

# Callan Park Companion Animals Management Plan

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Cover image: [Swimming dogs and owners on the beach at Callan Park](#) © 2021 Greater Sydney Parklands.

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# Summary

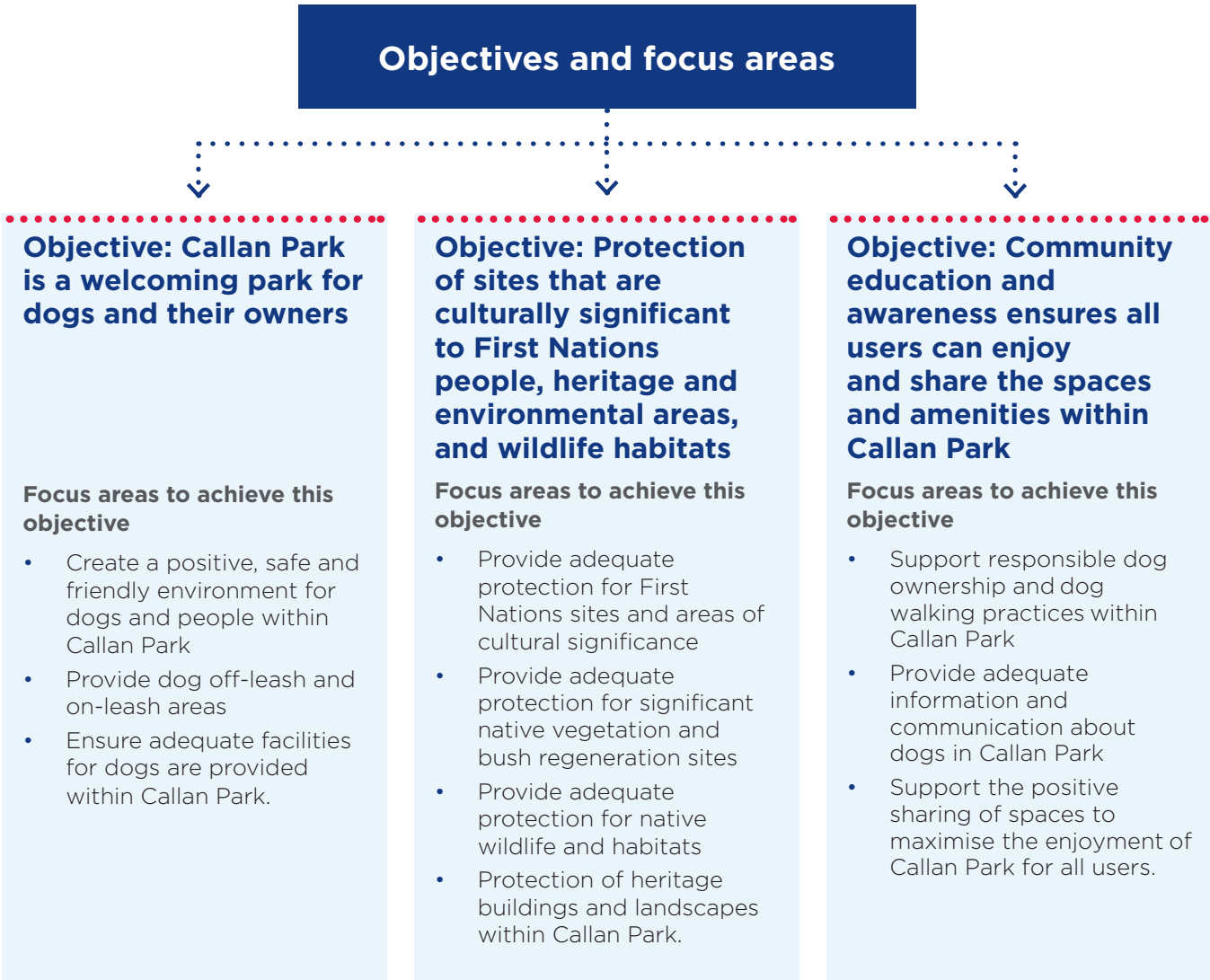




Figure 1: Callan Park CAMP Council shared and off-leash areas



# 1. Introduction and context

**Callan Park is the traditional land of the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation. Callan Park is a 61-hectare site on the southern edge of Iron Cove, a tributary of the Parramatta River, of which the Greater Sydney Parklands (GSP) manages 38 hectares, including the waterfront and central park areas.**

The vision for Callan Park is that it will be “an iconic park. A park with a mosaic of gardens, landscapes and recreation opportunities for Sydneysiders to explore. It will celebrate and treasure its unique heritage and position on the waterfront.” The whole site is considered a cultural landscape that serves to promote and strengthen connections to First Nations culture and identity, as well as a historically significant site with the potential to become an outstanding parkland destination in the heart of Sydney’s Inner West.

## 1.1. Greater Sydney Parklands

Greater Sydney Parklands is a newly formed agency which brings together parklands across Sydney into a single management Authority. This includes Centennial Parklands, Western Sydney Parklands, Parramatta Park, Callan Park and Fernhill Estate.

The priority for Greater Sydney Parklands is to develop new ways to expand and improve public green space and parklands for communities across Sydney, and to reinforce Sydney’s global reputation as a “City in a Park”. As part of its acquisition of 38 hectares of Callan Park, GSP is developing plans that support the management, and continuous improvement of Callan Park, and this includes preparing a Companion Animal Management Plan, to look at the ways in which dogs and people can happily visit Callan Park while ensuring equitable, safe and enjoyable access for everyone.

## 1.2. Purpose of this Plan

The CAMP will provide direction on managing companion animals in Callan Park, including clearly identifying on- and off-leash areas for dogs and required infrastructure, amenities and experiences for dogs and their owners.

The CAMP outlines principles and objectives that aim to balance the interests of all park users, including dogs and their owners, while minimising the potential for conflict between dogs and other park users and ensuring the safety of dogs, their owners and the broader community that uses and enjoys Callan Park.

The CAMP will comply with the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*, *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983* and *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Regulation 2014*, as well as aligning with the Inner West Council *Companion Animals Action Plan 2018* and the *Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan 2021*.

