

Community & Environment Committee

Agenda: *Community & Environment Committee*

Date: *Monday 24 November 2014*

Time: *6.00pm*

Outline of Meeting Protocol & Procedure:

- The Chairperson will call the Meeting to order and ask the Committee/Staff to present apologies or late correspondence.
- The Chairperson will commence the Order of Business as shown in the Index to the Agenda.
- At the beginning of each item the Chairperson will ask whether a member(s) of the public wish to address the Committee.
- If person(s) wish to address the Committee, they are allowed four (4) minutes in which to do so. Please direct comments to the issues at hand.
- If there are persons representing both sides of a matter (eg applicant/objector), the person(s) against the recommendation speak first.
- At the conclusion of the allotted four (4) minutes, the speaker resumes his/her seat and takes no further part in the debate unless specifically called to do so by the Chairperson.
- If there is more than one (1) person wishing to address the Committee from the same side of the debate, the Chairperson will request that where possible a spokesperson be nominated to represent the parties.
- The Chairperson has the discretion whether to continue to accept speakers from the floor.
- After considering any submissions the Committee will debate the matter (if necessary), and arrive at a recommendation (R items which proceed to Full Council) or a resolution (D items for which the Committee has delegated authority).

Recommendation only to the Full Council:

- Such matters as are specified in Section 377 of the Local Government Act and within the ambit of the Committee considerations.
- Matters which involve broad strategic or policy initiatives within responsibilities of Committee.
- Matters requiring the expenditure of moneys and in respect of which no Council vote has been made.
- Matters delegated to the Council by the Roads and Maritime Services.
- Matters not within the specified functions of the Committee,
- Matters reserved by individual Councillors in accordance with any Council policy on "safeguards" and substantive changes.
- Parks and Reserves Plans of Management (Strategies, Policies and Objectives).
- Residential Parking Schemes - Provision and Policies.

Delegated Authority:

- Community Services and Programs.
- Library Services
- Health.
- Licensing.
- Liquor Licences.
- Regulatory.
- Fire Protection Orders.
- Residential Parking Schemes (surveillance and administration).
- Traffic Management (Traffic Committee Recommendations).
- Waste Minimisation.
- To require such investigations, reports or actions as considered necessary in respect of matters contained within the Business Agendas (and as may be limited by specific Council resolution).
- Confirmation of the Minutes of its Meetings.
- Any other matter falling within the responsibility of the Community and Environment Committee and not restricted by the Local Government Act or required to be a Recommendation to Full Council as listed above.
- Statutory reviews of Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Committee Membership:

7 Councillors

Quorum:

The quorum for a Committee meeting is 4 Councillors.

WOOLLAHRA MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

Notice of Meeting

20 November 2014

To: Her Worship the Mayor, Councillor Toni Zeltzer ex-officio
Councillors Anthony Marano (Chair)
Peter Cavanagh
Greg Levenston
Andrew Petrie
Matthew Robertson
Elena Wise
Susan Wynne (Deputy Chair)

Dear Councillors

Community & Environment Committee Meeting – 24 November 2014

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1993, I request your attendance at a Meeting of the Council's **Community and Environment Committee** to be held in the **Council Chambers, 536 New South Head Road, Double Bay, on Monday 24 November 2014 at 6.00pm.**

Gary James
General Manager

Additional Information Relating to Committee Matters

Site Inspection

Other Matters

Meeting Agenda

Item	Subject	Pages
1	Leave of Absence and Apologies	
2	Note Council resolution of 27 June 2011 to read late correspondence in conjunction with the relevant Agenda Item	
3	Declarations of Interest	

Items to be Decided by this Committee using its Delegated Authority

D1	Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 10 November 2014	1
D2	Delivery Program 2013 to 2017 & Operational Plan 2014/15 (DPOP) Quarterly Progress Report September 2014 against Goal 1 – A Connected & Harmonious Community, Goal 2 – A Supported Community, Goal 3 – A Creative & Vibrant Community, Goal 5 – Liveable Place, Goal 6 – Getting Around, Goal 7 – Protecting our Environment & Goal 8 – Sustainable Use of Resources – 1229.G *Note Annexure 1 Distributed Under Separate Cover	2
D3	Feasibility of Synthetic Turf Sportsfield in Woollahra	17

Items to be Submitted to the Council for Decision with Recommendations from this Committee

R1	Trumper Park Dog Regulations – Review of Public Exhibition – 271.G	23
----	--	----

Item No: D1 Delegated to Committee
Subject: **Confirmation of Minutes of Meeting held on 10 November 2014**
Author: Craig Bennett - Manager – Governance & Council Support
File No: See Council Minutes
Reason for Report: The Minutes of the Meeting of Monday 10 November 2014 were previously circulated. In accordance with the guidelines for Committees' operations it is now necessary that those Minutes be formally taken as read and confirmed.

