

# COASTAL WATER QUALITY FOR CONTACT RECREATION

## WHAT WAIKATO REGIONAL COUNCIL DOES

Waikato Regional Council monitors a number of popular open coast beaches during the summer months to assess the suitability of the water for recreation such as swimming and surfing. We do this by measuring faecal indicator bacteria (enterococci). The number of faecal indicator bacteria present in the water indicate the likelihood of contracting a disease from the many possible pathogenic bacteria or viruses. We compare the level of faecal bacteria to national recreational water quality guidelines.

This type of monitoring tells us the suitability of the water at the time of sampling. Over time, we gain an understanding of the typical water quality at each location. This is represented by an overall grade which is given to each location at the end of the sampling season.

## SAMPLING

Waikato Regional Council staff sample weekly every summer between 1 November and 31 March at the locations in Figure 1.

## RESULTS

Results from each sampling event are published on our website as soon as practicable after receiving the results from the laboratory. We typically receive the results within one week of sampling. The results are also published on the national environmental data platform, Land and Water Aotearoa (LAWA).

We are working together with district councils and the Waikato District Health Board to identify any results that may have public health implications and then provide the public with the best quality information.

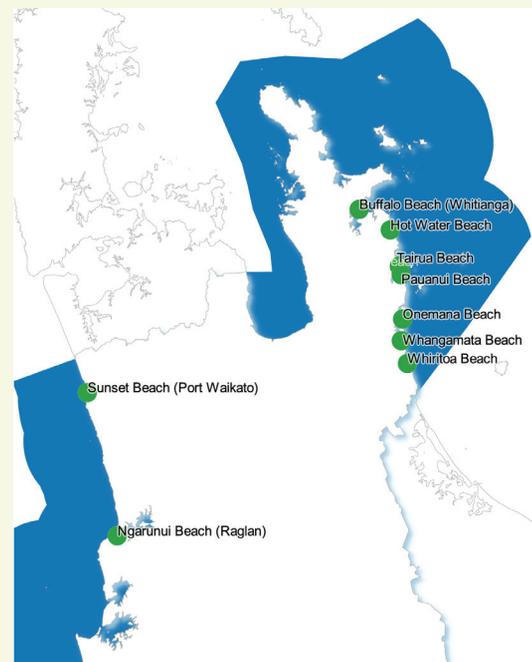


Figure 1: Open coast beaches monitored weekly during the summer months.



Waikato Regional Council staff member water testing in Raglan.

## GENERAL PATTERNS

The general pattern we see is that water quality at Waikato open coast beaches is high, however caution should still be taken following heavy rain as it flushes contaminants from urban and rural land into waterways which then make their way to the coast. These contaminants may be present in the water for up to two days after heavy or prolonged rainfall.

## LIMITATIONS

Sampling water weekly is a great way to track water quality over the summer months but it can only tell us what the water was like at the time of sampling. Results from previous sampling occasions are not indicative of what the water or health risks might be like in the future.

## MORE INFORMATION

### Results

[waikatoregion.govt.nz/coastalresults](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/coastalresults)

See results for the rest of the country at Land and Water Aotearoa (LAWA):  
[lawa.org.nz/explore-data/swimming](http://lawa.org.nz/explore-data/swimming)

### More coastal information

[waikatoregion.govt.nz/coast](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz/coast)

### Contact

Contact our Coastal Science Team on  
0800 800 401 or email  
[info@waikatoregion.govt.nz](mailto:info@waikatoregion.govt.nz).



Raglan Beach

HE TAIAO MAURIORA HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT  
HE ŌHANGA PAKARI STRONG ECONOMY  
HE HAPORI HIHIRI VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

For more information call Waikato Regional Council  
on 0800 800 401 or visit [waikatoregion.govt.nz](http://waikatoregion.govt.nz).

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**Waikato**  
  
REGIONAL COUNCIL  
Te Kaunihera ā Rohe o Waikato