DOGS IN OPEN SPACE PLAN



WHAT WE'VE PREVIOUSLY HEARD FROM OUR COMMUNITY

A review of previous community consultation feedback and service requests to inform Hume's Dogs in Open Space Draft Plan

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HUME CITY COUNCIL

Yulendj ngurrak Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Recognition

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to the existing family members of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and to Elders past and present.

Disclaimer

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Aim of the document review

The aim of the document review is to review community feedback already provided to the City of Hume and identify relevant insights and extracts to inform Council's Draft Dogs in Open Space Plan in 2026.

Over 2,300 participants have been engaged in Council community consultation programs or recently lodged customer service requests for matters relating to dogs and dogs in open, public, and private spaces within Hume. By reviewing the feedback provided by a broad cross-section of the Hume community since 2014, it is possible to identify the community's views and concerns regarding dogs and dogs in open spaces across a range of sites and suburbs. This document review draws out a range of considerations to inform planning for dogs in open space in 2026.

The document review has been undertaken by independent consultants Cochrane Research Solutions in partnership with ChatterBox Projects.

1.2 Scope of the document review

The community consultation feedback and service requests reviewed:

1. Sunbury Dog Park Concept Engagement (2014)
2. Craigieburn Dog Park Survey (2015)
3. Broadmeadows Dog Park Survey (2016)
4. Dog Access Changes Consultation Report (2017)
5. Dogs in Public Places Report (2017)
6. Broadmeadows Dog Park Design Options Report (2017)
7. Dogs Off-Leash Areas Survey (2021)
8. Consultation Summary Report for Draft Open Space Strategy (2024)
9. Dog-related customer service requests (2024/25)
10. Dog-related customer service requests (2025/26)
11. Register of dog attacks on people and animals (2025/26).

It is important to note that these documents have already been considered and informed Council decisions or strategic documents. Additional information relevant to Council's Draft Dogs in Open Space Plan in 2026 is shown as appendices. There are details about the current number of registered dogs across Hume (see Appendix 1), extracts from Council's current policy position around dogs in public places (2018, see Appendix 2), and insights from Council's Open Space Strategy (2025, see Appendix 3).

1.3 Key topics explored to identify relevant insights and extracts

The following topics or themes were used to search for and identify insights and extracts for this report:

- Responsible pet ownership, monitoring and enforcement
- Comparison of dog owner and non-dog owner views
- Cultural and personal considerations for dog owners
- Dog access and designated dog prohibitions and restrictions
- Designing dog parks in shared-use open spaces
- Dog nuisance behaviours, dogs attacks and safety
- Dog-related information, signage, education and events
- Elements of dog park concepts and dog access that are of concern (includes environment and biodiversity)
- Elements of dog park concepts that are supported or preferred
- Equipment, features, and activity zones in dog parks/spaces
- How the dog park is used and frequency of use
- Infrastructure and amenities in dog parks and open space
- Reasons why some dog owners prefer unfenced to fenced dog off-leash areas
- Specific dog park, location, suburb or precinct

2.0 Summary of key insights from the document review to inform Council's Draft Dogs in Open Space Plan

Key insights identified through the document review to inform Council's Draft Dogs in Space Plan are summarised here by theme:

- Comparison of dog owner and non-dog owner views: Dog owner and non-dog owner participants reported similar and contrasting views regarding dogs in fenced dog-off leash areas, concerns about fenced dog-off leash areas and unfenced dog-off leash areas, reasons why people may stop using dog parks, and attitudes to dogs off leash in public spaces. Additionally, dog owners vary in their views and concerns.
- Cultural and personal considerations for dog owners: Dislike dogs off leash in parks coming up to people and licking. There is a process in the Muslim culture that requires cleansing, especially if the hand is licked and you are going to pray
- Dog access and designated dog prohibitions and restrictions: Dog prohibited areas and dog off leash areas with time restrictions across the municipality are generally supported, however, concerns have been raised around limiting the ability of residents to exercise dogs and owners ignoring restrictions. Most participants also supported proposed changes to dogs in on-leash areas, off-leash areas and prohibited areas, although mixed views have been reported.
- Designing dog parks in shared-use open spaces: Participants reported mixed views about dog park designs in shared-use open spaces. However, participants generally preferred a fenced off-leash dog park in shared-use spaces to be spacious, with a combination of green space for dogs to run, play and socialise, some exercise or agility equipment, zones for small and large dog (or enclosures for physical separation), and some amenities such as seating and shelter.
- Dog nuisance behaviours, dogs attacks and safety: Dog nuisance, incidents and dog attacks on an animal or a person have occurred in many suburbs, including those with a higher number of registered dogs (i.e., Sunbury and Craigieburn), and a lower number (i.e., Broadmeadows and Greenvale).
- Dog-related information, signage, education and events: There is support for Council providing more dog-related information, education, events, and improved signage.
- Elements of dog park concepts and dog access that are of concern (includes environment and biodiversity): Concerns were raised regarding proposed enclosed or fenced dog parks about negative impacts on neighbours and other park users (noise, barking, traffic noise, traffic movement and parking), native wildlife, biodiversity and environment, and a lack of suitable car parking.
- Elements of dog park concepts that are supported or preferred: Positive feedback on proposed enclosed or fenced

dog park/s referred to having a space for dogs to run and play freely that avoids upsetting non-dog lovers, agility equipment area, sensory rock scramble areas, and a space where dogs and dog owners can socialise and relax knowing their dog cannot run off and is safe.

