

**Item No:** C0518 Item 6

**Subject:** DOGS IN PARKS-ELLIOT PARK AND BALMAIN COVE COMPANION  
ANIMAL REVIEW

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### **SUMMARY**

This report details the outcomes from the recent public survey undertaken to assess the potential public support for the establishment of an off leash companion animal area in Elliot Park and Balmain Cove, Rozelle. The report highlights the results of community engagement to date and recommends that an off leash trial period is held within the subject parks for a trial period of six months. An evaluation process will be undertaken towards the end of the trial period to assess residential and park user views. In addition, compliance and companion animal ranger presence will be present within the subject parks for the purposes of monitoring, education and compliance. The evaluation process will be reported back to Council at the end of the trial period with a recommendation pertaining to the future on or off leash status of these parks.

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

- 1. Council proceed with an off leash trial period in the areas highlighted in Attachment 3 at Elliot Park and Balmain Cove for a period of six months commencing from 1 June to 1 December 2018;**
  - 2. Council carry out an evaluation on the level of support for making the trial areas permanent at the conclusion of the trial period; and**
  - 3. Following the completion of the evaluation trial period, a further report on companion animal access at Elliot Park and Balmain Cove be brought back to Council for further consideration.**
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### **BACKGROUND**

In 2016 the former Leichhardt Council resolved to undertake a review of companion animal access to Balmain Cove and Elliot Park in Rozelle. On the 12 April 2016, Council resolved:

*That Council review companion animal access to open space for Elliot Park, Rozelle as a part of the formal review of companion animal access to open space for the Leichhardt Local Government Area, scheduled for July 2017.*

Presently both Balmain Cove and Elliot Parks are designated on leash areas for companion animals. The nearest open space within close proximity for off leash exercise is Bridgewater Park (refer to Fig 1.0).



Fig 1.0 Site Location Balmain Cove and Elliot Park

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Council will need to design and install companion animal access signage for the trial period. The costs associated with this signage is approximately \$1,000.

## **OTHER STAFF COMMENTS**

Council's Compliance Section-Animal Services has been consulted on the proposed trial period.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

On 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017 Council launched a public survey on its Your Say Inner West website advertising a review of companion animal access in Elliot Park and Balmain Cove. A total of 1,700 flyers were distributed to residential properties within the Balmain Cove area and the public survey was also advertised in the respective park areas. The survey ran through to the 4<sup>th</sup> February 2018.

A copy of the flyer advertising the review is attached (***refer to Attachment 1***).

In total 574 people viewed the survey project page with a total of 239 people completing the public survey. In addition Council received four written submissions in relation to the survey. A summary of these submissions is attached (***refer to Attachment 2***).

During the survey process a petition with 27 signatures was also received, requesting that Council maintain the current on leash conditions within the two parks.

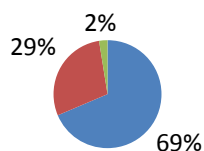
## Dogs in Park Survey Analysis

**Table Total Number of People Who Responded to the Survey.**

Reason for visiting	#	%
Visit with dog	164	69%
Visit for other reason	69	29%
Don't visit	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>239</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Reasons for visiting

■ Visit with dog ■ Visit for other reason ■ Don't visit

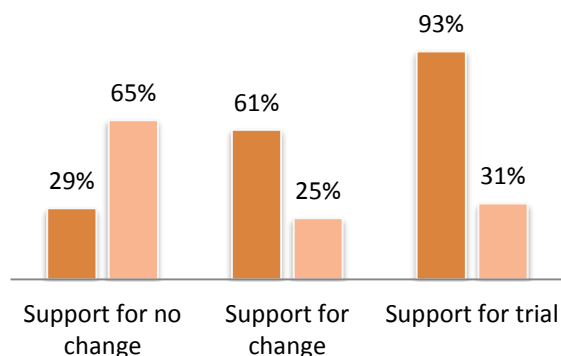


**Table Comparison of Support for Change: Visitors with Dogs and Visitors Without Dogs.**

	Visitors with dogs	Visitors without dogs
Support for no change	29%	65%
Support for change	61%	25%
Support for trial off-leash	93%	31%

### Review of dogs in parks Elliot Park and Balmain Cove

■ Visitors with dogs ■ Visitors without dogs



Based on the outcomes of the public survey and the support received for an off leash trial period, Council officers are recommending that Council proceed with the implementation of a six month off leash trial at Balmain Cove and within Elliot Park. The areas recommended for the trial period are highlighted in **Attachment 3**

Should Council support the implementation of an off leash trial period further community engagement and an evaluation of the trial will be held. Evaluation will include the following: included the following:

- an evaluation survey on Inner West Your Say web site.
- letterbox drop to residents adjacent to the trial area informing them of the off leash trial and evaluation process;
- a designated email address will be set up for feedback during the duration of the trial; and
- promoting awareness of the evaluation through Council Column and media release.

## **CONCLUSION**

Support for an off leash trial for companion animal access improvements at Elliot Park and Balmain Cove has been well supported by the community. The public engagement process to date has highlighted significant support for an off leash trial period. Moving forward an off leash trial period is recommended for a period of six months following which further community engagement will be undertaken with respect to community views on making the trial areas a permanent arrangement within the subject parks.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Community Engagement Flyer
2. Summary of Public Submissions
3. Proposed On and Off Leash Trial Area