

3 OFF LEASH DOG AREAS

FILE REFERENCE INT1987403

RESPONSIBLE GENERAL MANAGER Tracey Parker

AUTHOR Belinda Powell

RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolve to endorse the fourteen proposed off leash dog areas outlined below and advertise the areas in the Government Gazette and local newspapers.

Regional Dog Off Leash Areas

- Toomuc Creek Linear Reserve, Pakenham.
- Alma Treloar Reserve, Cockatoo.
- Don Jackson Reserve, Pakenham
- Cochrane Park, Koo Wee Rup.

District Dog Off Leash Areas

- Pepi's Land, Emerald.
- Cockatoo Road Reserve, Pakenham.
- Garfield Recreation Reserve, Garfield.
- Tantallon Bvd Detention Basin Reserve, Beaconsfield

Neighbourhood Dog Off Leash Areas

- Bob Burgess Reserve, Beaconsfield.
- Vantage Drive Reserve, Pakenham.
- Simon Drive Reserve, Pakenham.
- Ray Canobie Reserve, Pakenham.
- Harris Reserve, Upper Beaconsfield.
- Onyx Reserve, Officer.

Attachments

- 1 Off Leash Dog Areas - Maps 14 Pages
- 2 Off Leash Dog Areas - Hierarchy 1 Page

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fourteen sites have been identified as being suitable for designation as dog off leash areas in Cardinia Shire. These sites were chosen based on Council's agreed criteria, community preference and distribution across the shire. The sites have been categorised according to a hierarchical approach as either regional, district or neighbourhood level. Appropriate infrastructure and fencing will be delivered according to this hierarchical approach (please refer to attachment).

BACKGROUND

In 2007, Council developed criteria for establishing Off Leash Dog Areas, and adopted a number of locations for off leash dog areas. These off leash dog areas have proven to be popular with dog owners over a number of years as they provide an outlet for dogs to receive regular exercise and

increase their socialisation skills. In 2015, Council reviewed the criteria for establishing Off Leash Dog Areas, and adopted a number of locations for them.

The 2015 review of the criteria for establishing off leash dog areas confirmed that the criteria remained appropriate, with the criteria being:

- Proximity to wildlife nature reserve habitat.
- The likely impact on existing children's play areas.
- The likely impacts on existing picnic and barbeque areas.
- Proximity to vehicular traffic.
- The likely impact on sport and recreation facilities.
- Proximity to high people traffic i.e. walking / bicycle tracks.

The review according to the above criteria resulted in the following reserves being allocated as Off Leash Dog Area in 2015:

- Pepi's Land, Emerald.
- Toomuc Creek Linear Reserve, Pakenham.
- Simon Drive Reserve, Pakenham.
- Cochrane Park, Koo Wee Rup.
- Alma Treloar Reserve, Cockatoo.
- Garfield Recreation Reserve, Garfield.
- Ray Canobie Reserve, Pakenham.

The criteria was reviewed again in 2018 with a view to strengthen the assessment by applying a quantifiable measure. The changes to the criteria were as follows:

- 30 metres away from wildlife nature reserve habitat.
- 30 metres away from formal children's play spaces.
- 30 metres away from existing picnic and barbeque areas.
- Proximity to major vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian traffic.
- Likely impact on sport and recreation facilities (not during organised sporting events).
- Proximity to other off leash sites.

It is now proposed to formalise the allocation of dog off leash areas by way of official adoption by Council and gazetting. This will allow Local Laws officers to effectively enforce Local Law 17, as outlined in the Policy section below. The following list represents the proposed implementation of a hierarchical approach to Dog Off Leash Areas across the Shire:

Regional Dog Off Leash Areas

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The 2018 list previously also included Toddington Avenue, Officer (Crn Goldsborough Drive), District Park Officer and Tynong Recreation Reserve as potential dog off leash areas. Toddington Avenue was put forward as an alternative to Officer Recreation Reserve when this site was deemed inappropriate for a dog off leash area. However, in late 2018/early 2019 it became apparent that the local community did not support the creation of a dog off leash area at Toddington Avenue. Therefore, it has been removed from the list.

