

2.2 DOG OFF-LEASH AREA REVIEW CONSULTATION FINDINGS & OFF-LEASH POLICY

(Author:JG)

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its Meeting of 31 May 2022 Council resolved in part to:

- 3. Approve the public exhibition of the Off-Leash Area Review and Draft Dog Off-Leash Policy ... for community feedback.*
- 4. Approve temporary signage to be erected at reserves where changes to existing, new or potential off-leash or fenced off-leash areas are proposed to inform the community of these proposed changes and provide details on how they can have their say.*
- 5. Consider the findings of the community consultation at a future meeting.*

The Off-Leash Area Review and *draft* Off-Leash Policy were subsequently placed on public exhibition for community review and feedback from 9 July 2022 to 30 September 2022. Significant feedback has been received on this matter throughout the consultation period. Following analysis and consideration of the consultation findings:

- No changes to the draft off-leash policy are proposed.
- The number of off-leash areas in Monash is recommended to increase from 31 to 45.
- Amendments have been made to the proposed off-leash areas for Gardiners Reserve, Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, Mayfield Park and FE Hunt Reserve.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the consultation findings the Off-Leash Area Review and present a final Off-Leash Policy (Attachment 2) for Council consideration.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

Industry experts note that many dog off-leash areas (OLAs), and particularly fenced off-leash areas (FOLAs), are installed without being accompanied by a comprehensive dog off-leash policy that provides a rationale for the provision of unfenced, partially fenced and fully-fenced leash areas.

There are many considerations in relation to the provision of off-leash and potential fenced off-leash areas. At the 30 November 2021 Council meeting, Council endorsed 16 key design principles and considerations that are to be applied to the review of existing and design and development of new off-leash areas in Monash.

A draft Off-Leash Policy was subsequently developed based on industry best practice and the endorsed OLA principles. The draft policy was considered at the 30 May 2022 Council meeting and approved for public exhibition and consultation. In addition to the public exhibition of the draft policy, Council also invited community feedback on opportunities for:

- Up to 14 **new** potential OLA sites.
- The **expansion** of 4 existing OLAs – Ashwood/Jingella Reserve, Mount Waverley Linear Reserve (Heany Street & Beverley Grove), Pamela-Smyth Street electricity easement, Janice Road – Ivanhoe Street electricity easement.
- The **removal** of 1 existing OLA – Damper Creek Conservation Reserve.
- The **reduction** in size of 4 existing OLAs – Jack Edwards, Gardiners, Mulgrave and Caloola Reserves.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

An increase in the number of off-leash reserves will place more pressure on Community Laws to educate and regulate dog owners. Additional Animal Management & Education staff (3.0 EFT) is proposed to support implementation and enforcement of the recommended changes.

An estimated capital budget of approximately \$700,000 is required to fabricate and progressively install the dog-related infrastructure requirements in accordance with the minimum provision standards in the policy across the 45 OLA sites (previously 31 sites).

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended Council note the findings of the community consultation and make a determination in regard to the future provision of off-leash areas in Monash.

2.2 OFF-LEASH AREA REVIEW & DRAFT OFF-LEASH POLICY

(Author: JG)

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

RECOMMENDATION/S*That Council:*

1. *Notes the community feedback and key findings of the off-leash area review and draft off-leash policy consultation.*
2. *Notes the comprehensive community feedback received in regard to off-leash area hot-spots and endorses the amended off-leash area recommendations for Gardiners Reserve, Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, Mayfield Park and FE Hunt Reserve as depicted in Attachment 1 – OLA Hot Spots & Recommendations.*
3. *Notes that, with exception of the off-leash area hot-spots, generally all remaining proposed changes to existing and new off-leash areas are supported.*
4. *Agrees to increase the number of off-leash areas in Monash from 31 to 45 sites as detailed and mapped in Attachment 1 – OLA Hot Spots & Recommendations and -*
 - a) *notes that the provision of new OLA sites generally meets the recommended 800m minimum provision standard; and*
 - b) *approves a future capital allocation of up to \$700k to fabricate and install dog-related infrastructure (incl. safety fencing) at recommended and new off-leash sites.*
5. *Notes that the need for the proactive enforcement of the dog controls in places such as on-lead and off-leash areas was highlighted throughout the consultation and:*
 - a) *notes that the Community Laws team do not have capacity to uplift the existing level of patrols; and*
 - b) *refers an additional 3.0 EFT Community Laws Officers for consideration as part of Council's 2022/23 budget process.*
6. *Endorse the Off-Leash Policy as presented in Attachment 2 – Off-Leash Policy, noting that no changes have been made to the draft Policy.*
7. *Authorise offices to bring Council's decision regarding any approved changes to off-leash areas by adopting an Order made under Section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and publish this order in the Government Gazette and in a newspaper circulating in the Monash municipal district (effective from 1 July 2023).*

INTRODUCTION

This report details the consultation findings the Dog Off-Leash Area Review and presents final recommendations relating to dog off-leash area provision and an Off-Leash Policy (Attachment 2) for Council consideration and endorsement.

BACKGROUND

Dog Ownership

It is estimated that nearly forty per cent (40%) of Australian households have at least one dog (largely unchanged since 2016, at 38%), making them the most popular type of pets.¹ Based on a 40% household penetration rate and 2021 household census data, it is estimated there are approximately 27,710 dogs across 69,274 households in Monash.

The actual number of registered dogs in Monash however is much lower than the estimated 40% household penetration rate (see table below).

Year	Registered Dogs in Monash
2017	11,460
2018	11,663
2019	11,995
2020	11,671
2021	12,495
2022	12,476*

Source: Monash Community Laws
*October YTD

Council's Dog Control Order

Dog owners must comply with Monash's Dog Control Order (2015) that requires owners to: carry a short leash for restraining their dog; have effective voice or hand control over their dog; be able to bring their dog under control promptly; remain in constant sight of their dog and not allow their dog to worry, threaten or attack another dog or person.

Regardless of whether dogs are off-lead in an unfenced or fenced off-leash area, if a dog is off-leash, it must be brought under effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash (not exceeding 1.5 metres in length) if the dog is **within twenty metres** of:

- a) an arena or ground whilst being used for an organised sporting or practice event;
- b) a children's play equipment area that is being used;
- c) the location of an organised public meeting; and
- d) a barbeque or picnic area that is being used.

The requirement that dogs must be on a leash within 20 metres of an organised sporting event has been in place for over 25 years having been

¹ Animal Medicines Australia, A National Survey of People & Pets (2019)

first adopted by Council in October 1996. This followed a consultation process that identified increased public concern about the threat to people from dogs wandering out of control at the time.

Since that time, the Dog Control Order has evolved but the requirement to keep dogs on leash near sporting events, including training, and playgrounds has remained because it is seen as an essential safety measure. It is recognised that some dogs may become over stimulated in such environments leading to behaviours such as chasing people and equipment (e.g. balls). Dogs behaving this way are difficult to control and this can lead to unnecessary disruption to practice and play and has the potential to put participants and spectators at risk of injury. This is a view consistently held by the Local Government sector where councils including Monash (20m), Bayside (20m), Glen Eira (20m), Bass Coast (20m), Whittlesea (20m), Stonnington (20m), Boroondara (30m) and Ballarat (50m) all have 20m or more as the distance from a sporting event that dogs must be on leash. In Greater Dandenong, dogs are required to be on leash in all reserves when sports activity is underway.

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Community interest in dedicated fenced off-leash areas (FOLA's) for dogs was identified as part of the 2017-21 Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) consultation and resulted in an action item to *investigate the feasibility for a FO LA within the municipality*.

The DAMP also recommended a review of all off-leash areas be undertaken for a number of reasons including:

- reviewing sites where there is a conflict between dog off-leash and other activities
- identifying possible opportunities for additional off-leash areas
- sites where off-leash provision may need to be modified given other site considerations e.g. premier playing surfaces or sections of reserves
- identifying opportunities to better align on/off-leash boundaries for clarity of understanding (community) and ease of monitoring boundaries (compliance staff).

At the 15 December 2020 Council meeting Council resolved that officers identify a potential FO LA (dedicated fenced dog park) site in each ward and report back to Council.

Officers subsequently reported back to Council on 30 November 2021 on this matter and at this meeting Council resolved to:

1. *Note that work has been done on FO LA's as per the 15 December 2020 resolution of Council including investigation of potential locations having regard to the off-leash area key principles as outlined in Attachment A.*

2. *Note the key considerations and challenges of FOLA's as outlined in this report and resolves not to proceed with FOLAs at this point in time.*
3. *Accept in-principle that for the above reasons, the scale and number of any potential FOLA developments in Monash need to be further considered following further assessment and consultation, but if introduced should be on a limited basis.*
4. *Note the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) action for review of OLA's and accepts that this will impact existing areas, and the need to develop a policy and identify new OLA's (incl possibly FOLA's) accepting this will have an impact on current and future locations where people can exercise their dogs off lead.*
5. *Agree to undertake a holistic review of OLA's, including consideration of any changes/removal of existing OLA's and the identification of new possible OLA/FOLA locations.*
6. *Accept that the review of existing OLA's will be undertaken with in accordance with the 16 key principles as detailed in Attachment A.*
7. *Consult with clubs and users where OLA's exist and may be subject to any changes/removal of existing OLA's and report to Council at the appropriate time on proposed actions and feedback as well as a draft policy to inform the establishment (and retention) of OLA's including how FOLA's may be considered in the future.*
8. *That following the review referred to in part 6 of the motion that Council consults with the broader community to seek their feedback on the review, including OLAs and FOLAs, moving forward.*

Officers subsequently undertook a review of existing and potential OLAs, resulting in a report to Council on 31 May 2022 where Council resolved that it:

1. *Notes the findings of the review of off-leash areas as presented in Appendix 1.*
2. *Notes the Draft Dog Off-Leash Policy as presented in Attachment A and that this draft: - incorporates the 16 key design principles endorsed by Council at the 30 November 2021 Council meeting; and has been used to directly inform the review of off-leash areas as presented in Appendix 1 which identifies potential changes to existing and potential new off-leash areas.*
3. *Approve the public exhibition of the Off-Leash Area Review and Draft Dog Off-Leash Policy (Attachment A) for community feedback.*
4. *Approve temporary signage to be erected at reserves where changes to existing, new or potential off-leash or fenced off-leash areas are proposed to inform the community of these proposed changes and provide details on how they can have their say.*
5. *Consider the findings of the community consultation at a future meeting.*

Community Consultation

Following Council's decision at the 30 May 2022 Council meeting, the Off-Leash Area Review and draft Off-Leash Policy were placed on public exhibition for community review and feedback from 9 July 2022 to 30 September 2022. This extended period of consultation elicited significant feedback and comment. Various engagement opportunities were promoted including:

- Shape Monash consultation – interactive mapping of sites for site specific feedback at <https://shape.monash.vic.gov.au/dogs>
- Direct Email – Sports clubs and 'Friends of' groups were directly emailed and encouraged to complete the on-line survey and/or make a submission.
- Ongoing promotion of the on-line survey through Council's website and social media.
- Project page subscription registration – for regular project updates.
- Articles in Monash Bulletin distributed to all households in Monash - July 2022 and August 2022 Monash Bulletin articles were also translated into Simple Chinese, Greek and Italian.
- Reserve signage – signage erected at the main entry points to all impacted reserves.
- Residential Fliers – distributed to all residences within 200m of potentially impacted sites.
- Communications to existing networks e.g. direct emails to members of Council networks and community groups.
- Direct communication and/or presentation to Monash's advisory groups - Disability Advisory Committee, Young Persons Reference Group, Positive Aging Reference Group and Gender Equity Advisory Committee & Multicultural Advisory Group.
- Officer meetings (on-site) with dog walkers.

Consultation Report

All community feedback received in relation to the off-leash area review and draft policy consultation has been consolidated and recorded in a detailed Community Consultation Report. The Community Consultation Report has been previously distributed to Council under separate cover and copies of this report are available upon request.

Summary of Consultation Findings

1. Written Submissions

Eighty (80) written submissions were received via email. The top 5 key themes identified from the written submissions were:

1. Infrastructure provision – more fences and gates, better signage and improved facilities for dogs
2. Opposition to a proposed OLA change/reduction especially at Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, Jack Edwards Reserve and Gardiners Reserve in particular

3. Negative dogs' impacts e.g. concerns regarding dog waste and faeces (dog poo/smell) and playing surface damage (digging, urine)
4. Regulation and Education – concerns over irresponsible dog owners and increased need for regulation & education
5. Community Safety - concerns such as dog attacks, tripping hazards, fears for small dogs and children.

