

TO: communityengagement@act.gov.au

Review of dog exercise areas in the ACT

Dear Community Engagement,

Living Streets Canberra recommends that:

- 1. maps of proposed dog exercise areas be revised so that they provide an individual identifier for each area, and re-issued;**
- 2. the summary of proposed changes be revised, to include the individual identifiers for each of the areas under consideration, and re-issued;**
- 3. the consultation period be extended for a minimum of two weeks, from the date of reissuing of the maps and of the summary of proposed changes; and**
- 4. all dog off-leash areas be physically separated from public thoroughfares including roads, community paths and footpaths;**

1. maps of proposed dog exercise areas be revised so that they provide an individual identifier for each area, and re-issued

It is impossible to determine, with certainty, which part of the map represents an area such as “Duffy Street pedestrian parkland.” This makes it difficult to comment on specific proposals.

2. the summary of proposed changes be revised, to include the individual identifiers for each of the areas under consideration, and re-issued

See above under (1).

3. the consultation period be extended for a minimum of two weeks from the date of reissuing of the maps and of the summary of proposed changes

See above under (1).

4. all dog off-leash areas be physically separated from public thoroughfares including roads, community paths and footpaths

These public thoroughfares include community paths along Erindale Drive in Tuggeranong, along Yarralumla Creek in Curtin. and along Sullivans Creek through Turner, O'Connor and Lyneham.

Not all dogs have the traffic sense to avoid collisions with vehicles, such as cars and bicycles, that use roads, community paths and footpaths.

Most dogs are well behaved, but some are not. I know from personal experience that

dogs that are normally well-behaved can become aggressive, especially in the presence of motorcycles or bicycles. I have been chased by dogs quite a few times while riding bicycles, and I have twice been bitten by dogs while riding motorcycles. My wife has been bailed up by aggressive dogs while walking, in a situation where it was very difficult for her to protect herself, a child in a pram and a child in a sling. Even playful dog behaviour can be interpreted as aggression, resulting in evasive action that can lead to a crash.

Community paths and footpaths provide essential transport for children, for old people and for other people who don't drive. Many of these people are incapable of running fast enough to escape from an aggressive dog. The mere threat of the presence of off-leash dogs might be enough to prevent them from using a path.

Permitting off-leash dogs on community paths or footpaths would be contrary to the objectives of [Transport for Canberra](#). As Simon Corbell wrote in the Foreword to that policy:

Transport for Canberra will contribute to the ACT's greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets by ... encouraging more people to choose sustainable transport like walking, cycling and public transport. It will build on our commitment to active travel, highlighted by the ACT's signature to the International Charter for Walking in 2010.

Transport for Canberra will make our city a better place to live, work and do business, and a more accessible place where it is easy for everyone to get around.

With my best regards

Leon Arundell

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