

ITEM 6 PUBLIC EXHIBITION - DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS POLICY

Council's Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy has been reviewed and updated as part of the policy review cycle. The existing Policy was last adopted by Council on 26 February 2024, with only minor amendments implemented at the time.

The Policy establishes a best practice, balanced approach to access for dogs in public places within our Local Government Area (LGA). This report seeks Council's resolution to endorse public exhibition of the updated Policy

RECOMMENDATION

That Council publicly exhibit the updated Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy.

REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Corey Stoneham, Manager Regulation + Enforcement

Authorised by: Linda Davis, Director Planning + Environment - Future City + Neighbourhoods

ATTACHMENTS

- 1 Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy

ACRONYMS USED IN REPORT

Abbreviation	Meaning
ILALC	Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council
LGA	Local Government Area

BACKGROUND

The Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy uses a three-tier traffic light system, which has been in place since 2010. Green is for off-leash areas, orange is for on-leash timed areas, and red is for prohibited areas. The orange areas currently have seasonal adjustments to times which requires regular targeted community messaging. Any public area not specifically designated under the three-tier system is a 'Public Place', which allows access for dogs at any time provided they are on-leash.

It is estimated that there are approximately 86,100 dogs in the Wollongong LGA, which is equivalent to approximately 40 dogs per 100 people. Council ensures that access for these dogs in our public places is provided in a way that is consistent with demand arising from this high dog ownership rate.

Council has a legislative responsibility to provide a minimum of one (1) off-leash dog area as per the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (Part 3 Responsibilities for control of dogs).

Council currently provides dog owners with six (6) established off-leash dog parks and ten (10) off-leash beach locations from Stanwell Park in the north to Perkins Beach (Port Kembla) in the south. In addition, we provide 11 beach locations that are available for timed on-leash access.

This level of service provides for a minimum of one (1) off-leash dog area of either a park or a beach, within a five (5) kilometres distance from most residences within the Wollongong LGA.

Council also has a responsibility to provide an overarching education and compliance program to ensure the care and management of dogs within the Wollongong LGA. This is undertaken by Council's dedicated Animal Compliance team.

PROPOSAL

The required term review of the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy has resulted in predominantly editorial and format changes, including contemporising the structure of the document.

Editorial changes include:

- updated / new content relating to dog ownership numbers in the LGA;
- the intent of the policy as it relates to Office of Local Government requirements;
- requirements in relation to the *Companion Animals Act 1998*; and
- updated content relating to the recently released 'Our Wollongong Our Future 2035'.

These changes are highlighted through tracked changes in the revised draft Policy attached to this report.

Format changes have been made to improve the readability and navigation of the Policy, with a re-ordering of the document and inclusion of clear subject headings and subheadings to make it easy to find specific / targeted information. These changes are not separately tracked in the attached version.

In addition to the editorial and formal changes, two changes to the Policy are proposed:

- a) McCauley's Beach is currently identified as a green off-leash beach, which allows dogs off leash at any time. It is proposed to reduce the extent of the green area to between Corbett Avenue, Thirroul through to just south of the creek line, where the Sandon Point Aboriginal Place is located. Beyond this point, is proposed to remove the zoning at McCauley's Beach thereby making the beach a Public Place to the boundary of the red zoned rock platform to the south. This would allow dogs at any time but on-leash. Map 4 of the Policy has been updated accordingly.
- b) The timed orange areas currently have different hours depending on the season – before 9am and after 4pm in winter and before 9am and after 6pm in summer. The time changes can be confusing for the community, and it requires frequent targeted messaging at change of seasons. It is proposed to simplify the timed restrictions by establishing one standard time requirement to allow access for dogs on-leash before 9am and after 5pm all year round. No dogs are permitted between 9am and 5pm and at no time are dogs permitted within 100m of any lifeguard patrolled zone.

CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Consultation within Council's Regulation and Enforcement, Heritage, Parks and Open Space, Sport and Recreation, Environment, Lifeguards, Property, Engagement, Communications and Governance Teams has occurred, and feedback has been incorporated into the updated Policy.

Council has additionally engaged with the Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council (ILALC) on the preliminary review of the Policy.

If Council endorses the updated Policy, it will be exhibited for a minimum period of five (5) weeks. Copies will be available on Council's website and at Council's Administration Centre and libraries. Targeted stakeholder consultation will also occur, including feedback surveys and face to face engagement opportunities.

Following the exhibition period, a report on submissions will be prepared for Council's consideration, along with a recommendation regarding adoption.

PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This Policy is a direct contributor to the delivery of 'Our Wollongong Our Future 2035':

Goal 2 – We have well planned, connected and liveable places:

- 2.1 – Urban areas are planned and well maintained to provide a healthy and safe environment for our community to live, work and play.
- 2.14 – Plan and deliver an accessible, safe, clean and inviting public domain.

Council will continue to work with landowners in growth areas to ensure appropriate off-leash areas are planned as part of future new developments. This includes the Cokeworks development in Corrimal currently under development, which includes as a commitment an off-leash dog park with fencing and gate access.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The focus of the Policy's three tier approach is to identify areas where limited dog access is permissible to minimise impact to fauna and flora, sensitive dune areas, as well as in some areas impact to aboriginal heritage.

The orange zone requires dogs to remain on-leash at all times within that zone, and red zones are areas prohibited to dogs, including all rock platforms. Sustainability outcomes are inherently embedded within these designated areas.

RISK MANAGEMENT

The revised Policy has been considered and assessed against Council's Corporate Risk Score Matrix.

Any risks that have been identified and assessed can be managed through the consistent application of the Policy, regulatory decisions that are taken and through the Policy review cycle.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no significant financial implications associated with the updated Policy, as it is largely a continuation of current arrangements.

However, there will be a small cost where additional signage is required to be updated in response to changes to the Policy.

CONCLUSION

A term review of the Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy has been undertaken which has resulted in editorial and format changes as well as the proposed alteration of the status of McCauley's Beach and the timed requirement of the orange beach zones.

It is recommended that the revised draft Policy be endorsed for public exhibition to provide the opportunity for the community to provide feedback.



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS COUNCIL POLICY

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: XXXXXXXX

PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

PURPOSE

Wollongong City Council (Council) has a legislative responsibility to provide a minimum of one (1) off-leash dog area as per the Companion Animals Act 1998 (Part 3 Responsibilities for control of dogs). Council additionally has a responsibility to provide an overarching education and compliance program to ensure effective and responsible care and management of dogs within the City/Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA).

Council currently provides dog owners with six (6) established off-leash dog parks, and has also identified a number of beach locations as off-leash dog areas from Stanwell Park in the north to Perkins Beach in the south, adding a further 10 (ten) off-leash dog areas within the LGA. In addition, we provide eleven (11) beach locations that are available for timed on-leash access.

This level of service provides for a minimum of one (1) off-leash dog area of either a park or a beach, within a five (5) kilometres distance from most residences within the Wollongong LGA.

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

- Declaring, promoting and regulating designated dog off-leash and timed on-leash areas;
- Declaring, promoting and regulating native wildlife and environment and aboriginal heritage protection areas and other control areas, where dogs are prohibited;
- Controlling and regulating nuisance, menacing, dangerous and restricted dogs in accordance with the legislation; and
- Developing and implementing educational materials and programs aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership through microchipping, registration, de-sexing, and managing nuisance and aggressive dog behaviour.

POLICY INTENT

This Policy describes Council's process and systems for the management of dogs on beaches, parks and public places within the City/Wollongong LGA. Dedicated off-leash areas are identified, as well as other areas where specific dog controls are in place as required by law. ~~The policy also includes general information on dog ownership and details general dog owner responsibilities. It also outlines Council's compliance and enforcement role. The policy will be supported by various community awareness and promotion materials.~~

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

1. Meets accepted planning guidelines;
2. Is balanced and generally meets the dog-owning and non dog-owning community's needs;
3. Is valued by the community;
- 3.4. Specify- Specifies conditions under which dogs are permitted on beaches and parks / reserves across the CityLGA;

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- ~~4.5. Establish~~ Establishes / clarifies dog control areas including off-leash areas, on-leash areas, and locations where dogs are prohibited;
- ~~5.6.~~ Restates dog owner's responsibilities in respect to behaviour of dogs in public places;
- ~~6.7.~~ Supports environment, heritage, wildlife and threatened species protection; and
- ~~7.8.~~ Provides dog owners with adequate access to open space for exercising their dogs.

The Policy also provides the community with general information relating to:

- Council requirements relating to the Companion Animals Act 1998;
- dog owner responsibilities when their dog is in a public place;
- outline of dog control areas, including the traffic light system of green, orange and red zones;
- identification of dedicated dog beach and park areas;
- Council's focus on education and awareness raising; and
- Council's compliance and enforcement role.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following legislation governs Council's requirements regarding managing and enforcing responsible pet ownership:

- Local Government Act 1993; and
- Companion Animals Act 1998.

