

### COMPANION ANIMALS ACT

The Companion Animals Act, which first came into effect in September 1998, is designed to benefit pets, their owners, and the wider community. It is also the means by which Council regulates the behaviour of dogs and pet owners.

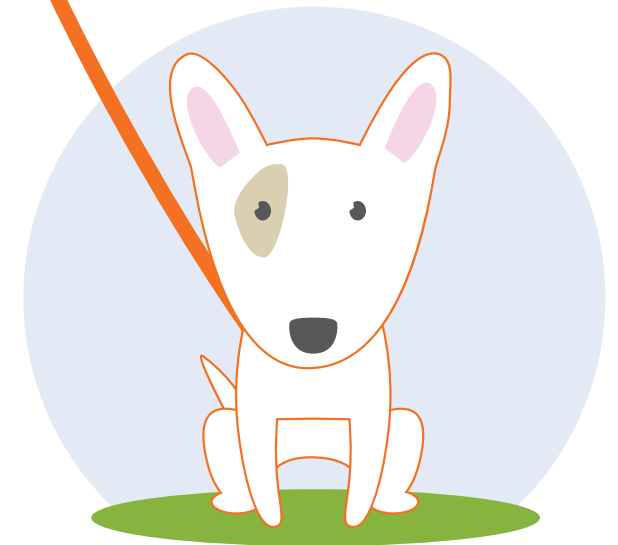
Council values pet ownership and is committed to encouraging responsible behaviour, or effectively control their animals. This can cause some conflict in the community, particularly in open space areas where there are many competing uses.

Council aims to manage companion animals through education and information using sanctions only as a last resort.

[www.thehills.nsw.gov.au](http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au)

## Dogs in public spaces

Dogs are an integral part of Australian family life. Owning and caring for a dog comes with responsibilities to ensure your pet and other people remain safe and content.



## WANDERING OR STRAY DOGS

If you happen to find a stray dog and you take the dog into your custody, you have a responsibility to return the dog to its owner (if you know who the owner is), contact Council or take it to an animal holding facility such as a pound or vet. By law, a member of the community can only hold a stray dog for a maximum of 48 hours. Council can only pick up dogs during business hours. If you find a stray dog outside business hours, you can either keep it overnight or take it to an animal holding facility, such as a vet. If you see an aggressive dog, do not approach it.

## EXERCISE

Exercise is an important way of life not only for people but for dogs. However, taking your dog into public places comes with a great responsibility. Council recognises that off-leash exercise is something highly desired by dog owners. It has responded to this request by providing several free run areas within parks scattered throughout the Shire. Free run zones are designated by a series of bollards with signs clearly delineating the free run area. Some free run areas may have time restrictions in place to protect the amenity of adjoining residences.

## OFF LEASH AREAS

Dog owners are required to make themselves familiar with the regulations detailed by signage at the designated off-leash areas. The Hills Shire Council off-leash areas can be found at:

- Balcombe Heights Reserve, Seven Hills Road, Baulkham Hills (within the fenced area)
- Bernie Mullane Sports Complex, Marella Avenue, Kellyville (within the fenced area)
- Connie Lowe Reserve, Adelphi Street, Rouse Hill (within the fenced area)
- Coolong Reserve, Coolong Street, Castle Hill (within the fenced area)
- Crestwood Reserve, Peel Road, Baulkham Hills (within the fenced area)
- Castle Hill Showground (lower dog arenas)
- Rutherford Avenue Reserve, Rutherford Avenue, North Kellyville (within the fenced area)

In all other parks and public places dogs must be on-leash at all times. All dogs within a designated off-leash area must be supervised. This person MUST:

- Be a competent person over 16 years of age
- Be able to control the dog/s by voice command
- Remove and dispose of all dog waste
- Have no more than four dogs under their control
- Not allow restricted breeds or dogs declared as dangerous to use off-leash areas

Taking dogs for a walk and giving them the opportunity to socialise while under control is an important aspect of responsible dog training and exercise.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VISITING AN OFF-LEASH DOG PARK

Because the first visit can be stressful for the new user (both human and dog), first-time visitors should consider visiting the park at non-peak times. It may take a little while for both you and your dog to feel comfortable in the dog park, but given time you will both come to enjoy this new experience.

Dogs coming into the dog park should be registered and fully vaccinated. All dogs in NSW must be lifetime registered from the time the dog is 6 months old. Do not take puppies to dog parks that have not completed their vaccinations.

Dog parks are not suitable for all dogs. Dogs that are aggressive or overly shy should not be taken into the off-leash area. If you take an aggressive dog into the off-leash area, you are risking harm to others and creating a potential liability for yourself.

You should have full control of your dog and it should come when called. You should be able to read when your dog is hot, thirsty, aggressive, fearful or happy and act accordingly. Learn to read and respond to your dog's posture and body language.

Don't allow children under 14 into the off-leash area without adult supervision. Children may be at risk around dogs, please supervise children carefully. Dogs can protect their toys, treats and people. Please avoid bringing food (with the exception of discreet small training treats) and toys into the enclosure.

## WHAT TO DO ONCE YOU GET TO THE OFF-LEASH AREA

Don't come into the off-leash area if it is already crowded. Leave immediately if you are concerned about anything happening, including your own dog's behaviour.

When entering or leaving through the transition area, make sure there is no-one else already in this space. This will prevent the possibility of gates being opened at the same time or dogs fighting in a confined space.

Quickly move away from the entrance and into the open. This will help disperse dogs that may come to greet your dog.

Keep walking, rather than sitting or standing in one place. This will encourage dogs to see the park as neutral space and reduce territorial behaviours.

Please bring plenty of bags and clean up after your dog. Cleaning up after those who don't will help to keep the park clean and useable.

Stay alert and focussed on your dog at all times. Many people find visiting the dog park a social outing and like to chat with other dog owners; however, it is very important to always keep an eye on your dog.

It is very likely there will be groups of dogs running around the park, which can quickly become a problem if not managed. As soon as you see any signs in any dog that they are no longer happy about the situation call your dog away.