



Don't go chasing waterfalls unless pooling with mermaids

Secret Spaces Hidden Places

Return of the mermaids in Manly Vale

With the soothing gentle trickle of a waterfall at the upper end and a verdant landscape around this catchment pool for Manly Creek, you can start to understand why this place might conjure thoughts of magical creatures.

A sign next to the bridge overlooking the waterfall talks to the history of the pools and how it got its name. According to local folklore, it reads, the pool was often used as a bathing spot by young women, who lived in a nearby camp in Allambie for people who had lost their homes. Since they would slip away and swim naked, it became referred to as 'Mermaid Pools.'

While Mermaid sightings are rare these days, mainly because it's advised not to swim in the catchment pool, you can still understand why it would have been the perfect

spot to escape for a swim.

But this wasn't always the case. Prior to 2002, the beautiful oasis had become overrun with debris, garbage and weeds. Over 70 Dedicated volunteers swooped in on 'Clean Up Australia Day' in 2002, to remove four tonnes of rubbish which then kicked off the ongoing restoration project. Since then, multiple conservation organisations and volunteers have become involved in keeping the site maintained including removing weeds, planting and even removing pest species.

These ongoing efforts, which includes a monthly bush regeneration group who meet every fourth Sunday, have meant local fauna are starting to return more often. According to some reports, Bandicoots have returned after a 40-year absence, Dwarf

Green Tree Frogs are thriving in the reeds and occasionally, Swamp Wallabies make an appearance too.

Despite a setback in early 2022 when severe storms and rain hit New South Wales, once again the locals swooped in, forming a human chain up King Street to remove the debris into the local tip - once again restoring the pools to their natural wonder.

Did you know...

Not only are bandicoots and wallabies returning, but a myriad of birdlife can be found around the pools such as azure kingfishers and fairy wrens. But according to Clean Up Australia, the key group involved in the start of the restoration project, many believe the real 'mermaids' of the pool are the native fish that have been migrating up Manly Creek and spawning at the pools for around 60 million years.

How to get there

As you wind your way down King Street towards Manly Dam, stop just past Quintan Parade, near the entrance to the UNSW Manly Vale Campus. Next to the wooden sign saying "Mermaid Pool" there is a slightly overgrown track that may require some creative footwork, but shouldn't take more than five minutes to reach the base of the pool. Ample street parking is available on King Street before the entrance.

Have a great spot you think should be featured?
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