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# STATION BEACH DOG OFF LEASH AREA – PROPOSED TRIAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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FINAL REPORT

13 JUNE 2019



NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL

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13 JUNE 2019

### **Parkland Planners**

ABN: 33 114 513 647

PO Box 41  
FRESHWATER NSW 2096

tel: (02) 9938 1925  
mob: 0411 191 866

[sandy@parklandplanners.com.au](mailto:sandy@parklandplanners.com.au)

[www.parklandplanners.com.au](http://www.parklandplanners.com.au)

**DIRECTOR: Sandy Hoy**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background

Over many years local residents and community groups have advocated for the community to be able to access and enjoy foreshore areas with their dogs on the Northern Beaches.

Council resolved at its meeting on 26 June 2018 to undertake community consultation regarding a potential trial dog off leash area at Station Beach.

A range of key stakeholders have been consulted with prior to a decision being made about conducting the trial, including State government agencies which have responsibilities for the management of Station Beach and the Pittwater waterway. Such agencies are NSW Department of Industry-Lands and Water, NSW Department of Industry-Fisheries, and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

## Parameters of the trial

Council has proposed the following parameters for the off-leash trial at Station Beach, which is the basis for the community engagement undertaken from November 2018 to February 2019.

### Trial location

The trial would be undertaken on a specified section of Station Beach south of The Boathouse and north of Beach Road.

### Trial period

The proposed trial would be conducted over a period of 12 months. The exact dates of the trial will be determined following consideration of the feedback received during the community engagement undertaken from November 2018 to February 2019.

Should Council resolve for the trial to proceed, environmental monitoring would be undertaken and community feedback would be collected during the trial period.

### Trial days and times

It is proposed that the trial area would be available for dog off leash exercising and swimming at these days and times:

- ☐ 4:00pm - 10:30am, 7 days a week during Australian Eastern Standard Time
- ☐ 5:30pm - 10:30am, Monday to Friday during Australian Eastern Daylight Time (in the summer).

## Community engagement process

The 'Your Say Northern Beaches' project page and online submission form went live on Council's website on 16 November 2018. Between 'going live' and the closing date for submissions of 28 February 2019, Council undertook the following community engagement tasks:

- ❑ Notices in Council's column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the *Manly Daily* on Saturdays 17 and 24 November, 22 December, 12 January, and 9 and 23 February
- ❑ 17 and 24 November - advertisement in the *Manly Daily*
- ❑ 21 and 22 November - letter box drop to nearby residents
- ❑ 26 November - signs installed at Station Beach
- ❑ 28 November – notification emails to key stakeholders: Boathouse Café, Channel 7 Home and Away, Dunes, North Palm Beach SLSC, Palm Beach Golf Club, Palm Beach Surf Club, Palm Beach Whale Beach Association, Seven Network (Operations)
- ❑ 28 November, and fortnightly to the Community Engagement Register
- ❑ 29 November - drop in session at Palm Beach Golf Club 6-8pm (14 people attended, 10 listed on attendance register)
- ❑ 1 December - drop in session at Palm Beach Golf Club –2:30 to 4:30pm (8 people attended)
- ❑ media releases issued throughout the community engagement period.
- ❑ e-mails sent to people involved in recent dog-related projects
- ❑ Repeat emails sent to key stakeholders and community registers.

Feature articles were published in the *Manly Daily*, *Peninsula Living* and *Pittwater Life*.

Although not part of Council's engagement process, community organisations such as Pittwater Unleashed, and, towards the end of the engagement process, Protect Palm Beach publicised their particular viewpoint and provided the link to Council's online survey on their own Facebook page to encourage their members and followers to complete the survey.

## Submissions received

3,567 written submissions were received as follows.

Source	No. submissions	Comments
Your Say Northern Beaches online survey	3,536	3,786 total responses were received by Your Say Northern Beaches at the closing date of submissions. Analysis of the submissions showed that some people made more than one submission, with some people making 4 submissions each. The additional submissions were deleted from the database. 250 or 6.6% of the original submissions were multiple submissions.
Emails and letters	31	62 separate written submissions were made outside Your Say Northern Beaches. Some people completed the online survey at Your Say Northern Beaches as well as sent an email to Council. The number of emails counted does not include submissions that were also made to Your Say Northern Beaches. Letters were received from individuals, and groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Boat Owners Association</li> <li>- Newport Residents Association</li> <li>- Palm Beach Protection Group (3 submissions, counted as 1)</li> <li>- Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association (2 submissions, counted as 1)</li> <li>- Pittwater Unleashed</li> </ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,567</b>	

The responses received at Your Say Northern Beaches were from people who ‘self-selected’ themselves to respond to the online survey, and represent the views of those people only. Therefore, it cannot be implied that the online survey data, and any conclusions drawn from aggregating responses to the online survey, is representative of the views of the general community.

A submission received from the Palm Beach Protection Group included the results of a telephone survey of 400 people in Pittwater Ward, and a report on the impacts of off leash dog activity on seagrasses at Station Beach, both of which were commissioned by the Palm Beach Protection Group.

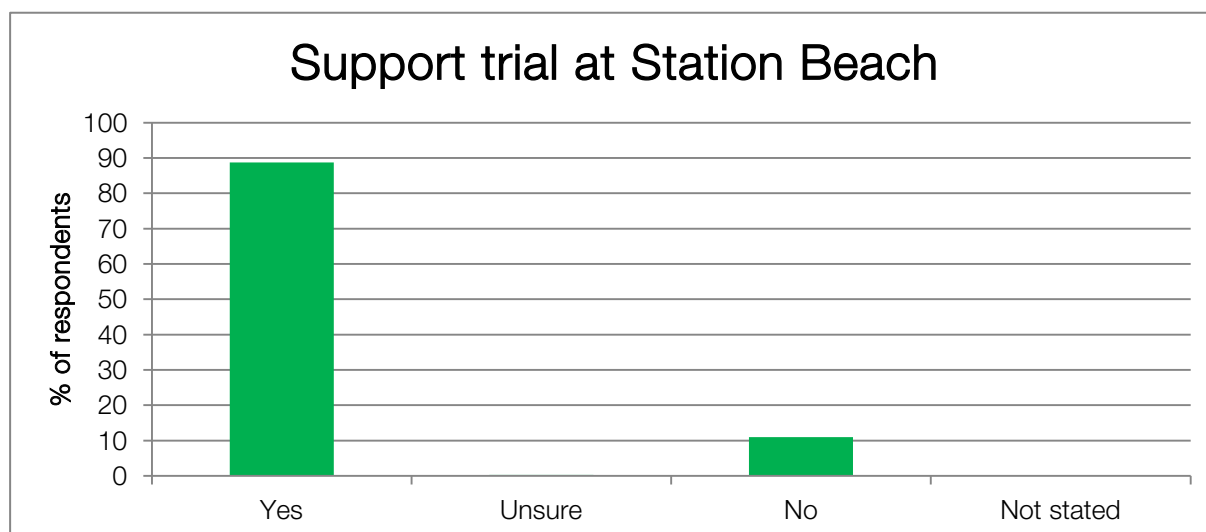
Groups that people commenting via Your Say Northern Beaches identified themselves with are Pittwater Unleashed 48, Pound Patrol 4, Manly Dogs 2, Sydney Wildlife 2, Animal Justice Party NSW Northern Beaches Regional Group 1, CABPRA 1, Dog Lovers Association – ACT 1, Dog Lovers United 1, Dogs Off Our Beaches 1, Free the Leash Foundation 1, Liberal Democrats 1, Living Ocean Incorporated 1, Northern Beaches Envirolink 1, Northern Beaches Greens 1, NB Off Leash 1, Palm Beach Protection Group 1, Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association 1, Sydney Whippet Owners 1, The Boathouse Group 1, and University of Technology Sydney – environmental and marine biologists 1.

Peninsula residents (Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Avalon / Avalon Beach and Newport residents) comprise 48% of respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches. Other Northern Beaches residents comprise a further 33% of Your Say Northern Beaches respondents. 19% of respondents to Your Say are from outside the Northern Beaches, as far afield as Tasmania. 408 respondents who may or may not be locals didn’t record their suburb.

## Views about the Station Beach trial

### All respondents

The Your Say Northern Beaches results show strong support for an off leash area on Station Beach (89% of respondents), but there are deeply felt and valid arguments on both “sides” which should be recognised.



It should also be noted that, among the wide ranging views even by supporters of an off leash dog area at Station Beach, Council’s decision will not satisfy the majority, let alone all, the people who support the trial.

## Place of residence

### Your Say respondents

Support for the trial by postcode is shown in the figure below.

88% of responses from Palm Beach, Whale Beach and Great Mackerel Beach residents were supportive of the trial. Some people living in other postcodes were more supportive of the trial.

Dog owners from outside the Palm Beach/Avalon/local area who live on the North Shore and north-west suburbs, are excited about their dogs using Station Beach, which conflicts with the desire of some locals for an off leash area at Station Beach for local use. Some local people fear that Station Beach will soon become overcrowded with people and dogs coming from elsewhere.

### Residents of Waratah Road, Palm Beach

10 residents/households living in the estimated 15 dwellings in Waratah Road responded to Your Say Northern Beaches or made a written submission. Of those 10 households, 7 or 70% are opposed to the trial because of reasons including:

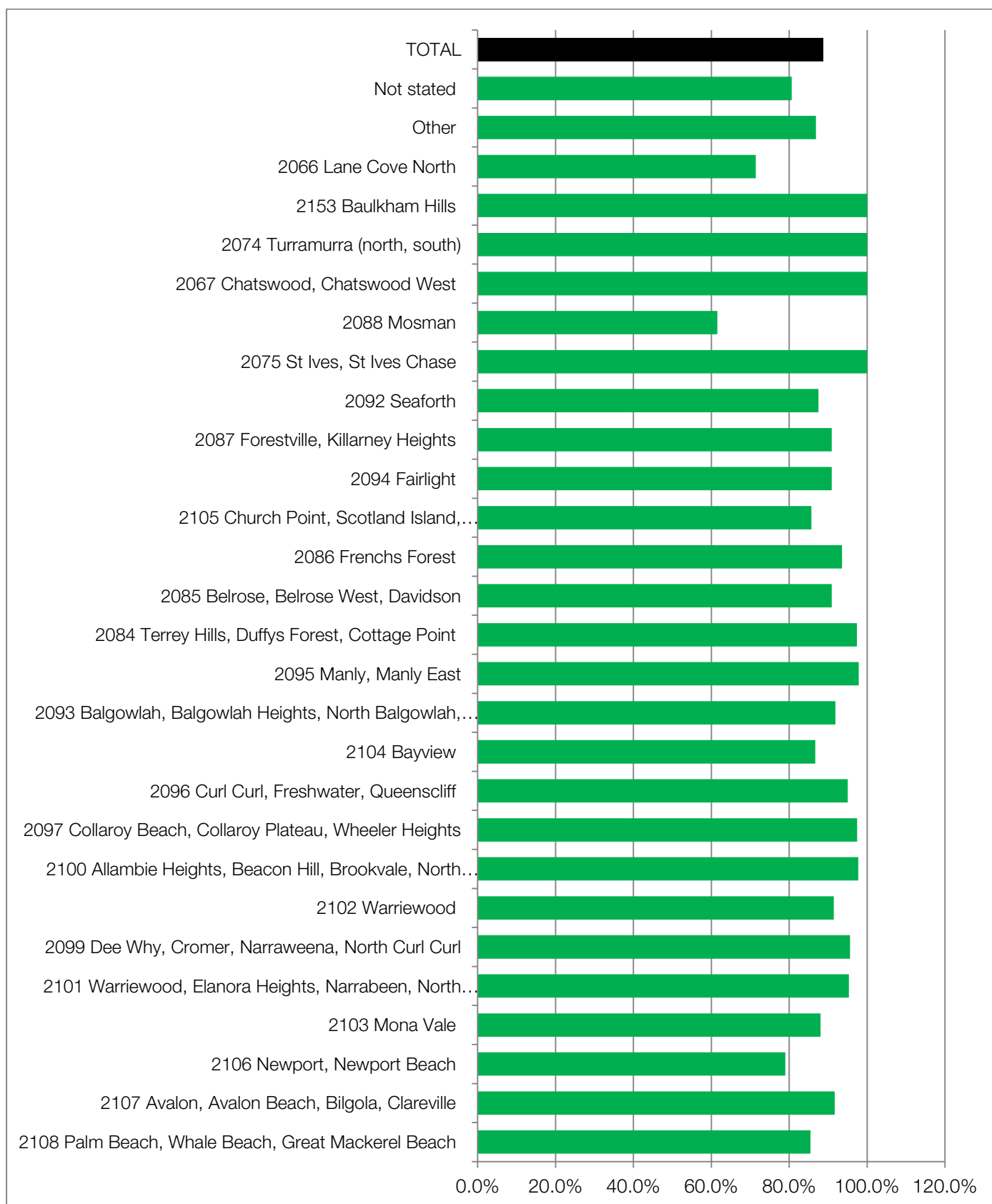
- ☐ limited vehicle parking spaces in Waratah Road and Beach Road
- ☐ people visiting Palm Beach park across their driveways
- ☐ noise from barking dogs, and owners and dogs entering their properties, are experienced regularly
- ☐ dogs may defecate and urinate in the water the residents regularly swim in.

## Reasons for supporting or opposing the trial

The reasons given by supporters and opponents for their viewpoint about the trial showed mainly two opposite points of view. In some cases tolerance for the other point of view was lacking.

Some dog owners do not approve of the trial because they think dog exercise should not occur on beaches, and some people who don't own a dog support the trial because they recognise the benefits of dog exercise in minimising nuisance barking and other undesirable behaviours.





## Summary of support for the Station Beach trial and parameters by postcode

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support Station Beach Trial		Support trial location		Support 12 month trial period		Support proposed days and times	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<i>Peninsula</i>										
2108	Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Great Mackerel Beach	316	270	85.4%	267	84.5%	259	82.0%	241	76.3%
2107	Avalon, Avalon Beach, Bilgola, Clareville	1,011	927	91.7%	919	90.9%	891	88.1%	836	82.7%
2106	Newport, Newport Beach	367	290	79.0%	286	77.9%	283	77.1%	258	70.3%
		1,694	1,487	87.8%	1,472	86.9%	1,433	84.6%	1,335	78.8%
<i>Other Northern Beaches suburbs</i>										
2103	Mona Vale	209	184	88.0%	180	86.1%	178	85.2%	152	72.7%
2101	Warriewood, Elanora Heights, Narrabeen, North Narrabeen, Ingleside	170	162	95.3%	157	92.4%	161	94.7%	146	85.9%
2099	Dee Why, Cromer, Narrabeena, North Curl Curl	137	131	95.6%	129	94.2%	127	92.7%	114	83.2%
2102	Warriewood	105	96	91.4%	97	92.4%	93	88.6%	88	83.8%
2100	Allambie Heights, Beacon Hill, Brookvale, North Manly	89	87	97.8%	86	96.6%	86	96.6%	70	78.7%
2097	Collaroy Beach, Collaroy Plateau, Wheeler Heights	78	76	97.4%	74	94.9%	73	93.6%	65	83.3%
2096	Curl Curl, Freshwater, Queenscliff	60	57	95.0%	57	95.0%	53	88.3%	47	78.3%
2104	Bayview	60	52	86.7%	51	85.0%	50	83.3%	43	71.7%
2093	Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, North Balgowlah, Clontarf, Manly Vale	49	45	91.8%	45	91.8%	44	89.8%	42	85.7%
2095	Manly, Manly East	47	46	97.9%	44	93.6%	43	91.5%	36	76.6%

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support Station Beach Trial		Support trial location		Support 12 month trial period		Support proposed days and times	
2084	Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest, Cottage Point	38	37	97.4%	36	94.7%	33	86.8%	28	73.7%
2085	Belrose, Belrose West, Davidson	33	30	90.9%	30	90.9%	28	84.8%	29	87.9%
2086	Frenchs Forest	31	29	93.5%	29	93.5%	29	93.5%	19	61.3%
2105	Church Point, Scotland Island, Elvina Bay, Lovett Bay, Morning Bay	28	24	85.7%	24	85.7%	18	64.3%	21	75.0%
2094	Fairlight	22	20	90.9%	19	86.4%	17	77.3%	17	77.3%
2087	Forestville, Killarney Heights	22	20	90.9%	20	90.9%	19	86.4%	16	72.7%
2092	Seaforth	8	7	87.5%	7	87.5%	7	87.5%	6	75.0%
<i>Outside Northern Beaches</i>										
2075	St Ives, St Ives Chase	22	22	100.0%	22	100.0%	20	90.9%	20	90.9%
2088	Mosman	13	8	61.5%	8	61.5%	7	53.8%	8	61.5%
2067	Chatswood, Chatswood West	8	8	100.0%	7	87.5%	7	87.5%	7	87.5%
2074	Turramurra (north, south)	8	8	100.0%	7	87.5%	8	100.0%	7	87.5%
2153	Baulkham Hills	7	7	100.0%	7	100.0%	7	100.0%	7	100.0%
2066	Lane Cove North	7	5	71.4%	4	57.1%	5	71.4%	3	42.9%
	Other outside Northern Beaches	183	159	86.9%	156	85.2%	152	83.1%	143	78.1%
<b>Not stated</b>		<b>408</b>	329	80.6%	320	78.4%	310	76.0%	293	71.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,536</b>	<b>3,136</b>	<b>88.7%</b>	<b>3,088</b>	<b>87.3%</b>	<b>3,008</b>	<b>85.1%</b>	<b>2,762</b>	<b>78.1%</b>

## Support

There was support for the trial from 89% of Your Say respondents.

Key reasons for supporting the trial are:

- ☐ it is about time/long overdue/the community has been waiting a long time
- ☐ the Pittwater Council decision to ban dogs on beaches should be relaxed or reversed
- ☐ need for another off leash area where dogs can swim north of Bilgola/Bayview/Newport as an alternative to take the pressure off the overcrowded and worn out Rowland Reserve at Bayview
- ☐ dog owners and dogs should have equitable access to open space, particularly beaches
- ☐ Station Beach is more pleasant and interesting than boring dog parks
- ☐ owners want to take their dog out with them as “part of the family”
- ☐ the proposed trial area is a small percentage of the Pittwater/Northern Beaches coastline
- ☐ more space allocated to dogs will reduce issues and complaints about dog behaviour
- ☐ off leash beaches work well without incident in many other places on the coasts of Sydney, NSW, interstate and overseas
- ☐ public health and safety risks from unleashed dogs are minimal and can be managed
- ☐ it would legalise off leash dog access to Station Beach which has been occurring for a long time
- ☐ dog owners are keen to show they are responsible for picking up faeces and controlling their dogs’ behaviour to ensure the success of the trial
- ☐ it would increase the use of Station Beach which is hardly used by the general public
- ☐ less road congestion and travel time for people living north of Bayview to access an off leash dog swimming area
- ☐ spending time with dogs has physical, psychological and social benefits for people
- ☐ benefits for people who don’t own or like dogs include that dogs will be confined to a specific area at Station Beach, and people like to see dogs enjoying themselves
- ☐ beaches are good for dogs to run, swim and have fun
- ☐ benefits for dogs through exercise and socialisation
- ☐ it is good for the local economy, especially for cafes, restaurants and shops in Palm Beach
- ☐ minimal impact on the natural environment (particularly seagrasses) and wildlife (particularly birds)
- ☐ minimal impact on adjoining residents
- ☐ it will be a legal place to exercise dogs away from the ocean beaches, where dog owners won’t be fined, and where dogs won’t upset the general public.
- ☐ it is “better than nothing” ie. it is a beach, but not a desired ocean beach.

## Opposition

People who don't support the trial (11% of Your Say respondents) oppose dog exercise on all beaches, or they don't agree with the Station Beach location.

Key reasons for opposing the trial are:

- ☐ opposition to allowing dogs on beaches in general, and at Station Beach in particular, stems largely from the negative experience(s) that opponents have had with dogs and/or irresponsible dog owners. Too many dog owners don't do the right thing by not picking up faeces after their dog, not watching and controlling their dog, letting the dog access restricted environmental or public areas, not complying with signs and off-leash area rules. Dog owners can be rude and hostile when people call out theirs or their dog's behaviour.
- ☐ the visual and recreational amenity of the beach would be spoilt. Dog activity and noise will interrupt and limit informal use of the beach for walking, swimming, watching sunsets, picnics, and running.
- ☐ a fear that Station Beach will become a "dog toilet" with smells and waste from faeces and urine.
- ☐ a precedent would be set for access for dogs to ocean beaches on the Northern Beaches.
- ☐ there are other alternatives to Station Beach for exercising dogs and for water access at Rowland Reserve, Careel Bay, and Curl Curl and Manly Lagoons.
- ☐ public safety concerns, particularly the fear of being harassed, attacked or bitten by dogs (especially on children and elderly people). Many people query Council's liability if someone is attacked and injured by a dog.
- ☐ fears for the safety of golfers from dogs on the golf course.
- ☐ safety of dogs from mis-hit golf balls and from other dogs on the beach.
- ☐ public health concerns from bacteria and parasites in dog faeces, and urine on the beach and in the water. Dog faeces attracts flies.
- ☐ some people are allergic to dogs.
- ☐ beach pollution from dog faeces, and litter from dog waste bags left on the beach.
- ☐ impact on the pristine and sensitive natural environment.
- ☐ damage to endangered seagrass beds at low tide.
- ☐ impact of dogs on wildlife, particularly migratory shorebirds and sand fauna such as crabs.
- ☐ existing traffic congestion and lack of parking in the local area, which would become worse with dog owners coming to the area.
- ☐ impact on the natural and cultural values of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park particularly Barrenjoey Headland.
- ☐ anger at dog owners in the minority of the community wanting the majority to accept dogs in more public places.
- ☐ unleashed dogs have been illegally taken on to Station Beach for years, annoying other beach users, diners at The Boathouse, and local residents.
- ☐ poor enforcement of the rules and the law in off leash dog exercise areas results in dog owners flouting the law and doing what they like.
- ☐ the impacts on local residents include noise from barking dogs, dog owners parking illegally, and intrusion of dogs into properties.
- ☐ Council has not released the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) so an informed view of the environmental impacts of the proposal is not possible.

- ☐ the trial parameters were set by Pittwater Unleashed and did not involve consultation with others in the community.

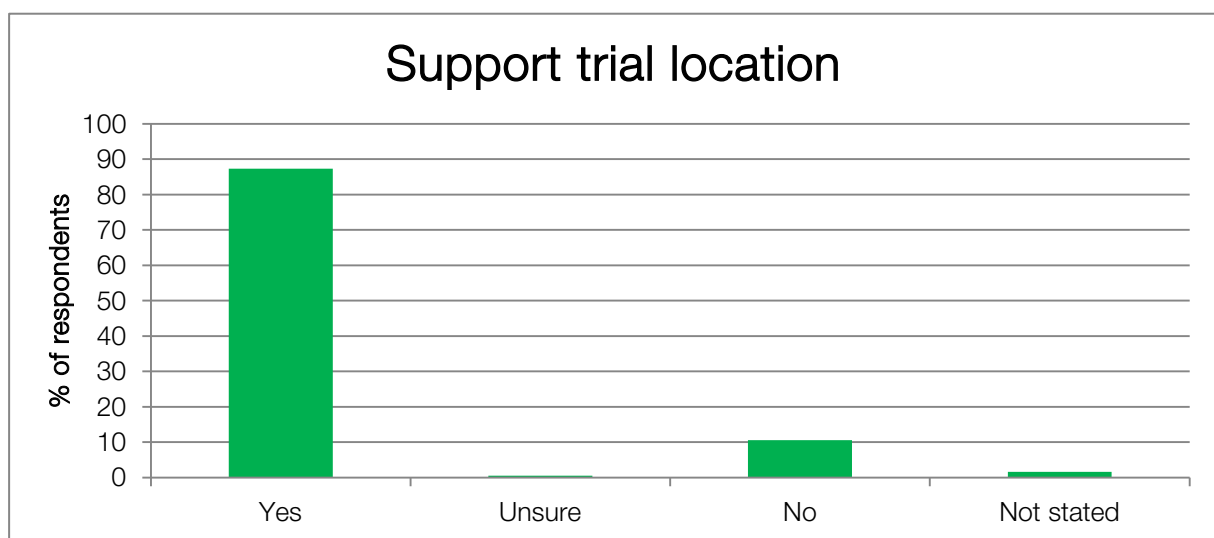
## Views about the trial location

**What are your thoughts on the proposed operational trial parameters:**

**Off-leash area between Beach Road and Boathouse café (see attachment 1).**

The trial would be undertaken on a specified section of Station Beach south of The Boathouse and north of Beach Road.

The trial location was supported by 87% of Your Say respondents.



In general, Station Beach is considered as a good/excellent/wonderful location or the perfect choice for dogs and owners to enjoy.

Reasons for supporting Station Beach as a suitable off leash exercise area are that it is:

- ☐ not a highly used public beach
- ☐ located next to the golf course
- ☐ not a good swimming area for people
- ☐ at the quiet end/stretch of Station Beach
- ☐ not affected by ticks
- ☐ not used by many people for sunbaking
- ☐ accessible for boat owners to let dogs off their boat for a run
- ☐ not next to houses
- ☐ a safe space for dogs, their owners and children, not near a busy road
- ☐ a place that allows the dogs to swim and run
- ☐ is a lovely place for dogs to swim, being relatively calm water
- ☐ next to The Boathouse
- ☐ small and local

- ☐ easy to get to
- ☐ a short distance to and from leashed areas and access and egress points
- ☐ a long stretch of sand which allows dogs to run and owners to exercise
- ☐ an excellent open area with a short width
- ☐ a consistently wide beach that doesn't decrease too much at high tide
- ☐ the tree lined strip offers shade
- ☐ allows dog owners to enjoy peaceful water and sunsets
- ☐ adjacent to the walking path
- ☐ close to home
- ☐ away from natural reserves
- ☐ a well contained area.

Suggestions for extending the proposed off leash area are to:

- ☐ extend the northern limit of the off leash area to The Boathouse / wharf
- ☐ start the off leash area from Beach Road
- ☐ include the whole/both ends of Station Beach
- ☐ start the off leash area from the car park and extend beyond The Boathouse
- ☐ open the southern end of the beach also
- ☐ extend the off leash area south to Palm Beach Wharf south of Sandy Point.

Some people think the trial area is too large. It should be limited to one off leash area away from The Boathouse with access for dogs further down the beach. The on leash area adjacent to The Boathouse should be extended so dogs do not disturb diners.

Opponents of the trial location (11% of Your Say respondents) say the key reasons to oppose the trial location at Station Beach are:

- ☐ the proposed area is a good start, but they would like the trial area extended north and/or south
- ☐ it is a favourite beach for families with young children
- ☐ dogs would not be off leash just in the designated area
- ☐ it is dangerous for unleashed dogs and people from wayward golf balls next to a golf course
- ☐ beach users will be annoyed by dogs
- ☐ it is too small and narrow with limited space for dogs to run
- ☐ dogs in water attract sharks
- ☐ there are no natural boundaries or fences
- ☐ there is inadequate parking
- ☐ dogs will annoy diners at the Boathouse
- ☐ spoils a beautiful location
- ☐ environmental reasons
- ☐ dogs will enter the golf course
- ☐ dogs will stray into seagrass beds
- ☐ an increased number of dogs and owners will increase the potential for accidents
- ☐ adjoining residents will be affected

- ☐ the proposed area is too far away
- ☐ there is no separate access to the off leash area
- ☐ it can hardly be considered as a beach.

## Views about the trial period

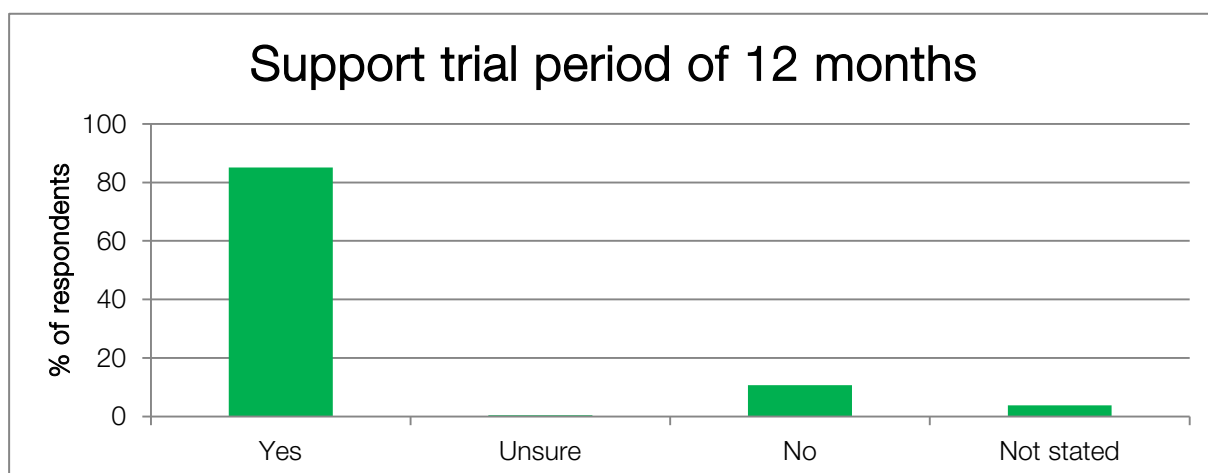
**What are your thoughts on the proposed operational trial parameters:**

- 12 months with restricted times

The proposed trial would be conducted over a period of 12 months. The exact dates of the trial will be determined following consideration of the feedback received during the community engagement period.

Should Council resolve for the trial to proceed, environmental monitoring would be undertaken and community feedback would be collected during the trial period.

There was support for the trial period of 12 months from 85% of Your Say respondents.



The trial period is seen as an opportunity to see how the trial works and the impacts of the trial.

11% of Your Say respondents do not support the 12 month trial period. Some people wanted a shorter trial period of 6 months, or no trial period by making Station Beach available for off leash dogs immediately.

## Views about the proposed trial days and times

**Proposed days and times of operation for off leash access:**

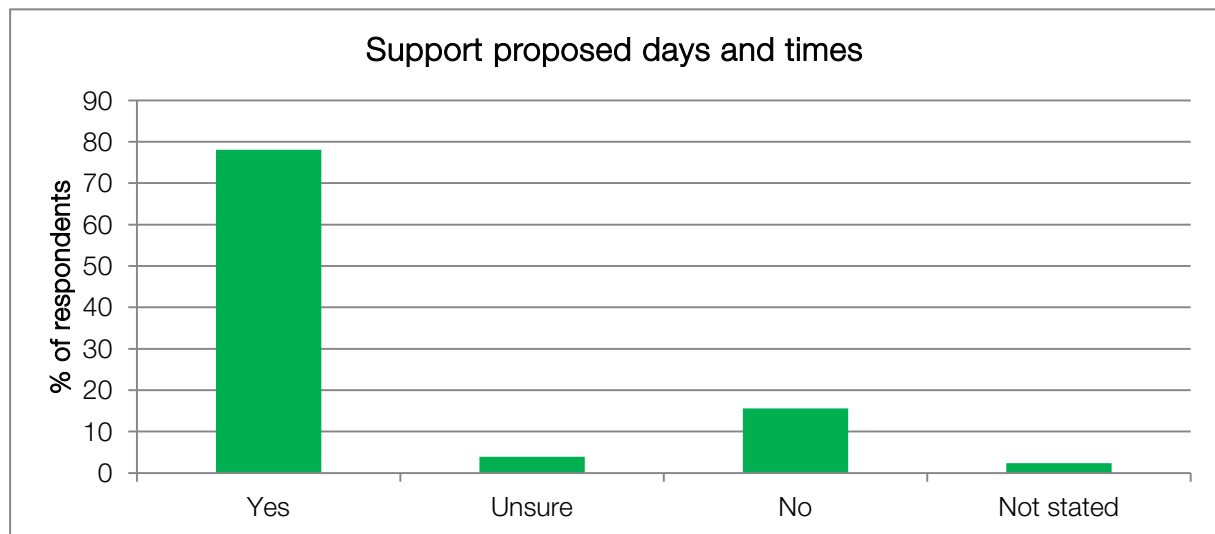
- ☐ 4:00pm – 10:30am, 7 days a week during Australian Eastern Standard Time
- ☐ 5:30pm – 10:30am, Monday to Friday during Australian Eastern Daylight Time (in the summer)

Dogs will not be permitted at Station Beach at all other times.



Respondents were less satisfied with the proposed days and times of operation than the other parameters of the trial.

Support for the proposed days and times of operation came from 78% of respondents to Your Say.



Many people who said they supported the proposed days and times in fact proposed alternative days and/or times, so these suggestions are included in the discussion below.

The key reason for supporting the proposed days and times is that they are better than no time at all for off leash dogs to access Station Beach.

Other reasons for supporting the proposed days and times include:

- ☐ successful time sharing of beaches is common elsewhere
- ☐ it is a fair solution for sharing this beautiful location to keep everyone happy so everyone can enjoy the beach
- ☐ local residents want the limited timed access to enable locals to take their dogs to Station Beach, but discourage out of area visitors especially on weekends to reduce the numbers of people using the area
- ☐ the proposed times are well thought out and pragmatic
- ☐ needs of dog owners and other beach users can be balanced
- ☐ time sharing is an excellent compromise
- ☐ agreed times are a good idea so people who are uncomfortable around dogs will be aware of when they will expect to encounter dogs on the beach
- ☐ being grateful for the trial to legally take their dog on the beach
- ☐ the proposed times are reasonable and should keep numbers of people and dogs on the beach down and therefore less impact on the beach
- ☐ dog friendly hours will encourage locals to get up and exercise before work and support physical and mental health.

A condition of support for the proposed days and times is that dogs are on the beach only within the time limits. The off leash times should be policed at the outset of the trial so people stick to the times. Otherwise people who come to Palm Beach for holidays or weekends think the rules don't apply to them which will ruin it for locals.

Nearly 20% of Your Say respondents oppose or are unsure about the proposed days and times of operation of the trial at Station Beach. The proposed days and times are a good start, but

many people would like to see the days and times increased. Many people want 24 hours 7 days a week access. Others want the days and times extended in various ways, such as:

- ☐ earlier or later start and finish times in the morning and evening
- ☐ proposed times but 7 days a week
- ☐ 24 hours a day on weekdays only
- ☐ all day/daylight hours
- ☐ weekends as well as weekdays in daylight saving
- ☐ longer hours in winter.

There is concern that allowing dogs on the beach at dusk, overnight and at dawn will affect native wildlife, bird foraging and roosting, and increase the risk of shark attack.