2. On-line Consultation

At the close of consultation on 30 September 2022, there were **3,556 visitors**, **693 contributions** including **61 submissions** (including Q&A) received via the Shape Monash page.

Sixty percent (60%) of all on-line survey responses were submitted by dog owners, followed by local residents (22%), sports club member/player/spectator (13%) and dog walkers (4%).

Dog owners/walkers tended to fall into 4 overlapping groups:

- those that take their dogs to an off-leash area, preferably a fenced sports field
- those that like to walk their dogs off-leash, preferably on bush trails
- those that walk their dogs on-lead
- those that ignore designated areas and walk their dogs off-leash wherever they want.

Overall there was a high level of support (69%) for increasing the number of off-leash areas in Monash to provide more equitable access across the city. Twenty-four (24%) of respondents indicated they did not support the provision of more OLAs and 7% preferred not to say.

Some salient points that did not feature enough to fall into a key theme, but are still considered important to note include:

- The value respondents put on socialising (for people and dogs) in fenced OLAs
- That some people avoid open space areas out of fear of uncontrolled dogs
- Considering a gender lens that might show that women (often accompanied by young children) feel safer and find valuable social support in fenced OLAs
- A push for keeping dogs on-lead at all times
- Although there were some calls for a specialised or exclusive 'dog park', this did not come through strongly.

3. Petitions

At the close of consultation on 30 September 2022, seven (**7**) petitions were received:

1. Support for an exclusive Fenced Dog Park in Mount Waverley (Matt Fregon MP - 500 signatures)

2. Opposition to the proposed OLA change at Jack Edwards Reserve Community Petition (76 signatures)
3. Opposition to the proposed OLA change at Jack Edwards Reserve Community Petition (170 signatures)
4. Opposition to the proposed OLA change at Gardiners Reserve Community Petition (60 signatures)
5. Support for the proposed OLA change at Gardiners Reserve Petition (Eastern Lions FC - 79 signatures)
6. Support for the proposed OLA change at Jack Edwards Reserve (Oakleigh Cannons FC - 408 signatures)
7. Opposition to the proposed OLA change at Damper Creek Conservation Reserve Community Petition (550 signatures, noting that less than 50 signatories (<10%) of these are Monash residents).

The Issue of Fencing

The draft policy proposes the following principles (#11-14) in relation to the fencing of Off-Leash Areas:

11. Fenced off-leash areas have a greater likelihood of attracting the following (compared to unfenced/partially fenced off-leash areas):
 - owners who have poor/less control over their dogs and whose dogs are not appropriately responsive to control commands
 - owners who have poorly socialised dogs
 - owners who will leave dogs unattended
 - owners and commercial operators who take too many dogs into a fenced off-leash area.
12. The majority of off-leash areas will be unfenced to optimise appropriate owner control over dogs.
13. The purpose of fencing is not to manage poorly controlled/behaved dogs and will generally only be considered where:
 - there is a safety or perceived safety risk nearby e.g. a road, commuter trail, busy road
 - there is need for a physical barrier between off-leash areas and other closely located or incompatible open space activity that cannot be managed by effective design and/or barrier landscaping e.g. a play space, picnic area.
14. To address safety and design requirements, potential fenced off-leash areas exclusively provided for dogs are to be a **minimum of 3,500m² and preferably 5,000m²+**. The development of potential FOLA's should not displace or disenfranchise other open space users/user groups. Landscape design solutions should be considered before an OLA is partially or fully fenced. For example, landscape barriers (vegetation, berms, rock embankments) may be used when OLA's are in close proximity to:
 - other parkland activities that are not compatible with dogs off-leash

- potential hazards such as roads and commuter trails
- wildlife or sensitive vegetation areas.

When asked *do you support the design principles on fencing of off-leash areas?* (principles #11-14) respondents answered:

- Yes 46% (319 responses)
- No 41% (280 responses)
- Not sure/Prefer not to say 13% (89 responses)

Fencing is a contentious issue and mixed views exist within the community; however, the majority of on-line respondents support the fencing principles detailed in the draft policy.

Exclusively fencing-off public open space for dogs within an existing park or reserve creates a physical barrier that can limit flexible access by the broader community. It is considered crucial that the technical manual's site assessment methodology be applied to identify suitable FOLA sites. This will help ensure broader community access to valuable open space is not adversely impacted and help manage potential impacts such as:

- reduced community access to public open space
- conflict between different user groups
- negative impacts on visual amenity (e.g. built infrastructure such as additional fencing and wear and tear on reserves)
- increased traffic and parking issues
- increased noise (dog barking) and rubbish (faeces) issues.

Similarly, the impact of dogs on sportsgrounds needs to be considered to ensure sports surfaces are not adversely impacted by damage to playing surfaces caused by dogs digging and urinating where player safety is a major consideration.

The draft policy clearly states the *'majority of off-leash areas will be unfenced to optimise appropriate owner control over dogs. The purpose of fencing is not to manage poorly controlled/behaved dogs.'*

The fencing-related design principles align with the legal responsibilities of dog owners which include being able to bring their dog under control if it is, or is likely to be, **within 20m** of an: organised sporting or practice event; occupied children's playground; organised public meeting; and occupied permanent barbecue or picnic area (Monash Dog Control Order - Order Number 4 August 2015).

The consultation findings indicate that many dog owners are not confident in being able to consistently control their dogs and believe that fencing is the solution. Alternate solutions such as effective design and/or barrier landscaping (principle #13) and incentivising/rewarding dog owners (e.g. dog registration subsidies upon completion of puppy school or dog training

courses etc) should be considered in the first instance. Limited fencing can be provided where more significant issues of safety exist.

Dedicated Fenced Off-Leash Areas for Dogs

It is important to note that the draft policy **does not rule out** the possibility of dedicated fenced off-leash areas within Monash - it does however offer a rationale for the provision of off-leash areas (OLAs) including unfenced, partially fenced and fenced off-leash areas, and details the site selection methodology and key design principles to be applied to determine the suitability of future FOLA sites.

The technical manual cautions land managers that there is '...a perception by some dog owners that these are areas [fenced dog parks] appropriate for poorly educated/behaved and aggressive dogs and additional resources are required for compliance monitoring and addressing complaints relating to lack of compliance monitoring.'

Council is not opposed to fencing where it is warranted (e.g. legitimate safety concerns) but there is no requirement or obligation for Council to fully fence parks and reserves with chain mesh fencing and gates to contain errant dogs. Due to the value of open space across the city, it is recommended that any existing open space identified for partial or full fencing not be deemed exclusively for dogs (i.e. exclusive fenced dog parks) but remain accessible for all whilst giving dog-owners some comfort that their dogs can be safely contained.

The draft policy also details the minimum provision standards for off-leash areas including dedicated fenced dog parks. These provision standards should be used to guide design, plantings, structures, amenities and management of off-leash areas including fenced and partially fenced off-leash areas and dedicated fully-fenced dog parks.

Draft Policy

The draft Off-Leash Policy was developed giving consideration to advice from independent industry experts (LMH Consulting/Paws4Play & Practical Ecology) and key internal services including Community Laws, Sustainable Transport (Engineering), Heritage & Conservation Services (Horticultural Services), Sustainability & Waste Services, Community Safety, Recreation Services and Urban & Landscape Design, all of which strongly support the key principles and policy positions embedded in the draft policy including:

1. Specialised Sports Surfaces becoming dog free zones.
2. Conservation Reserves becoming on-leash areas.
3. Major Shared Trails becoming on-leash 10m either side of the trail.

When asked *do you support the draft policy, in particular the key implications?* (items 1-3 above) respondents answered:

- Yes 40% (271 responses)

- No 55% (369 responses)
- Not sure/Prefer not to say 5% (32 responses).

Despite the opposition raised against some of the key principles in the draft policy, no changes are recommended as the key principles as these are considered reasonable and responsible. However, some changes are proposed to mitigate opposition to the principles, particularly relating to off-leash areas at Gardiners Reserve and Damper Creek Conservation Reserve.

Hot-Spots

A number of 'hot-spots' were identified during the community consultation, particularly Jack Edwards Reserve, Gardiners Reserve and Damper Creek Conservation Reserve.

These hot spots tended to generate high levels of community engagement and interest especially where perceived conflicts existed between different user groups such as dog walkers and sports clubs/commuter cyclists/conservationists.

With regard to the proposal to make the premier NPL playing surfaces dog-free (i.e. at Jack Edwards and Gardiners Reserves), it is important to note that whilst it is recommended the NPL pitches at these reserves become dog-free (i.e. no dogs), part of both these reserves will remain off-leash for dogs.

With regard to the proposal to change all of Damper Creek Conservation Reserve to on-lead, it is now recommended parts of this reserve remain off-lead for dogs in keeping with concessions recommended by Practical Ecology.

Ecological Impacts of Domestic Dogs

Further assessment of the ecological impacts from domestic animals on Damper Creek Conservation Reserve as detailed in attachment 4 confirms the adverse impact domestic dogs can have on vulnerable fauna and flora.

The remnant vegetation within the Damper Creek Conservation Reserve has been assessed as having high quality biodiversity values and moderate biodiversity values for the remainder of the reserve based on the mature revegetation and floral diversity present. While not the only animal referenced in the document, domestic dogs are one of the most common introduced animals to pass through the reserve and can be disruptive to native ecosystems if unrestricted and can cause damage to flora and fauna values that are present as indicated in the excerpt below:

Effects on Native Fauna

Dogs are natural predators and search for items of interest through their strong sense of smell and hearing, allowing them to identify if an animal is nearby before the prey is seen. The physical presence of a dog alone can

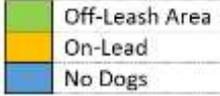
impact native fauna through inducing stress. Stress influences fauna in many different ways. For example, when under stress, birds corticosterone levels dramatically increase leading to excessive weight loss (Angelier et. al. 2016). Birds also have the tendency to self-mutilate when stressed as well as increase vocality and have increased risks of developing diseases such as Aspergillosis (Robertson 2019). This compared to Brushtail Possums which when stressed can develop stress dermatitis which causes painful skin rashes resulting in fur loss and infection which can be deadly for the individual (RSPCA 2020). Vulnerable fauna are likely to leave an area if a predator's scent such as a dog is frequently detected within the species habitat (Banks, et al. 2007). Additionally, it has been observed that feral predators such as foxes, are not deterred by the scent of dogs and will still hunt/scavenge in areas where dogs frequent (Mitchell 2005).

Domestic dogs have the potential to injure or kill native fauna if unrestricted within natural environments. Even the most well-mannered dog, off lead can attack or kill native fauna. Invertebrates are known to be the most commonly consumed group of species by dogs, followed by mammals, birds and then reptiles (de Campos et. al. 2007). Dogs can carry diseases such as mange which can be transferred to native fauna. When left untreated can cause animals to lose fur, have weaker immune systems and cause starvation. Dog faeces and urine create excess nutrients in the environment such as nitrogen and phosphorus, these nutrients (and faeces) can enter waterways creating pollution and nutrient blooms as well as reducing or excluding flora species that certain fauna species rely upon. This can cause species, in particular sensitive fauna to leave habitat areas in search for more favourable conditions or worst case the environmental conditions present cause fatality (Holderness-Roddam 2011).

Effects on Native Flora

Dogs negatively impact flora values present in reserves or bushland areas in a variety of ways. Dogs can reduce revegetation efforts through the destruction of plantings by trampling, digging and/or eating sensitive vegetation. Faeces can also impact revegetation through introducing excess nutrients into the soil which can result in plant death or by introducing the seed of exotic weed species, increasing competition for plantings (Buchhiz et al. 2021). Seed dispersal through faeces not only impacts plantings or sensitive vegetation but all indigenous flora species due to the fast growth rate of exotic species and in turn can introduce weeds species into an area not previously colonised or once eradicated through management efforts. Dogs are a vector for weed propagules to spread, with exotic seed getting stuck within dog fur as well as faeces (Holderness-Roddam 2011). As discussed above, faeces introduce excess nutrients into the environment and have the potential to pollute waterways, creating excess nutrients and reducing the growth/presence of riparian and/or wetland flora species.

Final recommendations regarding the hot-spots are outlined in the table 1 and detailed in *Attachment 1 - OLA Hot-Spots & Recommendations* overleaf.

