

# WALKING TRAIL



Moderate  
3hrs / 6km

# BATHERS WAY

EXPLORE NEWCASTLE'S  
COASTLINE THROUGH A  
SELF-GUIDED WALKING TOUR.



Bathers Way coastal walking trail

**NEWCASTLE**  
AUSTRALIA



0m 600m



# BATHERS WAY

Newcastle's Bathers Way is one of the premier coastal walks in NSW, stretching 6km from Merewether Baths in the south to Nobbys Beach in the north. Spectacular views abound from start to finish, from the stunning coastal panoramas at the top of Strzelecki Lookout, to the iconic stretch of sand leading up to Nobbys Lighthouse.

Equally impressive is the area's rich history, steeped in tales of shipwrecks and convicts, wartime defences, peacetime developments and the use of this land by the local Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

The walk offers a rollercoaster journey of hills and descents, with plenty of opportunities to stop for a break at beach kiosks and cafes along the way, or pack a picnic and enjoy a slower pace. Bathers Way is a key element in City of Newcastle's coastal revitalisation priority project, which aims to provide facilities that attract people to live, work and play in Newcastle.

For more self guided walking tours, visit [www.visitnewcastle.com.au](http://www.visitnewcastle.com.au) or visit the Newcastle Visitor Information Centre located at Museum Park, Honeysuckle.

**Newcastle Visitor Information Centre**  
Museum Park, Honeysuckle  
Open 7 days 9am-5pm  
[www.visitnewcastle.com.au](http://www.visitnewcastle.com.au)



Merewether Ocean Baths

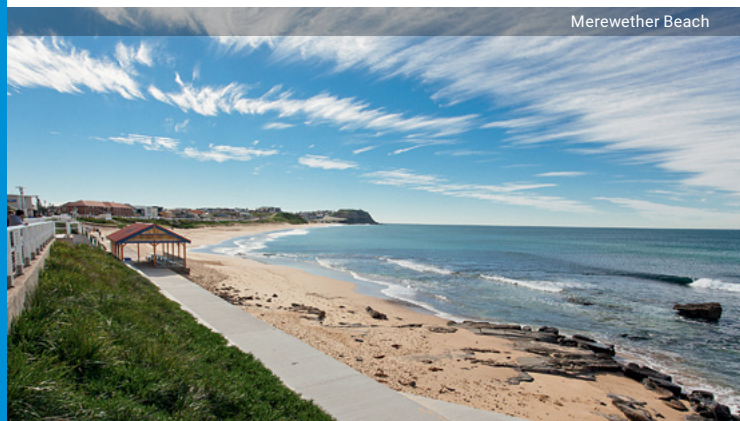
## 1 MEREWETHER OCEAN BATHS

The largest ocean baths complex in the Southern Hemisphere marks the southernmost point of the Bathers Way. Opened in 1935, the Baths comprise a main pool measuring 100.6m x 50.3m (the largest in the southern hemisphere) and an adjacent children's pool. Hardy members of the local Merewether Mackerels swimming club take the weekly plunge through winter, while fitness fanatics challenge themselves climbing the formidable set of stairs that scales the cliff face.

## 2 MEREWETHER BEACH

Continue east from the Baths to explore a coastal strip home to one of only nine national surfing reserves in NSW. Fittingly, Merewether Beach hosts the Surfest international surfing competition towards the end of summer each year, but any time the swell is up you're sure to catch some of the region's best surfers catching a wave.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Merewether Beach is the home break of four-time world champion surfer Mark Richards.



Merewether Beach

## 3 DIXON PARK BEACH

You'll need to prepare your legs for the next part of this walk, as the path climbs up past Dixon Park Beach to the headland above.

The end result is well worth the effort, with the headland offering one of the best spots to watch migrating humpback whales breaching and exhaling their silvery plumes of spray during winter. The beach itself is perfect for swimming and surfing, and has a large park, children's playground and off-leash area for dogs behind it.



