SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL DOG EXERCISE AREA REGIONAL PLAN & NETWORK BLUEPRINT

Consultation Summary Report on Draft Plan

TAP CONSULTING

PO BOX 1714
CAPALABA Q 4157
Email admin@thaoplanning.com.au
Web www.tapconsulting.com.au

Consultation Summary Report

TAP Consulting	
Date of Report:	05.11.2025
Document Owner:	Thao Ashford, Principal, TAP Consulting
Contact Details:	PO BOX 1714, Capalaba, Q 4157 | 0419840390| thao@thaoplanning.com.au

Prepared for Lat Studios on behalf of
Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1
1.0 Introduction 4
1.1 Background 4
1.2 Summary of Engagement Activities & Participation 5
1.3 Engagement Promotion 7
2.0 Focus Group Meetings 8
2.1 Purpose & Participation 8
2.2 Key Findings 9
3.0 Community Survey 14
3.1 Purpose 14
3.2 Participation 14
3.3 Key Findings 18
3.3.1 Visit to a dog exercise area on the Sunshine Coast 18
3.3.2 Accessibility and Inclusiveness of Existing Dog Exercise Areas Across the Region 19
3.3.3 Experience and Supporting Infrastructure 23
3.3.4 Agreement with the vision and objectives of the draft Plan 24
3.3.5 Dog Exercise Areas Values 34
3.3.6 Support for Proposed Amendments 40
3.3.7 Additional Comments 49
4.0 Submissions & Emails 52
4.1 Participation 52
4.2 Key Findings 52
5.0 Key Observations / Opportunities 57
6.0 Appendix A – Survey 67

List of Tables

Table 1. Engagement Activities 5
Table 2. Draft DEA Regional Plan and Network Blueprint Focus Group Sessions 8
Table 3. Summary of feedback on accessibility and inclusiveness by dog owner vs non-dog owner 20
Table 4. Experience and Supporting Infrastructure Ranking 23
Table 5. Feedback/comments in relation to vision and objectives 26
Table 6. Feedback/comments in relation to proposed amendments 42
Table 7. Additional feedback/comments 49
Table 8. Summary of email feedback sentiments by theme and sentiments 53
Table 9. Summary of email feedback key points by theme 53
Table 10. Environmental Opportunities 57
Table 11. Beaches and Foreshore Opportunities 58
Table 12. Sports Fields Opportunities 61
Table 13. Accessibility and Inclusion Opportunities 61
Table 14. Community and Well-being Opportunities 62
Table 15. Signage and Communication Opportunities 62
Table 16. Dog Parks Amenities and Features Opportunities 63
Table 17. Parking and Infrastructure Opportunities 65
Table 18. Regulation and Enforcement Opportunities 65

Table 19. Responsible Dog Ownership Opportunities 66

List of Figures

Figure 1. Coastal Suburb, Hinterland Suburb, Outside Local Government Area (LGA) 15
Figure 2. Gender 15
Figure 3. Age Group 16
Figure 4. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Origin 16
Figure 5. Own a Dog 17
Figure 6. Interest in the DEA Regional Plan & Network Blueprint 17
Figure 7. % of Respondents who have visited a Dog Exercise Area on the Sunshine Coast 18
Figure 8. Reasons why Respondents have not Visited a Dog Exercise Area on the Sunshine Coast 19
Figure 9. Assessment of Whether Respondents consider Existing DEAs are Accessible and Inclusive 20
Figure 10. Agreement with Vision and Objectives – All Response 24
Figure 11. Agreement with Vision and Objectives – Non-Dog Owners 25
Figure 12. Agreement with Vision and Objectives – Dog Owners 25
Figure 13. Parks and Gardens Values – All Responses 35
Figure 14. Parks and Gardens Values – Non-dog Owners 35
Figure 15. Parks and Gardens Values – Dog Owner 36
Figure 16. Environment Reserves Values – All Responses 37
Figure 17. Environment Reserves Values – Non-Dog Owners 37
Figure 18. Environment Reserves Values – Dog Owners 38
Figure 19. Beaches and Foreshores Values – All Responses 39
Figure 20. Beaches and Foreshores Values – Non-dog Owner 39
Figure 21. Beaches and Foreshores Values – Dog Owner 40
Figure 22. Support for Proposed Amendments to Dog Exercise Areas – All Responses 41
Figure 23. Support for Proposed Amendments to Dog Exercise Areas – Non-Dog Owner 42
Figure 24. Support for Proposed Amendments to Dog Exercise Areas – Dog Owner 42
Figure 25. Email Feedback Sentiments 52

Executive Summary

Sunshine Coast Council (Council) commenced community consultation on the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint (draft Plan) in early 2025. The consultation aimed to assess community values and gather insights and feedback to inform future planning and decision-making for dog exercise areas within the Sunshine Coast Council region.

Consultation on the draft Plan was conducted from 4 February 2025 to 7 March 2025. A broad engagement strategy was employed, including online surveys, website content, social media campaigns, targeted emails, face to face pop-up sessions and focus group sessions. The approach aimed to achieve diverse community representation and encourage meaningful participation.

Community consultation was promoted through a mix of digital, on-site, and direct engagement:

- Digital: Social media and the Have Your Say website reached over 50,000 impressions, with 26,000+ video views and 792 engagements. The Council eNewsletters drew 714 views.
- Direct Engagement: 18 pop-up sessions and 6,219 targeted emails to residents living within 500 metres of a current dog exercise area. There were also targeted emails to stakeholder groups.
- On-Site Promotion: 150 corflute signs with QR codes placed at key dog exercise areas.
- Media Coverage: Included radio (21), press (13), TV (2), online (8), and enquiries (6).

A total of 2,301 individuals completed the online survey, which featured targeted questions to capture community themes, aspirations, and values. It explored personal values (both through dog owners vs non dog owners), usage patterns, preferences for exercise areas, and provided opportunity to submit written feedback. Participants also shared suggestions for improvements, desired experiences, and infrastructure needs. Ranking tools were used to gauge levels of agreement or disagreement specific to the draft Plan, assess values associated with different dog exercise area types, and measure levels of support or non-support for proposed site-specific changes. Respondents could also provide open-ended feedback and anonymous demographic information.

Community Perspectives

The consultation revealed strong community interest in dog exercise areas, with majority of feedback coming from dog owners (78.4%) and residents of coastal communities (85.1%). While non-dog owners represented a smaller proportion of respondents (21.6%), their input provides a statistically valid representation of this community cohort.

A clear divide emerged between the two group profiles. Dog owners generally opposed increased restrictions and advocated for expanded off-leash areas, particularly along beaches and foreshores. This feedback reflected concerns about losing valued recreational spaces for exercising dogs and emphasised the importance of inclusive, accessible environments where dogs and their owners can enjoy outdoor activities.

In contrast, non-dog owners were more supportive of the draft Plan's overall vision and objectives. Concerns from this group included public safety, environmental protection, and the need for clearer regulation and enforcement in shared spaces. This group tended to favour tighter controls on dog access, especially in areas with high recreation use or ecological sensitivity. It is apparent that opinions varied significantly across specific questions, particularly between dog owners and non-dog owners. The consultation results highlight the challenge of balancing differing community needs. Moving forward, planning and policy decisions related to dog exercise areas will need to carefully consider both perspectives to ensure public spaces are welcoming, safe, and sustainable for all users.

Although there were divergent views, there was also some consistent agreement, for example, survey responses revealed overall support for the creation of new off-leash dog exercise areas, with 69.5% of participants either supporting or supporting with changes. Dog owners were notably more supportive of expansion compared to non-dog owners. In contrast, proposed restrictions and changes to beach and foreshore access received the least support, with 72.6% of dog owner respondents expressing opposition. The draft recommendations for sports fields (active playing surfaces) and environmental reserves (with high conservation values) received moderate support with 44.9% and 44.5%, respectively, of respondents either supporting or supporting with changes, while 29.3% opposed changes to sports fields active playing surfaces and 37% opposed changes to environment reserves. Up to 26% of respondents remained undecided across several areas, reflecting a diversity of views within the community and underscoring the importance of balancing the diverse community interests in future planning.

Emerging Themes

The consultation identified several recurring themes where feedback was most prominent:

- Social benefits
- Beach and foreshore provision
- Environmental protection
- Cultural heritage protection
- Monitoring
- Funding
- Education and training
- Decision making
- Responsibility / governance

Key Opportunities

The draft Plan outlines the strategic actions and goals for the next 20 years of dog exercise area planning. The community consultation has provided valuable insights that present several opportunities to refine and strengthen the draft Plan. These opportunities aim to better align the draft Plan with community values, address concerns, and support long-term strategic goals:

1. Enhance Beach and Foreshore Access Planning
    - Reassess proposed restrictions in high-use coastal areas such as Stumers Creek including considering options available to better manage risks of dog access on environmental, social, cultural and management values, with the aim to minimise reductions to dog access in high use areas.
    - Consider and assess seasonal or time-based access models to balance recreational use with environmental protection.
    - Consider pilot programs (with community) to test shared-use arrangements with monitoring.

2. Expand and Diversify Off-Leash Areas
    - Identify underutilised open spaces for potential conversion to off-leash areas.
    - Prioritise areas with demonstrated community demand and accessibility.
    - Recognise the extensive on-leash pathway network as existing exercise provision for dogs.
    - Consider private/public partnerships and promotion for dog exercise commercial opportunities outside of council managed land.

3. Communication and Transparency
    - Provide clear explanations of decision-making frameworks, including Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment and Pairwise weighting systems used to assess provision at different locations.
    - Publish multi-criteria risk assessment results to build trust and understanding.
    - Develop interactive maps and dashboards to show current and proposed dog exercise area locations and attributes.
    - Recognition of social benefits within proposed Objectives of the draft Plan.

4. Strengthen Education and Awareness Programs
    - Partner with local trainers, vets, and community groups to promote responsible dog ownership.
    - Continue and expand campaigns on dog etiquette, environmental stewardship, and cultural sensitivity.
    - Highlight the benefits of on-leash pathways and shared-use areas through signage and education.

5. Integrate Cultural Heritage Values
    - Collaborate with Kabi Kabi (KKPAC) and Jinibara (JPAC) to embed cultural knowledge and interpretation into culturally significant areas.
    - Include cultural education elements in signage and community programs.
    - Recognise and protect culturally significant sites within the network.

6. Funding and Governance
    - Provide transparent information on funding sources, including Council, developer contributions, and potential use of dog registration fees.
    - Explore community co-investment models for infrastructure upgrades.
    - Consider opportunities to enhance ongoing management and compliance enforcement.

7. Monitor and Evaluate Implementation
    - Establish a framework for ongoing monitoring of dog exercise area usage, compliance, and environmental impacts.
    - Use feedback loops to adapt and improve the network over time.

Several tables of data and graphs are presented within the report for analysis. The community consultation has resulted in ample feedback provided to Council and overall provided valuable insights to understand community values and consider any proposed changes to the draft Plan.

Next Steps

Community feedback will be used to refine the Draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint. The insights gathered highlight diverse views and priorities, which will inform adjustments to ensure the Plan reflects community values, balances interests, and supports long-term strategic goals.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

During the December 2023 Council Ordinary Meeting, Council adopted a Resolution that the "Chief Executive Officer plans to undertake, complete and report back to Council on a proposed region-wide dog exercise area plan and associated network blueprint".

The purpose of the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint is to develop a guide for the spatial distribution and types of dog exercise areas across the Sunshine Coast region for the next 20 years. The Plan focuses on the current and future provision of dog exercise areas on Council owned, or controlled open space including recreation parks, beaches and foreshores, environment reserves and sports fields.

Development of the draft Plan has been based on analysis of current registered dog data and dog-ownership trends, projected registered dog populations, industry research, benchmarking, legislation, intended open space purpose, function and values, and prior community consultation. This identifies:

- The Vision and Objectives for the draft Plan
- Previous community values associated with provision of dog access across Council managed open space
- The types of dog exercise areas (DEAs) and desired standards of service, including levels of embellishment
- Facilities requiring upgrades
- The estimated number and size of future dog exercise areas
- Actions for Council to implement the Plan.

The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint has been informed by recent engagement with community groups, businesses and key stakeholders through a series of community focus group sessions prior to broader community consultation.

Between 4 February 2025 and 7 March 2025, Council undertook consultation across the whole community to seek feedback on the draft Plan. The purpose of the community engagement was to seek communities' views and allow Council to hear feedback and consider any changes in preparation to finalise the Plan. This report summarises the community consultation undertaken and findings for the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint.

1.2 Summary of Engagement Activities & Participation

Consultation on the draft Plan was open from 4 February 2025 to 7 March 2025 and included the activities shown in the table below.

Table 1. Engagement Activities

Activity	Purpose	Participation
Have Your Say Website	• Inform the community of the project, its scope and timeframes. • Provide information on the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint maps. • Provide information on engagement opportunities and timeframes.	29,028 views 16,683 visits
Survey (online)	• Allow community to provide feedback on importance of key values, the contents and proposed recommendations and actions within the Plan. • Ascertain level of support for the draft Plan Vision and Objectives, location and design, site assessment criteria, and future network provision. • Invite feedback on any gaps, possible inclusions and or any aspects that could be strengthened.	2,301 responses
Targeted emails	• Inform interested stakeholders from previous related projects, community group registers, animal management groups, environmental and conservation groups, and sports clubs • Inform residents that live in close proximity to key dog exercise areas. • Provide information on the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint. • Provide information on engagement activities and timeframes. • Invite residents to pop-up sessions	6,219 residents living within 500m of a current Dog Off-Leash Area (DOLA) Additional emails sent to interested stakeholders and community focus group members
Direct Emails Received by Council	• Individual emails sent to Council with feedback.	216 direct emails
Submissions Received by Council	• Individual or community group representatives provided written submission to Council detailing feedback and requested changes.	6 written submissions

Activity	Purpose	Participation
Focus Groups Sessions	• Present information on the draft Plan. • Allow focus group participants to provide feedback on contents and proposed recommendations and actions. • Ascertain level of support for the draft Plan Vision and Objectives, location and design, site assessment criteria, future network provision. • Invite feedback on any gaps, possible inclusions and or any aspects that could be strengthened. • Membership of up to 50 community representatives.	9 focus groups sessions scheduled
Pop-up Sessions	• Provide information on the draft Plan at the following pop-up locations: o Muller Park, Bli Bli - 6 February 2025 o Quota Park, Nambour - 6 February 2025 o Maleny Library, Maleny - 7 February 2025 o Russell Family Park, Montville - 8 February 2025 o Viridian Circuit Park, Birtinya - 11 February 2025 o Grahame Stewart Park, Currimundi - 11 February 2025 o Village Green Boulevard Park, Palmview - 12 February 2025 o North Shore Road Park, Twin Waters - 18 February 2025 o Elizabeth Daniels Park, Buderim - 18 February 2025 o Stumers Creek Park, Coolum - 19 February 2025 o Cotton Tree Park (Maroochydore Rotary Park) - 19 February 2025 o Mill Park, Beerwah - 20 February 2025 o Maroochy Lions Park, Maroochydore - 21 February 2025 o Buderim Village Park, Buderim - 23 February 2025 o Moffat Beach Park, Moffat Beach - 24 February 2025 o Woorim Park, Golden Beach - 25 February 2025	18 pop-up sessions

Activity	Purpose	Participation
	○ Bulcock Street Precinct, Caloundra - 26 February 2025 ○ Ballinger Beach Park, Currimundi - 26 February 2025 • Invite community to ask questions and provide feedback on the draft Plan.	
Petitions	• 4 x Petitions to Council received and tabled at Ordinary Meetings: ○ 2 x Stumers Creek ○ Moffat Beach Headland ○ Ballinger Beach	

1.3 Engagement Promotion

The following communication methods were used to promote the community consultation for the draft Plan:

- Social media posts including Council's Have Your Say website.
  - 50,372 impressions, 26,231 video views, total engagements 792.
- 18 Pop-up sessions.
- Targeted emails to 6,219 surrounding residents within 500m of existing dog exercise areas.
- Emails to stakeholder groups (e.g. sports clubs, community networks, known dog businesses, environment groups).
- 150 corflute signs with QR codes were deployed at designated fenced DOLAs and beach and foreshore locations.
- Media coverage including, enquiries (6), radio (21), press (13), TV (2), Internet (8).
- 2 articles in Council's eNewsletters (total of 714 views).

2.0 Focus Group Meetings

2.1 Purpose & Participation

The purpose of the focus group meetings was to test the findings and actions identified in the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint. Specifically, the focus groups aimed to capture feedback on the following:

- The Vision and Objectives
- DEA Site Assessment Criteria
- Key strategic recommendations for the future Network Blueprint
- Identify opportunities to improve the draft Plan following community engagement feedback

In late 2024, prior to commencement of the community survey, four focus group sessions were held to help inform development of the draft Plan, across the following interest groups:

- Natural Environment
- Dog-related Businesses and Community Organisations, Access and Inclusion
- First Nations (1x Kabi Kabi group, 1x Jinibara group).

In 2025, during and after the survey consultation period, a further five focus group sessions were held. This helped to present draft findings and test the results with key stakeholders.

This report summarises information from focus group meetings conducted in 2025.

Table 2 presents the timetable of all focus group sessions during development of the Plan.

Table 2. Draft DEA Regional Plan and Network Blueprint Focus Group Sessions

Focus Group		Method	Date	Time	Venue
1	Natural Environment	In Person	9 September 2024	9.00am - 11.00am	Venue 114
2	Dog-related Businesses and Community Organisations, Access and Inclusion	In Person	9 September 2024	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Venue 114
3	Kabi Kabi Group (KKPAC)	In Person/Teams	1 October 2024	1.00pm - 3.00pm	City Hall Maroochydore/ Teams
4	Jinibara Group (JPAC)	In Person/Teams	16 October 2024	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Woodford
5	Natural Environment	In Person	13 February 2025	9.00am - 11.00am	Venue 114
6	Dog-related Businesses and Community	In Person	13 February 2025	1.00pm - 3.00pm	Venue 114

Focus Group		Method	Date	Time	Venue
	Organisations, Access and Inclusion				
7	Jinibara Group (JPAC)	In Person	1 April 2025	10.30am - 12.00pm	The Gantry D'Aguilar National Park
8	Kabi Kabi Group (KKPAC)	In Person/Teams	8 May 2025	11.00am - 3.00pm	City Hall Maroochydore/ Teams
9	Community Engagement Summary Focus Group Session	In Person	17 July 2025	9.00am - 12.00pm	Venue 114

2.2 Key Findings

The following provides some example feedback and a summary of feedback on the draft Plan captured through Mentimeter a feedback collection tool, used at the Focus Group Sessions held on 13 February 2025:

- *"A full respectful discussion looking to bring community together to ensure the best opportunity for dog owners and protect the environment. The staff have done a thorough study".*
- *"Education of the plan and the ability to promote the benefits overall to the community whether they be dog owners or not".*
- *"Really good discussion on the strategies for improving owner knowledge and skills. Supportive of access to training even if registration fees have to increase. Offer of training voucher with Registration".*
- *"There is a great Plan in progress, and I feel the council are proactive in trying to implement a future plan for all concerned".*
- *"I respect and appreciate the huge amount of listening and work gone into one small, but vitally important and very complex part of the region's open spaces planning. Dogs and owners will be forever grateful".*

The following captures feedback and suggested improvements to refine the final Plan.

Monitoring and Funding

- Monitoring and reporting on the process and transparency is needed.
- Questions in relation to how the Plan will be funded (e.g. developers, community), the cost implications and whether Council will commit funding to support dog parks/exercise areas.
- Suggestion that registration fees are increased which could potentially contribute to services, facilities, education and training.

Further explanation needed for Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment (MCRA)

- Workshop participants requested a more detailed explanation of how the assessment criteria tool was created and the weightings given to the different components.

- Suggestions to present the weightings in a table of its own with explanation.
- Description of how the assessment tool is applied and who has final decision-making authority.
- The Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment and Pairwise Assessment was supported and acknowledged as a good framework to assess values and understand impacts/risks on values and management for sensitive locations.

Education and compliance

- Opportunity for Council to collaborate more with key stakeholders including community and dog training businesses in educating community in responsible dog ownership.
- Suggestion that a permanent ranger is needed to ensure compliance with dog regulations.
- View that increased fines are not suitably explained to community when being issued.
- Improved signage and compliance/enforcement need to be established to preserve Environment Reserves.
- Key focus on education and training:
    - Educational evenings, webinars with professionals i.e. dog trainers.
    - Adopt a dog training program, similar to those already delivered by existing providers, which has a set of standards for clients to pass.
    - Educational brochures that can be distributed by vets, pet shops, etc.
    - Council to consider providing discounts on dog registrations where owners have undertaken accredited dog training with a certified trainer.
    - Provide links to dog trainers and discounts when registering a dog.
    - Target a younger audience to educate them on responsible dog ownership e.g. get Robert Irwin on the video to help promote the importance of protecting wildlife from dogs.
    - Expand creative education campaign.
    - Look at programs such as *Chat Before You Pat* and *Leave It*.
    - Visual signage, social media posts and maps.
- Consider using Jinibara and Kabi Kabi Rangers on ground to assist with compliance and education, but need the right information so message is consistent with Council.
- Suggestion for information to be made public around how compliance data has informed risk assessments.
- Suggestion for further data collection to inform future recommendations.

Dog Parks and Beaches

- Suggestion that the more restricted the area the more noise, unacceptable behaviour etc. for example dogs on beaches are better behaved than dogs interacting in confined dog parks due to their natural instincts.
- Some individuals were of the view that the current access to dog off-leash beaches should remain unchanged.
- Views that beaches offer a different experience, often positive and more active which is important.
- There is a view that beaches are safer than creeks/reserves (due to snakes etc.).

- Rather than banning dogs in areas, restricting dogs from being in the dunes currently works well.
- Need a balance between off-leash park space for obedience training and off-leash beach areas.
- Suggestion if there may be a possibility for timed bookings or allocations in popular dog parks to reduce conflict.
- Challenge around managing conflicts in dog parks (requires behaviour training).
- View from some that the proposed size of local DOLAs may only be suitable for small dogs.
- Council's ability to secure open space is a large consideration.
- Cotton Tree requires greater opportunities for dog access.
- Suggestion for information to be made public around how environmental and cultural risk assessments were informed.

Environment Reserves

- Support for protecting environmental values.
- Currently Council only prohibits dogs in 8 environmental reserves, recognition that there is a need to place prohibition in more reserves which the Plan aims to achieve.
- Bunya dieback is a major issue on Jinibara country (spreading of Phytophthora disease that are killing the bunya trees) – 'how can we reduce risks of dogs and people transporting disease in sensitive areas/conservation areas?'.
- Need cleaning stations for both humans and dogs where they access environment reserves e.g., use of corralling and fencing methods, need to work with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) as well, this is a priority for JPAC.
- Increased education on impacts to environmental and cultural values of dog and human access e.g. importance of the Bunya trees as food source etc.
- Believe that prohibited areas for dogs may assist with managing Phytophthora disease and is supported by JPAC.
- Need to protect vulnerable species such as the water mouse, nesting turtles, and shorebirds.
- Suggestion for a similar program like Land Care Groups e.g. would Council support community working groups to help maintain DEAs in bushland reserves, if so, can that increase the allowable areas for dogs?
- Suggestion for information to be made public around how environmental risk assessments were informed.

Alternative Sites and Standards

- Recognise on-leash pathway network as existing exercise provision and consider education opportunities to highlight on-leash benefits.
- Opportunity for DOLAs in underutilised spaces e.g. Caloundra airport mown areas, other mown areas, powerline easements.
- Consideration for more locations but with a lower standard for DOLAs e.g. could there be an additional category of dog parks with minimal embellishments that is low cost providing more access?

- Careful consideration for the location of new DEAs and dog sensitivity. e.g. distance from busy roads and high noise areas to reduce reactive behaviour requiring management and interaction by Council officers.

Responsibility/Governance

- Suggestion to include a column in the draft Plan to indicate who is responsible for the delivery of the actions.
- Need actions around who is looking for the future acquisitions of land.
- Sunshine Coast Council relationship with Queensland Parks and Wildlife particularly environmental matters - this needs to be clear, so people know who to speak to about certain matters.

Dog Numbers

- Consideration of limiting the number of dogs on private property – current local laws is for 2 dogs – more than 2 dogs require a permit. Breeders and rescuers may have more with special permit.
- Council noted that State and local mandates regulate the number of dogs allowed and there is no intention from Council to limit dog numbers from what is in place now.

