



## **Shoalhaven City Council**

### **Access Areas for Dogs Policy Review**

### **Community Engagement Summary Report**

*7 December 2021*

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## Section 1: Executive Summary

### 1.1 Engagement purpose, approach and participation

Shoalhaven City Council is undertaking a comprehensive review of its Access Areas for Dogs Policy and Dog Off-Leash Guide. It is important that the community and relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to share their views on the review of the Policy, Guide and its implementation approach. Council and Gauge Consulting conducted a comprehensive engagement process to gather community and stakeholder input, including:

	Stakeholder Workshops	Community Working Groups	Online Survey / Drop-In Sessions	Council Submissions
<b>Approach</b>	Internal Council Staff and relevant external stakeholders met to share their team's needs and interests in relation to the Access Areas for Dogs Policy Review, as well as suggestions.	All 123 self-nominated community members of the Community Working Group were invited to join one of five focus groups, which each met twice to share their needs and interests, propose shared criteria for success and share their preferences for (i) different access areas, (ii) the allocation of funds for the Policy and (iii) off-leash area messaging.	Council distributed an online survey covering the Community Working Group's draft criteria, the timing and location of access areas, signage, amenities, information initiatives, enforcement and more.  Council also held five public drop-in sessions to answer community questions and hear their views.	The community was also welcome to make direct submissions to Council throughout the process. Council will consider these alongside Gauge's Summary Outcomes Report.
<b>Who was engaged</b>	Representatives from various Council teams attended the Internal Workshop.  The External Workshop was attended by NSW Government Departments, National Parks & Wildlife and local tourism bodies.	The 123 community working group members included people from a range of demographics reflecting the make-up of the Shoalhaven community, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog Owners</li> <li>• Non-Dog Owners</li> <li>• Members of CCBs</li> <li>• Dog Trainers</li> <li>• Business Operators</li> <li>• People living with disability</li> <li>• Shorebird Rescue</li> </ul>	Of the 1396 survey respondents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80.6% were residents, 14.6% ratepayers (but not full time residents) and 4.8% were visitors</li> <li>• 84% were dog owners or carers of some description and 16% did not own a dog</li> <li>• 58% were aged between 50-69 years, with all age brackets (from 0-18yrs up to 85yrs+) represented to some degree</li> </ul> A total of 216 community members were engaged at the five public drop-in sessions.	Council received 108 submissions from residents, visitors and community groups from the commencement of the Policy review project and throughout the wider community engagement period.

## 1.2 Key insights

The outputs of these community engagement activities are summarised in this report. The following table highlights 39 particularly useful findings for Council to consider during the review process and the development of the revised Policy. Gauge strongly recommends reading the entirety of this report for a full appreciation of community and stakeholder contributions.

<p><b>Shared criteria for success</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Community Working Group developed a shared criteria for Council to use as the basis for assessing possible allocations of spaces and deciding on approaches to implementing the revised Policy. This criteria was further refined following survey feedback. It is displayed here in order of overall importance to survey respondents:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The revised policy provides <b>accessible dog-friendly spaces and facilities</b> that support the health and wellbeing of dogs and their owners</li> <li>b. The revised policy supports the <b>safe and satisfactory co-existence</b> of dogs with other users of the space (e.g. families, sportspeople), as well as providing dog-free public and natural spaces</li> <li>c. The revised policy helps to <b>protect the natural environment</b>, especially threatened and endangered wildlife (e.g. shorebirds)</li> <li>d. The revised policy is <b>simple and logical</b>, aligned with best practice, and based on research and consultation</li> <li>e. The revised policy <b>sets owners up for success</b>, with effective education and amenities provided to give owners every chance to do the right thing</li> <li>f. The revised policy <b>enables effective enforcement</b> when people don't do the right thing, especially to help keep people and dogs safe</li> <li>g. The revised policy <b>supports local tourism</b> (recognising visitors are attracted by the natural beauty and the dog-friendliness of the area)</li> <li>h. The revised policy provides <b>consistent, positive messaging</b> – including signage – that is easy to find and that clearly explains the 'why' behind dog access or prohibited areas</li> <li>i. The revised policy includes the <b>resources</b> to support ongoing implementation of the policy</li> <li>j. The revised policy is <b>compliant</b> with all relevant State legislation</li> <li>k. The revised policy includes <b>collaborative efforts and input</b> from Council teams, State Government agencies and industry or volunteer organisations</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Spending priorities</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Council used the above criteria to prepare potential spending categories for the implementation of the Policy. The Community Working Group ranked these categories to indicate which they believed were most important to direct funds towards. Overall, they were ranked as follows:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>Clearly communicated</b> – Spending on signage and other communications</li> <li>b. <b>Environmentally-friendly (protection)</b> – Spending on environmental assessments, impact mitigation and protection</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>c. <b>Dog-friendly (spaces)</b> – Spending on additional or expanded access areas</li> <li>d. <b>Dog-friendly (infrastructure)</b> – Spending on improved infrastructure at existing access areas</li> <li>e. <b>People-friendly (well-enforced)</b> – Spending on enforcement of the Policy</li> <li>f. <b>People-friendly (preventative)</b> – Spending on education for dog owners and general users</li> <li>g. <b>Logical and collaborative</b> – Spending on Policy satisfaction, engagement with key agencies and research for continual improvement</li> </ul>
Clearly communicated	<p>Suggestions for <b>communications and signage</b>, gathered through the engagement, can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Provide accurate and consistent information – including consistency across the local government area (LGA) and with state agencies – so the Policy is easy to understand, follow and enforce</li> <li>4. Improve signage, including by better positioning them (i.e. at entrances and transition points) and using messaging on owner responsibilities and the importance of all community members being considerate of others using the area</li> <li>5. Support signage with a mix of other resources (e.g. widely distributed print materials, letters to dog owners and/or in-depth online resources) and the exploration of new technologies and channels (e.g. QR codes, video, social media campaigns and search engine optimisation), including by partnering with other agencies to deliver</li> <li>6. Use positive messaging that explains the ‘why’ behind access area allocations and restrictions, including to help build community understanding and tolerance of other users</li> <li>7. Make it easy for people to find and identify access areas on maps, including with interactive versions (e.g. a mobile/web app)</li> <li>8. When communicating expectations for the control of dogs in off-leash areas, use succinct and plain English that puts the onus on the owner and provide a clear description and/or examples of what ‘effective control’ means</li> </ul>
Environmentally-friendly	<p>Suggestions for <b>environmental protection</b>, gathered through the engagement, can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Assess potential environmental impacts before allocating dog access areas, including with consideration for impacts on flora and fauna (especially shorebird nesting sites) and to meet legislative requirements</li> <li>10. Direct Ranger efforts towards environmental protection</li> <li>11. Alert area users of any sensitivities and what actions they can take to protect the environment</li> </ul>
Dog-friendly (spaces)	<p>Findings related to the <b>location and timing of access areas</b>, gathered through the engagement, can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Overall, survey respondents were mostly supportive of <i>more</i> of all types of off-leash areas</li> <li>13. Most non-dog-owning survey respondents (56%) wanted less off-leash areas overall, and less off-leash beach areas (75% <i>voted for less</i>)</li> <li>14. Non-dog-owning survey respondents’ views on non-beach areas were mixed but they were more supportive of off-leash fenced areas (66% <i>voted for more of these</i>)</li> </ul>

	<p>15. The majority of dog owners or carers who completed the survey preferred to exercise their dogs between 8-10am and 4-6pm, with the next popular timeslots falling just before these at <i>pre-8am</i> and between 2-4pm. The middle of the day, between 12-2pm, was the least popular timeslot</p> <p>16. Respondents generally opposed removing timed access to allow for a simpler allocation of 24/7 or <i>no dog access</i>, mainly because they would not tolerate the potential, slight reduction of off-leash areas that could result from this change</p> <p>17. When presented with potential improvements to the location and timing of areas, the most popular among survey respondents (aided by a strong push by dog owners) was <i>increased off-leash access during quiet times of year</i>, followed by <i>use of vacant/unused land</i> (which received strong support from both dog owners and non-dog owners)</p> <p>18. Participants encouraged Council to consider the accessibility of areas, particularly in terms of proximity to residents and tourists</p> <p>19. The following percentages indicate which of the following options Community Working Group members preferred or thought were more appropriate when the proximity of access areas was taken into account:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A short walk from home to a <i>non-beach</i> dog access area (52% of the vote) vs a short drive to a <i>beach</i> access area (48%)</li> <li>b. A short walk to a <i>timed</i> area (50%) vs a short drive to a 24/7 area (50%)</li> <li>c. A short walk to an <i>on-leash</i> area (35%) vs a short drive to an <i>off-leash</i> area (65%)</li> <li>d. A short walk to an area <i>without amenities</i> (60%) vs a short drive to an area <i>with amenities</i> (40%)</li> </ul> <p>20. Participants expressed mixed views on whether Council should use communication and education initiatives to improve people's respect for/ tolerance of other users of the same space or whether it should aim to avoid allocating dog access areas in spaces with many other users or uses</p>
Dog-friendly (infrastructure)	<p>Findings related to the <b>infrastructure/amenities in access areas</b>, gathered through the engagement, can be summarised as follows:</p> <p>21. <i>Dog waste bags and bins</i> were by far the most popular of the access area amenities presented in the survey, followed by <i>drinking water for dogs, fencing or suitable distance from roads, and greater accessibility for people of all abilities</i></p> <p>22. More Community Working Group members indicated that they preferred (or thought it more appropriate to) take a short walk from home to a dog access area <i>without amenities</i> (60%) than a short drive to an area <i>with amenities</i> (40%). Many participants suggested dog owners could provide their own poo bags and water and that people were more likely to be persuaded to drive to an area if its amenities were unique (e.g. a natural environment, agility equipment, separate spaces for small and large dogs)</p> <p>23. Community Working Group members advised that community associations or clubs would likely be able to help monitor and restock local poo bag dispensers if the dispensers and bags (ideally biodegradable) were supplied by Council</p>
People-friendly (well-enforced)	<p>Suggestions for <b>enforcement</b>, gathered through the engagement, can be summarised as follows:</p> <p>24. Use enforcement methods as an effective and accepted part of the policy but as a last resort</p> <p>25. The highest ranked enforcement initiative in the survey (aided by a strong push from dog owners) was for '<i>rangers to educate dog owners in the first instance</i>', while non-dog owners ranked '<i>improved ranger visibility</i>' the highest</p>

	<p>26. Views in survey responses were mixed as to whether rangers should take a <i>friendlier</i> approach (e.g. seeking to educate owners, weighing up circumstances or giving warnings before fining) or a <i>firmer</i> one (e.g. issuing consistent and heavy fines)</p> <p>27. Ranger resources should be most focused on protecting the community from dangerous dogs</p> <p>28. A channel should be available for the community to report non-compliance</p>
People-friendly (preventative)	<p>Suggestions for <b>preventative educative approaches</b>, gathered through the engagement, can be summarised as follows:</p> <p>29. Educate dog owners and non-dog owners on the Policy, the reason for area allocations and requirements for users in each area</p> <p>30. Use ranger interactions and ‘pop up tents’ or similar to educate the users of an area, especially during busy periods</p> <p>31. Leverage education opportunities at key points in the pet ownership journey (e.g. dog registration, vet visits, pet stores, kennels)</p> <p>32. Provide information for the tourism industry to share (e.g. social media posts, website information, ‘Holidaying with Pets’ packs)</p> <p>33. Coordinate and provide materials for community champions, volunteer groups and/or schools to promote positive ‘pet culture’ to residents and visitors</p>
Logical and collaborative	<p>Suggestions for <b>logical</b> and <b>collaborative</b> decision-making and implementation, gathered through the engagement, can be summarised as follows:</p> <p>34. Consistently apply a clear criteria for the strategic allocation of access areas across the LGA</p> <p>35. Transparently explain to Councillors and the community how engagement outputs and other evidence informed Council’s final recommendations</p> <p>36. Simplify the Policy where possible (e.g. avoiding different rules in parts of the same area)</p> <p>37. Incorporate data in decision-making, including population density and trends, the rate and growth of dog ownership, current area usage and baselines for access based on similar LGAs</p> <p>38. Collaborate with relevant state agencies and organisations to share insights, align maps and messaging, and prepare joint communications materials or campaigns</p> <p>39. Incorporate the revised Policy in Council’s strategic planning documentation and design a process for formally evaluating and reviewing the Policy (with the help of the community) once it is implemented</p>

### 1.3 Next steps

Gauge Consulting’s Summary Outcomes Report (this document) will inform Council’s review of its Access Areas for Dogs Policy and the development of the revised Policy. It will be tabled along with Council’s own report at a Council meeting in early 2022. Council’s report will cover the outputs of the community engagement, as well as a recommended way forward for the Policy.

