RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY REPORT
JULY 2025 – JUNE 2026

LACHLAN KRANZ
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Being the General Manager as appointed by Council pursuant to section 61 of the Local Government Act 1993."

1.0 STATUTORY CONTEXT

Municipal areas offer natural recreational waters including beaches and rivers which are used for activities including swimming and fishing. Other recreational waters include public pool facilities available to the community.

In accordance with section 130 (1) of the *Public Health Act 1997*, a Council is to monitor the quality of water within its municipal area in accordance with the '*Recreational Water Quality Guidelines 2007'* issued by the Director of Public Health. The primary aim of the Guidelines is to protect human health and prevent the transfer of disease-causing organisms during contact with recreational waters with the Guidelines providing for the sampling and monitoring of popular recreational waterways and swimming pools.

Under the Guidelines it is a mandatory requirement from the Director that samples for primary recreational waters, other than swimming pools, must be taken at the beginning of the swimming season, which covers the months of December, January, February and March. The samples must be taken weekly during the duration of the season from each site, unless other arrangements are approved by the Director. The samples are to comply with the microbial levels as stipulated under section 8 of the Guidelines. The Guidelines also state that controlling authorities are required to erect signs and conduct monitoring of popular recreational water areas where there are identified sources of pollution that may affect human health.

The public pools within Huon Valley municipal area are monitored and sampled during the duration of their opening times of the year. Under the Guidelines, it is a mandatory requirement that all public swimming pools must be tested for microbiological quality and chemical parameters on a monthly basis or, if directed in writing by an Authorised Officer, more frequently. The microbiological water quality of all public swimming pools and public spa pools must be maintained in accordance with the Microbiological Water Quality criteria set out in the Guidelines.

It is a mandatory requirement that at the end of each swimming season, the controlling authority shall prepare a report for presentation to the Director by 30 September each year.

2.0 MONITORING OF RECREATIONAL WATERS

In order for Council to provide a more proactive means of communicating public health advisories to the public and community regarding the quality of the water at identified swimming beaches within the municipal area, warning signs advising persons not to swim in these waters during and up to three days after rainfall events are placed at Dover Beach, Randalls Bay, Drip Beach, Surveyors Bay and Verona Sands. Rainfall makes it more likely for accumulated material contaminated with bacteria to be washed in the sea by surface water runoff.

2.1 COMMUNITY SURVEY TO CONFIRM POPULAR SWIMMING LOCATIONS

Council conducted an online survey between October 18 and November 15 2023 to get a better idea of popular swimming locations in the Huon Valley. Close to 200 responses were received and the subsequent information led to the follow changes in Council's recreational water sampling program;

Instead of the standard weekly testing at the 4 previous sites (Randalls Bay, Verona Sands, Drip Beach and Dover), sampling was staggered across 8 sites over 16 weeks from December 2025 until March 2026. The sampling frequency was aligned with the popularity of the swimming locations in the survey results, as listed below;

- Weekly samples were taken from Randalls Bay Beach and Drip Beach.
- Fortnightly samples were taken from Surveyors Bay Beach and Dover Beach.
- Monthly samples were taken from Verona Sands Beach, Ranelagh Kayak Ramp, Seven Inch Beach and Robleys Point.

The purpose of collecting water quality data from the previously untested sites is to better understand the background water quality at these locations to help our Environmental Health Officers assess whether ongoing testing should continue and whether there is merit for installing advisory water quality signage at these sites.

2.2 DISCUSSION OF SAMPLING RESULTS

Sampling results for the 2025-26 summer can be viewed via the sample results spreadsheet:

Recreational Water Quality Reporting Spreadsheet 2025-26 - Huon Valley Council.xlsx

Two of the 62 water samples that were collected and tested between December 2025 and March 2026 failed to comply with the *Recreational Water Quality Guidelines 2007*. These samples were taken from Drip Beach on 16 December 2025 and Seven Inch Beach on 25 February 2026. The follow-up samples, taken on 18 December 2025 and 27 February 2026 respectively, both complied with the Guidelines.

The likely cause of the Drip Beach non-compliant sample was heavy rainfall in the days prior to sampling; a small rivulet drains onto the beach as it does most weeks, and no other sources of pollution were identified.

The Seven Inch Beach non-compliant sample also followed heavy rainfall prior to collection, with no readily identifiable sources of pollution noted. Confirmation of the failed result was delayed due to laboratory turnaround, which meant the follow-up sample was not able to be taken within the usual 48-hour window; it was nonetheless collected and returned a compliant result two days after the initial sample.