- Equipment, features, and activity zones in dog parks/spaces: Many participants are satisfied with the equipment, features, and activity zones in dog parks. They are pleased that the park is secure or fenced, satisfied with the exercise equipment (bridge, sit-stay platform, box tunnel and hurdles), runabout and rock/scramble zones, and satisfied with general attributes, size, location, and appearance. Some participants prefer separate small and large dog zones.
- How the dog park is used and frequency of use: How dog parks are used, the frequency of use by dog owners, and sizes of dogs in the dog park vary greatly. Dog owners use the dog park/s to exercise their dog, socialise with other dogs and dog owners, and/or use the exercise or agility equipment.
- Infrastructure and amenities in dog parks and open space: Regarding infrastructure and amenities in dog parks and open space, there is support for more drinking fountains or water bowls, shelter or a sheltered area with seating, seating, reliable or secure entry/exit (double) gates, high fencing, grass, dog waste bins stocked with dog waste disposal bags, and signage (about location of the park and park rules).
- Reasons why some dog owners prefer unfenced to fenced dog off-leash areas: While there is support for more fenced dog parks/spaces in Hume, some dog owners prefer unfenced to fenced dog off-leash areas because there is more space to spread out, there are fewer dogs, their dog is more relaxed, it is easier to get away from poorly controlled dogs, or because the unfenced off-leash area is closer to home and/or provides to access to amenities.
- Responsible pet ownership, monitoring and enforcement: There is support for an increased presence of authorised officers monitoring and enforcing dog control requirements and responsible pet ownership in off leash areas. There are calls to improve responsible pet ownership behaviours in fenced and unfenced dog-off leash areas, particularly effective control, collecting dog litter, active supervision of dogs, being respectful to other dog owners, and dogs being left unattended.

3.0 Insights and extracts identified for each document reviewed

This section presents insights and extracts identified for each document reviewed that are potentially relevant to Council's Draft Dogs in Open Space Plan in 2026. Insights are presented for each document and then summarised in Section 3.0.

3.1 Sunbury dog park concept engagement (2014)

Council approved funding for the establishment of a dog park at Sunbury Park and sought community feedback on the draft concept plan. The proposed dog park would be fenced and will contain activity areas for open ball play, natural rummaging environments with rock scramble and grassed areas and equipment for developing physical skills, confidence and socialisation opportunities for dogs. Elements proposed included fencing, various types of vegetation, natural shade from exiting trees, regulation signage, water, bins, education equipment, seating and dog litter bag dispensers.

The consultation period was June to 31 July 2014, and the community was provided with an opportunity to review the proposed elements and provide ideas which would be considered in the development of the Sunbury Dog Park concept. The participation option was a survey (online and hard copy). A total of 38 participants were engaged in this consultation program including 35 from participants in Sunbury and 1 from Diggers Rest.

Theme: Elements of dog park concepts that are supported or preferred

- Majority support for the draft concept plan. Positive feedback on the proposed enclosed/fenced dog park which provides a space for dogs and avoids upsetting non-dog lovers. Positive feedback on the agility equipment area, sensory rock scramble areas, space for dogs to run freely and safely, and for dogs and dog owners to socialise
- Participant suggestions included providing an additional entry point, ensuring there are ample bins, a bin at each exit, the surrounding fence is at least 1.5 metres high, some shade, more seating, water taps, fenced off zone for reactive or smaller dogs, and a community noticeboard.

Theme: Elements of dog park concepts and dog access that are of concern (includes environment and biodiversity)

- Concerns included the dog park being constructed before the Master Plan is completed, negative impacts on neighbours (noise, barking, traffic noise, traffic and parking), and the native wildlife and environment. Lack of suitable car parking and toilets.

Theme: Dog owner concerns about fenced dog off-leash areas

- Concerns about having smaller dogs in the same area as larger dogs and dogs that are not well behaved, and the need to monitor and enforce dog owners having dogs on lead where applicable and picking up dog litter.

Location based references

- Proposed Sunbury Park Dog Park

3.2 Craigieburn dog park survey (2015)

Council officially opened Craigieburn Dog Park in September 2014. After one year of public use, Council sought feedback from community members about the park to inform continuing improvements and planning for future dog parks in Hume. The consultation period was 29 June to 31 July 2015, and feedback was invited on satisfaction with park (overall) and park features; how often and why they use the park; use and satisfaction with the exercise / agility equipment available; and how dog owners would like to be engaged in future. The participation option was a survey (online and hard copy).

A total of 145 responses were received of which 118 were completed and 27 were partially completed surveys. Most participants were female, resided in Craigieburn (Greenvale, Roxburgh Park or Sunbury), and ages ranged from 18 to 24 years to 65 years and over.

Theme: How the dog park is used and frequency of use

- The frequency of using this dog park varies, with many participants using it two to three times per week, once per week or once per month.
- Most participants take one or two dogs to the park, and the dog sizes vary from small (0-8kg) through to extra-extra-large (60+kgs).
- Most participants use this dog park to exercise their dog with other dogs, exercise their dog safely, socialise with other dog owners and/or use the agility equipment.

Theme: Equipment, features, and activity zones in dog parks/spaces

- Most participants rated the overall experience of the park as 'good' or 'very good' and were pleased that the park was secure/fenced, satisfied with the equipment and general attributes, size and location.
- The most popular exercise equipment was the bridge, followed by the sit-stay platform, box tunnel and hurdles. Less used items were the jump hoop and the step platform. Most users of the exercise equipment rated it as 'good' or 'very good'.
- The highest rated activity zones were the runabout, rock/scramble zones and exercise equipment. The lowest rated activity zone was the 'small dog zone'.
- Most participants were satisfied with aspects of appearance (connection, vegetation, surface, and cleanliness). Suggestion for more grassed areas in the park.

