TITLES 22–24 March 2026

The Buildcare Australian Surfing Para Titles Presented by Siblings Care 2026, will take place from 22–24 March in Byron Bay, officially crowning Australia's 2026 national champions. Delivered under Surfing Australia's national competition framework, the Titles form a key component of the official selection pathway for athletes aiming to qualify for The Irukandjis ahead of the 2026 ISA World Para Surfing Championships. The Australian Para Surfing Titles sit within the broader BrightSky Australian Pro Adaptive Surf Championships, presented by Forward Ability Support — aligning national championship competition with international-level adaptive surfing and expanded community programming. The week continues with the Australian Pro Adaptive Surf Championships (25–29 March), featuring elite international competition and live webcast coverage.

