

Lord Mayor of Sydney

CLOVER MOORE MP

Sydney Town Hall

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Sacha Blumen
President
2011 Residents' Association Inc.
By email blumensacha@yahoo.com.au

19 FEB 2008

Dear Sacha

Off-leash Proposal

I refer to your email about the off-leash park proposal currently being considered by Council.

I note your concerns and I have asked Mark Driver, the City's Recreation Planner, to include your letter as a submission. The exhibition period has now closed and a detailed report addressing all feedback will be prepared for Council's consideration before a final decision is made on each proposed park.

The City has identified a number of parks and open spaces which have the potential to provide off-leash recreation at all times. The aim is to create a choice of on-leash and off-leash areas within comfortable walking distance in consultation with all park users.

The *City of Sydney Companion Animals Policy* aims to protect the rights of animals and their owners in balance with the rights and needs of others in the community. The Policy recognises the benefits of companion animal ownership and focuses on promoting harmonious and equitable access to public parks for all residents.

The City does not generally support fencing off public parkland for exclusive off-leash areas. The City has relatively little open space available for recreational use, so it is important that the areas available are multi-purpose and available to the whole community. However, we have received similar requests from other residents and the report to Council on the off-leash proposal will address these requests.

While a significant proportion of residents are dog owners, of the City's 350 parks and reserves, only 21 are off-leash areas (time share) and just two are off-leash at all times. Regular off-leash exercise helps dogs to socialise and release pent-up energy, which reduces nuisance behaviour such as uncontrolled barking.

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Over the past year, the City has been running an extensive community education campaign to encourage and promote responsible pet ownership. This campaign includes information sharing, such as fact sheets and brochures on owners' legal and social obligations when taking their dogs out in public. The City Rangers and the City's Companion Animals Liaison Officer have also been speaking directly with dog owners at popular or problematic dog-walking sites.

The City also provides free dog obedience lessons in local parks to help owners effectively control their pets at all times. The City will install new signs in parks this year, listing the responsibilities of dog owners.

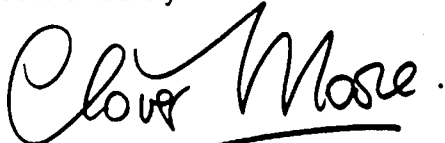
The City strongly urges park visitors to report all incidents of dog attacks or uncontrolled nuisance animals to the City Rangers for prompt investigation. The Rangers can be contacted at any time by calling Customer Service on 9265 9333.

I anticipate the proposals to be considered by Council's Cultural and Community Services Committee in March 2008. The Committee is an open meeting which you can address. The Committee generally meets in the Council Chamber of Town Hall at 6.00pm every third Monday, the week before Council meetings. A list of the meeting dates is available from the One Stop Shop behind Town Hall (Level 2, Town Hall House 456 Kent Street), on the City's website, www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au, by clicking on the 'Council' link, or by calling Customer Service on 9265 9333.

You can view more information on the proposal on the City's website, by following the link in the 'Residents' dropdown menu to 'Animals' then 'Off Leash Areas'.

If you would like to speak with a Council officer about the off-leash proposals, you can contact Mark on 9265 9333 or at mdriver@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clover Moore". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clover Moore MP
Lord Mayor of Sydney