

**YARRA BEND
DOG FRIENDLY PARK
Plan & Guidelines**



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- Libby Jude - Ranger in Charge Yarra Bend Park
- Illustrations of dogs by Margaret Chamberlain 2000

About this document

This document provides guidelines for Yarra Bend Park as a dog friendly park.

It was prepared by @leisure for Parks Victoria, in consultation with users. A summary of submissions made following the distribution of a draft is provided in Attachment 1.



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WHAT IS A DOG FRIENDLY PARK?

A dog friendly park means a defined place in a park where:

- dogs may run free, off leash, or
- dog owners and their pets can meet and socialise in a supportive environment, or
- dogs may be allowed and their visitation is supported; however this is controlled use such as on-lead.

This park may, in some instances, be fenced for the safety of dogs and the security of their owners.

The degree of accessibility, scale of facilities, comforts and conveniences, as well as supplementary services provided by other operators will depend on: the location, nature of the parkland, what is available close by, and the potential catchment of users.

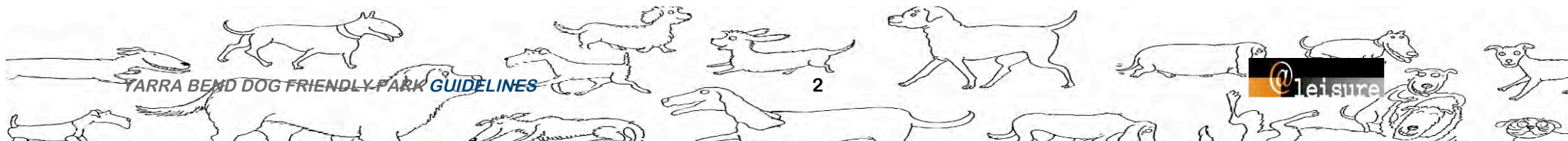
A dog friendly park does not mean:

- the responsibilities of dog owners (as in other public places) do not apply
- it is exclusively for dogs and their owners. These areas will need to accommodate other users.

Establishing dog friendly parks – Planning & Management

There are several implications for park planning and management of establishing dog friendly parks. These are likely to include:

- Council's local laws (Domestic Animal Management Plan)
- spaces or facilities Council or other organizations provide for dogs in the neighbouring area/ municipality
- the hierarchy of, and levels of service provided at these facilities
- There may be demand for programmed dog activities, and the provision of specific agility equipment.



GUIDELINES

Provision and location of seating

- Provide several seating areas, at dog friendly parks, in clusters of no more than two seats.
- Site seating where there is shade from trees or provide some permanent shade.
- Provide seats with a back and arm rests to provide for older or less mobile persons.
- Ensure seat designs are robust, and constructed from durable materials.
- Consider seating in the vicinity of water points.

Provision and location of shade

- Consider shade at nodes, or in break out spaces along a trail.
- Include shade trees in sites that are open parkland
- Shelters may provide seating and shade, but should not be central to off-lead areas to avoid conflict between dogs congregating around owners.

Provision and location of water

- Provide water points along any dog trail in areas with a high level of service, or one per site, (for owners and dogs) as water is in high demand when dogs are exercising. Note: the provision of bowls without a drain, and small ponds accessible to dogs may lead to the spread of disease via saliva in the water.

- Provide multiple water points to avoid conflict between dogs, and reduce the possible concentration of urine on plants.
- Ensure water points are adequately drained to reduce pooling and mud patches forming.
- Provide a water point in small sites for maintenance personnel.

