

Ocean baths: Merewether Main Pool, Merewether Learners Pool, Canoe Pool and Newcastle Baths.



Local government area description

Newcastle City Council covers an area of 183 square kilometres and has a population of approximately 140,000 people. The 15 kilometres of coastline are a highly valued recreational, social and economic resource for the community and includes sandy beaches, rock platforms, coastal lagoons and Newcastle Harbour.

Land uses within the region are varied and include residential, rural, commercial, recreational, industrial and bushland (Newcastle City Council, 2008).

Research by Tourism Australia indicates that, on average each year, 962,000 people holiday in the Newcastle City Council area and almost 2,000,000 people visit for the day. 'Going to the beach' is listed as a top activity by 73% of international tourists and 23% of domestic tourists holidaying in the area (Tourism Research Australia, 2008).

Program outline

Newcastle City Council routinely monitors four ocean baths. These are Merewether Main Pool, Merewether Learners Pool, Canoe Pool and Newcastle Baths.

Merewether Main Pool and Newcastle Baths are monitored weekly throughout the year, but only data from the summer swimming season (October 2008 to April 2009) are included in this report.

Faecal coliform results were assessed against the NHMRC (1990) swimming water quality guidelines to determine suitability for swimming. In months where four samples were collected, the closest sample in time from an adjacent month was 'borrowed' to provide the five samples necessary for the compliance calculation.

Insufficient samples to determine compliance were collected from Canoe Pool and Merewether Learners Pool between February 2009 and April 2009 due to pool closures for cleaning.

Council presented water quality data at open community meetings throughout the summer season and issued joint media releases with DECC.

Seven ocean beaches in the Newcastle City Council area are monitored by Hunter Water Corporation as part of the Beachwatch program. This information is provided as weekly star ratings in local newspapers and on Hunter Water Corporation's website, and data are also presented in the *Beachwatch and Harbourwatch State of the Beaches* report series.

Rainfall

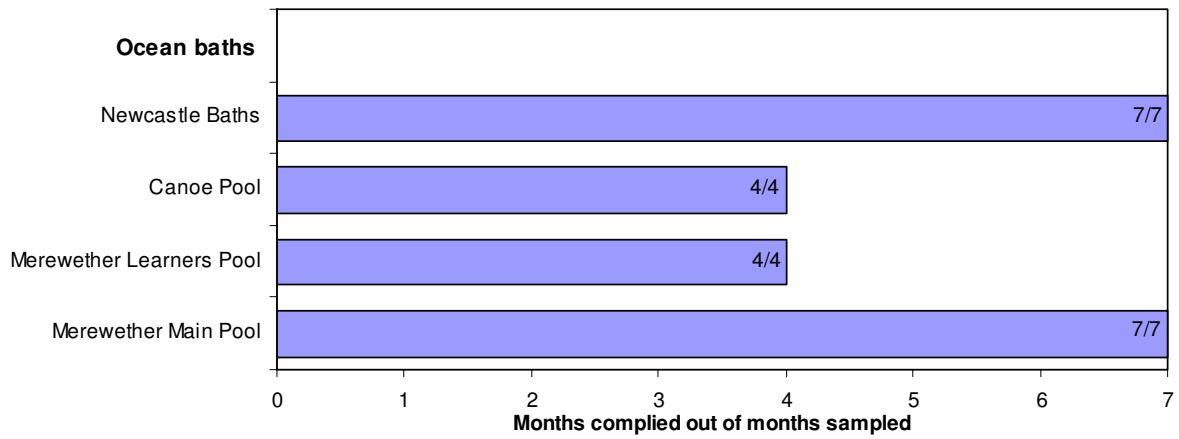
Rainfall data presented in the timeseries plots were obtained from the Bureau of Meteorology's gauge at Nobbys Beach.

Ocean baths

Canoe Pool and Merewether Learners Pool complied with NHMRC (1990) swimming guidelines in all four months in which sufficient samples were collected. Newcastle Baths and Merewether Main Pool complied in all seven months of the 2008-2009 summer swimming season (Figure 8).

Low levels of faecal coliforms were recorded at all pool sites throughout the monitoring period.