District Park, Officer has been removed from the list until such time that the reserve is constructed. Tynong Recreation Reserve has been removed from the list as the proposed location is being grazed by cattle and therefore would be inappropriate to allow dogs into.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Cardinia's Local Law 17 was enacted on 1st July 2016 and seeks to control a number of amenity issues within the Cardinia Shire.

Section 45 states that:

"A person who owns or is in apparent control of a dog in a public place must keep the dog under control by a leash, chain or cord connecting that person to the dog unless the public place is designated by Council signage to be an 'off leash' area. By the nature of Section 45, Council must ensure it designates off leash parks and adequately publicize those parks."

Section 26 part 3 of the Domestic Animal Act states that:

"An order made by the Council under this section must be published in the Government Gazette and in a newspaper circulating in the municipal district of the Council making the order."

This means that a site selected as an Off Leash Dog Area requires an order made by Council and subsequent gazetting of the order to allow the effective enforcement of Local Law 17.

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

The formalisation of Cardinia Shire Council's dog off leash areas supports a number of the directions of the Council plan. Namely:

- 1.5.1 Provide active and passive recreation facilities to meet the needs of residents.
- 1.5.2 Increase opportunities for residents to participate in a range of sport, recreation and leisure activities.
- 3.1.3 Provide accessible facilities to meet identified community needs.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

An online survey was completed in September/October 2017 receiving 264 responses; the results of the survey are as follows:

- 96.5% of respondents were in support of Off Leash Dog Areas.
- 64.3% walk their dog off lead in designated Off Leash Dog Areas, while 21.3% walk their dog off leash in other parks and reserves
- 88% of dog walkers walk their dog during Cardinia business hours (between 9am and 5pm).
- 54% of dog walkers walk their dog for less than 1 hour in Off Leash Dog Areas.
- 94.6% of respondents support enclosed Off Leash Dog Areas.

Survey results indicated three reserves as the most popular dog exercise areas across the Shire (with a total of 42.2% of the votes):

- Toomuc Valley Reserve, Pakenham - 53 respondents.
- Alma Treloar Reserve, Cockatoo - 23 respondents.
- Don Jackson Reserve, Pakenham - 19 respondents.
- The survey results indicated a second tier of reserves for reserve popularity (with a total of 21.8% the votes):
- Cochrane Park, Koo Wee Rup - 13 respondents.
- Onyx Reserve, Officer - 13 respondents.
- Pepi's Land, Emerald - 12 respondents.
- Cockatoo Rd Reserve, Pakenham - 11 respondents.

The survey specifically requested respondents' opinions regarding the suitability of the suggested Off Leash Dog Area criteria, the results are:

- Designated areas being 30 metres away from a wildlife nature reserve habitat.
 - Not appropriate - 15%
 - Somewhat appropriate - 22%
 - Appropriate - 38%
 - Highly appropriate - 14%
 - Essential - 9%
- Designated areas being 30 metres away from formal children playspaces.
 - Not appropriate - 13%
 - Somewhat appropriate - 21%
 - Appropriate - 35%
 - Highly appropriate - 17%
 - Essential - 11%
- Designated areas being 30 metres away from existing picnic and barbecue areas.
 - Not appropriate - 16%
 - Somewhat appropriate - 23%
 - Appropriate - 32%
 - Highly appropriate - 18%
 - Essential - 9%
- Proximity to major vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian traffic be taken into account.

- Not appropriate - 4%
- Somewhat appropriate - 13%
- Appropriate - 29%
- Highly appropriate - 23%
- Essential - 28%
- Impact on organised sport and recreational facilities be taken into account.
 - Not appropriate - 10%
 - Somewhat appropriate - 29%
 - Appropriate - 36%
 - Highly appropriate - 12%
 - Essential - 10%

The survey was supported via numerous social media posts and a media release including the then Mayor, Cr Brett Owen and his dog. The social media posts and media release also discussed the opportunity for community members to attend a drop in session with council staff and discuss Off Leash Dog Area issues. This was held in the Council Chamber but no community members attended.

Direct communication was made with recreation reserve committees of management, which were directly affected by Off Leash Dog Areas: Officer Recreation Committee, Garfield Recreation Committee and the Tynong Recreation Committee.