Cultural Heritage Values

- In addition to cultural feedback received from JPAC against Environment Reserves, also consider opportunity to be part of a forum with sections of community and Council to facilitate, engage and talk about what is important to KKPAC people in a controlled and managed discussion.
- Understand what KKPAC do on daily basis – protect country and heritage, this can be an education piece about KKPAC interests and values.
- Cultural heritage needs to be a continuation of environmental laws.
- Powerful story line for KKPAC, women's healing place, silence about listening to what is around, listening to ancestors, being in areas of high cultural significance.
- Cultural values are special, and it is important to ensure best possible outcome by mitigating impacts that have occurred, working together to ensure rich legacy for everyone.
- Suggestion for information to be made public around how cultural heritage risk assessments were informed.

Key Locations – Cultural Values

- Stumers Creek – Acknowledgement and concerns raised by KKPAC on how Stumers Creek location has been impacted by dogs and that it holds high significance as a cultural site for KKPAC.
- Muller Park dog park – Acknowledgement by KKPAC of the cultural significance of the site and not appropriate to have dog park near cultural site, this resulted in the dog park being moved 30 meters. This is a good example of protecting cultural heritage.
- All rocky headlands on the Sunshine Coast are important to Kabi Kabi dreamtime story. KKPAC have provided feedback that recommended prohibition of dogs on Rocky Headlands to protect tangible and intangible cultural values.

- Mouths of rivers/creeks have high cultural significance to Kabi Kabi KKPAC and there was significant concern about the impacts of dogs to cultural and environmental values in these areas. Stumers Creek, Maroochy River North Shore, Mooloolah River/Pt Cartwright and Currimundi Creek were identified as specific concerns to KKPAC.

3.0 Community Survey

3.1 Purpose

The specific aims of the survey were to:

- Provide information on the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint.
- Allow community to provide feedback on the content, proposed recommendations and actions.
- Ascertain the level of support for the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint Vision, Objectives, infrastructure design, site assessment criteria and future network provision.
    - Specifically, the level of agreement with the proposed amendments to sports fields, amendments to environment reserves, amendments to beaches and foreshores and the proposed 19 additional dog exercise areas.
- Invite feedback on any gaps, possible inclusions and any aspects that could be strengthened.

The survey questions are provided in Appendix A - Survey.

3.2 Participation

A total of 2,456 survey responses were received, however of this number, 155 responses were deemed duplicates[1] and have been removed from the data results (2,301 survey responses were deemed valid). The following is observed in relation to survey respondents:

- A large proportion of respondents (85%) reside in coastal suburbs.
- Over half of survey responses were from women (60.7%).
- Around 27.9% of survey respondents were aged between 35 and 49 years.
- Around 3.1% of survey respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin.
- The majority of respondents (97.5%) live on the Sunshine Coast.
- A large proportion of respondents (78.4%) owned a dog.
- 21.6% of respondents did not own a dog.
- Of those that responded to the survey, 57.3% indicated that they are users of parks and beaches, 19.2% indicated that they are environmentalist/conservationist and 17.7% indicated that they are a parent/carer of young children.

1 Responses were deemed duplicate where there was identical replicate survey responses, submitted within minutes of each other from identical IP addresses.

Figure 1. Coastal Suburb, Hinterland Suburb, Outside Local Government Area (LGA)

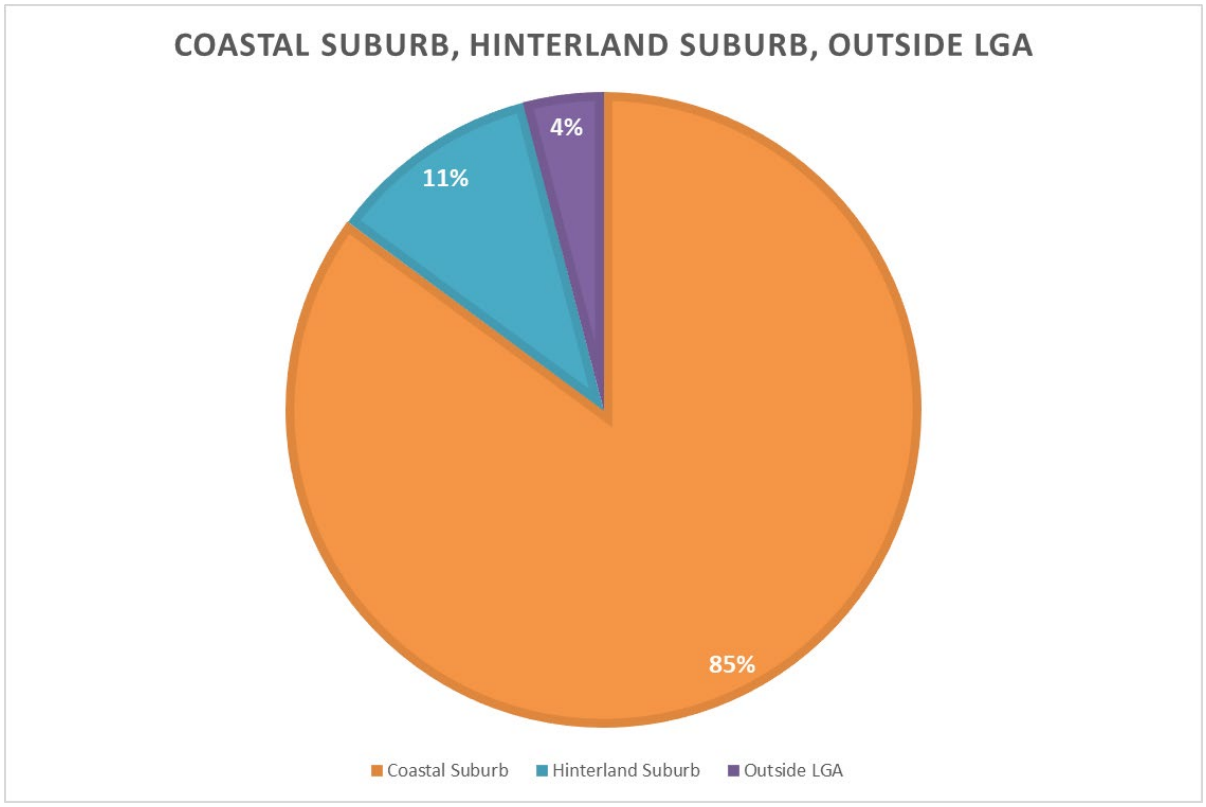


Figure 2. Gender

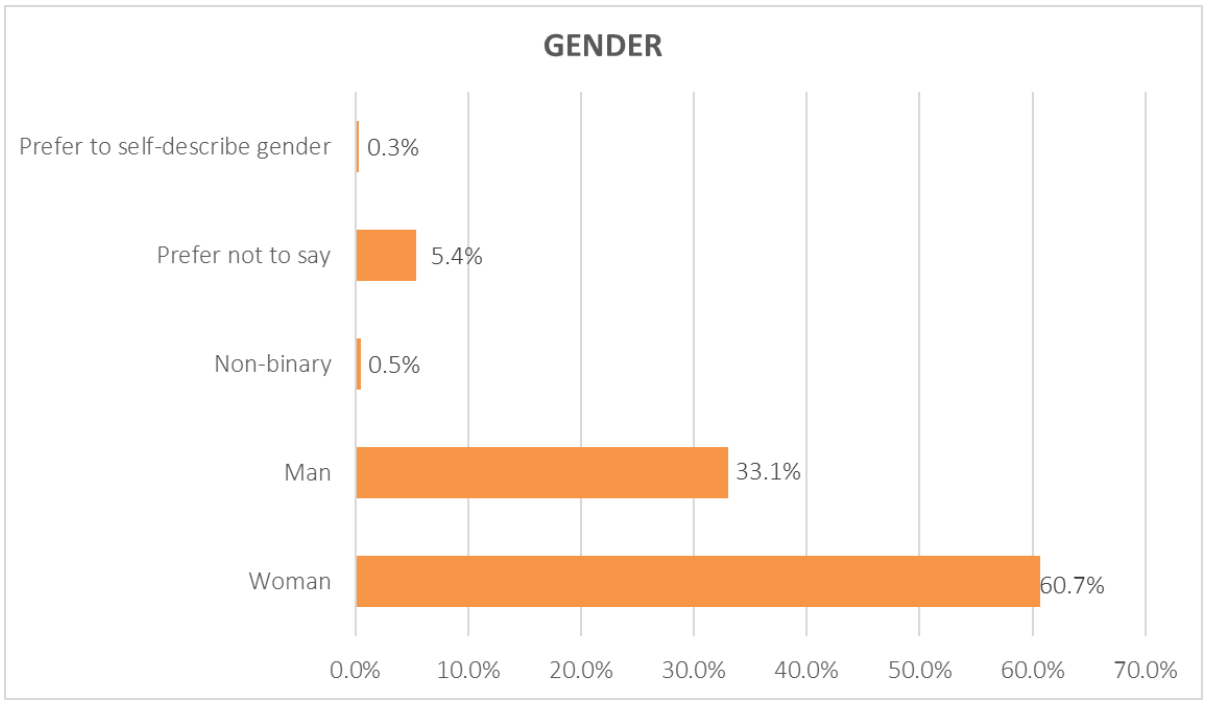


Figure 3. Age Group

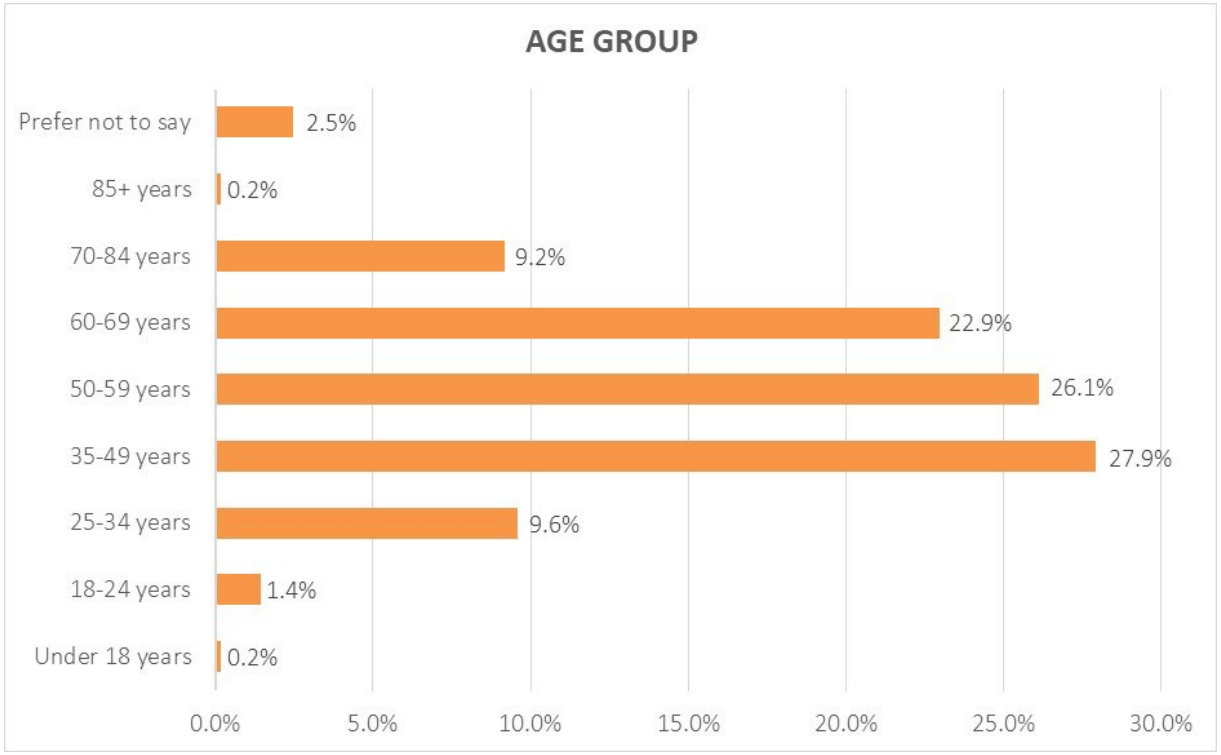


Figure 4. Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Origin

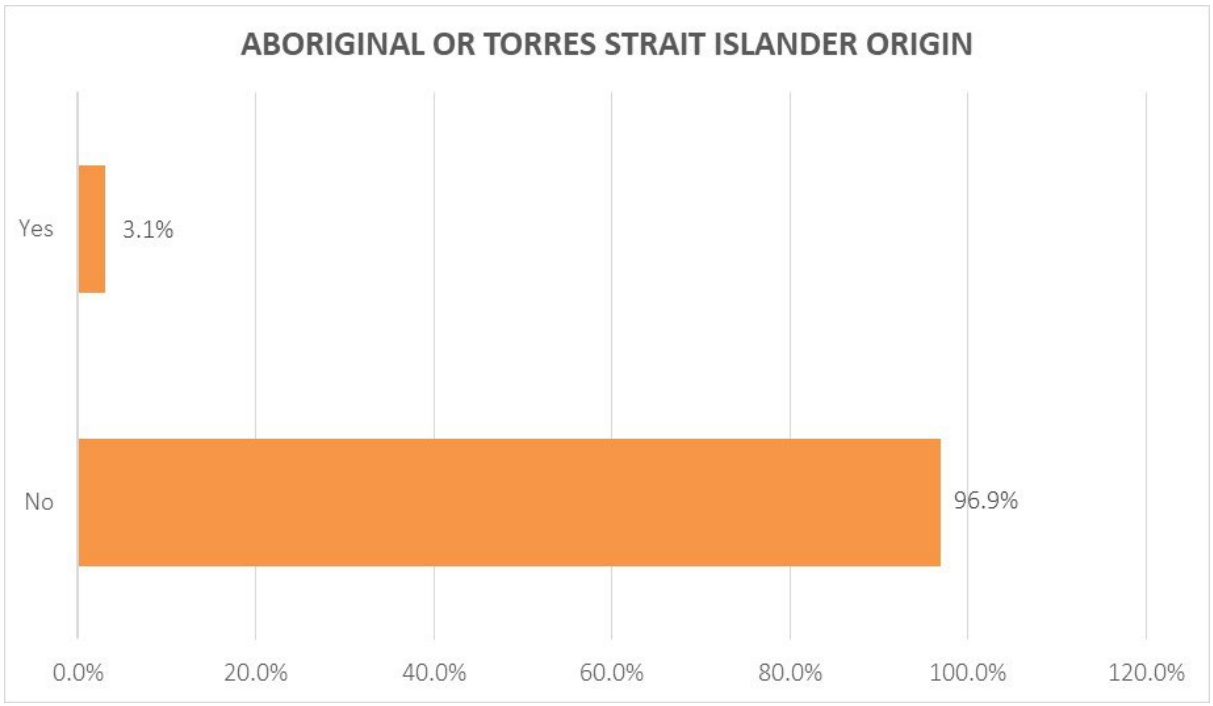


Figure 5. Own a Dog

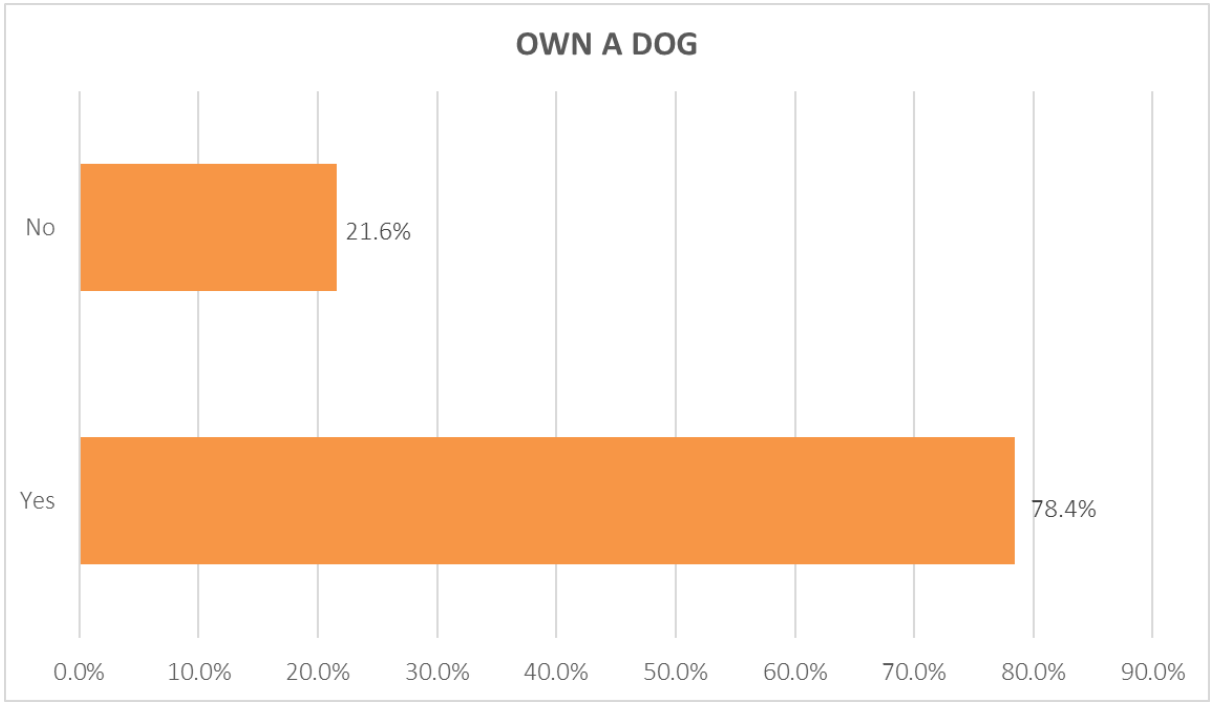
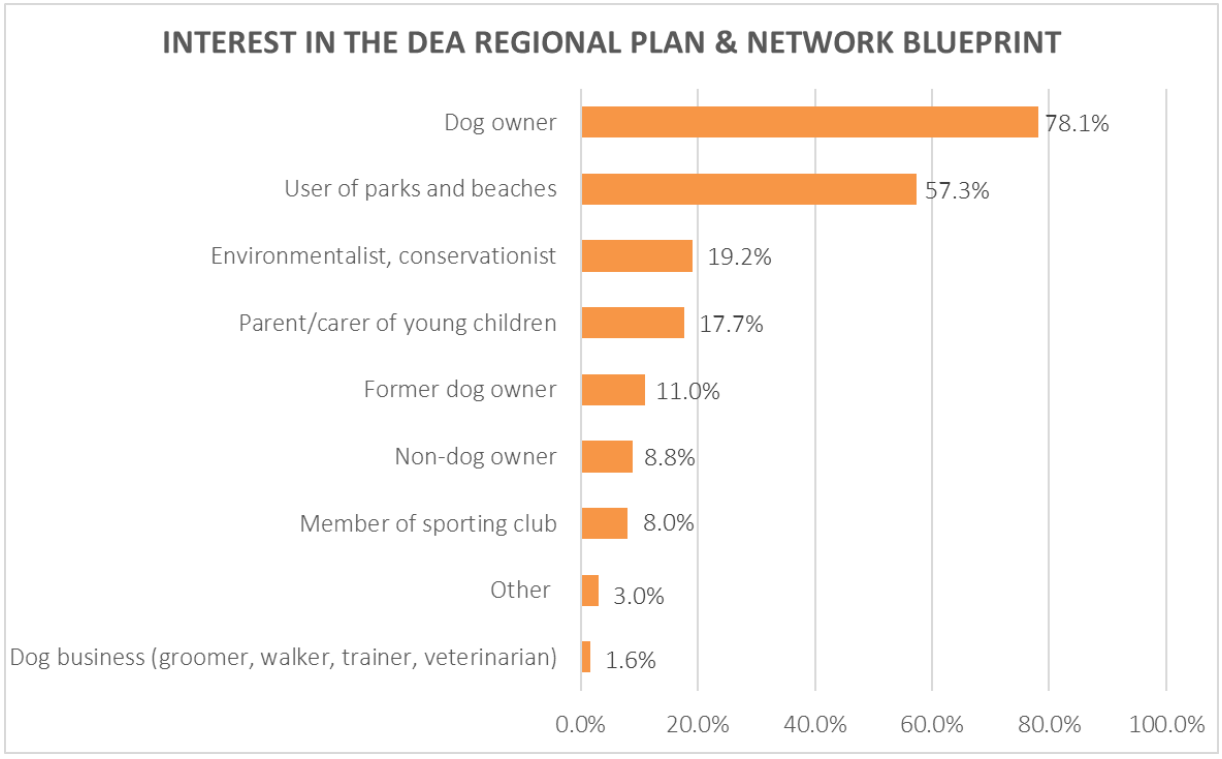


Figure 6. Interest in the DEA Regional Plan & Network Blueprint



Note: More than one response allowed.

3.3 Key Findings

The following survey results are categorised by responses from dog owners and non-dog owners. Although non-dog owners comprised 21.6% of total respondents, this proportion is considered a statistically valid representation of this group.

Community feedback regarding dog access has revealed a significant divide between key demographic groups, both of which are well-represented within the community. With approximately 40% of households owning a dog, this issue continues to generate strong and often opposing views. To ensure the draft Plan reflects a balanced and inclusive approach to dog provision across council-managed open spaces and aligns with the vision and objectives, it's important to consider the perspectives of both dog owners and non-dog owners. This helps to promote shared use and enjoyment of public spaces.

3.3.1 Visit to a dog exercise area on the Sunshine Coast

Survey respondents were asked ***"Have you visited a dog exercise area on the Sunshine Coast?"*** and of those that responded (n=2,278), 91.6% indicated 'yes' and 8.4% indicated 'no'. Of those that indicated 'no', a large proportion (51.1%) did not visit a dog exercise area because they 'do not think dog exercise areas are safe'. A large number of respondents (40.6%) indicated 'other' with the top mentions including 'do not have a dog' and 'dog exercise areas are too small'.