Recommendation:

That the Minutes of the Community and Environment Committee Meeting of 10 November 2014 be taken as read and confirmed.

Craig Bennett
Manager – Governance & Council Support

Item No: D2 Delegated to Committee

Subject: **Delivery Program 2013 to 2017 & Operational Plan 2014/15 (DPOP) Quarterly Progress Report September 2014 against Goal 1 - A connected & harmonious community, Goal 2 - A supported community, Goal 3 - A creative & vibrant community, Goal 5 - Liveable places, Goal 6 - Getting around, Goal 7 - Protecting our environment and Goal 8 - Sustainable use of resources.**

Author: Vicki Munro - Acting Director Community Services
Tom O'Hanlon - Director Technical Services

File No: 1229.G

Reason for Report: To review the status of the Priorities and Actions in Council's Delivery Program 2013 to 2017 and Operational Plan 2014/15 for the three months ending 30 September 2014.

Recommendation:

THAT the September 2014 Quarterly Progress Report on Goal 1 (A connected & harmonious community), Goal 2 (A supported community), Goal 3 (A creative & vibrant community), Goal 5 (Liveable places), Goal 6 (Getting around), Goal 7 (Protecting our environment) and Goal 8 (Sustainable use of resources) of Council's Delivery Program 2013 to 2017 and Operational Plan 2014/15 be received and noted.

Background:

Council adopted its Delivery Program 2013 to 2017 and Operational Plan 2014/15 (DPOP) in June 2014 in accordance with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Legislation for NSW Local Government. The Delivery Program and Operational Plan are two of the key strategic planning documents that comprise Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework.

It is a requirement under the Integrated Planning & Reporting Legislation that Council report on the progress of its Delivery Program at least every six months. In response to this requirement, and in order to ensure that Council's reporting to the community is transparent, timely and manageable under the legislation, progress reports on the DPOP are presented to Council quarterly for the periods ending 30 September, 31 December, 31 March and 30 June each year.

The framework for quarterly progress reports is consistent with the structure of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan developed around the following interrelated themes and supporting goals:

Theme: Community well-being

- Goal 1: A connected and harmonious community.
- Goal 2: A supported community.
- Goal 3: A creative and vibrant community.

Theme: Quality places and spaces

- Goal 4: Well planned neighbourhoods.
- Goal 5: Liveable places.
- Goal 6: Getting around.

Theme: A healthy environment

- Goal 7: Protecting our environment.
- Goal 8: Sustainable use of resources.

Theme: Local prosperity

Goal 9: Community focused economic development.

Theme: Community leadership and participation

Goal 10: Working together.

Goal 11: A well-managed Council.

Annexure 1 to this report is Council's Quarterly Progress Report for the period 1 July 2014 to 30 September 2014 for Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8, being most relevant to the Community and Environment Committee (C&E).

Progress comments for all Delivery Program Priorities and Operational Plan Actions are provided in the tables of **Annexure 1**. Council staff provide updates on these comments on an ongoing basis for internal management purposes, with the comments then collated at the end of the quarter for reporting to Council and the community. Generally, actions included in the Operational Plan relate to the current financial year, however there are actions that extend beyond June 2015, as indicated in the Target Date column.

A tick in the final column of the tables in Annexure 1 headed "Updated Comments" indicates that the comments relating to that action have been updated since the previous quarterly report to Council. The purpose of the tick is to enable Councillors and other readers of the report to easily identify where an action status has been updated.

Adopted notices of motion and other decisions of the Council:

To further improve the efficiency and transparency of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting procedures, Notices of Motion (NOM) and other decisions of the Council which are strategic and/or project based are now included as additional actions in the DPOP and reported on through the Quarterly Progress Report.

Adopted NOM which are non-strategic in nature, such as placement of an additional agenda item on a meeting or writing a letter to an organisation, will be monitored administratively.

