

# Dog Off-Leash Area Policy



<b>Policy type</b>	Council
<b>Adopted by</b>	Council
<b>Responsible General Manager</b>	Director, Infrastructure Services
<b>Responsible officer</b>	
<b>Date adopted</b>	27 April 2022
<b>Scheduled for review</b>	This policy will be reviewed four years from the date of adoption, or sooner if required.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to detail Council's commitment to providing Dog Off-Leash Areas, which encourage people and dogs to socialise and exercise within an open space setting as well as providing guidance on the future planning and development of Dog Off-Leash Areas within the Moira Shire.

## SCOPE

The Dog Off-Leash Area Policy covers the provision and development of Dog Off-Leash Areas in Moira Shire.

## DEFINITIONS

<b>Council</b>	means Moira Shire Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 2020
<b>Council officer</b>	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
<b>Confined Off-Leash Area (Confined OLA)</b>	A designated fully fenced area where dogs are allowed off-leash under effective control of the owner. These are referred to as 'dog parks'.
<b>Open Off-Leash Area (Open OLA)</b>	A designated area where dogs are allowed off-leash under effective control of the owner. The area is typically unfenced or only partially fenced such as a showground or recreation reserve.
<b>Registered Dog</b>	All dogs must be microchipped and registered with the council responsible for the area in which they normally reside to use Dog Off-Leash Areas.
<b>Owner</b>	The person responsible for bringing the dog(s) into the public domain. This does not need to be the registered owner.

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## POLICY

Access to open space is an important part of people's lives and being outdoors encourages us to be active, escape from the everyday, relax and form social relationships. The Dog Off-Leash Area Policy supports this by encouraging people and their dogs to exercise, socialise and enjoy all our parks have to offer.

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* Part 5A Section 68A, Councils must prepare a Domestic Animal Management (DAM) Plan at four year intervals to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership; the welfare of dogs and cats in the community; and to minimize the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

Council's DAM Plan 2021-2025, supports the provision of Dog Off-Leash Areas and the creation of confined off-leash areas as they assist in the reduction of nuisance dog behaviour such as wandering and barking.

## Principles

Council aims to:

- Encourage residents to be active and feel engaged with their local community by providing parks that foster social interaction through the inclusion of Dog Off-Leash Areas (OLA's).
- Over time, provide Dog OLA's in towns across Moira Shire based on the number of dog registrations, demand and suitable sites.
- Continue to allow dogs off-leash at Dog OLA's as per Council's current Domestic Animals Act Section 26 Order.
- For Confined OLA's, where space allows, provide separate areas for sedate and active dogs.
- Dog Off-Leash Areas may be used by any registered dog with their owner.

## Types of Off-Leash Areas

This policy covers two types of Dog Off-Leash Areas.

- **Open OLA**

No constructed barrier to provide separation from other open space or reserve users. Caters for dogs off-leash and play; facilitated by existing landscapes.

Open OLA's will be considered where the host site has sufficient space to accommodate the minimum size requirement and where there are existing features which enable clear delineation of the Dog Off-Leash Area.

- **Confined OLA**

Constructed barrier (fence) provides separation from other open space or reserve users. Caters for dogs off-leash and play facilitated by existing landscapes and/or agility equipment.

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## Site Attributes

When determining the location of a new Dog Off-Leash Area, the following should be taken into consideration:

- The space should be large enough to allow dogs sufficient space to exercise. Where practicable the minimum size for a Dog Off-Leash Area should be 0.2 hectares (2000m<sup>2</sup>) with separate areas for sedate and active dogs in Confined OLA's.
- There should be appropriate buffers between the Dog Off-Leash Area and other activities within the open space and nearby houses.
- Priority given to areas close to concentrations of registered dog ownership.
- Minimise proximity to residential homes and schools.
- Where appropriate utilise linear-shaped open space to promote physical exercise by encouraging people to walk around the space.
- In general, Dog Off-Leash Areas will be excluded from
  - Designated Conservation Reserves.
  - Areas of significant environmental value.
- Dog Off-Leash Areas will not be located within:
  - 20 metres of a playground or barbeque area.
  - 50 metres of any main or collector road (Open OLA only).