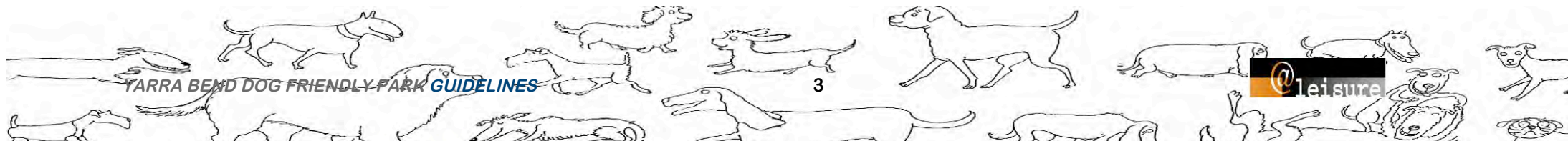
Provision and location of paths

- Provide an “accessible path of travel” from the car park immediately serving the dog friendly park, for people using wheelchairs.
- Encourage users to circulate around any small space with their dogs, but avoid establishing a dog friendly park over an established shared trail route.
- Avoid providing paths that hug boundaries or fence lines to avoid pack running.
- Ensure where possible paths provided are suitable for older people and those using mobility aids
- Ensure path widths allow owners to comfortably walk side-by-side.

Dog waste disposal

- Do not provide dogs waste bags where possible, so as to encourage users to take responsibility for their dogs waste in accordance with the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994.¹

¹ Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994



- Use general park bins for dog waste. Dog waste is not compostable, and owners may be more likely to clean up after their dog if they can dispose of the waste quickly.
- Position bins at key nodes along a trail, and near entry/exit points to the dog friendly park.
- Ensure bins provided seal well and preferably have an opening that does not require owners to touch the bin (open the lid etc.)

Provision and location of fencing

- No dog off-lead enclosures are proposed in Yarra Bend Park in the short term.
- Provide fences sparingly in dog friendly parks. Fences may be desirable to dissuade dogs wandering onto a road, or into fragile or high conservation value vegetation.
- Use a low mesh or wire fence with vertical rails for barriers adjacent to a road, any significant vegetation or hazards, in preference to a cable and post fence that dogs can go underneath.
- Use types of fencing that reflect any existing park themes and designs where these are suitable for dog enclosures, but do not use post and cable.
- Black or dark grey coloured, or galvanised wire is preferred for mesh fences
- Vegetation can provide an effective barrier if an internal wire mesh is provided
- Ensure fence design eliminates the chance of entrapment of body parts

Provision of swimming water

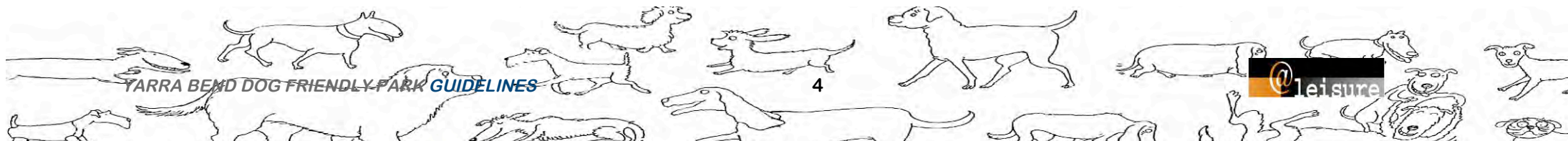
Swimming is good for dog health and socialisation, however dogs can damage riverbanks and sensitive riparian areas.

River swimming for dogs is best facilitated by one or more ramp access points; where they can be made suitable for dogs.

- Consider providing a defined ramp entry to water bodies (Deep Rock), suitable for dog use to enable dogs to swim, where dog use of water bodies is considered desirable, and conditions are appropriate.
- Provide a dog friendly park close to any such water access point where present.
- Do not provide access to a swimming area through a fenced dog enclosure.

Management of water access

- Ensure water-quality at ramp access points is frequently monitored, if dog swimming can be provided, as blooms of blue green algae can be toxic to dogs.
- Monitor changes in water levels and bed gradient.
- Monitor the condition of ramp infrastructure.



Provision of vegetation/landform

- Provide some variation in landform and /or vegetation to provide stimulation, play value and interest, and to create some separation between different dogs.
- Use trees to provide shade, protection, and slow down charging dogs.
- Plant trees and shrubs strategically to break the park into smaller areas to facilitate separate play groups forming.
- Provide a mix of open and sheltered areas, where possible.

Management of vegetation and landform

- Site a dog friendly park having considered gradients at the point of entry to meet access and maintenance requirements, and ensure land form does not present difficulties in establishing and maintaining grass.
- Inspect the area for species of vegetation that may be toxic to dogs, or that may cause injury such as those with spikes or sharp / pointed foliage.