## Section 2: Introduction

### 2.1 Engagement purpose

Shoalhaven City Council is undertaking a comprehensive review of Council's Access Areas for Dogs Policy and Guide. These documents provide important information on the location and community use requirements of off-leash dog areas, as well as dog owner responsibilities across the Shoalhaven Local Government Area.

It is important that the community and relevant stakeholders have the opportunity to share their views on the review of the Access Areas Dogs Policy, Guide and implementation approach. Council and Gauge have conducted a comprehensive engagement process to gather stakeholder and community input, which is summarised in this report and will be used as an input into Council's review and policy development.

### 2.2 Engagement approach

The following table outlines the series of engagement activities.

Stakeholder Workshops (Internal & External)	Community Working Group (First Round)	Online Survey & Drop-In Sessions	Community Working Group (Second Round)	Council Submissions
Internal Council Staff and relevant external stakeholders met to share their team's needs and interests in relation to the Access Areas for Dogs Policy Review, as well as suggestions.	<p>The Community Working Group was a pool of 123 people who submitted an expression of interest to Council's Get Involved page.</p> <p>Each member was invited to one of five focus groups to share their needs and interests and propose shared criteria for success.</p>	<p>Council received 1396 responses to an online survey covering the Community Working Group's draft criteria, the timing and location of access areas, signage, amenities, information initiatives, enforcement and more.</p> <p>At the same time, a total of 216 community members were engaged at the five public drop-in sessions held by Council staff. The public asked questions of the team and shared their views on the Policy Review. Gauge did not attend these drop-ins due to COVID-19 restrictions and so the themes from these sessions have been provided by Council.</p>	The Community Working Group members were again invited to one of five groups, this time to share their preferences for (i) different access areas, (ii) for the allocation of funds for the Policy and (iii) for off-leash area messaging.	<p>The community was also welcome to make direct submissions to Council throughout the process. A summary of these submissions has been provided by Council for the appendices of this report (see Appendix 1).</p> <p>Council will consider these alongside Gauge's Summary Outcomes Report.</p>

## 2.3 Who was engaged

The following table provides an overview of who was engaged through each activity.

Stakeholder Workshops (Internal & External)	Community Working Group	Online Survey & Drop-In Sessions	Council Submissions
<p>Representatives from various Council teams attended the Internal Workshop, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ranger Services</li> <li>• Shoalhaven Animal Shelter</li> <li>• Tourism</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Strategic Planning</li> <li>• Property</li> <li>• Environmental Services</li> <li>• Precincts</li> </ul> <p>The External Workshop was attended by the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jervis Bay Marine Park / Department of Primary Industry</li> <li>• Department of Planning, Industry &amp; Environment</li> <li>• National Parks &amp; Wildlife</li> <li>• Destination NSW</li> <li>• Destination Sydney Surrounds South</li> <li>• Shoalhaven Tourism Advisory Group</li> </ul>	<p>The pool of 123 Community Working Group members included people from a range of demographics and perspectives, reflecting the make-up of the Shoalhaven community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog Owners</li> <li>• Non-Dog Owners</li> <li>• Members of Community Consultative Bodies (CCBs)</li> <li>• Dog Trainers</li> <li>• Business Operators</li> <li>• People living with disability</li> <li>• Shorebird Rescue</li> </ul> <p>All members were invited to both rounds of focus groups. Round 1 of the focus groups was attended by 69 participants. Round 2 of the focus groups was attended by 51 participants.</p>	<p>Of the 1396 survey respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80.6% were residents, 14.6% ratepayers (but not full time residents) and 4.8% were visitors</li> <li>• 84% were dog owners or carers of some description and 16% did not own a dog</li> <li>• 58% were aged between 50-69 years, with all age brackets (from 0-18yrs up to 85yrs+) represented to some degree</li> </ul> <p>216 community members visited one of the five Council-hosted drop-in sessions.</p>	<p>Council received 108 submissions from residents, visitors and community groups from the commencement of the Policy review project and throughout the wider community engagement period.</p>

In addition to the above, Councillors John Levett, Patricia White, Mark Kitchener and Amanda Findley (Mayor) also chose to meet one-on-one with Gauge Consulting to share a number of themes they believed should be considered during the process, including safety and impacts on other users of a space, environmental protection, dog owner responsibilities and enforcement, signage and other communications, area amenities, and the timing and location of access areas. They also emphasised the benefits of detailed analysis and broad stakeholder and community engagement for logically determining access areas.

## ***2.4 Potential process limitation***

Gauge acknowledges that Council opted to not require respondents to complete a registration process or provide personal details prior to completing the survey, which means it was technically possible for the survey to be completed by the same person multiple times.

It is understood that Council's decision was based on the following logic:

1. The registration process is a well-known barrier for participation as it requires the user to have a higher level of motivation to complete the survey. Similarly, not allowing respondents sufficient anonymity can deter respondents from answering honestly
2. While the registration process may have helped deter users from making repeat entries, the engagement platform (<https://www.bangthetable.com/engagementhq-community-software>) would not have stopped users from creating multiple accounts

The survey data suggests that the 1,396 survey responses were received from 1,349 devices. These 47 duplicates may have been attempts by individuals to complete the survey multiple times or may be from other members of the household legitimately completing it for themselves.

Due to this potential limitation, Gauge recommends that raw survey numbers are not used as the sole basis for decision-making. Gauge has broken down survey responses by different perspectives (e.g. dog owner, non-dog owner) to assist Council in understanding the unique needs and interests of different community members. The focus groups also enabled Council to further understand the nuances in the full range of community views. The shared criteria for success, prepared in these focus groups, should be used as the primary basis for decision-making.

## Section 3: Stakeholder internal workshop

### 3.1 Needs and interests

The following are a summary of the needs and interests proposed by Council staff at the internal stakeholder workshop:

- Simple, clear, logical policy that we stick to (including criteria for strategic allocation of access areas)
- Consistent information sharing, including to support enforceability
- Strategic and effective education on the Policy
- Environmental protection, particularly native fauna
- Safe and satisfactory co-existence with other space users
- Dog-friendly and accessible options for the health and wellbeing of dogs and their owners, as well as to support local tourism
- Coordinated Council efforts (e.g. on rationalising asset tracks, the Local Strategic Planning Statement and property legalities)
- Ongoing budget allocated to support the Policy

### 3.2 Suggestions

The group identified a number of challenges for the implementation of the Policy, along with suggestions for how these might be addressed:

Challenge	Suggestions
What criteria might we use for assigning access areas?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Establish a checklist for assessment prior to assigning (e.g. considering potential for conflict with other users, environmental impacts, adjoining supporting assets, water sources etc.)</li><li>• Consider the Native Title and the Crown Land Management Act</li><li>• Consider proximity to urban areas and tourist precincts or businesses</li><li>• Strategically consider environmental factors and impacts, including proximity of an area to sensitive environments or fauna (e.g. nesting sites)</li><li>• Simplify area allocation (e.g. to avoid differing rules in parts of a given area)</li><li>• Factor in population density</li></ul>
How might signage be more effective?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create signage that is:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Clear, engaging and easy to understand</li><li>○ Consistent and in line with legislative requirements</li><li>○ Highly visual, including for users from different language groups</li></ul></li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appropriately placed</li> <li>• Support signage with a mix of other resources (e.g. online, print, QR codes)</li> </ul>
<b>How might we consistently and effectively educate dog owners (and other users)?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use QR codes or similar to easily link people to educative materials (e.g. Council's website)</li> <li>• Leverage education opportunities at key points (e.g. dog registration, vet visits, pet stores, kennels)</li> <li>• Leverage tourism industry support (e.g. social media, websites)</li> <li>• Leverage schools to empower kids to educate their parents</li> <li>• Leverage ranger presence as an opportunity to educate (e.g. pop up tents)</li> <li>• Targeted social media campaigns or events</li> </ul>
<b>How might Council work effectively with Councillors to develop and implement an enduring Policy and approach?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage Councillors in the Review process</li> <li>• Conduct comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement and share these insights with Councillors, along with how they have led to the revised Policy</li> <li>• Seek agreement on a process and timing for formal reviews of the Policy</li> </ul>
<b>How might we support safe, shared spaces and mitigate environmental impacts?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct proper assessments to meet legislative requirements</li> <li>• Support improved understanding among stakeholders of their diverse needs and the sharing of resources</li> <li>• Take a holistic approach to land use / precinct planning</li> </ul>

## Section 4: Stakeholder external workshop

### 4.1 Needs and interests

The following are a summary of the needs and interests proposed by stakeholder representatives at the external stakeholder workshop:

- Easy-to-find, user-friendly dog access areas and facilities, including to support local tourism
- Responsible dog ownership and avoidance of shorebird sites or other environmental no-go areas
- Inter-organisation collaboration to support consistent approaches and messaging (including signage) and compliance (i.e. preventative approaches)
- Positively-framed messaging that explains clear and strategic 'why' behind Policy elements
- Improved approach to providing and maintaining 'dog infrastructure' and facilities

### 4.2 Suggestions

The group identified a number of challenges for the implementation of the Policy, along with suggestions for how these might be addressed:

Challenge	Suggestions
<b>How might external organisations collaborate to support:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Shared mapping</b></li><li>• <b>Signage</b></li><li>• <b>Messaging</b></li><li>• <b>Collateral/ tools for communicating access areas and responsibilities</b></li><li>• <b>Compliance (i.e. preventative measures)?</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Improved collaboration</i> – via nominated go-to staff members and improved inter-organisation information sharing tools</li><li>• <i>Better alignment</i> – including of mapping overlays, key messages, media campaigns and shared signage solutions (that cater for multiple language groups)</li><li>• <i>Sharing of relevant strategies, action plans and insights</i> – e.g. Bega Valley Shorebird draft action plan and effective signage used elsewhere</li><li>• <i>Establishing community champions of positive 'pet culture'</i> – e.g. pet ambassadors, community club leaders and schools</li><li>• <i>Leveraging new channels</i> – e.g. tourism applications, Google adverts, video, TikTok, Instagram and augmented reality</li></ul>
<b>How might we overcome the challenge of 'invisible' boundaries between organisation 'jurisdictions'?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify challenging boundaries</li><li>• Provide clear, positive signage and messaging to make boundaries easy to understand (e.g. with the help of applications similar to the DPI FishSmart app)</li></ul>

<p><b>How might we positively frame dog access and responsibilities, including alongside information for locals and visitors?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use positive, inclusive messaging (e.g. 'Sharing the Shore')</li> <li>• Provide content that is easy for tourism operators and others to share with patrons (e.g. 'Holidaying with Pets' pack for accommodation providers and residents)</li> <li>• Improve search engine optimisation for online information and leverage existing platforms</li> <li>• Identify Dog Ambassadors and Champions</li> </ul>
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## Section 5: Focus Group workshops – round 1

### ***5.1 Introduction***

Each focus group began with participants sharing their different experiences and perspectives and identifying the key needs and interests they brought to the process. With these needs and interests in mind, the groups then prepared a criteria against which options for the future Access Areas Policy, Guide and implementation should be tested.

As a starting point, the first group was presented with some initial draft criteria that emerged from the stakeholder workshops and were invited to add their suggestions underneath these or propose entire additional criteria. These refined criteria was then presented to the next group as a starting point, and so on, until the last group arrived at a final version.