<p align="center">Table 1 – OLA Hot-Spots & Recommendations</p>		
<p>Hot Spot 1 - Jack Edwards Reserve</p>		
<p>Final Recommendation: No change It is acknowledged that there is significant opposition from dog walkers to this recommendation. This is in part because there is less public open space and less dog off-leash areas in Oakleigh. However dog access to the main turf pitch is not supported due to the high standard of premier-level sport being played on this ground e.g. Oakleigh Cannons FC recently reached the semi-final of the 2022 Australia Cup (versus A-League team, MacCarthur FC) and the venue has been selected as a training venue for an international team as part of the 2024 Women’s Football World Cup. Council has also recently committed \$8.2m to the redevelopment of the main pavilion and grandstand at Jack Edwards Reserve.</p> <p>Petition Summary Overall, a total of 408 signatories supported the proposed change versus 246 signatories who opposed the proposed change at Jack Edwards Reserve (i.e. no dogs on the NPL pitch).</p>		
<p>Hot Spot 2 - Gardiners Reserve</p>		
<p>Final Recommendation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Return the open space surrounding the southern (NPL) & synthetic (middle) pitches at Gardiners Reserve to off-leash (except on game days). 2. Consider additional fencing of the northern pitch as depicted. <p>Petition Summary Overall, a total of 79 signatories supported the proposed change versus 60 signatories who opposed the proposed change at Gardiners Reserve (i.e. no dogs on the NPL pitch).</p>	 <p align="center"> existing fence-line proposed new fence </p>	

Hot Spot 3 - Damper Creek Conservation Reserve	
<p>Final Recommendation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retain two small parcels of the reserve as off-leash areas as per the draft Damper Creek Conservation Reserve Conservation Management Plan (2021, p.23) which identifies: <i>“Designated dog-off-lead areas could be implemented at the ... boundary of the reserve, the grassed area adjacent to Bengal Crescent and the previously designated area adjacent to Park Road, to reduce the impact to ecological values within the reserve.”</i> 2. Consider additional fencing for the off-leash areas within the reserve AND 3. Bowman Street Reserve to become a dog off-leash area. <p>**Alternate Option Damper Creek Conservation Reserve</p> <p>If Council determines not to proceed with the officers’ recommendation for Damper Creek Conservation Reserve it is recommended that Council :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep Bowman Street Reserve on-lead; 2. Consider revisiting this recommendation at a later stage via other mechanisms; and 3. Provide an increased enforcement and education presence to address and impactful behaviour and educate on responsible animal control. 	 <p>Note: Attachment 4 - <i>Assessment of the Ecological Impacts from Domestic Animals and Invasive Pests within Damper Creek Conservation Reserve</i> outlines the academic evidence that domestic dogs can be disruptive to native ecosystems if unrestricted and can cause damage to flora and fauna values.</p>

Based on the community feedback, amendments have been made to the proposed off-leash areas for Gardiners Reserve, Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, Mayfield Park and FE Hunt Reserve. It is noted that feedback has been received in relation to the importance of the ability for both dogs and owners to socialise at off-leash areas. Where off-leash areas are recommended to change to on-lead, this interaction will still be able to occur, however dogs will obviously need to be on-leash. If supported, these amendments will deliver a net increase in the total number and amount (m²) of proposed off-leash areas in Monash. Refer to *Attachment 1 – OLA Hot Spots & Recommendations*.

OLA 800m Provision Standard

Spatial mapping of the 45 recommended OLA sites demonstrates that a minimum provision standard within 800 metres of 95% of all residential dwellings can essentially be met (excluding non-residential precincts such as Monash University, industrial business zones and private golf courses).

Refer *Attachment 3: OLA Catchment Mapping (Existing & Proposed OLAs) – 800m Minimum Provision Standard*.

NEXT STEPS

In order to bring Council's decision into effect it will be necessary for it to adopt an Order made under Section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994. This provision empowers Council to make an Order by resolution which may do all or any of the following:

- prohibit the presence of dogs and cats in any public place of the municipal district;
- impose all or any of the following conditions on the presence of dogs or cats in any public place of the municipal district:
 - conditions as to the means of restraint of dogs or cats;
 - conditions as to the times at which the presence of dogs or cats is or is not permitted;
 - any other conditions that are specified in the order.

Council is not required to give notice of an intention to make an Order under Section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and given it has already consulted broadly on the proposed changes a further consultation is not required.

As a final step, an order made by the Council must be published in the Government Gazette and in a newspaper circulating in the municipal district of the Council making the order.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

At its meeting held 30 November 2021 Council agreed to develop a Dog Off-Leash Policy to ensure decision-making is based on a sound understanding of dog control and management implications.

It is recommended Council endorse the Off-Leash Policy as presented in Attachment 2 to guide the future planning and provision of off-leash areas (including dedicated fenced dog parks) in Monash.

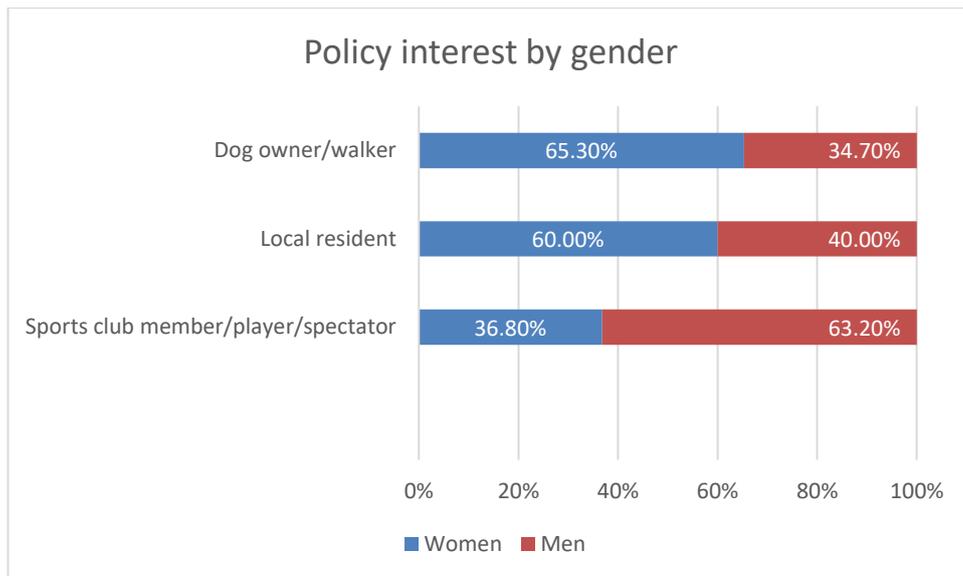
GENDER IMPACT ASSESSMENT

According to a 2019 Australian National Survey of People & Pets, women and families with children are the most likely to have a pet.²

Of the on-line survey respondents, 57% (364 respondents) identified as female, 37% (239 respondents) as male and 6% (41 respondents) preferred not to say or identified as 'other'.

Women who were dog owners (65%) and local residents (60%) tended to have a stronger interest in the draft policy than men. Men (63%) with links to sports clubs demonstrated a higher interest in the policy than women.

² Animal Medicines Australia, A National Survey of People & Pets (2019)



More data is needed to understand gender implications regarding dog ownership and how women, men and non-binary people access and use dog off-leash areas. Due to a lack of data, a gender impact assessment has not been undertaken at this time. It is recommended Council undertake a gender impact assessment as part of the next DAMP consultation.

EDUCATION & ENFORCEMENT

The need for the proactive enforcement of the dog controls in places such as on and off-leash areas was highlighted throughout the consultation. Given a range of competing demands and priorities the Community Laws team do not currently have capacity to uplift the existing level of patrols.

To meet community expectations around education and the proactive enforcement of dog controls in the additional OLA's an additional three (3) equivalent full time (EFT) Community Laws officers would be required at an approximate cost of \$283k per annum.

Significant feedback was received through the off leash review from dog owners and sports clubs in particular about the behaviour of dog owners and issues being created.

Current Patrol Regime

The current patrol regime is primarily reactive - responding to complaints. At present very limited proactive patrols are occurring in open space due to workload pressures. There are 336 open space areas within the municipality where dogs may be exercised. These range in size and include pockets parks, large sporting reserves and trails that are many kilometres long.

The time required to effectively patrol these areas vary between a matter of minutes to over two hours or more.

For safety reasons patrols in remote and high activity areas should occur in pairs.

At present there are parts of Jack Edwards Reserve (including the synthetic pitch) that are prohibited areas. Adopting the recommendations in the OLA report will create additional areas where the presence of dogs will be prohibited. These include turf pitches and synthetic pitches and conservation areas. Exclusion areas require significant presence via on-going patrols.

Areas such as Damper Creek Conservation Reserve and Gardiners Creek will require regular patrols and educative efforts especially given the extent of the changes and the modification of behaviours required.

In addition to the increased number of exclusion areas, an increase in the number of dog off-leash areas from 31 to 45 will likely lead to an increase in complaints about poorly controlled dogs, incidents such as dog rushes and attacks, and increased dog faeces.

It is evident that the successful implementation of the review and the policy will be dependent on Council's ability to effectively enforce the controls that arise from it.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Staffing

As outlined above, and in order to meet community expectations around education and provide proactive enforcement of dog controls, an additional three (3) equivalent full time (EFT) Community Laws officers are recommended at an approximate cost of \$283k per annum (including on-costs).

Infrastructure

Across the 14 new OLA sites, the fabrication and installation of the following dog-related infrastructure is also recommended:

Infrastructure	Fabrication & Installation (Est. \$)	Notes	Total (Est. \$) (14 new sites & 9 changes to existing sites)
1. Signage Panel Large Signs	\$500 each panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Per panel (large) ▪ x2 for double sided signs 	23 sites \$23,000
2. Regulatory Signs	\$800 each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Includes bollard and footing 	23 sites x 2 per site \$36,800
3. Black powder coated chain mesh fence (1125mm)	\$350 per lineal metre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Typically used for sportsgrounds 	1,000m x multiple sites \$350,000
4. Rubbish bins	\$5,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 bins (general waste & recycling) ▪ enclosures on a concrete base 	14 new sites \$78,400

5. Dog Poo Bag Dispensers	\$200 each	▪ Additional \$600 each if mounted on a new bollard	14 new sites x 2 per site \$5,600
6. Dog Drinking Bowl and Water Fountain	\$14,207 each	▪ Drinking fountain - \$5,185 ▪ Allowance of 30m water feed - \$7,402 ▪ Sump pit - \$1,000 ▪ Underground service detection - \$120 ▪ Turf Reinstatement - \$500	14 new sites \$198,898
Total Estimated Infrastructure Cost			\$692,698

An estimated capital budget of approximately \$700,000 (excl. GST) is required to fabricate and install the dog-related infrastructure requirements in accordance with the minimum provision standards in the policy across the 45 recommended OLA sites (previously 31 sites).

It is recommended this work be programmed over 3 years as follows:

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
Signage (1&2)	\$ 60,000			\$ 60,000
Fencing	\$ 150,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 100,000	\$ 350,000
Bins	\$ 26,000	\$ 26,000	\$ 26,400	\$ 78,400
Dispensers	\$ 5,600			\$ 5,600
Drinking fountains	\$ 50,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 69,000	\$ 199,000
	\$ 291,600	\$ 206,000	\$ 195,400	\$ 693,000

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

Like most inner-city municipalities experiencing increasing population growth and urban densification there is growing pressure on public open space and it can be difficult to resolve the many different and competing needs of our community.

Within Monash, the current and proposed off-leash areas are predominately shared spaces that are unfenced or partially fenced. At various times they may be used for community sport, recreation, play, cycling and dog walking, providing opportunities for community connectivity and for dog owners and their dogs to engage in physical activity and socialise with other dog owners/dogs in a community setting.

Fencing for dogs is a contentious issue but it is important that OLAs are not fenced in response to pressure from those who cannot or do not effectively control their dogs. Similarly, an understanding of dog and human behaviour in fenced environments is needed to ensure the design, maintenance, management and regulation of existing and new off-leash areas is adequate.

The off-leash area consultation has identified many dog owners would like to have access to more fenced areas to keep their dogs contained and 'safe', however the owner of any dog that is off-leash must be able to control their dog and be able to promptly bring the dog under control as stipulated in the Monash Dog Control Order (2015). There is an onus on dog owners to

ensure that their dog is under effective control (or can be quickly brought under effective control) - failing this then dogs should not be let off-lead in public open spaces. In summary, there are many areas within the municipality that are currently off-leash and not fenced, and are not considered unsafe.

