Can you imagine being banned from bathing in the sea? This was the case in New South Wales, Australia, from the 1830s to 1903. At this time the state government banned bathing in the sea in public view between 6 am and 8 pm. This book explores why bathing was banned, and the political and cultural processes that subsequently transformed the beach. The book begins by exploring the dominant moral values of the British colonial gentry that led to the ban on daylight bathing in public view, even at beach resorts in New South Wales. The focus of the book then traces the emergence of the bathing reserve, bathing ordinances and beach inspectors as mechanisms given to municipal authorities to restore respectability to a growing number of middle-class people that bathed, swam or sunbathed at the beach. The transformation of the beach cultures is examined in terms of the emergence of swimming and surfing clubs amongst the middle-classes, changing understandings of ‘race’, masculinity, healthy bodies and the implications new forms of mobility like the train and car. These ideas are illustrated drawing on examples form the Illawarra, some 80 kilometres south of Sydney.