

ITEM 4 POLICY REVIEW - DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS POLICY

This report provides details of the community consultation and exhibition of the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy and recommends the adoption of the revised Policy which includes an additional park based off-leash area at Reed Park Dapto, as well as administrative and operational changes. Enhanced Ranger Services are proposed along with improved signage, educational material and additional dog waste bag dispensers and bins.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 An off-leash dog area be declared at Reed Park, Dapto and that this area be fenced.
- 2 The revised Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy be adopted.
- 3 The revised Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy be widely promoted.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Danny Madigan, Manager Regulation and Enforcement
Authorised by: Mark Riordan, Director Planning and Environment - Future City and Neighbourhoods (Acting)

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Existing Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy
- 2 Draft revised Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy
- 3 Proposed Off-Leash Dog Area - Reed Park, Dapto

BACKGROUND

The Companion Animals Act 1998 requires Council to establish at least one dog off-leash area. Council responded by establishing the original Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy in 2002. The areas established essentially provided for off-leash free access on beaches and parks where dogs were already being exercised.

There have been a number of reviews of the Policy since that time and all changes were developed based on considerable community consultation (2001, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2016 and 2018), including specific Aboriginal consultation, a comprehensive Review of Environmental Factors (REF00499) and a peer review of the REF by Lesryk Environmental Consultants. The 2014 Policy review (Attachment 1) also included an assessment of the publication 'Public Open Space and Dogs - A design and management guide for open space professionals and Local Government by Harlock Jackson Pty Ltd, August 1995' an accepted guide for Local Government in planning for dogs in public open space.

Council also considered a report on 25 July 2016 and resolved that, "...proposed new dog / off-leash areas (Parks) be considered in the review of the Dogs on Beaches & Parks Policy."

The following parks were assessed as suitable off-leash dog areas but the report noted community consultation about the proposal would be required when the Policy was next reviewed -

- Bellambi Oval, Bott Drive, Bellambi
- Reed Park Dapto
- Northern end JJ Kelly Park – Illawarra Dog Training Club site

Council now provides a high level of access for dogs on beaches and parks across the City. This is important given the high level of dog ownership across the City is large. As at 31 March 2019, there were 60,547 dogs identified in Wollongong on the NSW Companion Animal Register. In addition it is

estimated, based on pound statistics, that there are also another 12,500 un-microchipped dogs in the City. This level of ownership ranks the City as the third highest for dog ownership in New South Wales.

The current review of the Policy commenced in late 2018 with Government Agency and community consultation.

PROPOSAL

Administrative and operational changes to the Policy (Attachment 2) are proposed below -

- changes to the Policy objectives to specifically include improved environmental and heritage protection;
- administrative changes to the Policy in regards language, style and set out;
- the inclusion of specific measures aimed at improving and increasing the protection of Aboriginal heritage;
- enhanced signage placement and promotional and public awareness raising materials;
- the declaration of an off-leash and fenced dog area (Green Zone) at Reed Park Dapto;
- enhanced compliance and enforcement activities.

Changes to the objectives of the Policy reflecting legislative requirements around heritage and environmental protection are strongly supported by NSW government agencies and staff, and have been included in the draft.

The changes in design, language and set out of the Policy clarify requirements so they are more readily defined and understood. Background information relating to the historic development of the Policy has been removed to ensure that the Policy is more concise.

The inclusion of specific additional measures to better ensure the protection and impact minimisation of Aboriginal heritage areas is strongly supported by government agencies and staff. Implementation of these measures will help mitigate the potential impacts of dogs on the very important Aboriginal places of significance in the City.

Improvements in signage to better identify declared dog control areas and to inform dog owners about their responsibilities is proposed and is strongly supported by government agency and community requests. Similarly, increased and improved siting of dog-waste bag dispensers and waste bins is also proposed.

The proposed establishment of an off-leash dog area at Reed Park Dapto (Attachment 3) is derived from Council's resolution on 25 July 2016. Submissions received from users of this reserve and from large numbers of the broader community support the establishment of a dog off-leash area at Reed Park, but request the area be fenced and provided with services such as water, waste bins and seating. The off-leash parks earlier proposed for consideration at Bott Drive Bellambi and JJ Kelly Reserve Wollongong are not supported.

The enhancement of companion animal compliance and enforcement activities was a strong theme during the community consultation and engagement process. Operational changes have been made to better achieve the required standard of enforcement and compliance required, and to enhance animal control services particularly over weekend periods.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Community Comment

The consultation and engagement regarding the review of the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy ran from 6 November to 10 December 2018. Proposed new off-leash park locations and facilities were also considered during this review. Feedback was sought on the following areas –

- 1 Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy
- 2 Establishment of three new off-leash parks at Bellambi Oval, Bott Drive, Bellambi, JJ Kelly Park, Wollongong and Reed Park, Dapto
- 3 Types of equipment to be considered for off-leash parks.

The total number of submissions received during the exhibition was 280, with 220 submissions via the 'Have Your Say' website and 59 submissions via email, letter and feedback form. One petition was received with 1088 signatures.

General Feedback

General feedback regarding the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy attracted a diverse range of responses. The main theme was in relation to fencing dog off-leash areas with respondents suggesting fencing would keep dogs safe from traffic, avoid impact with other activities and define the space where off-leash activity was permitted. Concerns about the impacts of dog waste and/or the need to supply dog waste bins and replenish waste bags at all off-leash areas was another common theme. Respondents indicated this was necessary to reduce the impact of waste, promote amenity and health and to ensure that peak usage sites were adequately catered for.

The environmental impact on endangered and threatened species was raised in regard to McCauleys Beach. General feedback recommended increased education and awareness around the timing and off-leash zones, and the definition of orange zone and timed access was important. The placement of signage at beach entry points and in unobstructed off-leash park areas was suggested to support education. There was support for increased enforcement to ensure that dog owners who do not comply with the requirements of dog off-leash areas are fined.

Feedback was generally in support of the three proposed off-leash areas. The highest level of support was for Reed Park, Dapto, provided the area was fenced. The location was viewed as suitable use of green space, particularly to service the growing population in the area. Many dog owners commented they currently travel outside the City to access dog parks. There was a high level of support from respondents to fence the area, supported by the concerns about nearby traffic and the safety that a fenced area would provide.

Although the proposed location at Bott Drive, Bellambi received a high level of support, there were a range of concerns presented including land tenure, the proximity of bushland habitat, and safety issues for users of the adjacent cycleway and adjacent recreation areas. It was also suggested that this location was not suitable for an off-leash area due to its close proximity to the adjacent existing beach off-leash area.

Overall, comments were in favour of the proposal at the Illawarra Dog Training Club at JJ Kelly Park, however this location also had the highest number of comments in opposition to a dog off-leash area. While respondents felt a dog off-leash park was needed in central Wollongong, the main concern referred to the potential impact of an off-leash dog area on the existing formalised dog activities at this site. The greatest concern raised referred to the existing formal dog activities (Illawarra Dog Training Club) at the space and how an off-leash area would impact that existing use.

As a consequence an alternate area of JJ Kelly Reserve on the western side of the creek was explored. Consultation with the user groups of the reserve adjacent was undertaken. Potential impact with users of the sporting fields adjacent was identified including Collegians Junior Rugby League and Coniston Football clubs and as such an off-leash dog park at JJ Kelly Reserve is not at this stage supported.

Various dog exercise equipment was presented for feedback such as bollard runs, dual-use bubblers and tunnels. The most support was for a dual purpose drinking bubbler. Respondents most frequently commented that fencing and the provision of dog waste bags and bins were important at off-leash parks.

Community comments regarding the Policy review were received across the common themes as detailed below.

Issue / Theme	Description	Staff Comment
Equipment and infrastructure	A requirement for a fenced off-leash dog park in the City with infrastructure including water, seating, waste bins and dog waste bags.	A fenced park at Dapto for dogs off-leash is supported
	Upgrading signage in existing off-leash parks	Noted and supported
	Provision of dog waste collection bags and bins at more beach and park locations stocked to cover weekends	Noted and supported
Environmental impacts	Concern re the impact of dog leash free areas on biodiversity (fauna and vegetation)	Noted and supported - Objectives are proposed to include environmental protection
	Support for enclosed areas for dogs without annoying people or endangering wildlife	Noted - a fenced reserve at Dapto is supported
	Concern re the off-leash area at McCauleys Beach re environmental impacts. The Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council requested the removal of the dogs off-leash area on this particular beach due to environmental and cultural concerns.	Changes to the off-leash (green) zone are not proposed at McCauleys Beach but measures aimed at reducing any potential impact have been incorporated in the proposed draft Policy.
Additional sites for off-leash dog areas.	Rezone Fisherman's Beach and East Corrimal Beach to dog prohibited beaches, and consider dog off-leash areas on beaches in un-flagged areas.	The existing beach based zones are considered reasonable
	Extend the off-leash area at Windang Beach	Not supported due to OEH concerns
	Consider off-leash area for Helensburgh	There is an existing off-leash reserve at Helensburgh
Safety and enforcement	Ensuring animals do not harass/intimidate people enjoying outdoor areas and ensure there are adequate dog free beaches and parks where children can play and increase compliance and enforcement.	Noted and comments generally incorporated
	Increase enforcement of dog owners who do not pick up dog waste	Enhancement of enforcement activities is proposed particularly over weekends.
	Provide safer access to dog off-leash areas and alternative entry points to locations frequented by anti-social behaviour	Supported
Social impacts	Ensure the Policy notes the importance of companion animals to health and community wellbeing etc	Supported and already included in the Policy
	Ensure off-leash parks are accessible for dog owners who have mobility constraints and cannot access beaches and walk safely in sand	The draft Policy includes the existing five off-leash parks across the City and proposes an off-leash park at Dapto
Increased	Enhance awareness raising resources to better promote the current off-leash areas and expectations	Noted and supported

Issue / Theme	Description	Staff Comment
education	regarding animal management	
	Review signage location for increased clarity and to support education and enforcement activities	Noted and supported
Consultation and decision making	Work more closely with dog groups and dog owners and improve consultation with industry groups such as Veterinary Practices	Noted and supported
Planning	Develop a planned network of dog parks across the region to accommodate the growth of the City and increasing dog ownership and consider dual purpose spaces with off-leash areas available in sporting clubs off season Implement integrated planning for dog parks into neighbourhood planning. Consider more, smaller and fenced off-leash areas in each neighbourhood	Noted - regular review of the Policy and other recreation planning strategy documents is planned
Specific dog breeds	Provide for all dogs but specifically retired greyhounds. There is a large community of owners of ex-racing greyhounds in the Illawarra. Fighting bred dogs or crosses of these breeds should not be allowed to use these areas unless the dog is properly socialised.	Noted - owner responsibility is key in regard this issue Restricted breeds are regulated in the legislation

A petition was also received during the consultation period which included 1088 online signatures supporting the following statement:

“Build a fully fenced dog park in Wollongong”.

The petition was supported by comments that were consistent with the themes of fencing, safety and social impacts. The comments referenced the importance of having a safe space to bring dogs to socialise, that fencing of dog parks was important, and that dog parks were an important place for dogs to interact and bring the community together. Dog off-leash parks also offer an important facility and resource for dog owners who cannot access beach areas.

