3.3 Gordon Barnard Reserve Dog Friendly Play Area - consultation feedback

Abstract

The purpose of this report is to:

- Present feedback to Councillors on the consultation to test community support for the development of a Fenced Dog Play Area (FDPA) in a portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve (GBR) (Site 2) as shown in **Attachment 1.**
- Provide Councillors with the result of officers' investigation of opportunities to introduce more 'dog friendly play areas' (including some limited fencing) within existing dog off-leash reserves, in lieu of looking for more sites for the formal fully fenced dog park option.
- Provide an opportunity for community members to present their views to Councillors ahead of Council formally considering officers' recommendations on how best to proceed.

Part One: Testing community support for a FDPA in Gordon Barnard Reserve

In March 2020 the Boroondara community was engaged through face-to-face and digital channels to have their say about a proposed FDPA within a portion of GBR in Balwyn North. The consultation consisted of:

- an onsite information session for residents immediately abutting GBR, and
- an online survey.

The online survey was accessible through Council's website and was open for 3 weeks.

174 unique responses were received to the online survey, 16 community members attended an informal on-site session and Council received an additional 19 independent submissions regarding the proposal.

As with any consultation process, it is important to respond to community feedback in a way that addresses concerns raised by local residents, and considers the needs and aspirations of the broader Boroondara community.

While there are mixed community views on the relative merit of the proposal, the deliberative design of the consultation has been well received. Many of the comments collected within the online survey convey a level of appreciation and thanks from community members who acknowledge they've been able to outline their views in detail.

The community consultation indicates a positive level of support for the establishment of a FDPA in Boroondara. However, support for a FDPA within GBR is currently insufficient to justify proceeding on survey results alone.

In making a recommendation, officers have taken into account the following considerations:

- There are mixed views about the relative benefit of FDPA's for both people and dogs. Notwithstanding these divergent views, Council has expressed a desire for a FDPA in Boroondara, and GBR has been identified as the preferred location following an extensive site assessment process.

- Of all 174 respondents, 119 respondents (68%) supported the general principle that Council provide a fenced dog play area **somewhere in Boroondara**.

- There were 54 people (31% of total 174 respondents) **not in support of a fenced dog play area in Boroondara**.

- The 120 people who responded with "Yes" to question 1 or did not answer it proceeded to question 2, "Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard Reserve?" Of these 120 responses, 83 people were in support of the fenced dog play area in GBR, and 37 people were not in support.

- Considering responses from all 174 people, 83 people or **48% of survey respondents supported the proposal of a fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve.** The remaining **52% appear to oppose the proposal for the Gordon Barnard Reserve.** This interpretation is based on combining the number of people who did not support a fenced dog play area generally (54 people or 31%) with those who do not support a fenced dog play area in the Gordon Barnard Reserve (37 people or 21%).

- Of the 48% who supported a FDPA in Boroondara and GBR, 94% or 78 respondents lived in Boroondara. Of these, 77% lived within Balwyn and Balwyn North.

- It is more than likely the survey results have been skewed in favour of the opposing position due to the organised campaign against the proposal.

- Despite the negative community campaign skewing the survey results, 48% of all respondents support a FDPA at GBR.

- Key concerns raised by community members opposed to the proposal primarily relate to:
    - Concerns about use of Council resources (49 people or 56% raised this concern)
    - Impact on the park (47 people or 54%)
    - Impact on animals (36 people or 41%)
    - Impact on people (30 people or 34%)

- While officers acknowledge the proposal will inevitably impact some elements of the park, with careful design, maintenance and management, these impacts are considered manageable and are unlikely to significantly impact the function, character or local amenity of the park or its users.

- Having undertaken extensive site assessments across all Boroondara parks and reserves, officers are not confident further analysis of new sites will elicit different results to those seen here (ie there is general support for an FDPA in Boroondara, but not majority support for a FDPA in any specific location).

- Should Council wish to apply for Round 2 funding under the Victorian Government's Local Parks Program when it opens, in order to have the best chance of success, Council would require a confirmed location for a fully fenced enclosure to be agreed ahead of the application closing date in August 2020. (Note only permanent facilities are eligible for funding under the program).

- Council has a leadership role to weigh up the pro's and con's of any proposal and make an informed decision. Ultimately, the decision for Council is to determine whether the community benefit to be delivered by such a proposal justifies the expense.

Having considered all the available information, officers recommend Council proceed with a reduced scope FDPA in GBR.

In reducing the scope it is recommended to delete some of the more permanent and higher cost items that are considered optional to the function of the facility. This will reduce upfront costs and minimise physical changes to the existing park area. While no design has been completed for this site, typical items that could be de-scoped include the provision of a shelter/meeting place including seating and picnic tables, bespoke dog play equipment and lighting.

Officers will utilise best practice design guidelines to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to minimise any potential impacts on the local park, its users and the surrounding community.

Pending Council's decision, officers will prepare a concept plan for the proposal and seek community feedback on the concept design.

Part Two: Investigation of additional dog friendly play areas within existing dog off-leash reserves

In addition to testing community support for the FDPA at GBR, Councillors also requested officers investigate the opportunity to provide more 'dog friendly play areas' (including some limited fencing) within existing dog off-leash reserves. These areas are intended to complement existing dog off-leash reserves and are not to be fully fenced.

The following sites are recommended for provision of additional dog friendly play areas:

- Markham Reserve in Solway Ward.
- Boroondara Park in Maling Ward.
- Lynden Park in Lynden Ward.
- Pridmore Park in Glenferrie Ward.

These sites performed well in the site suitability assessment, are large enough to absorb the additional infrastructure without unduly impacting the existing park character and amenity, and provide a good geographic spread of additional dog friendly areas across the municipality.

Given the minor nature of these initiatives and the expectation that they will complement the existing dog off-leash designation and use of the nominated parks, officers recommend proceeding with the implementation of these facilities as soon as possible, as funding permits.

Officers' recommendation

That the Services Special Committee resolve to:

1. Note the consultation outcomes and thank all submitters for their feedback received during this process.

2. Proceed with:

    - a reduced scope Fenced Dog Play Area in a portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve (Site 2) as shown in **Attachment 1**, and

    - implementation of additional ‘dog friendly play areas’ at Markham Reserve, Boroondara Park, Lynden Park and Pridmore Park, as funding permits,as shown in **Attachment 4**.

3. Note officers’ intention to commence the relevant statutory process to amend the Council Order (that designates dog off-leash areas) made under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Responsible director: **Daniel Freer**
Director Environment and Infrastructure

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Present feedback to Councillors on the consultation to test community support for the development of a Fenced Dog Play Area (FDPA) in a portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve (GBR) (Site 2) as shown in **Attachment 1**
- Present to Councillors the result of officers' investigation of opportunities to introduce more 'dog friendly play areas' (including some limited fencing) within existing dog off-leash reserves, in lieu of looking for more sites for the formal fully fenced dog park option, as shown in **Attachment 4.**
- Provide an opportunity for local community members to present their views to Councillors ahead of Council formally considering officers' recommendations on how best to proceed.

2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

Boroondara Community Plan (BCP)
The Boroondara Community Plan identified parks and green spaces as highly important and highlighted the increasing use of parks by dog walkers as both an opportunity and an issue needing careful planning and management.

A total of 184 of the 7,183 responses related to dogs in open spaces. These responses are broadly summarised below:

- (More) dog off lead areas are important (75 people said this).
- Dog walking is important (26 people said this).
- Dog "friendly" spaces are important (23 people said this).
- (More) fenced dog off lead areas are important (21 people said this).
- More dog poo disposal facilities are important (20 people said this).
- Irresponsible dog ownership is a problem in parks (14 people said this).
- Fewer off lead areas/more dog free areas are important (7 people said this).
- More drinking bowls in parks are important (2 people said this).

Council Plan 2017-2021
Catering for dog owners and their pets in our parks, opens spaces and reserves is consistent with following themes and strategies in the Council Plan 2017-2021:

- Theme 1: Your Community, Services and Facilities
  - Strategy 1.11 Ensure Council's assets are suitable for community use through proactive asset inspections, maintenance of asset data in the corporate asset system and development of Asset Management Plans

- Theme 2: Your Parks and Green Spaces
    - Strategy 2.1 Sustainably design, manage and utilise parks and green spaces to foster a connected and healthy community for all ages and abilities.
    - Strategy 2.4 Activate existing green spaces and build social connection through the delivery of additional Council and community services and programs in our parks and gardens.
    - Strategy 2.5 Increase and improve public amenities and facilities in open spaces to enhance functionality for a wider range of uses

Boroondara Open Space Strategy (BOSS)
The purpose of this strategy is to provide a strategic direction for the future planning, provision, design and management of open space in Boroondara to 2026. This includes understanding and addressing existing community open space needs and planning ahead to anticipate and meet the open space needs of the forecast future population.

FDPA's are consistent with the following BOSS principles:

- **Accessible** - The open space network is accessible to the Boroondara community including people of all ages, abilities, health, gender and cultural background.
- **Adaptable** - Open space and its facilities are flexible to adapt to changing environmental, recreational and social needs and expectations.
- **Diverse** - The open space network provides a diversity of places for the community to visit and habitats for native flora and fauna.
- **Recreational** - Open space encourages the community to be outside, play sport, exercise and/or keep fit to improve their health and wellbeing.
- **Shared** - The open space network will continue to embrace a variety of values and uses encouraging respect and consideration of all in sharing the space.
- **Social** - Open space provides opportunities for the Boroondara community to meet, socialise and participate in a variety of activities so it is accessible and safe for all

3. Background

In December 2019, Council resolved to (among other things):

1. Commence consultation to test community support for the development of a FDPA at GBR (Site 2).
2. Investigate the opportunity to introduce more 'dog friendly play areas' (including some limited fencing) within existing dog off-leash reserves, in lieu of looking for more sites for the formal fully fenced FDPA option.

In the report to Council at that time, officers noted that unless there is clear demonstrated demand for the fully fenced dog park option, there remains a risk of significant community opposition.

Testing community support early in the process was intended to not only minimises this risk but demonstrate Council's genuine willingness to test ideas and respond to community views.

In March 2020 the Boroondara community was engaged through face-to-face and digital channels to have their say about the proposed FDPA within a portion of GBR. The consultation consisted of:

- an onsite information session for residents immediately abutting GBR. This information session provided local residents with more targeted consultation material and personal briefings. It was intended to help them to better understand what is proposed. Additionally, the session was designed to help officers to better understand and respond to any specific local concerns.
- an online survey which was accessible through Council's website for 3 weeks. This approach was designed to reach local residents and the broader community.

The online survey was promoted through several channels, including:

- The Council website, where people were encouraged to click through to the survey on the 'Have your Say' webpage.
- 1200 postcards were letter dropped to residents within a 500m radius of GBR. An additional 500 Postcards were placed in Council libraries, customer service and local stores.
- Posters promoting the survey were placed at all entries to GBR, and within local stores including veterinary clinics and pet supply stores in Boroondara and Council buildings.

The consultation period ran for approximately 3 weeks, closing on March 22.

274 responses to the online survey were received. 100 of the survey responses were submitted by people who completed the survey multiple times. Duplicate submissions (ie submissions made multiple times by the same community member) were carefully identified on the basis of the IP address, entry time, comments in the open ended questions and email addresses. These duplicate survey responses were removed, leaving a total of 174 responses submitted by unique users.

Council also received 19 independent submissions from community members during this period.

While the survey was not designed to be statistically representative (ie a pre-determined number of participants who represent the particular demographics in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and suburb), it does present significant insight. Given that participants self-selected, it is reasonable to assume that people who participated in the survey are likely to hold a strong view on the subject.

The results of this consultation should, therefore, be interpreted as a valid insight into community views at this moment in time, but may not represent the views of all members of the wider Boroondara community.

4. Outline of key issues/options

Part One: Testing community support for a FDPA in Gordon Barnard Reserve

As occurred with the 2019 consultation process for the Fritsch Holzer Park dog park proposal, there has been a well organised effort by some community members to mobilise community opposition to this project. While we welcome all feedback, it is important to respond in a way that considers the merit of the concerns raised by local residents, and considers the needs and aspirations of the broader Boroondara community.

Results of consultation

While there are mixed community views on the relative merit of the proposal, the deliberative design of the consultation has been well received. Many of the comments collected within the online survey convey thanks from community members who acknowledge they've been able to outline their views in detail.

Outlined below is a summary of the findings from the online survey, informal information session and independent submissions.

See **Attachment 2** for a full report on the consultation process and findings.

Summary of survey results

Feedback from the online survey has been combined and analysed using a manual coding process, including interpreting the level of support for a FDPA in Boroondara.

As noted earlier, in addition to feedback received at the information session, 174 unique responses were received to the online survey, along with 19 independent submissions.

The survey contained a combination of closed questions and open-ended questions. The first two questions in the survey were formatted so that respondents who were not in favour of a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara or within GBR specifically, could describe their objections in an open-ended response format. At this point, the survey ended for these respondents after they had filled in the open-ended response section.

As shown in Table 1 below, a clear position of support for the principle of a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara was apparent in 119 of the 174 responses, or 68.4% of all respondents. Fifty-four respondents (31.0%) indicated that they were not in support of a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara and one respondent left this question unanswered.

Table 1: Levels of support for the principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara

Do you generally support the principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara?	Number of respondents	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	119	68.4%
No	54	31.0%
Did not answer	1	0.6%
Total	174	100%

The 119 respondents who were generally supportive of the principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara, and the one respondent who did not answer the question, were then asked if they supported the proposed location in GBR. Table 2 below shows the majority of respondents who support the general principle of a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara also support the development of a new FDPA adjacent to the existing pool in GBR (69.2% or 83 people). Of the respondents who support the general principle that Council provide a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara, approximately a third (30.8%) do not support the development of a new FDPA adjacent to the existing pool in GBR.

Table 2: Level of support for the proposed location of the FDPA at Gordon Barnard Reserve of respondents who generally support the idea of a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara

Do you support the development of a new FDPA adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard Reserve?	Number of respondents	Percentage of total respondents	Percentage of total survey respondents
Yes	83	69.21%	47.7%
No	37	30.8%	21.2%
Total	120	100%	68.9%

*Totals for the final column do not equal 100% as these figures exclude those respondents who are opposed to the general principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara

Although the majority of respondents to question 1 and 2 answered yes, when combined, the respondents who support the development of a FDPA in Boroondara and support the proposed location in GBR represent only 47.7% of the respondents. Therefore, as shown in Table 3 below, 52.3% of all respondents do not support the development of a FDPA in the GBR or Boroondara.

