



**WAYS READ THE OCEAN:** Josh Sherwell and Andy Lister check the surf at Maroochydore.

PHOTO: JOHN MCCUTCH

**SURF GUIDE: PART 2**

# Read ocean, then head out

Learning to spot a rip and tell what winds and tides will do to the surf are basic skills

**Robbie and Carlene Sherwell**  
of **XL Surfing Academy**

LEARNING to surf involves much more than just reading the waves. Numerous conditions and factors must be taken into account before each session. Which beach will have the best waves at which tide? Which direction is the swell coming from? How does the wind affect

the waves? How can I tell where the rips are? Learning to “read the ocean” is an essential skill that the coaching staff at XL will help develop with you. But like anything, developing knowledge about an ever-changing environment takes time and experience. The competent surfer has proficient knowledge of the conditions before they enter

the water. The conditions such as tide, swell and wind will determine the quality of the waves. The experienced coaches from XL Surfing Academy will help to develop the knowledge you require in becoming a confident surfer. **Offshore winds:** This is when the wind is coming from the land towards the ocean, making the surf most favourable with clean

conditions that aren’t choppy. **Onshore winds:** This is when the wind is coming from the ocean towards the beach, making the surf wind-affected and choppy. These winds are not pleasurable to surf in, but the right direction onshore wind (east/south-easterly) and weather patterns is what brings the swells on to the Coast’s beaches that the

more experienced surfers wait upon. Just remember: if you are caught in a rip on a surfboard, stay calm, stay on your board (your float) and signal or call for assistance. It is always a great idea if you are a novice to tackle smaller surf, head out with a mate and look out for each other or surf at a beach where a life guard can keep an eye on you.

**Developing knowledge about an ever-changing environment takes time and experience.**