Figure 7. % of Respondents who have visited a Dog Exercise Area on the Sunshine Coast

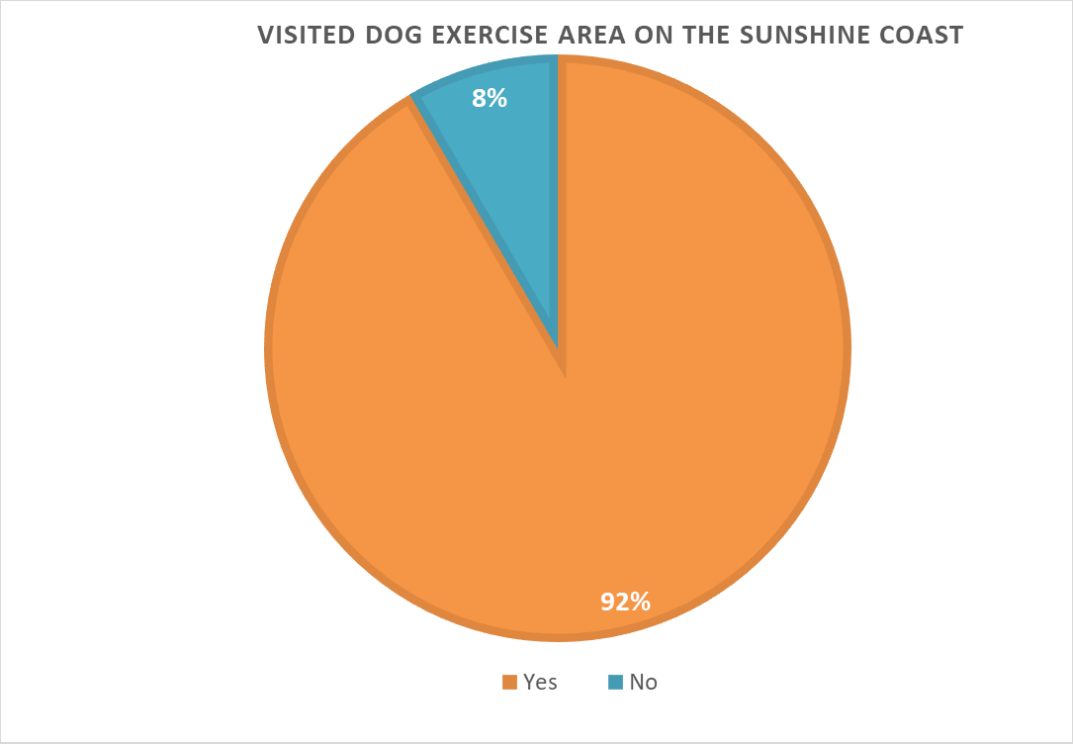
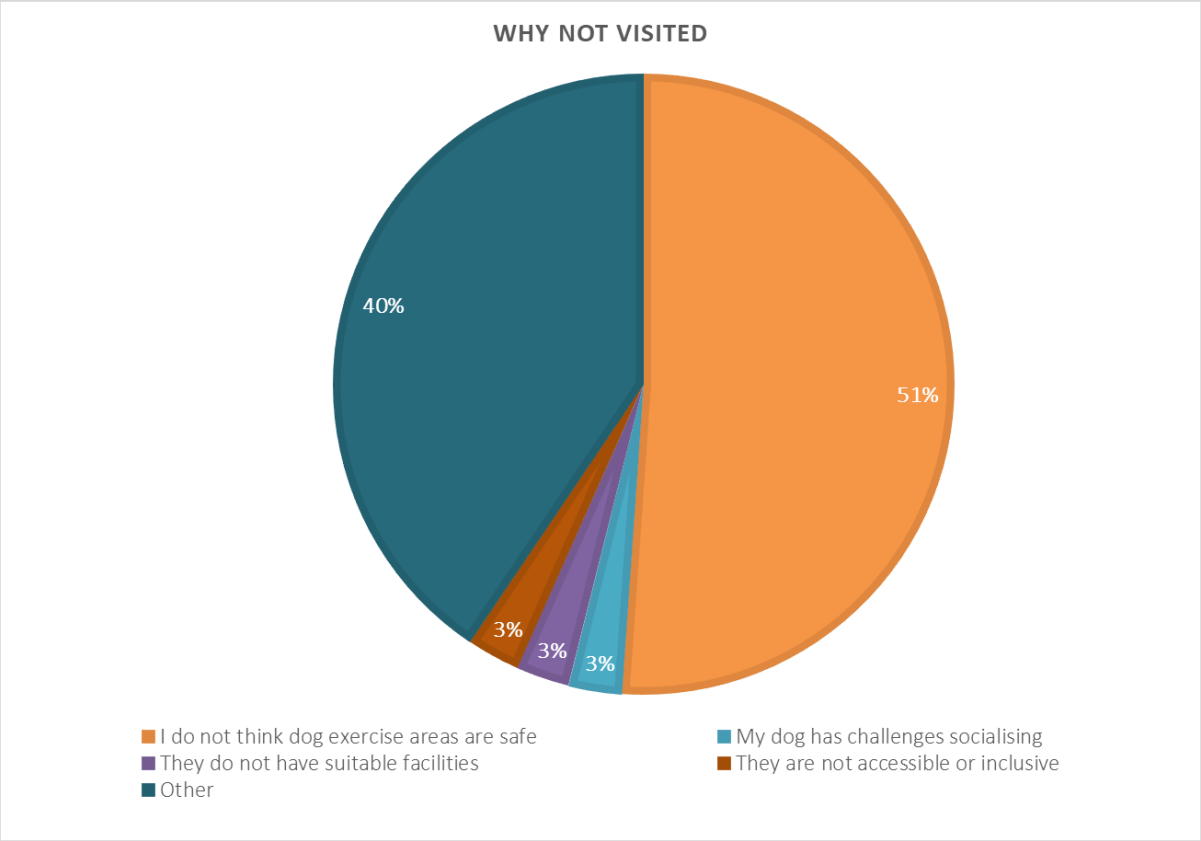


Figure 8. Reasons why Respondents have not Visited a Dog Exercise Area on the Sunshine Coast



3.3.2 Accessibility and Inclusiveness of Existing Dog Exercise Areas Across the Region

Survey respondents were asked ***"Do you find existing areas across the region to be easily accessible and inclusive?"*** and of those that responded (n=2,046), 69.4% indicated 'yes' and 30.6% indicated 'no' (refer to Figure 9). Respondents were also invited to provide detailed feedback on how accessibility and inclusivity could be improved at dog exercise areas. The feedback is summarised in Table 3 below for dog owners and non-dog owners. The following is noted:

Overall Feedback

- Dog Owners appreciated the variety of exercise areas, social and physical and mental health benefits, and features such as ramps, pathways, water stations, seating, shade, fencing, and calm swimming zones. Tourism and local business support were also noted.
- Non-Dog Owners echoed similar sentiments, valuing the abundance of designated areas, responsible ownership, and safe off-leash beaches like Stumers and North Shore.
- Dog Owners raised concerns about limited and inaccessible off-leash areas, loss of beach access, and inadequacies in fenced parks (e.g. size, amenities, maintenance).

- Non-Dog Owners cited irresponsible ownership, safety concerns for vulnerable users, environmental impacts, and poor upkeep of fenced parks.

Figure 9. Assessment of Whether Respondents consider Existing DEAs are Accessible and Inclusive

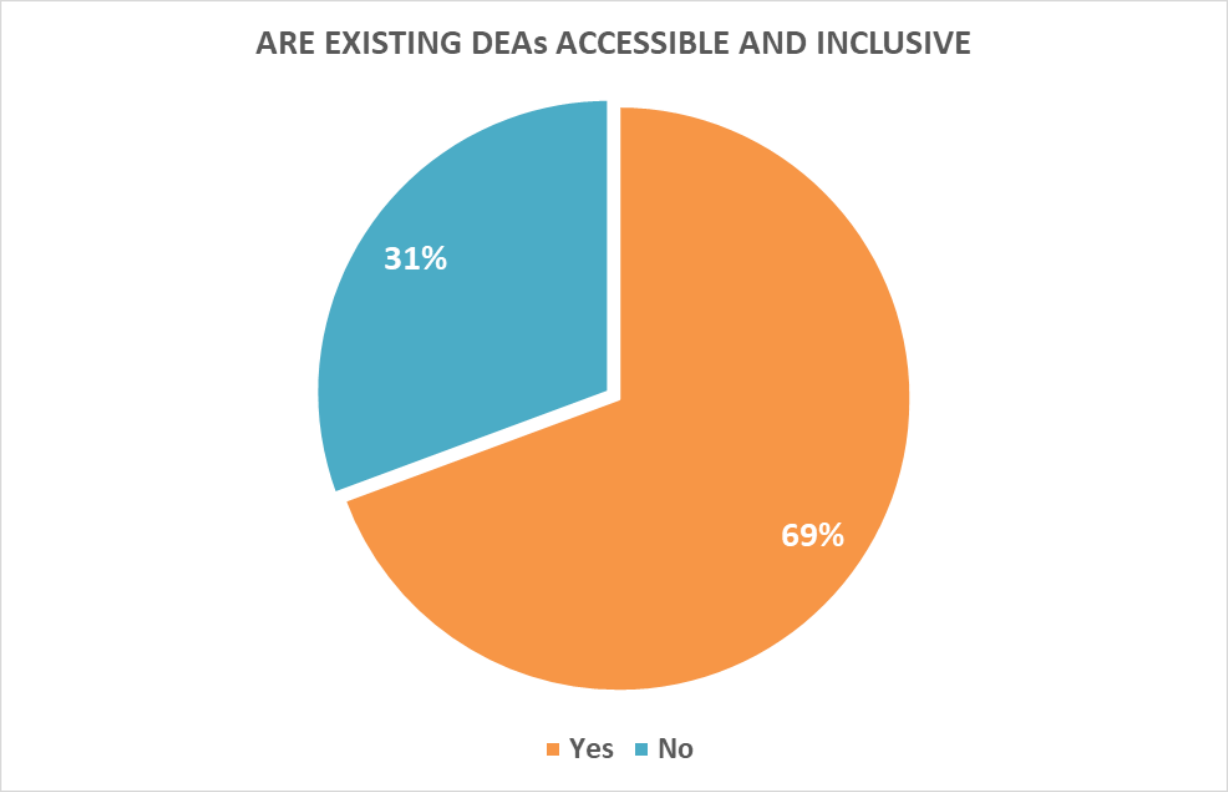


Table 3. Summary of feedback on accessibility and inclusiveness by dog owner vs non-dog owner

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Dog Owners	• **Accessibility & Inclusivity** – Frequent praise for accessible entrances, ramps, benches, and pathways making areas inclusive for individuals with mobility challenges, elderly, families with young children, and people with disabilities. • **Abundance of Off-Leash Areas** – There is widespread appreciation for the variety of off-leash (and on-leash) dog exercise areas across beaches, parks, and riverbanks, offering freedom for dogs to run and explore. • **Social & Community Hub** – Dog exercise areas serve as important community spaces where owners and their pets meet, socialise, make new friends, and foster a welcoming, friendly atmosphere. • **Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing** – Participants emphasise the therapeutic and emotional benefits of dog exercise areas, noting improvements in anxiety, depression, loneliness, and overall mood. • **Physical Health & Exercise** – Feedback highlights the value of dog exercise areas in promoting physical activity and fitness for both dogs and their owners through running, walking, and play.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Facilities & Amenities** – Key amenities such as car parking, water stations, seating, shade, and sanitary facilities are frequently mentioned as important contributors to a comfortable and functional environment. • **Safety & Security** Users appreciate safety features like fencing, double-gated access, and calm swimming areas that provide a secure environment for dogs, children, and those with mobility aids. • **Environmental & Natural Features** – The natural settings—such as calm creeks, protected shallows, creek mouths, and lakes—are valued for offering varied terrain and gentle conditions ideal for dogs and families. • **Economic & Tourism Impact** Dog-friendly spaces drive visitation and support local businesses, drawing both residents and tourists who contribute to the regional economy. • **High Satisfaction & Positive Sentiment** – A strong sense of contentment prevails, with many commenters expressing that the current arrangements are ideal, require no changes, and are loved by the community. • **Suggestions for Further Enhancements** – While largely satisfied, users offer specific ideas for improvements—ranging from better pathways and signage to enhanced seating, lighting, and sensory considerations. • **Clear Zoning & Signage** – The clarity and placement of on-leash/off-leash boundaries and signage are highlighted as effective in guiding user behaviour and maintaining a harmonious environment. • **Limited Off-Leash Areas** – Feedback suggested there are insufficient designated off-leash areas on beaches and in parks, forcing dog owners to travel long distances to exercise their pets and causing overcrowding in the few available spots. • **Accessibility Challenges for Elderly and Disabled** – Many off-leash and beach access points are difficult or impossible to reach for elderly, injured, or mobility-impaired users, due to soft sand, steep dunes, creek crossings, and lack of nearby parking or paths. • **Small, Overcrowded Dog Parks** – Most fenced dog parks and exercise areas are too small to safely accommodate the number of dogs, leading to overcrowding, territorial behaviour, and degraded ground conditions. • **Lack of Maintenance and Amenities** – Designated dog areas often lack basic facilities and upkeep—there is little shade, seating, water, waste disposal, proper fencing, or regular cleaning—making them uncomfortable and unhygienic. • **Safety and Dog Behaviour Issues** – Enclosed or overcrowded areas increase risks of dog fights, attacks, and anxiety, while uncontrolled dogs in mixed-use spaces create hazards for other dogs, children, and vulnerable users. • **Restrictive Policies and Enforcement** – Local regulations and their enforcement are viewed as overly punitive and inconsistent, fostering fear of fines and a perception that the Council is unfriendly or discriminatory toward dog owners. • **Confusing Signage and Boundaries** – Inadequate, unclear, or poorly placed signs lead to confusion about where dogs are allowed, resulting in unintentional infringements and frustration among users. • **Reduction in Beach Access Over Time** – Respondents note a continual loss or time-restricted access to dog-friendly beach stretches, undermining long-standing community spaces where dogs could roam freely. • **Limited Enrichment and Variety** – Many designated exercise areas lack engaging features such as walking trails, varied terrain, or water access, making them unstimulating and boring for both dogs and owners. • **Parking and Transportation Challenges** – Poorly located dog exercise areas, limited parking, overcrowded car parks, and lack of public transport force many users to drive long distances or abandon visits.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Non-dog Owners	• **Physical Accessibility & Inclusivity** - Facilities are largely barrier-free, offering flat terrain, accessible gates, and features that enable wheelchair users, seniors, and others with mobility or communication challenges to fully participate. • **Off-Leash Beach Areas** - Designated off-leash beaches—particularly Stumers and North Shore—provide safe, expansive zones for dogs and owners, supporting both on-lead transition areas and off-lead play. • **Open & Spacious Environment** - Wide, natural areas with ample room reduce overcrowding and territorial behaviour, allowing dogs to run, play, and exercise freely. • **Positive Dog-Friendly Atmosphere** - A joyful, welcoming vibe arises from well-behaved dogs, engaged owners, and the sheer delight of onlookers, fostering a strong sense of community. • **Perceived Adequacy of Existing Facilities** - Many users feel current dog exercise areas are already inclusive, accessible, and well-functioning, with no additional improvements necessary. • **Abundance & Variety of Dog Exercise Areas** - The region offers a broad selection of dog exercise areas—more than neighbouring councils—ensuring ample options for different preferences. • **Multi-Terrain & Water Access** - Beyond beaches, dogs and owners enjoy creeks, rivers, and joint-friendly swimming spots, offering diverse environments and year-round safe use. • **Responsible Dog Ownership & Compliance** - Owners generally follow rules—keeping dogs on-leads where required, maintaining control, and picking up waste—ensuring a safe, clean environment. • **Community & Socialisation** - Dog exercise areas serve as social hubs where people and pets connect, share experiences, and build community bonds. • **Lack of Dog Control and Owner Responsibility** - Frequent complaints about dog owners' failure to maintain effective control of their pets, leading to unsafe and uncomfortable situations for other users of shared spaces. • **Dog Waste and Hygiene Issues** - Recurring frustration over unsanitary conditions caused by dog waste and urine in public areas, including improper cleanup by owners and resulting health hazards. • **Safety Concerns for Vulnerable Users** - Frequent reports of unsafe interactions where dogs chase, bite, knock over, or otherwise threaten children, the elderly, and people with reduced mobility. • **Accessibility and Inclusivity Challenges** - Common feedback highlights that off-leash and on-leash areas are often inaccessible to the elderly, people with disabilities, families with young children, and non-dog owners, due to distance, lack of infrastructure, and inadequate consideration for diverse needs. • **Weak Enforcement of Leash Regulations** - Persistent concerns about lack of visible enforcement of leash rules, leading to widespread non-compliance and frustration among both dog owners and other users. • **Environmental and Conservation Impacts** - Frequent worries about dogs disturbing native flora and fauna, polluting waterways, and degrading environmentally sensitive areas. • **Overcrowding and Overuse of Shared Spaces** - Repeated feedback that popular off-leash areas are overwhelmed by too many dogs and vehicles, leading to chaotic, congested environments. • **Unwelcoming Behaviour and Owner Aggression** - Many non-dog users report feeling intimidated by dog owners' rude, aggressive, or dismissive responses when concerns are raised, creating a hostile atmosphere. • **Inadequate Infrastructure and Facilities** - Frequent mentions that dog exercise areas lack essential infrastructure such as fences, shade, size, seating, parking, and maintenance, limiting usability and comfort. • **Policy and Planning Concerns** - Recurring feedback on perceived inequities and negative impacts arising from proposed or existing dog area zoning, boundary changes, and resource allocation decisions.

3.3.3 Experience and Supporting Infrastructure

Survey respondents were asked ***"When visiting a dog exercise area, what type of experience and supporting infrastructure are you seeking?"*** (n=1,913), respondents were asked to select their top 5. Table 4 provides a summary of the responses in order of priority, and the following is noted:

- Of the top 5 priorities of respondents, 'Safe social interaction for dog', 'dog bag dispenser', 'drinking water', and 'safe interaction for humans' were selected most often.
- The number of responses prioritising unfenced and fenced areas was very similar, ranking 9th and 10th respectively.
- 'Lighting' received the lowest number of responses.

Table 4. Experience and Supporting Infrastructure Ranking

Priorities	1	2	3	4	5	Count of responses
Safe interaction for dog	60.3%	21.0%	7.4%	5.7%	5.6%	1,293
Dog bag dispenser	14.7%	21.0%	29.8%	18.4%	16.1%	1,130
Drinking water	4.2%	21.5%	28.4%	27.6%	18.3%	918
Safe interaction for humans	32.1%	41.5%	9.3%	8.8%	8.4%	873
Parking	6.0%	13.1%	22.6%	28.1%	30.1%	810
Dog water play	24.9%	17.5%	17.8%	16.9%	22.9%	668
Shade	13.9%	21.7%	24.0%	19.5%	21.0%	642
Dog wash down facility	4.6%	13.7%	21.8%	28.4%	31.5%	542
Unfenced	29.5%	19.6%	18.3%	17.9%	14.7%	525
Fenced	17.3%	17.3%	25.8%	21.9%	17.7%	462
Toilets / amenities	1.7%	7.9%	20.6%	28.3%	41.5%	407
Separated small dog large dog areas	11.1%	17.4%	20.0%	26.7%	24.8%	270
Turf area for dog play	6.2%	13.8%	18.6%	30.0%	31.4%	210
Seating	2.9%	14.8%	25.8%	27.8%	28.7%	209
Pathways	4.3%	13.0%	19.0%	27.2%	36.4%	184
Educational and way-finding signage	8.1%	21.5%	23.8%	25.6%	20.9%	172
Quiet area for sniff zones	1.0%	15.7%	17.6%	30.4%	35.3%	102
Dog agility equipment	5.3%	7.4%	22.1%	31.6%	33.7%	95
Lighting	0.0%	7.5%	5.7%	43.4%	43.4%	53

3.3.4 Agreement with the vision and objectives of the draft Plan

Survey respondents were asked ***"To what extent do you agree with the vision and objectives of the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan?"*** (n=2,301). Figure 10 provides a summary of all responses; Figure 11 provides a summary of responses from non-dog owners and Figure 12 provides a summary of responses from dog owners. The following is noted:

- There is a clear divide between dog owners and non-dog owners where there is a high level of disagreement (disagree/strongly disagree) amongst dog owners with all vision and objectives of the draft Plan, and high levels of agreement with all vision and objectives of the draft Plan amongst non-dog owners.
- Amongst non-dog owners there were balanced views (similar proportions for agreement and disagreement) on the following vision and objectives:
  - *The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan maintains the safety and comfort of the community – 40.8% (agree/strongly agree) and 39.8% (disagree/strongly disagree)*
  - *The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan protects environmental values – 38.7% (agree/strongly agree) and 39.6% (disagree/strongly disagree)*
- Amongst dog owners, there is strong disagreement that *'The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan promotes fair access to recreation opportunities across the region' and 'The draft Plan provides sufficient access to Dog Exercise Areas close to where dog owners live'* (top two points of disagreement).

Figure 10. Agreement with Vision and Objectives – All Response

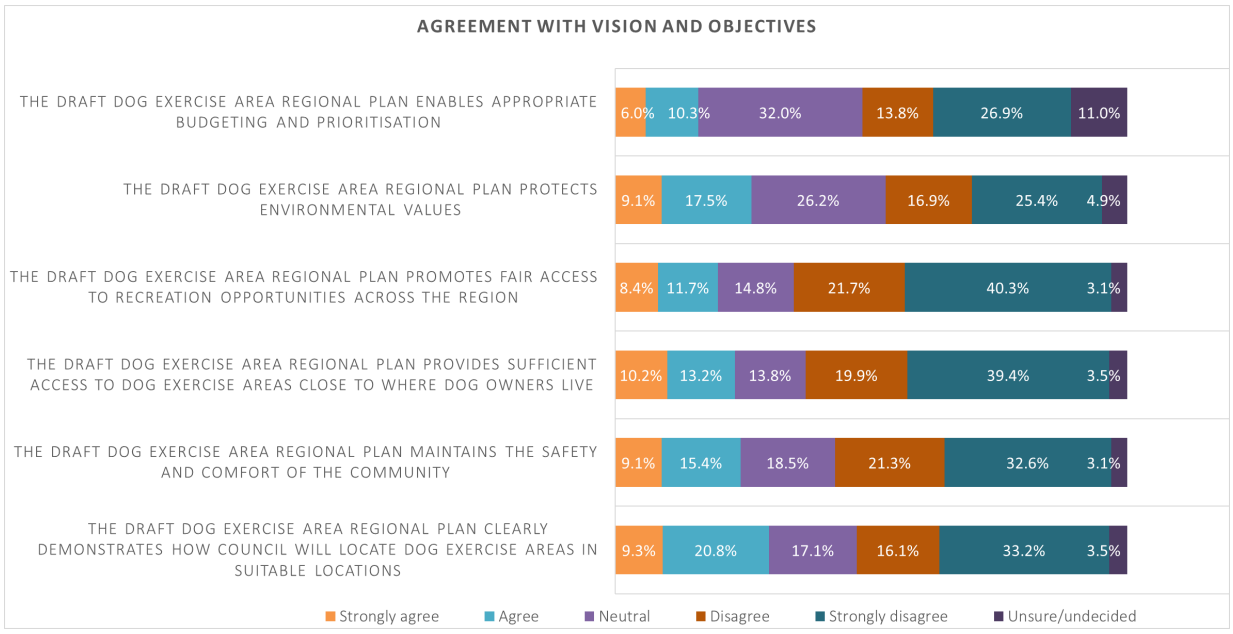


Figure 11. Agreement with Vision and Objectives – Non-Dog Owners

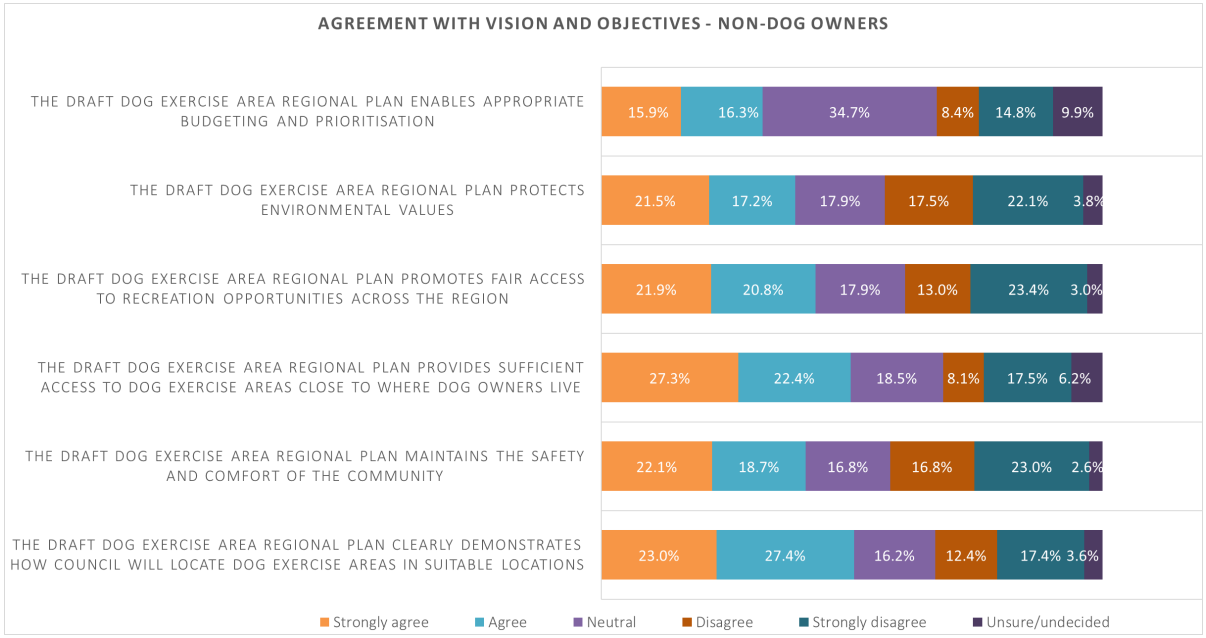
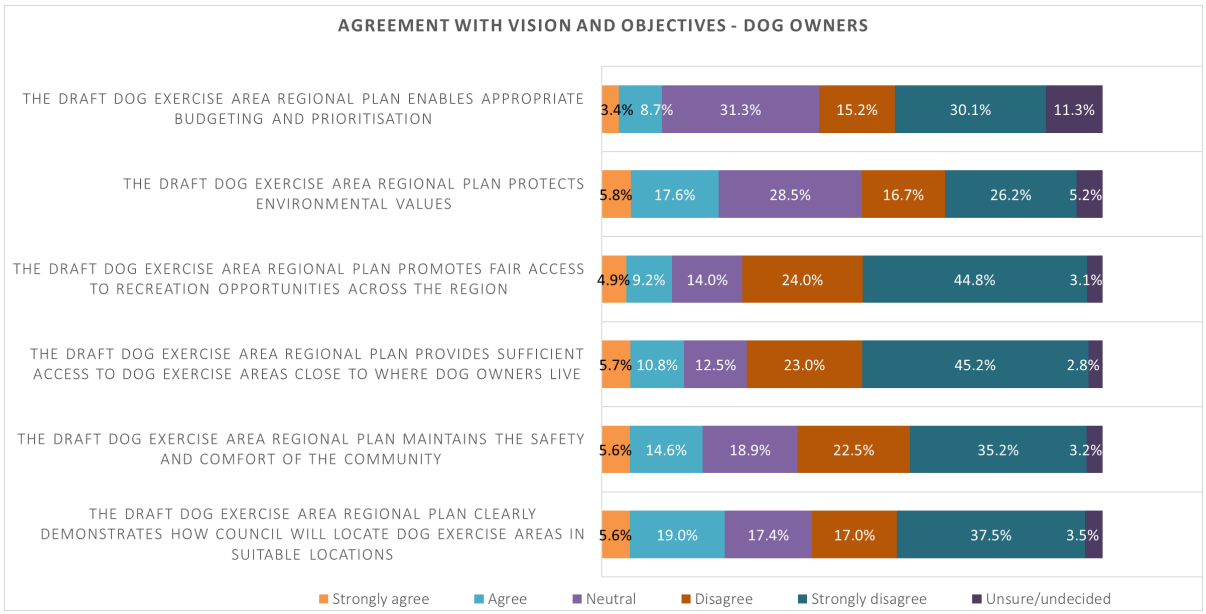


Figure 12. Agreement with Vision and Objectives – Dog Owners



Respondents were asked to provide further comments and details about their responses, and these have been captured in Table 5 for dog owners and non-dog owners.

