Maintaining the Status Quo

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Current situation in Maroondah
(Ringwood, Croydon, Bayswater, Heathmont)

- Dog ownership high – 13,000 registered (+10% not registered) = 33% of households have a dog
- Cats have not been raised as a significant issue in Maroondah (6000 registered)
- Only Local Law is that you must carry a bag and clean up and the State Act – Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994, which means that all dogs must be under effective control at all times, not necessarily on a leash

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- No designated off-leash areas
- No designated on-leash areas but some conservation areas and shared use trails are signed to encourage use of leashes
- Responsible Pet Ownership Scheme rewards people spotted doing the right thing by Local Laws Officers – monthly $100 voucher sponsored by pet industry, 1500 people stopped in parks/year
- No dog faeces bins or bag dispensers due to high cost of installing and maintaining ($2000 + /bin)

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History

- Community Attitudes Survey in 1996 – 1500 responses, 44% dog owners,14% cats, 24% both
- Dogs allowed to run free 6%, dogs allowed to run free in certain areas / times 55%, dogs on leash at all times 38%
- Dogs prohibited from certain areas – Land for Wildlife 18%, Playgrounds 21%, Most Parks 14%, Walking Trails 3%, Sporting Areas 5%, Shopping Centres 31%
- Nine conservation areas were proposed to be off limits for dogs and cats but resulted in a strong community backlash and not adopted

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- Open Space Household Survey in 2003 – supported desire for designated off-leash areas from owners and non-owners
- Several attempts to bring in local laws for on-leash but all failed due to community pressure
- Intense pressure for reform in 2004 following dog attacks, but Council official line is there is no significant problem

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Future

- Draft Open Space Strategy recommends that certain areas be off limits to dogs – playgrounds, BBQ's and fenced ovals (conservation areas were removed from original list). Also at special events (festivals etc.)
- Habitat Corridors Strategy also recommends greater controls on dogs and cats particularly in conservation areas
- Continue community education program

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Please clean up after your dog

Penalties Apply

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- Greater enforcement of existing controls
- Need to consider higher number of residents in Transit Centres with little public or private open space and increased density in all suburbs with less private open space
- Protection of waterways and conservation areas will become a greater issue as these places become valued and used more

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References

- Public Open Space and Dogs – A design and management guide for open space professionals and local government by Harlock Jackson Pty Ltd for the Petcare Information & Advisory Service 1995
- Dogs and Cats – Research into community attitudes, Maroondah City Council 1996
- Maroondah Open Space Household Survey 2003

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