

WALKING TRAIL

   Moderate
3hrs / 6km one way

BATHERS WAY

Explore Newcastle's stunning coastline with this self-guided walking tour.

Newcastle Memorial Walk. Destination NSW



NEWCASTLE

SEEK OFF BEAT



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

The City of Newcastle acknowledges its Local Government Area (LGA) sits within the Country of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples. We acknowledge that Country for Aboriginal peoples is an interconnected set of ancient relationships.

The City of Newcastle acknowledges the custodianship of the Awabakal and Worimi peoples and the care and stewardship they have performed in this place since time immemorial.



Merewether Ocean Baths

1 MEREWETHER OCEAN BATHS

Merewether Ocean Baths 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.

The area is popular year-round for swimming laps, wave free frolicking, workouts with a view and lazy beach days.

Did you know? 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 from the Baths to explore a coastal strip home to one of only nine national surfing reserves in NSW. Stretching from Dixon Park in the north to Burwood Beach in the south – with superb views in all directions this stunning stretch of sand is also perfect for beach sports and fitness activities.

Did you know? Merewether Beach is home to iconic surf competition, Surfest, which attracts the world's best surfers, including legendary World Surf League competitors.



Merewether Beach

BATHERS WAY WALKING TRAIL

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 from the Newcastle Memorial Walk, 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 Awabakal and Worimi peoples.

The walk offers a scenic journey of hills and descents, with plenty of opportunities to stop for a break at beach kiosks and cafés along the way, or pack a picnic and enjoy a slower pace. Bathers Way is one of the most popular activities in Newcastle.

Newcastle Visitor Information Centre
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Open 7 days
Phone (02) 4974 2109
Email visitorinformation@ncc.nsw.gov.au

 visitnewcastle.com.au

 facebook.com/visitnewcastle

 [@visitnewcastleaus](https://www.instagram.com/visitnewcastleaus)



3 DIXON PARK BEACH

Moving away from Merewether Beach, enjoy the sea breeze as you reach Dixon Park Beach – park on one side, beach on the other!

Enjoy the view from the top of the incline – the headland offers 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, off-leash area for dogs, and a kiosk serving delicious coffee, toasties, ice-cream and pastries.

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 Park offers one of the best skateboarding venues in Australia, including the epic 'gold bowl'.

Did you know? The nearby Susan Gilmore Beach was named after a sailing ship that was wrecked here in 1884.

Bar Beach



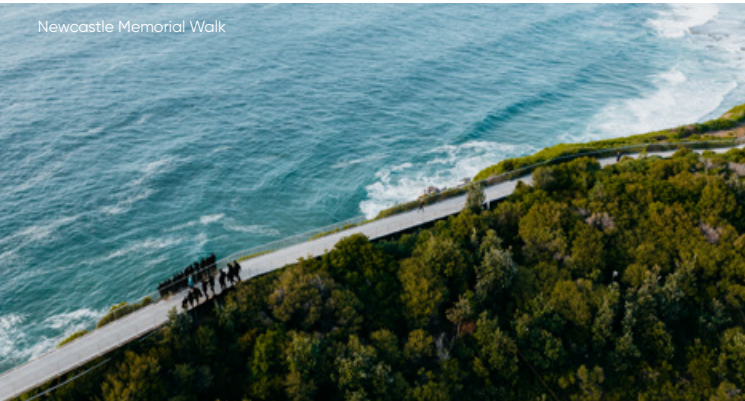
5 NEWCASTLE MEMORIAL WALK

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



6 STRZELECKI LOOKOUT

Strzelecki Lookout offers incredible panoramic views over the South Pacific; glimpse Newcastle Beach to one side with Merewether and beyond on the other. It's a favourite rest spot for good reason! This stunning spot is named after the Polish explorer, pioneering scientist, geologist, and humanitarian, Sir Paul (Paweł) Edmund Strzelecki, recognised for his Newcastle coal deposit research conducted between 1839 and 1845. It's an ideal spot to take a break and spot majestic migrating humpbacks.

View over Newcastle Beach from Strzelecki Lookout



Annual international surfing competition, Surfest Newcastle



TIPS FOR EXPLORING BATHERS WAY

Free parking is available at Merewether, Dixon Park, Bar, and Nobbys beaches.