Overall, the sampling results indicate that there is excellent water quality in the popular swimming locations sampled in the 2025/26 recreational water sampling program, with only two isolated exceedances recorded across the whole season, both coinciding with heavy rainfall and both resolved by a compliant follow-up sample.

3.0 MONITORING OF SWIMMING POOLS

3.1 MICROBIAL LEVELS FOR INVESTIGATION

Swimming pool water is tested for the organisms listed in Table 3.1 below.

Type of Organism	Maximum Count Allowable
Heterotrophic Plate Count (HPC)	100 Colony Forming Units (cfu) per ml
Thermotolerant Coliforms	<1 per 100ml
Pseudomonas aeruginosa	<1 per 100ml

Table 3.1 Testing parameters for microbiological testing of swimming pool water.

The total heterotrophic plate count (HPC) is considered to represent the general cleanliness of the water. As the HPC is not considered indicative of a potential health risk, these bacteria are not generally considered as a compliance measure, rather their numbers are monitored to understand changes in water over time and to alert operators to increases in general bacterial numbers. A HPC greater than 100cfu/ml is a warning sign that the conditions in the pool or spa are perfect for the multiplication of coliforms, Pseudomonas aeruginosa and other bacteria that pose a potential health risk. A HPC greater than 100cfu/ml may indicate there is a problem with the pool disinfection system. If a result reveals a HPC greater than 100cfu/ml a resample must be taken within 48 hours of becoming aware of this result.

Thermotolerant coliforms (which include *E. coli*) can be used to indicate the presence of faecal contamination based on the premise that they are present in high numbers in the faeces of humans and other warm-blooded animals. Their presence indicates that faecal pollution may have occurred and pathogens might be present as a result.

Pseudomonas aeruginosa is the most common disease causing agent associated with waterborne disease outbreaks. It is an opportunistic pathogen and has been identified as the causative agent of eye, ear and skin infections. Its normal habitats are water, soil and vegetation but may also be of human origin. Although relatively resistant to a range of disinfectants, chlorination of normal swimming pools should be sufficient to kill bacteria.

If a result reveals the presence of thermotolerant coliforms or *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, a resample must be taken within 48 hours of becoming aware of this result.

3.2 SAMPLING AND RESULTS

There are three swimming pools within the Huon Valley municipal area that are offered for public use. These include the Huonville Pool, Port Huon Pool (owned by Council) and the Hastings Caves Pool (owned by Department of Natural Resources and Environment).

NB: Results that revealed Nil per 100mL will be shown as <1.

3.2.1 Port Huon Swimming Pool

Samples were taken monthly and results are presented in Table 3.2.1 below.

PORT HUON		**Pool usually operates all year round**		
Sample No	**Date**	**HPC (max=100 per ml)**	**Thermotolerant Coliforms/100mL (max <1)**	***P. aeruginosa/ 100mL (max <1)***
1	01/07/2025	<1	<1	<1
2	05/08/2025	<1	<1	<1
3	01/09/2025	<1	<1	<1
4	30/09/2025	<1	<1	<1
5	03/11/2025	<1	<1	<1
6	02/12/2025	<1	<1	<1
7	06/01/2026	<1	<1	<1
8	03/02/2026	<1	<1	<1
9	03/03/2026	41	<1	<1
10	30/03/2026	2	<1	<1
11	11/05/2026	<1	<1	<1
12	01/06/2026	<1	<1	<1
13	30/06/2026	<1	<1	<1

Table 3.2.1 Swimming pool sample results for Port Huon Swimming Pool 2025-26 – non-compliant results in red

Interpretation of results and any appropriate action taken

All sample results for the Port Huon Pool complied with the *Recreational Water Quality Guidelines 2007* throughout the 2025/26 reporting year, demonstrating that the pool's treatment regime continues to operate effectively.

3.2.2 Huonville Swimming Pool

Samples were taken monthly and results are presented in Table 3.2.2 below.

