



DOG PARKS PLANNING FRAMEWORK AND TRIAL DOG PARK

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OUR VISION FOR OPEN SPACE

Hume will have a diverse range of open spaces which satisfy the needs of people of all ages, cultural backgrounds and abilities. The open space network will reflect Hume's natural and cultural heritage, protect indigenous flora and fauna, and enhance the visual quality of the urban landscape.

Hume Open Space Strategy, p 14

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Dog parks will be places where the community comes together to celebrate the importance of dogs as valued members of our community.

They will be places where individuals and families can come with their dogs to learn new skills, play, and have fun together.

They will be a focus, a reminder, of what we need to do and to be as responsible pet owners.

They will be attractive, and inviting places where people are drawn together because of their pets.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Term	Definition	Term	Definition
Dog parks	Dog off-leash areas that are fully enclosed or fenced	Parks / reserves	Areas that include open parkland, play spaces, sporting areas, trails, natural environments
Dog owner	The person responsible for the overall care and wellbeing of a dog	Dog walker	Refers to anyone responsible for the actions of a dog when it is in a park, reserve or other public place
Off-leash areas	Areas where dogs are permitted to run off-leash but only if they are under effective control of their owner / walker	On-leash areas	Areas where dogs have to be on a leash at all times
Dog litter	Dog droppings or excrement		

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1. Purpose of the project

In October 2010 council resolved to investigate the feasibility of establishing a dog park, which would add to the recreation and social opportunities available for residents with dogs.

The purpose of this document is to provide a framework to guide council's planning and development of dog parks and identify a suitable site for a trial dog park.

This required:

- The development of criteria to use to evaluate the suitability of potential sites
- The development of dog park provision guidelines
- An examination of council's database of parks and reserves to identify sites that have the potential to accommodate a dog park
- The short listing of potential sites for a trial dog park, and the recommending of a preferred site.

2. Background Information

2.1 Hume dog population

There are 18,141 dogs registered in the City of Hume, which equates to 12 dogs for every 100 residents. This is lower than the estimated Victorian and Australian average of 16 dogs for every 100 residents.¹ Some suburbs have a significantly lower dog population than the Victorian and Australian average.

The largest dog communities in Hume are located in Sunbury (6,558 dogs) followed by Craigieburn (2,313 dogs), Greenvale (1,177) and Roxburgh Park (1,111 dogs).

Sunbury has by far the greatest number of dogs per head of population with 21 dogs for every 100 residents, this is significantly higher than the Victorian average. In comparison Craigieburn and Greenvale have a lower level of dog ownership with 11 dogs for every 100 residents, and Roxburgh 7 dogs for every 100 residents.

Attwood has the second highest number of dogs per head of population with 15 dogs for every 100 residents, followed by Westmeadows (13 dogs for every 100 residents).

The lowest level of dog ownership is in Campbellfield / Somerton with 5 dogs for every 100 residents, followed by Dallas and Meadow Heights each with 6 dogs for every 100 residents.

It is estimated that 36% of households in Australia own a dog.¹ This compares with xx% of Hume households that own at least 1 dog. Can we get this information?

2.2 Why does council provide for dogs in parks and reserves?

Council appreciates the importance of pets including the health and wellbeing benefits they bring to their owners and families. In recognition of these benefits council supports opportunities to embrace pets as part of the community.

Research undertaken for the publication *Australians and Their Pets: The Facts*² highlights the significant health and well being benefits associated with owning a pet:

- People who own pets typically visit the doctor less often and use less medication
- Pet owners, on average have lower cholesterol and lower blood pressure and are less likely to report feeling lonely

¹ Australian Companion Animal Council, Contribution of the Pet Care Industry to the Australian Economy

² Australian Companion Animal Council, *Australians and Their Pets: The Facts*

- Pet owners recover more quickly from illness and surgery and deal better with stressful situations
- Pet owners show lower levels of risk factors associated with heart disease¹
- Pets have been shown to greatly increase quality of life for the elderly including reduced tension, fatigue and confusion and increased feelings of enthusiasm, interest and inspiration
- Self-esteem has been shown to be higher in children or adolescents who have a pet.³

Of particular relevance to this report is the research cited in *Living Well Together*⁴ which highlights the growing body of research that shows how dogs are likely to contribute to the health and wellbeing of dog owners and their families:

- Dog walkers are more likely to experience social contact and conversation than those that walk alone.
- Dogs motivate their owners to walk more often and meet recommended levels of physical activity
- Children who own dogs are less likely to become overweight or obese.
- Young girls who own a dog spend minutes more per day in physical activity and as a result achieve half the recommended level of physical activity for children just through the activities they undertake with their dog
- 5 to 6 year olds are 50% less likely to be overweight or obese compared with those who did not own a dog.

Research indicates that people over 65 who walk a dog, walk very frequently. However the greater proportion of dog owners over the age of 65 do not walk their dog at all or very infrequently. This raises the opportunity for initiatives that focus on dog walking for physical fitness and social interaction for older age groups.

Research shows that pets are important in instigating contact between people. Pet owners are more likely to engage with other people, exchange favours and perceive their neighbourhood and community as more friendly than do non-pet owners.⁵

2.3 Dog off-leash areas in Hume

There are 38 designated dog off-leash areas in Hume parks and reserves (Refer Appendix 2). These areas are generally unfenced and cater for a variety of park visitors and park activities, including dog owners.

Dog owners are permitted to let their dogs run off-leash in these areas, however they are not solely for use by residents with dogs. Dog owners are required to ensure they comply with all relevant local and state government requirements,⁶ and ensure their dog/s do not encroach on other park activities or users.

3. What is dog park?

Dog parks are fenced areas that may contain a number of activity areas including open ball play areas and, natural rummaging environments such as rock scramble areas or grassed areas.

They may also include educational or agility equipment for developing social and physical skills, and confidence in dogs.

