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Wet, wild and convivial : past, present and future contributions of Australia's ocean pools to surf, beach, pool and body cultures and recreational coasts

Marie-Louise McDermott
Edith Cowan University

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Wet, wild and convivial:

**Past, present and future contributions of Australia's ocean pools
to surf, beach, pool and body cultures and recreational coasts**

By

Marie-Louise McDermott

BSc (Hons), Dip Ed., Graduate Certificate in Experiential Learning,

Graduate Diploma in Sciences Communication,

Graduate Certificate in Screen Writing,

Graduate Certificate in Adult TESOL, MA (Public history)

Faculty of Education and Arts

Edith Cowan University

Abstract

I investigated the past, present and possible futures of Australia's ocean pools, over a hundred public seawater pools sited on rocky surfcoasts, so that waves wash over their walls. My interdisciplinary analysis informed by actor-network theory explored their contributions to surf, beach, pool and body cultures and recreational coasts.

Ocean pools have since the nineteenth century been far more significant in the surf, beach, pool and body cultures of Australia and South Africa, than in those of Britain and the United States. Most of Australia's ocean pools lie within state of New South Wales, and my work strengthens the case for recognising Australian and NSW ocean pools as having distinct collective identities and affinities with their South African counterparts.

Ocean pools are sites of social and environmental learning that challenge efforts to establish human mastery over wild natures and depictions of coastal environments as mere stages for enacting human activities unconstrained by non-human nature. They also challenge the notion that people prefer to swim and bathe at patrolled beaches or in private or public pools far less wild than an ocean pool. They are evidence that supervision by suitably trained and equipped lifeguards or lifesavers is not the only or the most satisfactory way to adequately safeguard bathers and swimmers from the dangers of the sea.

Australia's ocean pools demonstrate that regardless of race, class, gender, age or ability, people can and do make themselves at home in pools shared convivially with wild nature and well-suited for sustained, unsupervised recreation and sport on rocky surfcoast. Ocean pools serve as places of refuge, therapeutic and restorative environments, adventure playgrounds, convivial public spaces, visually appealing cultural landscapes, brands, icons and symbols.

Australia's ocean pools are unified by their sites, their affordances and core actor-networks linked to their fundamental and enduring identity as 'wild but safe

enough surfside pools'. Rocky shores and coastal waters characterised by surf, sharks and rips are among the most persistent macro-actors in these networks that include bathers, swimmers, tourism and transport networks, news media, local councils and progress associations.

Australian ocean pools that gained a further identity as 'public pools for competition and carnivals' acquired additional actor-networks strongly linked since the late nineteenth century to amateur swimming clubs and schools, and since the twentieth century to surf lifesaving clubs and winter swimming clubs. Those ocean pools nevertheless, remained predominately recreational facilities. As other types of public pools became more affordable, Australia's ocean pools remained popular despite gaining new identities as an 'unusually hazardous type of public pool' and 'a type of facility no longer created'. The growing threats to ocean pools and their actor-networks are a further unifying factor.

As sport and recreation venues cultivating healthy, convivial relationships with wild nature and possessing unrealised potential as centres for community engagement, learning and research, ocean pools are worth emulating on other rocky shores and in other public places. My work strengthens efforts to sustain and create ocean pools and supports further studies on seawater pools and their actor-networks.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

- i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;*

- ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis;
or*

- iii. contain any defamatory material.*

Signed

Date 30/11 /2012

Marie-Louise McDermott

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Background

Physical activity in nature-based leisure environments is gaining importance as a public health issue in Australia and much of the developed world amid growing concerns about the health and wellbeing of ageing and sedentary populations, the 'bubble-wrapped children' discussed by Malone (2007), and the 'nature-deficit disorder' identified by Louv (2005). A set of Australian aquatic leisure environments that appear to have wide appeal and to deliver a range of health and environmental benefits has, however, remained under-researched. Rather than serving as models for current and future leisure environments, these nature-based leisure environments seem to me to risk becoming 'facilities of a type no longer constructed' in Australia. I am referring to what I term 'ocean pools'. As shown in Figure 1-1, these pools also known as 'rock pools', 'rock baths' and 'ocean baths' are unheated, unfiltered, unchlorinated public seawater pools sited on rocky surfcoasts so waves can wash in over the pool walls.



Figure 1-1. Ocean pools at North Curl Curl and Mona Vale on Sydney's Northern Beaches

Regardless of whether they are cleansed only by the waves and tides or have been equipped with pumps to maintain water levels or water quality, these pools differ from other human-made seawater pools. I contend that the practice of classifying

ocean pools, harbour pools, bay pools and estuarine pools collectively as ‘sea baths’ (Gray, 2006, p. 163), ‘tidal pools’ or ‘tidal baths’ has impeded recognition of how much ocean pools differ from seawater pools in terms of their biophysical environment and their significance for pool, surf, beach and body cultures. I use the term ‘body culture’ as Eichberg (1989) uses it, to refer to the way human bodies are used in achievement sport concerned with records and standards, in fitness sport concerned with disciplining bodies in the interest of health and well-being and in forms of movement culture focused on bodily experience and social sensuality. All these activities can contribute to the development of identity for individuals and places.

Ocean pools remain scarce along most of Australia’s coast, yet as Figure 1-2 shows a stretch of the Pacific Coast within the state of New South Wales (NSW) hosts approximately a hundred ocean pools (Appendix 1). Many of these wave-dominated public pools serve as venues for sport, recreation and learn-to-swim programs. They are also liminal spaces, allowing coastal residents and visitors to enjoy what they regard as ‘safe enough’ encounters with the ‘wild’, the undomesticated, powerful aspects of non-human nature that human beings may influence, but cannot control and from which they may seek refuge.



Figure 1-2. Distribution of ocean pools on Australia’s New South Wales coast

Taking an interest in ocean pools

My long-standing and ongoing interest in ocean pools is fuelled by the embodied knowledge I have gathered through live and virtual engagement with seawater pools in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom (UK), the Isle of Man and Ireland. The abundance and variety of ocean pools on the NSW coast fascinated me for decades and led me to begin documenting and researching the ocean pools I visited.

In 2008, I was living in Sydney and Maroubra's Mahon Pool had been my local pool for over six years. Sited near a sanctuary for Grey Nurse sharks, this unsupervised ocean pool was part of the sea and the rocky shore and set well apart from Maroubra's long sandy surf beach. At street level, neither car travellers nor pedestrians can see Mahon Pool, just the steps stretching from the car park down past the change sheds and the signs to the pool on the rock platform. Getting into the pool safely requires taking care on wet, slimy rocks occasionally wrapped in bluebottle¹ tentacles. Feet stepping into the pool rest on seaweed and rock. Summertime sunbathers spread beach towels on the soft, sandstone rocks surrounding the sparkling pool. Children playing with the surging waves grab the chains on the pool's seaward wall. Others, including elderly people, just immerse themselves, float or swim laps.



Figure 1-3. Winter swimmers at Mahon Pool, Maroubra, NSW

¹ In Australian English, this term refers to the marine stinger (*Physalia*) better known in Britain as the Portuguese Man of War.

The ever-increasing barrage of warning signs at Mahon Pool did less to deter me from swimming than heavy seas or low wintertime water temperatures. Like most Sydneysiders, I preferred to stay out of water colder than 20 degrees Celsius, but Mahon's year-round swimmers sometimes braved waters as chilly as 12 degrees Celsius. On winter Sundays, when the Maroubra Seals Winter Swimming Club raced at Mahon Pool, waves occasionally washed competitors out of the pool. On days of wild weather, I was not the only person visiting Mahon Pool to watch and photograph the waves filling the pool with froth, nor the only photographer posting images of stormy ocean pools to photosharing websites.



Figure 1-4. Big seas at Mahon Pool, Maroubra, NSW

I viewed images of Mahon Pool on Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/>) and other photosharing websites, in art galleries, books (Swift, 2005, p. 53) and in real estate advertisements. I watched the Australian film *Walking on Water* (Watt & Ayres, 2002) showing friends meeting at Mahon Pool to mourn a dead housemate and

scatter his ashes. I read Tegan Bennett's (2001) novel *What falls away* depicting Mahon pool as a summer delight for children and families.

By 2006, I had created a Flickr photostream

(<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nswoceanbaths/>) and a website (McDermott, 2006) on NSW ocean pools. I had viewed exhibitions featuring John Earle's paintings of Newcastle's ocean pools, Steve Back's colour photographs of Sydney's harbour and ocean pools, Patrick van Daele's (2002) black and white photographs of NSW harbour and ocean pools, and the National Library of Australia's exhibition of Neale Duckworth's photographs (Daws, 2005) showcasing Victorian, NSW and Queensland sea baths. I had also met many more swimmers, photographers and other artists attracted to ocean pools or other seawater pools.

Aim and research questions

In this thesis, I give an interdisciplinary account of the pasts, presents and futures of Australia's ocean pools that offers a new perspective on recreational coasts and on pool, surf, beach and body cultures within and beyond Australia. I locate my exploration of the changing relationships with a set of coastal places for aquatic recreation and sport within what Rose and Robin (2004) categorised as the ecological humanities. I regard ocean pools as places jointly produced by human beings and 'things' that may be technologies, concepts or aspects of non-human nature. In the terms proposed by Latour (2005) and elaborated by McMaster and Wastell (2005, p. 180), ocean pools are "well articulated collectives" which offer a chance to "live the good life together" as the human and non-human members of each collective are fully mixed together, talked about and have their mutual entanglements displayed for debate, scrutiny and celebration in both the real and virtual worlds.

The key research question I seek to answer is 'how can an analysis of Australia's ocean pools offer new perspectives on recreational coasts and surf, beach, pool and body cultures'. I address this question in terms of three subquestions:

1. What (if anything) unites Australia's ocean pools across time and local/regional boundaries?
2. How and why have these ocean pool assemblages changed over time?
3. What (if any) significance do, and could, Australia's ocean pools have within and beyond Australia?

In addressing these research questions, I sought to explore the human and non-human assemblages that served to produce and sustain each of the current Australian ocean pools, to see how they have changed across space and time and how they differed from the networks associated with abandoned ocean pools or the phantom ocean pools that have remained as dreams or plans. Investigating the ways that people and things attempted, succeeded and failed to persuade each other to take on particular roles relevant in developing, managing, using and sustaining ocean pools required me to engage with issues such as risk management, aesthetics, embodiment and the making of convivial public space.

Conviviality is usually understood as people living or being together in a way that is agreeable, sociable, merry or festive. I wanted to explore ocean pools as public places with communal meanings and use the lens of conviviality to compare them with other public places. I wanted to look in a more species-specific way at ocean pools as places that engage the human senses. At wave-dominated public pools on a rocky shore, people can engage in a variety of activities that foster acquisition of embodied knowledges of the ocean and the rocky shore and afford opportunities to cultivate convivial relations with elements of non-human nature. Relationships between predators and their prey do, however, limit the scope for conviviality and relationships between top predators such as humans and sharks can be far from convivial.

I also wanted to investigate representations of ocean pools as part of the assemblages linked to ocean pools and to identify and explore any recurrent themes in discussions/representations of human activities linked to ocean pools and changes over time in the cultural models that humans have brought to these

interactions. In doing so, I needed to take account of the experiences and knowledges that I and others brought to our engagements with ocean pools and representations of ocean pools.

Literature review

The ongoing impact of ocean pools on the recreational use of coasts and on surf, beach, pool and body cultures has been little studied beyond or even within Australia. Though Booth (2001a) does mention ocean pools in Australia and New Zealand, studies of seaside and beach cultures focus on piers, sandy beaches, patrolled beaches and off-beach attractions ignoring the rocky shores and use of the ocean pools as protection from rips and sharks. The transnational comparisons common in studies of surfing and surf lifesaving cultures (Booth, 2001a; Ford & Brown, 2006; Jaggard, 2006) have challenged ideas about a one-way, north-south transfer of surf, beach, pool and body cultures. Transnational English-language studies of seabathing, beachgoing or swimming are, however, more likely to draw comparisons with practices in Britain or the United States, where ocean pools are scarce, than with practices in nations, such as South Africa, where ocean pools have remained valued aspects of recreational coasts and pool cultures.

The literature review for this project is therefore divided into eight parts, each focused on a different theme relevant to my research questions and interest and highlighting the limited material focused on or discussing ocean pools. As surf, beach and pool cultures mix and mingle at ocean pools on wave-dominated rocky shores, Parts 1 -5 seek to locate the study of ocean pools within the context of coasts, leisure cultures and poolsapes. Part 1 deals with Australia's coasts and ocean pools. Part 2 discusses other relevant leisure coasts, Part 3 focuses on the sea bathing practices at those leisure coasts. Part 4 provides transnational comparisons of ocean pools and other seawater pools. Part 5 considers poolsapes within and beyond Australia. Parts 6-8 explore issues addressed scantily in most published histories and heritage studies relating to ocean pools, but highlighted in histories of Wylies Baths (Slarke, 2001) and the Bondi icebergs pool (Andrews, 2004) in recent

biographical writings (Brereton, 2001; Carey, 2001, pp. 97-98; Forrest, 2001, pp. 90-92; Foster, 2004; McGill, 2007, p. 36; Mitchell, 2003, p. 5; Pilger, 2007; Richardson, 1992, pp. 236-237; Winton, 2010, p. 57; Young, 1998, p. 15), newspaper articles and tourist literature since the early nineteenth century and more recently in feature films, art and online discussions of ocean pools or their images. Part 6 considers conviviality at public pools, beaches and other public places. Part 7 considers acquisition of embodied and emplaced knowledges. Part 8 deals with the entanglement of nature, health, aesthetics and risk.

Literature review part 1 – Australia’s beaches and ocean pools

Australia’s ocean pools are an acknowledged part of its beach cultures (Booth, 2001a; Huntsman, 2001) and its swimming cultures (M. G. Phillips, 2008, pp. 119-125), but they are also relatively recent additions to its coast. Middens, rock art, fish traps and the present-day relationships with sea country that Nonie Sharp (2002) discussed in *Saltwater People: the Waves of Memory* relate to Indigenous cultures far older than the colonial and post-colonial cultures that brought harbour works, urbanisation, seawater pools and patrolled beaches to Australia’s coasts.

Sea baths developed as safe bathing places. The enclosures designed as protection against the deadly marine stingers (Gershwin, De Nardi, Winkel & Fenner, 2010; Short, 2000) of Australia’s tropical waters are, however, far flimsier structures than ocean pools sited on wave-dominated, rocky shores of southern Australia. Since crocodiles that threaten bather safety in Australia’s tropical waters are at home on both sea and land, human-made seawater pools cannot provide any useful protection against those predators. Warnings about marine stingers and crocodiles can, however, be found at popular beaches in northern Australia (Figure 1-5).



Figure 1-5. Warnings about marine stingers and crocodiles, Broome, Western Australia

Seawater pools have, however, since colonial times been regarded as providing valuable protection against the sharks that have remained southern Australia's most feared predators (Hoskins, 2009; Kellerman², 1918; Peace, 2009; Taussig, 2000; Tiffin, 2009). Despite the [Global Shark Accident File's incident log \(2012\)](#) showing many reports of shark attacks in Australian waters since colonial times, fatal shark attacks are now much less common though more newsworthy than drownings along Australia's coasts (H. Edwards, 2012; Surf Life Saving Australia, n.d.). Australian attitudes to some once feared shark species have also become more favourable since the 1960s (Boissonneault, Gladstone, Scott, & Cushing, 2005).

By contrast, there were few reports of shark attacks and few concerns about sharks as a hazard to bather safety along the temperate east coast of the United States, until a series of shark attacks in 1916 (Capuzzo, 2001 pp. 26-27). According to Capuzzo (2001), this series of attacks, which took place when leading American scientists still had difficulty believing that the sharks were capable of killing human beings, appears to have provided inspiration for Peter Benchley's influential (1974) novel *Jaws*.

² Known as Annette Kellerman in Australia and Annette Kellermann in the United States.

In southern Australia, nineteenth-century concerns about providing safety from sharks and safeguarding the respectability of bathers and passers-by were sufficient to prompt enthusiastic construction of fixed and floating baths in the sheltered waters of Sydney Harbour and Botany Bay in NSW, Queensland's Moreton Bay, Victoria's Port Phillip Bay, Tasmania's Derwent Estuary, South Australia's Gulf of St Vincent and Western Australia's Swan River (M. G. Phillips, 2008, pp. 105-119). The seawater pools that permitted safe and prolonged immersion in southern Australia's sheltered waters feature prominently in Andrea Inglis's (1999) study of Victoria's seashores, Dutton's (1985) exploration of Australian beach cultures, and histories of swimming (M. G. Phillips, 2008) and water polo (Rockwell, 2008). While such convivial and reasonably respectable refuges from heat, humidity and sharks were on occasion referred to as 'bathing machines' (Light, 2005, p. 25), they differed greatly from the classic English-style bathing machines discussed in Part 3 of this literature review.

As Broeze (1998, p. 241) notes, "before 1850 few white Australians chose to live near the sea for reasons of personal taste". Development of ocean pools in ports on the surfcoast of pre-1850 NSW did however signal that in one Australian colony a hazardous surfcoast was being transformed into a leisure coast with safe and respectable facilities for sea bathing. Ocean pools offered protection from both sharks and the rip currents common along the wave-dominated stretches of Australia's coast. While shark attacks now cause on average only one human death a year in Australian waters, the rip currents that "can quickly carry unsuspecting swimmers significant distances away from the beach, often against their will" still account annually for some 20 deaths and many thousands of surf rescues in Australia (Drozdowski et al., 2012).

According to Short and Woodroffe (2009, p. 127), the NSW coast has relatively short beaches (average length of only 1.37 kilometres) and has 677 topographic rips (due to the interaction of waves higher than 1.5 metres with topographic features such as reefs and headlands). They further state that average wave conditions along

the NSW coast produce an additional 2,952 beach rips with a mean spacing between them of 246 metres.

The apparent calm water of a deep rip is, however, often misinterpreted as an indication of a safe area for swimming (Sherker, Brander, Finch, & Hatfield, 2008). Panic at being caught in a rip or exhaustion from trying to swim against the rip increases the risk of drowning (Drozdowski et al., 2012). More confident and experienced board surfers, body surfers or open-water swimmers can, however, use rips to take a fast trip away from the beach.

Demand for ocean pools on the wave-dominated coasts of southern Australia thus depended on the distribution of sharks, rips, and the coast's human population. It also depended on people's perceived needs for protection from surf, rips or sharks or other non-human life forms, as well as the appeal and affordability of ocean pools compared to other types of bathing and swimming environments and bather safety measures. As pre-colonial Australia lacked ocean pools, Australia's ocean pools could reasonably be expected to be concentrated in areas with hazardous surf beaches accessible and appealing to non-indigenous populations interested in beach going and aquatic recreation.

Over 80% of Australia's population now lives within 50 kilometres of the coast (Harvey & Woodroffe, 2008), but the wave-dominated southeast 'Boomerang coast' stretching from Brisbane to Adelaide hosts most of its population (Blainey, 1966, p. 337). This population distribution helps explain why over 70% of the 10,685 beaches that constitute half of Australia's coast remain inaccessible by sealed or gravel roads (Short & Woodroffe, 2009, p. 106, 261).

From Tim Winton's (2010, p. 100) Western Australian perspective, the east coast is "the pretty side, the Establishment side, the civilised side.... the social coast, the sensible coast, at times the glamour coast", while the west coast is lonelier and wilder. While agreeing with Robert Drewe (1993, p. 6-7) that almost every Australian rite of passage occurs on or near the beach, Winton (2010, pp. 14, 83)

nevertheless insists that having been “reared on stories of shark attacks, broken necks from dumpings in the surf, and the spectre of melanoma”, Australians go to the beach with a “mixture of gusto and apprehension” knowing that the sea and its creatures are “something to be reckoned with”. Capp (2005, pp. 5, 8) refers to the “slap-in-the face exhilaration of the surf and the call of the blue yonder” and knowing how “quickly these beaches could become a graveyard for unwary swimmers”.

On an Australia-wide basis, beaches patrolled by volunteer surf lifesavers or professional lifeguards are far more common than ocean pools or shark-meshed beaches. Surf lifesaving clubs and shark meshing programs remain concentrated along the densely populated and safety-conscious NSW segment of Australia’s east coast (Short, 2007; Short & Woodroffe, 2009, p. 261. The NSW coast has 764 beaches and hosts some 130 surf lifesaving clubs (Short & Woodroffe, 2009, p. 261) and over 50 shark meshed beaches (M. Green, Ganassin, & Reed, 2009), as well as the ocean pools listed in Appendix 1.

As ocean pools remain rare along most of Australia’s coast (see Figure 1-2), the ocean pools mentioned in accounts of Australian beach cultures (Booth, 2001a; Huntsman, 2001), Australian poolscapes and water sports (M. G. Phillips, 2008; Rockwell, 2008) and Australian tourism (J. Davidson & Spearritt, 2000) are usually located in NSW. The focus on Sydney’s ocean pools (Ohlsson & Barca, 2004 p. 85-89; Proctor & Swaffer, 2007; S. Smith, 2004) has tended to obscure the existence of ‘natural’ and formalised ocean pools elsewhere in NSW and Australia. Formalised ocean pools have however been developed in Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.

While Western Australia still lacks highly formalised ocean pools near its major population centres, the surfcoast of Perth hosts the popular but minimally formalised Hamersley Pool and Mettams Pool located north of the popular beaches of Cottesloe and Scarborough (Short, 2005). Although its iconic pylon testifies to unsuccessful early twentieth-century efforts to create a shark-proof pool, Cottesloe

has yet to acquire an ocean pool. It is thus understandable that John Fiske (1983) made no mention of ocean pools in his well-known analysis of the Australian beach based on Cottesloe Beach.

As Walton (2011) notes, coastal tourism sells and in a sense manufactures "experiences, sensations, health, well-being, sociability, pleasure and memory, in combinations that vary and change over time and between places". Tourist guides (Lorck, 1905; New South Wales Government Railways and Tramways, 1905; Proctor & Swaffer, 2007; S. Smith, 2004; South Coast Tourist Union, 1899; Wollongong Municipal Council, 1910) have been recommending NSW ocean pools as places of safety and pleasures since the nineteenth century.

Gray's (2006, p. 164) assertion that after 1900 "Australian bathers deserted the baths in favour of bathing from the beach itself" is, therefore, clearly not applicable to the NSW coast. The growth in the number of ocean pools along the NSW coast for decades after the legalising of daylight bathing in public and the development of Australia's first surf lifesaving clubs was not, however, explored by in the accounts of Australian beach culture provided by Huntsman (2001) and Booth (2001a).

Histories of NSW surf lifesaving clubs (e.g. Brawley, 1995, 1996, 2007; Curby, 2007; March, 1983; Palmer, 1996; Symonds, 1982; Vesper, 2006; F. Young, 2000), histories of NSW swimming clubs (Andrews, 2004; Brombey & Daly, 1996; Keeble, 1992; Wye, 2002) and pool-specific histories (Iveson, 2003; Slarke, 2001) testify to persistent enthusiasm and demand for ocean pools in NSW long after the development of patrolled beaches. Histories of NSW surfside communities refer to development of ocean pools as signs of progress (Bayley, 1959, 1960, 1989; Cousins, 1994, Dixon, ca. 1935; Dowd, 1959; Finn, ca. 2006; G. Gordon, 2000; Grunseit, 1996; Hearn, 1996). Ocean pools are also portrayed as part of evolving beach, pool and swimming cultures (Australian Government, 2009a, 2009b; Curby, 2009; Cushing, 1997; Fenton & Pry, 1999; Metusela & Waitt, 2012, M. G. Phillips, 2008; pp. 109-125).

The NSW ocean pools that “aren’t much more than an extension of the rock ledges jutting from the headlands into the ocean ... [have] seen the beginning of many of our swimming greats” (Forrest, 2001, p. 92) and are still used for training and non-elite competitive swimming. By contrast, competitive swimming in Western Australia remained focused on Goldfields pools (Duncan, 2001) and Perth’s river baths until the 1962 Commonwealth Games prompted development of Perth’s first chlorinated, freshwater outdoor public pool (M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 13). Perth now lacks river baths and formalised ocean pools, but has many indoor and outdoor public pools.

In NSW, surf lifesaving clubs helped developed amateur and professional swimming clubs (Palmer, 1996; pp. 15-16, 43) and winter swimming clubs (WSAA Inc. 2010) based at ocean pools. When surf lifesaving had no ‘nippers’ or juvenile members (Booth, 2006, p. 99), NSW surf lifesaving clubs used swimming clubs at ocean pools as talent-spotting grounds. Programs for NSW surf club nippers now routinely use ocean pools as training venues and patrolling surf lifesavers still keep an eye on nearby ocean pools and their patrons (Vesper, 2006; F. Young, 2000).

The presence of ocean pools nevertheless continues to give the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia (RLSSA) a presence on the NSW surfcoast. A 1924 agreement gave surf lifesaving clubs responsibility for safety on the open surf beaches of NSW, while the RLSSA and its affiliated swimming clubs retained primary responsibility for safety within the inland waterways and enclosed public baths of NSW (Brawley, 2006, p. 39).

In Australian biographical writings, ocean pools are often portrayed as part of a happy childhood (Forrest, 2008; McGill, 2007; Mitchell, 2003; Stell, 1992; Winton, 2010; N. Young, 1998), sometimes as an adult pleasure (Richardson, 1992) and as places cultivating swimming skills, surf skills and a significant relationship with the ocean. Leone Huntsman’s (2001, p. 203) photograph captioned “the dissolving of boundaries: children squeal with delight as waves crash over the pool wall at high

tide” highlighted one of the treasured pleasures of ocean pools. She also stated (2001, p. 205) that:

in the pools sculpted into the rock platforms at the ends of the beaches, the manufactured component of built walls is dominated by the natural surround of sea, beach and sky, sand and shells. While the pool wall may seem a solid barrier to the sea, it is an illusory boundary, for at high tide the waves wash over it and swimmers’ bodies undulate in the swelling water.

Slarke’s (2001) cultural history of Sydney’s Wylies Baths highlighted the variety of clubs, schools, and publics associated with a single ocean pool. High levels of co-operation between swimming clubs and surf clubs associated with ocean pools are also evident in that history, in histories of swimming clubs based at ocean pools, and in the histories of many NSW surf lifesaving clubs and surfside communities. Recreational fishers have also remained an active presence in and around ocean pools (Beard, 2007, p. 112).



Figure 1-6. Wylies Baths, Coogee, NSW

The decades of campaigning to reopen and refurbish Wylies Baths discussed by Slarke (2001) showed that interest in Wylies Baths was not confined to people who visited that pool or to people who engaged in specific types of activity there. It also

included people who concerned about the continuing operation of that pool and other ocean pools.

Booth's (2001a, pp. 118-123) discussion of the opposition to the filming of the television series *Baywatch* at Sydney's Avalon Beach highlighted the community backlash provoked by the film crew's restricting public access to the beach and the ocean pool. Iveson (2003), by contrast, discussed the successful campaign to maintain restricted access to McIvers Baths, the only ocean pool in NSW still allocated solely for use by women and children.

Andrew Taylor (1996) and Leone Huntsman (2001) contend that Australia's beaches do appear have had more appeal for photographers and painters than for poets or writers of fiction. Australia's ocean pools likewise appear to have had more appeal for photographers and painters than for writers. Slarke (2001) drew attention to ocean pools and their swimmers as subjects for art, highlighting paintings of ocean pools by a range of artists including Jeffery Smart and Peter Kingsley. Max Dupain, well known for his black and white photographs of surf lifesavers and sandy beaches, also photographed a few of Sydney's ocean pools in the 1930s and 1950s (J. White & Cawood, 2000). More recently, photographers (Back, 2007; P. Foley, n.d.; Lever, 2008; Van Daele, 2002) and other artists (Earle, 2009; Swift, 2005; Willebrant, n.d.) have taken a greater interest in ocean pools. Images of NSW ocean pools appearing on the covers of recent Australian books (Drewe, 2008; Gemmell, 2009; Head, 2000; Hirst, 2010) imply that those images are appealing to Australian audiences not just to NSW audiences.

Publication of the *Illustrated Register of the National Estate* (Australian Heritage Commission, 1981) broadened Australian understandings of what constituted a heritage space. Australian surfside communities increasingly regarded their ocean pools as places deserving heritage recognition on the grounds of both longevity and ongoing importance to residents and visitors. Heritage studies (EJE Landscape Architects & Ludlow, 1994; Hutton, 1997; Mayne-Wilson & Associates, 1998, 1999; Stedinger Associates, 2003) and landscape architecture studies (Alldritt, 1991;

Mackenzie, 1991) affirmed that ocean pools, including some no longer in use, remained prized elements of NSW coastal heritage and landscape.

Ian Lever, already well known for his photographs of Sydney's ocean pools, was commissioned to photograph the fourteen Sydney ocean and harbour pools listed by the National Trust in 1997 as having heritage value (Slarke, 2001 p. 43). Until the listing of the Newcastle Bogey Hole, The Entrance Ocean Baths³ (Figure 1-7) and Wylies Baths in 2003, there were, however, no ocean pools listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. The national heritage listing of Sydney's Bondi Beach precinct (Garrett, 2008) included the ocean pools at North Bondi as well as the Bondi Icebergs pool (Figure 1-7).

To portray persistent enthusiasm for ocean pools only as an embryonic form of an Australian relationship with sea, that would blossom in the form of patrolled beaches or board surfing or open-water swimming, is thus to disregard the value that coastal residents and visitors have persistently placed on pools 'wilder' than other types of public pools. The presence of waves, fish (S. Smith, 2004) and octopus (Brereton, 2001) is still seen as adding to the appeal of ocean pools, which make a "colourful contribution to our swimming culture" (Goddard, 2006). In NSW, ocean pools are, however, now more often discussed as heritage pools meriting conservation and as 'a type of facility no longer constructed' than as desirable new developments on rocky shores.

Support for Australia's ocean pools is not at present articulated in terms of sustainable development or their value for environmental education. Despite the

³ The name refers to a surfside community on the NSW Central Coast near the entrance from the ocean to the Tuggerah Lakes.



Figure 1-7. The Newcastle Bogey Hole (top), The Entrance Ocean Baths (centre) and the Bondi Icebergs pool (formerly the Bondi Baths), NSW

presence along Australia's surfcoasts of environmental care groups, such as Bushcare and Coastcare (Clarke, 2006, 2008; Davison & Chapman, 2006), concerns about the water quality of ocean pools (Butler & Ferson, 1997; Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water NSW, 2010) have remained more prominent than any appreciation of the smaller ecological footprint (Lenzen & Murray, 2003) of ocean pools compared to public pools reliant on town water and chemicals.

Literature review part 2 – Other relevant leisure coasts

Before leisure coasts existed, seacoasts were 'nourishing terrains' (Rose, 1996) sustaining the bodies and minds of their inhabitants. Narratives of 'saltwater people' (Sharp, 2002) and others who rely on the seas for their livelihood or leisure do not fit easily into narratives about 'mastery over nature'. According to Corbin (1994), from the fall of the Roman Empire until the late eighteenth century, Europeans saw their seashores not as leisure coasts, but primarily as places of horror associated with storms, shipwrecks, drownings and invasions.

Sea bathing was, however, undertaken in pursuit of health as part of folk traditions even in Britain and Ireland's rather chilly seas. Travis (1997, p. 9-11) discussed working class sea bathing practices in eighteenth-century England. Cross and Walton (2005, pp. 12-13) regarded nineteenth-century England's "plebeian tradition of popular sea-bathing at the August spring tides" as the persistence of "an ancient custom widespread across Europe and coinciding with the Roman Catholic festival of the Assumption". Manners (1881, p. 53-54) noted that in 1846 "young and old, rich and poor, in the west of Ireland have an unbounded faith in the restorative effects of sea bathing . . . The sea, for all conceivable complaints, is a sovereign remedy".

Britain's seashores became more fashionable due to the eighteenth-century medical advice that sea air and seawater delivered health benefits comparable with those already associated with spas and other healing waters. Guidebooks to England's eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century seaside 'watering places' (Lee, 1848,

1856; Relhan, 1761) cited fashionable medical practitioners' contentions that while the mineral composition of seawater made sea bathing equivalent to bathing in a therapeutic mineral spring, the shock of immersion in cold seawater added a tonic effect of its own.

Sea air and sea bathing were promoted as providing health benefits and sensual pleasures for invalids and for anyone affluent enough to take a break from the stress and pollution of city life. All of Britain's seaside resorts were regarded as health resorts from the late-eighteenth century into the twentieth century (Fox, 1937). The prosperity of England's early seaside resorts made them a model emulated on other coasts.

Walton (1983), Walvin (1978) and Gray (2006) have lovingly described the development of those fashionable English seaside resorts that served as inspiration for and the many colonial Scarboroughs, Brightons, Ramsgates, Margates and Sandgates. As none of England's seaside resorts was a major city or a major port, city dwellers visiting them had to travel some distance either by water or difficult roads. For Londoners, the nearest point on the seacoast was Brighton, some forty miles distant. Affordable, reliable steam-powered railways and ships that made seaside resorts more accessible fuelled mass tourism and the growth of resorts such as Blackpool in Britain and Coney Island in the United States (Cross & Walton, 2005, pp. 13-15).

Colonial Australia's 'Brightons' were, however, more likely to resemble smaller-scale ports and seaside resorts in the British Isles, such as the Scottish seaside resorts studied by Durie (2003), Ireland's seaside resorts (Cusack, 2010; Davies, 1993; R. Foley, 2010, pp. 111-142; Heuston, 1993) or resorts on the Isle of Man (Beckerson, 2008). Nineteenth-century resort development on the surfcoasts of the British Isles (e. g. Cornwall, Wales, Northumberland, Scotland and Ireland) from 1800 to 1900 might also be expected to have some relevance to the development of surfcoast seaside resorts in Britain's colonies.

Place names, migration patterns and remarks by migrants and travellers do suggest that Britain's non-English and less studied seashores may have some relevance for coastal developments and ocean pools in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. A further incentive to investigate the as yet little studied relationships between bathing and seashore cultures of Ireland and colonial Australia is that Ireland was the birthplace of around a quarter of the convicts transported to the colony of New South Wales, provided at least 30 percent of overall nineteenth-century migration to NSW and an even higher proportion of migrants from the 1850s to the 1880s (Jupp, 2008; O'Farrell, 1986).

In late eighteenth-century Ireland, crowds of summertime bathers from Dublin travelled to Blackrock, a former market village acclaimed as 'the Bath or Brighton' of Ireland. Development of Ireland's first railway in the 1830s reduced the travelling time from Dublin to the seashore resort of Kingstown (present-day Dun Laoghaire) to less than twenty minutes and changed Dubliners' seabathing patterns (Somerville-Large, 1996). Extension of that railway in the 1850s transformed Bray into a resort celebrated as the 'Queen of the Irish seashore resorts' and 'the Brighton of Ireland' (Cusack, 2010).

Ireland's Newcastle, the "principal sea bathing place in the county of Down," was during the bathing season "thronged with company on a Sunday from the neighbourhood) for many miles round as if it were the time of a fair" (Plumptre, 1817, p. 165). Rostrevor in Ireland's north was also praised for the excellence of its bathing and acclaimed as 'the Brighton of Ireland' (Wakefield, 1812). Ireland's seashore resorts included Portrush (Cusack, 2010), Bundoran (Davies, 1993) and Kilkee (Heuston, 1993). Early nineteenth-century Irish sea bathing places, nevertheless, often failed to impress visitors expecting English-style seashore resorts with piers and bathing machines (Cusack, 2010; Manners, 1881, p. 55-56; Plumptre, 1817).

Britain's seashore resorts flourished into the early twentieth century, when sunbathing and outdoor recreation came into vogue in Europe (Worpole, 2000). The appeal of

long-established seaside resorts in the UK and Ireland diminished dramatically in the late twentieth century when California's Hawaiian-influenced surfing culture made surf beaches more fashionable and cheaper airfares made Mediterranean coasts and other warmer seashores more accessible to northern Europeans.

Study of the decline of Britain's traditional seaside resorts (Gale, 2005; Shaw & Williams, 1997) has, however, been far more extensive than the study of the impact on Britain's coast of the surf cultures that originated beyond Britain. Late twentieth-century Britain hosted surf lifesaving clubs (C. Ford & Jaggard, 2006; Jaggard, 2011) and recreational and professional surfers (Anderson, 2010; Beaumont, 2011; Ford & Brown, 2006; Wade, 2007). The globalising surf cultures forged new links between the United States, Britain (Ford & Brown, 2006; Ormrod, 2007), Australasia (Booth, 2001a; Ford & Jaggard, 2006) and South Africa (Pike, 2007; Preston-Whyte, 2002; Thompson, 2008, 2011). The surf lifesaving movement does, however, still have a more prominent and significant beach management role in Australia, than in Britain or South Africa.

Despite the importance of beaches and coastal waters for sport, recreation and coastal tourism since the nineteenth century, the management of sewage and stormwater became a threat to public and environmental health in many of the developed world's key seaside resorts and surfing areas. Since the closing decades of the twentieth century, there has been ongoing monitoring and reporting on the levels of bacteria and harmful chemicals of coastal waters in the UK (Hassan, 2003), United States (Busch, 2009; Turin & Liebman, 2002), Australia (Beder, 1989) and South Africa (Genthe, Kfir, & Franck; 1995). Campaigns to improve coastal water quality understandably attracted the interest of recreational users of the coastal environment such as Britain's Surfers Against Sewage (Hassan, 2003; Wheaton, 2007).

Though its effectiveness in encouraging visitors has been questioned, the European Blue Flag (Figure 1-8) system of rating bathing beaches by "water quality, environmental education and information, environmental management, safety and

services” has now been adopted as a marketing tool in the UK, Ireland, South Africa and New Zealand (Foundation for Environmental Education, n.d.; McKenna, Williams, & Cooper, 2010). Australia, however, continues to use its own Australian Beach Safety and Management Program (ABSAMP) system focused on safeguarding beachgoers rather than marketing beaches. ABSAMP assigns a hazard rating to beaches based on beach types, local hazards and average wave conditions (Short, 1993) and ignores issues relating to the quality of Australian coastal waters. Unlike the Blue Flag system, ABSAMP does not require annual assessments or disadvantage rural beaches in comparison to major resorts or (Staines & Ozanne-Smith, 2002, pp. 79-83).



Figure 1-8. 2011 Blue Flag flown at Bundoran, Ireland

Literature review part 3 – Sea bathing practices

The fashionable eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century English seaside culture discouraged bathers from spending too much time in the sea. Recommendations for short ‘dips’ in the sea were admittedly rational, where cold water posed a greater threat than any marine creatures to the safety of people bathing in the open sea. Guides to the English seaside resorts (Relhan, 1761; Lee, 1856) rarely discussed the subjective joys of sea bathing.

As enthusiasm for sea bathing grew, English bathing practices became both more highly regulated and more highly gendered with men's nude bathing invariably considered far more socially acceptable than nude bathing by women. Though applauded as exemplifying fearless and freedom-loving manly men, Europe's 'nude male alfresco swimmers' (Saville, 2009) were, however, increasingly confined to places away from the public gaze in the nineteenth century.

England's Scarborough inaugurated the use of horse-drawn bathing machines complete with modesty hoods to convey bathers to and from the water where 'dippers', who were paid to operate the machines then thrust bathers into the sea (Gray, 2006). Such bathing machines was practical only where: a horse-drawn carriage could access the bathing beach; the distance from the shore to water deep enough for bathing was more than a few steps at most stages of the tide; the beach was firm enough to support a wheeled carriage; the beach did not suddenly drop away; waves were unlikely to overturn the carriage, and nude or clothed bathers were prepared to pay for the privilege of being shielded from public view when entering or exiting the water.

Bathing machine hirers typically spent only a short time in water shallow enough for the hirers, the dippers, the bathing machine and its horse to stand in and did not venture far from their machines. With bathing machines inhibiting convivial bathing at the main beaches of nineteenth-century British seaside resorts, nude bathing and mixed bathing persisted at times and places where the use of a bathing machine or bathing costumes was not mandated (Travis, 1997). Despite being clearly unsuited to catering for sea bathing as an activity for the masses, bathing machines remained in use at English seaside resorts until World War 1.

While Ireland would eventually boast dippers and bathing machines (R. Foley, 2010, p. 116), bathing machines were both unpopular and rare in early nineteenth-century Ireland. Plumptre (1817, p. 11) stated that she "never saw a bathing machine to go into the sea any where in Ireland". Manners (1888, p. 55-56) reported that in 1846, County Clare's Kilkee had:

one bathing-machine and if you don't choose to wade a quarter of a mile among a hundred fellow-bathers over the said sands, you must do as I did, look out for some cranny among the black rocks and trust to the mercifulness of the Atlantic waves, or to your own strength and skill, to avoid being knocked up against those scarifiers of sides and shins.

Bathing machines did, however, appear on Australia's east and west coasts. Although a few wheeled bathing boxes were in use at Perth's Cottesloe Beach in the early 1900s (James, 2007, p.215), bathing machines quickly proved unpopular and unviable in both early nineteenth-century Wollongong and late nineteenth-century Sydney (Huntsman, 2001 p. 35; Metusela & Waitt, 2012). As Aflalo (1911, pp. 207, 209) knew, sea baths and rock pools were more favoured in colonial NSW than the bathing machine that he stigmatised as "a comfortless, ill-lighted, draughty, slippery tumbril, which should long ago have been relegated to the Chamber of horrors". Though nineteenth-century Irish seabathers bathed in ocean pools and sea baths in sheltered waters (R. Foley, 2010, pp. 117-120, 130-133), Anthony Trollope (1873, p. 215) nevertheless confidently asserted in the 1870s that "no place for bathing" in England or Ireland could match Sydney's harbour baths.

The bathing boxes, which Gray (2006, p. 164-165) regards as a "distinctively Australian" innovation predating England's twentieth-century enthusiasm for "beach huts", existed on Australia's Port Phillip Bay in the 1860s (R. Green, 2005, p. 88) and in early nineteenth-century Ireland. According to Plumtre (1817, p. 73) the so-called 'bathing machines' at Blackrock and nearby Seapoint on Dublin Bay were in fact merely small huts "like sentry boxes for the use of bathers to dress and undress". Holding firmly to her English values, Plumtre asserted that:

For ladies these are extremely inconvenient, since instead of plunging them immediately into the water as with English bathing machines, they must walk some way from the sentry box in the bathing dress before the water is reached.

According to Travis (1997), the increasing numbers of English seaside resorts that permitted mixed bathing by wearers of bathing costumes from the 1890s onwards ended demand for the bathing places traditionally allocated for men's nude bathing and "presaged the eventual demise of the bathing machine" in Britain. From the nineteenth century into the 1920s, concerns for both respectability and aesthetics nevertheless continued to fuel British objections to French seaside resorts that permitted wearers of bathing costumes to engage in mixed or so-called 'continental bathing' and British commitments to the use of bathing machines and gender-segregated bathing areas. Aflalo (1911, p. 207), for instance, found mixed bathing unappealing because the "vast majority of Eve's daughters" were "wistfully unattractive" in the water. Horwood (2000) mentioned Councillor Donald Clark characterising female bathers as "dripping, dishevelled peeling nosed frights" resembling "wet Scotch terriers" in his 1920s campaign against mixed bathing on English beaches.

A distinctive surf-bathing culture that permitted wearers of bathing costumes to engage in mixed or 'continental bathing' had, however, already emerged in the United States by the 1790s. At Long Branch, the main summer resort on the New Jersey shore for New Yorkers and Philadelphians, the surf was a major part of the resort's attraction, even though, according to Schenck (1868, p. 17), only 'dips' of no more than five minutes in length were considered advisable. Schenck (1868, p. 31) cited one visitor, who had:

never heard of any accident there. As to the sharks that are seen, they are very different from those in the West Indies, I believe no more danger is to be apprehended from them than from a sturgeon.

At Long Branch, ladies were customarily excluded from the "public bathing grounds" before 6 a.m. when, according to Schenck (1868, p. 19), "gentlemen have the only privilege of disporting in natural *abandon* [sic]" without any requirement for bathing costumes. Mixed bathing in full costume was permitted at other times and Schenck (1868, p. 20) mentions instances of "strong men dragging delicate wives in the surf, despite *real* [sic] screams and entreaties".

Some surf bathers would have been non-swimmers or poor swimmers. The 'bathing hour' was always on an incoming tide, so according to Schenck (1868, p. 21) "if taken off your feet, you are thrown upon the beach – a frolic in which many indulge". The main safety measures were vigilant 'bathing masters' and a safety rope. Schenck (1868, p. 21) advised less adventurous surf bathers to "simply lay hold of the rope tightly and let the surf break over you in a stooping position". While more useful in the surf than a bathing machine, those safety ropes were really only useful on sandy shores with a gradual slope on coasts where sharks were not considered as a significant threat to the safety of bathers.

By the early twentieth century, pleasure piers, safety ropes and lifeguards existed on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of the United States, where indoor, off-beach public pools with heated freshwater or seawater were also popular (Gray, 2006). These pools eliminated some of the hazards and discomforts of sea bathing (such as waves, tidal movements, rip currents and unpleasantly cold water). Such indoor or off-beach pools could be designed to shield bathers from the view of those outside the baths and managed to ensure or promote segregation by gender, race or class.

Literature review part 4 –comparisons of ocean pools and other sea baths

Although far less characteristic of the English seaside than bathing machines and pleasure piers (Gray, 2006), sea baths or sea pools did make sea bathing far more convenient in British coastal communities, where a large tidal range meant sea bathers otherwise faced a long walk (or a ride in a bathing machine) over shingle, sand or mud to seawater at low tide. A pool in use in the 1730s made Margate into England's "first coastal town known to have provided a substantial, purpose-built sea-water bath" (Barker, Brodie, Dermott, Jessop & Winter, 2007, p. 9). At Ilfracombe in North Devon, bathers travelled in bathing machines through a system of tunnels to arrive at gender-segregated bathing pools that were constructed in the 1820s (Gray, 2006, p. 150). Nineteenth-century Devon also had sea pools at Shoalstone (Rew, 2008, p. 168) and Plymouth (J. Smith, 2005, p. 108). Scotland had two sea baths in the northerly port of Peterhead by 1800 (Durie, 2003).

During the 1920s and 1930s, British railway companies competing keenly for seaside travellers produced posters depicting newly created sea baths and other outdoor pools as glamorous, summery places (Gray, 2006; Harrington, 2004) ideal for people attracted to sunshine and mixed bathing, and reliant on public transport. Those posters highlighted sea pools at Scarborough, Tynemouth and Whitley Bay, the Tinside Lido at Plymouth, the Jubilee Pool at Penzance and the huge pool at Dunbar in Scotland. In Northern Ireland, where the Blue Pool and Ladies Bathing Place had helped attract visitors to Portrush (R. Foley, 2010, p. 130-131) from the late nineteenth century, Bangor's Pickie Pool (Wilson, 2010) was formalised and a rock pool was created at Newcastle (Friends of the Rockpool, 2009).

Even now, according to Kate Rew (2008, p. 57), president of Britain's Outdoor Swimming Society, "the north coast of Cornwall is dotted with sea pools that give swimmers a chance to bathe safely away from the waves that make the coast so attractive to surfers". At those pools "waves are being broken by the wall, hundreds of gallons of water being smashed up into the air" (Rew, 2008, p. 57).

As Rew (2008, pp. 55, 57, 156 -157) acknowledges, few of Cornwall's sea pools are as obvious and accessible as the Bude Sea Pool (Figure 1-9). Rew (2008) and Start's (2009) guides to venues for 'wild swimming' (i.e. swimming in any environment other than an indoor pool), Oliver Merrington's (2009) online list of British "tidal salt-water open air swimming pools" and photosharing websites do far more to highlight ocean pools and other sea pools in the UK than do the standard tourist maps and guides. Merrington documents sea pools in Kent, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.



Figure 1-9. Sea pool at Bude, UK

Sea baths are now an increasingly rare type of outdoor pool in the UK and the ongoing operation of the seawater pools commended by Rew (2008) and Start (2009) is not assured. Although Plymouth's Tinside Lido (Figure 1-10) has been revitalised as part of 'Regenerating Plymouth', I observed that several of Plymouth's older sea baths have been concreted over since Janet Smith's (2005) book was published. The Bude Sea Pool has been threatened with closure on health, safety and cost grounds for decades (River and Lake Swimming Association [RALSA], n.d.). The Friends of Bude Sea Pool [FoBSP] (2011) are now struggling to raise funds to keep their ocean pool operational. A withdrawal of council funding now threatens the continued operation of the restored Jubilee Pool at Penzance (Figure 1-11).



Figure 1-10. Tinside Pool at Plymouth, UK



Figure 1-11. Jubilee Pool at Penzance, UK

Janet Smith's (2005, pp. 176-181) extensive list of Britain's defunct and demolished outdoor pools includes non-maintained seawater pools still available for use (Figure 1-12 and 1-13) and one very well commemorated demolished pool (Figure 1-14). She does not mention demolished and abandoned sea pools in Northern Ireland, such as Bangor's Pickie Pool (Wilson, 2010), now the site of an amusement park. Coakley (2003) discusses abandoned sea pools on the Isle of Man (Figure 1-15).



Figure 1-12. The large sea pool at the UK's Walpole Bay still attracted swimmers in 2011



Figure 1-13. The seawater pool at Pittenweem on Scotland's Fife coast is no longer maintained by the district council



Figure 1-14. Signs commemorating the demolished sea pool at Dunbar, Scotland (Lower photograph by Ian McConchie, 2011)



Figure 1-15. Two ghost seawater pools on the Isle of Man, the abandoned pool at Port Erin at top and the grassed-over pool at Peel

Outdoor Swimming Ireland (2010) laments the scarcity of outdoor pools while promoting the use of sea baths and traditional sea bathing areas such as Dublin's and Bundoran's sea pools and Kilkee's Pollock Holes (Figure 1-17). Photographs of Ireland's sea pools are exhibited in art galleries (Dunne, 2011) and photosharing websites and appear in blogs and tourist guides.



Figure 1-16. Bundoran's two sea pools and Kilkee's Pollock Holes, Ireland

Dublin's famous Forty Foot bathing place, reserved into the 1970s solely for men's nude bathing, is now for use by men, women and children wearing bathing costumes (Gray, 2006, pp. 175-176). It and other Dublin sea pools (Figure 1-18) remain prized places in everyday use. They appear in James Joyce's (1984) *Ulysses* set in 1904 and are prominent in *At Swim Two Boys*, Jamie O'Neill's (2001) novel climaxing with the 1916 Easter Rising.



Figure 1-17. The Forty Foot bathing place (top) and the Vico Road pool, Dublin, Ireland

Persistent public pressure by groups such as ‘Save Our Seafront’ appears to have prompted Council action to redevelop abandoned sea pools at Dun Laoghaire (Blake, 2008; “Dun Laoghaire Baths,” 2010) and Clontarf (F. McDonald, 2012). The sea pool at Blackrock (Figure 1-18), that was Ireland’s finest competition pool into the 1960s, nevertheless remains derelict, graffitied and lamented (Blake, 2009).

Bray's sea pool, though a large and glamorous pool boasting a diving tower in the 1930s (R. Foley, 2010, p. 117), is likewise now a complete ruin (Figure 1-18).



Figure 1-18. Derelict sea pools at Blackrock (top) on Dublin Bay and Bray, Ireland

Fred Gray's (2006, p. 163) contention that an enthusiasm for sea baths distinguishes Australian seascapes from English seascapes does not take adequate account of sea pools in Britain, Ireland and the Isle of Man and ignores those in New Zealand and South Africa. Tourist maps and road maps for Australia, South Africa, Britain and

Ireland do, however, highlight the current status of ocean pools as visitor attractions by including certain pools and omitting others equally evident on Google Earth's satellite images. By this standard, only two of Cornwall's ocean pools could be regarded as visitor attractions comparable with the far better publicised ocean pools in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. In my view, development of ocean pools in the latter three nations can be seen as similar, but not identical, 'modernising' processes transforming surfcoasts that a colonising population had regarded as hazardous into 'safe enough' leisure coasts.

With the notable exception of Tankard's (1992) work on ocean pools in East London, the history of South Africa's ocean pools has received far less attention than that of one New Zealand ocean pool (Daley, 2003; Booth, 2001a). Unlike the present-day St Clair Hot Sea Baths (Figure 1-19) at Dunedin in New Zealand's South Island, South Africa's ocean pools are generally termed 'tidal pools' and do not have pumps, heating or chlorination.



Figure 1-19. St Clair Pool, an outdoor heated seawater pool, Dunedin, New Zealand

South Africa's tidal pools (see examples in Figure 1-1s) are discussed as safe and attractive places for beachgoers (Genthe, Kfir, & Franck, 1995; van Herwerden & Bally, 1989). They also appear in discussions of coastal engineering (Bosman & Scholtz, 1982; Malan & Swart, 1997; Theron & Schoonees, 2007). While Bosman and Scholtz (1982) provided a typology of South Africa's estimated 80-90 human-made tidal pools, a combination of a fishermen's guidebook (Whibley, 2003) and a City of Cape Town (2009) publication currently provides the most comprehensive and convenient listing of South Africa's tidal pools. Patterns of conviviality and segregation at these and other pools are discussed later in this literature review.



Figure 1-20. South African tidal pools at Sparks Bay in the Western Cape and at Durban's Brighton Beach

The twentieth century saw development of patrolled beaches in Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and the introduction of shark meshing on the New South Wales coast in 1939, on the coast of Natal in the 1950s (Dudley, 1997), and later at Dunedin's beaches (M. Green, Ganassin, & Reid, 2009). Ocean pools remained in use near those shark-meshed beaches (City of Cape Town, 2009; Short, 2007; Whibley, 2003), and near other Australian and South African surf beaches.

With one notable exception, ocean pools were not a significant part of the modernisation of surfcoasts in the United States. An ocean pool was developed in Hawaii, not as protection against sharks, but as a memorial to Hawaiians who served in World War 1. The Waikiki Natatorium War Memorial in Honolulu (Figure 1-15) served as Hawaii's prime competition pool in the 1920s (Ireland, 2005), but

was closed in the 1970s for failing to comply with health and safety standards applicable to indoor pools. It remains closed because of local reluctance to spend allocated heritage funds on redeveloping and re-opening the pool (Kurano, 1999). The pool's demolition is now considered undesirable on environmental grounds. The active campaign by the Friends of the Natatorium (2011) to re-open at least some of the pool complex testifies to the contested nature of coastal heritage, the risk and aesthetic assessments of ocean pools, and the funding commitments needed to keep ageing ocean pools in acceptable working order.



Figure 1-21. Google Earth image of the War Memorial Natatorium at Waikiki, USA

Literature review part 5 – Poolscapes within and beyond Australia

All public and private pools (including ocean pools and other seawater pools) can be regarded as comprising a nation's or a colony's poolscape. Public baths necessarily take the form of shared indoor or outdoor public pools as saunas, hammams and other forms of steam baths have long effectively delivered health and social benefits. Furthermore, while traditional Japanese public baths (S. Clark, 1994) and the baths of classical Rome (Fagan, 2002) were designed both for the pleasures of bathing and the promotion of public hygiene, public baths were not always designed to make bathing pleasurable.

In both nineteenth-century Britain (Love, 2007a; C. Parker, 2000) and the United States (M. T. Williams, 1991; Wiltse, 2007), public baths were initially seen primarily as measures to reduce the spread of contagious diseases by promoting hygiene among the lower classes. Passage of England's *Baths and Washhouses Act* in the 1840s triggered development of many public baths (Crook, 2006; Love, 2007a; C. Parker, 2000), which were often indoor facilities with heated water to enable their year-round use. England's Serpentine Swimming Club, committed to "the healthful habit of bathing in open water throughout the year," has nevertheless staged its annual outdoor Christmas Day race in London's Serpentine Lake since 1864 (J. Smith, 2005, p. 46).

From the 1830s to the 1870s, the pay-to-use floating public baths of New Orleans helped ameliorate yellow fever epidemics and provided recreation for less affluent residents (Offutt, 2010). According to Bushman and Bushman (1988) and Gallman (2000), public health concerns exacerbated by fever-ridden trans-Atlantic migrants also led to the development of public baths in major ports and cities, such as Philadelphia and Boston. Ship owners' unwillingness to provide a healthy diet, exercise, ventilation and sanitation on ships voyaging from Europe to North America meant that those ships were major sources of infection and disease. Fever-ridden migrants were a much lesser concern in nineteenth-century Australia due to the longer sea voyage, the health regimes adopted on convict transports and migrant ships (Haines, 2003), and effective enforcement of quarantine measures.

Increasing water pollution meant nineteenth-century river baths and floating baths in Britain's major cities were rapidly replaced by indoor public baths, often equipped with laundries as well as bathtubs. As Sheard (2000) emphasises, Britain's nineteenth-century public baths were regarded more as a public service than as profit-making concerns. As Marino (2010) notes, buildings housing baths were substantial as local authorities were willing to invest heavily in pursuit of "civic pride and comparative municipal status". Indoor public baths suitable for year-round use were likewise preferred in the United States (M. T. Williams, 1991).

By 1899, Philadelphia had eight public swimming pools, but pollution had prompted the closure of all the city's river baths (M. T. Williams, 1991, p. 20). New York City still had eleven free floating baths for summer public use in 1911, but only two of its twelve free indoor baths open year round had pools (Bier, 2011, p. 27). Foggy and cold coastal waters meant San Francisco never matched Sydney's enthusiasm for sea baths. San Francisco millionaire and mayor Adolph Sutro gifted the Sutro Baths complex with six indoor seawater pools and a "fresh-water plunge bath" to his city in the 1890s and seawater piped from Ocean Beach filled a number of San Francisco's early off-beach pools (Gray, 2006, p. 195; Starr, 1997, pp. 122-23). In the 1920s, San Francisco's 220-yards long, heated, seawater-filled Fleischhacker Pool was acclaimed as the world's largest outdoor pool (Starr, 1997, p. 122-23). A natatorium built further north at Oregon's Bayocean Park in the early 1900s offered an indoor heated seawater pool with artificial waves (Komar, 1997, p. 76).

Despite the value placed on men's swimming skills, swimmers in ancient Rome or pre-modern Japan did not race competitively in the formalised public baths (Niehaus, 2010; M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 4). From the late-nineteenth century, the public pools in Britain (Love, 2007a), the United States (Bier, 2011; Wiltse, 2007), the Cape Colony (City of Cape Town, 2009) and Australasia (Daley, 2003; M. G. Phillips, 2008; Rockwell, 2008) did, however, become places where the modern art and sport of swimming could be practised and the spectacles of swimming, diving and water polo could be enjoyed. District-based swimming clubs were far less prominent in the United States, where learn-to-swim programs were generally run by the YMCA, the Red Cross or municipal authorities (Wiltse, 2007).

New public pools proliferated in Britain, the United States and Australia in the 1920s and 1930s (Marino, 2010; McShane, 2009; M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 131; Wiltse, 2007). The new styles of outdoor pools, known in Britain as 'lidos' (Pussard, 2007; J. Smith, 2005; Worpole, 2000) and in America as 'leisure pools' (Wiltse, 2007), catered for sunbathing and watersports. Those pools thus represented a departure from a tradition of indoor pools and a new enthusiasm for fresh air, sunshine,

outdoor play and good public health. To provide work for unemployed Americans between 1933 and 1938, the United States government developed thousands of wading pools, “built nearly 750 swimming pools and remodelled hundreds more” (Wiltse, 2007, p. 93). While most of those pools were located in smaller cities and towns, New York City acquired 11 more outdoor pool complexes each with three pools in 1936 (Wiltse, 2007 pp. 93-94).

