

Sydney beaches getting cleaner

By state political writer
LINDA SILMALIS

SYDNEY'S beaches are becoming cleaner with almost all popular swimming spots now meeting the state's water quality guidelines this year.

And for the first time since the State Government began the Beachwatch and Harbourwatch programs, the Parramatta River passed each of the tests.

However, water quality in Botany Bay and Port Hacking has deteriorated.

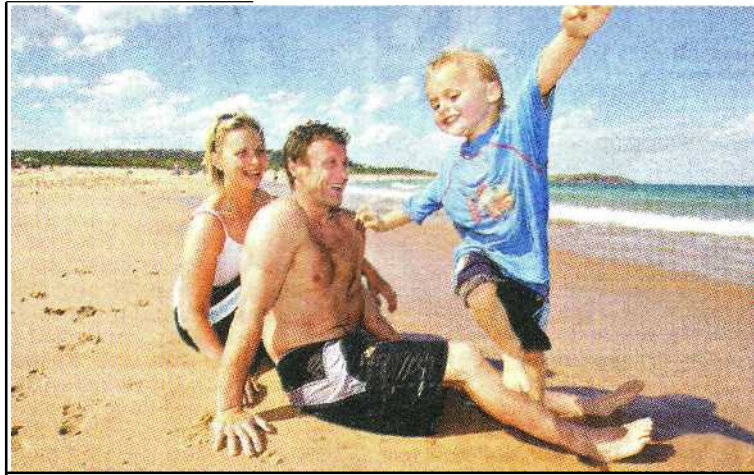
The latest list of cleanest and dirtiest swimming spots in the Hunter, Sydney and Illawarra regions are contained in the State Of The Beaches report.

Tests were conducted from October 2003 to April this year for faecal coliforms and enterococci — both of which can indicate the presence of waterborne pathogens harmful humans.

Of the total 129 beaches and baths tested, 86 complied 100 per cent of the time — up by three from the previous year.

Beaches in the Hunter region were deemed the cleanest with 16 out of 17 passing every test.

In Sydney, the top beaches in the north were Palm, Whale, Avalon, Bilgola, Newport, Bungan, Mona Vale, Turimetta,



Top marks: Neil and Clair Davies with son Charlie, 4, at Dee Why

North Narrabeen, Collaroy, Long Reef, Dee Why, North and South Curl Curl and Manly's Shelly Beach.

In the east, the best beaches were Clovelly and Maroubra while the cleanest in the south were Greenhills, Wanda, Eloura, North Cronulla and Sutherland's Shelly Beach.

Of the 59 harbour swimming spots, 37 passed every test.

The greatest improvement was in the lower Parramatta River where all five bathing sites

tested complied 100 per cent.

The dirtiest swimming spot was Foreshores Beach in Botany Bay.

The 2.2km beach opposite Sydney Airport's third runway came last after only meeting water quality guidelines 59 per cent of the time.

NSW Premier Bob Carr said Sydney beaches overall were in good shape.

Mr Carr attributed the good result to recent dry weather and the \$82 million urban stormwater program and the \$460 million Northside Storage Tunnel.