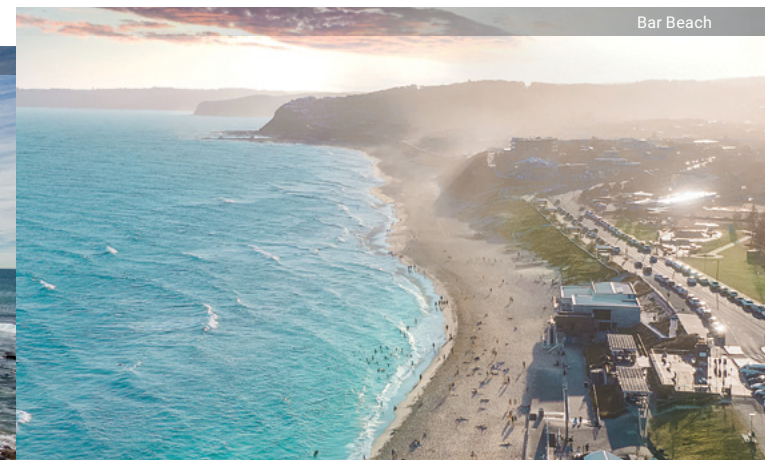
Dixon Park Beach

## 4 BAR BEACH

Make your way down the other side of the headland, stopping at the sheltered seating area to catch your breath as you make your way to Bar Beach.

A popular spot for families thanks to its sheltered rockpool at the northern end, Bar Beach also features shaded picnic tables where you can stop to enjoy a bite to eat from the kiosk, while the adjacent Empire Park skate bowl offers one of the best skateboarding venues in Australia.

**DID YOU KNOW?** The nearby Susan Gilmore Beach was named after a sailing ship that was wrecked here in 1884.



Bar Beach



## 5 NEWCASTLE MEMORIAL WALK

Tracing the coastline north from Bar Beach to Strzelecki Lookout, this spectacular 450m walkway was built in 2015 to mark the centenary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli. Steel silhouettes of soldiers, inscribed with the family names of almost 11,000 Hunter Valley servicemen and women who enlisted during World War One, line the 160m cliff-top bridge at the northern end of the walk.

Starting at Bar Beach, climb the 137 steps to the bridge, or park at Strzelecki for an easier stroll to some of the region's most spectacular city and coastal views.



Newcastle Memorial Walk steel silhouettes

## 6 STRZELECKI LOOKOUT

The roadside path from Bar Beach to Strzelecki Lookout is the ideal alternate route for dog walkers, and offers a unique view of the Walkway overhead, while gaps between the houses to the west provide a stunning outlook over the city to the harbour beyond.

The lookout itself is popular among hang gliders and paragliders, who launch themselves from the grassy slope of the site, which was named after 19th century explorer and geologist Sir Paul Edmund de Strzelecki.

## 7 SHEPHERDS HILL MILITARY DEFENCE GROUP

Follow the path alongside Cliff Street and The Terrace before veering right to enter the former Shepherds Hill military complex.

A crucial link in the city's coastal defence system during World War II, its history goes back to the late 1800s when the central gun emplacement pit housed a "disappearing" eight-inch gun, named due to its ability to retract underground. While the gun was decommissioned in 1906, a six-inch MK VII ex-naval gun and a concrete observation post were installed on the site during World War Two.

**💬 DID YOU KNOW?** Shepherds Hill was originally known to the area's indigenous peoples as Khanterin – you can learn more about its cultural significance from an information board on site.



Annual International surfing competition Surfest Newcastle

## COASTAL EVENTS

Newcastle makes the most of its enviable coastal location with world-class beachside events, from surfing and skating to cultural celebrations and music festivals.

Merewether Beach is home to Surfest, a month-long celebration of surfing at the end of every summer that attracts some of the world's best surfers to Merewether Beach.

Past champions of the main events include Kelly Slater and Mick Fanning in the Men's Pro and Wendy Botha and Stephanie Gilmore in the Women's Pro.

Further north, the Australian Bowl Riding Championships have found a home at the Empire Park skate bowl right across from Bar Beach, with the event attracting the world's best skateboarders, while the Newcastle to Nobbys Beach stretch of Bathers Way takes a turn in the spotlight during November for the Supercars Newcastle 500.



Bathers Way hugs the clifftop on the edge of King Edward Park

## 8 KING EDWARD PARK

Follow the gently curving path and series of concrete steps to skirt around the coastal edge of King Edward Park and enjoy an unrivalled view of the city's spectacular cliff faces.

The main park offers a tranquil spot to take a break in your walk and appreciate the picture perfect 1898 rotunda and its grassy surrounds. Families love the children's playground built into the hillside, while the walled Garside Gardens are a rainbow of colour when their flowers bloom. Amenities include electric barbecues and public toilets.