### ***5.2 Needs and interests***

The following are a summary of the needs and interests raised by community members across the five focus groups:

- Finding an appropriate compromise that supports wellbeing of current and projected populations of dog owners, dogs and other users
- Protecting the environment, including flora and fauna
- Arriving at a simple, easy-to-understand policy that is logically/consistently applied across the local government area
- Encouraging tolerance for other users to improve safety for people and dogs and reduce conflict between users
- Supporting the community and tourism sector to act responsibly (e.g. by providing amenities and information)
- Educating dog owners and non-dog owners on the reason for access area allocations, as well as the requirements for users in each area
- Improving communications, including signage and other channels
- Using enforcement methods as an effective and accepted part of the policy but as a last resort
- Improving data capture and the complaints process to inform future decision-making
- Transparent and accountable decision-making process, including communication of how engagement outputs informed the final decision and incorporation of the revised Policy in Council's strategic planning documentation

### 5.3 Shared criteria for success

Over the five focus groups, participants used their needs and interests as the basis for developing the following shared criteria for success:

- The revised policy is **simple and logical**
- The revised policy provides **dog-friendly spaces and facilities** that support the health and wellbeing of dogs and their owners
- The revised policy supports the **safe and satisfactory co-existence** of dogs with other users of the space (e.g. families, sportspeople)
- The revised policy helps to **protect the natural environment**, especially native fauna such as endangered shorebirds
- The revised policy **supports local tourism** (recognising visitors are attracted by the natural beauty and the dog-friendliness of the area)
- The revised policy **sets owners up for success**, with effective education and amenities provided to give owners every chance to do the right thing
- The revised policy **enables effective enforcement** when people don't do the right thing
- The revised policy **provides consistent, positive messaging** that is easy to find and that clearly explains the 'why' behind dog access or prohibited areas
- The revised policy **includes collaborative efforts** and input from Council teams, State Government agencies and industry or volunteer organisations
- The revised policy includes the **resources to support** ongoing implementation of the policy
- The revised policy is **compliant** with all relevant State legislation

Some groups also discussed how they felt these criteria were or were not currently being met. Their suggestions are summarised below.

How they are being met	How they are NOT being met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Area locations</i> – Current existence of off-leash areas (e.g. beaches, fenced) with areas plentiful in some parts of the LGA</li> <li>• <i>Area timings</i> – Some access areas provide dog owners and other users with their own times or space</li> <li>• <i>Communications and signage</i> – Some good signage and information on Council's website</li> <li>• <i>Amenities</i> – Good amenities in some areas, including enclosed spaces and areas with poo bag dispensers</li> <li>• <i>Enforcement</i> – Rangers taking a sensible approach in 'grey' Policy areas and doing well with limited resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Area locations, timing and accessibility</i> – Mixed views on whether off-leash area spaces or timing were insufficient and/or whether some areas included too many competing uses (e.g. popular, crowded beaches)</li> <li>• <i>Communications and signage</i> – Need for more consistent messaging and communication methods, better signage and clearer transition points between areas</li> <li>• <i>Irresponsible dog ownership</i> – Some dog owners not adhering to the Policy or showing consideration for other users</li> </ul>

How they are being met	How they are NOT being met
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Responsible ownership</i> – Most dog owners doing the right thing, with many in the community supporting each other to adhere to the Policy and show consideration for other users</li> <li>• <i>Review process</i> – Willingness by Council to consult and improve the Policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Enforcement</i> – Improved enforcement needed, including to tackle irresponsible dog ownership, increase safety and deal with dangerous breeds</li> <li>• <i>Amenities</i> – Need for safer on-lead areas for walking dogs</li> <li>• <i>Resourcing</i> – More resourcing needed</li> <li>• <i>Welcoming</i> – A more welcoming approach to implementing the Policy with dog owners</li> <li>• <i>Responsible tourism industry</i> – Opportunity for the tourist industry to play a greater role in supporting responsible dog ownership</li> </ul>

## Section 6: Drop-in sessions

### 6.1 Introduction (provided by Council)

Council hosted the following community-drop in sessions while the online survey was live. The Policy, Guide and project information were displayed at each session and Council staff were present to hear community views and answer questions about the project. Attendees were encouraged to complete the online survey, though hardcopy submission forms were also available.

Location	Date and time	People engaged
Plantation Point Reserve, Vincentia	7.00am – 10.00am, Friday 16 July 2021	62
Mollymook Beach, Mollymook	1.30pm – 4.30pm, Friday 16 July 2021	40
Broughton Court, Berry	9.00am – 12.00pm, Saturday 17 July 2021	38
Jellybean Park, Nowra	10.30am – 1.30pm, Monday 19 July 2021	10
Outside Ulladulla Civic Centre, Ulladulla	10.00am – 1.00pm, Saturday 24 July 2021	66

### 6.2 Key themes (provided by Council)

Council has provided for this Report the following summary of key themes raised by drop-in session attendees.

Topic	Key themes
<b>Signage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Location of signage</li><li>• Signage clearly indicating area with explanation of "why" categorisation</li><li>• Importance of defining "invisible boundaries"</li><li>• Language barrier of signage</li><li>• Simple signage</li><li>• Signage to include fines / offences</li><li>• Lack of signage</li><li>• Signage to set people up for success</li></ul>
<b>Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Shoalhaven marketing as a dog-friendly destination however rules do not reflect that</li><li>• Responsibility of Pet-Friendly Tourism Operators</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local community having to live with changes when visitors are culprits</li> <li>• Locals doing the wrong thing by not adhering to area categorisation or signage</li> <li>• Responsibility of pet shops / vets to hand out information</li> <li>• Training provided on beaches</li> <li>• Less enforcement, more education</li> <li>• Why specific areas are categorised a particular way (i.e. off-leash or prohibited)</li> <li>• Tourists doing the wrong thing as they are not aware of the Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Access Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No additional dog areas</li> <li>• More off-leash dog areas</li> <li>• More beaches for dogs</li> <li>• More 24 hour access</li> <li>• Larger dog off-leash areas</li> <li>• All beaches should be dog on-leash</li> <li>• Explanation and reasoning behind categorisation of areas</li> <li>• Better accessibility for people and dogs of all ages and abilities</li> <li>• Infrastructure and access needs to be continually maintained</li> <li>• Parking required</li> <li>• Better distribution of beaches/areas throughout the Shoalhaven to alleviate concentration of dogs</li> <li>• Supportive of times / restricted use as separates users - shared space</li> <li>• Times / restrictions to reflect busy and quiet periods</li> <li>• Remove timed areas</li> <li>• Dog access areas should not be popular / highly utilised areas</li> <li>• Less popular / underutilised beaches should be made dog off-leash</li> <li>• Less popular / underutilised areas should be made dog off-leash (i.e. Sportsgrounds)</li> <li>• Safe for dogs - away from roads</li> <li>• Mixed used public spaces do not work (i.e. Children's playgrounds and dogs)</li> <li>• Off-leash areas need to be fenced</li> <li>• Fenced dog off-leash areas do not work (lots of contained dogs)</li> <li>• Differentiation / provision for large and small dogs</li> <li>• Natural elements / features to assist in identifying boundaries of designated areas</li> <li>• Provision of bins and dog bag dispensers</li> </ul>

<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tidal fluctuations / environmental changes resulting in changes to area</li> <li>• Endangered Shorebirds</li> <li>• Consideration of NPWS</li> </ul>
<b>Behaviour</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of responsible dog ownership</li> <li>• Dogs are frequently taken onto prohibited beaches / areas</li> <li>• Dogs not under effective control</li> <li>• Tourists flouting rules</li> <li>• Requirements for dog training</li> <li>• Owners not picking up faeces</li> <li>• Locals picking up after tourists</li> <li>• Owners not reading / following signage</li> <li>• Owners not following times / restrictions</li> <li>• Owners not able to control their dog or dogs</li> <li>• More enforcement required</li> </ul>
<b>Benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall public health benefits</li> <li>• Overall health and wellbeing benefits</li> <li>• Mental health benefits for humans</li> <li>• Mental health benefits for dogs</li> <li>• Physical health benefits for humans</li> <li>• Physical health benefits for dogs</li> <li>• Socialisation for humans</li> <li>• Socialisation for dogs</li> <li>• People with dogs are very happy people</li> <li>• Dogs as part of the family</li> </ul>
<b>Policy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needs clear strategic direction</li> <li>• Needs to be clear</li> <li>• Council politics</li> </ul>

<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safety of community (in particular disabled/elderly/children)</li> <li>• Abuse from asking people to do the right thing</li> <li>• People who don't own dogs are rude and aggressive</li> <li>• Requirement of better awareness</li> <li>• Location chosen for drop-in not key entry point to off-leash area</li> <li>• Vexatious anti-dog complainants</li> <li>• Other Councils less restrictive</li> <li>• Policy that benefits dogs and their owners</li> <li>• Rangers waiting to fine offenders</li> <li>• Council listening to anti-dog comments</li> <li>• Exemption when disability</li> </ul>
<b>Survey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey too complex</li> <li>• Questions are guiding</li> <li>• Survey can be completed multiple times</li> <li>• Survey did not focus on coastal topography of Shoalhaven</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed dog access areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collingwood Beach</li> <li>• Sand flat at Burrill Lake</li> <li>• Fire break between bush and houses at Shoalhaven Heads</li> <li>• Camp quality rock Reserve</li> <li>• North of Boongaree and creek</li> <li>• Whole of Narrawallee Beach to be off-leash</li> <li>• Mollymook River Inlet to be made off-leash</li> <li>• "Julie's Corner" - old caravan park</li> <li>• Land on corner of headland at Dolphin Point to be fenced off-leash</li> </ul>
<b>Specific comments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friend was killed on Collingwood Beach</li> <li>• Council needs to come up with a "position"/"strategic direction" - whether Council is 'pro off-leash or not' - including beaches</li> <li>• Unreasonable to have dogs on-leash at all times</li> <li>• Collers Beach too small</li> <li>• More of Narrawallee Beach to be off-leash</li> <li>• Prohibit all dogs on Narrawallee</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Path from Surfers Avenue to off-leash area at Narrawallee is narrow, and poses trip hazard</li> <li>• Suggestion of main thoroughfare having two sets of stairs - one for dog owners and dogs, one for other users</li> <li>• CCBs to provide doggy bags</li> <li>• Existing dog agility park at Nowra Showground too small</li> <li>• Google reporting / stating off-leash areas when they are not</li> <li>• Bomaderry High School dogs being taken onto sports oval out of school hours</li> <li>• South of Ulladulla - lots of "civilised" dog owners</li> <li>• People who walk on Narrawallee don't control their dogs</li> <li>• Different dog behaviour at different beaches - chooses not to go to Narrawallee because of owner behaviour</li> <li>• Children causing issues more than dogs</li> <li>• Suggestion to put railing down both sides of Victor Ave stairs at Narrawallee</li> <li>• Does not believe in off-leash at all</li> <li>• Footpaths to indicate walking directions - response to COVID</li> <li>• Look at Eurobodalla Council's approach</li> </ul>
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A full breakdown of the frequency with which each theme was raised can be found at Appendix 2.

## Section 7: Online survey

### 7.1 Who responded

Council received 1396 responses to the survey from across the LGA. Of those:

- 80.6% were residents, 14.6% ratepayers (but not full time residents) and 4.8% were visitors
- 84% were dog owners or carers of some description and 16% did not own a dog
- 58% were aged between 50-69 years, with all age brackets represented (see Figure 1)

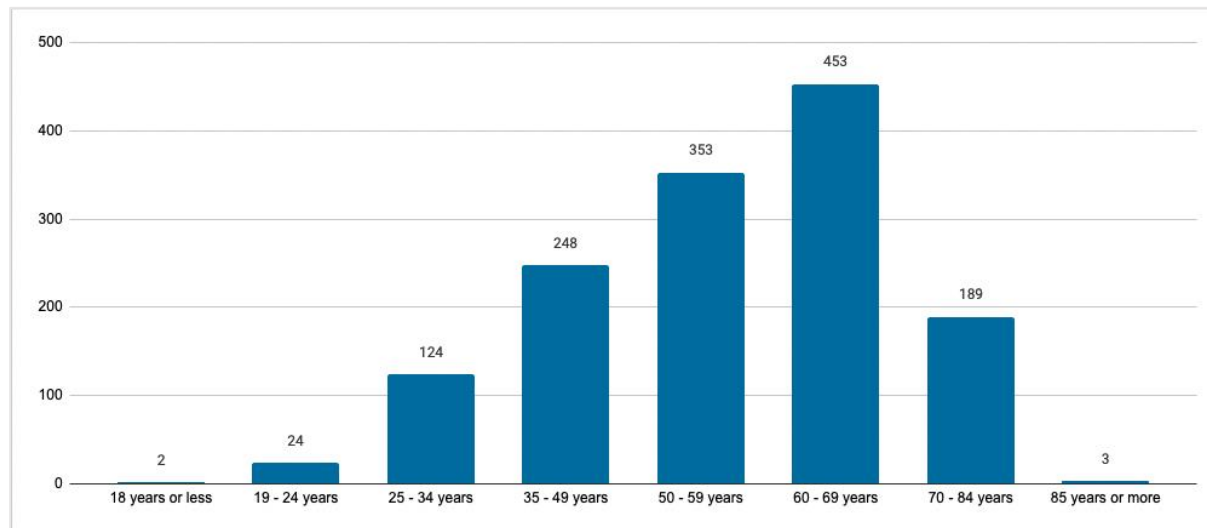


Figure 1. Age breakdown of responses

Figure 2 displays the geographic breakdown of responses, by Council 'planning area'. You can find out more about these planning areas and which suburbs they include at <https://bit.ly/planningareas>.