³ The Power of Pets: The Benefits of Companion Animal Ownership, Australian Companion Animal Council, 2009

⁴ Living Well Together: How Companion Animals can Help Strengthen Social Fabric, Centre for the Built Environment and Health, School of Population Health, the University of Western Australia

⁵ Various as cited in Living Well Together

⁶ e.g. City of Hume Dogs in Public Places Policy 2003 and Local Laws, Victorian Government Domestic Animals Act 1994

Dog parks should include amenities for dog owners and other people who may visit the dog park to ensure it is an appealing social environment, and a well-used community hub.

These amenities include natural shade or shade structures, water, seating, attractive and robust ground cover. Larger dog parks that attract people for longer stays and from further away should include access to toilets, car parking and picnic facilities (outside the dog park).

4. What are the possible benefits of dog parks?

The following highlights some of the benefits of dog parks. Dog parks should however be considered as one of a range of opportunities to provide for the dog owning community. Other opportunities for dog owners and their pets should be considered in relation to dog off-leash areas that are unfenced, trails, and urban environments including outdoor cafés.

The benefits of dog parks

- They mean dogs and their owners can **be separate** from other people who don't want to interact with dogs while visiting the park
- They keep dogs out of **sensitive environments such as waterways or bushland areas** but still allow them access to parkland
- They provide a meeting place or **activity hub** for people and families
- They encourage people to **exercise** more vigorously with their dogs
- They provide **older people and people with disabilities** with an accessible and safe place to exercise their animal companions
- They allow **apartment dwellers** or people living on small allotments to have canine companions
- They provide a venue that encourages **dog to dog socialisation**
- They can provide an environment where **advice** is exchanged on dog management and where responsible dog ownership is encouraged
- They provide for the **travelling community** in areas where there are limited opportunities for dogs e.g. roadside stops
- They provide a focal point for **community education and training programs**, and
- They can help **avoid potential conflict** between dogs and other activities in parks.

5. What are the possible downsides dog parks?

It is important that people using a dog park understand they do not abdicate their responsibilities as a dog owner because they are in an enclosed area. Local laws relating to dogs in public spaces and off-leash areas still apply.

The following highlight some of the issues that may arise in relation to any dog off-leash area. They are not necessarily specific to dog parks. Many of these matters can be addressed by appropriate management and through dog owner education, and many are rare occurrences.

The most common issues are likely to arise from:

- Dog owners / walkers not picking up after their dogs
- Too many dogs brought to the dog park by the one person
- Inappropriate dogs being brought to the dog park (e.g. entire dogs, restricted breeds, dogs that are too young, and unvaccinated dogs)
- Young children being taken into the dog park and children being left unattended
- People leaving their dog unattended in the dog park
- Domination of the dog park by commercial or community activity groups.

Sometimes there are concerns about an increase in dog rushing' incidents and in dog-to-human and dog-to-dog biting. Research indicates this is not the case⁷.

6. Open space planning and dog parks

6.1 Vision for open space and dog parks

The planning and development of dog parks, as for all parks and reserves has to be in keeping with the overall vision for open space in the city. The following vision for open space was developed as part of the City of Hume Open Space Strategy.

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⁷ Dog Bites: Why, When and Where, Podberscek, A. L. & Blackshaw, J. K. (1990).. Australian Wildlife Research, 20, 182-187.

Bark Parks-A Study on Interdog Aggression in a Limited-Control Environment, Shyan, M. R.; Fortune, K.A. Christine King.C. (2003). Journal of Applied Animal Welfare

6.2 Dog park planning principles

The same principles that guide the planning, design and provision of all open space areas should apply to dog parks. In line with these principles, which are contained in the Hume Open Space Strategy⁸, dog parks will:

- Be places where people want to go because they are pleasant places to visit and to meet with other people. This means they will include social amenities such as seating and shade, will include landscaped and green areas, and will have robust surfaces to minimise erosion, dust and mud.
- Be safe, feel safe, and therefore be located in well-used parks and reserves that are open and easily observed from streets and footpaths
- Be accessible. This means they are well located in terms of residential areas, have good footpath and trail access, have car parking spaces that cater for the needs of people with disabilities, with dogs or with families and dogs. The surfaces in the dog park will cater for a range of accessibility needs.
- Add to the diversity of recreation opportunities for residents, in particular those residents and families who want to recreate with the family dog
- Be innovative and creative
- Be quality environments
- Be well integrated with other open space opportunities for residents and families, and
- Will be designed and maintained in line with relevant service standards.

Well-designed and maintained parks engender a strong sense of community pride and identity.

5 Hume City Council Open Space Strategy

Council has developed standards of provision for the different categories of parks and reserves in the city. This is to help achieve a consistent approach to the level of development at each type of park or reserve. The different levels or categories of parks and reserves in Hume are summarised in the following table.

Dog parks will also be planned in accordance with these categories. The type and level of development that will be considered for each category of dog park is contained in section 7.

Category or level of open space	Characteristics	Type of provision for dogs that may be considered	
		Dog parks	Dog off-leash areas
Neighbourhood	Small parks, approx 0.75 ha catering for a short visits and within 400m of households. The focus is on unstructured activities and sport.	×	×
Sub-district	Approx. 5-6 ha catering for 3 neighbourhoods. Focus on unstructured activities.	✓	✓
District	Approx. 10 plus ha catering for 6 neighbourhoods. The focus is on unstructured activities and sport.	✓	✓
Regional	Approx. 5-7 ha – 15 ha catering for the principal population centres of Broadmeadows, Craigieburn and Sunbury. The focus is on unstructured activities and sport.	✓	✓
State	Development of these sites is the responsibility of state government or is dependent on state government approval.	✓	✓

Table 1 – Categories of open space and whether dog parks and dog off-leash areas may be considered

⁸ City of Hume Open Space Strategy, p14

7. Dog park design elements

Council has prepared a dog park planning and design framework that will guide the planning and provision of dog parks.