WOLLONGONG 2032²⁵ OBJECTIVES

This Policy is a direct contributor to the delivery of ~~Goal 5: "We are a healthy community in the liveable City" in the 2032 Community Strategic Plan~~ "Our Wollongong Our Future 2035";

Goal 2 – We have well planned, connected and liveable places:

- 2.1 - Urban areas are planned and well maintained to provide a healthy and safe environment for our community to live, work and play.
- 2.14 - Plan and deliver an accessible, safe, clean and inviting public domain.
- ~~— 5.2 Urban areas are created and maintained to provide a healthy and safe living environment for our community and,~~
- ~~— 5.4 Provide a variety of quality and accessible public places and opportunities for sport, play, leisure, recreation, learning and cultural activities in the community and,~~
- ~~— 5.5 Provide safe, well maintained and accessible beaches and aquatic recreation facilities.~~

BACKGROUND

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* (the Act) commenced in 1998 and Council commenced implementation of the Act in 1999 with an emphasis on managing dogs ~~promoting responsible dog ownership and providing the community with access to dog exercise areas~~. Off-leash areas were generally established on beaches and parks where people tended to already regularly exercise their dogs off-leash.

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It is estimated that there are approximately 40 dogs per 100 people in the Wollongong LGA. This is calculated based on a population of approximately 215,000 people (as per 2021 census data), and approximately 86,112 dogs (as per Office of Local Government data), which identifies both registered and microchipped (only) dogs. Council ensures that access for these dogs in our public places is provided in a way that is consistent with demand arising from this high dog ownership rate.

DOG OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

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

- ~~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; and
- 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 *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, carparks, footpaths and park areas allow access for dogs, but they must be maintained on-leash.

The exceptions to this rule are:

- Dogs accompanied by a person within a declared Council off-leash area;
~~NOTE: In off-leash 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; or
- A dog secured in a cage or vehicle or tethered to a fixed object or structure.

Dog off-leash:

All dogs within designated off-leash areas, including both off-leash beaches and off-leash parks, must be supervised by a person. In off-leash areas the person with the dog is ~~still~~ required to ensure that the dog

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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.

The person in charge of any dog within these areas, (which have been provided as a facility for enjoyment by the community), MUST:

- Be a competent person 16 years of age or over;
- Be able to control the dog (by voice command or other means);
- Not allow restricted breeds, or dogs declared as menacing or dangerous, to use the off-leash area; and
- Not allow dogs suffering from contagious disease, skin irritation or parasitic infection to use the area.

NOTE: THE OWNER OF A DOG, OR THE PERSON PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE OFFENCE WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE DOG, IS LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE IF THE DOG ATTACKS A PERSON OR ANIMAL (as per the *Companion Animals Act 1998* – Part 3 Responsibilities for control of dogs – Clause 13 Responsibilities while dog in public place).

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.

Microchip and registration:

Dogs over the age of twelve (12) weeks of age must ~~have a microchip implanted be microchipped and lifetime registered~~, 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.

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.

No more than four (4) dogs:

Any one person, either the dog's owner or a person in control of a dog, can only have a maximum of four (4) dogs under their control. This applies to dogs on-leash and dogs in an off-leash area. ~~This does not apply if a dog has been declared as menacing, for which different rules apply as outlined by the issued Menacing Dog Order for that dog.~~

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

DOG CONTROL AREAS

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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 for dogs provided for the community along the foreshore, beaches and parks/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 areas~~ The green areas are off-leash areas at all times, the orange areas are time-share access areas where dogs are required to remain on-leash only, and the red areas are dog prohibited (banned) areas.

Council also have general public place areas as defined by State legislation. Where a beach has not been identified as a specific zone, it is therefore a public place and dogs are required on-leash in these areas at all times. Public Place beaches are located at McCauley's Beach and between East Corrimal Beach and Corrimal Beach.

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.

