



Summer 2020-21 Outdoor Public Spaces Operational Management Plan

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1. Background

On 30 January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and on 11 March 2020, it declared the COVID-19 outbreak a Pandemic.

In response, the Australian Federal, State and Territory governments have developed a series of measures to deal with the public health risk of COVID-19 and its possible consequences. Specifically, the NSW Minister for Health and Medical Research has issued a series of Public Health Orders under section 7 of the *Public Health Act 2010*, including the *Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order (No 7) 2020* which currently has effect.

Waverley Council has responsibility, in conjunction with NSW Police and other agencies, in helping to manage public spaces in order to keep people COVID-safe and to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

Public Health Orders and health advice affecting public spaces

This plan will be implemented in line with the relevant health advice from the NSW Government and the directions contained in the latest Public Health Order affecting Council's management of its outdoor public spaces which includes:

- The health advice recommending social distancing. This advice is advisory only and is not the subject of a direction under a Public Health Order. The advice recommends reducing the close physical contact we have with one another and staying 1.5 metres away from other people where possible. This does not apply to people living in the same household.
- The occupier of premises, which includes owners, must not allow persons on the premises if the size of the premises is insufficient to ensure there is at least two square metres of space for each person on the premises (or four square metres in certain circumstances). The definition of premises includes Council's beaches and parks.
- Limits regarding the maximum number of persons that may participate in an outdoor public gathering (in Greater Sydney).

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Summer 2020-21 Outdoor Public Spaces Operational Management Plan is to help Council manage beaches and open spaces in a COVID-safe way over summer in line with Public Health Orders and health advice.

This Plan outlines Council's overall response and identifies the potential restrictions which Council may be required to implement to ensure compliance with the Public Health Orders.

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- Promote the wellbeing of our community through the enjoyment of outdoor public spaces.
- Ensure compliance with the Public Health Orders and to support government public efforts to keep people safe.
- Ensure effective communications and collaboration with relevant agencies (NSW Police, NSW Health, Transport for NSW, Surf Life Saving NSW) and neighbouring councils.
- Support staff/volunteer safety and wellbeing.
- Establish defined escalation protocols and actions.

3. Scope

This Plan outlines the arrangements for the management of outdoor public space across the Waverley Council local government area, including Waverley's beaches, parks and coast walk, during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is an operational plan that is subject to review on an ongoing basis based on changes to Public Health Orders, experience and other changes in context and circumstances. The Plan is intended to be read in conjunction with the Waverley Council COVID-19 internal operating procedures which provide details on its implementation.

The Plan has been developed taking into account consultation with key internal and external stakeholders including Waverley Council's Crisis Management Team, Councillors, local Surf Clubs, neighbouring councils, NSW Police, Transport for NSW and NSW Health.

4. Beaches, Coast Walk and Beach Parks Escalation Plan

Council's assessment of public outdoor space capacity takes into consideration Public Health Orders and government health advice on social distancing.

The rule around two- or four-square metre capacity limits, however, is not considered a practical limit for assessing allowable numbers to maintain social distancing guidelines, public gathering restrictions and to allow for easy movement of people. On the beaches we also need to allow space to ensure safe and easy movement of Lifeguard Services patrol vehicles. In our beach parks, there is additional infrastructure such as seating, trees and BBQ areas which take up some of the available space. As such a conservative approach to assessing capacity has been taken in our planning and is subject to change based on changing circumstances and ongoing risk assessments undertaken by Council officers at any time.

Escalation Plan

The escalation levels under this Plan will be determined and implemented in accordance with the minimum restrictions under prevailing Public Health Orders and Council's Operations Manager will consider the need for and risks associated with each level of escalation.

Additional factors such as weather and crowd behaviour will be taken into consideration when implementing each of the stages. In some circumstances, this means that the restrictions in place across Council's beaches are stricter than the restrictions under the Public Health Order to ensure public safety and compliance with government health advice and Public Health Orders.

Council will work with Police and other agencies to manage parks and open spaces and will provide open communication to the public on capacity with the support of external agencies such as Transport for NSW.

At all escalation levels the Lifeguards remain on duty to ensure water safety. Patrol hours at all three beaches will remain the same and be determined by normal winter or summer hours of operation:

- Winter: End May to End September – 7.00am to 5.00pm
- Summer: End September to End May – 6.00am to 7.00pm

If crowds in public spaces remain consistently high, Council may implement a variety of measures including further time limited parking restrictions or closing access to parking in certain areas.

