

27 January 2011

Four stars for city beaches

All 10 Shoalhaven beaches and two sites in Burrill and Conjola Lakes tested have gained four stars – the highest rating – as part of the annual Beachwatch program, with one site in Lake Conjola receiving three stars.

Samples of the beaches and lake sites were taken on 11 January. The sites are tested each week during summer as part of the program. The weekly Beachwatch results can be found on Council's internet site at <http://shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/Environment/Beachwatch/>

Council takes regular samples at two sites at both Burrill and Conjola Lakes. Despite the area experiencing rain for a few days prior to these water samples being taken both sites in Lake Burrill and the site next to boat ramp in Lake Conjola received four stars with the site at the end of Norman Street in Lake Conjola being given three stars or 'Fair'.

Environmental Services Manager Kelie Lowe said the water sampling proves that the beaches and Burrill and Conjola Lakes are in a good condition, during the busiest time of the year when the population swells from about 94,000 up to about 320,000 people.

"But it is prudent not to swim in either the ocean or our water ways after rainfall as some pollutants can be washed into the waterways from the rural and urban catchment areas surrounding the coastline," Ms Lowe said.

"When it rains stormwater can pick up pollutants and rubbish washing it into street gutters and drains that flow directly into our waterways and estuaries. We can all help keep pollution out of stormwater and our waterways by placing litter, cigarette butts and dog poo in the bin, composting garden waste and lawn clippings, not using a hose as a broom, washing the car on grass instead of the driveway, not over using fertilisers, and fixing leaking septic tanks."

Beachwatch programs – established in 1989 – provide regular and reliable information on beach water quality to enable people to make informed decisions about where and when to swim. Approximately 130 swimming locations are monitored in the Sydney, Hunter and Illawarra regions, with a further 150 sites monitored in partnership with local councils along the NSW coast.

Beaches in the Shoalhaven program include:

- Shoalhaven Heads Beach
- Tilbury Cove
- Warrain beach
- Collingwood Beach
- Cudmirrah Beach
- Mollymook Beach
- Rennies Beach
- Racecourse Beach
- Bawley point Beach

- Merry Beach

Council's Environmental Health Officers also test the water quality weekly in Burrill Lake at the ski ramp at Kings Point and the boat ramp off Maria Ave. They also test fortnightly in Lake Conjola at the boat ramp at the end of Lake Conjola Entrance Road and at the end of Norman Street (next to Lakeside Caravan Park).

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