



4. PETITIONS AND JOINT LETTERS

Item 4.1 TT Buckingham Reserve - Response

A Petition containing 60 signatures was received from residents and presented to a Council Meeting on 16 May 2018.

The Petition states the following:

- As originally planned when the Fishermans Bend Estate was founded in the 1940s, TT Buckingham Reserve acts as a social hub for neighbours.
- The vast majority of users of the park are families and residents who live in the immediate vicinity of the Reserve and many of these people have dogs. Daily, before and after work, neighbours meet in the Reserve with their dogs to socialise.
- There are also a number of mobility-impaired residents with dogs who live in the immediate vicinity of the Reserve. These residents rely on the relatively easy and safe access to the Reserve to socialise with neighbours and exercise their dog. They are not able to access the dog-off-leash beach nor the other off-leash Reserves further afield because they are wheelchair users and/or frail.
- Although there is a very small sign advising that dogs must be on leashes in TT Buckingham Reserve, in practice this has not been enforced. We gather that one member of the public has complained to the City of Port Phillip and requested Rangers enforce bylaws regarding dogs and leashes. Temporary signs were recently affixed to sign posts and poles around the Reserve referring to the requirement for dogs to be leashed.
- Dogs are permitted off-leash at the other Reserve in the Fishermans Bend Estate, Julier Reserve. We see no reason why families and residents around our Reserve should be treated differently.

We hereby request that:

1. Users of TT Buckingham Reserve be allowed to continue to use the Reserve as a social hub and for their dogs to be allowed in the Reserve off-leash.
2. Disabled residents be given the opportunity to easily access an off-leash area for their dogs – thereby enabling them to socialise with their neighbours.

OFFICER COMMENT

Buckingham Reserve

Buckingham Reserve is local reserve in Port Melbourne's Garden City neighbourhood which primarily serves the local community. The reserve includes a large open area with a cricket pitch in the centre of the reserve ringed by a paved pathway and a playground in the south west corner of the reserve adjacent to the pathway. The areas to the four sides of the central open area and playground to the adjacent streets are interspersed with mature trees. As part of the 2018-2019 budget money has been allocated for design work for upgrades to the reserve, and construction is scheduled for 2019-2020.

The sports oval on the reserve is also regularly used by organised sports groups for training. Buckingham Reserve is currently not included as a designated off-leash area under Council's Order No. 3, Section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) The nearest off leash reserve is Julier Reserve, which is approximately 360 metres away to the east.



Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP)

In 2017 Council reviewed its Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) which included extensive community consultation on a broad range of issues including off-leash areas. One particularly relevant point of the community feedback was in response to the following question: “Do Dog off leash park areas provide a good balance for all users?”

1511 (86.8%) respondents reported “Yes” with 230 (13.2%) reporting “No”.

Of the “No’s”:

- 58 (3.2%) wanted more off leash areas
- 50 (2.8%) wanted more safe / appropriate / fenced off-leash areas

Most of the comments provided related to issues with mixed use parks and reserves in general (e.g. off leash / sports fields / playgrounds etc.), and the need to fence dog off leash areas.

The DAMP does not include actions to investigate further off-leash areas within the municipality other than in a portion of the St Kilda Botanical Gardens and along various sections of the beaches. (Low-Medium priorities)

Council can make an order by resolution imposing conditions on the presence of dogs in any public place of the municipal district, including off leash areas and times, pursuant to Section 26 (2) of the Act.

An order made by the Council pursuant to S.26 (2) of the Act must be published in the Government Gazette and local newspaper.

Community consultation is important prior to considering any changes to Council’s current Order No.3, Section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994.

The DAMP includes an action to investigate fencing on Council owned and managed reserves as part of Council’s development of the new Public Space Strategy. (Medium priority)

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

Notes resident’s desire to have Council include Buckingham Reserve as a designated off-leash area under Council’s Order No. 3, Section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994.

Endorses the following action plan in response to the petition:

1. Concurrently consult with the local community, including users of the reserve and sports clubs, on the request to make the reserve a dog off leash area when public consultation occurs on the upgrades to the reserve in 2018-2019.
2. Investigate opportunities to support universal access and implement accessibility improvements in the reserve through the design of the upgrades to the reserve in 2018-2019.
3. Advise the petition organiser Mr Charlie Heerey of the action plan and any subsequent developments and outcomes as they arise.

TRIM FILE NO: 16/16/36
ATTACHMENTS Nil