During the period 1 July 2014 to 30 September 2014, there were no new NOM identified as strategic and/or project based in nature relevant to Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

Also to assist Councillors with tracking progress in relation to NOM, **Annexure 2** provides status reports for all adopted NOM relevant to the Community & Environment Committee for the current term of Council, i.e., since the September 2012 Council elections. With the Committee noting those NOM in **Annexure 2** which are completed, future quarterly DPOP progress reports will only report on the status of NOM either completed during the relevant quarter or still outstanding.

Conclusion:

THAT the September 2014 Quarterly Progress Report on Goal 1 (A connected & harmonious community), Goal 2 (A supported community), Goal 3 (A creative & vibrant community), Goal 5 (Liveable places), Goal 6 (Getting around) Goal 7 (Protecting our environment) and Goal 8 (Sustainable use of resources) of Council's Delivery Program 2013 to 2017 and Operational Plan 2014/15 be received and noted.

Vicki Munro
Acting Director Community Services

Tom O'Hanlon
Director Technical Services

Annexures:

- 1 DPOP Quarterly Progress Report September 2014 for Goal 1 (A connected & harmonious community), Goal 2 (A supported community), Goal 3 (A creative & vibrant community), Goal 5 (Liveable places), Goal 6 (Getting around), Goal 7 (Protecting our environment) and Goal 8 (Sustainable use of resources) – *distributed separately*.
- 2 Notices of Motion – Status Report to 30 September 2014.

Item No: D3 Delegated to Committee
Subject: **Feasibility of Synthetic Turf Sportsfield in Woollahra**
Author: Paul Fraser, Manager - Open Space & Trees
File No:
Reason for Report: To respond to an adopted Notice of Motion on the potential for the installation of an artificial turf surface on Council's sports fields.

Recommendation:

- A. That Council engage a suitable consultant to implement a design options report and cost benefit analysis for Woollahra Oval No.1 and up to 2 other sports fields in Woollahra.
- B. That Council approach potential funding groups, including private schools and current user groups to determine interest in a shared arrangement for construction and management of the facility.
- C. That a further report be presented to the Community & Environment Committee on the contents of the study and cost benefit analysis, planning requirements and potential funding sources.
- D. Council note that should the outcome of the report be positive a proposal be considered in the planning of the 2015/16 DPOP and Budget.

Background:

Council adopted the following Notice of Motion on 28 July 2014 as follows;

'That a report be brought to the appropriate committee on the potential for installation of artificial turf on one or more of Council's sportsfields. The report should consider social/community benefits, a cost benefit analysis, environmental benefits, ongoing maintenance and the potential for increased utilisation. The report should also consider potential sources of funding, including grants and contributions by user groups.'

The popularity of synthetic surfaces used by many sports as an alternative to natural grass has grown significantly over the past two decades. Many sports utilise synthetic technology to cope with the demand for sports fields including soccer, Australian rules, rugby league, rugby union, cricket and athletics.

This heightened interest in synthetic surfaces is due to a number of factors:

- Playability – to ensure a standard of play that is consistent and safe.
- Availability – to encourage more people to enjoy sport or recreational activities and local councils to keep up with the growing demand.
- Environmental – to counter the damage to natural turf due to either prolonged drought or excessive rain.
- Financial – to allow organisations to charge users an affordable price for the field while making a return on the investment that covers the whole of life costs.

There has been much research and documentation that has been written about the Synthetic Sports Surfaces, including a document put together by the *Smart Connection Consultancy, The Smart Guide to Synthetic Sport Surfaces (2014)*. Council staff have held discussions with the Managing Director of Smart Connection Consultancy, Mr Martin Sheppard who has provided technical advice that forms part of this report. The guide states that the main reasons for installing a synthetic surface for sport and recreational use are:

- Climatic – under drought and water restrictions or excessive rain conditions, it can be difficult to maintain a safe and suitable natural grass surface. Synthetic surfaces are not affected by the reduced or increased rainfall;
- Usage – there is a limit to the hours natural turf can be used before there is significant impact on surface condition. A high quality natural turf surface may only withstand use for up to 20 hours per week before it starts to deteriorate. Synthetic surfaces can sustain significantly higher use than natural grass with 60 hours plus per week as an acceptable expectation;
- Maintenance – maintaining a turf surface can be time consuming, expensive and generally requires a qualified person to do it. Synthetic surfaces require lower maintenance than a natural turf surface;
- Consistency and quality of play – synthetic surfaces provide a consistent and safe surface all year round for all sports to play on, improving the quality of performance for each sport compared with natural playing surfaces;
- Health – by allowing play on the surface more often and under safer conditions, it enhances physical health of participants.