Table 3: Levels of support for a FDPA and/or the proposed location in Gordon Barnard Reserve

Support for a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara and/or in the proposed location in Gordon Barnard Reserve		**Number of total respondents**	**Percentage of total respondents**
Supports the proposed location of a FDPA in Gordon Barnard Reserve	Generally ***supports*** the principle of a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara and ***supports*** the proposed location at Gordon Barnard Reserve	83	47.7%
*Does **not support*** a FDPA in Gordon Barnard Reserve	Generally ***supports*** the principle of a FDPA in Boroondara but ***does not*** support the proposed location in Gordon Barnard Reserve	37	21.3%
	Generally ***does not*** support the principles of a FDPA in Boroondara	54	31.0%
	Sub-total	91	52.2%
Total		174	100%

Respondents who did not support the development of a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara or within GBR, were allowed to explain why they didn't through an open-ended/free-text question. Overall, 52 and 35 respondents submitted comments to question 1 and question 2 respectively.

Table 4 below shows four primary themes emerged from the analysis of the 87 verbatim comments to questions 1 and 2:

1. Concerns about use of council resource (56%)
2. Impact on the park (54%)
3. Impact on animals (41%)
4. Impact on people (34%)

As can be seen in Table 4, the most frequently cited concern was about the use of Council resources followed by concerns about the impact on the parkland, animals and people. The Table also shows that each of the four primary themes of the commentary includes a range of issues that have been identified as sub-themes.

Table 4: Reasons for not supporting a FDPA in Boroondara or within a portion of GBR.

Primary Theme	No./ frequency*	**Sub-Theme**	No./frequency (within sub-theme)*
Resources - Concerns about investment	*n* = 49; 56%	Investment not needed – existing dog facilities nearby	*n* = 29; 59%
		Against community expectations and needs	*n* = 26; 53%
		Proposal goes against guidelines/GBR Master Plan	*n* = 11; 22%
		Investment and maintenance costs	*n* = 6; 12%
Park - Negative impact on the character and use of Gordon Barnard Reserve	*n* = 47; 54%	Limiting access to other park users / reducing public areas for everyone	*n* = 36; 77%
		Compromising park character – damaging the park's aesthetic	*n* = 19; 40%
		Contributing to traffic and parking congestion	*n* = 11; 23%
Animals - Animal wellbeing	*n* = 36; 41%	Fenced dog parks are not good for dogs	*n* = 22; 61%
		Threatening wildlife	*n* = 17; 47%
People - Disturbing residents of the area and park users	*n* = 30; 34%	Safety concerns for park users, especially elderly and children	*n* = 21; 70%
		Hygiene issues	*n* = 7; 23%
		Increased noise	*n* = 6; 20%

*Totals for each theme and sub-theme do not equal 100% as people were able to give multiple responses.

Provided below are excerpts of quotes illustrating the sentiments expressed by survey respondents.

1. Theme 1 - Resources - Concerns about investment

A range of concerns were raised questioning the justification for a dedicated dog park by 49 respondents. This primary theme was the most prevalent reason for not supporting a dedicated dog park.

1.1 Sub-theme 1 - Investment not needed – existing dog facilities nearby

Twenty-nine people provided comments about the investment not being needed due to existing dog facilities nearby:

"There are plenty of leash free parks to choose from already in Boroondara. We have taken our dogs to the leash free park at the bottom of Balwyn Road. A fenced dog play area is not appropriate for many reasons."

“There are already quite a few off-the-leash areas for dogs in Boroondara - I often go for extended walks in the parks of Balwyn/North Balwyn and know where dogs are allowed off their leashes.”

1.2 Sub-theme 2 - Against community expectations and needs

Twenty-six people provided comments about the dog park not being in line with community expectations:

“Quite unnecessary. Plenty of areas for dogs to be off leash. Open parkland is for everyone.”

“Complete waste of money on an un-necessary and unwanted concept.”

1.3 Sub-theme 3 - Proposal goes against guidelines/GBR Master Pla

Eleven people noted that the proposal goes against the guidelines for dog parks or GBR Master Plan:

“I strongly oppose the dog park in GBR as it would seriously compromise the park's character. Fencing off any area and introduce logs, boulders, rocks and a dog sandpit is definitely not consistent with the community’s expectations for this area as reflected in the Gordon Barnard Reserve Master Plan where it is designated as ‘Informal Open Space’ where it is to be used for unstructured recreation.”

“There are six fundamental facts that indicate the Gordon Barnard Reserve should NOT be used for this purpose. 1. The council’s own regulations indicate that the area proposed is too small and does not meet the set-back requirements for an off-leash dog park. The proposed area is only 4,500 m2, and the set-back from local houses has been reduced from 50m to 23m. These rules are there for a purpose and woe betide any ratepayer who tries to break one. There should be one set of rules, and everyone, including the council should play by them. This proposal sets a problematic precedent…”

1.4 Sub-theme 4 - Investment and maintenance costs

Six respondents raised concerns about the investment and maintenance costs:

“I would be most disappointed in this council if my views were not heard and my hard earned rates money would be spent on something as unnecessary and wasteful as a dog park.”

“There are existing off leash open areas within the council's area for people to exercise their dogs… Dogs that are exercised off leash should be under voice command and therefore no require a fenced area. I have observed some people exercising their dogs on fenced playing fields, and that is fine. They should be permitted to use those existing areas when games are not being played, then spending rates payers' money on additional fencing would not be necessary. Too many unnecessary fences have already been put in by Boroondara Council.”

2. Theme 2 - Negative impact on the character and use of Gordon Barnard Reserve

Impact on parklands was cited as the second most common concern with 47 respondents commenting on this.

2.1 Sub-theme 1 - Limiting access to other park users / reducing public areas for everyone

Thirty-six respondents raised concerns about the FDPA limiting access to other park users or reducing public areas for everyone:

“Gordon Barnard already has enough in it. Don't overcrowd it with too many things. You have a pool, basketball stadiums, 2 ovals, playground and some new park thing currently being built. You are trying to squeeze too much into one space. I would like to see it stay as a sports area. That space may be needed into the future for something else - more parking or an extension to BSC etc. It is also just nice to have open space. Not all space needs to be used.”

“No. The proposed area is already very busy with dog owner who, for the most part, do not keep their dogs on a leash. They commonly have their dogs play on the sports areas and on the paths and this interferes greatly with people using the paths. This is [a]n on-leash area and is usually ignored. On the weekends and on public holidays the park and sports field are well used. A facility to attract more dog owners and dogs to the area would be most unwelcome in my opinion . . . I am most disappointed that such a high people usage area, as a thoroughfare, play and spectator area, is even suggested as a suitable dog play area site.”

2.2 Sub-theme 2 - Compromising park character – damaging the park’s aesthetic

Nineteen people were concerned about the FDPA damaging the park’s aesthetics:

“Area too lovely to fence off for just dogs to play”

“I don't want to change the character of the park... I like that the park is an informal woodland. My daughter and I use the park regularly for walks around the woodland track, providing a special atmosphere of tranquility where we can unwind and connect with the natural habitat. This is what makes this park special, a dog park would completely contradict the atmosphere and character of this unique park.”

2.3 Sub-theme 3 - Contributing to traffic and parking congestion

Eleven people commented on the impact the FDPA would have on parking:

“I oppose the dog play area in this position... Finally the parking in the area is already often full due to the proximity of the Sports Complex and the sports ovals. The proposed dog park will put further strain on that...”

"Insufficient parking. Patrons to BSC and the sporting grounds fill up the parking spaces during weekends and after school hours. The proposed area is not big enough to placing it next to the pool is an eyesore."

3. Theme 3 - Animals' wellbeing

A negative impact on animals was cited by 36 people and was the third most common concern noted by respondents. These concerns related to both dogs and native animals.

3.1 Sub-theme 1 - Fenced dog parks are not good for dogs

Twenty-two people were concerned that FDPA were not good for dogs:

"Dangerous for dogs and dangerous for people. Dogs have been killed and injured in these fenced areas and people attacked by dogs in these confined places. As a dog owner I consider such fenced areas are completely unnecessary in Boroondara - THE CITY OF HARMONY."

"Dog enclosures are bad for people and bad for dogs."

3.2 Threatening wildlife

Seventeen people noted concerns about the impact that FDPA would have on the native wildlife.

"… I have mentioned the bird life in the Reserve. Protecting urban areas that are frequented by many species of birds should be a high priority, especially after the summer of bush fires where many bird habitats were destroyed.

Having a high concentration of dogs in one (too small) area will not augur well for bird life."

"This particular area is rich in native birdlife which is likely to be disturbed by careening dogs…"

4. Theme 4 - Disturbing residents of the area

Thirty respondents were concerned about the impact the FDPA would have on people due to safety concerns, hygiene issues and increased noise

4.1 Sub-theme 1 - Safety concerns for park users, especially elderly and children

Twenty-one people noted safety concerns for park users:

"Majority of people not obeying current dog leash rules, and so high potential of encouraging more dog owners who do not respect the regulations. Three personal incidents of dogs not controlled that harassed dangerously a child, and adults."

"Safety risk for children and adults as dogs uncontrolled."

4.2 Sub-theme 2 - Hygiene issues

Seven people noted potential hygiene issues due to the FDPA:

"It will provide dog owners opportunities to be less responsible … it will be an added maintenance expense for council with an inevitable dust bowl and dog poo smells and hygiene issues. Are we paying too much in our council rates if this is your priority?"

"Not needed… Having dogs off lead also make less likely people will clean up after them."

4.3 Sub-theme 3 - Increased noise

Six people were concerned that there would be increased noise levels:

"It will increase the noise level and has the potential to scare away native wildlife in the reserve"

"As a resident on Jacka Street, Balwyn North and a frequent user of the Boroondara Sports Complex swimming pool, my concerns for the proposed location are:… 2. Increased noise from dog barking to properties abutting the proposed fenced dog area and disruption to patrons (sunbathers, swimmers, parents) who enjoy a quiet lie-down on the grassy slope alongside the pool…"

The survey also asked respondents to provide other suggested locations for a FDPA within GBR. Six people nominated the other side of GBR near the playground and corner of Balwyn Road and Tuxen Street.

An additional 14 people nominated a range other potential sites, not within the Gordon Barnard Reserve including:

- Southside of the freeway immediately to the west of the north end of Balwyn Road (1 response).
- Koonung Creek Reserve near the Eastern Freeway (2 responses).
- Fritsch Holzer Park (1 response).
- Hays Paddock (2 responses).
- Within the existing dog off-leash reserves near GBR including:
    - Hislop Park (5 responses).
    - Macleay Park (3 responses).

Respondents who were supportive of the FDPA in GBR were also asked if they had any concerns about the proposed location or any other comments.

Thirty four responses were without specific concerns (e.g. responses were 'no', 'none', 'no concerns' and similar), or used this field of the survey to comment on their support for the proposal. Examples of the positive sentiments expressed were:

"This type of dog area is needed NOW"

"I have NO concerns and think it is an exceptionally great idea and should definitely go through"

"I have no negative concerns, and strongly support the proposal for a fenced dog play area at Gordon Barnard Reserve"

Concerns noted included ensuring not too many trees were removed, the need for adequate lighting and rubbish bins and limiting any parking congestion.

Please refer to **Attachment 2** for a full report of the consultation results including the community's responses to questions measuring demand factors to be taken into account when designing a FDPA.

These questions probe demand for possible features (such as a dog friendly drinking facility and open space) and the results indicate the features deemed most desirable by the community and worthy of consideration in the design of future FDPA's.

Other demand factors include frequency of use of a FDPA and popularity of different times of day across weekdays or weekends. These results provide instructive guidance on the size and accessibility requirements of a FDPA for Boroondara

Summary of the informal on-site information session

An information session was held at the commencement of the consultation process for those local residents who live immediately adjacent to the reserve.

This was intended to provide local residents with more targetted consultation material and personal briefings, to help them better understand what is proposed, and for Council officers to get a better understanding and/or respond to any specific local concerns.

Two Council officers, along with the Ward Councillor attended the session. 16 community members attended, mostly local residents abutting the reserve.

Community members who attended the session raised a range of specific local concerns associated with locating a FDPA in GBR.

A summary of the main points raised at this session have been combined and analysed using the same manual coding process applied to the open-ended questions from the online survey. Many of these mirror the responses to the online survey as shown below:

Council resource

- Where is the demonstrated need and demand for this facility?
- Mixed understandings of the criteria for selecting GBR.
- There are many reserves nearby which are off leash including Macleay Park and Hislop Park.
    - It must be noted however both these reserves are filled with sports on the weekends and not generally available for dog off-leash recreation.

Impact on the park

- This portion of GBR is the only free/tranquil area at the moment.
- What is the percentage of open space in GBR today?
- Will there be a loss of trees in this part of the reserve?

Impact on animals

- There are several native birds in GBR.
- The proposition that enclosed FDPA's can be dangerous.
- GBR is part of the Balwyn North Stepping Stone Biodiversity Corridor.

Impact on people

- There needs to be more enforcement of current GBR users.
- Crossing Balwyn Road is dangerous at the moment to access Hislop Oval.

Commentary on these items is included in the 'Response to key issues raised via all consultation methods' - below.

Summary of independent submissions

In addition to the responses received from the online survey and information session, Council received 19 independent submissions via email and phone. One of these submissions was a cohort of 11 primary school student submissions, whose letters were submitted by their teacher.

These comments have been combined and analysed using the same manual coding process applied to the open-ended questions from the online survey, including interpreting the level of support for a FDPA in Boroondara.

Overall, 17 of the 29 submissions did not express support for a FDPA (4 of these were the school students).

Similar to the online open-ended question regarding the FDPA the main themes were Council Resources (44%), Impact on animals (44%), Impact on people (37%) and Impact on the park (33%).

The feedback received is summarised below.

- **Council resources**
  44% of submissions think that a FDPA is an unnecessary investment by Council primarily as a FDPA is against community need or expectation (22%) and there are sufficient existing dog facilities nearby.

- **Impact on animals**
  44% of submissions expressed concerns about animal welfare, with concern split equally between native wildlife and the dogs that would use the FDPA.

- **Impact on people**
  37% of submissions were concerned about the disturbance a FDPA would bring to GBR, including increased noise and safety concerns for children and the elderly.

- **Impact on the park**
  33% of submissions expressed the belief that a FDPA would unfairly limit access to the park for other users, would compromise the character of the park and contribute to increased traffic and parking congestion.