Opponents of the trial are concerned that the proposed times conflict with informal use of the beach in the mornings and late afternoons.

## Suggestions for ensuring the success of the Station Beach trial

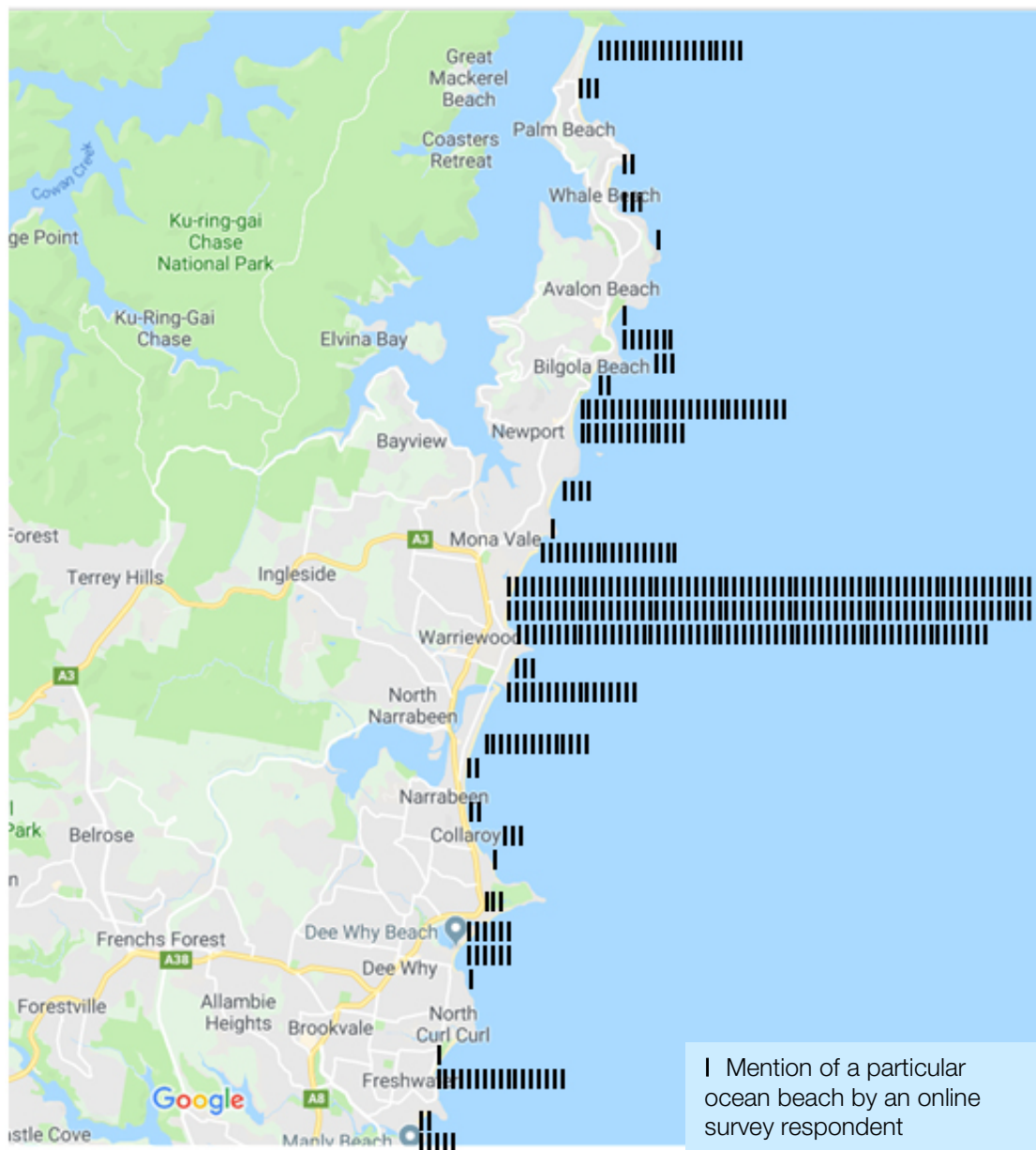
Numerous suggestions were made to help make the Station Beach trial work to show people opposing the trial that it can succeed. The suggestions are to provide:

- ☐ sufficient biodegradable dog waste bags and bins at the north, middle and south of the trial area
- ☐ adequate public parking
- ☐ large and clearly legible signs with the off leash area, hours, and fines clearly communicated
- ☐ fences between the beach and the golf course, and near The Boathouse and the wharf
- ☐ on-site rangers for education, enforcement and fines
- ☐ a payment/licence system to pay for implementation of the trial
- ☐ taps and hoses for rinsing and drinking, and water bowls
- ☐ clear definition of the off leash area
- ☐ improved access on to the beach
- ☐ closed circuit television (CCTV) to monitor picking up faeces and people attempting to take dogs on to the beach outside off leash hours
- ☐ a way to report people who do not pick up faeces after their dog
- ☐ a “traffic light” system so people are clear when dog access is on or off.

## Desire for other off leash areas

Many comments were not related to the questions asked in the online survey about the proposed trial at Station Beach. The common theme in those comments is that dog owners see Station Beach as a compromise, or a “stepping stone” towards gaining access to part or all of one, several or all ocean beaches in Pittwater/the Northern Beaches for off-leash dog exercise either part-time or full time.

South Mona Vale (most common) and north Newport Beaches were the most frequently mentioned beaches desired for off leash dog exercise as shown below.



Comments about existing off leash areas on the Northern Beaches were also made.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

### 1.1.1 Background to the trial

Over many years local residents and community groups have advocated for the community to be able to access and enjoy foreshore areas with their dogs on the Northern Beaches. Council recognises the benefits of off-leash areas to community well-being, including the community building aspect of owning a dog through meeting people and forming friendships at these areas. Council also recognises that the need to make provision for off-leash recreation has increased with a growing population and an increasing number of households with dogs.

Council resolved at its meeting on 26 June 2018 to undertake community consultation regarding a potential trial dog off leash area at Station Beach.

The wider community and a range of key stakeholders have been consulted with prior to a decision being made about conducting the trial. Such stakeholders include State government agencies which have responsibilities for the management of Station Beach and the Pittwater waterway.

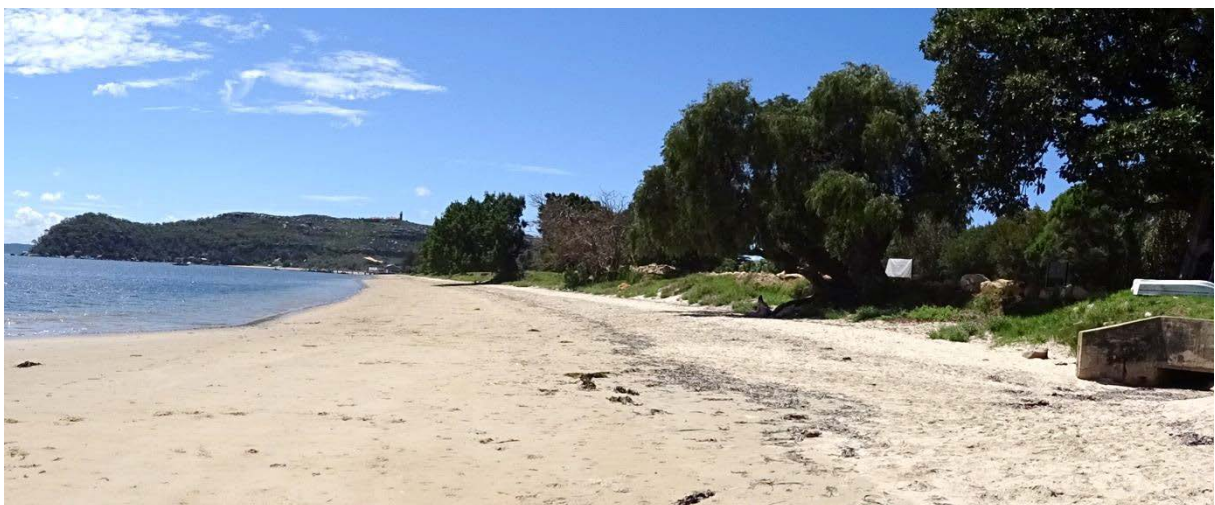
### 1.1.2 Parameters of the trial

Council has proposed the following parameters for the off-leash trial at Station Beach, which is the basis for the community engagement undertaken from November 2018 to February 2019.

## **Trial location**

The trial would be undertaken on a specified section of Station Beach south of The Boathouse and north of Beach Road – refer to Figure 1.

The proposed trial area is also shown in the photographs below.



Station Beach north from Beach Road



Figure 1 Concept Plan of Proposed Dog Off Leash Area at Station Beach







View south from mid trial area showing high tide mark



View north from mid trial area, with The Boathouse in the mid ground and Barrenjoey Headland and lighthouse in the background



Boundary between Station Beach and Palm Beach Golf Course



View south from Beach Road



View west to Great Mackerel Beach

## **Trial period**

The proposed trial would be conducted over a period of 12 months. The exact dates of the trial will be determined following consideration of the feedback received during the community engagement undertaken from November 2018 to February 2019.

Should Council resolve for the trial to proceed, environmental monitoring would be undertaken and community feedback would be collected during the trial period.

## **Trial days and times**

It is proposed that the trial area would be available for dog off leash exercising and swimming at these days and times:

- ☐ 4:00pm to 10:30am 7 days a week during Australian Eastern Standard Time
- ☐ 5:30pm to 10:30am Monday to Friday during Australian Eastern Daylight Time (in the summer).

The proposed times of operation would involve current use of the beach remaining unchanged during the day, and people with dogs being able to access the beach in the mornings and late afternoons.

Dogs would not be permitted at Station Beach at all other times.

### **1.1.3 Engagement with government agencies**

State government agencies with responsibilities for the management of Station Beach, the Pittwater waterway and adjoining land are:

- ☐ NSW Department of Industry – Lands and Water
- ☐ NSW Department of Industry – Fisheries
- ☐ NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service.

## **NSW Department of Industry – Lands and Water**

NSW Department of Industry – Lands and Water has provided Council with comments about the proposed trial at Station Beach, including:

- ☐ Station Beach has inherent environmental sensitivities due to the presence of an endangered species of offshore seagrass.
- ☐ to ensure the potential impacts on migratory shorebirds which visit the site are addressed, Council is encouraged to engage an ornithological consultant who is able to provide informed advice regarding the comparative significance of Station Beach to other sandy beaches in Pittwater, and whether the potential loss of habitat will impact Australia's three bilateral migratory bird agreements.
- ☐ given the environmental sensitivities of the site, the Department will require a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) to be prepared.

## **NSW Department of Industry – Fisheries**

The NSW Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries has no objections to the dog beach trial on Station Beach, provided that:



- ❑ signage is installed on the beach, stating that dogs must not be allowed to run through seagrass beds at low tide. Provide environmental information, advising that seagrass beds are present in the nearshore zone, including the endangered population of *Posidonia australis* (seagrass). Seagrass is important habitat for fish, providing shelter, food and a nursery for young.
- ❑ surveys of the seagrass are undertaken, showing species, distribution and density along Station Beach. The survey should be undertaken immediately prior to and immediately following the trial period.

## NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has indicated to Council that it does not have any concerns with this proposal, as long as it is clearly signposted that the Boathouse Wharf is the northern boundary of the off-leash area. Council will need to ensure compliance with the northern boundary to prevent off-leash dogs entering Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park to the north.

## 1.2 Purpose of this report

The purposes of this report are to:

- ❑ understand the level of community support for a trial of Station Beach as an off leash area.
- ❑ obtain community feedback on the parameters of a proposed trial.

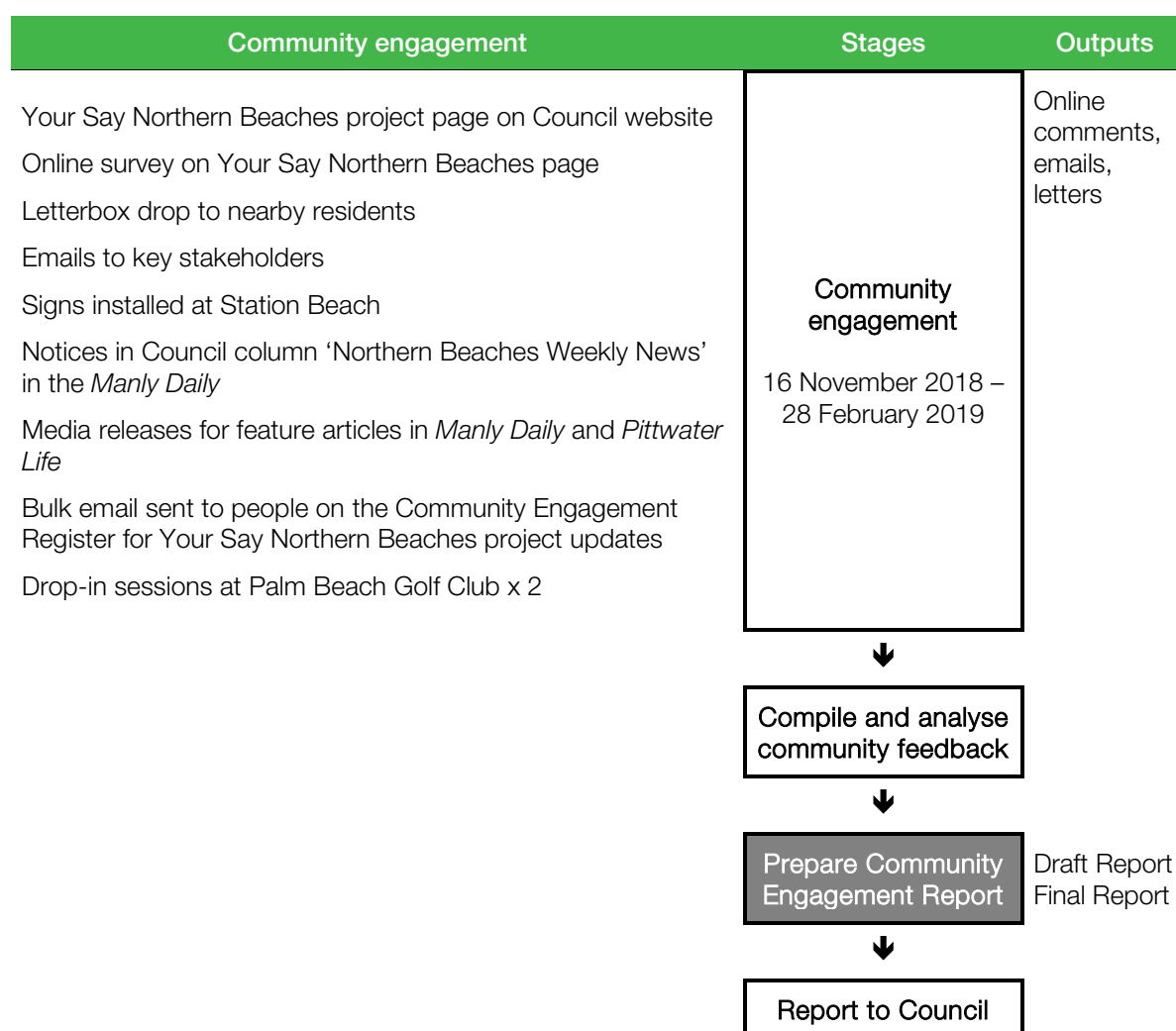
This report summarises and outlines in detail the outcomes of Council's invitation for submissions about the proposed dog off leash area trial at Station Beach, Palm Beach.

## 1.3 Process of preparing this report

### 1.3.1 Introduction

The process of preparing this report is as follows.

**Figure 2 Process of preparing this report**



## 1.3.2 Community engagement tasks

### Council

Throughout the community engagement period between 16 November 2018 and 28 February 2019 Council promoted and facilitated numerous opportunities for the community to comment on the proposals through the media and active participation.

**Table 1 Community engagement undertaken by Northern Beaches Council**

Date	Community engagement
Fri 16 Nov	<b>PUBLIC COMMENT BEGINS</b> YOUR SAY NORTHERN BEACHES PAGE AND ONLINE SURVEY GO LIVE Background information, answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs), and an online feedback form at 'Your Say Northern Beaches' <a href="http://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/stationbeachtrial">http://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/stationbeachtrial</a>
Sat 17 Nov	Notice in Council column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the <i>Manly Daily</i> Advertisement in the <i>Manly Daily</i>

Date	Community engagement
Wed 21 Nov	Letter box drop to nearby residents
Thur 22 Nov	Letter box drop to nearby residents
Sat 24 Nov	Notice in Council column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the <i>Manly Daily</i> Advertisement in the <i>Manly Daily</i>
Mon 26 Nov	Signs installed at Station Beach
Wed 28 Nov	Emails to key stakeholders: Boathouse Café, Channel 7 Home and Away, Dunes, North Palm Beach SLSC, Palm Beach Golf Club, Palm Beach Surf Club, Palm Beach Whale Beach Association, Seven Network (Operations). Emails sent to the Community Engagement Register and to people involved in recent dog related projects
Thur 29 Nov	Drop in session 1 at Palm Beach Golf Club 6-8pm (14 people attended, 10 listed on attendance register)
Sat 1 Dec	Drop in session 2 at Palm Beach Golf Club – 2:30 to 4:30pm (8 people attended) Notice in Council column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the <i>Manly Daily</i>
Fri 7 Dec	Bulk email sent to people on the Community Engagement Register for Your Say Northern Beaches project updates
Fri 21 Dec	Bulk email sent to people on the Community Engagement Register for Your Say Northern Beaches project updates
Sat 22 Dec	Notice in Council column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the <i>Manly Daily</i>
Fri 11 Jan	Bulk email sent to people on the Community Engagement Register for Your Say Northern Beaches project updates
Sat 12 Jan	Notice in Council column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the <i>Manly Daily</i>
Fri 25 Jan	Bulk email sent to people on the Community Engagement Register for Your Say Northern Beaches project updates
Fri 8 Feb	Bulk email sent to people on the Community Engagement Register for Your Say Northern Beaches project updates
Sat 9 Feb	Notice in Council column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the <i>Manly Daily</i>
Fri 22 Feb	Bulk email sent to people on the Community Engagement Register for Your Say Northern Beaches project updates
Sat 23 Feb	Notice in Council column 'Northern Beaches Weekly News' in the <i>Manly Daily</i>
Thur 28 Feb	<b>SUBMISSION PERIOD CLOSED</b>



Sign on Station Beach near The Boathouse

Media releases were issued by Council throughout the community engagement period. Feature articles were published in the *Manly Daily* and *Pittwater Life* as follows:

- ❑ 'Council has dropped off-leash lead' *Pittwater Life* November 2018
- ❑ 'Council hounded into action on Station Beach' *Pittwater Life* January 2019
- ❑ 'Off leash at Station Beach: Your Say' *Pittwater Life* February 2019
- ❑ 'Battle lines drawn on dog beach plan' *Manly Daily* 27 February 2019
- ❑ 'Barking up the right tree' *Manly Daily* 23 March 2019.

Refer to Appendix B.

Interested people could provide their comments by 28 February 2019 by:

- ❑ completing the online feedback form at Your Say Northern Beaches
- ❑ email to [council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au)
- ❑ post to Northern Beaches Council at PO Box 82, Manly, NSW 1655.

## Community groups

Community organisations such as Pittwater Unleashed and Protect Palm Beach frequently publicised their particular viewpoint and provided the link to the online survey on their Facebook pages to encourage their own members and followers to complete the survey.

Figure 3 Examples of Council notices

### Council notices

**16 Cliff St, Manly - re-notification of development consent**  
MOD2018/0465 - on Fri 31 Aug 2018, approval was granted for alterations and additions to a dwelling house. There was a typographical error in our advertisement in the Manly Daily on Sat 10 Nov 2018.

**Northern Beaches Local Planning Panel**  
Wed 21 Nov, 1pm  
Civic Centre, Dee Why

Item 3.1 - DA2018/1533 - Stirlings Ave, Curl Curl - alterations and additions to a recreational facility (outdoor) to provide two coaches boxes adjacent to grandstand.

Item 3.2 - DA2018/1109 - 36-38 South Steyne, Manly - stratum subdivision (associated with the airspace above the adjacent road reserve).

Item 3.3 - DA2018/1246 - Clontarf St, North Balgowlah - subdivision of land.

Item 3.4 - MOD2018/0470 - 22-26 Roseberry St, Balgowlah - modification of Development Consent DA300/2016 granted for demolition works, consolidation of three lots into one, construction of two shops including an Aldi store and signage.

Item 3.5 - DA2018/1325 - 25 Brinawa Rd, Mona Vale - demolition works and construction of an attached dual occupancy.

Item 3.6 - DA2018/0607 - 29-31 Warriewood Rd, Warriewood - construction of a residential flat building comprising 27 apartments, basement car parking and landscaping within currently unregistered Lots 2, 3, 4, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 of an approved 40-lot subdivision.


Item 3.7 - DA2018/1066 - 27 Kevin Ave, Avalon Beach - subdivision of one lot into two lots, demolition works and construction of a driveway.

Requests to address the Panel: contact the Panel Coordinator on 9976 1528 by Tue 20 Nov, 4pm  
View the agenda online.

with views over stunning Sydney Harbour, our completely refurbished centre is ready to welcome our children back to learn and play.

Limited long day-care spaces available for 2019.


RSVP for our celebration or book a tour to day:  
harbourviewchildcare@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au



## Australia Day Awards 2019

**Last chance to nominate your local hero**  
Nominations close 5pm,  
Monday 19 November 2018

Enquiries 9976 1752  
For further information or to nominate visit our website



- Wed 28 Nov, 5 - 7pm
- Sat 8 Dec, 8 - 10am

Comments close: Sun 16 Dec

**Thematic History - share your stories**  
We are preparing a comprehensive Thematic History of the Northern Beaches. To help us, we want to hear your stories about what life was like growing up on the Northern Beaches. Share your story online.

Comments close: Sun 16 Dec

**Notice of proposed easement - Nanbarree Reserve, Farrar St, Balgowlah Heights**  
Under s47 of the Local Government Act 1993, we are considering granting an easement to drain water, 1m wide and approximately 15m in length, to the current owner of 11 Hogan St, Balgowlah Heights (Lot 30 DP 36454) over part of Council community land (Lot 58 DP 31731).

The purpose of formalising an easement is for construction of an underground stormwater drainage pipe within Nanbarree Reserve. The proposed easement is to be granted in perpetuity.


This is subject to Council approval and payment to Council of an independently assessed value of compensation.

Submissions close: Sun 16 Dec

**Station Beach dog off-leash area - proposed trial**  
We are seeking community feedback on whether or not to trial a dog off-leash area at Station Beach, Palm Beach. Come along and talk to our Parks & Recreation team at a drop-in session at Palm Beach Golf Club:

- Thu 29 Nov, 6 - 8pm
- Sat 1 Dec, 2:30 - 4:30pm

Comments close: Thu 28 Feb



@beachescouncil

northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

08 MANLY DAILY, Saturday, November 17, 2018

MANE012018A - V1

Station Beach Council - Community Engagement - Have Your Say 25 January 2019 - Message (HTML)

Delete Respond Quick Steps Move Tags Editing Zoom

If there are problems with how this message is displayed, click here to view it in a web browser.  
Click here to download pictures. To help protect your privacy, Outlook prevented automatic download of some pictures in this message.

From: <yoursay@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au>  
To: <yoursay@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au>  
Cc: <yoursay@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au>  
Subject: Northern Beaches Council - Community Engagement - Have Your Say 25 January 2019

**Station Beach Dog Off Leash Area - Proposed Trial**

Please provide your feedback about a proposed dog off-leash area trial for Station Beach at Palm Beach.

Comments close Thu 28 Feb

**Projects closing soon**

**Northern Beaches Bush Fire Prone Land Map 2018 (draft)**  
Submissions close Sun 27 Jan

**Northern Beaches Cultural Collection Management and Gift Policy (draft) and Public Art Policy (draft)**  
Submissions close Mon 28 Jan

**Narrabeen Lagoon Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan (draft)**  
Submissions close Fri 1 Feb

## 1.4 Contents of this report

The remainder of this report sets out the outcomes of written submissions received by Northern Beaches Council from November 2018 to February 2019 in response to an invitation to comment on the proposed trial of a dog off leash area at Station Beach.

Appendix A includes notices from Council inviting the community to comment.

Appendix B contains feature articles published in local media.

Appendix C contains detailed comments and quotes from the community from the online survey and other written submissions.



## 2 OUTCOMES OF WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

### 2.1 Introduction

#### 2.1.1 Methods of submissions

Information about the proposed trial of a dog off leash area at Station Beach was on public exhibition for comment for 105 days between 16 November 2018 and Thursday 28 February 2019.

18 people attended two drop-in sessions organised by Council at Palm Beach Golf Club on 29 November and 1 December 2018 during the exhibition period.

During the public exhibition period over 3,500 written responses were received by Council as follows:

**Table 2 Sources of written feedback about proposed trial of off leash dog area at Station Beach**

Source	No. submissions	Comments
Your Say Northern Beaches online survey	3,536	3,786 total responses were received by Your Say Northern Beaches at the closing date of submissions. Analysis of the submissions showed that some people made more than one submission, with some people making 4 submissions each. The additional submissions were deleted from the database. 250 or 6.6% of the original submissions were multiple submissions.
Emails and letters	31	62 separate written submissions were made outside Your Say Northern Beaches. Some people completed the online survey at Your Say Northern Beaches as well as sent an email to Council. The number of emails counted does not include submissions that were also made to Your Say Northern Beaches. Letters were received from individuals, and groups including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Boat Owners Association</li><li>- Newport Residents Association</li><li>- Palm Beach Protection Group (3 submissions, counted as 1)</li><li>- Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association (2 submissions, counted as 1)</li><li>- Pittwater Unleashed</li></ul>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,567</b>	

The submission received from the Palm Beach Protection Group included the results of two independent reports which the Palm Beach Protection Group commissioned: a telephone survey of 400 people in Pittwater Ward, and a report about the impacts of off leash dog activity on seagrass at Station Beach.

## 2.1.2 Respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches

A significant number of people were motivated to engage with and inform themselves about the project pages and documents about Station Beach on the Your Say Northern Beaches website. 8,520 visitors made 9,208 visits to the Station Beach project pages at Your Say Northern Beaches, and viewed 28,043 pages about the project. On average, each visitor visited the project page 1.1 times, and viewed 3.3 pages during their visit.

3,786 responses were received at Your Say Northern Beaches on the closing date for responses of 28 February 2019. When compiling and analysing the responses it was noticed that some people had made 2, 3 and up to 4 responses, thus skewing the number of online survey submissions by 7%.

Northern Beaches Council treats public submissions by counting:

- ☐ one submission from one individual (regardless of how many times they comment/submit)
- ☐ one submission from each family member (not household) as everyone has the right to comment.
- ☐ one submission from each association, but note clearly that the submission is from a group and represents the views of the members.

When the multiple (more than one) responses were deleted from the online survey database, the total number of respondents to the online survey at Your Say Northern Beaches became 3,536.

The responses received at Your Say Northern Beaches were from people who 'self-selected' themselves to respond to the online survey, and represent the views of those people only. Therefore, it cannot be implied that the online survey data, and any conclusions drawn from aggregating responses to the online survey, is representative of the views of the general community.

Groups that people commenting via Your Say Northern Beaches identified themselves with are:

- ☐ Pittwater Unleashed 48 people
- ☐ Pound Patrol 4
- ☐ Manly Dogs 2
- ☐ Sydney Wildlife 2
- ☐ Animal Justice Party NSW Northern Beaches Regional Group 1
- ☐ CABPRA 1
- ☐ Dog Lovers Association – ACT 1
- ☐ Dog Lovers United 1
- ☐ Dogs Off Our Beaches 1
- ☐ Free the Leash Foundation 1
- ☐ Liberal Democrats 1
- ☐ Living Ocean Incorporated 1
- ☐ Northern Beaches Envirolink 1
- ☐ Northern Beaches Greens 1
- ☐ NB Off Leash 1



- ❑ Palm Beach Protection Group 1
- ❑ Palm Beach and Whale Beach Association 1
- ❑ Sydney Whippet Owners 1
- ❑ The Boathouse Group 1
- ❑ University of Technology Sydney – environmental and marine biologists 1.

## Place of residence

Written responses to Your Say Northern Beaches were received from residents of a wide range of suburbs throughout the Northern Beaches LGA, northern suburbs of Sydney, and from further afield. Refer to Figure 4 which shows the postcodes in which respondents live.

Peninsula residents (Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Avalon / Avalon Beach and Newport residents) comprise 48% of respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches.

Other Northern Beaches residents comprise a further 33% of Your Say Northern Beaches respondents.

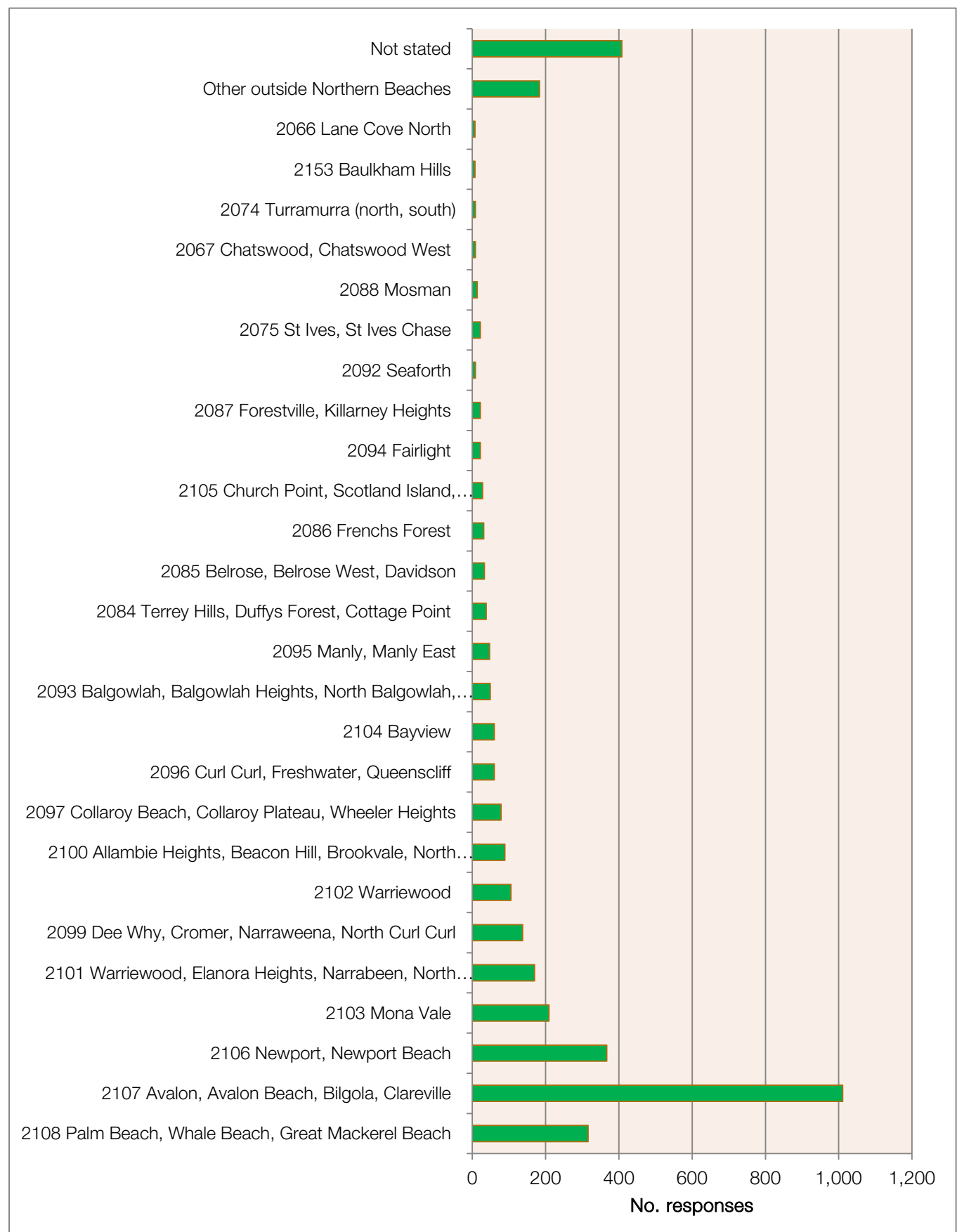
19% of respondents to Your Say are from outside the Northern Beaches, as far afield as Tasmania.

408 respondents who may or may not be local residents didn't record their suburb in Your Say Northern Beaches.

A summary discussion of all responses by question and other comments made are in Sections 2.2 to 2.7 below. The points made are drawn from the public submissions only, and are not the views of Northern Beaches Council or the author.

Detailed public responses are outlined in Appendix C.

**Figure 4 Postcode of respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches**



## 2.2 Views about dog off leash area trial at Station Beach

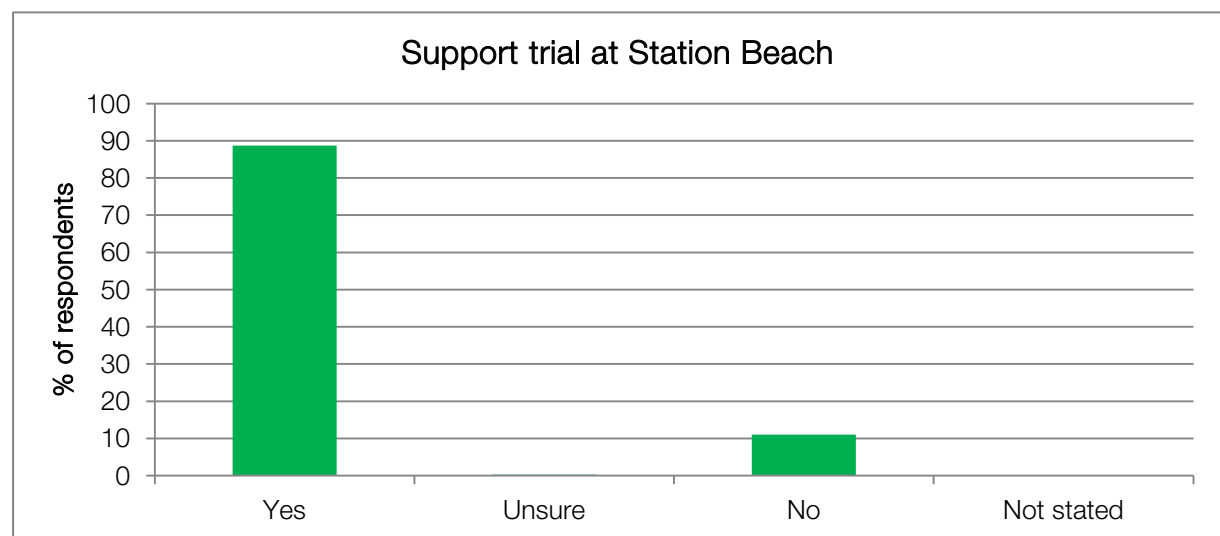
### 2.2.1 Introduction

Respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches were asked:

**Do you support a dog off leash area trial at Station Beach?**

The responses are shown in Figure 5 and Table 3.

