



Northern Beaches Council **COVID-19 Action Plan for Outdoor Public Spaces**

October 2021



northern
beaches
council

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Situation analysis

Purpose

The aim of the Plan is to provide a framework to support Council to effectively manage our public spaces during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This Plan will be activated at the commencement of the swimming season from 18 September 2021.

We want to keep our beaches, reserves, parks, walking trails and other public spaces open for the enjoyment and wellbeing of the community while adhering to NSW Public Health Orders and recommendations.

Updates to this Plan

The Plan is dynamic and will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the NSW Public Health Orders and to ensure the community's health and safety is prioritised. It will also undergo a formal review in May 2022.

For further information relating to the Public Health Orders, please visit the NSW Health COVID-19 website at nsw.gov.au/covid-19

Beach Capacity Information

For beach capacity information please visit beachsafe.org.au or download the Beach Safe App at beachsafe.org.au/apps

Restrictions affecting public spaces

The current NSW Public Health Orders and recommendations (as at 18/10/21) provide the following:

- Outdoor gathering limits:
 - For fully vaccinated you can participate in an outdoor gatherings of up to 50 people.
 - If you are not fully vaccinated you can participate in a outdoor gatherings with one other person or with your household.
- Maintain physical distancing 1.5 metres away from other people where possible. This does not apply to people living in the same household.
- Avoid crowds when exercising. If a location looks crowded, please visit another location, or plan to visit at another time.

Objectives

The objectives of the Plan are to:

- promote the wellbeing of our community through the enjoyment of our outdoor public spaces
- support NSW Public Health Orders and recommendations
- ensure effective communications with relevant agencies (NSW Police, NSW Health, Surf Life Saving NSW)
- minimise the number of people becoming infected or sick with COVID-19
- support staff/volunteer safety and wellbeing
- establish defined escalation protocols and actions.

Scope

The Plan applies to the management of outdoor public spaces that are at risk of large gatherings, crowds and breaches of physical distancing measures throughout the high-risk warmer months. This includes:

- beaches
- rock/ocean pools
- parks
- BBQ areas
- picnic tables, shelter sheds and outdoor seating areas
- playground and exercise stations
- skate parks
- walking tracks and trails.

Proactive risk management actions

The following actions will be implemented to ensure public health and beach safety are prioritised throughout the peak periods.

Action	Description	Responsibility
Beach Safety Working Group	<p>Establish a Beach Safety Working Group involving key stakeholders to develop, review and implement strategies to effectively manage Council's public open spaces during the COVID-19 Pandemic.</p> <p>Meet regularly to review weekend/public holiday data and forecast response requirements.</p>	Council's Incident Controller, Lifeguard Coordinator, Local Emergency Management Officer, Beach Safety Manager, Executive Manager, Parks and Recreation, Ranger Coordinator, along with President, Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches, NSW Police and NSW Health
Signage	Design, produce and install COVID-19 branded signage to support Public Health Orders and recommendations across the LGA. Audit and update as required.	Communications, Parks & Recreation
	<p>Install Variable Messaging Signs (VMS) at key sites, such as Palm Beach and Manly Wharf.</p> <p>Refer to Appendix D: VMS scripts.</p>	Transport & Civil Infrastructure / Communications
	Activate overhead permanent VMS signs on State Transit roads warning drivers of beach capacity and/or closures. (Operated by Transport Management Centre (TMC)).	Transport & Civil Infrastructure / Communications
Communications	Update website news items regularly.	Communications
	Create and/ or share posts from relevant agencies on social channels. Engage key stakeholder channels. Boost posts where required.	
	Distribute e-newsletters, publish media releases and collaborate with local print publications to ensure effective communication of key messages.	
	Provide onsite interactions with community promoting physical distancing etc.	Lifeguards, Rangers
	Broadcast public announcements at beaches operated by Lifeguards.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers
	Refer to Appendix D: Scripts for public announcements	
Patrols of beaches and public spaces	Conduct patrols of beaches and adjacent rock/ocean pools.	Lifeguards, Rangers
	Conduct patrols of Council managed public spaces.	Rangers, Parking Officers
	Monitor and provide Situation Reports (Sitrep) to Incident Controller.	Lifeguard Coordinator / ALS Coordinator / Warringah Surf Rescue / SLSNSW Duty Officer / Rescue Coordinator