Most of Britain’s 1930s sea baths and lidos were pay-to-use facilities where admission charges for spectators and sunbathers could exceed revenue raised from swimmers (Fox, 1937; Pussard, 2007). To promote themselves and bring in revenue even in poor weather, lidos in England’s northwest staged swimming, diving and water polo events, fitness classes, beauty quests and aquatic spectacles (J. Smith, 2005, p. 40). As with the seaside pleasure piers, lidos also often had professional entertainers performing diving or other aquatic acts (Gray, 2006; J. Smith, 2005, p. 4).

Although 1930s magazines showcased glamorous Californian homes with private swimming pools (Starr, 1997, p. 22-23), backyard pools remained rare in early twentieth-century United States, Britain and Australia. Private pools became far more common in United States, Australia and South Africa during the late-twentieth century (Dawes, 1979, pp. 4-9; Desai & Veriava, 2010; DiMartino, 2008; Wiltse, 2007). The number of residential pools in the United States rose from 2,500 in 1950 to 26,000 in 1955; 575,000 in 1965; 800,00 in 1970 (Wiltse, 2007, p. 199, 204) and now stands at 10.4 million (Sherr, 2012, pp. 12, 109). According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007), 11.7% of Australian households had a swimming pool in 2007, but swimming pools were most likely to be found in households in Queensland (17.9%), Western Australia (15.4%), NSW (12.4%) and the urban areas of the Northern Territory (28.9%).

Construction of public pools in the UK and the US slowed markedly in the late twentieth century (Wiltse, 2007; Marino, 2010). From the 1960s onwards, indoor ‘leisure centres’ or ‘aquatic centres’ with ‘fun pools’ and controlled conditions for

recreation and competitive swimming, hydrotherapy and aquatic exercise became more prominent in Australia and the UK.

According to Wiltse (2007, p. 210), a brief surge of public pool construction occurred during the late 1960s, when cities in the United States “sought to cool down angry black Americans and stop them rioting”. Dozens of 20-foot by 40-foot ‘mini-pools’ were provided as summer recreational facilities for black residents of inner-city Chicago and New York (Wiltse, 2007 p. 188). Though Sherr (2012, p. 12) states that the United States has 309,000 public pools, cost-cutting measures have led to the closure of many public pools since the 1970s. New York closed most of its mini-pools and some of its larger pools and Pittsburgh closed 20 of its 32 pools between 1996 and 2004 (Wiltse, 2007, p. 182). Swimming clubs in the United States often manage their own private club pools, rather than basing themselves at public pools.

Public pools in the United States have lost so much appeal and support since the 1930s, that Wiltse (2007, p. 213) regards them as threatened with extinction. In the poolscape of the United States, 25-yard and 25-metre pools remain far more common than Olympic-size pools (Sherr, 2012, p. 12) and ocean pools and other types of seawater pools are extremely scarce. The Sutro Baths are now in ruins (Gray, 2006, p. 197), the Fleischhacker Pool no longer exists, and the fate of the Waikiki Natatorium War Memorial was discussed earlier.

While London is hosting its third Olympics Games in 2012, most of the 1,400 public pools provided by the UK’s local authorities in 2002 were less than 50-metres in length (United Kingdom Parliament, 2002). At the end of 2002, England was believed to have only nineteen 50-metre pools or “about the same number of pools in Berlin or Paris alone” and the numbers of Britain’s public pools, outdoor pools and outdoor swimmers were declining (United Kingdom Parliament, 2002). Janet Smith (2005, pp. 25, 158) estimated that the UK had some 100 open-air pools in operation, or “less than a third of the number 50 years earlier” and less than a third of those were tidal pools (Merrington, 2009).

Ratecapping of Britain's local authorities and requirements to contract out council services to private providers prompted the closure of increasing numbers of Britain's lidos and indoor pools from the 1980s onwards (I. Gordon & Inglis, 2009; J. Smith, 2005). Some local authorities (e.g. England's Scarborough) considered pool closure or site redevelopment as a cheaper alternative to the costs of complying with health and safety guidelines relevant to their public pools. As some of Britain's local authorities chose to hand management and maintenance of public pools over to non-profit groups, volunteers now run about 25% of Britain's lidos and other outdoor pools (J. Smith, 2005, p. 158). In other cases, the local authority simply ceased to maintain its seawater pools (Figure 1-9, 1-10). Even heritage-listed and recently restored public pools remain at risk of closure.

The rapid disappearance of outdoor pools and other public pools in the UK has, however, galvanised a broad community of interest evident in nationally coordinated campaigns to counter threats to continued operation of public pools (A. Morgan, 2006) and more localised campaigns (Friends of Bude Sea Pool [FoBSP], 2011). Books (I. Gordon & Inglis, 2009; J. Smith, 2005) and websites (Merrington, 2009) mourn the loss of UK's public pools and celebrate those that survive.

As well as a River and Lake Swimming Association (RALSA), n.d), Britain now has an Outdoor Swimming Society with a manifesto (Outdoor Swimming Society [OSS], 2008) asserting that "water needs no roof". Recent legal action in England established the right to swim unsupervised at the Hampstead Heath Ponds (public swimming places that had traditionally been unsupervised on early mornings in winter) and exempted the Corporation of London "from prosecution under health and safety legislation should an accident occur" (J. Smith, 2005, p. 171). Books by Deakin (2000), Rew (2008) and Start (2008, 2009) are fuelling the growing British enthusiasm for swimming in environments 'wilder' than indoor pools.

By contrast, Australia's public poolscape has remained extensive and diverse (M. G. Phillips, 2008, pp. 100-133). Hundreds of new outdoor public pools were

developed in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s (McShane, 2009; Roberts, 2001). While seawater pools and other outdoor pools are still in use, Australia's public poolscape now includes many more indoor pools than in the 1960s (M. G. Phillips, 2008; p. 130-133). Olympic pools are commonplace, with Bonner (2008) assuring readers of the *New York Times* that:

Sydney today has some 40 traditional public 50-meter pools (New York and Los Angeles each has two!), which may explain how swimmers from Australia, with a population around 20 million, were able to haul off 15 medals at the 2004 Olympics in Athens — second only to the United States.

Community and government commitment to public pools remains stronger in Australia than in Britain or the United States. As Light (2008, p. 132) notes, most Australians “have access to a public pool that is owned, maintained and regulated by the local council”. Roberts (2001, p. 1) asserts that “for children growing up in an Australian city, summer revolves around the public swimming. Some outdoor public pools are recognised as heritage sites, or in Spruhan's (2011) terms as “treasured pearls of the past”, as places of architectural significance and as places inspiring photographers such as Ingeborg Tyssen (J. Williams, 2006) and Max Dupain (J. White & Cawood, 2000).

Pool closures regarded as ‘economically rational’ in the light of government policy for ‘contracting out’ and requiring more professionalised management of council-controlled leisure facilities have provoked public protests. Community-based campaigns have been mounted in Australia to counter threats to specific public pools, such as Sydney's Wylies Baths (Slarke, 2001) and Melbourne's Fitzroy Baths (McShane, 2009).

I turn now to consider the issue of conviviality and segregation at public pools and beaches.

Literature review part 6 – Conviviality at public pools, beaches & other public places

Public pools, beaches and other public places can differ in their degree of publicness and conviviality. Varna and Tiesdell (2010) see 'publicness' as having five key dimensions, namely ownership, physical configuration, control, civility, and animation. Amin (2008) contends that "human dynamics in public space are centrally influenced by the entanglement and circulation of human and non-human bodies and matter in general, productive of a material culture that forms a kind of pre-cognitive template for civic and political behaviour".

Hinchliffe and Whatmore (2006) argue, however, that cities need "a politics of conviviality encompassing plants, animals and other non-human things as well as human beings". That form of conviviality involves a way of living with the earth that is focused not on mastery of nature but on mutuality (Giblett, 2004), in a joyful entanglement of people and things not constrained by efforts to delimit nature and culture.

Illich's (1973) notion of a convivial technology envisaged a community of users developing and maintaining non-industrial tools that would allow average citizens to acquire valuable practical knowledge that promotes self-realisation and mutuality and counters the dependency on specialised knowledge institutionalised within an industrialised society. A user community could for instance develop, maintain and use a public pool as a tool for promoting convivial interaction among human beings, and even with some elements of non-human nature, as well as contributing to public health and the development of swimming skills. Convivial tools express the thoughts of their makers and have evident limitations, but are capable of many applications in addition to their original intended uses.

It is because public pools can, like beaches and parks, offer something for almost everyone at low or minimal cost that they exemplify Oldenburg's (2001) 'great good places', which are neither a residence nor a paid workplace for most of their patrons, but serve to develop a sense of community. Public pools can provide the

“relatively safe spaces that are busy, open to all, free of frenzy and lightly regulated” that Amin (2008) contends somehow domesticate urban complexity and diversity by making the strange familiar. The contribution of public baths to public health, recreation, conviviality and a sense of identity rather than to the development of swimming skills underpinned enthusiastic development of public baths both in classical Rome (Fagan, 2002) and the traditional Japanese public baths (S. Clark, 1994).

For Shaftoe (2008, p. 9), public pools are convivial public spaces precisely to the degree to which they encourage people to linger. He would have regarded the free municipal floating baths of 1870s New York City as profoundly unconvivial since they limited bathers to a mere 20 minutes in the pool and required the return of the dressing room key within 30 minutes (Bier, 2011, p. 21; M. T. Williams, 1991; p. 19).

Susie Scott’s (2009) account of the rules, routines and rituals of British municipal swimming pools focused on public pools as sites of negotiated order, rather than as convivial public places. The civic virtues identified by Kemmis (1992, p. 119) as trust, honesty, justice, toleration, cooperation, hope and remembrance need to be exercised in negotiating order if groups with differing backgrounds and conflicting values and goals are to convivially share public pools.

Cultures can differ widely on issues such as why, where and how people should bathe or swim, what if anything they should wear while bathing or swimming, with whom they can bathe or swim, whose swimming is admired and the value placed on bathing or swimming. At the Roman baths, the shared experience of bathing nude promoted a sense of companionship and sociability. Gender appears to have been more important than class in limiting when, where and with whom people bathed in classical Rome (Ward, 1992). By contrast, Scott Clark (1994) suggested that in traditional Japanese public baths, class appears to have been more important than gender in determining when or with whom people bathed.

At nineteenth-century English public baths with more than one pool, cleaner water and more expensive admission charges usually distinguished the first-class pool from the second-class pool. Women were more likely to launder clothes at the baths' washhouses than use the baths' pools, which were generally reserved for men and boys (I. Gordon & Inglis, 2009).

Access to clubs and learn-to-swim programs could likewise be restricted by age, gender, class, race and other factors. Public baths helped make swimming a working class sport in Britain (Birley, 1993, pp. 307-308), whereas in the United States swimming became a sport based in colleges and private clubs that could and often did, restrict access to their indoor pools. Distinctions between recreational and competitive swimmers and between amateur and professional swimmers also became constraints on the conviviality of public pools in late nineteenth-century Britain (Love, 2007a) and in its Australian colonies (M. G. Phillips, 2008; pp. 18-19; Winterton, 2009, 2010) and in the United States (Wiltse, 2007).

In the United States, public beaches and pools were integrated in terms of gender from the late-nineteenth century, but they were routinely segregated by 'race' into the 1960s (Wiltse, 2007). Public baths in the United States repeatedly denied entry to blacks, including Peter Jackson, the boxer who was Australia's national heavyweight champion in 1886, Coloured Champion of the World in 1888 and welcomed at public pools in Britain and Australia (Petersen, ca. 2011). Mexicans, blacks, Asians and other people regarded as 'non-white' were often only permitted to use early twentieth-century California's public swimming pools on the one day each week before the pool was drained and refilled (Starr, 2002, p. 37). Korean-American diver, Sammy Lee, represented the United States at the 1948 and 1952 Olympics despite his difficulties with gaining admission to suitable training pools in 1930s California (Yeomans, 2002).

Wiltse (2007) was thus able to explore the history of racism, class conflict and gender inequality in the northern cities of the United States by analyzing the rise and fall of municipal pools. He (2007, p. 3) sees those public pools as "intensely

contested civic spaces” precisely because of “the visual and physical intimacy” accompanying their use and the levels of racism that could not permit what Goffman (1977) calls ‘civil inattention’. According to Wiltse (2007, p.182-183; 193-198), white residents of America’s post-war suburbs so often spurned development of public pools in favour of developing private-club pools able to control the class and race of persons admitted, that the ‘swim club’ became a “ubiquitous suburban institution” while cities “downgraded the public importance” of swimming pools open to all. He states (2007, p. 2) that by the 1970s and 1980s, “tens of millions of mostly white middle-class American swam in their backyards or at suburban club pools”, while inner-city municipal pools were patronised mainly by Hispanic-Americans and African-Americans.

In Britain, where segregation by class and gender was more important than segregation by race, mixed or ‘continental’ bathing was contentious in the nineteenth century, but added to the appeal of the twentieth-century lidos and seashores (Horwood, 2000). To keep sea bathing modern and respectable in British terms, seawater pools in colonial Australasia (Booth 2001a; McDermott, 2005; M. G. Phillips, 2008) and the Cape Colony (City of Cape Town, 2009, p. 47; Tankard, 1992) were gender-segregated.

Although racial segregation was most overt at South Africa’s beaches and pools during the apartheid era, the public beaches and pools of proto-apartheid South Africa also catered primarily to the white minority. While most of the ocean pools in late-apartheid 1980s Cape Town were reserved for whites, some sea pools (e.g. Figure 1-22) were designated for use by coloureds and blacks (City of Cape Town, 2009), otherwise restricted to the less safe and accessible beaches (Booth, 2001a; Thompson, 2008).



Figure 1-22. Tidal pool at Cape Town's Harmony Park created for use by people classified as coloured in apartheid-era South Africa

The formal segregation practised in apartheid-era South Africa proved easier to remove than the informal segregation practiced at post-apartheid beaches and pools (Dixon & Durrheim, 2004; Durrheim & Dixon, 2001; Prochaska & Kruger, 2001; Thompson, 2011). Reducing the racial imbalance in swimming clubs and elite competitive swimming (Desai & Veriava, 2010) and in surfing (Thompson, 2011) is proving difficult. Gender imbalance has been a lesser cause of concern in South Africa. In a nation with star female swimmers, competitive women's surfing has nevertheless struggled to gain media coverage and support comparable with that for men's surfing (Thompson, 2008).

In colonial Australia, beaches and public pools were implicitly racialised and bathing was gender-segregated. Wiltse's (2007) finding that abandonment of gender segregation resulted in increased racial segregation at public pools in the United States may help explain why Peter Jackson was so readily accepted as a swimmer and as a teacher of swimming in Sydney's gender-segregated public pools (Petersen, ca. 2011). Racism in the 1890s did not prevent an Aboriginal man from becoming the star of Wagga's swimming club, or prevent talented mixed-race swimmers, such as the Wickham brothers and the Kong Sing brothers, from joining Sydney's amateur swimming clubs (Osmond & McDermott, 2008).

Racism was, nevertheless, part of the fabric of a nation that, did not count Indigenous inhabitants in its census until after 1967, resisted granting voting rights to indigenous adults, and had a migration policy designed to preserve “White Australia” until the early 1970s. Denis Byrne (2003) pointed out that, although racial segregation is invisible or denied within Australia’s public discourse, “in country areas of NSW . . . where most of the State’s Aboriginal population lived until the 1970s, cinemas, hospitals, and swimming pools were segregated by social convention and intimidation” rather than by formal by-laws or regulation. The revelation of the racial discrimination practised at a 1960s public pool in a NSW country town (Curthoys, 2002) was shocking to the many Australian city-dwellers who believed that public pools and beaches were open to all members of the public. It was, however, 1992, before Samantha Riley became the first indigenous Australian to compete in Olympic swimming (Osmond & McDermott, 2008). An Aboriginal surf lifesaver was still news in the 1950s (Ramsland, 2006) and McGloin (2005) has explored Aboriginal engagement in surfing culture.

Although gender-segregated bathing was abandoned at Australia’s surf beaches on safety grounds before World War I, many of its older public pools remained gender segregated into the 1930s (McDermott, 2005). Gender appears to have been a far stronger force for conflict at Australia’s ocean pools than issues of ethnicity, race, religion, class, age or ability (Andrews, 2004; Iveson, 2003; McDermott, 2005; Wye, 2002). Gender-segregated public pools are now rare and the allocation of any gender-segregated hours at Australian public pools is now contentious (Pardy, 2011). Despite resistance in Australia to admitting women as patrolling members of surf lifesaving clubs or as competitors on the professional surfing circuit, women’s involvement with surfing appears to have been greater in Australia than in the United States or South Africa (Booth, 2001b).

Conviviality has been less readily extended to non-human life forms at modern pools. The hygienic, chlorinated, filtered late-twentieth century waters of the developed world’s freshwater public and private pools are markedly less biodiverse environments than sea pools or river pools. As Archer and Beale (2004, p. 335)

complained the “blue, sterile, chlorinated horrors that dot suburbia at great expense” do not support Australia’s native wildlife, provide suburban children with the experience of swimming with wildlife, or teach children that it can be safe and enjoyable to swim in wild nature.

Literature review part 7 – Acquisition of embodied knowledges and emplaced learning

This section of the literature review explores the ways people engage and learn within, from and about their environment and the embodied knowledges that can be acquired at bathing and swimming pools. As living creatures cannot avoid acquiring an embodied knowledge of the world through their senses, the embodiment of knowledge is a consequence of having or being a body and knowing how to use it in a particular world for particular purposes. As Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 82) observed, “having a body, is for a living creature, to be involved in a definite environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and to be committed to them”.

Mark M. Smith (2007, p. 3) regards human senses as “historically and culturally generated ways of knowing and understanding” that “can only be understood in their specific social and historical contexts”. Sensory perception of the environment has interested historians such as Alain Corbin (1986, 1995, 1998); ecological psychologists such as James Gibson (1979), psychoanalytic ecologists such as Rod Giblett (1996, 2008, 2009, 2011); anthropologists such as Tim Ingold (2000, 2001); and designers of human-computer interfaces (Cassell, Bickmore, Campbell, Vilhjalmsón, & Yan, 2001).

As the provision of appealing and satisfying experiences for tourists is one of the prime functions of a tourist destination, tourists’ bodies and their perceptions of tourist destinations and attractions have attracted special scrutiny. While Urry’s (1990, 1992) influential concept of ‘the tourist gaze’ stressed the importance of visual perception, tourism remains a whole-of-body experience where perceptions of sounds, smells, touch and movement all matter. Edensor (2006) saw “embodied

tourist performance, perception and experiences” as emerging from “active subjects practically oriented toward durable shared skills and meanings” rather than from passive gazers.

Drawing on James Gibson’s (1979) work, which regards a person not as a self-contained individual confronting a ‘world out there’, but rather as ‘a developing organism-in-its-environment’, Ingold (2000) came to see much cultural variation as variations in skills that are as much biological as cultural. Studying hunter-gatherer and pastoral societies convinced him that skills relevant to survival were acquired by training and experience in the performance of particular tasks requiring engagement with a person’s environment.

Marcel Mauss (1973) argued that people from different societies have different ‘techniques of the body’ or ways in which they know how to use their bodies effectively and traditionally. The practices of swimming, diving, body surfing and board surfing can thus be regarded as encompassing different techniques of the body.

A swimming body experiences sensations not available to the body of a non-swimmer. Berleant (2005, p. 62) regarded swimming as “almost entirely tactual” and ‘the most intimate of water experiences’ as active swimmers feel the water’s weight, force, density, and temperature both “tactually and kinaesthetically”.

According to Olympic swimming champion, Shane Gould (2007):

One of the enduring attractions to swimming for humans is the way the water feels against the body. For most people, being in the water is an extremely pleasant sensation. Floating, supported by water’s buoyancy is particularly delightful.

Mauss (1973) acknowledged that within a given society the techniques of the body could change over time and vary by gender and age. During his own lifetime, the practice of training novice divers to keep their eyes closed prior to their entry into the water gave way to the practice of training divers to keep their eyes open. The

practice of teaching head-up breaststroke as the basic stroke likewise gave way to the practice of teaching crawl stroke, and the habit of swimmers “swallowing water and spitting it out again” was discarded.

As ways of acting in an environment are also ways of perceiving that environment, swimmers and non-swimmers can perceive water bodies quite differently. A pool deep enough for pleasurable immersion may be too small for a satisfying swim, depending on the swimmer’s preferred style and stroke. A pool too shallow for diving or swimming may, however, offer appealing affordances for water-walking, photography or children’s water-play.

While survival provides a powerful motive for learning, Ingold’s (2000, 2001) findings also accord with studies of children playing and learning and with the ways humans master the intricacies of recreational practices, sports and human-computer interfaces. As Stevens (2007, p. 200) notes, playful use of an environment is, however, “not necessarily efficient, practical or rational. It embraces opposition between risk and safety, production and waste, comfort and bodily tensions”.

It appears that engagement with any environment allows that environment to become incorporated within the human body as knowledge and skills. That embodied knowledge enables a person to feel more competent in engaging with that environment and similar environments and hence more comfortable and more at home with such environments and their inhabitants. This appears to hold true on land, in water, and in virtual or natural environments that humans can access only with specialised equipment, such as computers or scuba equipment (Dimmock, 2009).

The learning tasks relevant to a particular inhabited world can be self-imposed (whether as a matter of survival or perhaps as a form of play) or culturally imposed and perhaps requiring some formalised instruction. Thus a child able to access any suitable watery environment may acquire the embodied skill of swimming by solo experimentation, by imitating swimmers, by informal instruction from friends or

family members or through formalised instruction, such as a learn-to-swim program or some combination of these methods.

Lave and Wenger (1991) saw learning as a whole-person activity situated within social environments and involving participation in a community of practice, that offered ongoing engagement in a range of activities and access to experienced practitioners and a multiplicity of viewpoints, as well as information and other resources. Their paper is one of the key seminal works on communities of practice (A. Cox, 2005) and efforts to clarify this concept and its applicability to sport include work by Culver & Trudel (2008).

A variety of learning pathways can afford entry to communities of practice, which require, focus on or cultivate the ability to swim. Learning may be situated within a workplace, or a club (Light, 2006), school or even within overlapping communities of practice, such as schools, swimming clubs or surf lifesaving clubs (Light & Nash, 2006), neighbourhood gangs or friendly groups of pool users, fishers or cliff jumpers. Engaging with water or ocean pools through specific communities of practice will foster particular ways of acting in and ways of perceiving aquatic environments and their human and non-human actors present. Moran (2011) has addressed some of the “dangerous masculinities” relevant to aquatic risk taking and drowning.

Paolo Freire’s (1983) “internalised oppressor”, Bordieu’s habitus (Burkitt, 2002; Lau, 2004; Noble & Watkins, 2003) and Foucault’s governmentality (S. Scott, 2009) can all be employed to help explain an individual’s perception, selection and use of their environment’s affordances, which are the uses to which an individual person or animal can put a specific animal-environment system (J. Gibson, 1979; Hutchby, 2001; Stoffregan, 2003).

While changing and changeable environments, cultures and technologies offer a dynamic set of affordances, the acquisition of new skills, technologies (such as skateboards or snorkels) or sensitisation of the perceptual system can also reveal

new affordances in a stable environment. Recreational activities, such as skateboarding (Stevens, 2007 p. 203), parkour (Atkinson, 2009) and coastering (Start, 2009; Laviolette, 2009), revealed new affordances for recreation in urban and coastal environments. Though purpose-built skateboarding facilities now exist, use of skateboards has given existing urban and suburban environments new identities as recreational sites for speedy, complex and graceful movement by skateboarders. Parkour is not dependent on equipment, its practitioners simply use urban environments not intended or allocated for recreational use as obstacle courses along which they can move gracefully at speed. Coastering, the rocky shore equivalent of parkour, is more dependent on equipment such as wetsuits, helmets and ropes. In Eichberg's (1989) terms, all three of these body culture activities remain focused on sensual experience and social identity despite acquiring some of the characteristics of achievement sport and fitness sport.

Cultural frameworks, age, gender, class, ethnicity, health, nationality, prior experience and available technologies can all constrain which affordances of an environment are identified and used, what aesthetic values are applied, which skills are cultivated and which skills are displayed/represented to whom and in what circumstances. Places affording a safe refuge from threats to the respectability of bathers/swimmers have, for example, generally been of more value to women and girls than to men and boys.

Human lives insulated from 'wild nature' can, therefore, be expected to diminish the human capacity to directly perceive affordances associated with 'wild nature' and to manage them 'instinctively and intuitively'. Roger Deakin (2000, p. 164) has lamented that Britain's younger swimmers accustomed to indoor swimming and warm-water 'fun pools' lack respect for the sea and its dangers, view the ocean simply as "a giant fun pool", and make the "bland assumption that lifeguards are there to rescue you should anything go wrong".

Literature review part 8 – Linking nature, health, aesthetics and risk

The term ‘nature-deficit disorder’ coined by Richard Louv (2005) is a profoundly confusing term. Such a formulation suggests that any humans suffering from this ‘nature deficiency’ are somehow outside of a unified or uniform nature. It also suggests all forms of nature may be equally valuable in countering this disorder and fails to address the extent of human control that can be applied to encounters with non-human nature.

As Adrian Franklin (2006) notes, “fashions in nature mean that there is an aesthetic dimension to what is deemed properly natural at any one time”. Han (2003) argues that the criteria that Western and Asian adults use to identify a ‘natural environment’ relate to a landscape dominated by vegetation, water and mountains, the absence or concealment of man-made structures, and finally a dominance of curvilinear or irregular contours, rather than rectilinear or regular contours.

Although access to ‘green’ or ‘natural’ environments has long been considered desirable for both physical and mental health, a city park remains a very different aesthetic environment from the ‘wild nature’ of an abandoned suburban block or a wetland. Far from being safe and aesthetically pleasing stages for human performances, some of those environments may not only lack aesthetic appeal, but also pose significant risks to the health and safety of people accustomed to being comfortably insulated from non-human nature.

If engagement with a particular ‘natural’ or ‘green’ environment provides aesthetic pleasures and health benefits, those pleasures and benefits must presumably relate to where the human body is, what that body is doing, and to the relationships with humans and other beings with which the environment is shared. All such pleasures necessarily fall within the realm of the aesthetic, which originally, as Eagleton (1989) pointed out, “concerned itself with all that follows from our sensory relationship with the world, with the way reality strikes the body on all its sensory surfaces”.

Eichberg (1986) highlighted waves of enthusiasm for outdoor nature-based exercise in Europe. Perhaps because swimming is not necessarily a nature-based recreation, and because competitive swimmers (other than synchronised swimmers) are judged on speed rather than style, the sensual and aesthetic world of swimmers now attracts less study than that of board surfers (Booth, 2009; Evers, 2009; N. Ford & Brown, 2006; Satchell, 2006; Waitt, 2001). Yet any aesthetic based on the gaze of a person standing, walking or sitting ignores both the swimmer's gaze at or near the water surface and the sensations of immersion, motion through water and interaction with wind, waves and other lifeforms.

A focus on 'where the body is' prompts consideration of the persistent sense of certain places as therapeutic or restorative environments. Any environment suitable for the non-weightbearing, whole-body exercise of swimming can offer health. Certain swimming environments may, however, present health hazards on the one hand or provide aesthetic pleasures or welcome challenges to a swimmer on the other. Unlike indoor pools, both sandy beaches and rocky shores offer access to fresh air and opportunities to encounter 'wild nature' and engage in 'green exercise' in a 'blue gym' (Depledge & Bird, 2009; The Blue Gym, 2012), features considered desirable for both physical and mental health.

Brady (2003), Rew (2008), Deakin (2000), Sprawson (1992) highlighted the distinctive sensual pleasures linked to accepting the challenges of 'wild' swimming, especially in seawater. Roger Deakin (2000, p. 3-4) believed:

You see and experience things when you are swimming in a way that is completely different from any other. You are *in* [sic] nature, part and parcel of it, in a far more complex and intense way than on dry land, and your sense of the present is overwhelming.

Conversely, Tim Winton (2010) regards both surfing and lap swimming as "similarly forgetful things" offering a "form of desertion, retreat, hermitage, a stepping aside from terrestrial problems". For Winton (2010, pp. 83-85), the sea was "the one rare wild card left in the homogenous suburban life" and so "for every moment the sea

is peace and relief, there is another when it shivers and stirs to become chaos, it's just as ready to claim as to offer".

The persistent enthusiasm for engaging in wave play or swimming in Australia's ocean pools suggests that these wilder, nature-based swimming environments may offer some of the pleasures and risks typically ascribed to surfing rather than swimming. Exploring changes over time in the use of ocean pools, thus, has the potential to clarify the sensory world and the aesthetic appeal of those forms of 'wilder swimming'.

Appleton's (1975, 1992) prospect and refuge theory of landscape aesthetics suggests that humans find places that afford both a good view of the surroundings and a refuge from likely danger particularly attractive. Ingold's (2000, 2001) and James Gibson's (1979) work on the opportunities afforded by an environment provide a basis for expanding 'prospect' to include the prospect of pleasurable engagement with the affordances of a specific environment. Philip Drew (1994), who interpreted Australians' enthusiasm for verandahs and living near the coast in terms of Appleton's (1975, 1992) prospect and refuge theory, argued that those environments had affordances not available in less liminal spaces. Prospect and refuge theory thus seems particularly relevant to public pools sited on surfcoasts and affording refuge from feared natural hazards, while also providing affordances for recreation and sport.

Persistent and widespread reference to the beautiful and the sublime since the mid-eighteenth century suggests the utility of both these well-established aesthetic categories. Giblett (2008, p. 63) regards the beautiful and the sublime as 'crucial components of the landscape and the body'. The concept of the sublime has been extended beyond the Burkean (E. Burke, 1756/1987) and Kantian (1764/2004) romantic and masculine sublime of the eighteenth century to include a feminine (Mann, 2006) and an ecological sublime (Hitt, 1999). There is a general consensus that to experience the sublime is to encounter something far from mundane, far beyond human scale, indifferent to human needs and desires and hence so

overwhelming that it provokes a visceral response. Eagleton (1989) also saw the Western tradition as associating the sublime with “virile strenuousness: and certainly anyone seeking a real-life encounter with the romantic and masculine sublime risks being severely challenged, overwhelmed and injured.

Awesome landscapes, vast oceans, powerful ‘perfect waves’ and human bodies performing godlike feats glorified within the globalised surfing culture through films such as *Endless Summer* (Ormrod, 2005) can be considered sublime. Evocations of the sublime were, however, more prominent in the 1980s Australian environmental campaigns focused on ‘wilderness’ than in the 1990s environmental care movements (Clarke, 2006; Davison & Chapman, 2006; Foxwell-Norton, 2006, Lazarevski, Irvine & Dolnicar, 2008).

Unlike the sublime, the beautiful according to Kant (1764/2004) and Edmund Burke (1756/1987) related to pleasure, harmony, order and domesticity on a smaller, more human-friendly scale. Whereas the beautiful may engage all of the senses, it poses no threat to human health and safety. Despite its large extent, a panoramic view of a harmonious landscape hospitable to human beings can therefore be beautiful. An athletic human body could likewise be considered so beautiful as to constitute an appealing element of spectator sport (Gumbrecht, 2006; Holt, 2008). Eagleton (1989) contends that “beauty is a crucial constituent of our sociality”, yet any shared sensory experience can promote sociality and companionship.

In terms of Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1996), restorative environments act like a well-run spa by providing “a sense of being away” from the mundane world, “fascination”, “extent” by offering a structured and orderly environment, and “compatibility” between what a person wants, must and can do. As Hartig, Kaiser and Bowler (2001) note, those are characteristics of the person-environment relationship, rather than qualities within the person or the environment. Other recent research (Thwaites, Helleur, & Simkins, 2005) suggested that mental fatigue was reduced in even relatively small places that engage and hold attention, are compatible with a person’s expectations and inclinations and have boundaries that

are not easily discernable. Both a calm and beautiful ocean pool or an ocean pool providing an encounter with the sublime would appear to meet these criteria for a restorative environment able to reduce mental fatigue.

Thomson, Kearns and Pettigrew's (2003) finding that the value of Glasgow's public baths for public health now relates as much to social contact as to physical activity supported the argument (Staats, Gernerden, & Hartig, 2010) that the social context also helps determine the restorative quality of an environment. Work by Hug, Hartig, Hansmann, Seeland and Hornung (2009) further suggested that people are more likely to exercise in environments they perceive as 'restorative'.

Within a specific restorative or therapeutic environment, bodies may rest or be engaged in activities that require specific techniques of the body. People 'taking the cure' at spa towns traditionally engaged in the rituals of 'taking the waters' and promenading. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Britain's eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century seaside resorts had prescribed rituals for sea bathing.

Engagement with nature can, as Pretty (2004) suggests, take the form of "viewing nature", "being in the presence of nature" or "active participation and involvement with nature". The late nineteenth-century ideals of 'muscular Christianity' and 'manly' outdoor exercise (Haley, 1978) promoted more vigorous physical activity, at least for manly Christian men. Nineteenth-century women's involvement in vigorous outdoor sport and recreational activities was inhibited by the Western world's ideals of 'refined womanhood' and expectations that respectable women should appear decorative, genteel, ladylike and properly clothed in public (Hargreaves, 1985; McCrone, 1988; Park, 2007; C. Parker, 2010; Winterton, 2009).

More recent and inclusive notions of 'green exercise' (Pretty, Peacock, Sellens, & Griffin, 2005) and 'blue gyms' (DePledge & Bird, 2009; The Blue Gym, 2012) appear to envisage more energetic outdoor physical activity, such as walking, running, coasteering, swimming or surfing. As Brewster and Bell (2009) highlighted, framing an outdoor experience as being "out-in nature" enables it to be experienced as a

refuge from everyday life thus enhancing its therapeutic and restorative value and shaping behaviour in that environment

Even this brief discussion suggests the need for an aesthetic that goes beyond the gaze to address the range of risks and pleasures associated with being present and being active in specific environments. People prepared to put their bodies at risk of serious injury or illness when undertaking outdoor activities for their own pleasure highlight the influence of cultural and personal frameworks on the perception and management of risks and pleasures. Recognising that the risks of an activity may be incidental to its pleasures, Adams (1999) suggests that each individual has a personal “risk thermostat” with variable settings reflecting that risk taker’s experience, embodied skills, cultural frameworks and state of sobriety.

The practice in the Woodcraft (Turner, 2002), Boy Scouts (Baden-Powell, 1908), Girl Guides (M. Smith, 2006) and outdoor education movements (Payne & Wattoo, 2009) of cultivating sensitivities, skills and mutual support needed for safe and satisfying engagement with ‘wild’ nature can thus be regarded as resetting risk thermostats. Enthusiasts for surfing (Pendleton, 2001), rock fishing (M. Jones, 2003) and other ‘risky’ coastal recreations appear to consistently assign a higher priority to retaining a sense of local identity and engaging in activities that demonstrate a specific relationship between their bodies, the sea and the coast’s public spaces, than to avoidance of demonstrable risk. Photographers who routinely risk their personal safety and equipment pursuing their desired images of ocean pools likewise suggest that aesthetic appreciation of ocean pools and their environment can both promote risk taking and cultivate skills in risk management.

Current risk management measures actively seek to eliminate any need to cultivate special skills or foster trust and mutual support in risky environments. Standard risk management approaches thus ignore both the relationship between an individual’s or community’s range of capabilities (Gardoni & Murphy, 2009; Murphy & Gardoni, 2010) and the aesthetic and cultural considerations relevant to voluntary risk-taking in so-called adventure, lifestyle or nature-based sports and recreations.

Lupton and Tulloch (2002) identified self-improvement, emotional engagement and control as promoting voluntary risk-taking. Dimmock (2009) explored risk-taking as incidental to the pursuit of comfort. Stranger (1999) argued that the “surfing aesthetic involves a postmodern incarnation of the sublime that distorts rational assessment”, whereas Booth (2009) argued that surfing fits is one of those activities experienced as pleasurable precisely because they “momentarily destroy the stability of perception and inflict a kind of voluptuous panic upon an otherwise lucid mind”.

From a democratic, environmental justice perspective (J. Byrne, Wolch, & Zhang, 2009), providing “inferior access to environmental benefits” such as fresh water, clean air, open space, and hence arguably also to nature-based skillscapes and restorative or therapeutic environments, “can be regarded as an environmental inequity”. Such a perspective promotes scrutiny of measures, such as admission charges, segregation practices and societal constraints on independent mobility that restrict access to open spaces, skillscapes and restorative or therapeutic environments. It also demands consideration of equitable access to therapeutic and restorative virtual environments (DePledge, Stone & Bird, 2011) and to the human health benefits of involvement in ‘practical environmental volunteering’ or, in O’Brien, Townsend and Ebdén’s (2010) terms, volunteer involvement with “practical conservation activities in nature”.

Data and methods

My experience of ocean pools and consideration of the matters outlined in the preceding literature review helped determine my choice of data sources and methods. This thesis is therefore informed by my own visits to ocean pools as a recreational swimmer and a researcher, and by my experience of reading, reflecting, writing and speaking about them, looking at their images, making my own images of ocean pools and sharing them online.

Focusing on nations once part of Britain's formal empire, I compare Australia's coast and ocean pools with those of Britain, Ireland, the United States, New Zealand and South Africa. Although a wider southern hemisphere perspective might have been helpful, I lacked the English-language sources, fluency in languages other than English and capacity for more extensive travel necessary for meaningful comparisons with the surfcoasts and sea pools evident in Google Earth images of southern South America.

My research included visits to ocean pools and seashores and engagement as a participant observer in communities of place, practice and interest relating to ocean pools. I chose not to do surveys or interviews, gather new oral histories, or extensive ethnographic or netnographic (Kozinets, 2010) research that might have allowed a deeper analytical focus on key twenty-first century communities of practice, place and interest. Instead, I drew on a wide range of nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century visual, audiovisual and written records relating to ocean pools within and beyond Australia and focused on identifying and analysing changes over time. I explored the history embedded in poolscares and coastal landscapes and in scholarly, literary and non-literary texts in the public domain from Australian and overseas libraries, archives, websites, official records, newspapers, magazines and blogs. My research into representations of ocean pools and the responses these elicited included reviewing still and moving images of the ocean pools produced as news, memory aids, marketing devices, entertainment and art, and the recent practices of exhibiting and viewing images of ocean pools as art. These sources are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

As my core analytical tool, I decided to use the qualitative approach known as actor-network theory (ANT) also known as enrolment theory or the sociology of translation. As Hinchings (2003) noted, one of the great benefits of ANT is that it provides an explicit and persistent reminder "that the way in which we think about the world is always, to some degree, informed by the capacities and properties of the particular things that surround us in this world". ANT acknowledges the agency of animals, plants and inanimate nature in shaping human society and influencing

the character of supposedly 'human' spaces (Philo & Wolch, 1998). As ANT ignores distinctions between people and technological, natural, social, and analytical things, it employs an abstract and neutral vocabulary to explain the conflicting viewpoints of its human and non-human actors.

John Law (2009 p. 141) characterised ANT as “a disparate family of material-semiotic tools, sensibilities and methods of analysis that treats everything in the social and natural worlds as a continuously generated effect of the webs of relations within which they are located”. He (2009, pp. 142-146) discussed how ANT had by the early 1980s emerged from the study of science, technology and society through work by Michel Callon, Bruno Latour and himself. Law (2009, p. 146-149) saw the 1990 version of ANT as looking beyond the social to the power relations, process and effects of scale within precarious networks, where human and non-human actors defined and shaped one another and the material durability, strategic durability and discursive stability of those networks could be investigated. Law (2009, pp. 149--155) notes that the subsequent development of ANT as a diasporic material semiotics with a greater interest in enactment, multiplicity of identities, fluidity and the semiotician’s “simultaneous responsibility both to the real and the good” (Law, 2009, p. 149).

While still sometimes regarded as an “enticing but controversial approach to materiality, relationality and process” (Fallan, 2008), ANT has been fruitfully applied to information technology projects (Greenhalgh & Stones, 2010; Ramiller & Wagner, 2009), environmental history (Kortelainen, 1999), tourism (van der Duim, 2007) and angling (Mordue, 2009). Within Australian contexts, the interdisciplinary framework of ANT has been used to study information systems (Deering, Tatnall & Burgess, 2010), creative writing classes (Muecke, 2009), and wildlife tourism (Rodger, Moore, & Newsome, 2009).

Throughout this thesis, I hyphenate the term actor-network to emphasise that ANT regards actors as networks and networks as actors. In accordance with ANT, I investigate Australia’s ocean pools, not as places with well-defined or ‘knowable’

boundaries, but as hybrid assemblages involving both human actors and non-human actors (including sharks and rock platforms). I consider ocean pools themselves as actors in fostering tourism and community development, public and environmental health, outdoor and environmental education and environmental justice. I also consider ocean pools as actors that could be threatened or deserted and that could threaten or desert other actors. I explore the past, present and future contributions of Australia's ocean pools to valued embodied knowledges and identities.

Chapter outline

In presenting my findings, I take a thematic and largely chronological approach.

Building on the general introduction provided in this chapter, Chapter 2 discusses the roles that self-reflection, fieldwork, archival research and analysis played in my four-part methodology and outlines my analytical frameworks.

Both Chapters 3 and 4 relate to the Australian colonies in the period from 1788 to 1900. Chapter 3 discusses the involvement of ocean pools with colonial sea bathing and seaside tourism. Chapter 4 discusses the involvement of colonial ocean pools with swimming in terms of play, spectacle, survival skills, sport, fitness, education and tourism.

Chapters 5 to 9 relate to the period from 1901 to 2012. Chapter 5 considers the involvement of ocean pools with Australia's swimming, beach and surf cultures from 1901 to 1949. Chapter 6 deals with surf culture and pool cultures from 1950 to 1970. Chapter 7 focuses on the presence at post-1970 ocean pools of signs relating to vulnerable bodies and vulnerable environments. Chapter 8 discusses other post-1970 representations of ocean pools. Chapter 9 looks at abandoned ocean pools, reborn ocean pools and ocean pools that may still be created or further developed.

Chapter 10 explores three scenarios for the future of Australia's ocean pools, while Chapter 11 summarises my conclusions regarding my research question regarding the pasts, presents and possible futures of Australia's ocean pools.

Chapter 2. Methods and data

Introduction

To produce valid, well-grounded analyses of Australia's ocean pools, while taking account of relevant pool, beach, surf and body cultures within and beyond Australia, I used the methodology shown in Figure 2-1. The four overlapping elements of this methodology were not applied in a linear or cyclical sequence.

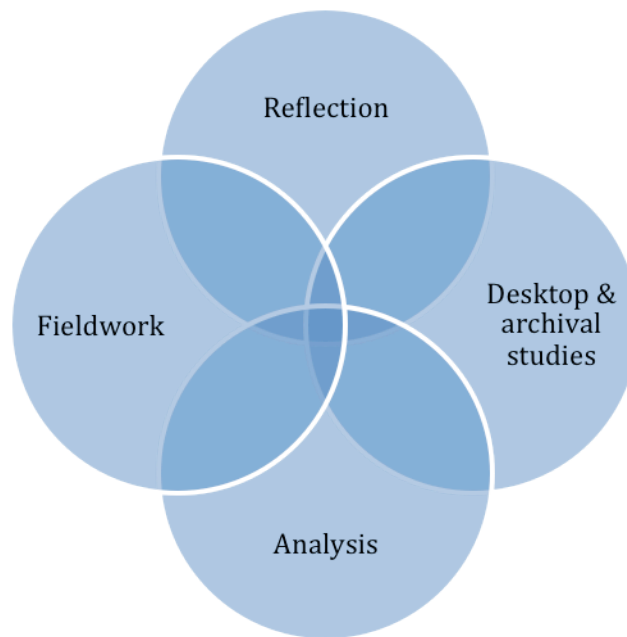


Figure 2-1. My four-part methodology

Each element of this methodology was a necessary part of addressing each of the research questions discussed in Chapter 1. Findings and ideas from each element were checked and validated via overlapping elements. Desktop studies suggested the location of an ocean pool, which could be investigated through fieldwork. Exploring the historical record inscribed on the recreational coasts by people and things involved with ocean pools and surf, beach, pool and body cultures and present-day practices. Fieldwork identifying rock types, lifeforms, materials, equipment, signs or facilities absent or present in a poolscape triggered desktop investigations, fieldwork and further analytical work. A plaque at an ocean pool acknowledging involvement of specific people and institutions in the pool's

development triggered desktop research regarding the networks associated with that pool.

I now consider each element of this methodology, outlining the approach I have taken and its justification.

Reflection

As my perceptions and interpretations of people and things reflect my experiences and my embodied knowledges, I should explain that the ability to swim or even bathe in public pools is not something I take for granted. As my family doctor had convinced my parents that asthmatic children should have minimal contact with water, I was eleven years old before I was permitted to learn to swim.

I still have strong memories of being a non-swimming child, observing swimmers enjoying the pleasures that the sea, rivers and swimming pools afforded in hot, humid, south-east Queensland summers. I remember the pleasure of learning to swim and how it changed the way I thought about my body and swimming environments. Ocean pools were not, however, a feature of the Queensland beaches where I spent my school holidays in the 1960s.

My parents made sure that my siblings and I attended swimming lessons and learnt to swim. Although my parents did not teach me to swim, they taught me about barriers to learning to swim. My father enjoyed being immersed in seawater or pool water, but he remained more of a bather than a swimmer. He had grown up in country Queensland and never used the term 'bathing', but talked instead of going "down the beach for a bit of bogey".¹ My mother never joined us in the water and I have yet to see her wearing a swimming costume. She grew up in an inland Queensland city with a gender-segregated public pool, had no female friends or relatives who visited the pool. She attended a girls school with no swimming

¹ Chapter 3 discusses the use of the term 'bogey' in colloquial Australian English to refer to the act of bathing.

program. She has yet to learn to swim and has always avoided situations where comfort or survival required an ability to swim.

As a high school student, I gained one of the lifesaving qualifications awarded by the Royal Life Saving Society of Australia. I did not, however, become a scuba diver, springboard diver, board surfer, body surfer, surf lifesaver or club swimmer. While I admire elite swimmers, I have no personal record of success in any form of competitive sport. I swim mainly for pleasure and sometimes for exercise and enjoy water-based activities, such as snorkelling, kayaking and boating. My ongoing fascination with ocean pools reflects my persistent preference for the smell of the sea air, the feel of lively seawater and the sounds of the sea, rather than the scent of chlorine, the less lively and buoyant water and less rhythmic soundscape of freshwater pools.

My initial encounters with ocean pools came during visits to the NSW coast while I was living in Queensland and after I moved to the ACT in 1980. I was intrigued to find people more familiar with the NSW coast complacently regarding ocean pools as valuable enhancements to the appeal of sandy surf beaches. After moving to the NSW coast in 1996, I was surprised by the number of ocean pools still in use south of Sydney and began to wonder just how many ocean pools existed along the NSW coast. Unable to find any comprehensive listing or history of the ocean pools along the NSW coast, I began documenting the ocean pools I found.

I came to see those pools as places with a presence on postcards, in photograph collections, in tourist information, in press and television advertisements and news, in art galleries, in cyberspace, and in the histories of surfside communities, surf lifesaving clubs, swimming clubs, schools and hospitals. I came to see those ocean pools as significant for community and personal identity in ways that extended well beyond their significance for beach safety, sport and recreation.

Convinced that ocean pools were a distinctive, but as yet little-studied, feature of the NSW coast and its beach cultures, I enrolled for an MA in Public History. I then

gained a \$14,000 grant from the NSW Heritage Office to develop a website exploring the history and heritage significance of the NSW ocean pools. Doing heritage assessments for each NSW ocean pool that I had located convinced me that the significance of the pools resided less in the fabric of their physical structure and more in what their patrons and supporters were allowed and inspired to do, and in the links these convivial places forged between human beings and non-human nature. I found it odd that environmentally friendly ocean pools could be categorised for heritage purposes as 'a type of facility no longer constructed', while less sustainable beach safety measures and public pools flourished.

The website (<http://www.nswoceanbaths.info>) I developed, launched and operated from 2006 to 2011 included case studies of the ocean pools listed in Appendix 1 and offered some thematic analysis (McDermott, 2006). It was one of the earliest attempts to highlight the set of ocean pools developed along the rocky NSW surf coast since the 1820s and to argue for their collective significance and identity. The website and my MA in public history further stimulated my interest in ocean pools and my ambitions for them. I became more interested in ocean pools as places exemplifying a joyous outdoor life and mutuality with nature.

Fieldwork

As indicated above, my fieldwork for this thesis thus began years before I enrolled to undertake my PhD and served as a base on which the other elements of the methodology could draw. That fieldwork included decades of visiting ocean pools on the NSW coast, 12 years as a NSW coastal resident using the local ocean pools for recreation, and the experience of co-leading heritage tours of the ocean pools around Sydney's Coogee Bay. In addition, I have visited and photographed ocean pools and other outdoor seawater pools in New South Wales and Queensland since 2000, in Western Australia since 2008, in New Zealand in 2009, in South Africa in 2010 (Appendix 2) and in Europe in 2011. With the exception of the satellite images, photographs in this thesis were taken on those visits.

Examining ocean pools outside Australia enabled me to look at Australia's ocean pools and their history with fresh eyes. In my fieldwork within and beyond Australia, I paid attention to views of and from the ocean pools, to the presence (or absence) of signage, plaques, memorials, artworks, pumps, wading pools, sunbaking and spectator facilities, diving facilities, and standardised courses for competitive swimming. I looked at buildings at or near the pool and each pool's accessibility for people with disabilities, walkers, cyclists, car travellers and users of public transport. I observed people bathing, swimming, sunbaking, gazing at fellow patrons, poolscapes, seascapes and landscapes, taking photographs, making video recordings, socialising, eating and drinking. I also engaged in many of these behaviours myself. I recorded my observations as notes, photographs and audio and video recordings. This data facilitated more extensive transnational comparisons than were possible from desktop studies alone and triggered further desktop and archival research as well as reflections and the identification of new focuses for analysis.

A thousand images from my visits to NSW ocean pools between 2001 and 2008 have been freely available for some years on a photostream I created on Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/nswoceanbaths>). These images, which document the sites, structures, signage, facilities and views at ocean pools and some of the practices of pool patrons, provided me with a reference point for further research into images and for other documentary and archival research. I also took account of the emails and other feedback on these images and the presentations I gave on ocean pools to academic conferences and to a wide range of community groups, include participants in the launch of my website on NSW ocean pools and the heritage tours that I led.

During this fieldwork, I acquired an emplaced and embodied contextualized understanding of ocean pools. This enabled me to bring more authority to my interpretation of documents relating to ocean pools and enhanced my appreciation of the selectivity and partiality of those documents. My fieldwork thus minimised the risk of overlooking matters infrequently discussed or represented in written

texts, still images or moving images. I did not, however, assume that past visitors to ocean pools would have perceived them as I did. I knew that anyone lacking access to digital cameras, video cameras, computers, photosharing websites and software for managing and manipulating images could not have represented the pools in the same way that I did.

Desktop and archival study

The desktop and archival element of my PhD research explored documents relating to ocean pools and to pool, beach and body cultures within and beyond Australia. As my focus was on a set of public places, I focused on documents within the public domain. I sought to explore accounts related to ocean pools inscribed within the print, electronic and institutional realms of the public domain and to compare them with the knowledge I had gained from my fieldwork. The primary and secondary sources I examined included:

- published print/electronic newspapers, journals from many disciplines including art, aesthetics, ecology, geography, history, linguistics, public and environmental health, sociology, leisure studies and tourism studies, books (including histories, biographies, fiction, travel guides and scientific studies), maps, plans and materials used to market sporting events, coastal tourism and real estate;
- physical and online archives (including handwritten, print and microfilmed records held by libraries, museums and surfside councils);
- artworks viewed in art galleries or in print/online sources; and
- other electronic sources (including photosharing websites, videosharing websites, Yahoo's Lido History group, Google Earth, blogs and surfcams as well as the emails and other electronic feedback I received about my own website, Flickr photostream and YouTube postings, research project and on the presentations I gave on ocean pools to academic conferences and to a wide range of community groups.).

As indicated above, technology constrained and enabled my research. When restricted to working with print or microfilmed newspapers, I avoided bulky, major daily newspapers and worked selectively with less bulky regional newspapers and sporting newspapers, clipping files and indexes to newspaper articles. As more newspapers became available online in a digitised form, I was able to undertake more extensive text searches. Google Earth allowed me to map and measure the ocean pools encountered in my desktop and archival research and my fieldwork.

The collective range and scope of these public records I investigated convinced me that many ocean pools have been and have remained important public places within and beyond Australia. While acknowledging that these sources offered information that was both selective and partial and usually favoured humans over non-humans, this research element gave me sufficient evidence of involvement with ocean pools by people and things in the present and past that I could, with a reasonable degree of validity make comparisons across time and space. As suggested in Chapter 1, public documents may fail to highlight the extent of informal racial segregation at Australian pools.

Desktop and archival research triggered both analysis and fieldwork. Looking at still and moving images assisted my assessment of the changes in the aesthetic appreciation of ocean pools. Newspapers, maps and council records alerted me to the existence of pools no longer mentioned in present-day street maps, tourist maps or street signs and to phantom, ghost and reborn ocean pools.

Analysis

The analysis element proceeded in tandem with the other elements of the methodology. I treated each ocean pool as a separate case study. I also used a combination of methods to identify the commonalities and differences in the development, use, maintenance and valuing of ocean pools across time and space.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I chose ANT as my main analytical tool. From an ANT perspective, objects are projects that have achieved material form at least on a temporary basis and each project is a network of human and non-human actors. Those actors can be combinations of symbolically invested things, which may be identities or even networks nested within other diverse networks.

ANT is also, as Hinchings (2003) and John Law (2009) noted, far from prescriptive. Latour (1993) recommended simply “following the actors” and tracing their engagements in whatever ways seem relevant by drawing upon a variety of perspectives relevant to the actions of interest. ANT is thus well suited for exploring networks of relations to see how they are composed and how they grow and change.

As the respective interests of various actors converge, a network that was initially disorderly and unreliable can evolve into a stable macro-actor or 'black box'. Any entity rendered strong and durable by the strength and credibility of the actors it recruited can therefore be treated as a macro-actor. I therefore regarded each abandoned or in-use ocean pool and each distinctive community of practice as a durable entity that was once an innovative project. Each ocean pool is an assemblage that includes pool walls, the ocean and a site on a rocky shore as well as humans and other things involved in developing, using, maintaining and representing the pool. Treating each ocean pool as a network of human and non-human actors facilitated comparisons across space and time.

ANT also highlights the relations of power evidenced in the construction and maintenance of networks. Each macro-actor remains somewhat unstable and unreliable as even its most stable elements are composed of shifting and constantly challenged alliances among its actors. Even where durable bonds between actors (that may themselves be networks) have created a durable network, changes affecting any actor can affect all its networks.

In post-ANT terminology (Gad & Jensen, 2010), any macro-actor existing simultaneously in multiple versions or identities (e.g. the doctor's and patient's version of a disease) is said to be fractal and the networks of those versions can intertwine. An ocean pool can easily have a multiplicity of identities. It may perform as a convivial public space, a safe bathing pool, an adventure playground, a visitor attraction, a venue for competitive sport, a nature conservation site, and as a simultaneous combination of these or other roles. Networks associated with each of those identities may converge, overlap and become tangled.

My analysis focused on stabilised assemblages that persisted for some years and so could validly be treated as macro-actors and compared with other similar macro-actors. Among the macro-actors I chose to work with were each pool's communities of place, practice and interest.

For the purposes of this thesis, I regarded any set of people and things engaged in performing a particular set of practices in and around a pool during some defined period as one of that ocean pool's communities of practice. I regarded the set of people and things (which may include several distinct human communities of practice as shown in Figure 2-2) to be found in and around a particular ocean pool during some defined period as part of that pool's community of place for that period. I did not assume that a person could be a member of only one community of place or practice or that a community of practice or interest could have relationships with only one pool.

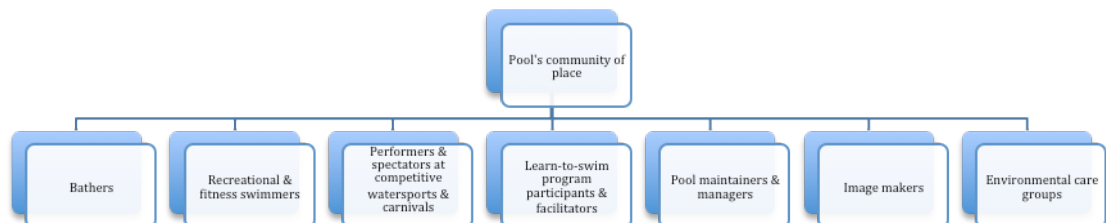


Figure 2-2. An ocean pool's community of place and human communities of practice

I regarded the set of people and things taking an interest in a particular pool during some defined period as constituting that ocean pool's community of interest.

Members of the pool's community of interest need never visit the pool, and may be involved with many communities of practice and many pools.

In looking at the people and things involved in developing and sustaining ocean pools, I considered the communities of place, practice and interest (PPI communities) associated with ocean pools as actor-networks. I also explore the roles of ocean pools in developing and sustaining PPI communities at their own pool and at other pools.

ANT uses the term translation to refer to the means by which one actor enrolls other actors into its own world and persuades them to perform appropriate actions. In ANT terms, non-human actors can 'persuade' human actors to engage in particular project activities. For example, sightings and reports of large sharks in coastal waters, translated via a profound fear of sharks, often helped persuade human actors to develop ocean pools.

Combinations of human activity and technology can likewise persuade inanimate actors to take on particular roles. A week of blasting, or a rather longer period of pick and shovel work, can persuade a wide rock platform to host an ocean pool. In this sense, construction of a deep ocean outfall for a coastal city's sewage system persuades the sea to provide cleaner water at many ocean pools.

ANT sees any innovation as being actively translated, rather than spreading by simple diffusion. The spread of any innovation through time and space is thus determined by actions of the actors able to modify it, deflect it, betray it, extend it, appropriate it, or abandon it. As Latour (1996, p. 137) wrote, "every context is comprised of individuals who do or do not decide to connect the fate of a project with the fate of the small or large ambitions they represent".

Although there are degrees of innovation, a new ocean pool at a beach or municipality or region is usually regarded as innovative by local human residents. Every human or non-human actor involved translates, or shapes, the innovation according to its own needs. Thus a swimming club that reshapes a bathing pool for competitive summertime water sports creates a venue that later actors could transform into a venue for competitive winter swimming. Extended chains of translation can strengthen and expand the network over space and time. As actors can differ in their commitment to the project, simply increasing the number of actors need not, however, increase overall commitment to the project.

Where enrolment strategies were insufficient, planned ocean pools failed to materialise and remained as phantoms, while some existing pools were abandoned. Latour's (1996) work on a public transportation system that never fully materialised and John Law's (2002) *Aircraft stories* demonstrate that ANT can be used to explore projects that did not attain or retain a material form.

Comparing ocean pool assemblages across time and place reveals changing cultural values and technologies that influence the assessments of affordances at these pools or the valuing and sharing of the knowledge and skills fostered by these pools. Bearing in mind the stress that ANT places on the translation process, I also sought to explore the ways that key macro-actors relate to specific cultural frameworks.