**Figure 5 Support for dog off leash area trial at Station Beach**



**Table 3 Support for dog off leash area trial at Station Beach**

Question	Response	No.	%
"Do you support a dog off leash area trial at Station Beach?"	Yes	3,136	88.7
	Unsure	11	0.3
	No	389	11.0
	Not stated	0	0.0
TOTAL		3,536	100.0

Most respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches support the proposed trial of off-leash dog access at Station Beach (89% of respondents). However, there are deeply felt and valid arguments on both "sides" which should be recognised.

The reasons given by supporters and opponents for their viewpoint about the trial showed mainly two opposite points of view. In some cases tolerance for the other point of view was lacking.

Some dog owners do not approve of the trial because they think dog exercise should not occur on beaches. Some people who don't own a dog support the trial because they recognise the benefits of dog exercise to minimise nuisance barking and other undesirable behaviours.

It should also be noted that, among the wide ranging views even by supporters of off-leash dog access at Station Beach, Council's decision will not satisfy the majority, let alone all, the people who support the trial. In particular, there is less support for the proposed days and times of the proposed trial (78%) than there is for the trial itself (89%).

## 2.2.2 Support trial by place of residence

### Your Say Northern Beaches respondents

Support for the trial by postcode is shown in Figure 6 and Table 4 below.

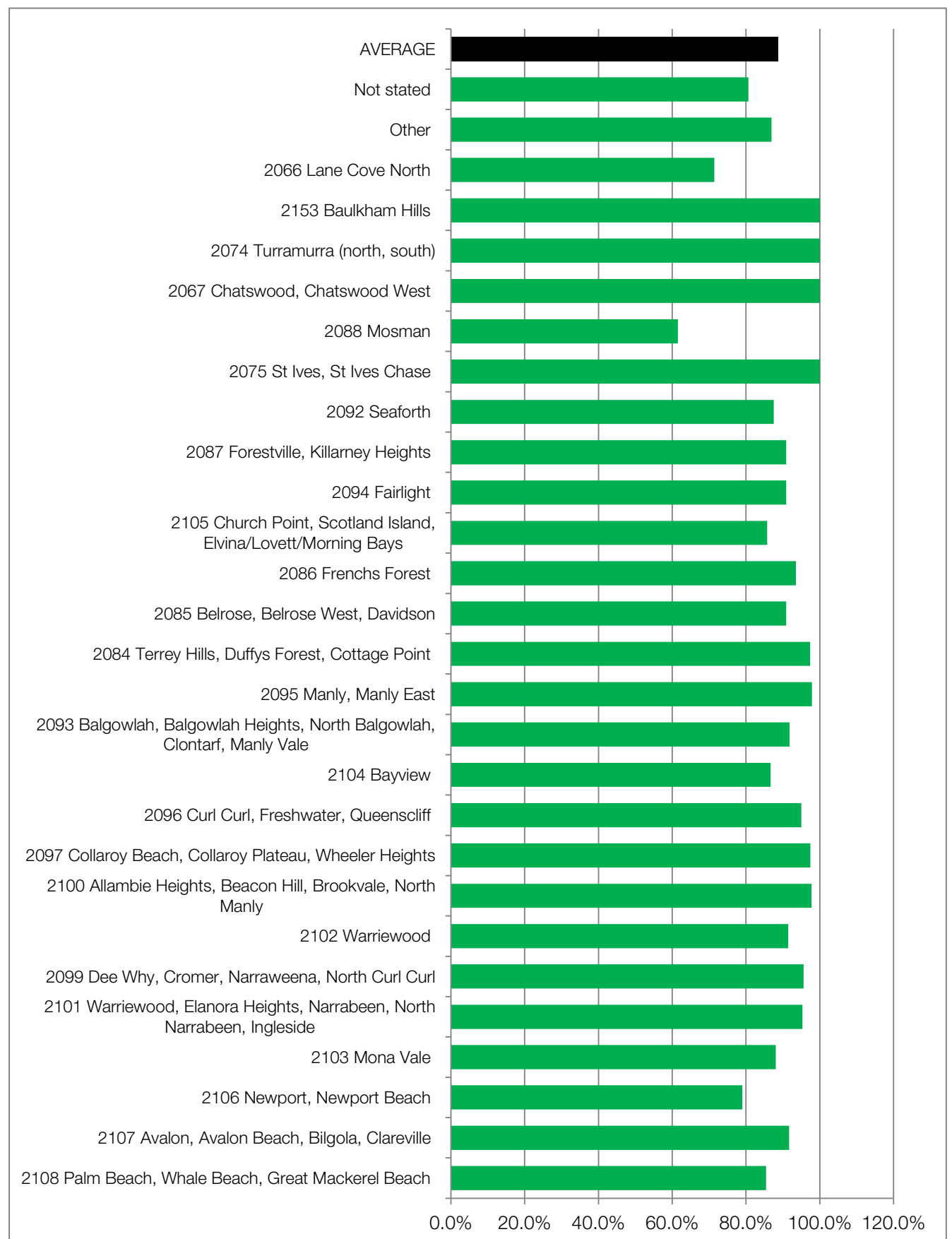
It is notable that the level of support for the trial among respondents who live in Palm Beach, Whale Beach and Great Mackerel Beach is below that of the Your Say respondents as a whole.

### Residents of Waratah Road, Palm Beach

The closest residents to the proposed trial area live in Waratah Road in Palm Beach. 10 residents/households living in the estimated 15 dwellings in Waratah Road supplied their address in Your Say Northern Beaches and/or made a written submission which included their address. Of those 10 households, 7 households or 70% are opposed to the trial because of reasons including:

- ☐ limited vehicle parking spaces in Waratah Road and Beach Road
- ☐ people visiting Palm Beach park across their driveways
- ☐ noise from barking dogs, and owners and dogs entering their properties, are experienced regularly
- ☐ dogs may defecate and urinate in the water the residents regularly swim in.

**Figure 6 Support for the trial by postcode**



**Table 4 Support for the Station Beach trial by postcode**

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support Station Beach Trial	
			No.	%
<i>Peninsula</i>				
2108	Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Great Mackerel Beach	316	270	85.4%
2107	Avalon, Avalon Beach, Bilgola, Clareville	1,011	927	91.7%
2106	Newport, Newport Beach	367	290	79.0%
		1,694	1,487	87.8%
<i>Other Northern Beaches suburbs</i>				
2103	Mona Vale	209	184	88.0%
2101	Warriewood, Elanora Heights, Narrabeen, North Narrabeen, Ingleside	170	162	95.3%
2099	Dee Why, Cromer, Narraweena, North Curl Curl	137	131	95.6%
2102	Warriewood	105	96	91.4%
2100	Allambie Heights, Beacon Hill, Brookvale, North Manly	89	87	97.8%
2097	Collaroy Beach, Collaroy Plateau, Wheeler Heights	78	76	97.4%
2096	Curl Curl, Freshwater, Queenscliff	60	57	95.0%
2104	Bayview	60	52	86.7%
2093	Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, North Balgowlah, Clontarf, Manly Vale	49	45	91.8%
2095	Manly, Manly East	47	46	97.9%
2084	Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest, Cottage Point	38	37	97.4%
2085	Belrose, Belrose West, Davidson	33	30	90.9%
2086	Frenchs Forest	31	29	93.5%
2105	Church Point, Scotland Island, Elvina Bay, Lovett Bay, Morning Bay	28	24	85.7%
2094	Fairlight	22	20	90.9%
2087	Forestville, Killarney Heights	22	20	90.9%
2092	Seaforth	8	7	87.5%
<i>Outside Northern Beaches</i>				
2075	St Ives, St Ives Chase	22	22	100.0%
2088	Mosman	13	8	61.5%
2067	Chatswood, Chatswood West	8	8	100.0%

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support Station Beach Trial	
2074	Turramurra (north, south)	8	8	100.0%
2153	Baulkham Hills	7	7	100.0%
2066	Lane Cove North	7	5	71.4%
	Other outside Northern Beaches	183	159	86.9%
Not stated		408	329	80.6%
TOTAL		3,536	3,136	88.7%

### 2.2.3 Reasons for supporting the trial

A summary discussion of reasons for supporting the Station Beach dog off leash area given by people and organisations who made written submissions is in Section 2.2.3 below.

The points made are drawn from the public submissions only, and are not the views of Northern Beaches Council or the author.

Detailed public written submissions are outlined in Appendix C.

## Introduction

Respondents who support the proposed trial are happy that the trial is proposed. Many people wrote one or a few words in support. They thank Council for this initiative and other dog projects which are well thought out.

Supporters congratulated Council on their balanced and consultative approach to off-leash dog access. They welcome the trial to help Council make an informed decision.

Some people mentioned that they can't wait to take their dog to the beach to walk/swim.

People whose dog is elderly or had passed away lament they didn't have this opportunity.

### “It's about time”

Supporters of the trial variously said “it's about time / long overdue / sick of procrastination / Council is behind the times”.

Long term residents and visitors recall how the Station Beach area was leash-free in their childhoods and youth. Supporters said that dogs accompanied their owners enjoying recreational activities, such as windsurfing and swimming, on Station Beach in the 1980s.

The decision by Pittwater Council to prohibit dogs from beaches was resented by dog owners. Legal options for exercising dogs locally have been deemed unsatisfactory, so dog owners felt compelled to break the rules by taking their dogs on to beaches and other prohibited areas.

Dog owners have been waiting a long time for dogs to legally access a beach in Pittwater.

Supporters are now very pleased to now see Council's Station Beach initiative as a step toward restoring some foreshore access for families with dogs.

Dog owners think it is time that Council allows access for off leash dogs to beaches, consistent with other coastal councils.

## **Need for an off leash area with access to water north of Bayview/ Newport**

With a growing population, an increasing number of families with dogs, living spaces contracting and new apartments now allowing small companion dogs, supporters of the Station Beach trial identified there is a strong need for more off-leash spaces to exercise their “fur members” on the Northern Beaches.

Supporters identified that more off-leash exercise spaces are needed on the peninsula in general (20). Refer to Section 2.7.1 for suggestions of specific locations.

More off leash water areas/ beaches are needed. Dogs need a place to swim to cool off in summer, and some owners would like to swim with their dog.

Since dogs are no longer permitted into the water at Careel Bay, there has been nowhere convenient for dog owners north of the Bends to legally take their dogs. The proposal would provide an off leash area with access to water in the Palm Beach/Avalon/Bilgola/Newport area north of Bayview. Supporters highlighted the need for a place north of Bayview/Bilgola Bends to take dogs to swim, because the dog park at Rowland Reserve at Bayview is overcrowded and dangerous, the Careel Bay dog park is not popular, and it takes a long time to travel to other dog swimming areas on the northern beaches from the Palm Beach/Whale Beach/Avalon area.

The present off leash areas are becoming crowded as dog ownership on the beaches continues to increase. Anything that diffuses the density of dogs and owners, and therefore the probability of tension between dogs in present off leash areas, is welcome.

Bayview is known to attract people from outside the Northern Beaches to bring their dog to swim there.

A new off leash dog area at Station Beach is welcomed, to “take the pressure off” the overcrowded Bayview, Careel Bay, Curl Curl and Manly Lagoon; and to provide an alternative for dog swimming north of the bends.

Off leash areas at Rowland Reserve and Great Mackerel Beach are considered too far away for dog owners who live north of the Bends. Rowland Reserve is 12 to 15 kilometres from Palm Beach, and Great Mackerel Beach requires a ferry to access.

Station Beach would add to the network of dog parks with Bayview, Careel Bay and Great Mackerel Beach, providing an off leash area within walking distance for Palm Beach residents, and convenient access for other people living at the northern end of the peninsula.

With the Bayview dog park and the Bilgola Bends, there would be no reason for anyone other than local residents to use the areas proposed.



Station Beach is also welcomed as an alternative to having to spend time and effort driving dogs to the Central Coast on day trips, and to other places further afield for their dogs to have a swim.

Dog owners want to be able to exercise their dog in a place that is pleasant and interesting for them as well as their dog. Station Beach is a welcome alternative to “boring” current off leash dog areas.

Members of the Boat Owners Association want continued access to Station Beach to take their dogs to exercise and to “do their business” ashore.

However, some supporters question whether one area at Station Beach will be sufficient, fearing overcrowding of Station Beach also.

## **Want equitable access to public spaces, particularly beaches**

Dog owners consider that between 30% and 90% of the population/households on the peninsula own over 90,000 dogs, so they feel their dogs are entitled to access a higher proportion of beaches and other public spaces off-lead than they are allowed to at present.

Supporters argue that there should be equity/fairness in use of public spaces, and the beach belongs to everyone to use and enjoy.

Station Beach is a small part of the Northern Beaches coastline, and so little of the coastline is available to dogs.

Resident dog owners who are also ratepayers feel that as they pay rates to Council they are entitled to the same rights as other user groups, and that Council has neglected the needs of ratepaying dog owners.

Some dog owners remarked that since dog exercise is restricted on the Northern Beaches, dog owners should receive a rebate from Council rates.

Supporters point out that more space allocated to dogs will reduce issues and complaints about dogs.

Some supporters understand the need for separate beach areas for people without dogs, recognise that there are numerous other beaches close by for non dog owners or non dog lovers to use, and that beach space should be shared.

One supporter dismissed the opposing view that the Station Beach trial will be a precedent for off leash access to all beaches on the peninsula.

## **Want authorised access to beaches for off leash dogs**

Dog owners want to exercise their dogs off the leash legally without attracting fines and upsetting other people.

Station Beach is seen as a legal incentive for people to exercise their dogs away from the ocean beaches.

## Success of off-leash areas elsewhere

Many supporters of the trial feel that dogs are unwelcome on the Northern Beaches compared to other parts of the world, such as the United Kingdom (UK), Canada, United States (US), New Zealand, and Europe.

They cited examples of places overseas where dogs could be taken off leash:

- ❑ UK - beaches, pubs, restaurants, public transport
- ❑ New York City – parks, waterways, public transport.

A key point made by supporters of the Station Beach trial is that off leash dog exercise on beaches occurs in many coastal areas in Sydney, the NSW coast, interstate and overseas without apparent incident.

Off leash areas on beaches are said to be successful in other coastal areas, particularly Sandy Bay in Clontarf, Rose Bay Beach, Cronulla, the Central Coast/Gosford (8) such as Killcare and North Avoca, Grants Beach at North Haven, Wollongong, Coledale, Jervis Bay, Pambula (south coast), Port Macquarie, Crescent Head, Lennox Head, Byron Bay, Gold Coast (2), Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Brighton in Melbourne, Glenelg in Adelaide, along the Swan River in Perth, Cable Beach in Western Australia, and the North Shore in Auckland, New Zealand.

Suggestions were made for Northern Beaches Council to consult these coastal Councils regarding their management of unleashed dog exercise on beaches.

## Dogs are a part of the community

Families with dogs are considered a valued part of the community. The trial would be a welcome/positive addition to the local area/community.

Some supporters recognise that everyone in the community doesn't support the trial. However, other supporters are openly dismissive of people and groups which oppose the trial in general.

Other supporters are dismissive of people and groups which oppose the trial in because they are perceived as being in the minority of the community. Some supporters are critical of residents groups which oppose the trial because they are perceived not to be representative of the community.

## The trial legitimises an existing activity

Station Beach has been a de-facto, unofficial off-leash dog beach for many dog owners for some years, as long as they did so outside ranger hours or were prepared to risk being fined by rangers.

The trial is understood by some people to have been already approved and in operation.

One supporter justifies making beaches leash free because locals ignore the signs.

## Health and safety

Dog owners and supporters of the trial are confident that the health and safety risks of off leash dogs are minimal and can be managed.

One supporter identified a concern about an aggressive unleashed dog possibly attacking other dogs.

One supporter sees the risk of being hit by golf balls is outweighed by access to Station Beach.

## **Increased use of Station Beach**

Supporters of the Station Beach trial say that Station Beach, particularly next to the golf course, is hardly used by the general public, so dogs should be allowed on the beach to increase its use.

## **Traffic and parking**

The proposed trial at Station Beach would mean less road congestion and travel time, because dog owners living on the peninsula currently need to drive to Bayview.

Dog owners are happy that they won't necessarily have to drive or catch the ferry to the Central Coast to let their dogs have a swim.

One person is not worried by the perceived traffic and lack of parking in Palm Beach resulting from people outside the area coming to Station Beach because local people are prepared to walk and there is ample parking at Palm Beach.

Concerns about traffic congestion would be addressed by the proposed times of off leash dog exercise in the early morning and late afternoon, which are restricted to avoid peak beach activity. Such times would benefit locals and their pets, not people travelling to the area.

Having an off-leash area within walking distance for Palm Beach residents is welcomed, because walking dogs is not easy due to no or limited footpaths, and is dangerous with speeding cars especially on weekends.

One person has observed that provision of parking could be increased at the end of Beach Road by removing shrubs outside private property.

## **Dog owners are responsible**

Dog owners emphasise that they are responsible dog owners in general.

Some dog owners state that the majority of owners are responsible by controlling their behaviour and by picking up after their dogs and others' dogs. Some owners recognise that they are responsible for the behaviour of their dog and to obey rules. Therefore they deserve the opportunity to enjoy Station Beach with their dog.

Responsible dog owners will make sure that dogs are trained, and they should be given priority at Station Beach.

However some dog owners break the rules because of the limited opportunities to take their dog off leash.

Responsible dog owners welcome the opportunity to take their dogs off leash at Station Beach. Dog owners will take the trial seriously. Dog owners want the opportunity to show they can be responsible, the trial can work, and that opponents of the trial don't have anything to worry about. If people have to drive there with their dog they will be responsible. One supporter promised to respect the people who live close by.

Dog owners hope that irresponsible people won't spoil the trial for other people and their dogs.

Dog owners realise that they must display responsible behaviour, and ensure other owners are responsible, to make sure the trial is a success otherwise dog owners have only themselves to blame.

Some supporters of the trial have suggested fines and a licensing system to make sure dog owners do the right thing.

## **Benefits of unleashed dogs to people**

### **General**

The benefits of dogs to people in general were raised. Dogs which are exercised are less likely to be nuisances to other people.

### **Dog owners**

There is a high number/percentage of local dog owners needing to exercise their dogs. Respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches estimated that between 30% to 90% of the local population/households have a dog.

Supporters of the trial frequently mentioned that dogs are a valued part of their family. Dog owners want to enjoy spending time with family members and their dog(s).

Walking, swimming and playing on the beach with dogs is considered a joy of living in the area.

### ***Physical benefits***

An off leash area at Station Beach will encourage people to exercise by walking to an off leash area rather having to drive.

Exercising the dog will encourage people to spend less time on screens.

Exercising the dog helps people recover from injury.

### ***Social benefits***

The social benefits of exercising dogs that supporters put forward are companionship to minimise loneliness, and opportunities for local people to meet friends and other people, particularly for the many retired and elderly people in the community.

### ***Psychological benefits***

Supporters say that dogs are good for the mental health, happiness and low stress levels of their owners.

Dogs help children not to be afraid of animals, and that people and animals can live together.

## **Benefits for non dog owners**

Benefits of off-leash dog exercise areas for people who do not own or like dogs cited by supporters include that:

- ❑ off leash dogs would be confined to a specific area at Station Beach
- ❑ they like to see owners and dogs enjoying themselves in a legal off leash area
- ❑ exercising dogs encourages dog owners to be active.

One person thinks that because Station Beach is not a destination beach it shouldn't affect non-dog lovers.

## **Benefits for dogs**

Off leash areas are needed to enable dogs to run freely off the lead. Walking dogs on a lead is an undesirable way to exercise a dog.

Beaches enable dogs to run free, have fun, swim, play, walk and socialise.

Dogs need access to water/beaches to swim and cool down after a walk, especially in summer. Swimming is also therapeutic for some dogs with arthritis or hip dysplasia.

Opportunities for dogs to interact and socialise with other dogs reduces problem behaviour.

## **Economic benefit**

People bringing their dogs to an off leash area at Station Beach will support the local economy through visiting shops and cafes, and from paying for parking, especially in the off-peak winter season.

## **Council restrictions are being relaxed**

Supporters of the trial have expressed ongoing resentment of former and current Council positions restricting access of dogs to beaches. Long term residents and people have moved here and found the Council is "anti dogs". Dog owners blame restrictions on dogs on over-regulation and people with a fear of dogs who are few in number and not representative of the broader community. Their view is the "no dogs" policy for the ocean beaches in Pittwater should not have been applied to the beaches on Pittwater.

Supporters of the trial welcome Council relaxing restrictions on unleashed dogs.

## **Minimal impact on the environment**

Supporters of the trial consider that dog owners love, are sensitive to and look after the environment.

People who oppose the proposed trial are not the only people who care for the environment.

Council needs to listen to everyone in the community, not just environmental groups

Council should be more concerned with the damage caused by people and domestic cats, which is greater than damage caused by dogs in an off leash area.

One person submitted that the environmental assessment will not significantly impact on the environment or the community.

One supporter believes the low environmental risk of the trial may be managed by signs and education.

## Seagrass

One supporter stated that seagrass would not be affected by the trial because the endangered species occurs further north on the beach, beyond the Boathouse.

The impact of unleashed dogs on seagrass beds in Pittwater is downplayed by supporters of the trial, who say that factors other than unleashed dogs are having and will have a greater impact on the sea grasses than unleashed dogs. Such impacts include:

- ☐ skidoos, jet skis and motorboats
- ☐ industrialisation and development, resulting in siltation
- ☐ nutrient runoff from Palm Beach Golf Course
- ☐ sea planes taking off and landing
- ☐ spearfishing.

## Waste

Supporters of the trial say that dog beaches are clean, that people leave more litter and waste on beaches than dogs do, especially on weekends, and dog owners regularly pick up waste and litter left on beaches by other people.

## Wildlife

### Birds

Some supporters of the trial believe that off leash dogs will have a low impact on birds, because there are never large numbers of birds present, and migratory birds prefer to use the area closer to the mangroves at the head of Careel Bay. As long as the birds are undisturbed there should be low impact on the birds.

### Crabs

One person observed that there are few if any crabs on Station Beach.

## Low impact on local residents

Some supporters of the trial who do not live on Waratah Road like Station Beach as the location of the trial because there are no/few houses along the beach that would be potentially affected, and so residents of those houses would not be directly affected.

One resident of Waratah Road supports the trial because most dog owners are responsible.

## Historical precedent for off-leash dogs on Sydney foreshores

One supporter stated that the dogs on the First Fleet probably enjoyed the Sydney foreshores.

## Conditions of support

Conditions that supporters of the Station Beach dog off leash trial placed on such support include:

- ☐ that all dog owners respect the privilege

- ☐ off leash dogs allowed in inland waterways only, with dogs not to be allowed on our surf beaches
- ☐ responsibility by dog owners to collect their dog's faeces
- ☐ dogs need to be trained or mild tempered and not aggressive to people or other dogs
- ☐ dogs not suited to off leash dog parks should not use them.

Some non-dog owners support the trial, subject to:

- ☐ dog owners picking up after dogs
- ☐ dog owners doing the right thing
- ☐ larger and more unpredictable breeds are under proper control by their owners.

## Requests if the trial is not approved or it fails

If the proposal is not approved by Council, one supporter urges Council to approve dog on leash use of the trial area during the proposed trial hours.

If the trial fails, another beach needs to be put forward for unleashed dogs, or residents of this area will not give up until there is one.

### 2.2.4 Unsure about the proposed trial

People who indicated they are “unsure” about the proposed trial said that:

- ☐ timed off leash access to beaches can work if dog owners and others are prepared to compromise. Dog owners need to ensure they act responsibly and control their dogs, Council provides adequate bins and empties them, and local residents should be open-minded
- ☐ a “real trial” would be on a large number of beaches over a large geographic area
- ☐ it would be useful to publish the criteria for measuring the success or failure of the trial
- ☐ the current fine system does little to deter the very few irresponsible dog owners. How does the council plan to address this issue?

### 2.2.5 Reasons for not supporting the trial

A summary discussion of reasons for not supporting/opposing the Station Beach dog off leash area given by people and organisations who made written submissions is in Section 2.2.5 below.

The points made are drawn from the public submissions only, and are not the views of Northern Beaches Council or the author.

Detailed public written submissions are outlined in Appendix C.

## Introduction

Some people don't support dogs on any beaches or foreshores at all, at beaches patronised by swimmers, or do not support the proposed trial at Station Beach in particular.

One person recommended applying the precautionary principle by keeping dogs off Station Beach.

The Protect Palm Beach community group commissioned Newgate Research (2019) to conduct an independent telephone survey of a sample of 400 Pittwater Ward residents in February 2019. The survey findings regarding concerns about the Station Beach trial are included in the discussion below.

## Negative experiences with off leash dogs

There is a strong view among opponents to the trial that there are too many dogs in the Northern Beaches.

Opposition to allowing dogs on beaches in general, and at Station Beach in particular, stems largely from the negative experience(s) that opponents have had with dogs and/or irresponsible dog owners. Too many dog owners are seen not to be doing the right thing.

Owners are viewed as the “problem”, rather than their dogs, because dog owners don’t like to be told what they can and cannot do.

Such negative experiences include dog owners:

- ☐ not picking up faeces after their dogs and disposing of it responsibly. Owners think they won’t be caught, and there is little policing of this. People who have dogs must be responsible for the waste they create. If dog owners are responsible why is there so much dog faeces in public places? If dog owners cannot pick up the dog’s faeces why should they continue spoiling it for others?
- ☐ not watching their dogs, instead chatting with friends, looking at their phone, and walking in front of their dog so they don’t see the dog defecating and so don’t pick it up, or see their dog annoying or attacking people or dogs
- ☐ not controlling their dogs, so people and wildlife are annoyed or attacked by dogs. Dogs should not be allowed off leash unless they have been through formal dog training
- ☐ letting their dogs on to ocean beaches and in rock pools when the lifeguards are not in attendance. A woman allows her dog to dig holes in front of Newport Surf Club. A person has seen a woman put her dog into the Bilgola rock pool
- ☐ apologising for their dog’s poor behaviour with “sorry he/she never does that” every time. Dog owners think their dog is “the best in the world” and would never hurt anyone or anything. Dog owners should take more responsibility for their dog’s behaviour
- ☐ not complying with regulatory signage and off-leash area rules. For example, the offleash area at Long Reef seems to extend to the whole of Long Reef because the majority of people continue to walk their dog out of the off leash area right around the whole of Long Reef without a lead
- ☐ not complying with time restrictions in off-leash dog parks
- ☐ taking their animals into restricted natural areas such as beaches and bushland reserves
- ☐ taking their dogs into increasingly more public spaces and private areas such as shops and businesses.

These negative experiences in general have resulted in animosity and a poor view of dog owners and dogs among opponents to the trial.



As dog owners ignore and break the rules already, Council should not give in to them and reward them for their poor behaviour by allowing them another dog park.

Opponents fear that off leash dogs on Great Mackerel Beach will be repeated at Station Beach. The introduction of dogs using Great Mackerel Beach has divided the community and is an ongoing source of aggression and argument. When visiting dog owners are approached, while most are apologetic for breaking the rules, there are always those who react in a very hostile, and often abusive manner and continue to let their animal ruin everyone else's day.

Opponents of the trial also fear that such behaviour from dog owners will continue to be on display at Station Beach. Poor behaviour from dog owners and dogs at Station Beach to date include:

- ☐ ignoring the “No Dogs on Station Beach” signs for years
- ☐ allowing unleashed dogs on Station Beach despite the trial not yet starting. This illegal behaviour is taking place beyond the proposed trial boundaries and outside the proposed trial times. Representatives from dog activist group ‘Pittwater Unleashed’ were at the Beach Road car park access each day over summer, routinely allowing their dogs off leash in all areas of the beach, at all times, and encouraging others to do the same. This regularly leads to tension between roaming dogs, dog owners, residents and visitors who want private, quiet and safe time on the beach. Council is not responding to this behaviour. If this behaviour happening before the trial commences then the trial is a sign of failure
- ☐ dogs being unleashed from the Beach Road car park, reaching the beach and going in all directions, including in front of the southern Station Beach homes, and the area directly in front of the car park (being the main recreational area and the area meant to be excluded from the proposed unleashed area). Only a smaller percentage of dogs go further up the beach northwards towards The Boathouse restaurant, which is supposedly the main unleashed area for dogs under the proposal
- ☐ residents being constantly woken or disturbed by dogs barking first thing in the morning, as their owners park in front of houses and let their dogs run wild
- ☐ dogs defecating on the beach.
- ☐ dogs are now taken under the tree on Station Beach where mothers and children usually play.
- ☐ people leaving dog faeces in bags tied in the branches of the trees overhanging the beach
- ☐ dogs annoying diners at The Boathouse.

The safety, health and environmental implications of these negative experiences raised by opponents to the trial are explored further below.

Some opponents to the Station Beach trial have a view that pets have become too important in dog owners' lives, and that human amenity should have priority over dogs. The relationship between people and their dogs is too often carried out without regard for the interests of others in the community. Dog owners could reconsider the breed of dog they have, and accept the dog is not one of their “children”.

Opponents are alarmed that dog owners are increasingly taking their dogs into more public places, and that dogs are “everywhere”. Dog owners seem to think they can take their dogs anywhere, and indeed do take them everywhere. There is a prevalence of dogs in cafes, apartment blocks, beaches and public areas which is impacting on quality of life. People should leave their dogs at home. The only dogs in public places and shops should be guide dogs.

Some opponents think that if people own dogs they should provide space on their own property to exercise them and for them to defecate and urinate, walk them on a leash, or live in another area. People only should enjoy Station Beach.

People are afraid to say something to dog owners if they are breaking the rules because they would be abused.

Some opponents are concerned that the Station Beach off leash trial will lead to conflict within the local community. People who don't agree with the trial are already being trolled and bullied online.

One person asked why there was a trial when dog owners already go to beaches unlawfully.

## **Decline in amenity of beach users**

The reasons why people value and like Station Beach are further described in Section 2.3 regarding community views about the trial location.

Station Beach is viewed as an iconic location and destination for Sydney locals and tourists. Palm Beach's worldwide reputation is not only generated from its publicity on 'Home and Away', but by its prestigious and pristine location.

Station Beach is described as a beautiful piece of waterfront recreational space, and a marvellous stretch of sand as you walk to Barrenjoey Headland. People value the beach because it is beautiful, quiet, serene, tranquil and an "escape" and "away from the crowd".

People enjoy the lovely view from Station Beach to West Head, Lion Island and Ettalong, and to the Barrenjoey Lighthouse on the headland.

People use Station Beach for numerous activities such as walking, playing on the sand, sunbaking, picnics under the overhanging tree near the Beach Road entrance, paddling in the water, swimming, snorkelling, fishing, watching sunsets from the west-facing beach, and for wedding ceremonies and photography sessions at sunset.

Station Beach is considered a good swimming area particularly for families with young children, because of the gentle slope and lack of small waves that allows children to play safely on the water's edge. It is a busy area for swimmers and children.

There is a strong call to leave Station Beach for the people to enjoy, and to generally keep our beaches and recreation areas clean for the use of humans, not animals. Beaches are viewed as "sacred" places away from barking, urinating and defecating dogs. Dogs should be exercised away from people.

Dogs on Station Beach will interrupt the enjoyment of activities currently undertaken on the beach.

Opponents feel that allowing dogs on Station Beach will spoil the quiet, beautiful, peaceful, family feel of the area; and will disturb the solitude and pristine beauty of this amazing area. People have rights to peace and personal safety.

The beach will be "ruined" for residents and visitors in numerous ways, including that it will be a free-for-all "public toilet" for dogs. Other unpleasant implications for beach users of off-leash dogs on the beach include:

- ❑ walking barefoot on the beach and treading in fresh dog faeces, which is an unforgettably unpleasant experience. Beaches and foreshores are one of the last areas where people can walk around in bare feet. Dog waste is not appropriate where people are barefoot or in swimwear.

Rowland Reserve at Bayview, also known as “Poo Park”, and Mona Vale Headland, also known as “Cooks Turd Terrace”, are littered with dog faeces which have not been picked up. They are no-go zones for people in bare feet and for people who don’t look down when they walk. People don’t want to have to look out for dog droppings.

- ❑ discouraging families with children using the beach
- ❑ dogs interrupt and accost people picnicking and ruin their food
- ❑ seeing dogs “doing their business” while walking on the beach on a nice day
- ❑ dogs bounding into the water and annoying/surrounding swimmers
- ❑ playing and swimming among dog faeces
- ❑ swimming in water contaminated with dog faeces. Local residents have encountered dog owners who believe the tide will wash the droppings away. People swim in this area after the tide comes in. The wide and flat tidal zone will make tidal flushing difficult at best, so dog faeces will remain on the beach and in the shallows through several tidal events.

An adjoining resident has noticed yellowish water from dogs which swim and use Station Beach, which discourages them from swimming in the same water

- ❑ a smell of urine and faeces. Bayview and Mona Vale dog parks are so smelly that even dog owners won’t go there
- ❑ noise from barking dogs and owners criticising and yelling at other dog owners and dogs.

Opponents feel that Station Beach is for everyone, and no one group should displace or discourage others from using the beach.

A resident of Waratah Road reports that in the past few months, since Council placed the confusing sign at Station Beach signalling a de facto trial off-leash area, a dog has run up to and barked at an elderly lady, fishermen are being harassed by dogs, and dogs are running up to families on towels.

Control of dogs and their droppings will be more difficult in an unfenced area.

Opponents of the trial don’t support use by unleashed dogs of public areas where faeces and urine is left behind, especially on sand. The sand at Bayview dog park is disgusting. George Street at Careel Bay is a dog toilet so it is awful walking there. The unleashed area at Long Reef has a lot of dog faeces which is disgusting.

People don’t want to swim at a beach that has dog faeces everywhere. Dogs urinating in the water will affect the sea life and humans. Over time the water will smell and turn yellow.

Some opponents consider that dogs and their owners have destroyed the amenity of Manly Lagoon at Queenscliff, with dogs barking, owners shouting at the dogs, and noise reverberating across the water and around the area. They don’t want this situation repeated at Station Beach.