Positive comments in regards to Council including a FDPA include:

- Two phone calls were taken from residents who expressed they would be happy to see a FDPA as Gordon Barnard is a large reserve and they would feel safer to have an enclosed space for their dogs to run freely, and that they could let their dog off leash without worrying that they would run onto the sports oval.

- Another resident wrote in “I don’t have a dog, and appreciate their contribution to our wellbeing and they need to have a safe place to exercise.”

Commentary on these items is included in the ‘Response to key issues raised via all consultation methods’ - below.

Response to key issues raised via all consultation methods

Officers have reviewed and assessed the relative merit of the key themes raised during the consultation process. The following section outlines officers’ response to these themes.

Theme 1. There is concern about the use of Council resource to develop a FDPA

The most prevalent reason for opposition is concern about the use of Council resource to develop a FDPA (53% of all opposition). This concern is broken into four key concerns. Officers response to these concerns are discussed below using the same sub-themes from the consultation feedback

- **Investment not needed – existing dog facilities nearby**

GBR’s proximity to other dog off leash reserves is one reason people say they don’t support this location. There are 50 off leash reserves in Boroondara, 3 are within 2 kilometres of GBR. These include Macleay Park, Beckett Park andHislop Park. While this may in part, help explain the sentiment that the investment is not needed, community feedback has also highlighted that access to these reserves for off-leash dog walking is extremely limited. This is due to the high level of use of these reserves for organised sport, and the requirement for dogs to be kept on-leash within 30m of any organised sporting activity. This requirement severely limits times people can walk their dogs off-leash in these off-leash reserves.

In addition, community feedback has also raised concerns about the danger of crossing Balwyn Road to access nearby Hislop Park, particularly for children walking their pets on their own. Anecdotally, it has been suggested this is one of the reasons why some people continue to run their dogs off-leash within the existing ovals at GBR, despite the reserve being designated on-leash.

Council's Traffic and Transport department has received community requests in the past for a pedestrian crossing along Balwyn Road, in the vicinity of GBR. However, VicRoads/Department of Transport has historically not support this request. Nevertheless, officers have included this proposal in the potential North East Link complementary project list, and following Council's recent legal action, Council has secured $700,000 for the design and construction of pedestrian operated signals on Balwyn Road, Balwyn, near Gordon Barnard Reserve, as part of the mediation process. This is an excellent outcome that will help improved pedestrian safety for all park users.

- **Against community expectations and needs**

Twenty-six people provided comments about the dog park not being in line with community expectations. These comments related to the concept being un-wanted and un-necessary due to proximity of other dog off-leash parks, and it being a waste of money.

The proximity to other dog parks is discussed above.

In relation to the demand for the facility, the survey results indicate:

- Most respondents support the general principle that Council provide a fenced dog play area somewhere in Boroondara (68%). Of all 174 respondents, 119 respondents (68%) supported the general principle that Council provide a fenced dog play area somewhere in Boroondara.

- There were 54 people (31% of total 174 respondents) not in support of a fenced dog play area in Boroondara.

- The 120 people who responded with 'Yes' to question 1 or did not answer proceeded to question 2, 'Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in GBR?'. Of these 120 responses, 83 people were in support of the fenced dog play area in GBR, and 37 people were not in support.

- Considering responses from all 174 people, 83 people or 48% of survey respondents supported the proposal of a fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve. The remaining 52% appear to oppose the proposal for the Gordon Barnard Reserve. This interpretation is based on combining the number of people who did not support a fenced dog play area generally (54 people) with those who do not support a fenced dog play area in the Gordon Barnard Reserve (37 people).

- Of the 48% who supported a FDPA in Boroondara and GBR, 94% or 78 respondents lived in Boroondara. Of these, 77% lived within Balwyn and Balwyn North.

Ultimately, the decision for Council is to determine whether the community benefit to be delivered by such a proposal justifies the expense.

- **Proposal goes against dog park guidelines/GBR Master Plan**

Given it is nearly 20 years since the master plan was adopted and the majority of actions have been implemented, its strategic value for future works is less

relevant. While the master plan was silent on the issue of a dog park, this is not surprising as the concept of FDPA's only really emerged in the last 5-10 years in response to new and emerging community needs.

Respondents have also raised concerns the proposal does not meet the 'required minimum 5000m2 design guideline' set out in the Victorian Government (Local Parks Program Guidelines prepared by Department of Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) 2019).

This document was developed as part of the Local Parks Program and is intended to help guide local governments to apply for funding to assist the development of new dog parks. While officers have used the document as a reference tool, there is no requirement to meet any minimum design standard for dog parks in Victoria. Nevertheless, should the project proceed, there is scope within the proposed site to extend the area to the recommended 5000m2 size.

- **Investment and maintenance costs**

Council has allocated funding to deliver a FDPA in Boroondara. Ultimately, the decision for Council is to determine whether the community benefit to be delivered by such a proposal justifies the expense.

Theme 2. There is a concern that the development of an FDPA will impact negatively on the existing park character and use (51% provided comments relating to this theme).

Impact on parklands was cited as the second most common concern for respondents (51%). The concerns are further broken down into the three sub-themes and discussed below.

- **Limiting access to other park users / reducing public areas for everyone**

GBR is well-loved by the community. It is a 13 hectare park within a highly urbanised environment. Within the park:

- Approximately 31% of the park is currently taken up by buildings (including the BSC), access roads and car parks.
- This leaves approximately 69% of the park area being available for passive and active recreation when the ovals are not in use.
- 42% of the park is available for passive and active recreation when the ovals and playground are in use.

Should the proposal proceed, a further 0.5ha will effectively be fenced off for a new dedicated use. While this is strictly not 'unusable' by other community members, by way of comparison this means the area of the park available for passive and active recreation when the ovals, playground and FDPA are in use is reduced from 42% to 38%.

From a strategic perspective, the Boroondara Open Space Strategy (BOSS) indicates that open space is well distributed in the suburbs of Balwyn and Balwyn North surrounding GBR. Within the vicinity of GBR, open space is well provided at Hislop Reserve, Macleay Park and Greythorn Park.

The introduction of a FDPA to a portion of GBR will provide a new service or activity that is not currently available. While this will generate more use of this area, this is considered a good use of an otherwise underutilised space within the reserve and is not expected to displace any existing regular use or activity.

- **Compromising park character – damaging the park's aesthetic**

Managing the inherent character of our urban parks and gardens is a critical responsibility of any Council and one which Boroondara takes seriously.

In the most recent Community Satisfaction survey in 2019, the City of Boroondara was ranked equal highest of eleven LGA's for overall satisfaction with its parks and gardens.

While the character of GBR has evolved with the development of new services and facilities to meet growing community demands over time, the park continues to offer a range of environmental, recreational and health benefits within a pleasant natural setting.

Should the project proceed, care would be taken with the design of a FDPA to respect the natural look and feel of the park by:

- Maintaining the informal open woodland character, protecting the existing trees, introducing new buffer planting, new grassed areas and mulching.
- Minimise built form and maximise the use of natural materials where possible.
- Maintain and preserve the existing mix of native and exotic plants as far as practical, both within the proposed enclosed area and within the broader park precinct.

Nevertheless, the introduction of a FDPA to this portion of GBR is likely to impact the look and feel of the park by:

- Introducing new service offerings in the form of the FDPA and attracting more visitors to the park and some increase in car parking.
- Introducing more built elements (shelter, paths, bins, seating and both perimeter and safety fencing).
- Introducing more dogs and people to the area.

The impacts identified above are mostly related to greater use of the park by local community members and are consistent with impacts typically associated with any well-used park in an urban setting.

While officers acknowledge the proposal will inevitably impact some elements of the park, with careful design, maintenance and management,

are considered manageable, and are unlikely to significantly impact the function, character or local amenity of the park or its users.

- **Contributing to the traffic and parking congestion**

There is no doubt a FDPA is a new service offering for GBR and is likely to generate some additional vehicle traffic within the park by residents travelling from beyond walking distance of the park.

Pleasingly, the survey results indicate that 48% of people are likely to travel to the FDPA by car, with 71% indicating they would walk and 4.8% indicating they would cycle to use the FDPA (note - respondents could tick more than one response to this question).

While it is difficult to accurately forecast use patterns for the FDPA facility, we estimate there could be up to 15 people using the facility in any peak hour during the week, and up to 25 people in any peak hour during the weekend. Average stays are estimated at around 30 minutes.

The survey results indicate the peak times would be:

- Weekdays between 6-9 am and between 3-9 pm.
- Weekend usage would generally be spread across the weekend with peak usage between 9-12 pm and 3-6 pm.

Assuming around half the users drive to the park, this equates to approximately 8 additional cars during any peak hour during the week and approximately 13 additional cars during any peak hour during the weekend.

With respect to parking for the FDPA at GBR, Council's Traffic and Transport officers are of the view that there is sufficient convenient parking in the area to accommodate the additional needs of potential users of the FDPA that choose to drive.

There is an access road on the west side of the Boroondara Sports Complex (BSC) leading to a small underutilised car park. The access road is in the order of 150m in length and just under 4m in width (3.95m). A flat unsealed verge at 1400mm in width is located on the east side between the access road and the residential property boundaries. On the west side, the verge between the boundary of the BSC and the access road is 500mm.

The car park area is in the order of 25m in width and 14m in length and can accommodate in the order of 9 spaces.

The existing GBR oval car parks to the north of the BSC can accommodate 135 spaces. The southern car parks can accommodate 82 spaces and the car park on the south side of Belmore Road, 28 spaces.

In terms of parking availability, the small car park located at the end of the access road can accommodate up to 9 parking spaces. Localised widening of the access road on the east and/or west sides to increase the width of the access road to 5.5m from 4m at the Belmore Road end, midway and at the southern end of the car park would allow for formal passing opportunities if required. This could be achieved by sealing off the verge either side of the access road. Localised widening at the northern end would also lead to an additional 3 formal parking spaces, bringing the total available car parks in this area up to 12 spaces.

Use of this small car park is very low as it is not located near other high use facilities, and it is not visible from Belmore Road given that it is located at the north east end of the BSC and there is no car park directional signage.

In the mornings, there is little use of the ovals with moderate use of the BSC and parking is readily available, notably during the week. Parking activity tends to increase in the late afternoons (after school) with use of the BSC and the ovals with sports training. An examination of 16 aerial photographs on a weekday between 2015 (opening of the new BSC) and 2019 shows that parking is readily available during the day time. During the week in the evenings, while there are no spectators attending the ground, there is some pressure for parking due to sports training, club meetings and use of the BSC, however parking at these times is still readily available to meet the expected parking demand for users of the FDPA.

Based on historical data, while parking activity during autumn/winter on weekends significantly increases and peaks due to football games on the lower and upper ovals and use of the BSC, parking is still expected to be readily available to meet the needs of FDPA users. While there has not been an opportunity to formally survey parking levels in winter due to the impact of Covid-19 to provide current data, an examination of an aerial photograph taken on Saturday 26 May 2018 with both ovals and the BSC in use, shows that there were 24 spaces available to meet the expected needs of up to 13 spaces for users of the FDPA in the car parks to the north and south of the BSC and the small car park. An aerial image for Sunday 7 April 2019 again with football on both ovals and use of the BSC, shows that there were 25 spaces available at this time which would be sufficient to meet the needs for users of the FDPA. It is noted that this analysis has focused on the winter season with both upper and lower ovals in use with football as well as the operation of the BSC (ie during peak activity). Outside of the winter football season, with cricket use of both ovals, parking is noticeably less of an issue. An examination of 8 aerial photographs between 2015 and 2019 taken on a Saturday or Sunday outside of the winter football season confirms the availability of parking.

In summary, our preliminary analysis shows that the existing parking facilities in the small car park and the car parks for the BSC and GBR would meet the needs of users of the FDPA. For the small car park, signage and minor works to create passing opportunities at regular intervals is recommended.

In the event that football returns over coming months post Covid-19, parking surveys during the football season (weeknight and weekend) could be undertaken to provide further details and more up to date information on parking data.

Theme 3. There is a concern that the development of an FDPA will impact negatively on animals.

Impact on animals (both dogs and wildlife) were cited as the third most common concern for respondents (39%). The concerns are further broken down into the two sub-themes and discussed below.

- **Fenced dog play areas are not good for dogs**

There are mixed views about the relative benefit of FDPAs for both people and dogs. Notwithstanding these divergent views, Council has expressed a desire for a FDPA in Boroondara, and GBR has been identified as the preferred location.

Benefits of FDPA's over and above non-fenced areas may include:

- They allow dogs to be off-leash in small or busy parks, or near facilities/activities incompatible with dog activity (e.g. playgrounds, sports fields, trails).
- They allow people who do not want to interact with dogs to still use the park.
- They allow dogs access to parkland that adjoins sensitive environments (e.g. wetlands).
- They provide older people or people with limited mobility a place to exercise their dogs off-leash and to socialise with other people.

This is not to suggest there are not challenges associated with fencing any dog park, including:

- Overcrowding which needs careful consideration, as this has the potential to increase dog management issues and problematic dog socialising, such as dogs intimidating other dogs/people, poorly managed dogs, bites/rushes and injuries to people and/or dogs.
- Potential for conflict with adjoining parkland activities including sport on ovals and people using the paths.

Officers have been unable to source credible research around the safety of dogs in FDPA's. According to the RSPCA, there are currently limited statistics available on the prevalence of incidents with enclosed facilities, and observational studies suggest that aggression between dogs in off-leash parks is rare, but the issue has drawn considerable criticism of off-leash dog areas in the media and by some dog trainers.

Industry research and case studies have produced a collection of 'best practice' design guidelines to address both the behaviour of dogs and their owners so that the optimal experience can be provided for both users while ensuring minimal conflict with other dogs, the local community and the surrounding environment. These include:

- Encouraging socialisation and exercise.
- Encouraging interaction between dogs and owners.
- Reducing conflict and behaviours of aggression.
- Promoting dog park etiquette through education, signage and enforcement.
- Ensuring minimal conflict with other park users

- **Threatening wildlife**

Seventeen people noted concerns about the impact that FDPA would have on the native wildlife, particularly birds inhabiting the existing trees. Proximity to our dedicated Biodiversity Corridor was also raised as a concern.

Stepping stone corridors and surrounding encouragement areas are designed to create links between the Yarra River, linear corridors, existing reserves and other natural areas outside the municipality. These areas and the associated vegetation allow animals to travel from one patch of the biodiverse parkland or reserve to another. The portion of GBR identified for a FDPA is not located within this corridor.