Table 5. Feedback/comments in relation to vision and objectives

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Objective - The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan clearly demonstrates how Council will locate Dog Exercise Areas in suitable locations	
Dog Owners	• **Preservation of Stumers Creek Off-Leash Area** - Many respondents emphasise that Stumers Creek is an ideal off-leash location with calm, safe waters and strong community value—and should remain unchanged. • **Maintain Existing Off-Leash Boundaries** - Many respondents feel that the current network of off-leash areas is satisfactory as is, and that no adjustments to existing boundaries are needed. • **Therapeutic & Health Benefits of Calm-Water Areas** - Calm-water locations like North Shore and Stumers Creek are highlighted for their therapeutic value—supporting dog swimming therapy, older dogs, and owners with mobility issues. • **Support for Council's Plan & Process** - Respondents praise the Council's comprehensive, methodical approach to identifying and planning Dog Exercise Areas, finding the framework clear and justified. • **Expansion of Off-Leash Areas & Fenced Dog Parks** - There is demand for additional designated off-leash spaces—particularly fenced suburban parks in areas such as Marcoola, Mudjimba, Coolum, and Buderim—to complement beaches. • **Economic, Tourism & Residential Attraction of Dog-Friendly Areas** - Off-leash beaches and parks attract tourists, drive economic benefits, and even influence residential choices—some people choose to live or buy dogs based on nearby dog areas. • **Community Building & Mental Health Benefits** - Dog exercise areas are valued as community hubs that foster social interaction, inclusivity, and mental wellbeing—especially for families, remote workers, and isolated individuals. • **Characteristics of Ideal Dog Exercise Areas: Spaciousness, Variety, Amenities & Accessibility** - Ideal locations are described as wide, generous beaches or parks with ample space to avoid conflict, plus key amenities—parking, toilets, shade—and accessibility for all ages and abilities. • **Shared Use & Minimal Conflict Between Dog and Non-Dog Users** - Feedback highlights harmonious sharing of spaces between dog owners and non-dog users, including families with children, with few reported conflicts. • **Dogs' Fundamental Need for Off-Leash Freedom & Movement** - Many comments stress that dogs require freedom to run, explore, and enjoy natural settings off a lead—essential for their wellbeing. • **Reduction of Off-Leash Beach Areas** - Frequent concern about significant removal or reduction of existing off-leash beach areas without equivalent replacements, negatively impacting dog owners. • **Inadequacy of Fenced Dog Parks** - Dog owners argue that new fenced parks are constrained, unengaging, prone to pests and conflicts, and cannot replace open beach spaces. • **Safety and Accessibility Concerns** - Proposed adjustments to off-leash areas, especially north of Stumers Creek, are seen as dangerous and often inaccessible due to tides, rocks, creek flows and unclear crossings. • **Poor Communication and Clarity of Plans** - Feedback highlights that maps are too small, documents too lengthy and complex, and there is a lack of clear, concise summaries of the proposed changes. • **Unsubstantiated Environmental Justifications** - Owners challenge the environmental and heritage reasons given for restrictions, citing a lack of evidence and warning of worse impacts if dogs are crowded into smaller zones. • **Impact on Vulnerable Users** - Proposed changes would disproportionately affect elderly, families with young children, people with disabilities and those who rely on easy beach access for safe exercise.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Non-dog Owners	• **Council Research and Consultation** - Positive recognition of the thorough, inclusive research and stakeholder consultation undertaken by the Council in developing the draft Plan. • **Broad Support and Agreement** - Expressed general support and agreement with the draft Plan's principles, vision, and overall direction. • **Perceived Adequacy of Space and Facilities** - Comments that the Plan provides sufficient space and facilities for dog exercise, appropriate for current dog populations. • **Off-Leash Area Enhancement** - Support for expanding or retaining off-leash exercise zones, particularly away from beaches and park/picnic areas. • **Dedicated Fenced Dog Parks** - Advocacy for designated, fenced dog parks as safe and contained areas for dogs to exercise. • **Unleashed Dog Beaches** - Appreciation for designated dog beaches and the demand for off-leash beachfront areas for dogs. • **Specific Location Suggestions** - Recommendations for precise areas—such as riverbanks, old runway sites, and north of Stumers Creek—for off-leash or exercise zones. • **Safety and Family-Friendly Regulations** - Emphasis on on-leash rules or dog-free zones at family-oriented beaches to ensure child and public safety. • **Balanced and Compromising Approach** - Recognition of the Plan's balanced, comprehensive strategy that accommodates both dog owners' needs and wider community interests. • **Resistance to Changes in Existing Off-Leash Beach Areas** - Opposition to reducing, relocating, or restricting long-standing off-leash beach zones (particularly Stumers Creek/Coolum), seen as valuable community assets and traditions. • **Equitable Distribution of Dog Exercise Areas** - Concerns that the Plan concentrates off-leash zones in a few beach locations rather than distributing accessible areas near residential communities. • **Accessibility and Inclusivity Issues** - Current off-leash areas on soft sand beaches exclude elderly, disabled, or low-mobility users who need flat, paved paths and easy access. • **Safety and Access Logistics** - Physical access issues—unsafe creek crossings, limited parking, poor signage/maps—make proposed changes impractical or risky.
Objective - The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan maintains the safety and comfort of the community	
Dog Owners	• **Off-Leash Areas for Well-Being and Community -** Feedback highlights that off-leash spaces are vital for physical and mental health of both dogs and owners and foster social connections and community well-being. • **Safety and Harmony in Dog-Friendly Spaces -** Many respondents note that off-leash beaches are well-managed, with minimal conflicts, safe interactions, and positive experiences for dogs, owners, and other beachgoers. • **Education, Signage, and Enforcement Strategies -** Suggestions to enhance on-site management through clear signage, educational campaigns, provision of bins and bags, ranger patrols, human training, and reasonable enforcement rather than blanket restrictions. • **Infrastructure and Facility Design -** Feedback on designing dog exercise areas, including preferences for fenced vs unfenced spaces, separation of small and large dogs with screens, provision of exercise equipment, and adequate space to minimise triggers and conflicts. • **Expansion of Off-Leash Trails and Facilities -** Calls for increasing the number and size of off-leash areas and trails to alleviate congestion, reduce conflicts, and provide more exercise opportunities for dogs outside of protected or crowded zones. • **Environmental and Wildlife Protection -** Emphasis on balancing off-leash dog access with conservation, ensuring dogs stay off dunes and wildlife habitats through fencing, pathways, and responsible management.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Responsible Dog Waste Management -** Calls for more disposal facilities, free dog bags, bins, and encouragement of owners to pick up after their dogs to maintain cleanliness and hygiene in public spaces. • **Inclusive Shared Enjoyment for Dog Owners and Non-Dog Owners -** Feedback notes that off-leash beaches are enjoyed by dog owners and non-dog owners alike, creating welcoming community spaces where people without dogs also partake in leisure and social activities. • **Negative perception of fenced dog parks** - Feedback criticises enclosed dog parks as too small and stressful, attracting poorly supervised dogs and leading to conflicts and an unsafe environment for both dogs and owners. • **Preference for open, unfenced dog exercise areas** - Respondents highlight off-leash beaches and natural open spaces as superior, providing room for dogs to roam freely, responsible owner behaviour, and a calm, safe environment without confinement. • **Concerns about reduced off-leash beach access** - Concerns that shrinking off-leash beaches in size, location, or time slots will compress dogs and people into tighter spaces, increasing crowding, conflicts, and reducing community safety and comfort. • **Accessibility and safety issues at Stumers Creek** - Many highlight that forcing users to cross Stumers Creek to reach off-leash zones poses hazards and exclusion for elderly, disabled, families and small dogs, making access impractical and unsafe. • **Enforcement and compliance concerns** - Comments reflect mixed views on Council policing—many call for more rangers and education to enforce existing rules, while others decry excessive fines and revenue-driven over-policing. • **Hygiene and disease risks** - Respondents worry about uncollected dog waste, inadequate maintenance, and increased disease transmission (e.g., worms, parvovirus) in confined exercise areas. • **Safety concerns over dog attacks and aggression** - Multiple reports of personal or witnessed attacks describe heightened aggression in confined areas, dogs trampling children or owners, and increased risk of injury in both parks and beaches. • **Community and mental health benefits of off-leash areas** - Respondents value open off-leash beaches for fostering social interaction, community cohesion, and mental well-being, often serving as key weekly connection points.
Non-dog Owners	• **Designated Off-Leash Dog Areas -** Many respondents advocate for the creation of fenced, dedicated off-leash dog parks and beaches, providing safe, clean spaces for dogs to exercise and socialise while reducing conflicts in shared public areas. • **Social and Emotional Benefits of Dogs in Public Spaces** - Many participants express joy and social connection from interacting with dogs and observing them in public settings, highlighting benefits for both dog owners and non-dog owners alike. • **On-Leash Requirements for Public Beaches and Parks** - Frequent feedback supports strict leash rules for dogs in most public areas, suggesting leash lengths and enforcement to ensure control and reduce interference with other users. • **Dog Owner Responsibility and Training** - Many respondents affirm that most dog owners act responsibly by controlling their dogs and cleaning up after them, and some suggest training for owners to further improve compliance and reduce issues. • **Recommendations for Council Regulations and Infrastructure** - propose specific actions for policymakers, such as fencing designated off-leash areas, restricting dog access to certain beaches, and constructing additional parks to address community concerns. • **Balancing Dog and Non-Dog User Spaces** - Some feedback emphasises the importance of allocating distinct zones for dog activities, ensuring that non-dog owners can still enjoy public spaces without being encroached upon by dogs. • **Preference for Dog-Free Beach Zones** - A segment of respondents supports completely dog-free beach areas or water zones to safeguard swimmers and families, and to maintain a clean and undisturbed environment.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Irresponsible Owner Behaviour & Rule Violations** - Feedback that owners frequently ignore leash rules, allowing dogs to run uncontrolled in prohibited areas, and often fail to clean up after them. • **Safety Concerns & Negative Interactions** - Numerous reports of dogs attacking, chasing, or knocking down people—particularly children and elderly—causing fear, injuries, and traumatic experiences. • **Concerns About Dog Waste and Hygiene in Public Areas -** Multiple respondents worry about dog faeces and urine contaminating beaches and waterways, leading to unhealthy and unpleasant conditions for families and other visitors. • **Public Safety Risks Posed by Uncontrolled Dogs -** Numerous comments cite concerns about uncontrolled dogs harassing or injuring beach visitors, especially children, and emphasise the need for measures to mitigate potential hazards in shared spaces**.** • **Insufficient Enforcement & Monitoring** - Lack of adequate Council presence, rangers, and enforcement leads to widespread non-compliance with leash and cleanup regulations. • **Rights & Equity for Non-Dog Owners** - Non-dog owners feel their rights to enjoy public spaces safely and comfortably are compromised by dogs and owners occupying and dominating these areas. • **Overcrowding of Off-Leash Areas** - Existing off-leash zones have become overcrowded with too many dogs in limited spaces, exacerbating safety, control, and comfort issues. • **Inconsistent Regulations & Confusing Signage** - Variations in leash rules, off-leash timings, and signage across locations create confusion for residents and visitors about where dogs are permitted. • **Scepticism Towards Dog Parks & Fenced Areas** - Many believe dog parks and fenced runs are ineffective or unsafe, leading to disease spread, increased aggression, and small enclosures unsuitable for dog exercise. • **Demand for Stricter Regulations & Enforcement** - Calls for reducing off-leash areas, mandating on-leash everywhere, instituting more fines, and redefining zones to ensure public health, safety, and comfort.
Objective - The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan provides sufficient access to Dog Exercise Areas close to where dog owners live	
Dog Owners	• **Maintain & Expand Off-Leash Beach Access** - Many respondents emphasise the need to keep existing off-leash beach areas open and, in many cases, increase the total accessible shoreline for dogs, ensuring no net loss of freedom for pet owners. • **Accessibility & Amenities for All Users** - Respondents highlight the importance of physical infrastructure—ramps, parking, toilets, shade, seating and drinking taps—to make off-leash areas welcoming and usable by people of all ages and abilities. • **Demand for New Dog Exercise Areas & Parks** - As the dog-owning population grows, many call for additional dedicated off-leash parks and beach areas in locations like Alex/Mooloolaba, Kenilworth, Eumundi and other suburban communities. • **Dog-Friendly Lifestyle & Community Identity** - Off-leash beaches are integral to local lifestyle and identity; many residents moved to (or visit) the Sunshine Coast specifically because of its dog-friendly culture and natural settings. • **Preservation of Current Off-Leash Beach Areas** - There is widespread opposition to any reduction or removal of existing off-leash beach areas (especially at Stumers Creek, Ballinger Beach and Moffat Beach). Many respondents stress that current arrangements work well and that shrinking these spaces will significantly harm both owners and dogs. • **Demand for Additional Off-Leash Spaces** - Many dog owners point out that the Sunshine Coast's dog population is growing, and that more off-leash areas are needed, not fewer. They call for expansion of spaces across suburbs to meet current and future demand. • **Local Equity in Dog Exercise Facilities -** Feedback highlights uneven distribution of dog exercise areas. Suburbs such as Caloundra, Maleny/Witta, Kings Beach, Buderim,

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	Eumundi and Palmview are described as under-served and demand local, district and regional DOLAs that match population needs.
Non-dog Owners	• **Perceived Sufficiency of Existing Off-Leash Areas** - Belief that current off-leash provisions in regions like North Shore/Mudjimba, Currimundi, Buddina and Catchment Urban G are adequate, with no need for additional zones. • **Local Community Focus** - Emphasis on prioritising local dog-owning residents—rather than tourists—in beach policy decisions. • **Responsible Leashed Dog Exercise** - Recognition that designated off-leash areas complement, rather than restrict, responsible on-leash exercise throughout beaches and neighbourhoods. • **Alignment with rising dog ownership and population growth** - Feedback notes growing dog ownership rates and population increases, calling for exercise areas to scale accordingly rather than shrink. • **Insufficient supporting information and poor communication** - Complaints about lack of detailed maps, unclear rationale, and inadequate consideration of existing usage in the plan documentation.
Objective - The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan promotes fair access to recreation opportunities across the region	
Dog Owners	• **Balanced Access & Shared Use** - Implement time-shared or scheduled access and ensure fair use between dog owners and non-dog users, highlighting that non-dog recreational spaces are available. • **Health & Well-Being Benefits** - Dog exercise areas improve mental and physical health for owners, reducing health costs and encouraging regular activity. - Frequent feedback highlights that off-leash beach areas provide significant mental, physical, and emotional health benefits for both dog owners and their pets, encouraging exercise, reducing isolation, and supporting overall well-being. • **Community & Social Cohesion** - Off-leash spaces serve as community hubs, fostering social interaction, reducing isolation, and strengthening neighbourhood connections. • **Accessibility & Inclusivity** - Design features like ramps and nearby facilities enable seniors, disabled individuals, and families with toddlers to use dog-friendly spaces safely. • **Variety of Off-Leash Options** - Provide specialised zones for different dog needs, including small or nervous dogs, ensuring all can exercise comfortably. • **Value of Specific Dog-Friendly Locations** - Recognise the unique benefits of established sites like Stumers Creek, Mudjimba, and Point Cartwright for diverse community needs. • **Responsible Dog Ownership & Education** - Promote responsible ownership, public education, and self-regulation to ensure harmonious shared use of dog spaces. • **Dogs as Integral Family Members** - Acknowledges that dogs are part of the family unit, and owners want their pets included in everyday recreational activities. • **Adoption of Best Practices from Other Regions** - Refer to successful models in Melbourne, WA, and NT as examples for designing and managing dog-friendly spaces. • **Unfairness and Discrimination Against Dog Owners** - Many residents feel that the Council's proposals disproportionately target and exclude responsible dog owners, treating them inequitably despite their status as rate-paying, registered community members. • **Impact on Vulnerable Groups and Accessibility** - Proposed changes are seen to disproportionately harm elderly, disabled, and mobility-restricted residents who rely on accessible off-leash beach entry points—such as disability ramps and calm creek areas—for safe recreation with their dogs. • **Advocacy for Balanced, Inclusive Policy and Coexistence -** Calls for an evidence-based, balanced policy that respects both dog owners and other community members, promoting shared spaces, coexistence, and mutual respect rather than exclusion.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Non-dog Owners	• **Balanced & Equitable Planning** - The plan is praised for its fairness and balanced approach in catering to both dog owners and non-dog owners, ensuring rights and interests are equitably represented. • **Inclusive Off-Leash & Community Interaction -** Off-leash areas are highlighted as inclusive spaces that foster community interaction and enjoyment for both dog owners and non-owners alike. • **Community Wellbeing & Tranquil Environment** - Feedback emphasises the mental health benefits, overall happiness, and calm, tranquil setting these spaces provide for individuals of all ages. • **Dedicated & Shared Space Management -** Comments support the strategic designation of dedicated and shared zones, along with managed access or prohibitions, to balance dog exercise needs with environmental protection. • **Equitable Distribution of Off-Leash Areas** - Concerns that off-leash areas are unevenly allocated across regions and housing types, creating unfair access for non-dog owners and residents without private yards. • **Community Division between Dog Owners and Non-Dog Owners** - Frustration over framing dog owners against non-dog owners, which many feel fosters unnecessary conflict and erodes community unity. • **Safety and Accessibility Concerns for Vulnerable Users** - Feedback highlights safety risks and physical access barriers posed by off-leash zones for families, seniors, disabled, and other vulnerable groups. • **Health, Wellbeing, and Community Cohesion from Off-Leash Areas** - Many comments emphasise the mental, physical, and social benefits of off-leash areas for dog owners and families, including stronger community bonds.
Objective - The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan enables appropriate budgeting and prioritisation	
Dog Owners	• **Affordable, Incremental Dog Infrastructure Solutions** - Feedback emphasises low-cost enhancements—converting existing spaces, adding small enclosures, signage, and bag dispensers—to avoid expensive new builds. • **Economic Benefits and Budget Prioritisation** - Multiple comments highlight the cost savings and high utilisation of dog-friendly beaches and parks, urging prioritisation of funding to support the majority of dog owners. • **Support for the Plan and Operational Resourcing** - Many praised the comprehensiveness of the proposed plan and called for operational support such as increased ranger patrols to ensure effective implementation. • **Projected Growth-Driven Demand** - Feedback highlights expected increases in dog ownership and densification in certain regions, reinforcing the need for forward-looking infrastructure planning. • **Budget & Financial Prioritisation -** Frequent concerns about the cost of the proposed dog parks and related initiatives, with calls to reallocate limited ratepayer funds to higher-impact areas. • **Education & Enforcement for Responsible Dog Ownership** - Calls for proactive owner education and sufficient ranger enforcement rather than punitive fines and blanket restrictions. • **Misaligned Council Priorities** - Concerns that the Council is focusing on dog parks at the expense of more pressing issues like homelessness, roads, and essential public services. • **Revenue Raising Through Dog Fines** - Belief that the Council's tightened regulations and increased fines are motivated more by revenue generation than genuine animal management. • **Lack of Budget & Implementation Details** - Frustration over the absence of cost estimates, priority ranking, and implementation timelines for the new dog exercise areas in the draft Plan.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Non-dog Owners	• **Access Fees and Licensing for Dog Owners** - Feedback advocates implementing direct fees or paid licenses for dog owners (and visiting fees for their guests) to access sites and parks. The revenue would cover extra cleanup, bags, garbage removal, and dog management staff, mirroring models like Canada's national parks. • **Budget Transparency and Cost Details** - Stakeholders frequently note the plan provides no specific budget figures, lacks clear cost estimates for new dog parks and has little transparency in how funds will be allocated or prioritised. • **Funding Fairness and User-Pays Principle** - Concerns that non-dog-owners are subsidising facilities while dog owners pay low registration fees; calls for cost equity and user-pays funding through increased registration and penalties. • **Wasteful Spending on Dog Facilities** - Many believe current and proposed dog parks and exercise areas represent an inefficient use of taxpayer money, with facilities often underused and funded at the expense of other priorities. • **Excessive Expansion of Fenced Dog Parks** - Feedback indicates too many new fenced parks are planned, consuming land and resources, and stakeholders suggest retaining existing off-leash areas instead of creating more. • **Lack of Trust in Government Implementation** - A prevailing scepticism that government will deliver on the draft Plan's promises, with worries that budgets change, proposals are not enacted, and there is no solid evidence base.
Objective - The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan protects environmental values	
Dog Owners	• **Responsible Dog Owner Behaviour -** Most dog owners consistently pick up waste, use provided bags and actively maintain the cleanliness and wellbeing of beach environments. • **Need for Improved Signage, Education, and Enforcement** - Calls for more effective signage, educational campaigns, and ranger patrols to guide dog owners and the public on environmental rules and seasonal restrictions. • **Protection of Sensitive Wildlife and Habitats** - Support for fencing, restricted access, and prohibited areas to safeguard nesting shorebirds, turtles, migratory and endangered species and preserve natural heritage zones. • **Seasonal and Temporal Access Restrictions** - Suggestions for seasonal or timed off-leash allowances to protect wildlife during critical periods while still accommodating dog owners at other times. • **Infrastructure and Facility Improvements** - Calls for improved physical infrastructure, such as safe access paths, water stations, bag dispensers, and better-managed car park entries to enhance user experience and safety. • **Other Environmental Threats Perceived as More Significant than Dogs** - Observations that human activities, farming, mining, plastic pollution, and feral cats pose greater risks to wildlife and habitats than well-managed off-leash dogs. • **Desire for Balanced Approach between Recreation and Conservation** - Calls to find an equitable balance that supports dog owner's recreational needs while ensuring robust protection of environmental values. • **Lack of Evidence & Transparency** - Frequent complaints that the Council's environmental justification for dog restrictions is unsubstantiated, lacking site-specific data or measurable evidence. Community demands clear statistics, studies, and transparency in decision-making. • **Minimal Environmental Impact from Off-Leash Dogs** - Observations that off-leash dogs and their owners cause negligible environmental harm; wildlife continues to use the beaches and dunes remain intact. • **Community Wellbeing & Access Impact** - Concerns that reducing or removing off-leash areas harms dog owners' mental, physical, and social wellbeing, undermining places for exercise, free play, and community connections. • **Hygiene & Waste Management Issues** - Complaints about dog excrement smell, uncollected waste left on beaches, and concerns for public health and beach cleanliness.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Wildlife Protection Advocacy** - Voices supporting stricter off-leash restrictions to protect shorebirds, turtles, dune vegetation, and other native wildlife from disturbance and harm by uncontrolled dogs. • **Alternative Management & Balanced Solutions** - Suggestions for targeted, less restrictive measures – such as signage, fencing, on-leash corridors, and seasonal closures – to balance dog access with environmental protection. • **Displacement & Environmental Trade-offs** - Concerns that shrinking off-leash zones will displace dogs to fewer areas, increasing travel distances, parking pressure, and environmental stress in concentrated or alternative sensitive habitats. • **Recognition of Responsible Dog Owners** - Highlighting positive contributions of conscientious dog owners – picking up litter, controlling pets, and supporting environmental cleanliness – arguing they deserve continued access and trust.
Non-dog Owners	• **Environmental & Wildlife Protection** - Frequent concerns about dogs disturbing sensitive habitats, native species, and shorebird populations, leading to calls for prohibitions and habitat restrictions. • **Dog Waste Management & Cleanliness** - Repeated feedback highlights issues with dog waste pollution on beaches and waterways, urging better cleanliness measures and dismissing careless behaviour. • **Dog Area Zoning & Leash Policies** - Diverse opinions on-leash requirements and off-leash access, with calls for designated areas, limited off-leash zones, and ensuring dog areas don't compromise overall open space. • **Balancing Dog Freedoms & Environmental Needs** - Support for the Council's approach to balance human and dog recreational freedoms with the protection of the natural environment and wildlife. • **Infrastructure & Enforcement Measures** - Suggestions for improved facilities like fencing, waste bins, and increased dog patrols to enforce rules and protect sensitive areas. • **Human Health & Recreation Benefits of Dog Access -** Highlighting the importance of off-leash dog beaches as spaces that promote mental and physical well-being for both dogs and their owners. • **Specific Site & Reserve Proposals** - Proposal for certain areas to be formally designated as reserves or have restricted dog access to protect wildlife and maintain cleanliness. • **Wildlife Disturbance and Habitat Disruption** - Frequent reports that off-leash dogs chase and harass native birds and terrestrial wildlife, leading to declines in local species and stress or injury to animals. • **Marine Turtle Nesting Habitat Protection** - Concerns that dogs on beaches threaten critically endangered marine turtle nests and hatchlings, with calls for stricter leash rules or complete bans in nesting areas. • **Dog Waste Pollution and Public Health Concerns** - Recurring complaints about dog faeces and urine fouling beaches, paths and waterways, causing foul odours, health hazards, and deterring public use. • **Off-Leash Access in Environmentally Sensitive Areas -** Frequent opposition to allowing dogs off-leash in conservation reserves, dunes, beaches and other wildlife habitats, citing incompatibility with ecosystem protection. • **Inadequate Enforcement and Signage** - Feedback highlights poor policing and insufficient or unclear signage, resulting in widespread non-compliance with leash rules and ongoing environmental harm. • **Perceived Prioritisation of Dog Owners over Environmental and Public Interests** - Sentiments that Council policies and plans favour dog ownership and recreation at the expense of environmental protection and non-dog-owning community members. • **Conservation Reserve Integrity and Funding Misalignment** - Criticism that using Environmental, Bushland and Conservation Reserves for dog exercise contradicts their original purchase purpose and misuses Environment Levy funds intended for preservation.