Figure 8: Summary of compliance with NHMRC (1990) microbiological guidelines for swimming at Newcastle City Council swimming sites during the 2008–2009 summer swimming season



Merewether Main Pool

See page 76 for key to map

Description

Merewether Main Pool is located at the southern end of Merewether Beach, adjoining Merewether Learners Pool. Council inspectors patrol the pool from October to April. The baths are emptied, cleaned and refilled on a weekly basis throughout the whole year.

Pollution sources

Stormwater from streets and the residential area of Merewether may be a source of contamination after heavy rain. Burwood Beach wastewater ocean outfall is 1.7 kilometres out to sea and two kilometres to the south of Merewether. It could affect the pool in extreme conditions.

Compliance

Merewether Main Baths was monitored between October 2008 and April 2009, and complied with the NHMRC (1990) swimming water quality guidelines in all seven months.



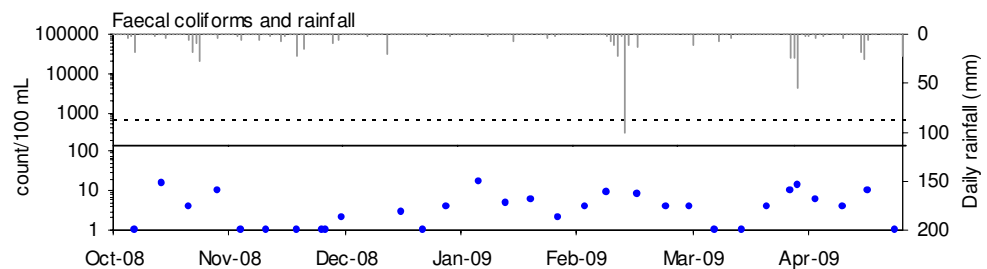
Compliance with NHMRC (1990) swimming guidelines at Merewether Main Baths

	OCT '08	NOV '08	DEC '08	JAN '09	FEB '09	MAR '09	APR '09
FC	PASS*	PASS	PASS*	PASS*	PASS*	PASS	PASS

* Only four samples were collected in this month. An additional data point was borrowed from an adjacent month to calculate compliance.

Timeseries plots

Levels of faecal coliforms remained very low over the monitoring period.



See page 5 for key to graph

Merewether Learners Pool

See page 76 for key to map

Description Merewether Learners Pool is located at the southern end of Merewether Beach, adjoining Merewether Main Pool. Council inspectors patrol the pool from October to April. The baths are emptied, cleaned and refilled on a weekly basis throughout the whole year.

Pollution sources Stormwater from streets and the residential area of Merewether may be a source of contamination after heavy rain. Burwood Beach wastewater ocean outfall is 1.7 kilometres out to sea and two kilometres to the south of Merewether. It could affect the pool in extreme conditions.

Compliance Merewether Learners Pool complied with the NHMRC (1990) swimming water quality guidelines in all four months monitored during the 2008–2009 summer swimming season.



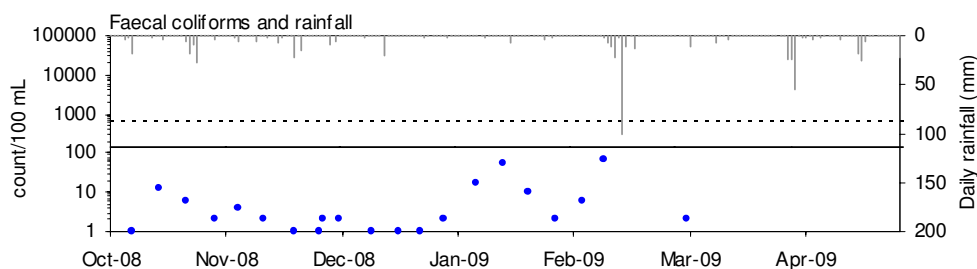
Compliance with NHMRC (1990) swimming guidelines at Merewether Leaners Pool

	OCT '08	NOV '08	DEC '08	JAN '09	FEB '09	MAR '09	APR '09
FC	PASS*	PASS	PASS	PASS*	**	**	**

* Only four samples were collected in this month. An additional data point was borrowed from an adjacent month to calculate compliance.