Theme: Infrastructure and amenities in dog parks and open space

- Many participants were satisfied with infrastructure (seating, shelter, drinking fountain, approach paths, signage, entry gates). Improvements suggested included more drinking fountains (and larger and lower to the ground), more shelter, more seating, more reliable or secure entry gates, and signage (about location of the park and park rules).
- Features of other dog parks and/or off-leash areas that appeal to participants included wide open spaces, water sources (e.g. wetlands, beach or creek), grass, and security (e.g. fenced or far from a road).

Theme: Responsible pet ownership, monitoring and enforcement

- Some concerns about dog owners not having their dog under voice control and/or being unconcerned about their dogs' (negative) impact on other dogs, smoking in the park, and bringing children (under 12 years) or dog toys into the park. Dog waste was the dominant cleanliness issue.

Theme: Dog-related information, signage, education and events

- Requests for signage (upcoming events and general information).
- Support demonstrated for a 'Paws in Park event' in the municipality. Activities that participants would like at events included animal welfare groups, dog clubs, vets, trainers, animal photography as well as organised walks and/or information and talks, and dog maintenance services.
- Sources of information about Craigieburn Dog Park included word of mouth, Council's website, Craigieburn Dog Park Facebook page, Hume News, social media, Hume Pride and Hume e-newsletter.

Theme: Equipment, features, and activity zones in dog parks/spaces

- Some participants reported large dog breeds dominating or intimidating. The current 'small dog zone' does not function as intended and requests were made for a barrier or fenced enclosure that physically separates small and large dogs.

Location based references

- Craigieburn Dog Park

3.3 Broadmeadows dog park survey (2016)

The consultation period was 30 June to 31 July 2016, and feedback was invited from the community (including surrounding residents, reserve users Broadmeadows Obedience Dog Club, football and athletics clubs) about the size of the park, seating and shelter requirements, number and types of exercise equipment to inform the planning of the Broadmeadows Dog Park in the John Ilhan Memorial Reserve. The participation option was a survey (online and hard copy).

A total of 121 responses were received in this consultation program, as well as a written submission and petition. Participants resided in a range of suburbs; however, many resided nearby the proposed Broadmeadows Dog Park in Meadow Heights, Broadmeadows and Westmeadows. Participants varied in their relationship to the space; most identified as future Broadmeadows Dog Park user, some identified as surrounding park user (athletics or soccer club member, walker, recreational user) and/or interested community member.

Theme: Designing dog parks in shared-use open spaces

- Mixed views were reported. Most participants preferred to balance the size of the proposed park, exercise equipment and amenities; some preferred to increase the size of the park (spend more on fencing and less on other features such as exercise equipment and amenities); some preferred to decrease park size and increase spending on amenities such as seating and shelter; and others preferred to decrease park size and increase spending on exercise equipment.

Theme: Equipment, features, and activity zones in dog parks/spaces

- Participants reported preferred features are for a time out zone to be located in a corner of the park, anchored hooks around the park, naturally shady areas, and a sensory area (to a lesser degree).
- Participants reported mixed views and some were not supportive of exercise equipment or stated their dog would not use it. The most popular exercise equipment was the bridge, followed by the sit-stay platform and weave poles. Less preferred items were the jump hoop, step platform, hurdles, and box tunnel.

Theme: Infrastructure and amenities in dog parks and open space

- Some participant preferred sheltered area with seating.
- Participant suggestions included increasing the safety and security for users, both dogs and people (physically dividing or fencing areas into separate sections, appropriate entry / exit gates and high fencing, as well as signage with clear rules and guidelines); increasing the amenity for users (for dogs - large

water bowls with taps and shade, for people - seating, toilets, shade and dog waste bins stocked with dog waste disposal bags; additional suggestions were signage (including signage stating park rules), water, maze and sand.

- Aspects of other dog parks and/or off-leash areas that appeal to participants included regular park maintenance, shelter, seats, shade, bins stocked (and regularly re-filled) with dog-waste disposal bags, parking, lighting, and tree planting, dog access to drinking water, shade, grass, and space to run, water-based activities, and security (e.g. double gates, high fencing, clear visibility within park).

Theme: Equipment, features, and activity zones in dog parks/spaces

- Participant suggestions included separated areas for different dogs (e.g. small and large dog areas).

Location based references

- Proposed Broadmeadows Dog Park

3.4 Dog access changes consultation report (2017)

In 2017, there were 40 dog off leash and six dog prohibited areas within the municipality. As the City's population increases so does the number of dogs needing to be exercised and socialised in a manner that considers the community and environment. In response, Council conducted a review of dog off leash areas available within the municipality and identified possible access changes in 21 areas.

The community was consulted about proposed changes to dog access (new dog off leash areas, new dog prohibited areas, designated dog prohibited areas to become dog on leash areas, and new off leash areas with time restrictions). The consultation period was 24 February to 13 April 2017, and feedback was invited to gauge community views on the proposed changes. Participation options were an online interactive map, survey (hard copy), face-to-face discussions at major events, and written correspondence. A total of 170 participants were engaged in this consultation program.

