



# DOGS OFF-LEASH AT MACKENZIES BAY: BENEFITS OF PETS AND OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

## What are some benefits of pet ownership?

Studies have shown that pet ownership can improve owners' physical and mental health. Indeed, dogs provide companionship, a reason to exercise and socialise.

Dogs are particularly important companions for older people and people living alone as they provide company and give a reason for individuals to engage with other people, thereby contributing to community health and well-being. They can also help teach children about compassion and responsibility.

## Why are dog off-leash areas important and what are their benefits?

There are approximately 10,000 dogs in Waverley LGA and national surveys have found that an increasing number of people consider their dogs to be part of the family.

Off-leash dog areas are safe and accessible public places where owners and their dogs can enjoy physical exercise, improved social well-being and mental health.

In high-density urban areas like Waverley LGA there are fewer private outdoor spaces compared to lower-density areas where more houses have backyards. This means that residents have a greater need to use public open spaces to exercise their dogs and for their own personal enjoyment. Dedicated off-leash dog areas allow some separation of dogs and other open space users, which can improve enjoyment and safety for all.

As outlined by the South Australian Dog and Cat Management Board in 2013, off-leash dog areas can also promote responsible dog ownership by reducing the 'likelihood of dog owners letting their dogs off-leash in other recreational areas and infringing on the rights of other community residents and parks users. They can also provide opportunities to educate dog owners about animal health, welfare, and dog park etiquette'.

**The consultation on a potential trial of dogs off-leash at Mackenzies Bay runs until 20 September 2020. Head to [haveyoursay.waverley.nsw.gov.au](https://haveyoursay.waverley.nsw.gov.au).**