



Academic Session: Topic 1. Surf Sustainability 13 February 2020
Gold Coast Campus - Southern Cross University - Building C,
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Poster: Surf Sustainability in Rote Island, Indonesia

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The Rapid succession of surf tourism developments in unprepared communities leads to unplanned, uncontrolled, and unsustainable surf tourism. Surf-break crowding greatly impacts the surf tourist satisfaction, the flow of surf tourism, and the natural ecosystems, provoking resource conflicts with social, economic and environmental implications. This empirical study applied the surf tourism destination governance (STDG) framework (Mach & Ponting, 2018) to analyze the ways in which 'conduct is conducted' at the surf-breaks of Rote Island, Indonesia, where a small community of



experienced surfers, mainly Australia expats used to enjoy the Rote's uncrowded world-class waves, such as Bo'a and T-Land, at least until the First Billabong Rote Open Indonesian Surfing Competition hosted in 2010. The surf tourism boom started in 2015 with the offering of daily flights to Rote Island that received more than 6

thousand tourists in 2018. Data from 28 in-depth interviews with all stakeholders shows that among the STDG framework's three different informal governance regimes that conduct behavior at surf-breaks (sovereign, disciplinary, and neoliberal), the disciplinary governance has been the predominant regime at Rote Island. Expats and local surfers know each other, so the remaining order comes from the fear of deviance from social norms like the local surf code. The surf governance challenge lies in the fact that most surf tourists are not attached to the local community and are more competitive and focused on getting the most out of their surf trip to Rote. The intense crowding is triggering the sovereign governance regime in form of overt localism.