The following table provides an overview of the type of features and amenities that may be considered for each category of dog park. Note that dog parks or dog off-leash areas will generally not be considered for 'neighbourhood' level parks.

Element	Open Space category applicable to				Comments	
	N'hood	Sub-district	District	Regional		
Core infrastructure						
Fencing (1.2 metres high)	x	●	●	●	No right angled corners – minimises opportunities for dogs to be cornered	
Enclosures <ul style="list-style-type: none">- single area- separate small dog area- time out area- dog training area	<div>x</div> <div>x</div> <div>x</div> <div>x</div>	<div>●</div> <div>x</div> <div>x</div> <div>x</div>	<div>●</div> <div>x</div> <div>●</div> <div>x</div>	<div>●</div> <div>●</div> <div>●</div> <div>●</div>	Consider opportunities if the space allows. Small dog areas support older owners / owners with disabilities who have small dogs. 'Time out area' allows for calming of overly excited dogs	
Double gated entry / exit (x2 minimum)	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>		Min 2 entries to avoid congestion. If a large dog park then may require more entry/ exits. Universal / disability accessible
Maintenance access gateway	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>		
Rules / regulations signage	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>		Locate away from entries to avoid congestion
Pathways <ul style="list-style-type: none">- approach pathways- internal pathways- textured pathways	<div>x</div> <div>x</div> <div>x</div>	<div>●</div> <div>●</div> <div>x</div>	<div>●</div> <div>●</div> <div>●</div>	<div>●●</div> <div>●●</div> <div>●●</div>	Sealed surfaces – for universal / disability access Textured / varied surfaces – educational element for dogs (confidence development)	
Amenities						
Seating & tables	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●●</div>	<div>●●</div>	Consider universal / disability access	
Water – people & dogs	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Consider universal / disability access	
Shade structures	<div>x</div>	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Locate away from entries to avoid congestion	
Picnic facilities (basic)	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Must be located outside the dog park enclosure. Consider universal / disability access	
<div>- Off street car parking</div>	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Consider universal / disability access	
Toilets	<div>x</div>	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Consider universal / disability access	
Activity Areas						
Rock scramble areas	<div>x</div>	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Rummaging / play areas	
Sensory vegetation plantings	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Rummaging / play areas	
Open ball play area	<div>x</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	<div>●</div>	Play / run about areas	

Element	Open Space category applicable to				Comments
	N'hood	Sub-district	District	Regional	
Agility / educational equipment	×	×	•	•	Educational / obedience skill development. Some equipment (e.g. 'sit stay' platforms) double as platform seating for owners
Landscaping					
Natural shade / tree plantings	×	•	•	•	
Vegetation along approach fencing	×	•	•	•	Consider where there is a need to minimise eye contact between dogs in the park and approaching – noise management
Drainage	×	•	•	•	Depending on site conditions and level of use
Under surfacing *	×	•	•	•	Consider universal / disability access
Other considerations					
Dog litter bag dispensers	-	-	-	-	Determined on a site by site basis
Dog litter bins	×	•	•	•	Litterbag dispensers will not be provided. Council policy is to reinforce responsible pet ownership responsibilities
Lighting	×	×	×	•	Only if a level of demand associated with social activities and / or dog club or training activities
Dog training area – external to the dog park	×	×	×	•	Only if dog obedience / training activities operate from the park / reserve
Dog club pavilion / storage	×	×	×	•	Only if a dog club / s operate from the park / reserve
× = Will not be considered • = Relevant to this category of open space •• = Most relevant to this category of open space					

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8. Management of dog parks

8.1 Requirements of dog park users

Dog owners / walkers will have the same responsibilities when using a dog park as they do in other dog off-leash areas. The following requirements relate to people with dogs in public places:

- Anyone in charge of a dog is responsible for cleaning up their dog's litter and carrying a device suitable for doing this⁹
- Anyone in charge of a dog/s in any off-leash area must also¹⁰:
 - have their dog/s under effective voice control
 - have their dog/s in their sight at all times
 - carry a leash
 - ensure their dog/s do not go within 10 metres of play, BBQ and picnic areas (applies

⁹ Hume City Council Local Law 1, section 2.3

¹⁰ Hume City Council Dogs in Public Places Policy

to both on-leash and off-leash), and

- ensure their dog/s are on a leash within 5 metres of a shared footway or bike path.

Dog owners and walkers will have additional responsibilities when using a dog park and will need to comply with user regulations that may relate to:

- The **number of dogs** any one person can take into a dog park
Generally limited to 2 to ensure dog owners / walkers can manage dogs they are responsible for while in the dog park.
- The **age of children** allowed into dog parks
Dog owners / walkers should be discouraged from taking very young children into dog parks as they can be overwhelmed by boisterous dog play and possibly knocked over. Children should be introduced to dogs in quiet and controlled environments so they learn to understand the nature of dogs and are not overwhelmed by them.
- The supervision of children
Children should not be allowed in dog parks unless fully supervised by an older person who can monitor and reinforce appropriate behaviour. Owners / walkers must understand that the environments in dog parks e.g. rock scramble areas, agility equipment, are for dogs. Children should be managed in these environments, particularly when there are a number of dogs engaged in robust play
- The age of dogs using dog parks
Young dogs should not use the dog park because they will not be fully vaccinated and therefore open to infection. Owners / walkers must be aware that young dogs should not be encouraged to jump from heights (e.g. rocks, education / agility equipment) because it can damage the developing joints of young dogs.
- Requirements relating to registration and desexing of dogs and 'inappropriate breeds'
Dogs using dog parks should be:
 - registered - a responsible pet ownership and council requirement
 - de-sexed - to minimise inappropriate behaviours
 - vaccinated - to minimise infection
 Breeds classified as 'dangerous dogs breeds'¹¹ must not be allowed in dog parks and council may designate other breeds of dog that will not be permitted in dog parks.
- Use of the dog parks by **commercial trainers and dog walkers** and for social events
Use of dog parks by commercial / private providers and large groups (e.g. formal gatherings) should be managed to minimise any conflict between these groups and residents wanting to use the dog park.
- About not leaving **dogs unattended** in the dog park
Information and signage must clearly state that dogs will be fully supervised and dog walkers / owners must be inside the dog park with their dogs.
- Picking up and disposing of **dog litter**
- The use of equipment
Information signage is recommended to ensure users of the dog park are aware of how to safely and appropriately use equipment. It is also important that signage clearly indicates the equipment is for use by dogs and not by children / people.

