

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

Fenced Dog Parks

SITING, DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT
GUIDELINES

January 2019

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This following guidelines were prepared for the City of Greater Geelong by Fiona De Rosa *from Balancing Act Adelaide*.

Maps, infographics and costings were prepared by Birdseye Studios.

A supplementary report entitled *Fenced Dog Parks, Community Engagement Summary, June 2018* is also available upon request.

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Section 1: Introduction

Dogs can draw people together by encouraging them outside to interact, exercise and share the common bond of owning a companion animal. In short, dogs are an important part of a healthy and socially-connected community.

Our population is growing and housing blocks are getting smaller. This creates greater demand for open space suitable for exercising dogs. We need to plan ahead to meet this demand and make sure we do so with a variety of open spaces, including fenced dog parks.

There is widespread community support for fenced dog parks. To be consistent in how we develop them, we've created the following guidelines.

The guidelines will shape future decisions about:

- where to locate parks
- park design and
- managing parks.

Informed by what we learnt from the community and our stakeholders, they are flexible enough so that they can be tailored to local conditions.

The four common themes that shape the guidelines are:

Better behaved dogs – we want good dog behaviour in public open spaces and to minimise incidents involving dogs.

Responsible dog owners – we want dog owners to be aware of their responsibilities in fenced dog parks, comply with dog park rules and demonstrate good park etiquette.

An educated community – we want a community who is educated about dog behaviour and able to support safe interactions between their dog and others.

The City as leaders – our organisation must proactively respond to changing community needs, take a planned and coordinated approach to developing fenced dog parks and build partnerships with the community.

PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

We have prepared these guidelines to assist with the planning, design, operation and management of fenced dog parks in the City of Greater Geelong.

Section 2 provides background information about the context in which dog parks are being built and some data about dogs in our community.

Sections 3 – considerations when looking for a suitable location, site assessment criteria and steps to follow when choosing a site.

Section 4 – principles to consider when designing a fenced dog park and information about core infrastructure and amenities.

Section 5 – ongoing management issues that require financial and human resources.

Section 6 – cost estimates for both construction and management of a dog park.

Section 7 – useful resources to help develop dog park education programs and signage.

WHAT IS A FENCED DOG PARK?

Fenced dog parks are fenced-in areas designated for off-leash exercise and socialisation of dogs.

They are a relatively new type of recreation park in Australia, although there are parks available in all states and territories of Australia.

There are no formal standards for fenced dog parks at present. However, the Dog and Cat Management Board of SA has produced a comprehensive publication '*Unleashed a guide to successful dog parks*', which this guide has been based on.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

Benefits and challenges of fenced dog parks that were highlighted in our community consultation include:

Benefits

- Opportunity for dogs to exercise and socialise.
- Can enhance the safety of dogs.
- Promote responsible pet ownership.
- Provide space to educate dog owners about dog etiquette and good behaviour.
- Minimise conflict in other public open spaces.
- Provide opportunities for people to socialise and build social bridges in the community.

Challenges

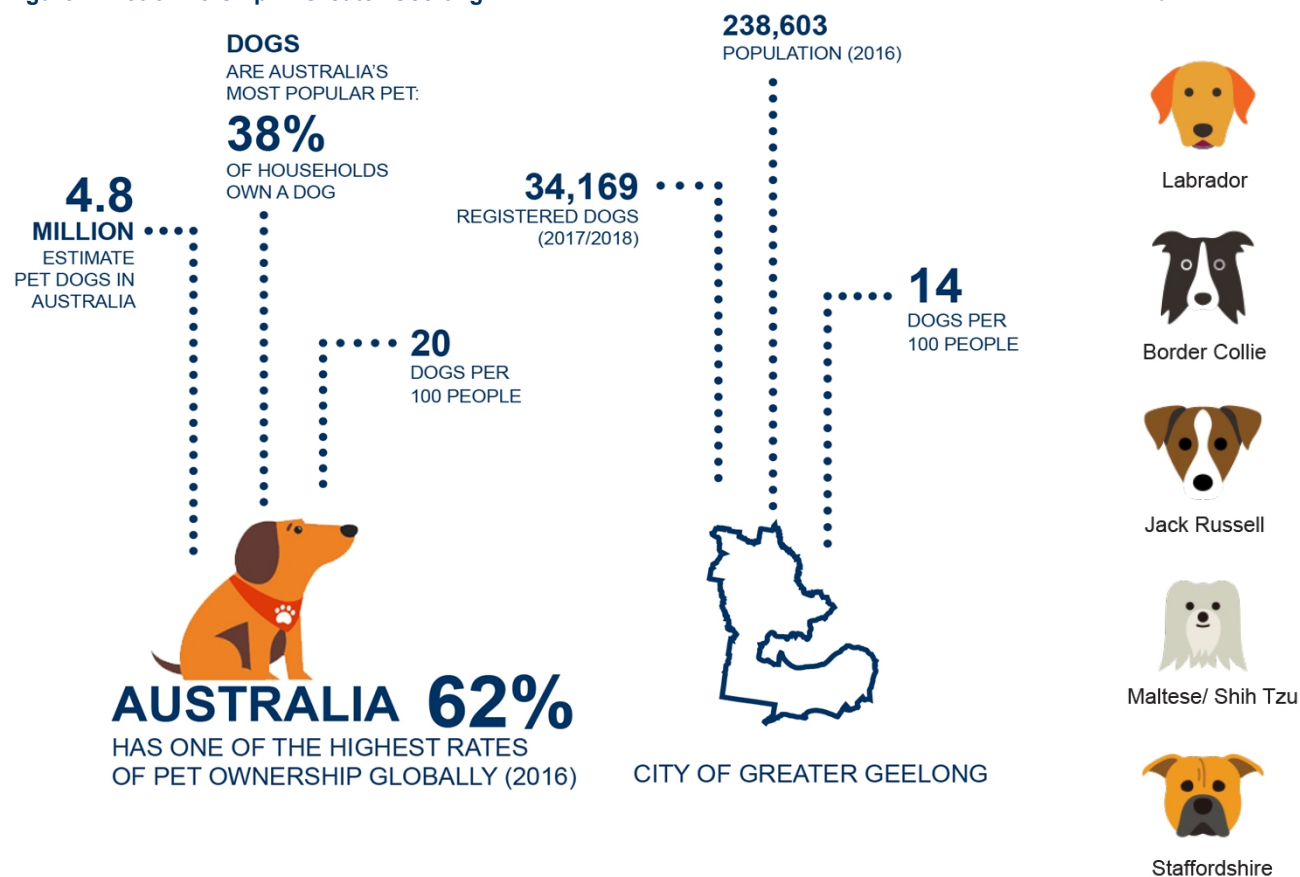
- Enforcing fenced dog park rules.
- Maintaining safety for dogs and people.
- Managing dog waste.
- Managing parking and traffic in surrounding streets.
- Managing noise.



Section 2 • Dogs in our community

Figure 1: Pet ownership in Greater Geelong.