The stepping stone biodiversity corridor (the Balwyn North Corridor) runs on the northern side of GBR near Tuxen Street. This stepping stone corridor aims to link in with larger linear corridors across Boroondara. Residential areas along the northeastern boundary of GBR have been identified as biodiversity encouragement areas, which indicates potential to engage interested residents to help strengthen the corridor through indigenous planting.

There are several large trees within the proposed FDPA which are likely to provide habitat for local birds and animals. Should the project proceed, care will be taken to ensure the design of the FDPA would minimise negative impacts by maintaining the informal woodland character, protecting existing trees wherever possible and providing indigenous plants in the garden beds to encourage and strengthen local biodiversity.

While the presence of more dogs and people in the area may impact some local fauna, any affected wildlife will likely relocate to nearby vegetation/habitat, including the area within the dedicated stepping stone biodiversity corridor.

Theme 4. There is a concern that the development of a FDPA will impact negatively on people, including residents living nearby.

Impact on people (both nearby residents and users of parks) were the least common concern for respondents (33%). The concerns are further broken down into the three sub-themes and discussed below.

- **Safety concerns for park users, especially elderly and children**

Respondents identified a number of safety risks to park users related to people not obeying dog off-leash rules, and not maintaining effective control of their dogs.

Several actions would be required to address any potential safety concerns including:

- Increased monitoring of a FDPA by Local Laws officers to ensure compliance with Local Laws and FDPA rules and regulations, and other relevant legislation such as the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
- Multiple entries to alleviate and minimise congestion of both people and dogs and to help encourage people to move through the space.
- Self-latching and childproof gates to prevent dogs from escaping and unsupervised children from entering.
- Maintenance access.

- Commercial/private providers will not be permitted.
- Use of the park will be monitored over time to address any potential overcrowding/behavioural issues.
- To protect users from errant balls, a ball net would be investigated to be placed around the top oval, behind the goals, this would be to protect users of both the reserve and FDPA.
- To protect cyclists from run-away dogs, a fence would be required restricting access to the nearby bicycle path.
- Dog park etiquette signs would be placed throughout the reserve and near the FDPA to promote effective dog ownership including educational messaging.

- **Hygiene issues**

Hygiene issues could result from overcrowding, and people not picking up after their dogs. Should the project proceed, the FDPA would include dedicated rubbish bins and bag dispensers, a first for Boroondara. This would encourage more responsible pet ownership, including better compliance with picking up and disposing of dog litter appropriately.

Local Laws patrols would need to be increased to encourage users to respect the requirement to pick up after their dog and to monitor and enforce non-complaint behavior.

As previously mentioned, a FDPA at GBR is also expected to address concerns with unauthorised use of the existing ovals for dog off-leash activities, thereby improving safety and hygiene issues for oval users.

- **Increased noise 20%**

Six people raised concerns about dog barking potentially:

- Scaring wildlife
- Impacting residents
- Impacting pool users

A number of actions would be required to minimise impacts on neighbours and other users of GBR including:

- A 25m offset from the adjacent residential properties along Jacka Street is proposed to minimise noise impacts on local residents. Industry guidelines and research from other municipalities have not indicated a significant increase in noise associated with these facilities.
- A landscaped buffer would be established along the FDPA edges to prevent dogs from going too close to neighbours.
- Use of the park before 7am and after 9pm would be discouraged.

While there may be some impact from noise affecting existing wildlife, the nearby stepping stone biodiversity corridor on the north side of the park provides good habitat options for any affected animals.

Other issues

Impact of community campaign against the proposal

A community instigated campaign opposed the proposal of a FDPA in GBR using a range of collateral **(Attachment 3)** including posters, a Facebook group, letters and other media coverage to encourage opposition to the proposal.

This has been demonstrated through the installation of a number of un-authorised posters attached to the signs Council officers erected on site to promote the consultation process to local park users. These posters sought to challenge Council's consultation process and urge local residents to raise their concerns and 'vote no to Council's proposal' on the on-line survey. Letters containing similar messaging were also sent out to local community members surrounding GBR, calling on people to complete the on-line survey and oppose the project.

Following the informal on-site session with residents who abutted the reserve, a Friends of Gordon Barnard Reserve Facebook page was established. This page included the same messaging as the posters and letters, and at the time of writing, this report had approximately 20 followers.

This same group is understood to have approached the Herald Sun on March 10 to promote the engagement and ask for people in the wider community of Melbourne to have their say.

While it is difficult to quantify the impact of this campaigning, it is more than likely the survey results have been skewed in favour of those opposed to the proposal.

It is important to note this is not unusual with any consultation process where there are mixed views in the community, and officers are not suggesting there is anything untoward about community members generating support for their particular cause.

Nevertheless, in analysing the results, it is important to recognise that it is more than likely the survey results have been skewed in favour of those opposed to the proposal.

Future grant funding

In 2019, the Victorian Government's DELWP announced a funding initiative to deliver 16 new dog parks across metropolitan Melbourne as part of their Local Parks Program. Each of the 16 new dog parks has been allocated to a specific local council area, including one park within Boroondara.

Since the announcement, officers have attended several information sessions to learn more about the program.

The first round of funding opened in October 2019, and officers submitted a grant application for $275,000 to assist with the development of a FDPA in Boroondara. The grant application was generally consistent with the guidelines specified by DELWP. While no specific location was submitted in the application, if successful, officers intended the grant funding would be directed to this project, pending the outcome of the community consultation process.

In March 2020, DELWP advised that Council's grant application had been unsuccessful, primarily due to the fact that we were yet to confirm a location, noting that, *'we certainly appreciate that the matter of dog parks encourages high local residents engagement and can very much polarise community opinion.'*

Whilst DELWP has a firm position regarding this funding only being available for FDPA projects that are fully enclosed (through the use of fencing), they have advised that some of the other considerations such as land size, proximity to related amenities, accessibility and links to existing trails etc, can be reviewed between DELWP and councils on a site by site basis.

In this context, should Council wish to apply for Round 2 funding when it opens, in order to have the best chance of success, we would require a confirmed location for a FDPA to be agreed ahead of the application closing date in August 2020.

The process to change site designation from on-leash to off-leash.
As GBR is currently designated on-leash, should this proposal proceed, the FDPA would need to be changed from on-leash to off-leash.

To achieve this, the relevant statutory process to amend the Council Order (that designates dog off-leash areas) made under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 would apply. The process to amend Council's Order includes:

- a 28 day public consultation period,
- a report to Services Special Committee Meeting to present the submissions from the public consultation process, and
- a report to Council for consideration of adoption of the proposed amendment.

The overall timeframe to complete the required statutory process to amend the Council Order pre Covid-19 would be in the vicinity of 4-6 months. Costs to amend the Order can be accommodated through Local Law's operational budget. Timing of this work will need to be reviewed in the context of Covid-19, as the statutory process requires for community consultation and engagement will need to consider the current social distancing requirments. It should be noted that the project cannot proceed without amending the Order to enable dogs to be allowed off-leash within the FDPA.

Part Two: Investigation of additional dog friendly play areas within existing dog off-leash reserves

In addition to testing community support for the FDPA at GBR, councillors also requested officers investigate the opportunity to provide more 'dog friendly play areas' (including some limited fencing) within existing dog off-leash reserves.

These areas are intended to complement existing dog off-leash reserves and are not to be fully fenced.

These dog friendly play areas may include installation of the following additional dog friendly infrastructure:

- Low rock scramble (a collection of large boulders arranged within a granitic sand area with tree and shrub planting to create interest for dogs and people).
- Dog-friendly water fountains with dog drinking bowls.
- Additional seating with shade.
- Additional sections of fencing where needed.
- Dog etiquette signage.
- Dog parking (a place to tie up dogs near buildings, shops or a playground to allow dogs to wait for their owners in a protected and safe spot. These would be located a minimum of 10m from Playgrounds and 30m from sporting ovals.)
- Rubbish bins for the safe disposal of dog pollution.

Given the minor nature of these initiatives and the expectation that they will complement the existing dog off-leash designation and use of the park, an informing approach to consultation is generally considered appropriate.

Providing dog friendly play areas into existing off-leash reserves is expected to offer the following potential pro's and con's.

Pro's:

- Provide an improved user experience within existing dog off-leash reserves.
- Less direct impact on any single location/local community.
- Possibly less contentious model that may be more palatable for local residents/users to accept.
- More equitable distribution across the municipality.
- High level of flexibility (opportunity to target danger 'hot spots' with fencing, and leave other safer areas unfenced).
- Potentially lower level of complexity to deliver and lower cost.
- Improved safety for dogs and people:
    - Harder for dogs to run onto roads or encroach onto other facilities (ie picnic areas and playgrounds).
    - Easier for people to stay away from dogs by staying clear of the fenced area.

Con's

- Community support/level of demand for this type of facility remains unknown.
- More dogs may lead to more conflicts with other users.
- Potential amenity impacts (ie fencing, defecation, parking etc).
- Users may be tempted not to supervise their dogs the way they otherwise might if there is less opportunity for dogs to 'escape' the enclosed area.
- May require greater enforcement of non-compliant behaviour.
- May require higher maintenance regime.

The following sites were recommended for further investigation to install additional dog friendly infrastructure and limited fencing (where required):

- Koonung Creek Reserve in Bellevue Ward.
- Hays Paddock in Bellevue Ward.
- Fairview Park in Glenferrie Ward.
- Frog Hollow Reserve in Lynden Ward.
- Markham Reserve in Solway Ward.

These sites performed well in the site suitability assessment, are large enough to absorb the additional infrastructure without unduly impacting the existing park character and amenity, and provide a good geographic spread of more dog friendly areas across the municipality.

A further three sites were added to this list in response to councillor and community requests received after the 9 December Council meeting including:

- Lynden Park in Lynden Ward.
- Boroondara Park in Maling Ward.
- Pridmore Park in Glenferrie Ward.

Following further site investigations, including site visits with a number of councillors, additional dog-friendly play areas are now recommended at:

- Markham Reserve in Solway Ward.
- Lynden Park in Lynden Ward.
- Boroondara Park in Maling Ward.
- Pridmore Park in Glenferrie Ward.

See Attachment 4 for a concept plan showing the proposed improvements at each site.

5. Consultation/communication

In addition to the community consultation, internal consultation has been undertaken with the following Council departments:

- Parks and Infrastructure.
- Traffic and Transport.
- Social Planning and Research.
- Family Youth and Recreation.
- Local Laws.
- Environment and Sustainable Living.
- Sports and Events

Representatives from each department have been involved in this project and support the findings presented in this report.

6. Financial and resource implications

The 2020/2021 draft Budget includes an allocation of $470,000 in 2020/2021 for the development of a dog off-leash park in Boroondara, and to commence the progressive implementation of other dog friendly play facilities at other parks and reserves identified in this report.

Funding in the order of $350,000 is expected to be required to deliver a FDPA, pending the size of the facility and desired level of infrastructure provision.

Boroondara is one of 16 nominated Council areas that is eligible to apply for up to $275,000 funding under the Victorian Government's Local Parks Program.

Pending the outcome of this report and any future application for the Local Parks Program grant funding, any excess funding will be used to implement a range of other dog friendly play facilities at other parks and reserves as identified in this report.

7. Governance issues

Officers involved in the preparation of this report have no conflict of interest. The list of prescribed human rights contained in the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities has been reviewed per Council's Human Rights Compatibility Assessment Tool and it is considered that the proposed actions contained in this report represent no breaches of, or infringements upon, those prescribed rights.

8. Social and environmental issues

This report considers a range of social and environmental issues including:

- Concerns about use of council resources
- Impacts on the park
- Impact on animals
- Impacts on people

Following extensive consultation with the local community, these issues have been considered in making a recommendation to Council.

9. Evaluation and review

Should the FDPA proceed, a robust monitoring and review process is recommended, post implementation. This approach will provide the best path for success by enabling any issues to be identified and rectified quickly and efficiently, reduce Council's exposure to safety concerns and help minimise any negative impacts of these projects on our community. This approach will also help inform decisions about other potential FDPA sites in Boroondara.

10. Conclusion

Part One: Testing community support for a FDPA in Gordon Barnard Reserve

The community consultation indicates a positive level of support for the establishment of a FDPA in Boroondara at this point in time. However, support for a FDPA within GBR is currently insufficient to justify proceeding on survey results alone.

In making a recommendation officers have taken into account the following considerations:

- There are mixed views about the relative benefit of FDPA's for both people and dogs. Notwithstanding these divergent views, Council has expressed a desire for a FDPA in Boroondara, and GBR has been identified as the preferred location following an extensive site assessment process.

- Of all 174 respondents, 119 respondents (68%) supported the general principle that Council provide a fenced dog play area **somewhere in Boroondara**.

- There were 54 people (31% of total 174 respondents) **not in support of a fenced dog play area in Boroondara**.

- The 120 people who responded with "Yes" to question 1 or did not answer it proceeded to question 2, "Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard Reserve?" Of these 120 responses, 83 people were in support of the fenced dog play area in GBR, and 37 people were not in support.

- Considering responses from all 174 people, 83 people or **48% of survey respondents supported the proposal of a fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve.** The remaining **52% appear to oppose the proposal for the Gordon Barnard Reserve.** This interpretation is based on combining the number of people who did not support a fenced dog play area generally (54 people or 31%) with those who do not support a fenced dog play area in the Gordon Barnard Reserve (37 people or 21%).

- Of the 48% who supported a FDPA in Boroondara and GBR, 94% or 78 respondents lived in Boroondara. Of these, 77% lived within Balwyn and Balwyn North.

- It is more than likely the survey results have been skewed in favour of the opposing position due to the organised campaign against the proposal.

- Despite the negative community campaign skewing the survey results, 48% of all respondents support a FDPA at GBR.

- Key concerns raised by community members opposed to the proposal primarily relate to:
    - Concerns about use of Council resources (49 people or 56% raised this concern)
    - Impact on the park (47 people or 54%)
    - Impact on animals (36 people or 41%)
    - Impact on people (30 people or 34%)

- While officers acknowledge the proposal will inevitably impact some elements of the park, with careful design, maintenance and management, these impacts are considered manageable, and are unlikely to significantly impact the function, character or local amenity of the park or its users.

- Having undertaken extensive site assessments across all Boroondara parks and reserves, officers are not confident further analysis of new sites will elicit different results to those seen here (ie there is general support for an FDPA in Boroondara, but not majority support for a FDPA in any specific location).

- Should Council wish to apply for Round 2 funding under the Victorian Government's Local Parks Program when it opens, in order to have the best chance of success, Council would require a confirmed location for a fully fenced enclosure to be agreed ahead of the application closing date in August 2020. (Note only permanent facilities are eligible for funding under the program).