## 1.3. Where the plan applies

Part of Callan Park was vested in the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust (the Trust) within Greater Sydney Parklands on 18 December 2020. The Trust is responsible for the long-term strategic planning and operational day-to-day management of 38 hectares of Callan Park. The *Callan Park Companion Animals Management Plan (CAMP)* will only apply to the 38 hectares of Callan Park that is managed under the Trust by GSP. The rest of Callan Park is owned and managed by NSW Health; companion animal management in these areas is guided by the *Companion Animals Act NSW 1998* and Inner West Council’s *Companion Animals Management Policy*.

This CAMP has been developed for the 38 ha that are managed by GSP and does not apply to the 22 hectares of land owned by NSW Health. Within NSW Health’s part of the park, Inner West Council will continue to be the Local Authority solely responsible for companion animal management within the Health precincts.

The area in which this CAMP applies is shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Area of Callan Park that the CAMP is applicable

Note: In the IWC Lease Areas and the areas managed by NSW Health (outside of the GSP zone), companion animals are managed by Inner West Council.

## 1.4. How the Plan was developed

In December 2020, the management of Callan Park was transferred to GSP.

In January 2021, the *Landscape Structure Plan* (LSP) for Callan Park was endorsed by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces as a guide for the park's revitalisation as an iconic, regionally significant urban parkland, celebrating the park's unique heritage and waterfront location.

The LSP generated significant interest from local dog owners who use Callan Park to exercise and walk dogs, with concerns about the absence of facilities and provisions for dogs. In response, the development of a CAMP was included as an action in the endorsed LSP.

A consultative approach has informed the development of this Plan. A deep and thorough community engagement process was undertaken prior, putting people at the centre of decisions about what should be considered in developing the plan. Engagement with local dog owners, commercial dog walkers, local community groups, sporting groups, general park users and the local community was undertaken between April and May 2021. The aim of the engagement program was to:

- Identify opportunities for on- and off-leash areas, park infrastructure and amenities or experiences that could be implemented to improve the site for dogs and their owners.
- Identify issues and challenges with current practices in sharing the park space with various users.
- Identify potential solutions that will inform the development of a CAMP for Callan Park.
- Identify amenities, infrastructure and experiences for dogs and their owners that could be considered for Callan Park.

The engagement program included a mix of online and face-to-face opportunities for the community to participate in and included an online survey with an interactive map, on-site intercept surveys with park users, pop-up events, online workshops, a webinar, stakeholder telephone interviews and a focus group with randomly selected park users from the area.

Consideration was given to The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), in particular Article 9, which allows for people with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life by ensuring equal access to the physical environment, transportation, information and communications, and to other facilities and services provided to the public. Measures include the identification and elimination of obstacles and barriers to accessibility in buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities.

In addition, advice to Inner West Council on preparing disability inclusion action plans to reduce conflict between dogs and people with disability, prepared by the Inner West Liveable Accessible Communities Taskforce in the "Pathways to Inclusion" document, has been considered. Relevant recommendations include:

- Dogs on a leash in public places or under immediate control of their owner.
- Responsible dog handling in public, including limited tethering of dogs on footpaths and outside shops.
- Issue of fines where dogs are tethered and unaccompanied on footpaths and major pedestrian walkways.
- Promote awareness of and enforce the *Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW)*.
- Promote awareness of and enforce the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code*.
- Educate the community about responsible management of pets in public areas.

Throughout the development phase of this Plan, Inner West Council has been closely consulted and the knowledge and expertise of staff involved in companion animal management has been incorporated into the Plan.

In addition, this CAMP has been developed to align with:

- *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*
- *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Regulation 2014*
- *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002*
- *Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan, 2021*
- *Companion Animal Action Plan (2019-2023), Inner West Council*





Photo: Dog on leash, watching walkers go by in Callan Park



1.5. Existing legislation relating to companion animals in Callan Park

The aim of a CAMP is to provide guidance to fulfill GSP’s responsibilities under the *Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW)* by determining objectives and priorities, along with a clear program of implementation.

The Companion Animals Act 1998 No 87 (NSW)

The *Companion Animals Act 1998 (NSW) (CA Act)* provides for the effective and responsible care and management of companion animals. The Act defines a companion animal as:

- a cat
- a dog, and
- any other animal that is prescribed by the regulations as a companion animal.

Since the *CA Act*’s introduction in 1998, the Inner West Council has been the body responsible for administering the Act in Callan Park as the relevant local authority, as defined by *Clause 6* of the Act.<sup>1</sup>

However, following the vesting of Callan Park in the Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust (the Trust), the Trust is the defined local authority for some of the purposes of the *CA Act* within the 38 hectares that it manages, including:

- *Clause 13* of the *CA Act*, which provides the power for a local authority to declare a public place to be an off-leash area.

The Trust and Inner West Council have dual responsibility to enforce on-leash requirements under the *CA Act*.

Inner West Council remains the local authority for other purposes under the *CA Act*, including:

- Companion animals killed in traffic. Council must determine the ownership of an animal that is killed in traffic and notify the Department Chief Executive Officer and the owner of the killed animal.
- Promoting awareness of companion animals with respect to the ownership of companion animals.
- Ensuring that it is notified or otherwise made aware of the existence of all dangerous, menacing and restricted dogs that are kept within its area.
- Ensuring Council and dog owners are responsible for compulsory identification (microchip) and registration of companion animals.
- Ensuring that annual permits are acquired for

cats that are not desexed, dangerous dogs and restricted dogs and companion animals.

- Ensuring that dogs are leashed in public spaces.
- Reporting annually to the Department of Local Government.

