

Dogs in Public Places Policy

2018 Version 0.2

Dogs in Public Places Policy

1 Purpose

To effectively implement measures that will control dogs in public places.

2 Background

Clause 26 2(b) of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 enables the Council to impose conditions on the presence of dogs in any public place within the municipality. This policy specifies the locations where dogs are permitted off leash, where time restrictions apply and where dogs are prohibited altogether. The twelve reserves where dogs are currently allowed off leash, and the two reserves where dogs are allowed off leash within designated times are listed below. Dogs are prohibited from the Williamstown and Altona beaches during designated times regardless of if they are on a leash.

Section 111 of the *Local Government Act* 1989 provides the Council with the power to make local laws “for or with respect to any Act, matter or thing in respect of which the Council has a function” provided the local law is not inconsistent with any Act or Regulation.

Requirement for dogs to be on leash

Council has previously resolved to adopt the following clause as part of its Community Local Law, and this clause clearly articulates that dogs must be on a leash at all times in public areas other than in the off leash areas:

Dogs on Leash – Clause 56

“The owner or person in charge of a dog in a public place must at all times keep the dog under control by a leash, chain or cord connecting that person to the dog unless the public place is designated by Council signage to be an area where dogs are permitted off-leash or are altogether prohibited.”

Animal Management officers currently enforce legislation and Community Local Law in relation to animal management and promote responsible pet ownership and education

3 Scope

The scope of this policy is to ensure accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 and *Community Local Law* 2015 and inform the provision for the control of dogs in public places.

4 Definitions

Public Place – as described in the *Summary Offences Act* 1966.

Management – the control and organisation of something.

Leash – a piece or rope, chain, etc. tied to an animal, especially to a dog at its collar when taking it for a walk.

5 Policy

Dogs need time off the lead to play, socialise, exercise and be trained. Council acknowledges this need by designating public spaces where these activities can occur.

Benefits of dog ownership

Owning a dog can be very fulfilling. Dogs are great company, affectionate and give us unconditional love. Many studies have shown that owning a pet improves your health by encouraging us to exercise. Dog ownership also teaches children responsibility and helps them develop their social and nurturing skills.

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world. About 63% of Australian households own pets. There are an estimated more than 25 million pets in Australia. Dogs are the most common pet, with 39% of households owning a dog. Responsible dog ownership includes caring for your pet's welfare needs, along with registration, microchipping and adequate confinement of dogs to your property.

Dogs in off-leash areas must be under the control and restraint of their owners at all times to prevent any harm or nuisance to other persons or animals. This means that the dog must be under effective voice or hand control such that a leash can be immediately applied if the need arises.

Off leash areas should be:

- easily accessible to the community
- provided with wide open spaces suitable for free dog exercise
- varied topography and layout of the park
- defined separately from adjacent waterways and sensitive conservation areas

Council has the authority to delete or add to the list of designated off leash areas by way of Council resolution made at an ordinary meeting of Council.

All off leash areas are sign posted to adequately inform people entering the area that unleashed dogs may be present. Areas will also be listed and clearly displayed (mapped) on Council's website.

Any review of dog off leash areas will be conducted in accordance with Council's Open Space Strategy. The draft Open Space Strategy recommends an assessment of all off leash areas in addition to potential suitable locations for dog specific parks in order to reduce conflict in the use of open space and the protection of significant conservation zones.

Dogs on Beaches

Dogs are restricted from these beaches from 10.00am – 9.30pm from 1st November to 30th April every year, seven days a week. At all other times, dogs must be on a leash.

- Williamstown Beach – between the Life Saving Club and Shelly's Beach Pavilion
- Altona Beach – between Romawi and Mount Street

In accordance with Councils Biodiversity Strategy 2017-22 persons in charge of a dog should be mindful of the potential impact of their activities on sensitive conservation sites like beaches and foreshores in the municipality by observing signage and boundaries of designated off lead areas.

Biodiversity Considerations

The Biodiversity Strategy 2017-22 highlighted Hobsons Bay's significant biodiversity assets including many rare and endangered species of fauna and flora and committed to using the strategy enhance its management of these important community assets. One goal of the strategy is to incorporate community recreational benefits without compromising our unique biodiversity. This is being achieved by providing opportunities for people to interact with the natural environment in areas where the biodiversity is robust enough to support these activities, such as providing designated and safe dog off leash areas. Restricting or prohibiting access to protect sensitive areas can provide the greatest community benefit for the value and protection of biodiversity.

Procedural Guidelines

Take Reasonable Caution in an Off Leash Area

Dog owners should always make an assessment of the activities of other dogs in an off leash area and not release their dog off leash if they consider there might be any risk at that point in time. Dog owners and dog walkers should not have more than two dogs off leash at any given time in an off leash area.

Animal Management Officers Direction

An Animal Management officer can direct a person under *The Domestic Animals Act* 1994 to put their dog/s back on a leash in an off leash area if they have concerns about the dogs behaviour or if in the officers opinion it is deemed necessary to do so for safety reasons.

Dog Off-leash Locations - Unrestricted

Park or Reserve	Area bounded by	Melways Ref
Cyril Curtain Reserve	Thompson Street and Giffard Street, Williamstown	56 D12
Clement Reserve	Ross Road, Mills Street and Gilligan Road, Altona East	55 C5
Hosken Reserve	Kororoit Creek, Grieve Parade and Blackshaws Road, Altona North	40 G12
Doug Grant Reserve	Queen Street, Apex Park, and Melbourne Water Drainage Channel, Altona	209 C1
AB Shaw Reserve	Victoria Street, Hall Avenue and Railway Line in Altona Meadows	53 G10
Burns Reserve (Altona Dog Beach)	Altona Coastal Park, Altona Road and Altona Sports Club Altona	55 B9
Pipeline Reserve	Shane Avenue and Point Cook Road, Seabrook	208 A2

Park or Reserve	Area bounded by	Melways Ref
Bladin Street Park	Opposite McCormack Park, south side of the creek to the cyclone wire fence	53 D8
Gloucester Reserve (Williamstown Beach)	The Esplanade, Williamstown	55 K11
The Warmies (by The Spit)	Narrow land adjoining the eastern side of The Warmies, Newport and south western section of Riverside Park	56 B4
Newport Lakes Park	Northwest tip	55 G2
Newport Park	Area of land running east-west at the north side of the athletics track and north-south to Douglas Parade and the athletics track	56 B3
Brooklyn Dog Park	Fenced Dog Park, Nolan Ave Brooklyn	41 A10

Dog Off-leash Locations - Time Restricted

Park or Reserve	Location	Time
Donald McClean Reserve	The second oval closest to Melbourne Road, Spotswood	Dogs permitted off-leash before 8am and after 9pm every day
Edwards Reserve	Area bounded by Truman, Brunel and Greene Streets, Spotswood	Dogs permitted off-leash before 9am and after 9pm

6 Related Documents

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021
Draft Hobsons Bay Open Space Strategy 2018-2028
Biodiversity Strategy 2017-22

7 Related Legislation

Domestic Animals Act 1994
Community Local Law 2015 – Sect 56
Summary Offences Act 1966

8 Further Information

For further information concerning this Policy please contact the Local Laws Department on: 9932 1000

9 Document Control

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Responsible Officer	Manager Governance and Local Laws
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Version History

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0.1	2nd August 2011	Manager Health and Regulatory Services
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