Many people like to visit the beach as a form of escaping the stress in their lives and achieving some form of peace and tranquility. Listening to nothing but the silence and the ocean itself restores an important balance for many people in their lives. People in their own form of

mediation on the beach enjoy the silence. It is considered not fair that this peace is shattered by barking dogs, or having dogs intrude in their space.

Dog owners think the trial on Station Beach has already started, and so their dogs are free to use the beach.

Off leash dogs will cause conflict at Station Beach, and people without dogs will not want to visit Station Beach any more.

Station Beach would be used more if it were free of dogs.

Opponents think Council has underestimated the number of people/dogs that will take over this small beach, especially if can only be used at the higher tide times. As has happened at Bayview, the area will be destroyed by the sheer number of users.

The public safety and public health impacts of off-leash dogs on Station Beach are further explained below.

## **Public safety**

Dog trainers advised that dogs off leash on any beach is not safe for either the dogs or the community that shares the space. Trainers say many dogs are not adequately trained. People use off leash areas as a lazy way to exercise their dogs.

## **Human safety**

The key concern of opponents of off-leash dogs on Station Beach is for the safety of beach users, particularly children who are fearful of dogs and are most at risk of being attacked by a dog, and unaware tourists wanting to use the beach at the same time as unleashed dogs.

Dog owners were frequently criticised for not controlling their dogs in public spaces, with their level of training questioned and their control over their pets often being “half-hearted”.

Opponents say many dog owners don’t understand that not everyone is comfortable with dogs being close to them. Dog owners don’t realise that not everyone wants a dog running around them, barking, urinating and defecating.

Many dog owners think their dog is well behaved, and say their dog won’t hurt anyone. However, not all dogs are harmless. Some people breed dangerous dogs. No-one can be ever sure how safe any dog is.

Dogs are pack animals, and when joining a pack of dogs they become impossible to control. For example, neighbours of an opponent to the trial have had their chickens eaten by dogs.

Dogs are a physical and psychological threat to people. There is an ever present risk of people and smaller dogs being attacked or bitten when dogs are not properly supervised. Dogs have a natural instinct to run after or chase people and objects.

Station Beach is known as a safe area for families if no uncontrolled dogs are present. There is a widespread view that areas which are less popular with families would be better for off-leash dogs.

Many people of all ages are scared of dogs having had bad experiences with dogs. Dogs are unpredictable, so they shouldn’t interact with unsuspecting people. People in a safe

environment should not be put at risk by animals that are not able to be controlled by their owners.

Dogs on beaches are described as a menace to families and swimmers. Dogs harass people by taking thongs from their hand. People are worried about dogs running at them on the beach.

Out of control dogs are a danger to passive users of the area. Dogs come up to children playing on the beach and sniff at their towels. Residents have found a dog on their towel when they have returned to it after a swim. Dogs invade picnics. People don't want to sit on the beach among unleashed dogs. Beach users want to lie on the beach to read a book or sunbake with friends without being harassed by dogs running up to and over them and leaving poo behind. People don't want to be dodging dogs or having their peaceful enjoyment of a place disturbed.

Sitting or lying on a beach places you in a more vulnerable position if a dog attacks, whether it is malicious or exuberant.

The narrow width of the beach which varies with the tide is a safety concern, due to reduced space and possible conflicts between dogs and other beach users.

Dogs also annoy people who are running. A person who runs on Station Beach in the late afternoon wants to continue running on the beach, but is bothered by bounding dogs.

There is a particular concern about the presence of dogs on the safety of families with young children and older people who use the beach when dogs are not allowed on the main beaches. Allowing dogs to roam freely puts young children and older people at risk. The health and safety of children and older people is considered paramount to the needs of yet another dog park. Station Beach should be left as it is for the public to enjoy without fear of dogs.

Children and grandchildren of opponents, as well as adults, are reported to have been left traumatised by previous encounters with unleashed dogs including the dogs licking them, jumping up on them, and biting them. Consequently, many small children are terrified of large dogs. Children can be frightened/terrified by what dog owners think is playful behaviour by their dog.

Some opponents have children who use this beach. They don't want to worry about dogs running up to the children, bowling them up, jumping up on them, or other unprovoked dog attacks on the children. Parents fear for their childrens' safety when they are approached or chased by unleashed dogs. A local child related how dogs jumped up on them on Station Beach and scared them. In December 2018-January 2019 a Station Beach user reports seeing big dogs off their leash jumping all over young children causing them significant distress.

Dogs running free results in dog fights which is not acceptable when children are present.

Adults reported that they have been attacked by a dog on a beach.

A person attacked by a dog on the northern beaches in the past 6 months now has permanent scars.

A resident of Great Mackerel Beach reported that there have been dog attacks towards people and other dogs on the beach there.

There is a strong concern that a person, particularly a child or elderly person will be badly injured from an off leash dog on Station Beach. It is considered only a matter of time before someone is bitten or attacked.

The lack of fencing to the golf course and to nearby residences is a safety concern.

There are no planned controls on the breeds that would be allowed because it would be impossible to enforce.

Opponents query how will the beach be supervised? What is Council going to do when someone is attacked? What happens if a dog attacks a child?

People afraid of dogs will be prevented from using the beach if unleashed dogs are using the beach. The public, not just dog owners, have a right to use the beach without fear for their own safety.

If Station Beach becomes an off leash area one person says they will not visit it because of safety concerns having previously been attacked by an unleashed dog.

### **Safety of golfers**

The golf course will be used as a short cut route endangering dog owners and golfers, with dogs off leash entering the golf course and leaving droppings.

Dogs could cause havoc with golfers by running on the golf course unless the area is fenced. Last week a person saw two dogs running across the golf course within three minutes, with the dog owners chatting at the edge of the golf course.

### **Safety of dogs**

An off leash area is also dangerous for dogs.

Dog owners worry that unleashed dogs will bound over to their dog wanting to play and bark.

Dog trainers say that dogs can be injured in off-leash areas.

Dog attacks are frequent in off leash dog areas and are mostly unreported.

One person reported their dog has been attacked three times by illegal off-leash dogs.

At Station Beach dogs are also at risk of being hit by golf balls.

### **Public health**

Opponents to the Station Beach trial are concerned about the impacts of unleashed dogs on public health.

While many responsible dog owners pick up their dog's faeces, some do not.

Dogs already use local beaches and leave faeces on the beach, including at Station Beach.

It is not acceptable to have dog faeces lying around our beautiful beaches for health reasons.

Beach users can come into direct contact with dog faeces by playing on the sand, digging holes, and building sand castles. People walking on the beach can step on faeces left on or in the sand. It's too easy for irresponsible dog owners to cover or kick beach sand over any dog faeces rather than pick it up, which occurs at Mona Vale Beach. It is very unpleasant finding dog nuggets covered in sand where grandchildren play on the beach.

The reported health implications of dog faeces at Station Beach are infection from walking barefoot on sand, swimming, and otherwise coming into contact with dog faeces.

Contamination of water will occur from faeces and urine of dogs swimming in water shared with people.

One opponent reported having seen dogs with diarrhoea in the water and on the beach at Bayview dog park, and people sitting in the water at the same location the next day.

There is no mention about how dog faeces will be managed throughout the trial.

Dog faeces presents a health risk of contracting diseases such as *E.coli* (2) and salmonella, and parasites such as roundworms, hookworms, and tapeworms.

An opponent cited an article by Professor Leigh Ackland <https://theconversation.com/dont-waste-your-dogs-poo-compost-it-107603> which made the points that:

- (i) one medium sized dog produces about 180 kg of faeces a year
- (ii) Once pathogenic microbes from the faeces get into waterways, they can find their way into other living things – including humans.

One person reported that in the most recent State of the Beaches 2018 Report Station Beach/Barrenjoey Beach showed the highest range of all of faeces present.

One opponent described their mother's experience of being infected with parasitic hydatid worms transmitted by a dog at the age of 4. She suffered all her life, having to undergo surgery on three occasions to save her life. The parasitic worms can infect all organs and travel to the brain where almost certain death will occur.

Some people are allergic to dogs and pet hair, and so don't want to be near dogs.

Dogs also carry undesirable fleas, cysts, lice, mange etc.

## **Environmental concerns**

### **Introduction**

In repeated council surveys/community consultations and engagement processes, the natural environment is repeatedly mentioned as a factor of high value to residents. Preserving the natural environment for future generations is also valued. Council generally acts to ensure that the principle of promoting the most good for the most people is upheld. This should be the overarching framework for this proposal also.

Station Beach offers access to an incredible biodiverse habitat area, unmatched by most, if not all, other foreshore areas on the Northern Beaches.



Station Beach is one of the last pristine, untouched, environmentally attractive areas of Pittwater and the Northern Beaches.

Allowing dogs on Station Beach would destroy the pristine nature of the area.

Palm Beach walks are too valuable to degrade.

Some opponents asked why so many dog areas are in prime positions such as headlands and parks next to water which are prime spots for families and tourists. Since dogs do not appreciate beautiful scenery, off-leash areas should not be given to them in prime waterfront scenic locations. If Council feels obliged to provide such areas, they need to use or acquire land in non-scenic locations which would otherwise be built upon. That way the general public are not losing open space and recreational amenity that should be preserved for the benefit of all, as well as for the environmental values of landscape and native flora and fauna.

Opponents to the trial are concerned about impacts of off-leash dogs on the natural environment.

Pittwater Council banned dogs on beaches many years ago for environmental reasons. Pittwater Council's investigations showed that Pittwater and ocean beaches in the area are heavily constrained regarding access by dogs.

Dogs are already let off leash through the aquatic reserves and animal protection areas.

Not all dog owners are considerate of the environment and spoil it for others. Local residents worry that that more people will come with dogs to Station Beach, not look after it, and spoil it.

The trial is described as “environmentally reckless”, with the potential for an environmental catastrophe. The environment is too important to allow anything that may risk it.

Beaches should be reserved for aquatic animals, birds and sea creatures, not for use by dogs.

## **Beach pollution**

Station Beach is environmentally sensitive.

Pollution from faeces and urine from dogs will make the sand and water dirty. Station Beach will end up as dirty like Bayview.

## **Beach erosion**

The sandy edge to Manly Lagoon has been eroded by dogs running in and out of the water.

Station Beach would need fencing to prevent erosion, and at high tide the fence would be in the water. A fence and the presence of dogs would cause erosion of the beach.

## **Litter**

Single use plastic bags have been banned in NSW, so why will they provided free of charge to dog owners?

Dog owners may pick up dog faeces in public, but often black bags full of dog faeces will be left behind and are never collected. An opponent lives next to door to a reserve and is always picking up black plastic faeces bags. People put black bags with dog faeces in the mangroves



at Hitchcock Park, and on top of brick fences or hanging from tree trunks between Bungan Beach and Mona Vale Headland.

## **Pests**

Uncollected dog waste promotes fly infestation, a fact acknowledged by a previous Warringah Council initiative to introduce dung beetles at Frenchs Forest Showground where there is very good council provision of dog waste bags and bins.

## **Wildlife**

Risk to wildlife is a key concern of off leash dog exercise at Station Beach.

The area should be preserved to protect the little wildlife we have left.

The presence of dogs and the scent they leave scares off many native fauna species including penguins and birds.

Dogs are predators which wander into natural areas and threaten and kill native species, contributing to reducing numbers of protected native animals.

Dogs will hinder the ability of most native fauna to move freely about. They will also prevent any attempts by native fauna to utilise this area.

Allowing dogs to freely roam in this area increases the risk of dog attacks on native and non-native wildlife such as birds, reptiles and small mammals.

Dogs are a threat to native vegetation and fauna which is still recovering from the impact of the fire at Barrenjoey Headland in 2013. The presence of dogs will very likely obliterate the chance for new fauna to be attracted to recovered vegetation.

Depletion of wildlife has been experienced at Great Mackerel Beach since the introduction of dogs there. People take their dogs off leash into the National Park. Constant barking occurs, and wildlife including lyre birds and wallabies has been chased and killed on many occasions. Two plovers are left on Great Mackerel Beach, compared to a large number that used to nest in the far northern end. Dogs chase all the birds from the beach and environs on a daily basis, including pelicans, plovers, gulls, brush turkeys and lyrebirds. Large numbers of migratory birds are chased away whenever they land here. At a time when the serious depletion of the world's wildlife makes headline news, domestic animals should be banned from any environmentally sensitive area, purely because the majority of owners, from what we are seeing first hand, think that their dog isn't a problem.

## ***Birds***

Impacts of off leash dogs on birds is also a concern.

Allowing dogs to roam freely poses a danger to birdlife, because dogs will go after and harass birds at any opportunity. Larger breeds love running after seagulls. Seabirds, gulls and pelicans will be affected.

Dog owners allow their dogs to chase birds or worse. People think it is funny to see their dog chasing birds. Dogs have killed seabirds on the sand flats at Bayview, and the same will happen at Station Beach.

The area is close to Clareville, where all the wading birds come in. Station Beach is a shorebird feeding ground. Migratory shorebirds' breeding and nesting sites, and chicks are very precious. Allowing access for dogs in the late afternoons/evening to mid-morning will affect vulnerable migratory shorebirds which are active in the evenings and mornings. The presence of dogs overnight will disrupt shorebirds which need to forage and settle down at night.

Most ground birds have been driven away resulting in an increase in ticks.

### ***Sand fauna***

Dogs will harass small creatures in the sand.

Sand crabs will be affected. Dogs have scabbled on crab holes in the sand.

### **Marine ecology**

Allowing dogs to roam freely poses a danger to the marine environment and marine life.

### ***Water quality***

Nutrients from dog faeces and urine are threats to water quality, leaching into the water and causing eutrophication with impacts on the aquatic ecosystem.

### ***Seagrass beds***

The Pittwater waterway west of Station Beach is zoned E2 Environment Conservation. This part of the Pittwater contains a significant area of endangered sea grass and marine habitat. The sea grass is in good condition in part due to the low levels of human and dog activity at this location. Station Beach is a relatively quiet and hidden part of the waterway. The sea bed slopes away gradually and much of the sea grass is close to the surface at mid to low tide. Lower levels of activity by swimmers and watercraft compared to other parts of the Pittwater has helped to maintain the fragile sea grass community. This prime area of sea grass, and the fish feeding and breeding habitat it provides, is central to the health of the ecosystem of the whole Pittwater. Anyone who has had a look beneath the surface at different locations around the Pittwater will know that the area off Station Beach is one of the most undisturbed and environmentally significant parts of the whole waterway.

Seagrasses would be exposed to unleashed dogs at low tide. Dog owners won't keep their dog off the seagrass at low tide.

The seagrass beds will be damaged by dogs and will be severely impacted by dog faeces.

Suggested water markers would be ineffective because dogs can't understand water markers.

Council is having experts conduct a survey of the seagrass bed issues and we look forward to reading the resulting report.

The Palm Beach Protection Group commissioned an independent environmental report by Aquation Pty Ltd (2019) into the potential impact of off leash dog activity on Station Beach and the nearby seagrass meadow. The key points of the report are:

- ☐ seagrass meadows must be protected because they are ecologically and commercially important. Seagrass helps improve water clarity and provides an essential habitat for juvenile fish.

- ❑ the potential impacts of off leash dog activity on seagrass meadows near Station Beach, particularly at low tide, include:
  - physical damage caused by tearing of seagrass structures by dog activity
  - excess nutrients from dog faeces in the surrounding water can lead to excessive growth of algae
  - increased sedimentation within the seagrass meadow, resulting in reduced light levels and reduced growth long-term
  - cumulative impact of unleashed dogs with human pollution of the Pittwater embayment and the invasive alga *Caulerpa taxifolia*.

The Aquation (2019) report concludes that “the assertion that seagrasses at the northern end of Station Beach are less valuable and vulnerable than seagrasses at the southern end of the beach is not supported by any evidence. The relatively recent invasion of the northern part of the beach environment by *C. taxifolia* indicates these seagrasses are now experiencing an additional threat. To deliberately concentrate potentially damaging activity on the northern part of the Station Beach seagrass meadow would be ill advised for this reason.”

Pittwater Unleashed countered the concern about the exposure of seagrass at low tide in their submission. The “supermoon” cycle has been experienced in recent months. “Super” king high tides correspond with “super” king low tides. The 2019 Tide Chart (Fort Denison) confirms a low incidence of these events in 2019, with the super lows affecting only 6 of 365 (1.6%) afternoons and zero mornings. This low incidence means the likelihood of impact from dogs at these times is exceedingly low.

### ***Seahorses***

Low tide will put marine life such as sea horses that are endemic to NSW at risk.

### **Impact on the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park**

Station Beach is located adjacent to Barrenjoey Headland which is part of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

The north end of Station Beach is zoned E1 National Parks and Nature Reserves.

Palm Beach is a sanctuary so no dogs should be allowed.

Dogs are not allowed in National Parks, so why are they allowed on beaches?

Council must commit to providing rangers to police the surrounding fragile nature reserves, particularly towards Barrenjoey Headland.

### **Impact on local residents**

Not all dog owners are considerate of neighbours and spoil it for others.

There are no fences between the properties of residents of Waratah Road and Station Beach.

Local residents believe they will have their properties and lifestyle impacted by:

- ❑ noise from barking dogs
- ❑ dog faeces and other mess created by the dogs

- ❑ people parking across their driveways due to limited parking
- ❑ dogs entering private properties facing Station Beach which are unfenced, causing alarm at times.

## **Traffic and parking**

Parking in the Station Beach and Governor Phillip Park area is already at capacity, especially on weekends. There is limited parking for family beach-goers, picnickers, restaurant and café patrons, windsurfers and paddlers, walkers to the lighthouse, and “Summer Bay” tourists.

Parking at both north and south ends of the beach is always at a premium, with golfers, people using the Boathouse Restaurant, and beach visitors. The limited parking available cannot cope with a further inundation of people/dogs at morning and night.

Opponents of the trial believe that people driving to access Station Beach will increase traffic to this already busy area, causing traffic congestion so close to the busy corner of Barrenjoey Road and Beach Road.

There is limited parking in Beach Road and the southern end of Station Beach. Waratah Road is always full of cars. Lack of parking is also an issue near The Boathouse. One opponent reported it was impossible to find a parking spot close by on their last visit.

The area is ready difficult to access. Use of Station Beach by possibly hundreds of unleashed dogs and their owners from locally and elsewhere will make traffic congestion and parking worse, and locals could no longer park here.

A resident of Etival Street in Palm Beach stated they should be actively promoting Station Beach as it would reduce the traffic and dogs in their once quiet street, but from their experience they fear for the locals of the Station Beach area.

Dog swimming areas at Sandy Bay at Clontarf and Sir Burt Oldfield Park in Killara attract high numbers of out-of-area people.

Professional dog walkers with 3-4 dogs each have recently started to visit Station Beach. Additional commercial businesses such as mobile pet care, and dog washing and grooming may be attracted to Station Beach placing further pressure on parking.

Dog walkers would take up designated car parking for golfers at the southern end of Station Beach, and people using the golf club for weddings and the like. The competition for parking spaces between the dog owners and the golfers after 7.30am will create a lot of angst.

The trial would decrease public transport use to Palm Beach because pet dogs are unable to travel on buses unless in a confined box as stated by the NSW Passenger Transport Act and Regulations.

## **Cultural heritage**

Several opponents to the trial highlighted the cultural heritage importance of Station Beach, Barrenjoey Headland and Lighthouse, and Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

Barrenjoey Lighthouse was built in 1881 and the associated houses beside the lighthouse, as well as the cottages below, have historic significance. These natural and historic heritage values are the reason Barrenjoey Headland is part of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

The Barrenjoey Lighthouse Precinct Conservation Management Plan (Office of Environment and Heritage, 2011) states “the specific objectives of maintaining ecological integrity,...between the park and reserves and adjoining areas”. The report stipulates that various heritage impact assessments need to be done to adhere to the planned objectives, including to recognise the importance to our national history of Station Beach. The heritage value of Station Beach is part of our network of national parks and leads to ecological sustainable use of the park.

The Barrenjoey Peninsula and the Palm Beach isthmus are significant and should not be broken up into small management segments, as small parks will lead to diverse and poor management.

The Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System (AHIMS) lists Station Beach as significant.

## **Visual / aesthetic**

Palm Beach is world-renowned as a stunningly beautiful location, attracting visitors from both Australia and overseas, film crews and locals.

There is a desire to keep Palm Beach beautiful and dog free.

One of the attractions of the golf course is there is no fence between the Palm Beach Golf Course and Pittwater, and it would be a great shame to ruin that ambience by constructing a fence. Fencing would ruin the Palm Beach aesthetics.

It would be a “tragedy” to deface Station Beach with unsightly signage and tidal markers.

## **Precedent for other off-leash areas on beaches**

Opponents to the trial frequently said that dog owners ignore “dog prohibited” signs throughout the northern beaches.

Dogs are already illegally taken on to unpatrolled beaches such as Bilgola, Bungan, Clareville, Paradise, Snapperman and Turimetta Beaches; patrolled beaches at Avalon, Newport and Mona Vale beaches; and into rock pools at Avalon, Bilgola and Newport at times when they think they will not be caught by rangers.

However there are no apparent consequences for dog owners who take their dog on to a beach. Dog owners exercise their dogs when and where they like because the rangers are never present and signs are inadequate.

This trial will set a precedent and be a “slippery slope” and the “thin end of the wedge” by dog advocates to push for further legal access to beaches, particularly ocean beaches, for their dogs.

Dog owners will abuse the privilege and expect more areas, particularly beaches, to be set aside for off-leash dogs.

The other ocean beaches that dog owners desire for legal off-leash dog exercise are listed in Section 2.7.1. The most frequently mentioned additional beaches desired are south Mona Vale and north Newport beaches.

The trial at Station Beach is seen as “opening the door” to a permanent off leash dog exercise arrangement at Station Beach.

Posts from the Pittwater Unleashed page make clear their intention to gain authorised access to Barrenjoey Lighthouse.

## Negative experiences at other off leash beaches

Other beachside Councils in Sydney – Waverley (Bondi and Bronte) and Randwick (Coogee, Clovelly and Maroubra) – don't allow dogs on their beaches.

Negative experiences at other off leash beaches include:

- ❑ dog owners at Bayview dog park and other similar areas do not pick up after their dogs.
- ❑ A trial at Wanda Beach in 2004 was abandoned after 3 weeks due to issues such as two serious dog attacks, dog faeces being left on the beach, and Council's limited resources to oversee enforcement of up to 2,000 dogs that visited the beach every day on weekends.
- ❑ Umina-Ettalong Beach is full of dogs, with none on a leash. Dog faeces and dogs terrorising children are disturbing.

## Inequitable access to public space

Opponents to the trial recognise that if people want to own dogs that is their right, and wish them well. However, the Station Beach off-leash trial is seen by opponents as inequitable for several reasons:

- ❑ **a minority group of dog owners is compelling the majority of the community to accept their views.** Council will no doubt have been inundated by supportive feedback from the powerful dog lobby on the Northern Beaches. This group of dog owners is over-represented in Council decision-making. Their highly organised campaigns will unfairly inflate the submissions received in support of the off-leash area, eclipsing the views and desires of the broader community who will probably not be aware of the proposed trial or the potential impacts. If the broader community were aware of the proposed trial and its impacts, there would be many objections. Consultation should never be dominated by the views and opinions of one particular minority group.

Opponents don't understand how dog owners, a small section of the community, can demand special use of such a beautiful community area. Dog owners do not have the right to inflict their choice on other people. Demanding access to beaches for dogs is an act of entitlement that will impact on the peaceful enjoyment of the beach and public land by others. The situation is seen as a monopoly of public recreation space for a minority of people in an iconic location.

- ❑ **off-leash dogs will limit the right of other people to enjoy public space.** All public places should be safe places to enjoy without having to work around dogs, and worry about dogs running round them. Having dogs off the leash in an area restricts the enjoyment of the area to people who own or like dogs, which is unfair. Once a beach becomes a place for unleashed dogs they immediately dominate the environment and exclude other people, particularly families with young children, elderly people, people with a disability, and people who can access the flat terrain around Station Beach from that stretch of beach. Off leash dog exercise also renders beaches and other public open spaces almost useless for other uses such as picnics.
- ❑ **if the trial proceeds, as little as 5.5 hours a day will be available for the public to use the beach.**

Pittwater Unleashed is considered to be "twisting the truth" regarding the proportion of the length of the northern beaches coastline which is intended to be or available for use by dogs.

The article 'Council hounded into action' falsely says we have 20 kilometres of coastline, and assumes all of it is usable by people. A narrow strip only about 3.5% of the 20 kilometre coastline is available for people, not including cliffs, rocks and sand dunes, car parks, surf clubs, private land and coffee shops when there is only a certain amount that is suitable or accessible anyway as pristine beach and recreation areas for humans.

## **Alternatives to Station Beach for off-leash dog exercise**

Some opponents to the trial consider that dogs living in places without access to sand and water for swimming are happy and receive exercise without needing to run along a beach or swim in the water.

Opponents of the trial think that Pittwater/Northern Beaches is already well served with places for dogs to roam off the leash, with 28 off leash dog parks on the Northern Beaches. Such areas include dog swimming areas at Rowland Reserve at Bayview, which is an acceptable place for dogs to run in the water; and Manly Lagoon. Other dog exercise areas at Avalon Beach Reserve and Careel Bay, are already provided and they are more than adequate for Pittwater's dog exercise needs. Careel Bay was mentioned as a preferred area for unleashed dogs.

It was suggested that water pools should be added to existing dog parks for dog swimming, rather than allow dogs to access beaches and foreshores.

## **Enforcement of responsibilities of dog owners**

Opponents to the trial want Council to enforce laws and policies to ensure dog owners are responsible.

### **On-site enforcement**

There is a widely held lack of faith that Council will or can enforce the Station Beach trial and unleashed dogs on beaches in general. Many instances of the poor behaviour of dog owners were described in the comments to Your Say Northern Beaches. However Council rangers are not, or rarely, seen to enforce regulations.

Opponents to the trial requested that Council rangers attend beaches and public spaces more often, and not just during business hours, when they are illegally used by dog owners, and apprehend and prosecute offenders.

Opponents often see unleashed dogs on beaches where they are not permitted. Owners take their dogs early in the morning or later in the day when they know the rangers are not there.

Station Beach is located at almost the northern most point of the Northern Beaches LGA. The travel time to deal with any report of a non compliance issue to an after-hours ranger would be lengthy, and any offender would be long gone before a ranger arrived. After hours ranger numbers seem to be low in any case.

Council appears to not have the staff or resources, or is unwilling, to enforce the rules and control degradation of other environments. Consequently, opponents of the trial don't believe Council will successfully monitor this trial. Harsher penalties such as fines or sanctions for breaking the rules are needed.

Dog beaches require 24/7 policing, but residents of Pittwater beaches haven't seen a ranger in some years.



With no policing of Station Beach after hours it is believed that dog owners will take their dogs further up the beach and soon to Barrenjoey Headland.

There will be difficulty with prohibiting dogs at low tide. Many people would be unaware of low tide in this location. Even at mid-tide the dogs will be in contact with sea grass and so will owners who wade out with them. The dogs will bound about and swim considerable distances out into the waterway through the sea grass beds, chasing balls and sticks.

People will ignore the proposed signs, especially if they've not looked at the tide chart and driven significant distance to get to beach at open times and find that the sign says it's closed. They will ignore that and go on the beach anyway.

Since the environmental report expressly forbids dogs to enter the water at low tide, and they would not choose to enter at high tide, then this being prime waterfront location is not just irrelevant to the dogs - it is going to be a constant regulatory problem for their owners and Council officers. Who is actually going to be there stopping dogs entering the water at low tide?

## **Dog registration**

An opponent feels that Council should issue dog owners a list of responsibilities with their rate notices.

Another feels that all dogs should have a DNA profile on record as part of the registration process. This would make it easy to associate dog excrement to the dog owner and to prosecute the owner. City of London is understood to be initiating this process.

## **User pays**

A suggestion was made that if the off leash area goes ahead it should be on a user pays basis.

## **The process of the trial is flawed**

### **Availability of the REF**

Some opponents to the trial think that the process of this trial is flawed. Council should make the recent Review of Environmental Factors prepared by Cardno, ornithological reports, and a seagrass survey available immediately to the community, and grant an extension of time after 28 February 2019 to make an informed submission about the Station Beach trial. A decision about the Station Beach trial should be deferred until the reports are available. Studying the area for its biodiversity while also having dogs on the beach will not provide an accurate reflection of the impacts of the off leash area. The absence of this information favours the position of Pittwater Unleashed.

If the REF conclusions are negative, what is the impact if the trial has already started?

### **Trial parameters have been set by Pittwater Unleashed**

Some opponents say that is unacceptable that dog owners have been working with Council to get dogs on the beaches. People without dogs didn't get this opportunity.

The parameters for the trial have been set by Pittwater Unleashed instead of undertaking wider community consultation.



## 2.3 Trial location

### 2.3.1 Introduction

Council invited the community on the Have Your Say webpage to comment on:

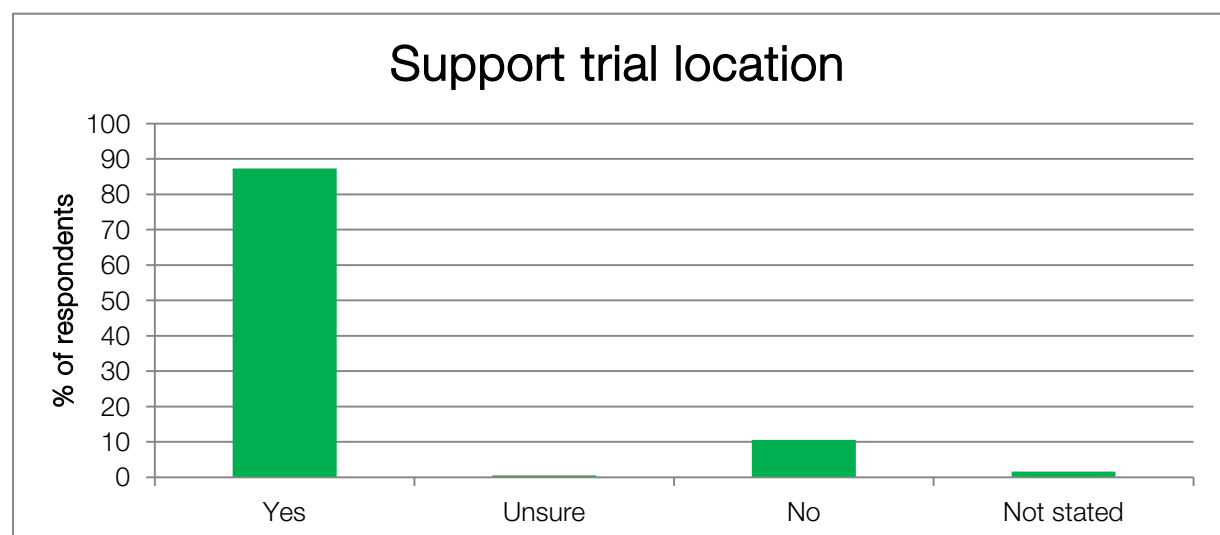
**What are your thoughts on the proposed operational trial parameters:**

**Off-leash area between Beach Road and Boathouse café (see attachment 1).**

Respondents were directed to see the map of the proposed trial area as shown earlier in Figure 1.

Figure 7 shows that 87% of the people who answered the question on Your Say Northern Beaches support the proposed trial location.

**Figure 7 Support for the proposed trial location**



**Table 5 Support for the proposed trial location**

Question	Response	No.	%
“What are your thoughts on the proposed operational trial parameters: Off-leash area between Beach Road and Boathouse café (see attachment 1).”	Yes	3,088	87.3
	Unsure	16	0.5
	No	376	10.6
	Not stated	56	1.6
TOTAL		3,536	100.0

**Table 6 Support for the Station Beach trial location by postcode**

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support trial location	
			No.	%
<i>Peninsula</i>				
2108	Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Great Mackerel Beach	316	267	84.5%
2107	Avalon, Avalon Beach, Bilgola, Clareville	1,011	919	90.9%
2106	Newport, Newport Beach	367	286	77.9%
		1,694	1,472	86.9%
<i>Other Northern Beaches suburbs</i>				
2103	Mona Vale	209	180	86.1%
2101	Warriewood, Elanora Heights, Narrabeen, North Narrabeen, Ingleside	170	157	92.4%
2099	Dee Why, Cromer, Narraweena, North Curl Curl	137	129	94.2%
2102	Warriewood	105	97	92.4%
2100	Allambie Heights, Beacon Hill, Brookvale, North Manly	89	86	96.6%
2097	Collaroy Beach, Collaroy Plateau, Wheeler Heights	78	74	94.9%
2096	Curl Curl, Freshwater, Queenscliff	60	57	95.0%
2104	Bayview	60	51	85.0%
2093	Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, North Balgowlah, Clontarf, Manly Vale	49	45	91.8%
2095	Manly, Manly East	47	44	93.6%
2084	Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest, Cottage Point	38	36	94.7%
2085	Belrose, Belrose West, Davidson	33	30	90.9%
2086	Frenchs Forest	31	29	93.5%
2105	Church Point, Scotland Island, Elvina Bay, Lovett Bay, Morning Bay	28	24	85.7%
2094	Fairlight	22	19	86.4%
2087	Forestville, Killarney Heights	22	20	90.9%
2092	Seaforth	8	7	87.5%
<i>Outside Northern Beaches</i>				
2075	St Ives, St Ives Chase	22	22	100.0%
2088	Mosman	13	8	61.5%
2067	Chatswood, Chatswood West	8	7	87.5%
2074	Turramurra (north, south)	8	7	87.5%

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support trial location	
2153	Baulkham Hills	7	7	100.0%
2066	Lane Cove North	7	4	57.1%
	Other outside Northern Beaches	183	156	85.2%
Not stated		408	320	78.4%
TOTAL		3,536	3,088	87.3%

### 2.3.2 Support trial location

Station Beach was supported mainly as a favourable location for the off leash trial by dog owners, with a small number of non-dog owners also supporting the location.

#### Support for Station Beach

In general, Station Beach is considered as a good/excellent/wonderful location or the perfect choice for dogs and owners to enjoy.