Government Agency comment

Specific comment regarding the review of the Policy was also sought from government agencies including Department Primary Industries (Fisheries), Crown Lands and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage. (OEH). Responses were received from OEH. The comments received are collated in the following table -

NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH)		
Issue	Description / Location	Staff Comment
Policy Objectives	Strengthen Policy objectives with regard biodiversity and heritage protection	An increase in emphasis on wildlife protection is supported and the Policy has been amended to reflect this
Wading Bird Protection	Continue the prohibition of dogs on all rock platforms across the City	No changes to the status of rock platforms as dog prohibited wildlife protection areas is proposed
Policy Enforcement	OEH remarked enforcement and regulation of the Policy appears to be under-resourced. The Windang sandflats were noted as a particular area of concern	Greater collaboration with OEH regarding wildlife protection areas is supported. No change to the

NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH)		
Issue	Description / Location	Staff Comment
	and OEH are seeking greater collaboration with Council regarding companion animals and wildlife protection areas.	RED zone at Windang is proposed. Strengthening of weekend enforcement activities has been programmed.
Community education & awareness raising activities.	Increase awareness raising and proactive compliance activities regarding the wildlife protection of wading and migratory bird habitat	Increased community awareness raising is a key component of the Policy and was a consistent theme of the broader consultation and is supported
Aboriginal heritage management	OEH requested the Policy be revised to ensure consistency of control measures with Heritage Management Plans particularly in regard McCauleys / Sandon Point and Hill 60 Port Kembla	Noted and supported and included in the draft Policy
	OEH noted that the Sandon Point Declared Aboriginal Place extends to the Low Water Mark and request that dogs on the beach be regulated to satisfy the requirements of the declaration	Noted and supported - refer to comment in theme below
	OEH requested that the values of the Sandon Point and Hill 60 Declared Aboriginal Places be specifically recognised in the Policy and that details of how the values of these places will be protected from the impacts of off-leash areas needs to be included in the Policy	Supported and included in the draft Policy
	OEH supported the criteria in the Policy regarding off-leash areas but suggest cultural and heritage protection should be included in addition to "Environmental Protection Areas".	Supported and included in the Draft Policy
	OEH supported the provisions of the Policy in regard the areas where dogs are prohibited.	Supported - no changes are proposed to areas where dogs are prohibited
Strategies & controls for impact management	<p>OEH suggested that where Aboriginal heritage values may be impacted by off-leash control areas that the following management strategies be included in the Policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Managed beach access for dog owners to limit the impacts to dunal vegetation and potential archaeological sites, - Installation of improved signage and waste disposal bins to limit faeces and litter, - Restriction of access by off leash dogs to the dunal areas, - Enhancing enforcement and ensuring greater compliance with Policy provisions, - Monitoring the Policy provisions to identify impact areas relating to off leash dogs and aboriginal heritage values. 	Supported - these requested elements strengthen the management of any impacts that may potentially be caused by dogs and have all been incorporated into the draft revised Policy
General	OEH suggested that specific Aboriginal consultation	Agreed and Noted - Engagement

NSW Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH)		
Issue	Description / Location	Staff Comment
comments	regarding the Policy review be undertaken particularly in the focus areas of Sandon Point / McCauleys Beach, Bellambi Point and East Corrimal, North Wollongong Beach, Hill 60 and Windang Beach	staff undertook specific consultation during the engagement period
	OEH suggested future Policy reviews consider a broader LGA assessment and approach to establishing companion animal control areas	The next review of the Policy is scheduled prior to 2024. Greater City wide consultation and assessment in regards general recreation needs is supported

Late Submissions

Individual submissions were also received early in 2019 (after the consultation period) from residents of Stanwell Park. These submissions suggested changes to the Stanwell Park off-leash beach area. The approved off-leash area was established in 2010 and is located at the northern end of the beach. The submissions received raised common issues with the existing off-leash area relating to conflict with other beach users. The submissions conclude the issues have resulted from general increased patronage of the beach, from park reserve overflow, from the lifeguard patrolled area now being located more towards the northern end of the beach, and from hang glider and paraglider landings just to the south of the leash free area. The submissions highlight this increased usage as an area of risk to beach users.

Property and Recreation staff have commented that - “Council’s patrolled bathing area moves along the beach dependent on tides, weather, sea and the predominant sand bank position. In the past the mid to southern section of the beach near the Surf Life Saving Club provided better sand banks to establish a safe bathing area, but over the past summer the mid to north section of the beach was the safest area.”

In addition a petition with 63 signatures was received in February 2019 requesting that Woonona Beach be re-classified from ORANGE to GREEN – off-leash zone between the Lighthouse Drive access south to Bellambi. This area is currently limited in accessways, however may be suitable as an additional off-leash area subject to further community consultation.

No detailed assessment or broader community consultation regarding these proposals at Stanwell Park and East Woonona has been undertaken. Should Council wish to proceed with an assessment of these requests to modify the current control areas, specific community engagement and consultation will be required. In this circumstance the following option may be considered.

That changes to the current declared dog control areas at Stanwell Park Beach and East Woonona Beach be subject of specific community consultation and engagement and be subject of a subsequent report to Council in regard a possible amendment of the Policy.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Our Wollongong 2028 Goal 1 “We value and protect our environment”, and Goal 5, “We have a healthy community in a liveable City”.

It specifically delivers on core business activities as detailed in the Regulatory Control Service Plan 2018-19.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Major changes to the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy are not proposed. Administrative changes to language and style will not have financial impact. Publicity around the revised Policy and the renewal of community education resources such as brochures, web information and media will also be funded from existing budget. The review of infrastructure such as dog waste bag dispensers and waste bins

locations, as well as the renewal and relocation of some signage will also be funded from existing budget.

The proposed off-leash dog area at Reed Park, Dapto with fencing, provision of water and seating, will be funded from the existing capital works budget. The proposed park may be designed and scoped and then constructed in 2020.

Enhancement of enforcement activities over weekend periods and in sensitive areas has been achieved through new rostering and structural changes, and this is also being funded from existing budget allocation.

CONCLUSION

Major changes to the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy are not proposed. However changes are proposed to the Policy set-out and language with expanded Policy Objectives. Improved signage, promotional materials and dog waste bag dispensers and bins is proposed along with the establishment of a fenced off-leash dog park at Reed Park, Dapto. The enhancement of animal control and enforcement activities across the beach and foreshore areas of the City, especially over weekends, is also proposed. These activities are all able to be funded from existing budget.

Further consultation, engagement and assessment may be undertaken in relation to the additional proposals received to change off-leash areas at Stanwell Park and East Woonona Beach.



ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: 24 NOVEMBER 2014

BACKGROUND

Council has a legislative responsibility to provide a minimum of one (1) off-leash area and a responsibility to provide effective and responsible care and management of dogs within our area.

As at 16 October 2014 there are 49,760 dogs identified in Wollongong under the NSW Companion Animal Register. This level of ownership exceeds the State average and is a significant overall number. Council has a responsibility to ensure that access for these dogs on our public places is provided in a way that is consistent with their significance.

This Policy has been developed after considerable community consultation (2009, 2010 and 2014), including specific Aboriginal consultation, an assessment of a comprehensive Review of Environmental Factors (REF00499) and a peer review of the REF by LesryK Environmental Consultants. The Policy also included an assessment of the publication 'Public Open Space and Dogs - A design and management guide for open space professionals and Local Government by Harlock Jackson Pty Ltd, August 1995' an accepted guide for Local Government in planning for dogs in public open space.

This Policy will be reviewed from time to time as dog owner behaviour and community needs change and in accordance with Council's normal review cycle.

OBJECTIVE

The main objectives of this Policy are to have a Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy that:

- meets accepted planning guidelines;
- is balanced and generally meets the dog-owning and non-dog owning community's needs;
- is valued by the community;
- defines areas for varying levels of dog access; and
- provides for continued education and enforcement.

POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy aims to introduce a comprehensive Policy that considers recommended Office of Local Government planning guidelines and establishes a best practice, balanced, approach to access for dogs in public places within our City.

DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

1 Context/Background

It has been estimated by the Australian Companion Animal Council in 2010 that 36% of households own at least one (1) dog. They have also estimated that there are sixteen (16) dogs per hundred (100) people in NSW. With a population of approximately 201,000 people in Wollongong this rate equates to 32,160 dogs. As at 16 October 2014 there are 49,760 dogs identified in Wollongong under the NSW Companion Animal Register. As dog ownership exceeds the State average and is a significant number, Council has a responsibility to ensure that access for these dogs on our public places is provided in a way that is consistent with their significance.

The Policy also included an assessment of the publication 'Public Open Space and Dogs - A Design and Management Guide for open space professionals and Local Government by Harlock Jackson Pty Ltd, August 1995' an accepted guide for Local Government in planning for dogs in public open space.

Table 1 provides a history of Council decisions concerning off-leash areas within the Local Government Area with changes to existing off-leash areas identified in green.

Table 1: History of Changes to Dogs on Beaches Policy/Off-Leash Areas

Year	Changes and Additions to Council's Declared Off-Leash Beaches/Parks	Comments/Added Changes
2002	Coniston Beach, Coniston south of Bank Street East Corrimal Beach (east of the Bellambi Sewage Treatment Plant) Figtree Oval, Figtree Riley Park, Unanderra King George V Park, Port Kembla	Ban for dogs on all other beaches
2006 SU23390 6/11/2006	Perkins Beach Windang (extending from Shellharbour Road/ Wattle Street Beach walkway north to easterly projection of unnamed road) MM Beach, Port Kembla East Corrimal Beach from East Corrimal car park to Bellambi Point McCauley's Beach, Thirroul for a distance of 300 metres south of Corbett Ave Little Austinmer Beach, Austinmer Sharkey's Beach, Coledale (from the car park, south toward the rock outcrop) Proud Park, Helensburgh Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra	No orange zone Ban on beaches other than off-leash areas Ban on rock pools Education and enforcement considered important
2010 Z10/125276 28/9/2010	Perkins Beach, Windang (extending from Shellharbour Road/ Wattle Street Beach walkway north to access way south of Port Kembla SLSC southern car park) Puckeys Beach area directly east of Puckeys Estate Fairy Meadow ie walkway north of Fairy Creek lagoon to walkway south of playground at Fairy Meadow Beach Bellambi between Bellambi ramp and ocean pool East Corrimal Beach from East Corrimal car park to Bellambi Point (temporarily on hold) McCauley's Beach, Thirroul, total length of beach (temporarily on hold) Stanwell Park Beach, north of northern lagoon	Orange zone introduced due to public demand after consultation for additional access on beaches Banned rock platforms Red banned areas nominated from Wollongong to North Wollongong Beaches, Austinmer Beach and Coledale Beach. All remaining beaches are orange timed zones. McCauley's and East Corrimal are on hold until Aboriginal and Environmental issues are resolved

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<p>2011 Z11/103827 27/4/2011</p>	<p>East Corrimal Beach from East Corrimal car park to Bellambi Point McCauleys Beach, Thirroul, total length of beach</p>	<p>Both McCauley's and East Corrimal continue as off-leash areas after external REF and Aboriginal consultation Woonona Beach considered for off-leash however resolved as orange zone</p>
<p>2012 Z12/178219 13/11/2012</p>	<p>East Corrimal Beach from northern side of Bellambi Lagoon outlet to Bellambi Point</p>	<p>Boundary changed to northern side of Bellambi lagoon to prevent conflicting use problems</p>
<p>2014 Z14/437392</p>	<p>Additional parks, including one in Dapto, locations yet to be determined</p>	<p>Existing beaches and parks remained the same due to overwhelming community support</p>

2 Community Consultation

This Policy has been developed after considerable community consultation (2009, 2010 and 2014), an assessment of a comprehensive Review of Environmental Factors (REF00499) and a peer review of the REF by LesryK Environmental Consultants.

