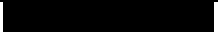


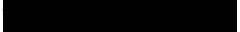

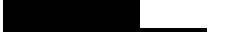
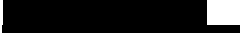



SCHEDULE OF SUBMISSIONS: PRAWN ROCK CHANNEL - DOG RESERVE

Submission Number	Name & Address	Verbatim Submission
S1	[REDACTED]	<p>I understand that there is some movement towards complete closure of the Prawn Rock area and the far end of Ocean Beach to people with dogs.</p> <p>As a dog owner I wish to protest very strongly against this movement.</p> <p>There is precious little good open area as it is for dogs to be exercised and also for owners to enjoy the delights of our beaches, and closure of this area would take away a very large portion of what is available to us.</p> <p>It is quite clear that dog owners that take their dogs to beach areas are responsible and keep the dogs well under control, and always clean up after them. The concern that dogs are destroying the nesting area of the sand dunes is nonsense, as no dog owners ever allow their dogs to go into the sand dunes, for this very reason, and also there is a very real danger of snakes in the warmer seasons. And we all know the problem of snakes for dogs!</p> <p>In my experience of many years of walking my dogs on Ocean Beach, and around the Prawn Rock area is that only walkers, (with and without dogs) fishermen (who often have dogs) and surfers (who always have dogs) use the far end of the beach, well away from swimmers and families. It is difficult to understand why anyone would want to ban dogs and their owners from this area. Also there is only part of the year that this area is physically accessible any way!</p> <p>I hope you will see how unfair it would be to penalise a large portion of the Denmark community, and their dogs, by closure of the area to them.</p>
S2	[REDACTED]	<p>We have heard on the "grapevine" that you are considering closing the prawn Channel Dog Exercise Area. Is this true?</p> <p>If it is true we strongly urge you to reconsider because our town has a real shortage of dog exercise areas. We know you are proposing to develop Lang Park in to a dog exercise park, which will be great. But outside of Lights Beach where else can you legally exercise your dog in Denmark?</p>
S3	[REDACTED]	<p>Thanks for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to ban dogs from Prawn Rock Channel.</p>


	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>My objections are as follows: The return nesting of birds is usually carried out in the dunes. I am saying this as I remember some years ago a section being roped off. Most dogs don't go anywhere near there. They head straight for the water's edge. Is there any evidence that dogs are preventing nesting of migratory birds? Or is it just a presumption? Whilst Lights Beach is a designated dog area it is a very confined space and therefore there is no room to escape more aggressive dogs and there have been several incidents down there. I don't go there anymore. At Ocean Beach there is plenty of space for dogs. The area is only open for a part of the year. This summer we did not have access across the inlet until Christmas. Access closes once the rains come. Do the birds nest on the island?</p> <p>You will have noticed, as I have, that the number of dogs have increased in Denmark. Certainly in the 20 years I have lived here. I know many who love to take their dogs down there who would be very disappointed if dogs were banned.</p> <p>I sincerely hope this does not happen.</p>
S4	<p>[REDACTED]</p>	<p>We respond to the above invitation in regard to dog exercising/access to the Inlet bar area.</p> <p>At our meeting with Shire representatives on August 6th onsite, it was indicated that it was not necessary to re-submit our (BirdLife's) previous submission of January 10th this year concerning the Shire's Dog Exercising Strategy. The information and comment provided then by BirdLife still applies. Following are additional comments on the current issue.</p> <p>Firstly we are disappointed at the phrasing of the "Invitation" as it panders to dog owners who are therefore likely to have expectations that nothing will change if they do not want anything to change. Not an encouraging start towards protecting shorebirds and seabirds using the bar area, particularly when their protection is legally required under Australian law.</p> <p>It would also have been helpful to provide some background to the community and to refer to the Shire's Coastal Reserve Management Strategy which describes the area's importance for shorebirds and seabirds and recommends a review of dog exercising over the bar area.</p> <p>2. Issues raised at the onsite meeting with Shire representatives in order from most to least acceptable to BirdLife were:</p> <p>(a) BirdLife's primary position is for dogs, either on lead or off lead, to be excluded from the bar area</p>

		<p>altogether. This simply and correctly acknowledges the importance of the area for shorebirds and seabirds and the continuous threats and impacts that dogs impose to their welfare.</p> <p>(b) Consideration of PRC island as the alternate off lead dog exercising area by construction of a perimeter track. PRC island is not a well utilised area for shorebirds and seabirds (far less so than the sandy bar area) and would relieve the dog presence on the bar area. Obviously this would mean reversing its status as a dog prohibited area.</p> <p>(c) Effectively placed fencing to direct people and on lead dog traffic on a more south-easterly route from PRC island towards the eastern section of Ocean Beach to avoid the main bird areas. The fencing installed may require an adjustment in position from time to time to ensure effective protection of the birds.</p> <p>(d) Requiring dogs to be on lead without other restrictions is not likely to be effective given the very poor compliance rate by dog owners shown by studies in other states eg Victoria.</p> <p>3. Whatever the strategy eventually adopted by Council for the bar area should be coupled with an ongoing community education and awareness program.</p> <p>BirdLife looks forward to contributing further on this issue and arriving at a workable and effective solution with the Shire. We ask that a copy of this email be circulated to all councillors.</p>
S5	  	<p>I am a member of the Denmark Dog Club.</p> <p>I use the Prawn Rock Channel dog exercise area to walk my dog on a regular basis, I used it especially when I was heavily pregnant as it is a low impact exercise for people as well as dogs.</p> <p>I like to swim with my dog there in summer too.</p> <p>I agree that the area may well be important to migratory birds. I would be sad if I were no longer allowed to walk my dog there, but I would not mind as much if another area were opened up for off the lead dog exercising.</p>
S6	   	<p>Thank you for invitation to comment on this issue.</p> <p>We like many others regularly utilise this area for dog exercise.</p> <p>Perhaps more importantly we also utilise the access through this area to visit the beach on City of Albany side of the inlet when conditions permit during the summer. This provides for a long walk suitable both for the elderly and for energetic dogs that need a good long run. Again this is a very popular usage judging by the numbers of dog walkers usually met during our walks.</p> <p>There is no other Denmark access to City of Albany beach other than e.g. Surf Club, where dogs are not permitted.</p>

		<p>Some people get over a fence and scramble down a steep rocky area near a lookout, however this is dangerous. Their actions do however point to a need to maintain access to the City of Albany beach on Nullaki.</p> <p>As for migratory birds, assuming they have not suddenly appeared in this area, they do not appear troubled by the many years of permitted dog access, otherwise they would not keep returning. If it is an issue, dogs on leads access could be introduced at sensitive periods during the year.</p> <p>We note that when the sand flats were recently ploughed the Shire claimed that there were no issues with migratory birds.</p> <p>WE WOULD BE MOST UPSET ABOUT BEING DENIED ACCESS TO THIS AREA!</p>
S7		<p>I am always saddened when I hear of a dog exercise area being removed or conditions of use being placed on it.</p> <p>As the population grows and ages, as house blocks get smaller, as children move away many in the community find themselves, old, isolated and alone.</p> <p>These people may not be able to drive anymore, they may not even own a car, and they may only have their friend <i>FIDO</i> to keep them company and to inspire them to get out, walk, mix and meet other people.</p> <p>We all care about the environment but lets face it; the damage to the environment by clearing blocks for intensive housing, paving over creeks for car parks, the use of water by a growing population for washing, eating, drinking and maintaining gardens and increased need for space for land fill for the refuse of that population is far greater than the damage a few dogs can do at the beach.</p> <p>Most dog owners live in fear of snakes and so during the months of Spring and Summer when snakes are most active and wildlife has young, dog owners tend to keep their dogs on leads or encourage them away from areas of scrub or bush where our wonderful Flora and Fauna reside.</p> <p>Most dog owners abhor the thought of their dogs hunting or gods forbid killing another animal, they go to great lengths to ensure their dogs are mannerly and social.</p> <p>Environmentally conscious couples are choosing to have dogs rather than children to off set the world population explosion.</p> <p>Families have dogs as a way of teaching responsibility and care for others.</p>



