



# Taking pride in being true blue

## Rabbit rides his own wave of euphoria

WAYNE "Rabbit" Bartholomew answered like a typical surfer when asked his reaction to receiving an Order of Australia Medal in the Australia Day Honours.

"Mate, I'm just really, really stoked," the Gold Coast surfing legend said.

"I read the honours list every year and just to see your name there is like 'wow!' It's a bit surreal. It's not something a surfer expects to see."

Bartholomew, 54, was awarded the OAM for services to surfing as a competitor, administrator and mentor.

He was also recognised for his contribution to the environment through support for a range of coastal conservation groups.

Gold Coast-born and raised Bartholomew was one of the pioneers of professional surfing in the mid

1970s. In 1978, he won the third world professional championship.

After retiring from the pro tour in the late 1980s, Bartholomew went on to become a national surfing coach.

He was instrumental in relocating the sport's powerbase from California to Coolangatta as head of the Association of Surfing Professionals.

Bartholomew has also been an active coastal environmental campaigner.

He has served with organisations including the Groups Against Sewage Pollution and the Surfers Against Nature's Destruction, and been a leader in the fight to restore the sand-choked Kirra Point to its former glory.

He is also an elder of champion Gold Coast board riding club Snapper Rocks and has mentored some of the area's top young surfers. A new generation of

Bartholomews – his sons Jaggar, 7, and Keo, 5 – are now carving up the waves at Snapper.

**Greg Stoltz**



**Rabbit Bartholomew and sons**