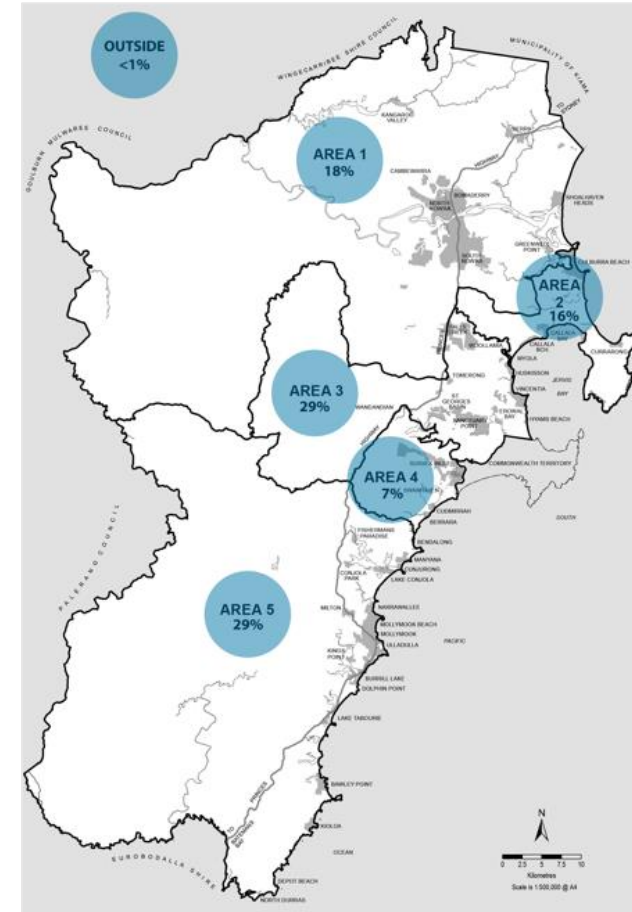


Figure 2. Geographic breakdown of responses

## 7.2 Summary results

The key insights from the survey are summarised in the following table. A full list of the survey questions is available at Appendix 3.

Preferred dog exercise times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of dog owners or carers prefer to exercise their dogs between 8-10am and 4-6pm, with the next popular timeslots falling just before these at pre-8am and between 2-4pm. The middle of the day, between 12-2pm, was the least popular timeslot.</li> </ul>
Awareness of the Act, Policy and Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>86% self-reported as being <i>completely across</i> or having a <i>reasonable idea</i> of the Companion Animals Act 1998, upon which Council's Policy is based</li> <li>55% have read the Policy and 67% have read Council's Dog Off-Leash Guide</li> </ul>
Criteria for Policy update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was most important to respondents that the revised policy <i>provided dog-friendly spaces and facilities, supported safe and satisfactory co-existence of users</i> and helped to <i>protect the natural environment</i></li> <li>It was most important to non-dog owners that the policy <i>enables effective enforcement when people don't do the right thing</i></li> <li>Respondents offered minor critiques of some criteria, which would be addressed by making the following changes (in blue): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The revised policy is simple and logical, <i>aligned with best practice, and based on research and consultation</i></li> <li>The revised policy provides <i>accessible</i> dog-friendly spaces and facilities that support the health and wellbeing of dogs and their owners</li> <li>The revised policy supports the safe and satisfactory co-existence of dogs with other users of the space (e.g. families, sportspeople), <i>as well as providing dog-free public and natural spaces</i></li> <li>The revised policy helps to protect the natural environment, <i>especially threatened and endangered wildlife (e.g. shorebirds)</i></li> <li>The revised policy enables effective enforcement when people don't do the right thing, <i>especially to help keep people and dogs safe</i></li> <li>The revised policy provides consistent, positive messaging – <i>including signage</i> – that is easy to find and that clearly explains the 'why' behind dog access or prohibited areas</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Satisfaction with current access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents were generally dissatisfied with the <i>timing</i> of access, especially in Planning Area 4</li> <li>Respondents were generally dissatisfied with the <i>categorisation</i> of access, especially in Areas 4 and 5</li> <li>Respondents were generally dissatisfied with the <i>location</i> of access, especially in Areas 4 and 5</li> </ul>
Area types	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, respondents were mostly supportive of <i>more</i> of all types of off-leash areas</li> <li>Most non-dog owners (56%) wanted less off-leash areas overall, and less off-leash beach areas (75% votes for less)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-dog owner views on non-beach areas were mixed but they were more supportive of off-leash fenced areas (<i>66% voted for more of these</i>)</li> </ul>
Location and timing improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents generally opposed removing timed access to allow for a simpler allocation of 24/7 or <i>no dog</i> access, mainly because they would not support the potential, slight reduction of off-leash areas that could result from this change</li> <li>When presented with potential improvements, the most popular (aided by a strong push by dog owners) was <i>increased off-leash access during quiet times of year</i>, followed by <i>use of vacant/unused land</i> (which received strong support from both dog owners and non-dog owners)</li> <li>Most additional responses advocated for more or less access to a specific type of space, with the majority of these calling for more access (particularly to beaches), be it increased area or time. Other qualitative themes not already covered in other survey questions included the importance of assessing the suitability of an area (e.g. current usage, accessibility, proximity to residents, safety, environmental impacts) before designating for dog access</li> </ul>
Dog owner behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, more respondents were satisfied than dissatisfied with dog owner behaviour. Views differed greatly between dog owners (<i>66% were satisfied or very satisfied</i>) and non-dog owners (<i>74% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied</i>)</li> </ul>
Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents suggested better <i>positioning of signage</i> would lead to the greatest improvement to shared use of space, with many additional responses stressing the need for more signs at entrance and transition points</li> <li>Other qualitative themes not already covered in other survey questions included the need for accurate and consistent signage and messaging on owner responsibilities and the importance of being considerate of others using the area</li> </ul>
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Dog waste bags and bins</i> were by far the most popular of the presented amenities for dog access areas, followed by <i>drinking water for dogs</i>, <i>fencing or suitable distance from roads</i>, and <i>greater accessibility for people of all abilities</i></li> </ul>
Information initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall, respondents believed the best information initiative for improving shared use of space was <i>a mobile app or similar for users to easily find dog off-leash / prohibited areas near them</i>, followed by <i>consistent signage</i>.</li> <li>The next most popular initiatives were <i>simpler identification of access areas on maps</i> and <i>clear messaging on effective control</i> (with more non-dog owners voting for the latter than for any other initiative)</li> <li>Other qualitative comments suggested messaging (e.g. on space allocation, the reason for restrictions, owner responsibilities and how non-dog owners can support positive shared use) and additional channels (e.g. Council's website, letter to dog owners, social media and Ranger educative conversations)</li> </ul>

Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In each Planning Area, the number of people <i>satisfied</i> or <i>very satisfied</i> with enforcement of the policy was low, ranging between 24-33%. Non-dog owners were much less satisfied than dog owners, with 79% of non-dog owners <i>dissatisfied</i> or <i>very dissatisfied</i> with current enforcement</li> <li>• The highest ranked enforcement initiative (aided by a strong push from dog owners) was for '<i>rangers to educate dog owners in the first instance</i>'. Non-dog owners ranked '<i>improved ranger visibility</i>' the highest</li> <li>• Many additional responses advocated for either a more <i>friendly</i> approach by rangers (e.g. seeking to educate owners, weigh up circumstances or give warnings before fining) or for a <i>firmer</i> approach (e.g. with consistent and heavy fines). Others suggested ranger resources should be most focused on protecting the community from dangerous dogs. Some recommended a channel for the community to report non-compliance</li> </ul>
Local opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to themes already covered in previous questions, respondents suggested shared use of public space in their area would improve if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Owners took greater responsibility for their dogs (including residents and tourists)</li> <li>○ All users showing greater tolerance and respect for each other (though some instead suggested clearly allocating separated spaces)</li> <li>○ Council arrived at a fair outcome, with some suggesting that meant distinguishing between majority and minority views</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Respondents also provided specific suggestions for changing, expanding on or adding access areas in their local community, all of which have been provided to Council for consideration as part of the review process (see Appendix 4)</li> </ul>
Final considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In addition to themes already covered in previous questions, respondents suggested Council should consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The large and growing rate of dog ownership and the benefits it brings to health and sense of community</li> <li>○ Human safety as a priority, especially in relation to dangerous dogs</li> <li>○ Potential impacts on the environment, especially endangered shorebirds</li> <li>○ The need for clear rules that are well communicated</li> <li>○ The importance of dog access for attracting people to the area but also the responsibilities of visiting dog-owners</li> <li>○ The need for engagement-led decision-making</li> <li>○ Best practice policies and implementation elsewhere (e.g. Eurobodalla Shire Council, City of Sydney)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Section 8: Focus Group workshops – round 2

### 8.1 Introduction

During the second round of focus groups – conducted online due to COVID – participants received a brief report-back on key findings from the online survey and used interactive tool GroupMap ([www.groupmap.com](http://www.groupmap.com)) to indicate and discuss:

1. Their preferred types of access areas when considering proximity as part of the equation
2. Where they would like to see Council prioritise their spending when implementing the Policy
3. The messaging they felt best reflected their expectations for the control of dogs in off-leash areas

### 8.2 Access Areas

Participants were asked to answer the following four questions to assist Council in determining the nature and location of access areas. Those who owned dogs were advised to indicate which action they would be more likely to take while those who did not own dogs were encouraged to select the option they believed was most appropriate for Council to provide. The following table indicates the number of participants who selected either Option A or Option B for each question, along with a summary of their top reasons for doing so.

Option A	Would you take a short walk from home to a <b>non-beach</b> dog access area OR...	Would you take a short walk from home to a <b>timed</b> dog access area OR...	Would you take a short walk from home to an <b>on-leash</b> dog access area OR...	Would you take a short walk from home to a dog access area <b>without amenities</b> OR...
	<p><b>52% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General preference for walking</li> <li>• Convenience – it is a hassle to transport their dog by car</li> <li>• More efficient way to exercise, including when busy during the week</li> <li>• More environmentally-friendly than driving</li> </ul>	<p><b>50% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You can plan your day around timed access (if they are reasonable)</li> <li>• Timed spaces are important to enable other users to visit when dogs are not off-leash</li> <li>• More environmentally-friendly than driving</li> <li>• Tourists will not drive so need spaces within walking distance</li> </ul>	<p><b>35% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walking to the beach is part of the local lifestyle</li> <li>• On-leash beaches often have less ‘dog traffic’</li> <li>• On-leash is safer for kids</li> </ul>	<p><b>60% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can provide own dog bags and water – no need for amenities</li> </ul>

Option B	...Take a short drive to a <b>beach</b> dog access area?	...Take a short drive to a <b>24/7</b> dog access area?	...Take a short drive to an <b>off-leash</b> dog access area?	...Take a short drive to a dog access area <b>with amenities</b> ?
	<p><b>48% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For variety or if also going for own leisure (e.g. with family or on weekends)</li> <li>• To meet up with other dog owners in popular dog access areas</li> <li>• To offer more stimulus, space and water to tire dogs out</li> </ul>	<p><b>50% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To avoid worrying whether you are in or out of allowed times</li> <li>• If you needed to walk dog outside of the times available in walking distance (or in warmer hours during Winter)</li> <li>• If you wanted to walk with less 'dog traffic'</li> </ul>	<p><b>65% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not worth going to on-leash destination since you can walk dogs on-leash most places</li> <li>• Potentially reduces user conflict if owners travel further for a dog access area</li> </ul>	<p><b>40% chose this option.</b></p> <p>Common reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To have access to the amenities that enable you to do the right thing</li> <li>• It would be worth the trip if the area offered a unique attraction for dogs and people (e.g. natural environment, agility equipment, separate spaces for small and large dogs)</li> </ul>

Participants and Council also fully acknowledged that driving is not always an option for all members of the community, including because of varying levels of mobility or other health considerations.