OFF-LEASH GREEN BEACH ZONES

The green off-leash beach 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, which means they are accessible for dogs to use off-leash at any time. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of these areas.:

- Stanwell Park Beach from the northern side of the lagoon in Stanwell Park reserve through to the northern end of the beach, approximately 140 metres east of the Maxwell Crescent and The Drive intersection in Stanwell Park;
- Sharkey's Beach from the most northern point of the Sharkey's Beach carpark through to the Brickyard Point boundary, approximately 200 metres north of the Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark;
- Little Austinmer Beach from the Headlands rock platform boundary approximately 50 meters north of Headlands Beach Hotel, through to Austinmer Beach boundary at the end of Toxteth Avenue, Austinmer;
-  McCauley's Beach from Corbett Avenue, Thirroul through to just south of the creek at the Sandon Point Aboriginal Place boundary, Bulli ~~the Sandon Point rock platform boundary, approximately 120 metres east of Garaban Court, Bulli;~~
- 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 public space area boundary, approximately 230 metres north/east of the Murray Road Carpark, East Corrimal;
- 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;

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- 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.

Note that where all lifeguards 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 are prohibited, even if on a green zone beach. These areas will generally be identified by temporary lifeguard 'No Dogs' signs in these areas.

Parks and Reserves (Green Zones) OFF LEASH DOG PARKS

The following parks are declared as off-leash areas, some being open dog park facilities, and some providing a fenced dog park facility. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of these areas.:

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

NOTE: Signage is used to determine alternatives to on-leash including where dogs are prohibited. 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 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.

ON-LEASH ORANGE BEACH ZONES

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, and access for the public at other times with no dog access allowed.

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 and are not permitted at all in between these times.

Summer months are defined as being from the beginning of 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 impact to fauna and flora impact, sensitive dune areas, as well as in some areas aboriginal heritage, from unrestrained dogs. It also provides

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~~limited access to designated times to provide dedicated beach zones for those who may not want to interact with 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 within the limited times has the added benefit of reducing unwanted aggressive behaviour due to the increased control of the dog. ~~(Refer to the attached Maps)~~

The following beaches are declared on-leash beaches only. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of these areas.

- Stanwell Park Beach from the southern side of the lagoon in Stanwell Park reserve through to the boundary of the Coalcliff rock platform, approximately 80 metres east of the Kallaroo Avenue and Lower Coast Road intersection in Stanwell Park;
- Coalcliff Beach from the boundary of the Coalcliff rock platform, approximately 150 metres south/east of the Coalcliff train station, 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, approximately 130 metres north/east of Jim Allen Oval, Wombarra, through to the northern side of the Wombarra rock pool;
- Brickyard Point from the southern boundary of Sharkey's Beach, approximately 200 metres north of the Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark 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;
- 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 public space area boundary, approximately 80 metres east of the Murray Road Carpark, East Corrimal 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;
- Puckey's 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, approximately 40 metres east of the Sewerage Treatment Plant entrance.

Note that where lifeguards patrol beaches, 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 are prohibited, even if on an orange zone beach. These areas will generally be identified by temporary lifeguard 'No Dogs' signs in these areas.

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

Dogs are declared prohibited in public bathing areas - 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), whether or not they are leashed or otherwise controlled. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of red zone beaches.

- 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;
- Windang Beach from the Lake Illawarra 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, approximately 40 metres east of the Sewerage Treatment Plant entrance;
- 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 eastern side of the Sandon Point SLSC through to the ~~McCauley's beach~~Sandon Point rock platform boundary, approximately 120 metres east of Garaban Court, Bulli.
- Austinmer Beach from the Thirroul Beach boundary which is located approximately 130 metres south of the Austinmer rock pool through to the Little Austinmer Beach boundary at the end 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.

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

- Children's play areas - within 10 metres of any playing apparatus provided in a 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 BBQs, public tables and picnic shelters, except where these areas are in a public thoroughfare;
- School grounds and child care centres - unless with the permission of the person in charge;
- Wildlife protection areas - 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; and
- Recreation areas where dogs are prohibited - these areas include any public place, or part of a public place, provided for public recreation or the playing or 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.

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) will~~

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~~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.~~

POLICY REGULATION

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Council will continue to provide ongoing 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 Beach and Park Dog Access Locations brochure;
- Animal Compliance Officer in-field education;
- School education; and
- ~~• Distribution of brochures and other educational material to RSPCA, caravan parks, camping areas and veterinary clinics; and~~
- Promoting the Policy at Council and community events, including information days, and microchipping days.

SIGNAGE

The Policy will continue to 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 continue to 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.

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

ENFORCEMENT

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Enforcement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's current Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Compliance and Regulation procedures. The Regulation and Enforcement Division commits to providing regular ~~enforcement for dogs on compliance patrols of~~ public land, particularly enforcement on ~~hotspot beaches, and high use parks. 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 ~~of dogs. The issue of r~~Responsibility ~~for a dogs~~ ~~behaviour sits with the owner or person in control of the dog, has arisen in the review and a~~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 maintains a compliance presence to~~ ~~increasemonitor compliantresponsible pet ownership and~~ behaviour in the declared 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 Animal Compliance Officers 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 Fines 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.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

The Customer Service action request system ~~will be is~~ 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.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every term of Council, or more frequently as required.