Specifically Station Beach is considered a suitable off leash exercise area because it is:

- ☐ **not a highly used public beach** being used less than other nearby beaches by local beachgoers and tourists
- ☐ **located next to the golf course.** Families with children and picnickers are less likely to use Station Beach because of the risk of mis-hit golf balls
- ☐ **not a good swimming area for people.** The water is shallow and weedy and not good for swimming. Choppy, shallow water in windy conditions results in poor water quality, making it less attractive to swim there. There are other better swimming areas to use nearby, with most people preferring the ocean beach for swimming and surfing. People who don't like dogs can swim north of The Boathouse which is a nicer area
- ☐ **the quiet end/stretch of Station Beach,** being relatively isolated/a little out of the way, deserted/empty, and not used for anything else. The southern end of the beach is rarely used by people, only to walk the length of the beach up to the café or on their way to the lighthouse and back. The proposed off leash dog area is a sensible approach to optimising the use of the beach area in the off peak period
- ☐ **not affected by ticks** compared to other local off leash dog parks
- ☐ **not used by many people for sunbaking**
- ☐ **accessible for boat owners** to let dogs off their boat for a run . Whilst not as popular as Sand Point and Clareville for setting dogs ashore (due to lack of depth), Station Beach is the northern-most option when returning by boat from Broken Bay, and is therefore an important place for those in shallow-draft vessels who are scouting somewhere to let their dog have a run
- ☐ **not next to houses,** so there are no residents to interfere with or upset. However one person would like the on leash boundary at the start of the southern end of the trial area so dogs don't disturb residents

- ☐ a **safe space** for dogs, their owners and children, not near a busy road
- ☐ a place that **allows the dogs to swim and run**
- ☐ is a **lovely place for dogs to swim**, being relatively calm water
- ☐ **next to The Boathouse**, which will attract people to support a local business. The Boathouse café accommodates dogs with a bowl of water
- ☐ **small and local**
- ☐ **easy to get to**
- ☐ a **short distance** to and from leashed areas and access and egress points. Access to that area is easy to control
- ☐ a **long stretch of sand** which allows dogs to run and owners to exercise
- ☐ an **excellent open area with a short width** to watch the social activity of the dogs
- ☐ a **consistently wide beach** that doesn't decrease too much at high tide like at Rowland Reserve
- ☐ the **tree lined strip offers shade**
- ☐ allows dog owners to **enjoy peaceful water and sunsets**
- ☐ **adjacent to the walking path**
- ☐ **close to home**
- ☐ **away from natural reserves**
- ☐ a **well contained area**.

One supporter likes the red lines marked on the map because the owners can be fined if dogs cross the lines.

## Support a larger off leash area at Station Beach

Some supporters of Station Beach as an off leash dog area think the defined area is a “good start”, but would like to see the area increased because Station Beach is expected to be inundated with dogs and dog owners when the trial starts. A larger area will “dilute” people and dogs in the defined area which is better for the environment and for the enjoyment of dogs and owners.

Suggestions for extending the proposed off leash area are to:

- ☐ **extend the northern limit of the off leash area to The Boathouse / wharf** to keep the rules simple, and so people can sit on the bench seats and watch the dogs and children playing in front of them. The seating area to be created at the northern end of the off-leash zone is likely to be favoured by the elderly, who might choose to sit there while the young ones are playing in the shallows with their dogs. A complication may arise from the proposed northern limit of the off-leash zone, where children are unlikely to be very good judges of an invisible line there. It would be more easily understood if the northern limit of the off-leash zone continued all the way to the wharf.
- However one supporter thinks it is good to have dogs some distance away from the café.
- ☐ **start the off leash area from Beach Road** where people will park to bring their dogs to the beach
- ☐ **include the whole/both ends of Station Beach**

- ❑ start the off leash area from the car park and extend beyond The Boathouse to the rocks so dogs can have a good run
- ❑ open the southern end of the beach also
- ❑ extend the off leash area south to Palm Beach Wharf south of Sandy Point.

## Support a smaller off leash area at Station Beach

Some supporters think the trial area is too large. It should be limited to one off leash area away from The Boathouse, with access for dogs further down the beach. The on leash area adjacent to The Boathouse should be extended so dogs do not disturb diners.

### 2.3.3 Unsure about trial location

The only comment from a person who was unsure about Station Beach as an off leash dog area was that the location map of the off leash area is not clear.

### 2.3.4 Don't support trial location

Residents in Waratah Road in Palm Beach who don't support the trial report that:

- ❑ car parking is at capacity resulting in illegal parking. People park over driveways and on lawns, and nose cars through trees on private property, in the Waratah Road cul-de-sac
- ❑ people picnic on their front lawns.

Since the trial was publicised Waratah Road residents report:

- ❑ off leash dogs are on Station Beach in front of dwellings south of the trial area
- ❑ barking, dog droppings, and urine burns on their lawn
- ❑ an unrestrained dog came inside a house on Waratah Road over summer. Other unrestrained dogs came up on to the back lawn, and one went down the side of the house on to the front lawn.

Reasons put forward by other people for not supporting the proposed off-leash trial area at Station Beach are that:

- ❑ **it is a favourite beach for parents with young children** to swim and play on the beach in a shady area. Families use the beach to escape the summer tides, southerly winds, and surf at Palm Beach for shallow, calm water and a lack of waves and rips. Station Beach is great for swimming at high tides in summer and/or when southerly winds prohibit swimming at the front beach.
- ❑ **dogs would not be off leash just in the designated area.** A red line on a map is unknown to dogs and ignored by many owners. Owners will remove the leash as soon as they get on to the beach. Dogs let out of a car at the end of Beach Road and not on a leash are just as likely to turn left outside the trial area as turn right. Dog owners will let dogs off the lead on the entire beach such as occurs at Curl Curl with no rangers to stop them.
- ❑ **it is dangerous for unleashed dogs and people from wayward golf balls next to a golf course.** Many balls are hit by accident towards the beach. Who will be responsible for injuries?

- ☐ **beach users will be annoyed by dogs.** People sitting on the beach will be approached by wet sandy dogs
- ☐ **it is too small** with limited space for dogs to run
- ☐ **it is a narrow beach.** At high tide it will be impossible to walk and share the beach with dogs, bringing other beach users in direct conflict with off leash dogs
- ☐ **dogs in water attract sharks,** which are attracted to splashing, movement, noise and smell over long distances. Dogs will create a great deal of noise and movement in the water or surf and have a particularly strong pungent odour. Dogs therefore present a danger to people in the ocean and should be banned from our beaches on these grounds alone. Sharks enter Pittwater, and measures should be taken to avoid attracting them including prohibiting dogs entering the water.
- ☐ **there are no natural boundaries or fences**
- ☐ **there is inadequate parking** to support dog owners from across the Northern Beaches. It was suggested to move the proposed area further north along the beach
- ☐ environmental reasons
- ☐ dogs will enter the golf course
- ☐ dogs will stray into seagrass beds
- ☐ an increased number of dogs and owners will increase the potential for accidents
- ☐ adjoining residents will be affected
- ☐ the proposed area is too far away
- ☐ there is no separate access to the off leash area
- ☐ it can hardly be considered as a beach.

One person queried why is there a leashed section at either end of the trial area?

Some people think that the quieter, under-used area of north Station Beach beyond The Boathouse and towards the lighthouse would be more suitable for off-leash dog exercise.

## 2.4 Trial period of 12 months

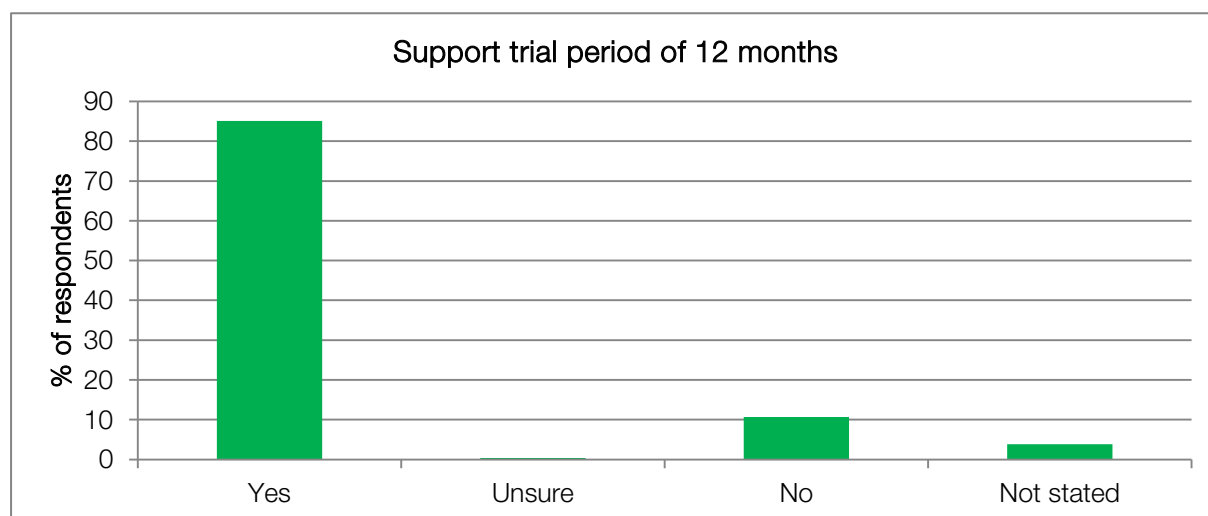
### 2.4.1 Introduction

Council invited the community on the Have Your Say webpage to comment on:

**What are your thoughts on the proposed operational trial parameters:**  
 - 12 months with restricted times

There was support for the trial period of 12 months from 85% of Your Say respondents.

**Figure 8 Support for the proposed trial period of 12 months**



**Table 7 Support for the proposed trial period of 12 months**

Question	Response	No.	%
"What are your thoughts on the proposed operational trial parameters: - 12 months with restricted times (as suggested by Pittwater Unleashed)"	Yes	3,008	85.1
	Unsure	13	0.4
	No	379	10.7
	Not stated	136	3.8
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,536</b>	<b>100.0</b>

There is variable support for a 12 month trial period among residents of the Northern Beaches, ranging from 77% among residents of Newport/Newport Beach and Fairlight, and 95% among respondents from Warriewood/Elanora Heights/Narrabeen/North Narrabeen/Ingleside.

**Table 8 Summary of support for the Station Beach trial period by postcode**

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support 12 month trial period	
			No.	%
<i>Peninsula</i>				
2108	Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Great Mackerel Beach	316	259	82.0%
2107	Avalon, Avalon Beach, Bilgola, Clareville	1,011	891	88.1%
2106	Newport, Newport Beach	367	283	77.1%
		1,694	1,433	84.6%



Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support 12 month trial period	
<i>Other Northern Beaches suburbs</i>				
2103	Mona Vale	209	178	85.2%
2101	Warriewood, Elanora Heights, Narrabeen, North Narrabeen, Ingleside	170	161	94.7%
2099	Dee Why, Cromer, Narrabeen, North Curl Curl	137	127	92.7%
2102	Warriewood	105	93	88.6%
2100	Allambie Heights, Beacon Hill, Brookvale, North Manly	89	86	96.6%
2097	Collaroy Beach, Collaroy Plateau, Wheeler Heights	78	73	93.6%
2096	Curl Curl, Freshwater, Queenscliff	60	53	88.3%
2104	Bayview	60	50	83.3%
2093	Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, North Balgowlah, Clontarf, Manly Vale	49	44	89.8%
2095	Manly, Manly East	47	43	91.5%
2084	Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest, Cottage Point	38	33	86.8%
2085	Belrose, Belrose West, Davidson	33	28	84.8%
2086	Frenchs Forest	31	29	93.5%
2105	Church Point, Scotland Island, Elvina Bay, Lovett Bay, Morning Bay	28	18	64.3%
2094	Fairlight	22	17	77.3%
2087	Forestville, Killarney Heights	22	19	86.4%
2092	Seaforth	8	7	87.5%
<i>Outside Northern Beaches</i>				
2075	St Ives, St Ives Chase	22	20	90.9%
2088	Mosman	13	7	53.8%
2067	Chatswood, Chatswood West	8	7	87.5%
2074	Turramurra (north, south)	8	8	100.0%
2153	Baulkham Hills	7	7	100.0%
2066	Lane Cove North	7	5	71.4%
	Other outside Northern Beaches	183	152	83.1%
<b>Not stated</b>		408	310	76.0%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,536</b>	<b>3,008</b>	<b>85.1%</b>

A summary discussion of reasons for supporting or not supporting the Station Beach dog off leash trial period given by people and organisations who made written submissions is in Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.4 below.

The points made are drawn from the public submissions only, and are not the views of Northern Beaches Council or the author.

Detailed public written submissions are outlined in Appendix C.

## 2.4.2 Support trial period

The trial period is seen as an opportunity to see how the trial works and the impacts of the trial.

Some people who support the proposed trial period of 12 months hope it then becomes permanent.

The 12 month trial will enable:

- ☐ everyone – for and against – a chance to ascertain any environmental or social impacts
- ☐ all agencies to monitor Station Beach in relation to survival of seagrass and safekeeping of the National Park.

## 2.4.3 Unsure about trial period

No comments

## 2.4.4 Don't support trial period

11% of Your Say respondents do not support the trial period. Some people wanted a shorter trial period of 6 months or less than 12 months, or no trial period by making Station Beach available for off leash dogs immediately.

One person queried under what circumstances is the trial revoked? Once a dog or owner does something wrong or is it repeated offences?

# 2.5 Trial days and times of operation

## 2.5.1 Introduction

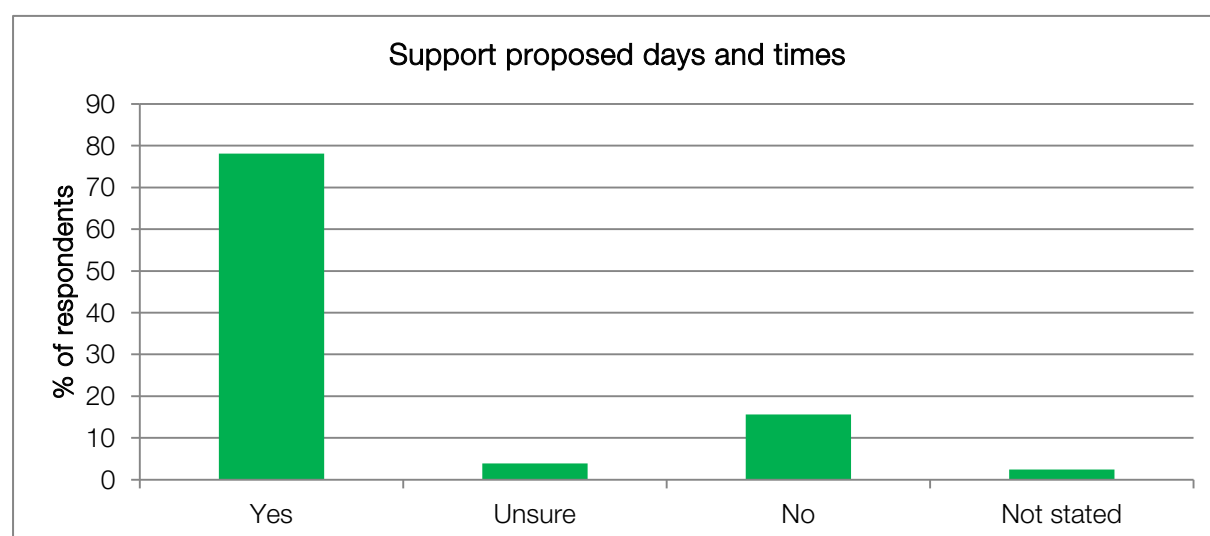
Council sought the community's views on the proposed days and times of operation for off-leash access:

Proposed days and times of operation for off leash access:

- ☐ 4:00pm - 10:30am, 7 days a week during Australian Eastern Standard Time
- ☐ 5:30pm - 10:30am, Monday to Friday during Australian Eastern Daylight Time (in the summer).

Support for the proposed days and times of operation came from 78% of respondents on Your Say.

**Figure 9 Support for the proposed days and times of operation of the trial**



**Table 9 Support for proposed days and times of operation of the trial**

Question	Response	No.	%
"Proposed days and times of operation for off leash access: - 4:00pm - 10:30am, 7 days a week during Australian Eastern Standard Time - 5:30pm - 10:30am, Monday to Friday during Australian Eastern Daylight Time (in the summer).	Yes	2,762	78.1
	Unsure	138	3.9
	No	551	15.6
	Not stated	85	2.4
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,536</b>	<b>100.0</b>

It was noted there was a frequent misunderstanding by respondents of the proposed times between daylight saving (Australian Eastern Daylight Time = AEDT) and non daylight saving time (Australian Eastern Standard Time – AEST).

Respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches were less satisfied with the proposed days and times of operation than the other parameters of the trial.

Support for the proposed days and times also varied among residents of the Northern Beaches.

**Table 10 Summary of support for the Station Beach trial days and times by postcode**

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support proposed days and times	
			No.	%
<i>Peninsula</i>				
2108	Palm Beach, Whale Beach, Great Mackerel Beach	316	241	76.3%
2107	Avalon, Avalon Beach, Bilgola, Clareville	1,011	836	82.7%
2106	Newport, Newport Beach	367	258	70.3%
		1,694	1,335	78.8%
<i>Other Northern Beaches suburbs</i>				
2103	Mona Vale	209	152	72.7%
2101	Warriewood, Elanora Heights, Narrabeen, North Narrabeen, Ingleside	170	146	85.9%
2099	Dee Why, Cromer, Narrabeena, North Curl Curl	137	114	83.2%
2102	Warriewood	105	88	83.8%
2100	Allambie Heights, Beacon Hill, Brookvale, North Manly	89	70	78.7%
2097	Collaroy Beach, Collaroy Plateau, Wheeler Heights	78	65	83.3%
2096	Curl Curl, Freshwater, Queenscliff	60	47	78.3%
2104	Bayview	60	43	71.7%
2093	Balgowlah, Balgowlah Heights, North Balgowlah, Clontarf, Manly Vale	49	42	85.7%
2095	Manly, Manly East	47	36	76.6%
2084	Terrey Hills, Duffys Forest, Cottage Point	38	28	73.7%
2085	Belrose, Belrose West, Davidson	33	29	87.9%
2086	Frenchs Forest	31	19	61.3%
2105	Church Point, Scotland Island, Elvina Bay, Lovett Bay, Morning Bay	28	21	75.0%
2094	Fairlight	22	17	77.3%
2087	Forestville, Killarney Heights	22	16	72.7%
2092	Seaforth	8	6	75.0%
<i>Outside Northern Beaches</i>				
2075	St Ives, St Ives Chase	22	20	90.9%
2088	Mosman	13	8	61.5%
2067	Chatswood, Chatswood West	8	7	87.5%

Post-code	Suburbs	No. responses	Support proposed days and times	
2074	Turramurra (north, south)	8	7	87.5%
2153	Baulkham Hills	7	7	100.0%
2066	Lane Cove North	7	3	42.9%
	Other outside Northern Beaches	183	143	78.1%
Not stated		408	293	71.8%
TOTAL		3,536	2,762	78.1%

## 2.5.2 Support trial days and times

A summary discussion of reasons for supporting the Station Beach dog off leash trial days and times given by people and organisations who made written submissions is in Section 2.5.2 below.

The points made are drawn from the public submissions only, and are not the views of Northern Beaches Council or the author.

Detailed public written submissions are outlined in Appendix C.

Supporters of the trial somewhat support the proposed days and times in general. The key reason for supporting the proposed days and times is that they are better than no time at all for off-leash dogs to access Station Beach.

Reasons for supporting the proposed days and times include:

- ❑ **successful time sharing of beaches is common elsewhere** - in other NSW towns, other states, overseas – Perth, San Diego, Auckland. The proposed hours – 7 hours a day for people with dogs (four hours in the morning and three hours in the evening) – and 7 hours a day for people without dogs - are equitable and apply at other dog friendly beaches on the NSW coast
- ❑ **it is a fair solution for sharing** this beautiful location to keep everyone happy so everyone can enjoy the beach. Leaving the popular time of the day for families is a great idea. People who want to enjoy the beach without dogs can still do so during the “off-peak” times for dog use. Dogs can be off lead at quieter times of the day when other people are not using the beach. Station Beach is used little outside 10:30am to 4:00pm so access for dog walkers is in the community interest. Mornings and afternoons are the busy times in dog parks. Morning and night when the beach is not so busy is good. Dog access times will not impact on general visitor use as dog owners will need to leave early in the day or arriving in the afternoon when families are packing up to leave
- ❑ **local residents want the limited timed access** to enable locals to take their dogs to Station Beach, but discourage out of area visitors especially on weekends to reduce the numbers of people using the area. Day trippers may not take care and respect the area as a local would. However people from “out of area” North Shore are excited and looking forward to be able to use Station Beach.

- ☐ **the proposed times are well thought out and pragmatic.** The proposed times are a sensible approach to optimising the use of the beach area in the off peak period.
- ☐ **needs of dog owners and other beach users can be balanced**
- ☐ **time sharing is an excellent compromise**
- ☐ agreed times are a good idea so people who are uncomfortable around dogs will be aware of when they will expect to encounter dogs on the beach.
- ☐ being grateful for the trial. They support any times during which people can take their dog to the beach legally. Any time for dogs to enjoy the beach is better than no time at all
- ☐ the proposed times are reasonable and should keep numbers of people and dogs on the beach down and therefore less impact on the beach
- ☐ dog friendly hours will encourage locals to get up and exercise before work and support physical and mental health.

A condition of support for the proposed days and times is that dogs are on the beach only within the time limits. The off leash times should be policed at the outset of the trial so people stick to the times. Otherwise people who come to Palm Beach for holidays or weekends think the rules don't apply to them which will ruin it for locals.

### 2.5.3 Unsure about trial days and times

No comments made

### 2.5.4 Don't support trial days and times

Nearly 20% of Your Say respondents oppose or are unsure about the proposed days and times of operation of the trial at Station Beach. The proposed days and times are considered a good start, but many people would like to see the days and times increased. Many people want 24 hours 7 days a week access. Others want the days and times extended in various ways (earlier or later in the morning and evening, weekends as well as weekdays in daylight saving, longer hours in winter). There was concern that allowing dogs on the beach overnight will impact on bird foraging and roosting.

Many people who said they supported the proposed days and times proposed a wide range of alternative days and/or times, so these suggestions are included in the discussion below.

## Days and times should be increased

The proposed days and times are a good start, but would like to see the times increased.

Reasons for wanting increased times in general are:

- ☐ it is not clear why there needs to be time restrictions which seem unfair on dog owners
- ☐ to make things easier for shift workers by making it on leash or not
- ☐ the times are too restrictive
- ☐ proposed days and times don't fit in with everyday living
- ☐ so dogs are not concentrated in one area
- ☐ to prevent overcrowding in the mornings and late afternoon / early evening
- ☐ people walk dogs when it suits them

- ☐ the proposed times would only be suitable for locals
- ☐ to spread users out over the day and avoid parking problems.

The proposed off leash times are fine but dogs should be allowed on the leash outside those times.

## **All day / 24 hours and day 7 days a week**

### **All day/ 24 hours a day / no time restrictions**

Reasons for supporting 24 hours /7 days a week access are:

- ☐ people who don't like dogs can go to other more suitable beaches. The public have plenty of other beaches to use
- ☐ access would be the same as Rowland Reserve
- ☐ the beach is unused and not a popular swimming or sunbaking beach
- ☐ ease of compliance. Times are difficult and expensive to police
- ☐ there should be no restrictions as long as the behaviour of owners and dogs is supervised, owners have good recall of the their dogs, and owners pick up dog faeces
- ☐ will avoid confusion and make things simple
- ☐ Council rangers could be doing something more constructive
- ☐ no time restrictions if this is a trial
- ☐ boat-bound dogs have to be able to land somewhere or else they would be forced into the National Park
- ☐ shift workers and elderly people take their smaller dogs walking during the day when not so many larger dogs are around
- ☐ the beach is isolated from the general public
- ☐ tide times vary across 24 hours
- ☐ determine when the beach is used during the trial and change the hours later if necessary.
- ☐ owners can't regularly visit during the proposed restricted hours
- ☐ there will be less dog owners during the day, but not all dog owners are able to use the beach at specific times
- ☐ dogs need to be walked every day
- ☐ public space is to be shared - no NIMBYs
- ☐ people work all hours and should be able to walk their dog whenever they can.
- ☐ too much control in this country
- ☐ the beach will be congested within a short period of time.

### **Proposed times but 7 days a week**

- ☐ 7 days a week but at the specified times
- ☐ 7 days a week year round
- ☐ Should be 5pm-10.30am 7 days a week
- ☐ Should be 7 days all year 11 for working dog owners and for dogs to cool off



- ☐ Monday to Sunday all year 4pm to 10.30am

### **24 hours a day on weekdays only**

- ☐ All day Monday to Friday
- ☐ Dogs allowed off leash on weekdays year round, with dogs on leash on weekends and public holidays
- ☐ These hours work at McCarrs Creek, and would reduce the fear of dogs of people visiting on weekends
- ☐ 24 hours a day on Mondays and Tuesdays which are quiet.

### **All day / daylight hours**

- ☐ During the day
- ☐ On hot days it's nice to take dogs for a swim at the hottest part of the day
- ☐ Allow dogs from 12 noon to 6:00pm so I can swim with my dogs
- ☐ More hours during the day. Many pet owners are shift workers. Female dog owners don't like being out at night
- ☐ Times during the day. proposed times are not convenient
- ☐ The Boat Owners Association raised concern with the proposed hours and days regulating the presence of dogs, as these would conflict with their established practices which frequently see members setting their dogs ashore at Station Beach in the middle of the day, and especially on the weekends in summer. Dogs included in on-board outings for a day, or several days, need to be set ashore to answer the call of nature. This routine often fits in with grabbing a morning coffee, or fish and chips for lunch, but can be any time of day, especially if the kids are keen to linger at the shore for a swim with the dog. Boat owners urge caution with respect to the introduction of time/day constraints - or at least the policing of these. They trust there'd be a common sense approach in place where rangers remain conscious of the importance of the shoreline to families with dogs arriving by boat at any time of any day.

### **Later finish time than 10:30am**

- ☐ One hour later finish time in the morning, especially on weekends
- ☐ 5pm-11am to allow use after school dropoff in the morning
- ☐ 3pm to 11am daily
- ☐ 4pm to 11am all week
- ☐ 4pm to 12pm
- ☐ Longer time period in the morning

### **Earlier start time than 4:00/5:30pm in the afternoon**

- ☐ From 3pm in summer and winter
- ☐ 3pm to 11am daily
- ☐ Start at 3.30pm all year so families with children can go there
- ☐ After 4pm all year
- ☐ One hour earlier in the afternoons

## Restrict proposed times

### Earlier finish time than 10:30am

- ☐ The times are generous and should be shortened. The proposed 10.30am finish time should be earlier because it hinders use by young families and other users during the day.

Suggestions for earlier finish times in the mornings are:

- ☐ Finish at 10am
- ☐ Finish at 9.30am
- ☐ Finish at 9am
- ☐ Finish at 8:30am
- ☐ Finish at/before 8am
- ☐ 2 hour time from sunrise.

### Later start time than 4:00/5:30pm in the afternoon

- ☐ 5-8pm every day would be a sensible solution for everyone
- ☐ Before 5pm AEST and after 7.30am AEST and AEDT are not appropriate for the convenience of the public and the users of Palm Beach Golf Course.
- ☐ Local residents like to swim in the late afternoons which would conflict with the proposed afternoon time
- ☐ after 6pm works in South Australia and Queensland.

## Daylight saving / summer hours November-March

Dog owners want longer off leash hours in daylight saving / summer because:

- ☐ proposed times in summer make it impossible to go to Station Beach with school age children and full time work
- ☐ people shouldn't be on the beach in the sun between 11am and 3pm in summer.
- ☐ 7 days a week in daylight saving
- ☐ times should not be limited during daylight saving.

Suggested times for off leash during daylight saving are:

- ☐ All day / daylight hours
- ☐ Earlier finish time in the morning – 7.30am
- ☐ Earlier finish time in the morning – 9am
- ☐ Earlier start time in afternoon – 3.30pm, 4pm or 4.30pm
- ☐ Include weekends in summer.

## Winter hours April-October

### Longer hours

In winter dog owners generally want longer hours during the day because the beach is quiet and hardly used so there should not be any restrictions for off leash use.

An earlier start time in the afternoon (3pm, 3.30pm, 4pm) is requested because of the shorter daylight hours in winter, giving people time to walk their dogs in lighter and warmer conditions; and because no-one sits on the beach in the colder months.

### **Earlier finish time in the morning**

One person stated that before 5pm AEST and after 7.30am AEST and AEDT are not appropriate for the convenience of the public and the users of Palm Beach Golf Course.

### **Weekdays**

Longer hours on weekdays

### **Weekends**

Dogs should be permitted in Station Beach on summer weekends because:

- ☐ that's when dogs want and need to swim the most
- ☐ people who work during the week can use the area then.

### **Issues with dawn and dusk / overnight**

There is no need for overnight off-leash access. Some people questioned why dogs would be allowed on the beach at dawn, dusk and overnight, which are the times when shorebirds and native fauna are active.

Dusk and dawn are prime time for shark attacks.

### **Proposed off leash times conflict with informal beach use**

Most people visit the beach in the mornings and late afternoon. Children and families use this beach early in the morning and later in the day to avoid the heat of the day. This pattern of use will directly conflict with the proposed times of use by off leash dogs.

Dog owners with children want to walk their dogs in the middle of the day.

People want to be able to use the beach without dogs when the tide is high and at sunset.

The proposed times line up with the times people without dogs want to use the beach to avoid the midday sun / outside the high UV times of the day to avoid skin cancers.

### **Days and times of use should be consistent throughout the year**

Times of use should be consistent all year to encourage people to abide by the rules. People are busy and don't have time to think about different times on weekdays vs weekends, daylight saving versus the rest of the year.

## 2.6 Requirements for success of the Station Beach off leash trial

Council did not specifically ask the community about what factors are required to make the Station Beach dog off leash trial a success. Respondents to Your Say Northern Beaches made many suggestions of their own, as outlined below.

There was a plea from dog owners to make the trial a success and not set it up to fail. Key messages to communicate during the trial are “Abuse it or lose it” and the consequences of non-compliance.

### 2.6.1 Suggestions for a successful off leash trial at Station Beach

Practical suggestions to make the trial at Station Beach a success are:

- ❑ **sufficient dog waste bins and biodegradable bags** to make disposal of dog waste easy, and so there are no excuses for dog poo left on the beach. The dog waste bins should be well designed. Dog waste bins and bags should be located at the northern and southern ends, and in the middle, of the off leash area. The bins must be emptied regularly and kept clean and tidy or some people will resent the off leash area which has happened in other places. Bins should be located out of the way where locals know where to find them rather than ugly bins being in plain view and dominating the landscape.
- ❑ **adequate public parking.** Concern that parking at Palm Beach is already difficult/impossible at weekends, so additional people visiting Station Beach to exercise their dogs will exacerbate the lack of parking. Residents with a parking sticker should not have to pay to use Station Beach like at Bayview.
- ❑ **large and clearly legible signs**
  - showing the boundaries of the off leash area. A sign “Dogs Prohibited Past This Point” should be placed before the houses on Waratah Road at the southern end of the beach.
  - Information including fines
  - encouraging people to pick up extra faeces
  - with information about the body language of dogs e.g. Lili Chin doggie language poster.
- ❑ **fencing**
  - between the golf course and the beach to stop dogs from running on to the golf course, and to protect beach users from being hit by stray golf balls. However one person says a fence doesn’t need to be considered along the golf course because people already walk their dogs there with no problem.
  - near The Boathouse to stop dogs running under the wharf into the National Park.
- ❑ **permanent ranger/warden on site** to enforce regulations, educate the community and build a better relationship with dog owners
- ❑ **fines** for:
  - not picking up dog faeces and putting dog waste bags in public garbage bins
  - allowing dogs outside the off leash area

#### ☐ a payment/licensing system

- dog owners pay Council for a tag to access the beach which their dog would wear on the beach.
- dog owners could be required to complete a form before their dog could access the beach

#### ☐ water:

- fresh drinking water 1 and bowls for the dogs
- a tap for drinking water and rinsing off
- push button taps (so they can't be left running) with water bowls.
- a hose at each end for rinsing dogs before leaving the area

#### ☐ clear definition of the off leash area

#### ☐ improved access on to the beach

#### ☐ closed circuit television (CCTV) to monitor picking up poo and people attempting to take dogs on to the beach outside off leash hours

#### ☐ a way to report people who do not pick up after their dog.

#### ☐ consider using a “traffic light” system so people are clear when dog access is on or off.

#### ☐ a limit of one dog walking van per hour to limit overcrowding.

The areas between the parking spaces and the designated off leash zone are a concern with the possibility of rangers catching people and fining them.

The owners of The Boathouse stated they are very happy to help in any way that might be appropriate, such as with bins and signage near their venue.

## 2.6.2 Criteria for measuring success of the trial

One person questioned how the success of the trial will be measured?

## 2.7 Other comments

### 2.7.1 Introduction

Many people who made a comment in Your Say or via email or mail made unsolicited comments outside the questions that Council asked about the trial. Such comments mainly related to the need for more unleashed dog exercise areas on the Northern Beaches.

The common theme in those comments is that dog owners see Station Beach as a compromise or a “stepping stone” towards gaining access to one, several or all ocean beaches in Pittwater/the Northern Beaches for off-leash dog exercise.

Comments regarding additional unleashed dog exercise in general (Section 2.7.2), and such areas at ocean beaches (Section 2.7.3), are outlined below.

Comments about existing off leash dog areas on the northern beaches are in Section 2.7.4.

A summary discussion of comments made by people and organisations who made written submissions about additional off leash dog exercise areas on the Northern Beaches, and existing off leash areas are in Sections 2.7.2, 2.7.3 and 2.7.4 below.

The points made are drawn from the public submissions only, and are not the views of Northern Beaches Council or the author.

Detailed public written submissions are outlined in Appendix C.

## 2.7.2 Additional off leash dog exercise areas

### General

Many dog owners see the trial at Station Beach as not going far enough for off leash dog exercise. There is a need for more and better quality dog friendly dog parks/unleashed dog exercise areas so families and dog walkers can spend time with their dogs and socialise, and the dogs can exercise and socialise. More off leash dog parks will also encourage tourists to the area.

Every suburb should have at least one off leash area. There are no off leash areas currently within 5 kilometres of Palm Beach and Whale Beach.

More off leash options should be available specifically in Bilgola, north of Mona Vale, and Manly.

### Beaches

Access to water for unleashed dogs is available at four locations on the northern beaches at Great Mackerel Beach, Bayview, Curl Curl, and Manly.

### Ocean beaches

#### *Introduction*

There is a strong desire to take dogs to ocean beaches to swim and cool off in the heat, exercise, and spend time with their dogs and families.

Pittwater Unleashed and many supporters of the trial see the Station Beach trial as a “good start”, and a first step in Council granting access to unleashed dogs on one or more ocean beaches in the Northern Beaches.