### 8.3 Resourcing

Participants were asked to rank different spending categories to indicate which they believed were most important for Council to prioritise when funding the Policy. These categories are displayed below in order of overall participant scores, along with some of the arguments different participants put forward for why each category should be a high or a low priority.

Score	Spending category	Arguments for high priority	Arguments for low priority
5.37	<b>Clearly Communicated</b> <i>Spending on signage and other communications</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preventative efforts are more effective and cost-efficient and lead to a better experience for dog owners/other users</li> <li>Improved signage will improve the experience for different users of the same space</li> <li>Clear and consistent communications make it easier for people to do the right thing and give the community and rangers certainty to alert others that they are doing the wrong thing</li> <li>If people understand why rules are in place, it will improve their willingness to follow them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None specified</li> </ul>
4.77	<b>Environmentally-Friendly (Protection)</b> <i>Spending on environmental assessments, impact mitigation and protection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental protection is a 'non-negotiable'</li> <li>Our natural environment is part of what makes Shoalhaven so unique</li> <li>Ranger efforts should be focused on environmental protection (i.e. shorebirds)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate allocation of spaces should reduce ongoing spending required on protecting the environment</li> <li>Spending on environmental assessments would be better directed to communications and signage to influence people's behaviour and encourage them to do the right thing for the environment</li> </ul>
4.51	<b>Dog-Friendly (Spaces)</b> <i>Spending on additional or expanded access areas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some suburbs have below-average access to dog areas and so these should be provided as a priority</li> <li>If Council provide the right spaces, people will "do the right thing"</li> <li>Improved timing will improve the experience for different users of the same space</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of current areas should be improved before adding to or expanding them</li> </ul>

3.85	<b>Dog-Friendly (Infrastructure)</b> <i>Spending on improved infrastructure at existing access areas</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The quality of current areas should be improved before adding to or expanding them</li> <li>• Good amenities draw people to a space and make it easier to spend more time there with others</li> <li>• Good amenities enable people to do the right thing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some suburbs have below-average access to dog areas and so these should be provided before improving infrastructure</li> <li>• Rather than spending on infrastructure specific to dog access areas, these areas could be positioned next to other existing public amenities</li> <li>• <i>Note – Highly divergent views on whether a user pay or levy system could be used</i></li> </ul>
3.51	<b>People-Friendly (Well-Enforced)</b> <i>Spending on enforcement of the Policy</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement will be important for keeping people and dogs safe and for helping protect the environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforcement only applies to the small percentage of people not complying with the Policy</li> <li>• Rangers have a role to play in communication and education, not just enforcement</li> </ul>
3.35	<b>People-Friendly (Preventative)</b> <i>Spending on education for dog owners and general users</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education is more effective than punitive measures because “people generally don’t want to do the wrong thing”</li> <li>• Rangers have a key role to play in education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This preventative, educative approach is more effectively captured by the ‘Clearly Communicated’ category</li> <li>• Third parties like tourist operators, holiday home owners and booking agents need to play their part to educate</li> </ul>
3.21	<b>Logical And Collaborative</b> <i>Spending on Policy satisfaction, engagement with key agencies and research for continual improvement</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules need to be logical and make sense so people are less likely to ignore them</li> <li>• Council needs to “bring people along on the journey” so it is important to check in and provide ongoing opportunities for input</li> <li>• “Logical” needs to extend to using clear data to understand population and dog ownership trends and to establish a reasonable baseline of access based on other similar local government areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None specified</li> </ul>

In relation to dog-friendly infrastructure, Council resolved MIN21.657 at its Ordinary Meeting on 28 September 2021 that:

1. *As part of the Review of Access Areas for Dogs Policy and Guidelines the Community Working Group looks at the adequacy of the network of dispensers for dog waste bags and considers the feasibility of Council taking control of the purchase and supply of bags and dispensers across the Shoalhaven.*
2. *Council also look at types of biodegradable disposable dog waste bags.*

As a result of Council's resolution – and given the importance survey respondents placed on dog poo bags in the survey – all community working group focus groups were also asked whether they had witnessed examples of bag dispensers working well and whether they expected their communities would be willing to help monitor and restock dispensers if Council were to supply the dispensers and bags.

Various participants suggested dispensers were working well in places such as Callala Bay, Huskisson and Shoalhaven Heads. Typically, the local community group had taken responsibility of monitoring and restocking these dispensers and so it was generally suggested that a similar model would likely work in other areas. Some individuals were also willing to restock in more isolated areas. It was noted that dispensers need to be stocked more often during holiday periods.

One group suggested that dog owners should be bringing their own bags while the other groups suggested the dispensers are useful if people forget. It was very important to people that dispensers are accompanied by bins, with one group suggesting funds should just be directed at bins, not bags. Two participants also suggested first testing whether dispensers in fact resulted in markedly cleaner areas. Other suggestions included using biodegradable bags and installing dispensers that made it difficult for people to extract more than one at a time.

A number of groups suggested communities could play other roles, too, including educating visitors on Policy requirements (if Council could help coordinate and provide communications materials to such volunteer groups).

#### **8.4 Education and enforcement**

It is important that the community's expectations for effective control of dogs in off-leash access areas are clear. To assist Council in communicating these expectations, the focus groups critiqued four selected examples of wording used by other NSW councils in their relevant dog policy, plan or strategy and were asked to vote on the one they preferred. The four select councils and the relevant documents are listed below:

- Wollongong City Council – Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy (adopted July 2019)
- Byron Shire Council – Companion Animal Exercise Areas (last reviewed January 2019)

- City of Sydney – Companion Animals Policy (last reviewed April 2021)
- City of Newcastle – Dogs in Open Space Plan (adopted March 2019) and associated Leash Free brochure

The table below displays the wording from these other Council documents along with the number of votes participants gave each and their comments on what about them they liked or disliked.

Council	Wollongong City Council	Byron Shire Council	City of Sydney	City of Newcastle
Votes	24 votes	17 votes	5 votes	3 votes
Wording	<i>"In leash-free areas the person with the dog is still required to ensure that the dog does not attack, harass or chase any person or animal. This means that the dog must be controlled so that other users of the area are not affected"</i>	<i>"The owner of a Companion animal shall ensure that a responsible person has care and control over the animal and does not allow the unrestrained animal to menace any person or child, or other species of animals while being exercised in any of the defined 'off-lead' areas"</i>	<i>"Dogs must always be under the effective control of their owners, including when they are let off the leash in designated off-leash areas"</i>	<i>"All dogs using the area must be able to be controlled without a leash, e.g. Return to handler on command"</i>
Positives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly outlines what 'effective control' means</li> <li>• "Does not attack, harass or chase" is less open to interpretation than others</li> <li>• Puts onus on dog owner rather than the dog</li> <li>• Uses plain English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Puts onus on dog owner rather than the dog</li> <li>• "Other species" extends consideration to native fauna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple and succinct</li> <li>• Puts onus on dog owner rather than the dog</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Example makes it clearer what 'effective control' means</li> </ul>
Negatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More objective examples needed to further clarify what is meant by 'attack', 'harass' and 'chase'</li> <li>• Not appropriate because dogs should be able to chase each other</li> <li>• Too lengthy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The term 'menace' is open to interpretation</li> <li>• Needs to also rule out dogs menacing <i>other</i> dogs</li> <li>• "Companion animal" is not plain English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None specified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The example is not appropriate as there are other ways to maintain 'control' (e.g. seeking approval from other owner before enabling dogs to play)</li> </ul>

## Section 9: Next steps

Gauge Consulting's Summary Outcomes Report (this document) will inform Council's review of the Access Areas for Dogs Policy and associated Dog Off-Leash Guide.

Council will table its own report at a Council meeting in early 2022, which will cover the outputs of the community engagement and a recommended way forward for the Policy review. An update will be posted to Council's Get Involved page and emails will be sent to focus group participants and stakeholders to advise when this will occur.

This document will be included as an attachment to the report to Council so the community will also have the opportunity to review Gauge Consulting's findings.

## Appendices

### ***Appendix 1. Summary of additional submissions (provided by Council)***

#### **Introduction**

A total of 108 submissions were received from 8 December 2020 to 27 July 2021 on the Access Areas for Dogs Policy review. These dates coincide with the beginning of the Policy review opening of Expressions of Interest for the Community Working Group on 8 December to the closing of the Community Survey on 27 July 2021.

After detailed review of each submission and analysis, it was identified that 52 submissions had concerns related to the Policy and Guide, 20 submissions in relation to the Policy review process and existing Policy and Guide and 8 submissions were related to the survey only.

#### **Submissions and Participation Process**

A total of 108 Submissions were received to 27 July 2021 on the Access Areas for Dogs Policy review. Submissions considered under this Report formally closed on 27 July 2021, as such submissions received after this date will be considered as feedback received as part of the public exhibition of the draft documents after endorsement from Council.

The submissions ranged from form letters and emails to very detailed submissions. Each submission was registered, reviewed twice and entered into a spreadsheet to capture the details of the person or group making the submission and the key issues raised.

Table 1 below provides a breakdown of self-identified perspectives provided in the submissions.

Identifier	Submissions
Dog Owner	7
Non-Dog Owner	3
Pro Dogs Off-Leash	3
Non-Identified	95

Table 2 below provides an overview of additional stakeholder identifier provided in the submissions.

Identifier	Submissions
Resident	44
Visitor	3
Regular Visitor	4
Community Consultative Body	6
Community Group	6
Other	3
Non-Identified	42

Table 3 below outlines the general location of the submissions or key concern communicated:

Subject / Location	Submissions
Planning Area 1	3
Planning Area 2	14
Planning Area 3	9
Planning Area 4	7
Planning Area 5	31
LGA Wide	35
Out of LGA	1
Survey Only Concerns	8

### Key Issues

The issues raised in the submissions can be categorised under the following themes:

- Dog Access Area Opinions and Suggestions
- Timing Suggestions
- Signage Suggestions
- Amenities and Infrastructure Suggestions
- Enforcement Suggestions

- Owner Behaviour and Responsibilities
- Environmental Impacts
- Safety Considerations
- Health and Wellbeing Benefits
- Economic Considerations
- Process Suggestions
- Process Critiques

The submissions raised a variety of different views on a range of topics included across the themes. Each theme is explored in more detail under the following headings.

#### Dog Access Areas

The most common issue addressed in 48 per cent of submissions were opinions on Council's existing access areas for dogs and suggestions for potential improvements. Comments reflected the following:

- A right to safe shared use of public space;
- Adequate dog access areas provided;
- Off-leash dogs frequently encountered in on-leash and/or dog prohibited areas;
- Inability to identify land management and access area boundary;
- More off-leash areas in the Shoalhaven;
- More beaches to be available for dog access;
- More dog fenced off-leash areas (FOLAs);
- The increase in dog ownership needing to be reflected by increase in dog off-leash areas; and
- Better distribution of dog off-leash areas in the Local Government Area (LGA).

Inequal distribution of dog off-leash areas within the Shoalhaven was identified as a key concern followed by expressions that all persons had a right be able to enjoy and use public space safely, whether dog owner or non-dog owner. More beach access for dogs was another popular opinion conveyed in submissions received.

#### Timing Suggestions

14 per cent of submissions provided suggestions for improvement in relation to existing dog off-leash area timed access arrangements such as:

- Extended hours for off-leash dog access;

- Consistent timed hours for off-leash dog access across the LGA; and
- Timing to be in-line with daylight savings to allow maximum utilisation of daylight throughout the year.

#### Signage Suggestions

19 per cent of submissions addressed issues with dog signage, providing recommendations such as:

- More signs required;
- Signs need to be clear and visible;
- Larger signs required for legibility;
- Signs to be erected at key accessways to areas regardless of categorisation;
- Location specific information provided on signs;
- Council to collaborate with key agencies and adjacent land managers to define land boundaries and changes in categorisation;
- Fines for offences noted on signs; and
- Signage to be consistent with the Policy.