- Garfield Recreation Reserve Committee was happy to continue to host an Off Leash Dog Area within the reserve; however, a request was made to modify the location to the southwestern corner of the reserve. This request has been granted.
- Tynong Recreation Reserve Committee was initially happy to host an Off Leash Dog Area within the reserve, but suggested that modification may be required such as signage to reduce the impact of active sport played at the site and allow better access for dog walkers. Contact has been made with the Tynong Recreation Reserve Committee in October 2019 to advise that we will no longer be pursuing that as a potential site due to the ongoing lease of the land to a farmer for cattle grazing.
- Officer Recreation Committee chose to draft a letter stating that it was highly opposed to Off Leash Dog Area being located at the reserve, indicating that dog walkers would negatively affect public safety and the effective use of the reserve by other stakeholders. Following this, Goldsborough Drive Reserve on Toddington Avenue, Officer, was put forward as a potential dog off leash location, however there was strong community opposition to this (including a petition). Subsequently, at the Council meeting on Monday 17th June 2019, following an extensive investigation and consultation process, Council voted to not proceed with the Leash Free Dog Area at the Goldsborough Drive Reserve, Officer.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The 2019/20 Council budget allocates a sum of \$150,000 for the implementation of Off leash areas infrastructure. The 2020/2021 draft budget also includes \$150,000 for the implementation of off leash area. Once the list of approved sites has been gazetted, Council officers will develop detailed designs for the implementation of the associated infrastructure and signage. The designs

for the regional dog off leash areas will be available for community review in February 2020. Construction is expected to begin in April and be completed by September 2020.

Appropriate signage at all designated Off Leash Dog Areas is considered a requirement to ensure all park users are aware of the exact location of the Off Leash Dog Area within reserves. It is expected that some sites will require at least two signs, depending on park entrance locations. Signage would include the following information as a minimum:

- Cardinia corporate branding and contact details.
- Visual mapped location of dog off-leash area.
- Regulative and advisory information.

Below is an example of proposed Off Leash Dog Area signage.



CONCLUSION

Fourteen dog off leash sites are being put to Council for official endorsement. Once Gazetted, signage and appropriate fencing and infrastructure will be delivered to each site according to their hierarchical ranking. It is anticipated that all infrastructure will be installed across all fourteen sites by September 2020.

Alma Treloar Reserve - Cockatoo



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Pepi's Land - Emerald



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Bob Burgess Reserve - Beaconsfield



Printed: 10/16/2019 Data Source: State & Local Government. © CARDINIA SHIRE COUNCIL

