

Attachment 7: Station Beach Dog Off-Leash Area Proposed Trial, Overview of feedback from community groups (received during engagement 16 November 2018 to 28 February 2019 and 14 June to 12 July 2019) and responses.

Community Feedback (summarised by theme)	Response
<p>Safety</p> <p>1) This will turn the whole of Station Beach into a “Dog Beach” to the exclusion of other users.</p> <p>2) REF 2019 is inadequate with regard to addressing safety concerns where young children and the elderly. Saying it is dependent on dog owners is unmanageable.</p>	<p>1). The proposed off-leash area is using approximately 520 metres of the southern section of Station Beach only and at these restricted days and times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4:00pm to 10:30am, Monday to Sunday (Australian Eastern Standard Time, non-daylight saving period). • 5:30pm to 10:30am, Monday to Friday (Australian Eastern Daylight Time, daylight-saving period, summer). • Dogs prohibited on Station Beach outside these days and times. <p>2). People taking their dogs to this trial area, and Council’s other off-leash areas, are required to abide by the conditions of use of the off-leash area as prescribed by Council and the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i>.</p>
<p>3) Doesn’t the proposed morning and afternoon off leash times coincide with many other people, including families, use the beach? Won’t this lead to inevitable conflict.</p>	<p>3) The proposed trial days and times have been set to provide suitable times for walking a dog and to minimise impacts on other use. For example the off-leash area will not be available on weekends in the summer - the busiest time of the year at Palm Beach. To ensure that there is broad community awareness of these days and times they will be widely advertised on-line and on signage at Station Beach.</p>
<p>4) Why does the REF 2019 ignore current practice where dogs are let off-leash from the Beach Road car park and run directly onto the beach, often approaching families, visitors, tourists, without regard for safety</p>	<p>4) Dog owners will be required to have their dogs restrained with a leash until they reach the off-leash area.</p>
<p>5) Why has there been no risk analysis of the golf course in respect of the trial.</p> <p>6) Why has fencing, public safety concerns and conflict been ignored.</p>	<p>5), 6) A risk assessment has been carried out in regard to the trial and the adjacent Palm Beach Golf course. Following consideration of the assessment and the current management of risks of open spaces adjoining other golf courses, at Mona Vale and Long Reef, it is proposed to install specific signage along the beach edge of the Palm Beach Golf course for beach users.</p> <p>Prior to and during the trial visitation audits will be conducted. This data will inform a review of the risk assessment that will be conducted during the trial. If required other measures may be considered such as fencing.</p> <p>The Palm Beach Golf Club do not oppose the trial.</p>

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<p>Compliance</p> <p>7) The REF 2019 raises concerns over compliance, mainly around dog owners not observing signage, times, dog swim area – isn't this trial therefore doomed to fail having wasted significant resources?</p>	<p>7) Council effectively manages our community's compliance with the <i>Companion Animal Act 1998</i> including at 29 existing dog off-leash areas, some of which have water access. This process of management will be implemented at Station Beach.</p>
<p>Dog Faeces and Health Risk</p> <p>8) REF 2019 concedes there will be a substantial loss of amenity and health risk. Beach may ultimately be rendered not suitable for swimming.</p> <p>9) The REF 2019 assumes all dog owners will collect their dog faeces. Is that contrary to evidence from other dog parks, creating genuine health and pollution concerns.</p>	<p>8) Environmental monitoring and reporting, including of seagrasses and water quality, will be conducted as required in the REF 2019.</p> <p>9) Staff have observed that dog owners generally pick up after their dogs. During the trial Council rangers will conduct regular patrols to encourage compliance and information sessions will be held on-site about trial conditions including about the importance of picking up after dogs.</p>
<p>Environment</p> <p>10) REF 2019 states adherence to the Pittwater LEP is not required however, adherence to the E2 zoning is essential to save this sensitive environment from destruction. REF 2019 acknowledges <i>Posidonia australis</i> is a threatened sea grass species.</p> <p>11) This will leave a poor environmental legacy for the next generation.</p> <p>12) Why does the REF 2019 ignore the fairy penguins on Lion island and the nearby seal colony.</p>	<p>10) Off-leash dogs will be prohibited from the seagrass beds and the area with <i>Posidonia australis</i>.</p> <p>11) Environmental monitoring and reporting, including of seagrasses and water quality, will be conducted as required in the REF 2019.</p> <p>12) Council does not have evidence that the trial will impact marine life at Lion Island.</p>
<p>Mitigation Measures</p> <p>13). There are upwards of 30 mitigation measures listed within the REF 2019. This is completely unmanageable.</p>	<p>13). Council has the experience and resources to implement the REF's mitigation measures. For example some measures, such as compliance management of off-leash areas, are standard practise for the Council's operation of the Northern Beaches existing 29 off-leash dog areas. Some of these areas also have water access which Council manages.</p>

