

15 REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITIES

15.1 Endorse for public exhibition: Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy

CSP Objective: Outcome 4.3: Our built environment is safe and inclusive; our infrastructure is well planned and well managed.

CSP Strategy: 4.3.1 Create a regional network of interconnected roads, shared pathways and cycleways to maximise access to key destinations and facilities.

Delivery Program: 4.3.1.1 Manage recreation and open space infrastructure to cater for current and future generations

Item 15.1

Summary

Council resolved to undertake the development of a five year Companion Animals Management Plan. The Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy makes up part of this plan. This plan will provide a strategic approach to the future provision of our dog friendly spaces throughout our Municipality.

The aim of this strategy is to provide guidance for the development, improvement, and management of dog-friendly areas within the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA). This strategy outlines specific objectives:

- To find a balance between the needs of dog owners and those of the wider community, ensuring parks and reserves are accessible and safe for everyone.
- To identify any gaps in dog friendly spaces provision and ensure fair distribution across the LGA.
- To plan for dog friendly areas in consideration of expected population growth and trends in dog ownership.

The strategy also includes various actions to be carried out over the next 10 years. These actions are categorised into short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals, aligning with the timelines of the Council's Operational Plan, Delivery Program, and Community Strategic Plan.

The draft strategy is provided as an attachment to this report. The intent of this report is to seek for Council to endorse the draft strategy and place it on exhibition, to seek community feedback and further input.

Financial implication

The actions outlined in the Draft Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy range from an internal audit of signage to the creation of a new fenced dog off leash area. The short-term actions can be accommodated by the current budget however actions that require the installation of infrastructure will need to be sourced either from the capital works, developer contributions or grants.

Council has been successful in obtaining a grant for \$42,600 from the Premier's Department under the Local Small Commitments Allocation (LSCA) program. It is proposed that these funds will be used to fund a fenced dog off-leash area.

Report of the Director Planning, Environment and Communities

15.1 Endorse for public exhibition: Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy (cont)

Regardless of the nominated priorities and timeframe of each of Management Actions listed in the strategy, implementation will largely hinge on the availability of resources and funding.

Risk implication

Council could be seen to not value or listen to community needs or demands. By not structuring and strategically planning its dog friendly spaces the risk to the community and open space used could lead to an increase in dog attacks or non-compliance. This could also lead to an increase in animosity between dog owners and non-dog owners.

Policy

Compliance and response measures for regulating Companion Animals are governed by the Companion Animals Act 1998 and Local Government Act 1993. Council policies that influence this strategy are Complaints Handling Policy, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Enforcement Policy, Health and Sustainability Policy, Markets – Public Places Policy, Media Policy, Procurement Policy, Public Land Management Policy and Use of Public Reserves for Commercial Fitness Activities and Personal Training Policy.

Consultation (internal)

Council's Property Section has been consulted regarding possible location of a dog off-leash area in Jamberoo. Other sections of Council that have been consulted in relation to this draft Strategy are the Compliance team, Engineering and Communications team.

Communication/Community engagement

Council undertook a survey to gauge what the community thought of dog friendly spaces. This was conducted online through Council's website and social media platforms for a period of just over three weeks (23 February – 22 March 2024).

The survey had 533 responses with 76% being dog owners, and 20% identifying as non-dog owners. The remaining responses were made up from visitors to the area.

Feedback from community consultation and previous correspondence to Council indicates that overall, the existing off-leash spaces are operating well with most concerns being focussed on responsible dog ownership and that there is a desire for Council to provide a fenced dog off leash area in the local government area. These issues and more are discussed in detail in the attachments, and where relevant, are accompanied by recommendations that feed into the implementation plan component of the Strategy.

Attachments

- 1 Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy [↓](#)
- 2 Community Engagement Report [↓](#)

Enclosures

Nil

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorse the Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy to be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days calling for submissions.
2. Receive a further report for consideration, if any relevant submissions are received or if any substantial changes are proposed for any other reasons, detailing the public exhibition outcomes and proposed changes with further recommendations regarding adoption.
3. On the day after completion of the public exhibition period, adopt the Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy, if there are no relevant submissions received and there are no substantial changes proposed for any other reasons.

Background

With a high ratio of dog ownership, one dog per every 2.5 people, Kiama dog owners make up a key user group of our open spaces. Council provides several dog off-leash areas and other dog friendly spaces that dogs can access on lead. With limited private spaces, reduced yard sizes and apartment living increasing it is important for Council to plan for future open spaces where dogs and their owners can exercise. This plan will provide a strategic approach to the future provision of our dog friendly spaces.

The Strategy is linked with Kiama Council's Community Strategic Plan objectives and strategies strongly tied to Pillar 1 – We belong and contribute.

1.2.3.2 *Maintain public order and safety in accordance with the Local Government Act through implementing the requirements of the Companion Animals Management Act and Regulations (registration, off-leash area, impounding facilities, and compliance requirements).*

Survey outcomes

The survey found that most dog owners choose to exercise in and around their own neighbourhood with 82% of respondents falling in the category. The most popular dog off-leash area being Bombo Beach showing that 43% of respondents choose to exercise their dogs at this location. Jones Beach (37%), Minnamurra Headland (33%) and Bombo Headland (32%) off-leash areas following close behind.

Dog owners strongly indicated that the provision of dog waste bags and bins was the most important amenity for a dog off-leash area with 87% of respondents specifying this. The survey showed that 63% of dog owners responded that drinking water facilities were an important feature of a dog off-leash area. At 48% tree shade and at 46% clear signage were both shown to be important features of a dog off-leash area. 47% of respondents felt that there were not enough dog off-leash areas and 37% felt that the balance was just right. Thirteen percent of respondents thought there were enough dog off-leash spaces and didn't see the need to provide further dog off-leash area. Of the non-dog owners 9% indicated that there were too many dog off-leash spaces.

Full details of the survey and engagement findings are outlined within the Community Engagement Outcomes report which is attached.



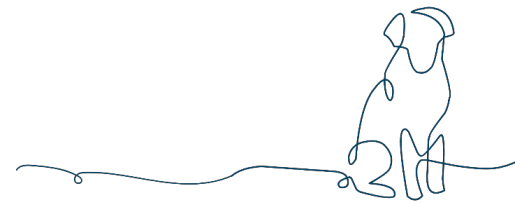
Draft Dog Friendly Spaces
Strategy
2024-2029

Adopted XXXX



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Why Does Kiama Council need a Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy?

Kiama Municipal Council has just over 9,000 dogs (NSW Companion Animal Register 2024) and a population of just over 23,000 people, making dog owners a key user group of our open spaces.

Council currently provides several dog friendly spaces for dogs and owners to spend quality time together and to facilitate opportunities for socialisation and exercise. With limited private open space, the need for Council to strategically plan for the future provision of open spaces for dogs to exercise is necessary.