Top 5 Breeds



PET OWNERSHIP IN AUSTRALIA

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world with 38 per cent of households owning a dog.¹

Companion animals, such as dogs, play a significant role in the lives of many Australians, as demonstrated by the following quote:

*"A higher proportion of us live in households with a dog and/or cat than a child. Fifty per cent of Aussies live in a household with at least one cat or/and dog in it, whereas 35 per cent share their household with a least one child aged under 16."*²

GREATER GEELONG DOG POPULATION

In 2017–18, there were 34,169 registered dogs in the City of Greater Geelong (see Figure 1). The dog population is likely to be higher given some dogs would be unregistered.

Map 1 (page 10) shows the distribution of registered dogs across the City of Greater Geelong and Tables 1 and 2 (pages 11 and 12 respectively) show where they live.

We anticipate that the number of dogs in our municipality will increase with the population growth anticipated for the region. This is expected to create a higher demand for off-leash areas, including fenced dog parks, within existing and planned open space.

BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP

*"Adults are moving away from structured sports to casual activities with dog walking being number three of the top 10 activities in Australia."*³

Research demonstrates the following benefits of pet ownership⁴:

Pets are good for our general health and wellbeing

- People with pets make fewer visits to the doctor.
- People with pets are at lower risk of cardiovascular disease than non-pet owners.

¹ Animal Medicines Alliance, 2016

² Roy Morgan, 2015, article 6272, n. p.

³ One Eighty Degree, n.d.; p. 23.

⁴ ACAC, 2019, PIAS, 2010, Woods et al., 2005

Pets are good for an aging population

- Pets can boost activity levels in older people, helping to improve overall health.
- Pets provide companionship for older adults living alone.

Pets are good for children

- Young children with pets are more likely to exercise.
- Children or adolescents with pets have shown to have higher self-esteem.

Pets are good for the community

- Pets can help people build social bridges in communities.
- People with pets are more likely to have conversations with other people.

CHANGES TO HOW WE LIVE

Almost a quarter of Australians live in medium to high-density housing. Block sizes are getting smaller and dwellings are getting bigger, leaving less private outdoor space available for dogs.

“Between 1991 and 2001, the number of separate houses in Australia increased by 18 per cent, while the number of higher density dwellings increased by 37 per cent.”⁵

If this trend continues, there will be increasing demand for public open space suitable for dogs. Accommodating dogs and their owners in the planning and design of new communities and open spaces is therefore critical.

DOGS IN PUBLIC PLACES

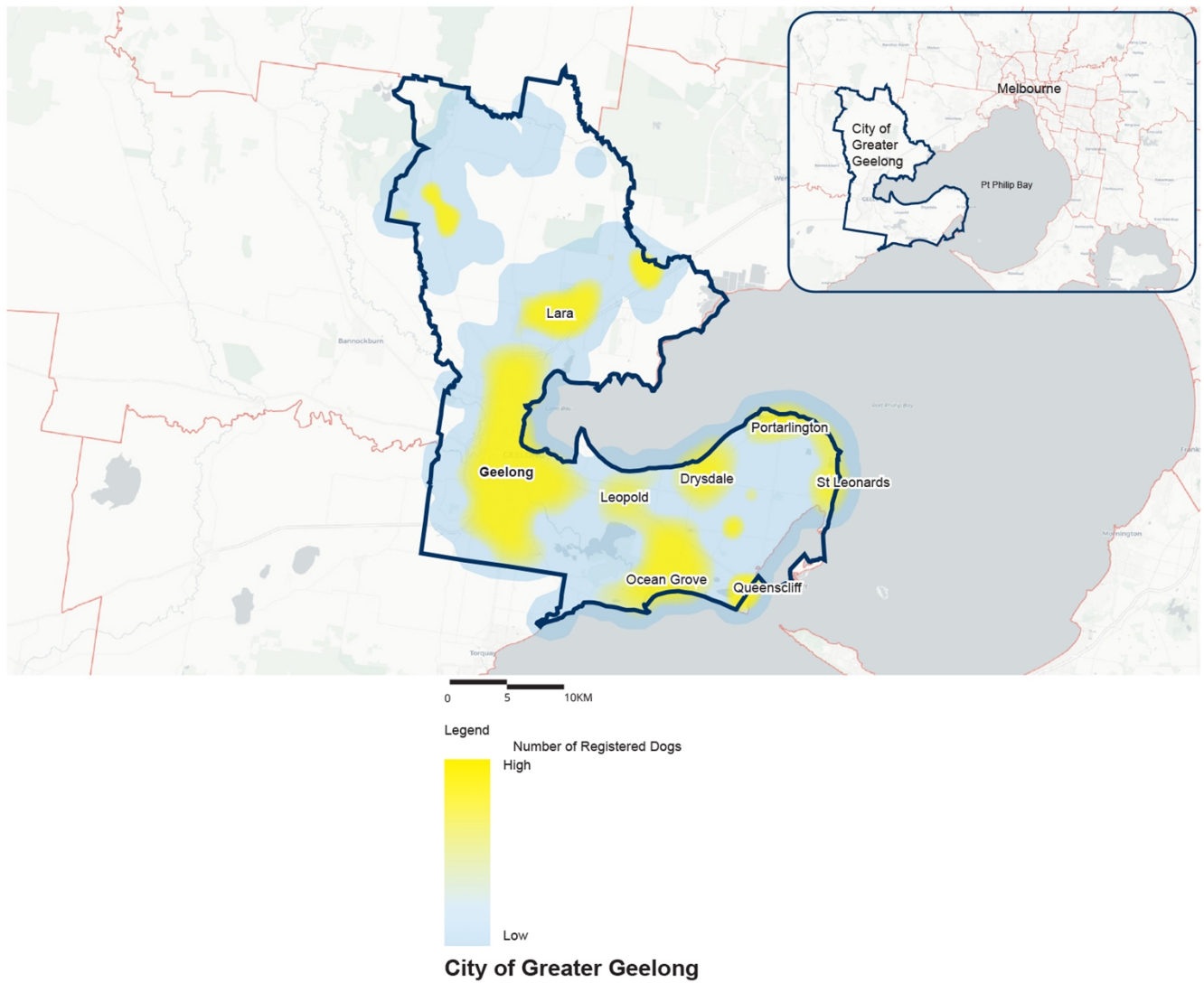
Dogs that are well-socialised, trained and have good manners are less likely to cause a nuisance in public. This training needs to happen in a range of settings, on and off-leash.

Like most local governments, we provide a diverse range of public open spaces for dogs and their owners that include:

- time-shared, off-leash areas, such as sporting ovals and beaches
- full-time off-leash areas and
- a designated fenced dog park (Stead Park Dog Park) at Corio.

Dogs must be kept on-leash in all other public areas, unless directed by local signs.