Action	Description	Responsibility
Increase swimming flag areas	Activate additional flagged swimming areas as required and where practical to reduce crowd density.	Lifeguard Coordinator
Increased cleansing protocols	Daily disinfecting of public seating areas, lifts and handrails in CBDs.	Cleansing
	Daily disinfecting of 15 identified high use bus shelters.	
	Frequent cleansing of public toilets, daily disinfecting of high touch points and periodic full sanitisation with truck mounted pressure-cleaning machine.	
Public carparks	Review options to restrict beach parking to reduce crowd numbers.	Transport & Civil Infrastructure
	In conjunction with SLSCs, review each patrolled beach and put in place parking options for Volunteer Lifesavers to ensure continuity of the lifesaving service.	
	Review options to change pay and display machines limiting parking times.	
	Review options to keep overflow carparks closed.	
Additional toilets	Review toilet capacity and install additional amenities in locations to reduce gatherings.	Property
Events	Review proposed events on Council managed public spaces.	IMT

Use of aerial surveillance

Council will work with Surf Life Saving NSW to progress the use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or drones, to provide aerial vision and surveillance to help monitor crowd capacity at beaches.

Escalation, response and actions

Council will apply a staged response based on actual and forecasted occupancy of public spaces. An assessment of the capacity of public spaces provides a model to guide the escalation process.

Refer to Appendices for capacity thresholds.

Stage One - Low to high crowd density

(0 - 75% capacity)

Action	Detail	Responsibility
Monitor	Undertake beach counts at 10am, 12pm, 2pm and 4pm once beaches reach 50% capacity. Record numbers.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers
Situational awareness	Situation report to Incident Controller every 4 hours or as required if numbers increase.	Lifeguard Coordinator / ALS Coordinator / Warringah Surf Rescue / SLSNSW Duty Officer / Rescue Coordinator
Communications	Monitor key stakeholders and authority social channels. Monitor and respond to customer requests on social media. Support customer service by providing updates and messaging.	Communications / Incident Controller

Stage Two - High to very high crowd density
(75% - 90% + capacity)

Action	Detail	Responsibility
Monitor	Count every 1 hour or as necessary. Record numbers.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers
Situational awareness	Situation report to Incident Controller every hour.	Lifeguard Coordinator / ALS Coordinator / Warringah Surf Rescue / SLSNSW Duty Officer / Rescue Coordinator
Public announcements	Beach nearing capacity - increase in frequency of announcements. Refer to Appendix D: PA script.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers
Communications	Monitor/ share social posts from authorities. Create social posts in line with key messages. Website news updates as required. Monitor and respond to customer requests on social media. Support customer service by providing updates and messaging.	Communications / Incident Controller
VMS controlled by Council	Beach nearing capacity. Script 2 - Refer to Appendix D: VMS script.	Transport & Civil Infrastructure, Communications
Overhead VMS controlled by TMC	Beach near capacity. Script 1 - Refer to Appendix D: VMS script.	Transport & Civil Infrastructure, Communications
Escalation to Police	Contact Police Duty Officer. Request police presence at 90%+.	Incident Controller
Crowd control	Lifeguard / Lifesavers / Rangers / to respond to crowd density management in consultation with Police.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers / Rangers / NSW Police
Carparks	Prepare to close carparks. Exit only.	Transport & Civil Infrastructure

Stage Three - Very high to full crowd density

(90% - 100% capacity)

Beach closures.