It is recommended Council endorse the Off-Leash Policy presented in Attachment 2. No changes have been proposed from the draft policy as the key principles and considerations are considered appropriate, reasonable and responsible.

Overall, there is demand for more off-leash areas across the city and the review recommends increasing the overall number and area (m²) of OLAs across this city from 31 sites to 45 sites. This will require additional infrastructure such as signage, dog poo bag dispensers, dog drinking bowls, bins, safety fencing etc to be progressively rolled out across a number of the new OLA sites, and additional resources for regulation and education, management and maintenance.

The increase in the overall number of off-leash areas across the city to 45 essentially meets the recommended 800m minimum provision standards, providing Monash residents with more equitable access to off-leash areas across the city.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - OLA Hot Spots & Recommendations

Attachment 2 - Off-Leash Policy

Attachment 3 - OLA Catchment Mapping – 800m min. provision standards

Attachment 4 - Assessment of the Ecological Impacts from Domestic Animals and Invasive Pests within Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, Mount Waverley (Practical Ecology, October 2022)

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed New OLAs

Of the 14 new proposed off-leash areas being trialled, the majority of these were broadly supported by on-line survey respondents:

Proposed new Off-Leash Area		Overall Community Sentiment & Recommendations
1. Larpent Reserve, Glen Waverley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Larpent Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 62.5% (10 responses) ○ No – 37.5% (6 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported
2. Highview Park, Glen Waverley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Highview Park? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 76% (13 responses) ○ No - 24% (4 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported ▪ <i>Recommend safety fencing along Springvale Road</i>
3. Jordan Reserve, Chadstone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Jordan Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 75% (18 responses) ○ No - 25% (6 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported
4. Mayfield Park, Mount Waverley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Mayfield Park? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 61% (20 responses) ○ No - 33% (11 responses) ○ Don't Know – 6% (2 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported ▪ <i>Community feedback supports extending the off-leash area to include the under-utilised open space under power lines at Mayfield Park.</i> ▪ <i>Refer to 'Other Recommendation 1' below</i>
5. Brandon Park, Glen Waverley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Brandon Park? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 73% (11 responses) ○ No - 27% (4 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported
6. Jells Reserve East (area west of tennis courts & east of Jells Road aka Sunnybrook Drive Reserve East), Wheelers Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Sunnybrook Drive Reserve East? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 67% (6 responses) ○ No - 33% (3 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported ▪ <i>Consider safety fencing along Jells Road</i>
7. Wellington Reserve, Mulgrave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Wellington Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 36% (12 responses) ○ No - 63% (21 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opposed (tenant sports club) ▪ <i>Recommended Council proceed as proposed as this site remedies a gap in OLA provision</i>
8. Whitehaven Crescent Reserve, Mulgrave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Whitehaven Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 58% (7 responses) ○ No - 42% (5 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported
9. Fregon Reserve, Clayton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Fregon Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 90% (9 responses) ○ No - 10% (1 response) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported ▪ <i>Consider safety fencing along Browns Road</i>

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

10. Davies Reserve, Oakleigh South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Davies Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 60% (12 responses) ○ No – 40% (8 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported
11. Bowman Street Reserve, Mount Waverley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Bowman Street Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 58% (14 responses) ○ No - 33% (8 responses) ○ Don't Know – 8% (2 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported (subject to Council's decision re Damper Creek Conservation Reserve) ▪ <i>Consider partial safety fencing along boundary</i>
12. Finch Street Reserve, Notting Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at Finch Street Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 80% (8 responses) ○ No - 20% (2 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported
13. F E Hunt Reserve, Oakleigh East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area at FE Hunt Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 61% (11 responses) ○ No - 39% (7 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported ▪ <i>Recommend extending off-leash area to include the entire reserve.</i> ▪ <i>Refer to 'Other Recommendation 2' below</i>
14. Off Keylana Boulevard & Legana Street, Mount Waverley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed new off-leash area off Keylana Boulevard & Legana Street? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 63% (12 responses) ○ No - 32% (6 responses) ○ Don't Know – 5% (1 response) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Expansion of existing OLAs

The proposed expansion of 4 existing OLAs were supported with the exception of Ashwood/Jingella Reserve:

Proposed expansion of existing Off-Leash Areas	On-line Survey Results	Overall Community Sentiment & Recommendations
<p>1. Ashwood Reserve (<i>Change name to Ashwood/Jingella Reserve</i>)</p> <p>Expanded OLA to include part of Jingella Reserve A grade rugby pitch at Holmesglen Reserve – no dogs Synthetic pitch – no dogs Shared Trail – on-lead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed changes to off-leash areas at Ashwood/Jingella Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 32% (9 responses) ○ No - 68% (19 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opposed ▪ <i>Recommend Council proceed as proposed and consider safety fencing along sections of High Street Road and Gardiners Creek Trail to minimize potential conflicts with dogs</i>
<p>2. Heany Street Reserve, Mount Waverley (<i>Change name to Mount Waverley Linear Reserve inclusive of Heany Street & Beverley Grove</i>)</p> <p>Expanded OLA to include Mount Waverley Linear Reserve North (Beverley Grove Reserve)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed changes to Mount Waverley Linear Reserve (Heany St & Beverley Grove)? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 73% (36 responses) ○ No - 27% (13 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported ▪ <i>Consider safety fencing along High Street Road</i>
<p>3. Pamela-Smyth Street Electricity Easement, Mount Waverley (<i>including 50-56 Smyth Street</i>)</p> <p>Expanded OLA to area east of Smyth Street</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed changes to the off-Pamela-Smyth Street Electricity Easement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 73% (16 responses) ○ No - 27% (6 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported
<p>4. Janice Road – Ivanhoe Street Electricity Easement, Glen Waverley (<i>Change name to Bristol Avenue to Ivanhoe Street Electricity Easement</i>)</p> <p>Expanded OLA to area east of Janice Road</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you support the proposed changes to the areas Janice Road – Ivanhoe Street Electricity Easement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 70% (7 responses) ○ No - 30% (3 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supported

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed OLA reduction/removal

The proposed *reduction/removal* of 4 existing OLAs raised mixed community sentiment:

Proposed reduction/removal of an existing Off-Leash Area	On-line Survey Results	Overall Community Sentiment & Recommendations
1. Jack Edwards Reserve, Oakleigh (<i>Change name to Jack Edwards Reserve South</i>) Reduced OLA A grade NPL pitch – no dogs Synthetic pitch – no dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you support the proposed changes to the off-leash area at Jack Edwards Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 7% (3 responses) ○ No – 93% (38 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very strong support from sports club (Oakleigh Cannons FC) ■ Strong opposition from dog walkers ■ Refer to 'hot-spot 1' below
2. Gardiners Reserve, Burwood (<i>part</i>) Reduced OLA A grade NPL pitch – no dogs Synthetic pitch – no dogs Shared Trail (Gardiners Creek Trail)– on-lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you support the proposed changes to the off-leash area at Gardiners Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 36% (35 responses) ○ No - 64% (62 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Very strong support from sports club (Eastern Lions FC) ■ Strong opposition from dog walkers ■ Consider full fencing of northern pitch ■ Refer to 'hot-spot 2' below
3. Mulgrave Reserve, Wheelers Hill (<i>Change name to Mulgrave Reserve West</i>) Reduced OLA Mulgrave Wetlands – no dogs Major Shared Trail (Dandenong Creek Trail) – on-lead within 10m either side Main turf wicket oval – no dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you support the proposed changes to the off-leash area at Mulgrave Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 36% (5 responses) ○ No - 64% (9 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Opposed ■ <i>Recommended Council proceed as proposed to protect Mulgrave Wetlands, minimize potential conflict along major shared trail and protect turf centre wicket. A large off-leash area remains.</i>
4. Caloola Reserve, Oakleigh Reduced OLA - Minor change but still predominately OLA Major Shared Trail (Scotchmans Creek Trail) – dogs on-lead 10m either side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you support the proposed changes to the off-leash area at Caloola Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 50% (12 responses) ○ No - 50% (12 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Even split ■ <i>Recommended Council proceed as proposed</i>
5. Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, Mount Waverley Remove OLA status Conservation reserve - on-leash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Do you support the proposed changes to the off-leash area at Damper Creek Conservation Reserve? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Yes – 18% (32 responses) ○ No - 82% (143 responses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Some support from conservationists ■ Strong opposition from dog walkers ■ <i>Consider fencing any OLAs within reserve</i> ■ Refer to 'hot-spot 3' below

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

HOT-SPOT 1 - JACK EDWARDS RESERVE

Existing	Proposed	Final Recommendation*						
 <p>Note: Existing Jack Edwards Reserve (current restrictions) - The area bound by parts of Parkside Ave and Edward Street, Oakleigh (Does not include Prohibited Areas) i.e. turf pitch at Jack Edwards Reserve when the pitch is being used for scheduled training or during a game that is not a National Premier League Victoria game; (c) the synthetic pitch at Jack Edwards Reserve; and (d) the area surrounding the synthetic pitch (designated by the low level fence) when the pitch is being used for scheduled games or training.</p>		 <div data-bbox="1601 853 1877 970" style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Off-Leash Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFD700; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>On-Lead</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #66B3FF; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>No Dogs</td> </tr> </table> </div>		Off-Leash Area		On-Lead		No Dogs
	Off-Leash Area							
	On-Lead							
	No Dogs							
<p>*Final Recommendation: No change to what was proposed.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that there is significant opposition from dog walkers to this recommendation. This is in part because there is less public open space and less dog off-leash areas in Oakleigh. However dog access to the main turf pitch is not supported due to the high standard of premier-level sport being played on this ground e.g. Oakleigh Cannons FC recently reached the semi-final of the 2022 Australia Cup (versus A-League team, MacCarthur FC) and the venue has been selected as a training venue for an international team as part of the 2024 Women’s Football World Cup. Council has also recently committed \$8.2m to the redevelopment of the main pavilion and grandstand at Jack Edwards Reserve.</p> <p>Petition Summary Overall, a total of 408 signatories supported the proposed change versus 246 signatories who opposed the proposed change at Jack Edwards Reserve (i.e. no dogs on the NPL pitch).</p>								

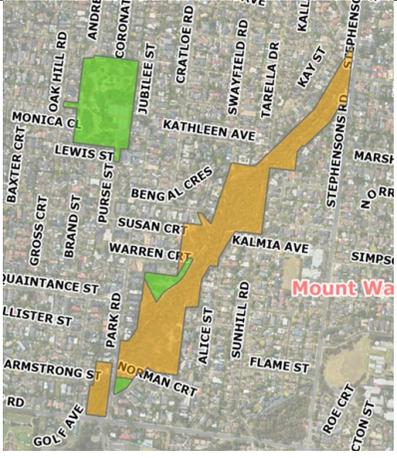
ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

HOT-SPOT 2 - GARDINERS RESERVE

Existing	Proposed	Final Recommendation*										
 <p data-bbox="259 882 667 932">Note: Gardiners Reserve (current restrictions) The synthetic (middle) pitch is a dog-free zone.</p>		 <div data-bbox="1644 879 1890 1037"> <table border="1"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #90EE90; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td>Off-Leash Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #FFD700; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td>On-Lead</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #ADD8E6; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td>No Dogs</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td>existing fence-line</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-bottom: 1px dashed black; width: 20px; height: 15px;"></td> <td>proposed new fence</td> </tr> </table> </div>		Off-Leash Area		On-Lead		No Dogs		existing fence-line		proposed new fence
	Off-Leash Area											
	On-Lead											
	No Dogs											
	existing fence-line											
	proposed new fence											
<p>*Final Recommendation/s</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Return the open space surrounding the southern (NPL) & synthetic (middle) pitches at Gardiners Reserve to off-leash (except on game days). Consider additional fencing as depicted. Install QR code to provide dog walkers with information on northern pitch bookings. <p>Petition Summary Overall, a total of 79 signatories supported the proposed change versus 60 signatories who opposed the proposed change at Gardiners Reserve (i.e. no dogs on the NPL pitch).</p>												

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

HOT-SPOT 3 - DAMPER CREEK CONSERVATION RESERVE

Existing	Proposed	Final Recommendation*						
		 <div data-bbox="1653 804 1890 900" style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #90EE90; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>Off-Leash Area</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #FFD700; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>On-Lead</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px; height: 15px; background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black;"></td> <td>No Dogs</td> </tr> </table> </div>		Off-Leash Area		On-Lead		No Dogs
	Off-Leash Area							
	On-Lead							
	No Dogs							
<p>*Final Recommendation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retain two small parcels of the reserve as off-leash areas as per the draft Damper Creek Conservation Reserve Conservation Management Plan (2021, p.23) which identifies: <i>“Designated dog-off-lead areas could be implemented at the ... boundary of the reserve, the grassed area adjacent to Bengal Crescent and the previously designated area adjacent to Park Road, to reduce the impact to ecological values within the reserve.”</i> 2. Consider additional fencing for the off-leash areas within the reserve AND 3. Bowman Street Reserve to become a dog off-leash area. <p>**Alternate Option Damper Creek Conservation Reserve</p> <p>If Council determines not to proceed with the officers’ recommendation for Damper Creek Conservation Reserve it is recommended that Council :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep Bowman Street Reserve on-lead; 2. Consider revisiting this recommendation at a later stage via other mechanisms; and 3. Provide an increased enforcement and education presence to break the impactful behavioural cycle and educate on responsible animal control. <p>Note: Attachment 4 - <i>Assessment of the Ecological Impacts from Domestic Animals and Invasive Pests within Damper Creek Conservation Reserve</i> outlines the academic evidence that domestic dogs can be disruptive to native ecosystems if unrestricted and can cause damage to flora and fauna values.</p>								

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

MAYFIELD RESERVE (CURRENTLY ON-LEAD)



Based on several written submissions (emails) received from local community members, it is proposed the off-leash area be extended to include the area under the powerlines.