⁵ PIAS, 2010:5



Map 1: Distribution of registered dogs

Table 1: Number of registered dogs, by suburb (City of Greater Geelong)

	Registered dogs (2017–18)	Population (ERP, 2017)	Suburbs (based on ABS groupings)
1	2649	17,371	Lara
2	2636	21,822	Highton, Wandana Heights
3	2563	15,170	Ocean Grove
4	2067	13,392	Leopold
5	2046	14,982	Grovedale
6	2037	15,817	Corio
7	1915	14,496	Belmont
8	1330	7,643	Clifton Springs
9	1275	10,651	Newtown
10	1151	6,058	Geelong, Drumcondra
11	1060	8,884	Norlane, North Shore
12	1105	9,899	West Geelong, Manifold Heights
13	896	5,954	Newcomb, Moolap
14	885	6,877	Armstrong Creek, Mt Duneed
15	879	4,658	Drysdale, Bellarine
16	833	4,821	Barwon Heads, Connewarre, Breamlea
17	800	4,900	St Albans Park
18	754	6,436	Hamlyn Heights
19	710	3,784	St Leonards, Indented Heads
20	588	3,992	East Geelong
21	585	3,744	Portarlington
22	578	3,927	Whittington
23	575	5,604	Waurm Ponds, Ceres
24	542	2,976	Rural Bellarine Peninsula
25	537	5,247	Bell Park
26	534	3,740	South Geelong, Thomson, Breakwater
27	505	5,116	Bell Post Hill
28	456	3,722	Fyansford, Herne Hill
29	434	2,722	Lovely Banks, Batesford, Moorabool
30	371	4,082	North Geelong, Rippleside
31	343	1,861	Curlewis
32	314	1,830	Rural North
33	226	2,663	Marshall, Charlemont

Table 2: Number of registered dogs, by regions (City of Greater Geelong)

	No. of registered dogs	Population (ERP, 2017)	Suburbs (based on ABS groupings)
North	2649	17,371	Lara
	2037	15,817	Corio
	1060	8,884	Norlane, North Shore
	1105	9,899	West Geelong, Manifold Heights
	754	6,436	Hamlyn Heights
	537	5,247	Bell Park
	505	5,116	Bell Post Hill
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	371	4,082	North Geelong, Rippleside
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	710	3,784	St Leonards, Indented Heads
	585	3,744	Portarlington
	542	2,976	Rural Bellarine Peninsula
	343	1,861	Curlewis



Section 3: Siting of fenced dog parks

Our municipality is divided into three regions: north, south and east, including the Bellarine (see Table 2 on page 12). We aim to identify a priority site for each of these regions, working to cover both established and growth areas. Once built, it is anticipated each fenced dog park will service a group, or cluster, of suburbs.

Dog parks will be built to complement existing off-leash areas, not replace or reduce existing off-leash areas.

Key factors that we will consider when planning future fenced dog parks include:

- number of registered dogs by suburb (see map and tables on pages 10–12)
- areas not served by off-leash areas, or where off-leash areas are not available at all times
- where existing fenced dog parks are located both in the City of Greater Geelong, and in adjoining council areas (see Appendix A for more information)
- number of community requests for fenced dog parks.

Our plan is to roll out one fenced dog park at a time. This gives us an opportunity to assess what has and hasn't worked before we move on to the next park.

Table 3 (on page 16) explains the steps we will use to create a shortlist of proposed sites.

SITE CONSIDERATIONS

Our choice of land will be largely restricted to what we own. However, in assessing each proposed site, we will make sure it meets certain criteria so that placing a dog park on site does not create more problems it solves.

These considerations have been summarised in Table 4 (see pages 17-18).

Park hierarchy

Fenced dog parks should only be established in suitable regional and district parks, as per our park hierarchy classification. They are not suitable for local or neighbourhood parks.

Park size

The size of each fenced dog park will ultimately be dictated by the land we have available.

However, 3,000m² is our preferred minimum size for a fenced dog park. If there are plans to allocate separate areas for small and large dogs, each area would need to be allocated 3000m².

"The area should be big enough for dogs to run around and space themselves out. If there's not enough square footage available, a park can easily get crowded. Crowding can lead to tension among dogs and, as a result, fights can erupt."⁶

Location

We want to build fenced dog parks that are central to the dog population.

A key issue raised in the community engagement was that the existing Stead Park Dog Park was not centrally located to the dog population, and the Princes Highway created a barrier, separating the majority of the dog population from the park.

While park location will be largely determined by availability of land, when choosing a site we will take into account the following results from our community survey:

- 45 per cent of respondents were willing to travel 10–20 minutes (by car)
- only 15 per cent were willing to travel 20+ minutes.

Site qualities

We will aim to build fenced dog parks that are relatively flat, have good drainage and offer shade from mature trees, if possible.

We will try and avoid the following:

- sites that are prone to flooding, as this will limit access to the park at certain times
- steep slopes, which are difficult to access.

Site access

Research shows that 68% of people drive to fenced dog parks.⁷

To reduce use of cars in and around dog parks, we will favour sites that are well-connected to walking trails.

However, given the large area that each park will be expected to service, we will favour sites with existing on-

⁶ American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2013.

⁷ (University of Adelaide)

site parking, or the potential to develop it. Parking should ideally be:

- provided as close as possible to the dog park and
- designed so it is easy for dogs to safely get in and out of the car.

We will aim to put fenced dog parks in areas that are easy to find. We would prefer not to locate them in areas only accessible from residential back streets, or no-through roads.

Managing potential conflict

Ideally, we will aim to position fenced dog parks in areas where there is little conflict with other land uses.

However, in cases where this isn't possible, we may have to put measures in place to minimise conflict.

Residential properties

Fenced dog parks located too close to residential properties may cause the following issues:

- increased noise from barking dogs and people talking
- park users looking into adjacent residential properties
- additional activity in the park, particularly in morning, evenings and weekends

Recreation areas

Examples of recreation areas likely to conflict with fenced dog parks include:

- children's playgrounds
- BBQ and eating areas
- skate parks and
- cycling trails.

We will aim to position dog park entry/exit gates away from areas with these uses, providing a buffer where necessary.

Environmentally sensitive areas

We will aim to avoid areas that contain endangered species, significant wetlands, biodiversity corridors and high-value habit areas.

Site infrastructure

As mentioned previously, we will aim to place fenced dog parks in regional and district parks. This means that other amenities and infrastructure should be available, including water, electricity, toilets and on-site parking.

Land ownership

All fenced dog parks built and managed by us will be

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

The community engagement undertaken as part of this project identified the following requirements for fenced dog parks:

- Dog parks should be away from conservation areas
- Dog parks should be separate from playgrounds, and BBQ areas
- Dog parks should be central and in easy to reach locations
- Dog parks should have lots of parking

- odour from dog waste
- increased traffic and parking on surrounding local roads.

We will therefore aim to use a setback or buffer between the dog park and neighbouring houses to reduce the potential for conflict.

placed on public land. However, we are also open to developing parks in partnership with other organisations, such as private industry and other levels of government.