Tantallon Bvd Detention Basin Reserve- Beaconsfield



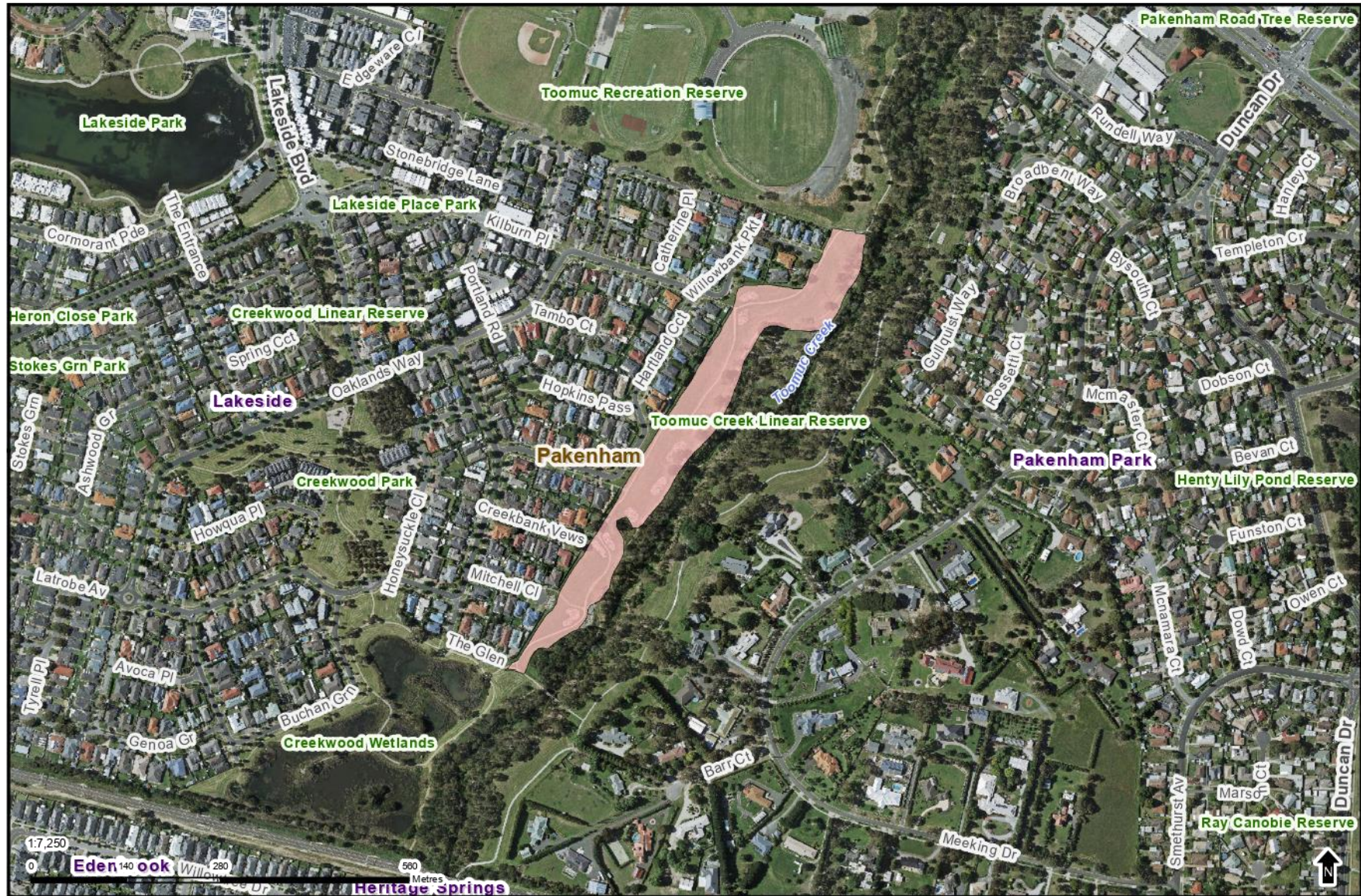
Printed: 10/16/2019 Data Source: State & Local Government. © CARDINIA SHIRE COUNCIL

Vantage Drive Reserve - Pakenham



Printed: 10/16/2019 Data Source: State & Local Government. © CARDINIA SHIRE COUNCIL

Toomuc Creek Linear Reserve - Pakenham



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Simon Dr Reserve - Pakenham



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Ray Canobie Reserve - Pakenham



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Harris Reserve - Beaconsfield