In addition to the broad community consultation, a specific Aboriginal consultation process commenced which included meetings with the following Aboriginal groups/Individuals –

- Aunty Muriel Davis, Traditional Owner, Wodi Wodi Elders Group
- Uncle Allen Carriage, Traditional Owner, Wadi Wadi Coomaditchie
- Uncle Reuben Brown, Traditional Owner, KEJ
- Aboriginal Land Council
- Sandon Point Tent Embassy (SPATE)
- Wollongong City Council, Aboriginal Reference Group
- Wider Aboriginal Community – Onsite kiosk Bellambi Neighbourhood Centre

3 Current Legislation

The Companion Animals Act 1998 requires Council to provide at least one (1) off-leash area for the Wollongong LGA. The form of the off-leash area is broad as indicated in Section 13 (6).

Section 13(6) states “A local authority can by order declare a public place to be an off-leash area. Such a declaration can be limited so as to apply during a particular period or periods of the day or to different periods of different days. However, there must at all times be at least one public place in the area of a local authority that is an off-leash area”.

Council is the authorised authority under the Companion Animals Act to manage companion animals. Dogs are classified as companion animals. A new principal object of the Companion Animals Act, Section 3A, is “to provide for the effective and responsible care and management of companion animals”.

Advice provided by the Manager Companion Animals Unit of the Office of Local Government indicate that this new objective was specifically included in the Act to ensure that councils are proactive in the proper management of companion animals under the Act. This increases the level of responsibility to provide education, enforcement and presence in the community.

To understand if Council is effectively and responsibly managing, and therefore complying with legislative obligations, significant consideration has been given to the recent community survey results in the development of this Policy.

With few exceptions, such as in off-leash areas, all dogs must remain on leash whilst in a public space. Section 13 (1) of the CAA states: “13 (1) A dog that is in a public place must be under the effective control of some competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash that is attached to the dog and that is being held by (or secured to) the person”. Because this is legislated across NSW no signage is required for this to be enforced.

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Acting contrary to signage is dealt with under the Local Government Act 1993. Section 632 (1) LG Act states: *“A person who, in a public place within the area of a Council, fails to comply with the terms of a notice erected by the Council is guilty of an offence”*. Signage along access paths, in parks and off-leash rules signs are dealt with primarily under the Local Government Act.

4 Strategic Planning for Access by Dogs

4.1 Key Principles

This policy considers current information relating to dogs in public places from 'Public Open Space and Dogs – A Design and Management Guide for open space professionals and Local Government by Harlock Jackson Pty Ltd, August 1995'. This publication is accepted as the guide for Local Government in planning for dogs in public open space.

Jackson 1995 indicates that there are four (4) principles that need to be established and considered when Council is considering access by dogs to public places and provides a sound basis for assessing the options for dogs' access to public open space. They are:

- 1 Provide formal recognition of the legitimacy of dog owners as being a deserving significant group of customers;
- 2 Understand more clearly the needs of both dogs and their owners;
- 3 Aim for integration of dogs with other public space users while recognising that separation is warranted in some instances; and
- 4 Councils should apply a strategic approach that considers access on a comprehensive Council wide basis rather than on a piecemeal park by park basis.

The basic premise is that since within our community 36% of households have at least one (1) dog, this population should have facilities consistent with their significance. The purpose of establishing off-leash areas, and other forms of access for dogs, is to provide locations where their dogs can be exercised and socialised with other dogs to reduce problems such as barking and other nuisance behaviour.

4.2 Main Access Options

The main dog access options are:

- On-leash areas;
- Off-leash areas;
- Banning;
- Different zones in one (1) park/beach; and
- Time share arrangements. Seasonal variations have also been used although mainly on beaches, eg dogs banned from November to April.

4.3 Selection of Off-Leash Areas

What to look for in selection of off-leash areas:

- Beaches/parks that can withstand free-running by dogs;
- Beaches/parks that have natural boundaries;
- Beaches/parks that meet the needs of dogs and their owners;
- Beaches/parks that are not associated with established recreation interests; and
- Unique local conditions or opportunities.

The areas to avoid in selecting off-leash areas are:

- Areas in the immediate vicinity of children's playgrounds because of the relative unpredictability of children in unfamiliar situations;
- Areas that attract high concentrations of people, eg popular beaches;
- Picnic areas – the presence of food may provoke annoying behaviour; and
- Botanic Gardens or Environmental Protection areas.

4.4 Needs of Dogs and Owners

The most fundamental need for dogs is that they be taken out with their owner as much as possible. This enables them to experience the full range of benefits – exercise, training, socialisation, relief of pent-up energy as well as time and fun with their owner and other dogs. They don't need to run freely off the leash as much as they need interaction with their owner and diversity of experience (sights, sounds, smells, textures, other dogs and humans).

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Taking a dog out has been found to stimulate social interaction with other humans. Studies suggest that friendships are developed with others using the same route and that, on average, the conversations lasted longer than those with people without dogs. For some, particularly the elderly who live alone, taking a dog to the park may stimulate the only human contact that person has for an entire day.

Urban consolidation, with more high and medium density housing developments occurring, will place greater demands on public open space both for human needs and as an outlet for dogs.

4.5 Fitness, Health and Mental Health

Harlock Jackson (1995) states that the health benefits of pet ownership is increasingly being recognised. Studies have revealed a beneficial effect of pet ownership on several of the classical factors for coronary heart disease and reported better physical and mental health than of non-dog owners.

Owning a dog encourages people to exercise and provide social opportunities particularly for the elderly and parents isolated at home during the day with small children. In an era when people feel increasingly threatened in public areas, being accompanied by a dog can also improve actual and perceived safety.

Pets can act as emotional substitutes for spouses, romantic partners and children. The studies have found that widows, single people and empty nesters are more likely to emphasise the companionship qualities of pets. Pets are often also obtained to help children learn responsibility and how to share. They show that if affection is given it will be returned.

4.6 Conflicts

The problems generally attributed to dogs and their owners whilst in public places include defecation, aggression to humans and other animals, non-compliance with leash laws and other nuisance behaviour.

Conflict is a matter of degree with its impacts ranging from threats to safety, to detracting from the quality of the recreation experience, to more simple annoyance. Even annoyance is a matter of degree – what is intolerable to one (1) person may only annoy another and may not even be noticed by another.

The most common complaint about unremoved faecal deposits is the effect on aesthetics and the unpleasant experience of dodging droppings on footpaths and in parks.

Dog attacks are the most serious potential problem and there is always a great deal of interest in the issue. Attacks can occur against humans, other dogs and other animals. Most dogs don't bite people or other dogs. Those that do are either frightened, dominant, protective or possessive.

Another argument for restricting dogs' access to public open space is that their presence (behaviour and smell) frightens away native wildlife.

The problems described above are either eliminated or reduced if dogs are confined to a leash. However leash laws of themselves raise another area of potential conflict – that of non-compliance. People don't comply for many reasons whether through protest, lack of awareness, laziness or because they think they can escape prosecution.

5 Three-Tier Approach

The three-tier approach (as in traffic lights) has been chosen as it is a suitable, easily understood way in which to explain the three (3) levels of access provided for the community along the foreshore and beaches. This approach also enables a diagrammatic view of the access provisions along our coast. The green areas are off-leash, the orange areas are time share access areas and the red areas are dog prohibited (banned) areas.

5.1 Green Zone – Off-Leash

The green off-leash zones have been provided to meet the needs of dogs and dog owners given the significant population in our community. Their spread along our coastal area demonstrates that Council is considering good planning practice in accordance with Harlock Jackson (1995). The chosen off-leash areas substantially meet the desired selection criteria for off-leash zones.

The following beaches declared off-leash areas are:

- Perkins Beach, Windang (extending from Shellharbour Road/Wattle Street beach walkway north to access way south of Port Kembla SLSC southern carpark;
- MM Beach, Port Kembla;
- Coniston Beach, Coniston south of Bank Street;
- Beach area directly east of Puckeys Estate Fairy Meadow ie walkway north of Fairy Creek lagoon to walkway south of playground at Fairy Meadow Beach;
- Bellambi between Bellambi ramp and ocean pool;

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- East Corrimal Beach from northern side of Bellambi Lagoon outlet to Bellambi Point;
- McCauley's Beach, Thirroul;
- Little Austinmer Beach, Austinmer;
- Sharky's Beach, Coledale (from the carpark, south toward the rock outcrop); and
- Stanwell Park Beach, north of northern lagoon.

The following parks are also declared as off-leash areas:

- Figtree Oval, Figtree;
- Proud Park, Helensburgh;
- Riley Park, Unanderra;
- Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra; and
- King George V Park, Port Kembla.

5.2 Orange Zone – Timed Access

The orange zone is a time sharing zone. This zone allows dogs on beaches on-leash only and only within certain times. This time sharing zone is an important zone that allows additional access for dogs and their owners in a controlled manner.

This zone is on-leash only as Council determined the need for this to minimise fauna and flora impact from unrestrained dogs as necessary. It also enables Council to have a higher degree of success in improving dog owner behaviour in relation to faeces management. Keeping dogs on-leash also has the added benefit of reducing unwanted aggressive behaviour due to the increased control.

In these zones access on-leash is allowed in summer before 9am and after 6pm and in winter before 9am and after 4pm. To assist the community with a simple education analogy for summer this area is also known as flags up – no dogs/flags down – dogs on-leash. The orange zone includes all beaches not designated as off-leash or banned areas.

Summer is defined as being from September school holidays to ANZAC day, (in line with lifeguard and SLSC patrols), and winter is the remainder of the year.

5.3 Red Zone – Banned

The red zone is an area where dogs are prohibited. The banned areas have been considered as a last resort to all other access provisions. These areas have been banned due to sites with sensitive environmental fauna and flora factors, high human population areas or for heritage reasons.

The banned areas for dogs are:

- All rock pools and ocean pools including Wombarra, Coledale, Austinmer, Bulli, Woonona, Bellambi, Towradgi, the old men's baths (rock pools north of the continental pool) and the nun's pools (northern headland of Wollongong City Beach) rock pool areas;
- All rock platforms;
- Windang Beach from Lake entrance to southern point of off-leash area;
- Port Kembla Beach extending to south end of southern carpark;
- The entire Wollongong to North Wollongong Beach area described as extending from Coniston off-leash area (east of Bank Street) beach to 500 metres north of Fairy Creek entrance North Wollongong (east of lower level of Puckeys estate). This area includes Belmore Basin;
- Austinmer Beach; and
- Coledale Beach.

5.4 Other Public Places including Parks and Sports Fields

The Companion Animals Act 1998 requires all dogs to be under effective control by cord or leash while in a public place. Signage is not required to enforce this effective control provision as it is NSW State Legislation applying throughout the State. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, all public road reserves and park areas allow access for dogs but they must be maintained on-leash.

Signage is used to determine alternatives to on-leash including prohibition. With the exception of the current parks identified as off-leash areas, other specific parks and sports fields have been determined to prohibit dogs. These areas will have No Dogs Allowed signage. The signage has been determined as appropriate in the past and will be enforced by Council under the Local Government Act 1993.

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6 Faeces Management

The impact of dog faeces has been assessed by a report titled 'Review of Environmental Factors REF 00499' undertaken by Wollongong City Council. The REF identifies a report prepared on behalf of the Australian Veterinary Association that concluded that although dog faeces may contain a variety of organisms that are pathogenic to humans the risk to human health does not justify the banning of dogs from those areas. Several factors detailed in the report indicated that the risk was low and that these risks are acceptable and can be almost eliminated with an effective education and enforcement strategy. An education and enforcement strategy are both part of this Policy.

