Swim site activation overview

The purpose of this document is to provide a top-level site by site overview of the evidenced gathered to date on the 12 proposed swim sites on the Parramatta River. It is based on the swim site activation framework structured around vulnerability, feasibility and desirability criteria.

This document is supported by several more in-depth reports and the data that sits behind them, these include:

- The Parramatta River Swim Site Activation Framework report
- Parramatta River Masterplan Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report
- Parramatta River Masterplan – Stage 1 Report
- Water Quality Modelling Report

The swim site activation framework

The swim site activation framework (the framework) was developed by McGregor Coxall in 2017 to provide guidance on the potential for activation at a swim site and the type of activation that can be achieved. The Parramatta River Swim Site Activation Framework report provides an in-depth explanation of how each of the criteria was developed.

Vulnerability

The vulnerability criteria determine the relative risks at the site and will influence the type of potential activation. The vulnerability score does not rule out a site for activation but gives an indication of the level of management measures that are needed to mitigate risk.

The sites have been scored **low, medium or high** on each criterion and been given an overall vulnerability score.

Feasibility

The feasibility criteria are used to initially determine the physical viability of activating a site for swimming. The feasibility assessment may rule out certain activations as they would be very difficult or excluded, for example if the site is too close to a ferry route it could exclude in river swimming.

The sites have been scored **low, medium or high** on each criterion.

Desirability

The desirability criteria are used to assess how likely it is that once activated a site will be used by the community. It looks at a range of criteria including access, parking and availability of facilities.

A desktop analysis of the desirability criteria, completed by a qualified urban planner, can be found in The Parramatta River Swim Site Activation Framework report. For the purposes of this report we have used the findings from the desirability assessments completed by the community.

The community desirability assessments were commissions as it was felt important to ask the community directly to assess the desirability of the 12 potential swim sites. Rather than take a traditional workshop approach to gain community feedback, RPS designed an experiential engagement process that took

community representatives to the swim locations to take part in site-based desirability assessments. These site-based assessments were supplemented by digital versions, hosted on the online engagement platform sydneywatertalk.com.au and promoted through social media and at the Riverfest community event

A total of 37 community members attended three workshops, each completing a desirability assessment. In addition, a further 131 surveys were completed at Riverfest and online at Sydney Water Talk.

The output of the desirability assessments has been analysed to provide a desirability score for each site. This scoring allows us to rank each of the 12 sites and unpick what aspect of the site is driving the score.

Participants were asked to consider 17 questions about the site and indicate whether they:

- Strongly agreed
- Agreed
- Neither agreed or disagreed
- Disagreed
- Strongly disagreed

In all cases strongly agreed indicated a high desirability of the site in relation to that attribute. We assigned a score to each answer ranging from 5 for strongly agreed to 1 for strongly disagree. This gave us an average score for each site out of 85 derived from the on-site and online assessments with a higher score indicating a more desirable site. These scores then informed a **low, medium or high** score.

It is important to note that a low desirability score does not mean that a swim site should be ruled out for activation or that it will not be desirable to the community in the future. It is instead an indication on the amount of change or investment that would be needed to activate the site. On the other hand, a high desirability score does not mean a site should be prioritised for activation, it is therefore important to read the desirability scores in conjunction with views from the community.

Any stakeholder views represented in this report were gathered at the **swim site prioritisation and interventions workshop** held in August 2017. More detail of the outcomes of this workshop and attendees can be found in the Parramatta River Masterplan Stakeholder and Community Engagement Report.

Water quality modelling

Water quality outcomes were modelled using enterococci data in line with current Beachwatch methodology. For this report we have used the modelled 2025 water quality outcomes. More detail can be found in the full Water Quality Modelling Report.

	2014	2025	INTERVENTIONS			
			Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Location	Baseline	BAU	Targeted Overflows Contained	All Overflows Contained	Medium Catchment Intervention	High Catchment Intervention
Lake Parramatta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Little Coogee	×××	×××	×××	×××	×××	×××
Parramatta CBD	×××	×××	×××	×××	×××	×××
Macarthur St Bridge	×××	×××	×××	×××	×××	××
Silverwater Park	×××	×××	××	××	×	×
Meadowbank	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓
Brays Bay	×	×	×	✓	✓	✓
Putney Park	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Kissing Point Park	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Cabarita beach	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Quarantive Reserve	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Henley Baths	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Bayview Park	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓
Chiswich Baths	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓
Callan Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Dawn Fraser Pool	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

Legend

Enterococci concentration (cfu/100ml) 95% of the time below.