Confusing and inconsistent dog signage is a well-known issue which has been communicated to Council regularly.

#### Amenities and Infrastructure Suggestions

19 per cent of submissions provided suggestions and requests improve amenity at dog access areas including the provision of:

- Bins for waste disposal;
- Dog bag dispensers and bags;
- Water fountains for dogs and their owners;
- Seating;
- Shade; and
- Separate fenced areas at FOLAs to accommodate different sized dogs.

A key concern raised was the importance for equal access to dog access areas for people and dogs of all abilities with consideration be required for available parking and topography of the area.

#### Information Initiatives

16 per cent of submissions proposed improvements to communication and distribution of information such as:

- Tourism providers playing an active role to inform visitors of the rules relating to dogs in the Shoalhaven;

- Community education and awareness campaigns;
- Provision of reasons to explain specific area categorisations; and
- Easier interpretation of documents.

#### Enforcement Suggestions

21 per cent of submissions were supportive of increased enforcement measures with the following recommendations made:

- More Ranger patrols;
- Increased Ranger presence during peak periods and holiday season;
- Increased penalties for offences;
- Zero tolerance for offences; and
- Impounding of aggressive animals.

In comparison the above, a number of submissions suggested education alternatives to fines.

#### Owner Behaviour and Responsibilities

32 per cent of submissions raised issues with the behaviours of dog owners, most notably:

- Owners not following the rules of the area they are using;
- Owners not picking up dog faeces; and
- Not having control of their dog at all times with inability to physically control if required.

#### Environmental Impacts

30 per cent of submissions identified impacts to the environment inclusive of both flora and fauna and environmental fluctuations affecting use of areas. There were particular concerns relating to:

- Dogs having negative impacts on the natural environment;
- Dogs having negative impacts on wildlife such as endangered shorebirds;
- Noise pollution from dogs barking;
- Concerns with dog waste on the ecosystem and humans unknowingly coming into contact with dog faeces; and
- Tidal fluctuations affecting access to dog access areas and boundaries.

Comments also related to emissions released by dog owners who have to drive to access dog off-leash areas due to lack of areas in their locality.

### Safety Considerations

24 per cent of submissions expressed concerns with dogs in off-leash areas and certain situations that may arise such as:

- Potential for a dog attack on humans or other dogs;
- Individuals having a fear of dogs regardless of dog or their temperament;
- Vulnerable persons such as children or the elderly being at risk of harm from incidents with off-leash dogs; and
- Dogs unsecured at private properties which roam neighbourhoods unsupervised.

In addition to the concerns noted above, a number of submissions specifically referenced witnessing or being subject to a dog attack themselves.

### Health and Wellbeing Benefits

24 per cent of submissions recognised a number of health and wellbeing benefits of dog ownership and dogs allowed off-leash:

- Interaction with beach environments as beneficial for dogs;
- Socialisation for dogs in off-leash areas;
- General human and dog wellbeing benefits with use of off-leash areas;
- Increased overall wellbeing due to dog ownership;
- Social interaction with like-minded community;
- Good physical exercise for both owner and dog; and
- Mental health benefits.

### Economic Considerations

14 per cent of submissions commented on economic considerations of dogs within the Shoalhaven and visitation to the LGA:

- Dogs as a revenue creator and beneficial to local economy; and
- Restriction of dog off-leash areas to result in tourism implications.

### Process Suggestions

19 per cent of submissions provided comment on the Policy review process specifically in relation to:

- Council needing a more consultative approach;
- Decisions and outcomes to reflect majority of views of residents, ratepayers and visitors; and
- Allocation of enough resourcing and budget to deliver to community expectations.

A number of submissions also suggested complaints to Council were only typically made from a vocal minority.

#### Community Survey Critique

8 submissions were received which addressed concerns with the Policy review process, in particular the Community Survey.

Feedback received included comments relating to:

- Lack of requirement for the identification of respondent leading to potential for multiple responses from the same individual;
- Skewed results due to lack of data integrity; and
- Leading questions showing prejudice against dog ownership and demonstration of bias.

#### **Location Specific Concerns**

37 submissions noted location specific suggestions including, but not limited to amendments to area boundaries, adjustments to time restrictions, provision of additional infrastructure and identification of areas for potential dog access categorisation. These are provided in Attachment A.

#### **Additional General Comments**

22 submissions raised additional comments which did not apply to any of the existing themes and key issues. These are noted in Attachment B.

#### **Best Practice Examples**

8 submissions identified certain locations within New South Wales as best practice examples for a variety of matters such as strategic locations of dog access areas, approach to dogs in the public domain and infrastructure provision. These locations are listed below along with the number of times mentioned in brackets.

- Eurobodalla Shire (3)
- City of Sydney (1)
- Ku-ring-gai (1)
- Canada Bay (1)
- Byron Shire (1)
- Neighbouring regions (1)
- Every other Council on the south coast beyond Shoalhaven (1)

#### **Conclusion**

The overarching areas of support and concern identified in the analysis of the submissions are summarised below:

- Support for more off-leash areas
- Support for better distribution of areas within LGA
- Support for off-leash areas to reflect increase in dog ownership
- Concerns related to control of dogs by owners and adhering to rules
- Concerns and impacts of dogs on natural flora and fauna
- Concerns related to current safe shared use of public space.

The review and analysis of the submissions was undertaken by Council, with this summary considered by Gauge Consulting in the preparation of the Consultation Summary Outcomes Report.

Submissions received after 27 July 2021 will be considered alongside feedback received for the draft Policy and Guide once placed on public exhibition.

#### **Attachment A – Location Specific Suggestions**

- Suburb-wide investigation in Old Erowal Bay of aggressive dogs and neglectful owners
- Area around Manyana Public Hall to be prohibited
- Bosom Beach to be timed off-leash
- Plutus to Hammerhead to be off-leash
- FOLA near skate park at Currarong
- Kioloa and Merry Beaches to remain on-leash
- Tilbury Cove to the Eastwood Street entrance to be dog on-leash area at all times
- Eastwood street entrance to Crookhaven to be a dog off-leash area at all times
- Sussex Inlet Surf Beach to timed off-leash
- More off-leash beaches in Huskisson area
- 24 hour off-leash area at Wiliam Mulligan Reserve
- Callala Beach off-leash time changes to 5pm-10am
- Burrill Lake Lions Park FOLA to cover whole area south of the fig tree
- Extend off-leash area from Currarong to Hammerhead
- 24 hour off-leash from Peel St to Hammerhead
- Extend off-leash area from Currarong to Windy Gully or Hammerhead
- Bosom Beach to timed or 24 hour off-leash

- Part of any beach in Sussex Inlet locality for timed off-leash area
- Huskisson beach as off-leash
- Sporting fields to be dog prohibited
- Better signage at Berrara Lagoon
- Off-leash extended from Tilbury Cove to Crookhaven Heads
- Sand spit along the ocean shore between Lake Wollumboola and ocean to be off-leash, only the sand spit needs to be prohibited.
- FOLA near the skate park at Currarong
- Extend off-leash times at Bosom Beach and west of Plutus
- Merry and Kioloa Beaches as on-leash
- North corner of Kioloa Beach caravan park as FOLA
- South Beach to be off-leash area south of bird nesting area
- Milton Showground to be off-leash except for organised events
- Butlers Creek reserve in Bawley Point/Kioloa for off-leash agility park
- Extension of Nelsons Beach, Vincentia off-leash times
- Decision needs to be made about Narrawallee no more trial
- Victor Avenue Stairs to remain open for dog owners
- Narrawallee Trial has gone on for too long
- Victor Avenue Stairs to remain open for dogs
- Extend summer timed beach access until 9am
- Area between carpark and beach to be off-leash at Plantation Point Reserve
- Bill Andriske Oval to be FOLA outside of sporting use
- FOLA at Milton Showground
- Narrawallee Headland to be off-leash extended from existing off-leash area
- Keep Surfers and Victor Ave accessible for dogs and owners
- Formal path to be constructed from Surfers Avenue entry at Narrawallee to off-leash area
- Ulladulla Sports Park ovals to be FOLAs when not used for sports
- Eastern side of Lions Park at Burrill Lake not highly utilised and suitable for dog off-leash
- FOLA at Burrill Lake Lions Park and Foreshore
- Narrawallee Beach to be dog prohibited
- Fred Evans Park, Culburra Beach as FOLA

- Narrawallee Beach existing area to become 24 hour off-leash
- Merry and Kioloa Beaches to remain on-leash
- Merry and Kioloa Beaches to remain on-leash
- All of Callala Beach to be timed off-leash
- Separating current FOLA at Nowra Showground to separate large / small dogs
- Timed separate access for different sized dogs
- Playground at Yulunga Reserve to be dog prohibited
- Playgrounds to be dog prohibited

#### **Attachment B – Additional General Comments**

- Lack of National Parks Ranger enforcement
- Vandalism on signs as an issue. Fencing around playgrounds to make clear the area is prohibited
- Tourists as main offenders, dog owners become aggressive when informed they are doing the wrong thing
- Dog ownership is an option
- The community is responsible as a whole towards the prevention of cruelty to companion animals. The general public have a responsibility here as well as dog owners. Identify rights of dogs/dog owners, local government and the general public and from this, identify responsibilities of dog owners, local government and the general public and allow for effective management
- Large areas for off-leash areas
- For rangers to become more effective, and be more as protectors, it would seem they need more training in dog behaviour and human interaction
- Stencils on pathways
- Owners commonly are unable to physically control their dog(s) due to age, or perceived fitness capability
- Open sections of empty beaches to be utilised by dogs away from busy swimming areas.
- No mention of evidence of experts of the need for dogs to run
- Rights of non-dog owners need to be considered too. Shoalhaven drawcard as clean and safe seaside destination
- Health concerns with dogs at cafes at table height
- Council has not been transparent in previous Policy decisions
- Council needs to consider legislative requirements under Part 5 of the EP&A Act - EIS not done by Council and foreshore reserve policy - Generic Foreshore Plan of Management
- Fenced areas don't work

- Better utilisation of existing underutilised facilities such as ovals and other green spaces. Council's sporting ovals could be FOLAs when not used for organised sports.
- REFs should include assessment of the subject area in terms of safety and topographic and geographic suitability for both humans and dogs. Council is currently non-compliant with the CA Act as it is in breach of Clause 20(2)
- Lifeguards during season should have a role in Policy enforcement, future legislation needs to address other domestic animals such as horses and cats
- Penalise dog behaviour, not access to the beach during certain times
- Questions seemed to have anti-dog sentiment, implementation options are complex and expensive. Other Councils are simpler and do not require as much time, money or complex process
- Council is anti-dogs
- Encouraging for registration and microchipping of their pets; and active responsible pet ownership through initiatives such as early identification and registration of dogs, incentives for registration and desexing

## Appendix 2. Drop-in session theme frequency (provided by Council)

		Number of times raised					
Topics	Key themes	Vincentia	Mollymook	Berry	Nowra	Ulladulla	Total
SIGNAGE	General	3					
	Location of signage	2	2	1		3	
	Signage clearly indicating area with explanation of "why" categorisation	4		1			
	Importance of defining "invisible boundaries"	2		2			
	Language barrier of signage	1					
	Simple signage	1		1		3	
	Signage to include fines / offences	1				1	
	Lack of signage				1		
	Signage to set people up for success					2	
	TOTAL	14	2	5	1	9	
EDUCATION	General					1	
	Shoalhaven marketing as a dog-friendly destination however rules do not reflect that	1					
	Responsibility of Pet-Friendly Tourism Operators	1					
	Local community having to live with changes when visitors are culprits	1					
	Locals doing the wrong thing by not adhering to area categorisation or signage			1			
	Responsibility of pet shops / vets to hand out information	1					
	Training provided on beaches	2					
	Less enforcement, more education	3		1		1	
	Why specific areas are categorised a particular way (i.e. off-leash or prohibited)	2		2			
	Tourists doing the wrong thing as they are not aware of the Policy				1		
	TOTAL	11	0	4	1	2	