The need for bins and dispensers has been highlighted as an essential requirement to reducing current faecal problems on the beach and along the bike track and pedestrian walking areas. Each off-leash area will have sufficient bins and dispensers and the bike track adjoining the orange zones will also be provided with bins and dispensers.

7 Enforcement

Enforcement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's current Enforcement Policy and Ranger Services procedures. The REF also confirms the need for enforcement to manage compliance for zone requirements and faeces management. Council's current Penalty Notice Review Policy will be used by Compliance Officers in relation to the issuing and handling of Penalty Infringement Notices and the representation process.

The Regulation and Enforcement Division commits to providing regular enforcement for dogs on public land, particularly enforcement on beaches. This will form part of a regular roster to patrol these areas.

To improve conditions for users of off-leash areas conditions of use, or rules, have been included on rules signage at each off-leash area. The following wordage exists on the rules signs:

*All dogs within the designated off-leash area must be supervised by a person. The person in charge of any dog within this area, (which has been provided as a facility for enjoyment by the community), **MUST:***

- 1 *Be a competent person 16 years of age or over. Be able to control the dog (by voice command or other means);*
- 2 *Carry a bag suitable for dog faeces;*
- 3 *Remove and place dog faeces in a suitable bag and dispose in an appropriate rubbish bin;*
- 4 *Not allow restricted breeds, or dogs declared as dangerous, to use this off-leash area;*
- 5 *Not allow dogs suffering from contagious disease, skin irritation or parasitic infection to use this area.*

NOTE: THE OWNER OF A DOG IS LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE IF THE DOG ATTACKS A PERSON OR ANIMAL.

As well as educating users in regard to expectations of use, the rules sign can be enforced under the Local Government Act where users act contrary to the signage.

8 Signage/Education

Council will provide education to the community in the following manner:

- Website information;
- Media Releases at appropriate intervals or incident;
- Telephone caller waiting information;
- Development and use of an off-leash brochure;
- Ranger in-field education;
- School education;
- Distribution of brochures and other education material to RSPCA and veterinary clinics; and
- Promoting the Policy at microchipping days.

Additional education will be provided by signage in various forms. Signage has been recognised as particularly important to providing an effective Policy and appropriate signage will be increased. Signage includes:

- Zone explanatory signage;
- Off-leash rules signage;
- Access path signage;
- Dogs prohibited signage; and
- Directional signs.

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Enforcement staff will also recommend additional signage after the Policy becomes operational where ongoing non-compliance occurs and where signage should be increased for compliance and education purposes.

9 Risk of Aggressive Behaviour by Dogs

The various levels of access within the three (3) zones have a varying degree of risk associated with it in relation to unwanted attention or aggressive behaviour. The issue of responsibility has arisen in the review and advice received by Council is that the Tort of Duty of Care arises under the common law of negligence and that Council has no responsibility as off-leash areas are allowed and specified under the Act.

Irrespective of this advice Council provides enforcement support to increase compliant behaviour in the dedicated zones. By providing clear access options and signage, the community is able to decide which area they wish to frequent and assume the risk associated with that area. Education advice will also be provided to the community in relation to risk.

Council also has included conditions of use on each off-leash area that will reduce risk of aggressive behaviour to users. Council Rangers will enforce under the Local Government Act when dog owners fail to comply with these conditions.

Should an attack occur in a public place, including an off-leash area, Council will ensure that all matters are investigated and the appropriate enforcement action taken. Action can include issuing Penalty Infringement Notices and/or having a dog declared a dangerous dog. Any injury or damage as a result of an attack is the responsibility of the attacked person to take legal action against the owner of the offending dog through the Court process.

10 Fauna Flora

The fauna and flora impacts of access by dogs on our beaches will be minimised by adopting the recommendations of REF00499 and adopting Plans of Management that includes recommendations of the LesryK Environmental Consultant's report in relation to McCauley's Beach and East Corrimal Beach. The red zone protect fauna and flora and the orange zone has been made on-leash only also to protect fauna and flora.

11 Aboriginal Heritage

The Sandon Point Aboriginal Place is a highly valued area for the Aboriginal Community and this site is known to contain at least one (1) burial. This area is also the only declared 'Aboriginal Place' under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 in the Local Government Area. East Corrimal to Bellambi Point has potential to carry similar levels of significance and cultural concern as Sandon Point. Although this is not as well documented the traditional elders indicate that the significant areas relate to the western side of the dunal system.

These two (2) sites are two (2) of the key coastal areas of Aboriginal cultural significance in the LGA. Council will be undertaking its duty of care to ensure the protection of the cultural significance of the Aboriginal Place.

It is clear that members within the Aboriginal Community consulted in the development of this Policy, (including several highly respected elders) do not feel that the banning of dogs is a necessary option and feel comfortable with the off-leash area continuing despite the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance. Their advice is that Aboriginals and dogs have co-existed for generations and therefore is not an issue particularly on the sandy part of the beach.

The Aboriginal community's concern is directed at the areas behind the beach, the dunal areas, and how people gain access to the beach through areas of Aboriginal significance. Plans of Management (PoM) will be completed which will implement protection measures to limit Aboriginal heritage disturbance by both people and dogs. The Aboriginal community request respect of these areas and the Plans of Management will assist in educating the broader community of their cultural significance.

12 Complaint Handling

The current customer service action request system will be used to register and monitor complaints in relation to dogs in public places. In addition, to improve the monitoring of the current system, a separate category has been installed within the system specific to off-leash areas. This information will be used in future reviews of this Policy.

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13 Review

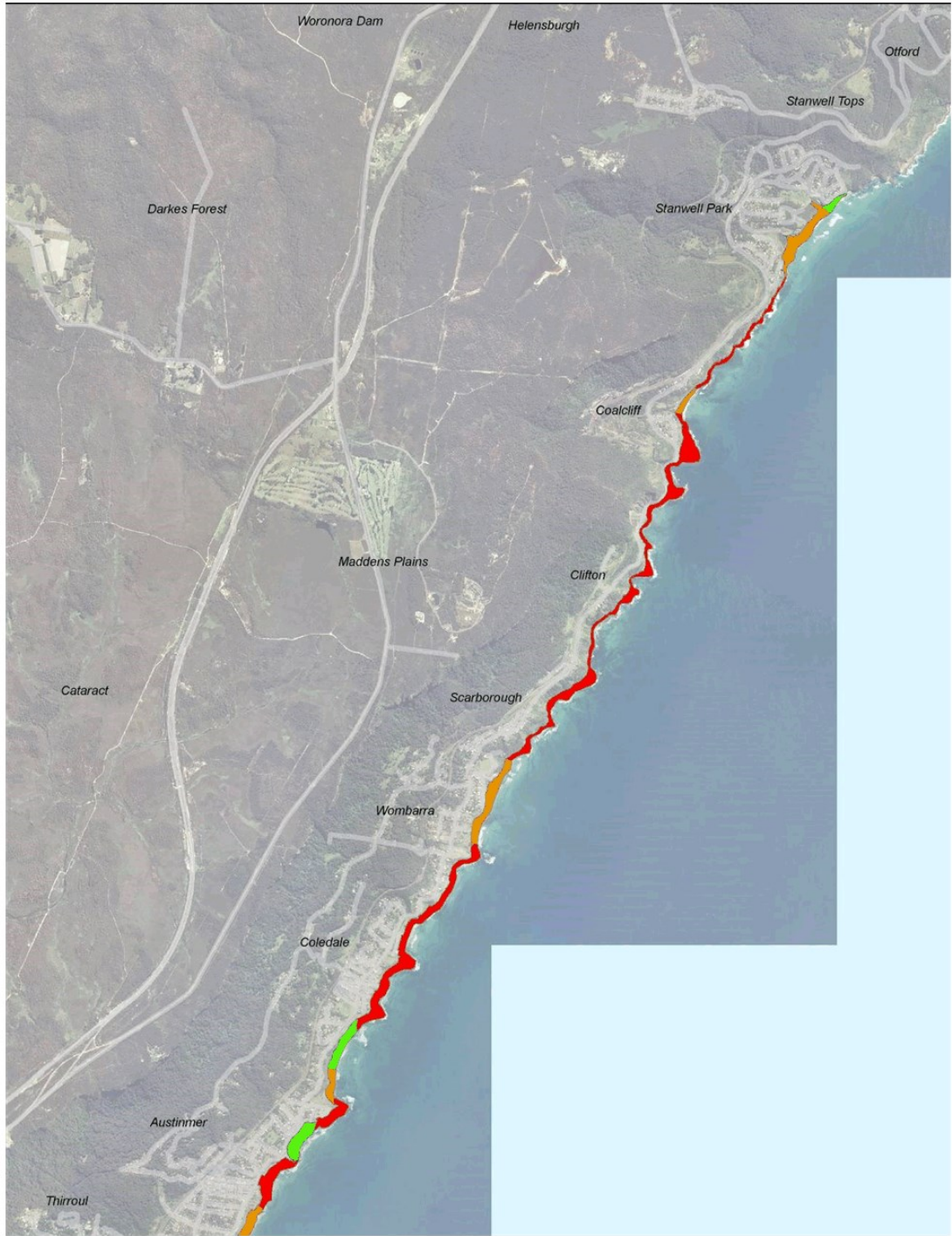
Council will review this Policy on a regular basis. The review will include public consultation and feedback, an assessment of complaints received, Penalty Infringement Notices levels and areas, the level of enforcement resources, changes to dog owner behaviour and other significant impacts or Legislative changes since the development of this Policy.

14 Attachments: Maps of Zone Areas

Legend:

-  Off-Leash
-  Timed On-Leash Access
-  Dogs Banned

Map 1: Stanwell Park to Austinmer



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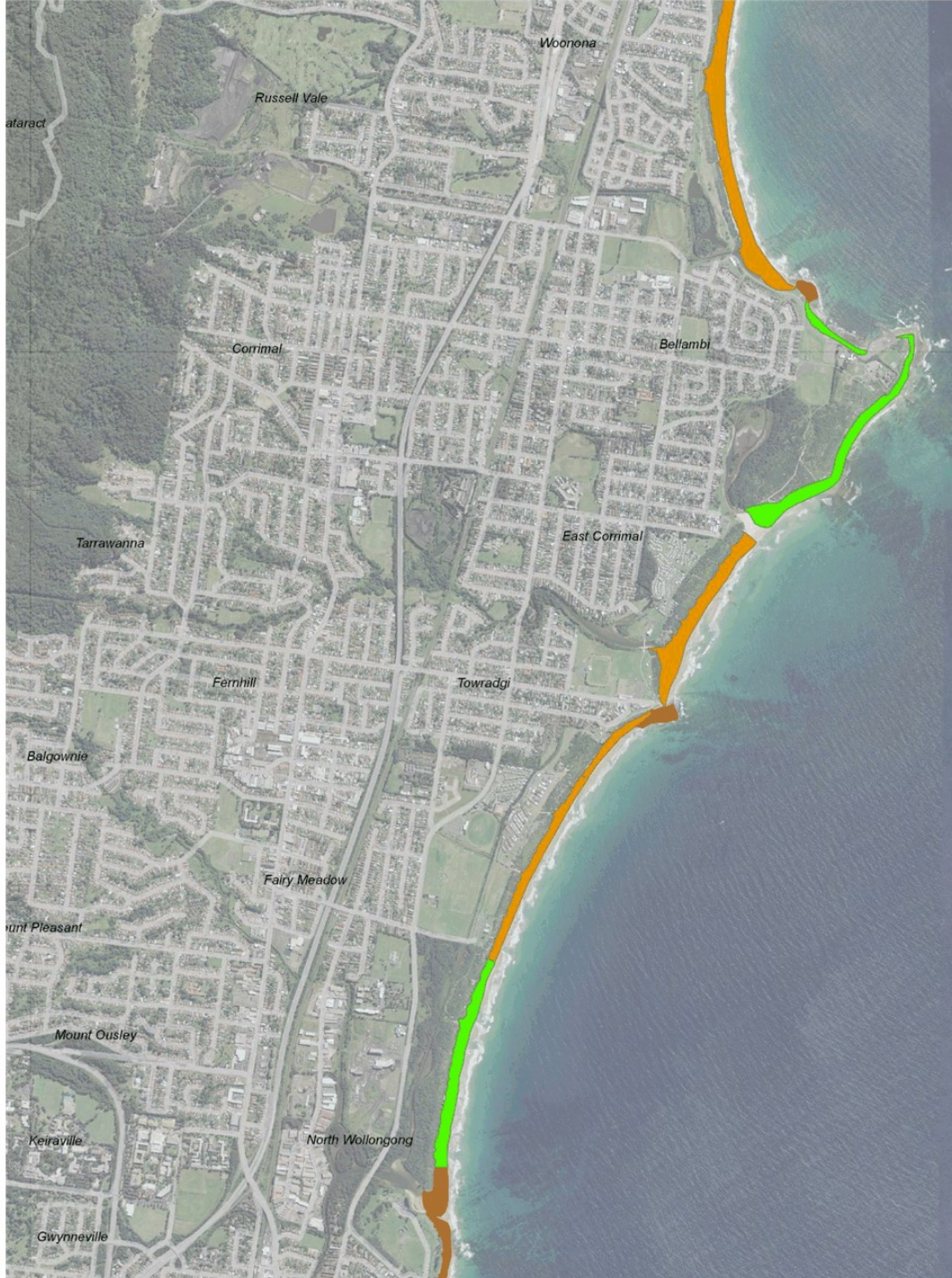
Map 2: Coledale to Bellambi



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Map 3: Woonona to North Wollongong



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Map 4: North Wollongong to Coniston



Map 5: Port Kembla to Windang



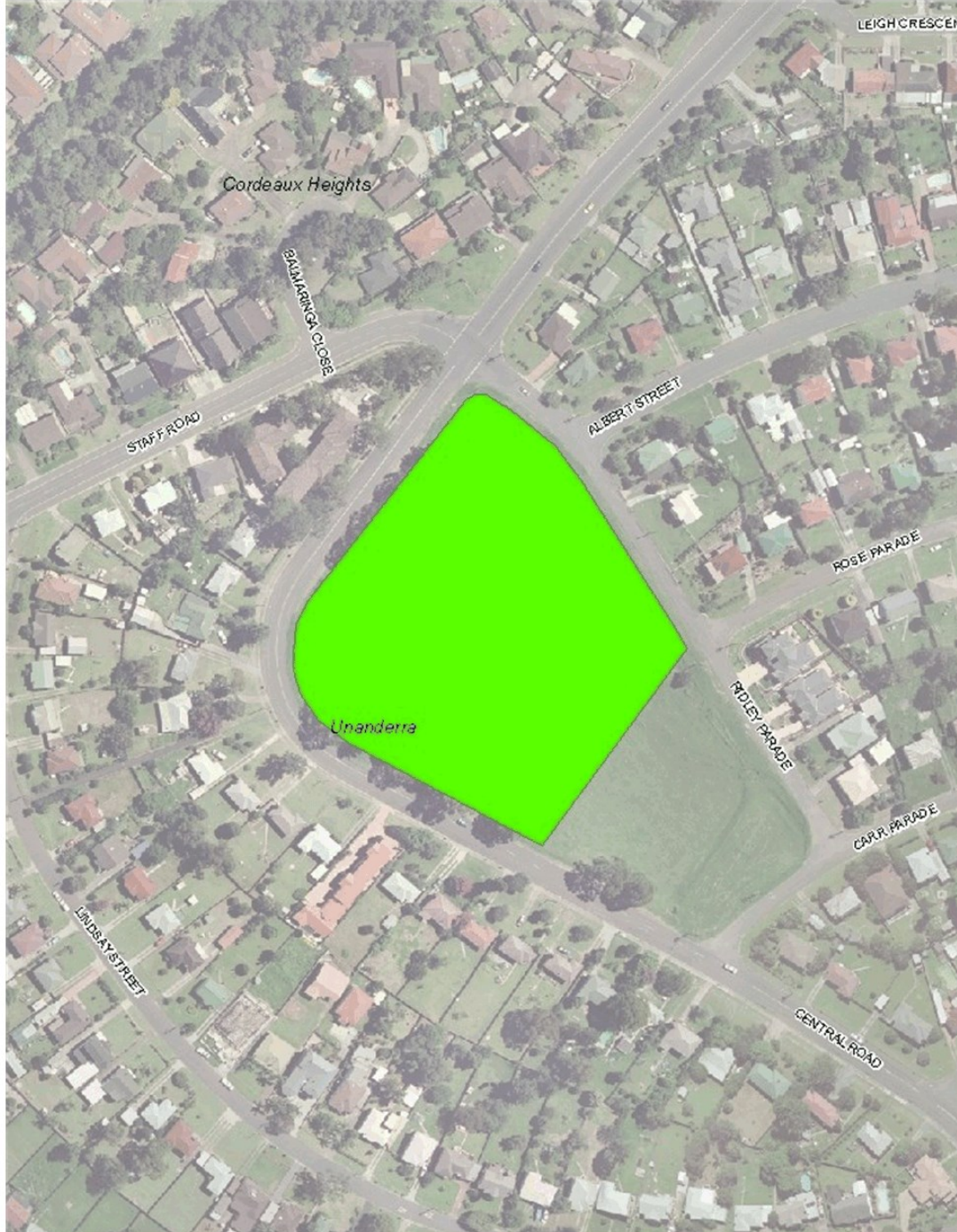
Map 6: Primbee to Lake Illawarra



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Map 7: Riley Park, Unanderra



Map 8: Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra



Map 9: Figtree Oval, Figtree



Map 10: King George V Park, Port Kembla



Map 11: Proud Park, Helensburgh



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SUMMARY SHEET

SUMMARY SHEET	
Responsible Division	Regulation and Enforcement
Date adopted by Council	24 November 2014
Date of previous adoptions	26 November 2012, 27 April 2011, 28 September 2010
Date of next review	April 2019
Prepared by	Ranger Services Manager
Authorised by	Director Planning and Environment



ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: [TO BE COMPLETED BY CORP SUPPORT]

BACKGROUND

Council has a legislative responsibility to provide a minimum of one (1) off-leash area and a responsibility to provide effective and responsible care and management of dogs within the City.

As at 1 July 2018 there were 60,547 dogs identified in Wollongong on the NSW Companion Animal Register. It is estimated from pound statistics that there are another 12,500 un-microchipped dogs in the City. This level of ownership ranks Council as being the third highest Local Government Authority for dog ownership in NSW. This Policy has been developed after considerable community consultation (2002, 2006, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2016 and 2018), including specific Aboriginal community consultation, a comprehensive Review of Environmental Factors (REF00499) and a peer review of the REF by Lesryk Environmental Consultants. The 2014 Policy review also included an assessment of the publication 'Public Open Space and Dogs - A design and management guide for open space professionals and Local Government by Harlock Jackson Pty Ltd, August 1995, an accepted guide for Local Government in planning for dogs in public open space.

This Policy will be reviewed in accordance with Council's normal review cycle.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To specify conditions under which dogs are permitted on beaches and parks / reserves across the City;
- To establish dog control areas including off-leash areas and locations where dogs are prohibited;
- To restate dog owner's responsibilities in respect to dogs in public places;
- To support environment, heritage, wildlife and threatened species protection; and
- To provide dog owners with adequate access to open space for exercising their dogs.

POLICY STATEMENT

Wollongong City Council will provide for dog management on beaches, parks and public places within the City by:

- Declaring, promoting and regulating off-leash areas, wildlife protection areas and other control areas;
- Controlling and regulating dogs in accordance with the legislation; and
- Developing and implementing educational materials and programs aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership through microchipping and registration, de-sexing and the protection of Aboriginal heritage and native wildlife.

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STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

Introduction

This procedure describes Council's process and systems for the management of dogs on beaches, parks and public place within the City. Leash free areas are identified, as well as other areas, where specific dog controls are in place as required by law. The procedure also includes general information on dog ownership and details general dog owner responsibilities. It also outlines Council's compliance and enforcement role. The Procedure will be supported by various community awareness and promotion materials.

Background

The Act commenced in 1998 and Council commenced implementation in 1999 with an emphasis on managing dogs. Leash free areas were generally established on beaches and parks where people tended to already exercise their dogs off-leash.

Significant consultation has occurred since that time with reviews of the Policy and Procedure occurring in 2002, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016 and 2018.

General responsibilities

Dog owners have an obligation to ensure that their dog does not adversely affect any other person:

- Dogs should be kept away, wherever possible, from adjacent private properties to prevent dogs in backyards from creating a nuisance;
- People with dogs in public places should be aware of other dogs and their owners, the general public and children in particular and should move to avoid conflict where it is anticipated;
- In natural areas such as reserves or beaches, dog owners should be mindful of native flora and fauna and keep dogs on established tracks and away from foredunes and other sensitive areas.

Legal Responsibilities

Dog on leash:

Throughout NSW, dogs are required to be on leash at all times in public places. The exceptions to this rule are:

- Dogs accompanied by a person within a declared Council leash free area;
NOTE: In leash-free areas the person with the dog is still required to ensure that the dog does not attack, harass or chase any person or animal. This means that the dog must be controlled so that other users of the area are not affected;
- A dog participating in an obedience class or trial;
- A dog being exhibited in a show;
- A dog working stock;
- A Police dog;
- A dog secured in a cage or vehicle or tethered to a fixed object or structure.

Collar and Name Tag:

A dog that is away from the premises of the owner must wear a collar and tag. The tag must show the name of the dog and the address or telephone number of the owner.

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Microchip and registration:

Dogs over the age of twelve (12) weeks must have a microchip implanted and be recorded on the NSW Companion Animal Register. Dogs over six (6) months of age must be lifetime registered.

Cleaning up after your dog:

If a dog defecates in a public place the dog owner must immediately remove the faeces and dispose of it in a proper manner. The need for bins and dispensers has been highlighted as an essential requirement in reducing dog faeces problems on beaches and along bike track and pedestrian walking areas in particular. Each off-leash area will have sufficient bins and dispensers and the bike track adjoining the orange zones will also be provided with bins and dispensers.

No more than four (4) dogs:

Any one person can only have a maximum of four (4) dogs under their control. This applies to dogs on leash and dogs off-leash in a leash free area.

Dog Control Areas

The three(3) tier approach (as in traffic lights) has been chosen as it is a suitable, easily understood way in which to explain the three (3) levels of access provided for the community along the foreshore, beaches and reserves. This approach also enables a diagrammatic view of the access provisions along our coast. The red areas are dog prohibited (banned) areas, the orange areas are time share access areas and the green areas are off-leash. All dog control areas declared by Council, require near the boundaries of those areas and at reasonable intervals, notices or signage detailing the relevant control areas. (Refer to the attached Maps).

RED ZONES - Dogs are declared prohibited in the following places (whether or not they are leashed or otherwise controlled):

- **Children's play areas (RED ZONES)** - meaning any public place across the City that is within ten (10) metres of any playing apparatus provided in that public place for the use of children;
- **Food preparation areas** – within ten (10) metres of any food preparation areas or food consumption areas such as barbeques, public tables and picnic shelters, except where these areas are in a public thoroughfare;
- **School Grounds and Child Care Centres** – unless with permission of the person in charge.