Provision of ground surfaces

- Use grass surfaces where possible that are more aesthetically pleasing and functional than mulch or granitic sand.
- Ensure the dog friendly park is a generous size to maximise the chance of a good grass cover being maintained and minimise concentration of wear and burns on grass from urine.
- Maintain a balance of grass species to address: sensitivity to high quantities of urine, digging, and trampling, aesthetic values, as well as water availability. Warm season grasses may be more water tolerant.

Dog equipment

- Avoid installing dog agility equipment. If agility equipment is considered appropriate, dog clubs and peak bodies may be better situated to provide agility equipment in a controlled environment for their members and for any specific events or competitions. Dog agility equipment in these public dog friendly parks is likely to be difficult to:
 - Provide safely to suit all sizes of dog
 - Maintain to a high standard, and
 - Ensure it is used correctly.



Control of dogs adjacent to playgrounds and trails

The City of Yarra and Boroondara's Local Laws apply to most areas of Yarra Bend Park. These variously state that:

- No dogs are allowed within 5m of play equipment and picnic areas
- Dogs are to be on-lead within a further 10-20m of play equipment
- Dogs are to be on leash within 5m of off-road trails (unless signed otherwise)

Provision of lighting

- In most dog friendly parks lighting will not be provided specifically for dog walking. There may be disadvantages of encouraging use at night by providing lighting, other than security lighting, in areas other than those with high use and good public surveillance.

Provision and location of signs

- Provide a sign (where appropriate), outlining the general code of conduct / rules of use of the park and remind users to pick up after their dogs.
- Use pictogram information on signs to convey any restrictions or regulations.
- Prepare a detailed brochure and web information concerning the code of conduct and use of the dog friendly park. Include the following suggestions:

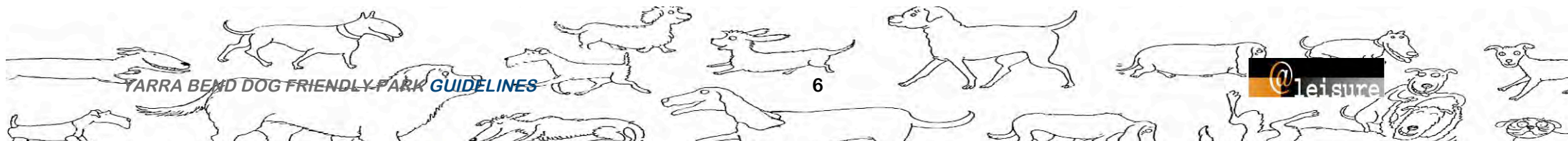
- Please do not bring food into off leash areas
- Please ensure your dog's vaccinations are up to date
- Please bring a friend if you wish to walk with more than two dogs
- Please ensure children are supervised whilst in the vicinity of dogs as they are vulnerable to attack
- Please minimise any disturbance to river banks and native fauna in the park
- Please consider other park users and ensure that dogs are kept under effective control.
- Provide a map of off lead areas at key entry points on trails and adjacent to off-lead areas
- Provide codes of conduct signs as per the attached Map
 - For off-lead areas not adjacent to playgrounds or picnic areas key messages on a sign may include:

YARRA BEND PARK - DOG FRIENDLY PARK

PLEASE:

- ☑ Consider other park users and ensure that dogs are kept under effective control at all times.
- ☑ Leave if your dog becomes aggressive
- ☑ Ensure children are supervised whilst near dogs, as they are vulnerable to attack
- ☑ Bring a friend if you wish to walk with more than two dogs
- ☑ Carry a lead at all times
- ☑ Clean up after your dog and take all rubbish home with you

For further information contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 19 63



- For off-lead areas adjacent to playgrounds or picnic areas

YARRA BEND PARK - DOG FRIENDLY PARK

PLEASE ENSURE:

- ☑ No dogs within 5m of play equipment and on lead within 10 m of play equipment
- ☑ Dogs are on lead within 5m of any picnic furniture and sealed/shared use trail
- ☑ Dogs are kept under effective control at all times
- ☑ You leave the area if your dog becomes aggressive
- ☑ Children are supervised near dogs, as they are vulnerable to attack
- ☑ You bring a friend if walking more than two dogs
- ☑ Carry a lead at all times
- ☑ You clean up after your dog and take all rubbish home with you

