



The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association Inc.

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3 December 2018

Mr Ray Brownlee, CEO
Northern Beaches Council
725 Pittwater Road
DEE WHY NSW 2099

Also by email: ray.brownlee@northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au

Courtesy Copy: Mayor Michael Regan, and all Councillors

Dear Mr Brownlee,

STATION BEACH TRIAL DOG OFF-LEASH AREA LETTER OF SUPPORT

The Palm Beach & Whale Beach Association has been aware - *ever since the "No Dogs" signs started appearing in 2006* - of an imbalance in local dog policy that has meant there is nowhere for families with dogs to legally enjoy access to the foreshore. Those who wish to do so, face a one-hour round trip to Bayview, adding unnecessarily to congestion on our local roads.

Back in April 2005, a significant gathering of Palm Beach locals took place at the Avalon Recreation Centre for the purposes of a Section 40A Public Hearing (Local Government Act, 1993) in relation to a proposed zoning/classification change of the land known as Snapperman Beach Reserve (Iluka Road, Palm Beach). There were 48 locals in attendance that day, and the Hearing attracted 20 written or oral submissions, which have been preserved in the Hearing report.

Of the many things that were mentioned at that Hearing, ***there was no concern raised about families with dogs continuing to have access to the foreshore here.*** The overwhelming message conveyed by our community was that we didn't want the *feel, appearance or usage* of the area changed in any way. Some went so far as to express *"please just leave us alone"*.

Yet within a year or so of this Hearing, "No Dogs" signage appeared without warning at this location, and elsewhere along the Pittwater foreshore. When this happened, it caused disruption to established routines, and effectively outlawed a longstanding and much-loved cultural activity.

We are unable to identify any instruments of approval for these signs along the Pittwater foreshore. Accordingly, we are very pleased to now see Council's Station Beach initiative as a step toward restoring some foreshore access for families with dogs. We consider this initiative long overdue.

The hours of operation appear to be designed to help manage the number of users drawn to this area, and we believe the trial is the best way to test the settings. We also note the proposed 80m buffer from the west end of Beach Road, and recognise this as consideration of the residents along the Waratah Road waterfront. Provided there is clear signage, we see no reason why the trial would involve an increase in public use of the public space in front of these properties to the south of Beach Road.

The seating area to be created at the northern end of the off-leash zone is likely to be favoured by the elderly, who might choose to sit there while the young ones are playing in the shallows with their dogs. In this respect, we see a complication arising from the proposed northern limit of the off-leash zone. Children are unlikely to be very good judges of an invisible line here and it would be more easily understood if the northern limit of the off-leash zone continued all the way to the wharf.

Please note our support for the initiative, and accept our thanks for Council's attention to this well-understood need.

Yours sincerely,
PALM BEACH & WHALE BEACH ASSOCIATION INC.



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