Significant consultation as part of review of the Policy has occurred in 2002, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2023.

REPORTING

Progress on the proactive compliance program for companion animals in public places is reported to Council in both the quarterly and annual reports.

DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Manager Regulation & Enforcement is responsible for reviewing and updating the Policy.

Compliance & Regulation Manager is responsible for the implementation of the Policy, including reviewing and updating the relevant dog access signage in beach, foreshore and park areas, ensuring that beach and foreshore areas are patrolled proactively and that the appropriate enforcement action is taken against offenders, and the community is educated about responsible dog ownership.

RELATED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Compliance and Enforcement – Council Policy

APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Regulation and Enforcement
Date adopted by Council	[To be inserted by Corporate Governance]
Date/s of previous adoptions	<u>26/02/2024</u> ; 22/07/2019; 24/11/2014; 26/11/2012; 27/04/2011; 28/09/2010
Date of next review	[Not more than three years from last adoption] <u>Not more than three years from last adoption</u>

ATTACHMENTS: MAPS OF ZONE AREAS

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:

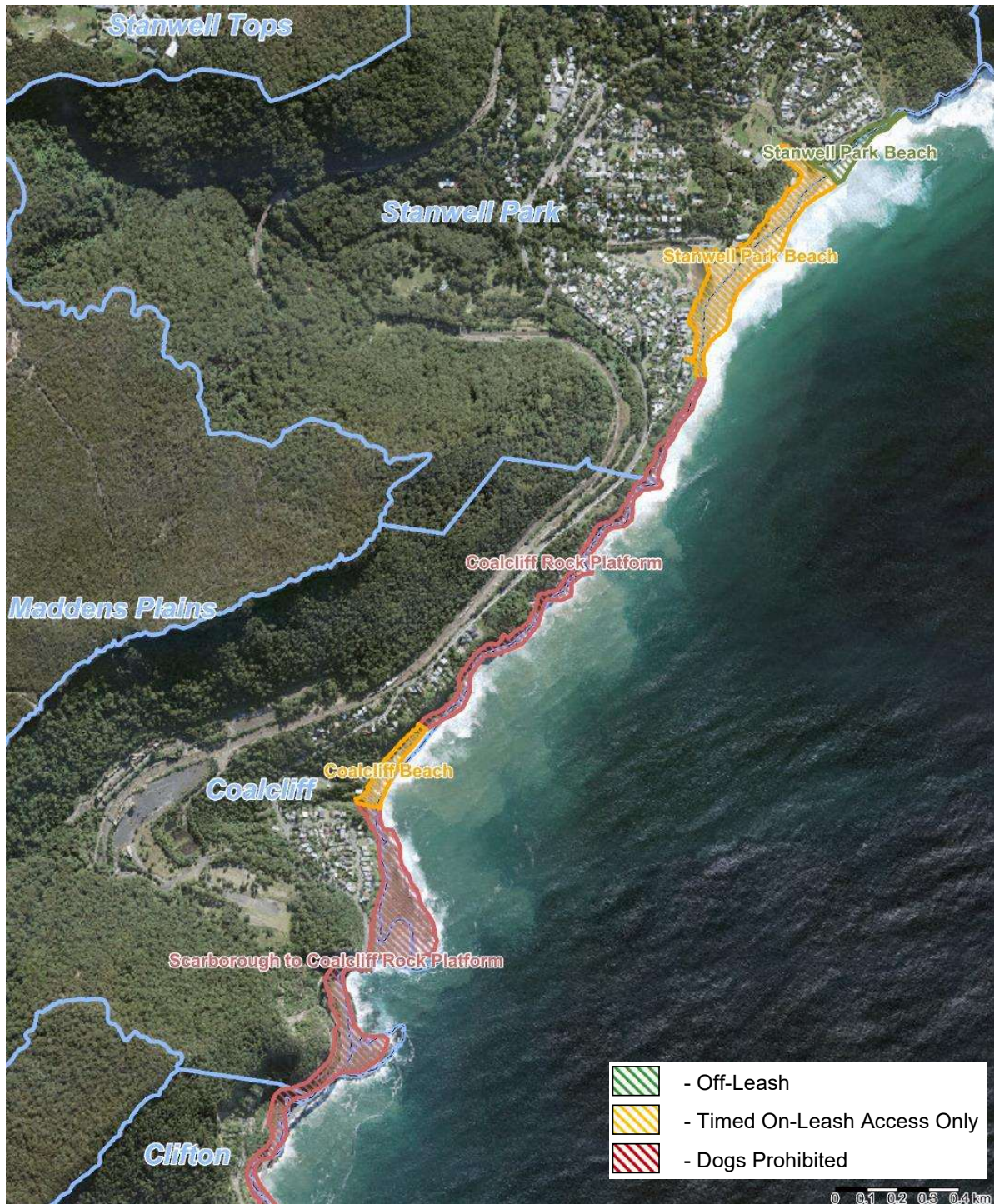
-  - Off-Leash
-  - Timed On-Leash Access Only
-  - Dogs Prohibited