3.3.5 Dog Exercise Areas Values

Survey respondents were asked to rank 10 values for three different dog exercise area typologies (parks and gardens, environmental reserves, and beaches and foreshores) in order of importance (1 being high importance, 10 being low importance) in relation to how each ***'value will inform how Council assesses the suitability of Dog Exercise Areas in parks and gardens, environmental reserves and beaches and foreshores'.*** The purpose of this question was to seek feedback and improve understanding from the community on the ranking/importance of values to inform refinement of the values and objectives of the Plan and associated Pairwise analysis and multi-criteria risk assessment processes.

Parks and Gardens

Figure 13, Figure 14 and Figure 15 provide a summary of the responses for **'parks and gardens'** and the following is noted:

- The top 3 most important values for all respondents included, 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (66.6%), 'safety for community members' (58.5%) and 'safety for dogs' (51.5%).
- The top 3 values that are considered to be low or not of importance for all respondents included, 'cultural heritage' (20.5%), 'ability to safely and effectively manage compliance' (15.1%) and 'amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)' (13.4%).
- The top value for non-dog owners is 'safety for community members' (78.9%) followed by 'environmental protection' (71.5%) and the value that is considered low or not of importance is 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (19.4%).
- Dog owners valued 'recreation opportunities for dog owner and their pets' the most, with 76.5% of dog owners indicating that this is very important. Dog owners also value 'safety for dogs' (57.7%) and 'safety for community members' (53.0%).

Figure 13. Parks and Gardens Values – All Responses

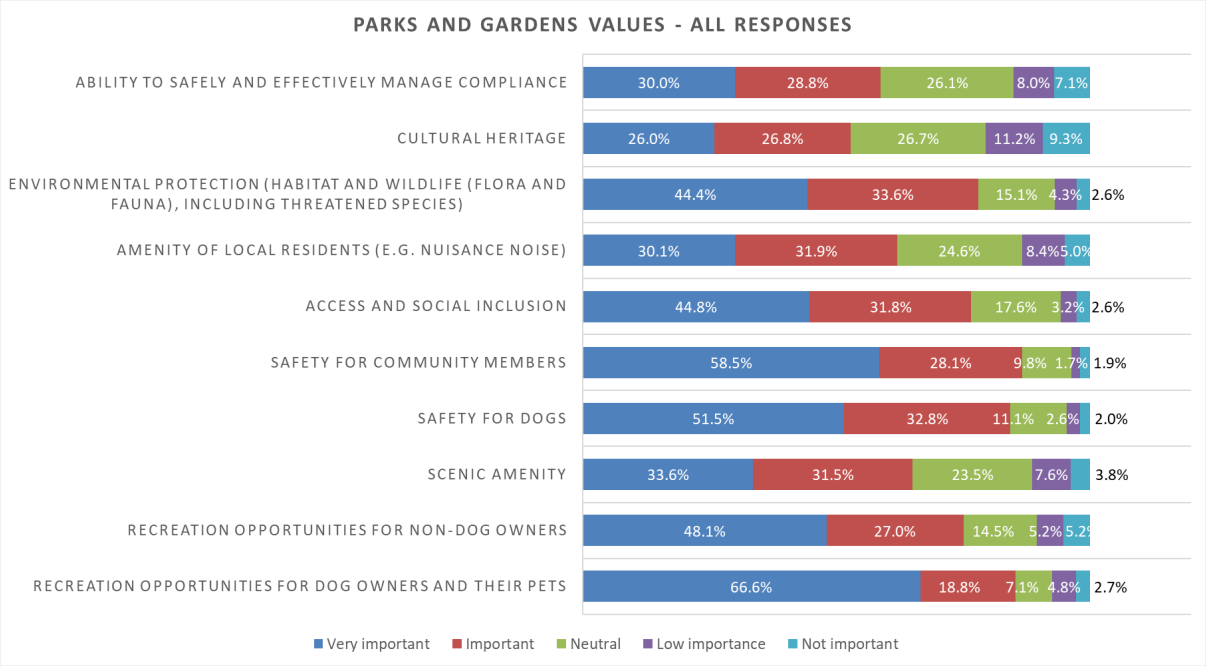


Figure 14. Parks and Gardens Values – Non-dog Owners

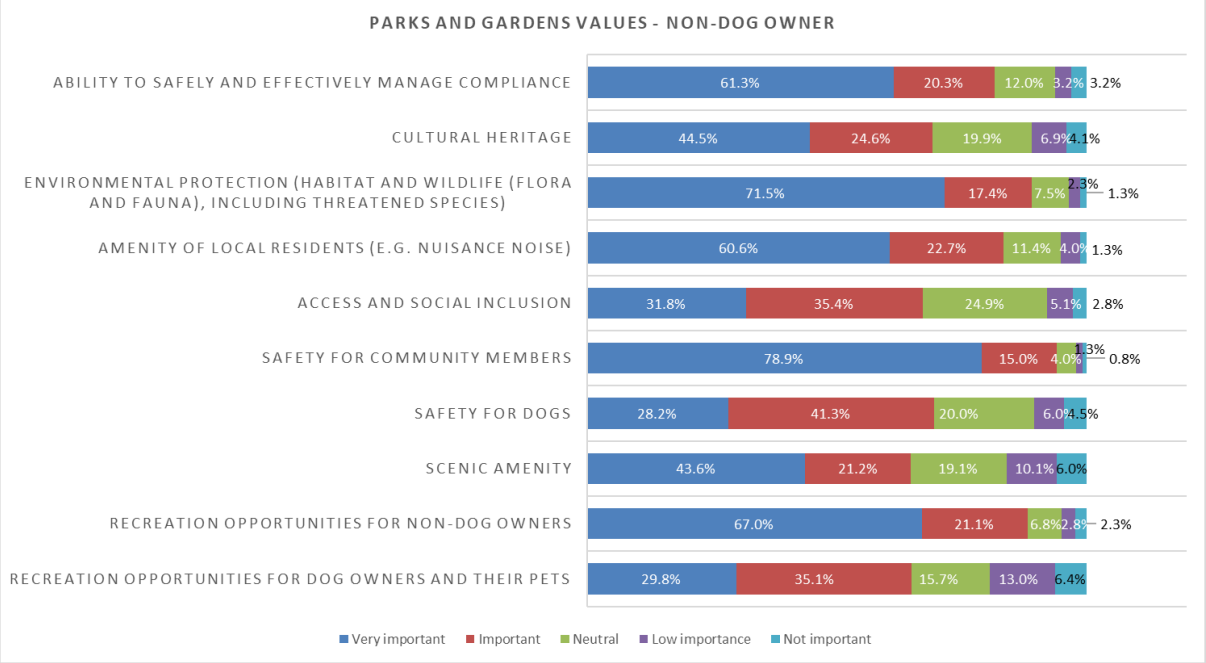
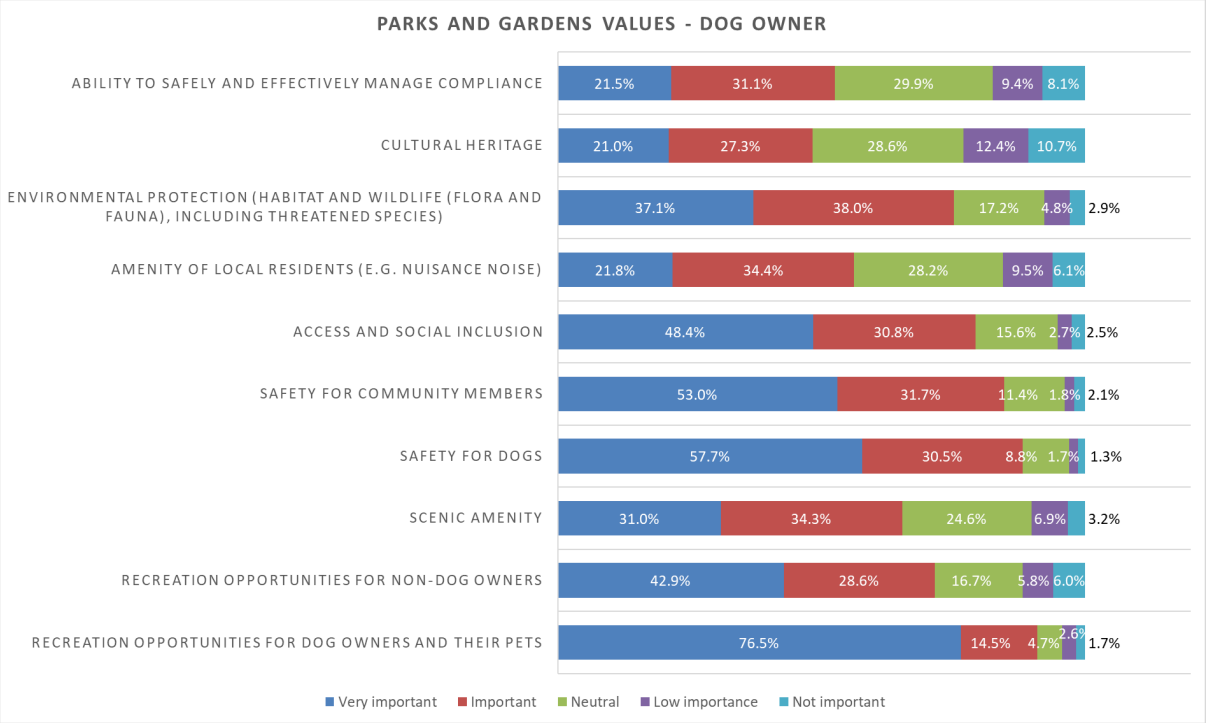


Figure 15. Parks and Gardens Values – Dog Owner



Environment Reserves

Figure 16, Figure 17 and Figure 18 provide summaries of the responses for **'environment reserves'** and the following is noted:

- The top 3 most important values for all respondents include, 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (54.6%), 'safety for community members' (51.0%) and 'environmental protection' (50.5%).
- The top 3 values that are considered low or not of importance for all respondents include, 'cultural heritage' (19.2%), 'amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)' (16.9%) and 'ability to safely and effectively manage compliance' (15.3%).
- The top value for non-dog owners is 'environmental protection' (75.6%) followed by 'safety for community members' (68.7%) and the value that is considered low or not of importance is 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (41.0%).
- Dog owners valued 'recreation opportunities for dog owner and their pets' the most, with 64.1% of dog owners indicating that this is very important. Dog owners also value 'safety for dogs' (48.5%) and 'safety for community members' (46.1%).
- Values considered low or not of importance for dog owners include 'cultural heritage' (21.8%), 'ability to safely and effectively manage compliance' (17.8%) and 'amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)' (19.5%).

- Values considered low or not of importance for non-dog owners include 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (41%), 'safety for dogs' (25%) and 'access and social inclusion' (11.1%).

Figure 16. Environment Reserves Values – All Responses

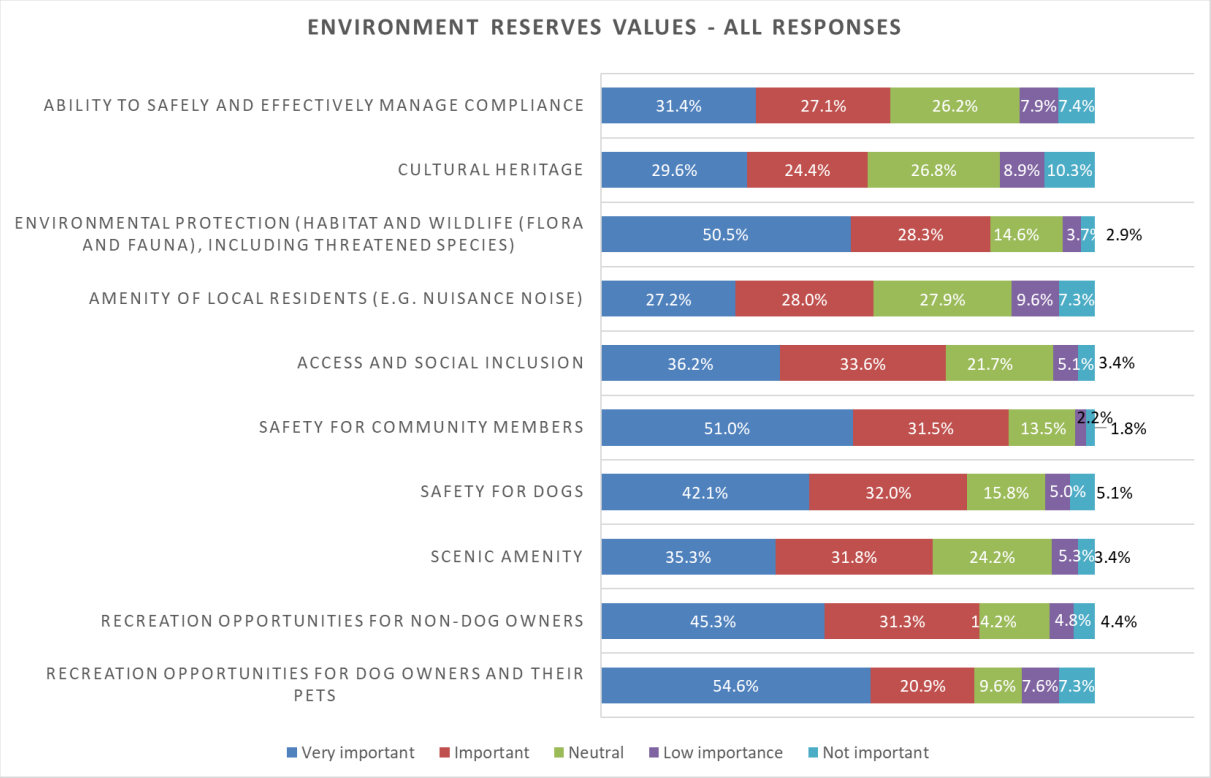


Figure 17. Environment Reserves Values – Non-Dog Owners

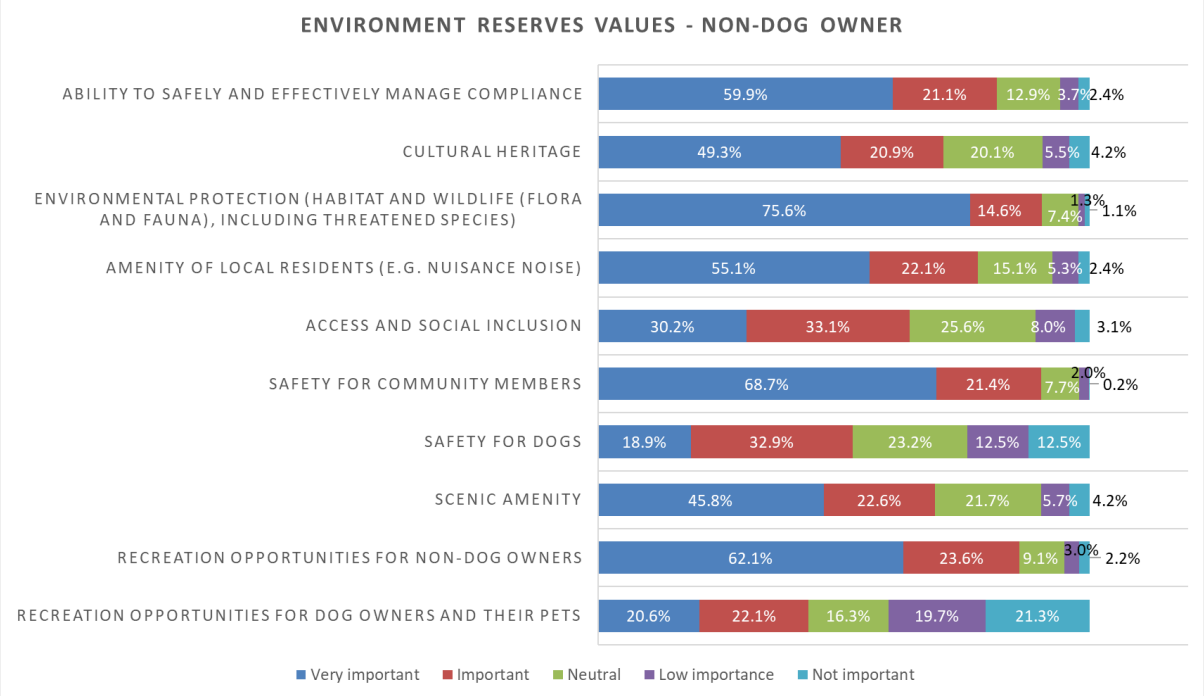
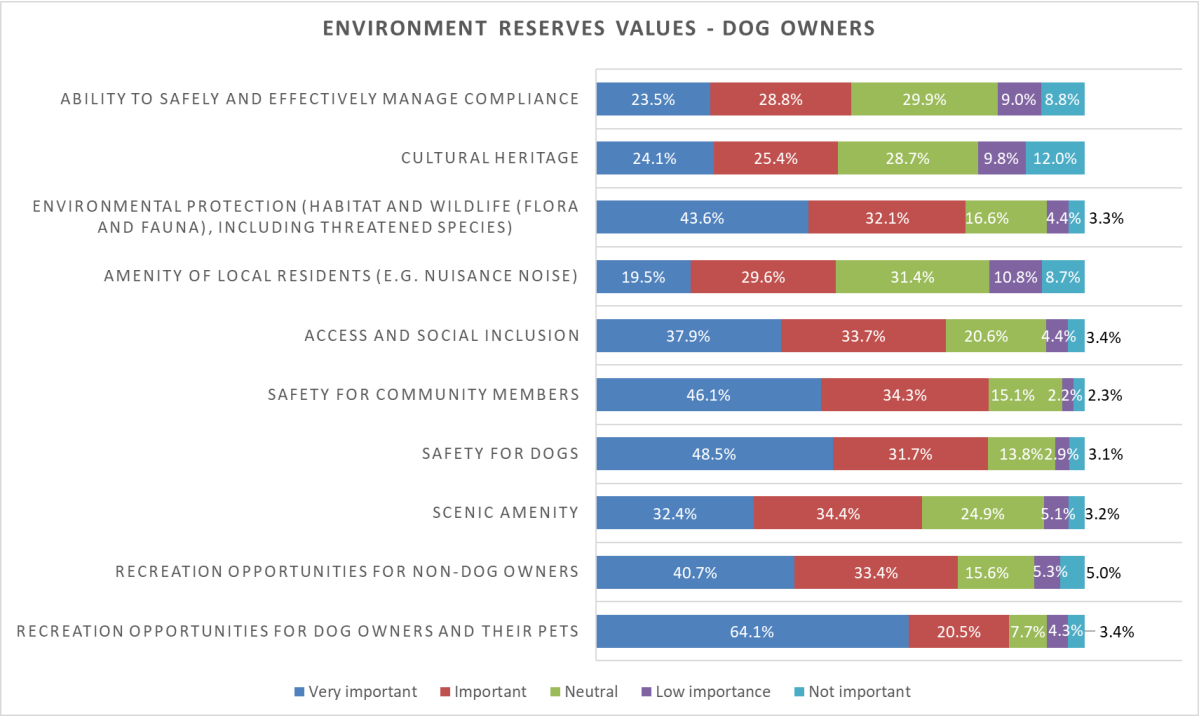


Figure 18. Environment Reserves Values – Dog Owners



Beaches and Foreshores

Figure 19, Figure 20 and Figure 21 provide summaries of the responses for **'beaches and foreshores'** and the following is noted:

- The top 3 most important values for all respondents included, 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (72.9%), 'safety for community members' (57.0%) and 'recreation opportunities for non-dog owners' (49.9%).
- The top 3 values of low or not of importance for all respondents included, 'cultural heritage' (22.0%), 'amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)' (17.4%) and 'ability to safely and effectively manage compliance' (16.7%).
- The top value for non-dog owners is 'safety for community members' (78.7%) followed by 'environmental protection' (72.9%)' and 'recreation opportunities for non-dog owners' (72.9%) and the value considered low or not of importance is 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (33.6%).
- Dog owners valued 'recreation opportunities for dog owner and their pets' the most, with 84.5% of dog owners indicating that this is very important. Dog owners also value 'safety for dogs' (56.1%) and 'safety for community members' (50.7%).
- Values considered low or not of importance for dog owners include 'cultural heritage' (24.3%), 'ability to safely and effectively manage compliance' (19.5%) and 'amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)' (19.9%).
- Values considered low, or not of importance, for non-dog owners include 'recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets' (33.6%), 'safety for dogs' (16.5%) and 'scenic amenity' (12%).