There are also some negative perceptions and community concerns around how the technology is made, managed and how it integrates into the local environment. The major concerns include:

- Environmental integration – whether there is a negative impact on the environment;
- Player comfort and safety;
- Loss of open space – some Local Government authorities have found that some sections of the community believe synthetic installations will translate to loss of open space for the general public;
- Cost – the initial construction cost is high.

Many local Sydney Councils and schools have committed to the installation of synthetic turf on their sports fields to plan for the future and meet the increasing demand. These include the following:

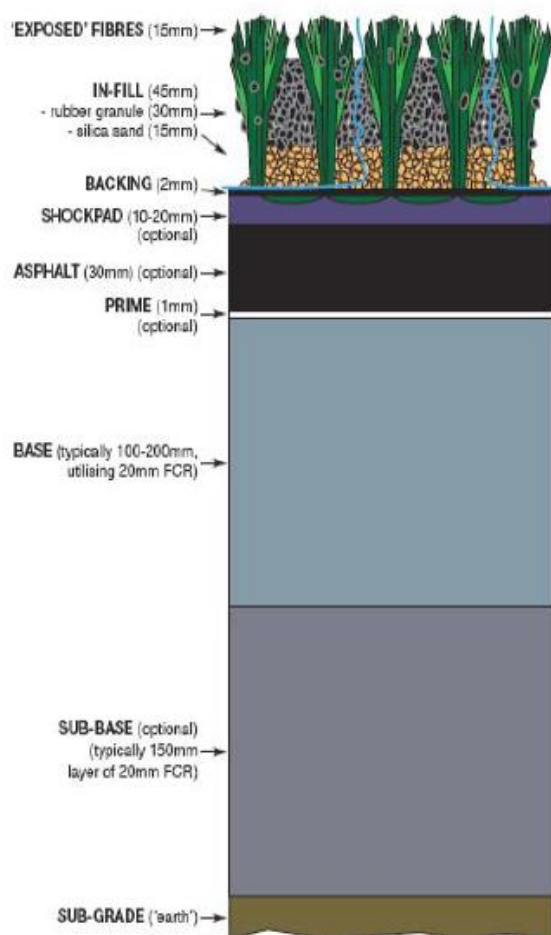
- Endeavour Sports High School (Multi-purpose)
- Marrickville Council – Arlington Reserve (Soccer)
- Willoughby Council – Northbridge Oval (Cricket/AFL/Soccer)
- Kuring-gai Council – Charles Bean Sports Field (Soccer)
- Pittwater Council - North Narrabeen Sports High School (AFL/Soccer)
- North Sydney Council – Cammeray Park, currently under construction (Multi-purpose)
- Lane Cove Council – Blackman Park, currently under construction (Soccer, cricket, rugby)

Council staff have met with the operators of the Endeavour Sports High School facility and were very impressed with the quality of the facility and the usability of the synthetic turf.

Synthetic Turf Surfaces

There are a number of synthetic surfaces that can be implemented to cater for specific sport users or multi-use. The various types differ in the length of synthetic grass fibres and the infill that is integrated into the pitch including the following:

- Long pile, sand and rubber filled turf – long pile turf has long blades (40mm-70mm) of fibre similar to natural turf playing surfaces. This allows for a greater amount of infill to be integrated into the pitch, adding to the shock absorbency and force reduction characteristics of the ground. The pitch infill normally comprises a performance infill and shock absorbing and cushioning surface emulating the performance characteristics we come to expect from a natural turf surface. Some sports such as rugby also need to have a shock absorbing cushion system under the synthetic turf.
A synthetic turf pitch provides the player with a sure-footed and consistent playing surface that is free from bumps, hollows and imperfections whilst being unaffected by the sun and rain. There is a standard of turf available for most levels of sporting competitions.
- Short pile, sand and rubber filled turf – all weather, multi-use short pile turf stands between 12mm-25mm high and is normally dressed with sand and/or filled with rubber granules, leaving approximately 5mm-8mm of the grass tips showing. This type of surface is ideal for fast paced balls to ground contact like hockey and tennis.
- Water based turf – uses water based carpet which allows fast play around the rolling ball. Mostly used for field hockey.