¹¹ Domestic Animals Act 1994

8.2 Management and monitoring of dog parks

Resources need to be allocated for the ongoing maintenance and management of dog parks particularly in relation to:

Maintenance

- Ground surface maintenance and restoration. Costs will vary depending on the level of subsurface drainage, the gradient of the land, soil conditions, the type of surface / under surfacing, and the level of use
- Cleansing. Costs will vary depending on the level of use, the level of responsibility dog owners / walkers take in cleaning up after their dogs, the type of surface. Increased use of the park may result in additional cleaning costs associated with toilets, rubbish bins and picnic areas in the park or reserve
- Vegetation management and replacement
- Grass cutting
- Infrastructure maintenance and replacement associated with seating, dog education / agility equipment, car parks, toilets etc.

Monitoring

- Increased monitoring of the site by Local Laws Officers for compliance with local laws and dog park rules and regulations

Signage

Note signage should be placed so as not to create congestion points e.g. immediately inside gates.

Signage requirements relate to:

- Regulatory signage addressing the issues above and how to report incidents or maintenance issues
- Equipment signage showing the appropriate use of equipment

9. Proposed dog park site evaluation criteria

The following evaluation criteria were developed to assess the suitability of identified parks and reserves for inclusion of a dog park, and to identify the preferred site for the city's first dog park. The sites that best satisfied the primary evaluation criteria were then assessed against the secondary evaluation criteria.

Primary evaluation criteria

1. The space available at the park or reserve to accommodate a dog park without it unreasonably impacting on the space available for existing park activities

Consideration was given to the capacity of the site to accommodate a dog park, the number of activities that may be impacted, the ability to provide buffers between activities if they exist and if it is appropriate that space allocated for existing activities should be reconsidered to make way for activities growing in demand.

2. The level of environmental sensitivity associated with the park or reserve

Consideration was given to such the impact the dog park may have on sensitive environments wildlife areas, wetlands or previous uses that may present issues such as former landfill sites.

3. The appeal of the site and amenity, perceptual or physical barriers associated with the park or reserve.

Consideration was given to degree of isolation of the site including the nature of surrounding land uses, the openness of the site, and the nature of other activities that will attract additional park users and optimise causal surveillance. The appeal of the site was also assessed. Sites that are green and in pleasant surroundings will attract users as will sites that provide for the whole family such as accessible car parking, play spaces, picnic facilities.

Secondary evaluation criteria

4. The integration of the proposed dog park site from other park activities

The location of the dog park on the site should allow for families who visit the park with their dogs with 'visual access' or connectivity to other park activity spaces such as children's ball play areas, sporting areas.

5. The proposed dog park site has good natural features including natural shade, attractiveness of the landscape

The location of the dog park should give individuals and families with dogs access to pleasant natural environments including landscaped and natural shade areas.

6. The proposed dog park site has existing and accessible infrastructure and amenities

The location of the dog park should give individuals and families with dogs easy access to park infrastructure such as car parking, toilets, picnic areas, and shelters.

7. The park or reserve has good linkages via the trail and footpath network

This will optimise the number of residents who can access the park or reserve via safe off-road pathways that provide direct routes to the site.

8. The number of people living near the park and who would potentially be able to walk to the site

Locating the dog park at a park or reserve that has a close and significant population will increase the use of the facility. It will also reduce dependence on motorised transport in order to access the site.

A park or reserve within a walkable distance will encourage walking to access the facility, which is in line with council's health and wellbeing objectives

9. The number of dogs residing within walking distance of the site

The park or reserve has a significant number of dog owning households within its catchment.

10. The readiness of the site to accommodate a dog park in the near future

This relates to the ability to proceed immediately with the establishment of a dog park. A number of factors may mean the site is not in a state that would enable work to commence on the installation of a dog park in the near future including:

- There are significant establishment works required as in the case of a newly established reserve, or reinstatement or remedial works as in the case of a former landfill site, or
- A master plan needs to be prepared to optimise the use of the site, or
- Another party owns the land and time is required to negotiate access and conditions of access to the land.

Consideration was also given to the following factors:

11. Whether the site is already a popular dog off-leash / on-leas area (formal or informal).

This indicates the site is already well used and well liked for dog off-leash activities and has a level of acceptance by the broader community for dog activities.

12. The number of people that will live within walking distance / the catchment of the site in the future

If all else is equal the anticipated population growth in the area may determine the advantage of one site over another.

10. Evaluation of possible sites for a trial dog park

There are 620 reserves and parks in the City of Hume that cater for a variety of sport and recreation activities. In addition, others provide important habitat and natural environmental features such as waterways, woodlands, and grasslands.

Council's database of parks and reserves was examined to identify sites that potentially had the space available to accommodate a dog park.

Sites were then assessed for their suitability to accommodate a dog park in line with the primary and secondary evaluation criteria outlined in section 9.

The sites that best satisfied the primary evaluation criteria were then assessed according to the secondary evaluation criteria.