For further information contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 19 63

- For those areas that are off-leash except when events/sport /casting pool activities are in progress suggested messages could include the following:

YARRA BEND PARK - DOG FRIENDLY PARK

PLEASE NOTE:

- ☑ This site is off lead ONLY when not being used for sport/events/or casting pool activities
- ☑ Bring a friend if you wish to walk with more than two dogs
- ☑ Carry a lead at all times
- ☑ Clean up after your dog and take all rubbish home with you

For further information contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 19 63

- For off-lead areas – especially adjacent to trails

YARRA BEND PARK - DOG FRIENDLY PARK

PLEASE NOTE:

- ☑ Dogs must be on-lead within 5m of any sealed/shared use trail
- ☑ Consider other trail users
- ☑ Bring a friend if you wish to walk with more than two dogs
- ☑ Carry a lead at all times
- ☑ Clean up after your dog and take all rubbish home with you

For further information contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 19 63

- Signs at Bellbird Picnic Area could include the following:

YARRA BEND PARK - DOG FRIENDLY PARK

- ☑ This site is on-lead ONLY due to the presence of significant wildlife
- ☑ Please do not walk dogs off any trail
- ☑ Please keep your dog on-lead at all times
- ☑ Please clean up after your dog and take all rubbish home

For further information contact the Parks Victoria Information Centre on 13 19 63



Control of dogs adjacent to playgrounds and trails

Consistent with the City of Yarra and Boroondara's local laws:

- No dogs are allowed within 5m of play equipment and picnic areas
- Dogs are to be on lead within 10m of any playground
- Dogs are to be on lead within 5m of any off-road (sealed/shared use) trail unless signed otherwise

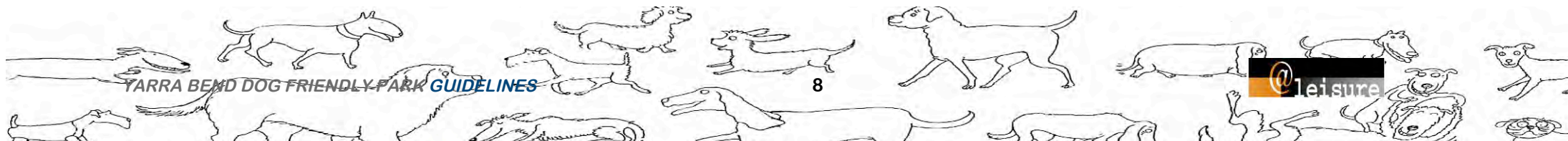
Associated services

- Consider occasional events or associated services such as dog obedience, or education classes that can be provided nearby to some dog friendly parks to engage with users and assist with distributing responsible dog ownership messages.
- Other associated commercial opportunities may be considered by the Parks Victoria Commercial Business Division where appropriate.