** Insufficient samples to calculate compliance were collected in this month.

Timeseries plots Levels of bacteria were generally low over the monitoring period, remaining below the guideline levels.



See page 5 for key to graph

Newcastle Ocean Baths

See page 76 for key to map

Description Newcastle Ocean Baths are located at the northern end of Newcastle Beach, adjacent to Canoe Pool. Council inspectors patrol the pool from October to April. The baths are emptied, cleaned and filled weekly throughout the year.

Pollution sources Stormwater from the surrounding hard-surface walkways may be a source of pollution during and after heavy rainfall.

Compliance Newcastle Baths were monitored between October 2008 and April 2009, and complied with the NHMRC (1990) swimming water quality guidelines in all seven months.

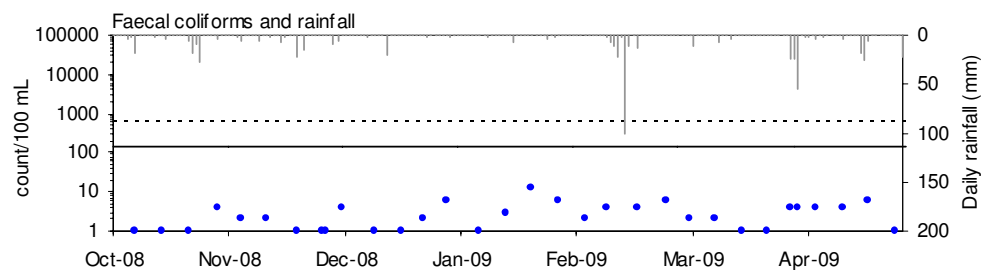


Compliance with NHMRC (1990) swimming guidelines at Newcastle Ocean Baths

	OCT '08	NOV '08	DEC '08	JAN '09	FEB '09	MAR '09	APR '09
FC	PASS*	PASS	PASS	PASS*	PASS*	PASS	PASS

* Only four samples were collected in this month. An additional data point was borrowed from an adjacent month to calculate compliance.

Timeseries plots Levels of bacteria remained very low throughout the monitoring period.



See page 5 for key to graph

Canoe Pool

See page 76 for key to map

Description Canoe Pool is located on the rock platform at the northern end of Newcastle Beach and adjoins Newcastle Ocean Baths. Lifeguards from the beach and ocean baths patrol the pool from October until April. The pool is emptied, cleaned and refilled each week during the summer season.

Pollution sources Stormwater from the surrounding hard-surface walkways may be a source of pollution during and after heavy rainfall. Bather shedding of bacteria may also be a source of contamination during the summer months, when the pool is very popular.

Compliance Canoe Pool complied with the NHMRC (1990) swimming water quality guidelines in all four months monitored during the 2008–2009 summer swimming season.



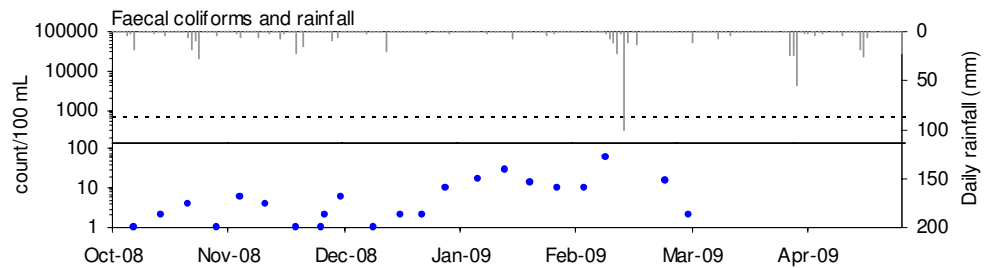
Compliance with NHMRC (1990) swimming guidelines at Canoe Pool

	OCT '08	NOV '08	DEC '08	JAN '09	FEB '09	MAR '09	APR '09
FC	PASS*	PASS	PASS	PASS*	**	**	**

* Only four samples were collected in this month. An additional data point was borrowed from an adjacent month to calculate compliance.

** Insufficient samples to calculate compliance were collected in this month.

Timeseries plots Levels of bacteria remained low throughout the monitoring period.



See page 5 for key to graph