Table 3: Steps to choosing a site

STEP 1	Develop a list of potential sites for fenced dog parks, adding new sites as they arise.
STEP 2	<p>Eliminate any sites unsuitable for a fenced dog park, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• local and neighbourhood parks (as per our park hierarchy classification)• parks less than the preferred minimum size of 3,000m²• areas of environmental significance (that is, areas that contain endangered species, significant wetlands, and high value-habit areas)• areas of high cultural or heritage significance.
STEP 3	Assess shortlisted sites using the criteria in Table 4 (see page 17–18).
STEP 4	Conduct a preliminary inspection of the sites left on list to refine it further.
STEP 5	Conduct detailed assessments of the remaining sites and select our preferred sites.
STEP 6	Consult with the community on preferred sites.
STEP 7	Select a site.
STEP 8	Further consult with the community during the design phase

Table 4: Site assessment criteria

Criteria	Questions to ask
Park hierarchy	<p>What classification is the park - regional, district or local? It's not ideal to locate a fenced dog park in a local or neighbourhood park.</p> <p>Preferred: Regional or district park.</p>
Size of park	<p>What is the size of the proposed fenced dog park? Is there enough space to minimise site degradation by overuse and crowding of dogs?</p> <p>Preferred: 3,000m² minimum enclosed space area for a fenced dog park.</p>
Location	<p>Is the site central to the dog population? Are there any major roads, freeways or railway lines that make it difficult for people to access the site? Are there any existing fenced dog parks or other off-leash areas nearby?</p> <p>Preferred: Locate fenced dog parks in areas central to the existing & projected dog population and in areas underserved by existing fenced dog parks.</p>
Site qualities	<p>Are the site qualities suitable for a fenced dog park? Is the site prone to flooding? Is there good drainage? Are there any mature trees for shade on the site?</p> <p>Preferred: Relatively flat topography, permeable soils for good drainage, and mature trees for shade.</p>
Site access	<p>Is there enough car parking to avoid creating a negative impact on surrounding areas?</p> <p>Is there any designated parking close by or capacity to establish car parking? How safe is the parking area for getting dogs in and out of cars?</p> <p>Preferable: Off-street car parking.</p> <p>Are there any connecting paths or trails leading to the site?</p> <p>Preferred: Connections to walking paths.</p> <p>How easy is it to access and find the site by road? Is the park located on a main road, off a main road, or only accessible from local residential streets?</p> <p>Preferred: Fenced dog parks should be easy to find and located on roads with good access – that is, not located near dead-end or no-through roads.</p>
Adjacent activities/uses	<p>What are the adjacent activities and are they compatible with a fenced dog park?</p> <p>Is there enough space to provide a buffer between adjacent activities such as children's playgrounds, skate parks, BBQ/eating areas and residential dwellings? If</p>

	<p>co-located with sporting ovals, how will people access the fenced dog park on match days?</p> <p>Preferred: Locate fenced dog parks near compatible activities, or separate incompatible activities with buffer zones or setbacks.</p>
Environmental sensitivity	<p>Are there any areas within the proposed site and surrounds that are environmentally sensitive, such as wetlands and biodiversity corridors?</p> <p>Preferred: Locate fenced dog parks away from wetlands, fauna habitats and other sensitive environments.</p>
Site infrastructure	<p>What existing infrastructure and services are on the site, or nearby (water, electricity, public toilets)? Where are the connection points? Are there any existing fences or boundaries we could utilise?</p> <p>Preferred: Water connections nearby, or easily accessible.</p>
Visibility	<p>Is the site visible from the road, or is it in an isolated position?</p> <p>Preferred: Sites should be highly visible.</p>
Ownership & Consent	<p>Who owns the land? Is consent needed from other authorities? Are there any cultural, heritage or environmental planning overlays that impact the space?</p> <p>Preferable: City-owned land preferred.</p>
Other considerations	<p>Are there any other requirements?</p> <p>Preferred: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) and accessibility principles should be considered.</p>



Section 4: Dog park design

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' design for a fenced dog park. The design of a fenced dog park will be shaped by:

- site conditions
- budget
- anticipated level of use and
- the needs of the community.

We will design our dog parks according to the following list of requirements:

CORE INFRASTRUCTURE

Perimeter fencing

A secure perimeter fencing is needed to discourage dogs escaping over, under and through the fence. It should be built as follows:

- approximately 1.7–1.8 metres high
- shaped without corners if possible, to avoid situations where dogs might feel trapped (for example, an oval-shaped fence)
- with a concrete plinth, or footing, to assist with maintenance and help prevent small dogs from escaping.

Entry and exit points

All entry and exit points should be double-gated to prevent dogs from escaping.

Gates should be:

- self-closing with a pull latch (similar to a pool fence)
- available in more than one location, to reduce congestion in and around the gates
- built to be accessible – this means all gates must be wide enough for wheelchair access and feature low latches

A separate maintenance gate is also needed and should be wide enough to accommodate service vehicles and machinery, such as bobcats.

Ground surfaces

Selecting suitable surface materials for a dog park can be challenging. Dogs need a variety of surfaces, to suit different types of activity, and surfaces must be dog-friendly, hard-wearing and emit minimal dust.

Appropriate materials include:

- Concrete – best for high traffic areas, such as in and around entry and exit gates, and internal paths.
- Mulch – suitable provided it is a good-quality grade and doesn't contain anything that has the potential to harm dogs, such as sharp objects, plastics and string.
- Grass – suitable for small areas only, as it can be difficult to maintain in such a high-traffic area. Grass varieties chosen should be hard-wearing, such as those used for high-use sports fields. To help grass survive and suppress dust, irrigation systems should be included.
- Sand – may be appropriate, in combination with other surface materials.

Asphalt is not an appropriate surface material, as it can burn a dog's paw pads in hot weather.

Drinking water taps

Taps for drinking water should be:

- built in areas with good drainage, to reduce water logging
- located away from the entry and exit points, to discourage people and their dogs congregating in high-traffic areas

The water bowl must be:

- large enough for all dogs, including those wearing a muzzle
- easy to refill and
- easy to keep clean – for example, a round bowl that can be turned over and emptied.

Shade

Shade from existing trees, new trees or built structures should be included in the design, as dogs are more vulnerable to heat than people.

Seating

Seating provided should be kept to a minimum, to encourage people to move around and interact with their dog. Ideally, seating should be:

- built with backs, to discourage dogs from jumping onto the seats
- provided informally, using rocks and logs.

Signs

All signs should be placed in highly visible locations.

Signs explaining the rules governing the dog park should be clear and consistent (see page 27 for more information about dog park rules).

Waste disposal

Poo bag dispensers, bags and waste bins must be provided to encourage people to pick up after their dog and dispose of the waste appropriately.

DESIRABLE AMENITIES

Separate areas

A dog park featuring separate areas for small and large dogs is desirable. However, our ability to build this will depend on the size of the park and construction budget. If park space is limited, one larger park is preferable to two smaller areas.

Dog parks with separate areas do offer other benefits, including the ability to rotate sides for grass repair, maintenance or upgrades.

Earth mounds and mass plantings are another way to create separate zones. As well as making good visual barriers, they help prevent dogs from getting up too much speed in the park.

Activity zones

Dog parks should ideally feature multiple activity zones and not just be a flat, fenced-in space. This is because:

- dogs need running areas, as well as quieter environments where they can sniff, play one-on-one with other dogs and interact with their owners
- activity zones help spread out park users, reducing wear and tear on surfaces.

Internal walking paths are a great way of encouraging activity in a dog park. They are desirable because they encourage people and their dogs to move around the space.

“Paths that encourage owners and dogs to keep walking are best for enhancing the dog/owner relationship and preventing dog to dog conflict.”⁸

Other ways of encouraging activity might include varied terrain, earth mounds, sensory plantings, tunnels, logs, water play and dog-play items

Plants

All plant flowers, seeds, fruit and leaves within and around dog parks should be non-toxic and non-irritating to dogs. Tussocks are particularly useful for dog parks, as dogs can weave through the plants.

