

NSW Marine Estate Community Wellbeing Surveys


NSW South East Coast (Upper) Region



The NSW Government's Marine Estate Community Wellbeing Surveys provide valuable insight into our coastline from residents, youth and visitors. Using the responses to the surveys, we can track the benefits, threats, and trends in community wellbeing over time.

This fact sheet summarises key findings for the South East Coast (Upper) region from Wave 1 of the Community Wellbeing Surveys.

The South East Coast (Upper) region of NSW extends from Stanwell Park in the north to North Durras in the south and includes the major centres of Wollongong, Kiama, Jervis Bay and Ulladulla, coastal environments and waterways like Lake Illawarra, Shoalhaven River and Jervis Bay.



“I live near the ocean and have enjoyed it from a very young age. Walking along the beach, swimming and seeing the coastal beauty and the creatures that live in the ocean brings much joy and contributes to my emotional and mental health.”



Image: Belmore Basin and Continental Pool. Location: Wollongong.

“The beauty of the south coast and the environment we have gives me an extra lease on life.”

Our health. Our coast.

Engaging with the NSW coast provides many wellbeing benefits, including improving our physical and mental health as well as our quality of life.

70% of residents and 75% of youth in our region visit our marine estate at least once per week!



8.4/10

Score is given for how important the NSW coast is in contributing to our quality of life.

Our coast. Our legacy.

Our community considers protecting nature and ensuring that a healthy marine estate can be enjoyed by future generations as important reasons for managing our marine estate (average score of at least 8.5 out of 10 where 10 is ‘very important’).

Our legacy is the coastline we leave behind.



8.9/10

Score is given on the importance of passing on a healthy NSW coast to future generations.

Impacts to our wellbeing.

Impacts to our marine estate.

Of the eleven key threats, those that have the greatest current impact on community experience in our region include:

- litter (6.4 out of 10 where 10 is a ‘severe impact’)
- illegal behaviour or activities (6.3)
- overcrowding (6.0)
- loss of natural habitats (5.7)
- climate change (5.5).

Our region has moderate impact scores for all threats and are mainly similar to the statewide averages.



85%

of residents consider our coastal environment to be in good/very good health.

Scorecard - results

This snapshot summarises the indicators and regional and statewide average scores given by survey respondents to the key questions in the Coastal Residents¹ Survey 2021.

Question/Indicator	Percentage or Average Score	
	South East Coast (Upper)	Statewide
Community use of the NSW marine estate		
How often do you visit your local coastal area?	70% at least once per week	64% at least once per week
Top 3 activities undertaken when visiting your local coastal area:		
• Beach going	65% of people	61% of people
• Picnicking, sightseeing, visiting coastal cafes	64% of people	58% of people
• Land-based exercise	61% of people	58% of people
Community perceptions of environmental health		
How would you rate the current health of the natural coastal environment in your local area?	Very good 28% Good 57% Poor 3% Very poor 1%	Very good 27% Good 55% Poor 5% Very poor 1%
Contribution of the NSW marine estate to quality of life		
How important is the NSW coast in contributing to your quality of life? ²	8.4/10	8.3/10
How important is the NSW coast in contributing to the following aspects of your life? ³		
• Emotional and mental health	8.2/10	8.1/10
• Physical health	7.9/10	7.9/10
• Spending time/socialising with family and friends	7.7/10	7.7/10
• Nutritional needs	6.3/10	6.6/10
How much do you agree with the following statements ⁴		
• I take pride in living on the NSW coast	8.6/10	8.3/10
• I feel a personal connection to the NSW coast	8.1/10	7.9/10
• The NSW coast is part of my identity	7.7/10	7.5/10

¹ Coastal residents defined as at least 18 years old, reside in local region and live within 5 kms of the coast

² 0 = Not important at all --> 5 = Neutral --> 10 = Very important

³ 0 = Not important at all --> 5 = Neutral --> 10 = Very important

⁴ 0 = Strongly disagree --> 5 = Neutral --> 10 = Strongly agree

Question/Indicator	Percentage or Average Score	
	South East Coast (Upper)	Statewide

Threats and impacts on community experience

How safe do you feel when using the NSW Coast? ⁵	8.3/10	8.1/10
How much of an impact do you think the following aspects currently have on your experience of your local coastal areas in the past 12 months? ⁶		
• Litter on shorelines or in the water	6.4/10	6.7/10
• Illegal behaviours or activities	6.3/10	6.3/10
• Overcrowding	6.0/10	6.3/10
• Climate change	5.5/10	5.9/10
• Loss of natural habitats	5.7/10	5.9/10

Community stewardship of the NSW marine estate

Top reasons why it is important to manage different aspects of the coast? ⁷		
• Pass on a healthy NSW coast to future generations	8.9/10	8.8/10
• Provide a place where people can connect with nature	8.6/10	8.5/10
• Preserve nature –even though it may never be used or seen by humans	8.5/10	8.5/10
Do you feel responsible for helping maintain a healthy NSW Coast? ⁸	7.8/10	7.8/10

⁵ 0 = Strongly disagree --> 5 = Neutral --> 10 = Strongly agree

⁶ 0 = No impact, 1-3 = Minor, 4-6 = Moderate, 7-9 = Major, 10 = Severe impact

⁷ 0 = Not important at all --> 5 = Neutral --> 10 = Very important

⁸ 0 = Strongly disagree --> 5 = Neutral --> 10 = Strongly agree

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