Changing glocalised framing of ocean pools

Rather than employ the concepts of centre and periphery, or metropolis and province, I used Roland Robertson's (1995) concept of the 'glocal', which recognises that the global and the local are intertwined and mutually constituted. While local environments and cultures determine how global phenomena are experienced, the converse also holds. For example, water sports played according to a globalised framework can have national or glocal characteristics relating to venues, style, aesthetics, administration and terminology.

To assist with comparisons of changing frameworks and influences relevant to ocean pools, I drew diagrams showing the frameworks or influences and key PPI communities relevant to Australia's coast and its ocean pools. As Figure 2-3 indicates, I regarded ocean pools as distinctly different bathing/swimming environments to the shark-inhabited, rip-prone coastal waters beyond those pools. As Figure 2-3 relates only to the colonial era, it makes no reference to the patrolled beaches and surf lifesaving clubs developed in the early twentieth century.

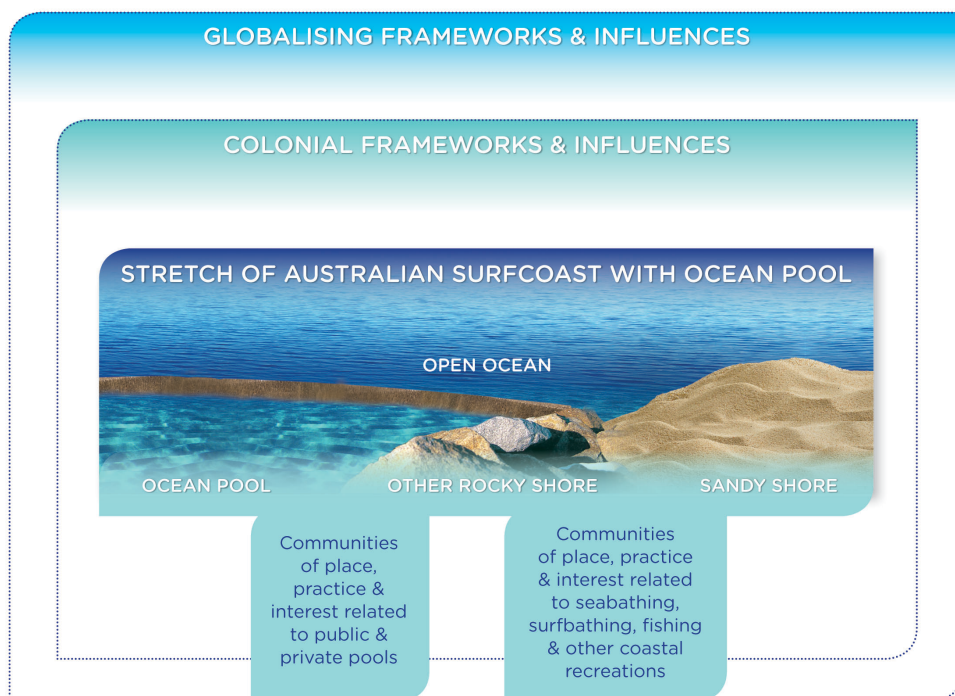


Figure 2-3. Frameworks and influences relevant to colonial ocean pools (Artwork by Cally Browning, Bare Creative)

Affordances, affordability and ethics

Because of my focus on the materiality of ocean pools and bodies, I did not attempt a comprehensive discourse analysis in relation to ocean pools. My experience and the literature review in Chapter 1 did, however, suggest that matters relating to affordances, affordability, sustainability and ethics would be canvassed when human actors strove to persuade each other to engage in the development, use and maintenance of ocean pools. Development or use of an ocean pool could, for

example, be regarded as both unethical and unaffordable despite the pool's affordances and sustainability. I turn now to examine those concepts in more detail.

Affordances relating to health and aesthetics

In my fieldwork and desktop work, I sought to identify the aesthetic and health values that people associated with ocean pools and the aspects of non-human nature encountered there. I regarded the aesthetics of immersion/bathing, swimming, diving, fishing, spectating, and representation as relating to one or more of the human senses. I considered environmental health issues, as well as issues related to cultivating and sustaining human physical and mental wellbeing.

In exploring differences across time and space in the health and aesthetic values associated with ocean pools, I sought to relate those values to the pool environment, to the experiences, knowledges and skills that people brought and still bring to the ocean pools and to their involvement with communities of place, practice and interest. Water pollution might, for instance, be dismissed as a health concern by health professionals, but remain an aesthetic concern for bathers and swimmers. Conversely, the desire to experience the aesthetic pleasure of bathing or swimming could lead bathers and swimmers to rely on their own sensory perceptions and disregard expert advice on water quality.

As ocean pools are facilities intended for bathing and swimming, it seems inappropriate to assess their aesthetic value solely or primarily in terms of an aesthetic grounded in a seated or standing person's static gaze. In exploring aesthetic values relevant to everyday and occasional engagement with a rocky surf coast and public places, I have had to accept the persistent use and value of such conventional aesthetic categories as the sublime, the beautiful, the uncanny and the picturesque. I did however define these key aesthetic terms for my purposes.

I chose to define the sublime as a human encounter with something awesome, something on a more than human scale, not subject to human control and

indifferent to human fate. By that definition, an ocean and its large breaking waves are sublime.

I chose to define beautiful as pleasing, harmonious order on a human-friendly scale. A pool of water calm enough to reflect a cloudy sky can be beautiful. The body and action of a skilled swimmer, diver or surfer can also be beautiful.

Like the sublime, the uncanny is not mundane. Freud (1919/2003) saw the uncanny as linked to both horror and fascination. It is also linked more closely to smells, touch and taste than to sight or hearing. Giblett (1996, pp. 13, 27) sees the uncanny as being associated with slime. I therefore regarded a slimy ocean pool as having a touch of the uncanny.

By contrast, the picturesque relates only to the sense of sight and primarily to the gaze of a traveller, a flâneur or an image-maker. While not strictly beautiful, decaying structures at an ocean pool can be picturesque enough to serve as a satisfactory subject for a painting or a photograph.

Affordances for conviviality and community development

As public places capable of attracting residents and visitors and fostering a sense of conviviality amongst them, ocean pools can have a profound effect on a local economy and a local sense of identity. Some communities of interest may therefore focus on a particular pool's economic significance as part of what van der Duim (2007) calls 'a tourism-scape'.

Public pools and other places are by definition places where one may encounter strangers, but they are also places where access restrictions may seek to provide a refuge from others considered too strange, threatening or unworthy. Constraints on who may meet whom in a public place may relate to gender, age, race, ethnicity, class, ability, dress code or species. The presence of octopuses and blue bottles may be tolerated at ocean pools from which dogs and sharks are excluded. I therefore

investigated the extent to which ocean pools and their associated communities of place, practice and interest enable what I term the 'circle of conviviality' (Figure 2-4) to be extended beyond humans.

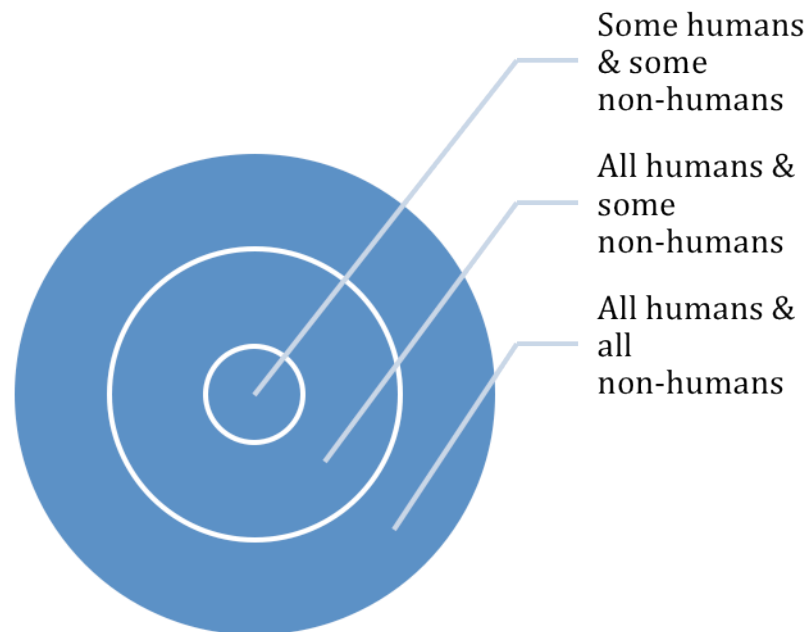


Figure 2-4. Circles of conviviality

Affordability and sustainability

Unless ocean pools are seen as performing substantially different functions to other types of public pools, their 'sustainability' and 'affordability' are assessed in relation to other types of public pools. I define affordability as relating to the time/effort/cost required to create and maintain the pool. Affordability is always important in relative terms (e.g. relative to the resources available to the network supporting the pool and relative to the time/effort/cost required to create and maintain other types of public pools). Affordability can be increased by the use of voluntary or other unpaid labour, by minimising the use of expensive material, by donations of cash or materials such as cement or by the ability to offset a pool's construction costs by putting excavated material to profitable or beneficial use.

I define sustainability as relating not only to sustainable use of water and other resources, but also to sustaining non-human populations of marine and coastal life

environments. Although sustainability has tended to be a less compelling issue than affordability, the smaller ecological footprint of ocean pools compared to other pools, or to other methods of safeguarding bathers from shark attacks, can be significant to some communities of place, practice or interest.

Ethical issues

Arguments for or against ocean pools can also address ethical issues such as whether ocean pools ought to exist on the rocky shore and whether they do more harm than good. Such ethical concerns are linked to particular cultural understandings of coastal environments, of the raced, classed and gendered human bodies and of the non-human lifeforms associated with those environments. Although restricting access to ocean pools may be incompatible with an environmental justice ethic, the durability of ocean pools is not compatible with a leave-no-trace ethic of engagement with 'wilderness' or 'wild' nature.

Conclusions

The methodology outlined above offers a satisfactory basis for a coherent, well-founded, account of Australian ocean pools that addressed the research questions while acknowledging existing accounts of those pools and of other pool, beach, surf and body cultures. This methodology could both acknowledge the variation within the set of ocean pools and highlight common unifying factors.

Comparing networks related to ocean pools within and beyond Australia can highlight common skillscapes, valued affordances and common themes encountered in the translation processes. It also directs attention to changes over time and space in the cultural and environmental knowledge relevant to translation processes in specific actor-networks.

The next chapter applies this methodology to ocean pools developed for sea bathing in nineteenth-century Australia.

Chapter 3. Ocean pools for sea bathing in colonial Australia

Introduction

This chapter shows how travel to Australia, sharks, use of bathing venues in Sydney Harbour, visions of tourist-driven prosperity and fears of drowning at surf beaches persuaded certain actors to develop and use ocean pools in the Australian colonies. Although the term 'rip' was not then in use, the risk of drowning at surf beaches was known to be far greater than in sheltered waters. Demand for safe and respectable bathing places on colonial surfcoasts drove development of ocean pools understood and promoted in New South Wales (Huntsman, 2001), New Zealand (Booth, 2001a) and the Cape Colony (City of Cape Town, 2009; Tankard, 1992) as affording pleasures and protections not available in other environments for seabathing.

The actor-networks for Australia's pre-1850 ocean pools included the frameworks, influences and key PPI communities (i.e. communities of place, practice and interest) outlined in Figure 2-3. Then and throughout the nineteenth century, disruption to colonial coastal environments serving as habitats for non-human life forms was not considered a significant ethical concern, but the summertime affordances and affordability of ocean pools and the assured sustainability of their summertime water supply mattered considerably.

The emergence of a stable form of local government resulted in actor-networks with a new pattern of frameworks and influences, as outlined in Figure 3-1. In NSW, legislation enacted in 1858 permitted, but did not compel, the development of municipalities able to levy rates, take responsibility for the care and management of various recreation and leisure facilities and impose bylaws to regulate behaviour in public places controlled by the municipality (Larcombe, 1976). Outside the municipal boundaries, normal NSW colonial laws applied, but residents were free of any municipal services and any obligation to pay rates.

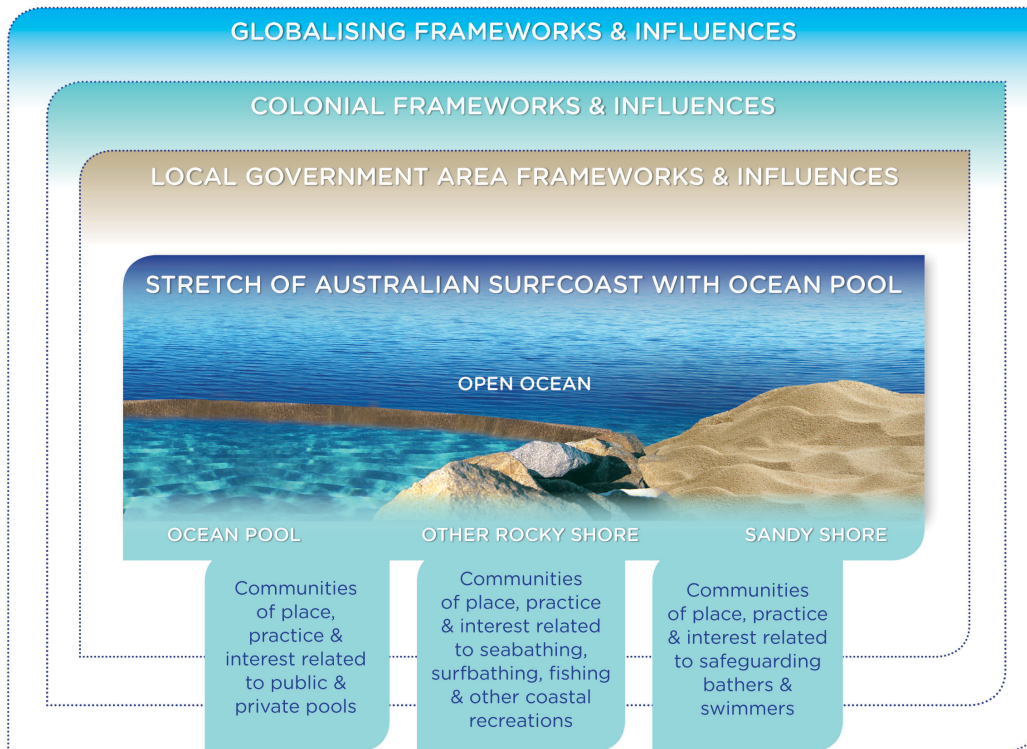


Figure 3-1. Frameworks and influences relevant to bathers at colonial Australia's ocean pools after the advent of local government (Artwork by Cally Browning, Bare Creative)

Until the 1890s, safeguarding the lives of bathers and swimmers by any means other than the provision of affordable 'safe enough' bathing places was a much lesser concern than rescuing the victims of shipwrecks. From the 1870s, a National Shipwreck Relief Society formed in NSW "for the relief of the widows, orphans and others dependent upon men lost in the marine service of our coast, or elsewhere" awarded medals for saving lives from drowning (Royal Humane Society of New South Wales, n.d.). Support for the Royal Humane Society of Australasia, completely federated throughout the whole of Australasia and Fiji by 1886, further demonstrated widespread concern about loss of life by drowning (Brawley, 2006; Royal Humane Society of Australasia, n.d.).

Well-sited and well-maintained gender-segregated ocean pools were enrolled in coastal tourism landscapes (van der Duim, 2007) emerging as macroactors as from the 1830s, when increased free immigration helped make NSW into more than just a convict settlement. Tourism within NSW remained focused on cool mountain air,

panoramic views, glittering caves and gullies of tree ferns into the 1890s (Horne, 2005). Few of Sydney's harbour-focused residents visited surfcoasts for pleasure before the 1870s.

Tourism, respectability and progress became even more important after 1840, when NSW ceased to accept convicts transported from Britain. Residents of late nineteenth-century NSW energetically sought to counter jibes about their self-governing colony's 'convict taint' by demonstrating their respectability, modernity and Britishness. The actor-networks supporting the ocean pools in colonial NSW were nevertheless glocalised, with news and people arriving from Britain helping to reinforce British values and practices.

Of sea voyages, sea baths and sharks

Europeans embarked on sailing voyages to colonial NSW with experiences and beliefs regarding ablutions, bathing, drowning and the sea derived from their education and their acquaintance with folk tales, myths, bible stories, religious practices, news and gossip. They might have believed that 'cleanliness was next to godliness' or known about water cures and renowned watering places like England's Brighton.

The voyage itself provided ships' passengers and crews with months of education regarding the sea, the practice of bathing in seawater and the appropriate way to deal with sharks (Haines, 2003). In warmer latitudes, seawater baths and shark sightings became familiar experiences. Voyagers saw sharks feeding on garbage, dead animals, human corpses and other items tossed overboard from the ship.

As Adrian Peace remarks (2009), sharks were seen as transgressing the boundary between culture and nature. Although 'mere fish', sharks regarded human beings not with fear or awe, but sometimes simply as prey. Boredom, combined with widespread convictions that the only reliably non-threatening large sharks were dead sharks, underpinned enthusiasm for the entertaining practices of catching, killing and eating sharks during the voyage to Australia (Haines, 2003).

Sea bathing in early colonial Sydney

As Australia was colonised from the sea, most of its early colonial settlements were ports. First and foremost of these was Sydney, located on the sheltered waters of Sydney Harbour, some seven kilometres from the nearest surf beach. Although in terms of its distance from the seacoast, Sydney more closely resembled Dublin than London, early nineteenth-century Sydney remained compact and firmly focused on its harbour.

The early colonists greatly admired the swimming skills of Aboriginal men, women and children, who seemed thoroughly at home in the shark-inhabited waters of Sydney Harbour. Significantly, a colonial culture that readily applied British names to rivers and areas of land was, according to the Australian National Dictionary Centre (2012), by the 1840s routinely using ‘bogey’, a word from an Aboriginal language spoken in the Sydney region, to signify the act of bathing and the term ‘bogey hole’ to refer to a swimming or bathing hole. Those terms have since spread beyond NSW and several ocean pools on the NSW coast are still formally known as ‘bogey holes’.



Figure 3-2. Sign near the Bronte Bogey Hole, NSW

The term 'bogey hole' was also a British term for a watery place associated with a water spirit or 'bogey', that Cooper (2005) has linked to 'bogey beasts', the boggarts in J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books, and Puck in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*. A 'bogey hole' still suggests a place of far less dignified behaviour and more fun and mischief than a 'bathing place'.

Despite the colonists' awareness of indigenous swimming skills, the non-Indigenous bathing practices of early colonial NSW continued to reflect the practices of military camps, navy ships and convict transports, where bathing in seawater could be a pleasure as well as a practice and sign of hygiene. Despite the evident presence of sharks in Sydney Harbour, the non-Indigenous population of early Sydney sought relief from the summer heat and humidity by bathing in the harbour. As that population was overwhelmingly male, favoured summertime bathing places became established as sites of male sociability. The summer water temperatures provided little incentive to limit bathing to a quick dip.

Since street clothing was heavy and slow drying, and few residents of early colonial NSW owned many clothes or any bathing costumes, most bathed in the nude. Nude bathing minimised, but did not eliminate, social distinctions among those male bathers. Appearances and odours revealed bathers' occupations, health and personal history. Rings and other personal adornments could still testify to marital status or personal wealth. Sailors, soldiers and convicts had tattoos. Soft hands marked men who did not engage in manual labour as clearly as tanned skin testified to an outdoor life under a powerful sun. Scarred backs identified the survivors of floggings inflicted for some breach of naval, military or convict discipline.

The first four governors of NSW were all naval men, who supported sea bathing but acknowledged the hazards that Sydney Harbour's shark population posed to bathers. As Hoskins (2009, p. 143) notes, nude bathing remained popular despite Governor King, the third of the naval governors, forbidding convicts from bathing in Sydney Cove and warning convicts about "voracious fish". Governor Macquarie, the colony's first non-naval governor, nevertheless issued a proclamation banning the

use of the government wharf and dockyard for bathing “in the interests of decency” (Hoskins, 2009, pp. 143-144).

Although mixed-gender nude bathing was still commonly practised by working class bathers in Britain and Australia, nude bathing posed problems for Britons accustomed to using dress to assess a person’s rank and respectability. The colonial middling classes and the progressively minded also increasingly saw mixed bathing as either a reversion to the decadence of ancient Rome or a descent into primitivism. Macquarie’s regulations and later restrictions on bathing in public view in daylight hours sought to minimise social risks by keeping unclothed bathers or bathers with wet clothing clinging to their bodies out of sight of the respectably dressed public. The most ‘respectable’ form of nude bathing was gender-segregated and out of public view in daylight hours.

According to Hoskins (2009, p. 144), by the 1820s Governor Darling had a bathing house, Sydney’s wealthier residents had harbourside villas with private bathing houses, while other Sydneysiders had access to gender-segregated public baths and bathing enclosures on Sydney Harbour that enabled safe and ‘respectable’ bathing (see also Light, 2005). Being located in sheltered waters, where the opposite shore was comfortably visible, meant even Sydney’s most splendid or appealing harbour baths could hardly be considered sublime. The need to exclude ‘man-eating’ sharks meant Sydney’s harbour baths needed better-constructed walls than bathing places, where sharks posed no significant threat to bather safety.

The version of ‘respectable’ British-style sea-bathing adopted in Sydney Harbour and colonial NSW was thus one that required little commitment to the wearing of bathing costumes or to the use of bathing machines, but was gender-segregated, either in time or in space. Well-defined and well-separated bathing places or separate times for men’s bathing and women’s bathing reduced the likelihood of men gazing at nude female bathers or women gazing at nude male bathers. As looking after young children was then clearly women’s business, women and young children bathed together, while older boys bathed with the men.

In ANT terms, both human and non-human actors were involved in developing and sustaining the non-Indigenous bathing and baths cultures nurtured in Sydney Harbour, which proved influential across the coastal settlements of the Australian colonies. Hot, humid summers encouraged Sydney's non-Indigenous inhabitants to immerse themselves in Sydney Harbour. Ready public access to the Harbour and limited access to supplies of freshwater meant there was little incentive to build expensive indoor public baths.

The local indigenous population was only a minor actor in the development of the colonising society's network of sea bathing practices. The shark population was, however, at least as persuasive as government regulations in promoting the use of sea baths. A long line of translators such as sea bathers, fisherman and newspaper reporters served to amplify and reinforce the non-indigenous population's profound fear and loathing of sharks.

Ocean pools in the Newcastle convict settlement

Australia's earliest colonial ocean pools were developed outside Sydney in regional ports undergoing extensive harbour works. The first was created north of Sydney at Newcastle, then a place of 'secondary punishment', where convicts laboured at coalmining and public works (Cushing, 1998).

In 1820s Newcastle, enlarging an existing rock pool to produce a small bogey hole was simply a matter of diverting labour from harbour improvements to a smaller-scale project. Just as harbour works enhanced the safety of shipping, an ocean pool sheltered human vessels from the sea's dangers and the full force of its waves

This pool, initially known as Commandant's Bath or Commandant's Hole (Cushing, 1997) and later as the Bogey Hole, was a place of prospect and a refuge from the summer heat and humidity. Protected from the full force of the waves, this pool site still offers its patrons fresh sea breezes, sea spray, panoramic views, a sense of being at one with the ocean on calm days and a glimpse of the sublime in rough weather. Though far smaller than the present-day Bogey Hole, the convict-era pool

provided a satisfyingly large private venue to enjoy the pleasures of bathing in a world of rock and water at the bottom of a cliff, away from the noisy, busy colonial harbour or the more public river baths. As a military sea baths, it fitted into a European tradition, which included baths in classical Rome, the Forty Foot bathing place on Dublin Bay (Gray, 2006, pp. 175-176), and the military baths developed in Sydney Harbour (Allan, 2004).

In terms of Attention Restoration Theory, this pool was a restorative place combining a sense of “being away” with extent, fascination and compatibility. It was also an exclusive rather than a convivial place, not intended as a facility for tourists, families or the general public, all of whom were scarce in convict-era Newcastle.

In ANT terms, this inaugural formalised ocean pool in early colonial NSW can be seen as a combination of human and non-human actors, including the colonial government, coal mines, imperial troops, convicts, harbour works, a hot climate, wide rock platforms, surf, sharks and tools. These factors combined to make an ocean pool possible and appealing and to provide the commandant of the convict settlement with all the authority and resources needed to translate a vision for an ocean pool into an affordable reality off-limits to most of the settlement’s inhabitants. The labour, skills and tools required for the pool’s development were all available within the settlement.

While a logical extension of the harbour baths of convict-era Sydney, the Newcastle Bogey Hole appears to have been an idiosyncratic personal project. Other ocean pools have, however, been developed to address the bathing needs of particular individuals, particularly women with disabilities. A resident of the rather isolated port of Broome in Western Australia arranged in the 1920s to have a small ocean pool known as Anastasia’s Pool (see Figure 3-3) developed so that his crippled wife could more easily enjoy the pleasures of seabathing (H. Edwards, 1984, p. 64). Cape Town’s Graaff’s Pool likewise resulted from a prominent Cape Colony wine merchant enlarging a rock pool near his house so that his wheelchair-bound wife could more readily enjoy a reviving dip (City of Cape Town, 2009, p. 47). The vast

majority of Australia's ocean pools were however developed not as private projects, but as public facilities catering to coastal residents and visitors.

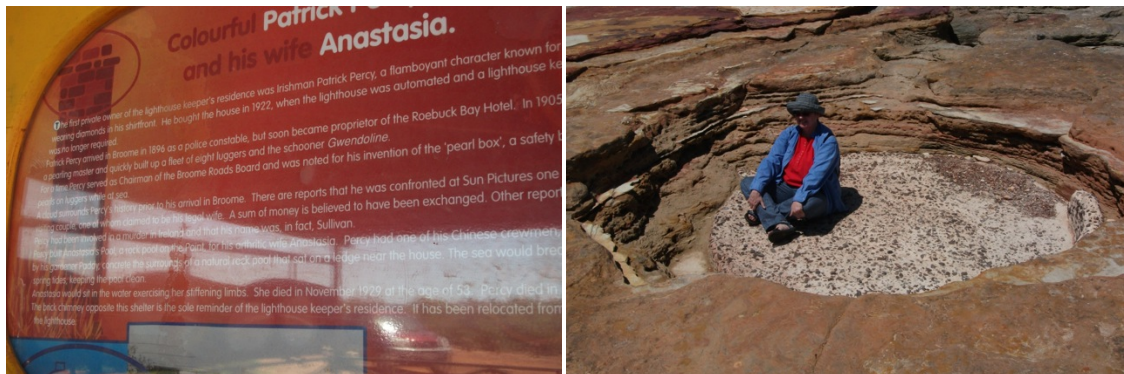


Figure 3-3. Part of the sign for Anastasia's Pool and the pool itself at low tide, Broome, Western Australia (Photograph at right by Ian McConchie)

Further evidence of the idiosyncrasy of the tiny Newcastle Bogey Hole came after an 1822 decision to relocate Newcastle's convicts north to the more suitably remote site of Port Macquarie and open the fertile Hunter region to free settlement (Cushing, 1998). Despite the availability of suitable sites, no ocean pools were developed in Port Macquarie. Newcastle's residents and visitors continued to use the Newcastle Bogey Hole and improve that pool and developed additional ocean pools later in the colonial period (Cushing, 1997).

Ocean pools for Wollongong's more civil society

In the Illawarra district south of Sydney, soldiers and convicts were associated with the development of another early nineteenth-century bogey hole. Convicts labouring to improve the harbour at Wollongong were housed apart from the town's free settlers on a peninsula of government land known as Flagstaff Hill. Creating a bathing place required only the construction of a small wall holding back a body of water between a cleft in the rocks (Figure 3-4) on the seaward side of Flagstaff Hill, a task easily accomplished by off-duty soldiers seeking to improve a favoured bathing place.



Figure 3-4. Wollongong Chain Baths (Nuns Pool) showing the current seaward wall and the steep path down to this NSW pool

Yet by the 1830s, when women were still a minority group in Wollongong, this pool where “the military officers of the Stockade had ... erected a hut for the ladies” (Organ, 1988, p. 17) was allocated for the use of women and children. Such provision for women’s bathing was extremely generous by English or Irish standards. Even by 1841, Wollongong’s colonial population comprised only 168 male convicts, 416 other males and 294 non-convict females (Henderson & Henderson, 1983). Having less need than female bathers for privacy, Wollongong’s male bathers continued to bathe and bask on the more public rock platform nearer the town.

Wollongong’s earliest ocean pool remained off-limits to male bathers into the mid-twentieth century. This ocean pool was always a bathing pool rather than swimming pool and more a playground than a temple of hygiene. Within the safety and privacy of their ocean pool, even bathers who could not float, swim, dive or tread water could freely enjoy the sensation of lightness from being immersed in buoyant seawater of a pleasant temperature as well as the scenic views and a social scene. The deeper parts of that bathing place were even “furnished with ropes for those who wish to swim or play the whale by floundering in a flurry” (“Ladies

Baths," 1842). In Eichberg's (1989) terms, that pool affording valued sensory experiences for women and children also fostered social identity.

Wollongong's earliest formalised ocean pool was, however, also of "necessary importance" to the sort of "watering place" that Wollongong aspired to be ("Ladies Baths," 1842). In order to attract affluent and respectable tourists, Wollongong had to concern itself with transport issues and tourist expectations of a seaside 'health resort' and its bathing facilities. Roads remained in poor condition and no railway then linked Wollongong to Sydney. To compete successfully for tourists, surfside communities therefore needed the support of Sydney newspapers and shipping lines to promote their visitor attractions as places of aesthetic appeal and restorative power. The prospect of attracting free-spending tourists justified and required development and promotion of appealing hotels, boarding houses and a gender-segregated ocean pool.

Accordingly, after convicts had laboured to improve the ladies baths in the 1840s, "the smoke dried citizens of Sydney" were urged to travel by ship to Wollongong where a season of bathing at the Wollongong Ladies Baths would impart a "roseate hue of health and cherry lips" ("Ladies Baths," 1842). Both the sublime and the beautiful were invoked in an effort to attract tourists to an ocean pool ("Ladies Baths," 1842) offering a view of:

a steep semicircular concave surface, hollowed out in its centre, the whole being clothed in Nature's richest mantle of green, interspersed with native shrubs and marine plants [imparting] an air of comfort and placid beauty which well contrasts with the wild and angry lashings of the foaming tide without, rushing in wave upon wave, in graceful but uproarious magnificence, until it reaches the rock curtain that has been so judiciously thrown across the mouth of the bath, against which it breaks and retires in white and boiling froth to the vasty deep, leaving the limpid stream to filter through to replenish and refresh the water within.

A closely palisaded fence at the top of the cliff enhanced the privacy of the bathers in the ocean pool, that offered “delicacy, comfort and safety to the most fastidious and timid” women indulging in the “luxury of a bath, whether for their health or pleasure”. Although the pool’s “three bathing rooms newly built under one roof, weatherboarded and shingled and fitted with the usual appliances” provided a place to change, it cannot be assumed that women or children wore any form of bathing costume for their bathing or ‘ablutions’.

In ANT terms, Wollongong’s earliest ocean pool can be seen initially as a combination of people (such as Imperial troops, convicts and other Wollongong, residents and visitors) and things (such as hot climate, rocky shores, surf, sharks, shipping lines, harbour works and newspapers) interpreted by Wollongong’s population and the colonial government that supported that settlement. While these factors combined to make an ocean pool possible and appealing to local residents, the ocean pool was itself an actor enrolled in a network promoting Wollongong as a tourist destination. By promoting the range of pleasures its ocean pool could offer women and children, 1840s Wollongong was clearly seeking to become a resort for affluent families.

Late nineteenth-century NSW seashores

By British and American standards, late nineteenth-century tourism in NSW remained very small-scale, despite the NSW government developing a modern public transport system based on steam trains and steam trams. Surfside communities along the NSW coast still aspired to emulate England’s Brighton, rather than Blackpool or New York’s Coney Island.

From the 1850s onward, the earlier NSW surfside resorts were, however, being eclipsed by Manly, the most accessible of Sydney’s northern surf beaches. Manly helped make Norfolk Island Pines emblematic of a new far-from-English beach culture that valued shade trees and did not involve English-style bathing machines (Allan, 2004). Good access by regular harbour ferries and its combination of harbour beaches and ocean beaches enabled Manly to rival the Blue Mountains as a holiday

destination (Curby, 2001). Given the success of its range of visitor attractions, which included promenades, the harbourside pier and sea baths and the Manly Aquarium, Manly had little incentive to construct ocean pools.

On the surfcoast of colonial NSW, where even commercial jetties proved short-lived, no pleasure piers developed and brief experiments with English-style bathing machines at Wollongong and Coogee served only to reinforce the superiority of ocean pools. Thus while England's Brighton never developed ocean pools, several 'would-be Brightons' on the NSW surfcoast saw ocean pools as valid visitor attractions for a population that regarded sea bathing as healthy and pleasurable, providing safety, respectability, convenience and affordability were adequately addressed.

Rules on acceptable seaside behaviour were not uniformly imposed by the NSW government, but were instead specified by individual coastal municipalities. 'Respectable' people increasingly expected municipal action to ensure that any bodies visible in public places (including gender-segregated public pools) were 'decently' clothed. The NSW surfside municipalities struggled to define and implement enforceable bylaws and offer sea bathing facilities acceptable to local residents and holiday visitors.

Surfside municipalities thus became important actors in the networks associated with ocean pools in late-colonial NSW. Civic initiatives, rather than the colonial government or private enterprise, were primarily responsible for the development of almost all the ocean pools in colonial NSW. New and upgraded ocean pools developed in the city of Newcastle and the municipalities of the Illawarra and Sydney's Eastern Beaches from the 1870s to the 1890s testify to demand for ocean pools, rising expectations regarding bathing space and bathing facilities, and the strength of the surfside councils' commitment to ocean pools.

Work to develop or enlarge ocean pools could be a prolonged and expensive undertaking as it had to accept constraints imposed by non-human nature and

accommodate tides, waves and weather. While coastal mining and quarrying communities or ports engaged in harbour works had people skilled in blasting and excavating rock, the municipalities of late nineteenth-century NSW could also call on the engineering expertise within the Harbour and Rivers Branch of the NSW Public Works Department.

The development and upgrading of ocean pools highlighted, engaged and enlarged their PPI communities. The community effort and public monies that facilitated the development of ocean pools enhanced recognition of a surfside community as a 'watering place' or seaside resort, allowing the limited funds available for private investment to finance shops, hotels, guesthouses and shipping lines. Since roads were still poorly developed, tourist guides (South Coast Tourist Union, 1899) highlighted the presence of ocean pools, the splendour of their dressing facilities and their accessibility by coastal steamer or railway.

Newcastle's ocean pools

Industrial areas in coastal NSW had the charm of novelty and modernity in the 1880s and 1890s and were seen either as tourist attractions or at least as no detriment to seaside tourism or health. Late-colonial Newcastle was thus simultaneously the second city of NSW, a proud 'coalopolis' and the sanatorium of northern colonial NSW (Cushing, 1998). Residents of Brisbane, Maitland and inland towns could easily travel to Newcastle by rail decades before a bridge over the Hawkesbury River allowed a direct rail journey between Newcastle and Sydney. Newcastle's attractions for visitors still included, but were not limited to, its pools and beaches.

Newcastle was the only surfside council in colonial NSW to develop indoor public baths. Its English-style indoor Corporation Baths, costing some 3,000 pounds, consisted of a large (90-feet by 35-feet) pool filled once a week with fresh seawater, dressing accommodation for bathers and 25 private baths with the hot and cold saltwater plunge baths that physicians recommended for use by invalids seeking better health ("Opening of swimming baths at Newcastle," 1888; Goold,

1947). For the city's female bathers, these Corporation Baths best provided the privacy denied them at the Bogey Hole, which was open to the gaze of men lying on the cliff above the pool ("Newcastle," 1861). Their counterparts in Wollongong likewise protested about cliff top voyeurs undeterred by inadequate fences.

Gender-segregated bathing hours, nevertheless, ensured that both the Newcastle Corporation Baths and the Bogey Hole remained primarily male domains. Eventually Newcastle's women gained a less formalised ladies bathing enclosure at Newcastle Beach (Cushing, 1997). Clearly, while gender-segregation was a valued marker of respectability in Newcastle, gender equity was a far lesser concern.

Modern English-style indoor baths did not diminish demand for open-air ocean pools or sea bathing in Newcastle. Newcastle's Council also constructed a new ocean pool known initially as the Newcastle Public Baths and later as the Soldiers Baths. According to Goold (1948), that 1880s pool, created by forming a ring-of-rocks below Fort Scratchley, had a diameter of 550 feet and bathing sheds for ladies and gentlemen.

During the 1880s, the Council also enlarged the Bogey Hole to produce a pool about seven times its original capacity, "over 50-feet long and nearly as broad", free of "sharks, stingarees or jelly fish" with a bottom "almost as smooth as a billiard table" filled with sparkling sea water, so pure and clear that one "could distinguish a button or a pin at the bottom of the deepest part" ("Important bathing improvements," 1884). A caretaker "provided bathers with towels at a moderate charge" and dressing sheds with showers using water piped from a natural spring ("The Bogey Hole," 1894). "The youthful as well as the adult portion of the sterner sex" could be seen lining the paths to the Newcastle Bogey Hole "from early morn to dewy eve" to "lave their limbs in the fresh and cooling wave" ("The Bogey Hole," 1894).

Illawarra ocean pools

Wollongong, despite its growing commitment to tourism, remained primarily a coal port and a commercial centre. The South Coast Tourist Union (1899) acknowledged that Wollongong had limited hotel and boarding house accommodation, but emphasised that Wollongong's attractions for tourists and picnic parties in the holiday season included separate ocean pools for ladies and gentlemen, two refreshment rooms and the 56 acres of Stuart Park offering bathing, fishing and boating and a carriage drive. A location close to the coal tramway running from the mine to the port did not detract from the charms of the men's baths at Wollongong.

An 1881 public meeting at the Wollongong Council Chambers decided to raise subscriptions, to seek assistance from the Council and hold an entertainment event to raise 50 pounds to enlarge the men's bathing place to produce "2,000 feet of bathing room ranging in depth from 4 to 7 feet at high tide" ("Bathing Place," 1881). The government engineer managing Wollongong's harbour improvements offered to superintend work to ensure the men's pool remained full even at low tide. According to the South Coast Tourist Union's (1899, p. 68) brochure, these improvements created a pool where, "as the waves are rolling over the wall, the bathers secure all the enjoyment without the danger of swimming in the open sea".

After the opening of the South Coast railroad freed Sydney travellers to the Illawarra from the discomforts of coastal shipping or road transport, residents of the Illawarra quarry town of Kiama sought to attract Sydney tourists. Government grants helped fund the upgrading of the Men's Baths at Kiama's Blowhole Point in the 1890s when both of Kiama's ocean pools were praised as "secluded spots within a convenient distance of the town, and ... largely patronised by the townspeople and visitors" ("The New Kiama show ground," 1897).

Progress associations also became actively involved with the development of ocean pools in NSW from the 1890s. At Shellharbour in the Illawarra, it was the Progress Association, rather than the municipal council, that coordinated development of an ocean pool to attract tourists (McDermott, 2009).

Ocean pools on Sydney's Eastern Beaches

Sydney's Eastern Beaches municipalities offered the surf beaches and ocean pools closest to Sydney's Town Hall. Once trams made the beaches at Coogee, Bronte and Bondi more accessible, both middle class and working class daytrippers came to promenade, paddle, fish, socialise, enjoy 'wild and grand' scenery, savour the sea air and sea breezes, picnic (C. White, 2003) and less commonly to bathe. As Caroline Ford (2006, 2009b, 2010) has highlighted, the pleasures of strolling, gazing admiringly at the sublime sea and falling in love could all be combined at Sydney's surf beaches.

The Randwick Municipality's Coogee Bay offered ocean pools for men and women. To avoid having to spend its own funds on an ocean pool, Randwick Council called tenders for a five-year lease of the gentlemen's baths at Coogee on conditions requiring an expenditure of 300 to 400 pounds ("Swimming," 1879). Despite the popularity of this pool, no tenders were received, leaving the Council to consider undertaking the construction of "a protecting fence" and dressing rooms.

Although the NSW government improved the Coogee bathing basins in the 1880s, they still lacked a caretaker in 1889. By comparison with Newcastle's Bogey Hole, where "a good fresh shower and proper conveniences, with a man in charge with towels" helped make "the fresh ocean dip most enjoyable", the men's baths at Coogee were rudimentary, though well-used (Doherty, 1889). Tellingly, this men's pool was from the 1870s being discussed as 'swimming baths', rather than as a bathing pool.

By the late 1880s, daytrippers at both Bronte and Bondi could, at the appropriate hours, also use the supervised gender-segregated ocean pools. An assistant engineer from the Harbours and Rivers Branch of the NSW Public Works Department designed and developed both these pools for Waverley Council ("Municipal Baths at Bronte", 1888). Unlike the Illawarra's pools, both of Waverley's ocean pools were pay-to-use facilities intended to be financial successes. Council spent some 600 pounds developing the Bronte pool and providing dressing sheds.

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In ANT terms, municipal councils and the property-owning ratepayers who underpinned their existence were important facilitators of the development and operation of ocean pools catering to coastal residents and visitors. Within the framework of the *Local Government Act*, councils could hold public meetings, levy rates, borrow money, pass bylaws and lobby the NSW government. Their impact might have been even greater had the Act explicitly stated their right to develop ocean pools below the high water mark on what was formally considered crown land. As it was, Council and ratepayer concerns about spending ratepayers' money in the sea would persist into the twentieth century and retard the development of ocean pools.

Late nineteenth-century municipal councils, progress associations and tourist businesses helped to make NSW ocean pools part of a consumer culture. Even the Illawarra's unsupervised ocean pools, where no admission charges were made, were marketing tools. They were helping to sell a municipality as a tourist destination, enhancing the attractions of nearby residential properties, promoting land sales and helping to convert tourists into property owners, ratepayers and residents.

Concerns about water quality or pool facilities had potential to reduce both the demand and support for nineteenth-century ocean pools. While surfside municipalities and the lessees of ocean pools could address dissatisfaction with baths charges or facilities, they could do little to reduce the increasing pollution of coastal waters by industrial waste, sewage and garbage (Allan, 2004; Curby & Macleod, 2003, p. 27).

Attitudes to waste disposal and water quality

While the NSW Government permitted colonial municipalities to dump garbage into the sea, any waste dumped too close to the shore (or where currents were unfavourable) simply washed up on the shore, rotted and served as shark bait (Allan, 2004, p. 52-57, Curby & Macleod, 2003, p. 27). Newcastle Council therefore

chose to cease dumping its municipal garbage at sea in the early 1900s (Cushing, 1997, p. 103). From the 1880s, residents of Sydney's surfside understandably objected to the Sydney City Council's dumping of waste at sea (Curby & Macleod, 2003, p. 27). From 1880s to the 1930s, generations of Kiama's townsfolk and visitors did, however, enjoy the entertainment afforded by efforts to catch and kill the sharks attracted to sheep, cattle or horse carcasses, that Kiama council routinely tossed into the sea off Blowhole Point, the site of both the famous Blowhole and Kiama's men's baths.

By highlighting the presence of sharks beyond the ocean pools, all these waste management practices contributed to the demand for ocean pools that provided safe bathing places. Fears of bathing in the shark-infested open sea made even polluted ocean pools seem desirable bathing places. Waste disposal practices of amateur and professional fishers (including shark fishers) and the littering habits of beachgoers did, however, further lower the water quality in and around ocean pools. Even a pool of dirty water could, however, seem wonderfully cool in a hot, humid summer.

The colonial NSW government evidently saw no inconsistency in assisting the development of ocean pools, while allowing litter, garbage or sewage to pollute coastal waters. In late nineteenth-century Sydney, provision of a sewage system was considered a necessary public health measure to combat diseases such as typhoid, while any pollution of ocean waters was considered a mere nuisance. The Sydney Metropolitan Water and Drainage Board's proposed discharge of raw sewage into the ocean on the north side of Bondi Bay nevertheless prompted community outrage (Beder, 1990). Neither objections from the mayors of Randwick and Waverley and the Sanitary Reform League (formerly known as The League for the Prevention of Pollution of Air and Water), nor examples of viable alternatives to releasing untreated sewage into coastal waters, diminished support for a sewerage system seen as a monument to progress, an advance in public health and a means to reduce the pollution of Sydney Harbour (Beder, 1990). By 1889, Sydney's sewage was being discharged into the ocean via the Bondi Ocean Outfalls System.

Attitudes to safety and risk at the ocean pools

Since all the ocean pools were seen as safe bathing places “except in the roughest weather and during high tides”, few nineteenth-century surfside municipalities had onsite caretakers at their ocean pools. There were no formalised rescue services for bathers swept out of ocean pools, nor any first aid for injured bathers other than the efforts by the lessees of the pay-to-swim ocean pools.

Bathers at these ‘wet and wild’ ocean pools were expected to take responsibility for their own safety by not using the pool in dangerous conditions and by not behaving in a foolhardy fashion at the pool. Accidents that did occur were well reported in the local and regional press and sometimes prompted further improvements to the ocean pools. Heavy waves swept one bather out of the Newcastle Bogey Hole in the 1860s (“Newcastle,” 1869) and swept another powerfully built male bather 30 feet over jagged rocks into Bogey Hole’s dressing cave in the 1870s (“A narrow escape,” 1879). Despite the risk of bathers being swept out of the pool or “violently dashed into the caves”, the Bogey Hole remained popular. Any cuts, scratches and minor injuries sustained at the ocean pools were clearly considered a small price to pay for access to a bathing place safe from sharks and the ‘undertow’.

As few non-indigenous women had any skills in swimming, surfing, rescue or resuscitation, bathers at unsupervised women’s pools had to pay close attention to the conditions, which might threaten their own safety or that of other bathers. If it was improper for a man to view a nude or ‘improperly clad’ woman or loiter around the women’s bathing place, then men with swimming skills could not be expected to rescue any woman who got into difficulties when bathing.

E. P. Field (1889, p.15) reported that after a “lamentable accident” at Coogee’s Ladies Baths, where “the rebound of a wave” washed three ladies out to sea and drowned them, further improvement to the baths aimed to eliminate “all danger of such a casualty”. Field (1889, p.15) also cheerfully noted that at the men’s pool on Coogee Bay:

Now and then an incautious or inexperienced bather is ... lifted like a straw and carried over the landward reef; but such accidents are very rare, and the basin will always retain its supremacy over all the places along the coast.

Conviviality of colonial ocean pools

As ocean pools were cheaper to create and operate than indoor baths, their admission charges could be kept low or waived entirely in order to promote community cohesion, health, recreation and tourism. Where admission charges were trivial or non-existent, and only one pool was available for use, there were few formal barriers to mixing across class lines.

Even though women's use of supervised pay-to-use pools might need female attendants, the management and caretaking of ladies baths were considered tasks that could be performed by a man or a woman. Randwick Council awarded the lease of the women's pool at Coogee to H. A. Wylie ("Swimming," 1900a), who had leased the Bronte Baths with its gender-segregated bathing hours from Waverley Council. These ocean pools were strongly identified with their lessees, and so were routinely referred to as Wylie's Bronte Baths or Farmer's Bondi Baths.

Maintaining propriety at the baths, keeping them in good order, and maintaining a convivial atmosphere that enhanced the pool's appeal for coastal residents and visitors were key aspects of the lessee's role. Lessees could also offer swimming tuition (discussed further in the next chapter) or introduce innovations in line with British baths and seaside practices. For example, H. A. Wylie introduced individual hot seawater baths to the Bronte Baths (Dowd, 1959, p. 150; "Swimming," 1898d).

At the unsupervised Illawarra ocean pools with no admission charges, the pool patrons more clearly determined the identity of their pool, and lengthy pool visits fostered acquaintance with other pool patrons. Kiama women reportedly spent whole days at their unsupervised, free-to-use ocean pool (McDermott, 2005), which had a separate pool for children in addition to the main pool. If a public pool is convivial to the extent that it encourages people to linger and socialise, the

women's pool in colonial Kiama was a very convivial place for women who had far less access than their male counterparts to other convivial public places.

This unsupervised women's pool was formally controlled by male trustees, who were assisted by the Progress Association and by a group of ladies who organised bazaars to raise funds for improvements to their pool. As O'Brien (2006) and Simon Morgan (2007) have pointed out, involvement in fundraising gave nineteenth-century women a respectable means of entering the public sphere.

Visual pleasures and the representations of ocean pools

Enthusiasts for the sublime, such as E.P. Field (1889, p. 15), found that changing weather conditions enhanced the visual interest of ocean pools:

Whether in calm or storm, this Coogee basin is equally delightful. ... But the best time to see the basin is when there is a good wind from the south and east. After an easterly gale, a long swell sets in, reaching right across the Bay from one of its headlands to the other. More than half of a mile [sic] away the swell may be seen rolling in, and as it sweeps onward, the reef forming the seaward barrier of the bathing place seems to brace itself to receive the shock. The wave, upraised, dashes itself madly against the rocks, the water shoots up to a height of thirty or forty feet, and falls on snow white foam into the basin.

Photographic Illustrations of New South Wales published in 1878 included an Alexander Brodie (1878) photograph showing the men's pool under Coogee's northern headland as a rather minimally improved pool of clear water on a wide rock platform on a day calm enough for poolside photography. Making clear photographic images of ocean waves was not feasible, as creation of a clear photographic image then required the subject to remain still for several seconds.

In Brodie's photograph, neither the man dressed for promenading, nor the man undressed for bathing seem concerned about being photographed. An illustration

of Coogee Bay in the *Picturesque atlas of Australasia* (Garran, 1886, p. 95) likewise indicates that figures at Coogee's men's pool were visible from the beach.

As colonial photography was perceived as a scientific or commercial tool rather than as art, photographers remained freer in their choice of subject matter than artists working in paint and exhibiting their work in art galleries. The Kodak cameras that made photography more appealing and affordable did, however, prompt concerns from New York (Mensel, 1991) to Australia about maintaining rights to privacy and discouraging men from photographing women emerging from the water.

By the 1890s, the artists now designated as the Australian impressionists (J. Clark & Whitelaw, 1985) were portraying beaches and waterways as playgrounds for white Australians. As municipal councils routinely banned daylight bathing within view of a public place, it is not surprising that paintings of a sunny day at Sydney's Coogee Bay by both Charles Conder and Tom Roberts (Australian Government, 2009c) show no sea bathers on the open beach.

Bathers' privacy may, however, have been a rather minor concern at Coogee's women's pool since Arthur Streeton's 1890 painting *Sunlight Sweet* (Australian Government, 2009c) suggests that women using that ocean pool were readily visible from a path above the baths. Female bathers' disrespectful treatment of a canvas screen, provided by Kiama's Progress Association to limit public view of bathers at Kiama's women's baths, likewise suggested those bathers valued freedom from the constraints of conforming with expectations of respectable female behaviour in mixed company more than privacy from the public gaze (McDermott, 2005).

More challenging than any paintings or still photographic images were the new technologies that enabled animated images of *Breakers at the Bogey Hole, Coogee* ("The cinematographer," 1897) and of male and female bathers to be shown on big screens to globalised audiences. Motion pictures provided a new context for

arguments about who should gaze at which bathers and how that gaze should be represented, distributed, marketed and assessed.

Conclusions

Nineteenth-century sea bathers seeking safe and respectable bathing places along Australasian and South African surfcoasts understandably developed priorities, facilities and practices that differed from those at the famed seaside resorts of Europe and North America. Development of ocean pools in the Australian colonies was neither inevitable nor uniform and in light of their overseas counterparts cannot be considered a 'uniquely Australian' undertaking.

Ocean pools offered nineteenth-century bathers access to a slightly domesticated body of water, within a boundary never entirely acknowledged by the forces of nature. Those 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' offered refuge from the dangers of the sea and aesthetic pleasures not available in sheltered waters. While far from risk-free, ocean pools enabled settler populations with few swimming skills to enjoy the sensual pleasures of solo and social sea bathing on the rocky shores in relative safety. The development of ocean pools that served as bathing venues and playgrounds for both adults and children fostered the development of new recreational relationships with the ocean.

Enthusiasts for colonial-era ocean pools were sea or water worshippers, rather than sun worshippers. Ocean pools were experienced not as watery prisons confining both water and bathers, but rather as places of luxurious pleasure. Even small, shallow irregularly shaped ocean pools could feel luxurious to residents and visitors, whose homes lacked access to a ready supply of water.

In colonial NSW, all ocean pools were regarded as a happy union of art and nature to promote human pleasure. The siting, patronage and representations of ocean pools demonstrated an appreciation of the romantic aspects of seascape and landscape. All the ocean pools were associated with a strong sense of place, valued social experiences and the enjoyment of aesthetics, sensory pleasures and informal

learning about the rocky shore environment. Even a small ocean pool on a surf-washed rock platform combined the safe with the sublime. On calm days, ocean pools promoted wave-play, while on stormy days they provided a focus on the power of the sea. Some sea bathers were clearly attracted to the 'wildness' of ocean pools.

Few ocean pools were developed prior to the establishment of a stable system of local government in NSW, more developed once residents of surfside municipalities aspired to attract tourists and daytrippers. NSW surfside communities, that could not afford to construct indoor pools, could afford to develop ocean pools catering to residents and visitors. The enrolment of other sea bathers, tourist businesses and surfside councils in the actor-networks that developed and sustained ocean pools was, however, doubtless influenced by the accessibility and affordability of other safe venues for bathing.

The actor-networks supporting the ocean pools in colonial NSW were glocalised, with news and people arriving from Britain helping to reinforce British values and practices such as gender-segregated bathing. The ocean pools were both explicitly gendered and implicitly racialised; Indigenous people were outside the leisure group for whose convivial use the gender-segregated ocean pools were intended. Although little effort was made to segregate male or female bathers by class, gender-segregation ensured the respectability of the ocean pools and enhanced their effectiveness as significant visitor attractions.

Gender also constrained the roles people could play in using, developing, maintaining and enhancing ocean pools. Surfside municipalities differed in the importance they placed on catering for female bathers, especially for those unable to bathe during normal business hours. Development of ocean pools allocated solely for women and children gave women more scope to become involved in pool management.

As with the public baths of classical Rome and modern Japan, attachment to the 'safe' gender-segregated ocean pools of colonial NSW contributed to recreation, conviviality and a sense of personal and community identity. The difficulties of colonial travel meant that attachments to ocean pools reflected knowledge of favourite bathing pools and particular coastal communities, rather than the coast as a whole.

The durability of the networks producing the ocean pools of colonial NSW would prove impressive. The key driving force behind the development of ocean pools was not the NSW government, the municipalities or entrepreneurs, but rather community-minded groups and individuals. Support from the NSW government in the form of convict labour, engineering and surveying expertise and transport services fostered and recognised the importance of ocean pools to surfside tourism and to surfside communities from Newcastle south to the Illawarra. It also influenced the affordability of ocean pools.

Development of ocean pools on NSW could have followed a very different pathway had the NSW Government more consistently managed the intertidal zone or applied a more comprehensive system of local government to the whole coastal strip. A more unified view of ocean pools by the NSW government, municipal councils or progress associations could have produced a more systematic process for leasing sites for ocean pools, developing ocean pools and safeguarding their water quality.

The bathing practices that fuelled the development of Australia's nineteenth century ocean pools persist in modern-day public pools that are too crowded, too shallow or too small for swimming. The next chapter shows how the priorities and facilities at ocean pools changed as swimming skills became more admired and more widespread.

Chapter 4. Ocean pools for colonial swimmers

Introduction

For this thesis, I define swimming as a method of self-propelled human movement through water, requiring neither flotation devices nor contact with the ground. This chapter considers the colonial-era ocean pool assemblages that emerged as swimmers became a recognised and influential community of practice. It discusses how the actor-networks including the frameworks, influences and PPI communities depicted in Figure 4-1 changed as more people acquired swimming skills and new methods were applied to save people at risk of drowning.

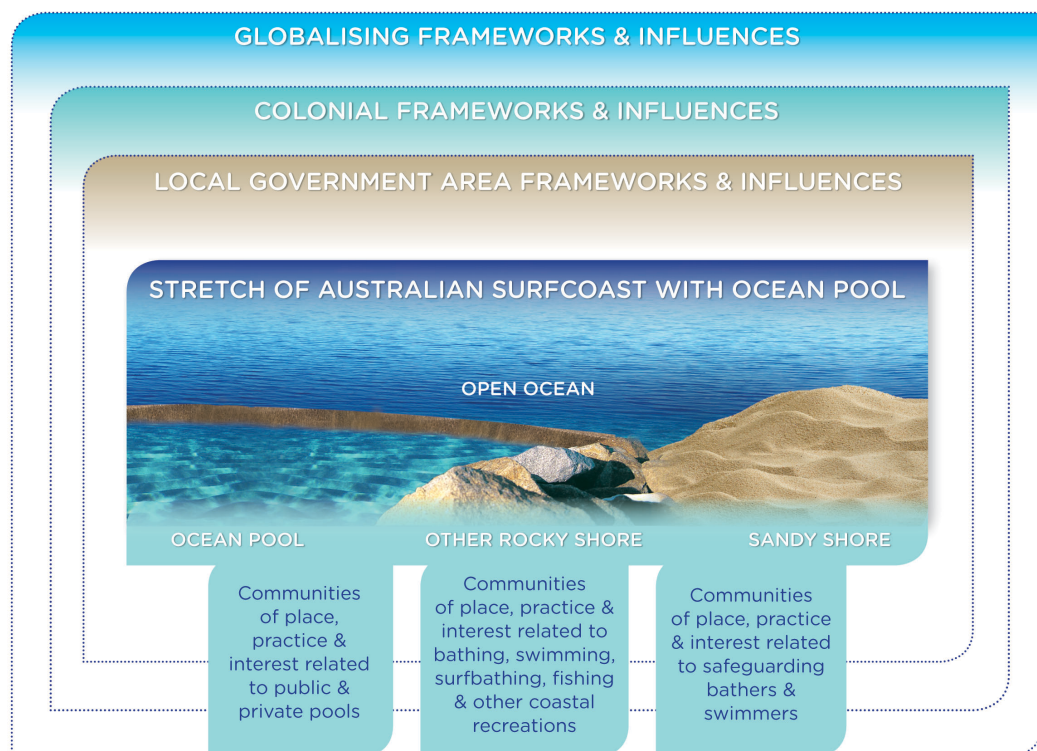


Figure 4-1. Frameworks and influences relevant to swimmers at colonial ocean pools (artwork by Cally Browning, Bare Creative)

While swimming skills alone cannot ensure safety from rips, sharks or the other dangers of the sea, learning to swim is a transformative process. The non-indigenous inhabitants of the Australian colonies expected learning to swim to be a challenging, rather than a pleasant process, as a conscious decision even to

immerse one's face in water was then held to require courage. As Olympic swimming champion and underwater photographer, Shane Gould (2007, p. 177) has acknowledged even in the present day "being horizontal, unstable and immersed in the water provides physical and emotional survival challenges".

While bathers and recreational swimmers both enjoyed what I have called 'wild but safe enough surfside pools', swimmers could recognise and enjoy affordances, pleasures, thrills and challenges unavailable or unappealing to bathers. Bathers and swimmers could both playfully splash about in shallow water, but a swimmer could engage more skilfully with deeper and wilder waters.

The networks that developed and sustained ocean pools were influenced by actor-networks linked to swimming as healthy exercise, as a pleasurable recreation, as a sport, as part of a child's education and as a means of reducing deaths by drowning. Enthusiasm in NSW, New Zealand and the Cape Colony for British developments in water sports, lifesaving and swimming instruction meant some 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' also became what I designate as 'pools for competitive water sports and carnivals'. Those pools gained new communities of practice and interest aware of opportunities for competition within and beyond the British Empire. In Eichberg's (1989) terms, these ocean pools catered for achievement sport and fitness sport as well as affording valued sensory experiences and fostering a playful, social sensuality.