Public bathing areas where dogs are prohibited (RED ZONES) - meaning any public place or any part of a public place that is used for or in conjunction with public bathing or public recreation (including a beach):

- All lifeguard patrolled beaches including the area between the dunes and the edge of the surf zone and within any patrolled zone indicated by the flags and areas within 100 metres of the patrolled zone;
- All rock pools and ocean pools including Wombarra, Coledale, Austinmer, Bulli, Woonona, Bellambi, Towradgi, the old Men's Baths (rock pools north of the continental pool) and the Nun's pools (northern headland of Wollongong City Beach) rock pool areas;
- Windang Beach from the Lake entrance to the Perkins Beach access off Murrie Street, Windang;
- Port Kembla Beach from the beach access at the south end of the southern Port Kembla SLSC carpark, through to the Fisherman's Beach boundary;

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- The entire Wollongong to North Wollongong Beach area (Wollongong City Beach and North Beach) from the Bank Street, Wollongong Beach entry point to a point on Puckey's Beach which is approximately 250 metres north of the lagoon in Stuart Park, Wollongong. This area includes Belmore Basin;
- Sandon Point from the Sandon Point SLSC through to the McCauley's Beach boundary;
- Austinmer Beach from the Thirroul Beach boundary which is located approximately 130 metres south of the Austinmer rock pool through to Toxteth Avenue, Austinmer;
- Headlands Beach from the Little Austinmer Beach carpark through to the most northern point of Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark; and
- Coledale Beach from the most northern point of the Sharkey's Beach carpark through to the northern side of the Wombarra rock pool.

Wildlife protection areas (RED ZONES) - meaning any public place or any part of a public place set apart by Council for the protection of wildlife and in which the local authority has ordered that dogs are prohibited for the purposes of the protection of wildlife e.g. on all rock platforms.

Recreation areas where dogs are prohibited (RED ZONES) – These areas include any public place, or part of a public place, provided for public recreation or the playing of organised games and in which Council has ordered that dogs are prohibited and in which, or near the boundaries of which, there are conspicuously exhibited at reasonable intervals, notices to the effect that dogs are prohibited in or on that public place or part.

ORANGE ZONES – The orange zone is a time sharing zone. Dogs are declared prohibited in the following places except at the detailed times and only when on leash. In these zones dogs are only permitted when on leash in summer prior to 9:00 am and after 6:00 pm and in winter prior to 9:00 am and after 4:00 pm.

Summer months are defined as being from the September school holidays to Anzac day, (in line with lifeguard and SLSC patrols), and winter months are taken to mean the balance of the year.

This zone is on-leash only and within the times designated to minimise fauna and flora impact from unrestrained dogs. It also enables Council to have a higher degree of success in improving dog owner behaviour in relation to faeces management. Keeping dogs on-leash also has the added benefit of reducing unwanted aggressive behaviour due to the increased control. (Refer to Maps)

- Stanwell Park Beach from the southern side of the lagoon in Stanwell Park reserve through to the boundary of the Coalcliff rock platform;
- Coalcliff Beach from the boundary of the Coalcliff rock platform through to the Scarborough to Coalcliff rock platform boundary which is located approximately 85 metres south of the Coalcliff SLSC;
- Scarborough and Wombarra Beaches from the Scarborough to Coalcliff rock platform boundary through to the northern side of the Wombarra rock pool;
- Brickyard Point from the southern boundary of Sharkey's Beach through to the most northern point of Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark;
- Thirroul Beach from the Austinmer Beach boundary, which is located approximately 130 metres south of the Austinmer rock pool, through to Corbett Avenue, Thirroul;
- Sandon Point Beach from the southern side of the Sandon Point SLSC through to the most northern point of the Bulli SLSC carpark;

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- Bulli Beach from the southern side of the Bulli rock pool through to the northern side of the Woonona rock pool;
- Woonona and Bellambi Beaches from the Woonona rock pool through to the northern side of the Bellambi rock pool;
- Corrimal Beach from the southern side of the Bellambi lagoon through to Towradgi Pool;
- Towradgi and Fairy Meadow Beaches south from the Towradgi rock pool boundary through to the Puckey's Beach boundary which is located approximately 150 metres from the most southern point of the Fairy Meadow SLSC carpark;
- Puckeys Estate from the entrance on Squires Way through the estate to the entrance on Elliotts Road; and
- Fisherman's Beach from the Fisherman's Beach rock platform, south to the Port Kembla Beach and rock pool boundary.

GREEN ZONES

The green off-leash zones have been provided to meet the needs of dogs and dog owners given the significant population in our community. Their spread along our coastal area demonstrates that Council is considering good planning practice in accordance with Harlock Jackson (1995). The declared off-leash areas substantially meet the desired selection criteria for off-leash zones.

The following beaches are declared as off-leash areas:

- Stanwell Park Beach from the northern side of the lagoon in Stanwell Park reserve through to the northern end of the beach which aligns with The Drive, Stanwell Park;
- Sharkey's Beach from the most northern point of the Sharkey's Beach carpark through to the Brickyard Point boundary;
- Little Austinmer Beach from the Headlands rock platform boundary south through to the rock platform at the end of Toxteth Avenue, Austinmer;
- McCauley's Beach from Corbett Avenue, Thirroul through to the Sandon Point rock platform boundary;
- Bellambi Harbour from the Bellambi rock pool boundary through to the carpark at the Bellambi boat ramp;
- East Corrimal Beach from the Bellambi boat ramp through to the northern side of the Bellambi lagoon;
- Puckey's Beach south from the Fairy Meadow Beach SLSC Carpark boundary through to a point on Puckey's Beach which is approximately 250 metres north of the lagoon in Stuart Park, Wollongong;
- Coniston Beach from the Bank Street, Wollongong Beach entry point to Port Kembla Harbour;
- MM Beach from the Port Kembla rock platform boundary south through to Fisherman's Beach rock platform boundary; and
- Perkins Beach from the south end of the southern Port Kembla SLSC carpark through to the Perkins Beach access off Murrie Street, Windang.

Parks and Reserves (Green Zones)

The following parks are also declared as off-leash areas:

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- Figtree Oval, Figtree
- Proud Park, Helensburgh
- Riley Park, Unanderra
- Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra
- King George V Park, Port Kembla
- Reed Park Dapto.

Provision of Facilities

Council will provide waste disposal bins in all dog leash free areas where possible and may also supply faeces disposal bags for the community's convenience. When no bins or bags are available, dog owners are required to provide and use their own disposal bags and remove the used bags from the area.

Other Public Places including Parks and Sports Fields

The Companion Animals Act 1998 requires all dogs to be under effective control by cord or leash while in a public place. Signage is not required to enforce this effective control provision as it is NSW State Legislation applying throughout the State. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, all public road reserves and park areas allow access for dogs but they must be maintained on-leash.

Signage is used to determine alternatives to on-leash including prohibition. With the exception of the current parks identified as off-leash areas, other specific parks and sports fields have been determined to prohibit dogs. These areas will have No Dogs Allowed signage, incorporated into the Public Place signage that is displayed. The signage has been determined as appropriate in the past and will be enforced by Council under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Aboriginal Heritage

There are two (2) gazetted Aboriginal Places within land covered by the Policy and Procedure namely Sandon Point Aboriginal Place and Bellambi Aboriginal Place.

East Corrimal to Bellambi Point has potential to carry similar levels of significance and cultural concern as Sandon Point. Although this is not as well documented the traditional elders indicate that the significant areas relate to the western side of the dunal system.

In addition to the general requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998 and general conditions of the Policy that are aimed at minimising impacts of dogs, specific protection of the heritage values is also indicated. To achieve this the following measures are also included to manage off-leash areas (Green Zones) and time limited prohibited areas (Orange Zones) at and adjacent to the above sites.

- Managed beach access via signage and barriers etc at dunal boundaries;
- Restrictions of access to dunal areas by rationalising accessways and via vegetative barriers; and
- Programming specific increased enforcement and education efforts.

It is clear that members within the Aboriginal Community consulted in the development of this Policy, (including several highly respected elders) do not feel that the banning of dogs is a necessary option and feel comfortable with the off-leash area continuing despite the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage significance. Their advice is that Aboriginals and dogs have co-existed for generations and therefore is not an issue, particularly on the sandy part of the beach.

The Aboriginal community's concern is directed at the areas behind the beach, the dunal areas, and how people gain access to the beach through areas of Aboriginal significance. Plans of Management (PoM)

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will be completed which will implement protection measures to limit Aboriginal heritage disturbance by both people and dogs. The Aboriginal community requests respect of these areas and the Plans of Management will assist in educating the broader community of their cultural significance.

Enforcement

Enforcement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's current Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Ranger Services procedures. The Regulation and Enforcement Division commits to providing regular enforcement for dogs on public land, particularly enforcement on beaches. This will form part of a roster to regularly patrol these areas.

The various levels of access within the three (3) zones have a varying degree of risk associated with them in relation to unwanted attention or aggressive behaviour. The issue of responsibility has arisen in the review and advice received by Council is that the Tort of Duty of Care arises under the common law of negligence and that Council has no responsibility, as off-leash areas are allowed and specified under the Act.

Irrespective of this advice, Council provides enforcement support to increase compliant behaviour in the dedicated zones. By providing clear access options and signage, the community is able to decide which area they wish to frequent and assume the risk associated with that area. Education advice will also be provided to the community in relation to risk.

Council also has included conditions of use for each off-leash area that will reduce risk of aggressive behaviour to users. Council Rangers will enforce under the *Local Government Act 1993* and/or the *Companion Animals Act 1998* when dog owners fail to comply with these conditions.

Should an attack occur in a public place, including an off-leash area, Council will ensure that all matters are investigated, and the appropriate enforcement action taken. Action can include issuing Penalty Notices and/or having a dog declared a dangerous, menacing or nuisance dog. Any injury or damage as a result of an attack, is the responsibility of the attacked person to take civil legal action against the owner of the offending dog, through the Court process.

An on-call after hours emergency service is also provided for dog attacks, aggressive and dangerous dogs at large, and in response to NSW Police requests.

Signage

The Policy will be implemented more effectively through consistent appropriate regulatory and educational / information signage. Signage is acknowledged and recognised as particularly important in providing clarity and consistency about the Policy requirements and appropriate signage will be erected and maintained. Signage includes:

- Zone explanatory signage;
- Off-leash rules signage;
- Access path signage;
- Dogs prohibited signage; and
- Directional / demarcation signage.

To improve conditions for users of off-leash areas, conditions of use have been included on signage at each off-leash area.

All dogs within the designated off-leash area must be supervised by a person. The person in charge of any dog within this area, (which has been provided as a facility for enjoyment by the community), MUST:

- Be a competent person 16 years of age or over;

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- Be able to control the dog (by voice command or other means);
- Carry a bag suitable for dog faeces;
- Remove and place dog faeces in a suitable bag and dispose in an appropriate waste receptacle;
- Not allow restricted breeds, or dogs declared as dangerous, to use this off-leash area; and
- Not allow dogs suffering from contagious disease, skin irritation or parasitic infection to use this area.

NOTE: THE OWNER OF A DOG IS LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE IF THE DOG ATTACKS A PERSON OR ANIMAL.

Enforcement staff will also regularly review signage across all control Zones particularly where ongoing non-compliance occurs and where signage should be increased for compliance and education purposes.