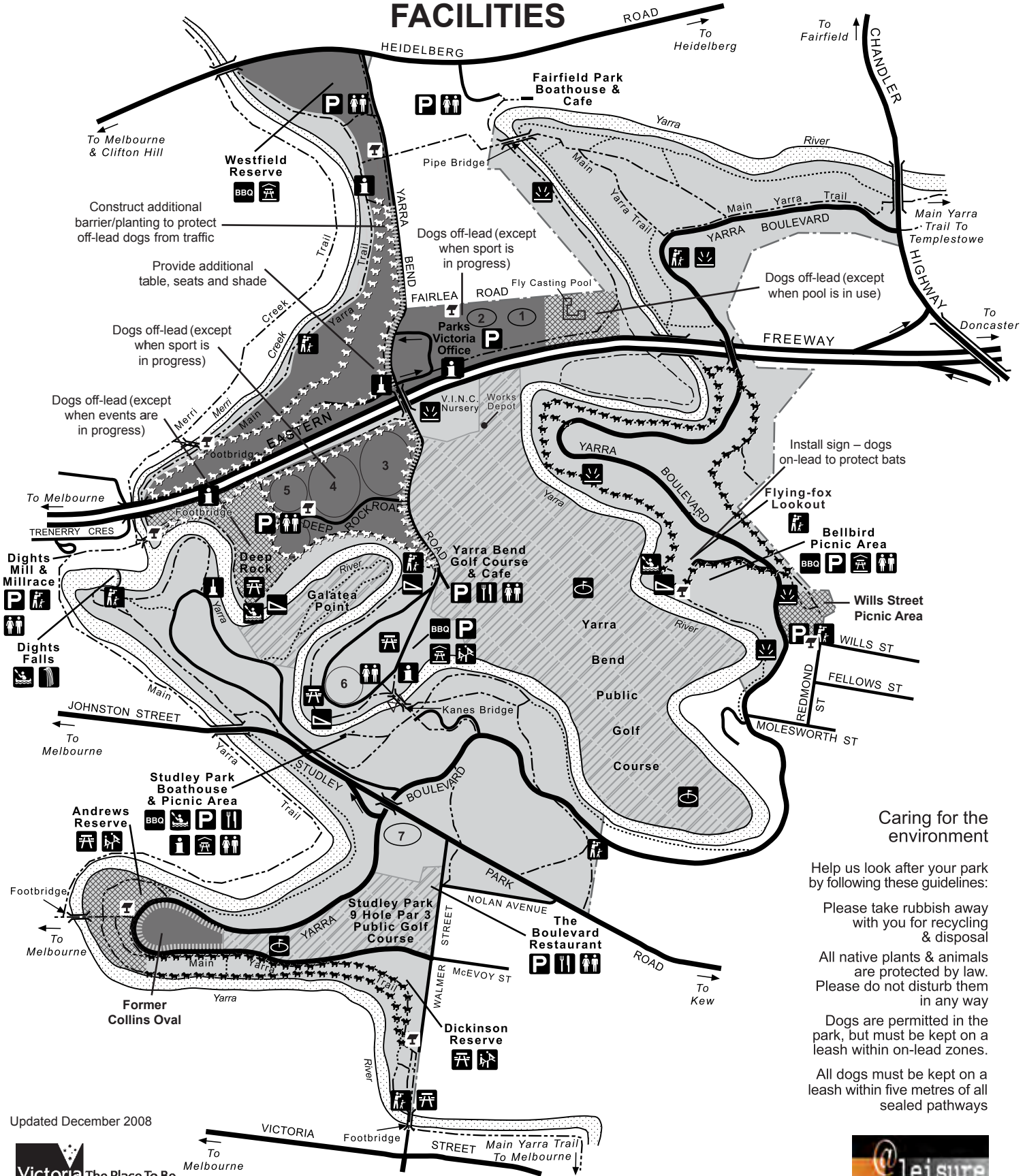
Management of information

- Consider provision of a community notice board at a dog friendly park to communicate with users, help promote responsible dog ownership, and coming events. Provide near the main entry point to any dog friendly park.
- Update Parkweb and Park Notes with details about responsible use of parks, and details of facilities and services available at dog friendly parks.

- Encourage dog friendship groups to form at dog friendly parks and communicate with them over use and management of the site.



YARRA BEND PARK: ADDITIONAL DOG FRIENDLY FACILITIES



Caring for the environment

Help us look after your park by following these guidelines:

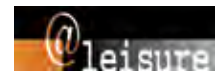
Please take rubbish away with you for recycling & disposal

All native plants & animals are protected by law. Please do not disturb them in any way

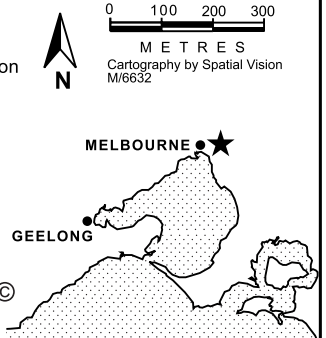
Dogs are permitted in the park, but must be kept on a leash within on-lead zones.