Site 1 - Sunbury Park, Sunbury (Crown land, managed by Hume City Council)

Site evaluation score - Primary evaluation criteria - 27, Total (primary & secondary) - 99

Benefits of the site

- The park is in Sunbury, which has the highest level of dog ownership in Hume
- The park is an existing dog off-leash area

- There are no known site related impediments at this time
- Well-established park with attractive natural features
- No formal activities on the site to be impacted by enclosing an area for a dog park
- Basic infrastructure at the site including toilets, water, and shade shelter
- A small informal designated car park already services the site with additional car parking available in adjoining street
- There are no residential properties immediately abutting the site and the local road provides a buffer between those in the adjoining street
- Good proximity to residential areas within walking distance and that are well connected to the site via the footpath network

Other considerations to be taken into account

- There is another park immediately to the south-west of Sunbury Park which includes small water body, a trail and plantings
- The size of the area to be enclosed needs to take into account the type and level of use of the site for other recreation activities such as picnics, ball play and 'reflective' / quiet activities
- A possible increase in traffic due to people driving to the site
- Community perceptions relating to noise, and cleanliness of the site
- Community consultation required as part of the next planning phase.

Recommendation as a site for a dog park

- Yes, would **be highly recommended** as a potential site for a regional, district or sub-district dog park because of existing infrastructure, the amenity of the site and current use as a dog off-leash area
- Opportunities to maximise the size of the enclosed area needs further consideration.

Site 2 - Broadmeadows Valley Park, Westmeadows (Council owned land to the east of the dog obedience club compound)

Site evaluation score - Primary evaluation criteria - 24, Total (primary & secondary) – 75

Benefits of the site

- Significant open space area available, however this may be restricted. Refer 'other considerations'
- Potential for additional space available for dog off-leash activities outside the proposed dog park
- Formal roadway into the site
- Dog activities already at the park
- Toilets within 500 metres of the site

Other considerations to be taken into account

- The proposed site is currently used by the dog obedience club, however the club indicates it will relinquish their lease over the site when the new site is available for their use
- The John Ilhan Memorial Reserve Draft Master Plan will guide the planning and development of the precinct and flags a new dog trials / training area to the south of the existing compound
- Westmeadows has 13 dogs / 100 people, which is slightly above the city's average (12 / 100 for Hume as a whole). However because of the size of the park, its boundary with abutting residential areas in some cases is in excess of 700 metres away. This reduces its catchment

- Very limited car parking available at the proposed site, which would require additional provision particularly at times when the dog obedience club is operating. A limited number of new car parking spaces are planned in association with the proposed trials / training area
- A road barrier has been erected to prevent inappropriate car activity in the park. This restricts car access
- Plantings and landscaping is required to enhance the appeal of the site and provide shelter from prevailing weather conditions
- Community consultation required as part of the next planning phase.

Recommendation as a site for a dog park

- Yes, would **be recommended** as a potential site for a future dog park but there are a number of factors that may limit use

Could be a site for a sub-district or district dog park given the co-location of the dog obedience club and the potential for a large allocation of space. This would require a review of relevant management plans.

Site 3 - Craigieburn Gardens, Craigieburn (Council owned land)

Site evaluation score - Primary evaluation criteria - 21, Total (primary & secondary) – 65

Benefits of the site

- In a built up residential area with good footpath and trail networks
- Other family related facilities provided at the site including children's playground, open ball play areas, picnic / BBQ facilities, walking / cycling / scooter trails
- Large under used area potentially available for a dog park.

Other considerations to be taken into account

- The site is undergoing a master planning process that may impact on the desired timelines for the establishment of a dog park and may identify more pressing infrastructure development priorities for the site
- Craigieburn has a below average level of dog ownership for the city (11 dogs / 100, 12 / 100 for Hume as a whole) people, however the suburb has the second highest number of dogs (2,313) after Sunbury (6,558). The suburb is however more compact than Sunbury which increases the potential catchment of the site
- Most of the site has a sense of 'isolation' because it sits behind the recreation centre and commercial premises located on its northern boundary and residential properties on its other boundaries
- Significant landscaping and vegetation required to make it an appealing site
- Limited car parking available
- Community consultation required as part of the next planning phase.

Recommendation as a site for a dog park

- Yes, would **be recommended** as a potential site for a dog park particularly given the immediate residential catchment. There are a number of factors that may limit use, the size of the space available, appeal of the site and ease of access.

Could be a site for a sub-district dog park.

The following sites scored significantly lower on the primary evaluation criteria and so did not progress to evaluation against the secondary evaluation criteria. This does not mean they will not be considered as sites for potential dog parks in the future.

Site 4 - Greenvale Recreation Reserve, Greenvale (Crown land, managed by Hume City Council)

Site evaluation score - Primary evaluation criteria – 16

Benefits of the site

- A site that is being progressively developed (4 sporting fields) and has the potential to incorporate a dog park.

Other considerations to be taken into account

- The space available may be limited due to the expansive nature of sporting infrastructure being developed at the site
- Greenvale has a below average level of dog ownership for the city (11 dogs / 100) people, however the suburb has the third highest number of dogs (1,177) after Sunbury (6,558) and Craigieburn (2,313). The reserve however is located well away from this catchment because it is on the edge of the populous area.
- A dog park has not been included in the original master plan for the reserve. If a dog park is to be included at the reserve adequate space is required for the dog park itself as well as associated amenities such as landscaping and car parking. The site also needs to be high profile, be well integrated with other activity areas, and have access to toilets, water etc.
- The recreation reserve sits beyond the fringe of existing residential areas, which puts the site out of walking distance of most residents at this time. The catchment for the reserve will be limited because residential development will only occur to the east of the site
- May not be the space to incorporate and appropriately locate a dog park

Recommendation as a site for a dog park

- **Yes, the site is recommended** for future consideration as a site for a dog park, possibly when the residential catchment increases as the area is developed, and if the space permits.

There are a number of factors that will limit use or ease of access at this time.

Could be a site for a sub-district or district level¹² dog park depending on the space available.