		<p>Health professionals promote dog ownership to stave off depression, fight obesity, reduce childhood ailments and boost immunity</p> <p>The majority of dog owners now days see their dog as a family member and to be forbidden places of recreation create disharmony and resentment.</p> <p>For a growing number of our community Lights Beach is inaccessible due to distance from the town and the long set of stairs; Parry beach is even further away from the urban hub and as people drive at some speed on the beach, dogs and children are at risk of being hit by a vehicle (one of my dogs was hit by a speeding driver at Parry) Peaceful Bay only allows dogs on lead.</p> <p>Again to address environment – dog owners who swim their dogs at the beach tend not to wash their dogs, a saving of 10 – 50 litres of water per dog per fortnight, they also tend to use less chemicals in maintaining their dogs – shampoos, conditioners, skin treatments to restore PH, toxic chemicals to control fleas all of which and their packaging end up in our environment.</p> <p>My dogs live in harmony with nature, they swim in the same dam as the native ducks and their ducklings, phascogales, possums, kangaroos all reside and rear young in the bush our dogs exercise in, Carnaby cocky, owls, eagles, blue wrens, parrots, magpies, crows and others I can not identify are confident to nest and raise young in close proximity to the dogs and unfortunately rabbits and foxes are undeterred by the presence of dogs on our property. (shown by the decimation of our chickens and veggie patches.)</p> <p>I, like many others are aware of the delicate nature of our environment; however it is not dogs but humans who are destroying our ecosystems and polluting the planet.</p> <p>Dogs are enhancing lifestyles, keeping people busy, active and socially and economically engaged.</p> <p>Removing an area of recreation for dog owners will not stop people and their dogs going to the beach or running through bush land, it will just ensure more dog owners sneak into areas that are unsupervised and potentially more fragile; creating an underclass or criminal element and certainly a level of irresponsibility and carelessness.</p> <p>If we allow Denmark to become a place that restricts dog outings we will see a rise in irresponsible owners, people</p>
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		<p>who own dogs on small blocks without the ability to exercise them; who leave them to bark and howl when the humans go out or people who open their doors at night to allow their dogs to roam unsupervised.</p> <p>We will see a community that encourages isolation for those of us not into sport or art.</p> <p>We will experience a rise in depression, loneliness, and low physical activity creating over use of our health care facilities and parking congestion.</p> <p>In the last five years I have watched Denmark turn from one of the most dog friendly towns where dogs accompanied their people for coffee, shopping, the park, the beach, concerts, wineries and such, to a town that is almost devoid of dogs.</p> <p>Once tourists used to say how fantastic it was to be able to come to Denmark with their dogs, now tourists talk of having to find boarding for their dogs prior to coming here.</p> <p>So in regard to ongoing community health and wellbeing I strongly reject restricting or denying access to dogs and their humans at anytime of year to prawn channel reserve no#20578</p> <p>References and further reading "Pets offer an unconditional love that can be very helpful to people with depression," says Ian Cook, MD, a psychiatrist and director of the Depression Research and Clinic Program at UCLA. Dog ownership increases the odds for survival in persons who have had a heart attack from 1 in 87 to 1 in 15. Pet ownership also has increased the percent of people who survived at least one year after hospitalization for heart problems. Only 6% of nonpet owners survived versus 28% of people with pets. Pet ownership may be only one of several variables that influenced this improved survival, but even a 2-3% difference is significant. In addition, pets may actually lessen the risk of heart attacks. Barker, SB; Dawson, KS. The effects of animal-assisted therapy on anxiety ratings of hospitalized psychiatric patients. <i>Psychiatric Services</i>. 1998; 49(6):797-801. Cutt, HE; Giles-Corti, B; Knuiam, M; Burke, V. Dog ownership, health, and physical activity: A critical review of the literature. <i>Health Place</i> 2007 March;13(1):261-272. Cutt, H; Knui,am, MW; Giles-Corti, B. Does getting a dog increase recreational walking? <i>International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity</i> 2008 March 27;5:17. Friedmann, E; Son, H. The human-companion animal bond: How humans benefit. In Trevejo, RT (ed) <i>Veterinary</i></p>
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S8		<p>Dog owners should be educated about coastal values and potential impacts of their dog in coastal areas. They should be encouraged to use beaches designated for dog-walking, and should carry bags to collect dog faeces and dispose of these appropriately.</p> <p>This along with other dog laws is part of the dog training programme offered by me.</p> <p>Teaching people about being responsible not only for their dog but for the environment and the community is an essential component every attendee of dog training is asked to comply with for the life of their dog.</p> <p>Whilst studies show dogs even being near native wild life <i>can</i> impact on breeding grounds it is far better to have a designated area set aside than to have dog owners unlawfully take their dogs into multiple undesignated areas creating multiple areas of impact.</p> <p>Many attendees of training use Prawn Channel as an off lead exercise venue as they are unable due to lack of time or lack of transport be able to get to Lights Beach or Parry Beach, they enjoy a morning or evening stroll with their dog to unwind from work or to gear up for a busy day ahead.</p> <p>Many attendees make arrangements to meet up @ Prawn Channel with other dog owners to ensure their dogs stay socialised and to brush up on training, especially the recall.</p> <p>Restricting or removing the use of previous designated off lead venues without supplying a similar (beach based) venue as an alternative may protect some wildlife but is more likely to send dogs and their owners to 'secret' (out of bounds) beaches, these people will be less inclined to clean up after their dogs or attend to their dogs activities putting more of the environment, dogs themselves and farm stock at risk and It will also increase the cost of</p>


		<p>policing as there are many beaches but only a few rangers.</p> <p>The majority of dog owners are good, law abiding, decent people. They love their dogs and enjoy an obedient, well trained, highly socialised companion to accompany them to the beach or on walks round the river.</p> <p>Denmark has too few off lead exercise areas for dogs already.</p> <p>Annie Harrison Park is convenient but unfenced.</p> <p>Lights Beach is out of town and its many stairs restrict its use to able bodied persons and dogs with transport.</p> <p>Parry Beach is further from town again and dogs share the area with cars.</p> <p>As I train dogs of all ages I am often faced with older dogs with arthritis – my first piece of advice is “take your dog swimming”. <i>I myself prolonged the life of a dog for 5 years without medication by swimming him morning and night everyday even through winter.</i></p> <p>Swimming is a great way to exercise dogs it has the same beneficial effect as hydrotherapy for humans. Restricting the use of Prawn Channel as an off lead exercise area will have major impacts for dogs and their owners in Denmark.</p> <p>Many dogs will not receive adequate exercise and will develop problem behaviours, barking, escaping, and roaming, anti socialisation (leading to dog fights) agoraphobia, aggression towards humans. .</p> <p>Their humans may develop depression, obesity, and feelings of being penalised, due to their choice of friends.</p> <p>The best protection for our wildlife would be the posting of signs declaring areas as “snake breeding and hunting grounds - spring through summer” this will naturally deter owners allowing their dogs to venture into sensitive areas unsupervised. It has the added bonuses of a) being true and b) reducing incident of snake bites.</p> <p>I have attached a more holistic approach to dog exercise areas as published by Hobart City Council; you will see many parks with children’s play areas have a 10 metre exclusion zone and allow dogs either on or off lead at parks or ovals when other activities are not in session or during ‘permitted times’ this approach to dog recreation areas</p>
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		<p>allows dog owners to be a part of their community not separate from it.</p> <p>Mankind has lived in harmony with dogs for thousands of years and the more areas available to dogs and their families will decrease the impact of dogs on fragile ecosystems and encourage a healthier and more inclusive community for all.</p> <p><i>{Officer Note: Attachment provided is at the end of this table}.</i></p>
S9		<p>I am in favour of the Prawn rock dog reserves.</p>
S10		<p>My submission is that I would support the restriction of dogs during bird breeding times at Prawn Rock channel and elsewhere in the Shire as appropriate.</p> <p>I would also like to see increased monitoring of areas where dogs are supposed to be on leashes. Many owners are responsible, but some are not, and increased patrolling is something I would dearly love to see. Improved signage, so it is clearer where dogs are allowed, where leashes are expected, and where dogs are not allowed, would also be helpful.</p> <p>I know people are passionate about their dogs! However, it is important to look after the rights of wildlife, too.</p>
S11		<p>Re Prawn Rock Channel and dogs - dogs have been exercising at Ocean Beach since people started using the area many, many years ago - the birds continue to nest in the area - I implore the Shire to make an evidence-based decision here - there is no real threat to the bird population from dogs being exercised on the beach - please let this continue</p>
S12		<p>This is a fantastic off lead dog exercise area and it would be heartbreaking to lose it considering the amount of dogs and owners who use this facility.</p> <p>If the main cause for concern is the nesting birds, why not build a decent sized island or islands further from the shore out of the reach of the dogs. This year, as the inlet will not be open to the sea, the problem will not arise as the current nesting island is under water and will be for most of the summer at least.</p> <p>The majority of dog owners in Denmark look after this area really well and appreciate it. This is easy to see by the numbers who are quite happy to wade across channels to reach the dog end of the beach and the number of very</p>