Plants and grasses must be well-established before the park is opened to the public. Temporary fencing may be used to fence off areas where plants are establishing, or recovering.

OPTIONAL AMENITIES

Park lighting

While park lighting can extend hours of use in a dog park, the construction budget and park location will determine whether it is included. If, for example, the dog park is near a residential area, lighting might not be appropriate.

Toilets

Dog parks should be ideally built in areas with existing toilet facilities, which include accessible toilets.

For areas without toilets, both the location and budget (construction and maintenance) will determine whether they are included.

Noticeboard

Noticeboards are a useful feature in a dog park for promoting upcoming events and information on dog park rules and etiquette. Ideally, they should be:

- lockable, with no breakable parts
- managed by us.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles should be considered when designing fenced dog parks. For more information, please visit

<https://www.planning.vic.gov.au/policy-and-strategy/urban-design/urban-design-guidelines>

⁸ (Larsen Bridge, 2007: n.p).

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

The community identified the following elements for a fenced dog park:

- secure high fencing
- double entry gates, with self-closing latches
- water for dogs
- bag dispensers and bins
- enrichment for dogs
- a variety of ground surfaces
- places to sit, but limited seating so people pay attention to their dog
- walking paths and trails
- natural shade
- toilets
- covered areas, such as shelter structures.

Ten top tips for design

- 1. Design doesn't have to be complex.**
Keep it simple and get the layout right.
- 2. Don't copy the dog park down the road.**
The design of a fenced dog park should be tailored to the individual site conditions.
- 3. Break up the space with natural barriers.**
This prevents dogs from getting up to high speeds in the park.
- 4. Keep the entry and exit points free of clutter and amenities.**
This minimises congestion in these high-traffic areas.
- 5. Create active and passive zones.**
Don't just build one flat, fenced-in area.
- 6. Get owners moving around with their dogs.**
Meandering walking paths or trails encourage walking and reduces the chance they'll stop in the one spot.
- 7. Think about the escape artists.**
Provide a double-gate system, with self-closing latches.
- 8. Provide more than one way of getting in and out.**
This minimises overcrowding in high-traffic areas.
- 9. Design the space to reduce potential conflict.**
Try and avoid creating spaces where dogs might become trapped.
- 10. Make the space accessible.**
Consider people of all abilities in the design. I



Section 5: Dog park management

Fenced dog parks have unique characteristics and require well-thought-out systems for managing and caring for the space.

As it is this care that is critical to the community's overall enjoyment and use of space over the long term, we must dedicate resources beyond the initial construction budget to make sure it is addressed.

MAINTENANCE

The essential elements of a maintenance program include:

- Fencing and gates – repair and replacement, keeping gate latches in working order.
- Pathways - clearing trip hazards, keeping paths in good condition.
- Mulch area – topping up and replacing.
- Sand area – topping up and raking.
- Grass area – restoration and replacement.
- Rubbish bins – collecting waste and maintaining.
- Irrigation – checking for leaks and keeping sprinklers in working order.
- Plantings – replacing plants and protecting damaged areas with barriers.
- Shelter – maintaining.
- Seats/benches – maintaining and keeping clean.
- Rocks and logs – maintaining.
- Drinking fountains – keeping them clean and in working order, checking water pressure and drainage.
- Signs – maintaining.
- Dog bag dispensers – restocking of bags and maintaining.
- General – filling in holes, graffiti removal and so on.
- Weed spraying – managing weeds using either non-toxic sprays, or exclusion periods after spraying.
- Rotating parks – in cases where large dog and small dog areas are available.

VOLUNTEERS

There may be opportunities to engage volunteers to help with basic maintenance, such as replacing the dog bags, sweeping the paths and general clean-ups.

ESTABLISHING THE RULES

The Dogs in Public Places Policy establishes dog controls in all public places, including dog parks. The purpose of the policy is to maintain fair and equal access to open spaces for all users, while maintaining community safety and protecting the environment.

According to the policy, dogs must be supervised and under effective control at all times in unfenced and fenced off-leash areas. Owners are also required to pick up after their dogs.

Beyond the policy, there is a need to establish some consistent rules for all dog parks that promote a safe and friendly environment. These rules should cover issues including:

- dog behaviour
- safe use of the space and
- what to do if there is an incident.

Examples of dog park rules used elsewhere are included in Section 7 (see page 34).

Once the rules for all dog parks have been set, they should be communicated in the following ways:

- signs placed in highly visible places near dog parks
- using the Park your Pet app
- through our online channels, including www.geelongaustralia.com.au/pets
- via information leaflets and brochures at dog park openings and events.

PATROLLING AND ENFORCEMENT

This was highlighted in the community survey findings as one of the biggest challenges in managing fenced dog parks.

The first month after opening is an excellent time for animal management officers to reinforce good dog park etiquette, and we will aim to factor this in to our planning.

Beyond that, dog parks will be patrolled by animal management officers as part of the broader municipality.

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Fenced dog parks bring pet owners together in one place. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to educate dog owners about a range of topics relevant to responsible pet ownership.

An education program should therefore be incorporated into the overall management of the space

Topics that could be covered include:

- dog body language
- assessing a dog's suitability for fenced dog parks
- socialisation
- basic dog training skills
- dog legislation and responsibilities
- children and dogs.

There are opportunities to work with other professionals, such as qualified dog behaviour experts, dog trainers, veterinarians and animal shelters to deliver these sessions.

For more information about education program, please go to Appendix D.

EVALUATION

Evaluation is often a forgotten aspect of the management of a fenced dog park, yet it is arguably one of the most important elements in maintaining effective and functional parks.

Ideally, we will establish a data collection management system to record the following:

General

- Feedback we receive from community members.
- Number of people using a dog park (measured by placing a counter across the dog park gate). This can help determine if the park is being overused or underused.
- Requests for fenced dog parks.

Safety

- Nature and number of incidents reported inside and outside of the fenced dog park.

Maintenance

- Amount of uncollected dog faeces inside and outside of the dog park.
- Condition of surface materials and infrastructure (before and after photos are an excellent way to document changes).
- Feedback received from parks and maintenance staff and maintenance contractors.

Costs

- Costs associated with the regular maintenance of the dog park, including budgeted and unexpected costs.

Feedback from park users and neighbouring residents (annually or bi-annually) is a simple yet effective way to determine their satisfaction or otherwise with a fenced dog park⁹.

The management system should ideally be set up to record information based on suburb and site location.

⁹ (Source: Dog and Cat Management Board of SA, 2014)

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

The following rules for a fenced dog park were suggested during the community engagement period:

- Coming into a dog park you agree to:
 - enter at own risk
 - share the space
 - respect all users.
- Stay focused on your dog.
- Children are to be supervised at all times and:
 - not run around with dogs
 - not play on dog equipment.
- Aggressive dogs are not allowed.
- Scoop the poop.
- Dogs to be on-leash when entering/exiting the park.
- Dogs to be up-to-date with vaccinations.
- Dogs to be registered, desexed and microchipped.
- Number of dogs per person to be limited– for example, 2–3 dogs for all users, including commercial dog walkers.



Section 6: Cost estimates

The following broad-cost estimates have been put together for the construction and establishment of new fenced dog parks.