*Part 3, Division 1, Section 14(1)* of the *CA Act* defines the public spaces where dogs are prohibited, relevant to this CAMP, including:

- **Children’s play areas**, meaning any public place, or part of a public place, that is within 10 metres of any playing apparatus provided in that public place or part for the use of children.
- **Food preparation/consumption areas**, meaning any public place, or part of a public place, that is within 10 metres of any apparatus provided in that public place or part for the preparation of food for human consumption or for the consumption of food by humans.
- **Recreation areas where dogs are prohibited**, meaning any public place, or part of a public place, provided or set apart by a local authority for public recreation or the playing of organised games and in which the local authority has ordered that dogs are prohibited and in which, or near the boundaries of which, there are conspicuously exhibited by the local authority at reasonable intervals notices to the effect that dogs are prohibited in or on that public place or part.
- **Public bathing areas where dogs are prohibited**, meaning any public place, or part of a public place, that is used for, or in conjunction with, public bathing or public recreation (including a beach), in which the local authority has ordered that dogs are prohibited and in which, or near the boundaries of which, there are conspicuously exhibited by the local authority at reasonable intervals notices to the effect that dogs are prohibited in or on that public place.
- **School grounds**, meaning any property occupied or used for a purpose connected with the conduct of a government school or non-government school under the *Education Act 1990*, other than any property used for a residence or the curtilage of a residence.
- **Child care centres**, meaning any property occupied or used for a purpose connected with the conduct of an approved education and care service within the meaning of the *Children (Education and Care Services) National Law (NSW)* or the *Children (Education and Care Services) Supplementary Provisions Act 2011*, other than any property used for a residence or the curtilage of a residence.

1 NSW Government, 2020, ‘Callan Park’, <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/callan-park>.

- **Wildlife protection areas**, meaning any public place, or part of a public place, set apart by the local authority for the protection of wildlife and in which the local authority has ordered that dogs are prohibited for the purposes of the protection of wildlife and in which, or near the boundaries of which, there are conspicuously exhibited signs by the local authority at reasonable intervals notices to the effect that dogs are prohibited in or on that public place.

Additional considerations defined under *Part 3, Division 1* of the *CA Act* include:

- *Section 12*: All dogs when outside of their property must wear a collar and identification tag.
- *Section 13(1)*: A dog that is in a public space must be under the effective control of a competent person by an adequate chain, cord or leash that is attached to the dog and that is being held by (or secured to) the person.
- *Section 13(4)*: A dog is not considered to be under the effective control of a person if the person has more than 4 dogs under his or her control.
- *Section 20*: The owner or person in charge of a dog that defecates in a public place must immediately remove the dog’s faeces and properly dispose of them.

In regard to the declaration of off-leash areas, *Section 13(6)* states that a local authority can by order declare a public place to be an off-leash area. Such a declaration can be limited so as to apply during a particular period or periods of the day or to different periods of different days. However, there must at all times be at least one public place in the area of a local authority that is an off-leash area.

*Part 6, Section 59* of the *CA Act* specifies that a person with disability is entitled to be accompanied by an assistance animal being used bona fide by the person to assist the person into or onto any building or place open to or used by the public or on any public transport.

1.5.1. Other relevant legislation and regulatory frameworks

This section provides an overview of the relevant legislations and regulatory frameworks that this CAMP has been developed to align with.

Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust

The Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust (the Trust) is a NSW Government agency constituted under the *Centennial Park and Moore Park Trust Act 1983*. Under *Part 2, Section 8* of the *Act*, the principal objectives of the Trust are:

- To maintain and improve the Trust lands.
- To encourage the use and enjoyment of the Trust lands by the public by promoting and increasing the recreational, historical, scientific, educational, cultural and environmental value of those lands.
- To maintain the right of the public to the use of the Trust lands.
- To ensure the protection of the environment within the Trust lands.
- Such other objects, consistent with the functions of the Trust in relation to the Trust lands, as the Trust considers appropriate.

Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002

The *Callan Park (Special Provisions) Act 2002* applies to the entire 61-hectare site. This *Act* is not supported by a land management regulation, which would normally apply to public parklands.

The objects of this *Act* are:

- To ensure that the whole of Callan Park remains in public ownership and subject to public control.
- To ensure the preservation of the areas of open space at Callan Park that were in existence immediately before the commencement of this *Act* and that extend to and include the foreshore of Iron Cove on the Parramatta River.
- To allow public access to that open space, including that foreshore, for public recreational purposes of both an active and passive nature.
- To preserve the heritage significance of Callan Park, including its historic buildings, gardens and other landscape features.
- To impose appropriate controls on the future development of Callan Park.

### Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan, 2021

The vision of the *Landscape Structure Plan* (LSP) is to be delivered via two key strategies. These strategies will see a focus on improvements to the waterfront and central parkland spaces as a priority, and will include changes to the road infrastructure, access and routes, as well as the removal of intrusive buildings to open up sightlines and spaces.

The key actions in the LSP relevant to the CAMP include:

- Prioritise the waterfront. This includes creating new open green space by removing intrusive buildings on the waterfront, extending pedestrian access via a pathway from Wharf Road to the waterfront and providing new park facilities including new accessible amenities.
- Close Waterfront Drive to vehicular traffic and upgrade the Bay Run, providing separate pedestrian and cycling paths.
- Improve protection for the Aboriginal cultural heritage and bushland at Callan Point.
- Remove intrusive buildings on Callan Point and redesign with native species. Restore rocky shoreline as a natural landscape.
- Provide a playground at Waterfront Sports Ground and explore the feasibility of adaptive reuse of B496 as part of the playground.
- Provide new open green space in Central Green and an accessible path network. Remove buildings 201, 207, 209, 210 and service roads. Explore the feasibility of adaptive reuse of 208.
- Use the pool as a water harvesting or water treatment reservoir and amphitheatre.
- Install an amphitheatre and shelter around the bowling green.
- Remove intrusive buildings around Balmain Road Sporting Ground, upgrade oval and provide a sports pavilion.
- Restore the Convalescent Cottages with select views to Iron Cove and remove building 488. Potential harbour swim site to be located in consultation with Council.
- Existing dog off-leash areas to be retained and new off-leash opportunities to be explored during consultation in early 2021 as part of a Companion Animals Management Plan.

The extensive community engagement to inform the LSP highlighted key themes and principles that the community values about Callan Park, which were taken into consideration in the development of this Plan. Values and suggestions include:

- Improved amenities for informal community use and connection, including social gatherings, informal ballgames and walking.
- New recreation facilities for children and young people, such as a skate park, pump tracks and mountain bike trails.
- Callan Park is highly valued for its open spaces that locals and visitors can access with their dogs, especially the large green spaces and beach access.
- There is a desire for sharing and cohesion amongst different user groups and visitors to ensure safe, equal access.
- The preservation of First Nations heritage sites should be a key priority, in particular the rock carvings and maintenance of indigenous vegetation.

