

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

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#### **Question from Councillor Pearl:**

In relation to consultation on fixed changes, would the same level of consultation be required if a three-month trial was proposed, as opposed to permanent changes?

#### **Response**

Council can resolve to trial altered arrangements for the presence of dogs on beaches within the municipal district without first undertaking community consultation.

The requirement for community engagement comes from the Local Government Act (2020) the requires Council to adopt and maintain a Community Engagement Policy.

Council's Community Engagement Policy expressly contemplates the trialling of initiatives without community consultation first occurring (see below).

Page 9: *Under this policy Council may agree to take a slightly different approach to engagement by trialling an initiative and seeking feedback through temporary use, initiatives or activations. Community feedback about what works and what doesn't through these temporary approaches will then be used to inform longer-term policy outcomes.*

The level of consultation undertaken to assess a trial would generally be the same, but the survey methodology would differ.

In the case of a trial of changed dog restrictions, a market research approach is recommended to provide Council with a solid dataset to support future decisions. This approach would involve developing quotas for representation and random sampling to ensure outcomes of engagement reflect a representative sample of our community and key stakeholders. Representative sampling would be a key factor in providing Council with a greater understanding of varying views across the municipality, as well as variations between respondent profiles such as age, and dog ownership.

*\*Please note: answers to any questions in Public Question Time and Councillor Question Time which were answered at the meeting are included in the minutes of that meeting.*