The most important aspect when considering what type of synthetic surface to use is what purposes the surface will be used for. It is critical to ensure that the correct standard and type of surface is selected for the type of sports.

The development of standards for synthetic surfaces by the peak bodies of sport has been one of the reasons for the rapid acceptance of surfaces by the community. It provides confidence that there will be interaction between the surface, player and the ball and reflects the playing characteristics essential for each sport.

Environmental Considerations

Local government and sporting bodies are becoming more environmentally conscious when making investment decisions around the installation of synthetic fields. Some key considerations are as follows:

- Weather implications – facilities need to consider the consequence of reduced water availability on natural turf. Synthetic turf technology is being used as a solution. Suppliers also are considering the heat implications of the synthetic turf and the use of heat mitigation technology to address these issues.
- Water management – water usage is a critical part of natural turf management. If adequate water is not available fields can become unplayable and disintegrate posing safety concerns for players. Synthetic turf surfaces can incorporate a water harvesting strategy collecting water from the synthetic field and using it for the natural turf pitches or building facility use nearby.
- Impacts on surrounding areas – reports have outlined that runoffs from fields into rivers, lakes, creeks or ponds contain various fertilisers and pesticides that are used for turf management. Synthetic turf fields however, where the runoff will be mostly pure water, drained through permeable layers and collected under the field.
- Recyclable products – suppliers are implementing the use of recyclable products as components of the synthetic fields such as used rubber tyres for the absorbing mat and rubber infill. In addition some manufacturers have developed technology that allows the recycling of the surface once the turf has reached the end of its useful life.

Health, Safety and Risk Management

Synthetic sports surfaces undergo a rigorous testing procedure which includes player safety and injuries, surface playability, health risks to the community and heat management. It is important that when selecting a synthetic surface it is important to ensure the standards are implemented to the specific sport.

The backing of major sporting bodies has resulted in quality standards and processes being developed for the majority of key sports in order to reduce risk.

Maintenance

Although a synthetic turf surface requires lower ongoing maintenance than a natural turf surface it is important that a maintenance program is implemented to increase longevity and sustainability of the field.

Proposal:

Potential Sites

The *Smart Guide to Synthetic Sport Surfaces* states that the selection criteria for a typical site may consider some of the following:

- Central Location – to service both the local and neighbouring community
- Park siting – appropriate position may include the replacement of a current highly used field, next to current pavilion and utilities, on a home field of a specific club
- Lighting – consideration of lighting requirements and light spill for residents
- Access – consider access and egress for pedestrians, spectators and users of the facility
- Orientation – ideally north-south to avoid sun-glare
- Maintenance – access for maintenance and emergency vehicles
- Water and utilities – potable water should be able to be sourced for users, spectators as well as electricity.

Council staff have identified the following potential site for a synthetic sports field:

Woollahra No.1, O'Sullivan Road, Rose Bay

Woollahra No.1 is Council's premier rugby playing field with an associated clubhouse utilised by the Easts Rugby Union Club. The Club have an agreement with Council to utilise the sports field from 1 April – 30 September for the playing of rugby union in the Sydney Grade Competition. The sports field is currently highly utilised (30+ hours per week) and has an extensive maintenance and renovation program. Due to the playing of 1st class rugby which includes television games throughout the season, ground staff are required to implement an extensive maintenance program which requires the sports field to be closed during February - March and for 3 weeks post rugby season. Overuse is currently a major problem which affects the condition of the oval especially during wet weather and at the end of the rugby season.

Other sites that will be considered are:

- Christison Park, Vacluse (*note, there is an historical issue relating to the provision of floodlights*)
- Woollahra No. 2 or Woollahra No. 3, Rose Bay
- Lough Playing Fields, Double Bay

It is recommended that Council proceed with engaging an expert consultant in the field of planning and construction of synthetic sports fields to provide Council with a report which details options of possible sites as mentioned above. The report should also provide Council with design options of the preferred location, detailed costing for construction, a cost benefit analysis, explore management options and outline the various planning requirements.

Cost

The estimated cost of upgrading an existing grass sports field to a new synthetic playing surface with drainage and fencing would be in the vicinity of \$1.2M - \$1.4M depending on the infill used.

Currently the cost of maintaining Woollahra 1 for a specific use being rugby is in the vicinity of \$50K - \$60K per year. The cost of maintaining a synthetic turf sports field is approximately \$15 - \$20K.

