

ATTACHMENT F

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**ASSESSMENT OF SUBMISSIONS NOT IN  
SUPPORT**

## Assessment of Submissions – Not in Support

Concern	Issue	Response
<p><b>Behaviour of Dog Owners</b></p>	<p>Dog owners behave with no consideration for other park users.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City's educational program is designed to reinforce and promote responsible &amp; considerate behaviour by dog owners. These include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continuing program of free dog obedience lessons;</li> <li>○ Production and dissemination of responsible dog ownership factsheets; and</li> <li>○ Enhanced monitoring and education of dog owners by Rangers and Companion Animals Liaison Officer.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Conditional Qualified Support</b></p>	<p>New off-leash areas should be enclosed by fencing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City's approach to off-leash parks is to integrate recreational activities rather than segregate activities into separate areas.</li> <li>• Enclosures reduce the multifunctional use of parks, for example preventing or hampering the hosting of community events.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, playgrounds at off-leash parks will be fenced to reinforce the prohibited status of dogs from playgrounds.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conditional Qualified Support</b></p>	<p>New off-leash areas should be subject to time share restrictions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Companion Animals Policy (Section 2.3) notes the City's preference for areas to be off-leash at all times.</li> <li>• Time-share arrangements may inconvenience residents &amp; visitors who perform shift work.</li> <li>• Time-share arrangements may discriminate against owners who want to exercise their dogs in daylight hours.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Monitoring and Compliance of Off-Leash Regulations</b></p>	<p>The City is taking a laissez faire attitude and seems lacking the will to enforce compliance with existing off-leash regulations.</p> <p>The scope and frequency of Ranger Patrols in the City's parks is insufficient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City's approach to the management of companion animals (Companion Animals Policy Section 1.2) emphasises the importance and effectiveness of education to affect responsible dog ownership.</li> <li>• The City's educational initiatives include factsheets and on site education of dog owners by the City Rangers and the Companion Animals Liaison Officer.</li> <li>• Enforcement will be taken by City Rangers against irresponsible dog owners to supplement the educational initiatives.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Off-leash and on-leash parks are regularly patrolled by City Rangers and the Companion Animal Liaison Officer.</li> <li>• Where problems are reported at particular parks, the monitoring regime at that park is increased.</li> <li>• Ranger patrols of off-leash parks will be enhanced to further improve education and compliance.</li> <li>• The Rangers and the Companion Animals Liaison Officer will be educating dog owners during patrols.</li> <li>• The newly introduced Ranger bicycle patrols currently operating at Sydney Park and the Glebe Foreshore Parks enable Rangers to cover more ground during patrols. Such bicycle patrols will be enhanced and expanded to other appropriate sites where required.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Environment</b></p>	<p>Off-leash dogs cause damage to parks and their features.</p> <p>Off-leash dogs have a negative impact on wildlife and their habitat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parks staff report that the damage caused by off-leash dogs is negligible and not significantly above the expected wear and tear particularly experienced at on-leash parks or small pocket/neighbourhood parks.</li> <li>• Damage to park assets including wear and tear are routinely repaired within the parks' maintenance regimes.</li> <li>• Concerns about wildlife were predominantly expressed about native and nesting birds at the Sydney Park wetlands and at the Glebe Foreshore.</li> <li>• Dogs are prohibited from entering the wetlands at both sites. The prohibited status of these areas is communicated by signs at Sydney Park, fencing of the wetland at Federal Park and through monitoring by the City Rangers.</li> <li>• The off-leash proposals are supported by the RSPCA NSW, an organisation focused on the welfare of all animals including wildlife.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Consultation Process</b></p>	<p>The public consultation process and methodology was considered to be inappropriate.</p> <p>The duration of the exhibition period was considered to be insufficient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals were on public exhibition for two months and advertised widely through:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signage at each of the proposed parks (in total 175 signs were erected) to specifically inform local residents and park visitors;</li> <li>• Information on the website; and</li> <li>• Media releases generated in total 247 media items including articles on: national television, national and local radio; and in national and local newspapers, generating extensive publicity and awareness of the proposals throughout the community.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The proposals were exhibited for over 9 weeks and generated significant response from the community.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Public Health</b></p>	<p>Off-leash parks impact negatively on health and fitness of those who avoid visiting parks due to the presence of off-leash dogs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The integration of off-leash recreation should not significantly deter people from visiting parks to exercise outdoors where dog owners act responsibly and with consideration for others.</li> <li>• The City's companion animal education program is designed to reinforce responsible behaviour when owners take their pets out in public.</li> <li>• Locally accessible on-leash parks will still be available for those prefer to reduce their exposure to off-leash dogs in the public domain.</li> <li>• The City manages 350 parks and reserves. The number of on-leash parks greatly exceeds the current number of off-leash parks and proposed off-leash parks.</li> <li>• Dogs will be prohibited from using sports fields when in use for formal sporting events.</li> <li>• Dogs are prohibited from playground areas and sports courts.</li> </ul>
<p>Uncollected dog faeces poses a risk to public health and is a nuisance to park visitors especially families.</p>	<p>Uncollected dog faeces poses a risk to public health and is a nuisance to park visitors especially families.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City's education program includes a factsheet detailing the importance of the social legal duty of dog owners to pick up after their pets.</li> <li>• The Companion Animals Liaison Officer and City Rangers emphasise the importance to pick up after pets when speaking to dog owners during their patrols of off-leash and on-leash parks.</li> <li>• Rangers will infringe irresponsible dog owners that fail to pick up after their pets.</li> <li>• The City will provide dog-tidy stations and waste receptacles at all off-leash parks. Over 300 dog-tidy stations have been installed across the City's parks.</li> </ul>
<p>An increased number of off-leash areas will negatively affect people with dog related phobias.</p>	<p>An increased number of off-leash areas will negatively affect people with dog related phobias.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally accessible on-leash parks will still be available for those who prefer to reduce their exposure to off-leash dogs in the public domain.</li> <li>• The City manages 350 parks and reserves. The number of on-leash parks greatly exceeds the current number of off-leash parks and proposed off-leash parks.</li> </ul>

