

Our beaches

Melbourne's beaches

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) monitors beach water quality and conducts litter surveys of 12 Port Phillip Bay beaches. The EPA litter survey involves 10 site visits to selected beaches.

1 EPA Port Phillip Bay survey area

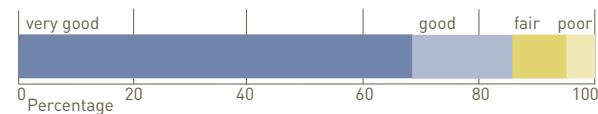


Beach water quality

The EPA measures *enterococci* bacteria levels as an indicator of beach pollution and whether a beach is safe for swimming. Samples with levels greater than 500 organisms/100 mL are considered 'poor'. If a beach receives a poor rating the EPA carries out further investigation and follow up testing. In 2004-05, the number of 'poor' results was higher than previous years, influenced by storms in January and February. *Enterococci* levels were below 500 organisms per 100 mL, in the fair to very good range, of 95% of routine samples.

Stormwater draining into the Bay can cause short-term beach pollution. Severe storms affect beach water quality, flushing stormwater out into the Bay. Stormwater can carry run-off from the catchment, including litter, animal faeces, fertilizers, septic and sullage effluent and leakage from old sewers to waterways and beaches. Contaminated stormwater remains the main cause of bacteriological pollution at Port Phillip Bay beaches.

2 Summary of routine *enterococci* results Port Phillip Bay 2004-05

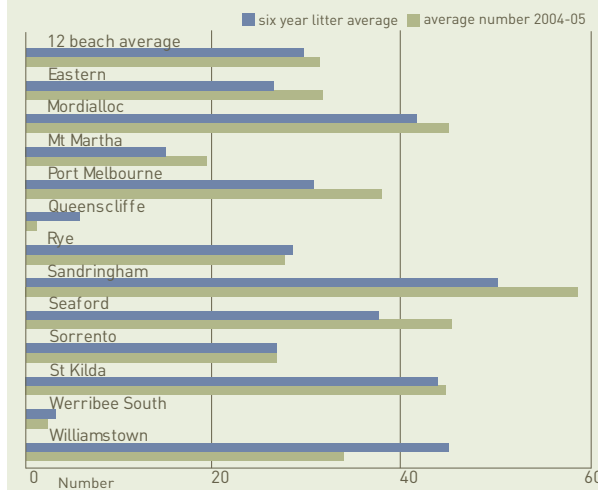


Beach litter

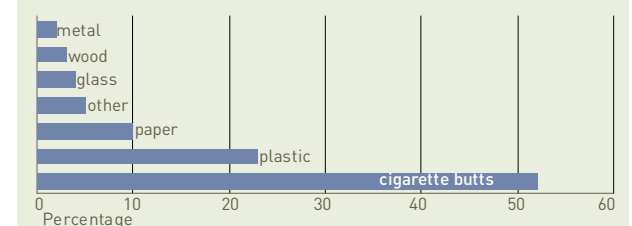
Sandringham, Seaford and Mordialloc had the three highest litter counts of all monitored Port Phillip Bay beaches in 2004-05. Mt Martha, Queenscliffe and Werribee South had the lowest litter counts.

Cigarette butts and other plastic items have been the most frequent litter items for each of the six years the EPA has conducted beach surveys. Cigarette butts comprised 52% of litter in the 2005 survey. The second most common item was plastic, which made up 23% of all litter found.

3 Litter items in survey areas Port Phillip Bay, 2004-05



4 Litter materials found in full scale surveys Port Phillip Bay, 2005



The 2005 Clean Up Australia Day brought together 133,356 volunteers across Victoria, who spent the equivalent of 12,224 days cleaning up 1,377 sites, collecting 1,652 tonnes of rubbish.