		<p>happy wet dogs.</p> <p>I do hope you will see fit to keep this area fully accessible to dogs and their owners.</p>
S13		<p>Green Skills would like to indicate its support for the submission of BirdLife Australia in relation to proposed dog/exercise area to the Inlet bar area. (An email version of this letter is attached below).</p> <p>We are deeply concerned that a proposal to allow a dog exercise area between the Inlet and Ocean Beach will adversely affect shorebirds and thus are opposed to such a measure.</p> <p>We have coordinated various shorebird survey and management planning projects over the years and attach a report newsletter which highlight the importance of WILSON Inlet for shorebirds habitat, both migratory shorebirds and resident shorebirds species.</p> <p>Pages 14 – 15 of Newsletter 7 of February 2014 deals with the Council’s proposed dog exercise area at the mouth of the Inlet. The 20134 shorebirds report outlines the critical importance of Wilson Inlet for migratory shorebirds on the south coast and recommends Local Government and other organisational support for strong measures to protect shorebird habitats.</p> <p><i>{Officer Note: Attachment provided is at the end of this table}.</i></p>
S14		<p>While it is essential to protect the feeding grounds of migratory birds and the breeding grounds of local water birds, it is also essential to protect a valuable community exercise area.</p> <p>It is often seen as an easy option to target domestic pets as being environmental hazards and thus populations which should be ‘constrained’. Before heading down that road I would ask the Shire to obtain the following facts and figures in order to have a discussion based on hard facts.</p> <p>a – How many dogs use that area – in what time of year and day? How many walkers – speed boats - canoeists – kayakers - swimmers – hang gliders?</p> <p>b – What size of an area do dogs use as compared to the area available to migratory birds?</p> <p>c – What research is available showing the impact on migratory birds’ feeding habits caused by dogs – as compared to that caused by walkers, speed boats, swimmers, canoeists, kayakers, hang gliders?</p>

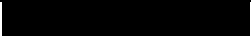
		<p>Prawn Rocks is almost the only dog exercise area which allows dogs freedom to run and swim, without concerns about traffic. Lights Beach, the other comparable area, is not accessible for disabled or frail dog owners. The majority of dog owners who use Prawn Rocks are responsible owners who make the effort to take their dog there to provide maximum exercise benefits with minimum impact on non-dog owners.</p> <p>The important issue of protecting breeding grounds for local water birds could be addressed by the relevant areas being clearly signposted in the breeding season with significant fines for contravention of these limits. This should not see the whole Prawn Rocks area being off limits to the general community and/or dog owners.</p> <p>I request that this information and research is obtained before any hasty and perhaps ill-considered decisions are made on this matter.</p>
S15		<p>A public access is needed to get to Ocean Beach – even dogs.</p> <p>A sand road, as we had before. Across the channel would be ideal. It would not only give people with dogs an exercise area but also people with disabilities and the elderlies an opportunity to fish or just enjoy the beach.</p> <p>Surely the bird breeding area can be fenced off to keep dogs and people out.</p> <p>If the above is for some unknown reason not possible, access via the surf club should be available.</p> <p>Ocean Beach is for all of us – dogs or not.</p>
S16		<p>I have taken my dog to this reserve all through summer. We park and cross Prawn Rock Channel by the first bridge. My dog is always on the lead until we reach the beach then she is allowed to run free.</p> <p>I walk very early in the morning. In summer at about 5.30am and in winter around 6.30am. I have never understood why I cannot walk with my dog past the surf club if she is on a lead.</p> <p>The exercise is beneficial to me, as a senior citizen, and for my dog who is 12 years old. We both find it difficult to climb the stairs at the dog exercise area at Lights Beach.</p> <p>During winter we are unable to access the Ocean Beach exercise area as it is under water. We cannot get to the beach as we are prohibited from walking past the Denmark Surf Club.</p>

		<p>If you want to restrict access to the area marked red on your map then allow people to take their dogs past the surf club. Then by closing the first bridge during the breeding season there would be no possibility of disturbance to migratory bird.</p>
S17		<p>I would like to comment on dog access to Prawn Rock channel area.</p> <p>The dog access area is badly needed in Denmark as dog friendly areas are few and far between.</p> <p>Migratory birds in this area have multiple nest and free area to live not counting Parrys etc.</p> <p>Being an indigenous Denmarkian (BORN IN THE OLD DENMARK HOSPITAL 1956) I have seen it all. The area in question has not changed much over the 50 years I have been going there. We used to have vehicle access, dogs even speedway (SANDBAR RACES USED TO BE ANNUAL EVENT) People parked on sandbar catching and cooking prawns on wood fires an area of great public enjoyment.</p> <p>Birds were there then and they are there now.</p> <p>This will only take more away from residents and tourists. Where are the people from the caravan park and ocean beach area exercise their dogs?</p> <p>For a tourist orientated town this is a bad move, more regulations, more signs, less vehicle access.</p> <p>Why don't you tell people stay at home you can't do shit in Denmark. Too many rules.</p> <p>What about my rite to access Ocean Beach. 'O' you might hurt a bird or run over a crab!</p> <p>Tourists come to access our beautiful county, walk on the beach with your dog, drive up to 2nd reef and catch a salmon not to be told NO, NO, NO, you can't do anything you might scare a non-resident bird.</p> <p>Please leave our dog area alone and give us back proper access to Ocean Beach. People live here to have these rites of access and enjoy our pristine area. There's plenty of room for everyone people bird and animals. Why limit us for 12 MONTHS of the year the birds are here only a couple of months. Put up a temporary fence if worried about nesting sites.</p>

		<p>P.S. I was reading about non opening of Ocean Beach bar 3 times in a hundred years it is not correct according to W I RG records kept by my father it was not opened in the fourtys about 1942-3 and in the fifties 1955-56 as the rivermouth reef was 16 – 18 inches out of the water and opening the bar would have flooded the lake with salt water so at least 5 times not opened. Thanks.</p>
S18		<p>Further to our discussion on 8/10/14 the following is submitted outlining what are believed to be errors in the Shire’s interpretation of boundaries applicable to Sections 5.1 and 5.2 of its Local Laws for Dogs 2001.</p> <p><u>Section 5.1 Places Where Dogs Are Prohibited Absolutely</u></p> <p>(d) In respect of the boundaries of reserve 20578 as indicated on the Shire map/air photo which you supplied to me yesterday and the Shire local law description of the dog prohibited area, the Dog Prohibited Area shown on the map accompanying the “Invitation to Comment ” appears incorrect.</p> <p>No part of Prawn Rock Channel island is included in this reserve and therefore, by the description in (d) PRC island appears not to be a prohibited area for dogs by that simple interpretation despite what the intention may have been. In any event the amount of what could be called “grassed” area on the eastern side of the channel is physically minimal and would occupy only a very small fraction of the total area of PRC island.</p> <p>Also, even if PRC island <i>was</i> included in the reserve the prohibited area shown on the map accompanying the Invitation is incorrect as it should only apply south of the most southern pontoon bridge.</p> <p><u>Section 5.2 Places Which Are Dog Exercise Areas</u></p> <p>(b) Again, this description is tied to reserve 20578 and therefore the dog exercise area does not apply outside of the reserve; thus the area shown on the map accompanying the Invitation as Dog Exercise Area is incorrect and therefore not a designated dog exercise area. That is, the area shown on the map hatched in green is not a declared dog exercise area.</p> <p>In this description the term “first pontoon bridge “ is assumed to be the northern pedestrian bridge (the better term for this purpose). Again , even if the dog exercise area shown on the map <i>was</i> correct it should not extend further north than the northern pedestrian bridge.</p> <p>Further, the term “sand area to the south” is too loose and non definitive to apply accurately in this case even if it <i>could</i> be applied.</p>

		<p>Also a reminder that the signs at the lookout and at the pontoon bridge depicting the dogs prohibited and dog exercise areas are incorrect for the reasons above.</p> <p>Given the above, Birdlife Albany requests the current review of submissions regarding the Shire's Invitation to Comment be suspended until the current status of the relevant sections of the dog laws can be reviewed and corrected.</p> <p>Also given the high importance of the wider bar area for shorebirds and seabirds and that it now appears technically that a declared dog exercise area does not exist over the area, there is an opportunity for the Shire Council to review its position from scratch. We trust this will lead to more informed and responsible protection for shorebirds and seabirds utilising the area, that is, formally making it a dog free area.</p> <p>We are happy to contribute further if required to resolve this issue.</p>
S19		<p>We are writing to comment on the exercising of dogs in the Wilson Inlet bat area / prawn rock channel (reserve 20578).</p> <p>We strongly believe that this is not an appropriate exercise area for dogs. The area in question is both an important habitat for birds (both resident and migratory) and breeding area. Many of the birds lay their eggs directly on the sand which makes them vulnerable. In addition, the presence of dogs could deter birds from nesting in the area, forcing them to find areas which may be less suitable. In the past we have helped in the erection of a temporary fence to protect the birds. However, a temporary fence is not always adequate protection against curious dogs who naturally love to chase birds. Fencing is also impractical and detracts from the natural beauty of the area. Many of us take pleasure in observing the birds on the inlet, which area already under pressure from so many other factors (inappropriate/non-opening of the bar, human impacts).</p> <p>In addition, this area is used intensively by families with children during the months October to April which corresponds with the nesting period for many birds. For the safety of both people and birds it is NOT appropriate to have dogs running freely off a leash in the area. Personally we do not want to have to worry about dogs running up to us or our children whilst at the beach.</p> <p>We understand that people enjoy walking their dogs up the beach and feel that the area between prawn rock channel and the beach should be limited to dogs on a leash only. Dogs should be kept well away from the area directly adjacent to the inlet at all times. Signs should be erected to notify all users of the area about nesting birds.</p>



