

PART 3 (*continued*)

'Off-leash' areas - exercising principles of good governance in urban animal management

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Appendix A

Summary of previous community consultations on off leash dog exercise areas

In addition to the range of information on off-leash dog exercise areas (including community perceptions) within the Animal Management Section of Townsville City Council, two formal consultations have been carried out in recent years.

1. Telephone survey on proposed off-leash dog exercise areas (Free Run Area Report) 1999

This telephone survey of 202 residents of Townsville was carried out in September 1999, prior to the introduction of the trial off-leash dog exercise areas.

The respondents included a sampling of:

- female (51%) and male (49%) respondents;
- age groupings (from 15 years), with a weighted average age of 42 years;
- dog owners (53%) and non dog-owners (47%);
- longer and shorter term residents (with a weighted average of 23 years); and
- various suburbs of residency.

The findings are summarised below:

- a. the majority of respondents (77%) are in favour of off-leash areas with a small percentage (12%) not being in favour;
- b. the most important requirements included fencing (69%), open spaces (42%), signage (39%), lighting (33%), parking (29%) and supervision (26%);
- c. the preferred suburbs included Pallarenda, Mundingburra, South Townsville, Heatley and Rowes Bay, with parklands and beach areas being preferred locations;
- d. there was a high degree of acceptability of the proposed Pallarenda (77%) and Hermit Park (73%) sites;
- e. there was a preference for dog owner supervision (54%), rather than a full-time Council officer (18%), occasional (14%) or part-time council officer (10%);
- f. the majority of respondents are prepared to share public space with dogs (68%);
- g. the main concerns include fear of dog attacks (23%), owners not cleaning up (22%) and dislike of unrestrained dogs (11%);

- h. dog owners considered that their dogs are sometimes obedient (42%), absolutely obedient (34%), partially obedient (19%) or not obedient (5%);
- i. the potential usage of the off-leash areas was by 58% of respondents, with estimates of usage including 2-3 times per week (43%) and once per week (24%);
- j. most respondents (51%) indicated that they are willing to spend 5-10 minutes in travel time and others being willing to spend 10-20 minutes (38%). Few were willing to spend more than 20 minutes.

2. Townsville City Council's community consultation on dog management issues, August 1997

This community consultation on dog management issues, undertaken in July 1997 by the Community and Cultural Services Consultancy Unit was part of a broader consultation on key issues of concern to the Environmental Services Department of Townsville City Council. The survey included the provision of off-leash dog exercise areas in its scope.

Aims of consultation

The aims of the consultation on dog management issues were as follows:

- to gain further information on community perceptions in relation to dog management in Townsville; and
- to assist in developing performance indicators for Council's role in dog management.

Methodology

To achieve the above aims, consultation strategies included:

- a. a door to door survey of 600 residents across the central Townsville residential area. Households surveyed were spread across suburb groupings to give a reasonable representation from each suburb and neighbourhood. There was an almost equal representation of dog owners (51%) and non dog owners (49%);
- b. face to face interviews with 46 park users and people exercising dogs in five of the major parks in Townsville.

Where appropriate, some information in the full report has also been drawn from a previous survey on animal management, 'Managing Pets in Townsville', conducted through council's newsletter, *City Update*, in March 1996. In all, 583 residents responded to this mail out survey, the majority of whom were pet owners (68%).

Findings on off-leash dog exercise areas

Strong support was indicated for the provision of designated areas for exercising dogs without a leash, with 80% of respondents being in favour of the concept. A wide range of responses were received in relation to the most appropriate area or areas for this activity. The most common suggestions were as follows:

- isolated areas away from people;
- areas where fouling is not a problem;
- vacant land/open space;
- South Townsville reclamation area;
- fenced area with water for dog provided;

- some Pallarenda beach areas;
- designated fenced area in local park; and
- somewhere accessible to children who want to exercise their pets.

Residents who responded to the 'Managing Pets Survey' (an earlier survey carried out by the Council through City Update), also supported the concept of nominated dog exercise areas, with over half (58%) of the respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing with the provision of properly constructed, enclosed, leash free areas for dogs.

Appendix B

Questionnaire format

Hello, I'm from the Consultancy Unit in the Community and Cultural Services Department of Townsville City Council. I was wondering if you would be willing to help us by giving your views on the recently designated trial off-leash dog exercise area (*Cape Pallarenda Road or Hermit Park*). During the trial period, we are gathering feedback from residents using the off-leash dog exercise areas as well as those living in the vicinity. All information provided through this survey will be incorporated into a report for council, which will summarise the views of residents and will not identify any person. Thank you.