Although ocean pools were becoming an appealing form of public pool for an increasing number of Australian surfside communities, cost considerations still inhibited the development of ocean pools. The use of ocean pools as schoolchildren's learn-to-swim venues did, however, give a new moral impetus to the development of ocean pools. While ocean pools were of significance to humans as recreational and educational spaces or venues for competitive water sports only in summertime, they served year-round as habitats for the non-human lifeforms of the sea and coast.

Cultural framings of swimming for health and pleasure

By the late-nineteenth century, a mix of British traditions and more globalised views regarding swimming had come to the Australian colonies through transportation of convicts, migration, correspondence, print publications, images, imagery and tours by overseas swimmers. Both long-established and emerging cultural frameworks influenced colonial attitudes to swimming and to the swimming practices of Indigenous Australians.

As well as the ‘bogeys’ discussed in Chapter 3, the British Isles had folk traditions (Waugh, 1960), songs and poems about two types of semi-human beings completely at home in the water, namely merfolk (who were part fish) and selkies (who were akin to seals). That both merfolk and selkies apparently derived their swimming skills from their animal rather than their human aspect demonstrates the persistent perception of swimming as a primitive, animalistic and rather magical skill.

Shipwrecks and drowning rates in the late-nineteenth century received a level of scrutiny and public discussion comparable to present-day discussion of car accidents and the road toll. A boat collision in Britain’s River Thames ("The collision on the Thames," 1878) that resulted in the drowning of 700 people, including many women, highlighted the threat that reliance on water transport posed to non-swimmers. Cumbersome clothing meant non-swimming women had a greater risk of drowning in such situations than non-swimming men. Swimming skills were, however, rarely considered as necessary survival skills for nineteenth-century women, fishermen, ship’s crews or passengers. Some proficiency in swimming was nevertheless considered desirable for late nineteenth-century British explorers, naturalists, and for “all who have to rough it” (Galton, 1872, p. 84; Kingsley, 1855).

Once Captain Matthew Webb swam the English Channel in 1875, his book on *The Art of Swimming* became a bestseller and his “natatorial feats” were, according to Lowerson (2004), reported world-wide and inspired songs. Webb ("Captain Webb," 1875) hoped his Channel swim might lead to “an increased desire to learn to swim

and that the day would come when swimming would be considered an essential part of every boy's education".

As Armitage (1977, pp. 124-125, 142) noted, both *The Boys Prize Book* and Reverend J. G. Wood's *Athletic Sports and Recreations for Boys* promoted swimming in 1860s Britain and by the 1870s *The Gentlemen's Magazine* urged "Swimming for the Million" or at least for the physical and mental health of the "overworked artisans, shopkeepers and busy men of commerce" in Britain's burgeoning cities. Cregan-Reid (2004) notes that men's swimming was also promoted as a virtuous activity in British popular fiction.

Recreational swimming at ocean pools in colonial NSW

In ANT terms, the key actors involved in recreational seawater swimming in post-1850s Australia included hot humid summers, relatively warm coastal waters, and a non-Indigenous human population seeking safer swimming environments than the open sea. A year spent in late-colonial NSW left F. G. Aflalo (1911, p. 209) convinced that Australia's only safe swimming spots were:

either the swimming-pool, railed off with a grid, through which we used to picture hungry sharks at gaze, or natural rock-pools filled only by the high-flung spray of the Pacific. Even these had to be carefully scrutinised before we took the plunge, for an unusually high tide during the night sometimes helped a stray shark over the natural barrier and there were occasional rumours of an octopus having squirmed its way into the swimming bath.

Despite Aflalo and other swimmers excluding non-human life forms encountered at colonial ocean pools from their circle of conviviality, spending hot, humid summers immersed in ocean pools encouraged and allowed bathers to develop and display new skills and form new communities of practice. Experimentation and imitation of skilled swimmers were important methods of learning to swim when there were few affordable learn-to-swim programs and few non-Indigenous parents capable of teaching their children to swim, dive or surf.

An 1880s image of the Newcastle Bogey Hole (Eipper, 1889, p. 299) shows boys confidently jumping and diving from rocks into the water. Generations of Newcastle men had reportedly learnt to swim at the Bogey Hole by the 1890s (“The Bogey Hole,” 1894), presumably as part of an informal community of place and practice. Women and children using the gender-segregated ocean pools had few skilled swimmers to imitate, as these pools catered for the non-Indigenous population and most skilled non-Indigenous swimmers were male.

As swimmers gained the confidence to move ‘out of their depth’ and dive from rocks, ocean pools deep enough for both swimming and diving acquired a new value. Field (1889, p. 14) confidently asserted that at the ‘improved’ rock pool at the northern end of Sydney’s Coogee Bay allocated for men’s use:

even in the lowest tides, the bather can dive off the rocks into a good depth of water, while in a high tide there is not less, in some places, than from eighteen to twenty feet.

Proficient swimming and diving enabled new forms of wave play. Field (1889, p. 14) observed that in Coogee’s men’s pool:

the water shoots up to a height of thirty or forty feet, and falls on snow white foam into the basin. Tons of water thus falling at a time, it requires a moderately good swimmer to batter against the weight; but after the first fall there is little risk, and it is easy to avoid this first fall by diving to the bottom.

Being able to swim could also minimise injuries to pool patrons. Audley Reay (n.d., p. 8) recalled that in the 1880s “when the tide was very high and the weather rough”, the Newcastle Bogey Hole “was a most delightful place if you could get safely in and out – to a moderate or indifferent swimmer it was hard to get out without a few scratches”. Clearly, the affordances of that ocean pool outweighed the risk of minor injuries.

Pool patrons took an interest in guarding each other from fates worse than a few cuts and scratches. According to *The Kiama Reporter* (“Local and general,” 1887), a Mr Thomas “was washed off the rock and into the seas” from the bathing place at Kiama’s Blowhole Point and “not being a v. good swimmer he was dashed to a great extent – very nasty cut above one eye and rather severely scratched on various parts of his body”. He was, however, rescued by a quick-thinking pool patron, who “got on the rock and handed him a towel”.

While some recreational swimmers clearly valued the ‘wildness’ of ocean pools and the mutual support provided by users of ocean pools, the accessibility and affordability of relatively safe public pools may have been more significant for other recreational swimmers. The enrolment of recreational swimmers in the actor-networks that developed and sustained nineteenth-century ocean pools might therefore have been influenced by the accessibility of other appealing and affordable environments for recreational swimming.

Engaging in wilder swimming beyond the ocean pools

Although the visible presence of sharks was sufficient to persuade most non-Indigenous bathers and swimmers to seek the safety of human-made seawater pools, other actors could diminish the persuasive power of the sharks sufficiently to encourage surf bathing by non-Indigenous men. Seeing Aboriginal boys enjoying the surf off Sydney’s Eastern Beaches in the 1870s inspired some men to decide to brave the surf. At Manly and on Sydney’s Eastern Beaches, an increasing numbers of swimmers inspired by the surfing style of Manly’s Tommy Tanna and other Pacific Islanders (Osmond, 2011) had, by the 1890s, begun to routinely accept the risks of the then extreme recreation of ‘surf shooting’ (now known as body surfing) in pursuit of its pleasures.

The risks to colonial surf bathers were exacerbated by the surfside municipalities, which enforced bylaws banning open-beach bathing in public view in daylight hours. Without daylight, it was more difficult for open-beach bathers to judge the

waves or detect the presence of rips and sharks. Even present-day experts on minimising the risk of shark attacks advise staying out of the surf around dawn and dusk. Although Manly's 1890s surf shooters had to leave the water before 7 a.m., (Osmond, 2011) there were, however, no sanctions against daylight sea bathing, surf shooting, nude bathing or mixed bathing outside municipal limits.

The Australian colonies had no formalised services focused on the rescue of surf bathers or swimmers at risk of drowning. Newcastle and several other Australian coastal ports did, however, have volunteer lifesaving brigades (marine rescue services or 'rocket brigades' similar to those then operating in Britain and the United States) focused on rescuing people from shipwrecks (Loney, 1993; Staniforth, 1992). Firing rockets served both as a signal of a shipwreck and as a means of delivering lifelines to which large tow ropes could be attached to save the lives of those aboard a wrecked ship. Surf rescue then meant a human chain of men joined hand-to-hand to enable the foremost man to clutch and hold a shipwreck victim. Such methods were clearly limited to situations where non-swimming rescuers could stand and breathe and could offer little protection against hypothermia in chilly waters or shark attacks in warmer waters.

Surf shooting and surf bathing from open beaches were, however, regarded in the 1890s as extreme recreational activities at least as dangerous as present-day rock fishing (M. Jones, 2003) and equally difficult to eliminate or regulate. Just as present-day concerns to minimise the loss of life among rock fishers have prompted the installation of 'angel rings' (life preservers) along the NSW coast (Angel ring project, 2012), so concerns in late-colonial NSW to minimise loss of life in the surf led to the installation of 'life-saving appliances' at popular surf bathing venues (Brawley, 2006, pp. 30-31; Dowd, 1959, p.138). Then, as now, such apparatus is of little value unless there is someone present and prepared to use it as means of rescuing a person at risk of drowning or injury.

In these circumstances, bathing and swimming at ocean pools remained far more mainstream activities than bathing and swimming at surf beaches. Sixty years of

surfing left Phillip (1940, p. 29) convinced that “surfing has its advantages, but cannot compete with the exhilarating energy and sense of security that can be enjoyed at Bronte Baths”. Where there was an ocean pool available, the pleasures of immersion, waveplay, floating, swimming, jumping and diving could be enjoyed in relative safety.

Professional and competitive swimmers

Sydney Harbour was Australia’s nursery for the modern sport of swimming and hosted the earliest reported swimming races in Australia (M. G. Phillips, 2008). Competitive swimming in late nineteenth-century NSW took place in harbour, bay, ocean and river pools as well as indoor seawater pools, such as the Newcastle Corporation Baths and the privately operated pools at inner Sydney’s Pitt Street Natatorium and the Coogee Aquarium.

As a ‘modern’ art and sport in the Australian colonies, swimming demonstrated strong links with developments in British swimming. 1870s Britain had an established set of professional male and female swimmers, who were primarily entertainers (Day, 2010; C. Parker, 2001; Terret, 1995) rather than competitors, and who took some interest in Australian swimmers and swimming styles (M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 65). Day (2011) has argued that swimming professionals, such as Professor Frederick Beckwith, “many years the champion swimmer of the world,” served as the nucleus of a community of practice encompassing their families, protégées, students and emulators. Their “celebrated troupe of swimmers and performers” could include men, women and children. Beckwith’s troupe included both his daughter Agnes, “the greatest lady swimmer in the world,” and his son Charles.

Day (2011) credits Beckwith with the development of many of the swimming and underwater feats performed in pools, theatres and circuses and documented in nineteenth and early twentieth century swimming manuals from Britain, the United States and Australasia (Dalton & Dalton, 1918; Holbein, 2005; Kellermann, 1918). As an accepted part of a cosmopolitan swimming culture, these acts featured at

swimming carnivals at Australia's ocean pools and other public pools into the early twentieth century.

Britain's Brighton was far less relevant as a role model for the development of the modern art and sport of swimming than it had been for the development of seaside tourism. Australian swimming, nevertheless, benefited substantially from the migration to Sydney of one member of Brighton's swimming club, namely Professor Frederick Cavill. Cavill operated public baths on Sydney Harbour, taught swimming to those affluent enough to pay a guinea for tuition (M. G. Phillips, 2008, pp. 61-62) and is credited with introducing water polo to Australia (Rockwell, 2008).

Fred Cavill and his children demonstrated their 'natatorial feats' at venues such as the Coogee Aquarium and the carnivals at the Bronte Baths ("Life-saving demonstration," 1894; "Waverley Swimming club," 1891) and Bondi Baths ("Swimming," 1897). Percy Cavill set a new Australian record for the half-mile at the Bronte Baths ("Swimming," 1898a). As stars of amateur and professional swimming, Fred's children helped to raise the overseas profile of Australian swimming and demonstrate the difficulty of earning a living as a professional swimmer both within and beyond Australia (Osmond, 2009, 2012). The Cavills also helped develop and refine the Australian crawl stroke so suited to ocean pools and surf swimming (Osmond & Phillips, 2004, 2006)

H. A. Wylie is in some ways an ocean pool counterpart to Fred Cavill. At various times he leased and managed the Bronte Baths, the Coogee Men's Baths and the Coogee Women's Baths. While lessee of the Bronte Baths, Wylie also officiated as starter or timekeeper at events staged by the Waverley Swimming club and the Eastern Suburbs Swimming Club. At one carnival ("Swimming," 1896), "H. A. Wylie (champion long-distance diver of Australasia) gave an exhibition of long-distance diving, in which he covered a distance of 70 yards under the water". At another carnival ("Waverley Swimming Club," 1893), he gave "an exhibition dive of about 60 yards", and then took part in "an exhibition of various feats of fancy swimming, including the pendulum, torpedo, and serpent movements". His daughter Mina

swam capably by the age of five (Allan, 2004, p. 120) and had a long and successful amateur swimming career.

As an individualistic sport previously associated with betting, with professional sportspeople and with public baths intended to improve the hygiene of Britain's lower classes (C. Parker, 2001), swimming held far less status and less imperial significance in Britain's empire than the 'gentlemanly' team sports of cricket or rugby. Amateurism helped make swimming and water polo into more respectable sports.

There was considerable support in late-colonial NSW for the British ideology of amateurism that allowed any modern 'white man's sport' to be promoted as a noble, character-building activity undertaken for the love of the game with no thought of reward. By demonstrating the presence of fit, healthy men with good character, amateur water sports appeared to affirm that the future of the Empire, the British 'race' or even the 'white race' was in good hands. The definition and conventions of amateurism were, however, still fluid and a matter of animated debate in the 1890s (M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 18).

Saturday half-holidays, early closing of shops on Wednesdays and the increasing number of workers with a working day limited to eight hours meant there was considerable time and demand for both sport and affordable entertainments in late-colonial Australia (Cashman, 1995, p. 35). Cricket, rugby, horseracing and the more established aquatic sports of yachting and professional sculling were, however, far more successful than swimming in attracting crowds of spectators.

With the assistance and influential presence of resident swimming professionals, such as Fred Cavill and H. A. Wylie, men's competitive swimming, diving and water polo all flourished in late colonial NSW as amateur sports. A wide range of swimming venues, including ocean pools became 'pools for competition and carnivals'. Lessees usually made their pay-to-use pools available at no charge for swimming club carnivals. As the main opportunities for competitive swimming

occurred within and between all-male amateur swimming clubs, membership of a club was a prerequisite for a successful swimming career.

By the 1890s, the network of NSW men's swimming clubs extended from Newcastle south to the Illawarra. Each club based at an ocean pool, indoor pool, harbour pool, bay pool or river pool was a community of practice. Club networks fostered intra-club and inter-club competitive swimming, increased both the number of male swimmers and their willingness to wear regulation swimming costumes. In 1892, that network justified the formation of the NSW Swimming Association, the earliest such body in any Australian colony (M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 16).

Competitive swimmers, swimming club members, spectators and sport reporters were less interested in the 'wildness' of ocean pools than in their role as competitive swimming venues. The enrolment of competitive swimmers, swimming club members, spectators and sport reporters in the actor-networks that developed and sustained ocean pools was, therefore, strongly influenced by the accessibility of other appealing and affordable venues for men's competitive and club swimming.

Swimming clubs did not form at any of the colonial ocean pools allocated solely for the use of women and children, nor at all of the ocean pools catering for men. As the men-only clubs based themselves at what was considered a municipality's 'best' pool for competitive swimming, Newcastle's club swimmers were based at the Corporation Baths, rather than at the Bogey Hole or the Soldiers Baths. The Randwick and Coogee Swimming club (Brombey & Daley, 1996) likewise based itself at the Coogee Aquarium, rather than the Coogee men's baths. In the Waverley, Kiama and Wollongong municipalities, ocean pools were, however, the only form of public pool available. In the Waverley municipality, both the Bronte Baths and Bondi Baths hosted swimming clubs. The swimming club based at the Kiama Men's Baths (Kiama Swimming Club," 1894) outlasted the swimming clubs formed in Wollongong ("The swimming carnival," 1896).

Improved public transport facilitated the staging of competitive swimming at ocean pools within and beyond Sydney. Inner Sydney swimmers and their supporters travelled from the city by 4-horse bus to attend an 1893 Waverley swimming club tournament at Bronte's ocean pool (Penguin, 1893). The South Coast Railway (then primarily a tourist line) enabled Sydney swimmers and their supporters to travel down to Kiama in the morning, enjoy a swimming carnival at the ocean pool, play a water polo match and eat dinner at a hotel before catching the evening train back to Sydney ("Kiama Swimming Club," 1894).

Scheduling major carnivals on the public holidays of New Year's Day, Anniversary Day (now Australia Day), Easter, Eight Hour Day and Christmas Day fostered a form of sports tourism. Over a hundred Sydney swimmers, including representatives of the West Sydney, Enterprise, Balmain, Rozelle, Bondi, Eastern Suburbs and Randwick-Coojee clubs attended the 1899 New Year carnival in Kiama (Natator, 1899a). Kiama residents understandably hoped such carnivals would increase their town's press coverage, tourism and land sales.

Although elite swimmers from other Australian colonies and New Zealand occasionally competed at the ocean pools and other public pools of NSW, British amateur swimmers did not. The latter lacked both the will and the financial incentives that had led the Beaumont family of professional swimmers to travel from Britain to entertain and inspire audiences in 1890s Sydney (Van Straten, 2003, p. 60) and the Illawarra ("The Beaumont Combination Company", 1894).

Although the actor-networks linked to ocean pools were growing, diversifying and becoming tangled, networks related to ocean pools I designate as 'public pools for competition and carnivals' enrolled far more men than women as swimmers. The flowering of men's associational life in late-colonial NSW, meant membership of men-only swimming clubs based at ocean pools could overlap with men-only progress associations, lodges, friendly societies and other fraternal associations, as well as volunteer life-saving brigades or rocket brigades, volunteer fire brigades and even the volunteer defence forces. Close working associations with the surfside

councils that operated and maintained ocean pools enabled men's swimming clubs to take on some of what I call the 'guardian of the ocean pool' roles previously performed by progress associations. Not only were women excluded from these organisations, but in NSW as in Britain, no comparable range of women's organisations existed to provide women with the pleasures of sport, theatre, travel, socialising and opportunities to acquire organisational skills.

Committed amateur swimming club members, such as Kiama's William Kelly, fitted readily into the broader fraternal culture where club members met in hotels for presentation nights and for business meetings at which toasts were heartily proposed and drunk. Kelly was credited with establishing both the Kiama Progress Association and spearheading development of the free-to-swim, men-only ocean pool at Blowhole Point in the 1890s. In addition to his leisure time roles as a swimming club captain, water polo player, volunteer teacher of swimming, organiser of swimming carnivals and performer of aquatic novelty acts (such as the Monte Cristo sack feat), he was a businessmen, a Mason, an Oddfellow, and a sought-after flower judge at agricultural shows ("Obituary. Mr. Wm. Kelly," 1924; "Swimming carnival," 1928).

By the 1890s, increasingly rigid definitions of amateurism constrained the conviviality of the gender-segregated ocean pools. Men's swimming events had to be either amateur or professional as proven claims of taking part in any professional sport or racing against any professional sportsman could cause a swimmer to lose his treasured amateur status.

Gaining entry to the world of men's amateur swimming meant overcoming actual and perceived social, cultural and economic entry barriers. As well as being acceptable as participants in male associational life, elite amateur swimmers needed free or affordable access to convenient training venues, time to train, money for entry fees, money for travel to events of a suitable competitive standard, and money for any professional training or coaching.

Swimming and other amateur sports were far less able to attract, develop and reward Aboriginal sporting skills than professional sports. The general lack of Aboriginal swimmers in men's swimming clubs based at ocean pools or other public pools was not, however, considered problematic. While according to Tatz (1995), Aboriginality was often perceived as conferring a competitive advantage in the professional sports of boxing and 'pedestrianism' (as professional athletics was known), this was not the case with amateur swimming.

The cultural constraints that prevented male and female swimmers from competing together also applied far more strongly to amateur swimming than to events run by commercial concerns or for professional swimmers. As Raszeja (1992) notes, females were more easily excluded than Aboriginal men from all aspects of men's associational culture. Prominent early twentieth-century female swimmers such as Annette Kellerman (Kellermann, 1918), Mina Wylie (Slarke, 2001), and Alice Cavill (Osmond, 2012) were fortunate in having fathers who supported the nineteenth-century beginnings of their daughters' swimming careers.

Except at pools with hours set aside for 'continental bathing', gender segregation still prevented men with swimming skills from teaching their wives, sisters, daughters or young sons to swim at ocean pools and other public pools. As there were no formal women's amateur swimming clubs at colonial Australia's public pools (M. G. Phillips, 2008, pp. 16-17), girls had more hope of learning to swim as part of a school program, than through a club program.

Learn-to swim programs and school swimming

Late-nineteenth century concerns about drowning rates helped make swimming a school activity and a school sport for Australian boys and girls. While there is still no worldwide consensus that learning to swim reduces the risk of drowning (Brenner, Saluja, & Smith, 2003), learning to swim was regarded in colonial Australia as minimising that risk.

An 1891 article ("Swimming," 1891b) in *The Dawn* magazine edited by Sydney-based feminist Louisa Lawson held that any non-swimmer was imperfectly equipped for "the vicissitudes of life" in the 1890s, and was unable to help others or him/herself. The article also "asserted that "all human beings should be able to swim" as although "a sudden fall from a wharf, pier or boat" placed any non-swimmer "in great danger of immediate death", such accidents were mere "matters of merriment" to a competent swimmer. Diving skills were valuable in situations where the rapid and controlled entry into water from a ship or jetty could save lives.

At the swimming carnival celebrating the opening of Kiama's upgraded ocean pool for men ("Opening of the public swimming baths," 1894), George W. Fuller, then the MP for Kiama and later Premier of NSW, stated that "learning to swim was part of a child's education", especially in the case of those living in "seaside towns". In the 1890s, when few NSW residents could swim, when few teachers of swimming existed, and when few learners could afford individual tuition, swimming and diving were coming to be regarded as skills best learnt at school.

Swimming programs for schoolchildren

The NSW Minister for Public Instruction, Frank Suttor, stated in 1893 (Leander, 1893) that boys and girls:

could not take part in any more healthy exercise, or in any exercise which brought the muscles more thoroughly into play ... Being able to swim might not always save their lives but it would assist them in keeping cool, and render them better able to face the danger in which they might find themselves. When they were able to swim well they would find it a great pleasure to assist others to obtain such a desirable accomplishment. It must be a proud day in the life of any young man or young woman who had been able to save life by having learnt to swim in their youth.

From the 1880s, the NSW government required all children to attend school between the ages of six and fourteen years. Disregarding Indigenous expertise in teaching swimming skills in favour of more modern 'scientific' methods, the NSW Education Department's 1890s learn-to-swim programs at government schools drew heavily on both military methods of swimming instruction and the 1870s programs in London's Board Schools. Support by successive NSW Ministers for Education and Public Instruction helped swimming to become more than an extra-curricular activity undertaken in school-based clubs. The school-based swimming programs pioneered in NSW were soon emulated in other Australian colonies (Winterton & Parker, 2009).

During the economic depression of the 1890s, the NSW government did not attempt to provide swimming facilities at, or near, all of its schools. Public pools functioned as the learn-to-swim venues for government schools in NSW. Recognising the unpopularity of any financial barriers seen as preventing children from learning to swim, pay-to-swim public baths discounted their entry charges for school swimmers. School swimming clubs also began affiliating with the NSW Swimming Association to ensure that they did obtain reduced entry charges to pay-to-use public pools.

Within and beyond the existing municipalities, the provision of learn-to-swim programs gave a strong moral impetus to the development and use of modern learn-to-swim facilities and competition pools convenient to schools. Both school swimming clubs and classes were less interested in the 'wildness' of ocean pools, than in their accessibility and affordability and suitability for learn-to-swim programs and competitive school swimming.

The formalised skills of swimming, lifesaving, water polo and diving were all seen as best mastered at venues where instructors could readily move around the pool to supervise swimmers. As swimming proficiency was increasingly defined by objective criteria of distance and time, the need to know the precise length of the pool increased. Cultivating a graceful style was a lesser concern than swimming

competently and quickly over a specified distance. The stroke (whether breast stroke, sidestroke, or the newer trudgeon and crawl strokes) used was of little interest when even elite competitive swimming allowed free choice of strokes. The issuing of certificates of proficiency provided formal recognition for the swimming skills of boys and girls.

Although the NSW government invested considerable resources in teaching its male and female teachers to swim, the shortage of female instructors meant swimming clubs and competitions for girls developed more slowly than clubs and competitions for boys. As boys were expected to swim in the men's baths once they turned eight, this became the minimum age of entry to learn-to-swim programs in NSW government schools.

By 1897, the Public Schools Amateur Athletics Association (PSAAA) was organising annual district swimming carnivals for boys at NSW government schools, leading up to an all-schools championship carnival featuring performances by invited swimming stars (Collins, Aitken, & Cork, ca. 1991). The NSW Minister for Public Instruction and the Mayor of Paddington attended the 1898 PSAAA Eastern Suburbs District Carnival held at the Bondi Baths, which included a Teachers' Handicap race and a Head Office Handicap race ("Swimming," 1898b). Annual PSAAA swimming carnivals for girls did not begin until 1900 (Collins, Aitken, & Cork, ca. 1991, p. 21).

While school swimming strengthened and supported the men-only amateur swimming clubs, the amateur swimming movement's commitment to gender segregation meant that it did not see schoolgirls or women who had learned to swim as potential members. There were no women's amateur swimming clubs or championships in colonial NSW (M. G. Phillips, 2008, pp. 17). While male swimmers competed at the 1896 Olympic games, there were no Olympic swimming events for women until 1912. Men, women and children were, however, taking part in colonial swimming carnivals as spectators, performers and competitors.

Spectacles and spectators at ocean pools in colonial NSW

Swimming carnivals held at ocean pools were newsworthy ritual occasions that punctuated the summer season, enhanced the conviviality of surfside communities and helped to disseminate swimming skills. They provided a focus for local pride and sporting rivalries, while attracting tourists and out-of-district swimmers. Inter-club swimming contests and polo matches brought teams from other pools to ocean pools at Bronte, Bondi and Kiama.

Carnivals staged at the ocean pools of colonial NSW all resembled variety shows with music as an integral part of the show. While the band playing between the events at the Bronte Baths was often the cadet band, the town band played at an 1896 carnival at the Wollongong's Men's Baths ("The swimming carnival," 1896).

Although handicapped swimming races remained rare in the United States, few NSW swimming carnivals hosted non-handicap 'championship' events. Most races at club events, including the novelty races, were run as handicap events. Handicap races offered a more egalitarian style of competition able to accommodate swimmers differing greatly in their abilities, strokes and styles and still provide races with exciting finishes. Breaststroke and sidestroke were then the most common swimming styles used in swimming races as crawl strokes were considered too strenuous to use except over short distances and many swimmers still preferred to keep their heads above water

Setting handicaps for members of their affiliated clubs was an important function of the NSW Amateur Swimming Association (NSWASA). Publication of swimmers' handicaps in a sporting paper such as *The Referee* also suggests the potential for betting on the race results. On at least one occasion, a handicapper had to "seek the protection of the [Amateur Swimming] association" after being abused at a swimming carnival by an aggrieved competitor (Natator, 1899b).

In both nineteenth-century handicap and championship races, competitive swimmers had a common starting line, but they did not race in marked or roped

lanes. The ability to take advantage of winds and waves and avoid waves and sandbanks constituted a competitive advantage in most races and novelty events at ocean pools. As any swimmer who could rapidly reach the front of a pack of swimmers gained a competitive advantage, both inadvertent and deliberate obstruction were possible. In the case of a dead heat, as occurred at a carnival in 1897 at the Bronte Baths, there was a swim-off (“Waverley Club,” 1897).

As Rockwell (2008, pp. 27, 40) pointed out, most of the elite swimmers in 1890s played water polo and allegations of unnecessary roughness were not uncommon at water polo matches. Although protests against ‘unsportsmanlike behaviour’ were permitted, it was often difficult for a spectator or official to distinguish particular individuals during the course of a race or a water polo match. Swimmers also competed in diving events such as plunging championships, distance diving, object diving and performance of the ‘neatest header’.

Competition pools varied considerably in their depth and in the lengths of their racing courses. A racing course 33 1/3 yards long defined by a wooden turning board (Figure 4-2) made it easy to race over distances of 66 yards and 100 yards at the non-rectangular Bronte Baths. By 1899, lap dash races at the Bondi Baths were held over 57 yards (“Bondi Club,” 1899b) and other races over 114 yards and 171 yards (“Bondi Club,” 1899a). There were then extensive disputes in the amateur swimming world regarding what could be accepted as legitimate turns. Races over a long straight course were considered both fairer and more exciting than those in a shorter pool, which required more turns.



Figure 4-2. Marked lanes and a turning board, Bronte Baths, NSW

While times were being measured and reported down to a fifth of a second in the 1890s, timing arrangements were not always reliable or essential (Eichberg, 1982). The order and style in which competitors finished a race was usually considered more interesting than the time taken. Although faster times could be swum in harbour pools or indoor pools, ocean pools were more than acceptable as venues for timed competitive swimming. Sydneysider Fred Lane became Australia's first Olympic swimming champion by winning the 200-metres freestyle event and the 200-metres obstacle race at the Paris Olympics in 1900, the year after he won the 440 yards championship of New South Wales in an Australasian record time at the Bronte Baths ("Swimming," 1899) and set an Australian record for the 100 yards at the Bondi Baths ("Carnival at Bondi," 1899).

Exhibitions by skilled swimmers, divers and aquatic performers (such as members of the Cavill and Wylie families) introduced spectators to new possibilities in terms of speed swimming, diving styles and swimming strokes. One "sensational exhibition dive" was from the top of the fences at the highest part of the rocks at the Bronte Baths (Swimming, 1898c). A carnival at Bondi in 1894 included an exhibition by "a group of ladies" of what was then termed 'trick and fancy swimming', a "life-saving exhibition by members of the Waverley branch of the English Life-saving Society" and an "exhibition of life saving by children" ("Swimming", 1894).

A swimming carnival might include races for men, boys (sometimes in specified age-groups), public school cadets, public school boys and 'ladies nomination races' (where a woman nominated a man to swim as her representative). While swimming may have been an 'ideal' sport for nineteenth-century British women (C. Parker, 2010) and a "decent and proper exertion" for nineteenth century Australasian women (Raszeja, 1992), 1890s NSW offered few opportunities for few girls or women to swim competitively. Several Waverley Amateur Swimming Club carnivals at the Bronte Baths in the 1890s included races for ladies ("Swimming," 1890, 1891a; "Life-saving demonstration," 1894). Those races attracted few competitors, with only two starters in the 1891 race and only three starters in the 1894 race. As

men's races then often had 15 heats, women's swimming races in the 1890s were reported as novelty events, rather than as serious sport.

To date, the novelty events and aquatic farces so prominent at swimming carnivals (Osmond, 2011; Osmond & McDermott, 2008) have attracted less scrutiny than aquatic performances at commercial venues, such as the Manly Aquarium and the Coogee Aquarium (Champion & Champion, 2000; C. Ford, 2009a). Novelty events staged at colonial ocean pools included all-clothes races, fancy costume races, Ladies Costume Races, 'swimming on back with arms folded', cigar races (where the contestants struggled to keep their cigars alight), umbrella and cigar races (where each competitor had to carry an umbrella and smoke a lighted cigar) and tug-of-war contests. When the sensational Monte Cristo sack feat was performed in the Bronte Baths, "the performer was tied in a sack weighted with stones weighing about 25-lb [around 12.5 kg], and was thrown into the water... managed very speedily to extricate himself and rise to the surface" (Waverley Swimming Club, 1893).

Wind and waves could add to the entertainment value of swimming carnivals. Enjoyment of an umbrella and cigar race in 1896 at the Bronte Baths was enhanced by a southerly wind that "made the water somewhat lumpy" (Natator, 1896). Rockwell (2008, p. 43) likewise cites a reporter for the *Referee* praising an 1895 Bondi versus Balmain water polo match at the Bondi Baths as "very amusing, on account of the ways in which the heavy seas breaking over the basin interfered with the rival team's action". In Eichberg's (1989) terms, achievement sport was not yet prized over community entertainment.

Swimming carnivals could be organised as part of the normal cycle of competitions or staged in honour of a special cause or event. The Bondi Club staged a charity carnival for the poor of their district in 1894 ("Swimming," 1894) and a special carnival in 1899 to celebrate the extension of their home pool ("Carnival at Bondi," 1899). A 1900 Bondi Carnival included a 50 Yards Federation Club Handicap and a 100 yards Commonwealth Stakes Inter-club Handicap ("Swimming," 1900b).

By permitting, encouraging and recruiting spectators, competitive swimming created a new, distinctive and influential community of practice at ocean pools. Carnival spectators extended the ocean pool actor-networks, and enhanced the conviviality, entertainment and educational value of colonial ocean pools. As Shane Gould (2007, p. 173) has noted:

Seeing swimming done well reveals the grace, the fluidity and the sheer beauty of the activity. Seeing this demonstrated might well encourage your experimentation for personal enjoyment.

Although Council bylaws prevented them swimming together at the baths or in daylight hours on the surf beaches, fully clothed men, women and children attended swimming carnivals together. Explicit formal restrictions on who could enter the gender-segregated colonial-era ocean pools to attend a carnival related to affluence as admission charges could restrict the attendance by members of socially disadvantaged groups. Where local councils routinely expected to receive up to half of all the funds raised by a carnival, they had an incentive to permit event organisers to charge admission fees even at ocean pools, such as Kiama's, that normally had no admission charges.

Although a large crowd of spectators was invariably a cause for celebration, it cannot be assumed that all spectators attended swimming events for the same reasons or engaged with those events in the same way or that their presence and actions were reported in the same way. While Winterton (2010) examined spectators at events run by the Victorian Amateur Swimming Association (VASA), the spectators at swimming spectacles and carnivals at public pools in late-colonial NSW have received less study than the spectators for Australian Rules football matches in colonial Victoria (Hess, 1996, 2000; Senyard, 1999). Yet in late-colonial NSW, where few women attended cricket matches, football (Rugby rather than Australian Rules football in NSW) matches or horseraces, women made up a good proportion of the spectators at swimming carnivals. Comparisons with Australian Rules football are particularly helpful as women have since the 1850s "usually made

up a greater proportion of the crowd at Australian Rules games than at any other football code in the world" (Hess, 2000).

Amateur swimming club carnivals at ocean pools drew far smaller crowds than the thousands, who witnessed swimming contests staged at the Coogee Palace Aquarium. Kiama Swimming Club's 1894 New Year carnival ("Opening of the public swimming baths," 1894) drew a crowd of between 300 and 400. The Waverley club's 1891 carnival attracted an estimated crowd of 800 "including many ladies" ("Waverley Swimming club," 1891). *The Referee's Natator* (1896) likewise considered a crowd of 400 with "the fair sex predominating considerably" was a good attendance at an 1896 Swimming Club carnival at the Bondi Baths where ladies were "especially looked after in terms of refreshments". The Bondi club's 1897 carnival had "several hundreds of spectators, including a large number of ladies" ("Swimming," 1897). Attendance at the 1898 Eastern Suburbs carnival at the Bronte Baths "numbered over 400 persons, the majority of whom were ladies" ("Swimming," 1898a). Ladies were again in the majority at the 1898 Eastern Suburbs Carnival ("Swimming," 1898c) and the 1899 Bondi carnival, which attracted a crowd of about 500 "most of whom were ladies" ("Carnival at Bondi", 1899).

From the viewpoint of the amateur swimming clubs, the ideal female spectators were 'ladies', who happily paid admission charges and contributed to the overall spectacle by their presence. According to Simon Morgan (2007, pp. 11, 174), women attending public rituals showcasing local pride and privileging the activities of elite men were almost always characterised in Victorian Britain as 'ladies' rather than 'females', especially if the women "occupied visible, segregated and especially elevated positions above the crowd" and were "usually described in ways that emphasised their contribution to the visual spectacle ... through their colourful and vivacious appearance".

An 1893 Waverley Swimming Club carnival made "provision for the convenience of ladies" (Penguin, 1893). Special efforts were likewise made "to include ladies" at a club carnival at the Wollongong gentlemen's baths, where the "bathing shed made

a splendid grandstand and was well filled with women, who seemed to take a great interest" ("The swimming carnival," 1896; "Swimming carnival results, "1896). "Ladies whose choice toilets [i.e. dress and appearance] lent additional attraction to the scene" attended the 1892 Waverley Swimming carnival at the Bronte Baths ("Swimming," 1892). Natator (1896) reported on a Bondi Baths carnival, where "ladies in their tasteful dresses, presented a very pretty picture, seated on the many rock ledges with which the pretty little basin is surrounded".

At nineteenth-century Australian Rules matches, large groups of women who chose to sit together were heavily scrutinised by other spectators and players (Hess, 1996). Not only was the presence of women as a distinct group an important feature of the visual spectacle provided by public events, it was also seen as helping to maintain public virtue (Morgan, 2007, p. 176). Hess (2000) also highlighted the nineteenth-century belief that having spectating women and children sit or stand at Australian Rules matches so that they could clearly see the players and be seen by the players encouraged men to behave as gentlemen.

Press reports indicate that crowds attending swimming carnivals at ocean pools were almost invariably well behaved. Two fully clothed officials were, however, pushed into the pool at a Kiama carnival "by an *individual* [sic] who, no doubt, styles himself a man" ("Opening of the public swimming baths," 1894). Competitive swimming, diving and novelty events involved little violence compared to water polo or football and there are no reports of language considered 'unfit for ladies' ears' at swimming carnivals. According to Rockwell (2008, p. 48), there were, however, concerns that the declining support for water polo among swimmers and swimming clubs in 1897/98 reflected the "perceived roughness of the game and the unsportsmanlike and aggressive attitudes of some enthusiasts".

Female swimmers appeared less newsworthy than spectators 'taking an interest' in nineteenth-century swimming carnivals, at least to news media with male reporters targeting a male readership. As Senyard (1999, p. 46) has noted, reports about nineteenth-century Australian Rules football invariably presumed 'the reasonable

spectator' was a middle-class male and therefore regarded any female spectators 'taking an interest' in the game as newsworthy.

Senyard's (1999) contention that Australian Rules football games differed from the theatre chiefly by being staged in daylight in the open air and offering a sensual entertainment suitable for young and old that "could be accepted as a restorative from the serious demands of a working life" seems equally applicable to swimming carnivals at ocean pools. Spectators at swimming carnivals can thus to some extent, be regarded in Senyard's terms as 'theatre-goers'.

Giulianotti's (2002) categorisation of association football (soccer) spectators as supporters, followers, fans and flâneurs can likewise be applied to spectators at swimming carnivals. While supporters have team and district loyalties and a technical knowledge of the sport, followers take an interest in one or more teams. While fans are focused on star performers, flâneurs are amused by the spectacle. A single spectator may, of course, fit into more than one of these categories.

Any district swimming carnival at an ocean pool was likely to trigger district support, interest in the visiting clubs, a focus on star performers and an appreciation of the carnival as theatre. Attendance in bad weather might be weighted in favour of supporters and fans, but could still include flâneurs. A spectator with 'a rational appreciation' for water sports was more likely to be a supporter or follower of competitive swimming than a fan or flâneur.

Female spectators certainly cannot be dismissed as mere passive onlookers or companions of men interested in attending a carnival at an ocean pool. Newspaper reports of the rather primitive seating arrangements at those carnivals suggest that those 'ladies' were youthful and agile, interested in fashion, and perhaps in flirting. Swimming carnivals at ocean pools provided a rather genteel situation, where women could enjoy the opportunity to display themselves and their clothing, experience a sense of power and participation, and enjoy an entertaining spectacle.

All the sights of a swimming carnival were considered suitable for women and children. While women at surf beaches were still expected to avert their gaze from sight of male bathers or swimmers, women attending swimming carnivals at ocean pools could legitimately gaze at swimmers, divers and water polo players in two-piece, chest-covering racing costumes. Despite costume stewards policing the wearing of costumes mandated for amateur swimming competitions, one sports reporter (Natator, 1899b) feared that inadequate costumes worn by scraggy-built or weedy-looking specimens, who were “so fond of exposing as much of their nakedness as possible”, would deter respectable women from attending swimming carnivals at ocean pools.

As few sports then provided much opportunity for female spectators to admire minimally-clad male bodies, the charms of legitimately gazing at well-built, sparsely clad male swimmers in their clinging, wet costumes may help explain why so many women attended swimming carnivals at ocean pools. The bare arms and streamlined knickerbockers of the 1870s Australian Rules players, have as Hess (1996) noted, been credited as attracting female spectators to their matches.

Although competitive swimmers abiding by the NSW ASA costume rules were often more clothed than boxers or oarsmen, women’s attendance at swimming carnivals was far more socially acceptable than their presence at NSW boxing matches. Spectators at a swimming carnival also usually had far less restricted views of the competitors than most spectators at rowing events.

Knowledge of the facilities, costumes and techniques used by male swimmers made female swimmers reluctant to settle for inferior facilities or to wear more cumbersome costumes. Gender-segregated pools gave women the freedom to wear the same racing costumes as men. Annette Kellerman (E. Gibson, 2005) and other elite female swimmers of colonial NSW routinely swam wearing men’s racing costumes. They had no need to wear the tights, stockings or above-the-knee socks then needed to proclaim the respectability of women performing on Britain’s stages or bathing or swimming at beaches in the United States (Warner, 2006; Bier, 2011).

Ocean pools for bathing and swimming

Unless colonial ocean pools hosted a men's swimming club, they tended to remain as 'wild but safe enough surfside pools', where bathers and recreational swimmers remained the dominant communities of practice. Recreational swimmers spurred development of 'safe' and accessible public pools long enough to swim several strokes and deep enough for diving, but provided little pressure to standardise the size or shape of ocean pools. With ocean kinetics, durability and affordability as the prime design considerations, there was little incentive to create pools with rectangular shapes, or right angle corners.

Without ever completely displacing the earlier bathing cultures, giving ocean pools a new identity as 'public pools for competitions and carnivals' introduced new activities (swimming, diving, water polo and lifesaving), events (swimming carnivals and water polo matches), roles (event organisers, competitors, performers, officials, musicians and sports reporters) and communities of practice. Pressures for standardisation grew as swimming gained recognition as a sport and as a school activity.

Although bathers and swimmers could share an ocean pool, the swimming culture both limited bathers' access to ocean pools and lowered their status at 'public pools for competitions and carnivals'. While both bathing and recreational swimming remained informal seasonal activities, competitive swimming was a formalised seasonal activity with clearly defined events that demanded the exclusion of bathers from the pools and the removal of algae, submerged rocks and sharp shells that could pose hazards to summertime swimmers. Competitive swimmers were bolder, newsworthy, praiseworthy and sometimes athletically beautiful in ways that bathers had never been.

The communities of interest at 'pools for competition and carnivals' included schools and swimming clubs using the pools, the Amateur Swimming Association,

sports journalists and newspapers. Communities of interest at ocean pools used for bathing and overlapped with those at ocean pools used as swimming pools. News media were interested in ocean pools as signs of progress, as amenities for residents and visitors, and as sporting venues.

The networked and gendered PPI communities relating to an ocean pool functioning as a 'wild but safe enough surfside pool' could thus overlap and intertwine with actor-networks linked to the pool's role as a 'public pool for competitions and carnivals'. The strength of the bonds resulting from those extended, tangled and intertwined networks suggests that pools catering for bathers, recreational swimmers and competitive swimmers would prove more durable than those catering only to bathers, at least until there was ready access to some 'better' pool for competitions and carnivals.

'Pools for competition and carnivals' needed facilities not required at bathing pools or recreational swimming venues. Divers needed water deep enough for safe diving and wanted springboards as well as any natural diving platforms. Competition pools needed space around the pools to accommodate competitors, officials, spectators and bands as well as a defined racing course of a standardised length.

As well as changing the facilities and introducing an amateur/professional divide, the presence of swimming clubs at ocean pools also changed the sense of time and seasons in their host communities. New summer rituals, such as the reappearance of springboards at the ocean pools, marked out the swimming season for recreational swimmers, swimming clubs and swimming classes. Seawater pools unable to offer adequate swimming and diving depth at all stages of the tide determined when swimming events could be scheduled. To overcome transport constraints, the colonial government and other providers of public transport scheduled special services to move people to and from swimming carnivals at ocean pools and other public pools.

While ocean pools serving as bathing places needed to be readily accessible to residents and visitors, ocean pools serving ‘public pools for competition and carnivals’ needed to be readily accessible to schools and transport. Those ocean pools acquired a new sense of place supported by memories linked to public entertainments, competitions, and achievements in water sports and water skills, as well as new communities of practice.

As competition and carnival pools, ocean pools became temples to the gods of sport and stages for star performers whose bodies and feats seemed even more beautiful or sublime or newsworthy to spectators and photographers than the ‘wild nature’ surrounding the ocean pools. Although bathers and recreational swimmers still gazed at the seascape and the coastal landscape, spectators at colonial swimming carnivals were often more focused on what was happening in the pool. Wind and waves were praised, not in their own right, but for enhancing the entertainment offered within the pool. Yet while ocean pools catering for swimming came to incorporate some of the characteristics of racecourses and theatres, the rarity of tiered seating or grandstands at the nineteenth-century ocean pools still marked them as spaces that were primarily for recreation rather than sport.

Collectively, the bather-focused ocean pools now occupy a far less prominent place in popular memory than two nineteenth-century Sydney ocean pools prominent in creation stories relating to Australia’s swimming culture and its surf culture.

Sydney’s early ocean pools as settings for creation stories

In popular memory, the development of the Australian crawl stroke derives from the swimming style used by the young Alick Wickham at Sydney’s Bronte Baths. The familiar creation story recounted by Vesper (2006) aligns with the archetypal hero’s journey (Vogler, 1992). Wickham functions as the mythic figure of the innocent youth, while baths’ proprietor and swimming coach George Farmer serves as the revered wise man who recognises true worth (or at least the significance of the swimming style) of the unknown youth from a faraway place. Unfortunately, according to Osmond and Phillips (2004, 2006), this satisfyingly dramatic story

artistically compresses the development of a style, which predates Wickham's first recorded competitive swim in Sydney and overlooks the Cavill family's role in developing 'Cavill's crawl'.

Despite his non-Islander father and his English name, the sporting press portrayed Wickham as an exotic, gentlemanly South Sea Islander memorable for his world-record swims, graceful swallow dives and feet-first 'South Sea Island jump'. By presenting Wickham as the vehicle for transferring a traditional skill from the people of the Pacific Islands to the people of Australia, this creation myth serves as a source of pride in both Australia and the Solomon Islands and as a defence against later claims that Americans created the definitive crawl stroke.

Wickham's listing in the sporting halls of fame and portrayals of his achievements in museums and exhibitions derive more from his mythic role than for his world record for the 50-yards swim or his world record 205-foot dive in 1918. The Bronte Baths also links the amateur and professional phases of Wickham's swimming career as he first swam as a professional swimmer at a 1914 Waverley League of Swimmers carnival at the Bronte Baths (C.H., 1914a&b). By focusing on Wickham's style early in his amateur career, this myth draws attention away from Wickham and the Cavills as professional swimmers (Osmond, 2009) and so portrays the Australian crawl as a noble amateur stroke untainted by professionalism.

The myth also has an appropriate setting in a beautiful ocean pool renowned in the 1890s for crystal-clear waters (Dowd, 1959, p. 150). Bronte's formalised ocean pool was praised as:

a magnificent basin, excavated in a sheltered position on the rugged coast, about 40 yards in length, of a uniform depth for a distance of 33 yards, and well protected from the big rollers of the Pacific which break into foam against the huge rocks forming the outside boundary of the bath ("Waverley Swimming Club," 1891).

Like Wickham, the Bronte Baths located on Sydney's Nelson Bay link several worlds. The names of the pool, the bay, the beach and the suburb are linked not to the English literary sisters, but to the King of Sicily's decision to confer the title of Duke of Bronte on Britain's Admiral Nelson. This ocean pool also links the constructed and the natural worlds to offer the "exhilarating energy and a sense of security" extolled by George Philip (1940, p. 29).

Although the Bronte Baths can no longer be legitimately acclaimed as the birthplace of the Australian Crawl, it did host the Australia's first lifesaving club, the 'Waverley branch of the English Life-saving Society' ("Swimming," 1894). This society, known initially as the Swimmers Life-Saving Society and later as the Royal Life Saving Society, drew on both the British Infantry Drill Book and the Manual of the Medical Staff Corps in developing its own manual on rescue procedures, a training program, and a system of proficiency awards (Love, 2007c).

John Bond of the Waverley Branch of the Life Saving Society, a member of the Waverley Amateur Swimming Club (based at the Bronte Baths), the NSW Army Medical Corps and a veteran of the New South Wales Volunteers, was the Society's first instructor in any Australian colony (Brawley, 2007; Vesper, 2006). After the Head Centre of Lifesaving was established in New South Wales, honorary lifesavers worked with the established swimming clubs and with schools to provide lifesaving classes at the Bronte and Bondi Baths in the 1890s. Histories of the local surf lifesaving clubs (Brawley, 2007; Vesper, 2006) and of Australia's surf lifesaving movement (Jaggard, 2006) acknowledge the Bronte and Bondi Baths as hosting Australia's earliest lifesaving classes.

While the migration of lifesaving skills from the ocean pools into the surf took decades, both the Bronte and the Bondi Baths are justly celebrated as the places where lifesaving techniques first moved out of the ocean pools. Graduates of those early lifesaving classes sought to rescue bathers at risk of drowning within those pools and in the waters beyond the pools.

No other NSW ocean pools that predated the development of their nearest surf club are so closely linked to the development of a surf culture or to the development of the crawl stroke, so suited to speedy surf rescue. Neither the harbour baths at Manly, nor any other colonial public baths so clearly supported the transition from swimming to surf lifesaving and from British styles of swimming and lifesaving to more distinctively Australian styles better suited to surf conditions.

Conclusions

Pre-federation Australia had a handful of ocean pools where the 'wildness' of the environment enhanced the pleasures of bathing and swimming. While school-based learn-to-swim programs provided a moral impetus for developing gender-segregated ocean pools readily accessible to schools, competitive water sports brought the greatest changes to gender-segregated ocean pools and their PPI communities. The enthusiasm of men, women and children for water sports and aquatic spectacles changed the sense of time, place and community at the few colonial ocean pools that became venues for competitive swimming.

The networks that developed and sustained Australia's colonial ocean pools did, however, suggest that, in the absence of more appealing and affordable public pools, the demand for ocean pools would grow as more surfside communities sought to establish themselves as tourist destinations and as more men, women and children learnt to swim. The presence of sharks and rips and the bans on daylight bathing from the open beach continued to constrain interest in open-water swimming and promote the use of ocean pools.

This chapter showed how ocean pools hosting swimming clubs and lifesaving classes facilitated the emergence of a new surf culture. The next chapter addresses the impact of that culture on the actor-networks linked to ocean pools between 1900 and 1949.

Chapter 5. A new nation's poolscape and beach cultures

Introduction

As new Australian beach and swimming cultures developed between 1901 and 1949, the number of people bathing at the surf beaches in summer, the number of patrolled beaches and the number of ocean pools grew. In NSW, more than in any other state, surfside communities rallied to construct ocean pools regarded as cost-effective enhancements for the safety and appeal of the generally unpatrolled surf beaches and as valued additions to local summertime sport and recreation facilities. The practice of mixed bathing gained acceptance at surf beaches and also enhanced the conviviality of many of the newer ocean pools. Night swimming under lights further extended the summertime use and conviviality of ocean pools. Though rarely used as recreational or sporting venues for humans outside the summer swimming seasons, ocean pools functioned year-round as a habit for the non-human lifeforms of the coast and sea.

Actor-networks relating to ocean pools in newly federated Australia included the frameworks, influences and PPI communities outlined in Figure 5-1. The globalising frameworks included the Olympic games, radio coverage of overseas events, and newsreels and feature films focused on bathing beauties, swimmers and divers.



Figure 5-1. Frameworks and influences for Australia's early twentieth-century ocean pools (Artwork by Cally Browning, Bare Creative)

From 1901 to 1949, the key actor-networks developing and sustaining Australia's ocean pools enrolled actors such as surf lifesaving clubs, new local government bodies, women's swimming clubs, scouts, girl guides, motor transport networks and coastal camping grounds. Local rivalries and variations in pool sites combined with the demand for road-building material to prevent the standardisation of even those ocean pools intended for competitive water sports. Development costs and the availability and affordability of a sufficient suitably skilled labour force rather than the cost of materials such as cement remained the main barrier to the proliferation of ocean pools in NSW. Sydney's surfside communities were less likely to have such a skilled labour force and hence less likely to possess pools excavated by volunteer labour than surfside coal-mining and quarrying communities. Rock excavated to create Sydney's ocean pools was also considered far less suitable for roadbuilding than the harder rock excavated from ocean pool sites in the Illawarra and other coastal coal-mining areas,

Actions to develop and sustain ocean pools on Australia's early-twentieth century coast were framed by three multi-nation wars that drew swimmers and other beachgoers away from Australian coasts. I have therefore divided this chapter into three main parts.

The first part discusses the period from Federation in 1901 (when soldiers from Australia were serving in the 1899-1902 South African or Anglo-Boer War) to 1919 (when Australian forces returned from the 1914-1918 World War). The Boer war resulted in a South African nation with a war-damaged land and a predominately inland population far less interested than Australia's largely coastal population in beach culture and Olympic swimming. Australia's early success in Olympic men's and women's swimming events, and development of a beach culture and surf lifesaving movement important to national identity meant Australia's ocean pools were far more likely than their South African counterparts to become 'pools for competition and carnival'. Australian enthusiasm for ocean pools throughout this period was, however, largely confined to NSW, and more specifically to Newcastle, Sydney and the Illawarra.

The second part discusses the interwar years, when mixed bathing, sun bathing and outdoor swimming pools surged in popularity in Europe (Worpole, 2000) and North America (Wiltse, 2007), as well as in Australia. Within NSW, interwar enthusiasm for developing ocean pools extended beyond Newcastle, Sydney and the Illawarra. Depression-era unemployment and relief schemes and public works projects caused the number of ocean pools to soar in NSW, but not in the rest of Australia or in South Africa.

The third part discusses the period from the beginning of World War II in 1939 to 1949, when the petrol rationing implemented Australia-wide during the war still restricted travel and tourism (Froude, 2002). Although this period saw the completion of some Australian ocean pools begun before or during the war years and the development of some new ocean pools, the rate at which ocean pools were being created had slowed, even along the NSW coast.

Part 1: Ocean pools as part of Australia's new beach cultures, 1901-1919

The NSW coast was the heartland of newly federated Australia's beach culture. Newspaperman William Gocher's protests against the bans on surf bathing in public view during daylight at Manly are well known. Lowe ([1950], Curby (2001), Huntsman (2001) and Allan (2004) have, however, shown that Gocher's protest was only one of the many challenges that prompted NSW surfside municipalities to permit daylight bathing in public view in the early 1900s, provided bathers wore regulation bathing costumes. In doing so, those municipalities made it legitimate for beachgoers to gaze without inhibition at swimmers and bodysurfers wearing bathing-suits in the water or en route to or from the water.

Although sun worship was on the rise and suntans were already considered desirable for men, "loitering on beaches clad only in a bathing costume" would nevertheless continue to contravene council bylaws into the interwar years (Allan, 2004, p. 208; Cushing, 1997; Booth, 2001a). Most NSW beaches and ocean pools were, however, so easily seen from above that it was impractical to construct the screened enclosures considered desirable for respectable sunbathing. Many

beachgoers understandably chose to use beaches outside municipal jurisdictions for their sunbaking or nude bathing.

Legal daylight bathing at NSW beaches did not, as Gray (2006, p. 164) contends, mark the demise of demand for ocean pools. In an era when few Australians had surf skills, ocean pools protected young children from the dangers of the surf and sharks, catered to people who 'did not prefer the surf' as well as to those who enjoyed both beaches and ocean pools. George Philip's (1940, p. 29) conviction that "surfing has its advantages, but cannot compete with the exhilarating energy and sense of security that can be enjoyed at Bronte Baths" was quite widely shared.

The visible presence of sharks (often linked to poor waste disposal practices by councils, water boards, fishers or industry) helped sustain demand and support for ocean pools. The NSW government developed a ring-of-rocks ocean pool for nursing staff of the Coast Hospital (later the Prince Henry Hospital) in response to a 1904 request for a pool to reduce the risk of sharks attacking nurses sea bathing at night on Sydney's Little Bay (Cordia, 1995, p. 46). A surprise encounter with several large sharks convinced a party of male bathers at Kiama ("Dangers of surf bathing," 1910) that "we have had enough of surf-bathing – the baths will do us in future".

Most municipal bylaws required gender-segregated bathing during daylight at both the surf beaches and ocean pools in the early 1900s. Though Newcastle had allocated part of its main beach for mixed bathing, many women still preferred to patronise the ladies bathing place in 1907 (Cushing, 1997). There were, however, increasing reports along the NSW coast of men and women bathing together and ignoring regulations regarding the required bathing costumes.

Mixed bathing was an expression of modernity and conviviality that rapidly gained respectability and acceptance as a safety measure at surf beaches. The increasing numbers of daylight drownings at surf beaches eventually made it seem unwise to segregate women and children from male surf bathers likely to have greater strength and better developed swimming and surf skills.

Beachgoers accustomed to mixed bathing at the surf beaches soon began to expect mixed bathing even in the safer environment of ocean pools. To lure people away from Coogee's surf beach and gender-segregated pools, H. A. Wylie's recently developed pay-to-use ocean pool began offering mixed bathing in 1910 (Slarke, 2001). Decades would, however, pass before mixed bathing became accepted practice in ocean pools, such as the Bondi Baths, which had a strong, longstanding commitment to gender-segregated bathing.

The Gerringong men's pool appears to have been the last of the gender-segregated ocean pools developed along the NSW coast. Gerringong Council's 1910 decision ("Proposed gentlemen's bath," 1910) to act on a boarding-house proprietor's suggestion to make a new "bath for the use of males only" and leave the earlier, larger and more secluded pool solely for the use of women and children was seen locally as "a great boon to the majority of the people as under existing circumstances, many are prevented from making use of the baths owing to the shortness of the hours for both males and females".

Concerns about the respectability of mixed bathing at surf beaches did, however, diminish markedly after the 1911 NSW government inquiry into surf bathing recommended mixed bathing as one of a raft of safety measures, including increased support for surf lifesaving clubs (Booth, 2001a; Huntsman, 2001). A number of influential Boer War veterans, including Major John Bond, were involved in establishing and promoting the volunteer surf lifesaving movement, which received strong support from local government bodies along the NSW coast.

By 1906, NSW had far more surfside councils than in the colonial era. The post-Federation overhaul of the NSW system of local government resulted in the creation of shire councils in 1906 to provide local government in the state's less populated areas and take responsibility for matters such as local roads, regulating sea baths and providing public pools (Larcombe, 1978).