Mr Sheppard from Smart Connection Consultancy has advised the lifespan of a synthetic sports field as follows:

- 40 hours of play per week and well maintained – 10 years life
- 60 hours of play per week and well maintained – 8 to 9 years life

The cost for replacement of the synthetic turf at current rates is approximately \$350K. Mr Sheppard advises Councils to set up a sinking fund from the money saved from maintenance to cost the replacement surface along with an appropriate user pay system.

Potential sources of funding

Council staff have informally met with representatives from a local private school to gauge the interest in partnering with Council to construct a synthetic sports field. The school were very interested in the potential construction of such a facility and asked that if a facility was approved that we continue discussions with them. Our expectations are that other schools would be similarly interested in becoming involved in this project.

In researching other synthetic sports fields in Sydney funding has been sourced from various third parties including Government funding, sports organisation donations, education funding or developer contributions.

It is important that a management strategy be developed for the facility to optimise usage and return for Council.

Identification of Income & Expenditure:

This project is currently not budgeted for in the 2014/15 Capital Works Budget. Should the recommendation be adopted the consultancy fee of approximately \$15K for a business case type report can be funded from the Public Open Space Planning & Asset Management (General Consultants) cost centre.

Conclusion:

It is recommended that Council approach an expert consultant to further process the proposal for an installation of a synthetic sports field within Woollahra and work with council staff on a business case and high level costing for specific locations. This will be reported back to Council for further discussion.

Paul Fraser
Manager – Open Space & Trees

Tom O’Hanlon
Director, Technical Services

Item No: R1 Recommendation to Council
Subject: **Trumper Park Dog Regulations – Review of Public Exhibition**
Author: Paul Fraser, Manager - Open Space and Trees
File No: 271.G
Reason for Report: To report on the public exhibition of changes to dog off-leash regulations in Trumper Park.

Recommendation:

- A. That the dog regulations in Trumper Park remain unchanged as follows:
- i. Dog on-leash at all times (except Trumper Oval)
 - ii. Dogs prohibited at all times on Trumper Oval playing surface.
- B. Council Rangers to continue enforcement of dog regulations in Trumper Park through patrols and issuing of fines for noncompliance of regulations.

Background:

During the 2013 public exhibition period of proposed changes to dog off-leash regulations throughout Woollahra, Council received an additional 22 submissions that were related to the dog regulations within Trumper Park. The submissions noted that Trumper Park was not included in the review and requested that the park be considered as an off-leash area.

The current regulations at Trumper Park are as follows:

- Dog on-leash at all times (except Trumper Oval)
- Dogs prohibited at all times on Trumper Oval playing surface.

It was communicated by staff that any changes to the regulations at Trumper Park would require an additional public exhibition and notification process. Subsequent to this, Council at its meeting of Monday 16 December 2013 resolved the following:

- A. *That Council implement the proposed extension of hours of the Category C regulations as exhibited for Rushcutters Bay Park, Lyne Park, Christison Park and Royal Hospital for Women Park (RHWP) as follows:*
- i. *Extension of hours of the Category C regulations from 3.30pm to 10.30am.*
 - ii. *For RHWP - Sunday regulations prohibiting dogs between 10am to 8pm remains unchanged.*
- B. *That Council implement a 24hr dog off-leash area along the Rose Bay Foreshore from Dumaresq Reserve to Percival Park.*
- i. *That Council write to the Roads & Maritime Service advising that Council will invoke their powers under the Local Government Act to extend Council's enforcement provisions to State Government owned land being Rose Bay Foreshore.*
- C. *An update of all relevant signage be undertaken communicating the extensions of hours.*
- D. **That Trumper Park remain unchanged as follows:**
- i. **Dog on-leash at all times (except Trumper Oval)**
 - ii. **Dogs prohibited at all times on Trumper Oval playing surface.**
- E. **That a further review of on-leash/off-leash arrangements at Trumper Park be undertaken and that this review includes consultation with the community as to their views.**

The review of dog regulations in Trumper Park was placed on public exhibition on 14 July 2014. The exhibition process was advertised by notices in the *Wentworth Courier*, a letter distributed to all adjoining residents of Trumper Park, information provided on Council's website (*Have Your Say* section) and signage within the parks. The public exhibition period closed on 4 August, however late submissions have been included.