Reasons for seeking off-leash access to ocean beaches are:

- ☐ the majority of dog owners are responsible
- ☐ a fear that Station Beach will become too crowded
- ☐ Bayview is currently too overcrowded and there are no waves. Another dog beach would take the pressure off Bayview.
- ☐ ocean beaches have no ticks
- ☐ timed off-leash access to beaches works in other areas, such as North Cronulla, Central Coast, Forster, Port Macquarie, Shoalhaven, Bayside in Melbourne, Portsea, Mornington

Peninsula, Gold Coast, Hervey Bay, and Western Australia. In Queensland dogs are allowed on all beaches 200 metres from flags. At the Spit Beach on the Gold Coast dogs are allowed to swim between the flags.

Beaches close to wildlife are recognised as being unsuitable for off leash dogs.

Many people want the trial to extend across the northern beaches.

Some dog owners are willing to pay a fee to access ocean beaches.

### ***Desired access to ocean beaches on the northern beaches***

Varying views about the degree of access to ocean beaches, ranging from access to all ocean beaches at all times to limited beaches and limited times, are set out below.

- ☐ All ocean beaches at all times
  - so locals can access their local beach leading to a sense of community, and within walking distance so less need to use cars
  - spread use throughout the area to reduce congestion at off leash dog areas
  - dog owners have a right to use public land
- ☐ all beaches – timed access / late evening to early morning
  - 5pm to 7am 111, 4.30-6pm to 7.30-8.30am, 4pm to 9am winter and 6pm to 7.30am in summer, 5pm to 9am
- ☐ all beaches – in winter
- ☐ all beaches– one end is dog friendly
- ☐ most beaches unless they are totally unsuitable for dogs
- ☐ most beaches – timed access on leashes in the early morning 7am-9am and in the evening 5pm-7pm
- ☐ at least one off-leash dog beach per suburb
- ☐ certain sections of every beach at all times and a certain distance from any swimming flags
- ☐ some dog beaches with no time restrictions
- ☐ certain sections of every beach with time restrictions
- ☐ a section of some beaches for a reasonable time
- ☐ a section of at least one ocean beach – untimed and the same days as at Station Beach
- ☐ popular/busy beaches at off peak times early morning and later evening
- ☐ quieter ocean beaches that are empty through winter
- ☐ a small number of beach areas – Manly, Dee Why, Narrabeen, some on the peninsula - available 10am to 4pm.

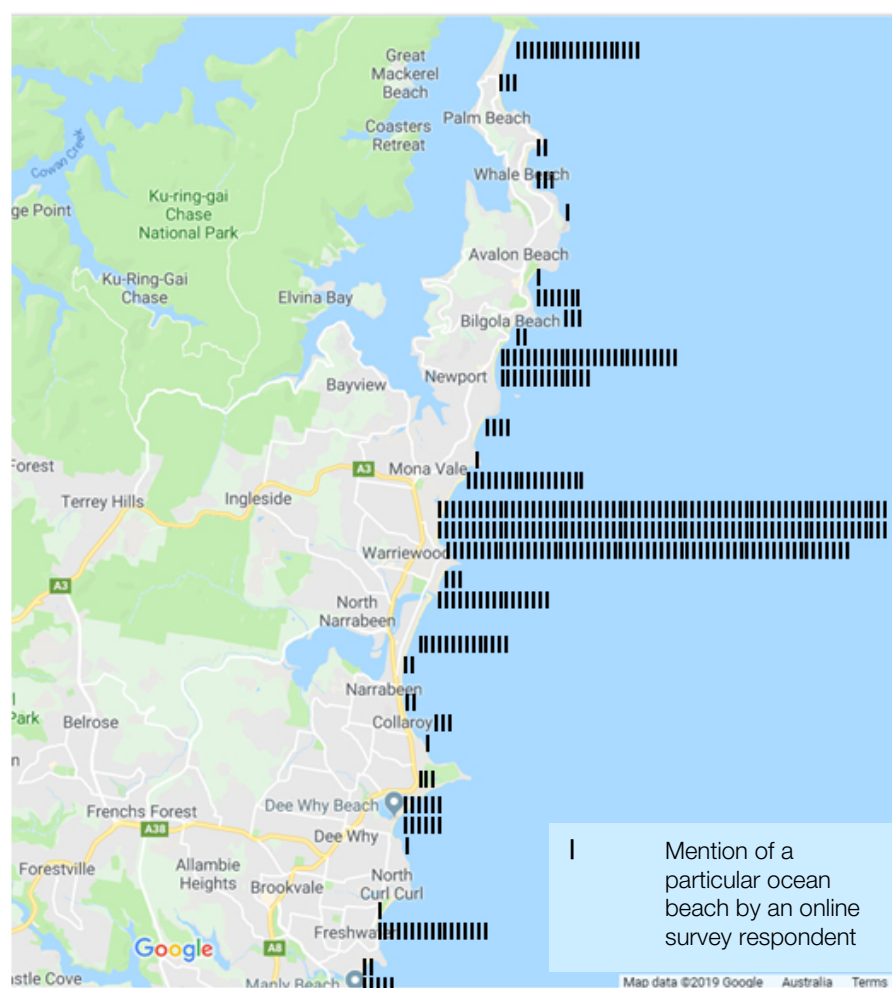
### ***Desire for off leash access to specific beaches***

Many supporters of off-leash areas on ocean beaches suggested specific beaches.

South Mona Vale (most common) and north Newport Beaches were the most frequently mentioned beaches for off leash as shown in Figure 10.



**Figure 10 Ocean beaches desired for off-leash dog access**



The suggestions relating to the advantages of some locations, as well as suggested times, are in Table 11.

**Table 11 Ocean beaches desired for off-leash dog access**

Beach	No. responses	Comments about location	Desired hours
North Palm Beach	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plenty of car parking</li> <li>- Larger area for dogs</li> <li>- Fenced off from dune stabilisation areas</li> <li>- Away from other activities such as golf</li> </ul>	6pm-8am (2)
Palm Beach	3	-	all day every day, 6pm-8am
North Whale Beach	2	-	
Whale Beach	3	-	6pm-8am, 7pm to 8am in summer
South Whale Beach	1	- adequate and safe parking, and an outdoor area dogs lovers can enjoy	-

Beach	No. responses	Comments about location	Desired hours
North Avalon Beach	1	-	-
Avalon Beach	7	-	Untimed 6pm-8am
North Bilgola Beach	3	-	-
Bilgola Beach	2	-	-
Newport Beach - north end	27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Long beach with plenty of room for people to share</li> <li>- People walk their dogs on the beach already</li> </ul>	6pm-8am 6pm to 9am on weekends 4pm on weekdays 4-5pm to 9am all day access in winter
Newport Beach	14	-	-
Crystal Bay	1	-	-
Bungan Beach	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unpatrolled</li> <li>- Quiet</li> <li>- Steep hill to access</li> </ul>	-
Mona Vale Basin	1	-	-
Mona Vale Beach	18	-	-
South end of Mona Vale beach	200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- low use swimming beach</li> <li>- beach is unsuitable for surfing</li> <li>- away from houses and traffic</li> <li>- unpatrolled beach and away from the flags</li> <li>- typically quiet – people don't like the steep access via the stairs</li> <li>- the area is already used as an off leash exercise area. Dogs are poorly supervised by owners – dogs harass people, owners don't pick up after dogs</li> <li>- extension of the off-leash area adjacent to the beach</li> <li>- parking is available</li> <li>- Locals won't have to drive to Bayview or Station Beach</li> <li>- Accessible to people from Terrey Hills</li> <li>- dogs and owners are already on the beach in the late afternoons</li> <li>- will work only if rangers ensure that times are adhered to</li> </ul>	same hours as Station Beach 4.30pm – 8am 6pm – 9am mornings and afternoons 6pm-8am Monday-Friday
Warriewood	3	-	-
Turimetta / Little Narrabeen	17	- not patrolled	-

Beach	No. responses	Comments about location	Desired hours
North Narrabeen	-	-	-
Narrabeen	14	-	-
South Narrabeen (Clark Street-Frazer Street)	2	- Plenty of space	-
Narrabeen to Collaroy	2	-	-
Collaroy Beach	3	-	-
Collaroy Basin	1	-	-
Long Reef	3	-	-
Dee Why to Long Reef	6	- More accessible to people in the central part of the northern beaches - Long stretch of beach - This part of the beach is never used	-
Dee Why	6	-	-
South Dee Why Beach	1	-	-
North Curl Curl	1	-	-
Curl Curl Beach (lagoon entry to the first southward entry/exit)	16	- Currently a UDEA adjacent to the lagoon - Quieter beach	after 6pm, 6pm-9am
Freshwater	2	-	6pm-9am
Queenscliff	1	-	
North / South Steyne	1	-	
Manly	2	-	6pm-9am

## Pittwater beaches

Suggestions for off leash access to beaches on Pittwater are:

- ☐ Clareville Beach early Mondays Monday to Friday when the beach is quiet
- ☐ Northern end of Station Beach, north of The Boathouse – not so many people
- ☐ Currawong Avenue Reserve at Palm Beach
- ☐ Eastern side of Careel Bay
- ☐ Scotland Island.

## Other

Council should consider an area for off leash exercise where families don't go with young children and which isn't a calm water swimming area.

### 2.7.3 Comments about existing off leash exercise areas on Northern Beaches

Dog owners commented that current off leash dog areas in general:

- ☐ are overcrowded
- ☐ are run down
- ☐ will become a health hazard
- ☐ have minimal shade
- ☐ have no water for dogs to cool down.

Refer to Appendix C for comments about off leash areas at Careel Bay/Hitchcock Park, Avalon Beach Reserve, Rowland Reserve at Bayview, Mona Vale, Curl Curl Lagoon, and Narraweena.

### 2.7.4 Consultation and approval process

Comments about the consultation and approval process for the Station Beach trial are:

- ☐ the consultation process is too long
- ☐ how do people find out when the trial is approved?
- ☐ looking forward to the trial and further community engagement.

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### 3 CONCLUSION

There is strong community interest in a proposal for an off leash dog area at Station Beach at Palm Beach. Over 3,500 submissions were received by Northern Beaches Council during the extensive community engagement process undertaken from November 2018 to February 2019 to determine the degree of support for the proposal.

The submissions to Your Say Northern Beaches show strong support for an off leash area on Station Beach (89% of respondents), with 11% of respondents opposed. However a wide range of deeply-felt, nuanced and valid views and reasons for either supporting or opposing the proposed trial should be recognised and considered. These views and reasons were set out in Section 2.2.

Support for the trial location south of The Boathouse and north of Beach Road (87%), and the trial period of 12 months (85%), was also relatively high. However, the level of support for the proposed days and times of operation for off leash dog access - 4:00pm-10:30am 7 days a week during Australian Eastern Standard Time and 5:30pm-10:30am Monday to Friday during Australian Eastern Daylight Time (in the summer) - was lower (78%) because many people want the proposed days and/or times to be either extended or restricted.

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# APPENDIX A

## ONLINE NOTICES

# Your Say Northern Beaches project page

[https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/stationbeachtrial?tool=survey\\_tool&tool\\_id=comment-station-beach#tool\\_tab](https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/stationbeachtrial?tool=survey_tool&tool_id=comment-station-beach#tool_tab)








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Home » Station Beach Dog Off Leash Area - Proposed Trial


## Station Beach Dog Off Leash Area - Proposed Trial







**Who's listening**


**Damian Ham**  
Manager Open Space and Recreation Planning  
Email [council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au)  
[more..](#)



**Document Library**

 Station Beach (South) dog off-leash area proposed Concept Plan - Nov 2018 (2.15 MB) (pdf)


 Department of Industry - Proposed dog off-leash trial at Station Beach, Pittwater Letter to Council 20181118 (422 KB) (pdf)

 Department of Industry - Response to request for comment on proposed dog off leash trail - Station Beach - Rescinded (2.22 MB) (pdf)

**FAQ**

[Why is Council seeking community feedback on a trial dog off leash area at Station Beach?](#)

<https://yoursay.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/stationbeachtrial/faqs#37798>





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Home » Station Beach Dog Off Leash Area - Proposed Trial


## FAQs


 Why is Council seeking community feedback on a trial dog off leash area at Station Beach?

 What have the NSW Government Agencies told Council about the proposed trial at Station Beach?

 Where is the proposed trial dog off-leash area to be located at Station Beach?

 What days and times would dogs be permitted off-leash at Station Beach during the trial?

 For how long would a trial at Station Beach be conducted?

 What are the next steps after the community engagement period ends 28 February 2019?

**Why is Council seeking community feedback on a trial dog off leash area at Station Beach?**

Local residents and community groups such as Pittwater Unleashed have over many years advocated for our community to be able to access and enjoy foreshore areas with their dogs.

Over the years, several preferred areas have been identified, including Station Beach. With a growing population, and an increasing number of families with dogs, the need to make provision for off-leash recreation has increased over the years since Careel Bay was closed.

In response Council resolved at its meeting held 26 June 2018 to undertake consultation regarding a trial dog off leash area at Station Beach, Palm Beach.

[Council Agenda 26 June 2018, Item 12.4, page 194](#)

[Council Minutes 26 June, Item 12.4, page 20](#)

Council recognises the benefits of off-leash areas to community well-being including the community building aspect of owning a dog through meeting and forming friendships at these areas.

Notwithstanding these and other benefits there are a range of key stakeholders to consult with prior to a decision being made about conducting a trial. This includes local residents and State government agencies who have responsibilities for the management of Station Beach and the Pittwater waterway.

STATION BEACH DOG OFF LEASH AREA – PROPOSED TRIAL  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT - FINAL  
PARKLAND PLANNERS

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#### What have the NSW Government Agencies told Council about the proposed trial at Station Beach?

[top of page](#)

The NSW Department of Industry - Lands & Water have provided Council with a range of comments in regard to the proposed trial at Station Beach. If you would like to read their comments please view these letters.

[Department of Industry - November 2018](#)

[Department of Industry - 10 September 2018](#)

In response Council has engaged consultants to carry out ornithological research and to develop an updated Review of Environmental Factors (REF). An REF was prepared in 2008 in response to a previous investigation for a trial dog swimming area at Station Beach will inform this work. The updated REF and an ornithological report will be completed in February 2019 and will be publicly available following Council review.

Findings from the REF and other research will inform how the trial would be managed, including seagrass monitoring, should it proceed.

The NSW Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries has no objections to the dog beach trial on Station Beach, provided that:

- Signage is installed on the beach, stating that dogs must not be allowed to run through seagrass beds at low tide. ..Provide environmental information, advising that seagrass beds are present in the nearshore zone, including the endangered population of *Posidonia australis* seagrass. Seagrass is important habitat for fish, providing shelter, food and a nursery for young.
- Surveys of the seagrass are undertaken, showing species, distribution and density along Station Beach. The survey should be undertaken immediately prior to and immediately following the trial period.

In response, should a trial proceed Council will install the signage and undertake the surveys of seagrass as requested by the of NSW Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has indicated to Council that it does not have any concerns with this proposal as long as it is clearly signposted that the northern boundary of the off-leash area is the Boathouse Wharf. Council will need to ensure compliance with the northern boundary to prevent off-leash dogs entering the national park to the north.

In response, should a trial proceed Council would install the signage and undertake compliance (as required) requested by the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

[top of page](#)

#### Where is the proposed trial dog off-leash area to be located at Station Beach?

The proposed trial dog off-leash area is located at the south end of Station Beach, Palm Beach.

[View the map of the proposed trial area](#)

#### What days and times would dogs be permitted off-leash at Station Beach during the trial?

[top of page](#)

Council proposes a trial arrangement that would allow families with dogs to share a section of Station Beach at specified times of day. The usage remains unchanged through the popular part of the day, but mornings and late afternoons would see the space also opened-up to families with dogs.

It is proposed that the trial area would be available for dog off leash exercising and swimming at these days and times:

- 4:00pm – 10:30am, 7 days a week during Australian Eastern Standard Time
- 5:30pm – 10:30am, Monday to Friday during Australian Eastern Daylight Time (in the summer)

At all other times dogs are not permitted at Station Beach.

As required by the Department of Primary Industries - Fisheries, dogs would only be permitted to swim at high tide, so as not to impact the seagrass.

[top of page](#)

#### For how long would a trial at Station Beach be conducted?

The proposed trial would be conducted over 12 months. The exact dates of the trial will be determined following consideration of the feedback received during this community engagement.

During this period environmental monitoring would be undertaken and community feedback sought.

[top of page](#)

#### What are the next steps after the community engagement period ends 28 February 2019?

At the conclusion of the community engagement period, staff will:

- Analyse the submissions and feedback received.
- Consider the outcomes of the Review of Environmental Factors and other research.
- Prepare a report for the consideration of Council.

During this time there will be updates posted on these Your Say project pages.

[top of page](#)

We are seeking community feedback about a proposed dog off leash area trial at Station Beach, Palm Beach.

**NEWS** **COMMENT FORM**

## Have your say

3 days ago



There are several ways that you can have your say on whether or not Council should conduct a trial:

- **Online**
- In writing - marked "Station Beach Trial Dog Off Leash Area" to Northern Beaches Council PO Box 82 Manly, NSW 1655
- In person - come along and talk to the Parks & Recreation team at one of the following sessions.

### Session 1

- Palm Beach Golf Club, 2 Beach Road, Palm Beach  
Thursday 29 November 2018, 6 - 8 pm

### Session 2

- Palm Beach Golf Club, 2 Beach Road, Palm Beach  
Saturday 1 December 2018, 2.30 - 4.30 pm

Comments close Thursday 28 February 2019.

If you would like more information please contact the Parks & Recreation Team on 1300 434 434.

## Background

3 days ago



We are seeking your feedback about whether or not to trial a dog off leash area at Station Beach.

Local residents and community groups such as Pittwater Unleashed have over many years advocated for our community to be able to access and enjoy foreshore areas with their dogs.

Over the years, several preferred areas have been identified, including Station Beach. With a growing population, and an increasing number of families with dogs, the need to make provision for off-leash recreation has

trial dog off leash area at Station Beach?

What have the NSW Government Agencies told Council about the proposed trial at Station Beach?

Where is the proposed trial dog off-leash area to be located at Station Beach?

What days and times would dogs be permitted off-leash at Station Beach during the trial?

more..



### Life Cycle

Nov '18 - Feb '19 - Community engagement on the proposed trial.

Feb '19 - Updated Review of Environmental Factors and omithological reports due

Mar '19 Report by staff on submissions

## Online Comments Form - proposed Station Beach dog off-leash trial



Please take a moment to provide your feedback on the proposed Station Beach dog off-leash trial.

If your comment includes attachments please send them to [council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au).

Comments close Thursday 28 February 2019

Do you support a dog off leash area trial at Station Beach? \*

Choose an option

What are your thoughts on the proposed operational trial parameters:

[View the map of the proposed trial area](#)

**Times of operation**

	Support	Don't support	Unsure
Trial location (see map of the proposed trial area)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposed trial period of 12 months	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proposed days and times of operation for off leash access	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Council about the proposed trial at Station Beach?

Where is the proposed trial dog off-leash area to be located at Station Beach?

What days and times would dogs be permitted off-leash at Station Beach during the trial?

more..



### Life Cycle

Nov '18 - Feb '19 - Community engagement on the proposed trial.

Feb '19 - Updated Review of Environmental Factors and omithological reports due



Comments

First name \*

Please limit answer to 255 characters

255

Surname \*

Please limit answer to 255 characters

255

Email \*

Address

Please limit answer to 255 characters

255

Suburb

Enter your suburb name

Postcode

Group represented/if relevant

Please limit answer to 255 characters

255

Postcode

Group represented/if relevant

Please limit answer to 255 characters

255

Would you like to receive email updates on this project? \*

Yes

No

Would you like to join Council's community engagement email list? \*

Yes

No

Already on it

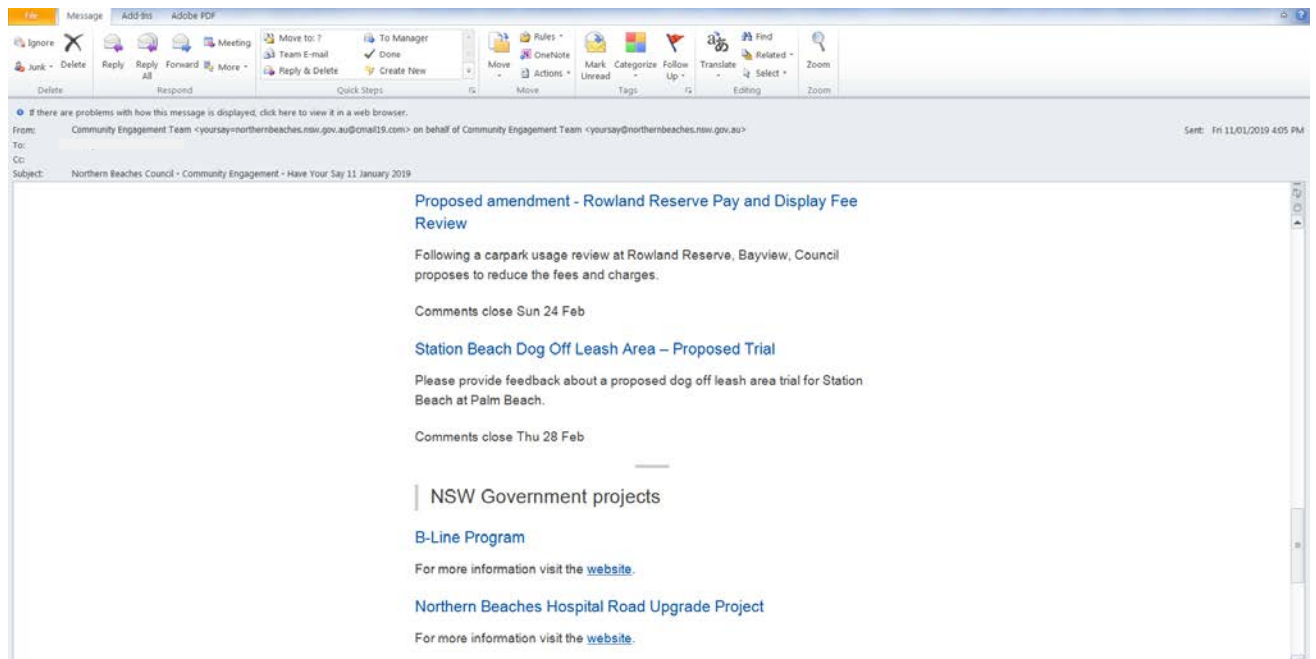
Cancel

Submit

Chronological report is due

Mar '19 Report by staff on submissions and feedback and the trial due

## Council Community Engagement email list notification



# APPENDIX B

## MEDIA ARTICLES



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## Council has 'dropped offleash lead'

Dog-owners advocacy group Pittwater Unleashed has accused Northern Beaches Council of unnecessarily delaying the introduction of an off-leash dog trial at Palm Beach's Station Beach which it says should have been settled by staff months ago.

The community group is furious that Council has wasted time and money assigning a Council staff member to oversee the project, only to stonevall the plan at the 11th hour.

At a meeting on June 26, Council resolved to trigger a public consultation process within 12 weeks, subject to there being no unresolvable barriers to do so, presented in any Government Agency correspondence response to the proposed trial.

The site for the proposed trial involves the Pittwater foreshore commencing 80 metres north of Beach Road and finishing at the Boat-house Wharf, 630 metres south of National Park lands.

Pittwater Unleashed, whose charter is to deliver "a voice for dog owners promoting a 'Fair Share' open space policy across the Northern Beaches Local Government Area" said Council had pointed to considerations requested by the NSW Lands Department in September as the reason for the additional delay.

Given "environmental sensitivities" NSW Lands had requested a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) be undertaken.

But Pittwater Unleashed spokesman Mitch Geddes said there was no reason for Council to be commissioning further studies given a 50-page REF and Biodiversity Assessment had already been undertaken by the former Pittwater Council, at a reported cost of \$15,000. According to Mr Geddes, the previous REF had been "misplaced" by Council in 2014, but is now available for all to see.

"The work is already done, and it is high time we let the community see the findings, by way of the formal consultation process," he said.

At its June meeting Council also invited the Executive Committee of Pittwater Unleashed to help develop the parameters for the Station Beach trial prior to its projected September public exhibition commencement.

Preparations for the trial had progressed to the point where a

draft sign had been prepared for the site to outline the conditions and scope of the trial (pictured).

Following discussion with Pittwater Unleashed, the parameters of the trial propose a 12-month timeframe, with restrictions between 4.00pm to 10.30am (Eastern Standard Time) and 5.30pm to 10.30am (Daylight Savings Time).

Mr Geddes said: "The Department of Lands already had its go when it demanded the first REF. The conduct of Lands, and other departmental officers at that time has recently been called into question, and is the subject of an investigation by Environment Minister Gabrielle Upton and Lands Minister Paul Toole.

"Imposing new delays and cost duplication at this late stage is not a good look, especially when one of the laughable suggestions is that we consider taking the dogs back to Carvel Bay!

"Council needs to get on with the job of delivering for the community by activating this stretch of underutilised foreshore, and by not getting caught up in endless bureaucratic circles."

General Manager Environment and Infrastructure Ben Taylor told *Pittwater Life*: "We know off-leash dog parks are an important topic for the community and Council is committed to providing improved spaces for our four-legged friends.

"Council has now received feedback about a trial off-leash dog area on Station Beach from a range of Government agencies including the

NSW Government's Department of Industry.

"This feedback identifies the need for environmental research prior to proceeding with any trial.

"The next steps are that Council will work with the government to meet their requirements prior to conducting any community consultation."

While the commencement date for public exhibition is currently up in the air, Council CEO Ray Brownlee had set a meeting with Pittwater Unleashed for late October.

"He's only been here five minutes, and is already onto this. We take this as a very good sign - that he won't cop these costly delay tactics," Mr Geddes said.

- Nigel Wall



News

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## Council hounded into action on Station Beach

An off-leash dog trial at Station Beach on the Pittwater side of Palm Beach is closer to reality, with Northern Beaches Council ready to assess community feedback and submissions when consultation on the polarising issue concludes on February 28.

After years of delays and stonevalling as reported by *Pittwater Life* in November, Council triggered an online survey to finally determine the matter following pressure from Mayor Michael Regan and Pittwater Ward Councillor Alex McGarratt.

The community are urged to add their voice to the proposal, which would allow families with dogs to share the southern section of Station Beach at only specified times of day, with dogs permitted off-leash between Beach Road and The Boat-house.

Proposed times are 4pm - 10:30am (7 days) and 5:30pm

- 10:30am (Mon - Fri) during Daylight Saving. The proposed trial would be for 12 months, commencing this year.

Mayor Regan said it was a great opportunity for residents to let Council know if they supported having dogs on Station Beach in a limited capacity.

"Many dog-owners would like to see new areas opened up on the Northern Beaches so their dogs can enjoy a swim," he said. "We'd love to know if our community think Station Beach is a good complement to the other off-leash beach areas like Rowland Reserve and Curl Curl Lagoon."

"We need to balance the views of our community as well as consider any environmental or local impacts before making a final decision if the trial will proceed."

The latest development has been applauded by local dog-owners group Pittwater Unleashed (PU), which has

been an advocate for the trial since the group's formation with the mission to deliver more off-leash dog areas in Pittwater four years ago.

Spokesman Mitch Geddes said the group had been chosen to work with Council to help develop the parameters of the proposed trial.

"It is fair to say we are the ones driving the process, and we are the ones with an interest in seeing the trial succeed," Mr Geddes said. "We have also done all the research, and appreciate the care that must be taken when balancing competing interests."

He said this meant pressing for only as much as was required.

"It is a contentious area," he said. "Our agenda is to see families with dogs regain access to certain parts of certain beaches at certain times of day - we call it the 'Triple-C Policy'.

"Our aim is to identify a few locations that are under-utilised, such as Station Beach, and to make them available in the mornings and late afternoon."

Mr Geddes said it was about locals activating local open space for locals.

"Our topography means we don't have rolling green fields to spare," he said. "And we also have a need to preserve bushland for our native wildlife."

"But what we do have is a large expanse of foreshore, and Triple-C means a shared approach will allow better use of this."

Further, Mr Geddes said carving out the popular part of the day enable PU to get what was needed without there being any observable change when most people were out and about.

"The time restrictions also mean we are able to manage the number of users



drawn to the area," he said. "For instance, it would be impractical to drive from Chateau or Pyramble, by the time you arrived, the morning windows would be

closing."

Mr Geddes said PU hoped Council would make good on its June resolution to also

400m north of the Surf Lifesaving Club, and at South Mona Vale an extension of the existing dog park there.

"For people north of Bilgola it is a return trip of up to an hour to take the dog to Bayview for a splash - and this isn't exactly what you'd call a beach," he said.

"From Turimetta to Barengany we have 20 kilometres of coastline, and not one inch of it is open to families with dogs."

"Beyond Station Beach, if the North Palm Beach and south Mona Vale trials prove a success, this would mean families with dogs have access to 3.5 per cent of this coastline - and then only at certain times of day."

"It might not seem like much, but to us there is a world of difference between zero per cent and 3.5 per cent."

Have your say; visit [nothernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](http://nothernbeaches.nsw.gov.au)

- Nigel Wall

## Offleash at Station Beach:

We received an overwhelming response to last month's article on Council's call for community feedback on the proposal for an offleash dog trial at Station Beach on the Pittwater side of Palm Beach. What do you think? Community consultation concludes February 28: have your say at [northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](http://northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au). Meanwhile here's a snapshot of community sentiment we received...

### FOR...

As a fourth generation member of a family who has lived and holidayed in this beautiful place for 150 years I add my voice to the discussion on whether to make an area of Station Beach available for the use of families with dogs. I have little to add to what seems an obvious issue of equity - four hours in the morning and three in the evening for families with dogs, seven hours through the day for families without dogs is a situation which applies in numerous shires on the east coast of NSW from Eden to Tweed Heads with perfect harmony and goodwill. My father could wander down to the sand in the even-

ing, cast his hand line to the outer edge of the seagrass beds and be reasonably sure of having a sizeable whiting for dinner any time he chose. Those conditions are sadly long gone. I would like those concerned with the issue of environmental damage to the seagrass beds to consider the following: I have been walking on Station Beach since 1934 and the seagrass beds have undoubtedly deteriorated steadily over those years. However, the main causes for this decline must include the increasing industrialisation, rural and urban growth upstream on the Hawkesbury

BEACH BROUHAHA: Place of contention Station Beach and how we were back in the 1930s.



River region leading to toxic run-off. In times of heavy rain these silt deposits are plain to be seen and settle on the seagrass at Station Beach.

Another important factor must be the nutrient run-off from the maintenance of the Palm Beach golf course. And

can the take-off and landing of sea planes have no effect on turbidity in the sea grass areas? Can - at times in the past month - up to six jetskis racing up and down over the edges of these areas have no damaging effect and not be very discouraging for sea birds?

I would be sorry to see this modest "fair go" proposal founder on environmental grounds. If only the repair of the seagrass beds was as simple to achieve as banning

## your say...

limited access to families with dogs. - Christine Tait, Avalon Beach

### AGAINST...

We do need to do more to acknowledge the rights of dogs to co-exist in our modern society, just as we clearly need to do more to preserve the rights of our native birds, animals and plants to survive in the few remaining beachfront niches not yet completely invaded by us, our paraphernalia or our pets.

The aims of the Pittwater Unleashed folk for the past four years have generally been, as Pittwater Life reports, to "identify a few locations that are underutilized...and make them available in the early mornings and late afternoons".

"Underutilized" of course means those areas where our native flora and fauna have, so far, been allowed to survive relatively free from our presence and activities. According to PU spokesman Mr Geddes, that

is 3.5% of our total Pittwater and ocean beaches area. If that is the sum total of Pittwater's undisturbed beachfront niches, it is a terrible indictment on our claims to be an environmentally conscious and caring community.

And, it seems, that these precious remnants are the very ones PU covets as offleash areas...eventually. To allow dogs access, leashed or not, overnight, early mornings and at dusk would impact on the very times that our native birds, animals and the hundreds of sand-dwelling species are up and about foraging, and would clearly destroy these as native habitats forever.

While I understand Pittwater Life's need to give editorial space to the case presented by PU I felt that the above represents the view of the many Pittwater folk who cherish this place and what remains of its natural assets. - Bill Thomson, Newport Beach

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[manlydaily.com.au](http://manlydaily.com.au) | 11 NEWS

# Battle lines drawn on dog beach plan

Penelope Bradley

A PROPOSAL to let dogs roam free on the Pittwater side of Palm Beach has divided the community.

Northern Beaches Council plans to temporarily lift the ban of dogs on beaches and trial an off-leash area at Station Beach.

It has been welcomed by many dog walkers who say foreshore areas north of Newport are needed for dog walking since Careel Bay foreshore was closed off in 2013.

But the move has been met by fierce opposition from the Palm Beach Protection Group who claim the trial will lead to ocean pollution, threats to bird and marine life and could increase the risk of dog attacks.

Richard Kovacs, from the group, said the off-leash access times (5.30pm to 10.30am each day) would interrupt community usage and enjoyment of Station Beach.

"Dog owners already ignore existing signage and no amount of signage will be able to enforce where dogs are allowed to be off-leash."

He said there were also concerns about the increase in visitors to the area.

"The completion of the



Locals say the trial could lead to more dog attacks

Barrenjoey Walkway in 2018 has increased visitor numbers and the beach has remained vulnerable since the June 2016 storms."

He also said there were concerns about the impact on the area's marine life, seagrass and possible pollution from dog faeces.

But Mitch Geddes, from Pittwater Unleashed community group, said dog walkers are not asking for much.

"Between Warriewood and Barrenjoey there is 20km of coastline and not one inch is available to families with dogs."

"Allowing off-leash areas at Mona Vale and Palm Beach would give us just

three per cent of the coastline for dog walking - and to us, that's the world."

He said residents who live north of Newport and wish to walk their dogs on the water's edge currently need to commute to Rowland Reserve in Bayview.

He also dismissed the suggestion the trail would lead to an influx of people.

"You wouldn't see thousands of people descending on Palm Beach to make use of the off-leash area as its not attractive to people from out of area," he said. "They would need to travel to Palm Beach arriving before 9.30am."

➔ **Have your say on the trial before February 28 at [northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au](http://northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au)**

# Barking up the right tree

Penelope Bradley



Ava and Indigo Gill play with their dog Ivy on Station Beach. Picture: Tim Pascoe

NINETY per cent of survey submissions support a trial to allow dogs to run free on Palm Beach foreshore.

