

LGOIMA

When releasing responses to previous LGOIMA requests, names of individual requestors may be withheld to protect their privacy.

Information requested by the media, from public sector organisations and MPs will always be published while information specific to an individual or their property will not generally be published.

Request

from: Hon Dr Nick Smith

For: Water Quality at Tahunanui Beach

Response

by: Clare Barton
Group Manager Environmental Management



Ref: A2352554

Civic House, 110 Trafalgar Street
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17 March 2020

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Hon Dr Nick Smith
544 Waimea Road
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Dear Dr Smith

Water Quality at Tahunanui Beach, Katharine Day

Thank you for your request for information, received at Council on 18 February 2020 (service request number 2007182). The information you requested is provided below.

Q1: What ongoing monitoring Council does of our beach water quality?

Popular swimming sites around Nelson are monitored for water quality over the summer period, with 20 samples taken each year. The testing frequency increases to twice per week over the peak bathing period, and samples are delivered to the Cawthron Institute lab on the same day as collected to provide a 24 hour return of laboratory results and reporting to the public. The sampling site for Tahunanui Beach is directly in front of the Beach Café.

The results are then reported on the 'Can I Swim Here' page of the LAWA website.

<https://www.lawa.org.nz/explore-data/nelson-region/swimming/tahunanui-beach/swimsite>

The results for this year (see Fig. below) show no exceedances (i.e. samples less than 140 Enterococci / 100 ml). In fact all of the samples are below 45 Enterococci / 100 ml, representing a natural background level.

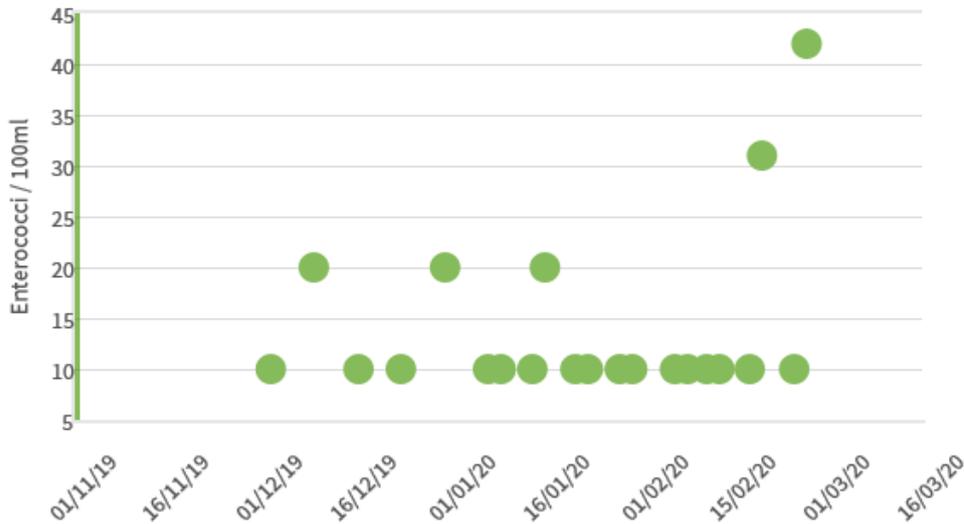
Internal Document ID: A2352554

Summer season monitoring history

Samples this season

Samples from last 3 years

Enterococci sampling graph



The four year data set shown below has four exceedances (amber and red), which are related to heavy rain events. On the LAWA web page there is a reminder to people not to swim after rain events.

Reminder

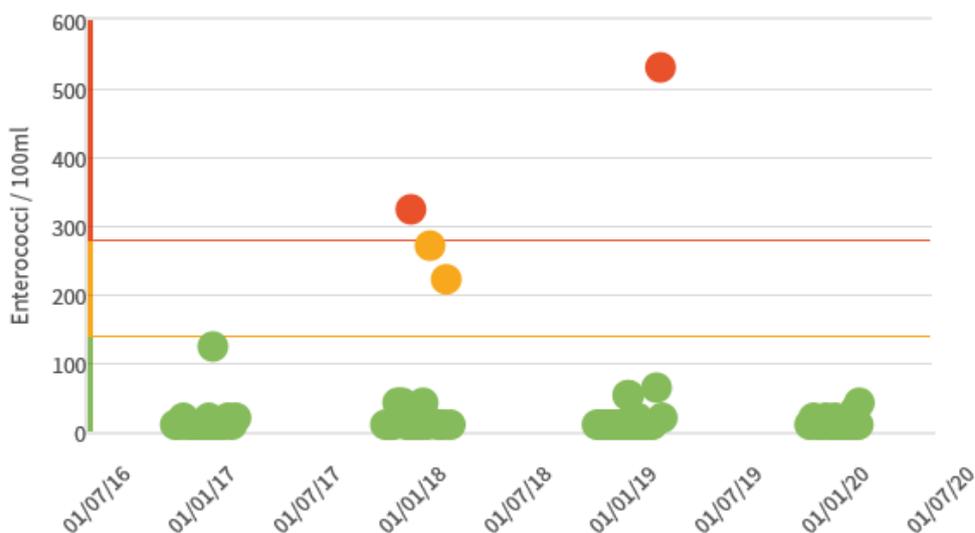
Heavy rain flushes contaminants from urban and rural land into waterways and we advise you not to swim for 2 – 3 days after heavy or prolonged rain – even at sites that generally have good water quality. Check that the water is clean and clear before taking a dip.