Education and Awareness Raising

Council will provide education to the community in the following manner:

- Website information;
- Community Newsletters;
- Media Releases, including Social Media, at appropriate intervals following an incident;
- Telephone caller waiting information;
- Development and use of an off-leash brochure;
- Ranger in-field education;
- School education;
- Distribution of brochures and other educational material to RSPCA, caravan parks, camping areas and veterinary clinics; and
- Promoting the Policy at microchipping days.




Complaint Handling

The Customer Service action request system will be used to register and monitor complaints in relation to dogs in public places. In addition, to improve the monitoring of the current system, a separate category has been installed within the system specific to off-leash areas. This information will be used in future reviews of this Policy.

Attachments: Maps of Zone Areas

The following maps depict all declared control areas across Wollongong City Council. All dog control areas are identified using the following legend.

Legend:

-  Off-Leash
-  Timed On-Leash Access
-  Dogs Prohibited

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Map 1: Stanwell Park to Austinmer

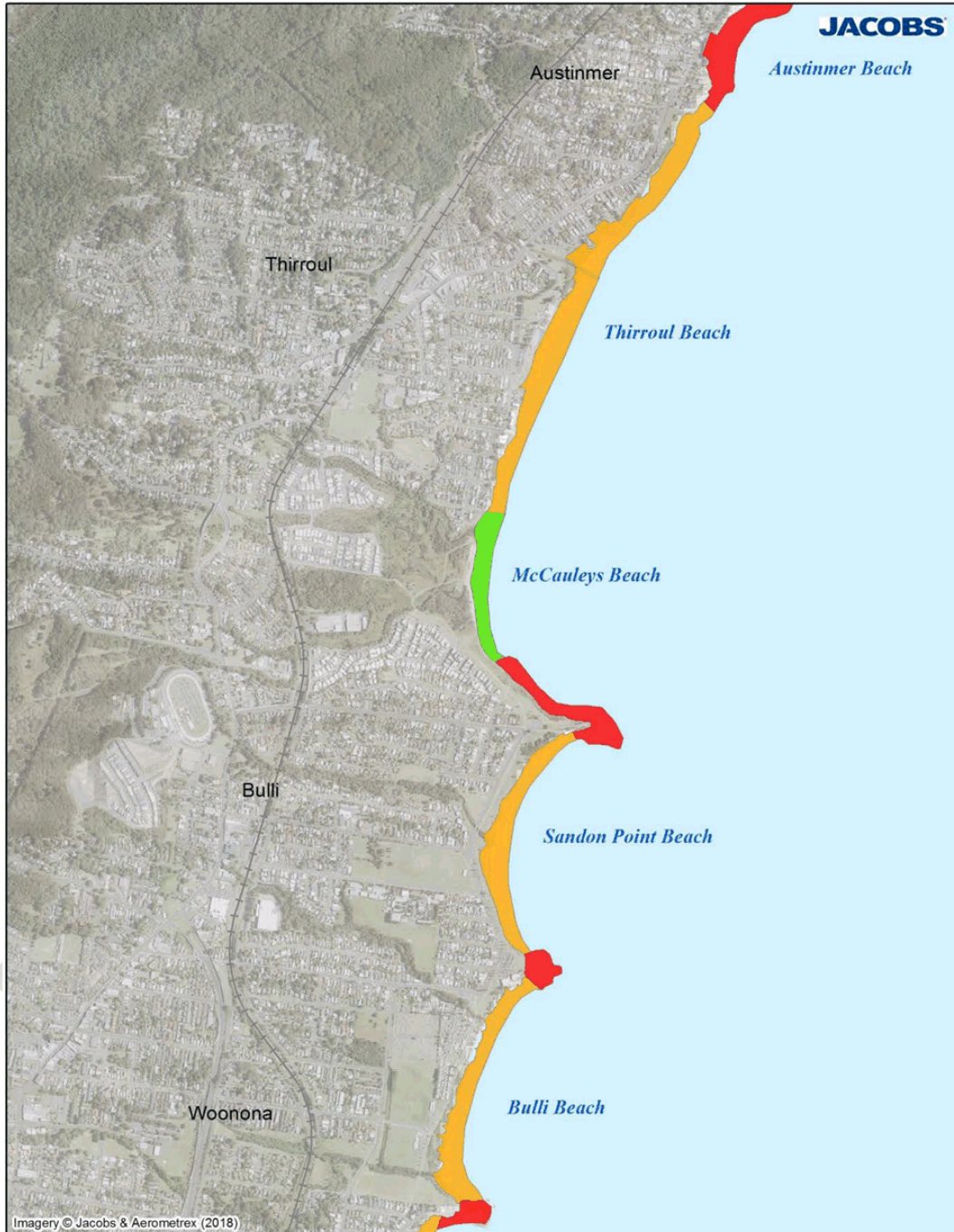


	Map 1:			GIS ref.: g11745_01	
	Stanwell Park to Austinmer			Printed: 19/03/2019	
	 Off Leash	 Timed		 Prohibited	Aerial Photography: 2018
				Scale 1:40,000	
					

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Map 2: Coledale to Bellambi



	<h3>Map 2: Coledale to Bellambi</h3>			GIS ref.: gi11745_01
				Printed: 19/03/2019
				Aerial Photography: 2018
				Scale 1:20,000
Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited		

Map 3: Woonona to North Wollongong



	Map 3:			GIS ref.: gi11745_01
	Woonona to North Wollongong			Printed: 19/03/2019
				Aerial Photography: 2018
				Scale 1:20,000
Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited		

Map 4: North Wollongong to Coniston



	Map 4:				GIS ref.: gi11745_01
	North Wollongong to Coniston				Printed: 19/03/2019
	Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited		Aerial Photography: 2018
					Scale 1:35,000

Map 5: Port Kembla to Windang



	Map 5: Port Kembla to Windang				GIS ref.: g11745_01
	Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited		Printed: 19/03/2019
					Aerial Photography: 2018
					Scale 1:20,000

Map 6: Primbee to Lake Illawarra

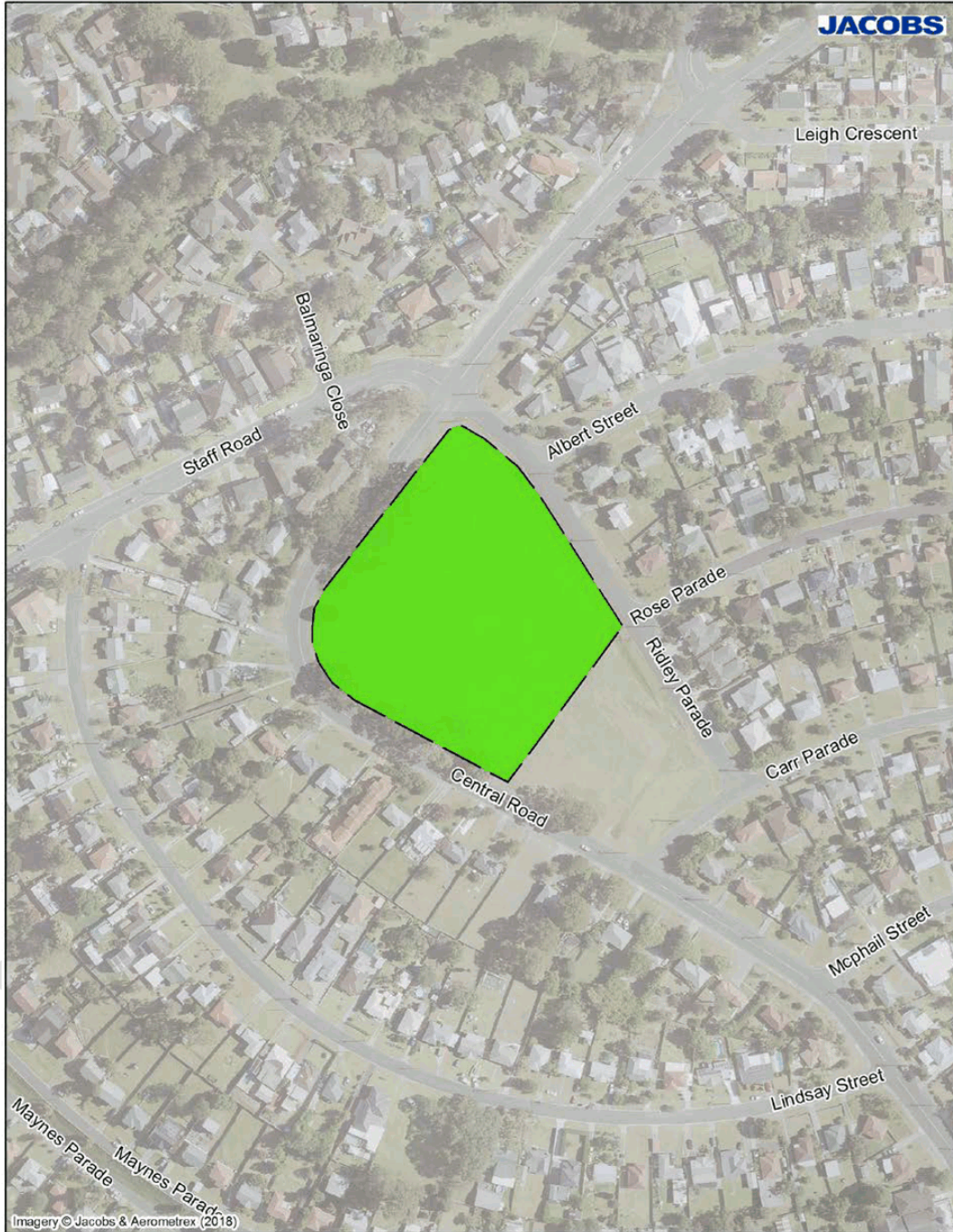


	Map 6: Primbee to Lake Illawarra				GIS ref.: g11745_01
					Printed: 19/03/2019
					Aerial Photography: 2018
					Scale 1:20,000
Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited			

DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

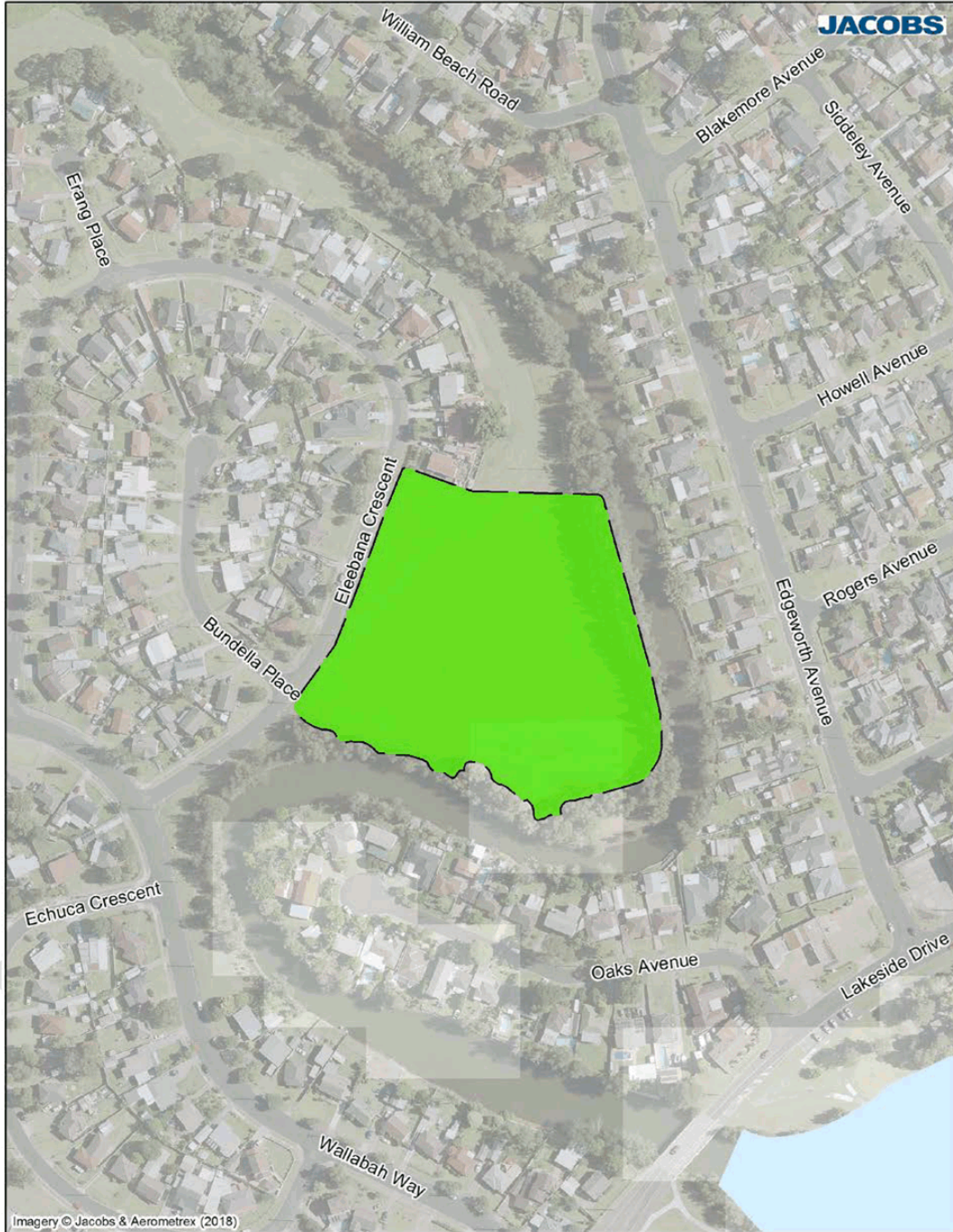
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Map 7: Riley Park, Unanderra



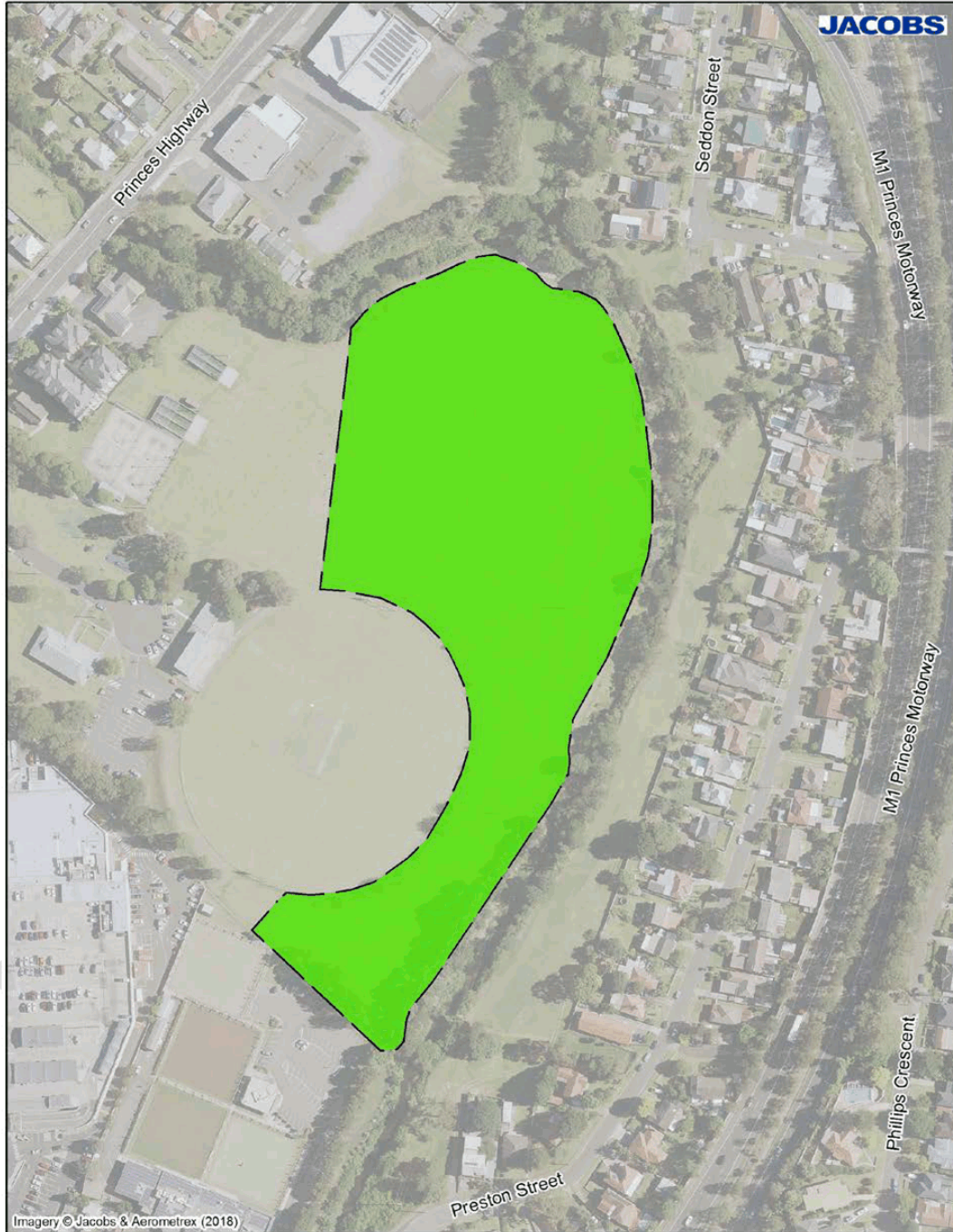
	Map 7: Riley Park, Unanderra				GIS ref: g11745_01
	Off Leash Timed Prohibited		Printed: 19/03/2019 Aerial Photography: 2018 Scale: 1:2,500		

Map 8: Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra



	Map 8: Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra				GIS ref.: g11745_01
	Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited		Printed: 19/03/2019
					Aerial Photography: 2018
					Scale: 1:2,500

Map 9: Figtree Oval, Figtree



	Map 9: Figtree Oval, Figtree				GIS ref: g11745_01
	Off Leash Timed Prohibited		Printed: 19/03/2019 Aerial Photography: 2018 Scale: 1:2,500		

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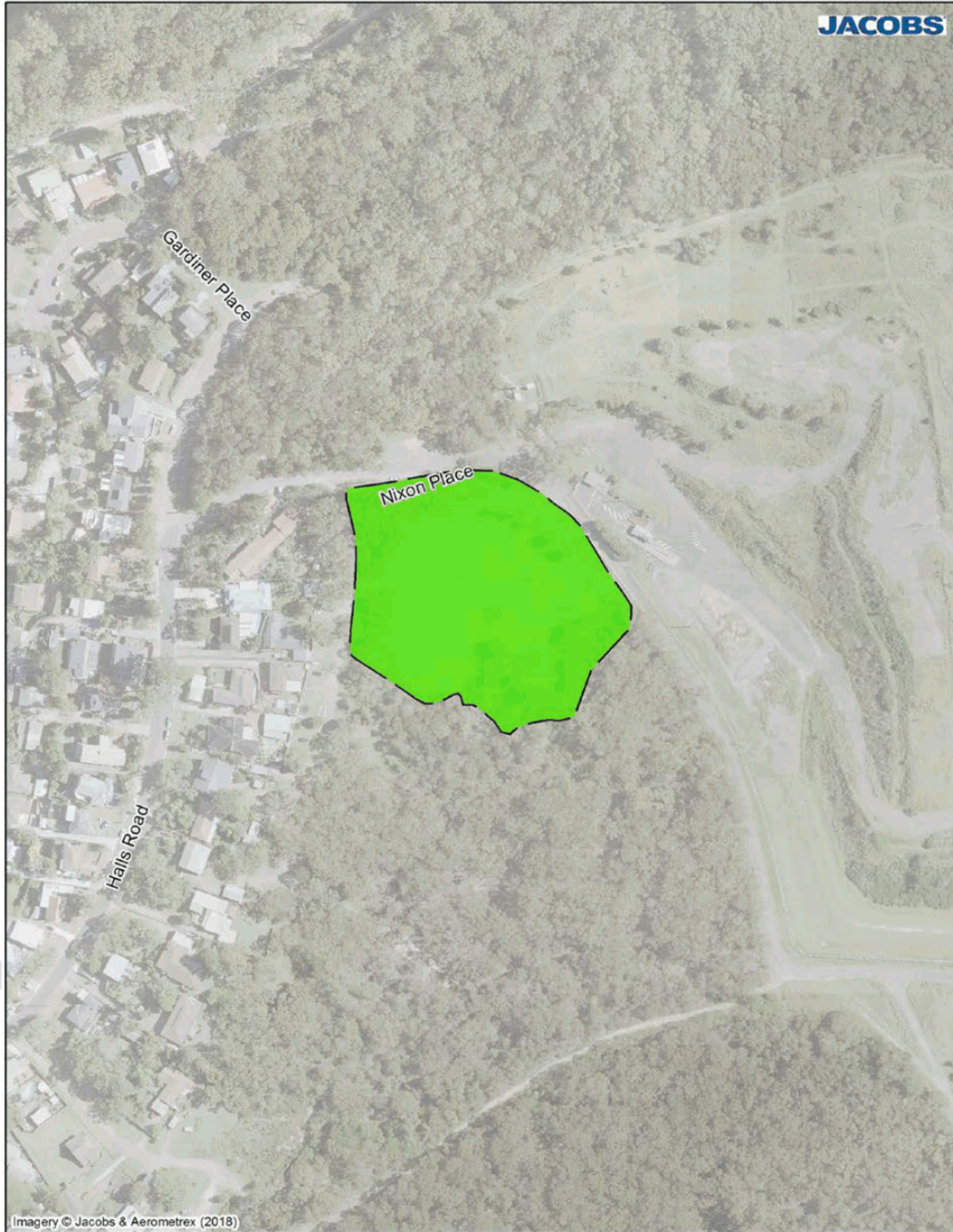
COUNCIL POLICY

Map 10: King George V Park, Port Kembla



	Map 10:				GIS ref.: g11745_01
	King George V Park, Port Kembla				Printed: 19/03/2019
	Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited		Aerial Photography: 2018
					Scale 1:2,500

Map 11: Proud Park, Helensburgh



	Map 11: Proud Park, Helensburgh				GIS ref.: gi11745_01
	Off Leash	Timed	Prohibited		Printed: 19/03/2019
					Aerial Photography: 2018
					Scale 1:2,500

Map 12: Reed Park, Dapto



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SUMMARY SHEET		
Responsible Division	Regulation & Enforcement	
Date/s adopted	<i>Executive Management Committee</i> 9 July 2019	<i>Council</i> [DD Mmmm YYYY]
Date/s of previous adoptions	24/11/2014, 26/11/2012, 27/04/2011, 28/09/2010 and	
Date of next review	July 2023	
Responsible Manager	Regulation & Enforcement Manager in consultation with Property & Recreation Manager	
Authorised by	Director Planning and Environment	

DRAFT

Proposed Off-Leash Dog Area Reed Park, Dapto