Surfside shires and municipalities seeking to become more suburban shared a conviction that “good convenient baths were probably the greatest factor in determining the popularity and success of any seaside suburb” (“Celebrations end,” 1935). They also knew coastal residents and holidaymakers increasingly expected access to both surf beaches and ocean pools and often would make use of both the pools and the beach, especially where the pools had no admission charges. While keen to capitalise on the attractiveness of their surf beaches, surfside councils knew that roads adequate for horse-drawn vehicles and cyclists needed upgrading to meet the needs of increasing numbers of motorists. Any excavation of a rocky shore that yielded material for road building and produced an ocean pool therefore became an attractive proposition, especially in coalmining or quarrying districts.

Having fewer assets and poorer rating bases than the older municipalities, surfside shires on Sydney’s Northern Beaches and the northern Illawarra were keenly aware of how patrolled beaches and ocean pools differed in their affordances, affordability and development timetables. When suitably trained volunteers were available, a patrolled beach could be established long before any permanent building was created to house the surf lifesaving club. That patrolled beach would, however, exist only as long as there was a surf lifesaving club to patrol it and patrols would be limited to daylight hours on the weekends and public holidays when volunteers were available to patrol.

While a patrolled beach offered a quick, affordable organisational method of providing safety from sharks and rips on summer public holidays and weekends, ocean pools were more permanent structural safety measures. Although surf beaches could host occasional surf carnivals, ocean pools were affordable multifunctional sport and recreation facilities, providing both a ‘pool for competitions and carnivals’ and safe sea bathing except in heavy seas.

Although most councils could not fully fund the creation and operation of ocean pools or surf lifesaving clubs, those costs could be minimised by organising working bees, obtaining grants from the NSW government, seeking public subscriptions, and

staging fundraising events. Any ocean pool developed in a surfside shire was likely to be regarded as a beach safety measure to which human access should not be limited by fences, admission charges, supervised hours, age or gender. Persons older than eight years of age were, however, expected to wear bathing costumes at ocean pools.

In the established coalmining villages of the northern Illawarra, development of ocean pools could precede, parallel or follow the development of surf clubs. Development of surf lifesaving clubs often preceded development of ocean pools in areas such as Sydney's Warringah Shire, which had little pre-existing community infrastructure. Community fundraising and other voluntary work had helped create or maintain the free-to-use ocean pools in Kiama, Gerringong, in the villages of Wombarra, Clifton and Bulli within the Illawarra's Bulli Shire, at Cronulla's Shelly Beach and Oak Park within the Sutherland Shire and at beaches within Sydney's Warringah Shire. In sparsely settled coastal districts, an ocean pool was a significant community centre for local residents, weekend and holiday campers and other visitors.

In mining villages of the Illawarra's Bulli Shire, voluntary labour developed ocean pools and provided material for road building. Rock excavated from the site of an ocean pool envisaged as a "useful addition to the attractions" of Austinmer was used for road building and to provide a base for the "spacious and up to date" ladies dressing sheds ("Austinmer," 1914a) erected by men-only working bees. That ocean pool had "been the privilege of the newly formed Progress Association to obtain for Austinmer with funds subscribed by the residents, house and land owners and visitors" ("Austinmer," 1914b); it also helped to promote local land sales. A little further north at Coledale, men-only working bees held on weekends and on those weekdays "when the coalmine was idle" developed an ocean pool and produced stone for use on the roads ("Bulli Shire Council," 1915).

Australia's most impressive pre-WWI ocean pool was, however, created by Newcastle Council. Newcastle's swimmers and beachgoers (Cushing 1997) had

lobbied for a modern ocean pool to replace the poorly ventilated indoor Corporation Baths. That pool lacked space for spectators to sit or stand, was poorly ventilated, became “a veritable stewpan” in the summer swimming season (“Newcastle notes,” 1904) and was blamed for Newcastle’s declining interest in amateur swimming (Healy, 1915). Its replacement, the Newcastle Ocean Baths, was 100 yards long and 50 yards wide and was opened “in an incomplete state” and free of any admission charges on New Year’s Day 1913 to “give a practical knowledge of the immense capacity the baths would have when complete” (“Newcastle Ocean Baths,” 1912).

Seaside travel and tourism 1901-1914

Getting men, women and children reliant on public transport to surf beaches and ocean pools still required resources well beyond any local government body. As the NSW government provided the railways, trams and some of the buses that transported day-trippers and holidaymakers to enjoy ocean pools in Newcastle, Sydney and the Illawarra, its travel guides (New South Wales Government Railways and Tramways, 1905) predictably promoted both the surf beaches and the ocean pools. Tourist guides produced by steamship companies (Lorck, 1905), tourist associations (*Tourist guide to Kiama*, n.d.) and councils (Wollongong Municipal Council, 1910) also highlighted ocean pools.

Professional photographers’ images of NSW ocean pools and surf beaches were displayed in the early 1900s at Sydney’s Challis House, which housed the NSW Government Tourist Bureau. The black and white and hand-tinted photographs of NSW ocean pools marketed by postcard publishers (such as William Henry Broadhurst in Sydney) and photographic studios (such as Wensemius Photo in Wollongong) portrayed ocean pools as valued venues for recreation, rather than as places of special beauty.

Postcards and photographs confirmed that ocean pools did not need to be large, have elaborate facilities, or be near a sandy beach to be highly prized. The dressing sheds at Wollongong’s men’s baths, so long a source of civic pride, were not

substantial or imposing public buildings. One photograph of the Wollongong men's pool (*Wollongong - Baths – Mens [sic] Baths*, ca. 1900.) shows waves rolling across the wide rock platform over the submerged pool and around a spindly wooden dressing shed braced against the waves. The photographer and the two people seen in that image appear to have visited the pool seeking an encounter with the sublime, rather than pleasures of socialising, bathing or swimming in placid water.

Activity within ocean pools 1901-1914

Commitment to its learn-to-swim programs and to fostering swimming in all NSW schools led the NSW government to train more female teachers as swimming instructors (Collins, Aitken, & Cork, ca. 1991). The number of swimmers grew, the swimmers and swimming clubs diversified, and the demand for convenient pools far outstripped demand for highly controlled swimming environments.

As filtration to maintain an acceptable water quality was not in common use at public pools in the 1920s, pools 'cleansed at every tide' remained important venues for competitive swimming. Elite swimmers understandably preferred the calmer bay and harbour pools to any ocean pool, where "the breakers were coming over every now and then at one end of the bath and the joggle caused thereby made the swimmer's task difficult" (C.H., 1914b).

The Bronte Baths did, however, host the 1905 NSW swimming championships in which Barney Kieran aged 19 swam 500 yards in a world record time (Ramsland, 2007). As Ramsland (2007) points out, Kieran "held the world's records [sic] for all the recognised distances from 200 yards to one mile" in early 1905 and had set his record for the one-mile event at the Bondi Baths in 1904. Men's amateur swimming clubs were however, no longer the only groups based at or staging carnivals at ocean pools.

A Wollongong ocean pool hosted a ladies swimming carnival in 1903 ("A ladies carnival," 1903). Men, women and children attended a 1904 swimming carnival for

women and girls, staged by the management committee of the Kiama Ladies Baths with support from Kiama's men's swimming club ("Swimming Carnival," 1904). Ladies swimming clubs emerged at Sydney's ocean pools only after the NSW Ladies Amateur Swimming Association (NSWLASA) broke away from the male-dominated NSW Amateur Swimming Association (NSWASA) in 1906 to stage carnivals that excluded men as performers, officials or spectators (Raszeja, 1992).

Annette Kellerman, Fanny Durack and Mina Wylie all swam at the 1902 NSW ladies swimming championships. Unlike Kellerman, Wylie and Durack would achieve fame as amateur swimmers. Mina Wylie (daughter of the proprietor of Wylies Baths) was among the promising swimmers at the Wentworth Ladies Club, which swam at the Coogee Ladies Baths during 1907 and Wylies Baths during 1908. Fanny Durack was a member of the Eastern Suburbs Ladies Club, which swam at the Bronte Baths in 1907 and 1910 and was later based at the Bondi Baths. As Lucas & Jobling (1995) noted, she was also "the world's greatest female swimmer over all distances from the free-style sprints to the mile marathon" from 1910 to 1918. Interest in competitive amateur swimming was evidently not confined to unmarried women as the Bondi Ladies Club held races for married ladies from 1908 (Keeble, 1992).

Had the NSWLASA not abandoned its ban on male spectators and re-affiliated with the NSW ASA, Durack and Wylie could not have been selected to swim at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm. The lack of official support from the Australian and NSW governments and the Olympic movement for sending Durack and Wylie and their chaperones to the 1912 Olympics then roused more community concern than the routine exclusion of females from the vast network of fraternal associations and much of public life. Public subscriptions organised by the NSWLASA helped Wylie and Durack raise sufficient funds to travel to Sweden. Their first and second placings in the 100-metres swim in Stockholm Harbour made Wylie and Durack into powerful international role models (Lucas & Jobling, 1995) and enhanced the appeal of Australia's women's amateur swimming clubs.

Amateur clubs were not the only type of swimming club at ocean pools. Clubs affiliated with the NSW League of Swimmers competed for prize money, which meant all their competitors were regarded as professional swimmers (M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 18; Raszeja, 1992). Swimmers fearful of forfeiting their amateur status avoided competing with members of the NSW League of Swimmers.

The League clubs first associated with ocean pools were the South Sydney Ladies, the Waverley District League (based at the Bronte Baths by 1911) and the South Sydney League and Waverley Ladies club (based at Bronte Baths from 1912). Office bearers of the League Swimming Club based at Wollongong's Men's Baths were drawn from the town's two surf lifesaving clubs (Palmer, 1996 pp. 15-16) Wollongong staged a 1913 carnival under League rules ("Wollongong Race," 1913), and the Newcastle League of Swimmers held its second carnival in 1916 ("Newcastle carnival," 1916).

Ocean pools also hosted swimming carnivals for public and private schools. Wollongong's Superior Public School swam at the town's men's pool ("South Coast. Wollongong," 1904). Waverley's ocean pools hosted swimmers from Paddington and Woollahra and the local schools, with 20 schools competing in the PSAAA carnivals at the Bondi Baths. The Waverley Christian Brothers College held a carnival at the Bronte Baths ("Christian Brothers' High School," 1905) and the Sydney Grammar School held its swimming carnivals at the Bondi Baths from 1905 to 1908.

Efforts by newer groups interested in teaching youths to swim and to 'be prepared' to save people at risk of drowning complemented the NSW Education Department's school vacation learn-to-swim programs and learn-to-swim initiatives by schools and swimming clubs. Robert Baden-Powell's experiences during the Boer War influenced his formulation of *Scouting for Boys* (1908) and development of two worldwide youth movements, namely the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. The Boer War and preparation for Australia participation in future wars was also relevant to cadet units formed to train boys for military service both before and after the introduction of universal military training for medically fit Australian males aged 14-

18. These movements all became part of the networks developing and sustaining ocean pools as 'pools for competition and carnivals'. A swimming carnival for Wollongong's cadets drew a crowd of a thousand in 1913 ("Wollongong Cadets' Carnival," 1913).

Swimming clubs, surf lifesaving clubs and the Royal Life Saving Society all made use of ocean pools. The club then known as the Merewether Amateur Swimming and Life-saving Club held a carnival at Newcastle's Bogey Hole in 1911 and 1912 (March, 1983, p. 10). Surf lifesaving clubs also competed at the incomplete Newcastle Ocean Baths (C.H., 1914b). The first batch of Australian candidates for the Royal Life Saving Society's silver medal were examined at the Bondi Baths ("Surf Bathing. Life-saving ability test," 1908). The pool-based Bondi Baths Life-saving club ("Surf Bathing. Bondi Baths Club," 1908) affiliated with the Surf Bathing Association (later known as Surf Life Saving Australia).

Wartime pools and beach cultures, 1914-1919

At the outbreak of World War I in 1914, Australia's defence forces were reluctant to accept female volunteers and women were already excluded from full patrolling membership of mainstream surf lifesaving clubs. Even though the many surf lifesavers enlisting in Australia's volunteer defence forces resulted in a scarcity of lifesavers on the wartime beaches, women were not recruited to patrol the surf beaches. The shortage of lifesavers may, however, have fuelled demands for the development and use of ocean pools.

While construction of ocean pools provided a focus for civic engagement, as well as safe and healthy recreational facilities for men, women, and children, it was not regarded as encouraging men of military service age to avoid enlisting for war service. Fundraising for ocean pools and projects to construct ocean pools therefore continued in tandem with fundraising and other community action to support the war effort.

Men's wartime amateur sports including swimming were largely confined to events for males over or under the age for military service. The wartime implementation of six o'clock closing for NSW hotels (Kirkby, Luckins & McConville, 2010, p. 240) ended the established practice of men's amateur swimming clubs holding their evening club meetings in hotels and fuelled demands for clubhouses at ocean pools.

Women's amateur swimming continued throughout the war years, despite women's involvement in fundraising, other war work and in the campaigns opposing conscription. Fanny Durack set a new women's world record for swimming 500 yards at the Newcastle Ocean Baths even though "the shallowness of the basin makes it unsuitable for putting up fast times" (Healy, 1915). While amateur sport offered only gender-segregated events during the war years, the NSW League of Swimmers held swimming events open to men and women.

During their wartime tour of Australasia, America's famed Hawaiian swimmers, Duke Kahanamoku (the 1912 Olympic champion), and George Cunha performed in a wide range of swimming venues, including the Newcastle Ocean Baths. Their visit affirmed that success in competitive swimming was compatible with the sports of body surfing and board surfing and strengthened links with American swimming and surfing cultures. Their visit was also credited with reviving enthusiasm for amateur swimming in Newcastle (Healy, 1915).

Seeing swimmers on the big silent screens

Britain's beaches, sea baths and swimmers became less relevant as a benchmark for Australia's surfcoasts and swimming as American athletes and American movies became more important in providing Australian men, women and children with shared cultural frameworks and new images of swimmers and divers. While silent cinema familiarised the world's cinemagoers with images of Tarzan swimming and diving, Mack Sennett's bathing beauties popularised mixed bathing, sleeveless bathing costumes and hairless female underarms. In silent movies, Australia's Annette Kellerman, acclaimed as having the world's most perfect body and as the "Diving Venus", swam and dived often wearing little more than strategically

arranged hair or seaweed (E. Gibson, 2005; Kellermann, 1918). Like Tarzan, Kellerman was shown engaged in wild swimming and performing stunts such as cliff dives.

By encouraging filmgoers to emulate the film stars applauded for swimming and diving feats demonstrating their skills, courage and daring, silent cinema promoted interest in physical exercise, sport and in swimwear that allowed free movement. Sydney swimmer, Isabel Letham, who had surfed with Duke Kahanamoku even sought a career as a Hollywood stuntwoman (Stell, 1992, pp. 7-8). Mack Sennett's Keystone Kops inspired comic divers performing at the Newcastle Ocean Baths (Healy, 1915).

Part 2. Pool and beach cultures in the interwar years

Australia commemorated World War I with solemn shrines and statues rather than new public swimming pools (K. Inglis, 1998). It therefore lacks any ocean pool equivalent to the massive Natatorium developed at Honolulu's Waikiki Beach as a war memorial, a recreational space and a 'pool for competition and carnival'.

Though outdoor public pools still dominated Australia's poolscape, the demand for gender-segregated public pools was diminishing. Although some public pools in the older NSW municipalities remained gender-segregated, mixed bathing was standard practice at interwar surf beaches and acceptable and expected at Australia's newer ocean pools.

Campers travelling by train or road were attracted to surfside camping grounds with ocean pools. The NSW railway carriages, displaying photographs (often in sepia) of ocean pools and beaches (Original prints of photographs used in NSW Trains, n.d.), provided transport to some beaches and ocean pools. Newcastle's railway station was only a short walk from Newcastle Ocean Baths and main surf beach. Trains also gave day-trippers and honeymooners ready access from Sydney to the Illawarra beaches, and eventually to Cronulla's beaches. Rail excursions brought tourists to Kiama, where they were entertained by performances at the ocean pool on Blowhole Point. No trains ran from central Sydney to Sydney's Eastern or Northern

Beaches, but trams ran to the Eastern Beaches and the Manly ferry provided access to the Northern Beaches.

Increased focus on surf lifesavers and sandy surf beaches by artists and campaigns to promote tourism and migration overshadowed the appeal of ocean pools beyond the local and regional level. To photographers such as Max Dupain, ocean pools seemed a less interesting, less distinctively Australian and less suitable subjects than the 'heroic' landscapes of patrolled surf beaches with flags, uniformed lifesavers and surf carnivals featuring military-style march pasts.

Dupain did however produce some memorable black and white interwar photographs of ocean pools at Newport and Bondi. His aerial photograph of Newport Beach (J. White & Cawood, 2000, p. 16) in Sydney's Warringah Shire shows its ocean pool as a tiny, fragile oblong contrasting with the sweeping curves of the waves, the beach and the headlands. The pool and the houses are signs of human presence in an unpeopled landscape. Elegant, sharp, and uncluttered, this photograph may have been taken from one of the planes used in the interwar shark-spotting program that triggered inconveniently frequent shark alarms at Sydney's popular beaches. Given his familiarity with Newport Beach (J. White & Cawood, 2000, p. 14), Dupain would have known that pool as the successor to earlier Newport pools washed away by the ocean and hence as a powerful testimony to both the necessity of attending to ocean kinetics in the design and siting of ocean pools and to local enthusiasm for ocean pools.

Interwar clubs, schools and volunteers

Involvement in efforts to support the war effort or oppose conscription enabled many Australian women to acquire organisational skills and interests. In the gender-segregated society of the interwar years, those skills and interests enabled women's clubs and organisations, such as the Country Women's Association (Townsend, 1988b) and ladies amateur swimming clubs, to flourish. The Randwick and Coogee Ladies Amateur Swimming Club began its long association with Coogee's Ladies Baths (Iveson, 2003) and the women's swimming club at the Bondi Baths produced

elite swimmers (Keeble, 1992). On the Mid-North coast of NSW, which lacked ocean pools, women joined women-only surf clubs (Berzins, 1996; Jaggard, 1997).

In Sydney's sparsely settled Warringah Shire, the women's amateur swimming clubs at the ocean pools were important social centres counterbalancing the men's surf clubs. As they catered to women and offered swimming tuition and competition to children, these swimming clubs were family clubs in a way that the men-only surf clubs were not. Men using those pools were often members of the local surf lifesaving club. Surf lifesaving clubs that staged swimming races at their local ocean pool gave their members little incentive to form or join men's swimming clubs.

The surf lifesaving clubs and the wider community were involved in funding, developing, managing and maintaining ocean pools. Construction of a minimalist ring-of-rocks children's pool at South Maroubra on Sydney's Eastern Beaches was a significant event for the local surf lifesaving club (Symonds, 1982, p. 16). By the 1920s, fundraising for ocean pools could include surf carnivals, dances, concerts, raffles, 'queen competitions', baby shows, euchre parties and picture nights at the local cinema. In the Illawarra's Bulli Shire, every child who raised ten shillings towards construction of Thirroul's ocean pool was rewarded with a fountain pen ("Thirroul," 1923a). Volunteer workers generated valued road-making material and more ocean pools at Coledale, Scarborough, Bulli, Thirroul and Woonona in Bulli Shire. The extent of the effort and involvement by people from a wide range of organisations, ages and backgrounds indicates the value placed on ocean pools and the free time and energy available for community purposes.

Volunteer work on ocean pools remained highly gendered. As it was not socially acceptable for women to do labouring work in public, women's support for ocean pools included fundraising and providing afternoon tea at men's working bees. Men's support for ocean pools included participation in fundraising and in working bees, praised as showing "the spirit of Gallipoli" ("Thirroul" 1923b). Recognition of the volunteers' efforts included newspaper reports, public praise, plaques and

testimonial dinners, as well as less formal tributes such as a hotel donating a keg of beer to ease the workers' thirst.

Entrepreneurs and businesses had little involvement in the development of Australia's interwar ocean pools. C.R. Staples & Company Ltd, a real estate firm did, however, create an ocean pool "a concrete swimming basin ... where it's always high tide" to help promote land sales at the Pearl Beach estate on the NSW Central Coast (Erina Shire Development League, [1928], p. 90). In the industrial area of Port Kembla in the Central Illawarra Shire, the E.R. and S. Co. [Electrolytic Refining and Smelting Company of Australia] provided material and a foreman to assist development of an ocean pool to provide safe bathing for Port Kembla's residents and visitors ("Port Kembla," 1921a). Other fundraising for that project included a concert, a dance and the raffle of a sewing machine by the Port Kembla Baths Art Union ("Port Kembla," 1921b, 1921c).

1920s ocean pools

Growing recognition in NSW of the limitations of patrolled beaches for children's recreation prompted development of shallow ocean pools designated as children's pools. Whether freestanding (as at Little Austinmer) or integrated with full-size ocean pools, these children's pools provided safe spaces, where older male or female persons clad in swimwear or street clothing could supervise non-swimming children.

Fears about losing the custom of campers and other holiday makers fuelled moves to create new ocean pools for mixed bathing in the surfside municipalities of Kiama, Shellharbour and Gerringong. Residents and ratepayers of those less affluent Illawarra municipalities nevertheless still expected and received Council action to protect their tradition of gender-segregated bathing (McDermott, 2005). Despite occasional complaints that overcrowded ocean pools had water "thick as soup and not sanitary for bathing in" ("Kiama Council," 1929), many surfside communities from Newcastle to Kiama were convinced that they had, or needed, "one of the finest sea baths in the state".

The most glamorous of the 1920s Illawarra pools was undeniably the Wollongong Continental Baths, the municipality's first pool catering for mixed or 'continental bathing' ("Continental Baths," 1926). Although the development of this pool began with volunteer labour, a substantial loan for town improvements eventually enabled Wollongong Council to take over the project ("Wollongong Continental Baths," 1928).

This capacious swimming pool costing 3,000 pounds and its bathing pavilion costing a further 4,500 pounds ("Official opening of the Continental Baths," 1928; "Wollongong Continental Baths," 1928) were both impressive facilities. This new ocean pool enabled families and friends to swim together day and night, and provided a much-improved venue for water sports and a tourist drawcard. Wollongong's two surf lifesaving clubs jointly created a men's amateur swimming club based at this new pool "perfectly situated between the Illawarra's two most famous surf clubs" (Palmer, 1996, pp. 43, 152). As Chapter 9 will show, the opening of the Continental Baths also diminished enthusiasm and support for Wollongong's gender-segregated ocean pools.

Extended use of interwar ocean pools

Interwar surfside communities faced strong summertime demands for night surfing and for night bathing under electric lights at ocean pools. With electric lighting enabling night-time competitive swimming, groups such as chambers of commerce, swimming clubs, surf lifesaving clubs, schools and scout groups organised night swimming carnivals recognised as tourist attractions.

Most ocean pools were used only in the summer swimming season, when coolness, sociability and glamour were all important considerations. Diving was a very popular sport, recreation and entertainment during the interwar period. As Sprawson (1992, p. 256) notes:

The swallow was the dive of the times, and seemed in some ways to express them. Musicals were full of girls swallow diving from the tops of waterfalls. Jane swallow dived from out of the trees into the eyes of Tarzan.

The risks involved in diving from blocks, springboards and diving towers were then considered quite acceptable, given the value placed on development of diving skills and on the pleasure diving afforded to participants and spectators. The Newcastle district's first ladies diving championship, staged at the Newcastle Ocean Baths as part of Civic Week in 1928, drew a large crowd of spectators ("Civic Week Swimming," 1928).

Despite water temperatures as low as 12 degrees Celsius, competitive club swimming at two Sydney ocean pools had by the late-1920s begun to continue into the winter. The Bronte Splashers raced in the winter even before the better-known Bondi Icebergs began their winter competitions (Andrews, 2004). Outdoor winter swimming also occurred in other Sydney seawater pools. The Domain Baths on Sydney Harbour hosted both the Sydney League Icebergs and the Shiverers, "an offshoot of the Sydney Amateurs who claim to be the oldest established club" ("Winter swimming," 1936).

New depression-era ocean pools

During the depression years, ocean pools provided appealing and affordable summertime leisure activities for men, women and children. The ocean pools provided by Sydney's Warringah Council were popular with residents and visitors. Those visitors included disadvantaged children brought to Sydney's Northern Beaches by church camps and secular social tourism programs, which might include medical treatments. Children attending NSW public schools, who were sent to the Stewart House Preventorium in the hope of improving their health, learnt to swim at the South Curl Curl pool. Sam Hood (1935) photographed some of those children at the pool with Olympic swimmer Harold Hardwick, compiler of the NSW Education Department's manual on swimming (Hardwick, 1938).

Ocean pools provided venues for recreation, sport and the training of surf lifesavers, boosted coastal populations, tourism, land sales and property values and the ability of coastal councils to raise revenue from their residential rates and attract campers to their council camping grounds. Projects to develop ocean pools therefore attracted NSW government funding for 1930s emergency relief work and the later schemes for public works. The NSW Minister for Public Works and Local Government, E. S. Spooner, was a self-proclaimed enthusiast for ocean pools, who enjoyed taking his children and their governess to swim at the Mona Vale pool on Sydney's Northern Beaches (Spooner, 2001).

Projects to provide work for unemployed men thus helped satisfy the depression-era demand for ocean pools. Les Murray's poem 'The Ocean Baths' (Murray, 1989) acknowledges the "men on relief for years, trapping the sea in oblongs" making "pool-cementing last, neap tide by neap, all through the Depression". Thanks to those workers, new ocean pools appeared north of Newcastle and south of Gerringong, and new ocean pools for mixed bathing were developed in the older surfside municipalities of Randwick, Shellharbour, Kiama and Gerringong.

Local people, progress associations and surf lifesaving clubs strongly supported ocean pool development projects managed by surfside councils. Development of the Blue Pool at Bermagui on the far south coast of NSW involved considerable voluntary labour by the local surf lifesaving club, a generous donation from a local philanthropist, and funding from the NSW government (Hearn, 1996). If there is less evidence of swimming club involvement with these depression-era ocean pool projects, it is because the progress associations and surf lifesaving clubs often existed prior to the development of ocean pools, which allowed the emergence of a swimming club.

Because of the sites that ocean pools occupied, even government funding and approval of construction plans produced little standardisation of ocean pools created by unemployment relief projects or public works schemes. Development of rather modest pools served local residents and helped attract visitors to hotels,

guesthouses and council camping grounds at Shellharbour, at Gerringong's Warri Beach and at Bermagui. More dazzling ocean pool development projects included Sydney's awesomely large North Narrabeen pool with its distinctive boardwalk and a new (110-yard by 40-yard) pool at Kiama.

As I will show, the Newcastle Ocean Baths influenced the actor-networks that developed ocean pools at Merewether and to the north of Newcastle at Forster in the 1930s. Although both the Merewether and the Forster ocean pool projects were designed and managed by council engineers and made use of the emergency relief scheme, the resultant pools reflected very different approaches to public pool design and operation as well as reflecting different eras of the Newcastle Ocean Baths.

Dissatisfied with their original small ocean pool, Merewether's 9,000 inhabitants had wanted a 'bigger and better' and admission-free version of Newcastle Ocean Baths at their own beach ever since the 1930s upgrade to Newcastle's sewerage system ended decades of pollution of Merewether Beach (Dixon, ca.1935). The new free-to-use Merewether Ocean Baths had a wide cement promenade separating the 55-yard wide, 110-yard long main pool from the 35-yard wide, 110-yard long children's pool. For Merewether's mayor, the new ocean pool "among the largest in the state" and "big enough to hold the largest swimming events" was the "greatest advertisement for Merewether as a residential suburb" ("Celebrations end", 1935).

The pool was an undeniably good investment for the Merewether municipality, which had borrowed 1,000 pounds from the NSW government repayable at 3% over 15 years and excavated road-building material valued at 2,500 pounds from the pool site, using free relief work valued at 3,500 pounds ("Celebrations end", 1935). Merewether Council had then sought a NSW government grant to fund the construction of dressing sheds at the pool and equipped the pool with a range of novelties, similar to the extensive range of pool toys in the popular harbour-side Wonder Pool at Manly (Dixon, ca. 1935). Merewether residents and visitors had little incentive to walk, drive or catch a tram to the pay-to-use Newcastle Ocean

Baths, which lacked a children's pool prior to development of the adjoining free-to-use Canoe Pool and Geographical pool ("Council prepares," 1939)



Figure 5-2. Waiting for the sea to fill the children's pool at the Merewether Ocean Baths

Development of the ocean pool, camping ground and a dance casino at Forster further to the north was part of Stroud Shire Council's strategy to attract tourists to a surfside community without convenient public transport networks. The NSW government approved Stroud Shire's use of relief workers (many of whom appear to have been Aboriginal men) and provided an advance of 2,500 pounds for the pool project (Finn, ca. 2006, p. 30). Council later used day labour to construct an adjoining dance casino controlled by the pool staff (Finn, ca. 2006, p. 30).

The Forster Ocean Baths catered for Olympic swimming requirements, had a diving board and floodlighting for night swimming. Buildings in a Spanish Mission style offered clubrooms, change rooms, lockers, cubicles and showers. Costumes and towels could be hired. Local guesthouses proudly advertised their proximity to the most elaborate ocean pool complex ever constructed on the NSW coast north of Newcastle.

Although admission charges applied at the post-1922 Newcastle Ocean Baths, the lido-like Forster Ocean Baths is a rare instance of a pay-to-use pool being created with unemployment relief funds. Adults paid threepence and children under 14 paid a penny to use the pool, and seasonal, monthly and weekly tickets were available (Finn, ca. 2006, p. 30). Stroud Shire Council records do not indicate whether those charges impacted any more severely on the Shire's Aboriginal residents than on its other residents. For their paying customers, the Forster Ocean Baths were popular and convivial.

Pay-to-swim ocean pools had remained unpopular in the Illawarra, where the introduction of admission charges at the Continental Baths provoked many complaints. By the late-1930s, some surfside councils in the Illawarra were, however, doubting the cost effectiveness of attempting to maintain all their ocean pools. The mobilisation of actor-networks once associated with ocean pools to support an off-beach seawater pool or favour one Illawarra ocean pool over another is discussed in Chapter 9.

Regardless of their sites, seawater pools did not provide the freshwater required to ensure that late-1930s record swims would be recognised worldwide. Official records could, however, be set in the filtered, stillwater, outdoor Australian pools that Lewi (2008, p. 285-286) designates as modernist icons, namely the North Sydney Olympic pool used for the 1938 Empire Games¹ and Western Australia's first Olympic Pool, the Lord Forrest Olympic Pool at Kalgoorlie.

Interwar ocean pools and 'the shark menace'

Enthusiastic use of interwar ocean pools was reinforced by well-publicised shark attacks and the frequency of shark alarms that brought surf bathers out of the water at the patrolled beaches. NSW government funding for the development of free-to-use ocean pools discouraged development of pay-to-use shark-netted enclosures like the one linked to Coogee's short-lived interwar pleasure pier (Allan

¹ The North Sydney Olympic Pool was filled with freshwater rather than harbour water for the Empire Games (M. G. Phillips, 2008, p. 131).

2004, pp. 103-110). New initiatives to reduce the 'shark menace' did not, however, reduce the demand for ocean pools.

In the mid-1930s, the NSW government reduced the amount of shark bait being added to NSW coastal waters by requiring councils to incinerate garbage or send it to landfill rather than dumping it in coastal waters (Curby & Macleod, 2003). As it did not ban the continuing discharge of untreated sewage, abattoir waste and industrial waste into the sea, both pollution and sharks remained concerns at Sydney's Eastern Beaches.

The NSW government did, however, commence shark-meshing Sydney's metropolitan beaches in the late-1930s (M. Green, Ganassin, & Reid, 2009). This reduced both shark attacks and complaints about the frequency of shark alarms (Huntsman, 2001, pp. 580-581). Displays of sharks caught by other professional and amateur fishers or shark meshing contactors all attracted admiring crowds.

The unobtrusive shark-meshing nets never in themselves attained the iconic status of the patrolled beaches or the ocean pools. Being a NSW government service rather than a local initiative, shark meshing was perceived as adding to beach safety, rather than diminishing either the need or the demand for patrolled beaches or ocean pools. Outside Sydney, the twentieth-century combination of a patrolled beach and an ocean pool continued to provide an affordable means of satisfying residents' and visitors' demands for safe bathing/swimming venues and promoting tourism and residential development on the NSW coast.

Years of war 1939-1945

World War II demonstrated the durability of ocean pools compared to other anti-shark measures. Surf lifesavers again disappeared from the beaches, there was no shark meshing at metropolitan Sydney beaches for three years, and wartime metal shortages caused the demise of the Coogee shark net (M. Green, Ganassin & Reid, 2009). Coastal tourism and use of beaches and ocean pools diminished amid the

demands of war service, the imposition of petrol rationing in 1940, redirection of volunteer efforts to war works, blackout requirements (which ruled out night swimming under lights) and holiday restrictions imposed by the Commonwealth Government. Barbed wire and tank traps appeared on Australia's surf beaches and improvements to facilities at ocean pools required approval from the Department of War Organisation.

NSW ocean pools completed in the war years included the massive Olympic pool at Kiama and the Mid-North coast's more modest Black Head pool, hailed as "one of the best on the coast" ("Black Head rock pool," 1940). As surf lifesaving clubs were far more common than swimming clubs on the NSW North Coast, the opening race at the Black Head pool was between the Black Head, Taree-Old Bar and Tuncurry surf lifesaving clubs. Manning Shire residents were convinced that the Black Head pool was "a great addition to the beach" ("Black Head Surf Club," 1942) and "a great boon to those who visit this pretty seaside resort" ("Local & general news," 1941). The Black Head pool was, however, one of the NSW ocean pools that fell into disrepair during the war years.

Ocean pools and other public pools retained some glamour and excitement during the war thanks to school swimming competitions, carnivals for scouts and guides, learn-to-swim programs, fundraising events and service carnivals. Ocean pools in Newcastle, the Mid-North coast, Sydney, and the Illawarra were patronised by foreign servicemen and women stationed in Australia as well as by local residents. Performances by Annette Kellerman and her Kellermanettes (E. Gibson, 2005, p. 202-203) at public pools in war-time Australia promoted interest in water ballet, the forerunner of synchronised swimming.

Coastal tourism, swimming clubs, surf lifesaving clubs, sport and patronage of ocean pools and learn-to swim programs began regaining vigour towards the end of WWII. Convinced that swimming provided "mental relaxation" via "a wonderful recreation" that exercised "every muscle in the body" while wearing "a minimum of clothing" enabling the sun's rays to "act as God's own tonic to the tissues", the NSW

ASA insisted that there was no project “of more National importance than construction of swimming pools throughout the country” (“Learn to swim,” 1944). Its members had for years conducted learn-to-swim campaigns in NSW country districts.

New life in ocean pools, 1946-1949

Along the post-war Australian coast, there was widespread enthusiasm for increased migration, National Fitness programs, and greater development of surfside tourism. As barbed wire and tank traps were removed from post-war surf beaches, the floodlights were again turned on at the ocean pools. Beaches and public pools were significant as safe, affordable, readily accessible, convivial public places amid the post-war housing shortage and the continuing rationing of petrol. Although beaches in Newcastle, Wollongong and Sydney were shark-meshed from 1949, demand for patrolled beaches and ocean pools remained evident in NSW both within and outside the shark-meshed areas.

Surf lifesaving, learn-to-swim programs and traditional wave-play remained as relevant at post-war ocean pools as the traditions of competitive water sports and ‘trick and fancy swimming’. Australia’s 1948 Olympic water polo team included members of the Bondi Amateur Swimming Club (Keeble, 1992). Innovative coaching techniques at the ocean pool used by the Palm Beach Amateur Swimming Club helped other swimmers prepare for the 1948 Olympics (Brawley, 1996; M. G. Phillips, 2008, pp. 77, 80).

When Randwick Council used part of the funds it received as Commonwealth Government compensation for war-time damage to its beaches to create a new ocean pool on Coogee Bay (McDermott, 2006), it brought the total number of ocean pools on that bay to four. On the beach once renowned for its pay-to-use shark net, Coogee’s youngest ocean pool occupies the classic twentieth-century position on the rocks at the southern end of a shark-meshed NSW beach and incorporates a children’s pool. Sited below the Coogee Surf Life Saving Club, this pool clearly demonstrates the close relationship between three no-fee beach safety

measures, namely ocean pools, the surf lifesaving movement and shark meshing. Yet this pool also flagged the end of an era, as few post-war public pools would be ocean pools.

Conclusions

In the early twentieth-century, both the development of the volunteer surf lifesaving movement and the ocean pools were driven by concerns to economically offer sea bathers safety from the dangers posed by sharks and rips along the NSW coast. All the measures that could be applied to improve the safety and pleasure of the coast's bathers, swimmers and surfers were seen as complementary. There was no conflict between an ocean pool's identity as a 'wild but safe enough surfside pool' and a 'public pool for competition and carnival' used by surf lifesaving clubs as well as swimming clubs and schools. Having actor-networks that included swimming champions and masculine icons such as lifesavers or winter swimmers meant Australian ocean pools were less likely than their South African counterparts to be characterised as 'granny pools' best suited to women and children.

Early twentieth-century innovations that increased the conviviality of ocean pools included broader-minded attitudes to social mixing and body display, greater use of ocean pools by a wider range of schools, clubs and community groups, night bathing under lights and increasing development of pools for children's use. Even though swimming clubs and surf lifesaving clubs remained gender-segregated, ocean pools and surf beaches were becoming less gendered places.

Most of the NSW ocean pools created before 1950 remain in use today. The next chapter discusses new patterns and approaches to the development, use, patronage and representations of ocean pools in the 1950s and 1960s.

Chapter 6. Rethinking surf, beaches and ocean pools, 1950-1969

Introduction

By ending petrol rationing in February 1950 (Froude, 2002), Australia's newly elected Liberal-Country Party government under Prime Minister Bob Menzies flagged a turn away from the post-war austerity. That coalition of parties would continue to govern Australia throughout the 1950s and 1960s, a period of stability, prosperity and increasingly comfortable (sub)urban life. This chapter shows how and why Australia's ocean pools and their actor-networks (including the frameworks, influences and communities outlined in Figure 6-1) changed during this period.



Figure 6-1. Frameworks, influences and community relevant to Australia's ocean pools, 1950-1969

The globalising influences the 1950s and 1960s included the Australian government's massive post-war migration program and a consumer culture

accommodating rapid technological changes. Although “the sprawl of suburbia... was not the gadget land of modern suburbia” (Townsend, 1988a, p. 11), Australians of the 1950s and 1960s acquired new types of recreational equipment such as Malibu surfboards, fast-drying nylon swimwear, snorkelling gear, wetsuits, scuba equipment, more affordable colour photography, televisions, home movies, cars and backyard pools.

As families were larger, houses smaller, cars fewer, and fears of traffic and ‘stranger danger’ less than at present, Australian children of the 1950s had a large amount of freedom, generally played outside the home, could wander their neighbourhood with their friends and investigate their environment and its affordances for play (Tandy, 1999). When outdoor play often involved riding bikes and building and using tree houses and billycarts, “stitches gave the injured child a certain glory”, while “broken bones carried kudos” (Townsend, 1988, p. 57). Minor injuries remained a far lesser concern for parents than childhood illnesses, even though the post-war availability of vaccines and antibiotics reduced the risk of death in childhood.

Australia’s beach cultures became more influenced by the well-publicised beach and surf cultures of California, Hawaii and Florida than by the British seaside, or even the Mediterranean seashores. Enthusiasm for American popular culture was enhanced by improved access to American films, music, records, literature, entertainers and television programs. Australia’s glocalised surf and beach cultures thus drew on knowledge of appealing activities, fashions and forms of masculinity acquired more from mass media or returned travellers than from the few migrants and tourists arriving from the United States.

Board surfing came to be seen as more glamorous than body surfing, swimming or surf lifesaving, but remained a predominately male activity. The new surfboard riding culture offered an appealing individualistic and mobile lifestyle, contrasting with the rather regimented club life associated with the swimming clubs based at Australia’s ocean pools or the surf lifesaving clubs patrolling surf beaches and

competing in surf carnivals. Surfing movies, magazines and amateur and professional boardsurfing competitions fuelled new relationships with surfcoasts.

Palm trees came to seem more modern and appealing than the Norfolk Island Pines strongly associated with popular surf beaches in NSW, on Queensland's Gold Coast and around Perth. With Australia's media and airlines helping to promote new holiday destinations such as Queensland's Barrier Reef and Gold Coast, glamorous beach holidays were less likely to be sought on the NSW surfcoast (R. White, 2005, pp. 170-171, 2009). Ongoing enthusiasm and support for the now-classic NSW family beach (complete with patrolled beach, Norfolk Island Pines and an ocean pool) can be viewed as a form of resistance to more globalised ideals of the beach.

An increasingly diverse and globalised society made more diverse demands of both surfcoasts and public pools. As a result, some projects to develop or extend ocean pools began to experience what Latour (1996) terms 'recruitment difficulties'. As well as affordability issues, there were now ethical concerns regarding the development of any ocean pool suspected of increasing the need for surf rescues or damaging coastal environments, amenity or human health. Water supply projects, good rains in catchment areas and water pricing regimes that encouraged greater use of townwater meant the ecological footprint of swimming pools was no longer the key to their affordability. In Australia, though not in South Africa, development of a new ocean pool thus became less of a standard procedure and more of what Latour (1996) terms an 'innovative project'.

As many of the actors associated with development of ocean pools were easily recruited to projects to construct other types of public pools, new ocean pools often did not remain their local community's best swimming pool for long. The next section considers Australia's expanding poolscape and the evolving roles of public pools on Australia's leisure coasts.

Australia's expanding poolscape

Australia's post-war housing crisis, the enthusiasm of developers and owner-builders, and the availability of affordable suburban land and motor transport fuelled rapid suburbanisation. As NSW coastal cities expanded inland, swimming clubs sprouted at the new chlorinated freshwater public pools, which were normally outdoors and unheated. While World War I had been commemorated with shrines and statues, building a new public swimming pool was seen as providing a very appropriate commemorative public place for lives lost in World War II (K. Inglis, 1998), as well as a venue for sport and recreation.

Few of these new public pools were ocean pools. Unlike the ocean pools had water year-round and provided a year-round habitat for non-human lifeforms of the coast and sea, chlorinated indoor and outdoor freshwater pools were usually only filled and used in summer and left empty over winter.

Summertime demands on ocean pools and beaches lessened as increasing numbers of inland suburban and regional areas acquired outdoor, unheated, uncovered, chlorinated, freshwater public and private pools. Sydney's newer inland public pools (Roberts, 2001) meant inland Sydneysiders had less incentive to head for the coast for sport, training or simply to cool off at the beach or ocean pools on hot summer days or nights. Swimmers in Hunter Valley towns like Singleton and Kurri Kurri likewise trained and competed in their local public pools and so had less incentive to travel to the more distant and more glamorous Newcastle Ocean Baths.

While the variety, distribution and use of public pools changed, American influences had much less impact on Australia's public pools and pool cultures than on its surfcoasts and surf cultures. Diving boards, diving towers and children's splash pools all enhanced the appeal of outdoor public pools, which were regarded as highly desirable community facilities contributing significantly to local sport, recreation and identity as well as to national fitness and the development of champion swimmers.

Once private pools became as affordable as a car, increasing numbers of homeowners became pool owners. As such, they were able to control the amount of chlorine and the quality of water in their pool, select the people with whom they shared the pool, choose their own pool toys, pool lighting and decide whether to swim nude or in some form of swimming costume.

From the late 1950s, bright blue backyard pools were increasingly obvious to anyone flying over Australia's coastal cities. The inflatable paddling pools and low-cost 'cheap and cheerful' above-ground pools offered cool affordable fun at home on hot summer days and still seemed less of an exotic luxury than home air-conditioning. The Bondi Icebergs and Olympic swimming champion Dawn Fraser appeared in advertisements for the above-ground pools now regarded as suburban icons (Bedwell, 1992). Inground pools signified greater prosperity and added more to the value of the family home, the main form of saving and investment for most Australian families. Australia's coastal camping grounds, caravan parks, guesthouses, hotels and motels also acquired private pools filled with town water.

New people and practices at summertime ocean pools

While the range of coastal holiday accommodation and activities was expanding and diversifying, ready access to ocean pools still helped attract holidaymakers to NSW coastal camping grounds, providing the rather modest standard of holiday comfort then sought by campers and the increasing numbers of caravanners (R. White, 2009). For example, Wombarra in the Illawarra was rated as "a very special place" to camp in the 1950s because it had "a rock pool, council laundry and toilets and a small sandy beach and a lot of oysters on the rocks" (Solo, 2001).

Not only were beaches free and the public pools free or inexpensive, they were safe, convivial spaces where people from a wide variety of ages and backgrounds could readily mingle. At Australia's public pools, limited funds and language skills mattered less than graceful dives, elegant swimming styles, the sight of beautiful bodies or the pleasures of being immersed in cool water on a hot day. The NSW coast's beaches and public pools were popular and important as meeting grounds

for singles and as family-friendly spaces and places, where children could go with their mates.

For post-war European migrants who lacked swimming skills or surf skills and preferred more formalised leisure spaces, the beach promenades, picnic grounds and ocean pools along the NSW coast were often more familiar and appealing than patrolled or unpatrolled surf beaches. Mediterranean and middle-European faces and fashions became far more common at ocean pools on Sydney's Eastern Beaches and in the Illawarra. Hungarian migrants brought a new style to water polo at the Bronte Baths (Rockwell, 2008). Newcastle's Greek Orthodox and Macedonian Orthodox communities began holding Epiphany ceremonies at the Newcastle Bogey Hole. Membership of surf lifesaving clubs, however, remained predominately Anglo-Celtic.

Knowing how to use an ocean pool was not a problem. Even children and adults who had never before seen sea or surf regarded ocean pools as appealing adventure playgrounds. This is evident in accounts of the Christmas Camps run by the NSW Aboriginal Welfare Board that brought Aboriginal children from inland NSW to Sydney's Northern Beaches in the 1950s and 1960s. Photographs of these camps in the Board's *Dawn* magazine show smiling girls in the water at an ocean pool and boys jumping into the water from Collaroy pool's seaward edge or leaning against the chains of the Narrabeen pool ("Christmas camp at Collaroy," 1953; "15 wonderful days," 1966). Children attending the 1966 and 1968 summer camps reportedly "loved going to the rock pool and the beach at Narrabeen" ("Home is far away," 1968).

The Collaroy and Narrabeen ocean pools were clearly regarded as safe and pleasurable environments by both the organisers and the participants in those camps. Those children appear to have quickly recognised the potential for pleasure in ocean pools, which may have been more exciting and more accessible than any public pool they knew. As ocean pools still seemed far safer playgrounds than unpatrolled surf beaches, shark-inhabited waters or even suburban streets, parents

sometimes required their children to demonstrate that they could swim competently at their local ocean pool before permitting them to use foam or fibreglass surf boards.

Despite the apparent simplicity, calmness and egalitarianism of the Australian beach holiday, the range of beach pleasures and facilities was expanding well beyond the combination of 'dressing pavilions, rock swimming pools, refreshments' cited on NSW tourist maps in the early 1950s. Demand for hired swimming costumes and convenient dressing pavilions also declined as beachgoers changed their clothes behind towels, put street wear on over the top of quick-drying swimwear, or used cars as change rooms.

Fashions in hair, makeup, foundation garments and other clothing still posed significant barriers to women having quick swims at ocean pools or beaches. Enthusiasm for gender-segregated bathing and swimming pools had, however, disappeared except at Coogee Bay, which offered two ocean pools open to all and two gender-segregated ocean pools. McIvers Baths remained reserved solely for women and children, while the Giles Baths complex had a rock pool reserved solely for men.

Amateur swimming clubs based at ocean pools had little difficulty attracting members. In 1950, the largest swimming club in the Sydney metropolitan area was the Dee Why Ladies Club with 263 members (Wye, 2002). A few years after its formation in 1963, the Newport Amateur Swimming Club on Sydney's Northern Beaches, had 300 members participating in its weekly races (Wye, 2002). Lisa Forrest (2008), who captained Australia's swimming team at the 1980 Moscow Olympics as a 16-year-old, discovered the joys of competitive swimming at the Dee Why Baths. She believes (Forrest, 2001) that "for parents there was something safe about a child starting the sport that way, something less obsessive about doing laps by the ocean. After all, the surf sparkled just beyond".

Isabel Letham and the ladies swimming clubs at the Freshwater and Dee Why ocean pools nurtured synchronised swimming (G. Gordon, 2000; Wye, 2002). Pat Nichol, “one of the few coaches of that fledgling sport in those years” (Stell, 1992, p. 14), ran 1960s Sunday afternoon synchronised swimming classes at the “somewhat murky Freshwater rock pool”. One of her pupils was Donella Burrige, who became an Australian champion, a 1984 Olympic competitor and a major figure in Australian synchronised swimming (Stell, 1992, p. 19).

As the NSW State Swimming Association then only sanctioned gender-segregated swimming clubs, the swimming clubs formed at the Curl Curl and Queenscliff ocean pool on Sydney’s Northern Beaches in the early 1960s had to be officially divided into men’s and women’s sections (G. Gordon, 2000, p. 93). It was only after the NSW women’s and men’s amateur swimming associations merged to form the NSW Amateur Swimming Association in 1964-65, that gender-segregated amateur swimming clubs were permitted to amalgamate. Ladies Clubs persisted at Coogee’s McIvers Baths leased and operated by the Randwick and Coogee Ladies Club and at the Narrabeen and Dee Why ocean pools on Sydney’s Northern Beaches.

Decisions to retain separate club identities did not prevent men’s clubs and women’s clubs based at the same ocean pool from working together. The Dee Why men’s and women’s clubs held joint swimming races, social events and presentation functions that recognised the interrelationships between their members (Wye, 2002). Officials of both the men’s and women’s swimming clubs at the Freshwater ocean pool and 3 ex-officio representatives of Warringah’s Council served on the Trust set up in 1956 for the care, control and management of the ocean pool, its clubhouse and the nearby park. The two clubs were responsible for the internal maintenance of their clubhouse and the Council for any external repairs and painting (Mayne-Wilson & Associates, 1999).

Swimming clubs continued to engage in a wide range of activities besides water sports and learn-to-swim programs. Women’s swimming clubs based at the Dee Why pool and at Merewether Ocean Baths offered year-round recreation such as

dances, keep fit activities, mahjong and netball (G. Gordon, 2000, pp. 77-78; Wye, 2002; March, 1983). The Bondi Icebergs winter swimming club likewise developed subsidiary handball, tennis, golf, cricket and bowls clubs and organised picnics with athletic events for its members (Andrews, 2004, pp. 37-39, 72).

While early twentieth-century NSW had very few high schools, from the 1950s a growing number of government and private high schools shared spring and summertime use of the ocean pools with primary schools and swimming clubs. As Wyong Shire's only public pool until 1968, The Entrance Ocean Baths hosted swimming classes for students from the Wyong High School (Bennett, 1969). Until Maclean acquired its own public pool, students at Maclean High School on the NSW North Coast swam at the Yamba ocean pool (McSwan, 1978 & 2001).

Ocean pools were not just attractive to children, clubs, schools, family groups and holidaymakers. For nurses living in onsite accommodation at Sydney's Coast Hospital (Cordia, 1995) and at other hospitals near ocean pools, these pools provided inexpensive recreational and social venues. For most women, public pools were welcoming, respectable social spaces during the day and night. During the 1950s and 1960s, many other public spaces were much less accessible and less welcoming as recreational venues for women. Until the traditional 'men-only' hotels started to disappear in the 1960s, custom largely limited female hotel patrons in NSW to a ladies lounge or a lounge separate from a hotel's public bar (Kirkby, Luckins, & McConville, 2010). Moreover, unlike public pools, NSW hotels had restricted trading hours and were not permitted to open all day on Sundays until the 1970s.

Men's drinking cultures and winter swimming networks

Although draught beer was Australia's preferred form of alcohol in the 1950s and 1960s, hotels in NSW were legally required to close at 6 p.m. on Saturdays and weekdays until the mid-1950s, permitted to open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. only from 1963, and could not legally open all-day on Sundays until 1979 (Kirkby, Luckins & McConville, 2010). Those legal restrictions did not prevent people getting a drink

after hours or on Sundays, but they did foster a masculinist culture of heavy drinking that was not confined to hotels.

From the 1950s, the burgeoning number of non-proprietary registered clubs with liquor licences offered new venues for legal drinking outside hotel opening hours. While lacking the social cachet of the country clubs that Wiltse (2007) describes in the United States, these members-only clubs offered their predominantly male members a social space with easy access to alcohol. From the middle of the twentieth century, gambling via poker machines at NSW licensed clubs was sustaining the professional Rugby League competition (Kirkby, Luckins, & McConville, 2012, p. 224).

Members of the Bondi Icebergs Winter Swimming Club's Social Committee routinely breached the law in the early 1950s by buying draught beer at a local hotel on Saturday mornings, pouring that beer into a collection of empty beer bottles, capping the bottles and storing them to be drunk after their Sunday races (Andrews, 2004, p. 76). To keep their traditional Sunday morning drinking practices within the law, the Bondi Icebergs Club eventually acquired a liquor licence that enabled the club to sell alcohol to members of the public as well as club members and to install the income-generating poker machines (Andrews, 2004, p. 76). Members of the Bondi Icebergs volunteered to record the takings from the poker machines prior to the club's Sunday swimming events and act as barmen, cellar-men, storemen and dishwashers (Andrews, 2004, p. 73)

NSW golf clubs, lawn bowls clubs, sailing clubs, rowing clubs and returned servicemen's organisations also enthusiastically acquired liquor licences. Some, including the Dee Why RSL club and the Harbord Diggers club on Sydney's Northern Beaches, developed swim teams that swam in summer at their local ocean pool. The licensed Maroubra Seals club, formed to help support Sydney's Maroubra and South Maroubra surf lifesaving clubs (Symonds, 1982), gave rise to a winter swimming club.

The amateur swimming clubs' lack of interest in liquor licences undoubtedly reflected both their vision of amateurism, their many members under the legal drinking age, and a greater proportion of adult members less engaged with drinking culture than lawn bowlers, golfers or sailing enthusiasts. Although they only admitted male adults as full members, surf lifesaving clubs in NSW likewise believed their visions of volunteerism and their club resources were not compatible with operating licensed clubs open to the public (Booth, 2006, p. 99).

Surf lifesaving clubs did, however, operate members-only bars and often opened them on Sundays to cater for the winter swimming clubs that offered surf lifesavers a way to keep fit during the off-season. Although winter swimmers rejected wet suits and heated pools, they enjoyed a few drinks after their races. In line with a widespread belief that odd behaviour was more socially acceptable if it raised funds for charity, many winter swimming clubs also raised funds for a local charity.

Following the example set by the Bronte Splashers and the Bondi Icebergs, winter swimming clubs gave themselves less formal names than the summertime amateur swimming clubs. By the 1960s, ocean pools at Sydney's Eastern Beaches hosted a set of winter swimming clubs that included the Bondi Icebergs, Bronte Splashers, Coogee Penguins, Clovelly Eskimos, Maroubra Seals and South Maroubra Dolphins. Sydney's Northern Beaches had the Cool Cats winter swimming club at the North Curl Curl pool and the Collaroy Crabs winter swimming club that started as an adjunct to the Men's Amateur Swimming Club at the Collaroy pool. The Tuggerah Tuffs winter swimming club swam at The Entrance Ocean Baths on the NSW Central Coast. The Illawarra's ocean pools hosted the Wollongong Whales, the Brass Monkeys (now known as Bulli Park Sea Lions), Austinmer Otters, Corrimal Marlins and the Coledale Oysters. Winter swimming clubs and year-round swimmers increasingly came to be seen as the appropriate spokespeople for ocean pools that amateur swimming clubs used only in the summer.

Winter swimming also attracted some elite amateur swimmers who saw year-round training as essential for achieving Olympic success and times comparable with those

of American college swimmers. Heated pools of elite standard were, however, so scarce in 1960s Australia that the Olympic swimming team did its winter training in the tropical waters of Townsville's outdoor seaside Tobruk Memorial Baths (H. Gordon, 1994, pp. 240-241). Sydney's lack of heated swimming pools led trainers such as Forbes Carlile (2004) to encourage:

enthusiastic and hardy pupils to train in the ocean and at rock pools at such places as Coogee Surf Lifesaving Club, Clovelly Inlet, and Bronte. During winter, the water was often very cold with the temperature as low as 13°C. There were no lights, and often storm-surf presented the real possibility of a swimmer being washed out of the pool into the ocean. Some, including Brian Browne and John Devitt who became Olympic 100m Gold medalist, trained consistently, twice daily in most weathers. In 1955, Brian left Australia to swim at the University of Michigan.

The fear of sharks still restricted the practice of open-water swimming. As NSW surf beaches were neither patrolled nor shark meshed during winter, the ocean pools offered NSW winter swimmers the best available protection against the risk of shark attack.

Preserving amateur status, nevertheless, remained far less of a concern for winter swimming clubs and surf lifesaving clubs than for amateur swimming clubs. The best-known winter swimming club, the Bondi Icebergs, put so little stock in the amateur/professional distinctions that they happily offered swimmers tangible prizes such as "all the alcohol you can drink for a week" (Andrews, 2004, p. 121).

Shared & entangled interests in ocean pools

The relationships between clubs sharing an ocean pool could be extensive, close, complex and tangled. Howard Hansen, the Curl Curl Amateur Swimming Club's first president was an active surf lifesaving club member, who coached swimmers at the South Curl Curl Pool (G. Gordon, 2000, p. 93; Mayne-Wilson & Associates, 1999). South Curl Curl Life Saving Club assisted the swimming club financially and allowed

it to use the surf club for meetings, social functions and storing equipment (G. Gordon, 2000, p. 93).

Boys graduating from a learn-to-swim program run by a ladies amateur swimming club in the 1950s and 1960s and aspiring to become surf lifesavers had the option of joining an amateur swimming club that served as talent spotters for surf lifesaving clubs with no juvenile members. Women and girls were welcomed as members of swimming clubs and the Royal Life Saving Society, but remained excluded from full membership of mainstream surf lifesaving clubs until 1980.

The difficulties in attracting and retaining adult members eventually led so many surf lifesaving clubs to recruit juvenile members (surf club nippers) that the Surf Life Saving Association established a national nipper program. By accepting girls as 'nipperettes', the men-only surf lifesaving clubs began the slow process of transforming themselves into more family-oriented clubs. In NSW, growing enthusiasm for year-round swimming and nipper programs strengthened the linkages between the ocean pools, winter swimming clubs and the surf lifesaving clubs.

While still valued as refuges from the open sea, ocean pools were increasingly seen as convenient entry points to the sea and exit points from it for surfers, swimmers and scuba divers. A black and white photograph by Max Dupain (J. White & Cawood, 2000, p. 39) shows the Bondi Baths in the 1950s as a place of pleasure that people may access from the sea.

The permits and zoning schemes at NSW beaches in the 1960s enlisted certain ocean pools in their attempts to segregate surf craft from surf bathers. At Sydney's Palm Beach, Warringah Council banned the use of surfboards in the area from the ocean pool to the Pavilion from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends (Brawley, 1996, pp. 158). Surfers in Newcastle acquired permits to surf the waves behind the Newcastle Ocean Baths (Melehan, 1999).