		Number of times raised					
Topics	Key themes	Vincentia	Mollymook	Berry	Nowra	Ulladulla	Total
ACCESS AREAS	No additional dog areas	1					
	More off-leash dog areas		2	3		2	
	More beaches for dogs	2	3	1		1	
	More 24 hour access	5	2		1	1	
	Larger dog off-leash areas					1	
	All beaches should be dog on-leash	2					
	Explanation and reasoning behind categorisation of areas		1				
	Better accessibility for people and dogs of all ages and abilities	2	2				
	Infrastructure and access needs to be continually maintained		1	1			
	Parking required		2				
	Better distribution of beaches/areas throughout the Shoalhaven to alleviate concentration of dogs	4	1			2	
	Supportive of times / restricted use as separates users - shared space	1					
	Times / restrictions to reflect busy and quiet periods	4	1		1	3	
	Remove timed areas	2					
	Dog access areas should not be popular / highly utilised areas	1				1	
	Less popular / underutilised beaches should be made dog off-leash		1				
	Less popular / underutilised areas should be made dog off-leash (i.e. Sportsgrounds)	1	1	2		1	
	Safe for dogs - away from roads			1			
	Mixed used public spaces don't work (i.e. Playgrounds and dogs)	1	1			1	
	Off-leash areas need to be fenced			1			
	Fenced dog off-leash areas do not work (lots of contained dogs)	2					
	Differentiation / provision for large and small dogs	1					
	Natural elements / features to assist in identifying boundaries of designated areas		1				
	Provision of bins and dog bag dispensers		1			4	

		Number of times raised					
Topics	Key themes	Vincentia	Mollymook	Berry	Nowra	Ulladulla	Total
	TOTAL	29	20	9	2	17	77
ENVIRON- MENT	General			1			
	Tidal fluctuations / environmental changes resulting in changes to area	2				1	
	Endangered Shorebirds	1	1			2	
	Consideration of NPWS					1	
	TOTAL	3	1	1	0	4	9
BEHAVIOUR	Importance of responsible dog ownership	1				1	
	Dogs are frequently taken onto prohibited beaches / areas	1					
	Dogs not under effective control		1				
	Tourists flouting rules	4			1		
	Requirements for dog training	2					
	Owners not picking up faeces	1					
	Locals picking up after tourists	1					
	Owners not reading / following signage	1					
	Owners not following times / restrictions	1					
	Owners not able to control their dog or dogs	1				2	
	More enforcement required					1	
	TOTAL	13	1	0	1	4	19
BENEFITS	Overall public health benefits						
	Overall health and wellbeing benefits		1				
	Mental health benefits for humans		1				
	Mental health benefits for dogs						
	Physical health benefits for humans						
	Physical health benefits for dogs		1				
	Socialisation for humans	4					
	Socialisation for dogs	5					

		Number of times raised					
Topics	Key themes	Vincentia	Mollymook	Berry	Nowra	Ulladulla	Total
	People with dogs are very happy people		1				
	Dogs as part of the family			1			
	TOTAL	9	4	1	0	0	14
POLICY	Needs clear strategic direction						
	Needs to be clear						
	Council politics			1		1	
	TOTAL	0	0	1	0	1	2
GENERAL	Safety of community (in particular disabled/elderly/children)	1		1		1	
	Abuse from asking people to do the right thing	1					
	People who don't own dogs are rude and aggressive		1				
	Requirement of better awareness	1					
	Location chosen for drop-in not key entry point to off-leash area						
	Vexatious anti-dog complainants	1				1	
	Other Councils less restrictive	1		1			
	Policy that benefits dogs and their owners	1					
	Rangers waiting to fine offenders						
	Council listening to anti-dog comments		1				
	Exemption when disability					1	
	TOTAL	6	2	2	0	3	13
SURVEY	Survey too complex	1					
	Questions are guiding	1	1			2	
	Did survey multiple times		1				
	Survey did not focus on coastal topography of Shoalhaven					1	
	TOTAL	2	2	0	0	3	7

### **Appendix 3. Survey questions**

#### **Tell Us About Yourself**

Are you a: (Tick any one option) \*

- ☐ Resident
- ☐ Visitor
- ☐ Ratepayer (but not full-time resident)

What suburb do you live in or most often visit? \*

*[Free text box]*

What is your age? (Tick any one option) \*

- ☐ 18 years or less
- ☐ 19 - 24 years
- ☐ 25 - 34 years
- ☐ 35 - 49 years
- ☐ 50 - 59 years
- ☐ 60 - 69 years
- ☐ 70 - 84 years
- ☐ 85 years or more

Do you own a dog? (Tick any one option) \*

- ☐ Yes, I am a dog owner
- ☐ No, I am not a dog owner
- ☐ No, I am not currently a dog owner but have owned a dog / am looking to own a dog
- ☐ No, I do not own a dog but provide regular care for a dog

If you own / care / have / are looking to own for a dog, what is / was / would be your preferred time to exercise your dog? Please tick all that apply.

- ☐ Before 8am
- ☐ 8am – 10am
- ☐ 10am – 12pm
- ☐ 12pm – 2pm
- ☐ 2pm – 4pm
- ☐ 4pm – 6pm
- ☐ After 6pm

How would you rate your awareness of dog ownership requirements and responsibilities under the Companion Animals Act 1998? (Tick any one option) \*

- ☐ I am completely across the requirements
- ☐ I have a reasonable idea of the requirements
- ☐ I have heard of the Act but am not familiar with the requirements
- ☐ I have not heard of the Act

Before recently, had you read Council's Access Areas for Dogs Policy? (Tick any one option) \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Before recently, had you read Council's Dog Off Leash Guide? (Tick any one option) \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

### What is important to you in the revised policy?

So far, stakeholders and community focus group participants have suggested that Council should consider the following important factors when exploring possible changes to the policy.

Please tick the three factors that are most important to you\*

- ☐ The revised policy is simple and logical
- ☐ The revised policy provides dog-friendly spaces and facilities that support the health and wellbeing of dogs and their owners
- ☐ The revised policy supports the safe and satisfactory co-existence of dogs with other users of the space (e.g. families, sportspeople)
- ☐ The revised policy helps to protect the natural environment, especially native fauna such as endangered shorebirds
- ☐ The revised policy supports local tourism (recognising visitors are attracted by the natural beauty and the dog-friendliness of the area)
- ☐ The revised policy sets owners up for success, with effective education and amenities provided to give owners every chance to do the right thing
- ☐ The revised policy enables effective enforcement when people don't do the right thing
- ☐ The revised policy provides consistent, positive messaging that is easy to find and that clearly explains the 'why' behind dog access or prohibited areas
- ☐ The revised policy includes collaborative efforts and input from Council teams, State Government agencies and industry or volunteer organisations
- ☐ The revised policy includes the resources to support ongoing implementation of the policy
- ☐ The revised policy is compliant with all relevant State legislation

Are there any important factors missing from the list? – Limit to one paragraph

*[Free text box]*

## Defining access areas

How do you currently feel about the off-leash times and off-leash areas? (Tick one box in each row) \*

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
How satisfied are you, currently, with the timing of off-leash and on-leash areas?					
How satisfied are you, currently, with the categorisation of off-leash and on-leash areas?					
How satisfied are you, currently, with the location of off-leash and on-leash areas?					

Would you like to see less, the same, or more of the following types of off-leash areas? (Tick one box in each row) \*

	Less of these	Same as now	More of these
Off-leash areas			
Fenced off-leash areas			
Off-leash areas on beaches			
Off-leash areas not on beaches (e.g. parks and reserves)			

Would you be open to Council simplifying the policy by removing timed off-leash areas altogether and allowing either 24/7 or no dog access, even if it meant a slight reduction in the number of off-leash areas? (Tick any one option) \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Other (please specify) - Limit to one paragraph *[Free text box]*

Which of the following do you expect will lead to the greatest improvement to the location and timing of access areas? (Please rank in order of importance) \*

- ☐ Improve consistency of off-leash times across the City of Shoalhaven
- ☐ Provide increased off-leash access during quiet times of the year (e.g. Winter)
- ☐ Assess potential environmental impacts before designating access areas
- ☐ Investigate vacant or unused land that might be used as new off-leash areas

Are there any improvement initiatives missing from the list above? – Limit to one paragraph  
[Free text box]

### Setting dog-owners up for success

How satisfied are you, currently, with the behaviour of dog-owners in your area? (Tick one box) \*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Which of the following changes to signage do you expect will lead to the greatest improvement in positive shared use of space? Please tick the three most important to you. \*

- ☐ Bigger and clearer text
- ☐ Clear and consistent colour indications of area categorisation
- ☐ Bigger and clearer maps of the area
- ☐ A “You are here” marker
- ☐ Simpler visuals (with minimal text)
- ☐ Messaging on why area has been categorised a certain way
- ☐ Messaging on the penalty that applies to irresponsible behaviour
- ☐ Messaging aimed at non-dog owners (e.g. warning families dogs are about)

- ☐ Better positioning of signage at access points or transition points between areas
- ☐ Other (please specify) – Limit to one paragraph *[Free text box]*

Which of the following would you most like to see in dog access areas? Please tick the five most important to you. \*

- ☐ Greater accessibility for people of all abilities
- ☐ Fencing or suitable distance from roads
- ☐ Drinking water for dogs
- ☐ Drinking water for owners
- ☐ Well-maintained grass
- ☐ Seating
- ☐ Shade
- ☐ Dog waste bags and bins
- ☐ Dog agility equipment
- ☐ Separate access areas for small and large dogs
- ☐ Better car parking
- ☐ Other (please specify) – Limit to one paragraph *[Free text box]*

Which of the following additional information initiatives do you expect will lead to the greatest improvement in positive shared use of space?

Please tick the three most important to you. \*

- ☐ Consistent signage across the City of Shoalhaven
- ☐ Simpler identification of dog off-leash / prohibited areas on satellite imagery or on base maps (e.g. Council's current Guide)
- ☐ A mobile app or similar for users to easily find dog off-leash / prohibited areas near them
- ☐ Stencils on footpaths and other surfaces communicating whether the area is dog off-leash / prohibited
- ☐ Council providing information to tourism sector to share with their customers
- ☐ Council providing information to vets, dog trainers and other organisations that work with dogs to share with their customers
- ☐ Clear messaging to improve understanding of what "under effective control" means
- ☐ Simple fact sheet that clearly outlines requirements under the Companion Animals Act 1998
- ☐ Other (please specify) – Limit to one paragraph *[Free text box]*

## Enforcing the policy

How satisfied are you, currently, with the enforcement of the policy in your area? (Tick one box) \*

Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied

Which of the following do you expect will lead to the greatest improvement to Council's approach to enforcement? Please rank in order of importance. \*

- ☐ Improved ranger visibility at peak times
- ☐ Rangers to educate dog owners in the first instance
- ☐ Rangers to issue fines for repeat offenders
- ☐ Rangers to consider owner intent or 'blatant disregard' when determining whether to fine

Is there anything missing from the list? – Limit to one paragraph *[Free text box]*

### Final comments

Overall, what do you believe is the biggest opportunity for improving shared use of public space in your local area? – Limit to one paragraph *[Free text box]*

Is there anything else you think should be considered in Council's Access Areas For Dogs Policy review process? – Limit to one paragraph *[Free text box]*

#### Appendix 4. Location-specific survey suggestions

The following suggestions were provided by survey respondents. They have been tidied up for readability and grouped by respondent suburb.