Initial survey results obtained by the *Manly Daily* reveal overwhelming support for the plan at Station Beach, located on the Pittwater side of the peninsula's iconic beach.

More than 3500 people responded on the Northern Beaches Council Yoursay website when asked if they supported a 12-month trial.

Councillors will soon vote to approve or reject the trial.

If approved, families with dogs would share a section of the beach for a year, during scheduled morning and afternoon periods.

Dogs would be prohibited from the beach outside allocated times and from seagrass beds at low tide.

Pittwater Unleashed member Mitch Geddes said a trial would support "the interests of 53,000 families with dogs who live in the area."

"A quick glance at Facebook metrics show huge support from (locals) who require more open-space and foreshore access to walk their dogs," Mr Geddes said.

The group's online community counts 3151 Facebook followers.

But residents who oppose dogs on the foreshore say the recent results do not yield a true reflection of community sentiment.

Palm Beach resident and prominent fund manager Richard Kovacks said survey results represented views of people living outside of Pittwater.

Council cannot yet decipher the locations of survey respondents, the *Manly Daily* understands.

"My understanding is that some (responses) come from outside Pittwater, and that this has been assisted by social media," Mr Kovacks said.

"The remaining 10 per cent represents a large number of local people who do not support a trial and their voices should be heard."

The new Palm Beach Protection Group opposes a "mass influx of dogs" to the blue-ribbon suburb, an area world-renowned for its natural beauty.

The group also cites damage to seagrass beds, parking and traffic concerns and a pre-existing problem with dog fouling from those who visit the beach despite its current dog ban.

» For proposed trial times visit: [manlydaily.com.au](http://manlydaily.com.au)

# APPENDIX C

## DETAILED WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS



This section includes direct quotes from the written submissions received by Council. The quotes were extracted verbatim from the written submissions, with some quotes containing spelling and grammatical errors.

These quotes and other key points made in the written submissions are organised according to the headings in the main report, and should be read in conjunction with the summary of submissions under those headings in the main report.

*Direct quotes are in italics.*

## Reasons for supporting the trial

### Introduction

*I commend the instigation of this trial and wish every success for a positive outcome providing Northern beaches residents, their critters, friends, families and any random observers a special spot to share and enjoy our Pittwater this perfect area.*

*In our opinion this trial is very appropriate, sensible, well thought out and is a positive use of a beautiful natural amenity. The good planning and management which has and will occur is a great solution for this special location. Thank you to the Northern Beaches Council for making this happen.*

*A forward thinking and well balanced proposal that considers the many views around this issue, but recognises the many families with dogs that live in our area.*

*This is a good news story for Council - if a lot of people make use of this, the new Northern Beaches Council should win an award for listening to the community and showing how better usage of an area can be achieved. The Palm Beach Association is to be congratulated too for their helpful website and letting people know about this. Well done all.*

*allowing the trial allows both sides of the argument to test their beliefs against fact and actual experience and they will be able to come to an informed decision at the conclusion of the trial.*

*Across the Northern Beaches the off leash areas have proved a great success. Overwhelmingly, this promotes a more social, active and healthy community environment. The parks are well used, dog are socialised and owners also become more responsible. The detractors lose nothing from the use, the spaces are only a small portion of available space and in any case, off leash areas are also free for non owners to use. The success and popularity of the program has led to increasing use and now many off leash parks are very busy at peak times. The Palm Beach off leash trial is a sensible way to test the Palm Beach area and consider the merits of extending the program to the Palm Beach precinct.*

*If only our beloved dog were still around for this day. An ocean beach play would have thrilled her.*

A child who owns an elderly dog wrote:

*I'm 12 years old I want to be able to take my 16 year old dog to the beach with me before she dies.*

## **“It’s about time”**

*In the 1970s and 1980s we used to windsurf off this beach and always brought our dogs who absolutely loved it. It will be great to be able to have this generation of dogs on the beach*

*The residents and ratepayers of Palm Beach and Whale Beach, and those north of the bends, have been waiting too long to get approval for this trial. Pittwater Council ignored its residents requests for many years, while rescinding access to a variety of areas that we once enjoyed with our dogs. We were able to access swimming at Careel Bay, walk in MacKay reserve and on Bangalley Headland, at North Palm Beach or even up to the lighthouse. There was no justifiable reason for denying access. How unfair and unjust to take all that away and leave us with nothing to enjoy.*

*Council incentivised rangers to police compliance often leading to hostile and inappropriate behaviour by rangers towards dog owners and many complaints to Council. Council often allowed matters to be escalated to the courts, wasting public monies, time and consequently had the matters thrown out by enervated magistrates.*

*Council actions have forced a significant number of its residents to form a committee (Pittwater Unleashed) to fight for a simple remedy, and residents like myself to spend hours of our time appealing to council at meetings and writing endless submissions such as this one. Imagine how fruitfully we could have spent that time otherwise! How many times is council going to ask for more comments? How many more submissions and appeals must we write? It makes me think that these are delaying tactics on the part of council staff in the hope that the problem will go away.*

*The debate on additional dog recreation areas has been going for more than 20 years - a ridiculous length of time to find a solution to something that is not even a problem!*

*This whole debate/discussion has taken so long to resolve that it is time a sensible decision is made. Please let us use these areas and be done wasting time, money and resources on this topic once and for all.*

*I don't know how this area got to be so dog unfriendly, but it is great to finally see a start being made to rectify this. Thanks for getting the ball rolling.*

*Well council it is time to extend this option to the dog owners on the northern beaches. Too long they've been denied access to these places without proper justification. We're not asking for much, are we?*

*When I first moved to Pittwater I couldn't believe firstly that there was no enclosed/fenced area to train a puppy in the whole peninsular. Then to discover that ALL beaches were off limit was very disappointing. So really good to see some improvement being trialed.*

*This is long overdue and will give local people and their dogs a special place to exercise be friendly and enjoy the environment.*

*All councils have dog beaches now.....lets get with the times.....*

*This trial will help bring Northern Beaches into the 21st century at last!*

## **Need for off leash area with access to water north of Bayview/ Newport**

*We need more pet friendly spaces on the beaches.*

*we can't expect to be banning dogs from bush reserves and beaches unless we give them other decent options.*

*The more places humans can take their dogs for exercise, socialisation, fun and stimulation the better!*

*We are very limited with dog area particularly from Avalon to Palm Beach. This would be a very welcome addition to the area*

*This would be a lovely option to have available for walking our dogs. Thank you!*

*A huge advance for our wonderful dogs on the beaches where there are only very limited and often over crowded dog parks.*

*I think this would be a very positive step for dog owners as another off leash area is desperately needed.*

*So many dogs and people are craving a place to splash in the water.*

*It would be wonderful to have an alternate option, where we can both swim!*

*We definitely need a beach/ water environment for our dogs north of the Bends*

*There are no beaches which provide access for dog owners at any time in the Palm Beach area in contrast to every other Council in the Sydney area providing at least some access some of the time.*

*It beggars belief that there is currently nowhere for dogs on the peninsular to play in the water - except the plastic kiddie pools at the Careel Bay dog park!*

*I grew up at Palm Beach and there were never any issues with dogs on the beach in the 70s and 80s. It was a beautiful way of life and to be able to enjoy it again with all the political correctness and plain BS out there would be wonderful. Come on NBC, please give it a go, be brave, it's not asking too much for our four legged family members to be able to enjoy some beach time.*

*You can't just keep cramming everybody into Rowland Reserve and expect everything to be fine.*

*Anyone in doubt of the need for more leash free areas need only visit Rowland Reserve where car parking is almost impossible from 6am until 6pm. At this time of the year especially when people come from all over Sydney to walk their dogs.*

*Other than Bayview dog park which is overcrowded I have nowhere at all to run my dogs off leash in or near water (of any decent size) unless I drive to Clontarf (40 minutes) or Curl Curl. This access is urgently needed for dog owners north of Mona Vale*

*...it would be great not having to drive for hours to get to one that allows dogs on it.*

*The ticks and mosquitoes at Careel Bay dog park are not everyone's preference.*

*We travel to the Northern Beaches regularly [from Maraylya] to take our dogs to Bayview - they just love it.*

*Although we live in Turramurra we regularly bring our dog to Rowland Reserve and would love to have another option for exercise.*

*Station Beach will help families with options down the northern end*

*Almost all the Northern Beaches dog parks are woefully inadequate for our needs, so it would be a step in the right direction to remedy the problem if we could access Station Beach.*

*The dog beach at Rowland Reserve is very well used and adding another facility like this in Palm Beach should prove attractive for residents and visitors with dogs.*

*I am 9 years old and am really looking forward to being able to go the beach with my dog. He just loves the beach but we have to take him to the Central Coast so he can have a proper swim as Bayview is too busy and has lots of big dogs.*

*There are only two dog parks in our area and when you need to go there twice a day, every day, it gets extremely boring. Not to mention the dogs always come home muddy from the dirt, so a beach is so needed for us dog owners, please!*

*Dogs and their owners get bored of walking around and around the dog park.*

*interesting for people as well rather than walking in circles around a dog park*

*Want to exercise dogs in a place that's nice for people too*

*Beautiful environment for people to enjoy, rather than being trapped standing in a dog park*

*the enjoyment factor of the humans, who are forced to spend their limited quality doggy-time in barren, dusty, uninteresting parks that are overcrowded (therefore often stressful and yes, sometimes downright dangerous), littered and polluted. The very 'issue' the council is trying to address is in fact exacerbated by its own containment. Give us more space, not less!*

*Boat Owners Association have historically played a part with NPWS and RMS to help discourage the landing of dogs on the western foreshore of Pittwater, which attaches to the 150 square kilometres of Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. Our ability to do this has relied on continued access to the peninsula side, where the landing of dogs has been part of the boating experience at all of the popular locations between Barrenjoey and Church Point for over 100 years.*

*Whilst visiting Pittwater on a sailing holiday earlier this month, our host needed to take his dog ashore. We were told that we were unable to go ashore anywhere in Pittwater other than on station beach.*

*My fear is that allowing only one beach will lead to overcrowding as happens at Bayview.*

*Station Beach is good, but it is not enough on its own.*

## **Want equitable access to public spaces particularly beaches**

*The proposal is not too much for dog owners to ask*

*dogs are part of the family and should be allowed greater access to beaches than currently.*



*dogs and their owners are treated very badly regarding the amount of off-leash walking areas that are provided. A very significant proportion of households have a pet dog and yet the proportion of parks and beaches that are made available for dog walking is miniscule.*

*As a responsible dog owner it is most annoying that there are only a couple of beaches where you can enjoy exercising your dog.*

*We are very slow to recognise the needs of a large percentage of the population who own dogs and wish to take them to the beach!*

*If society has made the collective decision to have dogs as part of the community then its only right that they enjoy some of the benefits of being part of that community...like access to water, if not equal access, then at least more than just Bayview.*

*council is obliged to support families with dogs with decent recreational space*

*Public spaces must be shared with all parts of the community and a noisy anti dog minority should not monopolise these spaces. We pay rates as well!*

*In fact with the attitude of some people, why don't we just fence off our beaches so that nobody can use them!*

*With many kilometres of pristine beaches on the peninsula where dogs are banned, I'm staggered that making a small section of Station Beach available for use by dogs is such an issue. This is taking our ridiculous obsession with greenery and general level of pettiness way too far.*

*As this country's demographic changes and animals are become integral to family (and individuals) life, there is a need to find dedicated space for walking a dog. As governments and councils are becoming more prescriptive and dictatorial in running everyday lives of the country they've forgotten the basics about humans and the love of dogs. Dogs need a place to play. There used to be a place before the government got controlling and PC. Let's bring back a park before the nanny state and the minority do gooders ruin it the majority. Dogs saves lives!*

*It is not reasonable to have the entire coast banned for the enjoyment of dogs & their owners.*

*It is so sad that we are surrounded by sand and water (which dogs love so much) yet we are not permitted to share any of these areas with our best friends*

*We have lots of beach area and it shouldn't be difficult to find places where families with dogs can enjoy quality outings together*

*It is absolutely ridiculous that we are not allowed to use all of the under-utilised shoreline on Pittwater. As a rate paying resident, we should not feel restricted in what areas we can go, with the entire family, including our fur children. 3.5% of the under-utilised area is abysmal. I guess at least it's something though.*

*A small section of coastline where they too can enjoy what our fabulous area has to offer only seems fair.*

*My view is that given the amount of coastline we have in the northern beaches of NSW, and the number of families with dogs, I struggle to understand why there isn't another dog beach area (other than Bayview) in this area that dogs can go to anytime of day!*

*We have so many beautiful beaches on the peninsula, more than enough for people to enjoy so surely we could share this one with our furry friends there are so few off-leash areas for them as it is.*

*there's enough beach for both dog lovers and haters*

*Give the ratepaying owners of dogs the same rights that motorists, walkers, children, boaters, and other groups in the area have.*

*Considering that approx 50% of all levy payers on the peninsular own dogs with a need to exercise their dogs daily within reasonable distances, it would appear that Council to date has severely and undemocratically neglected the needs of about half their levy paying population.*

*Restricting UDEAs to small parts of public land concentrates use and results in issues*

*More spaces -> less dogs in each space -> less issues and complaints*

*The more is taken the more crowded the ones left become. More chance of incidents, more growling, less pleasant for all*

*There are so many empty areas on the beaches for the dogs, & plenty of other spots for people who don't like dogs, or are scared of them.*

*whilst it is perfectly reasonable for people who do not like dogs to have access to beaches without dogs running around. It is also perfectly reasonable, even the duty of Council to provide recreational space close to the homes of such a large number of their constituents.*

*This is not about asking for rights for dogs. Rather it is about asking what is right for members of the community, who are ratepayers, who are time-poor, and who want to be able to enjoy a walk on the beach and a swim with their dog. And not on every beach. And not all day. Just along sections on some of the less popular beaches and at certain times of the day.*

*the notion of this creating a precedent for all beaches on the peninsula is absurd. There are many councils in NSW where the balance of human-only beaches and dog-available beaches (or parts of beaches) operate harmoniously and successfully with no pressing need or desire to expand these areas for dogs to go off leash.*

## **Want authorised access to beaches for off leash dogs**

*There have been a number of failed public policies concerning the provision of sufficient exercise areas in the past resulting in substantial numbers of dog owners breaking current local legislation every day. All in all an appalling result of low standard and highly disrespectful to the population's needs.*

*Would be wonderful to be able to walk swim your dog without the hassles of keeping an eye out cause u are supposedly breaking the law*

*There's nowhere nearby that we can take our dog on the beach without the fear of a fine or upsetting another member of the public for having our dog off the leash.*

*Wonderful idea – the rangers have been so awful to dog owners of late by making it even impossible to get out of your car at careel bay and over to the dog park so the more open spaces where we can run our dogs the better. Thanks!*

*Anything to get current dogs OFF main beach areas like Newport!!!! Every afternoon there are unleashed dogs on the northern end of Newport, some irresponsible owners don't clean up after them ...would be great that they could take their dogs for a legal play at Palm Beach.*

*This would encourage responsible dog ownership as we would have Station Beach to go to off leash and therefore would not be tempted to use other beaches. It is proven elsewhere so why are the Northern Beaches so behind?*

*By having such an area proper policing can be applied thus ensuring responsible ownership and handling of dogs and their "business". This could replace the current inflammatory practice of Rangers "booking" owners and charging \$600 to some one causing no harm to anyone ... much less than people playing soccer in a picnic area or jet skis beaching on the adjacent beach.*

*Please trial off leash dog areas like this one so that selfish and irresponsible dog owners will have no excuse for taking their dogs on beautiful beaches like bungan and Mona Vale basin. I am fed up with being harassed by dogs sitting where they pooped or weed. Being barked at. stepping in poo. If they have designated areas like rowland reserve or station beach then they can't complain. Dogs (and their selfish owners) on pristine sensitive beaches don't mix.*

## **Success of off-leash areas elsewhere**

*In London I could take a dog in the bus or train.... so this is a very mild compromise.*

*We just came back from California/Colorado everyone has a dog on a plane and on the streets everywhere they are these days a part of the family*

*We should be like Europe where dogs are accepted and seen everywhere with their families. Come on Australia. We need to be far more dog friendly. People on the Northern beaches love their dogs. Please give us more dog friendly areas.*

*Dogs on beaches around the country and the rest of the world is a normal phenomenon.*

*It would be so lovely for our dogs to have a run on a beach like they are allowed to do at so many locations throughout Australia - but not here...*

*When travelling up North there's nothing better than being able to walk miles along a beach with my dogs running free.*

*Beach sharing works in so many places - why are the humans in the Northern Beaches Council so different?*

*A carefully considered shared use of the space that does not conflict with other users should be achievable as is the case in numerous communities up and down the NSW coast.*

*Brings proposal in line with many east coast townships policy on restricted opportunities to walk dogs off leash on the beach*

*Australia has a very high level of dog ownership per capita. Other countries manage to include dogs on trains, in shops and accommodation, on walking trails, on beaches... and civilisation doesn't end. Why is it such a drama here?*

*I haven't heard of any disasters caused because of it.*

*I am a regular visitor to Port Macquarie and the dedicated off leash ocean beaches there are fantastic. My dogs have the time of their lives.*

*The central coast does an excellent job of including dogs into their beach policies. It would be great if we could follow suit.*

*The Dog Beach Trial in Chowder Bay, Mosman showed that dog owners can be responsible and has become an asset to the area for residents and their loved companions.*

## **Dogs are a part of the community**

*We are all members of a community and we should balance the views and needs of our community.*

*Dogs play a very important role in our community and for their owners.*

*owners shouldn't have to leave their dogs at home*

*Dog owners are a large part of the NB community and it would be great to support and encourage them to enjoy the lifestyle offered in the area.*

*This will be a great community building exercise.*

*There is an obvious need; dog-ownership is just one of the many recreational/sporty/social pastimes that should all have their place and facilities within a community.*

*this would be a hugely positive move for our family and friends in the area*

*Palm Beach is known for being a beautiful suburb, inclusive for all. Why not include dogs in this.*

*Happy to support this and hope that it leads to a wider acceptance of dogs in the community.*

*I understand that this is a polarising subject for the community however it is time to trial and once and for see if it works or doesn't.*

*How sadly divisive is the debate on whether to allow dogs onto some of our less popular beaches at limited times of the day.*

*The anti dog stance of the Northern Beaches brings down the relaxed vibe of the area.*

*It's about time the anti dog brigade were put back in their (dog) box*

*One or two individuals should not be able to block something that is in the broader interests of the community.*

*This trial is long overdue as the overwhelming evidence is that dog owners are in the majority of residences on the northern beaches and are tired of being stopped of using beaches for recreation and fun with dogs by the minority!*

*I have heard pathetic statements around why this should not proceed from a very small minority and only very strong support from the majority.*

*Noisy minority will oppose the trial when more residents will gain from it*

*Stop allowing a couple of whingers to dictate to the rest of the community. Seriously allowing dogs and their families to enjoy the beach will not make the world fall in*

*It's about time that decisions were made that took the majority into account instead of a vocal minority.*

*I am concerned that a small group of wealthy, well connected residents nearby could ruin the opportunity for a valuable community asset that can be enjoyed by many, with very minimal impact.*

*Voices of a few dog haters are taking precedence and are not the views of the majority.*

*I do hope that this time the voices of the majority will be heard, and not the minority whose anti-dog opinions have been given undue weight and preference by the council staff.*

*I get the impression there are a few locals with money and influence that like to make things difficult for the rest of us.*

## **The trial legitimises an existing activity**

*We love taking the dog for a walk here. It will be so much nicer not having to worry about the heavy hand of the law and costly fines.*

*As it stands a few local people already use the beach, especially for small dogs who can't safely go to Avalon or Mona Vale off-leash areas.*

*I have taken our dog there and all dogs & owners were well behaved. It was a lovely experience.*

*We went down there this morning and the trial seems to be going very well.*

*The trial at Station Beach would legitimise something that is already happening to help defuse some of the nastiness that is happening.*

*Locals ignore the "Dogs Prohibited" signs so beaches should be leash free*

## **Health and safety**

*There is research available to the Council to the effect that dogs off-leash are less likely to fight than dogs on leashes – they have the ability to remove themselves from threat and they are too busy enjoying themselves.*

*There is no evidence of health-risks from dog off-leash areas – if there were a suspicion, the Council would be shutting them all down.*

*In the 30+ years I have been a dog owner, I have never witnessed a dog attacking a child (or adult) on a beach, or for that matter in any off-leash park. Dog owners are aware of their dog's behaviour and act responsibly - they do not want to place children/adults or their dogs at risk. Further, as the days and times of operation for off leash access avoid peak human beach activity, this risk/concern is minimised.*

*Over the 20 years we have used off-leash dog spaces in other areas of Sydney, we have seldom seen aggressive behaviour by dogs towards each other and personally have never seen aggressive actions towards humans. Occasionally dogs display possessive behaviour*

*over a stick or ball and can growl or bark if another dog seeks to take it or they are surprised, but seldom continue with aggression or barking. In fact, dogs are generally less aggressive when off-leash when the interplay of dogs with some anxious owners can create anxiety in their dogs. Off-leash dogs tend to exhibit to friendliness towards each other or submission of one of the dogs. The risk is higher with very small children and most off-leash areas are kept separate from designated children's play areas. This does not apply at Station Beach and the only consequence may be that in the early morning or late afternoon adults with young children who are concerned might use any of the other of beaches not affected or use Station Beach in hours when off-leash activity is prohibited. It is unlikely that all dogs and their owners will behave perfectly at all times, but this applies equally to non-dog owners and visitors to the beaches and parks at Palm Beach. Some level of tolerance for other peoples' interests and views would benefit the middle majority of the community but will upset those on either extreme (who will be the most vocal). The various mitigating measures proposed in the 2008 document seem sensible, as does the intention to monitor poor behaviour and take actions to remedy these.*

*The only concern is if there is an aggressive animal off leash and it attacks the other dogs.*

*Even if we are dodging flying golf balls it is better than nothing*

## **Increased use of Station Beach**

*I walk along Station Beach often and usually I'm the only one on the beach. It seems unfair as this is such a perfect place for my dog to join me (armed with a leash and a 'doggy bag' of course!).*

*so sad no where lovely to walk them as station beach is not used much by anyone*

*I have often felt surprised at how few people walk along this beach. Great to see a beautiful part of the beaches being used .....and the dogs and visitors all look happy.*

*The beach itself is not heavily used for beach dwellers and what way better to utilize the area than for animals enjoying nature.*

## **Traffic and parking**

*The only legal swimming area is at Bayview which forces us into cars and onto the roads unnecessarily.*

*Since losing water access at Careel Bay, driving over to Bayview in summer to let the dogs cool off can take up a lot from time if the traffic is slow around the bends.*

*I'm over driving all the way to Bayview so my dog can have a swim.*

*Will get all the dogs and their owner off the narrow roads.*

*It's really lovely to have a beach where you as a human can run, swim and play with your dog in the water without having to take the ferry to Ettalong.*

*It has been my view that most dog owners are generally fit people who don't mind walking and there is ample parking at Palm Beach so I don't think any residences should really be affected by all the 'extra traffic' as I heard someone state.*



*However, we were there today and saw that the end of Beach Road has a lot of private shrubs planted in a way that prevents additional parking of at least 2 cars. A better outcome for the public would be to reclaim this parking space and insist that any plantings be limited to fence line as is the norm elsewhere.*

## **Dog owners are responsible**

*We are good citizens who look after our furry sons and pick up their things!*

*Dog owners are responsible and caring people. All we need are opportunities to enjoy the water ways in a safe and easy manner. Happy pets = happy owners = happy people.*

*as a community based individual have seen nothing but care from dog walkers picking up rubbish left by tourists and helping our elderly community with their dogs.*

*picking up of poo is the only issue and as I can see from the current dog parks the poo get picked up.*

*I came from the east and collection of pooh by owners outstripped the slack attitude up here. they could do with a shake up*

*And yes, for those selfish and disgusting dog-owners who are too posh to pick up their poo, please increase the fines to an astronomical amount, and motivate the rangers to police this offensive behaviour more vigorously!*

*If people have young dogs that do not yet come when called, they would be better suited to using the fenced playing fields at Careel Bay until the dog has learned to return when called.*

*The absence of fencing here is a good thing - it means those who choose to use this area will mostly be those who have a mature dog that returns when called. Or if bringing a skittish dog not yet well-trained, there is the option to keep him on leash but still enjoy the beach environment together.*

*I do fully respect the on leash areas and 100% support the importance of having such strict on leash areas but again feel that we lack in off leash areas and feel this may be why so many break the rules.*

*It makes no sense for us to have to drive all the way to Bayview. This is why if it is a hot day, we just ignore the signs that no one ever asked for.*

*When the rules changed about where the dogs can have a swim we were not given a say. This is unfair and is the reason people just ignore the signs at Clareville.*

*Dog owners are becoming increasingly responsible and I am sure that the area will be maintained beautifully as to ensure dogs are continually allowed within the area.*

*Dogs are part of family life and we hope that the trial goes through for us to demonstrate our gratitude by being responsible dog owners*

*It will be valued by locals and therefore to a certain extent managed by us eg ensuring beaches clean and reminding dog owners of their responsibility to all in the community including Mother Nature.*

*If dog owners are responsible and their dogs are well trained it would be possible to really enjoy a lovely dog beach for us after all these years we have been waiting for it!!*

*Dog owners encouraging other owners to pick up after their dogs so the trial will work and the off leash area will be permanent*

*Dog owners clean up after their dogs and keep them in check because they want to keep using the beach.*

*Many dog owners do the right thing. Don't persecute the good owners and dogs for a few bad ones*

*there's a lot of people who will make sure it's kept clean, even if there's the odd one or two who don't follow the rules, that always happens in any situation like this.*

*Just because a few dog owners can be irresponsible with their dogs, it doesn't mean every other dog owner who does the right thing should be penalised.*

*The minority will spoil it for others*

*We need equal beach access for leashed dogs, where people can walk their dogs on the sand, run with them, play with them in the water etc. In fact, there is a sound argument that dog owners who behave responsibly and control their dogs, deserve priority.*

*If the local dog owners can't make this work, then they only have themselves to blame. I am a local dog owner who is disgusted with local and visiting dog owners who simply don't pick up their dogs' poos. This area is one of the worst for offenders that I've come across in the state. So here's hoping*

*Owners must be diligent in picking up dog poo. If the trial fails dog owners won't get this opportunity again. No excuses*

*Why don't you make dog owners pay a yearly beach license? Say 250 dollars. If they are caught in the beach without proof they get the fine. I'd also be happy to have to spend one half day a year doing a beach clean up. This way you make you money and get clean beaches.*

*We have no objection to fines for people who fail to pick up dog poo.*

*We would suggest that at times rangers control that people pick up after their dogs and fine them hefty on the spot, because it is the irresponsible dog owner who spoils it all for the rest of us!*

## **Benefits to people**

*Dogs are lovely and bring joy to many many people.*

*I am a twice a week golfer at Palm Beach and all I can say is it is a sheer joy to watch these beautiful animals frolic on the beach with their human families & many of my golfing colleagues share my pleasure at seeing the dogs on Station Beach.*

*It must be understood by the greater community, that dogs which have been properly exercised are most unlikely to be the cause of nuisance barking, so the importance of introducing more unleashed areas cannot be disregarded.*

*Our dogs are our family and go hand in hand and we need to include all our family in our lives both indoor and outdoors.*



*So many families in Sydney have a dog as part of their family and these relationships should be embraced and encouraged by enabling families to include their pet in visits to the beach.*

*Let's face it, having a dog or two in your family makes us happier, healthier, far more active and better people all round.*

*Families these days consist of dogs that are like children. I want to spend time with my fur baby at Station Beach.*

*Our dogs are part of our families and we all live here together, it's not fair to not have them run free and have fun*

*Having no access for dogs to beaches is a disadvantage not only for the animals, but for owners. Lots of people enjoy a swim after a dog walk, or a swim WITH their dogs, but not having dogs on the beach means that owners miss out.*

*The benefits of dogs to individuals, families and the community have been shown over and over again, and in supporting responsible dog ownership, the council would be adding to the health and social network of the community.*

*Most people recognise the benefits of outside activities and dogs for both mental and physical needs of humans. Dog ownership should be encouraged with guidance*

*In a generation where people work longer hours and are more time poor, where dogs are left alone for longer periods of time during the day, and where neighbours know less and less about each other, we should be providing every opportunity for people to get out into nature and spend time with their pets and each other. This will benefit the mental health of dogs and dog owners alike and help to build the sense of community that we often feel we are missing.*

*I think it is a wonderful opportunity for people to be able to enjoy a swim with their family and dog.*

*Watching the sunset with the dogs playing on the beach would be a dream.*

*A great idea... we can walk the dogs around the park, have a coffee, let the dogs play in the water, and leave.*

*If I could stroll with my children and dogs along the beach in the evenings it would change our lives. From dog park or fire trails with snakes to freedom and fun as a family*

### ***Physical benefits***

*A great way to encourage active families.*

*Now that the excellent walkway is finished it makes it safe to walk to the beach from other parts of Palm Beach*

*I am looking forward to being able to maintain a healthy lifestyle with my 2 dogs and family. This keeps them healthy and reduces the Vet bills.*

*a Governor Phillip park offering, like Long Reef, of mixed leashed and off-leash dog exercise will provide a truly significant exercise opportunity for the dog owners as well.*

*Dogs provide and promote exercise and therefore less screen time.*

*Better to have kids outdoors having fun with their dog, than staying inside on Xbox.*

### ***Social benefits***

*Dog walking is also a great way for locals to communicate and interact with each other.*

*People walking dogs will engage in conversation more than those who don't*

*Chat with other dog owners while watching dogs play and swim.*

*Exercising dogs encourages social ties, community feeling and better health.*

*It is very important for elderly folk, who otherwise live alone, to have opportunities like this to enjoy nice meeting places with their dog. Their time in the community tends to be when they take the dog for its regular walks. The dogs need to be permitted to sit with them on the beach somewhere, otherwise you have a large grouping in the community that can no longer visit the beach.*

*It is much better to meet up with neighbours as we walk to the foreshore to let the dog have a run, than to get the car out and drive to someone else's local area where I do not know anyone.*

*We need to embrace the fact that more and more people are choosing not to have children but instead have animals. Also elderly who have companion animals. Dogs are very social animals and we should only embrace being a forward thinking community. Let's face it, animals bring happiness and reduce stress.*

*I often visit the off leash dog park at Bayview and it has been a great environment not only for the dogs but their owners as well. It is also a great way for lonely people to be around other people and make friends and their pet dogs can make that easy for them. I myself have made many friends and find it very enjoyable watching the happiness of both owners and their pets.*

*Having a dog beach would increase the interaction between residents in the local community, building new relationships and friendships as well as maintaining current ones.*

*We should delight in the joy we witness when families, old people, lonely people and children interact, connect and even form friendships when they gather to exercise their dogs.*

### ***Psychological benefits***

*Dogs are a valuable part of our lives. They bring us joy and get us out and about. Dog parks are some of the happiest places. Great for dogs and humans mental health 🐕🐾❤️🐾*

*It is so good for people who are suffering from depression and mental disorders to be able to walk with their best mate on a beach.*

*Getting outdoors with your dog near the water in proven to be beneficial for well being and positive for mental health which can only strengthen the community of this area.*

### **Benefits for non dog owners**

*It is also beneficial for non dog owners as it means dog owners who want to let their dogs in the water have no excuses for using other parts of the beach which I am sure some do already.*

*lots of older people like myself who don't have a dog, love to see the dogs enjoying themselves on the beach.*

*Don't forget, just because someone is not a dog owner, doesn't mean they don't enjoy interacting with dogs in an open, off-leash environment.*

*By the way, I don't own a dog, but I think people who do should have the right to have fun with their pets.*

*I am dog "neutral" but recognize the importance for the provision of this off leash beach area for the social, mental and physical well being of our community especially for the older and more isolated members and their companion dogs to be able to enjoy this relatively small piece of underutilised beach with like minded others.*

*Even as a non dog owner I see the importance of allowing dog exercise areas and non leash parks. We have become such a sedentary society and are constantly told to get out and move around but somehow people are always expected to leave their dogs behind.*

*Even those who don't have dogs like to think dogs are properly looked after with somewhere nice to run and splash.*

*Even though I do not own a dog I believe that companion animals have an important role in our society and that they deserve to have access to have healthy exercise and socialisation and their owners too.*

## **Benefits for dogs**

*Dogs need off leash areas to run and stretch their legs. In many cases bigger dogs don't have the luxury of a large home garden. The opposite is true for small breeds.*

*Dogs need physical exercise and stimulation as much as humans for their well being.*

*All companion animals should have reasonably easy access to the natural environment where they can run without restriction for their overall health and well being. Depriving animals, and limiting them of that is nothing short of cruel and increases behavioural problems which causes more issues long term.*

*Walking a dog on the lead isn't really walking a dog - dogs are genetically predisposed to run, and run a lot. A dog on a lead is cruel and frankly unusual in a park.*

*Further, I would like to see a level of humanity shown towards dogs noting that dogs on a leash isn't a normal way to "walk/exercise" a dog.*

*They need spaces to run, socialise, and have fun....*

*they also love to play and swim not just be walked on the lead.*

*I feel it is only fair that pet owners be allowed to let their dogs have a run and swim in the afternoon.*

*Our furry friends overheat very easily and having a splash in the water is the best way to cool down!*

*I feel it is only fair that pet owners be allowed to let their dogs have a run and swim in the afternoon.*

*Dogs & their owners can go for a swim in the ocean, particularly with Sydney's increasing hot & humid summer days of high 30 degrees!*

*Having a safe place to swim is vital for all the water loving dogs of Pittwater. Well exercised and socialised dogs make happy dogs!!*

*Being able to swim is not just fun and part of the natural habitat for many types of dogs, but also can be therapeutic to dogs with arthritis or hip dysplasia.*

*Dogs need to have some off-leash time to socialise and it such an enjoyable time for the owners as well. There is also the added bonus for the owners to meet other like minded people. Station beach is the perfect spot for this.*

## **Economic benefit**

*At a wider scale, the pet/dog industry is a huge industry offering thousands of jobs and stimulating the economy in a positive way.*

*People visiting the area to bring their dogs to Station Beach will support the local economy, the community and small businesses such as shops and cafes in the area, and on the parking meters, thus keeping Palm Beach alive. The benefit would be felt most in the off-peak winter season.*

*As a rate payer on The Northern Beaches I 100% support the Station Beach trials and in fact, I do not believe this provides enough water access for families and their dogs. We often drive away from the northern beaches to local government areas that allow dogs on beaches. Yup lunch, ice creams etc thus supporting businesses outside our own local area. I would love to be given the opportunity to enjoy the coast line with my entire family (dog included) and spend my money in local businesses.*

