

10.3 Starkey Reserve Off-Leash Dog Area

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose

To report on the outcomes of community consultation on a proposed fenced unleashed dog park at Starkey Reserve, Starkey Street, Killarney Heights and recommend allocation of funding for fencing in existing unleashed dog exercise areas.

Summary

On 27 September 2011 Council resolved to proceed with initial consultation and basic concept design of a fenced unleashed dog park located at Starkey Reserve, Starkey Street, Killarney Heights, and to provide a recommendation within six months including project requirements and costings before proceeding to design and construction. Consultation on the proposal was undertaken from 14 November to 5 December 2011. 88 submissions were received from individuals and three petitions were provided. Generally, the community did not support creating an unleashed dog exercise area in Starkey Reserve. This use, mixed with an existing playground at the site, is also inconsistent with Council's *Dog Control, Free-Run Areas Policy*.

Financial Impact

\$25,000 has been allocated for the design and construction phase of this project. It is recommended that this money be utilised to provide fencing and water supply at the existing unleashed dog exercise area at Currie Road, Forestville.

Policy Impact

The recommendation of this report is consistent with Council Policy *Dog Control, Free-Run Areas*.

**RECOMMENDATION OF DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER
COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

- A. That an unleashed dog exercise area not be provided at Starkey Reserve.
 - B. That the funding previously allocated to the Starkey Reserve proposal be utilised for installation of fencing and water supply at the Currie Road, Forestville off leash dog exercise area.
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REPORT

Background

On 27 September 2011 Council resolved:

- A. *To proceed with initial consultation and basic concept design of a fenced dog park located at Starkey Reserve, Starkey Street, Killarney Heights*
- B. *Provide a recommendation within six months including project requirements and costings for Council to consider before proceeding to a design and construction stage of the project.*
- C. *That total expenditure of up to \$25,000 be allocated for the project from unexpended capital expenditure being brought forward from the 2010/11 budget.*

This report provides information on the outcome of the consultation and a recommendation on progressing the project.

Consultation

Consultation on a proposed unleashed dog exercise area at Starkey Reserve was undertaken from 14 November to 5 December 2011. This involved signage placed in Starkey Reserve, letters to over 300 residents surrounding the park and notification in the public comment section of Council's website. An information day was also held on site on the 27 November 2011 so neighbours, residents and users of the park could speak with staff about their issues with the proposal.

88 submissions were received from individuals and three petitions were provided, two in opposition and one in support of the proposal. 70 individuals objected to the proposal stating reasons such as, but not limited to:

- Park is too small;
- Too close to residential properties;
- Noise (barking) and pollution (faeces) concerns; and
- Conflicting use with families and children at the playground.

Submissions from 18 individuals were received in support of the proposal stating reasons including:

- Not enough areas in Warringah for unleashed dog activities;
- Area needed in Killarney Heights; and
- Save driving to other locations.

In relation to the petitions, 209 people objected, consisting of 139 Killarney Heights residents and 70 from surrounding areas, and 22 people supported the proposal, which consisted of 17 Killarney Heights residents and five from surrounding areas.

Report

Starkey Reserve currently contains a children's playground. The upgrade of this playground is a component of the draft capital works program for the 2012/13 financial year and is the subject of a grant application to the Federal Government's *Community Building Partnership Program*, anticipated to be announced in March 2012. Council and grant funding of \$120,000 has been included in the draft budget and will allow a high quality facility to be provided in Killarney Heights.

Starkey Reserve is the best park in this area of Killarney Heights to provide a playground as other surrounding neighbourhood reserves are too small.

Council's *Dog Control, Free-Run Areas* policy states that before Council will allocate an area as a free-run area for dogs it will ensure there is no conflict with other users of the area. The reserve is a relatively small area and the current playground equipment is not fenced. Given the current and proposed continuing use of the site as a playground area, it is considered there is potential for conflict between children and dogs. This could be structurally limited by either fencing the playground or a dog exercise area; however this would then significantly limit the area available for dog exercise or informal children's play, such as an area to kick a ball.

Across Warringah there are nine areas to exercise dogs off the leash at any time, including Curl Curl Lagoon, and four areas with restricted times. The area closest to Starkey Reserve of unrestricted time is at Currie Road, Forestville, and restricted access is available at Melwood Oval, Forestville, between 10pm and 8am weekdays and 10pm and 7am on weekends. Melwood Oval is less than two kilometres from Starkey Reserve and the Currie Road site is within three kilometres. Both of these sites are significantly larger than Starkey Reserve, being a minimum of four times the size.

Given that Starkey Reserve is a strategic site in terms of playground provision, that there is potential for conflict between dogs and children, the reserve is limited in size, and that there are existing off leash options within reasonable distance of Killarney Heights, creation of an off leash dog exercise area is not recommended.

To improve facilities for dogs in the Killarney Heights and Forestville area, it is proposed to provide fencing and supply water at the Currie Road unleashed dog exercise area. Fencing along the boundary of Currie Road and the reserve will improve safety for animals using the site and people passing to access the adjacent Forestville Playing Fields. The provision of a water supply point will also improve the amenity and facilities for dog owners and their pets.

Policy Impact

The recommendation of this report is consistent with Council Policy *Dog Control, Free-Run Areas*.

Financial Impact

\$25,000 had been allocated for the design and construction phase of a dog exercise area at Starkey Reserve. It is recommended that this money be utilised to provide fencing and water supply at the existing unleashed dog exercise area at Currie Road, Forestville.

Group Manager Parks Reserves & Foreshores

