



Presented to	Ordinary Meeting of Council 15 March 2022
Related to Item	CD22/8142 – Review of Dog Exercise Areas Response to Queries at the 8 March 2022 Agenda Briefing Forum regarding Dog On-leash at a section of Bicton Foreshore (Beach Street) identified as a possible Dog Swimming Area
Submitted by	Jeff Bird – Manager Natural Areas and Parks
Attachments	N/A

This Advice Note has been prepared in response to queries raised at the Agenda Briefing Forum on 8 March 2022 regarding the implications of an on-leash dog arrangement for an area of Bicton Foreshore (Beach Street) identified as a possible dog swimming location.

This information is provided on the basis that the community engagement undertaken by the City regarding this proposal related to a dog off-leash area, which may not have been consistent with the understanding of some of the residents that supported dog swimming at the location.

The City of Melville has 18 kilometers of foreshore and 200 parks. Dogs are allowed off-lead to exercise at over 130 parks which includes two areas where dogs are able to access the foreshore to swim in the general area, being an area approximately 260m in length along Burke Drive in Attadale (near Page Street), and The Strand in Applecross which is approximately 290m in length.

Dogs can be walked on leash on paths along the foreshore, but are not able to access the foreshore itself at those areas as it is prohibited, with the exception of the two areas mentioned above.

The Blackwall Reach Parade in Bicton has a very narrow foreshore with a local road separating private residences directly opposite. Other examples of similar foreshore settings include Canning Beach Road in Applecross and The Esplanade in Mount Pleasant. All of these areas only allow dogs on-leash on the path, with dogs prohibited on the foreshore reserve area.

If a location along Blackwall Reach Parade is changed from prohibited to a dog on-leash area, this will then give dogs and their owners full access to the foreshore beach area and subsequently the water.

This would result in dogs being able to swim in the river either on-leash or off-leash as the City only has jurisdiction to land above the high water mark. When dogs are exiting the water, they would be required to immediately be put on the leash or the owner will be in contravention of the on-leash requirements.

It is also relevant to note that there are alternative dog swimming areas in close proximity to the Bicton foreshore including Burke Drive in Attadale (2.2 kilometres away), Riverside Road in East Fremantle north of Zephyr Café (2 kilometres away), Leighton Dog Beach (4.5 kilometres away) and The Strand in Applecross (7 kilometres away)

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The environmental risks regarding the foreshore flora and the fauna on land and in the water still exist with an area being dog on-leash. The concerns raised by the community during the engagement process would also still be relevant for dogs on-leash, those being:

Responsible Dog Ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog faeces • Dog attacks • Chasing wildlife • Dog control • Dog confinement
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbance to Birdlife (Melville Bird Sanctuary) • Disturbance to marine life • Destruction of vegetation • Increased shark presence • Destruction of Flora
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family safety • Water sports and recreation disturbance (Kayaking, divers, swimming, fishing, paddle boards) • Increased usage • Tranquillity disturbance?
Proximity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential houses • Walkways and roads • Proximity to existing dog swimming areas (no requirement for more) • Noise pollution (dogs barking and fighting)
Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited parking • No toilets
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Period of consultation

The same opportunities would also apply for dog on-leash as identified by the community which noted that a dog swimming area on the Bicton Foreshore would provide:

- Alternative locations for dog swimming;
- Reduction of congestion at other dog swimming areas;
- Increased physical activity (people and dogs);
- Multi-use (walk and play);
- Accessibility (path);
- Proximity to local residents (walk to and from area); and
- Dog confinement (dedicated area).

The Swan River Trust and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) have provided feedback already regarding the unsuitability of the Bicton foreshore as dog exercise areas.

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City officers have reviewed dog on-leash arrangements regarding the implications of the Bicton foreshore dog swimming areas being changed to a dog on-lead area, and conclude the following:

- The presence of dogs along the foreshore at these locations would deter the use by wildlife for feeding, breeding or resting whether on-leash or off-leash. These endemic fauna species would be displaced to other areas.
- There is still the risk of dog attacks on wildlife while dogs are off-leash in the water
- Dogs and their owners may inadvertently trample and degrade fringing vegetation in accessing the foreshore and water's edge, with consequential impacts on foreshore stability.

In considering the factors above, officers have concluded that the Bicton foreshore areas are unsuitable as either a dog on-leash or dog off-leash area and that the use for dog entering the water and/or swimming would adversely impact on the wildlife that frequent these areas and undermine biodiversity and ecosystem values.