<p>Off-leash parks cause noise nuisance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistics indicate that off-leash dogs do not contribute significantly to noise complaints generated throughout the LGA.</li> <li>• The vast majority of noise complaints relating to dogs (457 in 2007) are concerned with dogs on private property and not at off-leash parks.</li> <li>• City Rangers will respond to and investigate valid noise complaints.</li> </ul>
<p>Unwanted intrusions from dogs off-leash at parks with BBQ and picnic facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under the Companion Animals legislation, dogs are prohibited from within 10 meters of food preparation areas.</li> <li>• Dog owners are encouraged to respect the safety and convenience of other park visitors through educational materials, park signage and monitoring by Rangers on site.</li> </ul>
<p>Off-leash dogs create a stressful, unrelaxing experience for families, mothers with young children, elderly or frail people and people living with a disability.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogs are prohibited from playgrounds under the Companion Animals Act; where appropriate, playgrounds will be enclosed.</li> <li>• Dog owners will be encouraged to respect the safety and convenience of other park visitors through educational materials, park signage and through the education of dog owners by Rangers on site.</li> <li>• Locally accessible on-leash parks will still be available for those prefer to avoid off-leash dogs in the public domain.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Public Safety</b></p>	<p>Safety concerns for children at off-leash parks including the potential for dog bites; and injury from collisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 2007, 57 dog incidents were reported to the City for investigation. The vast majority of these incidents (77%) occurred on private property or on public streets.</li> <li>• There were 13 dog incidents related to City of Sydney parks in 2007 with 8 occurring at off-leash parks and 5 at on-leash parks.</li> <li>• Information about dog bites provided by North Sydney Council, where the majority of parks have been off-leash for about 10 years, does not indicate any correlation between off-leash or on-leash status of their parks.</li> <li>• Reports of incidents, harassment or nuisance are investigated by City Rangers.</li> <li>• Dog owners will be encouraged to respect the safety and convenience of other park visitors through:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park signage;</li> <li>• Educational materials; and</li> <li>• Education by Rangers on site.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where appropriate, playgrounds located within off-leash parks will be enclosed to reinforce their prohibited status.</li> </ul>
<p>Off-leash dogs increase the risk of collision with other park users.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No data is available to indicate a link between the likelihood of collisions due to the presence of off-leash dogs within City parks.</li> <li>• Dog owners will be encouraged to respect the safety and convenience of other park visitors through:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park signage;</li> <li>• Educational materials; and</li> <li>• Education by Rangers on site.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Off-leash dogs increase the risk of collision with cyclists.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern about conflicts between off-leash dogs and cyclists are predominantly confined to the Glebe Parks and particularly the foreshore walk.</li> <li>• Enhanced safety signage is due to be erected in the park.</li> <li>• The issue of cyclists' safety and use of shared pathways is addressed in the City's Cycle Strategy which proposes a 10km/h speed limit for cyclists on shared pathways and within parks and open spaces.</li> <li>• Bicycle patrols by City Rangers will also provide opportunities to speak directly to cyclists using the City's parks to educate them about speed limits and the need to be considerate to other park users.</li> </ul>
