

Bassendean River Parks Management Committee
Town of Bassendean
Via mail@bassendean.wa.gov.au

13/4/2018

To whom it may concern

Re: Dog Walking at Ashfield Flats

On 5/4/2018 a group of local Bassendean residents met to establish the Bassendean Dog Walkers. The meeting was held to discuss the issues around 'off leash' access to Sandy Beach and Ashfield Flats, with the proposed new Nature Playground initiating our conversations. We write this letter to table our group's thoughts regarding dog walkers concerns and contribution to the community, specifically to the Ashfield Flats area.

There was initial confusion with regards to where dogs are actually allowed to be 'off leash'. Ms Melissa Mykytiuk, Councillor for the Town of Bassendean (TOB), was in attendance and clarified that the reticulated area of Sandy Beach Reserve is not currently an off leash area. She advised that the majority of the Ashfield Flats, is currently managed by the WA Planning Commission and that, despite there currently being TOB signage in place indicating it is an off leash area, this was not necessarily the case.

The group identified the following as being priorities for the group regarding the Ashfield Flats and Sandy Beach Reserve:

1. The Ashfield Flats and Sandy Beach Reserve are extremely valuable community assets - spaces for the whole community - and, as such, should be freely accessible to all members of the community. Multiple group members indicated this was a space where community members socialise on a regular basis.
2. Dog walkers access the areas on a very regular basis with most accessing it daily and some multiple times per day. It was noted that they are deemed to be the most frequent users of the area.
3. Dog walkers provide a high level of 'passive security' with regular and frequent use of the areas preventing criminal activity such as car break-ins, car theft, vandalism and graffiti.
4. Dog walkers provided conservation activities including collecting rubbish such as plastic bags, fishing line, bottles and cans from the river and its banks.
5. Conservation of the local flora and fauna is a priority for the group.
6. Erosion of the river banks is of concern to the group. Noted was the fact that natural erosion is being exacerbated by speeding boats, lack of vegetation, and other issues. It was agreed that, although dogs can contribute to the erosion of the river banks, it is scientifically low on the hierarchy of causative effects of erosion. Options to minimise the effects of erosion caused by dogs were discussed.

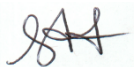
The following suggestions were made by the group to address the group's concerns with regards to Ashfield Flats and Sandy Beach Reserve:

1. 'Off Leash' privileges be maintained in the Ashfield Flats area to maintain the current level of community use and the passive security it provides.
2. A map of dog 'off leash' walking areas be available on the TOB website.
3. Current signage regarding off leash areas, and ON leash areas, be improved to assist the community to identify where they are, and are not, permitted to have dogs off leash.
4. Educational signage regarding the flora and fauna of the area be upgraded and/or implemented in appropriate areas to promote the diversity and needs of the environment and how to protect it. Signage should promote good behaviour by community members and the need to share the space.
5. Designated areas be identified and clearly signed allowing dogs to access and swim in the river, to prevent dogs trampling areas that needs protection.
6. Consideration be given to better fencing of the bridge is Ashfield Flats to prevent dogs entering the wetlands around the bridge.
7. Dog training classed be available in the area and promoted to the community to improve owner control of dogs.
8. 'Poo bags' made of vegetable products, rather than oil based products, that are fully biodegradable be provided to dog walkers.

The idea of enclosed dog walking areas was discussed and there was unanimous agreement that such areas would not meet the needs of dog walkers and were not a welcomed suggestion.

I trust that this letter provides a clear indication of local dog walkers' thoughts regarding the Ashfield Flats and Sandy Beach Reserve. We welcome this letter being distributed to various departments within the Town Of Bassendean and formally request that it be tabled and discussed at the next committee meeting.

Kind regards



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On behalf of
Bassendean Dog Walkers group

cc:

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