*Final recommendation: Community feedback supports extending the off-leash area to include the under-utilised open space under power lines at Mayfield Park.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

ATTACHMENT 1: OLA HOT-SPOTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

F E HUNT RESERVE (CURRENTLY ON-LEAD)



Based on feedback from Council’s Community Laws team, it is proposed the off-leash area be expanded to include the entire reserve as this would be easier to implement from an education, management and regulation perspective.

***Final recommendation:** Extend off-leash area to include the entire reserve.

MONASH DOG OFF-LEASH POLICY

POLICY OVERVIEW

This policy articulates the rationale for the provision of off-leash areas (OLAs) including unfenced, partially fenced and fenced off-leash areas, and details the site assessment methodology and key principles to be applied to determine the suitability of sites.

APPROVED BY:

APPROVAL DATE:

REVIEW DATE: Every four years as part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Contents

MONASH DOG OFF-LEASH POLICY.....	1
POLICY OVERVIEW	1
1. DEFINITIONS.....	3
2. PURPOSE	4
3. CONTEXT	4
3.1 DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANGEMENT PLAN.....	4
3.2 DOG CONTROL REGULATIONS	4
3.3 SPECIALISED SPORTS SURFACES	5
3.4 CONSERVATION RESERVES	5
3.5 MAJOR SHARED TRAILS.....	5
4. SCOPE OF POLICY	5
5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION	5
5.1 PRINCIPLES GUIDING PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT	5
5.2 MINIMUM PROVISION STANDARDS	5
6. ATTACHMENTS.....	6
7. RELATED DOCUMENTS.....	6
ATTACHMENT A – EXCERPT MONASH DOG CONTROL ORDER (2015)	7
ATTACHMENT B – OLA DESIGN PRINCIPLES (ADOPTED 30 NOV 2021)	8
ATTACHMENT C – OLA MINIMUM SERVICE & INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION STANDARDS	11

1. DEFINITIONS

Off-Leash Area (OLA)

A designated area where dogs are permitted to be off the leash. Off-leash areas may be unfenced, fenced or partially fenced.

Fenced Off-Leash Area (FOLA)

Designated off-leash areas that are partially fenced or fenced which may or may not be an exclusive areas for dogs. Exclusive fenced off-areas for dogs are commonly referred to as fenced dog parks.

Dog Control Order

A council resolution made pursuant to section 26(2) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Sportsgrounds

Outdoor turf sportsfields, ovals and pitches used for organised sport and community use e.g. cricket & Australian Rules ovals and rugby & football (soccer) pitches.

Specialised Sport Surfaces

Specialised sport surfaces include premier A grade sportsgrounds and synthetic sports surfaces such as synthetic hockey and soccer pitches, netball and tennis courts that are outdoors.

Shared-use areas

Parkland areas that can be used for a variety of outdoor recreation and sporting activities e.g. open space surrounding sportsgrounds, run-about areas, sportsgrounds, and parks and natural reserves.

Playgrounds (dogs must be on-leash within 20m of an in-use playground)

Any publicly accessible area used for outdoor play or recreation which contains recreational play equipment or infrastructure such as slides, swings, climbing structures, fitness equipment, basketball hoops, associated BBQ and picnic areas etc typically found in a park or reserve.

Major Shared Trails

Major shared trails are typically 3m wide, sealed trails commonly used for walking, running and recreational and commuter cycling. Transport Victoria has identified several primary and main Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC) routes or major shared trails run through and across Monash such as Scotchmans Creek Trail, Djerring (or Station) Trail, Gardiners Creek Trail, Dandenong Creek Trail, Waverley Rail Trail, Monash Freeway Trail (part) and potential Syndal Pipe Track Trail.

No Dog Areas

Designated areas where dogs are prohibited. Under this policy no dogs are permitted on:

- Specialised Sports Surfaces such as synthetic pitches e.g. Ashwood Reserve Hockey Pitch, Gardiners Reserve Middle Pitch, Jack Edwards Reserve Junior Pitch
- Premier A grade turf sportsgrounds and playing surface such as A grade baseball & softball diamonds (refer [Active Monash Facility Hierarchy](#) for details on sportsground classifications)

- Leased sporting facilities e.g. tennis courts and bowling greens operated by sports clubs under a lease agreement with Council.

On lead Areas

On-lead areas are all public areas where dogs must be kept on-leash. These are areas other than designated off-leash or 'no dog' areas and also include open space:

- Within 20m of a playspace (in-use)
- Within 10m either side of a major shared trail such as Gardiners Creek, Scotchmans Creek, Djerring, Rail, Dandenong Creek Shared Trails etc.
- Dedicated conservation reserves or environmentally sensitive areas such as Damper Conservation Reserve, Valley Reserve Conservation Park and Mulgrave Reserve Wetlands.

2. PURPOSE

This policy provides the rationale for the provision of off-leash areas (OLAs) including unfenced, partially fenced and fenced off-leash areas, and details the site assessment methodology and key principles to be applied to determine the suitability of sites.

3. CONTEXT

3.1 DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANGEMENT PLAN

The Monash Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is reviewed every four years in line with the requirements of the Victorian Domestic Animals Act. The DAMP recommends a review of all off-leash areas be undertaken to consider:

- opportunities for additional off-leash areas
- sites where off-leash provision may need to be modified given other site considerations
- opportunities to better align on/off-leash boundaries for clarity of understanding (community) and ease of monitoring boundaries (compliance staff)
- minimise and/or manage potential conflicts between dog off-leash and other activities.

3.2 DOG CONTROL REGULATIONS

Regardless of whether dogs are off the lead in an unfenced or fenced off-leash area, owners must comply with Council's current Dog Control Order (2015) that requires owners to:

- carry a short leash for restraining their dog
- have effective voice or hand control over their dog
- be able to bring their dog under control promptly
- remain in constant sight of their dog
- not allow their dog to worry, threaten or attack another dog or person.

Dog owners are also required to keep their dog on a short leash within 20 metres of children's play equipment that is in use (including BBQ or picnic areas) and within 10m either side of a major shared trails.

Refer to [Attachment A – Excerpt Monash Dog Control Order \(2015\)](#) details relevant Dog Control Regulations.

3.3 SPECIALISED SPORTS SURFACES

Dogs are currently allowed off-leash on some sportsgrounds and will continue to be allowed off-leash on some sportsgrounds such as designated B and C grade sportsgrounds. Under this policy, specialised sport surfaces such as premier A grade sportsgrounds and synthetic sports surfaces, are dog free zones.

Specialised sports surfaces and dogs are not considered compatible and are classified dog free or no dog zones to ensure these playing surfaces are not adversely impacted by:

- Damage to playing surfaces caused by dogs digging and urinating
- Increased turf maintenance costs associated with managing dog-related wear and tear and reinstatement of damaged surfaces
- Potential ground closures or grounds under repair to reinstate damaged or unsafe surfaces
- Sport training and match play impacted by dogs off-leash running through fields of play
- Dog faeces being left on playing surfaces.

3.4 CONSERVATION RESERVES

To protect high levels of biodiversity and native flora and fauna, dogs are required to be on-lead in designated conservation reserves such as Damper Creek Conservation Reserve.

3.5 MAJOR SHARED TRAILS

Major shared trails are heavily utilised by commuter cyclists, recreational cyclists, joggers and walkers.

To encourage greater cycling for transport through the provision of safer, lower stress cycle environments and to minimise potential conflicts of use between dogs and trail users dogs are required to be on-leash 10m either side of a major shared trail.

4. SCOPE OF POLICY

The policy relates to the planning and management of all off-leash areas, including unfenced, partially fenced and fully fenced off-leash areas.

5. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 PRINCIPLES GUIDING PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Policy relating to fenced off-leash areas should be considered in the wider context of all off-leash areas whether fenced or unfenced. This will ensure council's policy rationale is comprehensive and will minimise inconsistency.

There are 16 endorsed key principles that guide the planning of off-leash areas, including fenced off-leash areas. Refer to [Attachment B – OLA Design Principles \(adopted 30 Nov 2021\)](#).

5.2 MINIMUM PROVISION STANDARDS

Traditionally, planning for dog off-leash areas has not been subject to the same planning considerations as for other community facilities such as parks, sportsgrounds and play spaces. As a result, off-leash areas have generally been accommodated in and around existing parkland infrastructure (e.g. sportsfields, natural open spaces) and in smaller and/or less popular parks.

This has often resulted in conflict because of incompatible uses, inadequate buffers between off-leash and other parkland activities and non-compliance of some dog owners (e.g. dog litter and damage to sportsgrounds).

Given the increasing demands on open space and the lack of open space in some areas, this situation will require constant monitoring and review.

[Attachment C – OLA Provision Standards](#) outlines the provision framework to be used to guide the planning and development of off-leash areas.

6. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Excerpt Monash Dog Control Order (2015)

Attachment B – OLA Design Principles (adopted 30 Nov 2021)

Attachment C – OLA Provision Standards

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Planning, Design and Management of Off-Leash Areas Technical Manual (Including Fenced Off-Leash Areas), LMH Consulting/Paws4Play, 2019

ATTACHMENT A – EXCERPT MONASH DOG CONTROL ORDER (2015)

At Order Number 4 August 2015 is pursuant to section 26(2) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

1. Revocation

(1) All previous Orders made by Council under section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 are revoked.

2. Dogs must be under effective control

(1) The Owner of any dog must keep the dog under effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash (not exceeding 1.5 metres in length) held by the Owner and attached to the dog while the dog is in a Public Place except where that Public Place is a Designated Reserve or Prohibited Area.

(2) Sub-clause (1) does not apply where a chain, cord or leash attached to the dog is securely fastened to a post or other fixture and the dog remains under sight or voice control by the owner.

3. Prohibited Areas

(1) A dog must not enter or remain in any Prohibited Area. (2) The prohibition under sub-clause (1) applies in a Prohibited Area regardless of whether or not the dog is on a chain, cord or leash.

4. Owner's obligations in a Designated Reserve

(1) A dog may be exercised off a chain, cord or leash in a Designated Reserve if the Owner:

(a) carries a chain, cord or leash not exceeding 1.5 metres in length sufficient to bring the dog under control by placing the dog on the chain, cord or leash if the dog behaves in a manner which threatens any person or animal.

(b) remains in effective voice or hand control of the dog and within constant sight of the dog so as to be able to promptly bring the dog under control by placing the dog on a chain, cord or leash (not exceeding 1.5 metres in length) if that becomes necessary or desirable to avoid any wandering out of effective control or to avoid any threatening behaviour or any attack; and

(c) does not allow the dog to worry or otherwise threaten any person or animal, and does not allow the dog to attack any person or animal.

(2) If a dog is off a chain, cord or leash in a Designated Reserve it must be brought under effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash (not exceeding 1.5 metres in length) if the dog is within twenty metres of:

(a) an arena or ground whilst being used for an organised sporting or practice event;

(b) a children's play equipment area that is being used;

(c) the location of an organised public meeting; and

(d) a barbeque or picnic area that is being used.

5. Owners must be equipped to remove dog faeces

(1) The Owner of a dog must carry a bag, receptacle or other means of picking up and removing from any Public Place any of the Owner's dog's faeces.

