Additional Information provided to Councillors

In accordance with Council's *Meeting Framework Policy* Councillors can ask questions or request additional information on Agenda Items prior to the Council Meeting.

Where the information is requested by 4pm, 7 days prior to the meeting, the information is provided in writing and included as an attachment to the Minutes.

Following are the questions and/or information requested and the Chief Executive Officer's response(s).

Ordinary Council Meeting: 28 April 2026

ITEM 9.5.1 – KOORYUNDERUP – MOUNT HALLOWELL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Cr Lewis raised the following:

BACKGROUND / RATIONAL FOR QUESTION

In the September 2025 agenda (Item 9.5.1 Kooryunderup–Mt Hallowell Management Plan 2025–2035), point 14 states:

"*The Management Plan proposes to introduce notable changes to the current use of Kooryunderup – Mount Hallowell, particularly regarding dog walking and biking. At present, dog walking is unrestricted throughout the reserve; under the draft proposal, a substantial area in the south-east (see Figures 8 and 9 in the management plan) will be retained as an off-leash zone, while dog access will be restricted in all other areas to protect sensitive habitats.*"

The statement that "dog access will be restricted in all other areas to protect sensitive habitats" appears to imply that dog walking on the Bibbulmun Track presents environmental risks.

QUESTION

Can officers please outline the specific adverse environmental impacts associated with allowing dogs on the Bibbulmun Track within the Kooryunderup–Mt Hallowell reserve?

OFFICER RESPONSE

Environmental impacts (dogs on-lead vs walkers only)

Sensitive Areas

The Management Plan notes the Reserve's vegetation is generally in excellent condition, with localised degraded areas associated with trails and concentrated human use, particularly in the south-western and eastern portions; it also maps key threatening processes such as weeds (Figure D showing condition relating to weed infestation) to inform management focus. Officers interpret the sensitive areas to be those areas outside of the south-western and eastern portions.

Specific Impacts

1) Fauna disturbance and displacement (dogs add a predator cue beyond walkers)

Scientific evidence indicates that wildlife (particularly birds) can be disturbed more strongly when a dog is present, even if leashed, because dogs can function as a predator cue (scent/sight/sound).

Walkers can still disturb fauna, but the evidence indicates the disturbance effect is lower without dogs in the same setting. The Plan identifies the Reserve's high biodiversity values and the presence of threatened fauna recorded within/near the Reserve, which increases sensitivity to disturbance along key track corridors.

For this impact to become "material" at a Reserve scale, the key driver is typically frequency/volume and repetition—i.e., how often wildlife is exposed to the dog cue along the corridor. With low and infrequent use, impacts are more likely to be short-lived and localised near the track; with higher use (or repeated encounters in sensitive times/locations), the probability increases that disturbance becomes more persistent and effectively reduces habitat function near the corridor.

2) Dieback (Phytophthora) spread risk (material even at low use)

The Plan confirms dieback distribution includes the Bibbulmun Track area and notes operational mapping is focused on access points such as the Bibbulmun Track. The Plan's control measures focus on reducing soil movement (dry-soil operations; cleaning of vehicles/equipment/footwear; maintaining boot-cleaning stations and dieback signage). Allowing dogs (even on-lead) introduces an additional soil-contact surface moving the corridor (paws/fur), which can increase the number of opportunities for soil transfer, particularly where animals step off the formed tread or in moist conditions. Controls are

more straightforward for footwear/equipment via hygiene stations than for dogs (i.e., there is no equivalent hygiene station designed for paws/fur).

Dieback is best framed as a soil-movement (biosecurity) risk where the likelihood of spread is driven less by overall "use volume" and more by conditions and hygiene compliance (e.g. wet/muddy soils, stepping off the formed track, or bypassing hygiene infrastructure). In practical risk terms, one "bad" event under high-risk conditions (e.g. a muddy day where contaminated soil is carried past a boundary and deposited in a susceptible area) can have the same or greater consequence than many low-risk events, because it may create a new infestation pathway that is difficult to reverse; this contrasts with fauna disturbance, which is typically high-frequency but lower-per-event consequence and becomes material mainly through repetition/volume over time.

3) Compliance limitations (practical effectiveness of "on-lead" conditions)

The Plan states Ranger presence cannot be maintained at all times and is often infrequent, with reliance on signage, education and informal community policing to support compliance. Off-leash activity typically expands the area and frequency of disturbance (because dogs range further from owners and more often leave the track), increasing the likelihood of wildlife harassment and displacement compared with on-lead walking. Accordingly, the environmental outcomes from permitting dogs on-lead depend not only on the written rule, but on real-world compliance with keeping dogs on-lead and on-trail.

Risk (overall)

If compliance is high and conditions are dry, impacts are more likely to remain minor and localised; conversely, wet conditions and/or repeated non-compliance increases the likelihood that impacts become more persistent. Overall, the likelihood of dogs on lead causing a material, detrimental change to the Reserve's biodiversity values is best described as low–to–moderate under good conditions, and moderate–to–high under poor conditions.