Still persuasive sharks

Despite the NSW Government's 1949 extension of summertime shark-meshing beyond metropolitan Sydney to Newcastle in the north and Wollongong in the south, Australia's perceived 'shark menace' fostered widespread enthusiasm for all forms of shark killing, and even for movies about shark hunting. While John Pilger (2001, p. 34) vividly recalled his admiration of shark fishers and the thrill of being given a chunk of shark flesh, Michael Taussig (2000):

never actually saw a shark but I could easily imagine their torpedo long bodies writhing in his [the shark mesher's] cruel nets as they were joyfully hoisted aboard and given the treatment they deserved.

Shark alarms still rapidly cleared the water of swimmers at any patrolled beach, and the pranksters who placed live or dead sharks in ocean pools still witnessed swimmers speedily exiting the pool. Any 'New Australian' or overseas visitor taking appropriate precautions about sharks and rips by patronising patrolled beaches and ocean pools was seen as assimilating to the established NSW coastal culture, where, as Taussig (2000) recalls: "You never even waded or heaven forbid, went swimming outside of shark-proofed areas, of which there were pitifully few".

Although it still seemed folly to regard sharks as mere nuisances, the Australian perspective on sharks was changing to reflect the experiences of board surfers, spear fishers, scuba divers and underwater photographers. The fear of sharks did not stop board surfers with the light Malibu boards atop their cars and vans from ranging far beyond patrolled beaches in search of the best waves. Growing knowledge of sharks and the underwater world even led spearfishers and scuba divers to question the persistent widespread conviction that 'the only good shark is a dead shark'. Spearfishing stars Ron and Valerie Taylor moved from celebrating the killing of sharks to photographing sharks and later to advocating for their conservation (V. Taylor, 2000a, 2000b).

Televised nature documentaries, movies about glamour spy James Bond (Winder, 2006) and popular American TV series such as *Sea hunt* and *Flipper* helped popularise snorkelling and scuba diving and revealed more of the underwater world

and its sharks to the viewing public. As shark expert Valerie Taylor (2000a, p. xii) has pointed out:

line fishermen rarely see sharks except as desperate, half-crazed creatures fighting for their lives on the end of lines. Divers see them as they really are - perfect fish, beautiful, swift, sure of themselves, masters of their environment.

Her description of sharks also applies to elegant, efficient and capable human swimmers.

Persuasive powers of Olympic dreams

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Olympic swimmers still trained and raced at Australian ocean pools justifiably regarded as training grounds for champions. Charles Sprawson (1992, p. 13) reports Olympic swimming champion Murray Rose's enjoyment of "the natural pool on Bondi Beach, where the waves came over the sides as he raced and propelled him to extraordinary fast times in one direction". John Devitt, who improved his chance of selection for the 1956 Olympics by breaking a Bondi Baths swimming record, captained the 1956 Australian Olympic swim team, and won a gold medal at the 1960 Rome Olympics (Andrews, 2004, p. 91).

The success of Australia's swimmers at the Melbourne, Rome and Tokyo Olympics enthralled Australian television audiences and led more communities to demand Olympic-standard pools and more young swimmers to aspire to Olympic success. Ocean pools were developed, reshaped and resized to satisfy demands for access to Olympic-sized competition pools.

Lack of funds did, however, limit surfside councils' capacity to address the demands for new Olympic pools. In 1962 Wollongong Council had only 2,000 pounds available for construction of an Olympic pool costed at 250,000 pounds (Myler, 1962). Demands in Wollongong for a safe swimming area to address recent shark scares, combined with fears that the 1964 Country Swimming Championships might go to a town with a 'standard pool' (Myler, 1962), finally justified a 20,000 pound

transformation of Wollongong's Continental Baths. The result was an eight-lane Olympic pool, a smaller pool for beginners and a splashing pool for young children.

Having been formed by the amalgamation of Bulli Shire, the North Illawarra Municipality, the Wollongong Municipality and Central Illawarra Shire, the City of Greater Wollongong began its existence with an array of ocean pools. There were, nevertheless, concerns that the lack of swimming facilities in some of its coastal suburbs made it "difficult for local schoolchildren to compete with other schools in swimming carnivals" (Myler, 1962). In the 1960s, Wollongong Council therefore helped to develop ocean pools at two new sites: Towradgi and Bellambi.

The ocean pool developed at Towradgi, a post-war settlement developed on formerly swampy land, is a memorial to civic engagement. The earliest memorial plaque (Figure 6-2) credits the pool's development to the "voluntary labour of the citizens of Towradgi together with the co-operation of the Wollongong City Council and the Joint Coal Board". A later plaque (Figure 6-3) honours Doug Porter, a Wollongong alderman and member of the NSW parliament, whose "dedication and personal support made the construction of this Towradgi pool possible".



Figure 6-2. 1960s plaque at the Towradgi pool, NSW



Figure 6-3. 1989 plaque at the Towradgi pool, NSW

Volunteers began the construction of the Towradgi pool in 1959, but Wollongong Council built the dressing sheds and financed about half of the 10,000-pound project (“Opening of Towradgi rock pool,” 1964). The Joint Coal Board, established by the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments to provide local authorities with funds to improve the amenities and recreational facilities available in mining communities contributed funds.

That pool’s grand opening was scheduled to coincide with the opening of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Representatives of the Towradgi-Bellambi Rock Pool Committee, the Towradgi Rock Pool Amateur Swimming Club, Girl Guides, service clubs, schools, other community groups, the State and Federal Members of the NSW and Federal parliaments, local politicians, the South Coast Miners Federation Band and hundreds of local residents attended (“Opening of Towradgi rock pool,” 1964; “Mayor to open new pool,” 1964). The pool still complements Towradgi’s patrolled surf beach by providing a ‘safe enough’, formalised Olympic-size swimming environment suitable for learn-to swim programs, competitive swimming and

recreational swimming. Never a purely local facility, this pool continues to serve a range of visitors, including patrons of the nearby council caravan park at Corrimal. It has remained popular despite development of the more modern Corrimal Aquatic Centre.

Other actors linked to new ocean pools

Other actors besides sharks and Olympic competition helped persuade coastal communities of the desirability of ocean pools in the 1950s and 1960s. Although pollution of coastal waters was then usually treated as a mere nuisance, water quality concerns at existing public pools persuaded two surfside communities on the NSW North Coast to develop ocean pools in the 1960s.

At Coffs Harbour on the Mid-North coast of NSW, water in the main river baths had become so polluted as to constitute a health hazard, which left motel swimming pools as the town's best available learn-to-swim venues in the early 1960s (Yeates, 1993, p. 252). While plans for an inground pool at Coffs Harbour were being refined, a scenically sited war memorial ocean pool (Figure 6-4) opened nearby at Sawtell's Bonville Headland. The Sawtell pool provided a safer alternative to the hazardous swimming conditions around the mouth of Bonville Creek for inhabitants of the nearby popular camping ground and caravan park. Subsequent development of an inground public pool at Coffs Harbour allowed Sawtell's ocean pool to remain primarily a recreational space.



Figure 6-4. Sign and plaque at the Sawtell Memorial Rock pool, NSW

Further north, evidence of hazardous levels of pollution at a quarry pool used by local children and high school students from the up-river town of Maclean led Maclean Shire Council to invest \$33,534 in developing an ocean pool near the long-established surf lifesaving club at Yamba's main beach in the late 1960s (McSwan, 1978). Like the Sawtell pool, Yamba's new pool remained important for nearby caravan parks, but development of freshwater public pools (in both Yamba and Maclean) soon diminished its importance for the district's schools (McSwan, 1978, 2001).

Other impacts of water quality concerns

For surfside communities with acceptably clean coastal waters, ocean pools remained both a very affordable type of public pool, and a facility that enhanced the safety of a surf beach and its appeal to beachgoers. Unfortunately between 1951 and 1970, connecting households and public facilities for the growing NSW population to water and sewerage systems was given a far higher priority than treating sewage, industrial effluent or stormwater prior to its discharge at ocean outfalls. Despite high levels of beach pollution threatening land values and impacting on Sydney's tourist trade, an unembarrassed Sydney Water Board official stated in the late 1960s that "75% of the people don't mind swimming in untreated sewage" (Curby, 2001, p. 266). In essence, sewage outlets and stormwater drains were treated as higher priority uses of the intertidal environment than ocean pools and beaches.

Councils could do little to remedy polluted rivers (Goodall, Cadzow, & Byrne, 2010) or coastal waters if the pollution source lay outside their council area or was related to a powerful state government agency, such as a water supply, sewerage and drainage board. Abundant supplies of safe, clean, affordable town water made it more economically viable for even surfside councils to create filtered, chlorinated inground pools seen as emblematic of modernity. The greater environmental sustainability of the ocean pools compared to pools reliant on chemicals and cheap

town water mattered little when water quality at ocean pools sited near sewerage outlets remained well below that considered acceptable at other public pools.

Residents of Sydney and of the industrial cities of Newcastle and Wollongong tolerated both worsening air pollution and polluted waters at beloved surf beaches and ocean pools. Although ocean pools could be no cleaner than any surrounding polluted waters, they continued to serve and attract men, women and children, who saw ocean pools as safe, convenient and appealing places for sport and recreation. Visitors could and did choose to avoid polluted areas and pools.

Ocean pools were being challenged to match both the water quality and affordability of these newer public pools. By the late 1960s, admission charges had been abolished at the Newcastle Ocean Baths, while other long-established pay-to-swim ocean pools such as Wylies Baths or the Bondi Baths charged no more than the newer chlorinated and supervised public pools.

Local actions

During the 1950s and 1960s, there were, however, still few legal or cultural impediments to residents in more remote areas of the NSW coast creating or maintaining ocean baths without formal approvals from council and other government agencies. While it was difficult for volunteers to complete the entire construction of an Olympic-size ocean pool, the actions of a few residents could develop appealing 'wild but safe enough surfside pools'.

At Copacabana, a part of the Central Coast where suburbanisation was just beginning in the late 1950s, some landowners saw the potential for developing a rock pool at the northern end of their beach (Grunseit, 1996). For some years, they worked at the weekends when the tide was low to form a rock pool by using crowbars and rock hammers to shift boulders. Later, they used gelignite to blow up rocks in the middle of the pool and arranged for a council grader to push half-buried rocks out of the sand.

Progress associations, surf lifesaving clubs and service clubs were also involved in development of ocean pools. At McMasters Beach on the Central Coast, the president of the Progress Association led residents' efforts in 1963 to build the pool (Hartigan, 2002) so members of the local surf lifesaving club could teach children to swim. Kiama's Rotary clubs sponsored a new Kiama District Swimming Club in the 1950s and constructed a wading pool at the Blowhole Point Pool in the 1960s. A sign above the Ivo Rowe Pool at South Coogee states the pool was enlarged by the Randwick Apex Club in the 1960s.

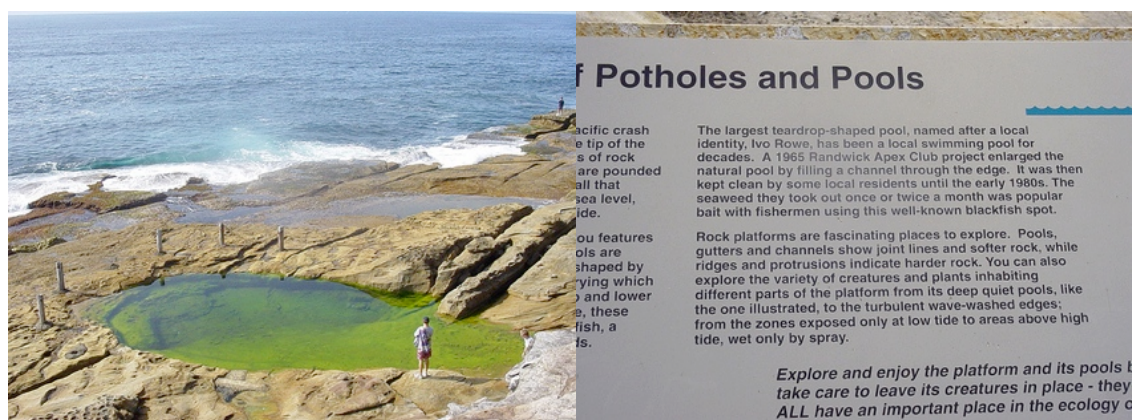


Figure 6-5. Seaweed at the Ivo Rowe Pool at South Coogee and part of a sign about it on the Eastern Beaches Coastal Walking Track, NSW

The Australian ideal of national fitness (still linked to fitness for military service in the 1950s and 1960s when young men were conscripted for national service) provided further justification for the construction of ocean pools and other public pools. Volunteer fundraising coordinated by a local National Fitness Committee in the 1960s helped develop the seawater pool at Huskisson on Jervis Bay in NSW and the ocean pool further south at Ulladulla (Skelsey, 2002).

All the ocean pools created with volunteer labour or fundraising embodied a particular sense of time, place and community. Both volunteer pool construction and fundraising efforts were seen into the late 1960s as generous, civic-minded gifts to the community of a pool providing a safe recreational space. Efforts to create or improve ocean pools were usually considered welcome signs of progress likely to

attract more tourists and residents to a coastal community. Waverley Council was therefore prepared to create a new clubhouse at the Bondi Baths for which the Bondi Icebergs club provided a third of the construction costs (Andrews, 2004, p.75). Other council support for the voluntary labour that helped contain the costs of creating and maintaining ocean pools included donations of cement.

Actors opposing ocean pool development

During the 1960s there were, however, emerging concerns about development of ocean pools threatening specific coastal environments and recreations. Growing community interest in conserving the prized surfing spots and the marine environment and in minimising beach erosion combined with increased scientific research on Australia's marine and coastal environments to make development of ocean pools more controversial and more costly.

On the NSW Central Coast, an ocean pool redevelopment project that began with widespread community support further called into question the widespread consensus about the desirability of bigger and better ocean pools. The Avoca Beach and District Progress Association (ABPA) complained in 1964 to Mr P.D. Hills, the NSW Minister for Local Government, that the coastline between the Hawkesbury River and The Entrance lacked safe bathing places and appropriate facilities for swim training or teaching swimming (F. J. Parker, 1964). The ABPA argued that few of the local schoolchildren could swim with any degree of safety and that a district population exceeding 11,000 during the summer holiday period justified enlarging and improving the rock pool at Avoca Beach to meet those needs and to enhance the beauty of the southern end of the beach.

A public meeting on the issue at the Surf Club pavilion discussed the pool proposal and community organisations, including the bowling club, Country Women's Association, Chamber of Commerce, Parents and Citizen's Committee and the local surf lifesaving club, unanimously agreed to support the plan in principle (F. J. Parker, 1964). As Gosford Shire Council had already given in-principle approval to the construction of a pool costing \$6,000 to \$10,000, the ABPA sent out a letter

seeking funds for extending the rock pool to make it the largest such pool in and around the district (McFarland. n.d.).

Work on the Avoca Beach Children's Rock Swimming Pool began in 1967 as a joint project of the ABPA, the Avoca Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club (de Ferranti, 1968). The ABPA Committee was certain that "when the pool is completed, it will be an asset to this portion of the Central Coast" (W. Phillips, 1969).

When some of the pool's initial supporters began to doubt the benefits of the pool development, they called for scientific studies to allay their concerns. The Avoca Beach Surf Life Saving Club suggested seeking scientific advice from CSIRO (Australia's leading scientific research body) on whether alterations to the rock structure would affect the currents as "the number of rescues this year appears to have increased since the alteration of the pool" (W. Phillips, 1969). The Avoca Beach Angling Club (1969) expressed concerns that work on the pool would unfavourably affect the fishing, which is "of prime importance to visitors" and that the only access to the improved pool would involve trespass on a private property. ABPA archives also include a complaint (Hillsmith, 1969) that the project interfered with "the natural unspoiled beauty of the area".

The ABPA did seek advice from CSIRO, which referred the matter to the University of New South Wales Water Research Laboratory (de Ferranti, 1968; Hattersley, 1968). The ABPA annual report for 1969/70 (ABPA, 1970, p. 2) nevertheless praised Mr George Miller for his "untiring enthusiasm for fostering interest in building a rock swimming pool".

The Avoca Beach Chamber of Commerce had, however, withdrawn its project donation by late 1969 "due to the lack of interest by the general public and abandonment of the Rock Swimming Pool project", though it still offered to support any similar projects in the future (McFarland, 1969). Although interest in developing the pool has since surfaced again, the Avoca Beach pool remains a simple ring-of-rocks bathing pool (Figure 6-6).



Figure 6-6. Avoca Beach pool, NSW

This failed pool upgrade project illustrates a considerable change of attitude regarding the safety and sporting value of ocean pools since the 1940s, when the affordances of ocean pools were seen as so compelling that only issues of affordability hindered their development. At Avoca Beach, the ocean pool was no longer automatically regarded as a sign of progress or as an enhancement to the rocky shore. An enlarged ocean pool at Avoca Beach was discussed as a potential threat to human safety, recreational fishing, tourism, coastal aesthetics and private property.

Conclusions

During the 1950s and 1960s, the number of Australian ocean pools increased and their PPI communities expanded. New actors, including winter swimming clubs and high schools, extended and strengthened the actor-networks of many NSW ocean pools. Winter swimming clubs and nipper programs strengthened the ties between NSW surf cultures, swimming cultures and ocean pools. Had more winter swimming clubs, swimming clubs and surf lifesaving clubs chosen to obtain liquor licences, the

sense of place and sense of community at the ocean pools would, however, have developed quite differently.

As the amateur swimming movement ceased insisting on gender-segregated clubs and surf lifesaving clubs admitted girls to nipper programs, it began to seem more likely that surf lifesaving clubs and winter swimming clubs would eventually admit women to full membership. This raised the potential for women's abandonment of amateur swimming clubs in favour of joining surf lifesaving clubs and winter swimming clubs, as well as the potential for a greater overlap between swimming club membership and surf lifesaving club membership.

The development of ocean pools was becoming more problematic by the late 1960s. Actors, such as surf lifesaving clubs, tourist businesses and coastal property owners, could no longer automatically be assumed to support the development or construction of an ocean pool. In the absence of supportive independent expert advice, progress associations and swimming-related groups were unable or unwilling to counter objections raised by surfers, surf lifesavers and recreational fishers opposed to ocean pool projects seen as detrimental to their activities. Where surf lifesavers, fishers, tourist businesses, property owners and scientists opposed an ocean pool project, neither the affordability nor the affordances of the ocean pool seemed to matter.

Concerns about aesthetic and environmental impacts and demands for scientific studies added to the cost and complexity of developing ocean pools and fed council and community support for development of less problematic public pools. The next chapter discusses actors contributing to post-1970 perceptions of ocean pools as hazardous places.

Chapter 7. Signs of vulnerable post-1970s bodies and pools

Introduction

Development of ocean pools at new sites along Australia's coast seems to have ceased in the 1970s, despite the apparent strength of the actor-networks associated with the existing ocean pools. My investigations of the warning and advisory signs (Figure 7-1) seen at and around twenty-first century ocean pools highlighted the post-1970 emergence of new actors able to confer a new identity that I designate as 'an unusually hazardous type of public pool' on ocean pools.

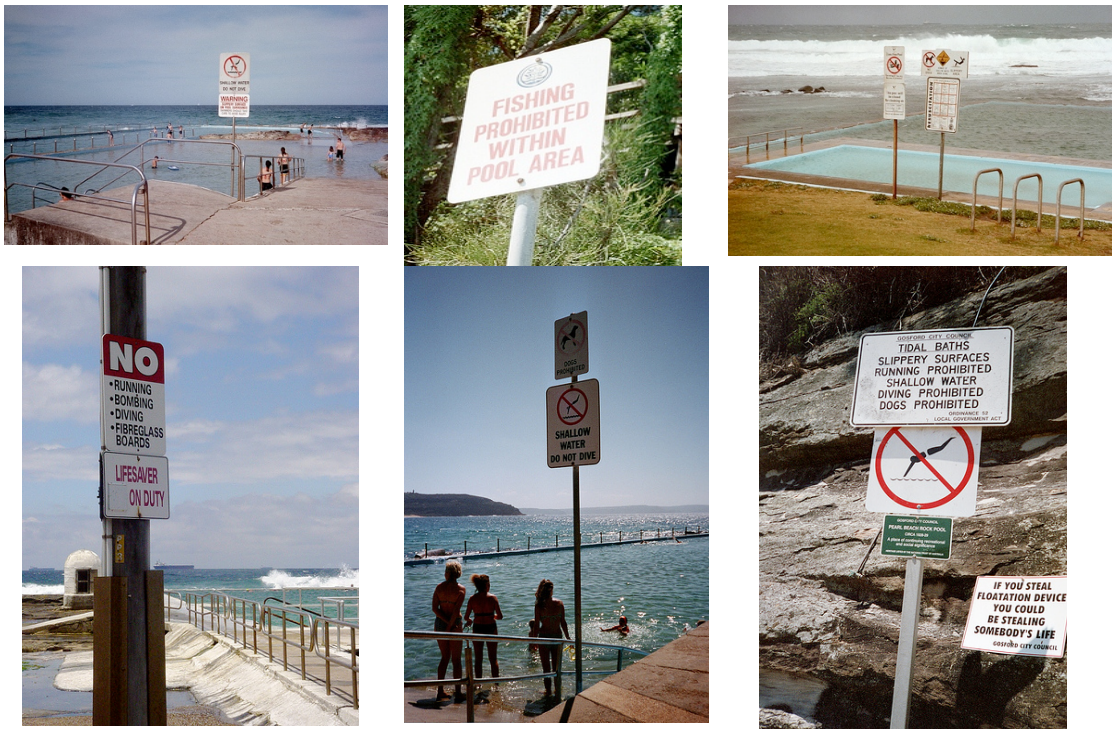


Figure 7-1 Signs photographed at NSW ocean pools

Since 1970s, the actor-networks relating to ocean pools and the frameworks and influences (Figure 7-2) that influenced the way Australians lived, worked and played included new technologies and glocalised cultures of comfort, consumerism, and risk management. Increasingly affluent, sedentary and car-dependent Australians became insulated from 'wild' nature in ways not possible in the 1960s, when children were more likely to play outdoors than indoors, home computers and

video players were unknown and air conditioning of homes and cars was uncommon.



Figure 7-2. Frameworks and influences for Australian ocean pools since 1970

After the 1972 federal election gave government to the Australian Labor Party for the first time in decades, the new government acted quickly to withdraw Australian troops from the Vietnam War and end conscription for military service. As the nation's fitness ceased to be discussed in terms of nurturing the ability to fight for one's life or country, less emphasis was placed on building resilience in confronting unexpectedly challenging situations or even the capacity to deal confidently, capably and independently with the predictable challenges of life. As Don Aitken (2005, p. 194) noted:

In modern Australia, the notion that one is somehow entitled to lead a life that has no dark side to it at all seems to be quite widely shared. Such a view would have been seen as unreal in 1950, when the prevailing notion was that one ought to accept with a minimum of complaint, accidents and 'acts of god'.

If the undesirable body of the 1930s had been tubercular, pale and deprived of fresh air, sunlight and good food, from the 1970s onwards the undesirable body was obese, untoned and in need of both exercise and sun protection. Australia's federal and state governments funded campaigns, such as *Life be in it* (n.d.) and *Get Active* (n.d.), which encouraged Australians to engage in sufficient physical activity to maintain good health. Other campaigns urged Australians to become SunSmart to reduce their risk of skin cancer (Montague, Borland & Sinclair, 2001).

Australian children have, however, since the 1990s had less play space and less independent mobility than their parents did as children and been more likely to play at home and indoors and to have their outdoor play organised by adults (Bundy et al., 2011; Carver, Timperio & Crawford, 2008; Malone, 2007; Tandy, 1999). Carver, Timperio & Crawford (2008) discussed the contribution of parental perceptions of dangers posed by traffic and strangers to the decline in children's physical activity. Malone (2007) saw smaller families, fears of traffic, 'stranger danger', and adoption of a 'protectionist parenting' paradigm as helping to make middle-class children into especially precious items to be 'bubblewrapped' and guarded against injury.

A focus on managing risks to human health and safety in an Australian population that was larger, older, more ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse and more concerned for the environment than in the 1960s produced new public education campaigns, legislation, regulations and standards. National campaigns urged adults and children to 'swim between the flags' at patrolled surf beaches to minimise their risk of drowning. Australia's governments legislated for compulsory wearing of seatbelts (1973), random breath testing of car drivers (1980s), compulsory wearing of bike helmets (1990s) as well as compulsory isolation-fencing around new backyard pools in NSW (1990s) and new standards to improve the safety of children's playgrounds (Witheaneachi & Meehan, 1997).

Ian Scott (2003, p. 228) argues, however, that the “new engineering that permitted the production of pre-formed fibre-glass domestic swimming pools” in the early 1970s helped make Australian backyards more hazardous for toddlers. As Australia’s backyard pools became recognised from the mid-1970s (W .R. Pitt & Cass, 2001; I. Scott, 2003, p. 228) as the places where children under five were most likely to drown, pressure for isolation fencing of backyard pools grew. After the implementation of pool fencing legislation, the pool drowning rate in Queensland and NSW remained less than half the pre-legislation rate, even though pool numbers had doubled (W. R. Pitt & Cass, 2001). Despite their dangers and fencing requirements, backyard pools remained so appealing that the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2003) found that 17% of Sydney households had a pool in 2002, as did 11% of the households in the rest of NSW.

In the consumer culture of late-modern Australia, individuals who sustained injuries in a risky recreational environment could see themselves not as risk takers with poor judgement, inadequate strength, skill or luck in an unfamiliar situation, but as the innocent victims of personal or organisational negligence. People could see themselves not as having voluntarily taken risks, but as having suffered unnecessarily because some person or organisation had failed to alert them to the risks or to protect them from injury. This person or organisation, therefore, could be held responsible for any victim’s injuries. The absence of any no-fault compensation scheme for catastrophic injuries provided a compelling incentive for such victims to seek compensation for their injuries through negotiation or the courts (Short, 2002). Those at risk of litigation had a strong incentive to take out public liability insurance and this made insurers, risk assessors and courts important actors in the actor-networks focused on safeguarding bathers and swimmers.

This chapter begins by focusing on the enrolment of signs in the actor-networks now linked to ocean pools. It highlights the role of legislation and court action on council management of ocean pools, and looks at actions taken by pool users to address what they consider to be significant safety risks. It also moves beyond

warning signs to consider other sorts of signage in and around ocean pools, as well as the mental maps of pool users.

Signs on, at and around ocean pools

Each sign in, at or around an ocean pool is an actor within the actor-networks associated with that particular ocean pool. Whether wooden, metal or synthetic, such signs are intended to be durable and to communicate messages of ongoing relevance via words and images.

Actor-networks enrol such signs to perform a variety of functions. Signs can identify the pool and its intended users or the council or body responsible for the pool's maintenance. Signs can warn of natural and human-created hazards. Signs can even attempt to regulate the behaviour of humans in and around unsupervised pools, under normal circumstances and in emergencies.

National standards and federal government initiatives, programs and funding influenced signs at ocean pools. Concerns over the drowning of 273 people in Australian waterways in the summer of 1997/98 triggered development of uniform water safety warning signs for use at the nation's beaches, inland waterways and public swimming pools (Godfrey, 2003; Weir, 2010). Had the federal government or state governments relieved Australia's local councils of the need to take out public liability insurance to cover incidents related to council-controlled beaches and pools, fewer warning signs might have been needed.

Differences in the signage relating ocean pools and other public pools highlight key cultural and environmental differences between those public pools. Most present-day local councils controlling ocean pools continue to resist pressures to reduce their public liability premiums by fencing ocean pools, providing supervision and restricting the hours of access. Opening hours apply only at a few fenced and supervised ocean pools including the few pay-to-swim ocean pools (such as the Bondi Icebergs Pool and Wylies Baths).

With the notable exception of the women's pool at Sydney's Coogee Bay (which has for decades been exempted from the NSW anti-discrimination law), present-day ocean pools are theoretically available to all and therefore do not need signs to identify who can use them. Any unfenced, unsupervised ocean pool remains open to all on all days at all times, except when work is underway to clean, maintain or upgrade it. The scheduled cleaning times are therefore worth displaying on signs around an ocean pool, as well as on the website of the council responsible for maintaining the pool.

Ocean pools remain more likely than other Australian public pools to have signs warning of the dangers of falling rocks or polluted waters. The post-1970 commitment to conserving the coastal environment means unstable cliffs may now be netted rather than reshaped to protect users of ocean pools below those cliffs. As water quality within such a pool can never be higher than in the surrounding coastal waters, signs at ocean pools report on water quality monitoring. Health authorities routinely advise people to avoid swimming at surf beaches, ocean pools or other sea pools for a few days after heavy rains. Although improvements to sewage systems have reduced pollution of Australia's inshore coastal waters since the 1990s, untreated stormwater is still discharged into ocean.

Tides, waves and algae contribute to the wetness and slipperiness of ocean pool surrounds. Except for the implicit suggestion that seaweed may contribute to the slipperiness of the pool surrounds, signage at NSW ocean pools makes little mention of any other hazards posed, the benefits delivered or the pleasures afforded by the presence of plants and animals of the rocky shore. Several NSW ocean pools (e.g. the Bronte Baths as indicated in Figure 3-2) now lie adjacent to intertidal protection areas intended to conserve the flora and fauna of the rocky shores. Some Sydney ocean pools have signs erected by NSW government agencies stating that the collection of certain forms of marine life is prohibited. No signs mention the smaller ecological footprint of ocean pools compared to public pools reliant on townwater and chemicals.



Figure 7-3. Sign prohibiting collecting near Sydney's North Narrabeen Pool, NSW

Sharing the rocky shore with venomous octopus, spiky sea urchins, crabs and other forms of plant and animal life does pose some hazards to human safety. A few ocean pools on Sydney's Eastern Beaches have signs advising that "blue ringed octopus have been found in this area" (Figure 7-4), but do not provide any further information about this shy, venomous octopus or even explain why its presence should be a concern. As the most signposted risks at ocean pools are those considered most likely to result in increased insurance premiums, litigation and claims for compensation, signs warning of slippery rocks far outnumber those warning of blue-ringed octopus.



Figure 7-4. Warning about octopus near Sydney's Malabar Pool, NSW

Other types of public pools have less need than ocean pools for signs attempting to regulate the behaviour of fishers. Spear guns have, however, caused injuries at NSW ocean pools (“Teen speared,” 1999). While signs at NSW ocean pools may prohibit fishing in the pool (as shown in Figure 7-1) or the cleaning of fish near the pool, they do not prohibit fishing from the pool’s seaward walls. Although those walls provide relatively safe places to engage in the dangerous recreation of rock fishing, I am not aware of any Australian counterpart to the ocean pool sited adjacent to a fishing pier at South Africa’s Victoria Bay (Figure 7-5).



Figure 7-5. Pier at the tidal pool at Victoria Bay, South Africa

Recreational drinking is also more of a concern at Australia’s ocean pools than at its fenced public pools. Signs declaring ‘Alcohol Free Zones’ or banning glass drink containers are an acknowledgement that recreational drinking at many NSW ocean pools is a practice not carried out solely behind the closed doors of clubhouses catering for members of swimming clubs and their invited guests. Apart from the risk to public order, recreational drinking from glass containers increases the risk of encountering broken glass in the pool. Differences in signage suggest that

discouraging the playing of loud music at ocean pools remains less of a concern in Australia than in South Africa.

While there are local variations in signage at Australian ocean pools (e.g. the presence of resuscitation signs at the ocean pools maintained by Sydney's Warringah Council), there is also evidence of compliance with national standards for water safety signage. A few 'slip, slop, slap' advisory signs reflect decades of Australia-wide campaigns begun in the 1980s to counter the risks of skin cancer (Montague, Borland & Sinclair, 2001). Beach and health cultures are, however, now sufficiently globalised and homogenised that I encountered similar SunSmart signs at Irish beaches in 2011.

Under the ABSAMP system, a 'lifeguarded beach' or a 'designated safer bathing (swimming) area' is defined as a place "at which a trained lifesaver and/or lifeguard is stationed during prescribed times and designated by the flying of red and yellow flags" (Weir, 2010). As any ocean pool offering a safer alternative to swimming from an unpatrolled beach and considered safe enough not to need supervision remains an 'unguarded area', it cannot be designated as a 'safe bathing area' under this system. This definition of a 'designated safer bathing (swimming) area' assumes that safety must come from supervision, rather than skilled self-management and the ability to recognise and enjoy the safety afforded by durable structures, such as the walls of an ocean pool. It therefore classifies ocean pools only as 'an unusually hazardous type of public pool' and disregards their core identity as 'wild but safe enough public pools'.

The result is that signage at Australian ocean pools (the sign above the ocean pool at Bermagui shown in Figure 7-6 is an extreme example) makes no attempt to place the hazards at the pool in the context of the hazards posed beyond the pool by rips, surf and sharks or to explicitly identify any ocean pool as a 'wild but safe enough public pool'. Any person relying solely on the signs to assess the risk of using an ocean pool could, therefore, easily draw the erroneous conclusion that it would be safer to swim at any stretch of unpatrolled sandy beach beyond the pool during the

day and at night. Figure 7-7 shows that a different approach is used on the sign for the Marine Pool at Hermanus in South Africa.



Figure 7-6. Warning sign above the Blue Pool, Bermagui, NSW



Figure 7-7. Sign above the Marine Pool at Hermanus in South Africa

It is therefore not their signs, but rather the ongoing lack of supervision at most Australian ocean pools, their recognition as places attractive to elderly people, families and young children, and the ongoing efforts to improve access to those pools for both able-bodied people and people with disabilities (Christodoulou, 2008; Gorton, 2010; Smee, 2011), that testify most strongly to the ongoing value of ocean pools as ‘wild but safe enough surfside pools’. Efforts to eliminate human-made hazards at ocean pools and other public pools further highlight the strength of the risk management macro-actors.

In the UK and Australia, influential actor-networks focused on promoting health and safety have succeeded in making diving facilities (Great Britain Diving Federation [GBDF], n.d.) a rarity at public pools. The Newcastle Ocean Baths no longer has the diving tower photographed by Sam Hood (1953) or the springboard (Figure 7-8), that persisted into the early years of the twenty-first century. By 2006, Newcastle City Council had also decided that the pool’s diving blocks were too high for safe use (Keene, 2006).



Figure 7-8. Photograph taken when the springboard was still expected to return to its mounts at the Newcastle Ocean Baths, NSW

Although the UK's 'tomb-stoning' terminology for hazardous jumps and dives (Laviolette, 2009) shown in Figure 7-9 has not been generally adopted in Australia, it was used in Weir's (2010) risk assessment of the Newcastle Bogey Hole. Signs to discourage divers and jumpers have become commonplace at ocean pools in NSW. Even the small ocean pool at Fairy Bower on Sydney's Northern Beaches now has an intimidatingly large sign (Figure 7-8) warning about death and severe injuries that may result from diving from the railing. A more narrative-based sign, of the kind suggested by Parkin and Morris (2005), might perhaps be rather more effective.



Figure 7-9. Warnings at left about tomb-stoning in Plymouth, UK and at right about diving at the Fairy Bower pool, Manly, NSW

Australia's present-day ocean pools offer no equivalent to the sign (Figure 7-9) at Ireland's Forty Foot bathing place stating that "diving at every part of the Forty Foot is dangerous, so care must be exercised". Signs at that pool (Figure 7-9) and at the Black Rock diving area on Ireland's Galway Bay (Figure 7-9) also display a profile of the seabed to assist potential divers to more strategically manage risk.



Figure 7-10. Signs at Dublin Bay's Forty Foot bathing place, Ireland



Figure 7-11. Galway Bay's Black Rock diving area and its signs, Ireland

Reported and feared injuries and litigation

Injuries sustained at beaches, ocean pools or during other types of 'risky recreation' become newsworthy when they result in death, severe disability or claims for large

compensation payouts. The landmark compensation case relates to a Sydneysider named Guy Swain, who became a quadriplegic as a result of diving into a sandbar inside the flags of the lifeguard-patrolled area of Bondi Beach in 1997. In 2002, he successfully sued Waverley Municipal Council for compensation on the grounds that it had a duty of care to warn beachgoers about the sandbar. He was awarded \$3.75 million in damages. After Waverley Council successfully appealed the decision in the NSW Court of Appeal, Swain took his case to the High Court, which in 2005 reinstated the 2002 jury verdict awarding Swain \$3.75 million.

Because of its implications for the ongoing operation of patrolled beaches and all forms of 'risky' recreations, the Guy Swain case triggered reforms to civil liability laws throughout Australia (Goldring, 2005). The *Civil Liability Act 2002* (NSW) emphasised people's responsibility for self-care in recreational situations, where the dangers were inherent or obvious (B. McDonald, 2007). NSW still, however, lacks a no-fault compensation scheme for the catastrophically injured.

A 2007 case illustrates the post-2002 approach to injuries sustained at NSW ocean pools. A recently arrived Serbian refugee named Novak Vujanic watched people diving into the Giles Baths rock pool on Christmas Day 2003 and then made two successful dives himself (Arlington, 2007). On his third dive, Vujanic struck his head on a submerged rock and became a tetraplegic. Four years later, he sued Randwick City Council for eight million dollars, alleging that Council had failed in its duty of care by failing to signpost the Giles Baths rock pool adequately or supervise it at peak times. After NSW Supreme Court Justice Elizabeth Fullerton stated that it would be difficult to establish that his dive was not a dangerous recreational activity, Vujanic agreed to drop the action ("Cliff dive man drops compensation claim," 2007).

The Vujanic case shows that the NSW coast's residents and visitors included individuals ignorant of, or oblivious to, the inherent and obvious risks associated with recreational uses of the coastal environment and the best ways to manage those risks. Community and government response to a more recent death at a NSW

ocean pool does, however, demonstrate a willingness to distinguish between risks to the general public at ocean pools and those relevant only to sensation-seekers and persons grossly overestimating their diving skills.

A 26-year-old man named Nathan Luke died in 2010 after sustaining critical injuries on the Australia Day holiday when he dived five metres and hit his head on a submerged rock in Newcastle's heritage-listed Bogey Hole, an ocean pool where he had often swum (T. Connell, 2010a & 2010b; Robinson, 2010). While police considered there were adequate safety signs at the pool (Weir, 2010), there had been public debate regarding the pool's dangerous state of disrepair and recommendations for its closure (J. Jones, 2010a). For Stubbs (2011), the Bogey Hole was "a crumbling iridescent pool for use by only the bravest of swimmers". That Bogey Hole had, however, only been associated with two deaths in a decade and the first of those deaths related to a man swept out of the pool by waves (A. Edwards & Smee, 2012).

Members of communities of practice or place linked to ocean pools tend to place less reliance on news stories, signage and supervision than on their own experiences, the evidence of their own senses, local knowledge and their communities' conventions and perceptions. Suggestions that the Bogey Hole be closed thus provoked a public backlash, with objections from regular pool users, the National Trust, politicians and the Hunter community (J. Jones, 2010b). By 2 February 2010, more than 5,500 people had joined the 'Save the Bogey Hole' campaign on Facebook (J. Jones, 2010b). Community pressure to both keep the Newcastle Bogey Hole open and to improve access to that pool recognised that the diver's death was due more to his own voluntary actions, and perhaps to what Moran (2011) categorises as 'dangerous masculinities', rather than to the pool environment.

By 2010, the Newcastle Bogey Hole had ceased to be a council-controlled pool. Weir's (2010) risk assessment report to the NSW government agency responsible for the pool site led to the entry to the pool being redesigned. The proposed

improvements gained approval from the NSW Heritage Council and funding from the Public Reserves Management Fund overseen by the NSW Department of Primary Industry (Smee, 2011). The Bogey Hole will acquire new steps, railings and a 7-metre steel platform just above water level over the deepest part of the pool to discourage thrill-seekers from attempting to dive into water from an overhead rock ledge (Smee, 2011).

Although the renovated Bogey Hole was not expected to be officially reopened until after the 2011/2012 swimming season (A. Edwards & Smee, 2012), Newcastle's Greek Orthodox community staged its 2010, 2011 and 2012 Epiphany celebrations there (N. Davidson, 2011; "Kotara man triumphs," 2012). Special permission from the NSW Department of Land and Property Management had been needed to stage the 2010 ceremony at the Bogey Hole (Branley, 2010). Having conducted its recent Epiphany ceremonies at the Newcastle Ocean Baths and the Merewether Ocean Baths, Newcastle's Macedonian Orthodox community currently plans to return to holding its Epiphany ceremony at the Bogey Hole from 2013 (J. Jones, 2012).

Interestingly, both the Giles Baths rock pool and the Newcastle Bogey Hole are recreational places lacking clubs ready to defend their home pool. The Bogey Hole is far less visible and accessible from a surf lifesaving club or surf beach than the Giles Baths rock pool. This is relevant as the severity of injuries sustained in, at or around ocean pools is often minimised by the prompt actions of surf lifesavers or other pool users and by the accessibility of the pool to ambulances and other emergency services.

Pool users' behaviour in and around an unsupervised ocean pool is more likely to be regulated by experience and membership of a community of place or practice than by signage or other hazard warnings. Knowing that the surfers, fishers, scuba divers and open-water swimmers, who pass through or use the ocean pools, routinely take far greater risks strengthens perceptions of the ocean pools as 'safe enough' recreational spaces. Objectively, the road toll, the deaths of rock fishers and

drownings in rips and backyard pools remain more pressing causes for concern than deaths and injuries sustained at ocean pools.

Pool users' knowledge of ocean pool conditions and habitual reliance on their own assessment of hazards based on input from their own senses can and does lead them to disregard warnings about using waters officially regarded as hazardous on the basis of laboratory analyses (Butler & Ferson, 1997). When advised to stay out of the surf and ocean pools for some days, as the Illawarra's sewage treatment plants had released partially treated sewage into the ocean during recent heavy rains, regulars at Wollongong's Continental Baths and the Towradgi pool said they would continue to swim ("EPA issues swim alert," 2002).

New kinds of working bees

While insurers, lawyers and councils debate the best ways to communicate warnings about water quality issues and natural hazards at ocean pools, pool users often remained more concerned that human neglect of the pools posed the risk of what I call 'demolition via neglect'. Perceived neglect of ocean pools often provoked protests, petitions and forms of direct action involving swimming clubs and surf lifesaving clubs. Campaigns for the restoration of Wylies Baths, the reopening of the Malabar Pool and the upgrading of The Entrance Ocean Baths are discussed in Chapter 9.

When the MacMasters Beach pool on the NSW Central Coast began to leak badly around 1991, local residents began writing to council and agitating to have the deterioration of their pool addressed (Hartigan, 2002). The president of the MacMasters Beach Progress Association argued "it's a community asset, built by the community and funded by council. We can't let it go because we will never get it back again" (Hartigan, 2002). Their pool was eventually upgraded.

Renovations to the Black Head pool on the NSW north coast in 2007 were funded in part by a private donation of \$35,000 (Druce, 2007). Community fundraising efforts such as lapathon at the pool (McKinnon, 2006) and an exhibition of photographs of

the pool ("Festival of Arts," 2006) were co-ordinated by the Hallidays Point Tidy Town subcommittee.

The Black Head pool also provides an interesting example of how the impact of post-1970s concerns to protect the environment changed the circle of conviviality at ocean pools and altered ongoing pool management and maintenance. Before the 1970s, slimy algae and sharp shells had been seen as 'nuisances' that proper council maintenance should remove from ocean pools. After chemical treatments long used to remove algae were banned on environmental grounds, high-pressure seawater became the preferred method of cleaning ocean pools. Regarding algae as an integral part of the natural environment also provided grounds for criticising any council efforts to remove algae as a waste of scarce local government resources.

While the elderly and retired population of the NSW coast grew and efforts were made to improve access to ocean pools for people with disabilities, post-1970 changes to council maintenance of ocean pools increased the risk that older, vision-impaired or less agile people would slip and fall on slimy algae around those ocean pools. Environmentally friendly working bees coordinated by swimming clubs or other groups offered one way of resolving such a dilemma.

A group of volunteers, known as Dad's Army and formed as the pool maintenance group of the Black Head Advancement Committee, have cleaned and maintained the ocean pool at Black Head since 1988 ("Celebrating Greater Taree's volunteers," 2010; "Honour for dedicated Black Head volunteers," 2010). They use high-pressure hoses to remove algae from the pool surrounds. Despite their volunteer work being honoured with a plaque in 2010, their pool was threatened with closure by Greater Taree Council in 2011 on the grounds of increasing cost and legislative requirements ("Council budget," 2011).

When Sydney's Randwick City Council refused to remove slippery algae from the surrounds of Maroubra's Mahon Pool in 2004, the Maroubra Seals winter swimming club organised a working bee to undertake that work (Constantinou, 2004).

Randwick Council then insisted that only a high-powered water spray could be used to clean the pool surrounds, that it would apply for the permit from NSW Fisheries to enable the work (including the relocation of sea urchins and other wildlife during the clean-up) to be undertaken (Constantinou, 2004). Council also insisted that it would have to approve the work safety data sheets that the Seals would follow during the clean-up process (Constantinou, 2004).

Undeterred by this bureaucratic approach, the Seals members convinced the licenced Maroubra Seals Sports and Community Club to fund the purchase of a high pressure gurney to be stored at the club and used as required by the local surf clubs, as well as by the Seals members cleaning slimy algae from Mahon Pool's steps and surrounds on a regular basis ("Mahon Pool gets a face lift," 2004). Their first clean-up in May 2004 involved removing rocks, relocating buckets of sea urchins, and using underwater scuba equipment to help them plug large holes in the pool walls with concrete ("Mahon Pool gets a face lift," 2004).

The actions by Black Head's Dad's Army and the Maroubra Seals were consistent with the established practice of pool patrons and clubs at unsupervised ocean pools taking responsibility for human safety in and around the pool. Volunteers at Wylies Baths have likewise relocated thousands of sea urchins over the years. While compatible with what I designate as the 'environmental care and protection' macro-actor, such local activities cannot effectively address major renovations or environmental issues, such as water pollution, that require action or funding on a larger scale.

Other signs - name boards, heritage signs & memorial plaques

Most, but not all, of Australia's ocean pools have signs indicating the name of the pool. While this name often refers to the pool's location, some ocean pools on Sydney's Eastern Beaches (e.g. Giles Baths, Wylies Baths, McIvers Baths) are still named after people, who once held the leases for those ocean pools and managed them as pay-to-swim public pools. Abandoned leases and dead lessees can thus still

function as influential actors in an ocean pool network and serve to persuade councils and other actors that the pool should continue to carry a particular name.

The most memorable lessee of an ocean pool need not have been the first or last lessee. The Giles Baths rock pool was once part of a pool complex, which included hot seawater baths at the top of Coogee's northern headland. This complex was originally known as Lloyds Baths after its lessee in the 1890s, later as the Randwick Municipal pool, and as the Coogee men's baths. It became known as Giles Baths after its redevelopment in the 1930s by O. Giles and then as the Giles Gym. The Coogee ocean pool, once known as Wylies Baths and later as the Sunstrip Pool, was consistently referred to as Wylies Baths in the campaigns to reopen it and restore it to its former glory (Slarke, 2001). As noted in Chapter 4, H. A. Wylie also once held the lease of Coogee's women's pool, which now bears the name of a later lessee, Robert McIver.

Other ocean pools are rarely referred to by the formal name displayed on their signs. The Beverley Whitfield Memorial Pool, named to honour an Olympic swimmer, is commonly referred to as the Shellharbour pool. Likewise, despite a sign proclaiming it to be the Ross Jones Memorial pool, the pool below the surf lifesaving club at Sydney's Coogee Beach is more often referred to as the Coogee Beach pool. It is, after all, more closely related to the sandy beach, than any of the other three ocean pools on Coogee Bay.

Ocean pools may also have memorial plaques honouring those commemorated by the pools. As noted in Chapter 6, the ocean pools at Sawtell and Towradgi are memorials to the casualties of war. A few ocean pools have plaques acknowledging individuals who were associated with the pool's development (e.g. Wylies Baths and Towradgi Pool) or who enjoyed a long and valued relationship with that ocean pool.

Only a handful of Australian ocean pools have plaques, that identify artworks, such as the statue of Mina Wylie at Wylies Baths, a sculpture at the Newcastle Ocean Baths ("Artwork takes pole position," 2005), the community mosaic at the North

Bondi children's pool and the pair of statues (Figure 7-10) gracing the seaward edge of the Fairy Bower pool on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Statues and other artworks were, however, not features of any of the ocean pools I visited in South Africa, Ireland or the UK.



Figure 7-12. Statues at Fairy Bower Pool, Manly, NSW

Local councils are often, but not always, the bodies responsible for those plaques and for other signage relating to pool history and heritage. Yet while Anastasia's Pool in Broome (Figure 3-3), Sydney's Wylies Baths and Ivo Rowe pool (Figure 6-5), Newcastle's Bogey Hole, and New Zealand's St Clair Hot Sea Baths (Figure 1-12) are well served by heritage notices about pool history and heritage significance, signage at most Australian and South African ocean pools barely hints at the long-lasting community significance of those pools as recreational and sporting facilities, public places, visitor attractions or beauty spots. Actor-networks linked to council and government agencies and focused on safeguarding public health and conserving the wildlife of the rocky shores appear to have been far more active in enrolling signs at ocean baths than any individuals or groups eager to highlight the heritage, benefits and affordances of Australia's ocean pools.

Name boards on clubhouses at NSW ocean pools testify to the formal naming of amateur swimming clubs (e.g. Dee Why Ladies Amateur Swimming Club) and the less formal names of the winter swimming clubs (e. g. Harbord Frigid Frogs). By contrast, none of the ocean pools I visited in South Africa (Appendix 2) had any signs or buildings testifying to the presence of a swimming club suggesting that those ocean pools are venues for recreation rather than competition.

Well-signposted surf lifesaving clubs are often visible from ocean pools along the NSW coast. As surf lifesaving clubs remain both far more common and prominent on the NSW coast than on South Africa's coast, NSW surf lifesavers remain more involved than their South African counterparts in keeping an eye on ocean pools and their users. All three of the ocean pools with marked lanes that I saw in South Africa were, however, sited close to surf lifesaving clubs with signs promoting their nipper programs.

Direction signs, mental maps and other maps

Signposts and coastal promenades can also serve to unify a set of ocean pools. All of Newcastle's ocean pools are linked by the signs that brand and promote them as part of the Bathers Way (Newcastle Visitor Centre," n.d.). The ocean pools on Sydney's Eastern Beaches are, likewise, presented as beauty spots to be viewed or otherwise enjoyed by people using the well-signposted Eastern Beaches coastal walking track (Tourism Australia, 2011; Henry, 2009). Ocean pools within the local government areas of Wollongong and Sydney's Sutherland Shire are also linked by walking tracks or shared paths for walkers and cyclists, but signs at one ocean pool usually offer no indication of where to find the next ocean pool.

Promotion and reporting of annual events such as an 'ocean pool crawl' (Great Ocean Pool Crawl, 2012) likewise helps to link ocean pools. These pools are also unified by personal projects to swim in (England, n.d.; The lazy swimmer, 2011), paint (Swift, 2005), photograph (Back, 2007; Lever, 2008; van Daele, 2002) or blog about (Sally, 2011; Spruhan, 2009; Trimble, 2007) Australian ocean pools either as a set of ocean pools or as part of a more extensive poolscape.

Ocean pools evident in satellite images are absent from certain types of maps. NSW government maps showing land titles predictably only show ocean pools where a formal lease for the pool site was created. Early in my research, I was surprised to find that leases had not been created for any of the ocean pools that Warringah Shire Council developed on Sydney's Northern Beaches in the early twentieth century. I also found that ocean pools close to a road or car park and those having strong ties to a swimming club or surf lifesaving club were the ocean pools most often included on Australian tourist and road maps.

A lack of directional signposts can help preserve ocean pools not marked on maps and not easily seen from the nearest road, promenade, car park or sandy beach as places for locals, rather than visitors. Local knowledge of ocean pools can also include mental maps of the well defined, but never explicitly formally mapped or signposted territories associated with informal groups of pool users, such as the 'steps of knowledge' at the Merewether Ocean Baths (Feeney, 2012).

Conclusions

My study of signs at ocean pools revealed national and local differences in the ways that concerns for health and safety, wildlife conservation, tourism, motor transport and public order impact on ocean pools and their users. It also highlighted the significance of fishers as a distinctive community of practice at ocean pools and the failure to promote ocean pools as either heritage places or valued 'wild but safe enough surfside pools'. A new term (perhaps 'wild swimming area' or 'adventure pool' or 'ocean pool') may be needed to identify unsupervised swimming areas, which are 'safe enough' except in heavy seas.

While they may comply with national guidelines and benefit domestic and international tourists, signs at and around ocean pools are intended primarily to provide advice and warnings relevant to visitors to a particular place. Improved signage and education programs could assist people unaccustomed to surfcoasts to more readily identify the values and affordances of ocean pools.

The effectiveness of signs as a medium of communication with the public in, at and around ocean pools is limited. The present set of signs undeniably does little to enhance the appeal of ocean pools, identify their affordances, or present those pools in a positive or attractive light. This is perhaps why people, who regard these pools as appealing places, or seek to promote them as visitor attractions, so rarely include any of these ubiquitous signs in their print, electronic or online images of ocean pools. The next chapter therefore looks beyond the signs in, at and around ocean pools to consider other post-1970s representations of Australian ocean pools and their associated PPI communities.

Chapter 8. Other post-1970s representations of Australian ocean pools

Introduction

This chapter complements the previous chapter by further investigating post-1970s representations of Australian ocean pools and relevant embodied knowledges. It focuses on the key identities, affordances and actor-networks of ocean pools and considers why particular actor-networks enrol certain types of representations. It discusses photographers and other artists as constituting communities of practice at ocean pools and highlights the potential for marked differences in the interpretations of images of ocean pools.

Glocalised aesthetic understandings, a distinctive sense of place and sense of identity, linked to the beauty and 'wildness' of the surf coast and its PPI communities, influence the making, use and interpretation of representations of Australia's ocean pools. Although beaches and enclosed waters such as Sydney Harbour remain more prominent in post-1970s Australian writing and visual arts, ocean pools appear to serve more often than other public pools as subjects for art and advertising and as signifiers of place and community identity. Representations of ocean pools are encountered in print, electronic and online media and on the walls of art galleries.

Any representation of an ocean pool can be regarded both as an actor and as a durable outcome of an actor-network. A description of a real or imagined ocean pool in a print publication implies the existence of a writer, a printer, a publisher, printing technologies, publication and distribution networks and a potential audience for such publications. A painting of an ocean pool exhibited at an art gallery testifies to circuits of production, to the existence of an artistic subject (which may be an abstraction or an idealised version of a physical reality), an artist, the availability of art materials and exhibition space and a potential viewing public. The existence of a photographic image likewise testifies to the existence of a photographic subject, a person or thing taking photographs, a photographic device

(which may be digital or able to take images underwater) and potential viewers. The existence of an online image of a photograph or painting testifies to the existence of a medium for displaying those images and to the people or things responsible for creating images or uploading them as well as to a potential viewing public.

The print, electronic and online media each encompass a tangle of complex actor networks further complicated in recent decades by cross-media linkages, such as those between print and online editions of a newspaper and between online newspapers and social media. Online responses to a newspaper article can now be browsed by online readers of that article, and a newspaper website can ask its online readers to upload images of their favourite places or images. When the *Sydney Morning Herald* did this, it selected several images of ocean pools for inclusion in its galleries of readers' photographs titled 'Sydney shines in Autumn' (2003), 'Winter wonderland' (2003), 'Sprung' (2003), and 'Your Sydney views' (2004).

Representing valued affordances of ocean pools

It is their roles as 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' rather than 'public pools for competitions and carnivals' that distinguish ocean pools from other public pools. Any public pool may have a distinct sense of place, linked to its environment, to personal, family, club and group rituals, memorials, memorabilia, myths, meanings and folklore. A person's long, intimate or intense acquaintance with any pool may meet the criteria that Chatterjee (2005) specifies for what he terms 'place-friendship'. Helen Pitt (2012) goes one step further writing a love letter to a Sydney ocean pool.

While ocean pools do serve as local pools, their significance extends beyond the local as they can perform some functions that other public pools cannot and can perform some functions differently to other pools. As Nick Carroll's (2001) question, "can you put a price on . . . an early summer lap of a Sydney ocean pool?" implies, ocean pools are often considered priceless assets by their PPI communities. Both

the use and representations of ocean pools suggest that these distinctive places encourage active lifestyles and attract people who live some distance from the pool. An encounter with the Newcastle Ocean Baths led Sheriden Rhodes (2011) to move from Melbourne to Newcastle.

My research indicates that the key affordances of ocean pools are as refuges, adventure playgrounds and skillscapes, restorative and therapeutic environments, convivial public spaces, visually appealing cultural landscapes, visitor attractions, brands and icons. I now explore each of these key affordances in turn, examining their relationships with each other, the pool sites and specific PPI communities.

Affordances as refuges and safety measures

Ocean pools can remain safe and usable for exercise, sport and play outside the hours when nearby beaches are patrolled and even when those beaches are closed (e.g. due to big swells, or shark alarms). Ocean pools are therefore highly valued by families and individuals who make long journeys to the beach and want to immerse themselves safely in seawater. Open-water swimmers also choose to swim in ocean pools in what they regard as ‘sharky’ conditions or poor weather. For triathletes, surf awareness programs for people with disabilities (M. McDonald, 2009a, 2009b) or nipper programs (Figure 8-1), having an ocean pool as an alternative venue to the beach means that planned activities can go ahead in most weather conditions.



Figure 8-1. Nippers at Cronulla’s main ocean pool, NSW

Night swimming is an established and treasured practice at some of the ocean pools, which provide far safer environments than unpatrolled surf beaches. Ian Lever's photographs (Lever, 2008) of the moonlit ocean pools on Sydney's Eastern Beaches acknowledged and promoted the romantic practice of 'moonbathing'. The film *Bootmen* (Hilary Linstead & Associates & Perry, 2000) showcased the romantic qualities of a night visit to the Newcastle Ocean Baths. On Sydney's Northern Beaches, youthful night-time visitors to ocean pools (Fordyce-Wheeler, 1995) would:

throw off our clothes and swim *au naturel* up and down in crooked lanes. The lights were off and the moon shone across the pool, making white bums appear as islands, while brown shoulders and backs blended with the water in moving silhouettes. The night was better for those of us not endowed with olive skin and thin thighs. Between the softening effects of the pale moonlight and our vision impairment due to beer, everyone looked much the same.

Ocean pools can also be seen as refuges from the mundane world, the glitzy beach culture, the ugliness of Australian suburbia or a consumer culture and its 'placeless places'. At ocean pools, club logos have more significance than corporate logos and global brands. Despite the presence of paid lifeguards at a few ocean pools, the entertainment and ethos at ocean pools remains overwhelmingly amateur and more focused on participation and immersive experience than on business. As ocean pools are usually unfenced, unsupervised and viewed as part of a beach, admission charges remain rare. While the iconic Bondi Icebergs pool and Wylies Baths, have remained popular despite their turnstiles and admission charges, informal Bogey Holes also still attract year-round swimmers (Jennings, 2011, p. 41).

Despite the popularity of the club and restaurant at the Bondi Icebergs pool and the café above Clovelly's Geoff James Pool, there is opposition to commercialisation of ocean pools. Regular swimmers, who "feared their idyllic waterhole would be turned into a tourist area", protested against development of a more upmarket

kiosk at Wylies Baths (K. Burke, 2012). Randwick Council's proposal to lease a site for a poolside café at Maroubra's Mahon Pool to fund the redevelopment of the pool's amenities block was also viewed as a threat to the pool's 'natural environment'. A 700-signature petition opposed the proposed café and the Maroubra Seals winter swimming club offered to contribute \$250,000 towards the refurbishment (Moncrieff-Hill, 2007).