		<p>We urge the Shire to provide an alternative, well fenced dog exercise area. Anne Harrison Park would make an excellent alternative.</p>
S20		<p>Following our further discussions regarding Reserve 20578 since our last submission on 15 September on the issue of dog exercise areas over the inlet bar area we refer you , importantly, to BirdLife Australia’s and Birdlife Albany’s submission of 10 January 2014 to the CEO (see attachments).</p> <p>This describes in some detail the high level of significance of the bar area (and the Inlet) for shorebirds and seabirds.</p> <p>Given this information, which we reasonably expected the Shire to accept positively, we are extremely disappointed that a proposal to declare the bar area as a dog exercise zone will be put to Council for its consideration. This proposal appears to ignore the contradiction of formally allowing dog exercising over an area of high value habitat for species of birds which require protection under Federal and State laws.</p> <p>We are therefore hopeful that rightful recognition will be given to the issue of bird protection in Council’s consideration of this matter.</p> <p>BirdLife’s position in resolving this issue is as follows in order from most to least acceptable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The priority is for dogs to be excluded from the bar area. This simply and correctly acknowledges the importance of the bar area for shorebirds and seabirds and the continuous threats and impacts that dogs impose on their welfare. (b) Prawn Rock Channel island be adopted as the only off-lead dog exercising area (in the general bar area) by construction of a perimeter track on the island. PRC is not well utilised by shorebirds and seabirds (far less so than the sandy bar area) and would be in substitution of the dog presence on the bar area. (c) The adoption of effectively placed, removable lightweight fencing to direct people and on-lead dog traffic away from the more bird sensitive bar area north of an west-east line from the lookout above the main channel towards a more south-easterly route from PRC island to the southern section of the bar area and eastern section of Ocean Beach. The fencing installed, as and when necessary, may require adjustment of location from time to time depending on the movement of exposed sand and shallow water. We can supply a map showing typical fence location if required. <p>Note : Keeping dogs on-lead while passing the fenced area is most important as dogs off-lead are rarely controlled as proven by studies in other states, eg Victoria and will take no notice of any fence.</p>

		<p>An integral part of the strategy adopted by Council for the bar area to offer the protection sought for birds should be an ongoing community education and awareness program including appropriate signage.</p> <p>Finally, given the Shire's recent dog exercising strategy giving extended facilities for dogs, there is a need and an opportunity for Council to find a better balance between perceived community needs for more dog areas and the neglected needs of protection for wildlife.</p> <p><i>{Officer Note: Attachment provided is at the end of this table}.</i></p>
S21		<p>It has come to our attention that plans are afoot to close the dog exercise area and access to Ocean Beach across the inlet. Our neighbour has already contacted you today and your comment was that only 1 person has written in support of maintaining access for dogs. We feel this is because it has not been well advertised ,we have not met a dog owner who knows anything about this so feel you are not getting a fair response. We have several comments/questions regarding this plan :-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What has prompted this proposed action to close a dog areas that has been in place for many years and used by locals and tourists alike? Has there been any problems to justify this drastic action. It has been our observation that everyone is having a great time on the beach and dogs and families have mixed joyfully. 2. Why is a total ban the only option? Have other options such as fencing , restriction of access during peak times , educational signs been considered? A possible solution could be a fenced path made behind the surf club to provide access for dogs on lead to further down Ocean Beach however the obvious solution that keeps all people happy is to make it compulsory for dogs to be on a lead across the area. 3.This leads to my next question, if the feeling is that you can,t police dogs on leads, how are you going to police a total ban? 4. Why penalise responsible dog owners for a few problem dogs, this seems to be a knee jerk reaction and lacking in consideration for dog owners (rate payers as well) 5. What studies have been done to show that dogs are causing a problem? If dogs are causing a problem , humans must also be causing a problem, is the proposal to ban people as well ? 6. How can a decision be made until more people are aware of this proposal? 7. Is this the only breeding area for these birds on the south coast? This area is one of only a few places you can walk dogs on the coast. <p>Whilst I use Lights Beach, which is a beautiful dog beach, it is a dangerous beach for swimming for both dogs and owners and the walk is not very long for exercise. Most people using the far reaches of Ocean Beach are dog</p>

		<p>walkers or surfers with dogs. One of the reasons we bought our current house, is that we could walk to the beach with our dog, providing plenty of healthy exercise for both of us. We feel dogs are being made to feel very unwelcome around Denmark despite the vast majority being well behaved and non aggressive.</p> <p>We are bird lovers and responsible dog owners and feel that we should remember that dogs deserve to be considered as well. As daily dog walkers it is our observation, that the majority of people walking and getting exercise are with dogs.</p> <p>I hope you will consider our comments and we would appreciate a response to these questions and more details about the process and timetable for dealing with this proposal.</p>
S22	[REDACTED]	<p>Prawn Rock Channel is a well used and much loved off lead exercise area for the dogs of Denmark. Access to the Light's Beach dog exercise area is difficult for older owners and the not so nimble, so if they want their dogs to run and swim in a safe area Prawn Rock fits the bill perfectly, and to lose it would be a great shame. Adequate signage warning of prohibited areas, and bins for dog waste, should encourage most to act responsibly, but as ever, sadly there will be the few who spoil it for the majority. I sincerely hope that access to this valuable spot continues.</p>
S23	[REDACTED]	<p>I would like to lend my support to the continuation of the dog exercise area as marked on the map made available by the Denmark Shire. During summer this area is used regularly by dogs and horses and is a valuable community resource. While I appreciate there are bird habitats in this area I believe with careful management dogs and wildlife can co-exist harmoniously. There are limited areas for dog exercise in Denmark and this is one of the most beautiful in summer – I would be very pleased to see access continue.</p>
S24	[REDACTED]	<p>I am writing as dog owner and local resident of Denmark for the past 18 years. Unfortunately i have missed the submission date cut off (30th Sept) for this issue, but, still wish to voice my concerns.</p> <p>Firstly, I would like to ask what are the proposed "breeding times" the shire wishes to close the dog walking section at Prawn Rock Channel?? (Should it be summer/autumn then the following applies).</p> <p>Currently, as you would be aware, the high water level during winter and spring make it impossible to walk dogs in that area - luckily the colder months are more conducive to walking through the lovely bush tracks Denmark has available. But, once the weather starts to warm up, so do the snakes and hence bushwalking becomes literally a life or death situation for dogs. In the 18years of walking my two dogs every day during the warmer months at Prawn Rock Channel, i have failed to see one snake as we make our way across the only stretch of land connecting Ocean Beach.</p>