Action	Detail	Responsibility
Closure of beach	Lifeguards / Lifesavers / Rangers / to manage closure of the beaches with assistance from NSW Police.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers / Rangers / NSW Police
Crowd control	Lifeguards / Lifesavers / Rangers / to coordinate crowd control with assistance from NSW Police.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers / Rangers / NSW Police
Public announcements	Beach at capacity. Refer to Appendix D: PA script.	Lifeguard Coordinator / Lifesavers
Monitor	Monitor compliance of numbers on beach. Engage and escalate as required.	Lifeguards / Lifesavers
Situational awareness	Sitrep to Incident Controller every hour.	Lifeguard Coordinator / ALS Coordinator / Warringah Surf Rescue / SLSNSW Duty Officer / Rescue Coordinator
Communications	Monitor/ share/ social posts from authorities. Create social posts in line with key messages. Website news updates/ Beach closed tabs as required. Monitor and respond to customer requests on social media. Support customer service by providing updates and messaging.	Communications / Incident Controller
VMS controlled by Council	Beach at capacity Refer to Appendix D: VMS script.	Transport & Civil Infrastructure
Overhead VMS boards controlled by TMC	Beach at capacity Script 3 - Refer to Appendix D: VMS script.	Transport & Civil Infrastructure
Carparks	Close entry to carparks. Exit only.	Transport & Civil Infrastructure

Escalation processes

Issue	Step
Staff/volunteer safety issue	Contact Police immediately.
Outdoor area nearing capacity	Contact Incident Controller immediately. Lifeguards to escalate to Rangers. Incident Controller to contact Police immediately.
Gatherings exceed the allowable limits on beaches	Lifeguards to escalate to Rangers to speak to group.
Gatherings exceed the allowable limits at other public spaces	Rangers to speak to group.
Gatherings exceed the allowable limits refusing to move on	Ranger to contact Ranger Coordinator. Ranger Coordinator to contact Incident Controller. Incident Controller to contact Police.
Weather forecast response	If weather is conducive to attract large crowds, plan to initiate Stage 2 response well in advance. Contact Transport Manager and Police.
Events	If known event in place and likely to attract larger crowds, plan to initiate Stage 2 response at start of day. Contact Transport Manager and Police.

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 NSW Public Health Orders and relevant authorities.

Council will align messaging with inter-agency communications through a process of collaboration.

Council will use an internal communication plan to escalate information as required at each response stage to key internal stakeholders.

Council will host a multi-agency meeting each week with the focus on reviewing the operational delivery over the weekend/Public Holidays.



Appendix A

Beach crowd capacity model

Council's assessment of beach capacity thresholds took into consideration social distancing restrictions based on prevailing NSW Health Orders and recommendations.

The methodology calculated the available usable sand space, which was assessed on approximately 125m to 150m either side of the flags and the width of the beach.

Should circumstances arise whereby beach conditions change, for example beach erosion, reassessment of beach crowd thresholds will be undertaken.

The crowd capacity of our beaches is as follows:

Beaches	Available metres squared of USABLE sand in designated patrol areas	Estimated crowd threshold at high tide	Estimated crowd threshold at low tide
North Palm	14,118	1,000	2,000
Palm	43,991	3,500	6,000
Whale	32,807	3,000	4,000
Avalon	29,217	2,500	3,500
Bilgola	48,878	3,000	5,000
Newport	22,377	2,000	3,000
Bungan	17,252	1,500	2,500
Mona Vale	51,126	4,000	6,000
Warriewood	36,604	2,500	4,000
North Narrabeen	33,492	3,000	4,000
Birdwood Park	3,708	200	1,000
Narrabeen	22,463	2,000	3,000
South Narrabeen	15,170	1,200	2,000
Collaroy	14,598	1,200	2,000
Long Reef	41,643	4,000	5,000
Dee Why	28,370	2,500	3,500
North Curl Curl	31,302	2,500	3,500
South Curl Curl	18,635	1,500	2,000
Freshwater	36,159	3,000	4,000
Queenscliff	18,139	1,500	2,500
North Steyne	14,388	1,200	2,500
Manly	29,638	2,500	4,000
Shelly	7,257	500	1,500
Little Manly	4,184	300	700

Appendix B

Rock pool capacities

Rockpools are to be monitored and managed based on prevailing NSW Health restrictions and appropriate social distancing guidelines.