As refuges from the more controlled elements of Australia's poolscape, ocean pools appeal to anyone convinced that "the best place in the world for a dip... is in a big pool of seawater, gouged out of a sandstone shelf" (Gripper, 2000). They offer a less controlled swimming environment with an appealing mix of sun, natural waves and "seagulls wheeling overhead, glimpses of ocean and blue sky taken in with every breath, and a glorious sense of tradition" (Hope, 1997). Helen Pitt (2012) thus took refuge in the "barnacled depths" and the "safety of the chained enclosure" at McIvers Baths. To replace the ocean beyond the pool wall with a lawn or a suburban streetscape involves a return to a more mundane world.

Affordances as therapeutic and restorative places

Martine Emdur's (Gallery; n.d.) paintings of ocean pools capture the contribution of an aesthetic setting to the sensual enjoyment of exercise. It seems "there's nothing like a dip in a saltwater ocean pool to refresh the soul, with all the advantages of a swim in the sea without the waves or the critters" ("Sea pools," 2007). Swimming "50 rhythmic laps" of Wylies Baths four or five times a week for decades seemed "a little bit akin to the secret of youth" for Frank Misson, better known as a test cricketer than a swimmer (Harari, 2000). His swims produced the "lovely feeling of being refreshed. And you don't give a bugger what happens for the rest of the day because you've had your lovely swim".

High tides, big swells, or storms make ocean pools into so-called 'infinity pools', where the pool edges are so little in evidence that the pool appears to reach the horizon. While acknowledging that such pools once represented "the ultimate

status symbol for five-star paradises” and were the “height of opulence” for 1990s pool owners, Patrick Barkham (2009) asserted that by 2009 infinity pools had become sufficiently ubiquitous as to constitute “the nadir of naff”. David Reyne’s (2012) more enthusiastic response to the enormous infinity pool atop Singapore’s Marina Bay Sands Hotel suggests Barkham was not looking at infinity pools from a swimmer’s perspective.

For Reyne (2012), an infinity pool is “a swimmer’s nirvana”, free of the boredom that is “the great curse of the lap swimmer” and provides a feeling of “freestyling with God” in an almost limitless space. For Roger Law (2001), an ocean pool provides just that sense of unlimited space: “in Bondi I swim in a sea pool built into the rocks. The blue of the pool, sea and sky merge into one another. It’s like breast stroking though a Mark Rothko painting”. By contrast, high walls protect swimmers from strong winds and block their view of the sea at the UK’s acclaimed Tinside Pool and Jubilee Pool.

The ambiguity of places that almost seamlessly link a bounded human-made space and a more expansive and turbulent natural world of water and sky is evident in Patrick van Daele’s (2002) photograph of clouds mirrored in calm pool waters at Cronulla’s Shelly Beach pool. The softness, sky exposure and the sense of the infinite evident in the photograph *Two Women at Bronte Pool* on Ian Lever’s (2008) website suggest that the restorative value of ocean pools may involve an encounter with the beautiful or sublime as much as the effect of any exercise in a ‘blue gym’.

Belief in the therapeutic power of sea air and seawater remains more prevalent in present-day Australia than belief in the therapeutic benefits of immersion in cold water. Year-round swimmers nevertheless remain convinced that their practice “is something that keeps everyone out of the way from [sic] the doctors and the hospital system” (Elbra, 2005), or at least reduces vulnerability to colds and flu (A. McDonald, 2000; Jennings, 2011), or helps to deal with depression (H. Pitt, 2012), or reduces the need for a wheel chair (McKimmie, 2010). Hail or cold does not deter year-round swimmers convinced that “you’ll always warm up after the

first couple of laps, and they swear it never lets them walk away gloomy” (Gripper, 2000).

At Mettams Pool on Perth’s northern beaches (McKimmie, 2010), regular swimmers are convinced that their morning swim can help them “kick-start their body, get a dose of physical activity, lift their spirits and lower stress levels by ‘dumping’ their problems in the water and chatting with fellow swimmers”. Helen Pitt (2012) likewise comments on the restorative power of a transformative dive into an ocean pool, eye contact with “crabfilled crevices” and feeling part of a “sorority of swimmers”. She regards Mclvers Baths as a powerful natural anti-depressant that helped her come to terms with her mother’s death.

Print and electronic news media also show images of sporting professionals doing recovery training or fitness work at ocean pools. The Sydney Roosters Rugby League team, the Sydney FC soccer team, and other sports teams have trained at the Bondi Icebergs pool (Andrews, 2004). Before heading south to Melbourne to win the 2005 AFL premiership, the Sydney Swans Australian Football team trained at Maroubra’s Mahon Pool (Stevenson, 2005).

Ocean pools appear to meet the Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1996) criteria for a restorative environment by providing: ‘a sense of being away’ from the mundane world; ‘fascination’ relating to the sea; ‘extent’ by offering a structured and orderly environment; and ‘compatibility’ between what a person wants, must and can do at an ocean pool. Recent research (Thwaites, Helleur, & Simkins, 2005) suggests that a human individual’s mental fatigue is reduced by being in even relatively small places that engage and hold that individual’s attention, are compatible with that individual’s expectations and inclinations, and have boundaries that are not easily discernable. Those mental health benefits may be more significant than physical health benefits. As Staats, Gernerden, & Hartig (2010) contend that the social context helps determine the restorative quality of an environment, the convivial atmosphere of an ocean pool may well also be important in the delivery of mental health benefits.

Affordances as adventure playgrounds and skillscapes

Ocean pools are neither as predictable nor as safe as other types of public pools. Unsupervised ocean pools offer children and adults more freedom to acquire skills unlikely to be developed in more controlled pools or in the waters between the flags of a patrolled beach. Ocean pools also offer a recreational environment very different to the static structures of a skate park or the typical post-1980s children's playground with low-risk equipment. The chains, rails and the seaward walls of ocean pools remain sites of exciting ritualised waveplay for young and old swimmers. In Tegan Bennett's novel (2001), *What falls away*, the local ocean pool is a sufficiently compelling adventure playground to draw a small girl there without her parents' knowledge.

Indicators that Australian ocean pools still function as skillscapes are the provision of marked lanes, the presence of diving blocks, the existence of labelled premises for swimming clubs, and photographs and records of learn-to-swim programs and the practice of 'chain surfing'. Leone Huntsman's (2001, p. 203) image of children hanging out on the pool chains and John Grainger's photograph of people at the chains of the Narrabeen pool awaiting a 'monster wave' (Minus, 2011) fall into the 'having fun in the adventure playground' category. *Dr Rip's Essential Beach Book* (Brander, 2010, pp. 106-107) includes an image captioned "storm wave riding of a different kind at Sydney's Bronte Baths". The captions to many such images (e. g. 'Swimmers cling to the fence at the Bronte pool' (Cubby, 2011) are, however, often at odds with the pleasure evident in the bodies of those engaged in this form of play.

The families, swimming clubs and schools that use ocean pools as learn-to-swim venues strengthen the link between swimming skills and surf skills. Children and adults who learn to swim at ocean pools, through those programs or less formalised means, acquire the ability to deal with moving water, slippery rocks, uneven surfaces and share a pool with people, plants and animals. They are thus better-

equipped to deal with the ocean and its changing moods than people whose swimming experience is limited to more controlled environments.

At the age of seven, Tim Winton (2010, p. 57) learnt to snorkel and to swim at Perth's Mettams Pool. He credits both his mother and his snorkel for teaching him to swim; as equipped with his mask, snorkel and fins, he "floated without thinking". For Linda McGill, her family's usual three-week Christmas camping holiday in the Illawarra meant "it was in the ocean pool at Shellharbour, that my brother and I became really good swimmers. We spent entire days in the water enjoying family races and teaching ourselves to dive by watching other people" (McGill, 2007, p. 36). Lisa Forrest (2001, p. 90), by contrast, took a copy of *Swimming the Shane Gould way* with her to the Dee Why pool each day after school to familiarise herself with the butterfly stroke before she competed in the Dee Why Ladies Club's Under Eights 25-metre Butterfly race.

John Pilger (2007) recalls a Bondi Icebergs member teaching him to "swim through the white water of 30-foot waves as they broke over Bondi's ocean baths". Former Australian Medical Association President, Kerryn Phelps, believes early morning training at the Bilgola Pool in her schooldays taught her "how good you feel, when you're fit" (Mitchell, 2003, p. 5). As that ocean pool had no marked lanes:

At high tide the waves would crash over the sea wall so you would be fighting the swell at the same time as you were concentrating on your swimming style and your lap count... It taught you a reasonable amount of physical resilience (Mitchell, 2003, p. 5).

Ocean pools attract swimmers who relish less controlled swimming environments where swimming is "like being in a washing machine on spin cycle" and racing in pools where crashing waves "carry swimmers off course" (D. Clark, 2006). Spruhan (2009) enjoys:

being in an ocean pool with waves tumbling in as you swim along. When the seas are big it's always great fun hanging on to the wall or the chain dividing

the surf from the pool, and waiting for the force of the waves to crash over you or push you back into the pool.

Ocean pools are also represented in guidebooks, pool histories and autobiographical writings as places to enjoy encounters with the plants and animals of the sea and rocky shore. Laurie Brereton (2001) wrote of his love for Wylies Baths where he “learnt to swim, learnt to play, spent countless hours exploring the shoreline with its bounty of ocean creatures ... dive-bombed into the pool from the long gone diving tower” and tried “luring an octopus from a crevice with cunji”. The “rocky areas that are excellent for exploring” enable children to explore the wonders of the rocky shore at Wylies Baths (S. Smith, 2004, p. 47).

For surfing legend Nat Young (1998, p.15), the Collaroy Pool was memorable because it was near a bamboo patch that provided excellent ‘swords’ for his boyhood swordfights, was where he collected octopus and other treasures from the rocks beside the pool, and where he first witnessed two people having sex. It was also there that he “was forced to learn to swim” when a wrestling bout with a friend on the wall separating the children’s pool from the main pool resulted in him being thrown into the main pool. For Young (1998, p. 15) being able to swim opened up a whole new world and “the transition from the calm waters of the pool to the open sea and its waves came perfectly naturally to me”.

In high tides or rough water, swimmers at ocean pools may as Bonner (2008) notes “sometimes grab a chain railing to avoid being swept out to sea”, but pleasurable swims at ocean pools are not confined to calm days. Pat Richardson (1992, pp.236-237), who had swum at the Coogee women’s pool as a 1940s schoolgirl, recalled one day in the 1990s, when:

We women sat on the edge of the pool for about ten minutes, assessing the danger of the waves breaking over it. Finally, one of the younger women slid into the middle, and then we all wordlessly followed. We then stayed in the middle of the pool, so the waves wouldn’t pound us against the rocky cliffs. It was one of the most exciting swims I’ve ever had.

Dangerous and dramatic incidents at the ocean pools linger in the memory and can be recalled with survivor pride and affection for a pool and its users. The Dee Why ocean pool was the place where Lisa Forrest (2001, pp. 90-92) learnt to swim, competed in club swimming and almost lost her life. Despite vividly recalling how at nine years of age she was nearly swept out to sea “like a piece of driftwood” and clung to the pool’s rusty chain until her father dragged her to safety, Forrest remains an enthusiast for ocean pools (Forrest, 2001, p. 92). My friend Ted Foster (2004) likewise enthused about ocean pools, but vividly recalled a life-threatening boyhood ‘joust with danger’ in the 1940s when a friend was rescued after being swept out to sea when playing at Sydney’s Mahon Pool.

Affordances as convivial public spaces

As convivial places enjoyed by a wide variety of people, ocean pools provide “possibilities for safe and mutually enriching forms of encounter between different groups” (Gleeson, 2006, p. 84). Leone Huntsman’s (2001, p. 184) characterisation of the Australian beach as “a meeting place, an Australian equivalent of the town square, a place to ruminate on the world today and to watch the passing parade” appears equally applicable to the ocean pools at the ends of so many NSW surf beaches. Austinmer’s ocean pool is, for instance, regarded as “the glue that holds the local community together” (CD, 2007).

An ocean pool is a more intimate space than an open beach. The awareness of ocean pools as somewhat risky places, and the sense that all present are in the same boat seems to enhance the conviviality of these pools. At ocean pools, one can invariably rely on strangers for advice and assistance with accidents and injuries or with common problems, such as retrieving belongings swept into the pool by wind or waves, avoiding bluebottles in the pool or locating lost goggles (Feeney, 2012).

Demand for access to unfenced, unsupervised ocean pools at all hours over the swimming season is sufficiently high on Sydney's Northern Beaches to make Warringah Council reluctant even to close any of its ocean pools for maintenance. Restrictions on access to the beach and the ocean pools fuelled opposition to filming a *Baywatch* TV series at Avalon Beach (Booth, 2001a, pp. 118-123). Waverley Council refused permission to film a QANTAS television commercial at Bronte Baths during the pool's peak period of summertime use (Clifton, 2004). Newspaper images, blogs and websites of clubs based at ocean pools are, however, more likely than paintings or art photos to show ocean pools as crowded places or as venues. I know of no image of an Australian ocean pool showing a mass of entwined figures comparable that depicted in Leon Kossoff's (1970) painting of a British indoor public pool.

As ocean pools differ from other Australian public pools by being 'an usually hazardous type of public pool' with the ability to cultivate convivial relations with wild nature, their communities of place and practice are usually portrayed as more heroic than their counterparts at less challenging public pools. Membership of these 'heroic' communities is, however, not limited to the young, fit, fashionable or able-bodied. Riches, celebrity, beauty and youth are acceptable, but are neither required nor especially admired at ocean pools. For Annabelle Mooney (2005, p.192), regulars at Wollongong's ocean pools "were anything but regular.... wrinkles, cellulite and missing body parts were all regular and ordinary; completely unremarkable". The variety of bodies at ocean pools has drawn the interest of photographers, such as Pete Elliston (Slarke, 2001), Neale Duckworth (Daws, 2005) and Matt Hoyle (2012).

While they are less attractive to fashion-conscious persons in their teens and twenties, ocean pools are considered ideal places for families with young children. Elderly men and women (including some former Olympic swimmers and surf champions) also swim at ocean pools, sometimes year-round (J. Connell, 1993; McKimmie, 2010). Swimmers at ocean pools often proudly refer to intense personal

relationships with an ocean pool that began early and continued over decades (Sider, 1991; Drew, 1995; Milsom, 2000).

Swimming clubs based at ocean pools have keen and competitive youthful and elderly members (Stewart, 1992). Swimming clubs and their coaches can attract several generations of a particular family ("Jack donates medals", 2005) to a specific ocean pool. Links with surf lifesaving clubs can also be strong and persist for several generations.

In a public place dominated by swimmers, the surfers and scuba divers who use Australia's ocean pools as entry points to the ocean, the rock fishers standing on the walls of ocean pools, the paid or volunteer maintenance workers, and the photographers and painters each constitute separate communities of practice. As fishers remain an important part of the community of place at ocean pools, references to ocean pools remain common in the fishing pages of Sydney, Newcastle and Illawarra newspapers. Newer communities of practice include social triathlon groups (M. McDonald, 2009b) and open-water swimmers training in the pool or using the pool to enter or exit the open water.

Newspaper images and websites of clubs based at ocean pools are, however, more likely than paintings or art photos to show ocean pools as venues for sport. Summertime club races and winter swimmers are part of the mundane world of the ocean pool showcased on the websites of amateur swimming clubs and winter swimming clubs. Even amateur clubs noted for producing Olympic champions are now more focused on family and on supporting life-long swimming habits. When granting permission for swimming clubs and schools to stage competitions, swim classes and learn-to-swim programs at ocean pools, surfside councils routinely ask for some space in the pool to be kept available for other members of the public during those functions.

Ocean pools also host less formalised communities of practice, which are evident in images and accounts (e. g. Jennings, 2011) of informal groups of regular daytime

swimmers who have well-defined times, territories and roles offering social support free of the competitive focus of swimming clubs. A brief exploration of popular photosharing websites¹ provides good evidence that dawn attracts both swimmers and photographers to ocean pools in Newcastle, Sydney and the Illawarra. There are dawn patrols at the Newcastle and Merewether Ocean Baths and sociable groups of year-round swimmers at many ocean pools. Informal groups swimming, sunbaking and socialising at ocean pools include the 'hip club' (so named for their hip transplants) at Wylies Baths (Gripper, 2000) and 'Dr Bronte's swimming and discussion group' at the Bronte Baths (Wicks, n.d.).

Ocean pools enable people to enjoy at little or no cost a pool with a different set of affordances to suburban backyard pools or other public pools and the same views as residents of the expensive houses near the ocean pools. The water, the waves, the views, the sun, light and company are all reported sources of pleasure making ocean pools appealingly sociable spaces even for people who come to talk or play cards as much as to swim or soak up the sun. Where the swimming clubs and the informal swimming and discussion groups at this 'unusually hazardous type of public pool' become an extended family, the pools or clubhouses can function as second homes with particularly good views and swimming environments.

Amateurism, racism and gender-segregation now pose notably fewer barriers to conviviality than in the early-twentieth century. Gender-segregated conviviality persists at McIvers Baths, now the only NSW ocean pool allocated solely for use by women and children (Iveson, 2003). That pool remains a place where, as Richardson (1992, p. 137) reported:

Ladies sat around like happy sea lions, sunbaked topless, swam unmolested and unstared at. Our stretch marks bother no-one. Our Caesareans, our bulges, our cellulite, our pregnancies were all our own. Fifteen stone mermaids like me could frolic, unsneered at by fat-gutted males with balding pates.

¹ These include Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>), Better Photo (<http://www.betterphoto.com/gallery>), and Photo of the Day (<http://potd.com.au/gallery>).

The continuing community and council support for McIvers Baths recognises that Coogee Bay's three other ocean pools and its surf beach remain less friendly and less appealing recreational venues for certain groups of women. While McIvers Baths is now promoted internationally to lesbian tourists, its patrons include women who prefer to wear far more or significantly less swimwear than is generally accepted at public pools and beaches and other women seeking freedom from the male gaze (H. Pitt, 2012; Richardson, 1992, p. 237; Sally, 2011). Support for that women's pool also reflects the generations of boys and girls taught to swim there by the women's swimming club.

While a pool's communities of practice and place can overlap, some attract far more news coverage than others. Images of bathers at an ocean pool routinely accompany Newcastle and Wollongong newspaper articles on summer heat. Most published images of ocean pools include no completely unclothed people, no topless women, and no women wearing non-standard swimwear, such as the burqinis² worn by women that Sally (2011) photographed at McIvers Baths.

Water sports at ocean pools are at club, rather than elite, level and so now receive less media coverage than non-sporting rituals and festivities staged at ocean pools. Wintertime inspires illustrated articles on winter swimmers at ocean pools and coverage of the start of the winter swimming season often includes images of Bondi Icebergs or the Merewether Mackerals leaping into their pool clutching chunks of ice.

As mentioned in Chapter 7, Newcastle's Greek Orthodox community and its Macedonian Orthodox community have held their Epiphany ceremonies at ocean pools for decades. Other festivities celebrated at ocean pools include Australia Day at the Black Head pool ("Australia Day", 2010), International Women's Day at

² As Bonner (2007) explains the burqinis, marketed under Sydney fashion entrepreneur Aheeda Zanetti's Ahiida label, are formfitting two-piece swimming costumes consisting of full-length leggings and a long-sleeved, hooded tunic.

Wollongong's Continental Baths (Crawshaw, 2004), a 'floating film festival' hosted by Wylies Baths for several years (Slarke, 2001 pp. 35-36), and sculpture shows (Killalea, 1999), outdoor cinema and theatre performances at the Newcastle Ocean Baths.

Ocean pools continue to inspire convivial fundraising for the pool or for charity. Pool-based activities include contests and lapathons, while other recent fundraising activities have included art exhibitions, a gourmet food fair, a children's play and a bookfair (Collins, 2009; "Pearl Beach Food Fair", 2009). By contrast, favoured interwar fundraising activities related to ocean pools were raffles, dances, euchre parties and cinema evenings.

Council newsletters, project websites and local papers document the presence of Coastcare and other environmental care groups in and around ocean pools. Sydney has Bushcare groups based at McIvers Baths and Wylies Baths on Coogee Bay (Randwick City Council, 2006) and the Merewether LandCare group's projects (Foley, 2011) include work on the surrounds of the Merewether Ocean Baths. The presence of these groups and the involvement of Tidy Towns with Dad's Army at the Black Head pool (discussed in the previous chapter) further emphasises that ocean pools should not be viewed only as venues for learn-to-swim programs, aquatic exercise and recreational or competitive swimming.

At unfenced, unsupervised ocean pools, where there is no effective way to exclude seaweed or animals, conviviality need not be limited to human beings. John Earle's (2009) painting *Bogey Hole II* shows people and dogs relaxing in and around the cool green water of Newcastle's Bogey Hole. Swimming laps, where you can greet the pool's resident octopus or watch the fish, can be "an enlivening experience; it's addictive. It's like being in an aquarium—nothing like an indoor pool where you're just watching the line" (Stevenson, 1999). At Wylies Baths, "the walls and floors are covered in lichen and seaweed, and lap swimmers disturb schools of tiny colourful fish" (D. Clark, 2006). Other pleasures more available at ocean pools than at most other types of public pools relate to seeing passing dolphins and whales, or even

"fur seals flopping about on the rocks, looking in at you" (KB, 2007a), or knowingly sharing pools with fish, sharks, rays, bluebottles, blue-ringed octopus, dolphins or seals (Pandaram, 2006).

As Boissonneault, Gladstone, Scott and Cushing (2005) noted, newspaper coverage of human-shark relationships has become so much more favourable since 1969 that sharks once feared as 'man-eaters' are now seen as meriting conservation rather than cruel treatment. Even relationships with sharks or rays washed into ocean pools or placed there by pranksters to startle swimmers (Magnay, 2003; "Swimming with sharks", 2006) have become more convivial. While sharks encountered at ocean pools were once routinely shot or harpooned, shark and rays are now more likely to be returned to the open-water (Bodkin, 2010; "Instructor," 2001; Minus, 2009).

A "flirtatious octopus" given to touching swimmers at the Kiama Blowhole pool was likewise removed from the pool and released into the sea (KB, 2007b). The relocation of sea urchins was discussed in the previous chapter. The NSW Parks and Wildlife Service also occasionally uses ocean pools as convalescent areas for injured dolphins (Meaney, 2004; "Stories from the Yamba ocean pool", 2005).

On the darker side, an abundance of sand, seaweed, sea lice, bluebottles or dead fish in an ocean pool can highlight the advantages of swimming in more controlled environments. Chlorinated freshwater public pools do not need to be closed to enable the removal of a decaying whale carcass washed into the pool (Cetinski, 2011; Cherry, 2011) or of venomous rays placed in the pool by ignorant or sinister pranksters ("Venomous ray", 2010). Bodies of drowned swimmers or rockfishers are also rarely found around chlorinated freshwater public pools.

Although the most commonly encountered images and representations of Australia's ocean pools are usually less diverse than the realities, they are consistent with a view of the pools as democratic, free and clean seawater swimming pools. Recent images of ocean pools are more likely to show sunbakers,

swimmers, spectators, surfers and fishers than any consumption of food, alcohol or cigarettes. In publicly exhibited images of ocean pools there is an absence of picnickers, drinkers, smokers, school groups and non-standard bathing costumes. Dogs or other 'domestic' animals are more likely to appear in family snapshots of ocean pools than in art photographs or news photographs of ocean pools.

While the visual arts, news or advertising rarely portray ocean pools as places of sadness, ugliness or more than pleasurable danger, fiction does portray a darker side to ocean pools. In Robert Barrett's (1995) thriller *The Day of the Gecko*, the redevelopment of the Bondi Icebergs pool provides a convenient place to bury bodies. In Leah Giarratano's (2007, p.5) thriller, *Vodka doesn't freeze*, a paedophile is killed while lurking in the shrubs near an ocean pool to photograph children at the wading pool.

Newspaper reports of anti-social behaviour at ocean pools in the form of assaults, thefts and vandalism have remained rare. There has, however, been sufficient vandalism at the Newcastle Ocean Baths, The Entrance Ocean Baths and the Malabar Pool to provoke debate regarding the use of surveillance cameras and security patrols as cheaper alternatives to the engagement of on-site caretakers.

On a more sombre note, those convivial ocean pools can also be sites for informal group grieving, as shown in the film *Walking on Water* (Watt & Ayres, 2002). More formalised mourning rituals can involve swimwear-clad honour guards forming on the seaward walls of ocean pools as the ashes of a deceased swimming club or surf lifesaving colleague are scattered into the sea nearby (Andrews, 2004). I recall a guard of honour being organised at Wylies Baths in late-2006 to honour a swimmer and surf lifesaver, whose ashes were scattered into the sea from the Coogee Surf Life Saving Club's inflatable boat.

The loss of an ocean pool or its distinctive structures likewise produces communal grieving and tributes to the departed. Thus when the Bondi Icebergs clubhouse became so damaged by concrete cancer that it had to be demolished, the old

clubhouse was mourned, commemorated in a photographic exhibition (Stead, 2003), and documented on the Icebergs' website.

Affordances as visually appealing cultural landscapes

All representations of ocean pools depict humanised landscapes, still valued as 'improving' and beautifying the rocky shores. In these images, the wilderness concept of human-less spaces has less capacity to, as Adrian Franklin (2006) puts it "overshadow other natures" and "set up the desire to be alone in the wilderness"; for though the photographer and other humans may remain invisible, the human effort to shape and sustain the structure of the ocean pool is evident.

Representations of ocean pools lack a sense of power over nature. Ocean pools are discussed as being "nestled into a headland" (D. Clark, 2006) or carved out of the ocean, as much as carved out of the rocky shore. A visiting Englishman (Beard, 1997, p. 112) described one of Sydney's ocean pools as:

a green chunk of ocean restrained as a rectangle. The long sides measure fifty metres, and men are sea-fishing off the flat whitewashed restraining wall. There are some bent and rusting fence-poles as a further token boundary against the Pacific, but the waves break and race along the wall-tops, filing the pool, overflowing it, then receding.

Far from dominating their environment, ocean pools appear to harmonise with, or be controlled by, their surrounds. Les Murray's (1989) poem, 'The Ocean Baths', even asserts that a person in an ocean pool is "not in the sea but the sea's television". In a Steve Back's (2007) colour photograph, where motion blur softens the waves, the pool at Bilgola seems tiny and unassertive against the enormity of the night sky and the beach. This image recalls the Max Dupain photograph discussed in Chapter 4, where the ocean pool provided the only straight lines in an aerial view of Newport Beach.

While early twentieth century postcards and some more recent representations have portrayed ocean pools as reassuringly safe, calm, bounded, beautiful spaces, it

is no longer simply the sense of safety that leads ocean pools and their surroundings to be regarded as beautiful. Anthony Roach's photographs (Roach, 2012) depict Wylies Baths and the Bronte Bogey Hole as places of mist and mystery. In a Steve Back (2007) colour photograph of the Bronte Baths, the green slime adds to the scene of eeriness and mystery and mist swirls over the rock beyond the pool. The pool is portrayed as an uncanny place rather than an ugly or a mundane place.

Human-made structures at ocean pools often age more rapidly than those in environments less subject to winds, waves and storms. In Peter Kingston's painting of Wylies Baths, the presence of the sea and vegetation produces a cheerful impression, despite the tired wooden buildings (Slarke, 2011 pp. 37-38). By contrast, a Dion Archibold (n.d.) painting portrays the buildings and pool at the pre-restoration Newcastle Ocean Baths as dull, tired and joyless. According to Stead (2003), Skeet Booth and Damien Brinley's photographs of the old Bondi Icebergs building demonstrated a capacity to find beauty even in decay in keeping with the Romantic penchant for ruins.

Wild and powerful waves at ocean pools can be categorised as relating to the sublime. A news story about people standing on the cliffs above Newcastle's Bogey Hole to "enjoy the show Mother Nature put on" (Vallejo, 2006) testifies to a persistent desire for engagement with the sublime and the willingness to brave water splashing 100 metres into the air. Peter Carey (2001, pp. 97-98) writes of viewing an ocean pool at North Bondi, where:

... Even the dog stops licking to watch the waves crash over the wall, cascade off the edge, foaming and spilling on the rocks beneath. The force of the ocean gives it an exciting, vaguely dangerous air. The impression is not exactly false.

Stormy weather and large waves add to the spectacle, attracting photographers and others to view ocean pools and daredevils to play with the waves. Sydney, Newcastle, and Wollongong newspapers and television stations often use ocean pools as reference points for extraordinary weather. News coverage of storms and

heavy seas is therefore often accompanied by images of water pounding against the walls of ocean pools, smashing over their sides, and filling them with cappuccino-like froth. News media are thus far more likely than marketing literature or art galleries to show the ocean pools as something sublime.

Photographers and other artists and the National Trust have done more than surfside councils or government agencies to draw attention to ocean pools as a distinctive set of places. Given the distribution of ocean pools and people along the Australian coast, it is not surprising that the ocean pools most often photographed and painted are those in the largest NSW coastal cities, namely Sydney and Newcastle. The proximity of the Bondi Icebergs pool and the Bronte Baths to inner Sydney and the easy access from inner Newcastle to the Newcastle Ocean Baths helps to make those pools appealing and popular subjects for photographs. Differences in the attraction of NSW ocean pools for image-makers and viewers are not, however, wholly explicable in terms of the size of the population in the catchment area for the ocean pools.

An ocean pool's style can make it particularly appealing to artists and photographers. For example, photographers are often drawn to the distinctive seaward walls of Coogee's Ross Jones Memorial Pool, to the boardwalk at the North Narrabeen Rock pool, to the size of the Merewether Ocean Baths, and to distinctive buildings such as those at Wylies Baths, or the Newcastle Ocean Baths or the Woonona Baths. They are also attracted to the straight lines and geometric patterns of the more formalised ocean pools and to the simplicity of the ring-of-rocks pools. As mentioned earlier, the mix of people seen at certain ocean pools also attracts photographers.

Regional differences in art and beach cultures are also important. Newcastle residents have long seen ocean pools as a worthy subjects for painting (e.g. John Earle, n.d.), and photography (e.g. P. Foley, n.d.) Its public and private art galleries have exhibited many images of ocean pools. Exhibitions featuring image of ocean pools, whether at galleries on the coast or further inland, stimulate production of further images of these pools.

As noted in Chapter 1, the extent of a viewer's acquaintance with ocean pools inevitably influences the interpretation of those pools and their images. Bonner (2008) does not expect his *New York Times* readers to be acquainted with any pools similar to the ocean pools he cites as one of Sydney's defining characteristics. Comments posted on blogs (Sally, 2011; Thecronins, 2011) and other popular photosharing websites affirm how exotic the NSW ocean pools are for North Americans, or even for visitors from Western Australia. Receiving feedback like "never seen anything like it in the states. I want to be there now and not in rainy Seattle" on his posted photograph of Coogee's Ross Jones Memorial Pool on Flickr, a Sydney-resident photographer (Harris-Roxas, 2006) felt compelled to explain:

you'd like it in Sydney. Ocean pools like this are quite common here (probably one every second or third beach). Here's a photograph of the one at Maroubra, a few beaches further along from Coogee.

After posting his *Whitewater-Whitewash*, an early morning photograph of the Merewether Ocean Baths on the pbase site, Thubleau (2005) found viewers (perhaps mistaking the pump house for a tank) admiring its 'post-apocalyptic' feel while evidently experiencing difficulty in interpreting the image. Thubleau had explained that the image showed:

the far end of the pool running parallel with the starting blocks, the pump house to the right of the block, a man standing on the pool edge, the waves beyond the pool edge breaking on the nearby rocks and to the left a guard rail and the headland in the distance.

Australia's ocean pool enthusiasts are, however, unlikely to ever share one European's (Straka, 1997) conviction that a photograph depicting two lap swimmers on a calm day at the Bondi Icebergs pool showed:

Two swimmers in a pool in front of the coast of Australia, buffeted by immense masses of water – a land wrested from the ocean. One could hardly portray more drastically the antagonism of nature and civilisation, of forlornlessness in nature and power over it.

Affordances as visitor attractions

Ocean pools are still regarded as visitor attractions along the NSW coast and especially in Sydney, which remains the most popular Australian entry point for overseas visitors. Inflight magazines (Mountney, 2007), travel magazines (D. Clark, 2006; Sea pools, 2007), guidebooks (Ohlsson & Barca 2004; Proctor & Swaffer, 2007; S. Smith, 2004), newspapers and blogs (Sally, 2011) all recommend visits to ocean pools, even for time-poor visitors to Sydney (“48 hours,” 2011).

Representations of ocean pools continue to be enrolled in actor-networks focused on marketing tourist destinations, real estate and other goods and services within Australia, and particularly within the state of NSW, to a far greater extent than in South Africa or any of its coastal provinces. Print and online images of ocean pools are enrolled to help attract tourists to motels, guesthouses, holiday houses, tourist parks, scenic drives and coastal walking tracks. Postcards of ocean pools are still popular, as are aerial views that include both ocean pools and ocean beaches.

Although surfside councils actively promote their ocean pools as local icons and visitor attractions via brochures, calendars, websites and other promotional materials, Australia’s ocean pools are not promoted as a network of places. The BeachSafe website (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2009) does however, list many of Australia’s ocean pools as beach features.

Affordances as backgrounds, brands and icons

Their special relationship with the sea still imparts a touch of the beautiful or the sublime to any view of the ocean pools or activities undertaken there. Ocean pools are an intentional background presence in some news stories, fashion shoots, wedding photographs and portraits. Ocean pools appear in the backgrounds of Peter Elliston’s portraits of swimmers at Wylies Baths (Slarke, 2001, pp. 41-42) and Matt Hoyle’s (2012) portraits of winter swimmers at the Bondi Icebergs pool.

People pictured at ocean pools generally appear at home with the water, the pool, their own bodies and any heritage structures.

From the 1970s onwards, both newspapers and television have displayed images of people campaigning to have ocean pools renovated, heritage-listed, protected from unwanted commercial enterprises, or simply to promote interest in a specific ocean pools. Usually the protestors are shown standing protectively in front of a readily recognisable view of their beloved pool. For example, a photograph of a protest against a proposed café at Mahon Pool involving mothers, babies and the local member of state parliament (Moncrieff-Hill, 2007) showed them with 'their' pool in the background. The protestors are, however, usually middle-aged or elderly regular swimmers.

Preference for a particular ocean pool suggests local knowledge. Profiles of Sydney celebrities, such as chefs (Meyer, 2011), cricketers (Lucius, 2003), actors (K. Cox, 2000) and radio announcers ("The outsiders", 2006) highlight their favourite ocean pools. Though better known as a bushwalker than a swimmer, NSW Premier Bob Carr chose to be photographed in the pool at Wylies Baths, when voted Man of the Year by a Sydney magazine (R. Smith, 2006, p. 470).

As having an ocean pool in the background of a shot can constitute a form of branding, ocean pools are used as venues for launching new projects and programs. The Australian ocean pool with most success as a nationally recognized brand is not surprisingly the Bondi Icebergs pool, an ocean pool located within a national heritage precinct (Garrett, 2008), sited closer to the heart of Australia's largest city than any other ocean pool, and managed by a swimming club rather than a council. This pool, rather than the Aquatic Centre at Sydney's Olympic Park, or the still prestigious North Sydney Olympic pool, was where Olympic swimmer Geoff Huegill (Jeffery, 2011) announced his intention to try for a place in the Australian swimming team for the 2012 Olympics. It was also the venue for launching a national water safety plan ("Water safety urged," 1998). A classic campaign shot for local, state and federal elections has the aspiring politician standing on the veranda of the

Bondi Icebergs club beneath the Australian flag with both a corner of the ocean pool and the curve of Bondi's iconic beach in the background.

Within Australia, and particularly within NSW, advertisers seeking to engage with the communities of interest associated with ocean pools use advertisements featuring ocean pools. Images of ocean pools, symbolic of healthy pleasures in an appealing setting, continue to assist the sale of goods and services ranging from massages to health insurance, travel, vitamins, deodorants, beach towels, fashion clothing, sporting goods, paint and especially real estate.

At present, the spatial relationship between a property for sale and its local ocean pools is often explicitly emphasised in aerial shots featured in real estate advertisements. A location close to an ocean pool can now add significantly more to the appeal and value of Sydney residential property than a heated indoor swimming pool and spa. Providing a colour image of a nearby ocean pools on a calm day is apparently more effective marketing tool than a photograph of the property for sale.

Real estate advertisements usually feature images evoking beauty or romance rather than the stormy sublime, which strikes most people as involving excessive discomfort. When I lived in Sydney, glowing images of iconic ocean pools or more modest ocean pools symbolising the best aspects of coastal living repeatedly featured in the real estate flyers that appeared in my letterbox, as well as in the real estate advertisements in local newspapers. Those images still appear in the real estate sections of major newspapers along the NSW coast.

The link between location and views could in principle be undermined by a combination of strategically located 'poolcams', 'beachcams' and 'wavecams' and the increasingly common large high-resolution screens and home theatre equipment. Internet-connected homes lacking a view of the coast can now access to images ocean pools from websites linked to 'poolcams', 'beachcams' and

'wavecams'. These internet-enabled views of nature may have restorative, therapeutic and commercial value.

Because of the association between ocean pools and vitality, images of ocean pools also appear in the news, lifestyle pages, and even on the business pages of newspapers in the major NSW cities as illustrations for articles on topics ranging from drought (Robins, 2008) to healthy lifestyles and finance ("Talk of a drop-in," 2003). For those newspapers and their readers, it seems an ocean pool is inherently and obviously a place where people joyously engage with an abundance of lively water. The image of an elderly, Speedo-clad winter swimmer at an ocean pool therefore has wide use within NSW news media and advertising as a symbol of healthy ageing, and of the life-long value of ready access to a physically challenging, playful, public recreational space that offers both openness to nature and a comforting sense of enclosure.

The image of a peopled ocean pool is also evidently intended and often understood as a meaningful expression or symbol of some aspect of an idealised Australianness or a relationship with the ocean. Despite the rarity of ocean pools outside NSW, Helen Pitt (2012) wrote explicitly of Mclvers Baths reacquainting her with "what it meant to be Australian". The ocean pools appearing as cover images for books (Drewe, 2008; Gemmell, 2009; Hirst, 2010) that make no mention of ocean pools are meaningful in this symbolic sense, rather than as the representation of a specific iconic place.

Although most of the images of ocean pools that I have encountered have been either realistic or romantically motion-blurred, James Willebrant produces more abstracted and symbolic images of ocean pools. I find the two most memorable archived paintings on Willebrant's (n.d.) website are *I Swam in the Childhood that My Memory had Saved* and *Pool of Memory*. In both paintings, the pool walls evoke both the distinctive walls of Sydney's Ross Jones Memorial Pool and the walls of several ocean pools on South Africa's Indian Ocean coast.

Both paintings are abstracted images of moonbathers with strong romantic and nostalgic elements. Both show a solo pale moonbather in part of a stark ocean pool complex defined only by its relation to the sea and lacking any apparent attachment to land, beach or a surf lifesaving club. Under a starry night sky, neat stripes of white waves head towards the pool. In *Pool of Memory*, a shark-shaped constellation acknowledges that much mythologised predator, and its role in promoting the development of ocean pools. As the titles of the paintings imply, these ocean pools are depicted existing outside geography as unworldly special places, dreaming sites and 'pools of memory'.

Conclusions

Although they deliver many of the same benefits as other public pools, ocean pools are recognised and represented as having certain affordances unmatched by other types of public pools. Looking more closely at representations of the key affordances of Australian ocean pools shows the value placed on the aesthetic appeal of these pools and the embodied knowledges and relationships with non-human nature that these pools cultivate. Studying representations of ocean pools also reveals national and local differences in the ways that images of ocean pools are used and valued. Australian writers, readers, film-makers, moviegoers and TV viewers appear to relate more to ocean pools and their representations than do their counterparts in the USA, UK, Ireland or South Africa.

Regardless of the heritage value of their structures, Australian ocean pools are acquiring new significance as sites of civic environmentalism, islands of resistance to consumerism and fashion and as risky and convivial public places with enthusiastic patrons across all age groups. Ocean pools provide satisfying and appealing skillscapes for learning about water, waves, plants and animal life, swimming, lifesaving, jumping and diving. Socialising within communities of place and practice in these adventure playgrounds encourages people to learn from others and from the non-signposted aspects of the environment, to keep each other safe in a risky recreational environment, and to see human beings as part of nature and as having responsibilities to care for and sustain non-human nature.

To date, there has, however, been a glaring lack of any environmental justice perspective regarding the pleasures and benefits delivered by ocean pools. Recognition of ocean pools as places that encourage active lifestyles and function as 'restorative places' suggests there is potential to argue on environmental justice grounds for more widespread access to such places. Environmental justice arguments could justify both construction of ocean pools at new sites and intensification of social tourism programs involving ocean pools to enable a wider population to enjoy the benefits of engagement with one or more of Australia's ocean pools.

The involvement of Australia's ocean pools in a variety of actor-networks related to different but entangled functional identities makes them less likely to be abandoned or destroyed than their overseas counterparts. The failure of Australia's ocean pools to become enrolled in emerging actor-networks focused on fostering healthy, sustainable public places or delivering environmental justice does, however, suggest that their affordances are not receiving due recognition. Failure to identify, document, celebrate and evaluate the affordances of ocean pools, in addition to those of other public pools, diminishes human interest in developing affordable new ocean pools or sustaining existing pools.

Recognition of those additional affordances at other than a local level continues to be inhibited by the failure of ocean pools of Australia, or even New South Wales, to achieve a widely recognised collective identity. Even the Newcastle and Illawarra ocean pools struggle to gain the recognition accorded to Sydney's ocean pools. Even in NSW, Sydney's high-profile ocean pools are not seen as role models to be emulated at new sites. This notion is further investigated in the next chapter in terms of the campaigns to sustain existing ocean pools, rebirth abandoned ones and develop new ones.

Chapter 9. Of ghost, reborn, phantom and threatened pools

In ANT terms, studying projects that fail to acquire or maintain a material form highlights failures to identify and enrol sufficient human and non-human actors, to adopt effective persuasive strategies, or to recognise the circumstances that constrain the choice and success of those strategies. This chapter, therefore, investigates ocean pools that failed to acquire or maintain a material form.

It begins by examining ghost ocean pools that acquired a material form, but were later abandoned. It then reviews instances of reborn ocean pools, which were once abandoned but later returned to use. It also examines the actor-networks associated with phantom ocean pools that have remained as unrealised dreams and plans. It identifies and explores the human and non-human actors assisting ocean pools to resist becoming ghosts or remaining phantoms.

Turning ocean pools into ghosts

As pools that have been abandoned, ghost pools testify to the instability and fragility of their actor-networks. PPI communities can transfer their allegiances to another pool deemed 'better' on the grounds of conviviality, convenience, the facilities for certain communities of place and practice, or for some combination of these reasons or other reasons.

In a poolscape dominated by more controlled swimming environments, surfside councils understandably wonder whether funds allocated for ocean pools might be better devoted to an indoor aquatic centre well-suited to year-round use. Ocean pools have, however, remained the only form of public pool in the Waverley local government area on Sydney's Eastern Beaches. During eastern Australia's recent decade-long drought, Waverley council considered extending its efforts to conserve water to include banning the filling of private swimming pools, lap pools and plunge pools (Malkin & Macey, 2005).

As noted in Chapter 4, the faint ghostly presence of Newcastle's Corporation Baths is a reminder that an indoor public pool was considered less appealing than an

ocean pool by some twentieth-century pool users. Sydney's Coogee Bay also provides clear evidence that the presence of ocean pools need not inhibit the development of indoor pools or vice versa. The indoor Coogee Aquarium pool was created as part of a nineteenth-century amusement park, at a time when Coogee Bay hosted only two ocean pools. When the Aquarium pool closed in the 1970s, there were four ocean pools in use on Coogee Bay. While a shopping complex now occupies the Aquarium's site, all four of Coogee's ocean pools remain popular, and one even experienced a rebirth after being abandoned.

The natural decay of abandoned ocean baths is, however, well-understood and accepted in NSW surfside communities. Once sustained maintenance action ends, an ocean pool soon ceases to provide a satisfactory 'pool for competition and carnivals', but may long retain some value as 'wild but safe enough surfside pool'. As human involvement declines, the ocean translates the pool back into a piece of rocky shore, more significant as a habitat for non-human life than as human recreational space.

As their human-made structure becomes less easily identifiable, abandoned pools become ghosts perceived only by people who enjoy the pool's current affordances or recognise and respect evidence of past community engagement with the ocean. Abandoned ocean pools are generally seen as benevolent ghosts and, like other ruins, can remain places of community interest and value.

Redevelopment of ocean pool sites for other purposes is rare in Australia. The present ocean pool at Kiama's Pheasant Point is a smaller scale reminder of the earlier storm-damaged ocean pools that were filled in and grassed over to minimise maintenance costs. The site of an ocean pool is formally crown land, sometimes leased by a council and generally regarded as a commons and as unsuited to most forms of development. Had more ocean pools been threatened by redevelopment plans, the formal heritage recognition of the NSW ocean baths might have developed more rapidly.

Ghosts of Wollongong's women's pools

As well as its many active ocean pools, the Wollongong local government area also hosts several ghost pools recognised as having heritage significance. For Wollongong's earliest formalised ocean pool, known as the Chain Baths or the Nuns Pool, a gradual process of abandonment began in the late nineteenth century. This bathing pool (see Figures 3-4) could not be easily converted to a 'public pool for competitions and carnivals'. By contrast, the Ladies Baths facing South Beach (now City Beach) was more readily adapted to provide a standardised competition course and standing room for spectators and officials. As neither of Wollongong's women's baths adequately addressed the needs of schools or other female swimmers, there was ongoing pressure on the Council (McDermott, 2005) to provide women's swimming hours at the men's baths, which into the 1920s provided the municipality's best venue for competitive swimming.

As discussed in Chapter 5, development of the Continental Baths offering mixed bathing, more swimming room, better competition and dressing facilities reduced the appeal of Wollongong's earlier gender-segregated ocean pools for residents and visitors. Neither of the women's ocean pools were located as close to the town and its patrolled surf beaches as the Continental Baths or the rock pool that had once been Wollongong's Men's Baths and the town's best competition pool. While there were no moves to close or demolish the women's pools, the case for maintaining them to the standards that their users considered appropriate became less compelling.

There were, however, some women in Wollongong who valued privacy when sea bathing and took little interest in lap swimming for recreation or competition. Those women were less prepared to abandon the Chain Baths. A report to Wollongong Council by a firm of heritage consultants (Stedinger Associates, 2003 p.11) states that 'Catholic nuns from the local convent on Harbour Street' were granted exclusive use of the Chain Baths.

Keeping all four of the Wollongong municipality's ocean pools in good order proved too demanding for the council. The Mother Superior of St Mary's convent

("Wollongong Council," 1940) complained to Wollongong Council in 1940 that neither of the town's ladies pools had any dressing accommodation. By 2003, the Nuns Pool was being visited only occasionally each week and the steep access path had deteriorated badly (Stedinger Associates, 2003, pp. 33, 58). The more accessible ladies pool closer to City Beach still attracts occasional fishers.

It was only the women's pools, predictably the two least convenient of Wollongong's three gender-segregated ocean pools, which became ghosts. By contrast, the ocean pool that was once Wollongong's men's baths was not abandoned but did lose its gender-segregated character. Older residents ("Before sea views were all the rage," 2001) recall learning to swim there because they could not as boys afford the one penny entrance fee to the nearby Continental Baths. Proposals to concrete over that pool provoked strong community protest. The pool remains in use today and is generally considered to present few public liability problems (Wood, 2002).

The relationship of the pool now known as 'the old Wollongong rock pool' to the nearby Continental Baths is similar to that of the Bronte Bogey Hole to the Bronte Baths. During periods when admission charges applied at their nearby more formalised baths, both the Bronte Bogey Hole and the Wollongong rock pool remained free of admission charges. Even in the absence of admission charges, beachgoers and swimmers seeking convenient unfenced, unsupervised 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' rather than 'public pools for competition and carnival' still use the Bronte Bogey Hole and the Wollongong rock pool.

The ghost ocean pools at Wollongong are, therefore, memorials to a NSW surfside community strongly committed from the convict era into the early twentieth century to providing women and children with access to public pools. They also provide evidence that Wollongong residents and visitors from the 1920s onwards preferred to use larger, more modern, more convenient, well-maintained ocean pools more readily accessible to all. The heritage report by Stedinger Associates (2003, p. 59) on five of Wollongong's less visited ocean pools explicitly stated the

community view that “lack of visitation” to those pools was “considered to be reflective of the poor conditions of the pools and the existence of alternative facilities” rather than to any pool’s “lack of community value or interest”.

Scarborough’s 1920s ghost pool

The City of Greater Wollongong also hosts ocean pools, which began transforming into ghosts during the early twentieth century, when they were still managed by Bulli Shire. One of these is the ocean pool developed at the Scarborough end of the Scarborough-Wombarra beach in the 1920s with the assistance of the Scarborough-Wombarra surf lifesaving club as “an additional attraction for visitors” and a training facility for surf lifesavers (“Scarborough-Clifton,” 1923).

In 1937, Bulli Shire’s engineer recommended enlarging the “more accessible and better situated” Wombarra pool at the southern end of the beach rather than the Scarborough pool (“Bulli Shire Council,” 1937). When Wollongong Council subsumed Bulli Shire, it too focused on maintaining the Wombarra pool. Lack of maintenance of the Scarborough pool did not, however, persuade all the local residents to abandon that pool. At least one local resident swam there from the 1920s until the late 1990s (Failes, 1998).

In 1998, local residents maintained a vigil on Wombarra Beach to protest the proposed development of a \$10 million stormwater tunnel to drain water from the Sydney-to-Wollongong railway that had potential to damage the Scarborough-Wombarra beach and the ocean pool at the beach’s northern end (Failes, 1998). The stormwater tunnel went ahead, the beach survived, but the ocean has now almost completely demolished the reinforced concrete walls of the Scarborough ocean pool (Figure 9-1) and made the well-maintained Wombarra (Figure 9-2) pool even more attractive.



Figure 9-1. The Scarborough pool, NSW



Figure 9-2. The Wombarra pool, NSW

Thirrour's 1940s ghost pool

As mentioned in Chapter 5, a 25-yard (approximately 25-metre) ocean pool at the southern end of Thirrour Beach was created entirely by voluntary labour in the

1920s. Development of this pool involved fundraising by schoolchildren and adults as well as working bees involving 40 to 50 men at a time ("The Opening," 1923; "Thirroul," 1923a, 1923b). This pool was envisaged both as a 'pool for competition and carnivals' and a 'wild but safe enough surfside pool'.

On the Eight Hour Day public holiday in 1923 the pool opened with a "monster swimming carnival" with swimming events for men, boys and girls attending public schools, surf clubs, open events, novelty event, a diving competition and music from the Bulli Band ("The Opening," 1923). The Progress Association erected a stone inscription to honour those who contributed in kind or volunteered their labour (estimated value of 900 pounds) and organised a testimonial fund for the men who did the blasting work ("The Opening" 1923; "Thirroul", 1923c).

A decade later, neither local schools, nor the progress association nor the Bulli Shire remained committed to this pool. Complaints (Bulli Council," 1933, 1934) about lack of water and the build-up of sand in the pool suggested the pool had not been sited to take appropriate account of ocean kinetics. By 1938, when the South Thirroul surf lifesaving club proposed a working bee to extend the existing rock pool ("Bulli Shire Council," 1938), Thirroul's expectations of a 'public pool for competition and carnivals' had moved well beyond a small and often silted pool carved out from a rock platform.

A new Thirroul pool was part of a package of improvements to beautify the Thirroul waterfront. The NSW government contributed half of the funds for the land resumption and development of a pool, kiosk, dressing shed, drainage, road works, road, wall, children's playground and shelter shed. Ratepayers agreed to a property rate surcharge to finance the Shire's half of the project's funding ("Thirroul's Olympic pool," 1940).

Like the seawater Olympic pool created at Port Kembla, the Olympic pool opened in 1940 at Thirroul ("Thirroul's Olympic pool," 1940) was an off-beach pool, where seawater arrived in a pipe. Surging waves were not part of these glamorous, wave-free pools admired and welcomed as swimming venues. Offering "everything that

can be desired for sportsmen and visitors generally”, the new Thirroul pool was lit for night use, had two pumps to keep it filled with seawater and provided a children’s wading pool, as well as the tiled pool with a diving tower and a ‘slippery dip’ or slide (“Thirroul's Olympic pool,” 1940).

“Champion lady swimmers from Sydney”, the NSW diving troupe, local swimmers, the Steelworks Band and the Scottish Pipe Band performed at its opening ceremony in January 1940 (“Thirroul's Olympic pool,” 1940). Among the 3,000 people present were members of NSW and federal parliament, shire councillors, the Thirroul Local Improvement Committee, surf lifesaving clubs, scouts, Red Cross members and “ladies of the various organisations”. The new pool was praised as “a monument to the enterprise of the members of the Bulli Shire Council and also to the Thirroul Improvement Committee” (“Thirroul's Olympic pool,” 1940). The Thirroul Progress Association (“Thirroul Progress Association,” 1940) regarded the new pool as the realisation of its dreams and a “wonderful attraction” enabling children to “learn the art of swimming under perfect conditions”.

Thirroul’s two seawater pools epitomise very different relationships with the sea. The earlier pool (Figure 9-3) has become a ghost pool, unable to hold water. Sand movements, desire for a better ‘pool for competition and carnivals’ and a lack of admission charges at the newer pool contributed to its abandonment. The newer pool has proved a very satisfactory ‘public pool for completion and carnivals’. It has hosted the Thirroul Swimming Club for over 50 years and was refurbished in 2005. Like the Tinside Lido and the Jubilee Pool in the UK, the well-maintained Thirroul Olympic pool (Figure 9-4) now insulates its pool users from views of the sea and beach.



Figure 9-3. Thirroul's old ocean pool



Figure 9-4. Thirroul's more recent seawater pool is behind the wall

Jack Evan's Porpoise Pool on Queensland's Gold Coast

Although Australia has had few ocean pools outside NSW, Queensland has a notable ghost ocean pool. An ocean pool developed by entrepreneur Jack Evans at Snapper Rocks on Queensland's Gold Coast as a pay-to-swim pool for humans became the famous 1950s tourist attraction known as the Jack Evans Porpoise Pool

(Duke & Cameron, n.d.). After storms washed the porpoises (dolphins) out of the pool, the porpoise pool relocated in the 1960s to a more sheltered pool in NSW.

On my last visit to Snapper Rocks, I found the original Porpoise Pool site had become a car park with a memorial plaque acknowledging the ghostly presence of the ocean pool. Further evidence that this early tourist attraction is not forgotten includes an image of the original Jack Evans Porpoise Pool show featured on the cover of a recent Gold Coast City Council *Annual Report* (2009). Images of this pool are accessible on the Gold Coast City council website.

Reborn Malabar Pool, NSW

From a twenty-first century perspective, it seems strange that so few of Sydney's ocean pools were abandoned during the decades when the presence in Sydney's coastal waters of faecal matter, affectionately termed 'blind mullet', 'Bondi cigars' or 'brown trout', was treated as a mere nuisance rather than as a serious hazard to health, recreation and tourism. It is not, however, surprising that the Malabar pool sited on Sydney's Long Bay, just across from Sydney's major sewage outfall, was closed for decades on water quality grounds.

In the 1890s, residents of crowded Sydney suburbs, such as Paddington, often had weekenders at Long Bay and enjoyed its ocean pool. Despite the sewage outlet sited on the other side of Long Bay in 1916, the ocean pool remained popular into the 1940s. After both the Bay and the pool were closed to the public on health grounds, the local surf lifesaving club relocated.

By the 1970s, signs erected by Randwick Council warned swimmers that the Bay's water was polluted. Passage of the 1970s NSW *Clean Waters Act* meant more industrial waste was channelled into Sydney's sewage system (Beder, 1989). Difficulty booking a public pool to host the school swimming carnival, and hopes that the Bay's water quality would be improved in the 1980s, led the principal of a local primary school to urge that Malabar's ocean pool be restored and reopened ("Pool restoration plan squashed," 1985).

By the 1990s, development of deep ocean outfalls for Sydney's sewage system led six local schools to request the reopening of the Malabar rock pool so that they could use it for swimming carnivals. With community consultation confirming that local residents wanted their ocean pool reopened, Bob Carr as the local member of parliament promised a dollar for dollar subsidy for renovating the pool if his party (the Australian Labor Party) won government at the next NSW election.

A plaque at the ocean pool at Malabar (Figure 9-5) states that it was renovated and opened for use in 1997 by the Mayor of Randwick and Bob Carr, who was by then the Premier of NSW. Funds for the redevelopment came from Randwick City Council, the NSW Department of Land and Water Conservation and Sydney Water.¹



Figure 9-5. Plaque at Malabar pool, NSW

While smaller and shallower than the 1890s pool, the restored pool hosts recreation and fitness swimmers, provides good access to the pool for people with disabilities, remains popular with local schools and has made Malabar a more attractive place to live and visit. Randwick Council continues to monitor the pool's

¹ Sydney Water is the NSW government agency responsible for water supply and sewerage in Sydney, the NSW Central Coast and the Illawarra region.

water quality, which still sometimes fails to achieve water quality standards expected of NSW ocean pools. This is now usually due to limitations of the storm water system rather than the sewer system.

Wylies Baths

While the Malabar community sought simply to regain a functional ocean pool with acceptable water quality, the decades of campaigning to reopen Wylies Baths at Coogee were concerned both to regain access to a treasured ocean pool and to retain the pool's iconic timber deck and chequerboard railing (Slarke, 2001).

Although Coogee had other ocean pools, Wylies was seen as having a special appeal. This case study of Wylies Baths shows that aesthetic factors, heritage values and a distinctive sense of place can fuel both pool campaigns and pool use, even where a pool environment is hazardous and alternative pools are more readily accessible.

Unlike most NSW ocean pools, which were created by voluntary labour or surfside councils, Wylies Baths was created and leased by entrepreneur and champion distance diver H. A. Wylie, and his family. Its pool was larger than Coogee's existing gender-segregated, pay-to-swim baths and offered mixed bathing from 1910. As mentioned in Chapter 7, when Desmond Selby later acquired its lease, the pool was rebranded as 'The Sunstrip Pool'. Following severe wind and water damage in 1975, the pool closed and the special lease for the baths site was forfeited.

Although Wylies Baths had hosted club and school swimming, the indoor pool at the Coogee Aquarium served as Coogee's prime competition pool and hosted the Randwick & Coogee Amateur Swimming Club from the 1890s until the 1970s (Brombey & Daley, 1996). Closure and demolition of the Aquarium pool, then led that Club to ask Randwick Council to reopen the Sunstrip Pool (Brombey & Daly, 1996, pp. 34, 36).

Objections from a local residents' group and problems with the lease for the baths site led Randwick Council to abandon any idea of a major refurbishment of Wylies Baths, but it spent \$20,000 on essential repairs and reopened the pool in 1978.

Thousands of school children used these baths that summer, and the Coogee surf lifesaving club held some rescue and resuscitation training there.