All dogs must be kept on a leash within five metres of all sealed pathways

Updated December 2008

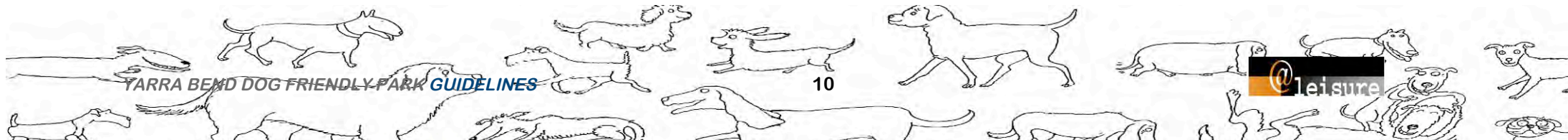


Yarra Bend Park - Dog Facilities		Recreational Facilities	
Dogs off-lead	Freeway	Access to River	Monument
Dogs on-lead	Park	Barbecue	Park information
No dogs	Major sealed road	Canoe Access	Picnic shelter
Proposed dog off-lead trail	Minor sealed road	Carpark	Picnic table
Dog on-lead circuit trail	Unsealed road	Falls	Playground
Proposed dog off-lead area	Shared cycle/walk track	Food	Toilets
Proposed road/trail barrier	Water body	Golf course	Wetland
Code of conduct sign	Gate	Lookout	

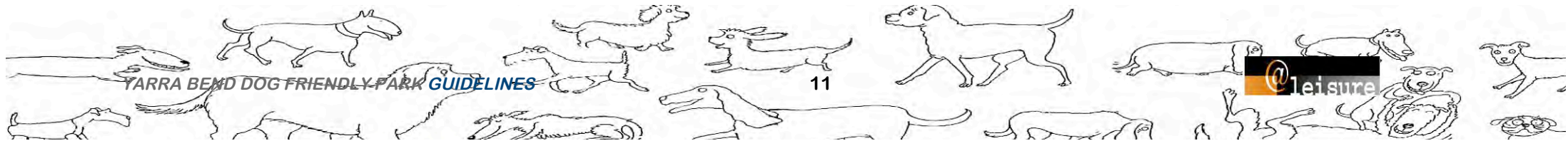


Attachment 1. Summary of submissions made on the draft plan and Proposed Actions

Sub. No.	Organisation / Individual	Endorse Yes/No	Summary / Key points for Consideration	Proposed Action
1	Individual	Yes	Requests bin opposite the Yarra Bend Park office beside the oval and/or the picnic table. Would like a shallow pool for dogs to swim	Done Not appropriate. River access provided
2	Individual	Yes	Endorse dog waste disposal plan and marking posts are to be provided and a bin nearby	No marking posts to be provided
3	Individual	Yes	Target people who are not picking up after their dogs – more bins would make more people comply. Advise bike riders to travel at a safe speed in the off leash area	Ongoing Ranger patrols to address issue Signs and codes of conduct introduced for cyclists and dog owners
4	Individual	Yes	Endorsed bar the code of conduct signs regarding the bats as dogs don't climb trees and bats are in trees. Would be good if there was more seating for dog owners while their dogs play – i.e. Sydney, Haberfield – there is a café with a fenced off areas for dogs while owners have coffee	Dogs and owners to remain on the trail Provide additional seat and table opposite PV office
5	Individual	Yes	There is a lack of protection from the road and needs barriers and / or planting	Improved fencing to be provided along Yarra Bend Road
6	Individual – runner and cyclist	N/A	1) Placing more and clearer signage in 'on-leash' areas 2) Monitoring the signage for vandalism (not sure whether the graffiti is random or targeted by disgruntled pet owners) 3) Random patrols doing spot checks and spot fines (although admittedly, this may not be the most efficient use of your resources) 4) Please do not place dog parks anywhere near the running/cycling trails – excited dogs can easily run onto the trail	Additional code of conduct signs to be provided Ongoing Ongoing education and compliance by Rangers On-leash 5m from trails to be enforced Natural barriers (planting) to be provided at back of Westfield South oval -where possible
7	Individual	Yes	I would like to say I FULLY SUPPORT this park being off lead. This will be of great help to me.	No action required
8	Individual	Yes – Generally	Extend dog areas; barriers to separate dogs from cars, more signs re conduct; commented on dogs dying of snake bites each year.	Consider providing additional snake warning signs along the Merri Creek
9	Individual	Yes	Include heavy/thick planting of barrier plants to define the edge of the north end boundary	May consider in the long term
10	Individual	Yes	I would like to submit my strong support for the increase in off lead areas for dogs and more	No action required