### Companion Animal Action Plan (2019-2023), Inner West Council

The *Companion Animal Action Plan* (CAAP) details the manner in which the Inner West Council intends to manage companion animal related matters for the next two years.

The CAAP outlines objectives and actions identified under five focus areas, including:

- Responsible companion animal ownership
- Companion animal identification and lifetime registration
- Companion animal education
- Dogs, including access to public space; dogs and the environment; uncontrolled, nuisance and aggressive dogs; roaming dogs; contribution made by dogs and their owners to the community; and other dog matters
- Cats, including management; contribution made by cats and their owners to the community; and other cat matters





Photo: A dog and owner walk along the foreshore in Callan Park © 2021 Greater Sydney Parklands

# 2. What the community told us

**Extensive engagement with local dog owners, community groups, sporting groups, general park users and the community was undertaken between April and May 2021. Engagement aimed to:**

- Identify opportunities for on- and off-leash areas, park infrastructure and amenities or experiences that could be implemented to improve the site for dogs and their owners.
- Identify issues and challenges with current practices in sharing the park space with various users.
- Identify potential solutions that will inform the development of a CAMP for Callan Park.
- Identify amenities, infrastructure and experiences for dogs and their owners that could be considered for Callan Park.

The engagement program included a mix of online and face-to-face opportunities for the community to participate in and included an online survey with an interactive map, on-site intercept surveys with park users, pop-up events, online workshops, a webinar, stakeholder telephone interviews and a focus group with randomly selected park users.

A summary of the key community findings that have informed the development of the Callan Park CAMP is provided below.



**Callan Park is valued by dog owners, particularly the access to open spaces at Callan Park that they can visit with their dogs. The community indicated that dog walkers feel a sense of responsibility for the park.**

*“At the moment there are large, connected areas where people and dogs can go on long uninterrupted walks and this is one of the greatest assets the park has, should be of vital importance to protect.”*

Survey respondent

*“Keeping sufficient large areas for off leash dog play. Having clear areas for different activities like picnic areas that are dog free and areas that are dog accessible.”*

Survey respondent



*“Please don’t stop dogs playing on the beaches and swimming in the water at Callan Point. It brings so much joy to so many dogs and their owners.”*

Survey respondent



**The protection of significant cultural and environmental areas must be balanced with dog access to Callan Point Beach. The community expressed that Callan Point is a well-loved and valued destination by all user groups, particularly for dogs and their owners accessing the beach. The community recognised the importance of significant First Nations sites and bush regeneration areas at Callan Point and would like to see increased protection of these sites from both humans and dogs.**

**Access to open green spaces for exercise, relaxation, socialisation and connection to nature is valued by the community. Callan Park’s large and unique open green spaces are important for all user groups in the local community and visitors, supporting health and wellbeing, particularly in light of the high-density living in the Inner West.**

*“Safety of other park users. Successful shared cohesion can be achieved if Dog Walkers learn to respect other people’s boundaries. We need Greater Sydney Parklands to employ 24/7 rangers to enforce all the safety issues for people, wildlife and our dogs, associated with the Companion Animals Act.”*

Survey respondent



**Catering for a variety of uses and users is important**, particularly in high-use areas such as the Bay Run and along the waterfront. The community would like to see on-leash areas for dogs to better accommodate users such as picnickers, children, older people, people with disability and people who are not comfortable with dogs. Community members also noted that having various large, designated areas for dogs to be off leash prevents conflict because other user groups and dogs can be more spread out.

*"I have a nervous dog who doesn't like other dogs charging at her and I feel that I have a right to be in the park on leash as well."*

Survey respondent

*"Provide maps and information so everyone knows where dogs can go."*

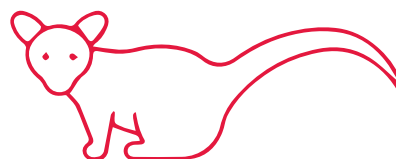
Survey respondent



**Fencing would increase safety for dogs and other users.** The community indicated that fenced areas could support dogs that may need it, including anxious dogs, puppies in training or dogs with behavioural issues, and new dog owners or dog owners who are nervous about their dog being around other dogs. The community expressed concern about small enclosed spaces for dogs as they can cause tension among dogs.

The community expressed the notion that any fencing throughout the park (e.g. for protection from roads) should be non-intrusive, friendly for all wildlife and sympathetic to Callan Park's natural environment, and that there is an opportunity to reinstate fencing in certain areas of Callan Park.

**More designated off-leash areas for dogs in Callan Park are required** to support access by dogs and their owners. In particular, the community would like to see formalised areas for off-leash access that are large areas for dogs to exercise, roam and socialise, and safe places that keep dogs away from other user groups and roads. The majority of participants would like more or all of Callan Park to become officially off-leash.



*"There is native wildlife at Callan Park. Any off leash areas need to be fenced. Protection also needs to be provided to native animals living there."*

Survey respondent

*"For a lot of us, our dogs play an integral part in our mental health. Being able to walk them off leash and have them play is stimulating and helps them learn. Callan Park provides a safe space for our dogs to socialise off leash and learn boundaries and allows us the space to train our dogs."*

Survey respondent



*"Education and communication - inform dog owners about their responsibilities and rights. Well socialised dogs are less aggressive."*

Survey respondent

**Increased education of responsible dog ownership is required**, particularly around the responsibilities of dog owners, managing the behaviour of dogs within shared spaces and clearly identifying on-leash and off-leash areas for people who visit the park. The community noted that improving responsible dog ownership is not seen as an issue specific to Callan Park, but a general issue with dog ownership.





**Enforcement and understanding about the rules in Callan Park** is inconsistent. This was noted as a current issue. Some community members would like to see enforcement of regulations in existing on-leash areas, such as the Bay Run, to support the safety of user groups and dogs, as well as clear signage of rules that indicate areas of the park that are on-leash and off-leash, and signage that indicates that rangers may enforce the regulations.

*“Environmental protection, specifically waste management, protection for native flora and fauna - including a plan for the cat colony.”*

Survey respondent



**Increased amenities for dogs and humans** are needed to support access to the park and alleviate some of the existing issues in Callan Park, such as general litter and dog poo bags being left in the park. The community would like to see amenities such as dog litter bins; trees for shade, cooling and comfort; rubbish bins for general waste; dog-friendly water stations; increased access to toilets across the park; increased lighting at night; and signage to show where toilets and other amenities are located.