		<p>Which brings me to my next concern, should the closure take place during the summer months, what access will be made available to the public (dog owners) who wish to walk their dogs along Ocean Beach?. As a rate payer I believe that if Ocean Beach has an area available for dog walkers - then appropriate access needs to be available.</p> <p>Also, I wish to add that my dog (12yrs old and elderly dog walkers) need a relatively flat surface (Ocean Beach/Prawn Rock Channel) to enjoy their morning strolls, unfortunately Lights Beach is fraught with steps and steep paths and is not an easy walk.</p> <p>Please reconsider any decision regarding the closure of Prawn Rock Channel.</p>
S25	[REDACTED]	<p>I write to support keeping the Prawn Rock off lead dog exercise area open to the public. There are not many areas where dogs may be allowed off lead to exercise and socialise in Denmark and the loss of this very useful area would be a shame. It is easily accessed by the many dog owners and visitors to Denmark who may not be able to journey further afield.</p> <p>The bird population seems to prosper at Ocean Beach in spite of the dogs/ horses/people/ vehicles and I see no reason for changing the present arrangement.</p>
S26	[REDACTED]	<p>I am concerned about potential restrictions on dogs accessing the sandbar at the outlet of Wilson Inlet.</p> <p>I am both a dog owner and a birdwatcher who occasionally participates in the monthly bird watching outings of Birdlife Albany. I own a pair of Dobermans and although I am pleased with the construction of the proposed dog park I expect it to be of only limited use to myself. My dogs need extensive off-lead exercise on a daily basis and the proposed area is unlikely to suffice, particularly as a portion will be restricted only to small dogs.</p> <p>I previously made frequent use of Lights Beach as an exercise area, but last year my male dog picked up a number of dead puffer fish from the beach which are very toxic to dogs. This led to one emergency visit to the vet.</p> <p>The sandbar at Wilson Inlet appears to be free of both puffer fish and snakes and provides an extensive area for my dogs to run off-lead. Until the area became flooded due to the winter rains, I took my dogs there regularly, at various times of day. It is popular with Denmark dog owners and provides an area where dogs can socialise in a natural environment. However in the summer the area adjacent to Ocean Beach Caravan Park is also frequented by many visitors to Denmark, of which a high proportion bring their dogs and walk across the sandbar to Nullaki Point on the eastern side of Ocean Beach. Limiting access to dogs in this area adjacent to the major tourist accommodation in Ocean Beach will be unpopular with tourists. The new Dog Park is unlikely to prove a major</p>

		<p>attraction for families who have brought dogs with them from Perth. They will want their dogs to accompany them to the beach area. As both a responsible dog owner and a birdwatcher I am concerned about any adverse impact on the shorebirds that frequent the Wilson Inlet, particularly the migratory species that may use the area for breeding. However there are very few birds that frequent the main exposed sandbank near Prawn Rock Channel. The nearest birds are usually 200 to 300 metres away to the North. Consequently most dogs taken to the area do not interact with the local birdlife.</p> <p>I think the situation could be helped by education of the visitors to the Prawn Rock Channel area. The Perth City of Stirling successfully protects the nesting areas of migratory rainbow bee-eaters for a few months each year in their recreation reserves. This is achieved with high quality signage explaining the nesting habits of the birds with appropriate photographs. The areas used for nesting are also temporarily surrounded with plastic fencing.</p> <p>Although it may not be feasible to surround the nesting areas in Wilson Inlet, it would be possible to install educational boards at the two access pedestrian bridges that cross the Prawn Rock channel. These could explain the migratory nature of the shorebirds and the risks they face on their annual journey north through Asia.</p> <p>It may also be feasible to demarcate the furthest permitted extent for off-lead dogs along the Northern edge of the sandbank. An improved map delineating the existing restricted areas would be helpful at the access bridges. The current map lacks clarity.</p> <p>I strongly believe that education would go a long way towards protecting the migratory shorebirds. Most of the dog owners are responsible citizens and make use of the area partly because of its natural attractions.</p> <p>I have seen a previous submission which proposed that banning dogs from the Prawn Rock sandbar would turn the Wilson Inlet into a significant bird reserve and attract visitors to Denmark. I disagree with this view. The Wilson Inlet is already a large, important and very attractive protected area for birdlife. It is 48 square kilometres in area while the Prawn Rock sandbar is only a comparatively minor 0.2 square kilometres representing only 0.4% of the total inlet area. The current major beneficial use of the exposed sandbank near Prawn Rock channel is clearly as an exercise area for dogs. Very few shorebirds are found on this particular sandbank and consequently few birdwatchers visit the area - there are far better birding sites further up the Wilson Inlet, such as Morley Beach. Yesterday it was unseasonal warm weather in Denmark. As the Prawn Rock sandbar is currently flooded I tried to take my dogs to Lights Beach for a run. The car park was completely full (even though there were presumably few tourists in Denmark). To find a suitable space to let my dogs run free I had to drive them to Cosy Corner dog beach</p>
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		<p>exercise area, a round trip of 80 kilometres from my home in Ocean Beach! Removing canine access to the Prawn Rock sandbar will be a serious setback for both resident and visiting dog owners in Denmark, particularly those with larger animals, as there are minimal alternative facilities available within close access to town. It would also be an unnecessary over reaction. For at least half the year most of the shorebirds would be in the Northern Hemisphere on their migratory cycle.</p>
S27		<p>Thank you for the invitation to comment on the Prawn Rock Channel dog exercise area.</p> <p>The Denmark Dog Club would like to be able to continue access to the Prawn Rock Channel off lead exercise area. It is a safe and easily accessible area for people of all levels of fitness to take their dogs and allow them to run free. Until the proposed Dog Park is available to dog owners, there are few other safe places to let dogs off lead.</p> <p>With regard to the Fairy Terns, dogs are not the only animals who may disrupt their breeding and nesting season. Other predators include foxes, cats, rats, snakes and other bird species. Perhaps damage from canines could be minimised by putting up temporary fencing, or allowing access only on lead during the breeding season.</p>
S28		<p>We have walked our dogs on the 'bar' for 20 years. We wish to raise our concerns that you may close off the bar to all dogs and people who use that area for exercise and pleasure.</p> <p>We agree that the habitat of the migratory birds should be cared for and be given due consideration. So solutions should be found to ease the concerns of both parties. Enclosed is a rough map to fence off to protect the birds. A recent trip to Bremer Bay showed us how this can work. Proper fencing and signage prevented people and vehicles from entering that protected zone. May we suggest that the shire does the same.</p> <p>Consequences of not allowing people and their dogs to enjoy the coast line. People will have to access the beach via the swimming area in front of the surf Club both in winter and the height of summer. Enforcement of dogs on leads. You'll need another ranger. Non-caring people will still access the bar to go to the beach. Are the bridges to be taken away? Then will Prawn Channel become a non-swimming area on the bar side?</p> <p>We believe that both parties can co-exist if careful planning on your plan.</p>

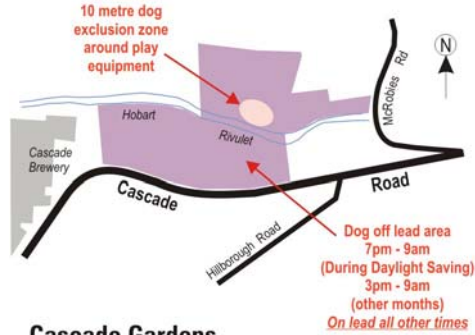
Attachment As Referenced in Submission 8

DECLARED AREAS (MAPS)

Legend	
Dogs prohibited (includes playgrounds)	
Dogs restricted (time restrictions)	
Sports grounds (when no activities are on)	
Dogs permitted on lead	
Dogs permitted off-lead	



