

ITEM NO: 15

SUBJECT: BUREAU PARK, KATOOMBA DOG OFF-LEASH AREA

FILE NO: F02200

Recommendations:

1. *That the grassed area of Bureau Park, Katoomba becomes a trial time-share dog off-leash area once the appropriate infrastructure is installed.*
 2. *That the Bureau Park, Katoomba dog off-leash area is subject to the same consultation processes and evaluation as the other dog off-leash trial areas adopted on 19 February 2008 Council meeting.*
 3. *That a report comes back to the Council on the trial at the same time as the other dog off-leash area trials in approximately 10-12 months time.*
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Report by Group Manager Community and Corporate

Reason for report

At the ordinary meeting of 19 February 2008, the Council resolved unanimously:

1. *That the Council declare an additional seven (7) dog off-leash areas across the local government area, one (1) full-time and six (6) on a time-share basis, for a twelve (12) month trial, with Bureau Park replacing Melrose Park at North Katoomba.*
2. *That a report be brought to the Council detailing the outcomes of the twelve (12) month trial period and provide recommendations for the future of each area.*
3. *That the seven (7) dog off-leash trial areas at Katoomba Falls, Bureau Park, Pitt Park, Old Lawson Golf Course, Tom Hunter Park, Sun Valley Reserve and Lapstone Oval be implemented as soon as possible this financial year utilising existing resource allocations for signs and trades works.*
4. *That prior to the commencement of each dog off-leash area the local community and current user groups be notified and provided with contact details for feedback during the trial period.*
5. *That the actual location of the dog-off leash area within Bureau Park be referred, as a matter of urgency, to the Community and Facilities Working Party for discussion and an inspection with Councillors, Council Officers and interested residents.*

6. *That the existing site next to Leura Oval be referred, as a matter of urgency, to the Community and Facilities Working Party for discussion and other possible sites in the area also be considered and subsequent site inspections take place with Councillors, Council Officers, interested residents and the local Bush Care Group.*

7. *That reports on Items 5 and 6 come to the Council after the full deliberations of the Community and Facilities Working Party and at the direction of the Chairperson.*

(Minute No. 407, 19/2/08)

This report describes the outcome relating to item 5 regarding Bureau Park only.

Extent, timing of opening and timing of use

Subsequent to a site visit attended by the Councillors, interested residents and staff it was put that the grassed oval area of Bureau Park, Katoomba should become a dog off-leash area. See map below. It was further put that the play equipment should be fenced against the dog off-leash area before it comes into effect. Funding for the fencing is currently included in the draft 2008/9 CWP budget. If approved, it is anticipated the dog off-leash area will be available in July 2008.



This area would also be on a trial basis, along with all the other areas adopted for trial at the 19 February meeting. The trial at Bureau Park, Katoomba is recommended to be for approximately nine months so that the results can be reported along with all the other trials.

Bureau Park, Katoomba is intended as a time-share oval. As there are currently low levels of sporting use the proposed hours are:

Saturdays: 3pm till dark (this allows for on-going Saturday morning sport should the demand increase)
 Sundays: all day
 Monday to Friday: dawn till 10 am
 Monday to Friday: 4pm till dark where no scheduled sports training is underway.

Dog owners will be expected to accommodate the occasional one-off sporting or other event if notice is provided.

Sustainability Assessment (Triple Bottom Line Reporting):

Factor	Positive	Negative
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs are restricted to one particular area and the presence of this off-leash area will reduce the inappropriate use of other open space areas for off-leash activities. • People in north Katoomba do not have to drive as far or at all to reach a dog off-leash area. • There are no known threatened or endangered species in the immediate area of proposed areas to be affected by dog presence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irresponsible dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs may cause negative impacts on the land, e.g. faeces run off into nearby natural areas or faeces may attract flies to area. • Irresponsible dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs may cause some health risk to other users
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a central location for dog off-leash activities will encourage more residents to socialise/exercise their dog which provides health and social benefits to both the dogs and owners. • Better behaved dogs as they have been properly exercised • It increases recreation diversity within the Mountains and achieves better utilisation of existing recreational facility (Map for Action 2.1.3). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less flexibility for sporting people in access to this sporting field. • Badly behaved dogs impacting on enjoyment of park by others. • People who dislike, or are intimidated by, dogs may feel alienated from park.
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dog off-leash areas will be established in already existing recreation areas. The financial outlay to establish these off-leash areas is considered minimal for the benefits they will provide. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional fencing will create a minor increase in maintenance of Bureau Park. • Rangers may need to carry out additional surveillance to monitor and ensure appropriate use of the park, particularly in the initial period of the off-leash trial period.

Financial implications for the Council

Creation of this dog off-leash area will require around \$10,000 for fencing and signs. This amount is in the draft capital works budget for 2008/09.

This type of infrastructure is anticipated to need replacement in 10 to 15 years.

Legal and risk management issues for the Council

As dog behaviour is the responsibility of dog owners, there is no risk to the Council from the extent of this dog off-leash area.

External consultation

Interested residents were invited to the on-site meeting with Councillors at Bureau Park, Katoomba. Many had also signed a petition outlining their interests and requirements of Bureau Park, Katoomba as a dog off-leash area.

Conclusion

The trial of Bureau Park, Katoomba dog off-leash area should go ahead as soon as funds become available for the required infrastructure. Results of the trial should be reported to the Council along with the other trial results anticipated around June 2009.

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