Council's Animal Advisory Committee (AAC) were informed of the exhibition period and informed they would be provided with an opportunity to review the responses at an AAC meeting. Council presented the recommendation and submissions at the AAC meeting on 20 August 2014. There were no objections to the course of action from the AAC.

Discussion:

Council received a total of 66 individual submissions (summary as Annexure 1) during the public exhibition period with the following breakdown;

- 33 in favour of the current regulations staying in place
- 21 in favour of changed regulations to off-leash
- 12 suggested a compromise, to be in line with the Rushcutters Bay Park regulations.

All submissions are noted in Annexure 1, however where an individual submitted multiple entries only one vote was recorded for the tally. Some submissions expressed a particular stance, for example remain on leash, however admitted that perhaps a compromise could be reached.

During the public exhibition period the concerns that were raised and Council's responses are detailed below:

Increased conflicts and dog control

There were 23 submissions that expressed concern that dog off-leash regulations will result in further conflict between the users and uncontrolled dogs. Trumper Park is a thoroughfare for pedestrians including commuters, elderly and children accessing Edgecliff shops, the train station and medical centre. Many parents and grandparents were opposed to any change in the regulations and stated that if the new regulations were put in place their children will not be able to walk or play in the park safe from off-leash dogs.

There were suggestions that there is an under reporting of incidents and therefore it is not an indication of what is happening in the Park. Many incidents are not reported as the owner or witness does not think to call the Council to report it.

There were concerns that dog owners do not regard the current regulations or the enjoyment of the park by other users, allowing their dog off-leash in the Park. Many park users noted that there is a lot of dog excrement left behind and felt this would be exacerbated if dogs were allowed to roam free. If the dogs roam free in the Park, they can disappear from the sight of their owner and relieve themselves without the owner knowing and therefore failing to clean up after their dogs.

Response

The Companion Animals Act states that companion animal owners are to ensure that pets do not harm or threaten any other person or animal.

Council's Companion Animal Officer stated that dogs off-leash within small areas like pathways could increase the likelihood of altercations between the off-leash dogs and with other people. The narrow, winding pathways through bushland in Trumper Park are not conducive to clear lines of sight between dog owners, parks users and off-leash dogs.

Council encourages responsible dog ownership, including picking up after your own dog. With reduced sight lines in the park, it is harder for owners to keep an eye on their dog and its droppings.

Convenient location

Concerns were raised that there is not a closely located dog off-leash area for the elderly residents who are unable to drive to parks like Rushcutters Bay to exercise their dog. Others raised concern that they would have to travel further in the darkness after they get home from work to walk the dog, particularly during winter.

Response

There were a number of elderly residents requesting that the dogs stay on leash as they are constantly in fear of being bowled over by an enthusiastic large dog.

There needs to be a balance municipality wide between dog off leash and on leash parks. Within the municipality, Council has classified areas suitable for walking your dog. The closest regulated dog off-leash parks near Trumper Park are Royal Hospital for Women Park, Rushcutters Bay Park, Yarranabbe Park and Centennial Parklands.

Natural Aspects

There was some disagreement to Council's draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy in which Trumper Park is identified as a Key Habitat Area. One submission felt that Council had painted an optimistic view of Trumper Park as the presence of litter, weeds, feral animals (such as cats, rats and foxes) in the Park were at odds to the 'Key Habitat Area' and conservation efforts. This opinion was expressed in four submissions. Many felt there was a lack of evidence to support the environmental attributes that were discussed in the previous report or that dogs have a negative impact on the natural environment.

It was expressed that the amount of litter in the park was more detrimental to the regeneration works than dogs. It was requested that bins were located in the Park, in particular along the Cecil to Cameron St pathway.

There were 13 submissions requesting that the regulations remain unchanged due to the important regeneration work of Council and the protection of lizards, birds and ducks.

Response

Trumper Park has been identified as a valuable green corridor through an otherwise densely developed area being the largest vegetated reserve in Paddington. An extensive revegetation program is in place to plant native flora complemented by soil stabilisation and weed control. In addition to the Council program it also supports an active Bushcare Volunteer Program. Council's Bush Regeneration Team have been active since 1980 and have invested over 30 years of time and effort into Trumper Park. Further to this, Council are pursuing the foxes and monitoring their dens with one large fox exterminated recently in Trumper Park.