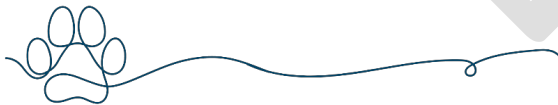
Council resolved to prepare a Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy (the Strategy). On 12 April 2022 a Council resolution was passed to undertake the development of a 5 year Companion Animals Management Plan, the Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy makes up part of this plan. This plan will provide a strategic approach to the future provision of our dog friendly spaces.

The formulation of the Strategy is based on the combination of community consultation and best practice learnt from other Council spaces and related documentation.

The Strategy is linked with the Kiama Council Community Strategic Plan objectives and strategies strongly tied to Pillar 1 – We belong and contribute.

- **Outcome 1:** A strong sense of community and belonging, where social and cultural life flourishes; and our families, friends and visitors feel welcome and included
- **Outcome 2:** We love where we live; we have the services and facilities we need, and the natural beauty of our surroundings enhances our safe, active and healthy lifestyle

Our operational plan identifies the development of a Companion Animals Management Plan.



The purpose of the Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy

The aim of this Strategy is to provide guidance for the development, improvement, and management of dog-friendly areas within the Kiama Local Government Area (LGA). This Strategy outlines specific objectives:

- To find a balance between the needs of dog owners and those of the wider community, ensuring parks are accessible and safe for everyone.
- To ensure compliance with legislative requirements.
- To identify any gaps in dog-friendly spaces provision and ensure fair distribution across the LGA.
- To plan for dog-friendly areas in consideration of expected population growth and trends in dog ownership.

The Strategy also includes various actions to be carried out over the next decade. These actions are categorised into short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals, aligning with the timelines of the Council's Operational Plan, Delivery Program, and Community Strategic Plan.

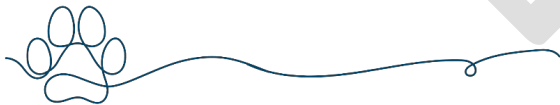
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Definitions of Dog Friendly Spaces

For the purpose of this Strategy:

- **Dog Friendly Spaces** – Council owned and or Council Managed Crown Land open spaces that allow dogs either on-leash or off-leash under the supervision of their owners.
- **Dog Agility Park** – A fenced or unfenced area where dogs can exercise off-leash under the supervision of their owners.
- **Dog Off-leash area** – An area where dogs can exercise off-leash under the supervision of their owners but it is not fenced.
- **Fenced Dog Off-leash area** – An area where dogs can exercise off-leash in a fenced area under the supervision of their owners.
- **Dog On-leash area** – An area where dogs can be on a lead under the supervision of their owners.
- **An Open Space** – means:
 - any pathway, road, bridge, jetty, wharf, reserve, park, beach or garden, and
 - any other place, that the public are entitled to use. (Local Government Act 1993)
- **Dog Prohibited area** – An area where dogs are excluded regardless of if they are on or off lead. E.g. within 10m of children's playground (see page 8 for further details).



Responsibilities of Dog Owners and Council

The Companion Animals Act 1998 (the Act) sets out obligations for both dog owners and local councils regarding the regulation of dogs in public spaces.

The Act can be accessed through the [NSW legislation website](#) and is crucial in determining suitable locations and considerations for dog-friendly areas. Local councils are mandated by law to designate at least one off-leash area and to ensure effective and responsible management of dogs within their jurisdiction.

According to the Act, individuals or those responsible for dogs should not be in control of more than four dogs simultaneously, and they must maintain control over the dogs at all times

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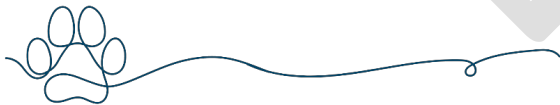


Dog Friendly Spaces in our Municipality

Currently the Kiama LGA has a variety of dog friendly spaces including one dog agility park.

These areas are listed below and outlined on [our website](#):

- Minnamurra Headland dog off-leash area
- Jones Beach dog off-leash area (Southern end)
- Bombo Headland dog off-leash area and agility park
- Bombo Beach dog off-leash area
- Kaleula Reserve dog off-leash area
- Marsden Headland dog off-leash area
- Werri Beach dog off-leash area
- Gerringong Headland dog off-leash area
- Black Head Reserve Gerroa dog off-leash area



Management of Dog Friendly Spaces

Current approach	Comment / analysis
Dogs permitted only on-leash	Unless spaces are prohibited which will be identified on signage, dogs on a leash can be walked throughout Council's public spaces.
Dog Agility Parks: Dogs are permitted off-leash.	Council currently has one dog agility park at Bombo Headland. Generally only used by dogs and their owners
Dogs off-Leash area: Dogs permitted off-leash	Council currently has nine designated dog off-leash spaces at Minnamurra Headland, Jones Beach, Bombo Headland, Bombo Beach, Kaleula Reserve, Marsden Headland, Werri Beach, Gerringong Headland and Blackhead Reserve Gerroa.
Dog prohibited area: Dogs are not permitted in certain spaces	<p>Under the Companion Animals Act 1998, dogs are prohibited in the following places (whether or not they are leashed or otherwise controlled):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 metres of any children's play spaces in a open space • 10 metres of any food preparation or food consumption spaces (public barbeques and kiosks) • Recreation areas such as sports fields, ovals and courts (unless otherwise sign posted) • Public bathing areas • School grounds unless with permission of the principal • Childcare centres unless with permission from the director <p>Under the Act, Councils also have the authority to prohibit dogs from other public spaces including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shopping complexes • Wildlife protection spaces (such as shorebird nesting habitats on the beaches and rock platforms of the LGA) In this respect, currently Seven Mile Beach and all beach areas not designated as an off-leash areas are dog prohibited spaces.

Note: In NSW, a Guide Dog in harness is legally allowed to enter all Open Spaces, therefore the above does not apply to guide dogs.



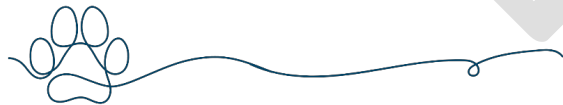
Kiama Community opinion on dog friendly spaces

Council undertook a survey to gauge what the community thought of dog friendly spaces. This was conducted online through Council's website and social media platforms for a period of just over three weeks (23 February – 22 March 2024).

The survey had 533 responses with 76% being dog owners, and 20% identifying as non-dog owners. The remaining responses were made up of visitors to the area.

The survey results have provided information that has helped to inform the preparation of this Strategy. In addition to the survey, Council has also used previous community correspondence to Council including complaints, reports of dog attacks and general feedback on dogs in public spaces to help inform the Strategy.

Feedback from community consultation and previous correspondence to Council indicates that overall, the existing off-leash spaces are operating well with most concerns being focused on responsible dog ownership and that there is a desire for Council to provide a fenced dog off-leash area in the LGA. These issues and more are discussed in detail below, and where relevant, are accompanied by recommendations that feed into the implementation plan component of the Strategy.