Theme: Dog access and designated dog prohibitions and restrictions

- Nine new dog off leash areas proposed: The majority of participants agreed with the proposed change to three areas (Bolinda Road in Campbellfield, Newbury Park in

Craigieburn, and Greenvale Drive Linear Trail in Greenvale), disagreed with the change to five areas (Haddon Hall Drive Reserve in Attwood, GPU Easement in Roxburgh Park, Bannerman Reserve in Sunbury, Curtin Drive Reserve in Sunbury, and The Skyline Linear Trail in Sunbury). No feedback was received for Zambezi Court Reserve in Roxburgh Park. Reasons for disagreement with proposed changes included irresponsible dog owners and the safety risk posed by off leash dogs to other space users, especially families and children and nearby play spaces. Concerns were raised about the potential negative impact on park features (e.g. wetland, waterbody) and native birds that nest in the area and enforcement issues due to the narrowness of the space in parts.

- Two currently designated dog prohibited areas proposed to become dog on leash areas: There was no definitive view for either area (Greybox Woodlands in Broadmeadows, and Konagaderra Bridge Reserve in Oaklands Junction).

Theme: Dog access and designated dog prohibitions and restrictions

- Eight new dog prohibited areas proposed: The majority of participants agreed with the proposed change to five areas (Maygar Grasslands in Broadmeadows, Kalkallo Commons in Kalkallo, Mt Holden in Sunbury, Tandara Reserve in Sunbury, and Fullwood Drive Ceremonial Ring in Sunbury) and disagreed with the change to one area (The Parkway Reserve in Sunbury). No feedback was received for Amberfield Grassland in Craigieburn or Somerton Red Gum Nature Reserve in Somerton. Reasons for disagreement with the proposed changes included limiting the ability of residents to exercise their dogs and enforcement issues due to surrounding fencing restrictions.
- Two new dog off leash areas proposed with time restrictions: The majority of participants agreed with proposed change to two areas (Hume Tennis and Community Centre in Craigieburn, Olrig Field in Craigieburn). Concerns were also raised about owners ignoring restrictions, safety issues, fear of dog attacks but also dogs needing to exercise, and request for a fenced dog area.

Location based references (dog parks grouped by suburb)

- Attwood (Haddon Hall Drive Reserve)
- Broadmeadows (Greybox Woodlands, Maygar Grasslands)
- Campbellfield (Bolinda Road)
- Craigieburn (Amberfield Grassland, Hume Tennis and Community Centre, Newbury Park, Olrig Field)
- Greenvale (Greenvale Drive Linear Trail)
- Kalkallo (Kalkallo Commons)
- Oaklands Junction (Konagaderra Bridge Reserve)
- Roxburgh Park (GPU Easement, Zambezi Court Reserve)
- Somerton (Somerton Red Gum Nature Reserve)

- Sunbury (Bannerman Reserve, Curtin Drive Reserve, Fullwood Drive Ceremonial Ring, Mt Holden, The Parkway Reserve, Tandara Reserve, The Skyline Linear Trail)

3.5 Dogs in public places report (2017)

The consultation period was 24 February to 13 April 2017. The aim of the consultation was to increase community awareness of the proposed changes to the management of dogs in public places across the municipality and to invite feedback to gauge community support or opposition to the changes.

Participation options were a survey (online and hard copy), face-to-face discussions at major events and Council facilities, emails, and written correspondence. A total of 50 survey responses were submitted.

Theme: Dog access and designated dog prohibitions and restrictions

- Majority support for proposed requirements for the management of dogs in on- and off-leash areas. In designated dog on-leash areas dogs must be on a short leash (max leash length of 2m) at all times. In designated dog off-leash areas owners must: (1) be able to see their dog(s) at all times, (2) have their dog(s) under control via verbal and/or visual commands, (3) carry a leash for each dog, (4) comply with site specific rules.

- Majority support for proposed changes that owners must have their dog on a leash in an off-leash area within:
    - 10ms of a market/community event
    - 10ms of a school/preschool boundary
    - 10ms of an organised sporting/training activity
    - 10ms of a car park/roadway
    - 50ms of a play space, BMX/skate park/etc
    - 10ms of outdoor exercise equipment
    - 10ms of picnic area.
- Proposed changes opposed were that owners must have their dog on a leash in an off-leash area within 10ms of a wetland/water body and 10ms of a trail/pathways.

Theme: Dog access and designated dog prohibitions and restrictions

- Majority support to proposed changes to dogs being restricted from specific spaces and activities:
    - To rush at, attack, bite, or chase wildlife
    - In 'dogs prohibited' areas
    - Tied up near a pathway/encroach on to the pathway
    - Within the boundary of a play space, BMX/skate park/etc
    - Tied up within 10ms of a school/preschool entry
    - On sports fields unless off leash area with no organised sporting/training activities occurring (noting 20% opposed)
- A proposed change opposed was the requirement for dogs to be restricted from any water body.

Theme: Responsible pet ownership, monitoring and enforcement

- Concerns raised related to the strictness of the leash length, dog owners being more respectful of other dog owners, and a lack of off-leash areas which results in owners disregarding requirements to exercise their dogs. Other concerns related to ensuring the enforcement, reporting and education of current and proposed changes to management of dogs in public places; need for more patrols and policing of unrestrained dogs; and the need to balance community concern about dogs with the important role that dogs play for many dog owners.

Theme: Dog-related information, signage, education and events

- Suggestions referred to need for public education and more signage.

3.6 Broadmeadows dog park design options report (2017)

The consultation period was November to mid-December 2017, and feedback was invited from the community including those who provided feedback in the 2016 consultation program, surrounding residents, reserve users Broadmeadows Obedience Dog Club, football and athletics clubs. Participants had the opportunity to review and indicate the preferred dog park design from two design options and reasons for selecting that option. The participation options were a survey (online and hard copy) and in-person information session. A total of 49 survey responses were received in this consultation program.

