For more information visit: www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au
For enquiries please call 4974 2000.

Merewether Ocean Baths
Frequently Asked Questions

Merewether Ocean Baths is a spectacular facility with a great history. Opened in 1935, it is one of the largest ocean baths in the southern hemisphere.

To know how the facility works take a look at our FAQs.
Council is committed to clean, manage and maintain Merewether Baths and always try's to find the balance between availability and cleanliness. The facility is highly exposed to the elements and the cleaning schedule can change due to any large swells or extreme weather.

How can I find out when the baths are being cleaned?
Replacement of the water and cleaning is programmed to occur weekly. The time and date of the cleaning is displayed at the facility and at www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au and go to Explore > Recreation > Beaches & Baths > Ocean Baths.

What work is involved in the cleaning of the baths?
The basic tasks performed during the weekly cleaning process are:

- Emptying of the pool to remove dirty water
- Removal of debris from pool floor such as seaweed
- Cleaning and whitewashing walls
- Removal of oysters
- Maintenance on gates, pumps, etc
- Pool refill

Why is the cleaning day sometimes changed at short notice?
Due to weather and other environmental conditions some or all of the clean cannot be achieved. Staff will either defer the clean until the following scheduled cleaning day or conduct the clean on an unscheduled cleaning day such as the following Monday. Whilst conducting the clean on an unscheduled day is disruptive to regular users, staff always aim to minimise disruption and have the baths cleaned.

Can the pool be cleaned more often?
The cleaning occurs weekly to achieve a balance between making the facility available to the public and providing a clean facility to users. The clean is generally on a Thursday in warmer months and Wednesday in cooler months.

Why does the cleaning of the baths occur at low tide?
Cleaning of the pool is highly dependent on surf conditions and weather. In particular in high seas it is not possible to empty the pool or safely perform work within the pool. Whitewashing the walls cannot be performed when water is entering the pool over the walls, in rain or if rain is forecast as the coating has to dry before the pool can be refilled. By cleaning on low tide, the chances of being unable to completely clean the pool is greatly reduced.

Why are the walls dirty?
While the walls are painted in whitewash on a weekly basis, the cleanliness of the walls is heavily influenced by the water temperature and usage of the facility. During summer, warmer water accelerates algae growth, resulting in an unsightly build up on the walls in the splash zone. Re-applying whitewash outside of the regular cleans would require closing the pool.

What about water quality?
Merewether Baths was opened in 1935 and is one of the largest ocean baths in the southern hemisphere. It should be noted that the water quality is heavily influenced by the naturally occurring water quality of the ocean and the debris present. While this can be partially controlled by
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**Are the bathroom facilities or pool surrounds available when the pool is closed for cleaning?**

The facilities are closed to enable high pressure cleaning of shower walls, floors etc. This is completed while facility is closed for safety reasons for our employees and the public. Cleaning of the pool deck requires the use of machinery which requires the lower deck to be closed to ensure the safety of staff and the public.