Balancing the needs of dog owners and open space users

Council must navigate the challenge of accommodating the varied needs of different users, including children, cyclists, sports clubs, and dog owners. However, the presence of dogs in these areas can affect the enjoyment of other park users. Therefore, it's crucial to implement a sustainable, lasting solution to manage the presence of dogs within the open space network effectively.

The community have highlighted the following main concerns:

- Access points to dog off-leash areas
- Provision of a fenced dog off-leash area
- People not taking responsibility for their dogs behaviour
- People not picking up after their dog
- Increased Ranger presence
- Improved signage
- Dog attacks
- Non-compliance with relevant legislation

The concerns raised demonstrate that more education and regulation needs to occur in the community to inform both dog owners and non-dog owners about the rules and responsibilities associated with dogs in open spaces.

- 82% of respondents liked to walk their dogs around their local neighbourhood.
- 43% of people liked to exercise their dogs at the off-leash area of Bombo Beach.
- 36% of the 404 dog owners used the Jones Beach off-leash area.
- 33% of dog owners used the Minnamurra Headland dog off-leash area.
- 32% of people liked to exercise their dogs at the off-leash area at Bombo Headland.
- 28% of people liked to exercise their dogs at Gerringong Headland dog off-leash area.
- 25% of people liked to use the Werri Beach dog off-leash area to exercise their dogs.
- 14% use the Kaleula Reserve dog off-leash area to exercise their dogs.
- 14% of dog owners like to use Blackhead Reserve Gerringong to exercise their dogs at the dog off lease area.



47% of respondents wanted to see an increase in dog-friendly spaces across the Municipality to provide variety and an equal spread to increase everyone's accessibility to dog friendly spaces, particularly off-leash spaces. Jamberoo, Kendell's Beach, Kiama Township and Kiama Downs were all suggested for new spaces.

A common theme from the survey and from previous correspondence to Council indicated that there is a strong desire for an off-leash area in Jamberoo. Council currently has no dog off-leash area in Jamberoo. Currently, Council does not provide a fenced dog off leash area within the Municipality.

Previous community submissions and interactions have highlighted the possibility of using existing sporting fields as dog friendly spaces either as dog off leash areas or dog on leash areas while fields are not in use. Currently, all sporting fields are dog prohibited areas, and Jamberoo sporting fields in particular are highly utilised by a number of sporting clubs who share the spaces, the school and other community members.

13% of respondents thought there was enough dog off leash spaces and didn't see the need to provide further dog off-leash area.



Action - continue education programs to inform dog owners of their responsibilities and consequences of having their dogs in public spaces. (short/medium)



Action - investigate providing an equitable spread of new spaces across the Municipality to provide off-leash and dog agility spaces. (short/medium)



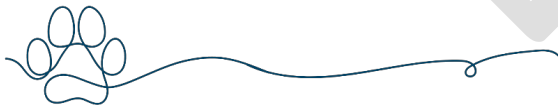
Action - investigate the suitability of providing a dog off-leash area at Jamberoo. (short)



Action - develop a policy position on circumstances where dogs should be allowed or prohibited at sporting fields. (medium)



Action - develop a policy position on circumstances where dogs should be allowed or prohibited at markets. (medium)



Ancillary infrastructure

Feedback from the community has expressed the desire for the installation of various pieces of infrastructure to enhance the site, increase use and encourage higher levels of compliance. It is important to note that when Council provides fencing, seating, water and natural shade, the cost and responsibility to maintain infrastructure falls on Council. Consideration towards the financial life cycle costs and resourcing implications has to occur before placing infrastructure into any public space including dog friendly spaces.

The survey revealed that the most important features of a dog off-leash area were:

- fencing (41%)
- segregation for different size dogs (29%)
- dog pool (23%)
- drinking water

Fencing

Fencing is a significant consideration for dog owners in off-leash areas. Fencing serves to delineate these spaces from other reserve activities and provides a clear boundary for the designated area. There are drawbacks associated with fencing such as being visually intrusive, limiting future reserve usage, being costly to install, and increasing maintenance expenses are some of the considerations that need to be taken into account when determining the need for fencing. There is also a thought that fencing these areas entirely can accelerate wear on the reserve surface and lead to a more relaxed attitude among dog owners in supervising their pets because they are contained within a defined space.

The decision to install fencing or gates is contingent upon a site audit confirming its suitability. Currently, the Council does not offer any fenced dog off-leash areas in the Municipality. All nine existing dog off-leash areas are currently unfenced, including three located on a beach. All beach areas will continue to be unfenced, with signage, bollards, or natural features used as alternative means to visually define the dog spaces.



Action – investigate the feasibility of providing a fenced dog off-leash area at Jamberoo. (short)



Segregation for different dog sizes

Segregation based on dog sizes in off-leash areas is a topic that warrants thoughtful discussion. While some dog owners advocate for segregated spaces to ensure safety and comfort for dogs of varying sizes, others argue that such segregation may limit socialisation opportunities and perpetuate stereotypes about specific breeds or sizes.

Advocates of segregation often cite safety concerns as a primary reason. Larger dogs can inadvertently pose a risk to smaller breeds during play due to differences in size and strength. Segregated areas could mitigate these risks by allowing smaller dogs to interact without fear of being overwhelmed or injured by larger, more energetic dogs.

Additionally, segregating based on size can cater to the specific needs and play styles of different breeds. Smaller dogs may prefer gentler interactions, while larger breeds often require more space and robust play. Separating these groups could enhance the overall experience for both owners and pets by creating environments tailored to their needs.

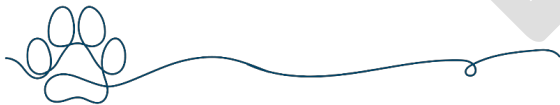
As with fencing, segregation brings with it increased installation, regulation and maintenance costs.



Action – when investigating a fenced off-leash area consider the option of having segregated areas for different sized dogs, including specific locations for each group. (short)

Shade

Tree shade made it into one of the top 3 most important amenities. The amenity of dog friendly spaces is enhanced by shade. All of the Council's designated dog-friendly sites are situated within natural park settings, offering diverse natural shade from trees and vegetation. Council remains committed to prioritising natural shade in future locations, integrating this consideration into site selection criteria for upcoming projects.



Dog Pool

The provision of a dog pool in a dog off-leash area offers several potential benefits. It provides dogs with a safe and enjoyable way to cool off during hot weather, promoting physical exercise and overall well-being. Water play can also be mentally stimulating and enriching for dogs, offering a novel activity that helps alleviate boredom.

A dog pool can enhance socialisation opportunities among dogs and their owners. It creates a designated space where dogs can interact and play in a controlled environment, fostering positive social behaviours and community engagement among dog owners.

The implementation of a dog pool requires careful planning and maintenance. Considerations include ensuring water quality and hygiene, implementing safety measures to prevent accidents, and regular cleaning to minimise health risks. Additionally, ongoing maintenance costs, such as water treatment and pool upkeep, should be factored into the decision-making process. Overall, a dog pool can enhance the recreational experience within off-leash areas, but it's essential to address practicalities and maintenance requirements to ensure its effectiveness and safety.