ATTACHMENT B – OLA DESIGN PRINCIPLES (ADOPTED 30 NOV 2021)

At the 30 November 2021 Council meeting, Council adopted 16 key principles to guide the planning of off-leash areas, including fenced off-leash areas:

Planning of Off-leash Areas

1. The assessment of a site's suitability as an off-leash or fenced off-leash area will be undertaken in accordance with the best practice assessment methodology detailed in the *Planning, Design and Management of Off-Leash Areas Technical Manual (Including Fenced Off-Leash Areas) (2019, extract)*, which is consistent with relevant legislation, guidelines and policy.
2. Council makes provision for dog owners and their dogs in public spaces because:
 - owners are increasingly making recreation/activity choices based on being able to take their dog/pet
 - dogs/pets contribute to the social, mental/emotional, and physical health and wellbeing of our society
 - many dog owners have significant engagement with others primarily through their dog
 - these spaces can:
 - become hubs where dog owners congregate and network
 - provide opportunities for education/awareness and community development and 'place-making' initiatives
 - provide an alternative and low-cost recreation option.
3. The following key considerations will influence decision-making relating to dog off-leash areas, including fenced and partially fenced areas and Council's capacity to fund, maintain, renew and manage the site effectively including:
 - active monitoring of the site
 - industry best practice
 - safety/risk minimisation
 - State Government legislation
 - Council strategy and policy context e.g. DAMP, reserve masterplans, sportsground classifications
 - recognised dog and dog owner behaviour in different on/off-leash environments.
4. Off-leash areas are public open space assets that will be accessible to all residents in line with:
 - Council's policy on optimising access to public facilities and open space for all residents
 - universal access, equity and crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and sustainable design principles
 - optimising safety/minimising risk for everyone who accesses open space/public facilities regardless of its primary use.
5. Planning and policy acknowledges the needs/aspirations of dog owners, people without dogs but who want to interact with dogs, and people who do not want to interact with dogs in public spaces.
6. Where possible, the same service level/provision principles will apply to the planning of dog off-

leash areas as they do for other open space assets (e.g. sports reserves, play spaces).

Shared and Responsible Use of Off-Leash Areas

7. People who use public open space must be respectful of other people who also use these spaces. For dog owners this means they must:

- understand and comply with relevant Council and State Government regulations relating to the control of their dog, leashing of dogs, picking up of dog litter
- prevent their dogs from making any unsolicited approach to other dogs or people
- control dogs in line with environment (e.g. short leash on trails) and remove poorly behaved dogs from the public environment
- be respectful of other open space users and of restrictions that may apply to dogs
- must understand that some people do not want to interact with dogs, do not like dogs or are fearful of dogs
- comply with regulations, requiring dogs kept on-leash within 20 metres of an occupied playspace.

For non-dog owners or people who do not want to interact with dogs this means they:

- must not make an unsolicited approach to dogs, and must prevent young people/ children in their care from doing the same
- must not provoke dogs
- should become familiar with the location of off-leash areas and consider alternative open space options for their outdoor activities
- must take due care and consideration when using amenities that are shared with dog owners/dogs such as when on trails and areas abutting trails/footpaths.

8. Council recognises that the majority of dogs can be effectively trained to recall.

Responsible Management of Off-Leash Areas

9. There are costs associated with managing dogs and the actions of dog owners in public spaces and these costs relate to:

- complaint management (e.g. dog litter, poorly controlled dogs/aggressive dogs and/or dog owners, dogs off-leash in on-leash areas)
- waste management including removal of uncollected dog litter, clearing of bins, supply of litter bags
- incidents of dog aggression/rushes, particularly in fenced/partially fenced areas
- degradation, renewal and maintenance of intensively used off-leash areas
- need for increased patrols by local laws, in particular at fenced/partially fenced off-leash areas
- ensuring compliance with dog control orders
- underuse of an asset due to the prevalence of aggressive/poorly behaved dogs.

10. Dog owners must ensure their dogs are appropriately educated to be off the leash and trained to immediate recall in line with Council's orders.

Fencing of Off-Leash Areas

11. Fenced off-leash areas have a greater likelihood of attracting the following (compared to unfenced/partially fenced off-leash areas):
 - owners who have poor/less control over their dogs and whose dogs are not appropriately responsive to control commands
 - owners who have poorly socialised dogs
 - owners who will leave dogs unattended
 - owners and commercial operators who take too many dogs into a fenced off-leash area.
12. The majority of off-leash areas will be unfenced to optimise appropriate owner control over dogs.
13. The purpose of fencing is not to manage poorly controlled/behaved dogs and will generally only be considered where:
 - there is a safety or perceived safety risk nearby e.g. a road, commuter trail, busy road
 - there is need for a physical barrier between off-leash areas and other closely located or incompatible open space activity that cannot be managed by effective design and/or barrier landscaping e.g. a play space, picnic area.
14. To address safety and design requirements, potential fenced off-leash areas exclusively provided for dogs are to be a **minimum of 3,500m² and preferably 5,000m²+**. The development of potential FOLA's should not displace or disenfranchise other open space users/user groups. Landscape design solutions should be considered before an OLA is partially or fully fenced. For example landscape barriers (vegetation, berms, rock embankments) may be used when OLA's are in close proximity to:
 - other parkland activities that are not compatible with dogs off-leash
 - potential hazards such as roads and commuter trails
 - wildlife or sensitive vegetation areas.

Sportsfields

15. Sportsfields with specialised sport surfaces (e.g. A-grade sportsfields and turf wickets) will generally not accommodate dog related activities to ensure premier playing surfaces are not adversely impacted.

Conservation Reserves

16. To protect high levels of biodiversity, Council designated conservation reserves are classified as dog on-lead areas e.g. Damper Creek Conservation Reserve.

ATTACHMENT C – OLA MINIMUM SERVICE & INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION STANDARDS

The minimum service & infrastructure provision standards will be used to guide design, plantings, structures & amenities and management of off-leash areas (including fenced off-leash areas) as detailed in the table below:

MINIMUM OLA PROVISION STANDARD:			
Aspire to meet a minimum provision standard of an OLA being located within 800 metres of 95% of all residential dwellings (except in non-residential precincts such as Monash University, industrial business zones and golf courses).			
TYPE 1 SITES – FULLY FENCED OLAS THAT ARE EXCLUSIVE FOR DOGS (DOG PARK) Dog exclusive or dog ‘primary use spaces’ of 5,000 sq mts+	TYPE 2 SITES – PARTIALLY OR FULLY FENCED OLAS THAT ARE NOT EXCLUSIVE FOR DOGS Shared use off-leash areas (significant use) & general park use sites	TYPE 3 SITES – LOCAL OLAS Local off-leash areas (may be co-located with Sportsgrounds)	TYPE 4 SITES – SPORTSGROUNDS THAT ARE ALSO OLAS Sportsgrounds where dogs can be off-lead outside of sporting activities
Design elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing depending on site requirements and principles as detailed in Policy Section 5.1 Principles points 10, 11 & 12. Pathways – to and within (btw elements) Landscape features/tactile features Open runabout area with ‘space-breakers’ (to break sightlines across the space) Hillocks/mounding – sensory and ‘boundary management’/visual distractions for dogs Sensory constructed elements – rock mounds, dry creek bed, dogging pit Surface considerations – grass/irrigation; granitic sand, opportunity for resting/restoration 	Design elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fencing depending on site requirements and principles as detailed in Policy Section 5.1 Principles points 10, 11 & 12. Pathways – as for classification of park Landscape features/ tactile features Open runabout area with ‘space-breakers’ (to break sightlines across the space) 	Design elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None-specific to dog use 	Design elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None-specific to dog use Considerations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No OLAs on premier A grade sportsgrounds No OLAs on synthetic grass sports surfaces Avoid OLAs on sportsgrounds with turf centre wickets wherever possible
Plantings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity and shade tree plantings Sensory vegetation plantings (for dogs) Visual barrier plantings 	Plantings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amenity and shade tree plantings Sensory vegetation plantings (for dogs) Visual barrier plantings 	Plantings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None-specific to dog use 	Plantings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None-specific to dog use
Structures & amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Etiquette /Conditions of Use signage 	Structures & amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for classification of park 	Structures & amenities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As for classification of park 	Structures & amenities

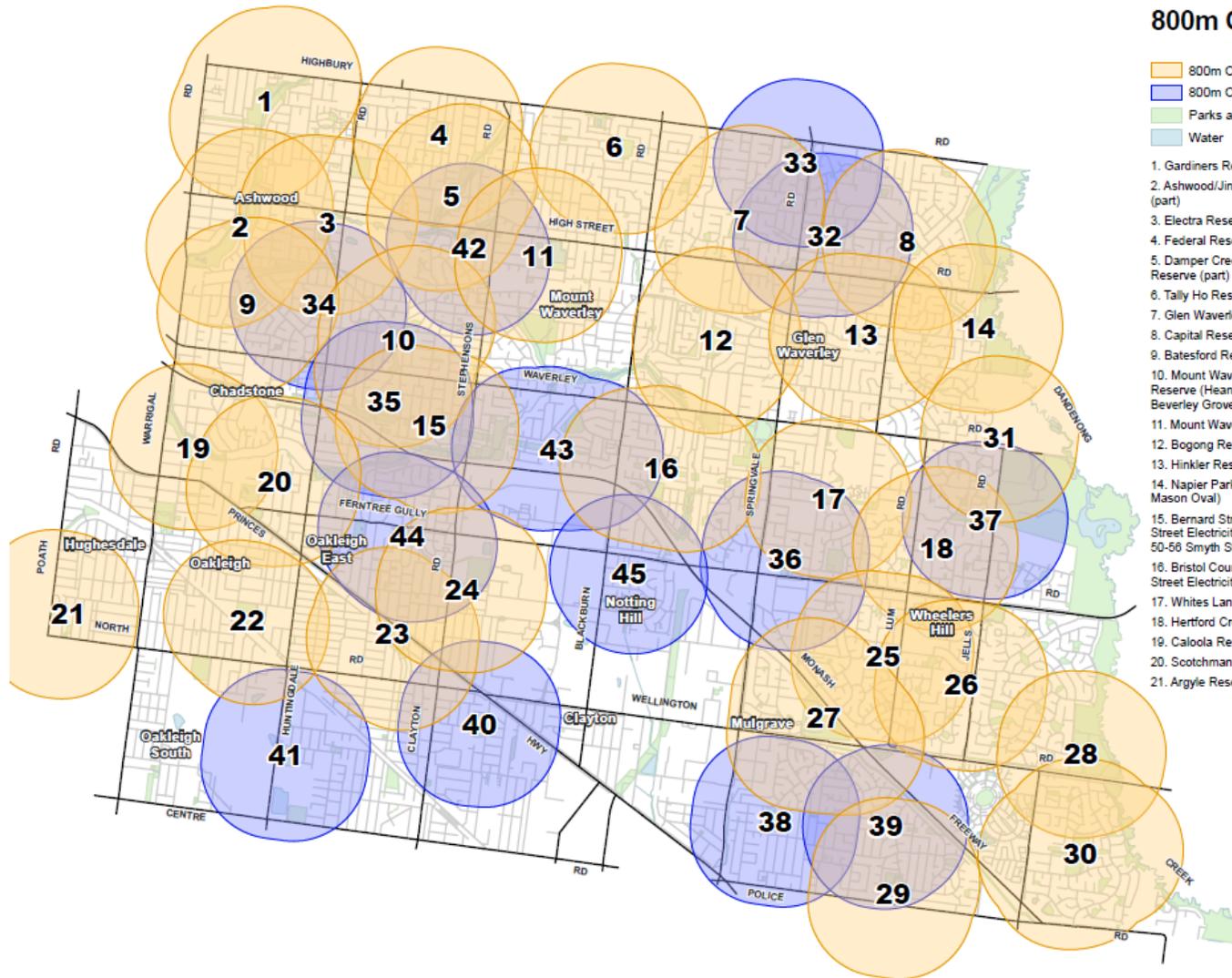
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<p>TYPE 1 SITES – FULLY FENCED OLAS THAT <u>ARE</u> EXCLUSIVE FOR DOGS (DOG PARK) Dog exclusive or dog ‘primary use spaces’ of 5,000 sq mts+</p>	<p>TYPE 2 SITES – PARTIALLY OR FULLY FENCED OLAS THAT <u>ARE NOT</u> EXCLUSIVE FOR DOGS Shared use off-leash areas (significant use) & general park use sites</p>	<p>TYPE 3 SITES – LOCAL OLAS Local off-leash areas (may be co-located with Sportsgrounds)</p>	<p>TYPE 4 SITES – SPORTSGROUNDS THAT ARE ALSO OLAS Sportsgrounds where dogs can be off-lead outside of sporting activities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built shade structures • Seats (with backs) • Drink stations (for dogs) • Bins/waste bag dispensers (for dogs) • Training equipment elements (for dogs) • Agility & play equipment (for dogs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drink stations (for dogs) • Bins/waste bag dispensers (for dogs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bins/waste bag dispensers (for dogs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None specific to dog use on the sportsground
<p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally, a significant level of maintenance/renewal required • Waste cleaning/removal • Patrols required • Community education required • Community development/ strengthening initiatives advisable (e.g. re dog control) • Activation required depending on elements e.g. training equipment elements 	<p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste cleaning/removal • Patrols required • Community education required • Community development/ strengthening initiatives advisable (e.g. re dog control) 	<p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste cleaning/removal • Patrols required • Community education required • Community development/ strengthening initiatives advisable (e.g. re dog control) 	<p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste cleaning/removal • Patrols required • Community education required • Community development/ strengthening initiatives advisable (e.g. re dog control)