Name of Interviewer:

Place:

Date:

Gender of Interviewee: Male [] Female []

1. In which suburb do you currently live? _____

2. How long have you lived in the Townsville Region? (please tick a box)

- | | |
|----------------|------------------------------|
| Under 6 months | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| 6 - 12 months | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| 1 - 2 years | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| 2 - 5 years | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |
| over 5 years | [<input type="checkbox"/>] |

3. Would you mind telling me your age group?

- 15 - 19 years []
- 20 - 29 []
- 30 - 39 []
- 40 - 49 []
- 50 - 59 []
- 60 - 69 []
- 70 years and over []

4. How did you find out about the off-leash dog exercise areas? (please tick a box or boxes)

- TV []
- Townsville Bulletin []
- Free newspapers []
- Radio []
- Signage []
- Word of mouth []
- Other (please describe) []

5. Do you think that there should be further advertising of the trial off-leash dog exercise areas to ensure that the community is aware of this facility?

Yes [] No [] Other [] (please describe) _____

6. If so, do you have any suggestions as to how this may be done?

7. What times of the day are you normally using the off-leash dog exercise area?

- Weekdays before 9.00 am []
- Weekdays between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm []
- Weekdays after 5.00 pm []
- Weekends before 9.00 am []
- Weekends between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm []
- Weekends after 5.00 pm. []

8. How frequently are you using the off-leash exercise area?

- More than 5 times a week []
- 2 - 5 times a week []
- Once a week []
- Once a fortnight []
- Less than once a fortnight []
- Other (please describe) []

9. What do you think is good about the design and facilities in this trial off-leash dog exercise area, for example size, shade, signage and bins? (Please describe) _____

10. How would you rate the general amenity (design and facilities) of this area? (Please circle a marker from 1 to 5, with 1 being very poor and 5 being very good)



11. Do you have any suggestions for improvements, for example, an agility course? (please describe)

12. Has your dog attended obedience training?

Yes [] No [] Other [] (please describe) _____

13. How would you describe your dog's level of obedience?

- Always obedient []
- Most times obedient []
- Sometimes obedient []
- Rarely obedient []
- Never obedient []
- Other [] (please describe) _____

14. What type of supervision would you suggest for off-leash dog exercise areas?

- Self management by dog owners []
- Supervision by Council officers []
- Other [] (please describe) _____

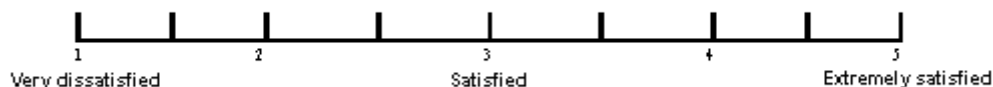
15. Public liability insurance is an aspect of providing off-leash dog exercise areas (in case of accidents caused by dogs not under effective control). How do you think the cost of this insurance should be covered?

- By dog owners (through registration)
- By Council (through rates)
- Not sure
- Other (please describe) _____

16. What do you see as the benefits of having off-leash dog exercise areas available in Townsville? (please describe)

17. What do you see as the disadvantages or concerns associated with off-leash dog exercise areas in Townsville? (please describe)

18. How would you rate your overall degree of satisfaction with the off-leash exercise area(s)? (Please rate from 1 to 5 with 1 as very dissatisfied through to 5 as extremely satisfied)



19. Do you think that there is a need for further off-leash exercise areas?

Yes No

20. If so, would you like to make any suggestions about possible locations?

21. Do you have any other comments in relation to the trial off-leash dog exercise areas? (Please describe) _____

Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

Appendix C

Sample monitoring of usage

In order to establish the number of interviews to be carried out with users of the trial off-leash dog exercise areas, visits were made to each area during April - May 2000. The following table records the number of people observed between 5 - 6 pm on each day.

Pallarenda			
Date	People with Dogs	Number of Dogs	Observations
16 April	31 adults, 1 baby	23	5 people walking and 1 jogging
20 April (near Easter holidays)	15 adults, 3 children	12	1 jogger and 2 walkers 3 adults and 2 dogs outside area 2 people did not pick up after dogs 2 people picked up after dogs
29 April	23 adults	22	7 adults and 1 child all walking 2 adults and 2 dogs outside off-leash area no bags available

Hermit Park			
Date	People with dogs	Number of dogs	Observations
19 April	6 adults, 2 children	8	1 stray dog 1 dog off-leash in street 2 people using part as short cut
1 May	9 adults	8	2 people taking short cuts 5 cars for people fishing in park/on road 3 people (2 groups) left with dogs on leash
4 May	10 adults	10	no comments

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