*“It may be more practical to have the underused middle of the park off leash during the week. I’ve rarely seen anyone picnicking in this part of the park and I’ve been going there for at least ten years.”*

Survey respondent

*“There must be clear signage so that all users understand where dogs are permitted - and dog owners must abide by the rules, unlike they do now.”*

Survey respondent



**Road safety should be improved for all users**, including dogs, as speeding cars and cyclists in Callan Park was expressed as a concern, particularly along Wharf Road. The community would like to see traffic calming measures such as speed humps, clear signage for speed limits and rights of way, enforcement of speed limits and low-level fencing or hedging along Wharf Road to improve safety for all users in Callan Park.

*“I think Callan Park is a true oasis. It would be fantastic to have a few more water fountains and poo bins, and perhaps easier access to the doggie beach. People are mostly responsible and we have a peaceful coherent place for our dogs.”*

Survey respondent



**Retain shared arrangement of sports fields as designated dog off-leash areas** when sport and training is not being held. However, many community members indicated the increased usage of sports fields by sporting groups throughout the week, weekends and during school holidays limits opportunities for dogs and their owners to access these areas as off-leash spaces.





Photo: Dogs on the beach in Callan Park © 2021 Greater Sydney Parklands.



# 3. Objectives and focus areas

The following objectives and focus areas have been established to provide a strategic framework for decision-making and set clear expectations about the provision for, and management of, dogs within Callan Park. This framework will guide decision-making, both now and into the future, and as the parkland evolves as the LSP is progressively implemented.

## 3.1. Callan Park is a welcoming park for dogs and their owners

Callan Park is a valued destination by dog owners. Providing clearly designated off-leash and on-leash areas, adequate facilities and amenities for dogs and their owners, and creating spaces where owners can meet and connect, will provide a place where dog owners continue to feel welcome.

### Why is this important?

- Callan Park serves as a regional catchment and supports a large inner-city population of dog owners.
- In May 2019, Inner West Council estimated that there were approximately 35,500 dogs and 29,200 cats residing within the Inner West LGA. Further estimates include the fact that approximately 42% of households in the Inner West LGA own a dog and 35% of households own a cat. Access to open spaces for people with companion animals is important.
- Dog owners and sporting group stakeholders are satisfied with the current arrangement of shared use of sporting fields and would like to see this retained in the future.
- Being able to access large green spaces across the park, as well as beach access at Callan Point and places for varied recreation activities with dogs, was highly valued by the community.
- Off-leash areas throughout Callan Park, as well as increased amenities such as dog litter bins, dog-friendly water stations and fencing to increase safety for dogs, was a high priority for the community.
- Concerns with cars and cyclists, particularly along Wharf Road, were identified. The community suggested additional traffic calming

measures such as speed humps, clear signage for speed limits and rights of way, low-level hedging or fencing, and enforcement of speed limits to improve safety for all users in Callan Park, including dogs.

- Creating a welcoming environment for dog owners in Callan Park and providing opportunities for social connection and support for the wellbeing of dogs and their owners was important to the community.
- The use of Callan Park by dogs and their owners means there is often activity in the park in the early morning and during the early evening. This can help to increase safety in the park.

### Focus areas to achieve this objective

#### 3.1.1. Create a positive, safe and friendly environment for dogs and people within Callan Park

Callan Park is a major destination for dog walkers. Enabling equitable access to public areas for companion animals and minimising environmental, nuisance and safety concerns for the public is important. Along with the clear designation of appropriate areas, the provision of facilities and the installation of clear signage, working with Inner West Council and local groups to support opportunities and activities for dog owners to meet and socialise will contribute to creating a positive, dog-friendly environment in Callan Park.

#### 3.1.2. Provide dog off-leash areas

Clearly identifying spaces for dogs in Callan Park, including designated off-leash and on-leash areas, helps dog owners and other user groups accessing the park understand expectations and minimises conflicts.

The following Off-Leash Site Selection Criteria will be considered in proposing new off-leash areas and any review of off-leash areas in the future. This criterion ensures that spaces provided for dogs and their owners are safe, in appropriate locations and contribute to the equitable access and sharing of public spaces within Callan Park.

The specific proposals for additional off-leash areas are outlined in Part 4 of this Plan.

3.1.3. Ensure adequate facilities for dogs are provided within Callan Park

Creating a welcoming park for dogs and their owners can be as simple as providing adequate facilities and amenities. Water bowls and bins strategically located across the park will not only support a welcoming environment within Callan Park, but will also alleviate issues of litter and dog poo experienced in Callan Park. Providing shade, lighting and other amenities, as appropriate, will increase the comfort, safety and utilisation of the park for both dogs and their owners.

3.2. Protection of sites that are culturally significant to First Nations people, heritage and environmental areas, and wildlife habitats

Callan Park is a unique open space, home to important First Nations sites. These include rock overhangs containing cultural material, artworks and shell middens, as well as significant native vegetation, bush regeneration sites and native wildlife habitats. To ensure that the activities of owners and their pets and other user groups do not adversely affect sensitive environments, measures to mitigate the impacts need to be in place.

Off-Leash Site Selection Criteria	
Off-leash areas should be accessible and easily identified.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Off-leash sites should be accessible to parking and pedestrians.</li><li>• Fenced off-leash sites should be easily seen and identified by the wider community.</li><li>• Off-leash areas should be located away from highly trafficked pedestrian paths.</li><li>• Unfenced off-leash areas should provide a variety of terrains/environments for dogs to explore.</li><li>• Access to both shade and sun should be considered.</li><li>• The implementation of the LSP should be considered when identifying off-leash areas</li></ul>
Off-leash areas should not impact heritage buildings or landscapes	Consideration should be given to the protection of the amenity of heritage buildings and their curtilages; historical plantings, gardens and monuments; and significant cultural sites and places of connection for First Nations people.
Off-leash areas should have minimal impact on other park users.	<p>Potential impact on other users must be minimal. The following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Risk to, or impact on, children or older people</li><li>• Risk to, or impact on, people walking and cycling, particularly in highly trafficked areas of the park</li><li>• Risk to, or impact on, people with disability</li><li>• Impact on the ability to play sport or pursue other recreation activities</li><li>• Risk of impact on the operation or use of areas tenanted by various health organisations, NGOs and education providers</li><li>• Off-leash areas must be located at least 10 metres from any children’s playgrounds and food preparation/consumption areas.</li><li>• The implementation of the LSP and the evolution of the park as a result of its implementation</li></ul>
Off-leash areas should not impact sensitive and significant sites	<p>There must be no impact on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Significant cultural areas/sites</li><li>• Sensitive natural environments</li></ul>