- Council has a leadership role to weigh up the pro's and con's of any proposal and make an informed decision. Ultimately, the decision for Council is to determine whether the community benefit to be delivered by such a proposal justifies the expense.

Having considered all the available information, officers recommend Council proceed with a reduced scope FDPA in GBR.

In reducing the scope it is recommended to delete some of the more permanent and higher cost items that are considered optional to the function of the facility. This will reduce upfront costs and minimise physical changes to the existing park area. While no design has been completed for this site, typical items that could be de-scoped include the provision of a shelter with seating and picnic tables, bespoke dog play equipment and lighting.

Officers will utilise best practice design guidelines to ensure that all appropriate measures are taken to minimise any potential impacts on the local park, its users and the surrounding community.

Pending Council's decision, officers will prepare a concept plan for the proposal and seek community feedback on the concept design.

Part Two: Investigation of additional dog friendly play areas within existing dog off-leash reserves

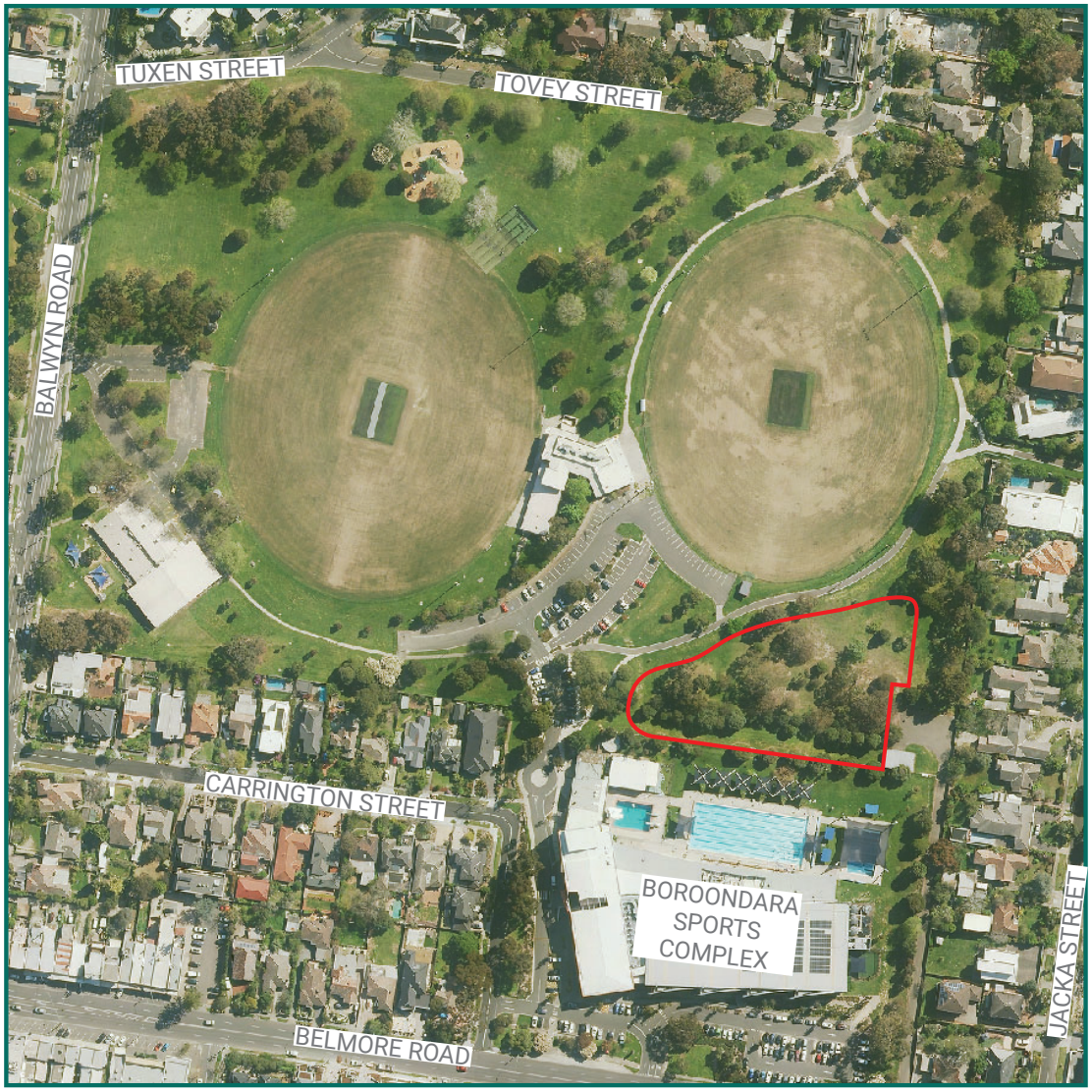
Given the minor nature of these initiatives and the expectation that they will complement the existing dog off-leash designation and use of the nominated parks, officers recommend proceeding with the implementation of these facilities as soon as possible, as funding permits.

Manager: Adam Hall, Environment & Sustainable Living

Report officer: Nathan Milesi, Coordinator Landscape and Design

GORDON BARNARD RESERVE

Location of proposed FDPA



1:2,500
0 metres 50 100

Location:
230 Balwyn Road,
North Balwyn

This information is indicative only

BOROONDARA City of Harmony 1

Attachment 2

Gordon Barnard Reserve - Proposed Fenced Dog Play Area - Community Consultation Summary

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Background

In March 2020, the Boroondara community was invited to participate in a survey about a proposed fenced dog play area within a portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve (GBR) in Balwyn North. The online survey was accessible through Council's website and was open for three weeks. The ESL team identified approximately 100 duplicate responses and removed these before passing the remaining 174 responses to the Social Research team for analysis.

The survey was designed by the ESL team and contained a combination of closed questions and open-ended questions.

Question 1 asked, "Do you generally support the principle of Council providing a fenced dog play area somewhere in Boroondara?". People who responded with "No" were asked to provide their reasons. The survey ended for them at this point.

The 119 people who responded with "Yes" to question 1 proceeded to question 2, "Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard Reserve?". People who answered "No" were asked to provide their reasons and the survey ended for them at this point.

Part 1 of this report provides an overview of the findings from the first two questions of the survey relating to support for a fenced dog play area.

Part 2 of this report provides details of the 83 respondents who support a fenced dog play area in the Gordon Barnard Reserve. These people were asked seven questions about themselves and their dogs to quantify demand for dog play facilities.

Attachment 1 contains analysis of the 19 individual independent submissions made by email and phone in addition to the survey responses.

1. Main points

- Of all 174 respondents, 119 respondents (68%) supported the general principle that Council provide a fenced dog play area **somewhere in Boroondara**.

- There were 54 people (31% of total 174 respondents) **not in support of a fenced dog play area in Boroondara**.

- The 120 people who responded with "Yes" to question 1 or did not answer it proceeded to question 2, "Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard Reserve?". Of

these 120 responses, 83 people were in support of the fenced dog play area in GBR, and 37 people were not in support.

- Considering responses from all 174 people, 83 people or **48% of survey respondents supported the proposal of a fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve**. The remaining 52% appear to oppose the proposal for the Gordon Barnard Reserve. This interpretation is based on combining the number of people who did not support a fenced dog play area generally (54 people or 31%) with those who do not support a fenced dog play area in the Gordon Barnard Reserve (37 people or 21%).

- People who oppose the development of a fenced dog play area somewhere in Boroondara have explained their views at length. The survey allowed an open field for people to express their views. Likewise, people who oppose the specific location proposed were provided with an open field to record their views. Four themes emerged from the verbatim comments from people who do not support a dog play area generally or in the proposed location:

    1. Council resource (56%)
    2. Impact on the park (54%)
    3. Impact on animals (41%)
    4. Impact on people (34%)

Part 1: Support for fenced dog play areas and reasons for opposing fenced dog play areas

Outlined below is an overview of the responses to Question 1 and Question 2 of the online survey.

1. **Do you generally support the principle of Council providing a fenced dog play area somewhere in Boroondara?**

The first question of the survey asked people to respond with a “Yes” or “No” to indicate if they generally support the idea of Council developing a fenced dog play area. This question deliberately avoids mention of a particular location, thereby allowing people to express their view on the general principle of providing fenced off areas for dogs to play while unleashed.

A clear position of support for the principle of a fenced dog play area was apparent in 119 of the 174 responses, or 68% of all respondents. Fifty-four respondents or 31% indicated that they are not in support of a fenced dog play area. One respondent left this question unanswered.

Table 1: Levels of support for the principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara

Do you generally support the principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara?	Number of total respondents	Percentage of total respondents
Yes	119	68%
No	54	31%
Did not answer	1	<1%
Total respondents	**174**	**100%**

Respondents who indicated they do not support a fenced dog play area were given the option of expressing their reasons in an open field. Fifty-two of the 54 respondents opted to complete this field, often with lengthy submissions. The survey ended for these 54 people at this point.

The reasons raised by the people who do not support fenced dog play areas were broad for a relatively small number of responses. See section a) below for these results.

2. **Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard reserve?**

Of the 174 respondents, 120 people proceeded to Question 2. These people supported the general principle of providing a fenced dog play area (119) or did not respond to Question 1 (1).

As shown in Table 2 below, 83 respondents answered "Yes" indicating their support of the location proposed within a portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve. Thirty-seven respondents answered "No".

Table 2: Support of development of a fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve (amongst the people who have indicated that they generally support the principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara)

Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard Reserve?	**Number of respondents to Q2**	**Percentage of the 120 respondents to Q2**	**Percentage of all 174 original respondents**
Yes	83	69%	48%
No	37	31%	21%
Total	**120 of the original 174 respondents**	**100% of Q2 respondents**	**69% of all 174 survey respondents[1]**

Table 3 shows the overall levels of support for fenced dog play areas. Of all 174 people surveyed, 48% supported the proposal to develop a fenced dog area in Gordon Barnard Reserve, with the remaining 52% respondents opposing. This interpretation is based on the assumption that if a person did not support a fenced dog play area generally, they did not support it at Gordon Barnard Reserve.

Table 3: Overall levels of support for a FDPA and/or the proposed location in Gordon Barnard Reserve

	Number of total respondents	**Percentage of total respondents**	**Overall position**
Do not support a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara	54	31%	52% do not support the proposed
Support a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara but not at GBR	37	21%	

[1] The remaining 31% are the 54 people who responded "No" to Q 1, "Do you generally support the principle of Council providing a FDPA somewhere in Boroondara?"

			location in GBR
Supports the proposed location at Gordon Barnard Reserve	83	48%	48% support the proposed location in GBR
Total	**174**	**100%**	**100%**

The 37 respondents who generally supported a fenced dog play area but answered "No" to the proposed location in Gordon Barnard Reserve were asked, "If no, why? Is there any other location within Gordon Barnard Reserve you think could accommodate a fenced dog play area?". This open-ended question allowed people to express their reasons for opposing a fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve. 35 of the 37 people responded. These wide-ranging verbatim comments from Question 2 were analysed in Section A below, along with the 52 verbatim responses from Question 1.

a) Main themes opposing the principle of providing a fenced dog play area or opposing a fenced dog play area within Gordon Barnard Reserve

The responses given by people who do not support fenced dog play areas in general (Question 1) overlapped with the reasons given by people who did not support Gordon Barnard Reserve as the specific location (Question 2). Given the relatively small numbers of comments (52 comments from Q1 and 35 comments from Q2), the comments have been analysed together to gain a better understanding of the issues of concern. Analysis of the principal themes and sub-themes within this combined set of 87 responses reveals people's positions in detail.

Table 4: Reasons for not supporting a fenced dog play area

Reasons for not supporting a fenced dog play area within Boroondara generally or within a portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve specifically. Analysis of verbatim comments made within Q1 & Q2 *Total verbatim comments* = 87 Totals for each theme and sub-theme do not equal 100% as people were able to give multiple responses.			
Primary Theme	No./frequency	**Sub-Theme**	No./frequency (within sub-theme)

1. Resources - Concerns about investment	*n* = 49; 56%	Investment not needed – existing dog facilities nearby	*n* = 29; 59%
		Against community expectations and needs	*n* = 26; 53%
		Proposal goes against guidelines/GBR Master Plan	*n* = 11; 22%
		Investment and maintenance costs	*n* = 6; 12%
2. Park - Negative impact on the character and use of Gordon Barnard Reserve	*n* = 47; 54%	Limiting access to other park users / reducing public areas for everyone	*n* = 36; 77%
		Compromising park character – damaging the park's aesthetic	*n* = 19; 40%
		Contributing to traffic and parking congestion	*n* = 11; 23%
3. Animals - Animal wellbeing	*n* = 36; 41%	Fenced dog parks are not good for dogs	*n* = 22; 61%
		Threatening wildlife	*n* = 17; 47%
4. People - Disturbing residents of the area and park users	*n* = 30; 35%	Safety concerns for park users, especially elderly and children	*n* = 21; 70%
		Hygiene issues	*n* = 7; 23%
		Increased noise	*n* = 6; 20%

b) Other suggested sites (new or existing)

Within the 35 responses opposing the specific location of Gordon Barnard Reserve, there were 20 suggestions of other sites.

