



Item 7.3 Petition – Access to Beaches for Dogs, Port Melbourne

A Petition containing 10 signatures, was received from local residents.

The Petition states the following:-

Dear Council – to the Mayor and Councillors of Port Phillip.

As a resident of Port Melbourne, I/We disagree with the process to ban dogs from most Port Melbourne Beaches from 1 November to March 31.

I/We believe this ban will cause:

- **Unnecessary crowding of the paths beside the beach** - *there is currently a need to social distance – the actual beaches are very empty in the early mornings, but the paths are congested. Due to the proximity of the 109 tram and the Todd Road exit ramp, Port Melbourne’s beach paths are very congested with visitors and there are already people getting frustrated by the crowding. If people with dogs could walk along the beach (closer to the water) this would free up some space. It just doesn’t make sense to restrict everyone to a small path.*
- **Unnecessary pressure on parks and other green space** – *dog numbers in Port Phillip have increased by approximately 1000 dogs since the last management plan was written. The largest increase has been in Port Melbourne. This has meant there are more people walking dogs, but people generally do this either early in the morning or in the evening and as dog owners are not allowed on the beach they are crowded in the parks. Now that many of us are working from home semi-permanently, there is a significant pressure on open space. Opening up the beach for walks during peak times is a free way to address this challenge.*

Residents have provided clear feedback to the Council in the in two feedback processes for the ‘Port Phillip Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021’. A result of the initial feedback process, was that 20 percent of respondents said their top concern was increased dog access to beaches during summer. In the second online policy review forum, in August 2021, the council moderator told respondents that the beach access issue would not be considered because a private survey addressed this issue in 2018. I would like Councillors to revisit this matter.

As noted, in the draft domestic animal management plan more dogs reside in Port Melbourne than any other bayside suburb, but Port Melbourne’s beaches are the most restricted in summer. At the Garden City end of Port Melbourne, only a small piece of beach is available to dog walkers.

The 2021 Council report stated that ‘Many respondents would like to see less restrictions on the beach for dogs. Some respondents in particular indicated their desire for beach access in the morning in summer, to be consistent with other beaches in the city’.

- **Could the Council respond and explain why Port Melbourne beaches are more restricted than most bayside beaches?**
- **Could the Council explain why this issue is not been addressed in the new 2021 animal management plan?**

MEETING OF THE PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL 6 OCTOBER 2021



- *I/We request that Council considers opening up Port Melbourne beaches to dog walkers before 10am in the morning during the November 1 – March 31 summer period.*

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the petition.
2. Notes that feedback from the consultation on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is currently being collated and that Officers will consider the merits of a review of the current dog restrictions on Port Melbourne beaches along with all other feedback, as there has also been feedback seeking beaches that are free of dogs. The final DAMP will be presented to Council in November for adoption.
3. Incorporates this petition as a submission to form part of the feedback currently being collated to inform the final DAMP report to be adopted by Council in November.
4. Notifies the petitioner of the outcome of this petition.

ATTACHMENTS

Nil