Swimming Clubs are required to have a COVID Safety plan and therefore are not subject to the requirements of this plan, however, physical distancing requirements will apply.



Appendix C

Other major outdoor area capacities

Skate parks, open spaces, parks and reserves will be monitored and managed based on current NSW Health restrictions and recommendations.

Skate parks (hard surface and surrounds)

Location details	Available metres squared of USABLE area in skate parks	Crowd threshold
Skate Facility - Forestville Playing Field	466	60
Skate Facility - Aquatic Reserve	119	15
Skate Facility - Miller Reserve	554	60
Skate Facility - St Matthews Farm	1,992	200
Skate Facility - Terrey Hills Oval	616	60
Skate Facility - Lionel Watts	575	60
Skate Facility - North Curl Curl	945	60
Skate Facility - Keirle Park	630	60
Skate Facility - Mona Vale	2,034	200
Skate Facility - Avalon	1,080	100

Other popular recreational areas

These estimates are indicative only and will be managed in accordance with current NSW Health Orders and recommendations.

Location details	Available metres squared of USABLE area in popular areas	Crowd threshold
Clontarf Reserve	15,734	1,600
Apex Park Mona Vale	10,590	1,000
Shelly Beach grass area	2,063	200
Dee Why Beach grass area	10,565	1,000
James Meehan Reserve Dee Why	17,951	1,800
Freshwater Beach Reserve	10,068	1,000
Governor Phillip Park	37,984	3,500
East Esplanade Manly	7,952	800
West Esplanade Manly	11,695	1,100
Little Manly Reserve	2,417	250
Lionel Watts Playground	3,119	300
Collaroy Beach Reserve excl. carpark	8,115	800
Winnererremy Bay Playground/Reserve	13,987	1,400
North Harbour Reserve	17,379	1,700
South Curl Curl grass area	1,300	130
Berry Reserve	5,740	500
Forty Baskets	5,056	500
Clareville Beach	7,523	750

Walkways, tracks and trails

There are a range of walkways, tracks and trails that attract significant community use year round. It is anticipated these areas will be subject to increased usage during this period. These include:

- Manly to Shelly Walk (Marine Parade)
- Narrabeen Lagoon Trail
- Northern Beaches Coast Walk (which includes all headland walks)
- Spit Bridge to Manly Walk (Manly Scenic Walk)
- Barrenjoey Lighthouse Walk

The approach to managing walkways, tracks and trails is focused on ensuring they remain open and that pedestrian traffic flow is well supported. This is in the interest of promoting the wellbeing of our community.

There are no crowd capacity limits planned for the walkways, tracks and trails. They will be monitored and managed based on current NSW Health restrictions and recommendations.



Appendix D

Scripts for public announcements and VMS boards

Public announcement scripts

Public service announcements will be updated in line with NSW Health Orders and recommendations.

Script number	Purpose	Script
1	Beach nearing capacity	Please be aware the beach is nearing capacity. Once the beach reaches capacity we will have to close the beach. For your safety, and the safety of others, please remember that face masks must be worn at all times unless you are exercising, eating or drinking and continue social distancing and stay 1.5m apart. Thank you for your cooperation.
2	Beach at capacity	Your attention please. This beach has now exceeded capacity and is closing for the health and safety of all. We ask you to pack up now and please leave the beach in an orderly fashion. Thank you for your cooperation and your help to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Council VMS board scripts

Script number	Purpose	Script
1	Beach nearing capacity	Beaches almost full. Reconsider your plans. Help stop the spread.
2	Beach at capacity	Beaches closed. Reconsider your plans. Help stop the spread.