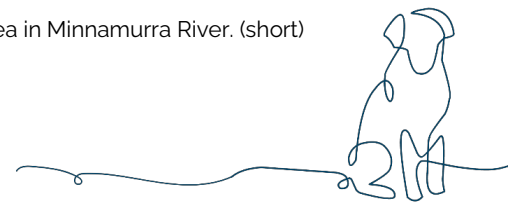
Action – investigate the cost of installation and maintenance of a dog pool. (medium)

Dog On Leash Swimming Area

On 15 July 2014 Council supported a (6 month) trial for a dog on leash swimming area in the Minnamurra River. From feedback received and based on regular patrols by Council, Compliance Officers have found that dog owners are not utilising this area correctly. Dog owners are not keeping the dogs on a lead in this area and there is often issues with the conflicting uses in this area. The area is heavily used by families with young children as it is seen as safe place to swim. Concerns relating to dogs located in environmental sensitive areas has also been identified as an issue in this area. Because of the low compliance rates and conflicting uses in this area it is strongly recommended that the "dog on leash swimming area" be ceased and declared a dog prohibited area.



Action – report to Council to support the cessation of the dog on leash swimming area in Minnamurra River. (short)



Bins and Managing Dog Waste

The survey overwhelmingly identified the provision of dog waste bags and bins as the most important feature of a dog off-leash area. Under the Companion Animals Act 1998 dog owners are responsible for removal and proper disposal of dog waste. Council currently provides dog waste bag dispensers and bins at existing dog off-leash areas, and other various locations with a high foot traffic volume throughout the LGA. Failure to dispose of dog waste appropriately can result in fines, although enforcement of this regulation is often difficult.

Survey results demonstrate strong support for the Council to continue providing dog waste bag dispensers and bins at dog off-leash areas, and to consider expanding this service to other locations within the Municipality.

However, increasing the number of bins and installing dog waste bag dispensers comes with significant initial and ongoing costs to the Council, including addressing issues such as vandalism of dispensers. Feedback from the survey emphasised the importance of regularly replenishing dog waste bags in high-use areas where supplies are quickly depleted.



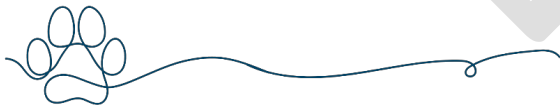
Action – implement measures to reduce the impact of dog waste in public spaces. (medium)

Dog Agility Equipment

Dog agility equipment adds another activity option to a dog friendly space. It provides the opportunity for dogs to develop confidence, competencies and have fun. It also allows dogs to practice skills learned at agility and education training. The only space within our Municipality that offers Dog Agility facilities is the dog off-leash area at Bombo Beach Headland.



Action – consider the availability or installation of dog agility equipment for any current and proposed dog off-leash and dog friendly spaces. (short/medium)



Drinking Water

The survey revealed that available drinking water was an important feature of a dog park. Currently Council provides drinking water stations in conjunction with the majority of our outdoor shower facilities.

There are also a number of parks and reserves where dogs are permitted off-leash and on-leash where water taps are provided these include:

- Reid park, Jamberoo
- Charmain Clift Reserve – Hothersal Street, Kiama – near the entry to South end of Bombo beach
- Minnamurra Headland – End of Eureka Ave, Kiama Downs – council has provided a new water supply with a hose tap to provide drinking water for dogs
- Gainsborough Skate Park
- South Werri beach – outside the surf club
- Gerroa boat ramp – Ricketts reserve, Gerroa
- Hindmarsh Park toilets – next to the old Fire Station

It is highly beneficial to provide infrastructure such as drinking water stations where they can be used by multiple user groups, therefore detailed planning and design will ensure the most efficient and equitable distribution of this resource.

Council intends to continue considering the provision of drinking water at future locations, incorporating this into site design and infrastructure criteria when selecting new sites. This approach aims to enhance the usability and accessibility of public spaces for all community members, including dog owners.



Action – when investigating the installation of a fenced dog off-leash area, ensure a dog drinking water station is made available.
(short)



Signage

Effective signage in parks and reserves was recognised as the primary factor for promoting responsible pet ownership in public areas. Signage within reserve provides direct guidance to visitors and dog owners regarding designated dog-friendly areas, boundaries, and regulations.

Well-positioned and clear signage can:

- Encourage better adherence to legislation and aids the Council in promoting responsible ownership.
- Help define areas for on leash, off-leash and dog prohibited areas, potentially reducing the need for extensive fencing and minimising confusion and conflicts with other reserve users and activities.

Currently, Council uses various signs indicating dog-prohibited areas, leash regulations, and associated rules like picking up after your dog. Some signs are text-heavy while others use simple graphics. Community feedback has highlighted confusion caused by differing signage styles, prompting a review to adopt a clearer, image-focused approach for conveying key messages.

Signage can fulfill the following functions:

- Educational messaging
- Boundary demarcation
- Identification of Dog friendly or Dog Prohibited areas
- Leash-specific guidelines (On-leash / Off-leash)
- Signage for shared spaces
- Environmental protection directives



Action – conduct an audit of all dog friendly and dog prohibited signage currently within the municipality. (short)



Action – review and update the design of the current signage for dog friendly spaces and dog prohibited areas. Ensure it is clear, consistent and easy to understand. (short/medium)



Action – conduct an audit of all dog off-leash areas and ensure signage and bollards and other infrastructure used to denote the dog off-leash is clear, visible and easy to identify. (short)



Action – review and update all dog off-leash areas and ensure signage and bollards and other infrastructure used to denote the dog off-leash is clear, visible and easy to identify. (short/medium)






Enforcement

The survey results and previous correspondence received by Council overwhelmingly shows that enforcement is a very important tool to ensuring compliance with rules relating to dogs in public spaces. Council's Compliance Officers enforce these rules using the Companion Animals Act 1998 and Local Government Act 1993. Council's Compliance Officers are responsible for regulating various dog-related issues within the community. While staff have achieved positive outcomes in enforcing these issues, the challenge lies in allocating resources effectively to ensure staff are present at the right time and place.

Many community concerns regarding dog management in public areas extend beyond designated dog-friendly spaces, focusing on broader issues of responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation. The success of dog-friendly spaces hinges on promoting responsible pet ownership and educating dog owners about their responsibilities when in public spaces.

Council's Compliance staff will maintain regular patrols of dog-friendly areas and address community complaints related to dogs in public spaces.