Site 5 - Jacksons Creek Reserve / 'The Nook' (between Vaughan and Powell Streets), Sunbury, (Council owned land)

Site evaluation score - Primary evaluation criteria – 16

Benefits of the site

- The park is in Sunbury, which has the highest level of dog ownership in Hume
- Well-established park with attractive natural features including sealed trails
- There are no residential properties immediately abutting the park
- The park is an existing off-leash area

Other considerations to be taken into account

- There is minimal space available and the land has a significant gradient (erosion).
- The community's aspirations for the reserve as an 'environmental' reserve may be in conflict with use for a dog park.

¹² Refer Hume Open Space Strategy

Recommendation as a site for a dog park

- **No, is not recommended** as a site for a dog park given the limited space available, environment considerations, and the gradient of the site.

Site 6 - Former landfill site, Bolinda Road, Broadmeadows (Council owned land)

Site evaluation score - Primary evaluation criteria - 15

Benefits of the site

- No established use so no conflict with existing activities or users
- Has the space available, however it will not be available in the short term. Beautification of the site is to commence this year.

Other considerations to be taken into account

- The site has a poor street profile being located behind factories
- The site has a limited catchment, particularly for walkers, because it abuts industrial areas (to the north, north-west and north-east) and the Merry Creek valley to the east
- Broadmeadows has a below average level of dog ownership for the city (8 dogs / 100, 12 / 100 for Hume as a whole). The dog catchment is further reduced because the site is surrounded by undeveloped land and industrial properties
- Basic amenities such as toilets, car parking, picnic / BBQ facilities and water are not available on or near the site and are unlikely to be in the near future
- Preliminary works to beautify the site have not commenced therefore it will be considerable time before the site is appealing to users
- The site is in an industrial area, which significantly minimises the number of people who can / will access the site on foot.

Recommendation as a site for a dog park

- Yes, would **be recommended** for further consideration potential site for a dog park or dog off-leash area as the site is developed and if, on review, demand warrants.

11. Recommendations

The sites scoring highest against the primary evaluation criteria were evaluated against the secondary site evaluation criteria (appendix 5). These four sites were:

- Sunbury Park
- Broadmeadows Valley Park (John Ilhan Memorial Reserve)
- Craigieburn Gardens
- Spavin Drive Reserve

Community feedback through consultation on the draft study further supported the establishment of dog parks at Sunbury Park and Craigieburn Gardens and that a facility be considered at Broadmeadows Valley Park at a later stage.

Sunbury Park and Craigieburn Gardens were prioritised for the first dog parks in Hume City based on the supporting information obtained through the evaluation criteria and community feedback.

Broadmeadows Valley Park will be considered at a later stage due to the lower dog numbers in the area and additional works required to incorporate a dog park.

Spavin Drive was discounted based on the poor street profile and lack of basic amenities.

11.1 Sunbury Park

Actual dog park site size is approximately 600 to 800m² and will be confirmed within marked areas. The location of the dog park will be determined following further community consultation. Sunbury Park is one of the two preferred priority sites for a dog park for the following reasons:

- Sunbury has a significant registered dog population with over 30% of the city's dogs residing in Sunbury
- The park is of sufficient size to accommodate existing activities and incorporate a medium to large size dog park including off-sets from other park activities and adjoining properties
- There are no significant environmental sensitivities associated with the site in terms of sensitive wildlife, vegetation or landform (e.g. waterways) environments
- The park has a variety of natural features such as treed / shaded areas and an undulating landscape
- The park is well located and is 'walkable' from nearby residential areas via the footpath network
- The site is open and easily observed from adjoining streets and properties that front the reserve
- Car parking is available in the small car park and in Harker Street. This provides a number of options for car parking for people with limited mobility or in wheelchairs. Formalising of car parking can occur at a later time if required
- Basic toilet, water and seating facilities are already available at the park
- Infrastructure is already available at the reserve including a rotunda

The design and management of a dog park will respond to or address:

- Some residents concern about parkland being fenced for dog activities, and potential negative impact on the Reserve's amenity. Barriers, including fencing, separating dogs from other reserve users will take into account the amenity of the park and in particular its natural setting
- Current park usage for passive walking, dog off-leash activities, and occasional cross country running events will be maintained
- Maintenance practices and how service levels will respond to increased usage
- Land owner consent and required changes to State Government regulations

- Native Title Assessment required
- Park hierarchy and function needs to be determined
- Educating park users.



Image 1 Sunbury Park

11.2 Craigieburn Gardens

The following summarise the features that warrant Craigieburn Gardens as one of the preferred priority sites:

- Craigieburn has the second highest registered dog population in Hume with 13% of the city's dogs residing in Craigieburn
- The Craigieburn Gardens Master Plan (2012) recommends the development of a dedicated dog exercise park as a priority action in 2013/2014
- Installing a dog park at Craigieburn Gardens will increase the off-leash areas serving the growing Craigieburn community
- The proposal for a dog park at Craigieburn Gardens was met with overwhelming support during community consultation
- The park has the space available to accommodate existing activities and incorporate a medium size dog park including off-sets from other park activities and adjoining properties
- There are no significant environmental sensitivities associated with the site in terms of sensitive wildlife, vegetation or landform (e.g. waterways) environments
- The park is well located and is 'walkable' from nearby residential areas via the shared path network, including access along Aitken Creek
- Water, picnic and BBQ facilities are already available at the park
- Other activities are already available at the reserve including shelter and play equipment.

The design and management a dog park will respond to or address:

- Designating the dog exercise park as a dog off-leash area
- Educating park users.



Image 2 - Craigieburn Gardens - Site proposed for a dog park

11.3 Indicative costing

The following table provides an indicative cost breakdown only. The final cost will be determined by the size of the dog park, the elements and equipment that are to be included, the type of pathways and under surfacing, and works to shared parkland infrastructure such as car parking and toilets.