Theme: Designing dog parks in shared-use open spaces

- Both designs included:
    - A secure perimeter with 1.2m high fencing, double gates, and two entry/exit points
    - A separate fenced area for small dogs and general area for all dogs
    - Amenities for users (dogs and people) including a drinking fountain with dog water bowl, bins with dog-waste bags, seating, paths, and signs displaying the park rules.
- Participants preferred Design option 2 which offered:
    - 3,900sqm fully fenced area
    - Four exercise/agility equipment items
    - More space for dogs to run and play
- Participants liked having the more spacious option, having more space for dogs to run, play and socialise, fewer pieces of equipment and obstacles, and a separate small and large dog zone.
- Participant suggestions included the enclosed dog park space having grass and not gravel, a concrete tunnel, extra water fountain or tap, more shelter, and access to public toilets within the reserve.

Location based references

- Broadmeadows Dog Park

3.7 Dogs off-leash areas survey (2021)

The aim of this consultation was to inform the planning, management and use of fenced off-leash areas (or dog parks) in Broadmeadows, Sunbury, Craigieburn and Gladstone Park. The consultation period was 1 October to 29 October 2021. Feedback was invited from the community regarding perceptions of dog parks and influences on the choice of using fenced and unfenced off-leash areas, attitudes to dog park use, and dog and dog owner behaviours. Participation option was an online survey. A total of 268 responses were received in this consultation program.

The majority of participants identified as Woman or female, were born in Australia and speak English only at home. Most suburbs across the municipality were represented, participant ages ranged from 18 to 24 years to 80 years and over. 80% of participants own or walk a dog now or have in the past; 40% use the recreational facilities in or near a dog park; 66% live near a Council Dog Park, and 90% have an interest in dog parks. Participants varied in relation to the dog park/s that they attended as well as the frequency of use.

Theme: Comparison of dog owner and non-dog owner views

Attitudes to dogs in fenced dog-off leash areas

- Around 90% of participants reported they own a dog and 10% reported they do not own a dog now or have not in the past.
- Around 87% of dog owners and 79% of non-owners agreed that fences stop dogs running off was a reason they liked fenced dog parks.
- Around 74% of dog owner and 66% of non-owners agreed they are not always confident dogs won't run off.
- Around 73% of dog owners and 61% of non-owners agreed that they can't always be sure dogs will obey recall commands.
- Around 66 per cent of dog owners and 68% of non-owners agree dog owners can relax more.
- Around 62% of dog owners and 63% of non-owners agreed they don't have to worry about dogs annoying other people.
- Around 60% of dog owners almost 60% of non-owners agreed dogs are safe.
- Around 55% of dog owners and 43% of non-dog owners agree that dog owners are not as attentive to their dogs in fenced off-leash areas compared to unfenced off-leash areas.
- Around 42% of dog owners and 45% of non-owners agreed people can talk to other dog owners without having to watch the dog all the time.

- Around 30% of dog owners and 16% of non-owners have seen more dog aggression in fenced off-leash areas than unfenced off-leash areas.

Concerns about fenced dog-off leash areas

- Around 81% of dog owners and 86% of non-owners agreed people not picking up their dog's litter is a concern.
- Around 77% of dog owners and 79% of non-owners agreed poorly behaved/trained dogs are a concern.
- Around 77% of owners and 76% of non-owners agreed unsupervised dogs are a concern.
- Around 77% of owners and 75% of non-owners agreed aggressive dogs are a concern.
- Around 66% of dog owners and 70% of non-owners agreed other owners letting their dogs annoy other dogs and/or people is a concern for them.
- Around 64% of dog owners 72% of non-owners agreed aggressive or impolite dog owners are a concern.
- Around 60% of owners and 60% of non-owners agreed unattended dogs are a concern.
- Around 58% of owners and 62% of non-owners agreed there is not enough enforcement of dog control requirements at dog parks.
- Around 55% of owners and 53% of non-owners agreed overcrowding is a concern at fenced dog parks.
- Around 48% of owners and 43% of non-owners agreed dog parks are too small.
- Around 37% of owners and 49% of non-owners agreed people who bring too many dogs at a time is a concern while around 30% of owners and 29% of non-owners disagreed.

Concerns about unfenced dog-off leash areas

- Around 84% of dog owners and 84% of non-owners agreed people not picking up their dog's litter is a concern.
- Around 74% of dog owners and 83% of non-owners agreed poorly behaved/trained dogs are a concern.
- Around 73% of owners and 83% of non-owners agreed unsupervised dogs are a concern.
- Around 72% of dog owners and 72% of non-owners agreed aggressive dogs are a concern.
- Around 66% of dog owners and 70% of non-owners agreed other owners letting their dogs annoy other dogs and/or people is a concern for them.
- Around 65% of dog owners and 71% of non-owners agreed aggressive or impolite dog owners are a concern.
- Around 61% of dog owners and 75% of non-owners agreed there is not enough enforcement of dog control requirements at dog parks.
- Around 60% of dog owners and 70% of non-owners agreed dogs running into other activities or users of facilities is a concern with unfenced dog parks.
- Around 60% of dog owners and 73% of non-owners agreed unattended dogs are a concern.

- Around 48% of dog owners and 43% of non-owners agreed dog parks are too small.
- Around 41% of owners and 61% of non-owners agreed overcrowding is a concern at fenced dog parks.
- Around 36% of dog owners and 58% of non-owners agreed people who bring too many dogs at a time is a concern.