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Cochrane Park - Koo Wee Rup



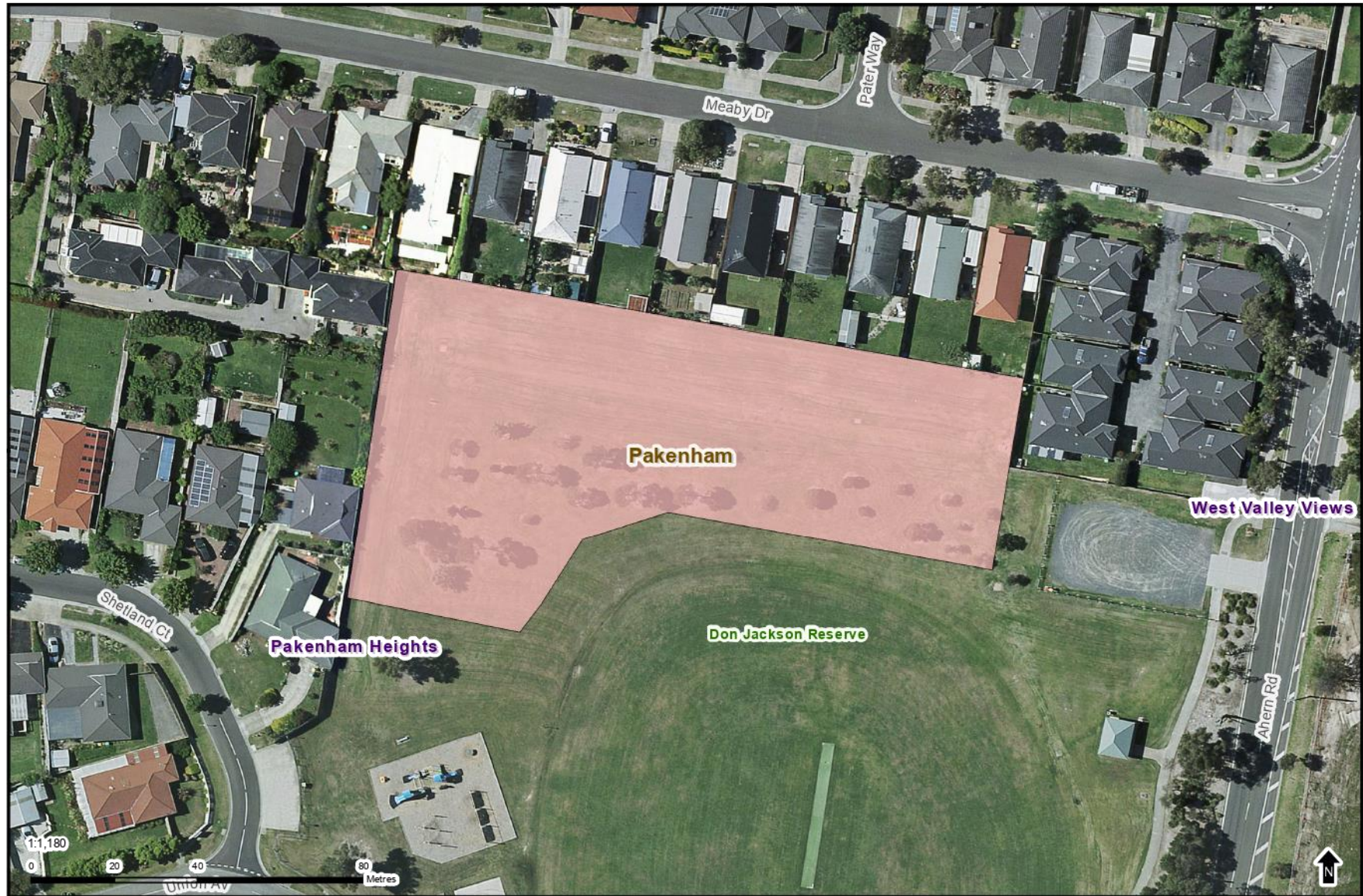
Printed: 10/16/2019 Data Source: State & Local Government. © CARDINIA SHIRE COUNCIL