<p>Off-leash dogs increase the likelihood of injury caused by dog incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vast majority of the 57 dog incidents reported to the City for investigation occurred on private property or on public streets.</li> <li>• Information about dog incidents provided by North Sydney Council, where the majority of parks have been off-leash for about 10 years, does not indicate a correlation between the off-leash or on-leash status of parks.</li> <li>• The City enforces the provisions of the Companion Animal Act which relate to restricted breeds and dangerous dogs.</li> <li>• Reported dog incidents, harassment or nuisance are investigated by City Rangers.</li> </ul>
<p>Off-leash dogs increase the likelihood of vehicle accidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of off-leash parks are not located near busy roads and are of sufficient area to provide off-leash recreation away from the roadside.</li> <li>• Data provided to the City by the RTA does not indicate any significant number of collisions between animals and vehicles. In the periods 2002 – 2006, of 11,000 reported collisions only 2 related to animals.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Site Layout/Design</b></p>	<p>Off-leash areas are incompatible with Childcare facilities/services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogs are prohibited from childcare facilities under the Companion Animals Act.</li> <li>• Childcare facilities located at Jubilee Park and Ward Park are enclosed by fencing.</li> <li>• The mobile Playbus uses Foley Park, Ward Park and Alexandria Park on a weekly basis. The playgrounds at these sites will be fenced to provide areas of enhanced safety.</li> <li>• The City will consider providing mobile light-weight fencing for use of the Playbus when they use these parks and the erection of temporary cautionary signage to inform dog owners.</li> </ul>
	<p>Off-leash areas are incompatible with playground facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dogs are prohibited from playgrounds under the Companion Animals Act.</li> <li>• Where appropriate, playgrounds at off-leash parks will be fenced to enhance their prohibited status.</li> </ul>
	<p>The size of some proposed off-leash parks is of insufficient area to accommodate off-leash dogs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The areas of parks proposed to be off-leash vary greatly.</li> <li>• The aim is to provide residents with a choice of locally accessible off-leash and on-leash parks. The diversity of parks enables dog owners to select a park suitable for the requirements of their dogs – smaller parks are predominantly used by owners of small dogs.</li> <li>• Off-leash areas provided by North Sydney Council are of a similar diversity in size.</li> </ul>
	<p>Off-leash parks should have fenced boundaries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The installation of boundary fences at parks impacts negatively on aesthetics and accessibility of parks.</li> <li>• Experience and data available (see above) indicates that boundary fences are unnecessary to prevent collisions or impacts with pedestrians or vehicles.</li> </ul>

<p><b>User Conflict</b></p>	<p>Designating parks off-leash alienates non-dog owners from their local park.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locally accessible on-leash parks will still be available for those that prefer to reduce their exposure to off-leash dogs in the public domain.</li> <li>• The City manages 350 parks and reserves. The number of on-leash parks greatly exceeds the current number of off-leash parks and proposed off-leash parks.</li> </ul>
	<p>The City is placing the interests of dogs before the interests of people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The City's parks and public open spaces provide for the recreational needs of the whole community.</li> <li>• The proposals aim to provide for the needs of dog owners and non-dog owners by providing a choice of locally accessible on-leash and off-leash parks.</li> </ul>