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<p>Low Tide</p> <p>14). To protect the seagrass beds, REF 2019 recommends no swimming at low tide. How will this be policed?</p>	<p>14). Council is not proposing dogs swim over the seagrass bed. Council will install 3 marker buoys 3 metres landward of the seagrass bed and a sign on the Station Beach Wharf to delineate the dog off-leash area.</p>
<p>High Tide</p> <p>15). At high tide there will be very little beach space for multiple users – won't this just lead to inevitable conflict and exclude other beach goers – highlights unsuitability of the site.</p> <p>16). Wasn't the purpose of the trial to allow continuous swimming access for off-leash dogs? If yes, why are we still considering this trial.</p>	<p>15). Station Beach does narrow significantly on king tides, however this will provide more area for dogs to swim.</p> <p>16). The proposed trial off-leash area will allow dogs to run in water on nearly all tides and prevent access to the seagrass beds. It is acknowledged that from time to time on certain tides there will be not enough water for dogs to swim.</p>

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<p>Visual Impact</p> <p>17). Installation of unsightly offshore boundary markers/piers to ensure no encroachment onto the sensitive seagrass area will not only be visually damaging but will also impede swimmers and watercraft. This is totally unreasonable and very costly</p>	<p>17). Council is proposing to delineate the eastern boundary of the trial off-leash area with three small marker buoys and a sign on the Station Beach wharf. The estimated cost of three buoys is \$1,500.</p>
<p>Marker Buoys</p> <p>18). Will they introduce a fresh set of maritime and recreational hazards.</p> <p>19) How many offshore boundary markers is Council proposing over the approximate 600 metre length of Buffer Zone Line?</p>	<p>18). NSW Roads and Maritime Services and Fisheries are supportive of the installation of marker buoys.</p> <p>19). See 17).</p>
<p>Size of proposed off-leash dog area</p> <p>20). Why are we considering taking up such a large proportion (50% or over 600 metres).</p> <p>21) Retain existing 80m Beach Road offset.</p>	<p>20). In accordance with Council's resolution, the size of the trial area was developed in consultation with Pittwater Unleashed.</p> <p>21). Agreed. The proposed on-leash area extends from Beach Road to the southern boundary of the off-leash area and is approximately 110 meters.</p>
<p>Impact on Local Residents</p> <p>22). Residents are concerned over parking, noise, pollution and the fact that currently the "No dogs" signage is ineffective.</p> <p>23). How will residents be assured that dogs will not invade private residents where there is no fencing.</p> <p>24). Why does the REF not measure the impact from the southern Beach Road carpark and Waratah Road and its impact on local residents.</p>	<p>22). It is acknowledged that some dog owners are currently accessing Station Beach.</p> <p>23). It cannot be guaranteed that off-leash dogs will not enter private properties. Any instances are to be reported to Council for investigation.</p> <p>24). The impact of traffic and parking on the local area and residents will be monitored throughout the proposed 12 month trial period.</p>

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25). If Station Beach cannot support continuous off leash swimming then alternate sites must be considered. The REF 2019 points to North Palm Beach – what is the status here?	25). Council's resolution was to only investigate Station Beach. However, in response to the requirements of Fisheries, a comparison of alternate ocean beach locations is to be investigated to determine the lowest environmental impact, concurrently with the trial, before a permanent location is approved. Fisheries has also recommended that Council consider Palm Beach (on the ocean side) amongst the ocean beach options.
26). Should we not await the outcome of the Council approved investigation into water parks for dogs and possibly re-purposing some of the existing 29 dog parks on the northern beaches?	26). Council resolved to investigate the suitability of Station Beach.
27). Why weren't the letters from the NSW Department of Industry dated 10 September and 15 November 2018, revealing their environmental concerns over the use of Station Beach, not made available to the public during the public consultation period when the Department provided permission to do so?	27). These letters will be made publically available with the report to Council.
<p>Size of off-leash area</p> <p>28) Introduction of 3 metre “buffers” is totally flawed and introduces a set of rules which will be administratively difficult – a “nightmare”</p> <p>29) Recommend changing the “buffer” approach to use one post at each end and possibly one in the middle located 5m to the shore side of the edge of the seagrass meadow. Management rule would then be <i>“If the posts are dry, the dogs are dry”</i>.</p> <p>30) Use the wharf as the northern limit, allowing a wharf pylon to be adopted as a tide marker.</p>	<p>28) See 16, and the 3 metre buffer marker buoys will clearly show the boundary of the off-leash area in the water for compliance and for the community.</p> <p>29) The most practical trial option arising from the REF 2019 is to establish an off-leash boundary three metres from the edge of the seagrass bed and that dog activity is permitted east of this line on restricted days and times. This option provides the most effective arrangement for Council to implement the mitigation measures required as it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows swimming at any tide whilst separating dogs from seagrass. • Provides a buffer between dogs and seagrass, limiting disturbance, and allows for seasonal variation in the edge of the seagrass. • Provides a clear boundary for the community and for rangers. <p>30) Agreed.</p>