### Why is this important?

- The protection of wildlife, significant native vegetation and bush regeneration areas is required by the *CA Act* and is important to the community, as these features are what makes Callan Park special.
- There are pockets of remnant bushland in Callan Park, including an endangered ecological community at Callan Point: the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest. Efforts are progressing to care for and expand this rare pocket of urban bushland. The community has indicated strong support for efforts to increase tree cover and bushland in Callan Park.
- Respecting First Nations culture through the protection of important sites and places of significance from all user groups, including both humans and dogs, is critical to the history and character of Callan Park and is important to the community.
- The community has expressed a desire for the ability to walk dogs safely at night (supported by amenities such as lighting), however the community also wants to see wildlife protected at night.
- Clear identification and signage protect important cultural and natural sites and landscapes, contributing to the increased education of park users and awareness about companion animal regulations.

### Focus areas to achieve this objective

#### 3.2.1. Provide adequate protection for First Nations sites and areas of cultural significance

Callan Park is the traditional land of the Gadigal and Wangal people of the Eora Nation. The whole site is considered a cultural landscape that serves to promote and strengthen connections to First Nations culture and identity. Cultural aspects of the site, such as the evidence of lifeways, fishing and gathering, including the middens, artworks and First Nations sites on the foreshore, rocky headlands and historic creek lines, are important. Indigenous vegetation can have significance to First Nations heritage, for example, cultural landscapes and foods provide insights into cultural values and indicate how First Nations people have lived with, and continue to connect with Country in Callan Park.

Engaging the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council and local First Nations Elders will guide how best to provide appropriate protection of the First Nations sites and cultural landscapes throughout Callan Park. Protection is important to ensure the physical, cultural and spiritual connection to Country, as well as contributing to the overall understanding of the story and history of the place we now call Callan Park.

#### 3.2.2. Provide adequate protection for significant native vegetation and bush regeneration sites

Since 1998, Callan Point Bushcare has successfully regenerated two hectares of rare remnant bushland, expanding the size of the bushland and improving its condition and biodiversity. This bushland is rare within the Inner West, being one of the last areas of remnant bushland remaining in Iron Cove.

The area of the park adjoining King George Sportsground and adjacent to Callan Point is significant as a representation of the type of bush that thrived in the area prior to colonisation and contains plants and trees that are now rare in other parts of the Inner West. This area contains an endangered ecological community: the Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest. Over many years, Callan Park Bushcare has worked to remove weeds and rubbish, helping the bush and headland at Callan Point to regenerate. Many species of native plants are now thriving in this area. The group continues to work in parts of the site that are in poor condition, allowing the native plants to recover with species endemic to the site.

#### 3.2.3. Provide adequate protection for native wildlife and habitats

A wide variety of native birds and fauna are thriving across Callan Park, in patches of bush and in many of the old hollow-bearing trees. Native fauna, including possums, lizards, flying foxes and other bats, and many species of birds rely on the trees and vegetation in Callan Park for habitat and sources of food. It is vital that these areas are protected to provide habitat for native wildlife and birds. There is recent evidence that the endangered powerful owl visits Callan Park, and there are numerous migratory species that depend on the park's trees for nesting and roosting.





Photo: A black labrador puppy on-leash



### 3.2.4. Protection of heritage buildings and landscapes within Callan Park

Callan Park is a site of exceptional heritage significance, both in terms of its built character and landscapes. From the pre-colonial occupation of the site by the Gadigal and Wangal people, through to the early 19th-century farming estates and the establishment of the largest purpose-built asylum in NSW, the history of Callan Park is complex and rich.

The architectural and aesthetic qualities of its buildings and landscapes are evocative legacies of this complex history and are intrinsic to the character of Callan Park. Over time, the park has also developed a series of character zones that reflect the historical uses of the site.

There are many exceptional buildings in GSP-managed area of the site, including the Garry Owen House (occupied by Writing NSW), Garry Owen Summer House, Bonnyview (also known as Gardener's Cottage) and Convalescent Cottages. The landscape setting and extensive gardens are also historically significant for their role in patient therapy and reflect the development of the site as an integrated aspect of patient treatment.

The whole of Callan Park is listed on the State Heritage Register in recognition of its outstanding significance to the people of NSW. GSP, as custodian of this heritage, is committed to ensuring that the buildings, landscapes, monuments and features of value are preserved and safeguarded for future generations to enjoy and to enrich the lives of citizens today.

### 3.3. Community education and awareness ensures all users can enjoy and share the spaces and amenities within Callan Park

Callan Park is a regional park that draws people from surrounding Inner West areas and across Sydney, accommodating a diverse range of spaces and both passive and active recreation and social activities. GSP is progressively implementing the LSP to increase and improve opportunities for people to connect with, and enjoy, Callan Park.

It is important that all users, including dogs and their owners, Callan Park tenants, walkers, cyclists, children, older people, people with disability, sporting groups and other social users, have equitable access to the park and can cohesively share spaces to ensure safety and maximise utilisation for everyone.

Increased community education and awareness, as well as consistent and accurate information about companion animals that is easily accessible, will encourage the sharing of public spaces and increase the enjoyment of all users.

#### Why is this important?

- Callan Park is a major destination for dog walkers.
- Engagement with the community revealed inconsistent enforcement of regulations, as well as varying levels of knowledge about the requirements of the Companion Animals Act and regulations applying to Callan Park.
- Participants would like to see clear, positive signage that details the responsibilities of dog owners and other user groups, identifies on-leash and off-leash areas, and highlights the rules in Callan Park.
- Increased education of dog owners, particularly around the responsibilities of dog owners, including managing the behaviour of dogs within shared spaces, as well as clearly identifying off-leash areas for people who visit the park, is the preferred approach to the management of companion animals within Callan Park and is more positive than enforcement.