Reasons people may stop using dog parks

- Around 71% of dog owners and 58% of non-owners agreed aggressive dogs are the reason they stopped using a fenced dog park.
- Around 69% of dog owners and 62% of non-owners agreed that owners not actively supervising their dogs is the reason they stopped using the fenced parks.
- Around 68% of dog owners and 58% of non-owners agreed poorly behaved/trained dogs are a reason they stopped using a fenced dog park.
- Around 61% of dog owners and 55% of non-owners agreed they stopped using the fenced dog parks because there is not enough enforcement of dog control requirements at dog parks.
- Around 56% of dog owners and 39% of non-owners agreed overcrowding is a reason they stopped using fenced dog parks.
- Around 53% of dog owners and 57% of non-owners agreed aggressive or impolite dog owners are a reason they stopped using a fenced dog park.
- Around 47% of owners and 34% of non-owners agreed that fenced dog parks are too small.
- Around 39% of dog owners and 27% of non-owners agreed there are other off-leash areas closer to home.
- Around 31% of both dog owners and non-owners agreed there was not enough to interest a dog.
- Around 29% of dog owners and 42% of non-owners agreed dogs running into other activities or users of facilities is a reason to stop using fenced dog parks.
- Around 18% of dog owners and 22% of non-owners agreed that fenced dog parks are too noisy.

Attitudes to dogs off leash in public spaces

- Around 61% of owners and 70% of non-owners disagreed that dogs should be allowed off leash in public places.
- Around 58% of dog owners and 48% of non-owners agreed that they prefer to walk a dog than go to a fenced dog off-leash area.
- Around 55% of owners and 38% of non-owners agreed dog owners are not as attentive to their dogs in fenced -off areas compared to unfenced off-leash areas.
- Around 48% of dog owners and 57% of non-owners disagreed that in an off-leash area people should expect that dogs will run up to them and/or jump on them.
- Around 47% of dog owners and 45% of non-owners agreed that they use unfenced off-leash areas more than fenced off-leash areas.

- Around 43% of dog owners and 30% of non-owners agreed they have let their dog off leash in public areas.
- Around 41% of dog owners and 55% of non-owners disagreed with the statement that it should be okay to let dogs off the leash in on-leash areas when no-one else is around.
- Around 41% of dog owners and 48% of non-owners agreed with the statement that dog owners think that it is okay for their dogs to run up to other people and jump on them.
- Around 38% of dog owners and 43% of non-dog owners agreed that a reduction on registration fees would support a dog owner to attend dog training/control classes.
- Around 30% of dog owners and 16% of non-owners have seen more dog aggression in fenced off-leash area than in unfenced off-leash areas.

Theme: Elements of dog park concepts that are supported or preferred

- Majority of participants agreed that fences stop dogs running into other parkland activities and/or people using recreational facilities; confident that the dog won't run off; can't always be sure the dog will obey recall commands; can relax more; don't have to worry about dog annoying other people; and feel dogs are safe.

Theme: Responsible pet ownership, monitoring and enforcement

- Majority of participants agreed they have concerns in fenced dog-off leash areas about people not picking up their dog's litter; poorly behaved/trained dogs; aggressive dogs; owners not actively supervising their dogs; owners letting their dogs annoy other dogs and/or people; aggressive or impolite dog owners; dogs left unattended; not enough enforcement of dog control requirements; and overcrowding/too many dogs.
- The majority of participants agreed they have concerns in unfenced dog-off leash areas about people not picking up their dog's litter; aggressive dogs; poorly behaved/trained dogs; owners not actively supervising their dogs; owners letting their dogs annoy other dogs and/or people; aggressive or impolite dog owners; not enough enforcement of dog control requirements; dogs running into other parkland activities and/or people; people who bring too many dogs; and dogs left unattended.

Theme: Reasons why some dog owners prefer unfenced to fenced dog off-leash areas

- Some dog owner participants have stopped using fenced dog off-leash areas, use them less now, or are selective about when they use them due to aggressive dogs; owners not actively supervising their dog/s; not enough enforcement of control requirements; aggressive or impolite dog owners; and overcrowding/ too many dogs.
- Some dog owner participants use unfenced off-leash areas more than fenced off-leash areas because there is more space

to spread out; there are fewer dogs around; their dog is more relaxed when there are not as many dogs around; their dog is better behaved/more responsive when there are not as many dogs around; they and their dog can get away from poorly controlled dogs; an unfenced off-leash area is closer to home; and/or to access to recreational facilities (such as seats, water fountains, agility equipment and playground).

Theme: Dog aggression, attacks and public safety

- Aggressive dogs is one of the reasons why some participants have stopped using fenced dog off-leash parks.

Theme: Responsible pet ownership, monitoring and enforcement

- Concerns about people not picking up their dog's litter and owners not supervising their dogs in unfenced dog off-leash areas.
- Some dog owner participants reported their dog has or did occasionally run away from them; they have attended dog training/obedience classes with their adult dog; their dog always immediately obeys or obeyed their recall commands; their dog will/would remain in a 'stay position' even when they walk/ed off from him/her; and there have been occasions in the past when they have not picked up their dog's litter.