These costings are provided for guidance purposes only, and the cost of individual projects would vary depending on the size of the park, existing site qualities, materials, site preparation and final design.

Table 5: Example: pre design, opinion of probable cost, 3000m² fenced dog park

NB: Please refer to the disclaimer at the end of this document

ITEM No.	DESCRIPTION	QTY	UNIT	RATE	AMOUNT
1.00	PRELIMINARIES				
1.01	Establishment, insurances, construction Environmental Management Plan etc	1	Item	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
1.02	Surveyor	1	Item	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$15,000.00
2.00	LANDSCAPE FURNITURE				
2.01	Timber seat with back (1.8m)	1	Item	\$2,200.00	\$2,200.00
2.02	Dog bag dispenser	2	Item	\$150.00	\$300.00
2.03	Bin enclosure – 240L	1	Item	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
2.04	Drinking fountain with dog bowl	1	Item	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$8,000.00
3.00	FENCING				
3.01	Perimeter fencing - 1.8m chainmesh with top and bottom rail (50x60)	220	lm	\$70.00	\$15,400.00
3.02	Double entry gates (2 per entry)	4	Item	\$500.00	\$2,000.00
3.03	Maintenance gates (3.5m width)	2	Item	\$2,000.00	\$4,000.00
3.04	Concrete plinth	220	lm	\$120.00	\$26,400.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$47,800.00
4.00	IRRIGATION				
4.01	Automatic irrigation system (allowance)	1	Item	\$30,000.00	\$30,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$30,000.00
5.00	SOFT LANDSCAPE PREPARATION				
5.01	Imported topsoil - Instant turf areas (100mm)	150	m ³	\$60.00	\$9,000.00
5.02	Imported topsoil - Garden beds (200mm)	200	m ³	\$60.00	\$12,000.00
5.03	Filling sand (Play pit sand)	50	m ²	\$20.00	\$1,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$22,000.00

6.00	ROCKS AND LOGS				
6.01	Rocks 400-600mm (for informal seating)	5	Item	\$200.00	\$1,000.00
6.02	Logs - 2.5m long	2	Item	\$500.00	\$1,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$2,000.00
7.00	PLANTING AND MULCHING				
7.01	Trees - 50L container including stakes and ties	10	No.	\$150.00	\$1,500.00
7.02	Tubestock	100	No.	\$3.00	\$300.00
7.03	Organic mulch (100mm)	1000	m ²	\$8.00	\$8,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$9,800.00
8.00	GRASSING				
8.01	Instant turf (roll out turf) – supply and install	1500	m ²	\$20.00	\$30,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$30,000.00
9.00	DEMOLITION WORKS AND SITE PREPARATION				
9.01	Clear site of rubbish and debris - allowance	1	Item	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
9.02	Excavating / minor trimming	3,000	m ²	\$5.00	\$15,000.00
9.03	Spoil removal	100	tonnes	\$25.00	\$2,500.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$22,500.00

10.00	SERVICES				
10.01	Water supply reticulation (provision)	1	Item	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
10.02	Electrical connection / irrigation controller (provision)	1	Item	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$20,000.00
11.00	STORMWATER DRAINAGE				
11.01	Stormwater drainage (allowance)	1	Item	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$10,000.00
12.00	LANDSCAPE SURFACES AND FINISHES				
12.01	Concrete paving (path)	100	m ²	\$130.00	\$13,000.00
12.02	Concrete pad under seat	2	m ²	\$130.00	\$260.00
12.03	Concrete pad shelter	36	m ²	\$130.00	\$4,680.00
12.04	Compacted rubble	100	m ²	\$30.00	\$3,000.00
12.05	Concrete edge	200	lm	\$60.00	\$12,000.00
12.06	Rubber mounds	30	m ²	\$220.00	\$6,600.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$39,540.00
13.00	LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES				
13.01	Shelter (4x4m)	1	Item	\$12,000.00	\$12,000.00

	SUBTOTAL				\$12,000.00
14.00	SIGNAGE				
14.01	Signage (allowance for 2 major signs and 2 minor signs)	1	No.	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$4,000.00
15.00	MAINTENANCE AND ESTABLISHMENT				
15.01	52 Weeks	52	No.	\$400.00	\$20,800.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$20,800.00
	SUBTOTAL OF LANDSCAPE AND EXTERNAL WORKS (not inc. GST)				\$293,440.00
	Contingency (10%)				\$29,344.00
	TOTAL OF LANDSCAPE AND EXTERNAL WORKS (not inc. GST)				\$322,784.00

This opinion provides illustrative calculations and indicative costs and should not be used as a substitute for a full and final costing of the works. It is not a recommendation by Birdseye Studios Pty Ltd to participate in or to abstain from the project and cannot be relied upon as a definitive statement of the total cost of the project. Birdseye Studios Pty Ltd does not accept any responsibility for and expressly disclaims and excludes all liability for any use of or reliance on this opinion or any loss or damage of whatever nature (including consequential loss), howsoever incurred, which is suffered by any person acting on or refraining from acting because of anything contained in this opinion.

Qualifications: Opinion of Cost assumes

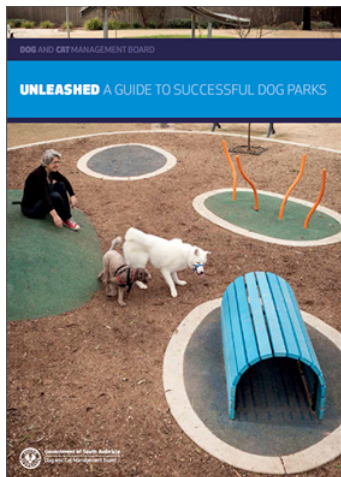
No excavation in rock
No site remediation
No disposal of material
No external paths



Section 7: Resources

1. **Dog Park Guidelines 'Unleashed: a guide to successful dog parks'**, Dog and Cat Management Board of South Australia

www.dogandcatboard.com.au/publications



2. **Off-leash Ambassador Program**, City of Calgary, Canada

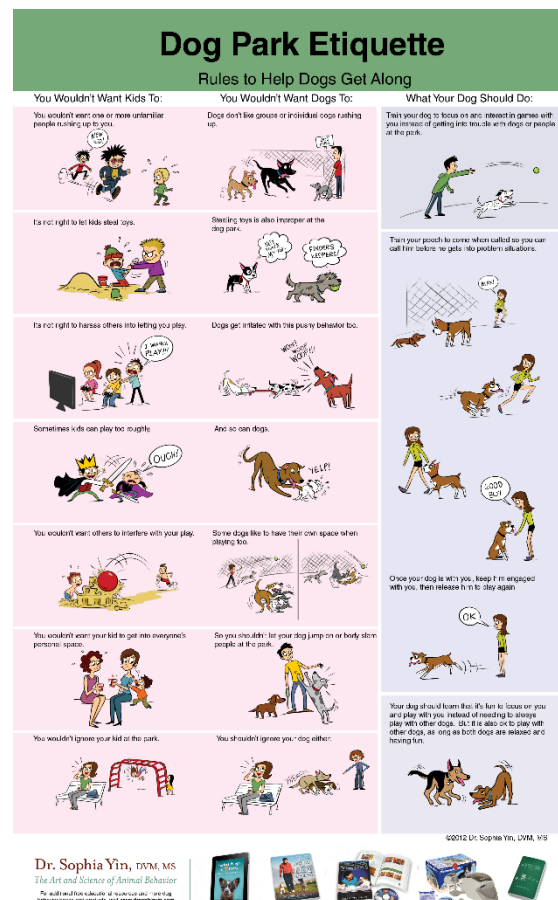
The City of Calgary offers free dog recall training classes from a certified professional dog trainer to help dog owners keep their dogs under control in off-leash areas. This program is part of the City's Off-leash Ambassador Program in Community Standards to promote public awareness of responsible dog ownership in off-leash areas.