Eleven verbatim comments that suggested *new* sites are listed below:

- *'A new location other than Gordon Barnard Reserve should be identified for the purpose.'*
- *'Down by the playground near the lower oval'*
- *'In the recent meeting attended by the Mayor (in the Boroondara Sports Centre) in late February/early March, the residents impacted most by this proposed dog park indicated that there were many other places in Boroondara and the local area more suitable for an off-leash dog park.'*

- *'If there a well-supported demand for this dog play area and if has to go to the Gordon Barnard Reserve (which green area is constantly shrinking with new developments) then consider the opposite corner, adjacent to the Balwyn Road.'*
- *'The ideal place for a fenced dog play area is in the parkland on the south side of the freeway immediately to the west of the north end of Balwyn Road.'*
- *'Other side of Reserve near corner of Balwyn Road and Tuxen Street would be better, but preferable to locate in the vast spaces of the Koonung Creek Reserve near Eastern Freeway.'*
- *'An alternative location within Gordon Barnard Reserve for a fenced dog area is the corner bounded by Balwyn Road and Tuxen Street.'*
- *The area near Balwyn Road and Tuxen Street would be better.'*
- *'The Fritsch Holzer Park is the size required to ensure all dogs of all sizes and temperaments can play safely'*
- *'I can only think somewhere like Hays Paddock might be suitable.'*
- *'I also visited Hays Paddock which is very large and I thought it may be an alternative to GBR.'*

Nine verbatim comments mentioned nearby off-leash dog parks *already in existence*:

- *'Hislop Park and Macleay Park which already offer off leash areas for dogs.'*
- *'The need for a dog play area in the vicinity is questionable given the large off-leash area nearby at Hislop Park.'*
- *'It might even get people to take their dogs over to Hislop Park instead of letting them off for a run in the ovals.'*
- *'I also don't believe this project would add that much value to Boroondara as there is already an off-lead area in the adjacent Hislop Reserve.'*
- *'I am not sure if Greythorn Park is off lead but when I visited twice on the weekend, there were only a couple of dogs off leash.'*
- *'There are other off-leash parks very close to Gordon Barnard Reserve.'*
- *'Also, there are other off leash areas in close proximity to GBR such as Hislop Park and Macleay Park.'*
- *'Macleay Park and other nearby areas already offer this facility.'*
- *'There is a large expanse of land adjacent to the Eastern Freeway that already provides for off lead exercising of dogs in the area.'*

Part 2: Further details of the people who support a fenced dog play area within the Gordon Barnard Reserve

This section focuses on additional data collected from the 83 respondents in favour of a fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve. People who answered "No" to either questions 1 or 2 were not able to respond to these questions.

1. **Do you currently own a dog(s)?**

The overwhelming majority (87%) of respondents had a dog/s, with 8% planning to get one in the near future and the remaining 5% not owning/planning to own a dog.

Among the 72 current dog owners, almost one third had more than one dog.

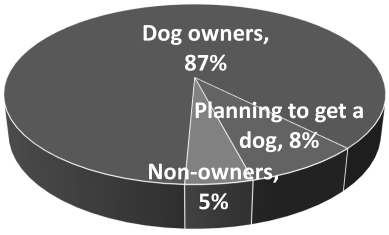


Figure 1: Dog ownership amongst respondents in favour of the location in Gordon Barnard Reserve

2. **How often are you likely to visit a proposed fenced dog play area at Gordon Barnard Reserve?**

Almost a tenth stated they would visit daily or every few days. Nearly 70% stated that they would visit a proposed fenced dog play area more than three times a month. Amongst the less frequent visitors, 16% stated they would visit the proposed fenced dog play area once or twice a month. 6% of respondents said that they would rarely or never visit the park despite agreeing with the proposal.

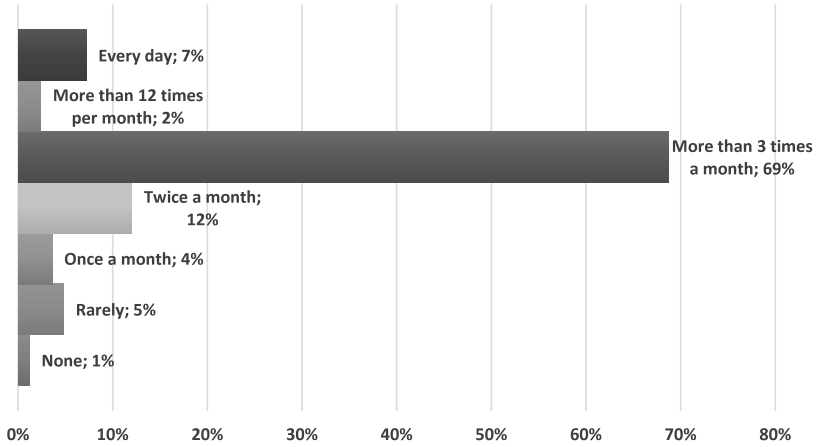


Figure 2: Estimated frequency of the visits to the proposed fenced dog play area by respondents in favour of the location in Gordon Barnard Reserve

3. **How are you most likely to travel to Gordon Barnard Reserve to use the proposed fenced dog play area? (tick all that apply)[2]**

As presented in Figure 6 below, the overwhelming majority of respondents (71%) said that they are most likely to walk to the park, while 48% of respondents stated they would drive a car to the park. Furthermore, 5% of respondents mentioned cycling as their mode of travel when taking their dog to the park.

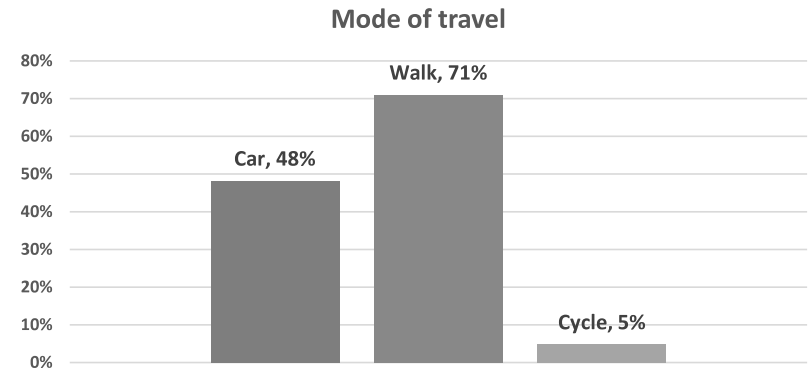


Figure 3: Mode of travel to the location in Gordon Barnard Reserve

[2] Figures do not equal 100% as people were able to select multiple responses.

4. **What times on a WEEKDAY are you most likely to visit a proposed fenced dog play area? (Select all that apply)3**

Figure 7 illustrates the expected times of use of the fenced dog play area on weekdays. Late afternoons and evenings can be expected to be most popular, followed by mornings.

The majority of respondents stated that they would use the park from mid-afternoon onwards, either between 3 pm and 6 pm (46%) or between 6 pm and 9 pm (47%).

Almost a third of respondents (30%) prefer the early hours between 6 am and 9 am. A further 23% of respondents indicated between 9 am and 12 pm as their preferred time.

Between 12 pm and 3 pm was least often indicated with 18% of responses. While there is a strong preference for later hours, these results also suggest that the proposed fenced dog play area would be used throughout the day.

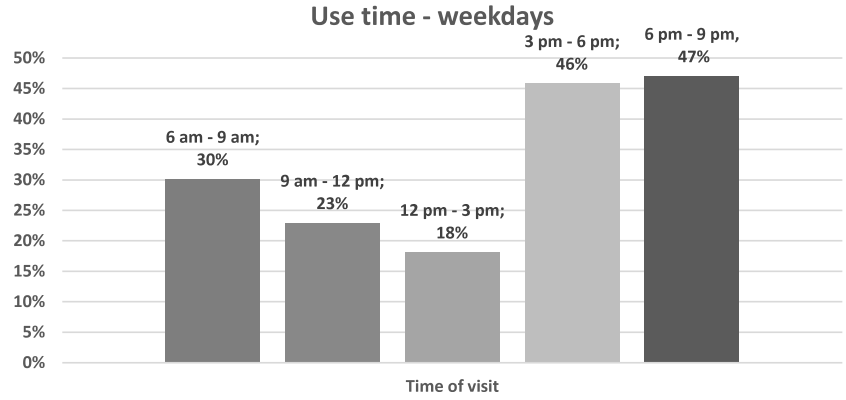


Figure 4: Expected use times during the week for people in favour of the proposed dog park

[3] Figures do not equal 100% as people were able to select multiple responses indicating they will visit the park at various times of the day.

5. **What times on a WEEKEND are you most likely to visit a proposed fenced dog play area? (Select all that apply)**

Weekends differ from expected use on weekdays. Figure 8 suggests that dog owners would use the park in significant numbers throughout the day.

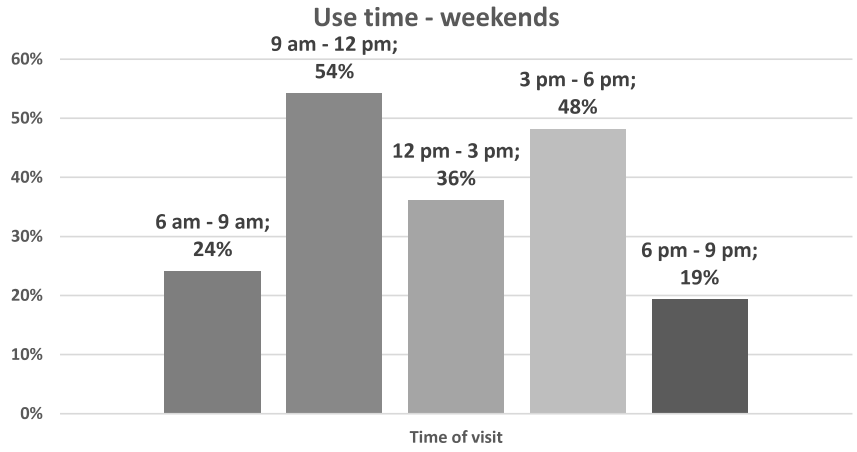


Figure 5: Expected use times during the weekends by people in favour of the proposed location

6. **Suburb of residence of respondents in favor of a fenced dog play area in the GBR**

Suburb of residence was collected only from the 83 people who supported a fenced dog play area in the proposed Gordon Barnard Reserve location. The majority of these people lived within Boroondara (94% or 78 of the 83 respondents), with 4% or 3 people living outside the municipality. The remaining 2% did not provide their address.

Three quarters (77%) of the people who support a fenced dog play area in GBR live in Balwyn North (53%) and Balwyn (24%).

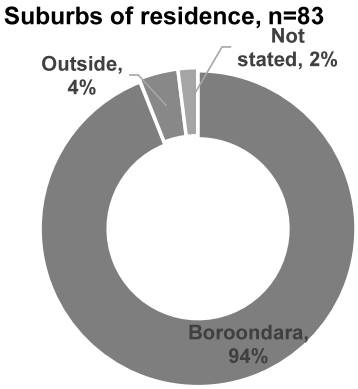


Figure 6: Location of respondents in favour of GBR.

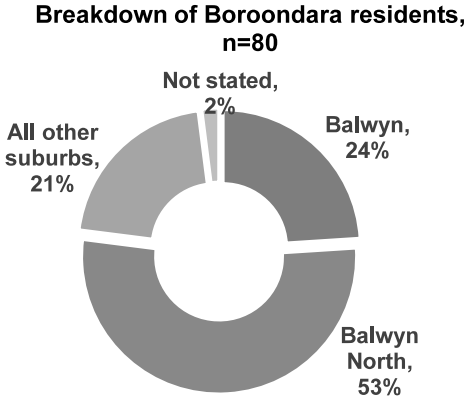


Figure 7: Location of respondents in favour of GBR within Boroondara.

Table 5: Boroondara suburb of residence

Suburb	Number of respondents	Percent of total respondents
Balwyn	20	24%
Balwyn North	44	53%
Camberwell	2	2%
Canterbury	1	1%
Deepdene	4	5%
Glen Iris	1	~1%
Hawthorn	1	~1%
Kew	2	2%
Kew East	1	~1%
Mont Albert	1	~1%
Surrey Hills	1	~1%
Outside Boroondara	3	4%
Not stated	2	2%
Total	83	100%

7. The following are features that may be included in a typical fenced dog play area. Please rank them from most important (top) to least important (bottom).

Finally, the 83 survey respondents who agreed with the proposed development of fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve identified the various dog play features they considered most important.

Table 6: Ranking by respondents of features in a proposed fenced dog play area

The following list is features that may be included in a typical fenced dog play area. Please rank them from most important (top) to least important (bottom).											
	Open grassed area	Fence	Poo bags	Drink fountain	Treed mounds	Nature play	Shade trees	Paths	Shelter/ seating	Range of seating	Irrigation
	Number of responses received										
Ranked as No. 1	42	23	7	4	2	2	2	1	0	0	0
Ranked as No. 2	19	6	7	17	26	2	2	0	3	1	0
Ranked as No. 3	10	4	3	13	12	26	10	0	1	3	0
	% of responses received										
Ranked as No. 1	51%	28%	8%	5%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0	0	0
Ranked as No. 2	23%	7%	8%	21%	31%	2%	2%	0	4%	1%	0
Ranked as No. 3	12%	5%	4%	16%	15%	31%	12%	0	1%	4%	0

- An open grassed area was ranked as feature number one by 51% of respondents who agreed with the fenced dog play area proposal. The importance of this feature was recognised by 23% of respondents who ranked it second most important and a further 12% of respondents who ranked it as the third most important feature.
- The second most important feature was a fence which was ranked as the most important by 28% of all respondents with a further 7% and 5% of respondents ranking it as second or third most important feature respectively.
- Further features of a fenced dog play area that were recognised as important by respondents included ‘poo bags’, ‘drink fountain’, ‘treed mounds’, ‘nature play’ and ‘shade trees’. Features such as ‘paths’, ‘shelter/seating’ and ‘range of seating’ were less important to respondents.
- None of the survey respondents saw ‘irrigation’ as an important feature of a fenced dog play area.

8. **What concerns do you have with this proposal that will require further consideration?**

47 respondents (57%) of the 83 who supported the proposed location of the fenced dog play area in Gordon Barnard Reserve did not answer this question. Of the remaining 36 people who gave responses, 12 people (15%) wrote positive comments (listed below) and a further 12 people (15%) expressed that they had 'no concerns'.

The responses that listed specific concerns and comments are detailed below.