Figure 19. Beaches and Foreshores Values – All Responses

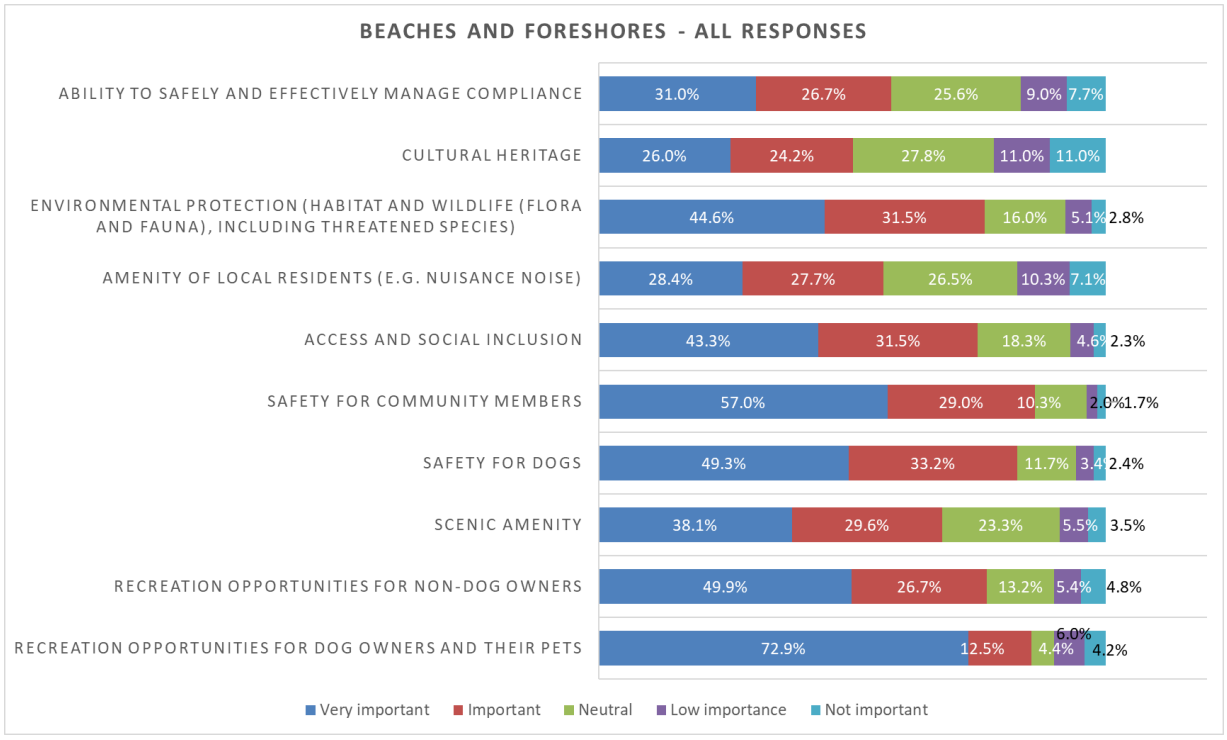


Figure 20. Beaches and Foreshores Values – Non-dog Owner

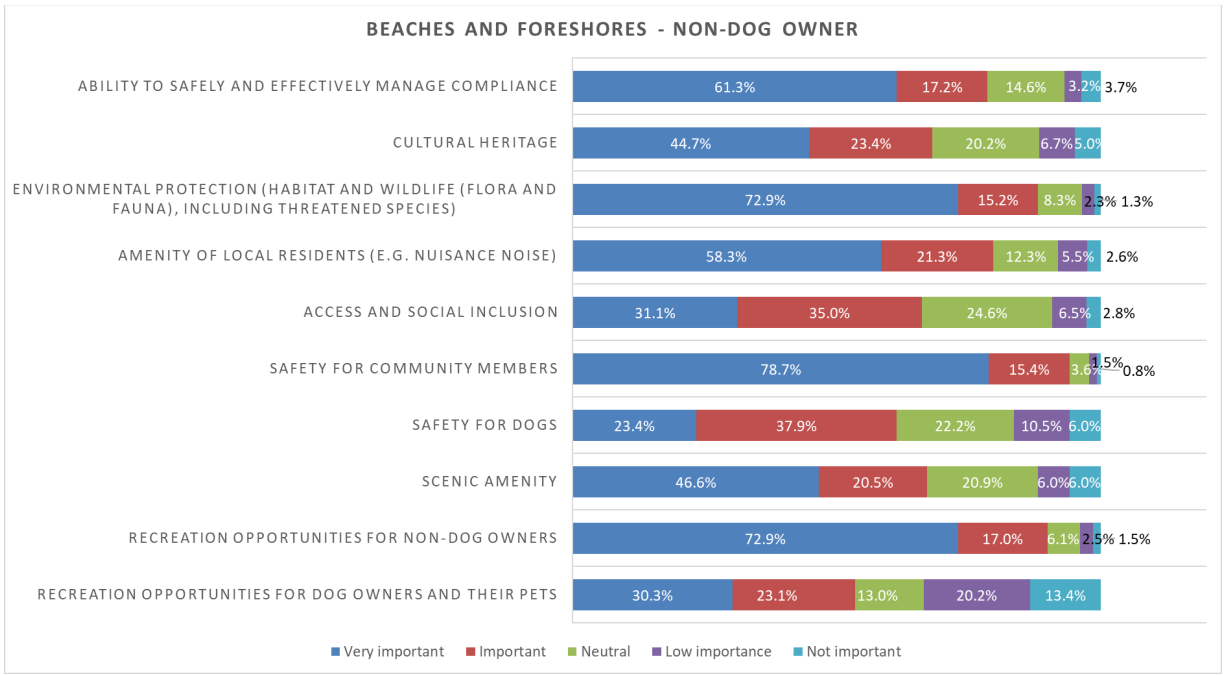
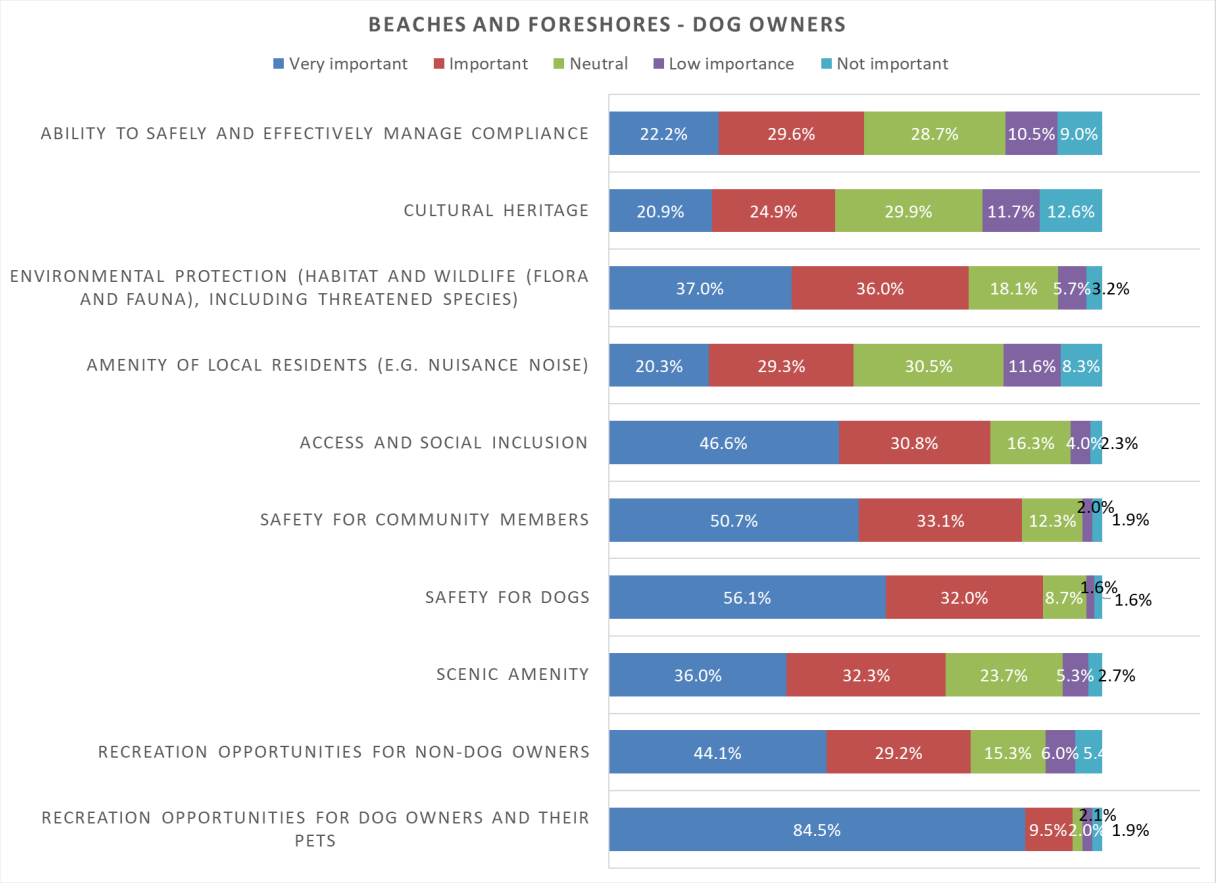


Figure 21. Beaches and Foreshores Values – Dog Owner



3.3.6 Support for Proposed Amendments

Survey respondents were asked *"To what extent do you support the proposed changes in the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan?"* (n=2,301). Figure 22, Figure 23 and Figure 24 provide summaries of the responses, and the following is noted:

- Sports Fields:
  - When considering all responses, there are more people that support proposed changes to 'sports fields' (28.4% with 16.5% supporting but with changes) than those that do not support (29.3%), there is also a relatively high proportion of respondents that are unsure/undecided (25.8%).
  - There is more support for proposed changes to 'sports fields' from non-dog owners (42.4%) than dog owners (24.6%).
  - There is a similar proportion of non-dog owners (14.3%) and dog owners (17.2%) who support amendments to 'sports fields' with changes.
- Environment Reserves:
  - When considering all responses, there are more people that support changes to 'environment reserves' (44.5% with 20.0% supporting but with changes) than those that do not support (37.0%). Around 18.5% of all respondents were unsure/undecided.

- There is more support for proposed changes to 'environment reserves' from non-dog owners (43.3%) than dog owners (19.3%).
- There are more dog owners (21.3%) who support amendments to 'environment reserves' with changes than non-dog owners (15.4%).

- Beaches and Foreshores:
  - When considering all responses, proposed amendments to 'beaches and foreshores' is not supported (65.9%) with only 28.9% support/support with changes, with 5.2% unsure/undecided.
  - There is more support for proposed changes to 'beaches and foreshores' from non-dog owners (34.3%) than dog owners (11.1%).
  - There are more non-dog owners (17.4%) who support amendments to 'beaches and foreshores' with changes than dog owners (11.7%).
- New Dog off-leash Areas:
  - When considering all responses, there is a majority support for the proposed '19 new dog off-leash areas' with around 69.5% of respondents indicating support/support with changes, whilst 8% were unsure/undecided.
  - There is more support for 'new dog off-leash areas' from dog owners (47.8%) than non-dog owners (37.2%).
  - There are more dog owners (25.0%) who support amendments for 'new dog off-leash areas' with changes than non-dog owners (20.4%).

Figure 22. Support for Proposed Amendments to Dog Exercise Areas – All Responses

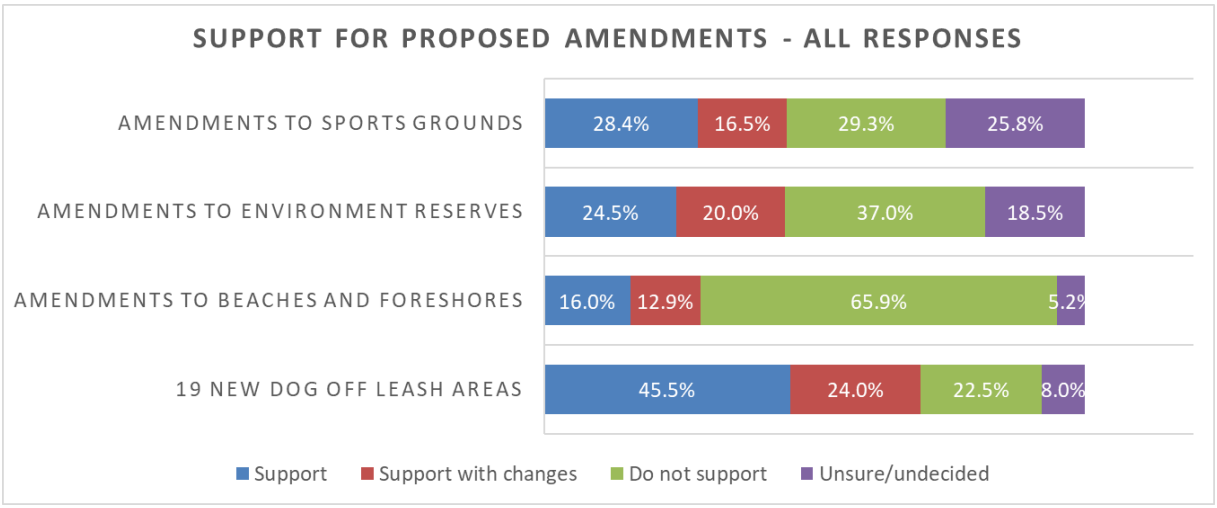


Figure 23. Support for Proposed Amendments to Dog Exercise Areas – Non-Dog Owner

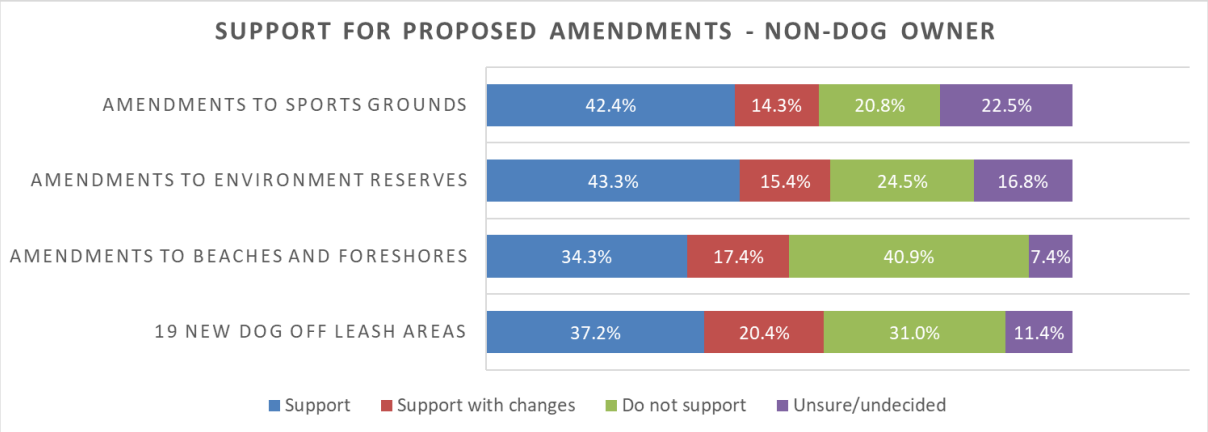
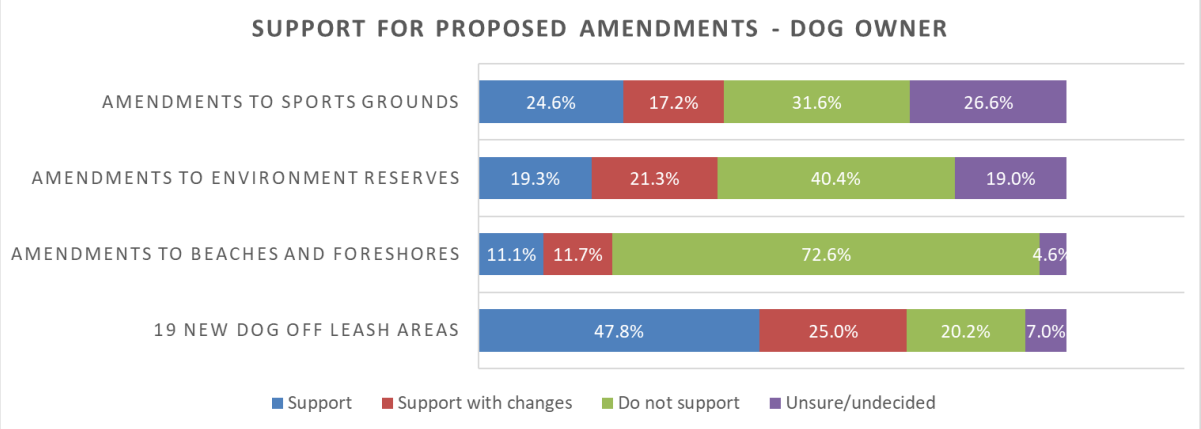


Figure 24. Support for Proposed Amendments to Dog Exercise Areas – Dog Owner



Respondents were asked to provide further comments and details about their responses, and these have been captured in Table 6 for dog owners and non-dog owners.

Table 6. Feedback/comments in relation to proposed amendments

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Beaches & Foreshores	
Dog Owners	• **Off-Leash Beach Access** - Feedback overwhelmingly calls for preserving and expanding off-leash beach areas for dog exercise, arguing against any reduction in access. • **Physical and Mental Health Benefits** - Many comments highlight the mental and physical health benefits for dog owners and their pets when exercising together on beaches. • **Accessibility for People with Disabilities** - Feedback underscores the importance of maintaining accessible beach entry (e.g., ramps and boardwalks) so people with disabilities and limited mobility can enjoy off-leash areas. • **Tourism and Economic Value** - Many comments point out that dog-friendly beaches attract tourists, drive visitation, and support the local economy.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Environmental and Wildlife Considerations** - Some feedback emphasises protecting shorebird habitats, water quality, and proper waste management, with suggestions for seasonal or spatial restrictions. • **Timeslot and Location Controls** - Several suggest allowing off-leash access only during specified time windows or in designated zones to reduce user conflicts. • **Safety and Negative Interaction Concerns** - A minority of feedback expresses safety and cleanliness concerns, advocating on-leash requirements due to incidents with children, fights, and waste. • **Infrastructure and Facilities** - Feedback calls for improved beach infrastructure such as multiple access points, dog wash stations, water supplies, and parking to support dog owners. • **Opposition to Reduction of Off-Leash Beach Access** - Dog owners overwhelmingly object to any reduction or removal of existing off-leash beach areas, arguing these changes unfairly limit their pets' freedom and diminish community amenity. • **Preservation of Stumers Creek as Off-Leash Area** - Stumers Creek's calm waters and open space are highly valued by dog owners as a unique off-leash destination; any proposal to convert it to on-leash is met with strong resistance. • **Accessibility Concerns for Elderly and Disabled** - Proposed changes threaten access for older people, those with disabilities or small children who rely on close, easily navigable off-leash beach entry points. • **Environmental Impact Arguments** - Many dog owners dispute environmental claims, noting that humans cause more damage than dogs and that blanket bans are misguided or inconsistent. • **Community and Economic Contributions of Dog Beaches** - Off-leash beaches are seen as vital to community life and local economies, drawing residents and tourists who support nearby businesses and property values. • **Safety, Overcrowding, and Congestion Concerns** - Reducing the size or number of off-leash beach areas is expected to concentrate users into smaller zones, heightening congestion, parking issues and safety risks. • **Dog Parks are Inadequate Replacements** - Stakeholders argue that fenced or enclosed dog parks cannot substitute for open beach environments, which offer more space, natural terrain and freedom.
Non-dog Owners	• **Beach Leash & Prohibition Policies** - Frequent calls to require dogs to be on leash or prohibited entirely on public beaches, reducing or removing off-leash areas to protect wildlife and beachgoers. • **Enforcement & Compliance** - Demand for stronger patrolling, visible fines, and surveillance to ensure dog owners adhere to leash rules, remove waste, and respect designated zones. • **Environmental Protection** - Emphasis on safeguarding sensitive natural habitats like dunes, nesting birds, turtles, sacred cultural sites, and rocky foreshores by restricting dog access. • **Signage Clarity & Public Education** - Need for clear, unambiguous signage and educational initiatives at beaches and parks to inform locals and tourists about on/off-leash boundaries and rules. • **Dog-Free & Human-Only Zones** - Support for establishing dedicated beaches and recreational areas exclusively for people without dogs, ensuring safe and clean spaces for non-dog owners. • **Alternative Off-Leash Facilities** - Suggestions to create well-planned, fenced, or remote dog exercise areas away from beaches and sensitive ecosystems to accommodate dog owners. • **Scheduled & Rotational Access** - Proposals for time-based or rotating off-leash beach access (e.g., early mornings, specific hours) to balance dog exercise needs with public use.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Balance of Access & Recognition of Responsible Dog Owners** - Calls for fair beach access proportional to dog ownership and acknowledgment of responsible owners who control and clean up after their pets. • **Opposition to Off-Leash Dogs on Beaches** - Many respondents strongly oppose any off-leash dog areas on beaches, advocating for complete prohibition or strict on-leash policies to ensure safety and comfort. • **Enforcement Gaps and Rule Non-Compliance** - Numerous comments highlight insufficient monitoring, lack of enforcement officers, and poor adherence to leash and waste pickup rules, leading to widespread non-compliance among dog owners. • **Environmental Impact on Wildlife and Dune Ecosystems** - Concerns focus on dogs disturbing turtle hatchlings, migratory birds, dune vegetation, and local wildlife such as kangaroos, potentially causing habitat damage and species decline. • **Public Health and Hygiene Risks from Dog Waste** - Frequent reports of dog urine smells, faeces on sand and pathways, and potential zoonotic disease transmission underscore public health and cleanliness concerns. • **Safety Hazards Posed by Uncontrolled Dogs** - Off-leash and unrestrained dogs have caused physical injuries, bites, and frightening experiences for beachgoers, children, and wildlife, leading to calls for stricter controls. • **Infrastructure and Accessibility Challenges** - Insufficient parking, lack of restrooms, hazardous creek crossings, and conflicts with patrolled and family-friendly areas reduce safe and convenient access to designated dog beach zones. • **Balancing Interests of Dog Owners and Non-Dog Owners** - Calls for Council policy to equitably consider both dog owners' needs and non-dog owners' rights, ensuring fair allocation of beach space and preventing one group from dominating decision-making.
New Dog Parks	
Dog Owners	• **Localised Gaps in Off-Leash Provision** - Many specific communities (e.g., Maleny, Eumundi, Coolum) lack or have insufficient nearby off-leash areas, prompting calls for targeted facility additions. • **Demand for Fenced & Segregated Dog Parks** - Frequent requests for fully fenced parks with separate zones for large and small dogs to ensure safety and containment. • **Desire for Natural, Unfenced Off-Leash Spaces** - Many owners prefer large, open, natural environments like beaches and bush trails where dogs can run freely without confinement. • **Need for Enhanced Dog Park Amenities** - Calls for additional features such as agility equipment, water play areas, seating, shade and washdown stations to improve dog park usability and stimulation. • **Need for Clear Signage, Regulation & Owner Education** - Request for improved signage, enforcement of current rules, training classes and licensing to promote responsible pet ownership and reduce conflicts. • **Proactive Planning for Projected Dog Population Growth** - Many comments stress the need to upscale off-leash facilities in line with forecast increases in dog ownership, to avoid future shortages. • **Accessibility for Elderly, Disabled & Apartment Dwellers** - Feedback underscores the need for nearby, easily accessible dog areas, especially for seniors, people with mobility issues and residents without private yards. • **Social & Mental Health Benefits of Dog Exercise Areas** - Many note the positive impact of dog parks on mental wellbeing and community cohesion, highlighting social interaction and loneliness reduction. • **Inadequate Provision of Off-Leash Dog Areas** - Many respondents indicate that current off-leash areas are insufficient in number and size, and express concern over potential reductions to existing spaces. • **Opposition to Fenced Dog Parks** - Negative sentiment toward fenced dog parks, viewed as hazardous, unsanitary, unnatural, and promoting aggression and disease.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Overcrowding and Space Constraints** - Concerns that decreasing space and consolidating dog exercise areas will lead to overcrowding, increased conflicts, and safety issues for both dogs and people. • **Call for Enforcement and Education Instead of Restrictions** - Calls for better policing of irresponsible dog owners and educational initiatives rather than imposing blanket restrictions on the majority of users. • **Lack of Transparency and Evidence** - Criticism that the Council's plans lack clear evidence and justification, with calls for data disclosure and genuine community consultation. • **Cost Concerns and Waste of Public Funds** - Frequent complaints about the high cost of creating and maintaining fenced dog parks, viewed as poor use of ratepayer money when existing areas suffice. • **Impact on Dog and Owner Wellbeing** - Concerns that limited off-leash access and restrictive environments will negatively affect the physical and mental health of dogs and their owners. • **Accessibility and Location Issues** - Feedback on new proposed dog areas being out of walking distance or poorly located, forcing reliance on cars and limiting non-driving residents' access. • **Perceived Anti-Dog Owner Bias** - Perception that the Plan unfairly targets dog owners, treating them as second-class citizens compared to non-dog users.
Non-dog Owners	• **Fenced and Enclosed Dog Parks** - A strong preference for off-leash dog areas to be securely fenced or enclosed to ensure safety and control. • **Location Separation from Beaches and Popular/Public Areas** - Feedback emphasising that dog areas should be situated away from beaches, environmental parks, and high-traffic public or family-friendly spaces to reduce conflicts. • **Enforcement and Monitoring of Leash Rules** - Calls for consistent enforcement, patrolling, and policing of leash regulations in and around dog exercise areas to promote compliance. • **Infrastructure, Site Design, and Maintenance** - Requests for well-designed dog areas with adequate facilities (e.g., entry points, parking, waste management) and proper maintenance to enhance user experience. • **Accessibility and Distribution for Urban Growth** - Highlighting the need for more local dog areas as population and pet ownership rise, particularly in areas with smaller residential lots and limited backyard space. • **Safety and Controlled Environments** - Emphasis on creating secure spaces to ensure both dogs and the public are safe, minimising aggression, swarming, and uncontrolled interactions. • **Social and Health Benefits of Dog Parks** - Recognition of exercise areas contributing to physical health, social connectivity, mental well-being, and therapy for various community groups. • **Environmental Protection** - Desire to protect sensitive ecosystems by avoiding environmentally significant areas and locating dog parks in lower-impact sites. • **Segregation by Dog Size and Area Capacity** - Calls for dedicated zones by dog size and appropriate sizing or density planning to reduce conflict and promote positive social interaction. • **Opposition to expanding off-leash areas** - Resistance against creating additional off-leash or dog exercise areas, noting that existing spaces are sufficient and opposing any amendments to increase them. • **Financial burden and fairness concerns** - Criticism of the cost of building and maintaining new dog facilities, arguing it's unfair for non-dog-owning ratepayers to subsidise them. • **Inadequate facility design, size, and maintenance** - Feedback highlighting that current or proposed fenced dog parks are too small, poorly maintained, and lack amenities like parking or proper landscaping.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Irresponsible dog owner behaviour** - Complaints about dog owners not picking up waste, failing to supervise or exercise dogs properly, resulting in unsafe or unsanitary environments. • **Lack of consultation and perceived bias** - Criticism that planning favours dog owners without sufficient community or stakeholder consultation, suggesting biased decision-making. • **Alternative solutions over park expansion** - Suggestions to focus on owner education, leash enforcement, and better compliance measures instead of creating new off-leash zones. • **Preservation of natural open spaces** - Opposition to replacing natural areas with constructed dog parks, urging to maintain existing open green spaces for general public use. • **Equity concerns across pet and non-pet owners** - Arguments that dog owners receive disproportionate public resources compared to non-dog owners and owners of other pets, challenging the special treatment of dogs. • **Owner suitability and dwelling considerations** - Recommendations to impose ownership restrictions based on dwelling size, breed suitability, and owner capacity rather than expanding public dog facilities.
Environment Reserves	
Dog Owners	• **Expanded On-Leash Access to Conservation Areas** - Feedback calls for more on-leash access within environmental reserves and natural areas, with dog owners seeking designated on-leash paths to maintain connectivity without harming habitats. • **Environmental Conservation and Wildlife Protection** - Emphasis on the importance of conserving native species, habitats, and endangered wildlife, with many advocating for strict no-dog zones in sensitive areas. • **Enforcement, Compliance Checks, and Ranger Presence** - Numerous suggestions for better enforcement of existing rules through warnings, fines, employing rangers, and more frequent compliance checks to deter irresponsible behaviour. • **Signage, Education, and Communication of Regulations** - Calls for clearer signage, public education campaigns, and transparent communication of plan changes and maps to ensure dog owners understand and follow area-specific rules. • **Responsible Dog Ownership Practices** - Feedback highlights the role of responsible behaviour—staying on paths, keeping dogs leashed, cleaning up waste—to minimise environmental and community impacts. • **Seasonal and Localised Access Restrictions** - Suggestions to use seasonal or area-specific closures (e.g., turtle nesting seasons) rather than blanket bans, allowing more flexibility while still protecting sensitive habitats when needed. • **Balancing Community Needs with Conservation Values** - Many advocate finding a fair balance between dog owner needs and the protection of the natural environment, recognizing that both community wellbeing and wildlife conservation are important. • **Dog Owners as Environmental Stewards** - Assertions that responsible dog owners actively care for the environment by picking up litter, removing weeds, and reducing congestion on fragile paths. • **Collaboration with Park Authorities and Best Practices** - Suggestions to partner with national/state parks and learn from other regions that allow controlled off-leash access to trails, implementing best practices and partnerships to expand dog-friendly areas. • **Social and Health Benefits of Dog Walking** - Emphasis on the physical, mental, and social well-being of dog owners, including inclusion of families, elderly, and people with disabilities. • **Maintenance of Current Dog Access** - Opposition to any reduction or change to existing dog access areas; a desire to keep current off-leash and on-leash provisions unchanged.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Concerns About Environmental Damage from Dogs** - Worries that dog waste, damage to flora, water degradation, and disease transmission threaten sensitive natural areas. • **Public Safety and Amenity Concerns** - Concerns about unpredictable or aggressive dog behaviour, noise, dog fights, and waste left in shared spaces, negatively affecting other users' experiences. • **Off-Leash Exercise and Hiking Opportunities** - Many dog owners express frustration over limited off-leash areas in bushland and trails and request more opportunities for off-lead hiking and bushwalking beyond fenced parks. • **Demand for Evidence-Based Environmental Justification** - Calls for clear data and scientific studies to substantiate claims of environmental harm before imposing dog access restrictions. • **Advocacy for Alternative Management Measures** - Suggestions to use education, signage, targeted restrictions, fines, and patrols instead of blanket bans on dog access. • **Perceived Policy Unfairness and Revenue Motives** - Criticism that dog registration fees fund the Council, yet dog owners face new restrictions and fines, while other polluters go unchecked. • **Impracticality of Leash Requirements** - Concerns that on-leash rules are overly restrictive, cumbersome, and unsafe for dogs and owners in certain environments. • **Opposition to Fenced-in Dog Parks** - Resistance to proposals for fenced dog areas, seen as unnatural, risking dog fights, disease spread, and appearing as 'prisons'. • **Protect Access to Key Local Dog Walking Sites** - Specific objections to restricting dog access at popular local trails and reserves such as Maleny, North Shore, and Stumers Creek.
Non-dog Owners	• **Wildlife and Habitat Disturbance** - Frequent concerns about dogs disturbing and harming native wildlife, including feeding water birds, migratory shorebirds, loggerhead turtles, and ground-dwelling species, leading to habitat degradation. • **Leash Regulations and Dog Control** - Regular calls for mandatory on-leash requirements in public and environmentally sensitive areas to minimise disturbance to wildlife and reduce negative interactions with other users. • **Prohibition of Dogs in Sensitive Environmental and Conservation Areas** - Support for completely banning or curtailing dog access in key conservation zones—national parks, wildlife reserves, beaches, and bushland—to protect biodiversity and prevent degradation. • **Designated Off-Leash Areas and Dog Exercise Zone Planning** - Suggestions to establish well-planned, mainly fenced off-leash dog areas (DOLAs) and adjust existing zones to separate dog exercise from ecologically fragile or protected environments. • **Enforcement, Education and Compliance Measures** - Calls for stronger enforcement—including patrols, clear signage, fines—and public education campaigns to improve adherence to dog rules and protect people and wildlife. • **Call for Stronger Environmental Impact Assessments & Mitigation Strategies** - Feedback requests that planning for dog areas include rigorous environmental impact assessments and mitigation measures to safeguard sensitive ecosystems and native fauna. • **Cultural Attitudes and Prioritisation** - A desire to shift local culture so that human recreation and protection of native wildlife take priority over unrestricted dog access. • **Opposition to Dog Access in Environmental Reserves & National Parks** - Opposition to any dog access in environmental reserves and national parks, citing wildlife protection and the belief that these areas should be preserved from dogs entirely. • **Wildlife Disturbance and Species Threat from Dogs** - Feedback highlights instances of dogs disturbing or harming wildlife, including chasing, predation of native species, and threats to endangered birds and turtle hatchlings. • **Lack of Enforcement and Compliance with Dog Regulations** - Concern over inadequate policing and enforcement of dog area rules, leading to frequent rule-breaking and ineffective seasonal bans.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Dog Waste and Hygiene Concerns** - Residents express frustration with dog faeces in public spaces, polluting paths and sensitive habitats, harming native species, and undermining recreational enjoyment, highlighting health hazards and the irresponsibility of owners who fail to pick up after their pets. • **Public Health and Safety Concerns** - Concerns regarding health risks to families and children in water areas, incidences of dogs chasing wildlife or people, and potential dog attacks when unrestrained. • **Public Safety and Comfort for Non-Dog Owners** - Feedback emphasises the need for public spaces where non-dog owners, especially families with children, can feel safe and comfortable without interference from dogs or irresponsible owners. • **Rebalancing Public Space Privileges Against Dog Owners** - Some respondents call for shifting priorities away from dog owners towards other residents and visitors, arguing that dogs have received disproportionate access to natural areas. • **Perceived Minimal Environmental Impact & Advocacy to Retain Current Access in Specific Areas** - Some comments argue that certain natural zones experience minimal impact from dogs and should remain unchanged, highlighting owner responsibility and low population in these areas.
Sports Fields	
Dog Owners	• **Retention of Existing Maleny Showgrounds Dog Exercise Area** - Feedback emphasised the importance of maintaining the current unfenced dog exercise area within the equestrian section of the Maleny Showgrounds in the new proposal, citing its alignment with assessment aims and community value. • **Extended Off-Leash Time Windows and Family-Friendly Access** - Several comments highlighted that the current limited off-leash hours (e.g., 4am–8am) are unsuitable for many families and suggested extending off-leash availability, as well as allowing dogs to accompany families to sports events and training. • **Fencing Infrastructure Improvements** - Feedback called for more parks and oval areas to be fully fenced, acknowledging recent fencing projects like Coochin Park while requesting similar measures at Currimundi cricket oval, Grahame Stuart Park, and others to improve safety. • **Social and Familial Role of Dogs at Community Events and Gatherings** - Bringing dogs to sports events foster community bonds and supports social inclusion for families, elderly, disabled individuals, and others who view pets as integral members sharing in local activities. • **Support for Dog Sports Clubs and Training Facilities** - Many respondents noted the growth of dog sports, the need for dedicated, funded venues, and supported opening sports grounds to local dog training businesses and clubs that responsibly manage dog exercise and foster community. • **Shared Use of Underutilised Sports Grounds for Dog Exercise** - Many respondents noted that sports fields, often unused outside peak sporting activities, could efficiently serve as dog exercise areas (on or off-leash) with proper controls, leveraging existing infrastructure and potentially reducing costs of new facilities. • **Opposition to Proposed Amendments Restricting Dogs from Sports Grounds** - Many dog owners strongly oppose the proposed changes that would ban or limit dog access on sports grounds, viewing them as unnecessary, overly restrictive, and punitive toward responsible pet owners. • **Importance of Sports Grounds for Dog Exercise, Training, and After-Hours Use** - Sports fields provide much-needed open space for dogs to exercise, train on long-lines, and roam safely when games are not in session, offering flexibility that dedicated off-leash areas lack. • **Inadequacy of Alternative Dog Facilities (Fenced Dog Parks)** - Fenced or purpose-built off-leash areas are criticised for poor conditions—such as mosquito infestations, swamp-like terrain, lack of space, and heightened reactivity—making them less desirable than open sports fields.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Concerns Over Dog Waste and the Call for Evidence-Based Solutions** - While some fear dog waste on sports fields poses health hazards, many owners argue that irresponsible behaviour by a few shouldn't lead to blanket bans and question whether evidence supports such restrictions. • **Satisfaction with the Status Quo:** Belief that current dog access balances needs - Some community members feel the existing mix of dog-friendly and non-dog areas is appropriate and that further restrictions would disrupt an already balanced system without addressing real issues.
Non-dog Owners	• **Complete dog ban at sports grounds -** Feedback advocating for a total prohibition of dogs on sports grounds due to overcrowding and safety concerns. • **Safety concerns in recreational areas** - Frequent worries about dogs posing physical danger to park and sports field users, including children and wildlife, when roaming freely in shared spaces. • **Calls for dog-free community and sporting areas** - Demands to ban dogs from sports fields, reserves, and community recreation areas to ensure these spaces serve all residents without dog-related hazards or disruptions. • **Clear, time-based dog access policy -** Suggestions and concerns about clarifying when dogs are allowed in sports grounds, proposing time-limited access during non-peak hours and practical resource use. • **Negative impact on non-dog owners' recreational experience** - Comments on how dog presence, fouling, and disruptive behaviour diminish enjoyment of parks and picnics, with concerns about uncollected waste, bag disposal, and unpleasant smells interfering with leisure activities. • **Opposition to restrictions limiting dog owners' freedom** - Frustration that new proposals would unjustly limit dog owners' rights to use public spaces, viewing the changes as punitive, unnecessary, and a threat to current freedoms.