Planning Area	Respondent's Suburb	Specific Suggestion
AREA 1	Bamarang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Add Callala Bay to off leash areas</li> </ul>
	Berry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access the vast, mostly unused Seven Mile Beach area between Gerroa and Shoalhaven Heads</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow dog access to Seven Mile beach</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow dogs on leash through the National Park and off leash on 7 mile beach</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide access on to Seven Mile beach with dogs remaining on leash through the National Park but once on the beach are allowed to be off leash except near where people are swimming</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide beach access for residents of Berry</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise areas, like Berry Showgrounds, which remain unused most of the time</li> </ul>
	Bomaderry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide more and larger fully fenced off leash places in town, as well as access to the river near town</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Turn Thurgate Oval into an official off leash dog park. It is not used for anything else</li> </ul>
	Cambewarra Village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better enforce penalties, especially at Nowra Showground and including to make dog owners pick up their dog's mess</li> </ul>
	Kangaroo Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow dogs off leash on Kangaroo Valley Showground</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow off leash use of Kangaroo Valley showground</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create an off leash area in Kangaroo Valley near the oval</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kangaroo Valley has no off leash area at present</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make Kangaroo Valley Showground an off-leash area - it is underutilised and is perfect for dog walking</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an off leash area in Kangaroo Valley</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide at least one off leash area in Kangaroo Valley</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide off leash area in Kangaroo Valley</li> </ul>
	North Nowra	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a fenced off leash area in Joe Hyam Park, North Nowra</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide an off leash area in North Nowra, Bangalee, Tapitallee</li> </ul>
	Nowra Dc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve behaviour of dog owners at the Nowra Showgrounds</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make Vic Zealand Oval off leash in certain times</li> </ul>

	<b>Shoalhaven Heads</b>	• Provide bins, water and seats at new fenced area in Shoalhaven Heads
		• Put up a specific on leash / off leash sign up at the Heads Golf course beach entrance
		• Reduce 24/7 off leash access to the river at Shoalhaven Heads, which is prohibiting others from enjoying it
	<b>West Nowra</b>	• Create an off leash area at Nowra Showground
		• Create an off-leash area at Nowra Showground between the Agility Park & the War Memorial by fencing along the sportsground and providing water and poo bags
	<b>Worrigee</b>	• Improve fencing at Greenwell Point (caravan park side) – dogs can climb under and get into the park
<b>AREA 2</b>	<b>Callala Bay</b>	• Designate east of Wowley Creek an off leash area for dogs as it is usually quiet and those who don't like dogs can walk west of the creek
		• Let dog owners use the beach between Wooley Creek & Red Point, at least in the off season
		• Provide a separate dog park near Callala Bay
	<b>Callala Beach</b>	• Add off leash times for the beach north of Wooley Creek in Callala Bay
	<b>Culburra Beach</b>	• Add signage in the Lake Wollumboola area to clarify where dogs are prohibited, including the sand bar
		• Better educate owners and monitor dogs to protect shorebird nesting areas at Culburra Beach
		• Create a dedicated 24 hour off leash dog park at Culburra Beach
		• Create a dedicated 24 hour off leash dog park at Culburra Beach
		• Make the area from Tilbury Cove to The Mall at Culburra Beach a 24/7 on leash area
		• Provide a large fenced off leash area for large dogs in Culburra Beach
		• Provide a totally dog free beach at Tilbury Cove for children and families, just like children's playgrounds are dog free
		• Provide some dog free areas on the beaches at Culburra
		• Provide total dog free beaches such as Tilbury Cove Culburra that are child safe beaches
	<b>Currarong</b>	• Build a fenced dog park in Currarong in addition to current off leash beach times
		• Designate Peel St to Windy Gully 24/7 off leash, especially in off-peak times
		• Exclude dogs from Jervis Bay Marine Park sanctuary zones to protect wildlife, as well as from Abrahams Bosom beach in summer and school holidays
		• Extend the off leash area in Currarong to Windy Gully to alleviate congestion
		• Give Currarong a grassed area as high tides leave no beach to walk on during current limited hours

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make fox baiting signs more visible on beaches and keep Bosom a leashed area (with off leash time extended out of holiday periods)</li> <li>• Offer off leash outside holidays at Warrain Beach past the creek</li> <li>• Provide a grassed off leash area - at high tide we are unable to walk on the beach due to the tide</li> <li>• Provide a second off-leash area at Bosom Beach</li> <li>• Provide an additional fully fenced dog park near the skate park</li> <li>• Provide an off leash area after Peel St Creek as very few people use this part of Warrain beach</li> </ul>
	<b>AREA 3</b>	
	<b>Erowal Bay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a 24/7 off leash beach area in Vincentia, like other towns in the Shoalhaven</li> </ul>
	<b>Huskisson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the winter off-lead time restrictions on Huskisson Beach more generous for dogs and owners</li> </ul>
	<b>Hyams Beach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate Hyams Beach as off leash during certain times.</li> <li>• Designate Hyams Beach at the southern end of Seaman's Beach as an off leash area</li> <li>• Increase the areas available for unleashed walking (i.e. the southern half of Sailors Beach at Hyams)</li> <li>• Make Hyams beach a dog free zone</li> <li>• Make Seaman's Beach at Hyams off leash at designated times, in line with other beaches in the area</li> <li>• Open up the south end of Hyams Beach (Seamans Beach) past the creek as an off leash dog area</li> <li>• Provide off leash areas at Hyams Beach</li> </ul>
	<b>Sanctuary Point</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow people to enjoy the sunset in peace on the narrow paths on the foreshore of St Georges Basin</li> <li>• Expand off leash options, even if with restricted times and offer at least one 24/7 off leash in Jervis Bay</li> <li>• Make Palm Beach Sanctuary Point dog friendly</li> <li>• Provide one 24hr off-leash beach in either Huskisson or Vincentia</li> <li>• Provide one 24hr off-leash beach in either Huskisson or Vincentia</li> </ul>
	<b>St Georges Basin</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change Huskisson Beach access to Collingwood Beach</li> </ul>
	<b>Tomerong</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more dog friendly off leash areas in Jervis Bay</li> </ul>
	<b>Vincentia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address disrespect owners are showing for rules on Blenheim Beach</li> <li>• Address issues on Nelsons Beach – it is overrun by dogs yet is one of the most popular beaches in the Shoalhaven</li> <li>• Create a 24-hour off leash beach in the area (e.g. Nelsons beach in Vincentia)</li> <li>• Designate Nelson Beach as 24/7 off leash given it is well located for the elderly to park and access</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep Nelson Beach access</li> <li>• Make Collingwood Beach 24/7 off leash because no picnic areas or playgrounds are nearby</li> <li>• Make Collingwood Beach a 24/7 dog beach since - unlike Nelson and Husky Beaches - it does not have children's playgrounds nearby</li> <li>• Make Collingwood Beach dog friendly</li> <li>• Provide more bins on the shared path between Holden St and Plantation Point</li> <li>• Provide off leash on beaches 24 hours in Winter with signage for non-dog owners at Nelson's Beach</li> <li>• Provide on leash areas (i.e. Collingwood Beach in Vincentia)</li> <li>• Relieve congestion of dogs on the beaches in Huskisson/Vincentia by providing a 24/7 beach</li> <li>• Stop using the small beach near the caravan park in Huskisson as a dog beach and use Collingwood instead</li> <li>• Swap current dog friendly Nelson &amp; Huskisson Beaches with 24/7 off-leash at Collingwood Beach as it is larger and less popular with other users</li> <li>• The three adjacent dog beaches on Plantation Point mean a long walk to get to the non-dog beaches - designate Nelson Beach as the only dog beach instead</li> </ul>
	<b>Wandandian</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully secure fencing where it is not on a beach (e.g. at Greenwell Point) as dogs can still get through the fence</li> <li>• Offer a few 24/7 off leash beaches around Jervis Bay as Washerwoman's Beach can be too far</li> </ul>
	<b>Woollamia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a fenced dog park off leash area around Huskisson</li> <li>• Provide dog access to the spit at creek opposite Huskisson</li> </ul>
	<b>Worrowing Heights</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Vincentia Beach to off-leash access</li> </ul>
<b>AREA 4</b>	<b>Berrara</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add an off leash dog area somewhere in the Berrara/Cudmirrah area (e.g. Kirby's beach)</li> <li>• Better enforce dogs on and off leash at Berrara Beach</li> <li>• Fine the people who walk dogs up to Mermaid Pool at the South end of Berrara Beach</li> <li>• Open Berrara Beach to dogs as shorebirds are hardly ever there (maybe 6 weeks of the year)</li> </ul>
	<b>Cudmirrah</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a beach between Sussex Inlet and Cudmirrah that is off leash 24/7</li> <li>• Provide dog off leash areas to all communities, including in Sussex Inlet area where Swan Lake edge can be under water</li> <li>• Provide dog off leash areas to all communities, including Sussex Inlet area given Swan Lake edge can be underwater</li> </ul>

	<b>Sussex Inlet</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designate Cudmirrah Beach off leash as there is often not enough sand left on Swan Lake for dogs and humans to walk due to the lake's fluctuating water levels</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer more dog access areas, especially in Sussex Inlet</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer one area on a beach in/near Sussex Inlet, between certain hours, for dogs to run free</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a dog off leash area at Sussex Inlet (e.g. southern end of the beach at Sussex Inlet - officially called Cudmirrah Beach)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an off leash area on Cudmirrah Beach as there is often not enough sand to walk on along Swan Lake</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more off leash areas in Sussex Inlet</li> </ul>
	<b>Swanhaven</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove dog access to Dyball's Reserve Swanhaven and designate ski beach for dogs</li> </ul>
<b>AREA 5</b>	<b>Bendalong</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enforce prohibition of dogs on Flat Rock</li> </ul>
	<b>Burrill Lake</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a designated, timed, off-leash area in the Burrill Lake/Dolphin Point area, possibly East side of Lions Park, especially as the caravan park is dog friendly</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an appropriately-located, fenced off leash area at Lions Park</li> </ul>
	<b>Kings Point</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide an off leash area on the south side of Ulladulla</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more off leash areas between Burrill Lake and Bawley Point and consider beach access for dogs along Wairo beach (e.g. from the Pumphouse to the Hook surf spots)</li> </ul>
	<b>Kioloa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finish the path between Bawley Point and Kioloa for dog owners to walk along</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer morning and afternoon off lead access to Kioloa and North Kioloa beaches</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer off leash access to Merry Beach as the caravan park is dog friendly</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timed access all year around for Kioloa beaches, just as Eurobodalla Shire offers</li> </ul>
	<b>Lake Conjola</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure owners have their dogs on a lead when walking streets of Lake Conjola</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn Lake Conjola Beach into an off leash beach</li> </ul>
	<b>Lake Tabourie</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide off leash access on South Beach</li> </ul>
	<b>Manyana</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn Manyana beach into an off leash area</li> </ul>
	<b>Milton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Narrawallee Beach 24-hour off leash</li> </ul>
	<b>Mollymook</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep dogs in areas where they should be (i.e. not swimming in the Bogey Hole in Mollymook)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer off leash at Mollymook in the middle of the beach</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove ban on leashed dogs being able to access community space, including so owners can walk dogs near Narrawallee Inlet or on grassed area at Mollymook Beach</li> </ul>

	<b>Mollymook Beach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow dogs across the full length of Narrawallee Beach</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct conflicting signage between Tallwood Ave and Donlans North near North Mollymook Beach</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not provide off leash access at Swan Lake due to the environmental impact</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase off leash access but with large fenced areas (e.g. Ulladulla Sporting Complex ovals)</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain the on leash corridor at the rear of South Narrawallee Beach to access the approved off-leash area</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make Narrawallee dog off-leash area a larger area than at present (e.g. extend north) and make 24/7</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the middle of Mollymook Beach 24hr off leash to ease congestion on Mitchell Pde shared path</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide alternate access to Mollymook Beach (further North at the Creek) as the vacant block at cnr Mitchell Parade/Donlan Road - which previously provided access - has recently sold</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide off leash areas for dogs on more beaches (e.g. timed off leash at central part of Mollymook Beach)</li> </ul>
	<b>Narrawallee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow dogs on leash at the northern end of Narrawallee beach</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify that the south end of Narrawallee beach is a red zone – dogs prohibited</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not allow any dogs on Narrawallee Beach at peak times as off leash areas are impossible to navigate with ease</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not allow Narrawallee to be an off leash beach as it is too close to residents that are impacted by noise and has Surf Lifesaving flags, endangered shore birds, surf schools and is a popular swimming spot</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend the off leash area on Narrawallee Beach to the northern headlands in holiday times</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase on-leash beach access for dogs, especially in Narrawallee</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer more 24/7 off-leash beach spaces for dogs, including at Narrawallee</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide 24/7 off leash access at Narrawallee with an extension of the space available for dogs to use</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide dog access at the north end of Narrawallee Beach</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove the off leash access path on Narrawallee Beach as it is an outlier from the rest of the Shoalhaven and the 10m access width is not well defined</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain access to Narrawallee beach via the Victor Avenue steps as it is a critical access point for dog owners</li> </ul>
	<b>Ulladulla</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not allocate Narrawallee Beach as an off-leash area</li> </ul>