

SWIM & GO AND SURF & GO FAQs

WAVERLEY COUNCIL



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Why is the Council reopening its beaches?

Waverley's beaches remain CLOSED until further notice. Our Swim & Go and Surf & Go measures only provide access to the water for surfers, paddle boarders, kayakers and swimmers who otherwise cannot exercise at home. These areas are for exercise only.

Access to the water will be via entry points managed by Council Ambassadors. Council Lifeguards will patrol the beaches between 7am and 5pm but there will be no red and yellow flags.

Are there restricted hours for access to the water?

Access will only be provided between 7am and 5pm with last entry into the water at 4.45pm to allow people time to leave before the access is closed. We encourage people to stagger their exercise throughout the day to limit numbers and maintain social distancing. If Council deems the risk to be high in terms of numbers and lack of social distancing, we may need to close access to some or all of the areas at short notice.

What does 'Swim & Go' and 'Surf & Go' mean?

As the name suggests, 'Swim & Go' and 'Surf & Go' areas provide safe access to the water for swimming for exercise and surfers, paddle boarders, kayakers and swimmers for the purpose of exercise and to then exit the water immediately and return home.

People will be able to leave their towels in designated areas but must adhere to social distancing.

Once finished exercising, users will be directed to leave the beach via designated exit lanes.

Can I bring my kids to the beach for a swim or a surf?

Access to the water is for exercise only. If your child or children can swim or surf independently, without help, they can access the water via our Swim & Go and Surf & Go corridors. If your child or children cannot swim or surf independently, then they cannot access the water at this time.

Whilst we are in a pandemic, we ask families to not to come to the water for a play in the waves. The beaches are closed, the flags are not up.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back to our beaches once it is safe to do so.

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Where can I go swimming and surfing?

<u>Bondi Beach:</u> Swimming for exercise is restricted to the northern end of the beach only. Surfing (and surf craft usage) is restricted to the middle and southern end of the beach. Entry to Swim & Go is at the northern end of the beach and Surf & Go access is in front of Bondi Surf Club and the southern end.	<u>Bronte Beach:</u> Access to the water for surfing (and surf craft usage) and swimming for exercise is from the middle of the beach (opposite the kiosk). Access to the bogey hole is at the southern end.	<u>Tamarama Beach and Mackenzie's Bay:</u> Only surfing, paddle boarding and kayaking (use of surf craft) is permitted due to hazardous conditions for swimming.	Please note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Swim & Go' and 'Surf & Go' areas are for surf craft users and swimming for exercise only• Swimming will not be permitted if conditions are too dangerous• Swim at your own risk—no red and yellow flags• Lifeguards will maintain a strict focus on water safety• Lifeguards will make public safety announcements on the loudspeaker• Rangers will be enforcing the access points and closed off areas
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Why are the ocean pools still closed?

The ocean pools remain closed at this time as the Public Health Order directs that public swimming pools must be closed.

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How long will Council be providing this access?

Council will continue to monitor numbers and whether people are maintaining social distancing in accessing and leaving the water. If Council deems the risk to be high in terms of numbers and/or lack of social distancing, we will close the areas completely.

What is Council doing to ensure social distancing is maintained?

All access points will have separate entry and exit lanes which will be clearly signposted.

Rangers and Council Ambassadors (staff) will be stationed at all of our beaches to monitor the new measures and to ensure that people are complying with restrictions around social distancing and public gatherings.

We ask anyone making use of the new water access points to be mindful of social distancing.

Why didn't Council make these changes sooner?

The situation has been changing rapidly over the last few weeks. Since the beaches were closed, new Public Health Orders have been introduced which continue to stop people gathering but also prohibit anyone leaving their place of residence without a reasonable excuse ie. work, exercise etc.

In working closely with the Police, there is clarification that swimming for exercise and surf craft use are allowable under the Orders. Over the past few weeks, we have seen an increasing number of people entering the water to exercise and we want to make sure surfers and swimmers can do so in a safe manner.

Council also consulted with the Minister for Health, Brad Hazzard on our plans for swimming and surfing for exercise and wanted to make sure he and the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Kerry Chant were happy with our approach. On Monday 20 April, we received confirmation that the plans could go ahead from the Minister, as long as strict social distancing gathering provisions under the Public Health Order could be adhered to.

Why can't I run or exercise on the beach?

The decision to close the beaches was done as a result of the Public Health Orders and this is still the case. Council has an obligation to prevent such gatherings in all of the public spaces that are not excluded under the Orders, and this includes beaches.

By providing limited access to the water only, Council hopes to better manage these

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restrictions. We encourage people to go walking or jogging in quieter areas around their neighbourhood if they cannot exercise at home.

Why are there no red and yellow flags?

We are not installing the red and yellow flags to ensure people are aware the beaches remain closed. Access to the water is being provided to allow surfer craft users (surfers, paddle boarders and kayakers) and swimming for exercise to do so safely if they cannot exercise at home. Our 'Swim & Go' and 'Surf & Go' areas are not for a casual dip, and it is swim at your own risk.

Lifeguards will continue to patrol between the hours of 7am and 5pm to provide water safety. All surfers and swimmers must promptly leave the beach once they finish exercising.

What does 'swim at own risk' mean?

You are responsible for your own safety when you enter the water. Please don't place the safety of our lifeguards at risk. Know your capabilities. Please stay at home if you are feeling unwell.

How will Council manage the numbers?

Rangers and Council Ambassadors [staff] will be available at all beaches to provide advice and information and will close access routes if areas become too busy.

Will the outdoor showers be open?

Showers remain closed until further notice.

Will the beach car parks be open?

Council will continue to monitor the beach car parks at Bondi and Bronte, and may need to introduce measures such as limiting the amount of parking available or providing access to beach parking permit holders only to assist in limiting the numbers visiting our beaches.