

## Summary of engagement activities - San Remo and Phillip Island

In January and February 2019, Council completed community consultation in relation to a number of proposed dog off-leash beach locations. A total of 1,817 survey responses were received. Seventy per cent of people completing the survey were local residents. A further 20% were holiday home owners. The largest number of respondents came from Cowes, followed by Cape Woolamai. A total of 1,336 people who completed the survey came from Phillip Island. Around 80% of those completing the survey were dog owners (1451 respondents).

Council received 187 written comments as part of the process, most of which were included on hard copy surveys. Council also received a number of detailed written submissions.

Key themes of the comments supporting off-leash areas included:

- General support for provision of suitably designated off-leash beach areas
- A need for more off-leash beach areas in San Remo and Phillip Island
- Longer time-frames when dogs can be walked off-leash on designated beaches
- Larger off-leash areas
- More options for dog owners to use beaches on Phillip Island and San Remo during the summer

The Off-Leash Cowes/Cape Woolamai group provided a submission supporting off-leash areas on Phillip Island. They are seeking two more areas where dogs can be walked off-leash on the beach on Phillip Island. They would like to see a changes made to the dates/times when dogs are allowed on beaches, similar to Inverloch's restrictions, providing more access for dogs. Their submission identified they don't support dogs being off-leash near Hooded Plover nesting areas.

Key themes of the comments opposing off-leash areas included:

- Dogs should not be allowed off-leash on any beach in Bass Coast due to the impact on native wildlife, in particular Hooded Plovers at Cleeland Bight and Ventnor
- Safety concerns, due to dogs interacting with people on 'swimming' beaches
- A need to improve enforcement of regulations
- A need for a fenced off-leash area on the Island

Birdlife Bass Coast's submission identified concerns in relation to off-leash dog areas having a negative impact on the welfare of the coastal birds on Phillip Island.

Phillip Island Conservation Society's submission did not support the provision of more off-leash dog beaches on Phillip Island. They recommended that aside from the current off-leash area at Ventnor, all other Council-managed beaches should be on-leash beaches. They also recommended that further consideration be given to creating inland off-leash areas.

## Site specific information

### San Remo

Currently in San Remo, dogs are allowed on-leash on the beach from 1 December to 30 April, except between 10.00am and 6.00pm when no dogs are allowed. Fifty seven per cent (472) of respondents did not support these current regulations. More than 85% (723) of respondents support a designated off-leash beach in San Remo and more than 85% (703) of respondents supported Foots Beach as the location (with time and date regulations).

### Cape Woolamai

More than 85% (949) of respondents indicated they would support a designated off-leash beach in Cleeland Bight in line with current dog regulations. Seaspray Avenue access track 520 metres north to Cleeland Road access track was the most popular option for an off-leash beach area in Cleeland Bight (64% or 651 respondents). Palm Beach Avenue access track 350m to south to Southport Avenue access track was the next most popular with support from 22% (232) of respondents; Seaspray Avenue access track 170 metres north to Grofam Court access track was the least popular, supported by 13% (134) of responders.

Council received a submission from Bird Life Bass Coast that identified significant concerns in relation to off-leash dog areas having a negative impact on Hooded Plover nesting areas and on other shore birds that use the rock platforms in Cape Woolamai for feeding. Birdlife Bass Coast's submission recommended any off-leash area in Cape Woolamai should have no rock platforms.

### Newhaven

Eighty-five per cent (1371) of respondents would support a designated off-leash beach in Newhaven in line with current dog regulations. The preferred off-leash beach option for Newhaven is from Phillip Island Bridge 200m towards Cape Woolamai (86% or 1284 respondents).

Birdlife Bass Coast's submission identified potential impacts by off-leash dogs on Hooded Plovers and also shore birds that use the rock platforms in Newhaven and Cleeland Bight for feeding. They did not support an off-leash area in Newhaven.

### Cowes West

More than 85% (1350) of respondents indicated they would support a designated off-leash beach in Cowes West in line with current dog regulations. Of the two options presented, the Yacht Club access track to 340m McKenzie Rd access track was the preferred option (84% or 1225 respondents).

### Ventnor

69% (1132) of respondents would support a designated off-leash beach in Ventnor, being available through the year with no time restrictions. 20% of respondents would like no change to times and 11% do not want it to continue as an off-leash area. Birdlife Bass Coast did not support the Ventnor off-leash area being 24/7.