-  **Action** – increased presence of Compliance Officers in dog friendly and dog prohibited areas. (short)
-  **Action** – investigate tools that Compliance Officer can use to increase compliance with dog related legislation, this could include the purchase of additional microchip readers, use of a specialist vehicle to access off-leash areas on beaches. (short)
-  **Action** – investigate options for different incentives or education programs promoting responsible dog ownership. (medium)

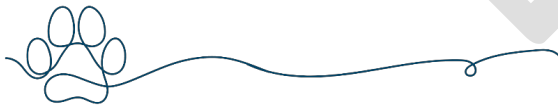


Community Education

One of the main challenges with operating dog-friendly spaces in the Kiama LGA is the occasional confusion among dog owners and non-dog owners regarding the precise locations of dog-friendly versus prohibited areas. This confusion can lead to conflicts between these groups. The source of this confusion includes outdated or unclear signage and information, as well as some owners not realising that specific spaces are designated dog prohibited areas, for example, sporting fields and children's play grounds. Where possible, when out in the field Compliance Officers aim to educate the public by advising owners if they are in breach of the relevant legislative requirements i.e. dog in a prohibited area. Our Compliance Team takes a graduated enforcement approach with education at the forefront of our practice. Currently, Council provides information about pet ownership and the location of [dog prohibited areas, dog on lead areas and off-leash](#) spaces on its [website](#).

The Council uses various communication channels such as brochures, social media, signage, public events, and community consultations to engage with the public. Survey results have emphasised the need for increased community education on Council regulations for dog owners and the responsibilities associated with having dogs in Open Spaces.

-  **Action** – investigate various education opportunities for responsible dog ownership. (medium)
-  **Action** – devise education programs for the community in relation to the requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998. Common noncompliance areas will be targeted as a priority. (medium)
-  **Action** – review and update the Dog Off-Leash Areas Conditions of Entry brochure every four years. (ongoing)







Expansion of the Dog Friendly Spaces

Staff consultations, desktop research, and site investigations were conducted to explore the potential for increasing the number of dog agility parks in the Kiama LGA. This process revealed opportunities to enhance existing off-leash spaces by adding fencing or agility equipment, as well as identifying new locations for additional dog off-leash areas throughout the LGA, pending grant funding opportunities or budget allocation.

Community consultation identified a strong desire for a fenced dog off-leash area. The main focus was for a dog off-leash area in Jamberoo as this is the only township that does not have a dog off-leash area.

In addition to this, community feedback has identified the disconnect for access to the coastal walking track in the vicinity of Easts Beach and Kendalls Beach, and the disconnected access between dog prohibited areas and Bombo Beach dog off-leash area.

Any expansion or enhancement of dog friendly spaces will be guided by several key factors, including community demand, areas expected to experience significant growth, site suitability, and consideration of native fauna habitats, particularly nesting shorebirds.

-  **Action** – investigate areas in the Jamberoo township that would be appropriate for a dog off-leash area with the potential of providing the first fenced dog off-leash area in the municipality. (short/medium)
-  **Action** – investigate areas with high non-compliance and determine whether moving the area or improving delineation would improve compliance. Bombo beach off-leash area has a high incidence of non-compliance where it is difficult for dog owners to access the site without entering dog prohibited areas. It may mean that the dog off-leash area is moved slightly north to accommodate better access.
-  **Action** – investigate the possibility of allowing dogs on lead on Kendalls Beach so that dogs and dog owners can access the Kiama Coast Walk (coastal walking track) to the south of Kendalls Beach.
-  **Action** – investigate the possibility of allowing dogs on lead on Easts Beach so that dogs and dog owners can access the Kiama Coast Walk (coastal walking track) to the south off Easts Beach.



Evaluation criteria for potential Dog Friendly Spaces

Expanding the dog off-leash network is contingent upon robust enforcement, the provision of supporting infrastructure for off-leash activities, and comprehensive community education.

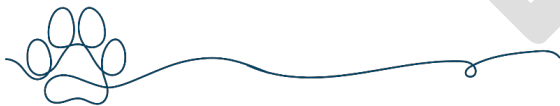
Factors to consider for identifying new sites may include:

- Community preference: Incorporating community input when selecting dog off-leash spaces.
- Network approach: Ensuring an equitable distribution of dog off-leash areas across the LGA.
- Emphasis on reserves: Prioritising reserves for their ample space and existing infrastructure that can accommodate dog off-leash areas alongside other recreational activities.
- Dog registration data: Using data on dog ownership concentrations to guide the placement of off-leash spaces.
- Reserve form and layout.
- Size, shape, and configuration of the park and off-leash area.
- Accessibility to and within the site.
- Compatibility with adjacent Reserve activities, such as organised sports.
- Consideration of conservation or environmental significance, including Council's major reserves, wetlands, and shorebird habitats.
- Reserve usage levels.
- Appropriate zoning and land classifications.

Utilising selection criteria to evaluate potential dog-friendly spaces offers a strategic approach to planning new areas for off-leash activities.



Action – establish a set of selection criteria to assess potential dog friendly spaces. (short/medium)



Site Design

After selecting a site for an off-leash or dog agility park, the next phase involves designing the space with careful consideration of essential elements, taking into account available space and budget constraints.

A well-designed dog-friendly space might include but may not be limited to:

- Ensuring the area is accessible and inclusive for people of all abilities.
- Drinking water station.
- Easy to maintain and accommodates machinery and equipment used to maintain the site.
- Incorporation of natural features such as rock scrambles.
- Use of durable surfaces capable of withstanding regular use.
- Installation of fencing, gates, seating, water stations, and shade structures.
- Landscaping with sufficient tree planting to provide natural shade.
- Provision of parking facilities and easy access from the parking area to the dog-friendly space.
- Segregated areas for large and small dogs.
- Rest areas for dogs to take breaks from park activities.
- Various activity zones like ball-play areas and spaces equipped with dog agility equipment.
- Access to dog waste bags and dog waste disposal bins.



Action – ensure any new and/or upgraded dog friendly spaces meet the design criteria and ensure they are safe and easy to use as well as maintain. (medium/long)



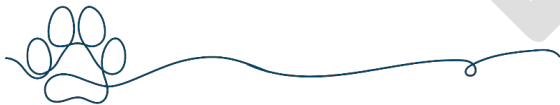
Funding

Expanding dog friendly spaces around the Municipality will impact on Council's compliance resources as increased patrols will be required. This could potentially result in the need for additional staff to monitor off-leash spaces, particularly if spaces become problematic and create conflict between open space users.





The expenses associated with developing new dog-friendly spaces like agility parks and off-leash areas will need to be sourced from capital works, developer contributions, and potentially grant funding.







Council has been successful in obtaining a grant for \$42,600 from the Premier's Department under the Local Small Commitments Allocation (LSCA) program. It is proposed that these funds will be used to fund a fenced dog off leash area.





Regardless of the nominated priorities and timeframes of each of Management Actions listed in this strategy, implementation will largely hinge on the availability of resources and funding.












