



MEDIA RELEASE

6 October 2015

HUNTER BEACHES: THE BEST ARE ABOUT TO GET BETTER

The Hunter's beaches have been ranked the cleanest in the state for the 15th year running and work is underway to make them even cleaner.

Beachwatch released yesterday the annual 'State of the Beaches' scorecard yesterday, ranking 100% of the Hunter's beaches as 'Good' or 'Very Good'.

Almost 1,500 samples were taken in the Hunter over 12 months, testing for pollution that includes viruses, bacteria and protozoa.

Hunter Water Interim CEO Jeremy Bath said a state-of-the-art disinfection system was soon to be installed at Burwood Waste Water Treatment Works that would push the Hunter's Beachwatch score even higher.

"Although it's been eight years since one of the Hunter's beaches has been rated anything other than 'Good' by Beachwatch, we're not 100% satisfied.

"Merewether was rated by Beachwatch as 'Good', which means that occasionally under certain conditions, it can be affected by pollution.

"That's why next month Hunter Water will start installing a \$14m ultra-violet disinfection system at Burwood Waste Water Treatment plant, which will kill any bugs remaining in the effluent after it's been processed.

"The UV system works by sending DNA-shattering, ultra-short length microwaves through treated waste water that while might appear clean, contain harmful micro-organisms like bacteria.

"With the Hunter's population expected to increase by 10% per decade, this new technology will help ensure our beaches not only rank the best in NSW for another 15 years, but continue improving in quality.

"Part of what makes the Hunter world class is its pristine beaches, and good waste water management makes for clean coasts. Around half of the \$1.1 billion Hunter Water is spending over the next decade is on waste water upgrades, which means a higher population won't mean higher pollution," he said.

Hunter Water's UV disinfection upgrade at Burwood Waste Water Treatment Works is due to be completed by late 2016.

The full 2014/15 State of the Beaches Report is available to download here - <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/beach/reportann.htm>

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2014-15 BEACHWATCH RATINGS FOR HUNTER BEACHES

Beaches rated as 'Very Good'

Zenith Beach
Box Beach
Fingal Beach
One Mile Beach
South Stockton Beach
Nobbys Beach
Newcastle Beach
Bar Beach
Dudley Beach
Redhead Beach
Blacksmiths Beach
Caves Beach

Beaches rated as 'Good'

Merewether Beach
Burwood North Beach
Burwood South Beach
Glenrock Lagoon Beach
Swansea Heads Little Beach
Catherine Hill Bay