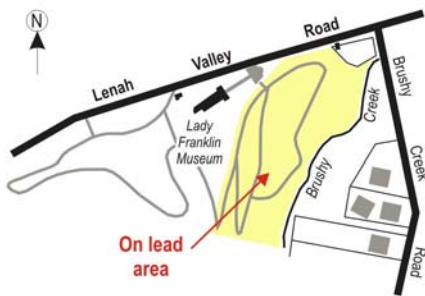
Benjafield Park



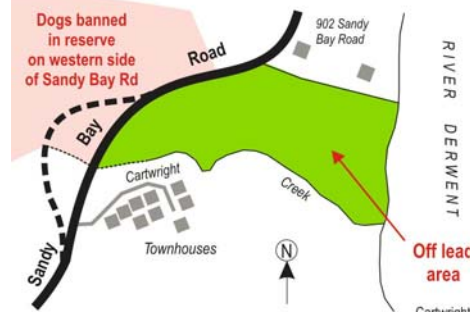
Cascade Gardens



Cornelian Bay



Ancanthe Gardens



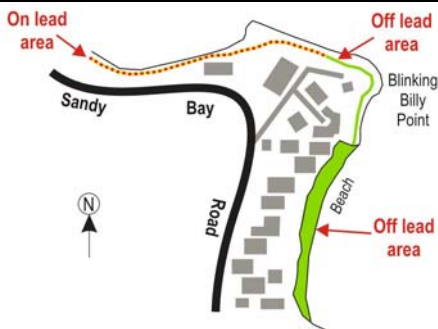
Cartwright Point Reserve



Clare St Oval



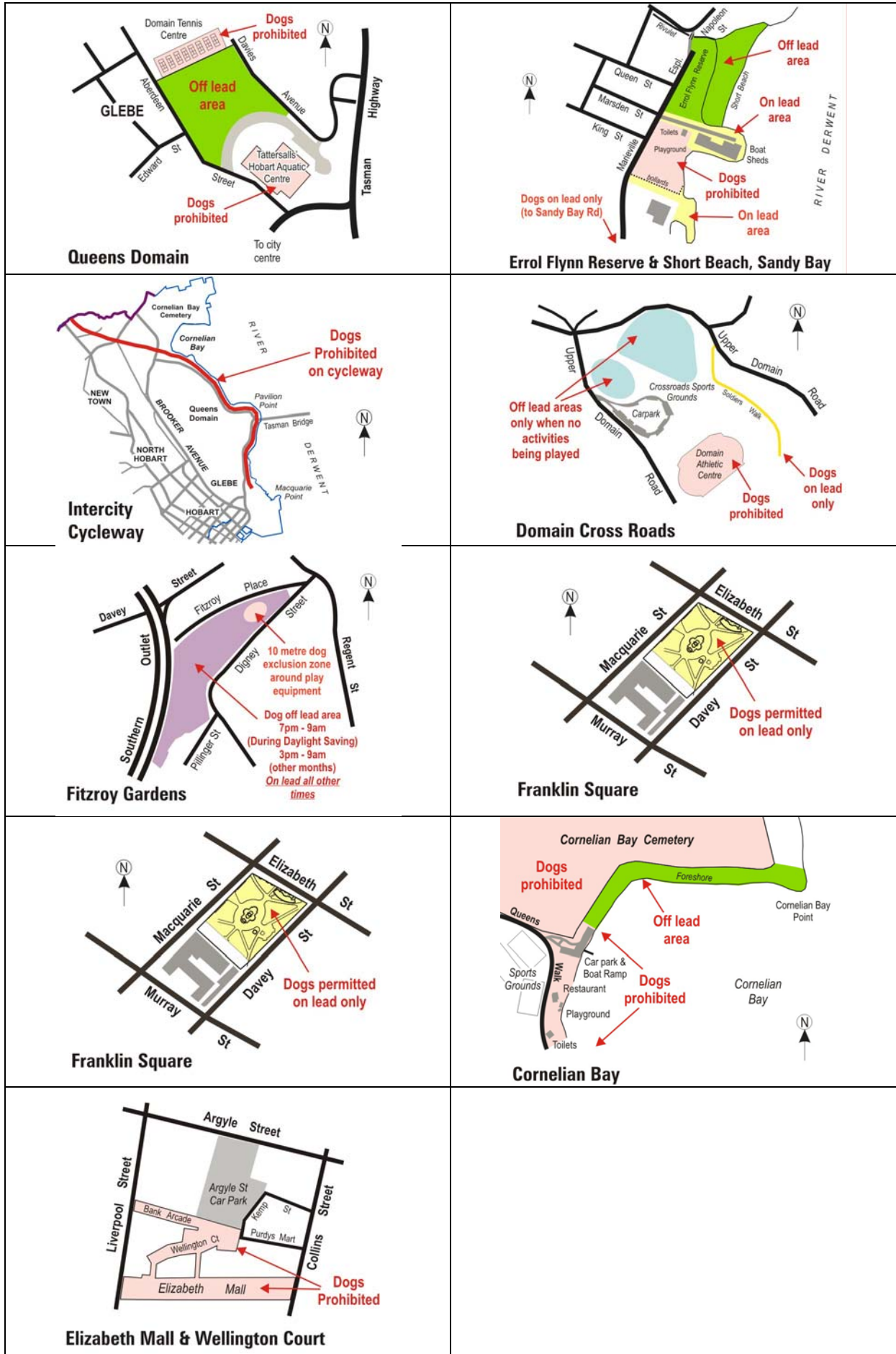
Alexandra Battery

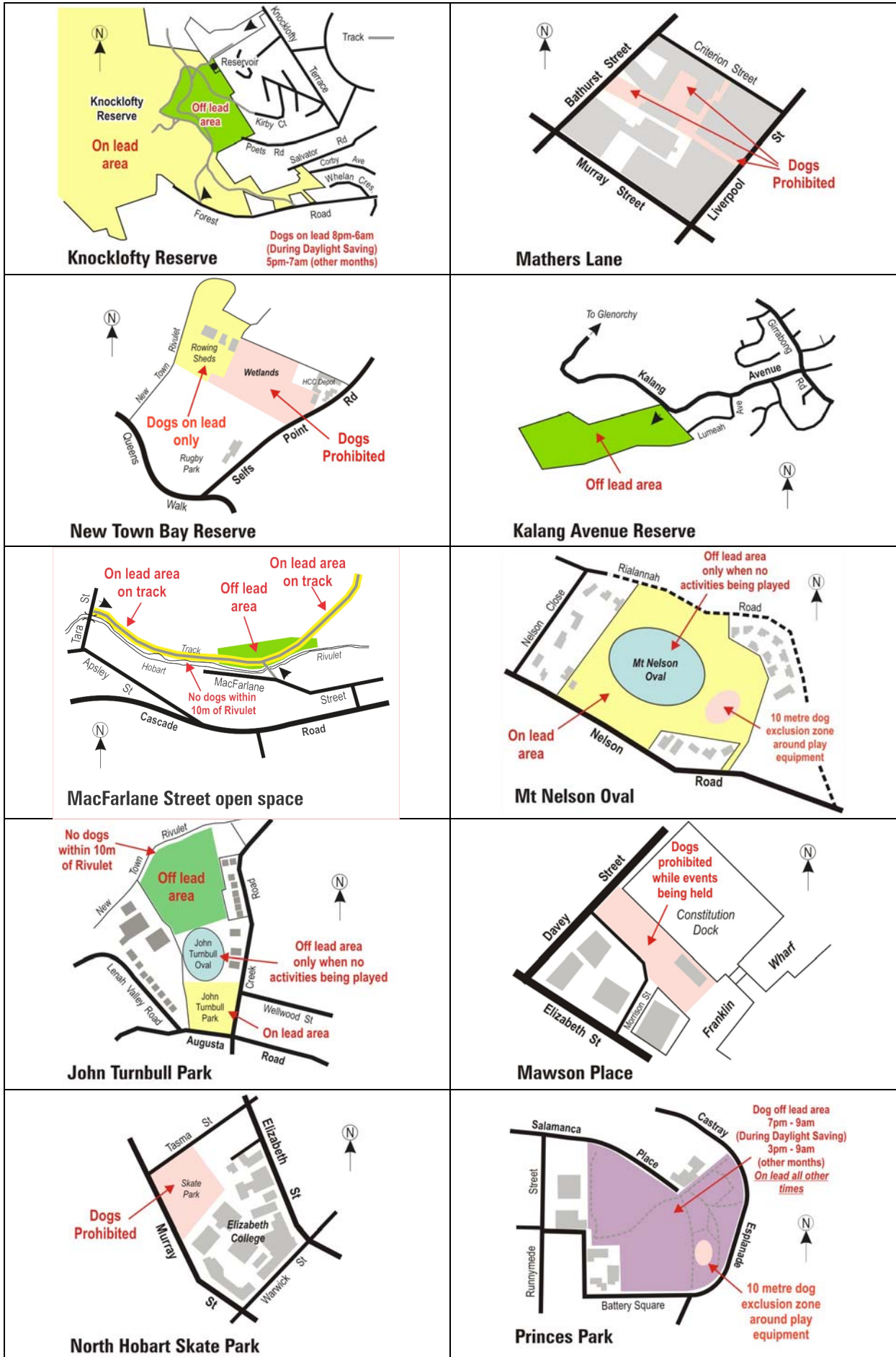


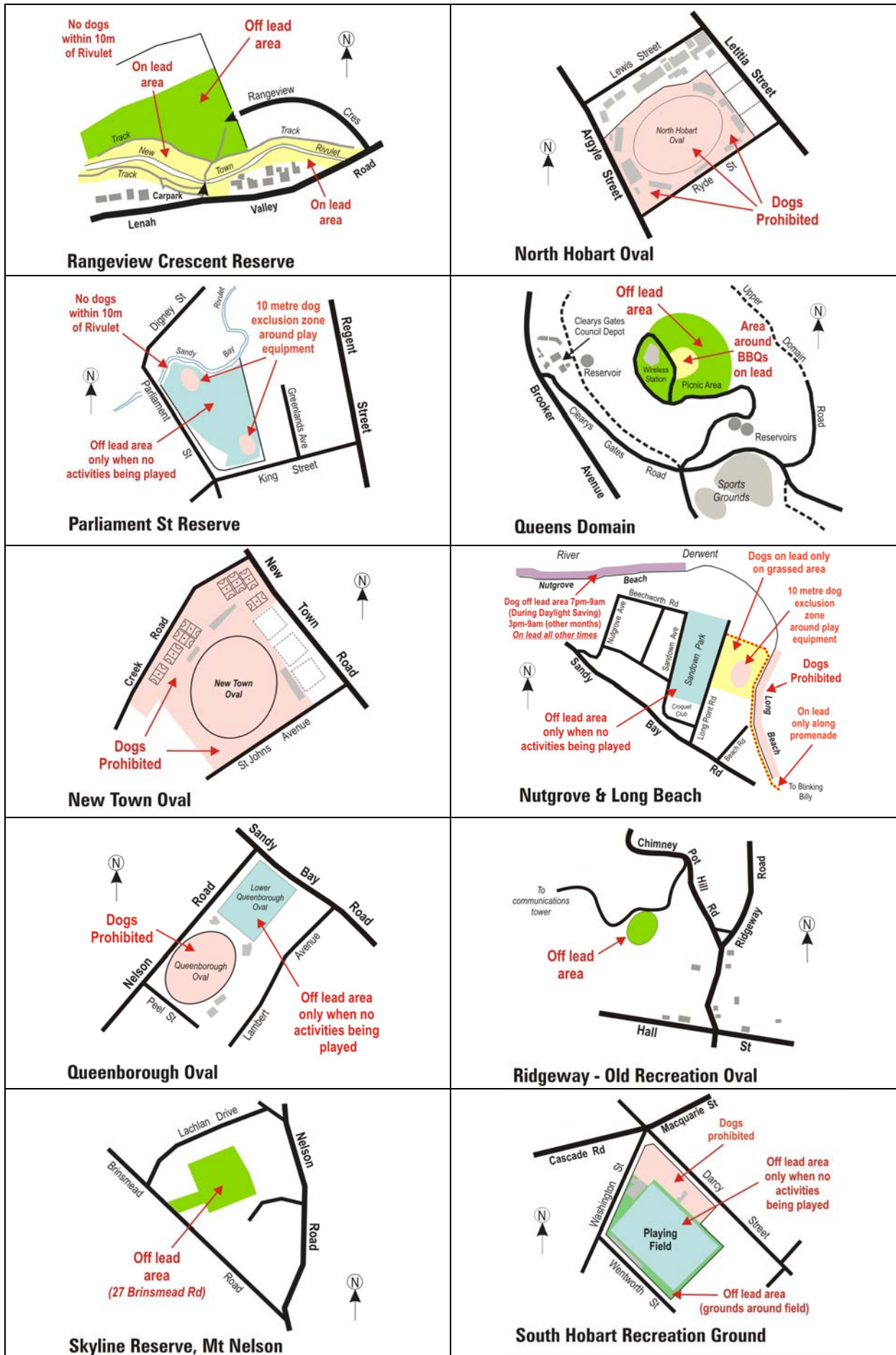
Blinking Billy, Sandy Bay

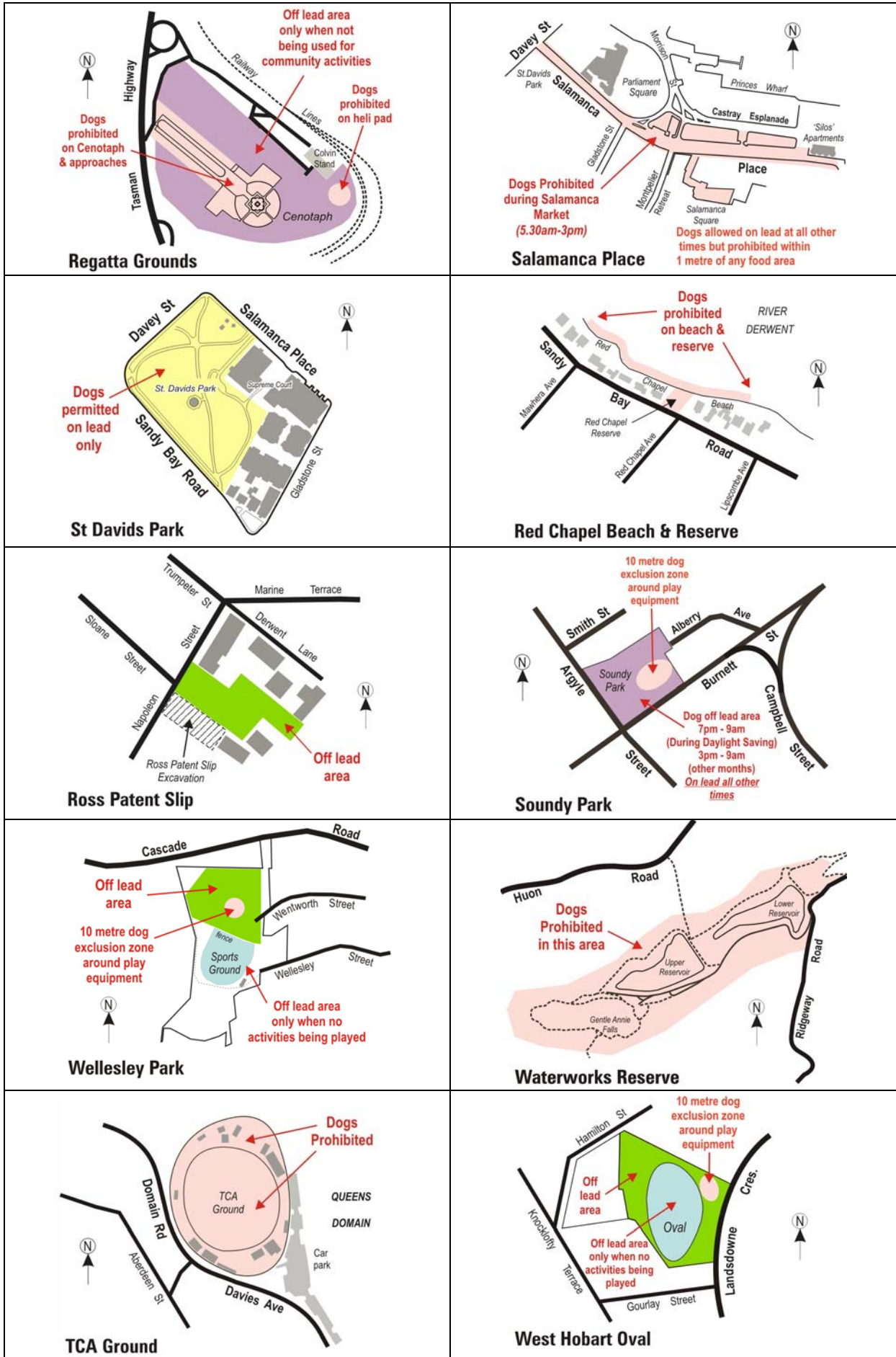


Churchill/Edith Aves, Sandy Bay









Denmark Shire Council's proposed Dog "Off-Lead" Exercise Strategy

Denmark Shire Council has recently proposed a new dog park and Dog "Off-Lead" Exercise Strategy which was open for public comment until the 20th January. The following is an excerpt from the submission made by Anne Bondin and Brad Kneebone for BirdLife Albany.

"We believe it is timely for Council to review its off-lead dog exercise areas on beaches, in particular the current off-lead dog area at the Wilson Inlet bar area. The bar area at the mouth of Wilson Inlet provides high value habitat for a large variety of species protected by legislation and which use the area extensively. Off-lead dog exercising over the bar and dune area frequently results in unacceptable disturbance to shorebirds and seabirds which require undisturbed roosting and feeding zones. For migratory shorebirds in particular, it is critical that they can feed undisturbed, so they can build up energy reserves for the flight to their breeding grounds in the arctic regions of the northern hemisphere.

Red-capped Plover, one of 8 resident species, has nested at the bar area and Fairy Tern, a listed threatened species, has attempted to breed there. Hooded Plover, another species listed as threatened, and the Australian Pied Oystercatcher have also been observed showing breeding behaviour. To breed successfully, the birds need to remain undisturbed. At least seven species of sea birds use the bar area extensively all year round for roosting as most use both the Inlet and the ocean for feeding. Again, resting (roosting) periods without disturbance are extremely important for their welfare and survival.

Recognizing the Inlet's importance and the economic benefits of eco-tourism offered by maintaining and enhancing the integrity of the Inlet's environmental values protects not only birds but all other wildlife. Protecting birds from uncontrolled dogs is just one step in the process.

Given the importance of the birdlife to the Inlet's biodiversity we recommend closing the bar area to dog exercising. If however, Council considers an initial compromise to be more appropriate in this case, we suggest a one year trial period of allowing only dogs on-leash over the bar area, the trial to be monitored for compliance. A high compliance rate would be necessary to be of realistic benefit to the birds. This initial or staged approach would allow an assessment of options leading ultimately to positive outcomes for the birdlife.