www.calgary.ca/CSPS/ABS/Pages/Volunteering/Off-leash.aspx?redirect=/offleashvolunteer

3. **Dog Park Etiquette: Rules to help dogs get along**, Blue Cattle Dog Productions

This free poster is accessible from Dr. Sophia Yin's website. It outlines basic rules to keep your dog out of trouble in a fenced dog park. This poster has been used as a sign at the City of Geelong's Stead Park Dog Park.

www.calgary.ca/CSPS/ABS/Pages/Volunteering/Off-leash.aspx?redirect=/offleashvolunteer



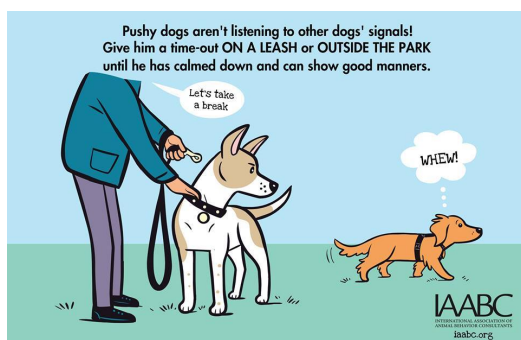
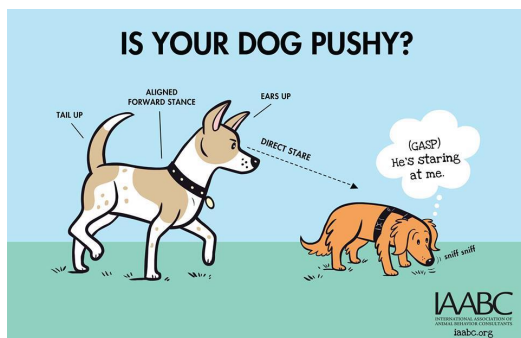
Dr. Sophia Yin, DVM, MS
The Art and Science of Animal Behavior
For additional information of resources and dog behavior issues, visit www.dogsinplay.com



4. Dog Park Safety Project, The International Association of Animal Behavior Consultants (IAABC)

The Dog Park Safety Project provides a series of posters to promote safety in dog parks and in dog play. The posters (JPEG format) can be download from IAABC's Facebook site.

www.facebook.com/iaabcorp/photos/?tab=album&album_id=10154607479924126



5. Dog Body Language, Lili Chin

www.flickr.com/photos/lilita/5652847156/sizes/l/

DOGGIE LANGUAGE

starring Boogie the Boston Terrier



© 2011 Lili Chin www.doggiedrawings.net *ali*

6. Dog park signage and etiquette brochure, City of Charles Sturt, South Australia

The City of Charles Sturt has produced an innovative dog park etiquette brochure and illustrated dog park signs i.e. large panels displayed inside a fenced dog park.

Councils can purchase an electronic copy of these signs for use by contacting the City of Charles Sturt in South Australia.

The City of Charles Sturt dog park etiquette brochure is below.

www.charlessturt.sa.gov.au/page.aspx

Welcome to Doggie Land

Doggie Land has as an Active and Passive area to meet different dogs' needs.

If your dog loves to play chase or wrestle with others, run, jump and generally explode into the park with enthusiasm, then the Active area is for you!

Our Passive area allows for relaxed, sniff-focused, calmer and exploratory interactions between dogs and will suit older, calmer or shyer dogs best.

To use either of our parks, your dog must be under effective control – you need to be supervising them at all times, and be able to call them away from play at a moment's notice.

For the safest use of our off lead dog parks, we recommend you:

- Let your dog off lead as soon as you enter the park
- Supervise young children around dogs, and keep interactions between kids and dogs safe and calm
- Avoid the park for dogs that: prefer to be left alone; aren't confident; young puppies, older, sore, blind or deaf dogs, dogs that are unwell, or females in season



Does Your Dog Want To Be Here?

YES!



Great! Stay A while!

Appropriate and polite dog play includes lots of short breaks for sniffs, drinks or laying down so dogs don't become overly boisterous or hyper-stimulated. Ensure your dog gets a chance to relax in good company too! If you're not sure whether your dog is enjoying himself here, or you're worried about the behaviour of another dog, take your dog out of the dog park to give him a break. Not all dogs are social butterflies, some prefer the company of a few good friends instead.

NO!



Why not try some different activities?

Long explorative walks along a trail or outside of the dog park. Attend the park at a time where there are less dogs, or where the other dogs' play styles match your dog's. How about a bit of training? Sniffy walks along the beach or linear park.

While your dog is in the park, watch them closely to ensure they are feeling happy, and confident.

Interrupt play frequently with practice of recalls, to help dogs calm down and avoid play escalating out of control. Intense, hyper-focused, obsessive behaviours like herding, nipping, excessive chasing without pause, pinning or escalating vocalisations are signs the play is becoming more inappropriate and have no place in our dog parks. Lots of short 1-2 minute breaks will help keep all dogs happy and relaxed.

Dog parks are not good places to 'socialise' dogs (especially puppies) unless you know the dogs inside and their play styles well. Watch your dog constantly to know how well they are coping. Confidence building for shy dogs and socialisation for puppies is best done in more controlled, predictable environments or with one-on-one carefully supervised play initially.

Remember that not all exercise is equal – are you alternating your dog's play in the park with long exploratory, sniffy walks along the beach or in a reserve on a different day? Relaxing, sniff-focused walks will often benefit your dog's mental enrichment more than a good play at the park. Make sure you're doing both to meet all your dog's needs.

Show us your pets for a chance to win each month!

#PetsofCharlesSturt
#petsofcharlessturt



Is your dog a PUSHY POLLY?

Ensure your dog gives other dogs a chance to enter the park safely and calmly. Watch all interactions regarding your dog. Move your dog out of the park if they are being pushy. If you know your dog has a tendency to become pushy in play, interrupt interactions frequently by putting them on lead and taking them for a calming walk outside of the park. All dogs and owners have a right to enjoy the park feeling safe and comfortable. Sometimes dogs need your help to learn how to play appropriately.



Is your dog a NERVOUS NELLY?

Fearful dogs need more space and more time to acclimatise. You may find that the dog park isn't the best place to help build your dog's confidence as other dogs can be uncontrollable or unpredictable. Better to take confidence building patiently and calmly – you'll find the more positive experiences your dog has the more confidence they will gain. Continuously putting them in situations they can't cope with will only exacerbate their fear (no – they don't need to just 'toughen up' – behaviour development and dog play is complex and dynamic – it's not that simple).