#### Focus areas to achieve this objective

##### 3.3.1. Support responsible dog ownership and dog walking practices within Callan Park

While most pet owners and dog walkers who currently use Callan Park manage their pets in a responsible way, further education will be key to the successful implementation of this Plan and minimising conflict with other park users or other dog owners.

Early socialisation of animals is important as it allows for exposure to different stimuli in the local environment (children/older people, other animals, noises and movement). Dog training is encouraged to ensure that Callan Park is a positive and safe place for dogs, their owners and other users.

**3.3.2. Provide adequate information and communication about dogs in Callan Park**

An “inform and educate” approach is a positive and preferred approach to the management of companion animals in Callan Park. Engagement indicated varying knowledge of the management regulations set by the *CA Act* and inconsistent enforcement, which contributes to confusion and, at times, conflict.

Working with Inner West Council, local dog owners and other local community groups to provide appropriate and accurate information will increase education and awareness about the management of dogs in Callan Park and the responsibilities of dog owners and other users of the park. This will benefit everyone and contribute to a greater enjoyment of the parklands. Clear and welcoming signage that communicates designated areas for dogs to be on-leash and off-leash, as well as rules, responsibilities and behaviour expectations in the park, will clarify expectations and regulations for all park users.

**3.3.3. Support the positive sharing of spaces to maximise the enjoyment of Callan Park for all users**

People should be able to move freely throughout the park without loss of amenity due to dogs not being under effective control. Dogs are important companions for their owners and access to safe off-leash and on-leash exercise areas is important to the wellbeing of both humans and animals. It is equally important that the community and open spaces in the park can be enjoyed by everyone, and that tenants are able to access their places of work free of dog (or cat) nuisances and remains.

By working in partnership with Inner West Council, park users and local community groups and organisations, GSP is able to increase community understanding about Callan Park, its history and regional importance. It can show how the effective management of companion animals can significantly contribute to the positive sharing of spaces and maximise enjoyment of Callan Park.



# 4. Implementation

## 4.1. Management of dogs in Callan Park

Inconsistency of enforcement and a varied understanding of the regulations was identified through the engagement. This section outlines who is responsible for the management of companion animals in Callan Park.

GSP is responsible for the day-to-day management of companion animals under the *CA Act* within Callan Park, except for the sporting fields, which are under lease to Inner West Council. This includes the education and management of dog owners about on- and off-leash areas, responsibilities, etiquette, expectations and the enforcement of regulations within the park.

Inner West Council remains responsible for the management of dangerous dogs across the LGA including Callan Park. Under the terms of the lease arrangements for the sporting fields in Callan Park, Council is also responsible for the management of companion animals in this specific area of the park.

GSP will continue to work with the Inner West Council to ensure the management of companion animals within all areas of Callan Park is consistent, including enforcement and signage.

## 4.2. Off-leash areas in Callan Park

In accordance with the *CA Act* and taking into consideration the Off-Leash Site Selection Criteria (see Section 3.1.1), proposed off-leash areas during the hours of 5am and 10pm, in Callan Park are:

- Callan Point Beach
- Bonnyview Cottage Gardens, noting a heritage exclusion zone of 10 metres from the sandstone building
- Central Green
- Wharf Road Gardens (incorporating the bowling green)
- Balmain Road Green
- Writing NSW Gardens (eastern part).

Shared areas (managed by IWC under lease) that remain available for off-leash access at times when there is no organised sporting events or training on the grounds, include:

- Balmain Road Sporting Ground
- Glover Street Sporting Ground
- Waterfront Sporting Ground.

Areas that will be considered to locate fenced off-leash dog area, designed with appropriate amenities (such as double gates, lighting, bins and water), include:

- Balmain Road Green.

## Access during events

From time to time GSP may host events in the areas proposed above. Off-leash access may be limited by GSP during events if it is deemed necessary for event management or public safety at these times.

## 4.3. On-leash areas in Callan Park

The *CA Act* states that dogs must be under effective control and on-leash in all areas in NSW (outside of an individual's home), unless the area is designated to be off-leash. All of Callan Park is designated on-leash with the exception of the three sports fields, which are under lease to Inner west Council and designated off-leash areas when there is no sporting activity occurring. The on-leash designation in Callan Park was made when the site was an operating psychiatric hospital campus and has not been revised or changed since that time.

## After-dark access

To protect native wildlife after dark, the whole of the GSP managed area of Callan Park, except for any fenced dog area or Council shared off-leash zone, is to be on-leash between the hours of 10pm and 5am.



Figure 3: Callan Park CAMP Council shared and off-leash areas.

Note between 10pm and 5am the whole of GSP managed area is on-leash

4.4. Action plan

Table of actions organised by the objectives and focus areas.

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
Objective 3.1 - Callan Park is a welcoming park for dogs and their owners	
3.1.1 Create a positive, safe and friendly environment for dogs and people within Callan Park	<div><div>i. Install welcoming signage to outline dog owner responsibilities, expectations, relevant regulations, enforcement processes and boundaries for on- and off-leash access.</div><div>ii. Develop a dog off-leash etiquette for Callan Park (informed by Inner West Council's dog off-leash etiquette) and promote it.</div><div>iii. Work with Inner West Council and local service providers to support community events, encouraging dog owners to connect, and education events.</div></div>
3.1.2 Provide dog off-leash areas	<div><div>i. Continuation of Inner West Council lease arrangement with shared off-leash access of sporting fields when there is no sport or training.</div><div>ii. Establish the following off-leash areas (outside of the areas leased by Inner West Council) that meet the Off-Leash Site Selection Criteria. Off-leash areas during the hours of 5am and 10pm, in Callan Park are:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Callan Point Beach</li><li>Bonnyview Cottage Gardens, noting a heritage exclusion zone of 10 metres from the sandstone building</li><li>Central Green</li><li>Wharf Road Gardens (incorporating the bowling green)</li><li>Balmain Road Green</li><li>Writing NSW Gardens (eastern part)</li></ul></div><div>iii. Establish new fenced off-leash dog area in the Balmain Road precinct that is informed by site constraints, community consultation and a dog behaviourist.</div><div>iv. Work with Inner West Council to ensure consistent enforcement of legislation.</div><div>v. Better define off-leash areas through accurate site maps, pathways, landscaping and signage.</div><div>vi. Seek to ensure clarity regarding the management of companion animals and responsibilities to uphold the CA Act throughout the whole of Callan Park (including the GSP managed areas, Inner West Council leased areas and NSW Health managed areas)</div></div>
3.1.3 Ensure adequate facilities for dogs are provided within Callan Park	<div><div>i. Provide bins, strategically located throughout the park.</div><div>ii. Provide pet-friendly drinking fountains, strategically located throughout the park.</div><div>iii. Consider provision of other appropriate amenities to support a welcoming environment for dogs and their owners in the park.</div><div>iv. Work with Inner West Council to consider the temporary and/or permanent extension of hours that sporting field lights are on during the evening.</div></div>



Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
<b>Objective 3.2 - Protection of sites that are culturally significant to First Nations people, heritage and environmental areas, and wildlife habitats</b>	
<b>3.2.1 Provide adequate protection for First Nations sites and areas of cultural significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. In partnership with local First Nations Elders and the community, design and develop ways to appropriately identify and protect areas and sites of cultural significance.</li> <li>ii. Construct raised boardwalks across the headland at Callan Point to protect sensitive sites.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2.2 Provide adequate protection for significant native vegetation and bush regeneration sites</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Enforce on-leash access throughout Callan Point (except on the beach) to protect key sites of significance.</li> <li>ii. Install welcoming signage to outline key dog owner responsibilities, expectations of behaviour, regulations and boundaries relating to the protection of native vegetation and regeneration sites in Callan Park.</li> <li>iii. Identify and declare appropriate Wildlife Protection areas e.g. Callan Park Bushcare site, and provide necessary education and signage. Noting that this would prohibit dogs from any area declared Wildlife Protection.</li> <li>iv. Promote responsible pet ownership, particularly in regard to wildlife protection.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2.3 Provide adequate protection for native wildlife and habitats</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Investigate the installation of animal bridges between trees.</li> <li>ii. The whole of GSP managed area of Callan Park, except for any fenced dog area or Council shared off-leash zone, is to be on-leash between the hours of 10pm and 5am.</li> <li>iii. Ensure lighting for fenced off-leash areas doesn't impact the habitat of native animals.</li> <li>iv. Continue to educate dog owners on the impact of dog waste on the environment.</li> </ul>
<b>3.2.4 Protection of heritage buildings and landscapes within Callan Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Ensure the designation of off-leash areas (outside of the areas leased by Inner West Council) meet the Off-Leash Site Selection Criteria.</li> <li>ii. Install welcoming signage to outline key dog owner responsibilities, expectations of behaviour, regulations and boundaries relating to the protection of native vegetation and regeneration sites in Callan Park.</li> </ul>
<b>Objective 3.3 - Community education and awareness ensures all users can enjoy and share the spaces and amenities within Callan Park</b>	
<b>3.3.1 Support responsible dog ownership and dog walking practices within Callan Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Partner with Inner West Council to develop and implement a community awareness and education program to educate companion animal owners about regulations and responsibilities.</li> <li>ii. Work with Inner West Council and local service providers to support community events, encouraging dog owners to connect, and education events.</li> <li>iii. Provide signage to encourage responsible management of dogs that clearly shows the boundaries of off-leash areas.</li> <li>iv. Establish a dog off-leash etiquette for Callan Park (that is informed by Inner West Council's).</li> <li>v. Work with Inner West Council to ensure consistent enforcement of legislation, relating to the number of dogs being walked by a single person.</li> <li>vi. Consider developing a Commercial Dog Walking Policy that is consistent with relevant legislation and policies.</li> </ul>

Focus Areas	Proposed Actions
3.3.2 Provide adequate information and communication about dogs in Callan Park	<div><div>i. Consider a variety of communication tools to educate and increase awareness about responsible pet ownership, such as information brochures, newsletters and digital platforms (e.g. website and social media).</div><div>ii. Adopt an “inform and educate” approach to the enforcement of dogs in Callan Park. A phased approach to enforcement of the CA Act and Regulations will be adopted that includes education, communication and enforcement.</div><div>iii. Design and make available printed information that encourages responsible dog ownership where digital options are not available/ suitable.</div><div>iv. Partner with local community groups to provide information to dog owners, commercial dog walkers and other Callan Park users.</div><div>v. Develop a map of off-leash areas, amenities for dogs and general information to support companion animal owners. Distribute online and printed flyers.</div><div>vi. Install legible and welcoming signage in appropriate locations for all park users that defines off-leash areas, safety and responsibilities.</div><div>vii. Erection of signage at all off-leash dog areas communicating the times, conditions of use and facilities available.</div><div>viii. With Inner West Council, develop a directory of available dog and cat training services.</div></div>
3.3.3 Support the positive sharing of spaces to maximise the enjoyment of Callan Park for all users	<div><div>i. Install positive, welcoming signage to outline key responsibilities, expectations, regulations and boundaries for off-leash access.</div><div>ii. Provide amenities to encourage responsible management of dog faeces.</div><div>iii. Work with Inner West Council to ensure consistent enforcement of legislation.</div><div>iv. Educate dog owners and with Inner West Council, enforce leash provisions in public areas.</div><div>v. Run publicity campaigns to inform owners of leash provisions.</div><div>vi. Work with local organisations and Inner West Council to increase community understanding of the potential impact companion animals may have on the environment and other park users, and how impacts can be mitigated.</div></div>

**4.5. Review and monitoring**

Ongoing monitoring and review of animal management is required. This will ensure the objectives and focus remain relevant, sustainable and in line with statutory obligations and community expectations.

Further, as the actions to achieve the vision of the Callan Park Landscape Structure Plan 2021 are implemented, park access and use may change, requiring review of this plan.

Monitoring activities could include:

- Analysing park usage and incidents data over time to indicate performance of this Plan, adjusting if necessary.
- Seeking feedback via community surveys with park users and animal owners about the management of companion animals and creating a welcoming park for owners and their animals.
- Working with Inner West Council to implement this Plan and to regulate effectively, and consistently the management of companion animals within Callan Park.
- Encuring Callan Park is a welcoming and safe environment for all park users.



Photo: Dog on leash with tennis ball in mouth



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