



DOGS IN OPEN SPACE AREAS



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POLICY OBJECTIVES

The intention of this policy is to guide the management and control of dogs in open space areas within Gosford City. An important component of the management of dogs in open spaces is the suitable provision of accessible off leash dog exercise areas balanced by appropriately identified and managed dog exclusion areas to support the whole community and to protect the natural environment

The objectives of this policy are as follows:

1. To declare and regulate clearly identified dog off leash exercise areas across the Gosford City Local Government Area
2. To support and promote the social value of responsible dog ownership and adherence to the requirements of the relevant legislation
3. To manage risk and minimise nuisance caused by dogs to the public
4. To ensure the public recreational and environmental values of open space areas are retained

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy has been prepared in accordance with the following legislation:

- NSW Companion Animals Act 1998
- Companion Animals Amendment (Outdoor Dining Areas) Bill 2010
- NSW Local Government Act 1993 (Section 632)
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000

In accordance with the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 Council will provide an allocation of public open space for the purpose of dog off leash exercise.

Dog exercise is permitted on leash in all areas unless specified by Council or the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 including all streets and associated footpaths.

Council is also able to declare and signpost areas as dog exclusion areas.

In 2012 Council adopted the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy. The Strategy identifies that dogs are extremely important to the community. However, there is community expectation for the increased management and control of dogs in open spaces including improved signage, community education initiatives, promotion and enforcement of responsible dog ownership.

Future planning and management of dogs in open spaces is to be consistent with the recommendations of the Dogs on Open Spaces Strategy 2012.

LAND TO WHICH THIS POLICY APPLIES

For the purpose of this policy “Open Space Areas” are defined as community land or Crown Reserves under the care, control and management of Gosford City Council or where Council has been appointed Reserve Trust Manager, used for recreation.

Beaches

Dog off leash, dog on leash and dog exclusion areas are provided on all beaches. These areas can be accessed 24 hours per day every day of the year.

See corresponding maps for clarification of areas and access points.

Parks

Dogs are permitted on leash in all parks at all times unless declared and signposted by Council as a dog exclusion area or prohibited under the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 (see Dog Prohibited Areas and Dog Exclusion Areas).

Sportsgrounds

Dogs are permitted on leash on Council sportsgrounds unless games or training are in progress or are declared and sign posted by Council as a dog exclusion area. Sportsgrounds that are located adjacent to off leash areas will be sign posted dog exclusion areas.

Bushland Reserves

Dogs are **NOT** permitted in any of Councils Coastal Open Space System (COSS) reserves.

COSS reserves are established for nature conservation work such as bush regeneration, plant and animal surveys and studies.

Dogs can be exercised on leash in all non-COSS bushland reserves unless declared and signposted by Council as a dog exclusion area.

Fenced Dog Exercise Area(s)

Council will provide a fully fenced off leash dog exercise park in a suitably identified central and accessible location within the Gosford LGA.

Dog Prohibited Areas

Under the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 dogs are not permitted in the following areas:

- NSW National Parks
- Food preparation and eating areas (exclusive of outdoor eating areas if the dog is under effective control)
- School or childcare grounds
- Within 10m of children’s playground equipment

- Within 10m of the flagged areas on patrolled beaches and declared dog exclusion areas on beaches (see corresponding maps)
- Wildlife protection areas as designated by Council

Dog Exclusion Areas

The following areas have been declared by Council as Dog Exclusion Areas:

- COSS Reserves
- Crommelin Native Arboretum (Pearl Beach)
- Beachfront Parade Reserve St Huberts Island
- Illoura Foreshore Reserve Davistown (see corresponding map)
- Saratoga Conservation Area (see corresponding map)
- Other areas as declared and sign posted by Council

Maps of the off leash dog exercise areas for each geographical area in Gosford City are available on Councils website.

Note: In accordance with the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 a person with a disability is entitled to be accompanied by an assistance animal in open space areas, including dog exclusion areas where the assistance animal is being used bona fide by the person to assist the person.

ENFORCEMENT

Councils Compliance Unit has the primary responsibility for monitoring and enforcing the provisions of the legislation.

Dog owners in breach of the policy face penalties including the issue of infringement notices.

PROCEDURE

The Procedure (attached), being an administrative process, may be altered as necessary by the Chief Executive Officer.

(Minute No 447/1985 – 21 May 1985)
 (Revised Minute No 912/1994 – 13 September 1994)
 (Minute No 650/1996 – 27 August 1996 –Review of Policies)
 (Minute No 239/2000 – 24 October 2000 – Review of Policies)
 (Minute No 173/2003 – 22 July 2003)
 (Minute No 346/2004 - 23 November 2004)
 (Minute No 311/2009 - 5 May 2009 - Review of Policies)
 (Minute No 388/2013 - 16 July 2013 - Review of Policies)
 (Minute No 721/2014 – 9 December 2014)

ATTACHMENT - PROCEDURE

DOGS IN OPEN SPACE AREAS

1. Council is required to promote awareness of the requirements of the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 with respect to the ownership of companion animals and to take such steps as are appropriate to ensure that it is made aware of the existence of all dangerous, menacing and restricted dogs kept within the Gosford City area.
2. Dogs in public places must be under effective control at all times.
3. The dog owner (or other person over 16 years who is in charge of the dog at the time) is guilty of an offence if their dog rushes at, attacks, bites, harasses or chases any person or animal.
4. The dog owner (or other person over 16 years who is in charge of the dog at the time) must immediately remove and properly dispose of a dog's faeces if a dog defecates in a public place.
5. Council is responsible for the provision of a balance of dog off leash and dog exclusion areas to support the whole community in accordance with the recommendations of the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy 2012.
6. Council is responsible for planning and allocating financial resources to enable implementation of the Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy 2012 including:
 - a. Improved quality, function and infrastructure associated with designated dog off leash areas
 - b. Signage and promotion
 - c. Provision of waste receptacles in all dog off-leash areas
 - d. Community education programs regarding responsible dog ownership
 - e. Provision of a fully fenced dog exercise park
 - f. Enforcement
7. A hierarchy framework for the provision and enhancement of off leash dog areas has been adopted on the basis that not all facilities can be provided at the same level of development.
8. Council will take action where required to protect the environment with particular regard to vulnerable species and Part 5 Assessments under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.
9. Council will regularly monitor and review implementation of the policy.