×××	**10,000**	Water quality unlikely to be suitable for full immersion swimming
××	**1,000**	Water quality unlikely to be suitable for full immersion swimming
×	**500**	Water quality unlikely to be suitable for full immersion swimming
✓	**200**	Water quality suitable for full immersion swimming
✓✓	**40**	Water quality suitable for full immersion swimming

10 Bayview Park

Background information

Bayview Park is located at the end of Burwood Road in Concord. It was once a regular swimming spot with public baths, which no longer remain. Bayview Park has several picnic tables, undercover areas, BBQ's, toilets and a public boat ramp. The land is managed by City of Canada Bay and is close to the site of the former Bushells Factory which is proposed for redevelopment.

Recommended activation

Swimming in the river.

Key actions and considerations

- The proximity of the ferry to the beach area would need to be considered in any proposed activation.
- The site is already active for a range of river based activities included boating, paddle boarding and a swim site for dogs.
- Several community members suggested that all they would need to start using the site was a shark net and assurance the water quality was safe for swimming.
- Concerns were expressed around over use at this site and driving more visitors to the area.

Site vulnerability

Overall score - Low to Medium Vulnerability

	Score			Key vulnerability observations	Recommended actions/mitigations
	Low	Medium	High		
Water Quality		●		• Local Peninsula is a former industrial area • Minor local stormwater outlets	• Undertake water quality modelling – initial 20 samples and evaluate to determine need for fu • rther testing • Dive study • Undertake high level background studies, including heritage and service constraints and develop initial concepts options for swim site activation developing sketch plans for a range of upgrades. • Liaise with RMS to understand implications of proximity to ferry wharf and potential restrictions due to proximity of ferry • Undertake community consultation to better understand existing site uses and the community needs and desire for swimming at the site. • Consider potential for integraiton with Bushell Site re-development and developer contributions to park upgrades • Carry out a Health Risk Assessment of chemical contaimants in sediment included resuspension • Map historical land use and contaminated lands to understand levels of contamination risk
Water Clarity		●		• Ok slightly turbid. Visible to about 0.3m from surface	
River Sediment Type and Quality		●		• Within a large embayment on the river, although sediments found to be coarse sandy sediments, very few fine sediment • Minimal muddy sediments • Low levels of sediment contamination, with only potential risk identified with tests for dioxin like compounds associated with muddy sediments. However the dominant sediment is coarse sand with few visible fine sediment.	
River Dynamics	●			• Low velocities	
River Bed Physical Hazards		●		• The area to the immediate west of the wharf was undergoing erosion and exposing former fill at the site including bricks and concrete.	
River Bank and River Edge Characteristics	●			• Sandy beach with gentle sloping access with some existing establishing native vegetation dominated by casuarinas and further to the west of the wharf there are good mangrove stands which restrict access	
Heritage		●		• Bayview Park is a local heritage item and is heritage listed in the LEP	

Site feasibility

	Score			Key feasibility observations	Recommended actions/mitigations
	Low	Medium	High		
Boat Traffic		●		• Rivercat wharf in close proximity	• Discuss exclusion zones with RMS and design in barriers as required • Undertake further water quality modelling • Undertake bathymetry survey
Water quality		●		• Water quality not well known at present	
Bathymetry		●		• Observations indicate reasonable depths	
Publicly Available Land	●			• Land available	
Ecological Restriction	●			• Limited ecological constraints	

Water quality modelling

Water suitable for full immersion swimming in 2025.

	2017	2025	INTERVENTIONS			
			Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3	Scenario 4
Location	Baseline	BAU	Targeted Overflows Contained	All Overflows Contained	Medium Catchment Intervention	High Catchment Intervention
Bayview Park	✓	✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓

Site desirability

Rank (of 12)	Score	What did the community find desirable?
2	● Lots of desirable features	Most desirable feature • The attractiveness of the site, amount of tree shade and plants • The attractiveness of the river back and ease of access to the water • The attractiveness of the water for boating and walking alongside Least desirable feature • Proximity to shops and cafes

What the community told us

'Beautiful and quiet location. Overcrowding this site would be a shame as it is small and not enough car parking. Better suited to swimming than Brays Bay'

'This site is beautiful. It would be worth catching a bus instead of a train just to get to this site over Brays Bay. More picnic tables would be an improvement. It feels so safe and relaxing, like an inner west oasis '

'Facilities need to be upgraded. Additional bus services need to be provided.'

Stakeholders shared the view of community members that minimal interventions were needed to make the site swimmable. It was suggested that this site could be a 'quick win' and making it swimmable could be used to generate momentum and support for some of the sites that are more challenging to activate