Summary of Action Points




ACTION	TIMEFRAME	COSTINGS
 Action - continue education programs to inform dog owners of their responsibilities and consequences of having their dogs in public spaces. (short/medium)	Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action - investigate providing an equitable spread of new spaces across the Municipality to provide off-leash and dog agility spaces. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short/medium)	Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources and grant funding
 Action - investigate the suitability of providing a dog off-leash area at Jamberoo. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	Existing internal resources and grant funding
 Action - develop a policy position on circumstances where dogs should be allowed or prohibited at sporting fields while not in use. This decision will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (medium)	Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources

ACTION	TIMEFRAME	COSTINGS
 Action - develop a policy position on circumstances where dogs should be allowed or prohibited at markets. This decision will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (medium)	Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action - investigate the feasibility of providing a fenced dog off-leash area at Jamberoo. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	Existing internal resources and grant funding
 Action - when investigating a fenced off-leash area consider the option of having segregated areas for different sized dogs, including specific locations for each group. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	Existing internal resources and grant funding
 Action - investigate the cost of installation and maintenance of a dog pool. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (medium)	Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources and grant funding
 Action - report to Council to support the cessation of the dog on leash swimming area in Minnamurra River. (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action - when investigating the installation of a fenced dog off-leash area, ensure a (combined human and dog) hydration station is made available. (short)	Short term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources and grant funding

ACTION	TIMEFRAME	COSTINGS
 Action – conduct an audit of all dog friendly and dog prohibited signage currently within the municipality. This audit will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action – review and update the design of the current signage for dog friendly spaces and dog prohibited areas. Ensure it is clear, consistent and easy to understand. This review will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short/medium)	Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action – conduct an audit of all dog off-leash areas and ensure signage and bollards and other infrastructure used to denote the dog off-leash is clear, visible and easy to identify. This audit will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action – review and update all dog off-leash areas and ensure signage and bollards and other infrastructure used to denote the dog off-leash is clear, visible and easy to identify. This review will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short/medium)	Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources and cost of signage which is estimated to be \$15,000

ACTION	TIMEFRAME	COSTINGS
 Action - increased presence of Compliance Officers in dog friendly and dog prohibited areas. (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action - investigate tools that Compliance Officer can use to increase compliance with dog related legislation, this could include the purchase of additional microchip readers, use of a specialist vehicle to access off-leash areas on beaches. (short)	Short term (within 2 years)	\$200 for microchip reader \$8,000 for vehicle and trailer
 Action - investigate options for different incentives or education programs promoting responsible dog ownership. (medium)	Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action - investigate various education opportunities for responsible dog ownership. (medium)	Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources or grant funded
 Action - devise education programs for the community in relation to the requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998. Common noncompliance areas will be targeted as a priority. (medium)	Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources or grant funded
 Action - review and update the Dog Off-Leash Areas Conditions of Entry brochure every four years. This review will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (ongoing)	Ongoing	\$2,000

ACTION	TIMEFRAME	COSTINGS
 <p>Action - investigate areas in the Jamberoo township that would be appropriate for a dog off-leash area with the potential of providing the first fenced dog off-leash area in the municipality. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short/medium)</p>	<p>Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)</p>	<p>Existing internal resources or grant funded</p>
 <p>Action - investigate areas with high non-compliance and determine whether moving the area or improving delineation would improve compliance. Bombo beach off leash area has a high incidence of non-compliance where it is difficult to for dog owners to access the site without entering dog prohibited areas. It may mean that the dog off-leash area is moved slightly north to accommodate better access. (short/medium)</p>	<p>Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)</p>	<p>Existing internal resources</p>
 <p>Action - investigate the possibility of allowing dogs on lead on Kendalls Beach so that dogs and dog owners can access the Kiama Coast Walk (coastal walking track) to the south off Kendalls Beach. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short/medium)</p>	<p>Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)</p>	<p>Existing internal resources</p>

ACTION	TIMEFRAME	COSTINGS
 Action - investigate the possibility of allowing dogs on lead on Easts Beach so that dogs and dog owners can access the Kiama Coast Walk (coastal walking track) to the south of Easts Beach. This investigation will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short/medium)	Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action - establish a set of selection criteria to assess potential dog friendly spaces. This set of selection criteria will be used to inform the Open Spaces and Recreation Strategy. (short/medium)	Short term (within 2 years) to Medium term (within 2-5 years)	Existing internal resources
 Action - ensure any new and/or upgraded dog friendly spaces meet the design criteria and ensure they are safe and easy to use as well as maintain. (medium/long)	Medium term (within 2-5 years) to Long term (within 5-10 years)	Existing internal resources

References

In the development of Kiama Council's Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy the following documents were reviewed:

- Shellharbour City Council Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy 2019
- Blue Mountains City Council Dogs in Public Spaces Strategic Plan 2017
- City of Bayside –Dog Off-Leash Policy 28 September 2022
- City of Greater Dandenong Dog Off Leash Strategy 2019
- Maitland City Council – Off Leash Dog Exercise Area Strategy 2013
- NSW Office of Local Government
- Paws for Play
- NSW Companion Animals Act 1998
- NSW Local Government Act 1993

Available on request

- Online survey questions / summary
- Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy Community Engagement summary report





Community Engagement Report Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy

Phase 1: Consultation (co-design)
23 February - 22 March 2024

Item 15.1

Attachment 2

Background

Council resolved to prepare a Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy (the Strategy). On 12 April 2022 a Council resolution was passed to undertake the development of a 5 year Companion Animals Management Plan, the Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy makes up part of this plan. This plan will provide a strategic approach to the future management of our dog friendly spaces.

The formulation of the Strategy is based on the combination of community consultation and best practice learnt from other Council spaces and related documentation.

The Strategy is linked with Kiama Council's Community Strategic Plan objectives and strategies strongly tied to Pillar 1 – We belong and contribute.

Outcome 1.2: We love where we live; we have the services and facilities we need, and the natural beauty of our surroundings enhances our safe, active and healthy lifestyle.

1.2.1 Provide facilities that enable us to participate in social, cultural, recreational and sports activities, no matter our background, ability or age.

1.2.1.2 Partner with the stakeholders to develop a Strategy for Open Spaces and Recreation Places within the Kiama Local Government Area

1.2.3 Look after each other in times of disaster.

1.2.3.2 Maintain public order and safety in accordance with the Local Government Act through implementing the requirements of the Companion Animals Management Act and Regulations (registration, off-leash area, impounding facilities, and compliance requirements).

Our operational plan identifies the development of a Companion Animals Management Plan.

Consultation

Consultation was conducted internally with Compliance, Property and Engineering staff in relation to the challenges they currently face and the first hand feedback that they receive from customers.

Community consultation consisted of a combination of previous feedback and correspondence to Council and an online survey.

The survey sought feedback from participants on existing dog friendly spaces. The survey also invited suggestions on what Council can do to improve dog friendly spaces and how to find a balance between the needs of dog owners and those of the wider community.

A copy of the survey questions is provided in Appendix 1 of this report.

The survey had 533 responses with 76% being dog owners, and 20% identifying as non-dog owners. The remaining responses were made up from visitors to the area.

The survey results and comments have provided information that has helped to inform the preparation of the Strategy. In addition to the survey, Council has used previous community correspondence to Council including complaints, reports of dog attacks and general feedback on dogs in public spaces to help inform the Strategy.