3.3.7 Additional Comments

Respondents were asked *"Do you have any further comments or ideas to share on the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint"?* Additional feedback/comments have been summarised into key themes and are captured in Table 7.

Table 7. Additional feedback/comments

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Dog Owners	• **Public Safety & Personal Comfort** - Many dog owners express concerns about personal safety and comfort, citing incidents of dogs running up, jumping, aggressive behaviour, and the fear of being knocked over or accosted. • **Environmental & Wildlife Protection -** Many respondents emphasise the need to protect native fauna and sensitive habitats from dog disturbances, urging no-dog zones and restrictions to safeguard turtles, shorebirds, and dune ecosystems. • **Responsible Dog Ownership & Cleanliness** - Many comments highlight frustration with dog owners failing to pick up after their pets, advocating for greater personal responsibility and cleanliness to maintain public spaces. • **Enforcement & Regulatory Compliance** - Many respondents call for stricter enforcement of dog rules through heavier fines, increased ranger patrols, and stronger compliance measures to deter irresponsible behaviour.

Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Leash Policies & Zoning Restrictions** - Many comments advocate for clear zoning of on-leash versus off-leash areas, especially mandating leash use on beaches and in busy public spaces to enhance safety and comfort. • **Support for the Draft Dog Exercise Area Plan -** Many respondents express strong backing for the proposed plan, praising its thoughtfulness, balanced approach to safety, and environmental considerations. • **Council Communication & Plan Quality Appreciation** - Many users commend the clarity and quality of the draft Plan, praising the Council's data-led, thorough approach and inclusive consultation process. • **Opposition to Additional Dog Areas** - A significant portion of feedback rejects the expansion of off-leash areas or new dog parks, asserting existing spaces are sufficient or excessive. • **Dog Exercise Area Design & Amenities** - Feedback highlights the importance of well-designed exercise areas with adequate amenities—fencing, shade, seating—and features like size segregation to enhance usability and safety. • **Social & Mental Health Benefits** - Some feedback emphasises the positive impact of dog exercise areas on mental health, reducing social isolation, and fostering community engagement. • **Preserve Existing Off-Leash Beaches** - Opposition to any reduction or alteration of current off-leash dog beach and foreshore areas, with frequent calls to maintain the status quo at key locations. • **Expansion of Off-Leash Dog Areas -** Frequent requests for additional and diverse off-leash spaces across beaches, parks, and trails to accommodate a growing dog population and reduce travel. • **Mental Health and Community Cohesion** - Dog exercise areas are seen as vital contributors to personal well-being, social interaction, and community bonds; restrictions are viewed as threats to mental health and social harmony. • **Economic and Tourism Impact -** Off-leash dog areas are highlighted as drivers of tourism, local business income, and property values; limiting access is seen as risking visitor numbers and economic benefits. • **Lack of Consultation and Transparency -** Council's engagement process is criticised for inadequate community consultation, poor communication, opaque plans, and insufficient transparency toward dog owners. • **Environmental Concerns Lacked Evidence** - Repeated challenges to Council's environmental justifications (e.g., shorebirds, nesting habitat), citing lack of evidence and contrast with other permitted developments. • **Unsuitability of Fenced Dog Parks** - View that fenced dog parks are poor substitutes for open beaches due to limited size, overcrowding, disease risk, and negative impacts on dog behaviour. • **Excessive Fines and Enforcement** - Criticism of harsh enforcement measures, excessive fines (e.g., $806 penalties), perceived revenue-raising motives, and inconsistent ranger presence. • **Accessibility and Inclusivity Issues** - Concerns that proposed restrictions disproportionately impact elderly, disabled, and families with young children by creating unsafe or inaccessible off-leash areas. • **Misplaced Council Priorities and Spending** - Views that Council is misallocating resources on secretive plans and consultants for dog exercise areas instead of addressing pressing issues like housing, infrastructure, and core community needs.
Non-dog Owners	• **Safety and Harassment by Uncontrolled Dogs** - Frequent reports of off-leash dogs engaging in aggressive behaviour such as chasing, biting, jumping on people, causing fear and safety hazards for beach users, particularly families and children. • **Dog Waste and Hygiene Issues** - Widespread concern about dog faeces, urine, and waste bags littering beaches, creek outlets, dunes, and parks, creating unsanitary conditions, foul odours, and health hazards.

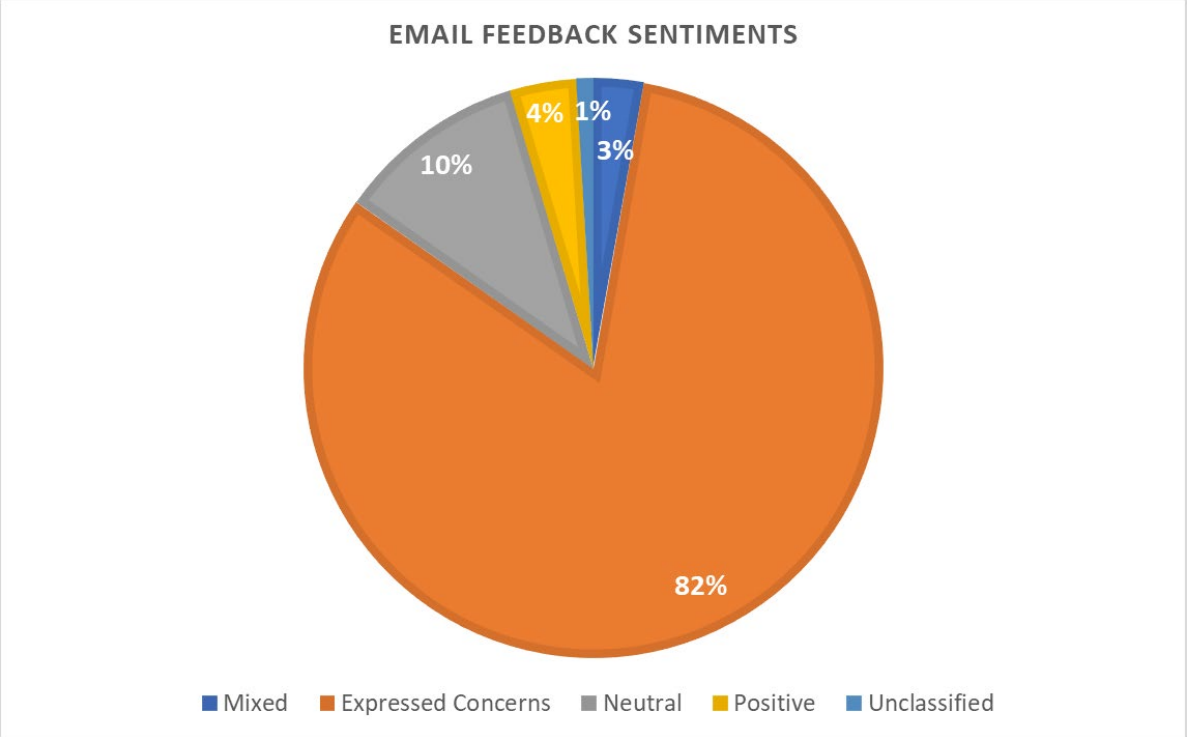
Group	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• **Environmental Impact on Wildlife and Ecosystems** - Dogs disturbing fragile dune ecosystems, eroding dunes and trampling native vegetation, preying on or disrupting wildlife including turtle and shorebird nests, and harming overall biodiversity. • **Inadequate Enforcement of Regulations -** Observation that existing dog management rules are poorly enforced, with minimal policing or presence of control officers, leading to widespread non-compliance and calls for stronger enforcement and visible fines. • **On-Leash vs Off-Leash Zoning and Access Distribution** - Debate over the allocation of beach space between dogs and people, with calls to reduce off-leash areas (DOLAs), expand on-leash or dog-free zones, and ensure fair access for non-dog owners. • **Dog Owner Responsibility and Education -** Advocacy for improved owner education, accountability, and training to ensure owners keep dogs under control, clean up after them, and respect public and environmental spaces. • **Infrastructure Needs:** Fencing, Facilities, and Signage - Requests for physical infrastructure improvements such as fenced off-leash areas, protective dune fencing, water taps and showers for dogs, and clear signage to manage dog access and protect sensitive zones. • **Community Division and Dog Owner Dominance** - Tension between dog owners and non-dog owners, with non-dog owners feeling marginalised, believing dog owners have disproportionate influence and show little empathy or respect. • **Health and Food Safety Concerns** - Concerns about dogs being allowed in proximity to food preparation and service areas, raising hygiene and disease transmission risks in restaurants, cafes, and dog parks. • **Supportive Feedback for draft Plan** - Expressions of appreciation and endorsement of the Council's draft dog management plan, commending the environmental considerations and proposed public safety measures. • **Expansion and Preservation of Off-Leash Areas -** Frequent appeals to protect current off-leash beaches and parks, oppose restrictions, and create additional or extended off-leash areas and times to accommodate dog owners. • **Site-Specific Off-Leash Area Proposals** - Consolidates feedback centred on specific locations (e.g., Stumers Creek, Ballinger Beach, Point Cartwright) where participants request to maintain, restore, or adjust off-leash access. • **Critique of Council's Consultation, Transparency, and Decision-Making** - Expresses distrust in the Council's processes, criticising short consultation periods, perceived bias, predetermined outcomes, and lack of transparency in planning. • **Debate Over Environmental Impact Justifications** - Challenges the environmental rationale used to justify dog area restrictions, calling for solid evidence, pointing out minimal dog impact, and highlighting other sources of pollution. • **Calls for Improved Enforcement and Recognition of Responsible Ownership** - Highlights concerns over insufficient enforcement and signage, stressing that responsible dog owners should not be penalised for the actions of a few irresponsible owners. • **Social and Mental Health Benefits of Dog-Friendly Public Spaces** - Underlines the social and mental health benefits of dog-friendly public spaces, emphasising community interaction, stress relief, and importance for vulnerable groups like the elderly and disabled. • **Accessibility and Safety Concerns Related to Proposed Changes** - Raises issues around increased distance, dangerous creek crossings, parking limitations, and emergency access caused by relocating or restricting off-leash areas. • **Desire for Enhanced Dog-Related Facilities and Amenities** - Requests for enhanced amenities such as dog cafes, picnic seats, BBQ facilities, drinking taps, and shaded areas to improve dog exercise locations and visitor comfort. • **Criticism of Council Resource Allocation and Priorities** - Feedback that the Council is misallocating resources on consultants, planning tools, and fences rather than addressing more pressing issues or delivering effective compliance.

4.0 Submissions & Emails

4.1 Participation

The report has analysed 216 emails that were received from community members. Figure 25 provides a breakdown of the feedback sentiments. As can be seen, a large proportion of emails (82% or 177) were received from community members expressing concerns. A summary of the key findings is noted below.

Figure 25. Email Feedback Sentiments



4.2 Key Findings

Common themes from the email feedback are shown in the table below with corresponding sentiments for each. The top three common themes mentioned included opposition to off-leash reductions and beach access restrictions (22%), concerns about consultation and transparency (13%) and the need to maintain or expand off-leash areas (11%).

Table 8. Summary of email feedback sentiments by theme and sentiments

Theme	Total Mentions	Mixed	Expressed Concerns	Neutral	Positive
Accessibility & inclusion	4%	0%	93%	7%	0%
Balanced or compromise approach	5%	0%	94%	3%	3%
Community & economic well-being	7%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Concerns about consultation & transparency	13%	0%	89%	11%	0%
Council decision-making & survey bias	6%	3%	97%	0%	0%
Dog ownership & positive off- leash experiences	6%	0%	85%	0%	15%
Environmental impact concerns	9%	2%	90%	8%	0%
Need to maintain or expand off-leash areas	11%	1%	85%	9%	5%
Opposition to off-leash reductions & beach access restrictions	22%	1%	93%	1%	4%
Parking & emergency access	4%	0%	93%	3%	3%
Signage & communication gaps	4%	0%	64%	29%	4%
Stumers creek safety & access	8%	0%	98%	0%	2%

A detailed summary of each theme in the emails is included in Table 9. Feedback included concerns over changes to beach access and the impact this would have on health and wellbeing of humans and dogs. Concerns also raised in relation to impacts of dogs on the environment and wildlife. Additional concern regarding the evidence base of data and research on environmental impacts. Unclear signage and safety for dogs in fenced areas was also raised as concerns.

Other feedback received including support for prioritising environmental concerns. Other sentiments captured included many dog owners actively participating in community clean-up efforts and contributing to environmental stewardship by removing rubbish and protecting wildlife.

Table 9. Summary of email feedback key points by theme

Theme	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Accessibility & Inclusion	• Impact on elderly, the necessity of flat, easy-access areas, and the discrimination that could result from the proposed changes. • Safety concerns are raised about crossing the creek (Stumers), and there is a request for additional accessible parking.

Theme	Key Feedback/Sentiments
Balanced or Compromise Approach	• The need for a balanced approach that considers the interests of different beachgoers, the practicality of access restrictions, and the importance of environmental protection. • Confusion over terms used in the draft Plan, and the perception that proposals may be biased against dog owners. • Emphasis on maintaining community access while ensuring environmental safety and accommodating the growing dog ownership population. • Requests for keeping certain areas open for off-leash activities or for implementing time-based restrictions that would permit off-leash access during less busy hours.
Community & Economic Well-Being	• Concern over the potential changes from off-leash to on-leash access to Stumers Creek, emphasising the importance of this area for mental health, community well-being, and social interaction. • Concerns related to economic and tourism aspects in Coolum Beach, with a particular focus on the implications of local-law changes affecting local businesses and the community.
Concerns about Consultation & Transparency	• Dissatisfaction with the lack of genuine inclusion of dog owners in the planning stages, leading to a misunderstanding of the community's needs and potential disregard for their concerns. • The consultation documents are described as lengthy and difficult to read, with summaries that lack detail, contributing to a lack of accessibility and inclusiveness. • Sentiment that Council has made decisions without proper consultation, particularly regarding signage and the potential closure of dog areas, which is seen as rendering the process ineffective. • Concerns over the lack of transparency, inclusivity, and accessibility in the consultation process. • Sentiment that Council has not provided sufficient opportunities for informed participation, with requests for more after-hours sessions, longer consultation periods, and the inclusion of diverse feedback mechanisms.
Council Decision-Making & Survey Bias	• Dissatisfaction with Council's decision-making process regarding the management of open spaces, specifically the reduction of off-leash dog areas. • Opposition to the changes, scepticism about Council's consideration of dog owners' concerns. • Dissatisfaction with the survey construction and results • Concerns and suggestions regarding the budgeting and financial disclosure of the project.
Dog Ownership & Off- Leash Experiences	• Sense of frustration over the lack of representation and input from dog owners in the decision-making process. • Suggestion that dog owners actively participating in community clean-up efforts and contributing to environmental stewardship by removing rubbish and protecting wildlife. • Concerns about dog waste management, with some owners not picking up after their pets or leaving bagged waste on the beach. • Issues with dog control, such as dogs knocking down people, intimidating beach visitors, and causing safety concerns, especially at Wurtulla Beach and around the Currimundi lake mouth.