BEACHES AND BEACH PARKS

ESCALATION LEVEL	RESPONSE
Stage 1: Normal Operations	Crowd monitoring
	General COVID-safe communications including messaging, VMS boards, signage and media
	Roving Ambassadors/Rangers providing education and information
Stage 2: 70% Capacity	Crowd monitoring
	Nearing Capacity communications including Ranger/Ambassador messaging, public announcements, signage, VMS boards and media
	Rangers/Ambassadors deployed to beach access points and beachside parks
	Managed access infrastructure on standby
	Notify neighbouring Councils, local Surf Clubs and SLSNSW areas nearing capacity
	Contact Transport for NSW to provide alerts/messaging at relevant stations regarding areas nearing capacity
	Notify NSW Police
Stage 3: Effective Maximum Capacity Reached	Crowd monitoring
	Capacity Reached communications including Ranger/Ambassador messaging, public announcements, signage, VMS boards and media
	Implement managed access at beach entry points Note: People on the beach allowed to remain. Beach and water remain open - flags remain up and lifeguards continue normal operations
	Rangers/Ambassadors stationed at beach access points and continuing patrols of beach parks to advise capacity reached
	Notify neighbouring Councils, local Surf Clubs and SLSNSW re. capacity reached
	Contact Transport for NSW to provide alerts/messaging at relevant stations regarding areas where capacity reached
	Notify NSW Police and request attendance
	Stage 4: Maximum Capacity Reached

COAST WALK

ESCALATION LEVEL	RESPONSE
Stage 1: Normal Operations	Crowd monitoring
	General COVID-safe communications including messaging, signage and media
	Roving Ambassadors/Rangers providing education and information
Stage 2: 70% Capacity	Crowd monitoring
	Nearing Capacity communications including Ranger/Ambassador messaging, signage and media
	Rangers/Ambassadors deployed to coast walk access points
	Managed access infrastructure on standby
	Notify neighbouring councils
	Contact Transport for NSW to provide alerts/messaging at relevant stations
	Notify NSW Police
Stage 3: Effective Maximum Capacity Reached	Crowd monitoring
	Capacity Reached communications including Ranger/Ambassador messaging, signage, and media
	Implement managed access at coast walk entry points
	Rangers/Ambassadors stationed at coast walk access points
	Notify neighbouring councils
	Contact Transport for NSW to provide alerts/messaging at relevant stations
	Notify NSW Police

5. Management of other Outdoor Public Spaces

Council’s assessment of outdoor public space capacity takes into consideration social distancing restrictions based on the prevailing Public Health Orders and government health advice. The rule around two- or four-square metre capacity limits, however, is not considered a practical limit for assessing allowable numbers to maintain social distancing guidelines, public gathering restrictions and to allow for easy movement of people. In our parks, there is additional infrastructure such as seating, trees and BBQ areas which take up some of the available space. As such a conservative

approach to assessing capacity has been taken in our planning and is subject to change based on an ongoing risk assessment by Council officers at any time.

Our parks and reserves will be managed with priority given to beaches, beach parks and coast walk. COVID-safe signage will be installed in outdoor public spaces including at playgrounds, skate parks and outdoor fitness stations reminding people to socially distance.

6. Communications Approach

Council will provide timely and accurate communications across a range of channels. This includes digital, website, social, print and signage and any other platforms that will increase the effective engagement of the community in key messaging.

All communications will be in line with Public Health Orders and government health advice and will be aligned with key messaging from the relevant authorities. Where possible, Council will include general COVID-Safe messaging in its communications material. See Appendix 1 for an example.

Council will host debriefing and forward planning meetings with relevant inter-agencies and neighbouring councils as required.

7. Consultation

Waverley Council works in partnership with the NSW State Government, NSW Police, and neighbouring councils in providing a multi-agency response to the pandemic. This Plan has been developed taking into account consultation with the following key stakeholders.

External Stakeholders:

- NSW Police
- NSW Health
- Transport for NSW
- Cross-Councils Working Group
- Waverley Council Surf Clubs
- Surf Life Saving NSW

Internal Stakeholders:

- Councillors
- Waverley Council staff

8. Review of Plan

This Plan will be reviewed regularly as required throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic to ensure consistency and compliance with the relevant Public Health Order restrictions and to promote public safety. Members of the public may provide feedback about this document by emailing info@waverley.nsw.gov.au

Appendix 1 – COVID- Safe Messaging Example