The next phase of the planning for the dog park and the budget available to the project will influence the actual cost of the facility. The next stage should involve interested residents and community groups.

Element	Cost estimates	Comments
Core Infrastructure Costs		
Fencing (1.2 metres high)	26,000	Based on external fencing 100x100 and internal fencing allowance, gates say total 450 lineal metres
Signage	7,000	Depending on artwork / finish required and extent of signage required e.g. for equipment use
Pathways allowance	8,000	Depending on extent of pathways and whether internal and external pathways required
Water fountains / connection allocation	6,000	Universal/disability access. Include dog water faucet/bowl
Landscaping/earthworks - general	25,000	e.g. mounding, basic drainage works, seeding, under surfacing

Element	Cost estimates	Comments
Vegetation/plantings/mulch	15,000	e.g. shade trees, screen planting, and sensory plantings for dogs
Sub total	87,000	
Ancillary Costs		
Social amenities	20,000	e.g. seating tables, shade structure/s
Rock scramble area	4,000	Landscaping, rocks
Agility / educational equipment	30,000	
Rubbish bins including dog litter bins and bag dispensers	2,000	This is in line with council responsible pet ownership policies/strategies
Toilets – minor upgrade	2,000	Universal/disability access. Include dog water faucet/bowl
Car parking	5,000	e.g. surfacing / minor forming works
Sub total	65,000	
TOTAL	\$152,000	

This table provides an indicative cost breakdown only. The final cost will be determined by the size of the dog park, the elements and equipment that are to be included, the type of pathways and under surfacing and works to shared parkland infrastructure such as car parking and toilets.

12. Next Steps

It is recommended that concept plans for a dog park at Sunbury Park and Craigieburn Gardens be developed. The plans will include design elements for a district level dog park and will provide the basis for further community consultation.

The planning of the Craigieburn Gardens dog park will commence in 2012/2013 as part of the Craigieburn Gardens Master Plan implementation. Planning will involve will include consultation on the draft concept plan, determination of park elements, size and layout of the dog park, and preparation of community education information.

A master plan for Sunbury Park will be prepared identifying opportunities to include a dog park. The master plan will include a dog park concept plan and will also detail management, maintenance requirements. The master plan and facility concept plans will guide the development of the dog park in 2013/14.

In addition, council will review the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2009 in late 2012. The review will incorporate the findings and recommendations from this feasibility study, including council's ongoing community education role in terms of responsible pet management. The Dogs in Public Places Policy (amended September 2003) will also be reviewed to consider the role of existing dog off leash areas and the need for additional dog off leash areas.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dog ownership in the City of Hume

Suburb	No. of dogs	% of total dog population	Population (2006 Census)	Number of dogs / 100 people
Attwood	432	2.48	2,914	15
Broadmeadows	774	4.44	9,801	8
Campbellfield / Somerton	265	1.52	5,404	5
Coolaroo	289	1.66	3,086	9
Craigieburn	2,313	13.27	21,018	11
Dallas	373	2.14	6,033	6
Fawkner *	9	0.05		
Gladstone Park	952	5.46	8,666	11
Greenvale	1,177	6.75	10,852	11
Jacana	220	1.26	1,958	11
Meadow Heights	863	4.95	14,545	6
Roxburgh Park	1,111	6.37	16,900	7
Sunbury	6,558	37.62	31,198	21
Tullamarine	625	3.59	6,323	10
Westmeadows	764	4.38	5,862	13
Airport Rural (*)	708	4.06	3,195	22
TOTAL	18,141	100	147,755	12
(*) Bulla, Clarkefield, Digger Rest, Kalkallo, Keilor, Melbourne Airport, Mickleham, Oaklands Junction, Wildwood, Yuroke				

Appendix 2 – Dog off-leash areas in the City of Hume

	Reserve	Sporting Reserve	Time Restrictions Apply	Melways Reference
	SUNBURY			
1	Emu Bottom Wetland (except for high conservation area - Horseshoe Bend)	No	No	362 F7
2	Eric Boardman Reserve	Yes	No	381 G5
3	Heyson Drive Reserve (between Heyson Dve & Wright Crt)	No	No	381 J2
4	Langama Park	Yes	No	381 K6
5	The Nook	No	No	382 G4
6	Spavin Drive Dam and Kismet Creek (part of - area immediately below the dam and designated dog swim area)	No	No	362 C11
7	Stewarts Lane Nature Reserve (part of - open clearing in the middle)	No	No	361 K12
8	Sunbury Park (not in equestrian area)	No	No	382 F6
9	Sunbury Recreation - Clarke Oval	Yes	No	382 C2
	BROADMEADOWS			
10	Anderson Reserve	Yes	No	6 H11
11	Barry Road Reserve / Broadmeadows Valley Park	Yes	No	6 G3
12	Broadmeadows Valley Park (between Johnstone and Dimboola St)	No	No	6 E7
13	Gibb Street Reserve	Yes	Yes	6 K4
14	Jacana Valley (part of) / Jacana Reserve	Yes	No	6 E8
15	Laura Douglas Reserve	Yes	No	7 C4
16	Seabrook Reserve	Yes	No	7 A8
17	Will Will Rook	No	No	7 B9
	WESTMEADOWS			
18	Westmeadows Reserve	Yes	No	6 A9
19	Willowbrook Reserve	Yes	No	5 J6
20	Jacana Reserve	Yes	Yes	6 D8
	MEADOW HEIGHTS			
21	Broadmeadows Valley Park – Shankland Reach	No	No	179 H10
	TULLAMARINE			
22	Trade Park Reserve	Yes	No	15 G1
23	Tullamarine Reserve - Melrose Drive	Yes	No	5 H10
24	Tullamarine Reserve – Spring Street	Yes	No	15 H12
	CRAIGIEBURN			
25	D.S. Aitken Reserve	Yes	No	386 H9
26	Hothlyn Drive Reserve	Yes	Yes	387 A12
27	Vic Foster Reserve	Yes	No	387 A7
28	Aitken Creek Reserve (part of – between Hothlyn Drive and the railway line)	No	No	387 B11
	GREENVALE			
29	Bradford Ave Reserve	Yes	Yes	178 K9
30	Drummond Street Reserve	Yes	Yes	6 A1
31	Greenvale Reserve - Section Rd (part of)	Yes	No	178 G7