Feedback from community consultation and previous correspondence to Council indicates that overall the existing off-leash spaces are operating well with most concerns being focussed on responsible dog ownership and that there is a desire for Council to provide a fenced dog off-leash area in the Municipality.



Key findings

Where do dog owners exercise their dogs?

The survey found that most dog owners choose to exercise in and around their own neighbourhood with 82% of respondents falling in the category. The most popular dog off-leash area being Bombo Beach showing that 43% of respondents choose to exercise their dogs at this location. Jones Beach (37%), Minnamurra Headland (33%) and Bombo Headland (32%) off-leash areas following close behind.

What were the most important amenities in dog off-leash areas?

Dog owners strongly indicated that the provision of dog waste bags and bins was the most important amenity for a dog off-leash area with 87% of respondents specifying this. The survey showed that 63% of dog owners responded that drinking water facilities were an important feature of a dog off-leash area. At 48% tree shade and at 46% clear signage were both shown to be important features of a dog off-leash area.

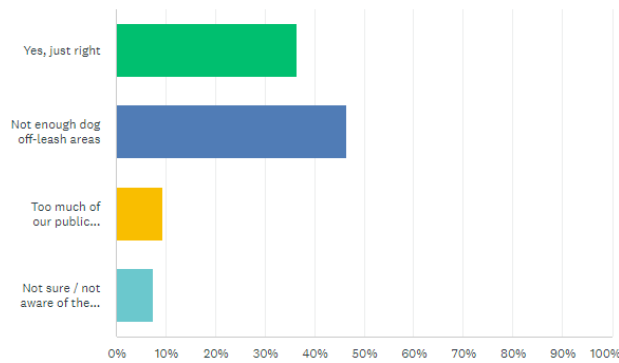
Do the current dog off-leash areas provide a good balance for sharing our public spaces?

47% of respondents felt that there was not enough dog off-leash areas and 37% felt that the balance was just right. 13% of respondents thought there was enough dog off-leash spaces and didn't see the need to provide further dog off-leash area. Of the non-dog owners 9% indicated that there were too many dog off-leash spaces.

When analysing the data it is clear that dog owners are strongly in favour of an educational response from Council with upgrading of signage being a suggestion to improving compliance. However, non-dog owners have indicated that regulation in the form of active patrols, increased enforcement and fines are approaches that could achieve better compliance.

Do the current (nine) dog off-leash areas provide a good balance for sharing our public spaces?

Answered: 490 Skipped: 43



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, just right	36.53%	179
Not enough dog off-leash areas	46.53%	228
Too much of our public spaces are dog off-leash areas	9.39%	46
Not sure / not aware of the dedicated spaces	7.55%	37
TOTAL		490

Preferred location for a new dog off-leash area?

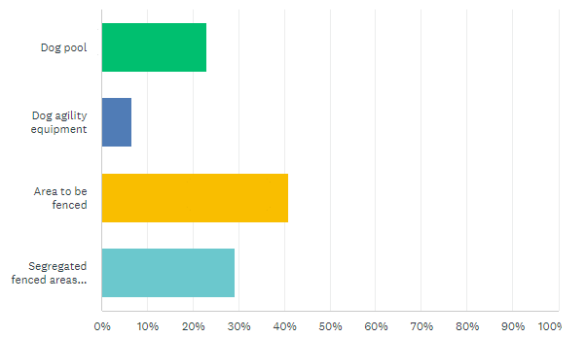
A majority of respondents identified Jamberoo as the preferred location for a potential future dog off-leash area. Other locations mentioned were Chapman Oval, Gainsborough, Easts Beach, Kendall’s Beach, Hindmarsh Park, and sporting fields.

What features would you like to see in a dog off-leash area?

Of the options provided the majority (41%) of respondents indicated that the most important feature for a dog off-leash area is fencing followed by segregated fenced areas.

If the Council had the resources and budget to create an additional dog off-leash area, what key feature would you like to see included? (Select your top 2)

Answered: 417 Skipped: 116

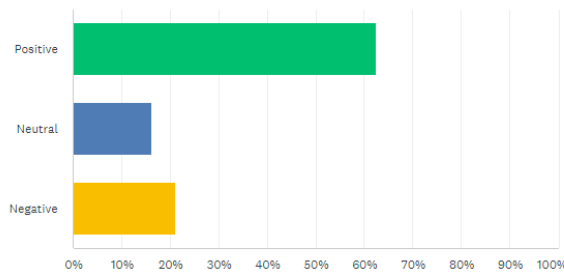


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Dog pool	23.02% 96
Dog agility equipment	6.71% 28
Area to be fenced	41.01% 171
Segregated fenced areas for small vs large dogs	29.26% 122
TOTAL	417

Overall experience of dogs in our public spaces

What is your overarching experience of dogs in our public spaces?

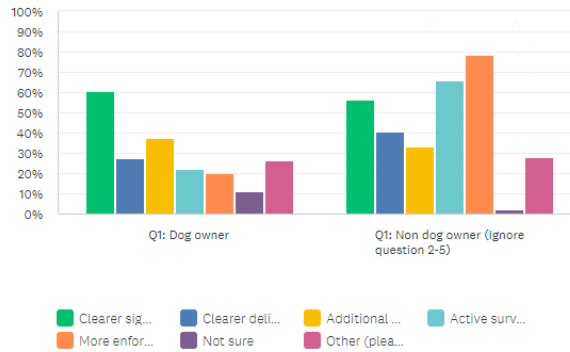
Answered: 505 Skipped: 28



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Positive	62.57% 316
Neutral	16.24% 82
Negative	21.19% 107
TOTAL	505

How can Council encourage responsible pet ownership and behaviour within our public spaces? (Select all that apply)

Answered: 487 Skipped: 21



	CLEARER SIGNAGE	CLEARER DELINEATION	ADDITIONAL EDUCATION	ACTIVE SURVEILLANCE AND CHECKING REGISTRATION THROUGH PATROLS.	MORE ENFORCEMENT AND FINES	NOT SURE	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	TOTAL
Q1: Dog owner	60.78% 234	27.27% 105	37.14% 143	22.34% 86	19.74% 76	10.91% 42	26.23% 101	101
Q1: Non dog owner (ignore question 2-5)	56.31% 56	40.78% 42	33.01% 34	66.02% 68	78.64% 81	1.94% 2	28.16% 29	29
Total Respondents	291	147	177	154	157	44	130	

We are generally aware dog owners

Awareness of Council regulations and responsible pet ownership is relatively high, with the opportunity for more awareness on:

- Dogs not being allowed on or off-leash within 10m of children's playground equipment, food preparation areas (public barbeques and kiosks), and active recreation areas (during the play of an organised sport)
- Uncollected dog poo washing into a waterway can create bacteria and make the water unsafe for swimming

Conclusion

The feedback from the community and other stakeholders indicates that generally that the dog off-leash spaces are working well with the major concerns being responsible dog ownership, the provision of a dog off-leash area in the Jamberoo township and a fenced dog-off-leash area to be provided. The Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy will aim to address these concerns and actions. In addition to this, the Strategy will seek to provide consistent rules and signage for these spaces.