Note – any beaches not designated as above are ‘Public Place’.

DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

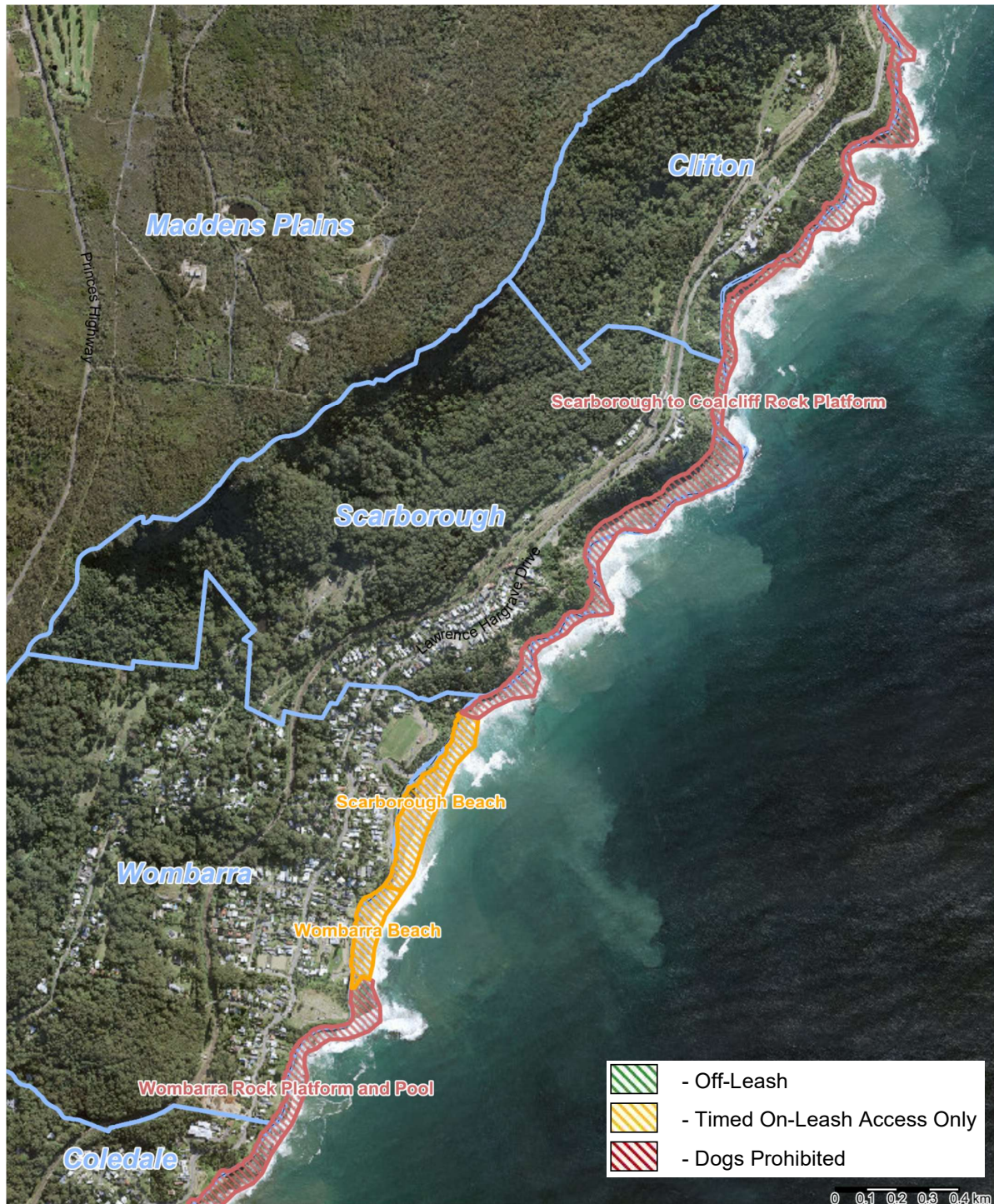
Map 1: Stanwell Park - Clifton



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 2: Clifton - Coledale



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 3: Coledale – Thirroul



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 4: Thirroul - Woonona



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 5: Woonona – Bellambi