Randwick Council prepared an environmental impact statement (EIS) for its controversial proposal to construct a new toilet block to serve both Wylies Baths and the adjacent Grant Reserve (Randwick Municipal Council, 1980, pp. 21, 26). The NSW State Planning and Environment Commission approved that EIS in principle, despite eighty residents demanding changes to the development application for the amenities block, changes to the pool surrounds and the removal of the “visually offensive” fence around the pool (“Controversial history of Wylies Baths,” 1991)

Amid arguments over the lease for the pool site and possible detrimental environmental impact, the pool facilities continued to deteriorate. By 1980, when it would have cost around \$350,000 to construct a 50-metre pool without changing sheds, Randwick Council allocated only \$142,500 to cover improvements to Wylies Baths and building amenities and changing rooms to serve both the Baths and the adjacent reserve (“Controversial History of Wylies Baths,” 1991).

The change room, kiosk and decking at Wylies required extensive repair work by 1984, when plans were completed for refurbishing the complex at an estimated cost of \$150,000. Yet despite leaks and dangerous conditions at the pool, no repairs or upgrade work occurred until the NSW Department of Sport and Recreation provided a \$70,000 grant in 1987 (“Controversial History of Wylies Baths,” 1991; “Upgrading of Wylies Baths,” 1988).

The first 15 years of the long campaign to restore Wylies Baths at Coogee demonstrated that an EIS process can actually encourage the ‘cheap and easy, do-nothing option’ of neglecting structural maintenance at council-managed ocean pools. It also showed that an EIS process could both inhibit the traditional community-led development of ocean pools and fail to address the environmental and social costs of not maintaining or upgrading existing facilities.

Wylies Baths continued to attract swimmers after its dressing sheds were closed for safety reasons and throughout the pool's eventual renovations. Photographs of Wylies Baths helped rally popular support for action to conserve it on heritage grounds. Decades of vigorous campaigning finally saw Wylies Baths restored and re-opened in 1995 and listed on the NSW State Heritage Register in 2003 ("Historic Baths," 2003).

Wylies Baths remains a rare example of a NSW ocean pool with admission charges. A swim at Wylies Baths still involves taking two flights of stairs down to a large timber deck from which long, steep flights of steps lead down to a pool that "can be a bit too exciting when big waves break over at high tide" (S. Smith, 2004, p.71). Although the concrete and rock around this pool can be "hard on the knees of crawlers and on learner walkers and speedy toddlers", Seana Smith's guidebook (2004, p. 71) insisted it was worth risking a few cut knees since "children can paddle and splash in the shallow areas of the baths and will sometimes spot a fish".

As noted in Chapter 7, the Grant Reserve BushCare team that meets at the entrance of Wylies Baths (Randwick City Council, 2006) demonstrates the feasibility of combining a new environmental ethic with the traditional love of nature and of collective action associated with enthusiasm for ocean baths. The annual Wylies Baths art competition for children at schools in the Randwick Council area (Slarke, 2001) acknowledges the aesthetic significance of this pool.

Threats to ongoing use of other Australian ocean pools

Although few surfside communities oppose unused ocean pools gradually returning to a state of nature, community campaigns have repeatedly been organised to counter perceived risks to ongoing use of the ocean pools that embodied community effort and provided a focus for community life. Having discussed the Bogey Hole in Chapter 7 and Wylies Baths earlier in this chapter, I now consider the community campaign to keep another of the now heritage-listed NSW ocean pools operational. This case raises further issues relating to the effectiveness of heritage listing in helping ocean pools to achieve the funding needed to remain operational.

Keeping the Entrance Ocean Baths operational

During the 1930s, a seven-lane Olympic-size ocean pool replaced an earlier ocean pool at The Entrance on the NSW coast. The Entrance Ocean Baths hosted an amateur swimming club since the 1950s, produced an Olympic swimmer in the 1960s, and gained a winter swimming club known as the Tuggerah Tuffs formed by members of the local surf lifesaving club (“When the going gets Tuffs,” 2006). Several generations of local families and holidaymakers learnt to swim in The Entrance Ocean Baths.

Rising public liability costs had by 2002 led Wyong Council to consider closing the pool complex or charging entry fees (Nolan, 2003). Opposition to both these courses of actions prompted a community petition to heritage-list The Entrance Ocean Baths and so prevent their closure. With strong support from The Entrance Amateur Swimming Club and the Tuggerah Tuffs and local businesses, the petition gained more than 11,000 signatures.

After concerted lobbying by the local member in the NSW Parliament, the pool received NSW heritage listing and NSW Premier Bob Carr pledged \$330,000 in state funding for the pool (Goldner, 2003; Williamson, 2003). Wyong Shire and community groups still had to find the balance of the funds needed for a new concrete pool lining, a new pumping system, a renewed concrete concourse, improved access for the disabled, and a repainted pool surface. In addition to the NSW government funding, the pool upgrade attracted \$240,000 from Wyong Council and \$90,000 from the baths’ community trust. Testimony to the high public profile of this project came in mid-2005 when Premier Carr opened the upgraded pool (Elbra, 2005).

The campaign for The Entrance Ocean Baths was shorter than that to restore Wylies Baths. While heritage listing helped to publicise the upgrade project, the heritage listing would have counted for little had the council and community not been able to help fund the upgrading of The Entrance Ocean Baths.

The problems of ocean pools as individual heritage items

From the closing decades of the twentieth century, ocean pools were seen as endangered. Surfside councils often struggled to conserve and update ocean pools and other aspects of coastal heritage relevant to local ratepayers and residents, tourists and other PPI communities.

Case-by-case heritage assessments exacerbated differences between candidates for heritage listing and produced anomalous results. The Entrance Ocean Baths achieved the highest level of NSW formal heritage recognition earlier than many older, more influential, better-known and still operational ocean pools including the Bondi Icebergs pool, the Bronte Baths, the Newcastle Ocean Baths and Wollongong's Continental Baths. Despite its age and the special status conferred by its formal exemption from anti-discrimination requirements, McIvers Baths took years longer to be recommended for formal recognition as having heritage significance at least equivalent to Wylies Baths or The Entrance Ocean Baths.

A cultural landscape can by definition blend built heritage and natural heritage. Heritage studies focused on the built environment tend not to address the benefits of strengthening the links with environmental care programs funded to care for natural heritage. Case-by-case heritage assessments also draw attention away from benefits that a set of ocean pools (and additions to that set) might contribute to a region, state, nation or planet. By highlighting that ocean pools are 'a type of facility no longer constructed', heritage listings inhibit the development of ocean pools at new sites.

Wherever interest focuses on documentation regarding a pool's structural elements, 'the gaze' is prized over the sensual immersive experience, and over cherished cultural practices and accounts of the contemporary pleasures of visiting those pools. As the heritage consultant's gaze and the non-swimming aesthete's gaze are easier to articulate and document, the immersive pleasures and functional identities of prime importance to many ocean pool enthusiasts are often ignored in

debates on aesthetics or heritage values. The amenity value of ocean pools remains difficult to quantify or market, especially when play is seen as less worthy than sport and learn-to-swim programs and both playgrounds and public pools are expected to be low-risk.

While heritage listing may help preserve pool walls and iconic pool buildings, such as those at Wylies Baths, it has done little to preserve treasured traditions of diving, jumping or drinking valued by the PPI communities associated with ocean pools. Bureaucratic processes associated with environmental protection, risk management and heritage all have the capacity to delay maintenance work needed to keep ocean pools functioning as satisfactory 'pools for competition and carnivals' or even as 'wild but safe enough surfside pools'. The recent struggle (highlighted in Chapter 7) to keep the Newcastle Bogey Hole accessible to the public testifies to the limited value of heritage listing for reducing risk management and public liability concerns.

If the Australian government or a state government assumed public liability risk for ocean pools, or even only for those with a specified heritage status or safety status, those ocean pools could retain more of their character. Surfside councils could more systematically be required or assisted to keep their ocean pools in good working order and both heritage listings and safety ratings would be more effective in keeping ocean pools operational. Development of unsupervised ocean pools at new sites would also be supported.

Even the NSW government, which undertakes the shark-meshing program and acts to control coastal developments and educate licensed rock fishers about safer fishing practices, refuses to take responsibility for dealing with public liability matters at the state's surf beaches and ocean pools. If the Federal or state governments were willing "to secure the health and safety of citizens in public spaces" (Gleeson, 2006) and assumed public liability risk for surf beaches and ocean pools, Australia's ocean pools would be less threatened and their collective networks would have more hope of combining and developing into more credible macro-actors.

In the absence of a widely recognised collective identity for ocean pools and governmental support for ocean pools as a class of places, it is the presence of people able and willing to raise funds and organise campaigns and working bees that keeps ocean pools from becoming ghost pools. The case studies in this chapter and Chapter 7's discussion of efforts to keep the Newcastle Bogey Hole in use suggest that the unsupervised Australian ocean pools not already associated with a summer or winter swimming club or a nearby surf lifesaving club or a Dad's Army are most at risk of becoming ghost pools.

While community or club working bees can assist in containing the costs of maintaining public pools, few swimming clubs or pool campaigners can follow the example provided by the Bondi Icebergs. To protect their club and home pool, the Icebergs took over the lease for the pool and raised funds for the site's extensive makeover, which included development of a commercial restaurant and office space (Andrews, 2004). This commercial approach was not unexpected from a winter swimming club that had for many years managed the pool and operated a licenced club there.

Cost considerations and activist exhaustion may therefore yet pave the way for an Australian equivalent of the UK's national pool campaign (A. Morgan, 2006) and for Australia's ocean pools to acquire a more widely recognised collective identity. Meanwhile, action to prevent individual ocean pools from becoming ghosts continues around Australia and proposals for new ocean pools struggle to achieve material form.

Phantom ocean and beach pools

This section considers pool projects that never materialised as pools, but remained among those 'unloved' possibilities that were as Laurier and Philo (1999, p. 1054) described "batted backwards and forwards by different groups of not-overly-interested human actors, as countless scenarios in which no human actor is sufficiently interested to sift the inspired from the half-baked". Despite the

readiness of the key non-human actors (e.g. sea and rocky shore) to be recruited, two NSW surfside communities have for decades hosted phantom ocean pool projects that never progressed beyond generating plans and discussions.

Phantom ocean pool at Stanwell Park, NSW

Interest in developing an ocean pool at Stanwell Park in the Northern Illawarra began in the early twentieth century, when Stanwell Park was attracting tourists and had a surf lifesaving club operating. 1930s residents and visitors sought to gain Bulli Shire Council's support for development of an ocean pool at Stanwell Park, a "lovely spot ... without a decent swimming pool" ("Bulli Shire Council," 1939). The Council engineer, however, decided that a pool was not feasible due to site constraints.

The budget for the development of an ocean pool at Stanwell Park has continued to be regarded as inordinately high compared to other pool sites. Although the city of Wollongong was developing ocean pools at new sites in the early 1960s, a deputation to Wollongong City Council failed to gather sufficient support for a swimming pool at Stanwell Park. Wollongong Council reportedly still holds funds collected to help Stanwell Park's phantom pool become a reality, but Stanwell Park's winter swimming club still swims at Coalcliff's ocean pool (Pugh, 2006).

Phantom ocean pool at Port Macquarie, NSW

Decades after development of the popular ocean pools at Forster and Black Head on the mid-north coast, Port Macquarie still lacks an ocean pool. Closure of a local amusement park in the 1970s, "the proliferation of red weed at local beaches and Olympic pool congestion" all helped fuel support for building an ocean pool that "would have been the best baths by a mile in Australia" (Plews, 2007). A community-based proposal claimed a "unique aquatic facility" consisting of an eight-lane, 50-metre pool and recreation pool at the southern end of Flynn's Beach would be a "draw card tourism-wise" and "a great facility for local residents".

The Hastings Ocean Pool committee struggled for 17 years to gain the required development approvals for the proposed ocean pool (Plews, 2007). Clearly this pool project was not being fast-tracked as a desirable or urgently needed beach safety measure, community facility or a visitor attraction. Despite an estimated cost of \$350,000, considered far less than for an indoor aquatic centre, this project could not recruit Council and government support or funding (Plews, 2007).

Like Stanwell Park's phantom pool, the Flynn's Beach phantom pool is a persistent presence. It was, however, not engineering feasibility, but bureaucratic approval processes and a failure to understand and appreciate the identities and affordances of ocean pools that stymied development of an ocean pool at Flynn's Beach.

Phantom beach pools in Western Australia

The lack of shark meshing at Western Australia's surf beaches and a fatal shark attack at Perth's iconic Cottesloe Beach in 2001 led a group of local residents to begin lobbying for development of a seawater pool as a safety measure and a visitor attraction (Cottesloe Beach pool, n.d.). The Town of Cottesloe (2004) "did not consider the proposal to be feasible" its 2002 community survey showed the "need for a marine pool was supported by only one of 182 randomly selected survey respondents". The Town of Cottesloe did, however, offer to support an application for funding for a feasibility study for a beach pool "on the clear understanding that there is no commitment to any further action on this matter".

The Beach Pool Action Group engaged consultants to undertake the needs assessment. This assessment included a random survey of 340 beach users and was completed in 2004. The report suggested over 3,500 people per week might use the pool and, while assuming that the pool would have no admission charges, acknowledged that entry fees would be "vital if onsite management is required". It recommended obtaining detailed costings for "the capital construction of both a 50-metre lap pool and a 33-metre lap pool".

It was already clear that the pool would be a seawater beach pool sited above the intertidal zone, rather than an ocean pool. No comparisons were made with the beach pool constructed further south at Bunbury in the interwar years (Figure 9-6) and now filled with sand, nor with the popular seawater pool at Thirroul Beach in NSW (Figure 9-5) or the Sir Francis Nicklin Testimonial Swimming Pool at Caloundra on Queensland's Sunshine Coast (Figure 9-7).



Figure 9-6. The beach pool constructed in the interwar years is no longer operational, Bunbury Back Beach, Western Australia



Figure 9-7. The Sir Francis Nicklin Testimonial Swimming Pool at Caloundra's Kings Beach, Queensland

The consultant believed it “would be fair to assume that the existence of a new marine pool (the only one in the metropolitan area) would attract new users, in particular people with disabilities, seniors and young children due to the relative safe use it offers” (Town of Cottesloe, 2004). While it might draw lappers from other pay-to-swim pools, the pool would attract “those generic groupings, who find difficulty in accessing the marine environment, such as people with disabilities, seniors who are unsteady on their feet, young families wanting pram access etc.” (Town of Cottesloe, 2004).

The Cottesloe Surf Life Saving Club was prepared “to support the Action Group in undertaking a feasibility study for the pool” and agreed that if the pool became part of the beach, it would be included in the lifesaver’s patrols (Town of Cottesloe, 2004). Despite this, and a 413-signature petition calling for a pool, the Cottesloe Beach Pool Action Group was unable to persuade the Town of Cottesloe to sponsor an application to Western Australia’s Department of Sport and Recreation for funds to undertake a feasibility study of a 50-metre “marine swimming pool” at Cottesloe beach (Town of Cottesloe, 2004).

In 2006, inclusion of a beach pool in a “privately-produced master plan of a vision for the possible future development of the Cottesloe foreshore” received more positive than negative comments, but prompted questions regarding its viability and location (Town of Cottesloe, 2006). Although the beach pool was part of the Cottesloe Foreshore Vision (Town of Cottesloe, 2010), there was no firm commitment to the implementation of that vision.

By 2011, the beach pool was still not a priority for the Town of Cottesloe, but private funding was being sought for a proposal to construct a beach pool by 2013 (Thomas, 2011). The proposed 33-metre pool “with four swimming lanes with provision for a children’s wading pool and disabled access” was expected to cost several million dollars. A Cottesloe surf lifesaver argued that Perth’s most iconic beach would benefit from a pool like the ones that were part of beach life in Sydney

(Thomas, 2011). Western Australia's Premier Colin Barnett agreed that the Cottesloe Pool "would benefit the elderly and people with disabilities" (Emerson, 2011).

A fatal shark attack on an open-water swimmer off Cottesloe Beach in late-2011, followed by two other fatal shark attacks in Western Australia within the space of seven weeks led Cottesloe's open-water swimmers to swim closer inshore and roused more interest in a beach pool. Champion open-water swimmer, Shelly Taylor-Smith, lent her support to the Cottesloe Beach Pool Committee and spoke of missing Sydney's "lovely rock pools that are lit up at night" (Emerson, 2011). Western Australia's Shadow Fisheries Minister Jon Ford (clearly mistaking Sydney for NSW) commented that "26 pools built into the NSW coast were immensely popular" and suggested that ocean pools or shark-proof swimming enclosures should be constructed at Cottesloe, Albany and one of Perth's northern beaches (Emerson, 2011).

By February 2012, public feedback on the Cottesloe beach pool concept plan was very positive and strongly in favour of a 50-metre pool, but the pool's precise location was not finalised and plans for the pool had yet to be formally presented to the Town of Cottesloe (Thomas, 2012). The City of Fremantle (2011, March 28, pp. 200-203) had, however, given in principle approval to development of a seawater pool at Bathers Beach and to working with Swimming WA to obtain funding for this pool.

By mid-2012, when Western Australia had recorded five fatal shark attacks within ten months, the state government still dismissed the idea of developing seawater pools as a bather safety measure as "hundreds would need to be built to meet the needs of the community" ("Labor promises beach pools," 2012). State Labor leader Mark McGowan had, however, promised that if the Australian Labor Party won government at the next Western Australian election, it would build at least three seawater pools to provide "a safe swimming environment for families" and "protect

swimmers from sharks and other ocean dangers” (“Labor promises beach pools,” 2012).

Satellite monitoring of tagged sharks now provides local councils, lifeguards and lifesavers with timely warnings about the presence of those sharks at Perth’s beaches (L. Edwards, 2010; Orr, 2012) and has required less evident modification of the coast than the development of ocean pools. As a method of safeguarding bathers this shark tagging and monitoring program still appears more complex, less robust and less reliable than a set of ocean pools that can be used even when sharks are detected off the beaches.

The seawater pools now sought for Western Australian beaches remain phantom pools that demonstrate the persistent persuasive power of sharks and the capacity for consistent resistance to the construction of a seawater pool by a council and a state government. Had the set of Australian, NSW or even Sydney ocean pools attained a more widely recognised collective identity and become more energised macro-actor, better data on the usage of ocean pools might have helped these phantoms to quickly become usable pools.

At present, Australia’s surf beaches and public toilets have more recognition as national networks than do its public pools. Users of computers and internet-connectable devices can access authoritative websites or download free application software (apps) providing information on beaches (Surf Life Saving Australia, 2009) or public toilets (“The national public toilet map,” 2012), but no equivalent services exist for the nation’s network of public pools.

As surfside councils’ interest in ocean pools understandably diminishes at the boundaries of their local government areas, it is not only Western Australians who underestimate the number of ocean pools on the Australian coast, or imagine that almost all of those pools exist within the Sydney metropolitan region. At present, the sets of Sydney, NSW and Australian ocean pools exist only as easily overlooked public pools and beach safety measures, due to their hybrid roles as part of a beachscape and part of the poolscape.

Conclusions

As the case studies in this chapter have shown, 'better' and affordable pools can lead swimmers and surfside councils to abandon ocean pools. As discussed in Chapters 4 and 5, the amateur swimming movement has long accepted that more controlled environments are necessary for the setting of officially recognised still-water swimming records and are also preferred for training elite swimmers. There was far more support for new ocean pools in the 1950s when other sorts of public pools seemed less affordable in coastal communities, few private pools existed, and ocean pools were more highly prized as durable, desirable and affordable beach safety measures.

Ocean pools are, however, still perceived as convenient and cherished features of some Australian beaches and as places delivering benefits that more controlled swimming environments cannot. Even if it cannot surmount the barriers presently inhibiting development of ocean pools at new sites, the strength of this grassroots perception combined with strong place attachments can mobilise sufficient support to sustain or even rebirth specific ocean pools.

Unapproved development of ocean pools is no longer feasible, except in truly remote locations. As the case studies also showed, the process of gaining development approval and funding is now far more difficult than it was in the 1960s and must take account of concerns to manage risks to human and environmental health. Australia's surfside councils and state governments have become far less supportive of community desires for development of ocean pools at new sites.

Although heritage listing can help prevent existing pools from becoming ghosts, it does not help phantom ocean pools to materialise or promote development at new sites not yet associated with any phantom pool. Australia's amateur swimming movement persists in seeing all public pools as valuable learn-to-swim venues, but it remains more focused on the development of Olympic champions than on promoting the delights and skills of wild swimming. It seems that in order for new

ocean pools to be created, new types of actors need to be enrolled either into the ocean pool identities already discussed or into totally new identities. The next chapter therefore explores the potential for future developments of the actor-networks that develop and sustain Australia's ocean pools.

Chapter 10. Future scenarios

Introduction

In this chapter, I outline some potential futures for Australia's ocean pools based on the actor-networks and recurrent themes discussed in chapters 3 to 9. Extending and amending the actor-networks previously discussed in regard to the pasts and presents of Australia's ocean pools can generate an infinite number of futures. I have, however, chosen to present only three scenarios for consideration and to discuss each scenario's frames of reference and circles of conviviality. I begin by considering the rosiest prospect.

Scenario 1. The best of all possible worlds

In this scenario, all Australian surfside councils offer a diverse range of public pools and acknowledge the traditional owners of each pool site. Although funding for public pools is provided at federal, state and local levels, some pools have Friends groups that engage in fundraising and working bees. Public pools are portrayed and managed as key elements of local, state, national and worldwide poolscapes.

The cultural and environmental history of each public pool is publicly available and readily accessible via council and community websites and social networking sites as well as via the plaques, monuments, artworks and other displays at each pool. Users of Internet-connectable devices can readily locate details of their nearest public pool and compare its features and facilities with those of other pools.

Every residential or holiday community along southern Australia's rocky surfcoasts has access to an ocean pool. Community and government pressure compelled surfside communities lacking ocean pools to consider developing at least one ocean pool as an environmentally friendly multipurpose community centre for leisure, health, sport, education and research. A comprehensive accident compensation scheme eliminated the concerns about public liability that once constrained the development and use of ocean pools.

Water temperatures and demands for elite still-water competitive swimming venues are now almost the only socially acceptable grounds for any surfside local government body to choose to construct a heated public pool above the tide limits. While both indoor and outdoor hot sea baths fed by pipelines from the ocean have become popular, only freshwater pools can host competitive events for elite still-water swimmers. Swimmers continue to compete in open-water and still-water competitions as well as in the special 'ocean pool' class of competition within the amateur swimming, winter swimming and surf lifesaving movements.

While almost all ocean pools are normally unsupervised, all ocean pools host learn-to-swim programs delivered by clubs, schools and government agencies. Both swimming clubs and surf lifesaving clubs deliver open-water swimming programs as well as learn-to-swim programs. All those programs are free to schoolchildren, pre-schoolers and to the groups considered at high risk of drowning such as international visitors, refugees, first-generation migrants to Australia, and holders of fishing or boating licences. Other participants are sometimes charged a small fee.

Amateur swimming clubs, masters swimming clubs, winter swimming clubs and surf lifesaving clubs make extensive use of ocean pools. While surf lifesaving clubs usually have their own premises away from the pool, swimming clubs are located within the carefully sited and well-designed, storm-resistant community buildings located at or near ocean pools. Those buildings also host cafes, environmental care and education programs as well as community groups and programs focused on community health, education and research. Ocean pools serve as sites promoting and researching healthy environments, lifestyles and green exercise. Aquarobics, yoga and exercise sessions staged at the pools target professional sportspeople, seniors and people recovering from illness or injury.

Ocean pools are also sites promoting and researching sustainable practices. Freshwater used in the pools' outdoor showers, amenities blocks, community buildings and the nearby public reserves and surf beaches comes from rainwater tanks and storm water harvesting, augmented by water from small-scale

desalination plants powered by wave energy. Solar energy devices provide lighting in and around the ocean pools, while greater use of wind energy is being investigated. Ocean pools are renowned as showcases for best practice in recycling.

Many ocean pools serve as centres for community and government environmental monitoring of sea levels and the plants and animals of the surrounding sea and land. Embedding microcentres for research and education into beautiful recreational and sporting venues frequented by seniors and family groups has supported community-based research and helped to counter once widespread beliefs that wild nature was necessarily remote from cities and suburbs or dangerous to human health or invariably benign.

Ocean pools host swimming and diving competitions, sculpture shows, dance and theatrical performances, outdoor cinema and religious ceremonies. Events linked to sport, recreation, arts and the environment celebrated at ocean pools include Sea Week, Clean up Australia Day, World Water Day, World Meteorological Day, Earth Hour, World Heritage Day, National Volunteer Week, National Reconciliation Week, World Environment Day, World Ocean Day, National Tree Day, Keep Australia Beautiful Week, National Biodiversity Month, World Habitat Day and National Recycling Week.

Local schools and other educational institutions are involved in many of these events. They also make use of ocean pools for sport, physical education, studies of the environment and studies of local history. Inland schools and social tourism programs bring children to ocean pools to give them an experience of 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' and to enable them to engage in activities similar to those of the surfside schools.

Swimming tours focused on ocean swims and ocean pools (especially the gold star ocean events and pools considered to offer peak swimming experiences) are popular with domestic and international tourists. Rankings of ocean pools are hotly disputed and of intense interest to the tourism industry. Swimmers who register online and log their swims at ocean pools are eligible to receive certificates and

have their names listed in the online *Ocean Pool Swimmers Hall of Fame*, and are also in the running for glamorous prizes. Anyone assisting with flora and fauna surveys at ocean pools can earn extra points and prizes. Comparisons with other ocean pools are often part of conversations held at ocean pools and in the online world.

Ocean pools are a well-established point of comparison in accounts of northern and southern hemisphere leisure coasts. With many people aspiring to gain recognition for having swum in all (or at least more than half) of Australia's and South Africa's ocean pools, ocean pools have helped strengthen links between the pool, beach and surf cultures of Australia and South Africa.

Scenario 2. The 'do nothing' option

One key scenario to be considered is always the 'do nothing' or at most 'do more of the same' option. Under this scenario, the informal moratorium on the creation of ocean pools continues. Financially burdened local government bodies cannot afford to upgrade ocean pools, and have difficulty maintaining ageing pools and their associated infrastructure to the standards that PPI communities demand for their beloved pools.

The determination, skills and fund-raising resources of those communities and the type of pool construction helps determine which pools remain operational. Poorly constructed reinforced concrete pools and buildings afflicted with concrete cancer are more threatened than the simple ring-of-rocks pools, where the major form of maintenance is rearranging rocks dislodged by storms.

Working bees and community fundraising account for most of the maintenance activity at ocean pools. Any maintenance activity requiring greater skills, technology or funds is only possible with grants from non-government organisations, governments or philanthropists. Community groups are increasingly seeking funds from individuals and groups outside Australia to conserve heritage pools or maintain them as viable sport and recreation facilities.

As Australian and state governments have other more pressing demands for their funds and resources, they invariably refuse to contribute any funds to conserve or upgrade ocean pools and rarely provide any funds to conserve the heritage or safety value of ocean pools. While no Australian government recognises ocean pools as distinctive cultural landscapes meriting support, governments remain willing to accord heritage recognition for ocean pools on a case-by-case basis and sometimes even fund conservation of architecturally significant buildings at an ocean pool. In the rare cases where governments have funded the development of a digital archive for an ocean pool, its splendid presence in the virtual world contrasts markedly with its dilapidated physical state.

The Bondi Icebergs pool continues to operate, as do other pools commanding strong community support. This support is usually spearheaded by a swimming club or by a group of senior citizens, who regularly swim at a specific pool and can bring considerable influence to bear on local, state and federal politicians. Pool campaigning remains a localised activity, not coordinated at state or national level.

Ocean pools are rarely discussed in accounts of Australia's current and future leisure coasts or its pool cultures. As sea-level rises associated with climate change pose a greater a risk to ocean pools than to other public pools, most Australian surfside communities have invested in off-beach, pay-to-use public pools catering year-round for learn-to-swim programs, as well as for recreational and competitive swimming. Australia has fewer ocean pools in use and more ghost ocean pools than in 2012 and support for its phantom ocean pools is almost non-existent.

Things are rather different in South Africa where both swimmers and non-swimmers continue to frequent unsupervised ocean pools, which offer protection from sharks and rips at no cost. The provision of ready access to unsupervised admission-free ocean pools is still seen as important in terms of environmental justice, beach safety and assisting South Africa to realise its goal of creating a nation of swimmers.

Scenario 3. The worst of all possible worlds

Australians and their insurance providers and surfside councils have come to regard most ocean pools as unsafe and therefore undesirable places. Australia has many more ghost ocean pools and far fewer ocean pools in use than in 2012. Australia's phantom ocean pools have lost all their supporters and allocated funds.

Although nostalgic images of unfenced ocean pools and romantic images of ruined ocean pools remain popular, no Australian surfside council or community would now dream of constructing an ocean pool. On the NSW coast, the Bogey Hole in Newcastle, the Blue Pool at Bermagui and both the Giles Baths rock pool and the Bronte Baths in Sydney have all been filled in to end the dangerous practice of people diving into those pools from the nearby cliffs.

Australians rarely swim in any unsupervised public pool or body of water not supervised by lifeguards as doing so is generally considered both unsafe and unwise. Only holders of a costly and annually renewable swimming licence are now permitted to swim outside the flags at any patrolled beach or at any unsupervised, unfenced pool or swimming area. Surf lifesaving clubs administer that licencing test, which rigorously assesses swimming, lifesaving and first aid skills. Few people other than surf lifesavers bother to take the licence test. Though rumours abound that the test will soon become compulsory for all holders of a fishing licence, board surfers and boaters are likely to retain their exemption from the test.

Provision of full-time lifeguards and suitable fences has permitted continued operation of a few ocean pools in Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. On Sydney's Eastern Beaches, the Bondi Icebergs pool, McIvers Baths and Wylies Baths still operate. There are also a few ocean pools still in use on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Newcastle is still served by the Newcastle Ocean Baths and the Merewether Ocean Baths and Wollongong by the Continental Baths. Within Australia, these pools have the same novelty status that Dunedin's St Clair Baths hold in New Zealand. Australian tourists, however, are invariably astounded by the abundance and ongoing popularity of the ocean pools along South Africa's coast.

Conclusions regarding ocean pool futures

Scenario 1 sees ocean pools as recreational spaces that are convivial sites of performance, research and learning. This scenario describes the actor-networks that could become associated with ocean pools, if those pools were recognised as cultural landscapes important for sport, recreation, public and environmental health and community education. Scenario 1 is clearly far more convivial than Scenario 2 or 3 and its ocean pools are undeniably multi-purpose leisure centres.

The Scenario 1 is not outside the realms of possibility. Tennis played on grass courts is recognised as a different activity to tennis played on clay courts. As noted in Chapter 8, ocean pools are still regarded by their supporters as beautiful and therapeutic places. While Foxwell-Norton (2006) deplored the chasm between Australian beach culture and the science-based action to conserve coastal environment, Chapter 7 noted that some ocean pools already host environmental care groups and that the area around an ocean pool can be a focus for environmental care activities. While ocean pools have tended to be subjects for art rather than sites for artworks, ocean pools in NSW have hosted outdoor cinema, theatrical performances and art shows, as well as swimming carnivals and community celebrations.

One major contributor to the improbability of Scenario 1 is that the current notion of multifunctional community centres does not embrace work and leisure, arts and sciences, both cultural and natural heritage, or link environmental education with aquatic sport and recreation. Outdoor and environmental education centres are not based at public pools. Despite discussion of the benefits of lifelong education, especially in ageing populations, science centres and environmental education centres have come to be seen as facilities that should stand alone and cater primarily to schoolchildren.

The main reason that Scenario 1 seems improbable is that there appears to be no credible way of achieving an extraordinary increase in investments of time, money and energy in activities and facilities in and around ocean pools. There is still no Australian organisation or movement capable of providing the funding, labour and

leadership needed to persuade actors to extend the existing actor-networks to the extent envisioned in Scenario 1. Australia's government, sporting organisations and other non-government bodies have remained reluctant to treat ocean pools as a class of public pools, which might have significance beyond aquatic sport and recreation. While Australia has enthusiastic outdoor and open-water swimmers, it has no equivalent to the UK's Outdoor Swimming Society and lacks a no-fault compensation scheme for catastrophic injuries.

Interest in the ongoing operation of specific Australian ocean pools has not translated into support for ocean pools in general. In recent decades, even the surf lifesaving movement in NSW has ceased to argue for the development of ocean pools at new sites. Australia's pool campaigners have not yet followed their British counterparts and sought the support and strength of a national umbrella.

A case could easily be made for the formation of a national peak non-government organisation advocating and lobbying for the preservation, use and development of ocean pools. That organisation, or an ocean pool foundation, could research and promote the heritage, environmental health, public health, sport and safety values of ocean pools within and beyond Australia. It could also engage with local, state and national organisations and governments and perhaps persuade the Surf Life Saving Association (or even its NSW branch) to renew its interest and involvement with ocean pools.

In Scenario 2, the paramount considerations relate to the costs rather than to the health and wellbeing of the coastal environment and its human residents and visitors. Affordability relates to public liability issues as well as the unavoidable costs of developing and operating an ocean pool. Different types of costs receive quite different levels of scrutiny. The processes for scrutinising new coastal developments remain far more rigorous than those for identifying and addressing the neglect and underfunding, which remain key threatening processes for the functionality, conviviality and the cultural and natural heritage values of ocean pools. Opportunity costs are often ignored, as are the costs of sustaining ecosystem

services or taking preventive rather than curative approaches to improving public health.

In many ways, this scenario is built on recent experience in Britain (J. Smith, 2005) where devolving the operation and maintenance of public pools to non-profit community organisations is more common than in Australia. In this Scenario, ethical concerns and sustainability issues remain irrelevant to decision making about ocean pools.

In Scenario 3, human safety is prized over costs and over the 'look and feel' of ocean pools. As Chapter 7 notes, more resources have for decades been devoted to identifying risks and hazards at ocean pools than to identifying their affordances for play and learning. The educational value of ocean pools is markedly diminished by any risk management approach focused on minimising natural hazards without acknowledging how that might impact the affordances of ocean pools for health, skills training, environmental learning, art, community development and identity-formation. The ethical concerns in Scenario 3 are limited to an ethic of care for human bodies and minimising evidence of human presence on rocky shores.

A focus on eliminating avoidable hazards and risks takes no account of the significance of unsupervised recreational spaces as skillscapes cultivating skills in dealing with natural hazards and fostering convivial relations with wild natures. In Scenario 3, such skills are seen as neither necessary nor desirable for members of the general public. In Scenario 3, lifeguards, surf lifesavers, surfers and licensed rock fishers remain skilled and privileged elites compared to unlicensed swimmers and other beachgoers.

In both Australia (M. Jones, 2003) and New Zealand (Moran, 2010), the deaths of rock fishers who drown after being swept off the rocky shore by waves are almost as newsworthy as shark attacks and far more newsworthy than much more frequent traffic accidents. While bans on rock fishing have been considered impractical, NSW already licenses rock fishers and makes efforts to educate them about the survival skills relevant to rock fishing (NSW Water Safety Taskforce,

2010). Scenario 3 extends this licensing approach to swimmers but recognises that the licensing of surfers would be more problematic. Having surf lifesaving clubs as the testing body recognises the dominant role of the surf lifesaving movement in water safety and beach management.

Each of the three scenarios I have outlined is a defensible alternative vision of the future for Australia's ocean pools. While not claiming to predict the future, Scenario 1 is my preferred vision of the future, Scenario 2 seems all too likely, and Scenario 3 is the one I most fear. Australia's small numbers of ghost ocean pools, many suitable sites for ocean pools convenient to coastal communities seeking to protect swimmers and seabathers from shark and rips do, however, provide reason to hope that some Australian phantom ocean pools may yet assume material form and the development of further ocean pools can proceed provided their actor-networks can recruit more actors and recruit from a wider set of PPI communities.

Chapter 11. Findings and conclusions

Introduction

In this chapter, I review the methods I used to address my research questions and my findings regarding the pasts, presents and potential futures of Australia's ocean pools. I also highlight the scope for further research regarding ocean pools.

Advantages and limitations of the methodology adopted

As noted in chapter 1, I chose not to do surveys or interviews, gather new oral histories, or undertake extensive ethnographic or netnographic (Kozinets, 2010) research that might have allowed a deeper analytical focus on key twenty-first century PPI communities of practice, place and interest. As noted in Chapter 2, I did, however, use a range of analytical tools in addition to ANT in investigating the pasts, presents and futures of Australia's ocean pools. My fieldwork within and beyond Australia and my reflections also supplemented and informed both my study of documents and my analysis of collected data.

Using ANT as my main analytical tool had a number of advantages. ANT is opposed to taking a 'one size fits all' approach to any question. As noted in Chapter 1, ANT opposes the notion of innovations spread by an inevitable or simple diffusion process. A bathing culture need not become a swimming culture. A swimming culture is not necessarily more effective than a sea bathing culture in persuading actors to enrol in networks associated with ocean pools.

While ANT suggests that extended, intertwined actor-networks may confer some stability or resilience, it sees all actor-networks as inherently unstable. As Chapters 3-9 showed, wars or changes in fashions, technologies and economies can drastically change the actor-networks linked to sport or recreation venues. Provision of funds, leadership and labour has in the past proved critical in sustaining the actor-networks supporting ocean pools. Focusing on the key actors, frameworks

and themes surfacing in discussions of ocean pools assisted my use of transnational comparisons.

Bearing in mind the limitations of my chosen methods, I turn now to my findings regarding the research questions.

The overarching research question

In addressing my over-arching research question was ‘how can analysis of Australia’s ocean pools offer new perspectives on recreational coasts and surf, beach, pool and body cultures’, my research has provided new perspectives.

I have shown that although not ‘uniquely Australian’, ocean pools have since the nineteenth century been far more significant in the surf, beach, pool and body cultures of Australia and South Africa, than in those of Britain and the United States. As sites of social and environmental learning that challenge efforts to establish human mastery over wild natures, ocean pools challenge the depiction of coastal environments as nothing more than stages for enacting human activities unconstrained by non-human nature. Ocean pools also challenge the notion that given the choice, people will prefer to swim and bathe at a patrolled beach or in private or public pools far less wild than an ocean pool. They are evidence that supervision by suitably trained or equipped lifeguards or lifesavers is not the only or invariably the most satisfactory way to adequately safeguard bathers and swimmers from the dangers of the sea.

I have shown that strategies of collaborating with the ocean are embedded in the development and use of ocean pools, which demonstrate and cultivate human capacity to convivially share a recreational space and a venue for watersports with the non-human lifeforms of the sea and shore. Unlike nature reserves established by humans to protect valued but vulnerable aspects of non-human nature, ocean pools provide a wildlife habitat that accommodates human recreation and sport, while affording humans some protection from two long-feared aspects of powerful

nature, namely sharks and rips. My analysis highlighted the affordances and key functional identities of ocean pools.

I have argued that ocean pools represent a particular balance between competitiveness and conviviality, and between Eichberg's (1989) trialectic of achievement sport, fitness sport and bodily experience. Provided the rank order of finishing matters more than the precise times swum by competitors, ocean pools are acceptable venues for competitive swimming.

I have demonstrated that a case can be made for developing ocean pools on grounds other than safeguarding bathers and swimmers or providing sporting venues. While almost any public swimming pool can accommodate all three categories of Eichberg's (1989) body culture trialectic (fitness sport, achievement sport and movement culture focused on sensory experience/social identity), ocean pools have particular value for the last of these categories. Ocean pools are more convivial places than other public pools as they allow humans to acquire valued relationships with the waves, winds, rocky shores, both marine and intertidal plants and animals, the sun, and the ocean beyond the pool walls. Ocean pools are therefore better able to cultivate swimming and surf skills and a sense of well-being grounded in aesthetic appreciation of the sea and rocky shore and convivial relations with wild nature and to foster mutual support among pool users, especially those using unsupervised ocean pools.

Anyone learning to swim or accustomed to swimming in a wave-dominated pool inevitably embodies a more comprehensive set of survival skills than someone swimming or learning to swim in a more controlled environment. Swimmers training or competing in the 'wilder' swimming environment of ocean pools cannot simply focus on chasing a black line down the pool. As swimmers in ocean pools also attend to marine plants and animals as well as weather and waves, ocean pools have particular relevance for the training of open-water swimmers, surfers, surf lifesavers, scuba divers, boaters, rock fishers and others for whom an embodied

understanding of waves and rocky shores has particular value. Except in heavy seas, waves add to the pleasures of bathing and swimming at ocean pools.

I have shown that Australia's ocean pools are wave-dominated recreational spaces facilitating significant performative learning about the body, self, other and the world. The greatest value of ocean pools within and beyond Australia may be in illustrating that regardless of 'race', class, gender, age or ability, people can and do make themselves at home in pools well-suited for sustained, unsupervised human recreation and sport on a rocky surfcoast shared convivially with wild nature. Equitable provision of ocean pools can therefore be regarded as an environmental justice issue.

As discussed in Chapter 10, when public discussion of ocean pools remains focused on minimising costs, affordability is prized over affordances. Where safety is prized over the educational value of a skillscape, the potential value of ocean pools as places able to integrate civic environmentalism with established sport and recreation cultures for overlooked potential as centres for environmental education and community research is easily overlooked.

Wet, wild and convivial ocean pools appear to me to be an exceptionally sound use of public space on a rocky surfcoast and a model worth emulating in other public places. To realise that vision, new actor networks need to be developed and stabilised. Increasing concerns to improve community and environmental health may yet persuade Australians and others to build on the demonstrated success of ocean pools in encouraging physical activity in convivial environments with wide appeal and a small ecological footprint.

I now consider the findings on each of the subquestions within my overarching research question.

What, if anything, unites Australia's ocean pools? – the findings

Their sites and their affordances unite Australia's current, ghost and phantom ocean pools first and foremost. The physical environment of the rocky south-eastern and south-western surfcoasts of Australia is a major actor in the actor-networks linked to ocean pools. The combination of this macro-actor's hot and, in NSW often humid, summers with surf, rips and the sharks in coastal waters translated into a settler society's demand for 'wild but safe enough surfside pools'.

Ocean pools are united by their core identity as 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' with affordances not available at other types of pools. The entwined actor-networks associated with this identity are focused on bathing, recreational swimming, other recreational uses of the pool and the pool's use as a learn-to-swim venue (especially suitable for people interested in acquiring 'wild swimming' skills).

This most fundamental and enduring identity of ocean pools is associated with a 'core' actor-network encompassing various types of pool walls, coastal residents, coastal visitors, tourist businesses and mass media. At many ocean pools, that core network, whose human actors focused on aesthetics, conviviality, recreation and tourism, expanded with the development of local and federal government, transport networks, photography and aquarobics. The network also enrolled a media macro-actor, which expanded beyond newspapers and magazines to include electronic and online media.

That core network can be and often is entwined with other networks related to the pool's identity as a 'public pool for competition and carnivals'. This identity enrolled a rather different set of actors including schools, government departments linked to education, sport and recreation, swimming clubs, surf lifesaving clubs, peak bodies for swimming and surf lifesaving, spectators and sports journalists. Those actors and their networks in turn developed new ocean pools and reshaped existing ocean pools to make them more suitable as venues for formalised learn-to-swim programs, competitive water sports and community celebrations. This identity still strongly links Australia's ocean pools with other public pools.

The political and cultural environment created since 1901 within the Commonwealth of Australia and prior to 1901 within the Australian colonies further unified those 'safe enough' pools. A subset of Australia's ocean pools, namely those located along the coast of present-day NSW, are further unified by their shared political and legal environment and the systems of local government. The strong and persistent presence of swimming clubs and surf lifesaving clubs distinguishes many of their actor-networks from those of ocean pools outside NSW. Within NSW, there are also persistent differences in the values that surfside councils and progress associations place on the presence, management and promotion of ocean pools.

While development of Australia's ocean pools was largely community-driven and significant amounts of voluntary labour have served to sustain the existence and operation of ocean pools, there are no guarantees that the current set of pools and actor-networks will endure decades into the future. The growing threats to the survival of ocean pools and resistance to the development of new ocean pools can legitimately be regarded as a further unifying factor.

How have the ocean pool assemblages changed over time? – the findings

All of Australia's gender-segregated colonial ocean pools were 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' with a year-round role as habitat for non-human life forms and an additional summertime role as human recreational space. A few colonial ocean pools also became gender-segregated, summertime 'public pools for competition and carnivals', which nurtured a new culture of lifesaving appropriate to surf beaches. With the exception of free-standing children's wading pools, almost all the post-federation ocean pools in NSW were intended to serve as 'wild but safe enough surfside pools' and as 'public pools for competition and carnivals'.

When seawater pools were a cheaper alternative to other pools, competitive swimming lifted the profile of ocean pools along the NSW coast. Although some

ocean pools were never associated with competitive swimming, many NSW ocean pools have entwined actor-networks associated with school and club swimming and surf lifesaving. While remaining primarily as recreational space, NSW ocean pools helped produce Australia's Olympic swimming champions, surf champions and competitive winter swimmers.

All ocean pools ceased to be viable venues for elite competitive swimming once internationally recognised swimming records could no longer be set in seawater pools. Lack of access to other appealing, accessible and affordable swimming environments continued to support links between ocean pools, schools and elite swimmers until the late-1960s. The links between ocean pools, non-local schools and elite swimmers weakened from the 1970s as more controlled swimming environments became more affordable and accessible.

The most overt forms of segregation practised at ocean pools related to gender and amateur status. While no new gender-segregated pools were created after 1912, gender-segregated bathing remained standard practice at ocean pools in some of the older surfside municipalities for decades after mixed bathing had become accepted practice at surf beaches and newer ocean pools. Though professional swimming clubs affiliated with the League of Swimmers have now disappeared from Australia's ocean pools, amateur swimming clubs now share ocean pools with surf lifesaving clubs and winter swimming clubs little concerned about amateur status.

By the 1960s, the amateur swimming movement no longer required gender-segregated swimming clubs and by the 1980s women were admitted as full members of surf lifesaving clubs. Year-round use of ocean pools became more common from the 1950s, when men-only winter swimming clubs often linked to men-only surf lifesaving clubs became established at many ocean pools. Winter swimming clubs were, however, slower than amateur swimming clubs or surf lifesaving clubs in recruiting women and children.

While ocean pools were developed and managed to be 'safe enough' for humans, they have now for decades been regarded as 'an usually hazardous type of public pool' and 'a type of facility no longer created' along the Australian coast. The objections to new ocean pools appear to be based on ethical judgements and are often couched in terms of risk management or effective use of limited funding. While growing barriers to development of ocean pools have combined with demand for ocean pools have led to boost the numbers of phantom ocean pools, few ocean pools have been abandoned or demolished since 1970.

Existing ocean pools have instead been acquiring heritage status and a greater attraction for artists and for swimmers bored with, or seeking relief from, more controlled swimming environments. Winter swimming clubs, surf lifesaving clubs and informal groups of recreational swimmers have played major roles in helping to stabilise many of the actor-networks associated with ocean pools formally controlled by surfside councils.

Despite artists and swimmers demonstrating interest and support for the ocean pools that afford satisfying engagement with wild non-human nature in a public pool with a small ecological footprint, environmental educators have largely failed to recognise, use and promote the opportunities that ocean pools afford for environmental learning. Changed attitudes to wild nature and pool management practices since the 1970s have, however, made ocean pools safer places for seaweed, sharks, and other lifeforms of the ocean and the rocky shores.

Attitudes to ocean pools along the coast of present-day NSW changed markedly since colonial times. Demand for ocean pools in colonial NSW reflected a view of them as desirable not always affordable developments offering safe bathing, beauty spots, visitor attractions and sometimes serving as sporting venues. In early twentieth-century NSW, ocean pools became desirable and affordable developments offering safe bathing, beauty spots, a visitor attractions and valued sporting venues. By the 1960s, ocean pools were no longer automatically considered affordable, beautiful or visitor attractions and from the 1970s onward,

ocean pools were being signposted as hazardous sites. As discussed in Chapter 8, the ocean pools of NSW nevertheless continue to be represented and valued as safe bathing places, beauty spots, visitor attractions and valued sporting venues.

What significance do ocean pools have within or beyond Australia? – the findings

Despite their acknowledged contributions to the development of Australian beach cultures, ocean pools were an aspect of nineteenth and early twentieth-century NSW beach culture that proved far less exportable than surf lifesaving or Norfolk Island pines. The abundance of ocean pools along the NSW coast thus remains one of the features distinguishing it from other Australian coasts. Ocean pools have remained less common than Norfolk Island pines and surf lifesaving clubs on Queensland's Pacific coast. While surf lifesaving clubs flourish south of the New South Wales-Victoria border, ocean pools and Norfolk Island pines do not. Surf lifesaving clubs and Norfolk Island pines can both be found at Perth's surf beaches and have remained more common than ocean pools on Australia's Indian Ocean coast.

While ocean pools are less common and are generally considered less 'typically' or emblematically Australian than sandy patrolled surf beaches, they nevertheless still outnumber Australia's shark-meshed beaches. Both shark meshing and ocean pools remain concentrated along the wave-dominated and well-populated NSW coast from the Hunter to the Illawarra region. Unlike shark mesh, ocean pools are fixed in position and offer beachgoers ongoing protection from both sharks and rips. Unlike shark mesh, ocean pools are sustainable habitats rather than threats to marine life. As durable and resilient beach safety measures, ocean pools have significance for swimming, surf lifesaving, surf and beach cultures.

In Australia, and particularly in NSW, ocean pools have become emblematic of a healthy and convivial outdoor lifestyle. Images of people at ocean pools evoke the idea of a comfortable relationship with wild nature, that values sensual experience and playful social sensuality. Ocean pools are, however, usually perceived and

portrayed as being associated with particular cities (notably Sydney and Newcastle), where ocean pools are recognised as an integral aspect of the surf beaches.

Ocean pools are an honoured part of Australia's swimming cultures and swimming history. The ongoing use of ocean pools for club and school swimming in NSW strongly affirms that fast, heated, filtered, chlorinated, wave-free pools are still not regarded as the only desirable environment for either summer or winter recreation or non-elite competitive swimming. Ocean pools have fostered the mixing and mingling of surf, rocky shore, beach and pool cultures. The live water and dramatic setting of ocean pools enhance their appeal as venues for public celebrations and recreation.

Recognition and valuing of ocean pools as places where surf, beach and swimming cultures mix and mingle nevertheless remains limited. The idea of the Australia as a surfing nation or as swimming nation has hindered the study of convivial spaces that support more hybridised identities. While ocean pools along the NSW coast do, appear to have more hybridised identities than other Australian ocean pools or their South African counterparts, even those actor-networks remain inherently unstable regardless of their depth or complexity.

This thesis strengthened the case for recognising NSW and other Australian ocean pools as having collective identities demanding a more consistent approach to their development and management. It also challenged the assumption that it is no longer worthwhile to consider developing ocean pools at new sites within Australia.

My research likewise challenged both the idea that there was nothing distinctive about Australia's beach culture until the development of the surf lifesaving movement and the view of ocean pools as 'uniquely Australian'. Transnational comparisons offered productive comparisons of actor-networks and challenged the notion that Australia's or South Africa's ocean pools should be regarded as simple derivatives of British seawater pools and seaside cultures.

Focusing on the development of ocean pools highlighted differences in the seaside, beach and pool cultures of Britain, Ireland, the Isle of Man, the United States, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia. Some of these differences related to the presence of sharks and other dangerous marine life, to physical factors, such as the temperature of coastal waters, and to cultural factors, such as the degree of enthusiasm for bathing in cold water, understanding of the benefit and dangers of rips, the affordability of non-tidal, heated pools and the demand for them. The sharks that contributed so powerfully to the development of ocean pools in Australia and South Africa were less evident and less persuasive on other recreational surfcoasts.

Comparisons with South Africa enabled a more thorough examination of the relationship between nation, peace, 'race' and gender in the development of beach, surf and pool cultures. South Africa's ocean pools were less involved with mass learn-to-swim programs, surf lifesaving and serving as 'public pools for competition and carnivals' than their Australian counterparts.

Ocean pools merit consideration within and beyond Australia as public spaces important for recreation, tourism and sport and with potential for further development as multifunctional community centres. The benefits of using ocean pools not only as venues for learn-to-swim programs, recreational swimming and competitive swimming but also as health, education, research and community centres should be considered both in regard to managing existing ocean pools and in planning the development of new public pools. The Australian ocean pools that have remained in use, and those that have been reborn, offer hope to campaigns to retain, revive and develop public seawater pools within and beyond Australia.

Scope for further research

My research suggests scope, and provides a firmer base for, more in-depth transnational studies of ocean pools and other seawater pools to explore the extent to which changing Australian attitudes to ocean pools are paralleled in other

nations such as South Africa and Ireland, where seawater pools were or remain significant elements of recreational coasts and poolscapes. My research also suggests studies of the PPI communities related to Australian and other ocean pools, of the production, use and interpretations of representations of ocean pools and the persistent failure to capitalise on the opportunities that ocean pools afford for environmental learning could productively combine ANT with ethnography or netnography. This study has conclusively demonstrated how use of ANT and a focus on ocean pools can provide new perspectives on recreational coasts and on surf, pool, beach and body cultures with and beyond Australia.

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Note: I have used the notation 'np' to indicate issues of newspapers, which were printed without page numbers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Ocean pools in New South Wales visited since 2000



I group the NSW ocean pools into 9 distinct regions indicated in the map above (map by John Kopetko, Global Presence). I visited pools still in use and sites of remnant or once present ocean pools

Region 1 NSW North Coast

Local government body

Ballina Shire Council
Clarence Valley Council
Coffs Harbour City Council
Greater Taree City Council
Great Lakes Council

Ocean pools

East Ballina children's pool
Yamba Rock Pool
Sawtell Memorial Rock Pool
Black Head Rock Pool
Forster Ocean Baths (the Bullring)

Region 2 Newcastle

Local government body

Newcastle City Council

Ocean pools

Soldiers Baths
Square Hole (site)
Newcastle Ocean Baths
Canoe Pool
Ladies Baths (site)
Bogey Hole
Bar Beach Rock Pool
Old Merewether Baths
Merewether Ocean Baths

Region 3 NSW Central Coast

Local government body

Wyong Shire Council

Gosford City Council

Ocean pools

Norah Head (Cabbage Tree Harbour)
The Entrance Ocean Baths
Terrigal Rock Pool
Avoca Beach Rock Pool
Copacabana Rock Pool
MacMasters Beach Rock Pool
Killcare - Putty Beach Rock Pool
Umina Beach (remnant)
Pearl Beach Rock Pool

Region 4 Sydney's Northern Beaches**Local government body Ocean pools**

Pittwater Council	Palm Beach Rock Pool Whale Beach Rock Pool Avalon Rock Pool Bilgola Rock Pool Newport - Northern headland rock pools (site) Newport Rock Pool Mona Vale Rock Pool North Narrabeen Rock Pool
Warringah Council	Collaroy Rock Pool Dee Why Rock Pool North Curl Curl Rock Pool Curl Curl Rock Pool Freshwater Rock Pool Queenscliff Rock Pool
Manly Council	Fairy Bower Pool

Region 5 Sydney's Eastern Beaches**Local government area Ocean pools**

Waverley Council	North Bondi - Wally Weekes Pool North Bondi - Children's Pool Bondi Icebergs Pool (Bondi Baths) Bronte Bogey Hole Bronte Baths
Randwick City Council	Geoff James Pool (Clovelly Baths) Coogee - Giles Baths Coogee - Ross Jones Memorial Pool Coogee - McIvers Baths Coogee - Wylies Baths South Coogee - Ivo Rowe Pool Maroubra - Mahon Pool South Maroubra Rock Pools Malabar Pool Little Bay Pool

Region 6 Sydney's Cronulla Beaches**Local government body Ocean pools**

Sutherland Shire Council	Cronulla - northernmost pool Cronulla - Children's Pool Cronulla - main ocean pool Cronulla - Shelly Beach Pool Cronulla - Oak Park Pool
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Region 7 Illawarra**Local government body**

Wollongong City Council

Ocean pools

Coalcliff Pool
 Clifton Baths (not maintained)
 Doctors Pool (not maintained)
 Scarborough Baths (not maintained)
 Wombarra Baths
 Coledale Baths
 Little Austinmer children's pool
 Austinmer Baths
 Old Thirroul Baths - McCauleys Rocks (not maintained)
 Collins Point Baths /Woonona Baths
 Bellambi Pool
 Towradgi Pool
 Wollongong rock pool (once the Men's Baths)
 Wollongong Toddlers Pool (not maintained)
 Wollongong Continental Baths
 Wollongong - Nuns Pool or Chain Baths (not maintained)
 Wollongong - Ladies Baths (not maintained)
 Port Kembla - old rock pool (not maintained)
 Port Kembla - Fishermens Beach Rock Pool (not maintained)
 Barrack Point Pool (not maintained)
 Shellharbour - Beverley Whitfield Pool
 Shellharbour City Council
 The Council of the Municipality of Kiama
 Kiama - Pheasant Point
 Kiama - Blowhole Point
 Werri Beach - Campbells Hole
 Werri Beach Pool
 Gerringong - Boatharbour Baths
 Gerringong - Men's Baths Boatharbour (remnant)

Region 8 Shoalhaven**Local government body**

Shoalhaven City Council

Ocean pools

Currarong Pools
 Huskisson Sea Pool (more a pool in a park than an ocean pool)
 Mollymook Bogey Hole
 Ulladulla Sea Pool

Region 9 NSW Far South Coast**Local government body**

Bega Valley Shire Council

Ocean pools

Bermagui - Horseshoe Bay (pool site)
 Bermagui - Blue Pool
 Bermagui - Zane Grey Pool (area)
 Eden - Aslings Beach Rock Pool

Appendix 2. Tidal pools visited in South Africa in 2010



Part A. Western Cape Province

(west to east sequence around the coast)

Cape Town	Cape Town - Graafs Pool Milton Beach Pool Sea Point (old pool site) Broken Bath Beach (Pool site) Maidens Cove Pool Camps Bay Pool Clovelly Pool Dalebrook Pool St James Pool Strandfontein Pool Monwabisi Pool Strand Pool Harmony Park Pool Sparks Bay Pool
Hermanus	Ficks Pool The Marine Pool
Mossel Bay	Point Pool Beach Pool
Herolds Bay	Cliff Pool Main Pool
Victoria Bay	Victoria Bay Pool

Part B. Eastern Cape Province

East London	Quanza pool site Insolvents hole site Aquarium pool
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Part C. KwaZulu-Natal Province

(north to south sequence)

Shakas Cove Pool Thompsons Bay Pool Salmon Bay Pool Granny's Pool, Umhlanga Brighton Beach Pool, Bluff, Durban Amanzimtoti Pools Warner Beach Pool Umkomaas Pool Scottburgh Pool Pennington Pool Ifafa Pool Mtwalume Pool Banana Beach Pool Southport Beach Pool Umtentweni Pool Shelly Beach Pool St Michaels-on-Sea Children's Pool St Michaels-on-Sea Pool Uvonga Beach Pool Manaba Beach Pool Lawrence Rocks Pool Ramsgate Pool South Broom Pool Marina Beach Pool Trafalgar Pool Palm Beach Pool
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Appendix 3. Latitudes of Australian and South African ocean pools

South Africa's ocean pools are at latitudes comparable with the NSW ocean pools.

Latitudes of communities with ocean pools	
South African sample	Australian sample
	Broome, Western Australia 17.9620° S
	Yamba, NSW 29.4333° S
Durban, KwaZulu-Natal 29.8697° S	
	Sawtell, NSW 30.3699° S
	Newcastle, NSW 32.9167° S
East London, Eastern Cape 33.0000° S	
	Sydney, NSW 33.8683° S
Cape Town, Western Cape 33.9767° S	
	Wollongong, NSW 34.4331° S
	Eden, NSW 37.0667° S