Summer season monitoring history

Samples this season

Samples from last 3 years

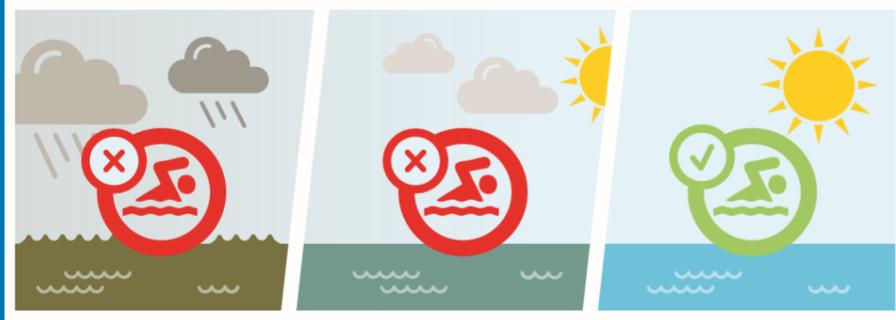
Enterococci sampling graph



Q2: Are there any concerns that have been identified and any actions that Council has taken or that are planned to address these?

Monitoring at Tahunanui Beach shows generally good water quality, and the only concerns identified are related to heavy summer rain events, and wastewater overflows.

In the case of heavy rain, urban stormwater contamination of the Tahunanui beach environment is the primary contaminant risk identified. This risk is managed through education, a management framework, permanent signage and regular media updates; for the public to be aware of the potential risk and avoid primary contact recreation if the water is discoloured, especially for the first 48 hours after rainfall. Sampling of the beach water during or post storm events has identified elevated levels of Enterococci, as would be expected. The permanent water quality sign at recreation sites is shown below.



If the water is discoloured after rainfall, please do not swim here

especially for the first 48 hours after heavy rain,
as contaminated surface run-off could be a health risk.

For more information about swimming sites
in the Nelson region, visit www.lawa.org.nz



In the case of a known wastewater overflow a management and monitoring plan is followed and specific signage is erected to notify members of the public of a sewage spill.

I hope this information answers your questions, and we would be happy to discuss our monitoring programme further with yourself or [REDACTED]. We would also be interested to understand more about where and under what circumstances [REDACTED] took her samples. If you would like to discuss it further please contact Jo Martin, Manager Science and Environment, at jo.martin@ncc.govt.nz.

Yours sincerely

Clare Barton
Group Manager Environmental Management



18 FEB 2020

Hon Dr Nick Smith

Member of Parliament for Nelson

Clare Barton
Environment Manager
Nelson City Council
PO Box 645
Nelson 7042

cc. [REDACTED]

Dear Clare

I have had raised with me by my Nelson constituent [REDACTED] concern about the standard of our water quality at Tahunanui Beach. [REDACTED] took samples from the beach that were tested by the Cawthron Institute showing very high levels of Enterococci.

Tahunanui Beach is an absolute gem for Nelson and so important for our quality of life. I am keen to better understand its water quality and the results from [REDACTED] do raise concerns. I am interested to know what ongoing monitoring the council does of our beach water quality, any concerns that have been identified and any actions the council has taken or that are planned to address these. I recognise that any single test can only partially inform any assessment but am keen to understand if we do have issues and risks.

My interest is not just as local MP but also in the broader discussion about water quality for recreation nationally, and about what Government can do to help to improve the quality of both freshwater and seawater for recreation.

I would welcome any appropriate reports you may have or the opportunity to meet with the appropriate staff to discuss.

Yours sincerely


Nick Smith
Nelson MP