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

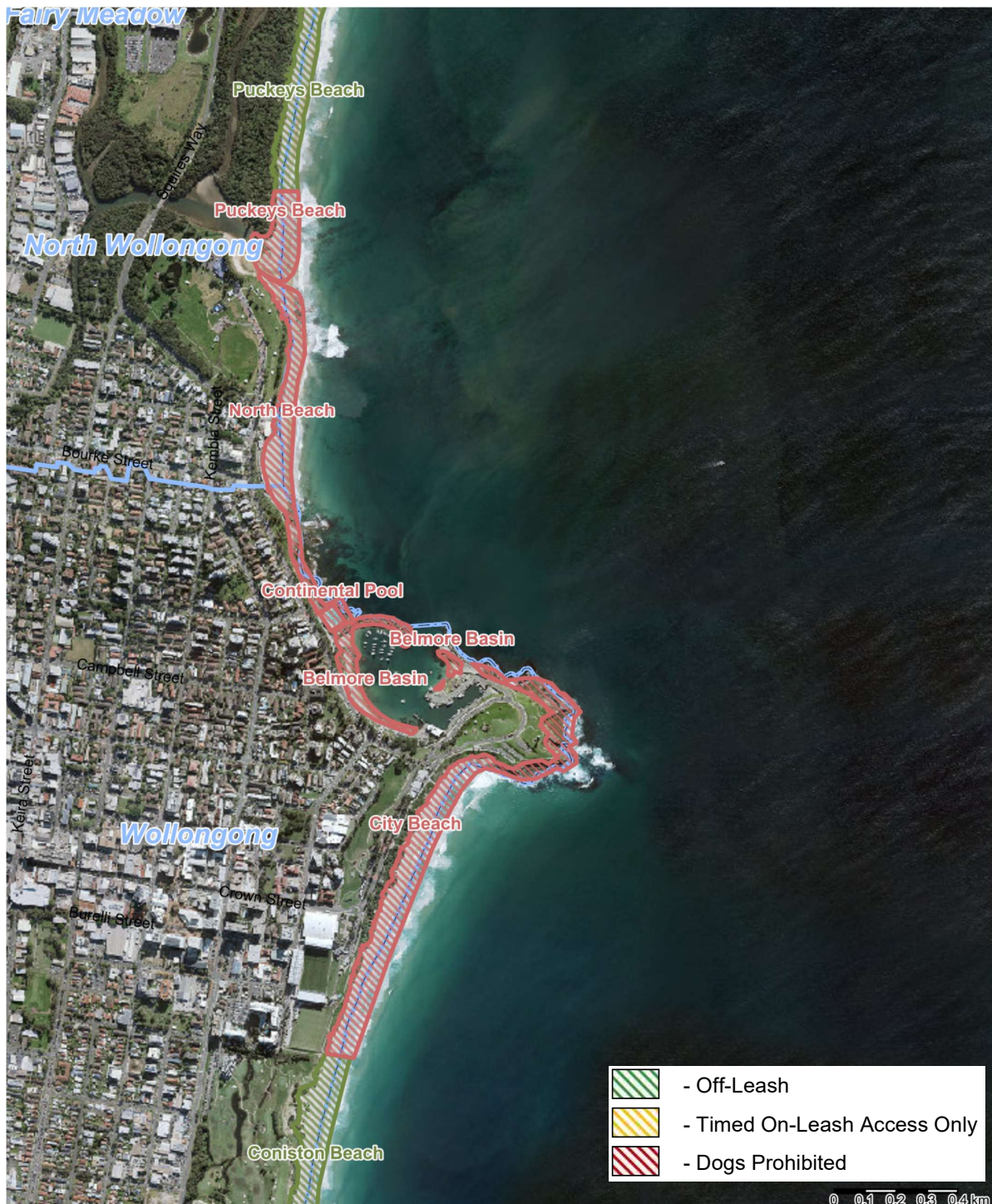
Map 6: Bellambi – North Wollongong



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

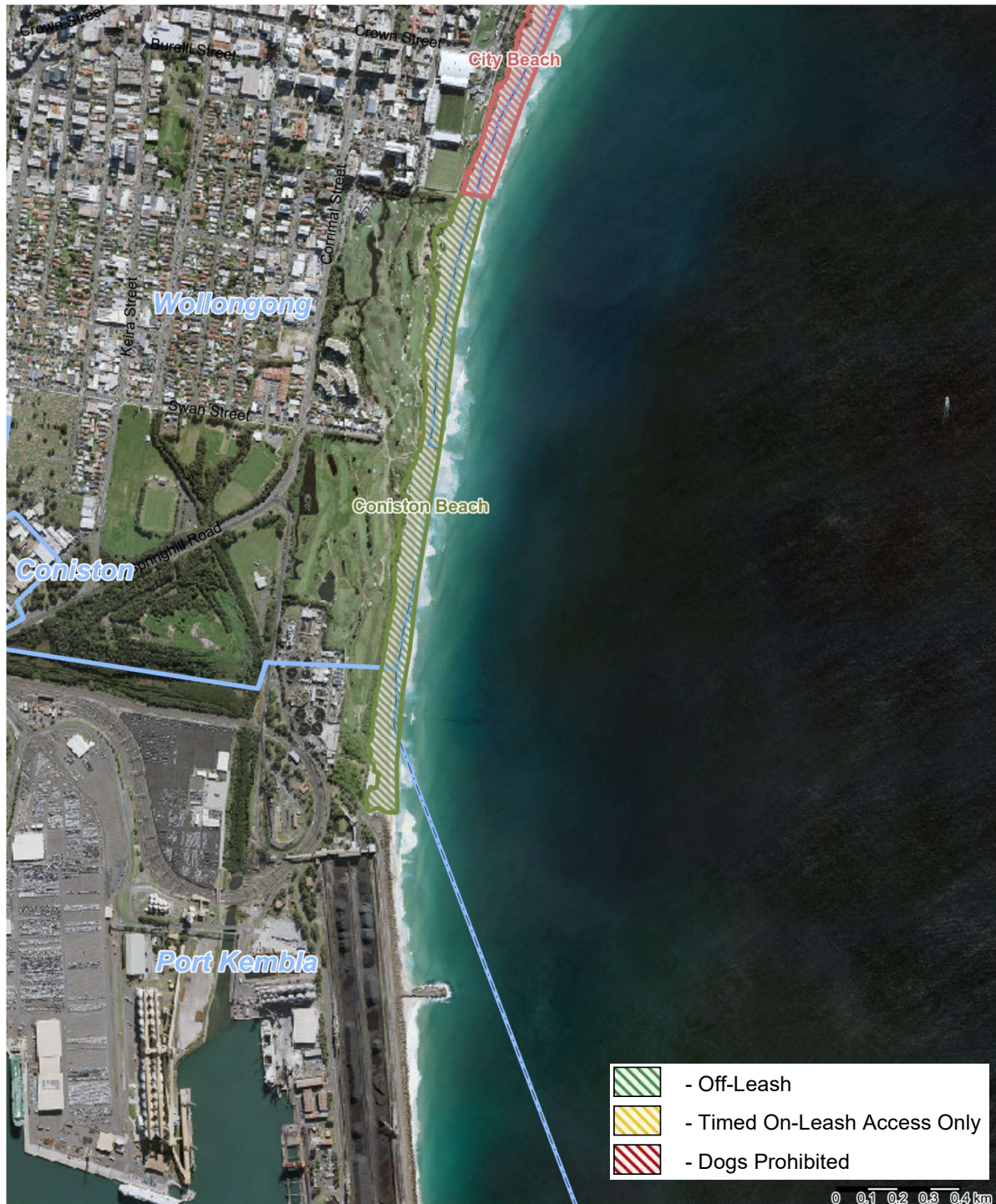
Map 7: North Wollongong – Wollongong



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 8: Wollongong – Port Kembla



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 9: Port Kembla – Primbee



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 10: Primbee – Windang



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 11: Figtree Oval, Figtree



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 12: Proud Park, Helensburgh



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 13: Riley Park, Unanderra



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 14: Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 15: King George V Park, Port Kembla



DOGS ON BEACHES AND PARKS

COUNCIL POLICY

Map 16: Reed Park, Dapto