## Site Assets

Existing assets can reduce the total cost of implementation and influence patronage of a Dog Off-Leash Area, and they will be taken into account when determining a suitable site.

Assets that influence the location of a Dog Off-Leash Area include, in order of importance:

- Available space
- Supply of drinking water and related fixtures.
- Natural and constructed shade areas.
- Seating.
- Landscape features that facilitate play/agility.
- Proximity to public toilets.
- Car parking.
- Path network to park.
- Path network within off-leash area.

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## Securing Sites

Dog Off-Leash Area sites can be secured via the:

- Subdivision process.
- Allocation of existing Council owned or managed open space.

Specific circumstances and available funds will determine which of these options is applicable on a case by case basis.

## Development Standards

Attribute	OPEN Off-Leash Area	CONFINED Off-Leash Area
Delineation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing constructed assets.</li> <li>• Existing landscape features.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose built fence min 1200mm high</li> <li>• Concrete plinth under fence</li> <li>• Double gated entry/exit.</li> <li>• Fence materials to be compatible with surrounds</li> </ul>
Surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing.</li> </ul>	From: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing.</li> <li>• Grass.</li> <li>• Granitic sand.</li> </ul>
Agility / play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing landscape features only.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing / modified landscape features.</li> <li>• Equipment may be provided.</li> </ul>
Drinking water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 1 fountain with attached dog bowl.</li> <li>• Adjacent to the area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 1 fountain with attached dog bowl.</li> <li>• Within each enclosure.</li> </ul>
Seating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard bench seats.</li> <li>• Quantity determined by size of enclosure.</li> </ul>
Tables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not provided within the enclosed area.</li> <li>• May be provided in adjoining open space.</li> </ul>
Shade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural or artificial as required.</li> </ul>
Waste Bin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 1 bin adjacent to area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimum 1 bin adjacent to each entry/exit. (externally located, internally accessible)</li> </ul>
Bag Dispenser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided.</li> </ul>
Car Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing.</li> </ul>
<p>The design process must consider all mitigation actions required to maintain the enjoyment and safe use of the Dog Off-Leash Area and adjacent open space areas.</p>		
<p>The information above must be considered in conjunction with any site specific regulatory requirements, such as those applicable to transmission easements.</p>		
<p><b>Whilst the above considerations will guide the design of Dog Off-Leash Areas, the final design will be dependent on planned reach [e.g. local or regional] and available funding.</b></p>		

# Dog Off-Leash Area Policy



## General Rules for use of Dog Off-Leash Areas

The following rules for users of a Dog Off-Leash Area will apply.

The owner (person in apparent control of the dog) must:

- Keep their dog under effective control via voice and/or hand control and remain within constant sight of the dog so as to be able to promptly bring the dog under control by placing the dog on a chain, cord or leash;
- Ensure that the dog:
  - is not allowed to worry, rush at, bite, attack or otherwise threaten any person or animal;
  - is prevented from breeding or attempting to breed with any other dog; and
  - is prevented from damaging property or Council assets.
- Not attend the Designated Area if their dog is on heat;
- Ensure that their dog is wearing its current registration tag;
- Supervise children carefully around the dogs;
- Ensure that children under 16 are supervised by an adult;
- Ensure that one adult is only permitted to supervise up to 2 dogs;
- Remove their dog immediately if it becomes aggressive;
- Clean up after their dogs;
- Not smoke or drink alcohol in the area;
- Not behave in an offensive, violent, threatening or intimidating manner; and
- Comply with all requirements for use of the Designated Area, as signposted by Council.

## RELATED LEGISLATION

*Local Government Act 1989*

*Local Government Act 2020*

*Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006*

*Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*

## REFERENCES

Moirá Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025

Moirá Shire Council – Council Plan 2021 - 2025

Wellbeing for All Ages Strategy 2021 – 2025

Recreation Strategy 2016 – 2026

Economic Development Strategy 2019 - 2023