Theme	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	• Suggestions for a balanced approach to maintain off-leash dog areas while addressing these concerns, and for education to address issues with dog poo rather than imposing restrictions. • Feedback highlights the various benefits that beach access provide, including physical and mental stimulation for both dogs and owners, health benefits, opportunities for social interaction, and bonding.
Environmental Impact Concerns	• Concerns on environmental impact of dogs in natural areas, beaches and rocky foreshores. • It was the view of some that responsible dog ownership can minimise environmental impact, and that dogs may not be as harmful to the environment as portrayed. • Questioning the evidence used to justify restrictions on dog access due to environmental concerns.
Need to Maintain or Expand Off-Leash Areas	• Community's opposition to proposed changes to dog off-leash areas, particularly at Stumers Creek and other beaches. • Sentiment against more restrictive rules, fines, and the creation of fenced dog parks, which are seen as inferior to beaches. • Concerns and demands regarding off-leash dog areas, particularly on beaches. • Dissatisfaction with Council's previous decision to remove off-leash access at La Balsa/Point Cartwright • Sentiment against the proposed changes to off-leash beach access at Stumers Creek and other areas • More information on accessible off-leash areas for people with mobility challenges. • Community's desire to maintain and potentially expand the existing off-leash areas for dogs. • Some support for changing certain areas to on-leash due to safety concerns, such as personal experiences of being bitten by dogs. • Inadequacy of Council's draft blueprint plan in providing a variety of spaces suitable for dogs of different sizes and the need for water activities. • Eumundi district and Peregian Springs are mentioned as lacking planned dog exercise areas, and there is a call for immediate action rather than adhering to a proposed five-year plan.
Opposition to Off-Leash Reductions & Beach Access Restrictions	• Sentiment that these areas are essential for both local and visiting community members, and that the proposed changes could negatively affect the quality of life for dogs and their owners, especially those with mobility issues. • Feedback suggests a collective opposition to the proposed changes and a desire for more, not fewer, dog-friendly areas to accommodate the growing population and number of dog owners. • There is a fear of a hidden agenda behind the changes, and a belief that the proposed reductions are not in the best interest of the local community. • Concerns about the impact on safety, accessibility, and the potential for increased conflict and overcrowding in the remaining areas. • Concern that the draft Shorebird Conservation Plan proposes to restrict access to public beaches and to close or restrict off-leash dog beaches. Concerns about the

Theme	Key Feedback/Sentiments
	potential impact on tourism, as visitors with dogs may reconsider their holiday plans. • Request for clear information on current and proposed beach access rules, and a suggestion for a seasonal approach to dog access on beaches. • Fear of increased isolation for vulnerable populations if access to these areas is restricted. • Concern over the effectiveness and necessity of on-leash regulations, with many respondents citing personal experiences of dog attacks even with leashed dogs or questioning the need for such rules during quiet times. • Fear that enforcing leash rules could lead to more dog fights and behavioural issues, which could be used to justify further restrictions on dog owners.
Parking & Emergency Access	• Lack of accessibility parking- request for additional disabled parking. • Risk of overcrowding due to parking constraints. • Sentiment that the current Plan fails to adequately address parking and emergency access issues.
Signage & Communication Gaps	• Signage and information clarity at various access points, particularly at Coolum access point and Currimundi lake access for dogs. • Proposal for Council to erect warning signs about possible bird presence instead of prohibiting dog access to areas. • Request for improved signage that delineates on and off-leash sections and informs non-dog owners about dog etiquette and behaviour.
Stumers Creek Safety & Access	• Concerns about the safety and accessibility of the area, especially for elderly, disabled residents, and families with young children. • Concerns about the practicality of the Plan, including the risks associated with crossing the creek, the lack of parking and emergency access, and the potential for overcrowding and safety issues. • Community's deep connection to Stumers Creek, which is seen as an important social space that fosters well-being, social interactions, and serves as a hub for various community members, including dog owners, the elderly, and those recovering from trauma.

5.0 Key Observations / Opportunities

Key information raised by the community is summarised in the Tables 10-19 below with corresponding opportunities for the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint. Key themes include the following:

- Environmental Impact
- Beaches and Foreshore Access
- Sports Fields
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Community and Well-Being
- Signage and Communication
- Dog Parks Amenities and Features
- Parking and Infrastructure
- Regulations and Enforcement
- Responsible Dog Ownership

ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 10. Environmental Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
General Environmental Impact	• Concerns on environmental impact of dogs in various natural areas, beaches and foreshores. • Concerns about dogs chasing wildlife, causing disturbances, and the lack of control by their owners.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108; Strategic Action 5, PG 109 – 112)
Data and Evidence Gaps	• Perceived lack of evidence regarding the impact on shorebirds with data referenced in the Plan • Questioning the evidence used to justify restrictions on dog access due to environmental concerns. • Call for current evidence-based studies and impact assessments to substantiate the claims made in the report.	Addressed in draft: (Desired standards of service, PG 43, Strategic Action 4, PG 107 – 108), and existing reference to Exiting Federal and State legislation). Consider including annual shorebird survey reports in references of Plan.
Protect Shorebird Habitats	• Effectiveness of prohibiting dogs from areas identified as shorebird habitat.	Addressed in draft:

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
		Assessed through Multi-Criteria Risk Assessments and Pairwise analysis. (Desired standards of service, PG 43, Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108; Strategic Action 5, PG 109 – 112) Shorebird Conservation Plan provides direction on shorebird conservation outcomes. Consider including annual shorebird survey reports in references of Plan.
Protection of Highly Sensitive Environments	• Suggestions for compromise, such as on-leash or time-restricted access, are common, reflecting a desire for balanced solutions. • Dogs should be on-lead in environmental reserves with some supporting complete bans, whilst others suggest that on-leash is sufficient. • Prohibited areas for dogs may assist with managing biosecurity management such as Phytophthora disease (Bunya dieback).	Addressed in draft: Assessed through Multi-Criteria Risk Assessments and Pairwise analysis. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108; Strategic Action 5, PG 109 – 112)

BEACHES AND FORESHORE ACCESS

Table 11. Beaches and Foreshore Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Maintenance and Expansion of Off-leash Areas (Beaches)	• Community desire to maintain and potentially expand off-leash beach areas for dogs. • Some have expressed a preference for beach access over fenced parks.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings in the Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment (MCRA) based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments to provide dog off-leash access to beach locations where deemed suitable through MCRA. Review at 5-year intervals. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)
Overcrowding due to proposed reductions to beach access	• Concerns about overcrowding at dog-friendly beaches if access is reduced elsewhere.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
		community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments to provide dog off-leash access to beach locations where deemed suitable through MCRA. Review at 5-year intervals. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)
High Value of Beach for Dogs	• Community sentiment valuing the presence of dog-friendly beaches as part of a lifestyle that includes enjoying outdoor spaces with pets. • Desire for more natural off-leash areas, such as dams, rivers, and beaches, indicating a preference for environments that allow dogs to engage in more instinctual behaviours.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments to provide dog off-leash access to beach locations where deemed suitable through MCRA. Review at 5-year intervals. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)
Reducing Beach Access due to Environmental and Safety Concerns	• Restricting dog access from some beaches due to environmental concerns and the need for conservation. • Consideration for the safety of beachgoers, particularly children e.g. fear of being chased by dogs.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments to provide dog off-leash access to beach locations where deemed suitable through MCRA. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)
Stumers Creek/Coolum	• Sentiment against the proposed changes to existing off-leash beach areas like Stumers Creek. • Opposition to reducing off-leash beach areas, with emphasis on the community and mental health benefits of the current setup. • Recognition of Stumers Creek's role in local tourism and its economic benefits to the community.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments to provide dog off-leash access to beach locations where deemed suitable through MCRA.

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Rocky Foreshores and Headlands (Moffat Headland, Caloundra Headland, Point Perry, Point Arkwright, Alexandra Headland and Point Cartwright)	• Concerns about the prohibition of dogs in these areas, with some arguing that dogs do not harm the environment, wildlife, or rocky platforms. • Opposition to reducing off-leash and on-leash dog areas, particularly at Moffat Headland. • Mixed opinions on environmental concerns, with some advocating for stricter restrictions and others questioning the impact of dogs compared to human activities.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments, where deemed suitable through MCRA. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)
Golden Beach	• Demand for more off-leash dog areas, particularly for swimming and in less crowded or less environmentally sensitive areas.	Considered in draft Plan, however State Marine Park regulations apply. (Section 11 PG 40 – 49)
Mudjimba South	• Some concerns about dune erosion, wildlife harm, and limited space during high tide. • Feedback expressing support for the additional off-leash area as a compromise for the seasonal restriction at a section of North Shore.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments, where deemed suitable through MCRA. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)
Currimundi to Ballinger Beach	• Opposition to reducing off-leash areas. • Concerns about overcrowding and increased pressure on Ballinger Beach due to the closure of other off-leash areas like Point Cartwright. • Opposition to restricting dog access, particularly at access points 261 and 262, due to the impact on elderly and disabled individuals who rely on the disability ramp.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments, where deemed suitable through MCRA. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)
North Shore/Mudjimba	• Opposition to proposed restrictions on dog access, citing lack of evidence for environmental impact, particularly on shorebirds. • Mixed opinions on environmental concerns, with some supporting seasonal closures for shorebird protection and others questioning the validity of such measures. • Recognition of North Shore as a safer and more accessible area compared to open beaches, particularly for vulnerable groups. • Opposition to reducing off-leash areas. • Environmental concerns, such as the impact on nesting shorebirds and turtles.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments, where deemed suitable through MCRA. (Strategic Action 4, PG 107-108)

SPORTS FIELDS

Table 12. Sports Fields Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Shared Use/ Off-limits to Dogs due to Health and Safety	• View that sports grounds are an underutilised space with perception that sports fields are empty during the day, consideration for shared use with dogs outside of sports time/peak sports season. • Mixed views regarding whether dogs should be allowed on sports grounds on-lead or off lead. • View that sports grounds should be off limits to dogs for health and safety reasons including irresponsible dog owners.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 3, PG 107) Currently proposed for dogs to be permitted on-leash in common or surround areas only and prohibited from the active playing surface.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Table 13. Accessibility and Inclusion Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Need for Accessible Beach Access	• Ensuring that beaches and dog-friendly areas are accessible to individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those with mobility challenges e.g. availability of ramps and flat entries.	Consider reference in draft Plan to expand information on disability access to beaches, Section 11, PG 41
Dog parks within Walking Distance	• The need for these areas to be accessible by walking, especially for those without personal transport. • The need to elaborate on the opportunity the community has to walk their dog on-leash using the network of approximately 1,600km of pedestrian footpaths.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106) Consider update to Plan to expand on description of on-leash pathways (Section 9 PG 32).
Elderly and Disabled Access	• Current draft Plan could further consider the needs of elderly, disabled, and dog owners, especially with the proposed removal of off-leash areas and accessible ramps.	Consider including reference in draft Plan to expand information on disability access to beaches, Section 11, PG 41.
Accessibility for Elderly Dogs	• Impact on elderly dogs, the necessity of flat, easy-access areas.	Consider reference in draft Plan to expand information on disability access to beaches, Section 11, PG 41.

COMMUNITY AND WELL-BEING

Table 14. Community and Well-being Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Mental Health and Community Welfare	• Concern over the potential loss of access to Stumers Creek, emphasising the importance of this area for mental health, community well-being, and social interaction.	Consider update to Pairwise weightings and Multi-Criteria Risk Assessment based on community feedback on values and site-specific information. Opportunity to consider amendments, where deemed suitable through MCRA.
Economic/Tourism	• Economic and tourism aspects in Coolum/Stumers Beach. • Negative consequences of proposed reductions to dog access at Stumers Beach, which is seen as a key attraction and differentiator for the area.	Consider including tourism and economic benefits as part of the draft Plan in Section 6 Dog off-leash areas.

SIGNAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Table 15. Signage and Communication Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Need for Improved Signage	• Concerns about the clarity and adequacy of current signage, which has led to confusion and difficulty in navigating to specific areas such as new exercise zones, off-leash dog parks, and beach entry points.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 7 PG 113-114)
Better communication	• Better communication through signage, maps and online platforms to help dog owners navigate these spaces.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 7 PG 113-114)

DOG PARKS AMENITIES AND FEATURES

Table 16. Dog Parks Amenities and Features Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Inadequate Dog Park Facilities	• Need for more designated spaces where dogs can be off-leash, both fenced and unfenced, to accommodate the growing number of dog owners and the increasing dog population.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Lack of dog exercise areas in Eumundi & Coolum	• Lack of dog exercise areas in Eumundi, with many residents expressing frustration and disappointment. • Growing population and increasing number of registered dogs are frequently cited as justifications for new facilities.	Consider opportunity for a DEA in the Eumundi and Coolum areas.
Some Dog Parks Not Suitable for Bigger Breeds of Dogs	• Sentiment is that dog parks are not suitable for some breed of dogs that like to run and therefore preference to open space like beaches.	Addressed in draft: Local DOLAs are ideally 3,000 – 4,000m2 with provision for smaller DOLAs where no suitable space is identified (e.g. in coastal urban corridor). District DOLAs are proposed to be 10,000m^2 (Section 11 PG 40 - 49)
Size of Local and District DOLAs	• Concern that the proposed sizes for dog parks (District and Local DOLAs) are not large enough resulting in high concentration of dogs in a small, confined area leading to potential issues.	Addressed in draft: Local DOLAs are ideally 3,000 – 4,000m2 with provision for smaller DOLAs where no suitable space is identified (e.g. in coastal urban corridor) District DOLAs are proposed to be 10,000m^2 (Section 11 PG 40 - 49)
Alternative Sites and Standards	• Consideration for more locations but with a lower standard for DOLAs.	Addressed in draft: (Section 11 PG 48)
Dog Parks Should Not Replace Beaches	• Fenced dog parks are not an adequate alternative to natural, open spaces like beaches and bush trails. • Perception that dog parks are being used as a replacement for beach and foreshore access.	Addressed in draft: (Executive Summary PG 6-7, Section 2 PG 15, and Section 11 PG 40) provides for a diversity of DOLA's).
Dog Waste Issues	• Concerns about the lack of adequate facilities for the disposal of dog waste, including	Addressed in draft:

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
	insufficient numbers of waste bags, disposal bins, and dog wash stations.	(Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Dog Park Maintenance	• Complaints about the maintenance of these facilities, with reports of bins not being regularly refilled or cleaned, leading to overflow and unpleasant. • Problems with gate maintenance, with some gates not locking or staying closed properly.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Dog Park Safety and Overcrowding	• Concern for safety of small dogs. • Overcrowding in dog parks and exercise areas has been mentioned, leading to tension and potential dog fights.	Addressed in draft: Local DOLAs are ideally 3,000 – 4,000m2 with provision for smaller DOLAs where no suitable space is identified (e.g. in coastal urban corridor) District DOLAs are proposed to be 10,000m^2 (Section 11 PG 40 - 49) (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Insufficient Shade and Seating	• Need for sun protection, shelter from bad weather, and comfortable seating, particularly for individuals with mobility issues and older dog owners.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Drinking Fountains with Dog Bowls	• More water bowls that can be emptied and cleaned, as well as designated places to wash them.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Dog Wash Stations	• Need for improved and increased dog wash stations at beach locations.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Inadequate Park Lighting	• Improved lighting at park entrances, additional lighting throughout parks, well-lit paths for safety during non-peak hours, and specifically, the provision of adequate lighting in dog parks to allow for nighttime activities such as walks and play sessions.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 1 PG 102-103; Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)
Dog Parks Flood-Prone	• Accessibility of dog parks during and after rainy days, with specific instances of flooding leading to unusable conditions.	The Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme sets the criteria for flood immunity of open space for future recreation areas. Addressed in draft Plan (Section 11, PG 43 for certain sites

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
		Strategic Action 2 PG 104 – 106)

PARKING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Table 17. Parking and Infrastructure Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Changes to draft Plan
Insufficient Parking Availability	• Insufficient parking availability at Stumers Creek and other locations.	Further consideration by Council. Out of scope of Plan.
Need for More Car Parks	• Frustration over the lack of adequate parking facilities, which becomes especially problematic during peak times such as weekends and holidays.	Further consideration by Council. Out of scope of Plan.
Illegal Parking and Campers Issue	• Problems caused by overnight camper vans and camping in car parks designated for other uses, such as access to dog off-leash areas. • Need to increase monitoring, enforcing rules, and potentially increasing staff to manage the situation.	Further consideration by Council. Out of scope of Plan.

REGULATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT

Table 18. Regulation and Enforcement Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Stricter Enforcement	• Concerns about the lack of enforcement and the need for stricter measures to ensure dog owners comply with the rules.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 7 PG 113-114)
Increasing Patrols	• Regular Council visits, monitoring by Council employees, and increased patrols, especially during peak times. • Need for more ranger presence during holidays and peak times when rule-breaking is more prevalent.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 7 PG 113-114)
Fairness and Over Policing	• Concerns have a been raised about the fairness of the rules and the perceived over-policing by Council rangers.	Further consideration by Council. Out of scope of Plan.

RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP

Table 19. Responsible Dog Ownership Opportunities

Issue/Concern	Details	Opportunities
Promote Dog Owner Education	• Need for better education and training for dog owners to ensure responsible pet ownership. • Investment in pet ownership training programs, to support better understanding of responsibilities in public spaces.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 7 PG 113-114)
Irresponsible Dog Owners	• Concerns about dog owners not adhering to leash laws, failing to pick up after their pets, and allowing their dogs to roam freely in on-leash areas.	Addressed in draft: (Strategic Action 7 PG 113-114)

6.0 Appendix A – Survey

Draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint Survey

Council is seeking your feedback on the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint. You can provide feedback by completing this survey.
The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete.
A copy of your submission will be provided upon completion of the survey.
Your contribution is appreciated and your privacy protected.

Feedback on the draft Plan

Before providing feedback, please review the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint.

01. What is your interest in Dog Exercise Areas? Required

Please select all that apply.

Select all that apply
☐ Dog owner
☐ Former dog owner
☐ Non-dog owner
☐ User of parks and beaches
☐ Dog business (groomer, walker, trainer, veterinarian)
☐ Member of sporting club
☐ Parent/carer of young children
☐ Environmentalist, conservationist
☐ Other

02. Do you currently own a dog?

Select one answer only
◯ Yes

◯ No

03. Have you visited a dog exercise area on the Sunshine Coast?

Select one answer only
◯ Yes
◯ No

04. If you don't visit dog exercise areas, what is the primary reason?

Select one answer only
◯ I do not think dog exercise areas are safe
◯ My dog has challenges socialising
◯ They do not have suitable facilities
◯ They are not accessible or inclusive
◯ Other

05. Please provide your thoughts on how accessibility and inclusivity could be improved.

Please include details about any dog exercise areas where you have experienced access issues.

06. Do you find existing dog exercise areas across the region to be easily accessible and inclusive?

Select one answer only
◯ Yes
◯ No

07. Please provide your thoughts on how accessibility and inclusivity could be improved.

08. When visiting a dog exercise area, what type of experience and supporting infrastructure are you seeking?

Please select your top 5 priorities. If you are using a PC/laptop, please drag your selection to the numbered boxes on the right of screen.

Select 5 answers
Safe interaction for dog
Safe interaction for humans
Shade
Educational and way-finding signage
Seating
Dog bag dispenser
Drinking water
Fenced
Unfenced
Separated small dog large dog areas
Parking
Toilets / amenities
Lighting
Dog wash down facility
Pathways
Turf area for dog play

☐ Quiet area for sniff zones
☐ Dog agility equipment
☐ Dog water play

09. To what extent do you agree with the vision and objectives of the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan?

IMPORTANT: Council requires sufficient information to fully understand how the draft Dog Exercise Area Plan can best align with our region's environmental, cultural and community values. You will be required to provide further details about your response.

The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan clearly demonstrates how Council will locate Dog Exercise Areas in suitable locations
◯ Strongly agree
◯ Agree
◯ Neutral
◯ Disagree
◯ Strongly disagree
◯ Unsure/undecided
The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan maintains the safety and comfort of the community
◯ Strongly agree
◯ Agree
◯ Neutral
◯ Disagree
◯ Strongly disagree
◯ Unsure/undecided
The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan provides sufficient access to Dog Exercise Areas close to where dog owners live
◯ Strongly agree
◯ Agree
◯ Neutral
◯ Disagree
◯ Strongly disagree

◯ Unsure/undecided
The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan promotes fair access to recreation opportunities across the region
◯ Strongly agree
◯ Agree
◯ Neutral
◯ Disagree
◯ Strongly disagree
◯ Unsure/undecided
The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan protects environmental values
◯ Strongly agree
◯ Agree
◯ Neutral
◯ Disagree
◯ Strongly disagree
◯ Unsure/undecided
The draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan enables appropriate budgeting and prioritisation
◯ Strongly agree
◯ Agree
◯ Neutral
◯ Disagree
◯ Strongly disagree
◯ Unsure/undecided

10. Please provide further comments or details about your response.

Please include all relevant comments and information about your level of agreement with the vision and values in the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan

11. The following values will inform how Council assesses the suitability of Dog Exercise Areas in parks and gardens.

Please rate the importance of these values.

Recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Recreation opportunities for non-dog owners
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Scenic amenity
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Safety for dogs
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Safety for community members
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral

◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Access and social inclusion
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Environmental protection (habitat and wildlife (flora and fauna), including threatened species)
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Cultural heritage
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Ability to safely and effectively manage compliance
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral

◯ Low importance
◯ Not important

12. The following values will inform how Council assesses the suitability of Dog Exercise Areas on beaches and foreshores.

Please rate the importance of these values.

Recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Recreation opportunities for non-dog owners
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Scenic amenity
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Safety for dogs
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Safety for community members

◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Access and social inclusion
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Environmental protection (habitat and wildlife (flora and fauna), including threatened species)
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Cultural heritage
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Ability to safely and effectively manage compliance

◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important

13. The following values will inform how Council assesses the suitability of Dog Exercise Areas in environment reserves.

Please rate the importance of these values.

Recreation opportunities for dog owners and their pets
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Recreation opportunities for non-dog owners
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Scenic amenity
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Safety for dogs
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral

◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Safety for community members
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Access and social inclusion
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Amenity of local residents (e.g. nuisance noise)
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Environmental protection (habitat and wildlife (flora and fauna), including threatened species)
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Cultural heritage
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral

◯ Low importance
◯ Not important
Ability to safely and effectively manage compliance
◯ Very important
◯ Important
◯ Neutral
◯ Low importance
◯ Not important

Before responding to the following question, please refer to the executive summary of the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint for details on the key recommendations.

14. To what extent do you support the proposed changes in the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan?

IMPORTANT: Council requires sufficient information to fully understand how the draft Dog Exercise Area Plan can best align with our region's environmental, cultural and community values. You will be required to provide further details about your response.

19 new dog off-leash areas
◯ Support
◯ Support with changes
◯ Do not support
◯ Unsure/undecided
Amendments to beaches and foreshores
◯ Support
◯ Support with changes
◯ Do not support
◯ Unsure/undecided
Amendments to environment reserves
◯ Support
◯ Support with changes
◯ Do not support
◯ Unsure/undecided
Amendments to sports grounds

◯ Support
◯ Support with changes
◯ Do not support
◯ Unsure/undecided

15. Please provide further comments or details about your response.

Please include all relevant comments and information about your level of support for the proposed changes in the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan.

16. Do you have any further comments or ideas to share on the draft Dog Exercise Area Regional Plan and Network Blueprint you would like to share?

17. If you have any other information, documents or images you would like to share relevant to your comments, please upload them here.

Attach and submit documents with this form

Tell us a little bit about you

18. Are you a resident of the Sunshine Coast?

Select one answer only
◯ Yes
◯ No

19. Suburb Required

20. Postcode Required

Maximum of 4 characters

21. What is your gender? Required

Select one answer only
◯ Woman
◯ Man
◯ Non-binary
◯ Prefer not to say
◯ Prefer to self-describe gender

22. Which age group are you in? Required

Select one answer only
◯ Under 18 years
◯ 18-24 years
◯ 25-34 years
◯ 35-49 years
◯ 50-59 years
◯ 60-69 years
◯ 70-84 years
◯ 85+ years
◯ Prefer not to say

23. Do you identify as a person with disability? Required

24. To receive a copy of your submission and future updates on this project, please provide your email address.