Fencing should also be considered to supplement the trial period given that compliance by dog owners with keeping dogs on leash has been found to be low from studies on beaches in Victoria. Any fencing in the bar area needs to be strategically located to be effective. The Plan's recommendation for a public education and awareness program to address the impacts of dogs in the bar area and other beaches should be run in conjunction with any trial."

BirdLife Australia staff Dr Grainne Maguire, Beach-nesting Birds Program Manager and Dan Weller, Shorebirds 2020 Project Officer, have supported Anne and Brad with a further submission which provided additional information about the significance of bird use of this site, and the impact dogs can have. Below is an excerpt from that submission

"We strongly emphasise the high conservation value of the inlet for seabirds and shorebirds, including the Fairy Tern, listed as threatened under the EPBC Act and migratory shorebird species protected under EPBC and international conventions. Both the Fairy Tern and all migratory shorebird species are Matters of National Environmental Significance (NMES) under the EPBC.

Count data from our national Shorebirds 2020 monitoring program database demonstrates that Wilson Inlet is of national conservation significance for Common Greenshank, Curlew Sandpiper and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, and international conservation significance for Banded Stilt, Red-capped Plover, Red-necked Avocet and Red-necked Stint. Twelve long-toed stints recorded in a single observation at a site is almost unheard of and signifies the importance of this site.

continued on next page

Photos: Fairy Terns courting near the bar at Ocean Beach—Geoff Taylor, November 2011.



Denmark Shire Council's proposed Dog "Off-Lead" Exercise Strategy

The table shows maximum counts for Wilson Inlet for selected shorebird species since regular annual counts commenced in 1982 compared with their significance threshold for the East Asian Australasian Flyway, the 1% level meeting RAMSAR criteria.

Fairy terns have greatly declined around Australia, in particular in Victoria and South Australia, so that Western Australia remains the stronghold for the species. There are few sites around Australia where Fairy Terns breed, and Wilsons Inlet offers further potential nesting habitat for these birds (nesting having occurred there in recent years).

Regulation of recreational access to this area plays a great role in maintaining the conservation value of this habitat for this threatened species.

For breeding shorebirds and seabirds, dogs off-leash have more than double the impact of a person in terms of disturbance. An approaching dog off the leash causes incubating parent bird/s to leave the nest/s at a far greater distance than a walker and causes the bird/s to then stay off the nest/s for a greater duration. These impacts are similar for disturbance to chicks, whereby chicks that are foraging will be called into hiding by their parents at a greater distance and for a greater period of time when there is an off leash dog on the beach.

These increases in distance of the birds' reaction and duration of the reaction can mean a single disturbance can be lethal on days of extreme temperatures and strong winds, but more commonly, it is the cumulative impact of multiple passersby with dogs off the lead on the beach, that results in lethal exposure of eggs and chicks.

In addition to the higher disturbance impacts of off-leash dogs are predation and crushing of the eggs and chicks. There is substantial evidence in the scientific literature and from BirdLife Australia's monitoring of beach-nesting bird nests reporting multiple cases of off-leash dogs eating eggs, stepping on nests and pursuing young birds. Chick mortality is more difficult to determine although there are records in the literature of flightless chicks of beach-nesting birds being depredated by dogs.

We have carried out numerous research studies into the effectiveness of dog regulations and have found that compliance with dog leashing is incredibly low (82% of 2,847 dogs on Victorian beaches, 1994–2008). Our most recent study involved using GPS loggers on dog collars in off and on leash areas to explore differences in beach usage by on-leash and off-leash dogs. There was no difference in space use between on-leash and off-leash these areas and this was almost entirely driven by high rates of non-compliance with leashing in on-leash dog areas.

Considering the threatened status of beach-nesting bird species such as the Fairy Tern, all attempts to protect these birds from disturbance from off-leash dogs and to set an example to other councils in establishing dog walking areas away from shorebird conservation zones, is to be supported. As manager of the Beach-nesting Birds National Program here at BirdLife Australia, I [Grainne] work closely with local and state government departments in advising integrated coastal zoning that ensures this threatened suite of birds is protected while the community still has access to alternate areas for dog access.

It will be important to educate the community about the importance of using designated dog walking areas and avoiding conservation areas such as Wilson's Inlet, and to ensure there is adequate signage and enforcement during summer, the most critical time for migratory and resident shorebirds in the region. BirdLife Australia can assist with further advice and materials if needed including the contact details of other councils who have achieved a balance between beach recreation and wildlife protection."



Wilson Inlet WA		Significance Threshold	
Species	Count	1% EAAF	0.1% EAAF
Banded Stilt	2550	2060	
Bar-tailed Godwit	250	3250	325
Common Greenshank	568	600	60
Curlew Sandpiper	732	1800	180
Long-toed Stint	12	250	25
Red-capped Plover	1053	950	
Red-necked Avocet	2880	1070	
Red-necked Stint	15252	3250	325
Sharp-tailed Sandpiper	1059	1600	160

Photo: Red-capped Plover runner sheltering from wind, dogs and people at Ocean Beach—Geoff Taylor, January 2009



10 January 2014

Mr Dale Stewart,
Chief Executive Officer,
Shire of Denmark,
Denmark, WA 6333

Dear Mr Stewart,

PROPOSED DOG “OFF-LEAD” EXERCISE STRATEGY

In response to Council’s proposed Dog “Off-Lead” Exercise Strategy we believe it is timely for Council to review its off-lead dog exercise areas on beaches, in particular the current off-lead dog area at the Wilson Inlet bar area.

The Shire’s Coastal Reserves Management and Action Plan 2010-2020 (the “Plan”) refers to the impact of dog exercising over the Inlet bar area (amongst other beaches) upon both migratory and resident shorebirds and seabirds. The Plan’s recommended actions EM14, LUC3 and C17 at Section 7 and Table 8.2 include a review of designated dog exercise areas and ongoing educational signage and public education and engagement to address these impacts.

The bar area at the mouth of Wilson Inlet provides high value habitat for a large variety of species protected by legislation and which use the area extensively (see also Birdlife Australia’s supporting letter attached).

Off-lead dog exercising over the bar and dune area frequently results in unacceptable disturbance to shorebirds and seabirds which require undisturbed roosting and feeding zones. For migratory shorebirds in particular, it is critical that they can feed undisturbed, so they can build up energy reserves for the flight to their breeding grounds in the arctic regions of the northern hemisphere.

Red-capped Plover, one of 8 resident species, has nested at the bar area and Fairy Tern, a listed threatened species, has attempted to breed there. Hooded Plover, another species listed as threatened, and the Australian Pied Oystercatcher have also been observed showing breeding behaviour. To breed successfully, the birds need to remain undisturbed.

At least seven species of sea birds use the bar area extensively all year round for roosting as most use both the Inlet and the ocean for feeding. Again, resting (roosting) periods without disturbance are extremely important for their welfare and survival.

Unfortunately, the current uncontrolled behaviour of dogs in this area occurs mainly during the high shorebird activity of October to March. It seems therefore timely to remind Council of the international, national and regional importance of Wilson Inlet due to the presence of migratory and resident shorebird populations. As council will be aware, migratory shorebirds are protected under the federal Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, the Wildlife Conservation Act WA and as well as Australia's international treaties with China, Japan and Korea.

Recognizing the Inlet's importance and the economic benefits of eco-tourism offered by maintaining and enhancing the integrity of the Inlet's environmental values protects not only birds but all other wildlife. Protecting birds from uncontrolled dogs is just one step in the process.

Given the importance of the birdlife to the Inlet's biodiversity we recommend closing the bar area to dog exercising. If however, Council considers an initial compromise to be more appropriate in this case, we suggest a one year trial period of allowing only dogs on-leash over the bar area, the trial to be monitored for compliance. A high compliance rate would be necessary to be of realistic benefit to the birds. This initial or staged approach would allow an assessment of options leading ultimately to positive outcomes for the birdlife.

Fencing should also be considered to supplement the trial period given that compliance by dog owners with keeping dogs on leash has been found to be low from studies on beaches in Victoria. Any fencing in the bar area needs to be strategically located to be effective.

The Plan's recommendation for a public education and awareness program to address the impacts of dogs in the bar area and other beaches should be run in conjunction with any trial. In terms of the suggested signage we point out that the existing signs depicting the dog exercise areas at PRC and the Lookout above the channel are unclear and need to be replaced with new easily interpreted signs (Section 7.2, OB7).

Sincerely,



Anne Bondin
Convenor Birdlife Albany

Brad Kneebone
Convenor BirdLife Albany

Encl.

1. Supporting letter from Birdlife Australia.
2. Extracts from Shire of Denmark's Coastal Reserves Management Strategy & Action Plan
3. Brochure: Protecting Our Beach-nesting Birds.