Dogs (on leash) are permitted along Bathers Way, but not on the Newcastle Memorial Walk or at the Bogey Hole.

Refreshments kiosks, toilets, and water bubblers are available at multiple points along the walk.

The entirety of the walk is Insta-worthy; top photography spots include the Merewether Ocean Baths and Beach, Bar Beach viewing platform, the Bogey Hole, and King Edward Park overlooking the City.

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

7 SHEPHERDS HILL MILITARY COMPLEX

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 II.

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.

King Edward Park Rotunda



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.

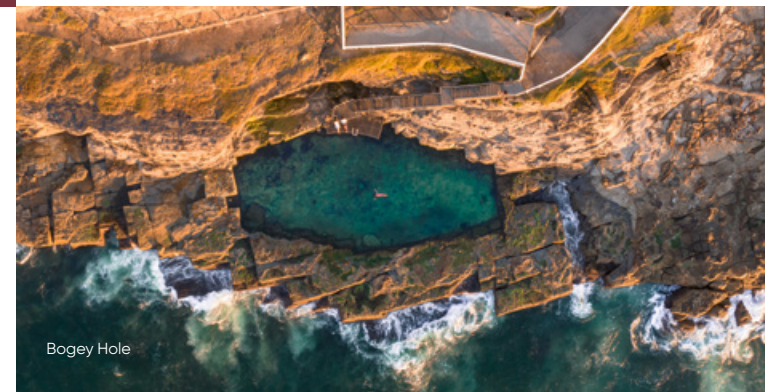
The main park offers a tranquil spot to take a break and appreciate the picture perfect 1898 rotunda and its grassy surrounds. Families love the children's playground built into the hillside, while the walled Garside Gardens are a rainbow of colour when their flowers bloom. Amenities include electric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

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".



Bogey Hole



South Newcastle Beach Skate Park

10 SOUTH NEWCASTLE BEACH SKATE PARK

A celebration of accessibility and diversity, this beachside skate park features the Hunter's first wheelchair-accessible (WCMX) skate bowl. On any given day, you can spot kids experiencing the thrill of a bowl for the first time, a crew of jump and street skaters doing their thing, and wheelchair riders taking to the ramps and accessible bowl. Plus, with features this slick, the pros grace the concrete from time to time, too.

11 NEWCASTLE BEACH & OCEAN BATHS

Continue to the heart of the action; one of our most popular beaches, Newcastle Beach. With cafés, beach kiosks, boutique shopping, and hotels close by, this is an ideal spot to enjoy the golden sands and renowned surf breaks, before exploring the nearby streets and laneways.

Stay by the sand to enjoy the sea breezes or take the higher path for a better view. Just by the beach is another of the city's renowned seawater pools, the Newcastle Ocean Baths, known for its 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 Beach & Ocean Baths



12 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.



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 I and World War II 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 II.

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 6 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.

13 'GROUNDED' SCULPTURE



'Grounded' sculpture, Nobbys Beach

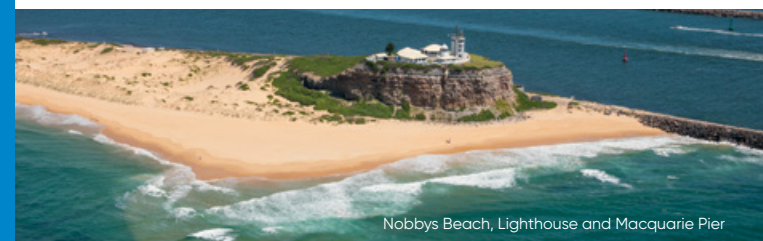
A little further around the sweeping bend in the path will bring you to the bright red public art installation at the southern end of Nobbys Beach, which commemorates the grounding of the MV Pasha Bulker, a 225m bulk carrier swept to shore during a violent storm on 8 June 2007.

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.

14 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.



Nobbys Beach, Lighthouse and Macquarie Pier

15 NOBBYS LIGHTHOUSE

A final 1km stretch along Macquarie Pier, known to locals as the 'breakwall', 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 and public holidays from 8am to 4pm.

Not finished enjoying the views just yet? Continue walking along the foreshore and take in the sights of ships and tug boats coming to and from the harbour or enjoy something to eat at one of the harbourside dining venues.