*we would come up from Manly to visit and spend our money in the local community, either for breakfast or dinner based on the trial hours.*

*The owners of The Boathouse at the northern end of the trial area support the trial.*

*One supporter questioned the money Council is spending on the trial:*

*am still fuming over the waste of tax payers money on this...it's insanity. \$6 million, and now you are starting from scratch....how many more millions will be wasted?*

## **Council restrictions are being relaxed**

*Support "live and let live" not over-regulation*

*why is it we can travel north or south to beaches where dogs are welcomed and loved?*

*The current settings do not work, and locals were not consulted when Council placed "Dogs Prohibited" signs along Pittwater side of Palm Beach. These signs are ugly and unnecessary.*

*Whose idea was it to ban dogs here in the first place? Same thing happened along the water's edge in avalon and Clareville, signs saying "No Dogs" sprung up out of nowhere.*

*i am tired of the ever increasing restrictions imposed on residents. We came to live here because it was free from red tape and council intervention. If residents want to take a walk with their dog they should be allowed to!*

*Reducing, restricting and not maintaining off leash areas to exercise dogs is causing untold behavioural issues, dog aggression, neighbourhood barking and noise complaints and ultimately adding to the re-homing epidemic when under-stimulated and bored dogs display these behaviours*

*The rest of the developed world has a far more humane and "live and let live" attitude when it comes to dogs - all except Australia and especially Pittwater Council. The anti-dog bias in the Council is a disgrace and it simply solved when the next elections are held.*

*... signage is the cause of many problems arising from the disruption to what families have been happily doing here for so long - in our case, nearly 90 years. Those who simply ignore the signs (and there are many who do) can become the target of vigilantes who see it as their job to snap photos with zoom lenses for the purpose of reporting an off-leash dog, even though the dog is doing nothing more than playing with the kids on an otherwise vacant patch of sand. The ... signs should all come down. If there is an argument for banning dogs along parts of the foreshore, then let that debate be had.*

*After living all over Australia and the world I'm now seeing how backward the policies toward dogs with the NBC has become it's ridiculous. Please take note of the voices and make the change.*

*Why so much red tape? good to see finally we are steering away from the nanny state*

*Is it possible for Council to review how the dog ban was introduced here in the first place? It seemed like that decision came out of nowhere and it is good to see it is about to be reversed. I always remember bustling activity here in summer with dogs happily included in the fun - why did it ever change? How did banning dogs improve things?*

*The Station Beach trial is a good start to normalizing the situation and bringing Pittwater into line with other SYDNEY councils. For what it is worth, in comparison with the regulations in the UK and France the rules in Pittwater are draconian!*

## **Minimal impact on the environment**

*Dogs are an essential element of Pittwater's environment*

*All dog owners love our environment and waterways.*

*Animal lovers are nature lovers. We look after the environment, too.*

*Many of us have moved here because of the beautiful natural beaches and we will all do our utmost to protect them, however a well managed area for dogs to play and swim is important if people can use it properly.*

*Those who are against this proposal do not have a monopoly on cherishing and caring for this place. Whilst there are some careless dog owners, the majority who I meet care very much about their dog's behaviour and wish to do no harm.*

*Council needs to listen to all the community, not just the environmental groups, who seem to want our suburbs to be treated as if they are national parks.*

*We are sick of policy that seems to be written by green groups who do not like dogs and want them banned from anywhere there might be a plover or a skink.*

*The damage caused by humans and domestic cats allowed to roam on our wild flora and fauna is far greater than dogs in a small off leash area*

*Council's proposal for a trial to allow dogs off-leash along a section on Station Beach (on the Pittwater side of Palm Beach, mornings and late afternoons only) is backed by a comprehensive Environmental Assessment. It follows extensive consultation with NSW DPI - Fisheries and NSW National Parks, who support the trial as it would be "unlikely to cause a significant impact on the environment or the community". Of course that is not the same as saying there will be NO impact on the environment or the community.*

*With careful implementation and management as detailed in the report, the environmental importance of the area should be able to be preserved and at the same time the use of the beach broadened to local dog owners too.*

*I believe the environmental risks for beach use are very low and should be managed by signs/education, as I believe dog-owners are very responsible and concerned for the environment.*

## **Seagrass**

*There is no endangered sea-grass in the area proposed for the trial – the endangered species occurs further north on the beach, beyond the Boathouse.*

*If you bothered to look over this holiday it has been shredded by Jet ski's with damage to the sea grass*

*The seagrass issue is hogwash - more damage is caused by the chap who spearfishes every day than the few dogs that might occasionally walk on it at very low tide.*

*I would like those concerned with the issue of environmental damage to the seagrass beds to consider the following:-I have been walking on station beach since 1934 and the seagrass beds have undoubtedly deteriorated steadily over those years. However the main causes for this decline must include the increasing industrialisation, rural and urban growth upstream on the Hawkesbury River region leading to toxic run off. In times of heavy rain these silt deposits are plain to be seen and settle on the seagrass areas of Station Beach. Another important factor must be the nutrient runoff from the maintenance of the Palm Beach Golf course which has been in place as long as I can remember. Can the take off and landing of sea planes have no effect on turbidity in the sea grass areas? Can - at times in the past month - up to six Skidoos racing up and down over the edges of these areas have no damaging effect and not be very discouraging for sea birds? I would be sorry to see this modest "fair go" proposal founder on environmental grounds. If only the repair of the seagrass beds was as simple to achieve as banning limited access to families with dogs.*

## **Waste**

*I spend time on beaches in other parts of NSW where dogs are off leash in designated areas. These are without a doubt the cleanest beaches I visit.*

*Dog owners not only pick up after their dogs, but collect other waste on beaches (plastics, cigarette butts etc). Dog owners are responsible, care for the environment and appreciate the opportunity to spend time with their dogs on the beach.*



*Besides humans create more litter and waste on beaches than any animal. Cigarette butts, icecream wrappers, coffee cups do not break down. The odd accidental left behind dog poop will wash away, be buried or picked up by another dog lover.*

*Dogs don't litter the areas with disposable nappies, needles, rubbish and other human waste*

*Yes some owners leave poo behind but they are a minority. How many humans leave rubbish behind???? But are still allowed access anywhere they want?*

*Humans leave waste that kill animals. Not dogs!!*

*Rangers should pick up litter from people instead*

*But even public areas (non dog related) lack bins and encourage human food and rubbish littering. I would argue dog owners would clean up after their dogs more than parents with their children. As long as the council ensures there is a bin nearby, dog waste will not be a problem.*

## **Wildlife**

### **Birds**

*Sure, there will be a couple of greenie types who think the beach is no place for dogs because they might scare a few seagulls, but we can't keep giving in to this way of thinking.*

*We play here regularly in the mornings and we never see any wildlife, other than a few seagulls, maybe the occasional pelican (which just casually swims into deeper water if it sees a person or dog coming along the shore). We regularly see people walking their dogs and see no problem with that.*

*Someone is bound to say "we saw a pelican there once" but let's not forget the Pittwater pelicans only arrived in 2005 when the Menindee system dried up and they flew east for food. And pelicans are not troubled by dogs anyway, many having adopted Sydney Harbour as their home. The dogs need somewhere to run and swim, and Station Beach is a good start.*

### **Crabs**

*There are few if any blue soldier crabs on Station Beach (it is too exposed and sandy).*

## **Low impact on local residents**

*I appreciate residents south of station beach may have concerns however this is not directly in front of their properties!*

*local residents will find it annoying and inconvenient that outsiders from Avalon, Newport and further afield dare take up their valuable parking spaces and populate a 600m section of their beach.*

*My family has lived on Station Beach (Waratah Rd) for over 70 years. We have no problem with people and their dogs. I've never seen aggressive dogs or animal excrement. 99% of dog owners are sensible and responsible. Please don't punish the majority for a significant minority view. If people do the wrong thing, punish them, not everyone.*

## Historical precedent for off-leash dogs on Sydney foreshores

*When Governor Arthur Phillip landed in Sydney Cove in 1788 he came ashore with his own dog, and several others that had accompanied the First Fleet. The dogs, no doubt, enjoyed frolicking on the Sydney foreshore at that time, and have been able to enjoy the Sydney foreshore ever since. It may be argued that the First Fleet dogs set foot upon Sydney beaches prior to the first white man. In any case, it should be acknowledged that dogs have been able to use the foreshore (and beaches) longer than any living human being, and NIMBY's would be well reminded of this historical fact.*

## Requests if the trial is not approved or it fails

*If the proposal is not approved by Council, I would urge Council to approve dog on leash use of the trial area during the proposed hours*

*If this plan fails, another beach needs to be put forward and I don't think residents of this area will give up until there is one. There is simply nowhere to take our dogs without fear of a whopping fine in exchange of providing a healthy lifestyle for our animals.*

## Reasons for not supporting the trial

### Introduction

*I just don't understand why dog owners don't accept the referee's decision and have to go parent shopping to get a different result. Time after time, councils have turned down requests by dog owners for beach access and no sooner than this happens, dog owners have another go, at another beach. The facts remain the same.*

*There is no reason for it except for a minority of people from Pittwater Unleashed pushing it.*

*The growing power of the lobby group "Pittwater Unleashed" has facilitated and even defends these individuals. If dog owners can't obey the law and respect fellow residents how can you trust them with Station Beach. There is an increasing resentment amongst residents over the growing influence Pittwater Unleashed seems to have over Northern Beaches Council.*

### Community

*It may be that a dog is man's best friend and that is a very personal matter. But what is a closed relationship between man and dog is too often carried out without due regard for the interests of others in the community.*

*It is not normal behaviour for dogs to socialise outside their family unit; to effectively socialise dogs to this environment requires knowledge and a lot of work on the part of the owner.*

*It's very frustrating that they can't follow the rules already in place, yet they are very vocal that their dogs should have the right to be off leash*

*An off leash area on this beach will make a small group happy, another group will be indifferent but will make another, I would say considerably larger group unhappy.*

*In the Mackerel 'trial' we rarely had a council rep out and the no report on the trial was submitted prior to council making a decision consequently we are left with a divided*



community. DO NOT allow yet another beautiful Pittwater beach to be taken from the community by a vocal minority.

A dog defecated in front of our jetty in Waratah Road. The dog owner was not nearby and did not carry a litterbag. After a heated discussion, the dog owner reluctantly went away to find a litter bag. This is typical dog owner behaviour who are not close to their dogs when they "poo" and pollute our beautiful beach

"I had to move twice from the Boathouse last week because of dogs breathing on me while I was eating my breakfast."

Will diners at the Boathouse want to share meals with dogs? The Boathouse hosts events including weddings. Visualise the photos of the couple on the sand by the water's edge, perhaps barefoot and ... oops ... stains on the white dress. Not a good look, but easily avoided - no dogs please.

People need to choose their dogs responsibly, considering the dog's exercise needs and whether they can be readily provided.

Their expectations of peeing everywhere are just not on....The doggies can pee at home in the owners back yard.

Those who speak up against dogs off leash are ostracized and bullied by even the most agreeable of residents.

We are also concerned over the aggressive antics of some dog owners associated with 'Pittwater Unleashed'. My family has been verbally abused by members of 'Pittwater Unleashed' outside our residence and on Station Beach and I have received threatening messages via Facebook. Is this what we can expect when offering an alternative opinion to 'Pittwater Unleashed' or pointing out signage, under a trial?

## **Amenity of beach users**

Palm Beach and Barrenjoey Headland, together with the adjacent Lambert Peninsula and Broken Bay, are absolutely world-class scenic and landform treasures.

Palm Beach is internationally recognized. Do you want this to be a major tourist issue - "i went swimming and found it disgusting".

My wife and I regularly walk Station Beach in the morning and the last thing we want is someone's uncontrolled dog anywhere near us.

Whilst on my daily run along Station Beach I looked up a little late from under my peaked cap to be confronted by a large young dog - in mid air - that I could only prevent from colliding with me, by raising my foot into its face. The lady owner was 30 feet away - saying "I'm sorry - I can't control it". I attempted several times to continue my run, and each time it tried to bound under my feet. I asked the lady to put it on a lead but she couldn't. I know this is only one dog (and I don't mind the good ones), but if you are going to open up the beach for conceivably hundreds of them, then I doubt I will be safe doing my daily run any more.

Station Beach Palm Beach is no place to mix unleashed dogs and children and golfers and visitors and swimmers.

This is one of our favorite spots to watch sunsets year round, and we now will have to face the disruption of noise, animal waste, and potential physical interference by uncontrolled animals.

*We are concerned that this beautiful beach will be 'trashed' and end up in a similar state to the poor experiences at Bayview, Careel Bay and Sandy Bay.*

*Palm Beach has been a favourite spot for my family for many years now. Upon a recent visit where we sat underneath the lovely big tree a small dog came over and urinated on our towel , pooped close to where we sitting, then urinated for the second time all over our freshly prepared picnic, which had been lovingly prepared to feed 7 of us including 3 small hungry children. Not only were my children hungry, afraid of where to dig their castles in fear of digging up more than just sand, there were also dogs running freely and scaring mine and other people's children. Please don't let this happen.*

*One of my daughters stepped in dog poo and then they were making a sand castle and a dog lifted its leg and pissed on it with no apology from the owner. Dogs were running on our towels.*

*Manly lagoon is a nightmare with dogs on leash*

*If Station Beach becomes an off leash area I will not visit it because of dog poo being left on the beach by owners who don't remove it*

## **Public safety**

### **Human safety**

*Having recently spent 6 hours at Mona Vale hospital with a friend who was badly bitten by a dog while we were walking requiring numerous stitches it's a NO from me.*

*"My kids get chased by a dog every time we are there and we end up leaving."*

*"We went down there a couple of days ago and two dogs were running mad down the beach, leaving my kids so scared they couldn't get up the stairs to the car."*

*" Palm Beach is our "happy place" – please don't change that. We leave our dog at home."*

*Will Council provide total unreserved legal liability for this? (2) Who will pay for public liability insurance? Not to mention the trauma experienced by the person who is the innocent victim of such an incident?*

*Will there be a discount in rates for non-dog owners?*

### **Safety of dogs**

*"I have seen a normally friendly large dog attacking a small dog and shaking it to death."*

*How will dogs be kept off the golf course?*

## **Public health**

*In the most recent State of the Beaches 2018 report Station Beach/Barrenjoey Beach, showed the highest range of all of faeces present – dog faeces, meaning that enough people are granting themselves the right to take their dogs to defecate on the beach already to make the poo charts.*

*My mother was infected with hydatid worms transmitted by a dog at the age of 4. She suffered horribly ALL HER LIFE having to undergo surgery on THREE occasions to try to save her life. She was connected on one occasion to a tube for 6 weeks into a bottle the size of a flagon to drain a hydatid cyst which had burst and caused her to haemorrhage. She was left with the appearance of a second navel and malformed stomach. Complete removal of the cyst was impossible as they travel through the blood stream and so at age 80 to our great horror, evidence of another infestation site was apparent on a CT. These horrible parasitic worms can infect all organs and travel to the brain where almost certain death will occur. Hydatid disease is still present today although one never hears of it, the truth is never palatable where dogs are involved, but information can be found by googling. The disease is also known as Echinococcus granulosus.*

*If a wet dog touches me I end up in welts for days*

## **Environmental concerns**

### **Introduction**

*We recognise that it is totally unacceptable to have cats in our local environment and dogs are no different.*

*To open up and encourage increased use of the foreshore and waters off Station Beach is to neglect a duty of care for the natural environment of the Pittwater.*

*The Northern Beaches is lucky enough to have wildlife in abundance compared to areas like the Central Coast BECAUSE we protect our wildlife by hugely limiting offleash beaches.*

*Why would Council even consider giving such an environmentally sensitive and scenically extraordinary area for dogs to run in?*

*Why do we need to offer up prime real estate to dogs not to mention that it's a tourist and wedding spot? Surely there are better locations off the beaten track.*

*Once the damage is done there will be no going back.*

### **Beach pollution**

*It is absolutely disgusting to see the sh!t floating around near the other dog beach in the Pittwater (Bayview Dog Beach).*

### **Marine ecology**

#### ***Seagrass beds***

*We refer to this as our 'coral reef' given the amount sea life, including sea horses and other juvenile fish species that it supports.*

*The designation of Station Beach as an off leash area will result in considerable increases to the visitors to the area. People drive for miles to let their dogs swim in Rowland Reserve in Bayview. A Station Beach off-leash will draw dog owners from far afield and the foreshore will be inundated with people who decide to spend the day swimming and playing with their dogs. They will bring along with them paddleboards, snorkels, blow-up toys and the likes to play in the water all the while crushing, uprooting and damaging the sea grass with every step and stroke they take through it.... The trial period alone may cause damage that the sea grass and*

*associated ecosystem cannot recover from.... No amount of monitoring and assessment will bring the sea grass back once gone*

*We note the NSW Department of Primary Industries – Fisheries have said in their comments with regard to this trial “that dogs must not be allowed to run through seagrass beds at low tide”. This would be impossible to police in practice without the constant attendance of Council’s compliance officers. Where is the strategy to ensure compliance?*

*Council is having experts conduct a survey of the seagrass beds issues and we look forward to reading the resulting report.*

## **Cultural heritage**

*The area falls within the general objectives which apply to all National Parks in NSW. NSW Govt. Office of Environment and Heritage, Barrenjoey Lighthouse Precinct Conservation Management Plan. 2011, p.84, states “the specific objectives of maintaining ecological integrity, ... between the park and reserves and adjoining areas”. The beach must therefore be protected from introduced species such as dogs. The lighthouse at Palm Beach is recognised as heritage, and so is the ‘Customs Station’. 1. A study of the archaeology and heritage value of the foreshore (at Station Beach) and Governor Philip Park should be undertaken before dogs are likely to impact the area. The Barrenjoey Lighthouse precinct will be impacted by dogs if Station Beach is not protected from dogs. The NSW report stipulates, (ibid p.96 Policy no. 18) that various heritage impact assessments need to be done to adhere to the planned objectives:-*

- management needs to consult with Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council if any ‘change’ or ‘trial’ of current management plan is being considered and that a professional archaeological project must precede it (op cit),*
- and also (ibid p.89) any change or ‘trial’ of current management plan must be suitable and ecologically appropriate to Ku-ring-gai National Park and to all national parks in NSW.*
- to recognise the importance to our national history of Station Beach. The heritage value of Station Beach is part of our network of national parks and leads to ecological sustainable use of the park.*

## **Visual / aesthetic**

### **Precedent for other off-leash areas on beaches**

*Dog owners want Station Beach and Palm Beach, and it won’t stop there because they want other beaches. What’s next ...Dee Why? Avalon? Collaroy?*

*On their Facebook site Pittwater Unleashed openly state that Station Beach is only the beginning, they want access to all beaches at all times, indeed, they are already doing so, openly mocking your rangers. In a recent post, the administrator of their Facebook page stated they must defend the gains made at station beach “literally with our lives”. Make of that what you will. The growing influence this lobby group appears to have over the council is a source of concern to many residents. Station Beach will be a disaster for local residents, golfers and walkers as the flagrant disregard of the law and respect for others that Pittwater Unleashed promotes proves that some dog owners cannot be trusted to do the right thing. As a resident of Etival St I should be actively promoting Station Beach as it would reduce the traffic and dogs in our once quiet street but I really fear for the locals of the Station Beach area*

*If this goes ahead, I predict it will also mean that people will ignore signs and let their dogs run on the ocean side of Palm Beach, as well as in the National Park, and will try to take their dogs*

*up to the Lighthouse (because give an inch and they'll take a yard) and this will spoil it for the people who are coming to enjoy the National Park and pristine bushland and beach,*

*Only today I saw two piles of dog crap on the smugglers path up to the lighthouse, and the sight of arrogant dog owners blatantly ignoring the "no dogs" signs is an almost a daily event.*

## **Negative experiences at other off leash beaches**

### **Inequitable access to public space**

*People seem to want to treat their dogs as if they were children but conveniently forget the responsibilities that come with both. One of those responsibilities surely is to ensure a pet has ample room to live and play. If that is not possible then the pet can be walked - on a leash - as per the Animal Companion Act. Just because a minority feel entitled to a space does not mean they must be appeased.*

*If dog owners expect substantial areas of public land to be set aside for off-leash areas, perhaps dog registration fees need to reflect the price of acquiring such land. It certainly should not be done in waterfront locations.*

### **Alternatives to Station Beach for off-leash dog exercise**

*I own a dog and if I want to take him in the water, I can go to Bayview.*

### **Enforcement of responsibilities of dog owners**

*We find that dog owners are not responsible and don't comply with the existing laws and these laws are not enforced by Council.*

*How can a dogs unleashed trial possibly be seriously considered when the proponents of such a trial cannot be trusted with the existing No Dogs policy, proposed hours and days of operation when they clearly will flout this, and remain in the proposed northern section of Station Beach, when they cannot do it presently?? The answer is they cannot and will be impossible to enforce.*

*I strongly urge Council forget extending concessions to a dog-owner lobby and instead Council demonstrate its willingness and capacity to hold dog owners accountable for breaches of community trust and expectations (2).*

*The trial will waste Council's money and staff time*

### **On-site enforcement**

*Council can't enforce the existing dog bans at places like Avalon Beach. At 6.30 am it's a free for all for dogs and not a ranger in sight.*

## Support the trial period

*Having a 12 month trial period is a positive approach. It is important that rate payers and visitors to the Palm Beach region have the option and that it be for a 12 month trial period.*

*A trial is just that. If there are issues that cannot be addressed the trial is deemed unsuccessful.*

*I can understand the reasoning for a proposed trial, although would prefer to see the area allocated as dog friendly immediately.*

## Don't support the trial period

### Support proposal but oppose trial

*This issue has been around for more than two decades, it is ridiculous to propose yet another stupid trial.*

*Why is a trial even needed - this is hardly a ground breaking idea? Presume you want to check how many whingers come out of the woodwork?*

*Hurry up and get on with we don't need a trial. Stop procrastinating we all want it. Make it happen*

*No time restrictions or trial period required. Dog owners NEED this*

*Stuff the trial, make it permanent, all day every day. Move on with it now.*

*Would rather have no more trials. Why are they necessary.*

*It would be good to see no more delays as the longer it drags on, the worse it looks for Council.*

### Trial period is too long / should be shorter

#### Trial period is too long in general:

*Is 12 months too long?*

*Too long a trial period.*

*I wonder why it will take 12 months to assess - this is too long. In the meantime will any additional beach areas be assessed for dog access - leashed or unleashed?.*

*My only wish is that the time periods set aside for this trial could be compressed so that we can enjoy walking our dogs off leash in this beautiful location sooner.*

*I think the trial period needs to be shorter.*

#### Prefer a trial period of 6 months:

*A 12 months trial period is too long. Six months would be sufficient to assess impacts. Birds may be driven away by then.*

*Suggest the trial period be reduced to 6 months*

*Let's give it a try and make any amendments following feedback 6 months into the trial.*

*The only issue is that 12 months is a long time for a trial --- 6 months should be enough?*

### **Shorter trial periods:**

*Thinking 12 months trial is too long--maybe winter only??*

*trial period just a few months so we can move on*

*The time period is too long such that if the trial is ended, owners will still be conditioned to access the area in the future.*

*We need it now forever - not just 12 months!!*

### **Revocation of the trial**

*Under what circumstances is this revoked ... once a dog or owner does something wrong or is it repeated offences?*

### **Support trial days and times**

*I think its a good idea to be able to walk the dogs on the beach at set periods of time.*

### **Don't support trial days and times**

*Timed access doesn't work and we can't afford to police it.*

### **Days and times should be increased**

**All day / 24 hours and day 7 days a week**

**Proposed times but 7 days a week**

**24 hours a day on weekdays only**

**All day / daylight hours**

**Later finish time than 10:30am**

One hour later finish time in the morning, especially on weekends

5pm-11am to allow use after school dropoff in the morning

3pm to 11am daily

4pm to 11am all week



4pm to 12pm

Longer time period in the morning

### **Earlier start time than 4:00/5:30pm in the afternoon**

From 3pm in summer and winter

3pm to 11am daily

Start at 3.30pm (2) all year so families with children can go there

After 4pm all year

One hour earlier in the afternoons

### **Restrict proposed times**

#### **Earlier finish time than 10:30am**

Earlier times in the morning (2)

The times are generous and should be shortened. The proposed 10.30am finish time should be earlier because it hinders use by young families and other users during the day.

2 hour time from sunrise

#### ***Finish at 10am***

7:30am to 10am

8-10am would allow Ku-ring-gai people to get there

Proposed times could end at 10am to deter commercial dog walkers and allow local residents to use the area with their dogs

#### ***Finish at 9.30am***

10.30am is too late for parents with young children who want to use the beach earlier in the morning. The off leash time should finish at 9.30am on weekdays and weekends. Families will be gone before the afternoon off leash dog session.

*The suggested times are too generous - would prefer not at all, but if it has to be, then shorten the hours to between 5.00pm and 9.30am (10.30am is too late in the morning)*

#### ***Finish at 9am***

7 days a week 7.00am-9.00am and 5.00pm onwards

Before 9am, after 5pm

6-9am

Restrict the morning time to 9am to limit the number of people from outside the area

### ***Finish at 8:30am***

Before 8.30am works in SA and Queensland

Off leash should be 5:30pm – 8:30am

Before 8.30am and after 6pm works in SA and Queensland

### ***Finish at/before 8am***

5-8am would be a sensible solution for everyone (2). 5am to 8am would allow owners to exercise their dogs before work

Before 8am

### **Later start time than 4:00/5:30pm in the afternoon**

5-8pm every day would be a sensible solution for everyone (2)

Before 5pm AEST and after 7.30am AEST and AEDT are not appropriate for the convenience of the public and the users of Palm Beach Golf Course.

Local residents like to swim in the late afternoons which would conflict with the proposed afternoon time

after 6pm (2) works in SA and Queensland

### **Daylight saving / summer hours November-March**

Proposed times in summer make it impossible to go to Station Beach with school age children and full time work

In summer people shouldn't be on the beach in the sun between 11am and 3pm.

7 days a week in daylight saving

Times should not be limited during daylight saving

### ***All day / daylight hours***

5am to 7:30pm

### ***Earlier finish time in the morning – 7.30am***

Before 5pm AEST and after 7.30am AEST and AEDT are not appropriate for the convenience of the public and the users of Palm Beach Golf Course.

### ***Earlier finish time in the morning – 9am***

5.30pm – 9am Mon-Fri AEDT

Early cut off time of 9.00am on weekends, public holidays and school holidays in summer because the beach can get busier then.

### ***Earlier start time in afternoon – 3.30pm, 4pm or 4.30pm***

5.30pm is too late to start off leash walking on weekdays. Many dogs are walked by children after school. By 5:30 they need to get home for dinner. Consider off leash from 3:30pm

5:30pm is too late in daylight saving times because children are in bed at 7pm. Daylight savings time should be 4.00pm to 9.30am 7 days

time should be earlier than 5:30pm so we can enjoy the beach with our dogs

start at 4pm so school children can walk their pets with their families after school

Starting at 5.30pm impacts on family meal and study times. 4pm – 10.30am would be better

7 days a week 4pm – 10:30am

Daylight saving hours should be 4:00pm – 10:30am. There is no valid reason for delaying the start until 5:30pm

Commence at 4pm same as in winter

4pm to 10.30am. 5.30pm is too late

Daylight saving time should be from 4.00pm when families walk their dogs, let them swim, and go home to prepare dinner. 5.30pm is too late for people trying to do an afternoon swim and walk.

4.30pm to 11am except in the school holidays

Why is the time in summer brought back by 1.5 hours? People would still like to walk their dogs at 4:30pm in summer. Work/business hours don't change in daylight saving time.

### ***Include weekends in summer***

Should be 7 days in summer

Trial Saturday or Sunday during daylight saving to identify potential benefits and issues on a weekend day include weekends until 8am

Access in the evening and earlier mornings on weekends in daylight saving when the weather is warmer and dogs want to swim

Weekend hours in summer school holidays 6.30-9am

6pm to 10am on weekends in summer

Offleash allowed on weekends from 6:30pm when most beachgoers have left

## Winter hours April-October

### *Longer hours*

Consider longer hours in winter (10) because the beach is quiet and hardly used (2) so there should not be any restrictions for off leash use.

Longer hours on weekdays in winter

24 hours in winter, except school holidays

Allow dogs on the beach all day/daylight hours in winter (3)

5am to 6pm EST

4pm-10.30am means only 4 hours

### *Earlier finish time in the mornings – 7.30am*

Before 5pm AEST and after 7.30am AEST and AEDT are not appropriate for the convenience of the public and the users of Palm Beach Golf Course.

### *Earlier start time in the afternoon*

Start at 3:00pm because of the shorter daylight hours in winter, giving people time to walk their dogs in lighter and warmer conditions

Earlier start time 3:00pm – 3:30pm because no-one sits on the beach in the colder months.

Earlier access to the beach in the afternoon because light fades earlier

4.00pm to 9.30am 7 days AEST

Daylight times in winter

## Weekdays

Longer hours on weekdays

## Weekends

Why are dogs not permitted on weekends in summer? (4) That's when dogs want and need to swim the most.

Include weekends in summer (14) so people who work during the week can use the area.

Slightly longer hours on weekends to all family time (2)

Want mornings on weekends (2) to finish by 8am-8.30am

*We are left walking the tarmac or driving in the traffic to Bayview, particularly on the weekends (which is another reason we need timed access in the summer months on the weekend too, because of the traffic crawl in and out of Palm Beach!).*

*Boat Owners Association raise concern however, with the proposed hours and days regulating the presence of dogs, as these would conflict with our established practices which frequently see members setting their dogs ashore here in the middle of the day, and especially on the weekends in summer.*

## **Other suggested times**

Times should be morning only (2)

7am to 10pm 7 days a week

Most of the beach should be available in the early morning such as at Boomerang and Blueys Beaches

I would like to see the hours extended by at least one hour.

Extending times by an hour morning and night would give working people more chance to use the beach

Early morning and evening

The majority of people use the beach early mornings and after work. Limit dogs to work hours and after dusk to minimise impact on other users

For a couple of hours very early in the morning and very late in the day

Want longer hours but not in the middle of the night. All day Sunday

4pm-10pm Jervis Bay

## **Issues with dawn and dusk / overnight**

### **Proposed off leash times conflict with informal beach use**

*I am one of the many tens of thousands of people who walk there each year. Some are regular locals, others are visitors walking up to the lighthouse for the first, and perhaps only, time. Throughout summer, early morning and late afternoon to early evening are the best times for a walk, avoiding the burning heat of the middle of the day. Yet Council proposes that at exactly these times, the peace and enjoyment of our walk would be severely compromised by dogs running around!*

*these places that are being requested are not often frequented during early hours of the day or late hours of the evening. This is the perfect time for residents to be able to walk their dogs between 5pm-9pm and 5am-9am. That way there will not be a conflict with beach goers or other dog-unfriendly residents.*

*Dogs should not be able to access the beach on weekends at all when the beach is likely to become crowded as it will be a recipe for disaster.*

*May I suggest the other way around - announce a trial where humans may go to station beach for 12 months between the said hours without a dog in sight.*

## Days and times of use should be consistent

### Criteria for measuring success of the trial

*When the trial is concluded, what will be the criteria for saying this can become a full-time facility for use by dogs and their owners? Who is going to determine if the trial is a success or a failure? Are you going to hold a referendum? Is the popular vote going to prevail or will we once again have to pander to the nonsense of the Greens and other minorities with special interests who presumably got dogs banned from all beaches in the first instance?*

### Additional off leash dog exercise areas

#### Ocean beaches

##### *Introduction*

*on Sydney's Northern beaches there is not one surf beach that allows dogs*

*It's a beginning.... small 🐾🐾 first*

*Especially if it is the start of a more comprehensive approach to sharing the beaches with families with dogs.*

##### *Desired access to ocean beaches on the northern beaches*

*My concern is that the one beach is not enough. The trial may fail because it is overcrowded. More beaches should be trialled simultaneously.*

##### *Desire for off leash access to specific beaches*

### Comments about existing off leash exercise areas on Northern Beaches

#### Careel Bay / Hitchcock Park

##### Positive comments

A joyous place for dogs and owners

##### Negative comments

- ☐ unpleasant / horrible (3)
- ☐ overused and run down (2)
- ☐ limited, and boring after repeated use (2)
- ☐ depressing dust bowl (1) that is dry and dusty (1)
- ☐ muddy after rain (1) and most of the year
- ☐ ticks

- ☐ the small/shy dog area is hardly used. That space is not available for dogs who want to get away from annoying, ball stealing dogs
- ☐ no access to water
- ☐ the carpark is full of boats and trailers that don't move

## Avalon Beach Reserve

A sad and highly unused option

the new dog park in Avalon is not much bigger than a lot of peoples yards on the Northern Beaches.

The dog park is not fenced properly. A dog has escaped on the main road side. Some dogs make their way through bushes to the drain on the other side

## Rowland Reserve, Bayview

### Positive comments

*a much loved place on Pittwater, loved by dogs, of course, and by PEOPLE.*

### Negative comments

Overcrowded 1 with people and dogs from all over Sydney

Extremely busy 1

Worn out 1

Free parking is limited (2)

unsafe for my dog - there are too many people who do not keep their dogs under control; who bring aggressive dogs; and who do not pick up after their dogs.

Fights between untrained dogs occur 1

People and their dogs come from as far afield as Ryde and Turramurra 1

*Bayview in particular is known for the quick spread of infection if something going around.*

*Who wants to swim in a marina? (pretty much adjoining just metres away. . . )*

The water is quite toxic to sensitive dogs, poisoned by protective paint on boats 1

## Mona Vale

Highly exposed without shade trees and wind protection. Tree planting is needed

## Curl Curl Lagoon

Broken glass all around 3

Polluted, dirty lagoon 3



The lagoon and lagoon sand is not suitable for anyone, human or dog, to be around 1  
Dog always gets sick after swimming in Curl Curl Lagoon

## **Narraweena**

Provide a tap

## **Other comments**

### **Planning considerations**

*Urban planning needs to embrace dogs*

*Add to that the outright ban on allowing any more doggy daycare centres to open, which would alleviate the pressure in the parks at 'rush hour' and allow the dogs variety and enrichment, thus abating some the classic after-work, over-excited, out-of-control doggy crowds you see at the parks.*

### **Dog policy**

Prepare a consistent Dog Policy for the Northern Beaches, modelled on the Manly policy rather than the Pittwater policy

### **Other**

*As long as an off leash dog beach is not within 10 kms of penguins (manly) then I support this decision*