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Appendix A: Adjoining dog parks

The Wyndham City there has several fenced dog parks including:

- Saltwater Reserve Dog Park, corner of Saltwater Promenade and Middleton Drive, Point Cook
- Dog Park, corner of Forsyth Road and Perennial Drive, Truganina
- Presidents Park, McGrath Rd, Wyndham Vale
- Allura Estate Dog Park, Vibrandia Way, Truganina.

A summary of three fenced dog parks are outlined below.

	Saltwater Reserve Dog Park, Point Cook	Forsyth Park Fenced Dog Park, Truganina	Presidents Park Wyndham Vale
Setting	Part of a larger park (multipurpose park) accommodating sporting facilities i.e. oval, tennis courts, children's playground toilets and off-street parking (co-located) Part of new housing estate	Part of a larger park (multipurpose park) accommodating toilets, grassed area, children's playground, toilets Part of new housing estate	Part of a larger park (multipurpose, park)
Park Size	Approx. 3,750m ² .	Approx. 2000m ² .	Size unknown
Dog Areas	Dog park for all dogs	Dog park for all dogs	Dog park for all dogs
Ground Surfaces	Grass	Grass	Grass
Car Parking	Designated off-street parking	On-street parking	Designated off-street parking
Fencing	Black chainmesh fencing approx. 1.5m high with top & bottom rail	Black chainmesh fencing approx. 1.5m high with top & bottom rail & concrete footing	Black chainmesh fencing approx. 1.5m high with top and bottom rail
Gates	Single gating system	Single gating system	Double gating entry system
Entry/exit points	Multiple entry/exits gates (x2)	Entry/exits gate (x2)	Entry/exit gates (x1)
Shade	Some mature trees on site	Few mature trees on site	Mature trees on site
Seating	Benches	Benches	Benches
Water	Water fountain for people and dogs inside park	No water fountain/tap provided	Water fountain for people and dogs inside park

Signage	Dog park rules attached to entry/exit gate	No signage noted	Dog park rules attached to entry/exit gate
Dog bag dispenser	Dispenser attached to fence and bins inside park	Dog bag dispenser and bin in park	Dog bag dispenser and bin in park

(Source: De Rosa, site visits undertaken June 2018)

The Surf Coast Shire

The Surf Coast has no existing fenced dog parks, but an action in their Domestic Animal Management Plan (2017-21) says:

- conduct a feasibility study into the development of a major dog park off-leash area for the high-pressure areas (Torquay foreshore)."

Appendix B: Guideline background

HOW WE DEVELOPED THESE GUIDELINES

A comprehensive engagement process was undertaken with the community and external stakeholders to help us prepare these guidelines.

The community engagement was undertaken in May–June 2018 and included:

- A survey (online and hard copy)
- face-to-face meetings, with targeted stakeholders
- drop-in sessions and
- a social media campaign.

The following interactions were recorded during the community engagement:

- 32,269 people were reached through social media
- 617 completed surveys
- 44 drop-in participants
- 10 stakeholder participants.

The ‘what the community told us’ sections in this report are designed to help show how the feedback was incorporated into the guidelines.

Other research methods used to inform the guidelines include:

- a desktop review of our information and data
- research about current best practice planning, design and management of fenced dog parks
- preliminary investigations of potential fenced dog park locations.

The guidelines were also informed by the knowledge and practical experience of the consultant who has researched and visited numerous fenced dog parks in Australia and overseas.

You can read more about the community and stakeholder engagement activities and findings in the *Fenced Dog Parks: Community Engagement Summary June 2018* report.

Appendix C: Stead Park Dog Park

STEAD PARK DOG PARK

We own and operate a fenced dog park at Stead Park, Corio, which is co-located within a larger park system accommodating formal sports, including hockey, soccer, baseball, softball and lawn bowls. This site has off-street parking and public toilets.

A summary of Stead Park Dog Park is outlined below.

Built	2014
Hierarchy	Sited within a Regional Park
Size	60m x 40m / 2,100 m ² (oval shape)
Dog park type	All dogs
Fencing	Approx. 1.5m high black chainmesh fencing with top and bottom rail
Gating	Single-gated system
Entry/exit	Two entry/exit gates and maintenance gates
Surfaces	Combination of some grass and gravel
Amenities	Seats Dual drinking fountain inside the dog park near the main entry/exit gate Dog bag dispenser and bin outside the dog park
Signage	Large dog park etiquette sign near the main entry/exit gate

A community Facebook group 'Corio Dog Park, Stead Park' has been established around this fenced dog park.

A common issue raised in the community engagement was the fencing at Stead Park Dog Park was too low (1.5m high) and the park is too small (approximately 2,100m²).

An upgrade to meet to the minimum core infrastructure highlighted in this report is therefore required. This could include:

- installing double-entry, self-closing gates and
- fixing the drainage issues around the water fountain.

"(It's) far too small, overcrowding particularly on weekends, and there isn't enough space to move away from troubled dogs and owners." (Respondent)

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

Potential improvements to Stead Park Dog Park identified by the community include:

- a grassed area.
- trees for shelter and shade
- concrete footing under perimeter fencing, so dogs can't dig under and escape
- drinking fountain/tap for people in working order
- seats scattered around the park, rather than located in one spot
- self-closing gates
- double-entry gates
- effective drainage, to reduce muddy areas around gates and drinking fountain generally.

Appendix D: Education programs

In our community survey, over 90 per cent of respondents indicated that dog park education and etiquette was important.

The suggested topics and activities for a dog park education program included:

- a. Dog body language
 - i. For example, recognising when a dog is stressed or anxious and whether your dog is having a good time at the fenced dog park
- b. A dog's suitability for a fenced dog park experience
 - i. Understanding what your dog can tolerate as some dogs may not be suitable for a fenced dog park
- c. Dog socialisation

"Dog owners need to have a good understanding of what socialisation means i.e. exposure to a range of different people, different experiences, settings and the opportunity to mix with other dogs, ideally from a young age" Animal Shelter stakeholder

- i. Knowledge on how to support the development of a well-socialised dog
- d. Basic dog training skills
 - i. Knowing how to get a reliable recall for dogs in distracting environments like a fenced dog park
- e. Dog legislation and responsibilities
 - i. Understanding your legal obligations and other responsibilities in having a dog such as vaccinations and socialisation
- f. Children and dogs
 - i. Educating school children on how to interact safely near dogs

You can read more about dog body language, and dog park safety in section 7.

Below are some key questions raised by the community regarding dog park etiquette:

- g. What happens if you have an excitable dog? Go to the park or not?
- h. Should dogs jump up on people at a fenced dog park?
- i. It is Ok for kids to run around with dogs?
- j. It is OK for kids to play on dog equipment?

- k. Should dog guardians/owners have a minimum requirement of basic dog training e.g. puppy training or equivalent before visiting a fenced dog park?
- l. Should there be a limit on the number of dogs in a fenced dog park at any one time?
- m. Are all dogs a dog park dog?

These are the sort of questions that should be addressed in a fenced dog park education program.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY TOLD US

The community engagement undertaken as part of this project identified the following aspects for a fenced dog park education program:

- Reliable recall
- Qualified dog trainers to help dog owners with dog park etiquette and basic dog skills
- How to supervise your dog safely
- How to read your dog's body language
- Supervision of children in a dog park