

Council Policy

Dogs in Open Space

Version 4 - 27 March 2023

Policy - external Dogs in Open Space

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to acknowledge the importance of dogs as companion animals and providing access to open space for dogs to be exercised, while balancing the needs of the broader community.

Scope

The policy sets the broad parameters to define open spaces that are suitable for dogs to be exercised on leash, off leash or areas where dogs should be prohibited.

In this policy

- 'open space' refers to community land owned or Crown land managed by Lake Macquarie City Council
- 'off leash areas' refers to a designated open space area that permits dogs to be exercised off leash. These can be fenced or unfenced.

The Dogs in Open Space Strategy provides further detail on the framework for managing dogs in open space including provision standards, site suitability criteria and development standards.

Policy statement

This policy has been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation, most notably the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998*.

This policy has been prepared to be consistent with the Dogs in Open Space Strategy.

Principles

Dogs are permitted to be exercised on leash in all open space with the exception of:

- open space areas signposted by Council as dog prohibited areas
- on a sportsground during use for games or training
- within 10 metres of children's play areas (playing apparatus)
- within 10 metres of any food preparation or food consumption spaces (not including public pathways)

Dogs must be under effective control at all times, regardless if they are on leash or off leash.

Provision of new off leash areas are not to be located on sportsgrounds that are used for training and competition.

Existing off leash areas located on sportsgrounds are to be relocated where possible to an alternate site within 1,000 metres of the current location.

Changes to existing off leash areas or their location require public consultation and will be approved by Council resolution.

Council will provide signage clearly identifying off leash areas and dog prohibited areas in open space.

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Dog prohibited areas in open space can be declared for reasons including, but not limited to, environmental protection of flora and fauna, protection of cultural values, safety of other users, and repeated complaints of dog nuisance.

Council will promote responsible dog ownership. Council Rangers will be responsible for compliance of dogs in open space in accordance with the Regulatory Activities Policy and through the provisions in the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998*, the Dogs in Open Space Strategy and this policy.

Council will publish a list of off leash area and maps on its website.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are consistent with the Dogs in Open Space Strategy. They are to:

1. balance the needs for dogs in open space with the needs of the broader community
2. provide a diversity of opportunities for dogs in open space
3. provide off leash areas that are fit for purpose
4. plan for off leash areas for existing and future populations
5. ensure environmental and cultural values of open space are retained
6. improve education and regulation for dogs in open space

Review and Evaluation

The Dogs in Open Space Policy will be reviewed every four years. A review will also be triggered by any changes to the relevant sections of the *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998* or a review of the Dogs in Open Space Strategy.

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Controlled Document Information

Authorisation Details

Folder No:	F2005/02187	TRIM Record No:	D10838734
Audience:	External - Dog Owners		
Department:	Asset Management	Officer:	Community Land Planner (Open Space) - Donna Mitchell
Key focus area(s):	Lifestyle and Wellbeing		
Review Timeframe: Max < 4 years	4 years	Next Scheduled Review Date:	27 March 2027
Authorisation:	Adopted by Council - 27 March 2023		
Authorisation - Council Adoption Date:	27 March 2023		

Related Document Information, Standards & References

Related Legislation:	(Legislation Name) NSW Companion Animals Act 1998	(Relationship/Context)
Related Policies:	(Policy Name)	(Relationship/Context)
Related Procedures, Guidelines, Forms, WHS Modules/PCD's, Risk Assessments, Work Method Statements:	(Document Name)	(Relationship/Context)
Standards, COP's & Other References	(Standard, COP or Other References)	(Relationship/Context)

Definitions

Term / Abbreviation	Definition

Consultation (update for each version created)

Key Departments, Teams, Positions, Meetings:	Asset Management – Community Asset Management (Coordinator) and Recreation and Land Planning (Coordinator, Community Land Planner); Environmental Systems – Environmental Strategy (Environmental Planner) and Natural Assets (Coordinator); Environmental Regulation – Ranger Services (Coordinator and 3x Rangers) Community Consultation – Publicly exhibited for 30 days from 1-30 November 2022.
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Version History

Version No	Date Changed	Modified By	Details and Comments
1	23/11/2004	L Linstead-Brown	Remove superfluous information and duplication
2	30/11/2015	J Salmon	Updated into new template – no changes
3	18/12/2017	D Mitchell	Change name of policy, update policy statements and remove maps
4	27/03/2023	D Mitchell	Policy updated into new template and content changed to be consistent with the new Dogs in Open Space Strategy

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