Community quotes

"Please don't reduce the number of off-leash areas! It's so important for dogs (and their people) to have spaces to run and play."

"My biggest concern with current area relates to access to the Bombo beach site. When accessing this area from the north the only permitted way to get there is by walking along the road. There is no footpath or speed humps to slow traffic. It is dangerous on busy days or when cars speed along that road (which is often). I have been told off by rangers and life guards for walking my dog (on lead) along the beach to the off-leash area but to me it's the safest option."

"Jamberoo - an off-leash area required. We have family with a dog who have moved to Jamberoo."

"The coastal walk at easts beach needs clearer signage for passing through the area with a dog (on lead). The caravan park won't allow access and the signs indicate dogs aren't allowed on the beach or in the creek."

"Unfortunately there is a segment of the community that does not respect guidelines and make it difficult for owners, that includes owners that place droppings in bag and then drop the bag."

"There is way too many areas that are dog off-leash. I don't feel safe at the dog beaches so am very selective as to when I visit them. During lockdown I tried to face my fear and exercise at Bombo as it was close to my home and nice to walk along, but I was surprised how many dog owners were not taking responsibility for their dog and also assumed I wanted to interact with their dog. Already many people walk their dogs off-lead on rocks around Bombo and the coast track too. Can some of the areas be timed like in the Shoalhaven eg between the hours of 4pm and 8am?"

"Our experience is that people walking around the streets don't pick up after their dog. Signs and plenty of poo bags might help, but it's usually the people who don't leash their dog that don't pick up."

"In my experience of walking in the Jones Beach and Minnamurra Headland area dogs are off-leash in non designated areas and dog prints often evident near the signs to Jones Beach that state "No Dog to enter the beach at the point" obviously the sign is ignored."

"Would love to see more off-leash areas in Kiama."

"Often I find dogs off-leash in the No Dogs Past This Point on the beach. Also we have continual trouble with owners of dogs not picking up after their dog on our footpath."

"Any expansion of these areas should not involve any loss of amenity to adjoining property owners and to people who normally use the area for recreation. It is vital that significant native vegetation and bush regeneration projects or wildlife should not be put at risk. There should be clearer and sufficient signage to adequately delineate the boundaries of the off-leash area. There should be at least 2 entrances / exits for any off-leash area and no blind spots so that dogs are always exercising in direct view of owners. Off-leash areas should not include through roads or paths frequently used by bike riders and walkers. There should be a concerted education campaign for dog owners using off-leash areas and all other public spaces."

"I think that the Kiama Council area is treated as a dog off lead area. over the summer period, we have had 10-15 dogs off-lead per day on the Minnamurra River Reserve on Charles Avenue. This is an accident looking for a place to happen. There are plenty of signs ignored by dog owners clearly stating the need for on leash dogs. Such is life in Kiama Council Area which makes you anxious with small grand children in the river."

"Congratulations to Kiama Council for initiating this survey and soliciting input from the Kiama community. This is an important issue and hopefully the community feedback will support the Council to finesse the 'right' balance for dogs and dog owners, and pooch loving but non-dog owners, to all enjoy and responsibly share the open spaces of our beautiful open spaces."

Next steps

The Draft Strategy was endorsed by Council for public exhibition at its Ordinary Meeting on [date] as follows:
[Resolution detail]

Next steps

- 1. Council consideration**
Draft strategy will be reported to the Council for consideration.
- 2. Public exhibition**
The Draft Strategy will go on formal public exhibition for 28 days, providing you with another chance to have your say.
- 3. Consideration feedback**
Any feedback received during the exhibition period will be considered and incorporate where relevant.
- 4. Council endorsement**
The final Strategy will go to Council for endorsement, including a report outlining how feedback received during the consultation phase shaped the final Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy.

Have your say: [Dogs in Public Spaces Kiama Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/dogs-in-public-spaces)

Appendix 1

Copy of Survey Questions

Q1 How do you identify? (select all that apply)

- Dog owner
- Non dog owner
- Kiama Local
- Visitor

Q2 Dog owners only. Where do you take your dog(s) to exercise? (Select all that apply)

- Around my neighbourhood
- Bombo Beach (dog off-leash area)
- Bombo Headland (dog off-leash area)
- Kaleula Reserve (dog off-leash area)
- Marsden Headland (dog off-leash area)
- Jones Beach (dog off-leash area)
- Minnamurra Headland (dog off-leash area)
- Werri Beach (dog off-leash area)
- Gerringong Headland (dog off-leash area)
- Blackhead Reserve Gerroa (dog off-leash area)
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

Q3 Dog owners only. What are the most important amenities in dog off-leash areas? (Select your top 3)

- Clear signage
- Tree shade
- Seating
- Drinking water facilities
- Provision of dog waste bags and bins
- Accessible parking
- Toilets nearby
- Children playground nearby
- Other (please specify)
- None of the above

Q4 Dog owners only Are you aware that...? (Select all that apply)

- The NSW Government has three education programs targeting responsible pet ownership and safe pet interaction – We are Family: Home (nsw.gov.au)
- Dogs are not allowed on or off-leash within 10m of children's playground equipment, food preparation areas (public barbeques and kiosks), and active recreation areas (during the play of an organised sport)
- Uncollected dog poo washing into a waterway can create bacteria and make the water unsafe for swimming
- All pet dogs must be registered with Council as part of the NSW Companion Animal Register
- Dogs must be microchipped before 6 months of age
- Dog owners must always effectively control their dog(s) in a designated off-leash area. Effective control means their dog returns immediately when called, doesn't approach strangers uninvited and is under constant supervision

- Microchipping and registration make it easier to reunite a lost pet with its family
- People walking dogs must carry a bag to collect dog poo
- Dogs must be on leash at all times in public spaces, unless in an area designated off-leash

Q5 What is your overarching experience of dogs in our public spaces?

- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

Q6 How can Council encourage responsible pet ownership and behaviour within our public spaces? (Select all that apply)

- Clearer signage
- Clear delineation
- Additional education
- Active surveillance and checking registration through patrols
- More enforcement and fines
- Not sure
- Other (please specify)

Q7 Do the current (nine) dog off-leash areas provide a good balance for sharing our public spaces?

- Yes, just right
- Not enough dog off-leash areas
- Too much of our public spaces are dog off-leash areas
- Not sure/ not aware of the dedicated spaces

Q8 What would be your preferred location in our community for a potential future dog off-leash area?

Q9 If the Council had the resources and budget to create an additional dog off-leash area, what key feature would you like to see included? (Select your top 2)

- Dog pool
- Dog agility equipment
- Area to be fenced
- Segregated fenced areas for small vs large dogs

Q10 Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

Q11 (Optional) Leave your email address to stay in the loop with the developments of the Dog Friendly Spaces Strategy