

Water quality guidelines for public aquatic facilities: *policy context and role of the guidelines*

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Guideline status

Public Health Act 2005

s. 61 - Regulation making power to set standards for water quality in residential and non-residential swimming pools, spas, hydrotherapy pools, water slides and recreational water parks, for human use.

Despite regulation making power, guidelines will **not** be mandatory.

Some Councils may choose to require compliance with the guidelines via clauses under a local law.

Purpose of the guideline

- To promote best practice in aquatic facility management whilst recognising that many public pools are popular community facilities that must remain affordable.
- Tool for operators and regulators
- Reduce burden of disease from recreational water



Burden of disease from recreational water

- Recreational water illnesses include: gastroenteritis, eye, ear, skin and respiratory infections from bacteria, viruses and protozoans, asthma and, VERY rarely, fatal diseases like Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis (*Naegleria fowleri*)
- Some major outbreaks over past 20 years
 - Brisbane crypto 1998 (52 cases 1 large facility) (NSW too)
 - NSW crypto 2005 (254 cases, 33 pools)
 - Victoria crypto 2006 (134 cases)
 - Victoria crypto 2013 (960 cases, 42 facilities, >20 Councils)

Estimated disease burden for gastro from recreational water exposures

- It is estimated that:
 - 16-17 million gastro cases in Australia per year[#]
 - Only 0.65% of gastro outbreaks associated with swimming pools and spas⁺
 - That means possibly > 100,000* cases of gastro from swimming pools and spas per year
 - Plus all the other rec water related conditions not just from pools and spas but also water parks

[#]Hall et al 2004 Results from the National Gastroenteritis Survey 2001 – 2002 <http://hdl.handle.net/1885/43181>;
Kirk et al 2014 *Foodborne illness in Australia: Annual incidence circa 2010* Australian Government Dept of Health

⁺ Dale et al 2010 Reported waterborne outbreaks of gastrointestinal disease in Australia are predominantly associated with recreational exposure *Aust NZ J Public Health* 34, 5 527-530

* Not an official figure

Timelines for the guidelines

- Document will be ready for use in lead up to the Commonwealth Games in April 2018
- Draft has been prepared by consultants and subject to one round of initial consultation
- Second round of consultation required
- Quick reference factsheets to be developed for key issues
- Graphic design process
 - *Can you help?*
 - *We are looking for photo opportunities*



Contact details

For queries relating to the guidelines please contact the
Department of Health Water Unit:

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