

Grant McBride Baths

Fact Sheet



Summary/Introduction

The iconic Grant McBride Baths is positioned along the pristine coastline at The Entrance and has long been a popular swimming spot for locals and visitors to the Central Coast. The ocean baths are free to use and open year round (subject to maintenance and cleaning) and supervised with various patrolled hours throughout the season.

Accessible by pathway from Ocean Parade, the baths have a 50 metre outdoor pool, 22 metre lap pool, a children's wading pool, as well as change, shower and toilet amenities.

Please note that due to these Baths being tidal ocean baths, they are often required to be closed for cleaning and maintenance during low tide and following major storm events.

Please check for the current open/close status online by searching 'Grant McBride Baths' at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au



History

Formerly 'The Entrance Ocean Baths', the iconic ocean pool was renamed in 2018 to The Grant McBride Baths in recognition of the efforts former local Councillor Mr McBride took to protect the Baths for the benefit of the Central Coast community.

The Baths were constructed in stages between 1938 and 1965 and in 2002, Mr McBride campaigned with local residents to save the coastal icon from potential closure.

Over 9,000 signatures were collected during the campaign, and in 2003 the Baths were successfully placed on the New South Wales Heritage List.

Cleaning, maintenance, and water quality

Council manages, cleans and maintains this facility and always tries to find the balance between availability and cleanliness. At present the baths are cleaned on a regular basis with scheduled maintenance being undertaken continuously throughout year.

Water quality testing is also carried out at this site and all of our other patrolled beaches, baths and lake areas with the results for the 32 sites tested then placed onto Beachwatch website each week for the community to view.

The cleanliness of this Ocean baths facility is heavily influenced by the water temperature

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and usage. During the summer months warmer water accelerates algae growth resulting at times in an unsightly build up on the walls in the splash zone. While this results in the appearance of an unclean pool at times, regular weekly testing indicates that the water quality is acceptable for public swimming.

FAQS

When is the Ocean water replaced within the pools at the bath's facility?

Council staff continuously monitor the cleanliness of the Ocean baths facility and work within the numerous constraints to achieve a balance between availability and cleanliness.

On assessing quality of ocean water staff will have the pumps running on high to mid tides with ocean water topping up all pools. The pumps can only be run on these mid to high tides efficiently and as such unfortunate are not always able to be used with low tide. This is a challenge that all ocean baths sites have with pumps and working with tides at tidal baths facilities.

Due to the alignment with tides and weather, it's difficult to predict an exact schedule for these works.

To check if the facility is closed or open go online by searching 'Grant McBride Baths' at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

How can I find out when baths are being cleaned and the facility is closed?

The time and date of the cleaning is displayed on notice board at the facility.

In addition, the current open/close status is listed on Council's webpage.

How long does it take to refill pools?

The time taken to fill each pool after cleaning varies between the 50 metre and two smaller pools. It's typically between 4 - 6 hours and is dependent on the weather, tidal conditions, and surf conditions on day.

What work is involved in cleaning of the baths?

Each time the pool is cleaned, the following process is undertaken:

- Staff assess sea conditions, tide and safety aspects prior to each clean to ensure pool can be emptied with current forecasted sea conditions.
- Staff place anticipated shutdown times on Council's website and notice board on site.
- On day of clean, staff erect fencing and signage around 50 metre pool.
- The pool is emptied to remove dirty water
- Removal of algae growth, debris such as sand, seaweed and rubbish from pool and floor area by hand with shovel.
- Cleaning, hosing and scrubbing of walls, and hosing of all walls and floor with a pressure hose.
- Clean off all access ramps, stairs and pool deck area
- Maintenance on pumps, pump room, pump pit area, check water inlet and outlet valves.
- Refill pool on next high tide, which can take up to 4 - 6 hours.
- Remove fencing and re-open pool area for public use.

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Why is the cleaning day not set to a scheduled day like some other Council areas?