Bogey Hole

## 9 BOGEY HOLE

Make your way to the bottom of the stepped coastal path alongside King Edward Park and take a quick detour down the road to the right to discover a unique and sometimes treacherous ocean bathing opportunity.

Convicts risked life and limb in 1819 to carve a private swimming hole out of the exposed rock shelf south of Newcastle Beach for then-Commandant of Newcastle, James Morisset. It was enlarged in 1884 to seven times its original size, while recent improvements include new stairs and an entry platform.

**💬 DID YOU KNOW?** The Bogey Hole's modern name derives from the Dharawal word meaning "to bathe".



## 10 NEWCASTLE OCEAN BATHS

Make your way back to the path and continue west, passing by South Newcastle and Newcastle beaches. Stay by the sand to enjoy the sea breezes or take the higher path for a better view and the chance to grab a coffee.

Just over 1km from the Bogey Hole is another of the city's renowned seawater pools, the Newcastle Ocean Baths, known for their iconic Art Deco pavilion façade.

A small rail line and draught horses were required to remove debris carved out of the rock shelf when construction of the Baths began in 1910. They officially opened 12 years later, with the main pool measuring 91.4m x 45.7m.

Experienced surfers looking for a reliable reef break should check out the Cowrie Hole just north of the Baths, with the mid tide in autumn and winter the best time to catch a wave.



Newcastle Ocean Baths and Canoe Pool

## 11 SOLDIERS BATHS

You'll need a low tide to spot the rough semi-circle of rocks at the southern end of Nobbys Beach, once considered "the most commodious and purest bathing accommodation" in Newcastle. Soldiers stationed at Fort Scratchley used to bathe here, hence the name.

## 12 "GROUNDED" SCULPTURE

A little further around the sweeping bend in the path will bring you to the bright red public art installation at the southern end of Nobbys Beach, which commemorates the grounding of the MV Pasha Bulker, a 225m bulk carrier swept to shore during a violent storm on 8 June 2007.

**DID YOU KNOW?** It took just over three weeks, and two unsuccessful attempts, before the Pasha Bulker was finally re-floated and towed to Japan for major repairs.



Fort Scratchley Historic Site firing of the guns

## FORT SCRATCHLEY

With its commanding position above the city and harbour entrance, Fort Scratchley has stood watch over Newcastle for more than 130 years.

Guns were hauled to the top of what was then known as Beacon Hill as early as 1828, but the fort really started to take shape in the early 1880s amid nationwide fears of a Russian invasion.

The fort's armaments were replaced in 1910 with two six-inch Mk VII guns, which were used several times during World War One and World War Two to halt unauthorised shipping movements into the harbour.

But their real test came on the night of 7-8 June 1942, when Japanese submarine I-21 surfaced off Newcastle and opened fire on the city. The fort's guns returned fire, but didn't manage to hit the marauding sub. The brief

action made Fort Scratchley the only Australian fortification to fire on an enemy naval vessel during World War Two.

After closing as a military facility in 1972, the fort eventually reopened to the public and has over the years been restored to its former glory.

The site is open six days a week (closed Tuesdays) and is free to enter, along with its five museum rooms, which cover its history from pre-fort use by the Awabakal people through to its purpose as the first coal mine in Australia and its later military activities. Guided tours of the extensive tunnel complex are also available.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Fort Scratchley was named after British Lieutenant Colonel Peter Scratchley, who was sent by the British Government to advise on its naval defences.



Nobbys Beach and Headland

## 13 NOBBYS BEACH

Looking at its sweeping golden shoreline, it's hard to believe Nobbys Beach didn't exist before European settlement. The beach gradually formed from sand accumulation after the early-1800s construction of a rock pier connecting Newcastle to the Nobbys Head island.

The beach's south-easterly aspect makes it ideal for families and those learning to surf, while the beach pavilion, with its Art Deco arches and views to Nobbys Lighthouse and beyond, offers a great spot for photography, particularly at sunrise.

## 14 NOBBYS LIGHTHOUSE

A final 1km stretch along the breakwall (originally known as Macquarie Pier) will bring you to the summit of the headland where the iconic lighthouse has stood lighting the way for ships since 1858.

The lighthouse beacon was converted to run automatically in 1935 and today projects a 580,000 candle-power beam that can be seen up to 24 nautical miles (44.4km) away.

**DID YOU KNOW?** You can gain access to the grounds of the Heritage-listed site on weekends from 8am to 4pm, with extended hours in summer.



Nobbys Lighthouse lighthouse keepers cottages