	Reserve	Sporting Reserve	Time Restrictions Apply	Melways Reference
	BULLA			
32	Bulla Reserve	Yes	No	177 B6
	CAMPBELLFIELD			
33	Seth Raistrick Reserve	Yes	No	7 F6
	ROXBURGH PARK			
34	Lakeside Drive Ovals / Reserve	Yes	No	179 K6
	GLADSTONE PARK			
35	Ginnifer Reserve	Yes	No	6 C10
36	Carrick Drive Reserve	No	No	6 B8
37	John Coutts Reserve	No	No	6 C11
	COOLAROO			
38	Progress Reserve	Yes	Yes	6 K2

Appendix 3 – Preliminary discussions with dog groups

Sunbury and District Dog Obedience Club (2 representatives)

Notes from discussion

- Club operates from Boardman Reserve and shares the pavilion with the fishing club. The arrangements work well
- The club has 200 members with approximately attending classes / sessions on a regular basis
- Club offers obedience, agility, and trials training / classes
- About Sunbury Park:
 - A dog park would enable members to practice skills learned at classes during the week. Agility / educational equipment and open space areas would particularly benefit people learning obedience, trials and agility skills
 - Good that the dog park be as large as possible to enable a number of activity areas
 - Representative:
 - Asked if there would be the opportunity for the club to consider options for relocation to the site, possibly share the equestrian area
 - Indicated the club would be interested in opportunities to work with council to develop programs (e.g. responsible pet ownership initiatives) if the dog park proceeds on the site
 - The site seen as good because it is attractive, open, has toilets, has a good size space and is close enough for residents to walk to.
- About Broadmeadows Valley Park
 - Overall a site with good opportunities
 - Gets very windy
 - Dog club operates from the site which is a complimentary activity
 - Would be too far for Sunbury dog owners
- Not aware of the Craigieburn Gardens site

Broadmeadows Dog Obedience Club (club secretary)

Notes from discussion

- Club has approximately 150 members of whom 100 are active members
- Club runs trials and obedience training. Sessions run Sundays 9-10 am and 10.30-11.30 am and Wednesdays 4.30-8 pm
- Age of members ranges from 7 to 74 years with the core group being 30-50 years of age
- Would appreciate assistance with promotion of the club and activities and would like to be involved in more community events and festivals
- Concept of a dog park received very positively
- Comments re dog parks
 - Dogs are unpredictable so fencing of an area is beneficial, also good for older people with dogs
 - Should consider litter bag dispensers and rubbish bins, shade trees / shelter, water, seating
 - Children must be with a parent, do not restrict ages
 - Good to have different activity spaces means lots of things for dogs / owners to do

and becomes a real community gathering place

All Paws Forward K9 dog training (organisation representative)

Notes from discussion and written comments

- Concept received very positively and impressed with the planning that has so far gone into the planning of the proposed dog park
- Would like to see dog litterbag dispensers included. Feels this will enable errant dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs/leave a bag at home to be encouraged to do so
- Particular reference paid to the inclusion of different activity areas within the proposed dog park and the benefit this provides in terms of opportunities to work dogs in separate areas
- Emphasised that dog parks are important social hubs that must be people and family friendly with inclusions such as toilets, water and shade
- The organisation is keen to work with council to support positive dog ownership initiatives

Appendix 4 – Evaluation of 6 potential dog park sites

The first 3 highlighted sites are those that proceeded to secondary evaluation stage because of their high score on the primary evaluation criteria.

		Broadmeadows Valley Park	Sunbury Park	Craigieburn Gardens	Greenvale Rec Res	Jacksons Crk Reserve	Bolinda Road (former landfill)
	Primary Site Evaluation Criteria						
1	The space available on the site to accommodate a dog park without it unreasonably impacting on the space available for existing park activities and to enable a buffer between adjoining activities / properties	8	8	7	5	7	10
	- local level dog park	***	***	***			
	- district level dog park	***	***	***			
	- regional level dog park	***					
2	No environmental sensitivity associated with the site such as the close proximity of wildlife areas, landfill	10	10	10	7	3	5
3	The site is appealing and does not have amenity, perceptual or physical barriers.	6	9	4	4	6	0
	SUB TOTAL	24	27	21	16	16	15
	Secondary Criteria - Site considerations						
4	The site is not isolated from other parkland activities	7	10	8			
5	The site has existing and accessible infrastructure such as - car parking, toilets, picnic areas / shelters	7	9	4			
6	The site has good natural features including natural	6	7	4			

		Broadmeadows Valley Park	Sunbury Park	Craigieburn Gardens	Greenvale Rec Res	Jacksons Crk Reserve	Bolinda Road (former landfill)
	shade, attractiveness of the landscape						
7	Good linkages to the site such as trails and footpaths	6	8	4			
8	The readiness of the site to accommodate a dog park in the near future	7	8	0			
	SUB TOTAL	30	40	20			
	Secondary Criteria - Demographic considerations						
8	The number of people living near the park and who would potentially be able to walk to the site	6	8	9			
9	The number of dogs residing within walking distance of the site	6	8	6			
	SUB TOTAL	11	18	15			
	Other considerations						
11	Whether the site is already a popular dog off-leash / on-leas area (formal or informal). This indicates the site is already well used and well like for dog off-leash activities.	7	8	2			
12	Significant increase in the number of people who will live within walking distance / catchment of the site in the future	4	6	4			
	SUB TOTAL	7	12	2			
	TOTAL	75	99	65			