Scheduled cleans are not suitable for this Ocean baths facility due to changing ocean, tidal conditions, seaweed growth at The Entrance Beach area and water run out of The Tuggerah Lakes system.

A set scheduled day does not allow for continuous changes in weather and seas condition that must be included in the assessment to clean pools regularly.

Council Beach Safety staff continually review the cleaning process and take into consideration multiple factors prior to the cleaning of the Ocean baths, this includes the ability to clean the pool being highly dependent on weather conditions, surf conditions and tidal heights for each clean. For example, sometimes a higher than normal low tide results in the inability to empty the pool or engage pumps to backfill pool.

In the event a clean cannot occur due to rough sea conditions, it will be deferred until an alternative day is available. We may also have experienced a large amount of coastal rainfall prior to cleaning, which then effects the ocean water quality that is used to backfill the pools.

We understand that conducting the clean on an irregular basis is disruptive to regular users and Council always aim to minimise disruption - taking into consideration the time the pool is closed to public and notification to the public prior to cleaning. We also ensure that on cleaning the larger 50 metre pool, the 2 other pools are open for public use or when the 2 smaller pools are being cleaned, then the 50 metre pool is open for public use.

Can the pool be cleaned more often?

Cleaning occurs regularly to achieve balance between ensuring the facility is available to public while providing a clean facility to all users.

It should be noted that in addition to the regular cleans the pool water is continually recycled with fresh ocean water throughout day on high to mid tides. This continually tops up all 3 pool areas over the high tide cycle each day.

Why does the cleaning occur at low tide?

Cleaning of pool is highly dependent on surf conditions, weather and ocean water quality at time of each clean. During a high tide cycle, it is not possible to empty pool safely and perform the cleaning schedule within the pool.

By emptying the pool on the outgoing high tide and cleaning during low tide we can ensure that the pool is cleaned with best possible outcome, and staff safety is considered continually throughout this process while working within open aquatic environment.



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Why do the pool walls appear to be dirty at times with algae?

The cleanliness of the pool walls is heavily influenced by multiple factors – the ocean water temperature and level of usage. During the warmer months water accelerates algae growth resulting at times in build-up on pool walls. Re-topping of water levels on the high to mid tides and regular cleaning scrubbing of walls removes this algae growth.

How often is water quality tested at baths?

Water quality is influenced considerably by naturally occurring water quality of the ocean and the debris present. The water quality is tested each Monday in summer patrol season (September to April) with weekly updates placed onto Beachwatch website for all of the 32 Central Coast beach and ocean/tidal baths sites tested.

The onsite pumps do assist in filtering and the cleanliness of the pool, however they can only operate between mid to high tides efficiently and as such are unfortunately not always able to be used because of the tidal variation.

There will always be a balance between the need to flush out the pool water and keeping water to acceptable level and the risk of introducing discoloured water from the ocean.

What is the flow of water of pumps when refilling pools?

On refilling after clean staff are regularly monitoring the water intake through pump filtration system. To get maximum out of the 2 pumps on site we are running these at a consistent 20 - 22 psi with 21 psi being 144.8kpa which is 14.8 m of total dynamic

head. This converts to these pumps producing a flow of 62 litres per second.

This is considered in industry as an excellent flowrate given the size of inlet pipe is limited to 64 litres per second before friction causes excessive backpressure and vibration on pumps and potential damage to pumping and filtration system.

What is Council doing to improve baths site?

Council is continually monitoring all its operations and introducing efficiencies within its operations at this site and all areas.

Council is upgrading the public toilet and change rooms in the 2021-22 financial year, with works undertaken throughout April to June. Council will also continue to improve operational efficiencies on site with new and improved filtration systems and scheduled maintenance of pumps throughout year.

All Ocean baths facility of this age require constant maintenance and ongoing programmed works to ensure their continued operations.

Ask us a question

Please contact Council customer service or beach safety team by phone on 02 4306 7900.

Location

88 Ocean Parade, The Entrance NSW 2261