



THE WEST COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL

20 December 2017

'Can I swim here?' launched today, includes 18 West Coast sites

A new 'Can I swim here?' online tool launched today means West Coast residents and visitors can enjoy our rivers, lakes, and beaches with confidence this summer. The online tool shows the most up-to-date water quality information for 18 commonly used swimming locations across our region and is freely available on LAWA.org.nz/swim.

With West Coast residents now making the important decision of where to swim this Christmas, the launch is well timed. It comes five weeks after West Coast Council staff started their weekly summer-season water quality monitoring.

Jonny Horrox oversees the regional water monitoring team and is pleased to see that information from samples they collect is freely available to the public.

"Currently, we collect samples from 13 sites every fortnight, and weekly from another 5 sites across the region, which are sent to an independent lab for water quality testing."

"We're interested in the *E.coli* result as this is a human health risk. The results are shown on LAWA's 'Can I swim here?' with unsafe for swimming *E.coli* levels marked red and good levels marked green," said Mr Horrox.

The LAWA website contains valuable information for swimmers on other swim smart things to look out for before taking a dip. This includes advice on checking if the water is clean and clear, avoiding swimming for two days after heavy rainfall, and looking out for other possible hazards.

Mike Meehan, Chief Executive of the West Coast Regional Council is looking forward to using LAWA's 'Can I swim here?' tool this summer.

"This tool will help families get out and enjoy the stunning rivers, lakes, and beaches our region has to offer. The website covers popular lake and river sites such as Lake Mahinapua, Lake Brunner and Nelson Creek, as well as some great beach locations such as Karoro and Carters Beach. I recommend people thinking of heading out for a swim take a look," said Mr Meehan.

LAWA is a partnership between councils, Cawthron Institute, Ministry for the Environment and Massey University and has been supported by the Tindall Foundation.

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The new 'Can I swim here?' - www.lawa.org.nz/swim
For more information - <https://www.lawa.org.nz/learn>

Media contact

Nichola Costley | Manager Strategy and Communications | West Coast Regional Council | 021 168 6987