Council Policy NB-P-43
Management of Beach and Water Safety

Purpose

Northern Beaches Council is responsible for the safety of beaches and waterway locations and the foreshore reserves under the care, control and management of Council.

Council aims to facilitate the safe and enjoyable use of beaches and rock pools through lifesaving/lifeguard and other non-regulatory water safety functions.

A safe swimming environment is achieved through Lifeguards establishing flagged swimming areas and surf craft prohibited zones, undertaking rescues, administering first aid, and providing emergency life support and resuscitation.

Broader public safety and enjoyable use of the beach and rockpool areas is achieved through Lifeguards undertaking beach surveillance, enforcing relevant legislation, overseeing beach licence operators, managing beach and foreshore reserve events, and compliance issues related to animals and crowds.

Policy Principles

- The beaches are managed to facilitate the amenity of the beach and enjoyment of users.
- Council will meet all relevant legislative and statutory requirements for beach and water safety management.
- Council will take a risk management and evidence-based approach to water safety to ensure appropriate mitigation strategies, lifesaving practices and community education programs are in place to address safety issues.
- Council will adopt and implement best practice and continuous improvement to ensure that we provide a high standard of service to the community.
- Council will ensure that the staff designated to operate the service are suitably qualified and trained.
- Council will collaborate, engage and work in partnership with Surf Lifesaving Sydney Northern Beaches Branch, local Surf Life Saving Clubs and their volunteers, and other stakeholders to provide the best possible service to our community.
- Council will work with the community to facilitate and promote water safety awareness through the provision of education programs, signage and day to day beach operations.
- Council will provide support to the Surf Lifesaving Associations and other community groups to facilitate the provision of high quality water safety services, programs and facilities.

Scope and Application

This Policy applies to all employees, agents and officers of Northern Beaches Council, along with all Councillors.

Where non-regulatory water safety functions are delegated to partner organisations, Council retains ultimate oversight to ensure compliance and community safety.

The day-to-day operation of patrolled beaches is managed through the implementation of the Lifeguard Operations Manuals. These documents outline the levels of service and staff responsibilities at each location.

The Deed of Agreement between Council and Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches articulates the roles, responsibilities and service standards of both parties. The partnership

between the two groups is integral to Council's management of the beaches and provision of water safety.

References and Related Documents

- Policy Framework NB-P-01
- Local Government Act 1993
- Department of Local Government's Practice Note No. 15 – Water Safety
- Northern Beaches Council Annual Beach Services Lifeguard Operations Manual
- Deed of Agreement Northern Beaches Council and Surf Life Saving Sydney Northern Beaches (2023)

Community Strategic Plan

This Council policy relates to the Community Strategic Plan Outcomes of:

- Community and belonging - Goal 8 Our community feels safe and supported
- Housing, places and spaces - Goal 12 Our community has access to spaces that enable healthy and active living and allow for a broad range of creative, sporting and recreational opportunities to be enjoyed
- Partnership and participation - Goal 22 Our Council builds and maintains strong partnerships and advocates effectively on behalf of the community

Responsible Officer

Executive Manager Property, Buildings and Beach Services

Review Date

April 2029

Revision History

Policy number	Date	Detail	TRIM #
Revision 1	5 September 2019	Amendment to References and related documents	2019/502063
Revision 2	24 September 2019	Policy adopted by Council with amendment made to references and related documents	2019/502063
NB-P-43	April 2025	Draft for Council review – updated to align with *Council Policy NB-P-01 Policy Framework*	2025/242852
NB-P-43	15/04/2025	Adopted by Council	2025/242852