

Water Quality Kingston Beach FAQ

- **Why has the beach been given a poor rating?**

When a monitoring site at a recreational beach records five (5) results over the trigger level, then that beach shall be given the rating associated with the below:

- Five (5) results in five years that are above 280 = "Fair" rating.
- Five (5) results in five years that are above 500 = "Poor" rating.

The northern section of the beach has been classified with a "Poor" grading, as there has been 5 results out of 88 that exceeded the threshold; over the last 5 years.

The table below shows the high results (over 500) from each year in the last five years.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
Kingston North	-	1	-	2	2	= 5
Kingston Middle	1	-	-	1	1	= 3
Kingston South	-	-	-	1	1	= 2

- **What exactly has been detected in the water?**

Enterococci is the indicator used in the summer monitoring program. Enterococci levels in these samples are measured in cfu/100ml (colony forming units per 100mls).

Enterococci is a faecal bacterium that is indicative of the presence of sewerage but can also be present from other natural sources in the environment such as agricultural runoff, birds and animals.

Water contamination by sewage and animal faeces may pose a health hazard when the water is used for primary contact recreation, such as swimming.

- **What is the process of reviewing the beach grading?**

Following every summer swimming season, the sample results are added to previous results, and the results from five years of sampling are collectively used to calculate a new long-term rating by the Derwent Estuary Program.

- **Is the water always contaminated?**

No. The beach rating is based on a long-term grading system.

15 out of the 17 samples taken in the most recent 2021-22 sampling season complied with the Recreational Water Quality Guidelines. The rating is based on the last five (5) years of sampling data.

The long-term rating is not a representation of what the water quality is like from one day or one week to the next.

- **Is the Northern end of Kingston beach closed?**

No, the beach is not closed.

Council cannot stop the public from accessing or using the beach. However, we do not currently recommend swimming in the northern section of the beach due to the new long-term "Poor" water quality rating.

This area will be clearly signposted to make members of the public aware of the impacted area.

- **I went swimming in the 'poor' section, will I be, okay?**

It is unlikely that you will become sick.

As always, if you are concerned, we would encourage you to talk to your GP or other healthcare professional.

The trigger levels for enterococci are set by the National Health and Medical Research Council and are based on the amount of ingestible portions that a swimmer is likely to consume on an annual basis.

Regular swimmers will have a greater exposure and are assumed to ingest a larger amount of water annually.

- **Is it safe for my dog to swim at the northern end of the beach?**

The Recreational Water Quality Guidelines are specific to human health only.

- **Why is the contamination only affecting the northern end?**

While we cannot point to the exact cause of the high results recorded at Kingston Beach North, we do know that this site is subject to flows from Browns River.

Browns river is known to not be suitable for primary contact activities such as swimming.

Periods of high rainfall result in a flushing of Browns River to the northern end of Kingston Beach where the river meets the beach.

- **Is it still okay to swim at the middle and southern sections?**

Yes, you can still swim at the middle or southern end of Kingston Beach.

Always be aware of where and when you swim.

Avoid swimming in the Derwent estuary for two days after heavy rain (> 10 mm of rain over a 24-hour period) and don't swim or allow children to play in or near stormwater outfalls or urban rivulets.

- **What is Council doing about the contamination?**

Council has a dedicated Stormwater Investigations Officer to track and trace potential sources of contamination.

Council is currently examining the stormwater network in the Kingston Beach area as well the inputs higher up the catchment, that feed into Whitewater Creek and Browns River.

Bacterial & ammonia testing is being utilised to track and monitor possible sources of contamination.

Investigations into the sewer network in the surrounding area are also ongoing, with issues being referred to TasWater as they arise.

- **What can I do to help prevent contamination of the Derwent estuary?**

Be aware that anything that you put into the stormwater network will wash out at the beach.

Whatever gets washed down Kingborough's stormwater drains on all our streets ends up in our waterways and beaches.

Pick up after your dog at the beach and notify Council of any illegal or suspicious polluting activities into the stormwater system.

- **How will Council keep the community updated?**

Keeping our community updated is an important priority for Council and that is why we have dedicated part of our website to hosting our current test results and locating information for the public on stormwater health across the community.

Council will also regularly update its social media channel and local newspapers with any further developments.

Council will also look to host an open community event in the near future, once the testing program is further advanced and more investigations are underway.