Twelve respondents (15% of the 83 respondents in favour of a fenced dog play area within the GBR) provided specific concerns. Responses with a negative sentiment reflected the themes identified across responses to Question 1 and Question 2. Each response is listed below:

- *"Ensuring that as few trees as possible - if any - removed as part of the plan."*
- *"Lighting in evening would be safer"*
- *"Parking congestion when sports events are happening - but this is just a constraint and dog owners can visit another time"*
- *"That it will attract more people to the park, the carpark is already overflowing at time when sport is on but most of the time it is quiet in the evening. More frequent dog attacks with people letting their dogs off."*
- *"Rubbish bin for dog waste and general rubbish within the fenced area. Maybe to have 2 fenced areas one for large dogs and one for small dogs"*
- *"Security concerns - people."*

There were also neutral responses addressing specific concerns or giving suggestions to improve the proposal, including:

- *"Will it be wheelchair friendly?"*
- *"Owners must be responsible for their pets in the play area."*
- *"The council should be considering more than one fenced dog area."*
- *"The southern boundary of the proposed area seems to create a 'dead-space' between it and the pool fence. It would be better to extend the dog play area to the pool fence."*
- *"How responsible other dog owners are. Most would be fine but want to ensure all dogs are happy and fine to play without fear"*
- *"Why if it is a play area do you need circulation paths!?"*

Of the 36 responses, some examples of positive sentiments expressed were:

- *"This type of dog area is needed NOW"*

- *"I have NO concerns and think it is an exceptionally great idea and should definitely go through"*
- *"I have no negative concerns, and strongly support the proposal for a fenced dog play area at Gordon Barnard Reserve"*
- *"It will be very good to have a leash off area on this side of very busy Balwyn Road; It will take dogs away from the ovals where they all currently play; It is big enough and shaded enough to provide a great play area for dogs; It serves the needs of the community much better than current leash off areas which are closed to dogs when there is any sporting event at all which is almost all the time; The area under consideration is safe because it is away from traffic and completely unused currently except by five landowners; As long as you have some rules around its use and have no gates near those landowners property their objections would be muted I suspect; If you had it go right up to the pool fence it would save some money on fencing, easier to maintain and also would be bigger for the dogs"*
- *"I think this proposal is a great idea. I have lived in north Balwyn since 1991 and in my current house since 2002. I regularly walk past the proposed development area on my way to the gym and I hardly ever see anyone there - so it currently gets very little use. This proposal for a fenced play area would provide a great use of the site."*
- *"No concerns. A area within the Gordon Barnard Precinct would be a fantastic addition to the area. I know from speaking with other dog owners around the area it would be greatly welcomed and appreciated. 1. It will be very good to have a leash off area on this side of very busy Balwyn Road 2. It will take dogs away from the ovals where they all currently play. 3. It is big enough and shaded enough to provide a great play area for dogs. 4. It serves the needs of the community much better than current leash off areas which are closed to dogs when there is any sporting event at all which is almost all the time. 5. The area under consideration is safe because it is away from traffic and completely unused currently except by five landowners. 6. As long as you have some rules around its use and have no gates near those landowners property their objections would be muted I suspect. 7. If you had it go right up to the pool fence it would save some money on fencing, easier to maintain and also would be bigger for the dogs."*

9. Do you have any further feedback or comments?

In total, 34 responses were received to this question (or 41% of the 83 respondents in favour of a fenced dog play area within the GBR). Of these, 28 responses (34%) were "thank you" or similar and did not provide any further suggestions. Some respondents used this field to reiterate their support for the proposed fenced dog play area in a portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve. Several people expressing their

thanks also made meaningful comments regarding the importance of the dog park in a context of socialising (particularly for older people) and increasingly limited backyard space.

Finally, six people (7%), made actual suggestions and these verbatim comments appear below:

- *'Ensure people pick up after dogs, and people close gates behind them, having lived in areas with & utilised fenced dog parks before this was the only issue we had:)'*
- *'Really important to have updated drinking fountain for dogs in all parks.'*
- *'If this legislation does not go through, I would earnestly request that the "Dogs must be on leads" signage be made larger. Currently, I cannot take my dog for a walk on the reserve, due to most dogs being off leash. She is great with people, however, she is protective of me when another dog comes too close. If people do read the signage, they don't take any notice and there are no enforced restrictions. Dogs are allowed to wander through the children's play area, although there are signs indicating this is not allowed.'*
- *'I fully support the general concept of an enclosed off-lead play area for dogs, as long as it is sensitively designed and doesn't impact too greatly on the park environment.'*
- *'The area should include night lighting to encourage all round usage up until certain hours. If you want a good example, investigate Citizens Park in Richmond.'*

  'Really appreciate the councils plan. If for some reason this site is deemed not suitable please don't abandon the idea - either select another spot or simply make grounds outside fenced ovals off leash.'

Independent Submissions

In addition to the online survey responses, Council received 19 individual independent submissions via email and phone. One of these submissions was a cohort of 11 primary school students whose letters were submitted by their teacher.

These comments have been combined and analysed using the same manual coding process applied to the open-ended questions from the online survey, including interpreting the level of support for an FDPA in Boroondara.

Overall, 17 submissions opposed and 12 of the 29 submissions expressed support for an FDPA (seven of these were the school students).

Similar to the online open-ended question regarding the FDPA the main themes were Council Resources (44%), Impact on animals (44%), Impact on people (37%) and Impact on the park (33%), and additional theme for supportive comments (39%)

The feedback received is summarised in Appendix 1.

Positive comments in regards to council including an FDPA include:

Two phone calls were taken from residents who expressed they would be happy to see an FDPA as Gordon Barnard is a large reserve and they would feel safer to have an enclosed space for their dogs to run freely, and that they could let their dog off leash without worrying that they would run onto the sports oval.

Another resident wrote in “I don’t have a dog, and appreciate their contribution to our wellbeing and they need to have a safe place to exercise.”

Appendix 1: Analysis of additional submissions

Coded responses to the independent submissions

Gordon Barnard Reserve email and telephone submissions Primary and Sub-Themes *Submissions* = 29			*Total*
Primary Theme	No./ frequency	**Sub-Theme**	No./frequency (within sub-theme)
Council Resources - Concerns about investment	*n* = 12; 43%	Investment not needed – existing dog facilities nearby	*n* = 5; 42%
		Against community expectations and needs	*n* = 6; 50%
		Proposal goes against guidelines/GBR Master Plan	*n* = 3; 25%
		Investment and maintenance costs	*n* = 4; 33%
Park - Negative impact on the character and use or Gordon Barnard Reserve	*n* = 9; 32%	Limiting access to other park users / reducing public areas for everyone	*n* = 8; 89%
		Compromising park character – damaging the park's aesthetic	*n* = 5; 55%
		Contributing to traffic and parking congestion	*n* = 4; 44%
Animals - Animal wellbeing	*n* = 12; 43%	Fenced dog parks are not good for dogs	*n* = 7; 58%
		Threatening wildlife	*n* = 7; 58%
People - Disturbing residents of the area	*n* = 10; 36%	Safety concerns for park users, especially elderly and children	*n* = 9; 90%
		Hygiene issues	*n* = 1; 10%
		Increased noise	*n* = 3; 30%
Support for Fenced Dog Play Area	*n* = 11; 39%	Improved safety and benefits for dogs	*n* = 9; 82%
		Benefits for people	*n* = 6; 55%
		Better for the environment / park	*n* = 3; 27%

*Figure totals do not equal 100% as people were able to give multiple responses.

Appendix 2: Gordon Barnard Reserve Online Survey

INTRODUCTION

A portion of Gordon Barnard Reserve adjacent to the existing pool has been identified as a potential location for a fenced dog play area.

Regardless of the outcome of this consultation, the remainder of the reserve will continue to be a dog on-leash area.

This survey should only take 3-4 minutes to complete and your answers are anonymous.

The survey will be open until Sunday 22 March 2020.

We will use the feedback received to prepare a report for a Council decision on whether the project should proceed in this location or not.

Thank you for taking the time to have your say.

SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. **Do you generally support the principle of Council providing a fenced dog play area somewhere in Boroondara?**
   - Yes (jump to next question)
     - If No, why?_____ (*at this point responses who chose no were not asked any further questions*)
2. **Do you support the development of a new fenced dog play area adjacent to the existing pool in Gordon Barnard reserve?**
   - Yes (jump to next question)
     - If no, why? Is there any other location within Gordon Barnard Reserve you think could accommodate a fenced dog play area?_____ (*at this point responses who chose no were not asked any further questions*)

3. **Do you currently own a dog(s)?**
   a. Yes, how many?
      - One
      - Two
      - Three
      - More than three

- No
- Planning to get one

4. **How often are you likely to visit a proposed fenced dog play area at Gordon Barnard Reserve (on a monthly basis)?**
   - More than three times a month
   - Twice a month
   - Once a month
   - Rarely
   - Other (please specify)_____

5. **How are you most likely to travel to Gordon Barnard Reserve to use the proposed fenced dog play area? (tick all that apply)**
   - Car
   - Public transport
   - Walk
   - Cycle
   - Other (please specify)_____

6. **What times on a WEEKDAY are you most likely to visit a proposed fenced dog play area? (Select all that apply)**
   - 6am - 9am
   - 9am - 12pm
   - 12pm - 3pm
   - 3pm - 6pm
   - 6pm - 9pm

7. **What times on a WEEKEND are you most likely to visit a proposed fenced dog play area? (Select all that apply)**
   - 6am - 9am
   - 9am - 12pm
   - 12pm - 3pm
   - 3pm - 6pm
   - 6pm - 9pm

8. **What street and suburb do you live in?**

_____

9. The following list are features that may be included in a typical fenced dog play area. Please rank them from most important (top) to least important (bottom).

- Open grassed areas for active play
- Treed mounds for explorative play
- Dog nature play (balancing logs, boulders, rocks, sandpit)
- Shelter/meeting place (including seating)
- Plenty of seating for diverse users
- Accessible drink fountain with bottle refill and dog bowl
- Dog bag dispenser, signage and bins
- 1.5m high fully enclosed fence with multiple entries
- Shade trees
- Additional path connections and circulation paths
- Irrigation to protect grass surfaces

10. What concerns (if any) do you have with this proposal that will require further consideration?

- Other:

_____

11. Do you have any further feedback or comments?

_____

Would you like to receive email updates about this project?

- Yes/No (if yes, email field appears)

Confirmation at completion of survey:

Thank you for taking the time to have your say.
The feedback received will inform officers' recommendation for Council's consideration, to determine whether this proposal should proceed in this location or not.

GORDON BARNARD RESERVE

Poster in GBR Reserve

GORDON BARNARD RESERVE

ENCLOSED FENCED PARK LAND

- GET THE FACTS -

The council **are proposing to take away your open parkland** for a single purpose, to build a fenced dog area. This site is enjoyed by all within our community with its informal open woodland character providing a shaded, tranquil space for a wide variety of activities.

We urge you to raise your concerns. Read on for the facts and respond to the council survey link.

We welcome you to join **Friends of Gordon Barnard Reserve** on Facebook to gain access to more material and share your views. We encourage you to become informed and then influence the Boroondara council's decision through responding to their survey or contact council directly.

https://surveys.boroondara.vic.gov.au/fenced-dog-play-area-in-gordon-barnard-reserve/
EMAIL: environment@boroondara.vic.gov.au
POST: Environment and Sustainable Living, City of Boroondara, Private Bag 1, Camberwell VIC 3124.

The current information provided by the Boroondara City Council does not provide the full picture. Read on, be informed and **vote 'No' to council's proposal before 22nd March 2020.**

There is an absence of details regarding the criteria for council's site selection. Various compromises (as outlined below) to the existing state government guidelines raises questions about the council's transparency in representing the community's interests and their decision-making process. Below are facts that aren't presented by the council. We urge you to become informed and have your voice heard.

The recent proposal for an off-leash dog park at Fritsch Holzer Park (FHP) has been rejected. The council has now focused its attention upon Gordon Barnard Reserve (GBR). The proposed park was not implemented in FHP for three main reasons which remain applicable to Gordon Barnard Reserve, albeit with differing circumstances.

1. **The perception that the addition of the dog park is 'taking something away'**

While the council has characterized the proposed space as 'under-utilized', this beautiful part of the park has patronage from a diverse range of our community. It is regularly used for meditation, Tai Chi, picnics, artistic groups painting as well as aiding, non-aquatic activities during school swimming sports, and it provides an essential area for walkers traversing GBR and enjoying the shaded setting. The proposal would take away this tranquil space and have it designated for a single use, addressing only a small part of our community. (21 respondents agreeing that 'more

GORDON BARNARD RESERVE

fenced dog off-lead areas are important' in the Boroondara Community Plan (BCP) consultation survey of 7,200 residents. This reflects a community demand for this facility of 0.3% of respondents.)

2. The construction of the proposed dog park compromising the character of the park

While the council recognises the area's beauty, "informal open woodland character, is lightly treed, has excellent visibility and passive surveillance", its proposal to fence-off the area and introduce "logs, boulders, rocks and a dog sandpit" this is not consistent with the community's expectations for this area as reflected in the Gordon Barnard Reserve Master Plan where it is designated as 'Informal Open Space' where it is to be utilized for unstructured recreation. This area of GBR has also been identified as an essential corridor for support of native wildlife. There has been no assessment of environmental impact. The presence of dogs would likely disrupt and threaten wildlife in its natural habitat.

3. The potential risks developing as a result of the dog park

In Gordon Barnard Reserve, the key risks arise from the proposed location directly behind the sports field goals. This location creates an inherent risk to children collecting errant balls entering the space where the dogs are not restrained. Additionally, the proposed fencing will funnel walkers directly into the zone behind the goals, raising the threat of injury to particularly the young and elderly residents and not providing them the opportunity to take a wider berth and walk amongst the trees.

Compromises:

The suitability of the GBR site for this project is also questionable given that it fails to adhere to and requires changes to several guidelines and regulations. This brings into question the amount of consideration given to the amenity of GBR by the council and the lack of consideration shown to the local residents. Their convenient 'pick and choose' approach to guideline compromises are exemplified with the following:

- There are several Victorian Government off-leash dog park guidelines that are not being adhered to in the council's proposal including:
  - Off-leash dog park guidelines call for a 50 metre set-back from sensitive interfaces.
    - The prescribed set-back has been arbitrarily halved by the council to 25 metres in the proposal on the boundary with resident's property.
  - Off-leash dog park guidelines call to highlight that the provision of a dog park addresses a demonstrated need "i.e. lack of dog parks in the area".
    - Noting the survey results above and consider that there are existing off-leash areas in close proximity to Gordon Barnard Reserve such as Hislop park and Macleay park
  - Off-leash dog park guideline call for a recommended minimum size of 5000 m^2
    - The proposal has a size of 4500 m^2, even after halving the 50 metre set-back guideline in an attempt to expand the site's available area.

- Changes will be required to the existing council by-laws
  - the proposal would require a change to existing Council Order made under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 which is concerned with the designation of parks as on-leash or off-leash. The proposal would be to create a irregular exception to partition-off a portion of the park to be designated 'off-leash'.

The council states that the selection of the GBR 'site 2' is not a final decision and yet their mascot dog as seen in the communications material has been named 'Gordy' after the Gordon Barnard Reserve (GBR). We can still influence their decision, but we need you to voice your concerns and respond to the council survey.

THREAT TO YOUR OPEN PARK LAND

– HAVE YOUR SAY NOW-

GORDON BARNARD RESERVE

Herald Sun Media Article 10.03.2020

INNER EAST

North Balwyn dog park proposal provokes community reaction

Friends of Gordon Barnard Reserve want this part of the park to remain as is. Picture: Julian Smith

The prospect of a dedicated dog park in North Balwyn has raised the hackles of some neighbours.