Sub. No.	Organisation / Individual	Endorse Yes/No	Summary / Key points for Consideration	Proposed Action
			dog friendly parks	
11	Individual	Yes	Barrier along the road, more code of conduct signs covering all park users	To be implemented as per plan/map
12	Individual	Yes	Additional areas on a time share basis; more code of conduct signs; barrier to the road	To be implemented as per plan/map
13	Darebin Dog Owners Group	Yes – Generally	Barrier along Yarra Bend Road and extend along Heidelberg Road, could be planting, support timeshare with clear signage, and be clear and positive for all users	May consider in the long term
14	Individual	Yes	I would like to support your proposal for more 'off-lead' areas, as this is most important to have such areas for the benefit of both dogs and their owners. Congratulations on your forward thinking.	To be implemented as per plan/map
15	Individual	Yes	I am delighted about the proposal for off-lead areas at Yarra Bend Park.	To be implemented as per plan/map
16	Individual	Yes	Although I am not a dog owner, I fully support Parks Victoria's proposal to increase the off lead areas of Yarra Bend Park. I strongly believe that off lead dog walking is beneficial to both dogs & their owners.	To be implemented as per plan/map
17	Individual	Yes	I fully support the implementation of more DOG FRIENDLY PARKS and off lead areas. We definitely need to increase the number of spaces we can exercise our dogs off lead since recent changes to Darebin Parklands.	To be implemented as per plan/map
18	Individual	Yes	I am writing to offer my full-support to the wonderful initiative of providing more off-lead space for dogs and their families. I applaud this initiative and am happy to provide more feedback should you require it.	To be implemented as per plan/map
19	Individual	Yes	I would like to show my support for the proposed increases in OFF LEAD arrangements for Yarra Bend Park.	To be implemented as per plan/map
20	Individual	Yes	Please give my pooch more room to move off lead. I support the changes!	To be implemented as per plan/map
21	Individual	Yes	Thank you so much, Parks Victoria, for deciding that more dog off-lead areas in Yarra Bend and other parks are to be given to ratepayers	To be implemented as per plan/map
22	Individual	Yes	I would like to offer my support for the planned off lead amendments and thank you for your positive support to the dog ownership world.	To be implemented as per plan/map
23	Individual - Cyclist	N/A	Objects to dogs being off lead along (Main Yarra Trail) this well used trail particularly the uncontrolled animals – no PV staff seen enforcing rules during peak times and therefore request that tracks are dedicated as on lead within a few metres of the track	Guidelines indicate dogs on-lead 5m either side of the trail



Sub. No.	Organisation / Individual	Endorse Yes/No	Summary / Key points for Consideration	Proposed Action
24	Individual	Yes	All off leash areas should be fully fenced with chain wire or similar, complete with self closing gates More poop scooper/disposal points and bins to be colour coded Speed deterrent for cyclist required along the main Yarra trail	Not appropriate at this stage Dog bag dispensers to be removed. A new waste bin has been installed Code of conduct sign proposed
25	Individual	Yes	Insufficient bins	A new waste bin has been installed. No plans to increase number of bins
26	Individual	Yes	Bar Andrews Reserve - suggest that the area around the children's adventure play area (basically the left hand side of the reserve as you cross the bridge from Gipps St) remains a "dogs on leash" area (with improved signage), meanwhile the right hand side (as much of the rest of the reserve) could still change to dogs off lead as is proposed.	Local law prohibits dogs in playgrounds (within 5m) and requires dogs to be on-lead 10-20 metres from that buffer Provide signs as per plan
27	Individual	Yes	Wills St picnic area is a good site for an off lead area	Provide signs as per plan
28	Individual	Yes	Would like an off leash enclosure adjacent to PV office	Could be considered in the long term
29	Individual	Yes	Could vegetation around the river access ramps be cleared to provide better views of animals in the river	To be undertaken as general park maintenance
30	Individual	Yes	Provide additional shade at nodes in the former oval	To be provided over seating at Westfield South oval

