



The Hon Robyn Parker MP

Minister for the Environment Minister for Heritage

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW BEACHES CONTINUE TO CLEAN UP**

As the time approaches for local beachgoers and swimmers to head back to the surf, or their favourite swimming spots for summer, they can do so with confidence in the quality of the water and up to the minute information.

The Minister for the Environment, Robyn Parker has today released the *State of the Beaches Report 2010–11* – an annual scorecard of the water quality at 259 popular NSW beaches and swimming spots.

“After a long cool wet winter I’m sure people will be itching to get back into the water. The good news is that our report shows that, even with this year’s major downpours, the beaches are as clean as ever,” Ms Parker said.

Despite the wet conditions and major flooding events, 83 per cent of the swimming spots that were tested across the state were rated either good or very good.

“Heavy rainfall can have a significant effect on the water quality of beaches and harbour swimming spots, this year presented some of our wettest conditions yet but our results continue to be very good which is great news.

“Of the 148 ocean beaches monitored over the last year, all but one (Malabar beach) was rated as very good or good. The work being undertaken at Malabar by Sydney Water and Randwick City Council should mean a significant improvement in water quality at the beach.

“Sydney’s beaches are now up to 98 per cent cleaner than they were two decades ago, but we still have work to do to improve coastal lagoons and lakes, estuarine beaches and freshwater rivers.

“Variations in the performance between ocean beaches, ocean baths, coastal lakes/lagoons, estuarine beaches and freshwater swimming sites were due to the susceptibility of closed waters contaminated by stormwater.

“The poorer performers remain those with lower levels of ocean flushing, such as coastal lakes and lagoons which collect runoff from urban areas following rainfall and can be periodically closed to the ocean,” Ms Parker said.

Key findings in the 2010–2011 report were:

- 99% of the 148 ocean beaches monitored along the NSW coast from Bega to Byron Bay were graded as Very Good or Good, indicating they are suitable for swimming almost all of the time.
- All of the five ocean baths monitored were graded as Good or Very Good, including Newcastle Baths, Canoe Pool, Merewether Learners Pool, Merewether Main Pool in Newcastle and Pearl Beach Rockpool on the Central Coast.

- Five of the 15 swimming sites in lakes/lagoons monitored during 2010–2011 were graded as Very Good or Good but water quality generally remained dependant on whether the entrance to the water body is open or closed to the ocean.
- 67% of the 85 estuarine swimming locations monitored were graded as Very Good or Good, with most susceptible to impacts from stormwater runoff and sewage overflows following rainfall.

“Making our popular swimming sites and beaches cleaner has been a team effort with local government and this report card confirms NSW as having some of the best and cleanest beaches in the world,” said Ms Parker.

“Put simply, local beachgoers and visitors to NSW can expect clean beaches and excellent swimming conditions this summer.

“While this is very good news, there are many things the community can do to help keep our swimming spots clean. By placing litter in the bin and ensuring rubbish does not find its way into the stormwater system, we can all reduce pollution across our swimming spots,” said Ms Parker.

For the first time people will have easier access to Beachwatch updates with the launch of their twitter feed.

“The swimming season is always a busy one on our State’s beaches. By using social media connected to the Beachwatch website, more people than ever will be able to get real-time information on what’s happening at the beach - from beach pollution to beach closures, blue-bottles and general beach conditions.

“The site already contains lots of interesting information about beaches and swimming spots across the State, so now all we need is to connect that with the eyes and ears of the public,” Ms Parker said. <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/beachapp/>

Twitter information @BeachwatchNSW

The full report and table of tested areas can be found at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/beach

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