Boroondara Council is getting the community's thoughts on transforming part of into a devoted area for four-legged friends.

But a community group has formed to oppose the proposition, citing concern for what that would mean for those who use the park as well as questioning the need for it in the area.

Friends of Gordon Barnard Reserve founder Ralph Niesen said the council was proposing "to fence off this beautiful parcel of lightly treed parkland that currently serves our community as open, shaded space for a wide variety of free recreational activities".

"The park ... is regularly used for meditation, tai chi, picnics, painting groups, non-aquatic activities during school swimming sports and it proves an essential area for walkers traversing Gordon Barnard Reserve and enjoying the shaded setting," he said.

"The proposal would take away this tranquil space and have it designated for a single use, addressing only a small part of our community."

A community campaign derailed council's first attempt at creating a dog park at Fritsch Holzer Park in Hawthorn East.

Mr Niesen also raised concerns about the lack of assessment of the environmental impact of a dedicated dog park and any risks related to having it located directly behind the goals on the sports field.

The reserve is home to Old Camberwell Grammarians and Greythorn football clubs, as well as Balwyn and North Balwyn Combined cricket clubs.

The need for such a park was also questioned considering the nearby off-leash dog areas at Hislop Park and Macleay Park.

The council's environment and infrastructure director, Daniel Freer, said the park was "underused, large enough to provide a safe space for dogs to run and play, easily accessible by car with ample parking spaces available and toilets nearby".

He said there were more than 15,000 dogs registered in Boroondara, and while there was 219ha of open space designated as off-leash dog areas, no dedicated dog park existed.

"What is proposed is a fenced dog-friendly play area specifically designed to cater for dogs and their owners," Mr Freer said.

"A fenced dog-friendly play area will provide a new space for dogs and their owners to socialise and exercise in a safe and controlled environment."

https://www.heraldsun.com.au/leader/inner-east/north-balwyn-dog-park-proposal-pro... 10/03/2020

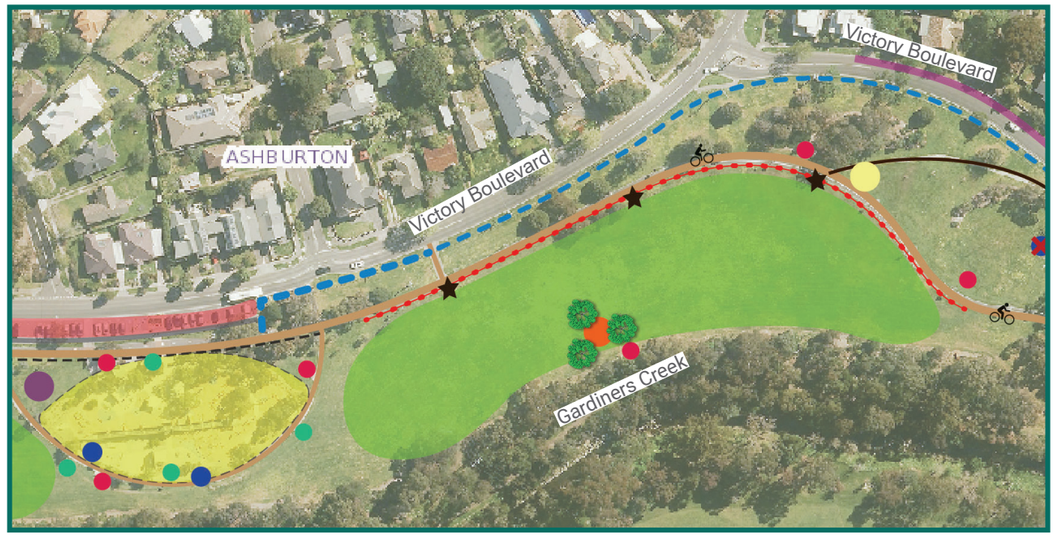
Graeme Both with his dog Jasper at Gordon Barnard Reserve. Picture: Julian Smith

Markham Reserve

Site Analysis/ Opportunities

Location:

80 Victory Boulevard,
Ashburton



NTS

0 metres 50 100

Legend

Existing Conditions

- existing fenced playground
- used for recreational use (including dog activities)
- existing council rubbish bins
- existing seats
- existing drink fountains
- existing carpark unrestricted parking
- existing street unrestricted parking
- existing timber bollards
- existing post and mesh panel fence
- existing shared path
- existing formalised path

Proposed

- proposed tree planting
- proposed formalised path
- proposed pedestrian access gate
- proposed installation of chain mesh fence for safety
- drink fountain removal
- proposed dog friendly drink fountain
- Proposed dog parking
- proposed location for informal low rock scramble

This information is indicative only

Markham Reserve is designated as an off-leash reserve. The reserve includes a regional playground, sporting ovals, pavilions, formal paths, and a community garden. The reserve is well utilised by the community including dog walkers who use a majority of the open space to walk their dogs off-leash. The reserve is relatively flat with wide expanses of grassed areas, vegetated areas and dense tree canopies along the southern boundary and Gardiners Creek. There are many access points into the reserve, including an informal path in the northeastern corner off Victory Boulevard. These access points link into a well-maintained gravel path which connects to the Gardiners Creek Trail. The linear car park and road reserve provide a barrier between the reserve and the residential area to the north. Within the reserve there is some existing reserve infrastructure to support dog park users and the community including seats, paths, parking, and water.

Following the analysis of this Reserve it was decided Markham Reserve would be a suitable location for a low rock scramble and to provide additional reserve infrastructure.

Existing benefits of this site

- Natural edge with Gardiners Creek on one side and the Gardiners Creek Trail on the other.
- Existing high-use site by dog owners.
- Moderate setback to housing, minimal overlooking, low numbers of properties abut the site.
- Good shade and ambiance on the reserve edges.
- Existing reserve infrastructure to support dog park users and the community including shelter, seats, paths, parking, regional playground and drink fountains with bottle refill and dog bowls.
- Abundant area to ensure minimal conflict with surrounding land and reserve use.
- Existing circulation pathways.
- Relatively flat topography.

Challenges

- People already use the reserve for dog walking and can safely exercise their dogs off-leash in the reserve.
- Multiple entries into the reserve.
- Fill site.
- Located on the outskirts of the municipality.
- Prone to flooding from Gardiners Creek.
- Proximity to native flora and fauna.

Opportunities

- **Low rock scramble and cluster of trees**
  - * Plant a cluster of trees adjacent the existing seat to provide a welcoming micro-climate locate a low rock scramble with plants adjacent to create a social zone.
- **Partial fence and gates**
  - * Provide three gates and partial fencing to the reserve side of the shared path to restrict conflicts.
- **Formalise path**
  - * Formalise the informal access from North-Eastern corner.
- **Dog-Friendly Drinking Fountain**
  - * Provide a new drink fountain with dog-friendly facilities near the reserve edge or relocate the existing drink fountain.
- **Dog parking**
  - * Provide dog parking near the car parking for the playground to provide a space for dogs to wait for their families whilst they are playing.

Low Rock Scramble (Typical - sketch only)

LYNDEN PARK

Site Analysis/ Opportunities

Location:

210 Highfield Rd,
Camberwell

Legend

Existing Conditions

- existing fenced playground
- existing council rubbish bins
- existing seats
- existing carpark unrestricted parking
- existing street unrestricted parking
- existing drink fountains
- existing foot path
- existing unformalised path
- existing post and rail fence and maintenance gate
- existing post and mesh panel fence and gate

Proposed

- proposed installation of chain mesh fence for safety
- proposed dog friendly drinking fountain
- proposed formalised path

This information is indicative only

Lynden Park is designated as an off-leash reserve. The reserve is well used by the community and used by a wide cross-section of the community including dog walkers who use a majority of the open space (including the ovals when they are not in use) to walk their dogs off-leash. Key features and infrastructure include a playground, sporting ovals, pavilions, formal paths and seats. Parking and water are predominately located near the pavilion and playground. The reserve has many access points including an informal path from the corner of Ruyton Street and Highfield Road, this location is additionally a preferred location to include additional dog-friendly supports as it has good visibility, is located adjacent to Highfield Road, is lightly treed and has some undulation.

Following the analysis of this reserve, it was decided Lynden Park would be a suitable location to provide additional reserve infrastructure which encourages dog ownership and provides for other park users.

Existing benefits of this site

- Moderate setback to housing, minimal overlooking, low numbers of properties abut the site.
- Existing reserve infrastructure to support dog park users and the community including seats, paths, parking, power and water.
- Relatively flat land.
- Potential to utilise grass embankment as a barrier to sports ovals.
- Existing trees provide natural shade, character and visual amenity.
- The nearby playground is already fenced and has parking.

Challenges

- People already use the reserve for dog walking and can safely exercise their dogs off-leash in the reserve.
- Proximity to residential housing.
- Multiple entries into the reserve.
- Limited existing parking.
- Potential conflict with cyclists on Highfield Road.
- Located in the 1 in 100 year flood zone.
- Ovals have significant use by sporting clubs.

Opportunities

- **Formalise path**
  - Formalise the informal access from the Ruyton Street and Highfield Road corner.
- **Dog-Friendly Drinking Fountain**
  - Provide a new drink fountain with dog-friendly facilities.
- **Fence panel replacement**
  - Proposed installation of chain mesh fence for safety along Highfield Road, Lynden and Ruyton Street.

BOROONDARA PARK

Site Analysis/ Opportunities

Location:

66 Canterbury Rd,
Canterbury

NTS

0 metres 50 100

Legend

Existing Conditions

- existing fenced playground
- used for recreational use (including dog activities)
- existing council rubbish bins
- existing seats
- existing drink fountain
- existing street unrestricted parking
- existing foot path
- existing shared path (runs under Canterbury Road)
- existing chainlink fence located in verge along Canterbury Road
- existing post and rail fence

Proposed

- remove seat and relocate
- relocated seat
- proposed pedestrian access gate (in park)
- proposed installation of chain mesh fence for safety (in park)

This information is indicative only

Located in the valley adjacent Canterbury Road, Boroondara Park is a well-used off-leash reserve with large grass areas, a playground, shared path and scattered trees. The reserve is a social location for the community and attracts community members, commuters and groups of dog walkers and their dogs. The Anniversary Trail shared path runs along the western border of the reserve and under Canterbury Road, providing a connection to East Camberwell Railway Station and further afield. The reserve is lower than its surrounds and characterised by low-density residential. This elevated position allows users excellent visibility of other users in the reserve. Within the reserve, there is some existing reserve infrastructure to support dog park users and the community including seats, paths, parking, and water.

Following the analysis of this reserve, it was decided Boroondara Park would be a suitable location to relocate a seat to a place where dog walkers are more likely to use it and fence along Canterbury Road with pedestrian entry points.

Existing benefits of this site

- Moderate setback to housing.
- Natural edge.
- Good shade and ambiance.
- Existing reserve infrastructure to support dog park users and the community including. shared path, playground, seats, paths, power and water.
- Well-utilised by dog owners for off-leash walking and socialising.

Challenges

- People already use the reserve for dog walking and can safely exercise their dogs off-leash in the reserve.
- Multiple entries.
- Boroondara Park is a main pedestrian connection to the East Camberwell Railway Station with some conflicts on the shared path.

Opportunities

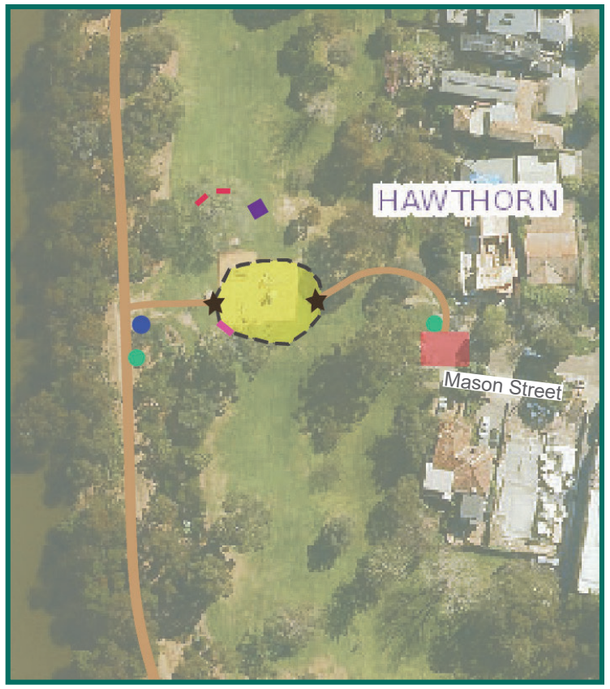
- **Relocate Seat**
  - Relocate a seat to mid way between the playground and path junction to provide a place for dog walkers to overlook the dog off-leash zone.
- **Partial fence and gate**
  - Provide partial fencing and gate gaps to the reserve along Canterbury Road for safety.

PRIDMORE PARK

Site Analysis/ Opportunities

Location:

2 Mason St,
Hawthorn



NTS

0 metres 50 100

Legend

Existing Conditions

- existing playground to be replaced
- existing council rubbish bins
- existing carpark unrestricted parking
- existing drink fountain
- existing path

Proposed

- proposed foot path (playground replacement)
- proposed playground gate
- proposed informal log seats
- proposed playground fence
- proposed maintenance gate
- proposed picnic table

This information is indicative only

Located adjacent the Yarra River and filled with open space, Pridmore Park is a neighbourhood park with a playground, kick about space, a path along the Yarra River and is well-loved by the local community including dog walkers and their canine companions.

During recent playground replacement consultation, the community requested officers look at maintaining existing and incorporating new dog-friendly infrastructure into Pridmore Park.

Following the analysis of this reserve, it was decided Pridmore Park would be a suitable location to accommodate some reconfigured seating under the oak tree to better accommodate dog walkers, a new fence to the playground to mitigate existing challenges with dogs running on to the playground and some playful logs for casual seating and or dog play.

Existing benefits of this site

- Moderate setback to housing.
- Natural edge.
- Good shade and ambiance.
- Existing reserve infrastructure to support dog park users and the community including; informal creek side path, playground, seats, kick about space and water.
- Well-utilised by dog owners for off-leash walking and socialising.

Challenges

- People already use the reserve for dog walking and can safely exercise their dogs off-leash in the reserve.
* The existing seat is used by dog walkers but is inadequate as social groups commonly meet there and have to sit on the low playground edge.

Opportunities

- **Fully fence the playground**
* Provide fencing to the playground for safety.
- **Seats**
* Reconfigure and expand the seating under the oak tree to better accommodate dog walkers. Include informal log seats and a picnic table.