HUONVILLE		**Pool operates during Summer months (Oct – Mar)**		
Sample No	**Date**	**HPC (max=100 per ml)**	**Thermotolerant Coliforms/100mL (max <1)**	***P. aeruginosa/ 100mL (max <1)***
1	13/10/2025 (am)	2 (est)	<1	<1
2	13/10/2025 (pm)	3 (est)	<1	<1
3	03/11/2025	<1	<1	<1
4	02/12/2025	<1	<1	<1
5	06/01/2026	<1	<1	<1
6	03/02/2026	1 (est)	<1	<1
7	03/03/2026	<1	<1	<1

Table 3.2.2 Swimming pool sample results for Huonville Swimming Pool 2025-26 – non-compliant results in red

Interpretation of results and any appropriate action taken

All water quality sample results for the Huonville Pool were compliant with the Guidelines during the 2025/26 reporting year. The two consecutive samples taken prior to the pool's reopening in October 2025, following its off-season closure, both passed, confirming the pool was safe to open for the summer season.

3.2.3 Hastings Caves Swimming Pool

Samples were taken monthly and results are presented in Table 3.2.3 below.

HASTINGS CAVES		Pool operates all year round		
Sample No	**Date**	**HCC (max=100 per ml)**	**E. coli/100mL (max <1)**	***P. aeruginosa/ 100mL (max <1)***
1	08/07/2025	<1	<1	<1
2	04/08/2025	2 (est)	<1	<1
3	08/09/2025	<1	<1	<1
4	06/10/2025	3 (est)	<1	<1
5	09/11/2025	<1	<1	<1
6	07/12/2025	3 (est)	<1	<1
7	05/01/2026	8 (est)	<1	<1
8	03/02/2026	10 (est)	<1	<1
9	02/03/2026	6 (est)	9 (est)	<1
10	04/03/2026	4 (est)	<1	<1
11	07/04/2026	12	<1	<1
12	08/05/2026	11	<1	<1
13	01/06/2026	<1	<1	<1

Table 3.2.3 Swimming pool sample results for Hastings Caves Swimming Pool 2025-26 – non-compliant results in red

Interpretation of results and any appropriate action taken

One sample result for the Hastings Pool did not comply with the *Recreational Water Quality Guidelines 2007* during the 2025/26 reporting year. The sample taken on 2 March 2026 returned an *E. coli* result of 9 (est) per 100mL, exceeding the maximum of <1 per 100mL, and was reported by the laboratory as a notifiable contaminant under the *Laboratory Guidelines for Notifiable Water Contaminants 2019*. Pool maintenance was undertaken and a follow-up resample was taken on 4 March 2026, within 48 hours, and the result complied with the Guidelines.

This is a testament to the dedication of the Parks and Wildlife team at Hastings, who manage the pool in challenging conditions, and responded promptly to return the pool to a compliant state.

3.3 SUMMARY OF THE POOL WATER SAMPLING

The sampling results for the Port Huon and Huonville pools were all compliant with the Guidelines, demonstrating that the current treatment regime at both pools is working well. The sampling results for the Hastings Pool were compliant with the Guidelines with the exception of a single result in March 2026, which was promptly resolved by a compliant follow-up sample.

The Hastings Pool faces challenges that most pools do not encounter, as it is an open-air pool in a natural bush environment and, due to the pool water overflow discharging into a nearby pristine creek, it uses hydrogen peroxide rather than chlorine as the chemical treatment. Hydrogen peroxide breaks down more readily than chlorine and hence better protects the creek ecosystem, but this also makes it more difficult to manage the dosing system.

Parks and Wildlife have worked hard over recent years to implement strategies to reduce the number of non-compliant results.

4.0 RECREATIONAL WATER SAMPLING PROGRAM CONCLUSIONS

Council has continued its expanded recreational water sampling program in the 2025-26 summer based on popular swimming locations determined by the 2023 community survey. Two non-compliant results were recorded during the season, from Drip Beach and Seven Inch Beach, both of which were resolved by a compliant follow-up sample within days, indicating that all areas sampled generally have excellent recreational water quality and are suitable for swimming. The sampling results continue to support advice on Council signage advising to avoid swimming up to 3 days after significant rain.

Due to a low number of non-compliant sampling results over the last 6 years, Council is proposing a reduced sampling program to save on costs and staff time. This proposal can be viewed in the related document *HVC Natural Recreational Water Quality Overview 2020-2026*.

This proposed amended sampling program must be approved by the Director of Public Health. A draft letter to the Director of Public Health can be viewed in the related document *HVC Letter - Director of Public Health 2026-2 Amended Sampling Program Proposal.*

2025 – 2026 Recreational Water Report completed August 2026 by:

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