

Name of policy:	Vehicles on Beaches		
Adoption by Council:	27 October 2021	Minute number:	345/2021
Last review date:	November 2017		
Review timeframe:	4 Years		
Next scheduled review date:	October 2025		
Related legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i> <i>Crown Lands Act 1989</i>		
Associated policies/documents:	Nil		
Responsible division:	Liveable Communities		

Policy objective

This policy aims to protect the coastal environment, nesting shorebirds, flora, fauna and beach users. The policy is supported by guidelines that provide conditions of use for vehicle permits that enable access to beaches in MidCoast Council’s region.

Policy statement

Council has a shared responsibility with NSW Government agencies and community members to ensure preservation and protection of our coastal environments.

Beaches and dunal ecosystems are highly valued by both the local community and the many visitors to the MidCoast region.

Our beaches:

- contribute to the overall amenity and visual appeal of the region
- are shared spaces
- are vital ecological resources, providing habitat to a variety of native flora and fauna
- are integral to the lifestyle of our community
- support a diverse range of recreational activities
- are a significant driver of tourism

Council aims to ensure safe and responsible access to some beaches through an appropriately managed permit system.

Coverage of the policy

This policy applies to all drivers and all motor vehicles other than those used by:

- (a) Emergency Services and other authorised activities

- (b) Authorised officers of Local, State and Commonwealth Governments in the performance of their duties.

The following persons are authorised to enforce this policy:

- Officers of the NSW Police Force;
- Authorised officers of Council (Council Rangers).

Strategic Plan link

The policy is consistent with the strategic plans of MidCoast Council.

Value - Our environment

Objective 7 - We protect, maintain and restore our natural environment

Strategy 7.1 - Value, protect, monitor and manage the health and diversity of our natural assets, wildlife and ecosystems

Policy content

As the coastline is subject to coastal erosion and access points are regularly affected by coastal erosion, access during these times cannot be guaranteed.

In the event of any beach or access point being unsuitable for motor vehicle use following short-term damage due to storm conditions, Council shall have authority to temporarily close a beach to vehicles to permit the return of sand and dunal vegetation.

Vehicles are prohibited at all times on:

- (a) any other beach, or part thereof, not specifically identified as being accessible by vehicle under this policy as defined in **Schedule 1** to this policy
- (b) any dune or beach area that is vegetated
- (c) any dune or beach area undergoing restoration or a regeneration programme
- (d) areas where endangered shore bird habitat or nesting areas, as marked by National Parks and Wildlife Service or Crown Lands
- (e) any closed beach.

Jimmys Beach at Tea Gardens is only open for professional fishers and restricted permit holders (restricted permit holders require a doctor's certificate every two (2) years verifying limited mobility or be holders of an Australian Disability Parking Permit issued by Transport for NSW).

Any breaches of this policy are an offence under the *Local Government Act 1993* and subject to penalties, fines and withdrawal of permits.

Permits are available for purchase online, at council offices, tourism centres and local businesses.

Beach permit fees are variable based on permit timeframes, currently 30-day permits, yearly permits, and restricted yearly permits.

Fees are determined by Council each financial year.



A brochure identifying accessible areas and beach usage guidelines accompanies this policy. Council will provide beach users with a copy of the brochure for reference and keeping in the permit holders nominated beach vehicle.

The proceeds from permits and infringement notices are allocated towards improved signposting, board and chain access tracks for vehicles and pedestrians, dunal fencing and revegetation works.

Definitions

NSW Government agencies means: Crown Lands, National Parks and Wildlife NSW (NSW Office of Environment & Heritage) who work together to help protect and ensure suitable year-round habitat for Endangered Shorebirds.

Restricted area means: areas of beaches only accessible to a) Professional Beach Access Permit holders, and b) valid Beach Access Vehicle Permit holders approved for “Restricted” access.

References and related documents

Schedule 1 – list of beach access points and permitted areas

Responsible officer (position)

Manager Major Assessment and Regulatory Services

Attachments

Schedule 1 – list of beach access points and permitted areas

Schedule 1: MidCoast Council beach vehicle access

Beach	Access points	Prohibited areas
Crowdy Beach	14 km accessible Access Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North of Surf Club • Kyllies Beach 	Southern Corner 250m / 0.25Km (at Surf Club) School Holidays: Closed to all Vehicles 8:00 am to 6:00 pm (June/July break excepted)
Harrington Beach	5km accessible Access Points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rutile Road, Crowdy Head ▪ Via Rainforest road, Harrington. 	Northern Corner 300m Closed to all Vehicles at all times.
Manning Point	Total Length 10.1 km Access Point: through Manning Point reserve	Sign-posted nesting areas
Old Bar Beach	North on Muddishops Rd (left turn only)	Sign-posted nesting areas
Wallabi Point Beach	Access point – through Manning Point Reserve	Total length 1.25 km (with exception of boat launching, which is restricted to Southern corner)
Black Head Beach	Boat launching access point is adjacent surf club	Total Length 1.30 km (with exception of boat launching, which is restricted to Southern corner)
Tuncurry Beach (also known as Nine Mile Beach)	10.5 km accessible Access points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.2 km from north end at Blackhead (right hand turn only) • end of Beach street Tuncurry 	200m Northern corner at Blackhead (Back Beach) 800m at the southern end of Tuncurry Beach
Sandbar	1.6 km accessible Access point – via Sandbar Caravan Park	1.2 km northern end to Cellito Headland closed to all vehicles at all times.

Seal Rocks (also known as No.1 Beach)	Restricted area Access point – Eastern End	Total length 1.1km prohibited (with exception of licensed professional fishermen hauling mullet)
Seal Rocks Boat Beach	Boat launch only Centre of beach	Total length 0.4km prohibited (with exception of boat launching). No access to any vehicles 100m from Eastern end.
Hawks Nest Bennetts Beach	Access points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North 3.7km accessible from North of Surf Club near Hawks nest Golf Club • Restricted area. South 1.7km accessible from South of Surf Club opposite Jimmys Beach caravan Park is a Restricted area.	1.1km from southern end adjacent to Surf Club prohibited to all unauthorised vehicles
Jimmys Beach	Restricted area Accessible Jimmys Beach caravan Park then 0.9km East to South of Hawks Nest Beach	Total length 3.9km prohibited (with exception of licensed professional fishermen actively fishing).