Garfield Recreation Reserve



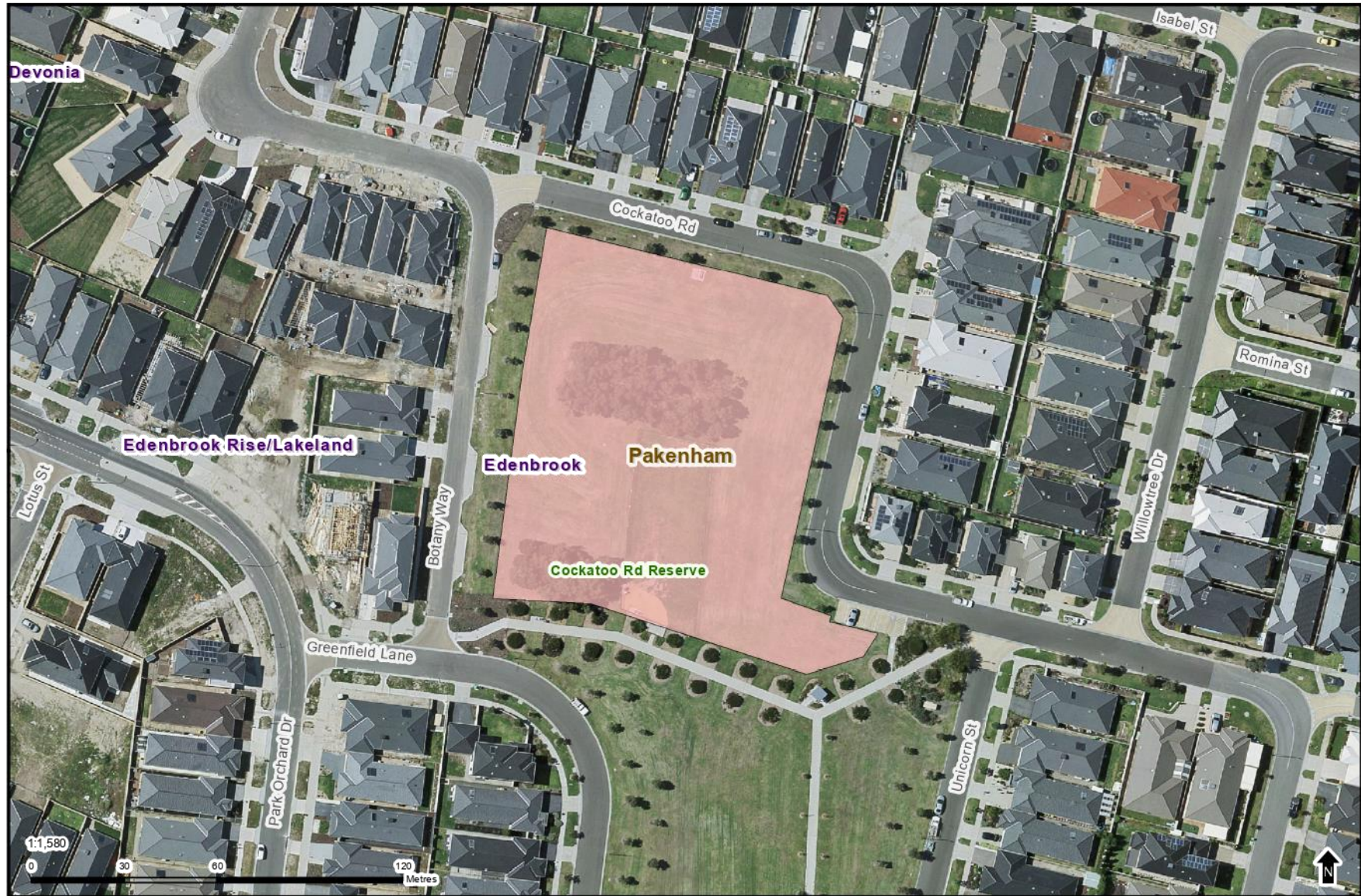
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Don Jackson Reserve - Pakenham



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Cockatoo Rd Reserve - Pakenham



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Onyx Cr Reserve, Officer



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Off Leash Dog Area Hierarchy			
	Regional	District	Neighbourhood
Purpose	Open space that provides off leash dog areas with a number of activities and infrastructure available. Attracts use from within the local community as well as beyond the Shire. May be located within popular sites that contain other recreational opportunities.	Open space that provides dedicated off leash dog areas. Attracts use from across the Shire. May be located within prominent sites that contain other recreational opportunities.	Open space that provides dedicated off leash dog areas. Attracts use from local residents regularly utilising the site.
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agility activities • Exercise • Dog socialisation • Relaxation and enjoyment of open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise • Dog socialisation • Relaxation and enjoyment of open space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercise • Dog socialisation • Relaxation and enjoyment of open space
Reserve type	Non-Specific	Within district reserves	Within neighbourhood reserves
Visitor Catchment	Caters for residents of Cardinia and beyond	Attracts people from within the municipality	Generally caters for local residents, and surrounding neighbourhoods
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dog agility equipment • Fencing • Drinking fountain with dog bowl • Seating • Rubbish bins • Natural and built shade structures • Arboriculture assets • Pathways • Garden beds • Signage • Sealed car parking • Turf cells at gate entrance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial fencing • Drinking fountain with dog bowl • Seating • Rubbish bins • Natural and built shade structures • Pathways • Garden beds • Signage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partial or no fencing • Seating • Natural shade • Pathways • Garden beds • Signage
Replacement cost	\$50,000	\$20,000	\$5,000