Location based references

- Broadmeadows Park Dog Park
- Craigieburn Gardens Dog Park
- Gladstone Dog Park
- Sunbury Dog Park

3.8 Consultation summary report for draft Hume open space strategy (2024)

The Draft Hume Open Space Strategy was released in May 2024. Feedback was invited from the community regarding the Vision of the Draft Strategy; views on the three key directions (Protect, Optimise, Grow); views on the six priority actions (Partnering with Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung, Enhancing the park renewal program, Amending the planning scheme, Enhancing the urban forest program, Continuing the park maintenance program, and Establishing a strategic land investment program), any actions that are missing from the Draft Strategy, and general comments. The consultation period was 4 May to 16 June 2024. Participation options were a quick poll, place-based pop-up sessions, online survey, online information sessions, drop in sessions, and rightsholder and stakeholder discussions, and written submissions. The consultation program reached over 6,000 community members and 275 participants were engaged.

Theme: Designing dog parks in shared-use open spaces

- A small number of participants reported valuing "Off-leash dog areas" as an important priority in parks.
- When seeking new dog off-leash areas, Council seeks large open areas that are not busy with people. This can include sports grounds during non-sport times, and easements. The Strategy does not name where new sites will be as this will require further analysis and consultation.
- Requests for more space for dogs, upgraded spaces for dogs, and more dog off leash areas.

Theme: Infrastructure and amenities in dog parks and open space

- Requests for more public lighting for parks, paths and walkways.
- Requests for more and clean public toilets in parks.
- Many participants reported valuing "Trees and shade for neighbourhood" as an important priority in parks.

Theme: Elements of dog park concepts and dog access that are of concern (includes environment and biodiversity)

- Many participants reported "Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Aboriginal values", "Heritage features showcasing past uses", and "Plants and wildlife for biodiversity" are important priorities in parks.
- Support shown for greater protection of biodiversity and more wildlife corridors.

Theme: Dog-related information, signage, education and events

- Requests for easier to understand dog off lead signage.

- Requests for information in other languages for our multicultural communities to understand what options there are.

Theme: Dog zones within dog parks

- Requests for separate sections for big/confident dogs and small/anxious dogs.

Theme: Responsible pet ownership, monitoring and enforcement

- Requests for dog owners to have better control and clean up after their dogs.

Theme: Cultural and personal considerations for dog owners

- Dislike dogs off leash in parks coming up to people and licking. There is a process in the Muslim culture that requires cleansing, especially if the hand is licked and you are going to pray.

Location based references (most grouped by Precinct)

- Investigating options for new parks in the southern suburbs: Majority support for investigating options for new parks in the southern suburbs of Hume which have less open space than suburbs in Hume's north and west.
- Need for new dog off-leash areas: New dog off-leash areas will be needed in some areas of Hume, including the new growth areas suburbs of Kalkallo, Mickleham, Craigieburn, Greenvale and Sunbury.
- Need for additional off-leash areas: Additional off-leash areas are needed in Roxburgh Park.
- Precincts 1, 2, 3, 4 Sunbury: Focus on walking trail priorities, cultural heritage protection, and the importance of parks and nature. Request to upgrade the dog park in Sunbury.
- Precinct 5: Bulla and rural areas: Focus on the importance of Bulla Parkland upgrades.
- Precinct 6: Greenvale: Focus on the importance of Greenvale Reservoir upgrades.
- Precinct 7: Tullamarine, Gladstone Park, Westmeadows, Attwood: Focus on improvement opportunities for different parks.
- Precinct 8: Broadmeadows, Jacana, Dallas, Coolaroo: Requests for more spaces, cleanliness, safety and trail and park improvements
- Precinct 9: Meadow Heights, Roxburgh Park: Requests for more play and safety improvements through lighting and traffic improvements
- Precinct 10: Campbellfield, Somerton: Requests for more open spaces, barbecues, and paths.
- Precinct 11: Craigieburn: Focus on walking links and park improvements.
- Precinct 12: Mickleham: Requests for walking, cycling and park improvements.

- **Precinct 13: Kalkallo:** Focus on park improvement and use opportunities.

3.9 Dog-related customer service requests (2024/25)

Council maintains a register of service requests received relating to animals and park patrols of on lead and off lead. Based on the location information provided, all incidents reported occurred within public open space.

11 service requests were submitted between 17 July 2024 and 18 May 2025 relating to the category “Report on animals” and sub-category “Park Patrol - On Lead/Off Lead”.

- Requests were submitted via email (5 of which 4 were lodged via Snap Send Solve), phone call (4), and in-person (2).
- As of 20 May 2025, all service requests were completed.

Theme: Dog nuisance behaviours, dogs attacks and safety

- Between 17 July 2024 and 18 May 2025, 11 service requests were submitted relating to some form of dog nuisance or incident.

Location based references (suburbs)

- The locations of the dog-related service requests were Craigieburn (6), Sunbury (2), Westmeadows (2), and Attwood (1).

3.10 Dog-related customer service requests (2025/26)

Council maintains a register of service requests received relating to animals and park patrols of on lead and off lead. Based on the location information provided, around half of the incidents reported occurred within public open space.

16 service requests were submitted between 1 July 2025 and 23 March 2026 relating to the category “Report on animals” and sub-category “Park Patrol - On Lead/Off Lead”.

- Requests were submitted via email (13 of which 10 were lodged via Snap Send Solve), phone call (2), and in-person (1).
- As of 11 March, these service requests were completed (11), created (4), and waiting for customer (1).

Theme: Dog nuisance behaviours, dogs attacks and safety

- Between 1 July 2025 and 23 March 2026, 16 service requests were submitted relating to some form of dog nuisance or incident.

Location based references (suburbs)

- The locations of the dog-related service requests were Greenvale (10), Sunbury (3), Craigieburn (1), Meadow Heights (1), and to be confirmed (1).