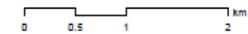
ATTACHMENT 3 – OLA CATCHMENT MAPPING – 800M PROVISION STANDARD

Off Leash Area 800m Catchment Analysis



- 800m Catchment Zones - Existing OLA Sites
- 800m Catchment Zones - Potential New OLA Sites
- Parks and Reserves
- Water

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Gardiners Reserve (part) | 22. Jack Edwards Reserve South |
| 2. Ashwood/Jingella Reserve (part) | 23. Princes Highway Reserve |
| 3. Electra Reserve | 24. Carlson Reserve |
| 4. Federal Reserve | 25. Lum Reserve |
| 5. Damper Creek Conservation Reserve (part) | 26. Columbia Park Reserve |
| 6. Tally Ho Reserve | 27. Freeway Reserve |
| 7. Glen Waverley North Reserve | 28. Mulgrave Reserve West Oval |
| 8. Capital Reserve | 29. Southern Reserve |
| 9. Batesford Reserve | 30. Gladeswood Reserve |
| 10. Mount Waverley Linear Reserve (Heany Street & Beverley Grove) | 31. Glen Waverley Sports Hub South |
| 11. Mount Waverley Reserve | 32. Larpent Reserve |
| 12. Bogong Reserve | 33. Highview Park |
| 13. Hinkler Reserve | 34. Jordan Reserve |
| 14. Napier Park South (Dick Mason Oval) | 35. Mayfield Park |
| 15. Bernard Street to Smyth Street Electricity Easement (incl. 50-56 Smyth Street) | 36. Brandon Park Reserve |
| 16. Bristol Court to Ivanhoe Street Electricity Easement | 37. Jells Road Reserve East |
| 17. Whites Lane Retarding Basin | 38. Wellington Reserve |
| 18. Hartford Crescent Reserve | 39. Whitehaven Crescent Reserve |
| 19. Caloola Reserve Central | 40. Fregon Reserve Oval |
| 20. Scotchmans Run Reserve | 41. Davies Reserve |
| 21. Argyle Reserve | 42. Bowman Street Reserve |
| | 43. Off Keylana Boulevard and Legana Street |
| | 44. F E Hunt Reserve |
| | 45. Finch Street Reserve |



Scale: 1:40,000 @ A3
Date of Production: 05/10/2022

North point is True North, Magnetic North is 11° 28' 51" E (01/01/2007), AGRF Model Geocence Australia.

This map was produced on the Map Grid of Australia 2020 (GDA2020). For most practical purposes MGA 2020 (GDA2020) coordinates and latitude/longitude (GDA2020) coordinates based on the World Geodetic Datum 1984 (WGS84) are the same.

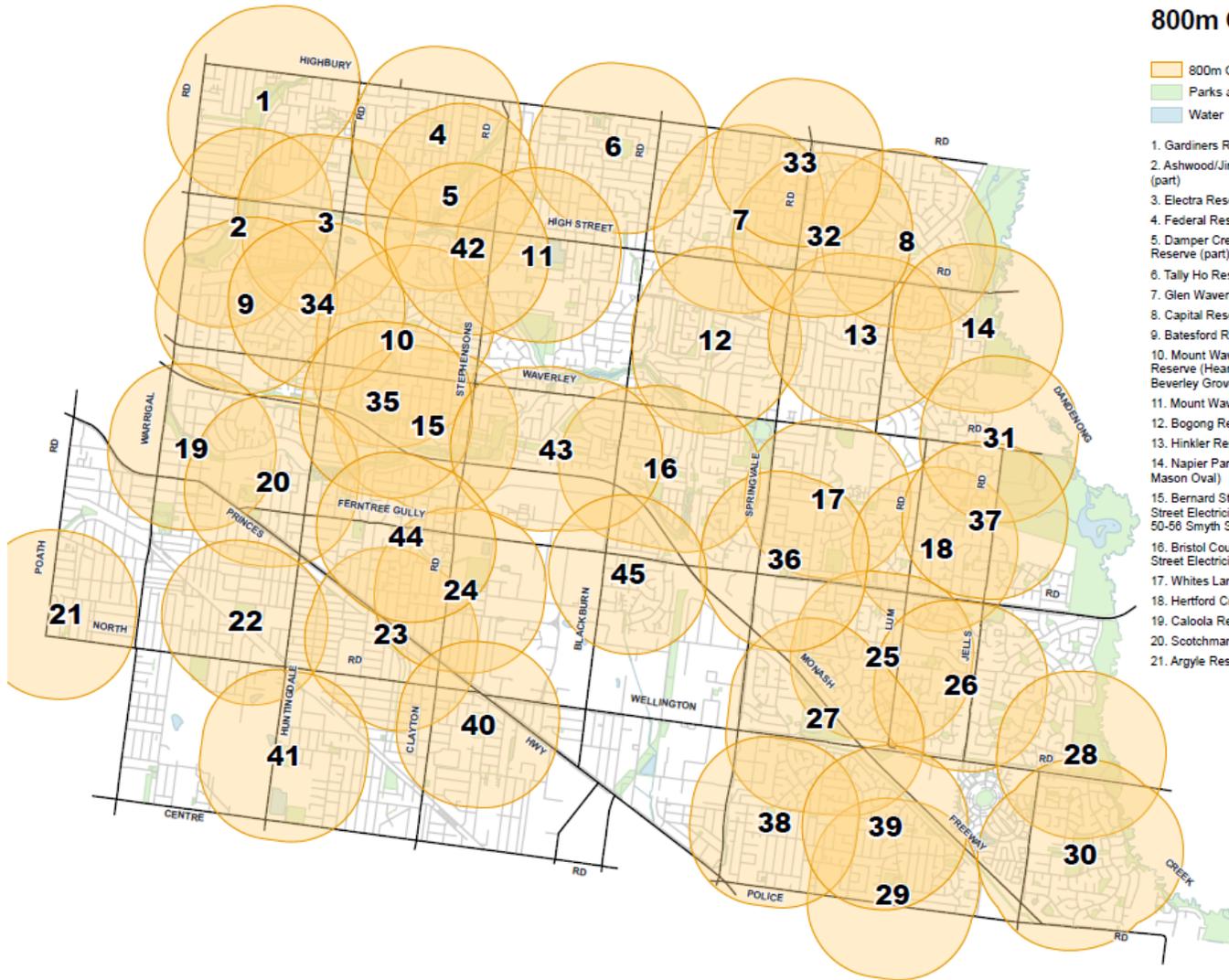
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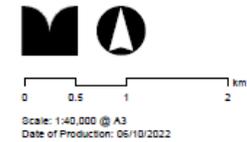
ATTACHMENT 3 – OLA CATCHMENT MAPPING – 800M PROVISION STANDARD

Off Leash Area 800m Catchment Analysis



- 800m Catchment Zones
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10th October 2022

Assessment of Ecological Impacts from Domestic Animals and Invasive Pests within Damper Creek Conservation Reserve, Mount Waverley

Practical Ecology was commissioned by Monash City Council to highlight the impacts domestic animals and invasive pest animals have on the native flora and fauna values throughout Monash's bushlands reserves with particular focus on Damper Creek Conservation Reserve.

Damper Creek Conservation Reserve (DCCR) is approximately 13.2ha, located in Mount Waverley, 20km east of Melbourne. The Conservation Reserve runs either side of Damper Creek and contains significant remnant flora values which provide an important ecological corridor in an otherwise urbanised municipality. The remnant vegetation within the reserve was assessed as having high quality biodiversity values and moderate biodiversity values for the remainder of the reserve based on the mature revegetation and floral diversity present (McKinnon 2022).

The revegetation of terrestrial and wetland/riparian plantings, low weed cover and high recruitment of indigenous flora species within the reserve clearly demonstrates the successful management that has occurred, resulting in high biodiversity values throughout the DCCR. With this, management efforts are now focused more on increasing and maintaining the flora and fauna values that are currently present, which can be done through the management of key threats currently present within the Reserve. One of the further management recommendations stated in the *Damper Creek Conservation Reserve Conservation Management Plan* (McKinnon 2022) was to reduce the impact of domestic dogs throughout the reserve through implementing restrictions.

DCCR is currently an 'off-leash' reserve, where dogs have unrestricted access throughout the entire area. It is understood that Monash City Council (MCC) are considering altering the current 'off-leash' status to 'on-leash' within DCCR to support the restoration and enhancement works to date. MCC are seeking to further understand and highlight the impacts domestic animals and invasive pest animals can have on flora and fauna values when access is unrestricted.

This document aims to highlight the most common domestic animals and invasive pests of the area that have detrimental effects on native flora and fauna values, and provide strategies and recommendations that can be implemented to reduce the amount of harm done to the native environment.

1. DOMESTIC ANIMALS

Due to DCCR being within an urbanised environment, domestic animals, particularly dogs are one of the most common introduced animals to pass through the reserve. Domestic animals can be disruptive to native ecosystems if unrestricted and can cause damage to flora and fauna values that are present. This section aims to highlight impacts that the two most common domestic animals (dogs and cats) have on native flora and fauna.

1.1. Dogs

Effects on Native Fauna

Dogs are natural predators and search for items of interest through their strong sense of smell and hearing, allowing them to identify if an animal is nearby before the prey is seen. The physical presence of a dog alone can impact native fauna through inducing stress. Stress influences fauna in many different ways. For example, when under stress, birds corticosterone levels dramatically increase leading to excessive weight loss (Angelier et. al. 2016). Birds also have the tendency to self-mutilate when stressed as well as increase vocality and have increased risks of developing diseases such as Aspergillosis (Robertson 2019). This compared to Brushtail Possums which when stressed can develop stress dermatitis which causes painful skin rashes resulting in fur loss and infection which can be deadly for the individual (RSPCA 2020) Vulnerable fauna are likely to leave an area if a predator's scent such as a dog is frequently detected within the species habitat (Banks, et al. 2007). Additionally, it has been observed that feral predators such as foxes, are not deterred by the scent of dogs and will still hunt/scavenge in areas where dogs frequent (Mitchell 2005).

Domestic dogs have the potential to injure or kill native fauna if unrestricted within natural environments. Even the most well-mannered dog, off lead can attack or kill native fauna. Invertebrates are known to be the most commonly consumed group of species by dogs, followed by mammals, birds and then reptiles (de Campos et. al. 2007). Dogs can carry diseases such as mange which can be transferred to native fauna. When left untreated can cause animals to lose fur, have weaker immune systems and cause starvation. Dog faeces and urine create excess nutrients in the environment such as nitrogen and phosphorus, these nutrients (and faeces) can enter waterways creating pollution and nutrient blooms as well as reducing or excluding flora species that certain fauna species rely upon. This can cause species, in particular sensitive fauna to leave habitat areas in search for more favourable conditions or worst case the environmental conditions present cause fatality (Holderness-Roddam 2011).

Effects on Native Flora

Dogs negatively impact flora values present in reserves or bushland areas in a variety of ways. Dogs can reduce revegetation efforts through the destruction of plantings by trampling, digging and/or eating sensitive vegetation. Faeces can also impact revegetation through introducing excess nutrients into the soil which can result in plant death or by introducing the seed of exotic weed species,

increasing competition for plantings (Buchhiltz et al. 2021). See dispersal through faeces not only impacts plantings or sensitive vegetation but all indigenous flora species due to the fast growth rate of exotic species and in turn can introduce weeds species into an area not previously colonised or once eradicated through management efforts. Dogs are a vector for weed propagules to spread, with exotic seed getting stuck within dog fur as well as faeces (Holderness–Roddam 2011). As discussed above, faeces introduce excess nutrients into the environment and have the potential to pollute waterways, creating excess nutrients and reducing the growth/presence of riparian and/or wetland flora species.

