

MEDIA RELEASE



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Feedback on dog control at Ocean Grove Main Beach

City of Greater Geelong Councillors have considered public feedback on the first year of a trial dog-free area at Ocean Grove Main Beach.

The endorsement of the public feedback by Councillors means dog control orders will be put in place for the second year of the trial.

Barwon Coast and the City of Greater Geelong are working together on the trial, which began on 1 January 2021 after previous feedback highlighted the need for an area of beach to be set aside as dog-free all year round.

The dog-free area accounts for 805 metres of beach approximately between 13W and 15W beach access stairs. In the upcoming second stage of the trial dogs will be prohibited in this area of the beach all year.

Feedback from both dog walkers and non-dog walkers on the dog-free trial was encouraged during the six-week community engagement period.

In total, 1140 people shared their views about the dog control orders on the section of the beach where the Surf Life Saving Club is based, and which is also popular with swimmers, surfers and Nippers.

The survey results showed 76 per cent of respondents were dog owners. Of these respondents, 72 per cent were from Ocean Grove and 12 per cent from Barwon Heads.

Mayor Stephanie Asher said the survey confirmed there were strong opinions in the community.

"This has been a challenging issue because dog control orders often generate passionate and contrasting views between dog owners and non-dog owners," the Mayor said.

"We will keep working with Barwon Coast to find an appropriate balance between the needs and expectations of all beach users."

Councillor Jim Mason AM, Bellarine Ward said a key outcome from the public feedback is a recommendation that the City's Chief Executive Officer ensures that there's a review of animal management resources to educate and enforce dog orders, in line with community expectation.

"Dogs are important family members for many people, but the results show there are sections of our community who also want to enjoy a section of the beach without the presence of dogs," Cr Mason said.

“There was also strong community feedback that a greater presence of officers on the coast is required to effectively monitor and educate the community.”

CEO of Barwon Coast Gary McPike said the trial is about getting the balance right for Ocean Grove Main Beach.

“We were pleased to get such a strong response from our community of beach users. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the City to develop dog controls that consider the access issues of all users alongside environmental management requirements.”

Dog walking areas on the Barwon Coast coastal reserve [are listed here](#).