3.11 Register of dog attacks on people and animals (2025/26)

Council maintains a register of service requests received relating to animals and dog attacks on an animal or on a person. Based on available information provided, it is not possible to determine whether the dog attacks occurred on public land, open space, streets, private land or residences.

- The service requests related to Dog attack on an animal (108 service requests) or Dog attack on a person (62). Six service requests referred to “Dangerous dog or dogs”.
- Requests were submitted via phone call (119), and email (29 of which 10 were lodged via Snap Send Solve) and in-person (22).
- As of 25 March, these service requests were completed (150), in-progress (12), created (4), and waiting for customer (4).

Theme: Dog attacks and public safety

- Between 1 July 2025 and 23 March 2026 a total of 170 service requests were submitted of which 108 related to Dog attack on an animal and 62 related to Dog attack on a person.

Location based references (suburbs)

- Many of the dog attack service requests occurred in Sunbury (39), Craigieburn (24), Greenvale (14), and Broadmeadows (10).

- No dog attacks were recorded for Attwood, Campbellfield, Clarkefield, Fawkner, Keilor, Melbourne Airport, Somerton or Yuroke.

Suburb of issue	Number of service requests logged
Broadmeadows	10
Bulla	1
Coolaroo	2
Craigieburn	24
Dallas	2
Diggers Rest	6
Gladstone Park	1
Greenvale	14
Jacana	2
Kalkallo	5
Meadow Heights	8
Mickleham	5
Oaklands Junction	1
Roxburgh Park	6
Sunbury	39
Tullamarine	7
Westmeadows	7
Wildwood	1
No value	*10*
To be confirmed	*19*

4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, Council has comprehensive dog-related policies and detailed strategic documents in place to inform future planning for dogs in open spaces. By way of examples, there are guiding principles for dogs in public places, ways that dogs are permitted to access public places, types of dog off leash activities permitted for each category of open space, criteria for assessing suitability of public open space for off leash activities, features of dog activity areas by hierarchy of open space, distribution of dog off leash areas, and dog access controls in open spaces. Council's Open Space Strategy (2025) emphasises equitable access to open space experiences across all precincts, including recreation opportunities for dog owners. When it comes to dog-related planning, there is a need to balance recreation opportunities with biodiversity protection, cultural heritage, accessibility, safety and inclusion.

Dogs play an important role in the lives of many residents and community members within the Hume municipality. However, insights from this document review signal there are many tensions and complexities when it comes to planning for dogs in open space including:

- Dogs being off leash in multi-functional open spaces with a range of formal or informal shared uses.
- The benefits and challenges of fenced and unfenced off-leash spaces for dogs, dog owners, shared space users, and nearby residents.
- Securing support for proposed changes to dog access in on-leash areas, off-leash areas and prohibited areas. For example, a situation where there is community support for protecting the ecological and cultural values, a preference reported by dog owners for an off-leash area not be reduced significantly, and dog owners permitting dogs to access prohibited areas (Emu Bottom Wetland Masterplan consultation in 2023).
- The variety of equipment, features and activity zones that best and safely accommodates dogs of varying sizes, breeds, and personalities. Dog owners do not always want the same elements or experiences in dog spaces.
- Encouraging and enforcing responsible pet ownership regarding dog behaviours towards other animals and people, as well as dog owner behaviours that are respectful and complying with instructional signage, local laws, and restrictions.

Insights from this document review also highlight several considerations for engaging the Hume community in future consultation programs to inform planning for dogs in open space:

- Seek feedback from a broad cross-section of users including dog owners, non-dog owners, families, nearby residents, shared space users, sports field user groups, environmental

groups, Traditional Owners and culturally diverse communities.

- Where possible, capture participant demographic information such as gender, age, suburb, dog owner or non-dog owner status, connection to the open space, and cultural diversity.
- Consider exploring perceptions of safety, amenity, accessibility, dog behaviour, maintenance and conflicts between users.
- Consider exploring views about preferred locations, fenced versus unfenced areas, on-lead versus off-leash preferences, and acceptable restrictions near environmentally sensitive areas.
- Use multiple channels to raise awareness about the consultation and a range of community engagement approaches such as online surveys, interactive maps, pop-up engagement in parks, culturally inclusive approaches, on-site signage, translated materials and targeted engagement with nearby residents.
- Clearly communicate how environmental protection, biodiversity and cultural heritage values influence dog access decisions.

Appendix 1. Registered dog population in Hume (2024/25)

By way of context, the registered dog population in Hume as of 2024/25 is shown below. Council's City Laws Team estimates there is a further 22,000 unregistered dogs in Hume.

Suburb	Registered dogs (2024/25)	Population (ABS 2024)	Dogs per 100 residents
Atwood	414	3,422	12
Broadmeadows	427	13,325	3
Bulla/Clarkefield/ Diggers Rest/ Keilor/ Wildwood	237	1,548	15
Campbellfield/ Somerton/ Fawkner	183	5,333	3
Coolaroo	153	3,299	5
Craigieburn	2,978	71,553	4
Dallas	164	6,954	2
Gladstone Park	678	8,271	8
Greenvale/ Yuroke/ Oaklands Junction	1,644	25,443	6
Jacana	132	2,313	6
Kalkallo	372	9,204	4
Meadow Heights	505	14,960	3
Mickleham	1,027	25,582	4
Roxburgh Park	830	25,152	3
Sunbury	5,881	42,080	14
Tullamarine/ Melbourne Airport	542	6,843	8
Westmeadows	571	6,571	9
Total	16,738	271,853	6