Relevance to Damper Creek Conservation Reserve

Dogs currently have unrestricted access to all areas within Damper Creek Conservation Reserve when 'off leash'. Given this unrestricted access, all of the negative impacts associated with domestic dogs stated above are likely to occur within the conservation reserve, in particular within the remnant and revegetation areas. It is difficult to determine the rate of impact that each dog may have within a natural environment, however given the history of dog presence within DCR it is likely that such impacts are present. Increases in disturbance within remnant or revegetated areas likely results in more works needing to be conducted to restore/maintain the Reserves' native biodiversity.

1.2. Cats

Effects on Native Fauna

Cats are opportunistic predators that will hunt and kill birds, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. Cats have the ability to climb into trees and access tight areas where native fauna may be sheltering. Cats can be classified into four different categories that affects the impact the species may have on an environment. These categories include Owned, Semi-Owned, Unowned and Feral. Owned cats make up the largest group within Australia with approximately 4.9 million individuals. Semi-owned and unowned cats include cats that are lost or abandoned, with this group estimated at roughly 710,000 individuals. Finally, feral cats are cats that live independently from humans and require little to no contact from humans for survival. The population of this group is estimated to be 2.07 million individuals. The latter two groups are expected to kill more wildlife as this is their only food source however, owned cats will still hunt for prey despite being well fed (AVA 2022).

It has been estimated that cats kill roughly 2 billion native animals every year, with a further billion invertebrates killed every year (NESP 2020). From this it is estimated that every day cats kill roughly 3.2 million native mammals, 1.2 million native birds 1.9 million reptiles and 250,000 native frogs (NESP 2020). Even well-fed cats still hunt for prey and will kill if given the chance (Coman & Brunner 1972). It has been shown that only a fraction of all prey hunted by cats is brought back to the home meaning that fauna mortality rates may be much higher than commonly thought (Lloyd et. al. 2013) It is clear from these findings that cats have a significant negative impact on native fauna.

Additionally, cats, similar to dog's cause stress to native animals through their presence and scent within native fauna habitat (Trouwborst et. al. 2020).

Effects on Native Flora

Cats' main detrimental effects of flora is the predation of pollinator species that plants rely on (Medina et. al. 2011). Local extinctions of pollinators can cause plant communities to crash due to the lack of pollination occurring in the area. Cats also effect flora through the spread of weed propagules through scats and fur dispersal. Seeds that pass through the digestive system of cats or get trapped in their fur can spread into bushland areas and germinate (van der Meulen et. al. 2008). Faeces will spread an increased amount of nutrients into the soil and waterways increasing the rate and spread of weed species and water pollution within an area (Holderness–Roddam 2011).

Relevance to Damper Creek Conservation Reserve

Currently the population of cats that utilize DCCR for hunting/roaming is unknown however, from VBA searches 3 separate recordings of feral domestic cats were found in a 5km radius around DCCR. It can be assumed that some cats would be present in the area both feral/stray and pets from neighbouring properties. Cats that are allowed to roam free around the neighbourhood would contribute to the loss of fauna commonly associated with cats. This would result in the loss of vertebrate and invertebrate pollinator species which could cause a loss of plant life and plant germination within DCCR.

2. INVASIVE PESTS

2.1. Foxes

Effects on Native Fauna

Foxes are extreme hunters that are nocturnal and territorial that hunt for prey as well as scavenge for food. They are able to kill more prey than they can eat which is known as surplus killing behaviour (NSW DPE 2021). Foxes are so successful in urban environments as they do not require large areas of bushland for shelter. They have no natural predators and are highly adaptable to changing environments. Foxes cause significant losses to native fauna through excessive predation, where they mainly target small mammals and ground birds but have also been observed killing reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates (Coman 1973). Foxes have been so successful in Australia as the native fauna have not adapted to being hunted by foxes and are therefore, easy targets for hunting. Foxes face no natural predators in Australia allowing their populations to rise without any significant barriers, causing many extinctions and local extinctions of native fauna (Queensland Govt. 2020). Foxes also carry a range of diseases such as mange and distemper that can be transmitted to other species such as dogs, possums and wombats, causing decline and sickness in populations (DSEWPC 2010).

Effects on Native Flora

Foxes spread weed propagules from faeces and physical transmission. Foxes have a wide range in diet, and also commonly eat fruits and berries (e.g. Blackberries, Boxthorn, Sweet Briar). These seeds are mainly distributed after an animal has consumed the berry and the seed passes through their faeces. It has been found that berry seed germination rates through fox scats are between 22–35% (DELWP 2017). Fox scats also contain excess nutrients that leech into soil and can cause weed growth. For shelter foxes create dens by finding burrows, tree hollows or through digging into the ground. The soil disturbance that occurs through den construction increases the germination and spread of weed species by daylighting seeds that may have been previously unable to germinate due to dormancy.

Relevance to Damper Creek Conservation Reserve

VBA records indicate that there have been 19 separate recordings of Red Foxes within a 5km radius of DCCR, with the last record being observed in 2017. This indicates that foxes are in the area of DCCR and may occasionally enter the Reserve or are potentially living in the Reserve. Foxes within the reserve will result in high native fauna mortality and the reduction of native fauna populations. Animals such as small birds, possums and frogs are at significant risk from foxes within DCCR.

2.2. Common Myna

Effects on Native Fauna

Common Mynas are extremely territorial birds that exist within small to large community structures which commonly bully native species out of an area they inhabit. They are known to outcompete native and endangered bird species out of nests and hollows resulting in a decline in native species presence. Common Mynas actively eat and destroy the eggs of other bird species killing any chicks that may emerge. Furthermore, Common Mynas spread disease and parasites to other birds resulting in a sick native population (DPIRD 2021).

Effects on Native Flora

Common Mynas spread weed propagules through faeces and are commonly associated with spreading common olive species and other fruiting plants. Spreading of weed propagules results in fewer native species being able to germinate, thus lowering the quality of native environments (DPIRD 2021). Common Mynas also have the ability to outcompete native fauna for food resources. Due to the large community structure of Common Mynas, the feeding habits they have on the environment can strain and damage flora potentially driving native fauna out of a region.

Relevance to Damper Creek Conservation Reserve

From a VBA search 2043 different instances of Common Mynas were recorded. This number is likely much higher however given how common this species is in urbanized environments. The presence of the Common Myna within DCCR reduces the available nesting opportunities and food resources

for the native bird species commonly observed. This is the case for sensitive bird species such as small woodland birds that have already been observed as declining within the reserve. The consistent presence of the Common Myna within the reserve has the potential to deter native species from inhabiting due to their aggressive mob mentality.

3. COMMON MITIGATION MEASURES IMPLEMENTED

Various methods can be implemented to control each identified animal. Across Victoria, different methods are used depending on the impacts that the target animal has on the environment as well as where the mitigation measures are taking place. Below are some control and mitigation methods that could be adopted for the control of these species within DCCR.

Common mitigation measures implemented for **dogs** include:

- Control of dogs through establishing dog ‘on leash’ only reserves’;
- Exclusion of dogs through fencing areas of high biodiversity and;
- Complete exclusion of dogs from a reserve

Common mitigation measures implemented for **cats** include:

- Implementing and maintaining a cat curfew to prevent cats from being outside at night;
- Local council implementing only inside/secured cats or no cat ownership for households surrounding reserves/areas of conservation significance and;
- Control of feral cat populations in the area by;
 - Trapping
 - Baiting

Control measures for **foxes** includes:

- Monitoring of fox populations for presence/absence;
- Baiting;
- Den fumigation or ripping
- Ethical Trapping
- Exclusion fencing

Control measures for **Common Mynas** includes:

- Ethical trapping (implemented in other councils such as Cardinia Shire)

4. POSITIVE OUTCOMES TO FLORA AND FAUNA

There are multiple positive outcomes that may occur through the management of unrestricted dogs (off leash) within an environment, such outcomes include:

- an increase in small bird and mammal populations that may have previously been deterred or left an area from to induced stress;
- reduction of weed spread;
- improvement in water quality; and
- retainment of revegetation efforts; and
- reduced pollution in the environment

Positive outcomes that can occur though the control/management of cats and foxes includes the reduction on predation on small mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates which are commonly preyed upon. Control of these species will also reduce the amount of weed spread and growth throughout the Reserve.

Positive outcomes that can be achieved with the reduction of Common Mynas is the reintegration of native birds that would commonly be bullied out of nests, hollows and feeding areas as well as increased populations of native birds due to their eggs not being destroyed. Common weed seed dispersal would also be slowed due to the reduction of scats spreading weed propagules.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MONASH CITY COUNCIL

It is recommended that Damper Creek Conservation Reserve become a designated dog ‘on-leash’ reserve to reduce the impacts that unrestricted dogs have on flora and fauna vales. As stated in the *Damper Creek Conservation Reserve Conservation Management Plan* a “dog-off-lead area could be implemented at the previously designated area adjacent to Park Road, to reduce the impact to ecological values within the reserve.” (McKinnon 2022). This would provide dog owners with an area where dogs can be ‘off leash’ and therefore localise the impacts that domestic dogs have within DCCR to a relatively cleared area. Fencing this area may be an option to reduce dogs from roaming further then the cleared area present and promote people to leash their dog once exiting the fenced area and continuing their walk through the remainder of the reserve.

Council should consider appropriate ways to reduce the impact that cats (both feral and domestic) have on the native ecosystem. Implementation of a cat ban could be considered if deemed appropriate or a cat curfew preventing cats from being outside at night could also be considered, a method

recently implemented in multiple councils across Melbourne. It is up to Council to deem what mitigation measures area appropriate to reduce the impacts of cats.

Foxes within DCCR should be reported by Council Staff when sighted and potentially a reporting system established, where residents can report fox sightings and/or evidence of foxes. Such a system would help in directing management efforts such as trapping and den destruction when appropriate in order to reduce fox presence within the area.

Monitoring of Common Myna populations should be implemented to identify population sizes and areas where they frequent. If deemed necessary and in Councils scope trapping (using 'Pee Gee' traps) could be implemented similarly to what other councils have implemented.

6. CONCLUSION

Any introduced animal will likely have negative effects on the natural environment. Dogs can deter, injure and/or kill native animals whilst also spreading seeds of invasive weed species, increasing nutrients within the soil and waterways from faeces. It is for these reasons that if Damper Creek Conservation Reserve was to become a 'dog on-leash' area the impacts that unrestricted dogs have on the native flora and fauna values would be reduced and management efforts may be directed to controlling other domestic and invasive pest animals that require more effort and persistent management to control.

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Appendix 1. VBA 5km Search for Introduced Fauna

Scientific Name	Common Name	Count of Sightings	Last Record
<i>Carassius auratus</i>	Goldfish	3	29/01/2002
<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>	European Carp	4	24/01/2018
<i>Misgurnus anguillicaudatus</i>	Oriental Weatherloach	4	30/01/2002
<i>Gambusia holbrooki</i>	Eastern Gambusia	7	28/04/2010
<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>	Redfin	1	19/11/1991
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Mallard	131	8/06/2021
<i>Columba livia</i>	Domestic Pigeon	478	23/08/2021
<i>Spilopelia chinensis</i>	Spotted Dove	3281	23/08/2021
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Common Blackbird	1312	23/08/2021
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush	96	18/04/2021
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Eurasian Skylark	8	19/04/2006
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	31	10/07/2006
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow	621	18/01/2021
<i>Chloris chloris</i>	European Greenfinch	61	1/09/2001
<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Common Myna	2043	23/08/2021
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Common Starling	1060	19/08/2021
<i>Rattus rattus</i>	Black Rat	10	18/01/2018
<i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	Brown Rat	5	25/10/2017
<i>Mus musculus</i>	House Mouse	3	27/05/2013
<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	European Rabbit	1	12/05/1989
<i>Felis catus</i>	Domestic Cat (feral)	3	25/05/1988
<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Red Fox	19	25/10/2017
<i>Anser anser</i>	Domestic Goose	3	21/04/2010
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	European Goldfinch	86	26/08/2003
<i>Anas superciliosa X Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Pacific Black Duck/Mallard Hybrid	10	26/05/2021