The draft Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (currently in development) has identified Trumper Park as a 'Key Habitat Area'. Trumper Park is one of 9 terrestrial 'Key Habitat Areas' in the LGA and one of the 6 'Key Habitat Areas' managed by Council.

Restoration and enhancement of Woollahra's 'Key Habitat Areas' is important as these areas have the greatest potential for regeneration and recruitment of flora species that are locally extinct or are declining rapidly, and provide the greatest opportunity to conserve native fauna species through providing food sources, refuge and habitat throughout the LGA.

Trumper Park contributes to habitat connectivity within the region. The proximity of Trumper Park to Cooper Park and Centennial Park increase its value as it provides greater habitat connectivity within the area.

In bushland parks such as Trumper Park, dogs have the ability to detrimentally impact biodiversity through predation of native fauna, physical disturbance to vegetation and nutrification of native vegetation through excrement.

Council prohibits dogs from sensitive ecological areas such as Gap Park and Parsley Bay Reserve. This regulation is also implemented by National Parks and Wildlife Services at the majority of their parks including Nielsen Park and Sydney Harbour National Park.

Enforcement of regulations

There were concerns that the compliance with the current regulations is not sufficient and that Rangers are not present during peak dog walking times which are before and after offices hours.

Response

Council has one full time Companion Animal Officer and three full time Rangers tasked with patrolling the Municipality including parks, beaches and footpaths. Council Rangers will continue patrols in Trumper Park at varying times of day, issuing fines and educating those who do not comply with the regulations.

Compromise

There were 12 submissions suggesting that a compromise could be struck in order to strike a balance within the Park. There were suggestions to bring the regulations in line with the dog off-leash hours in Rushcutters Bay. Others put forward the idea of making a certain area off-leash or perhaps having a trial period.

Response

Rushcutters Bay Park is off-leash from 3.30pm to 10am, which is the peak usage time in Trumper Park with commuters walking through and children using the open space.

Trumper Park does not have any clearly defined areas that are appropriate to be off-leash. The areas around the Trumper Oval are in close proximity to the playground, have historical significance or are in close proximity to bush regeneration works.

Companion Animals Act 1998

The Companion Animals Act 1998 was designed to benefit pets, their owners and the wider community. The Act covers all dogs and cats in NSW and provides guidelines for pet owners to follow, to ensure their pets are happy, healthy and not a problem to the community.

Companion animal owners have responsibilities towards other members of the community. These include:

- Preventing your animal from causing a nuisance through continuous and persistent barking, roaming the neighbourhood or causing damage to others property;
- Ensuring your pet does not harm or threaten any other person or animal;
- Making sure your dog is on a lead at all times when in public, except in a Council designated off-leash area;
- Ensuring your dog or cat does not enter public bathing areas, school grounds, children's playgrounds, shopping complexes, food preparation areas and similar public places where prohibitions are in force;
- Always picking up your dog's waste when in public;
- Keeping your dog secure;
- Keeping your cat inside at night to ensure it does not cause harm to our local wildlife; and

- Making sure your cat or dog wears a collar with a tag clearly showing the name of your pet and your address or telephone number.

We will continue to implement this Act in our local area which includes planning, community education and enforcement of regulations.

Conclusion:

This exhibition process prompted 66 submissions to Council in relation to the regulation of dogs in Trumper Park. Although we cannot provide the ideal proposal that all community members will be happy with, we can regulate in a way to assist in reducing complaints and assist the needs of the community.

Council staff recommend that due to the expressed concern that dog off-leash regulations will result in further conflict between the users and uncontrolled dogs and the importance of regenerating Trumper Park it remains an on-leash area. Council staff believe that this recommendation provides a balanced approach for dog owners and the general community throughout the municipality

Council Rangers will continue enforcement and education of dog regulations in Trumper Park through patrols and issuing of fines for noncompliance of regulations.

Although the Paddington area does have a limited amount of public open space it is closely connected to Rushcutters Bay Park and Yarranabbe Park to the north and Centennial Parklands in the south where dog off-leash options are available. We do believe that the recommendations that we have provided gives a balanced approach to dog management within the area.

Caitlin Moffat
Team Leader – Open Space & Recreation Planning

Tom O’Hanlon
Director - Technical Services

Paul Fraser
Manager – Open Space & Trees

Annexures:

1. Summary of submissions

Political Donations – matters to be considered by Councillors at Meetings

