



Developing guidelines

for dog off-leash areas

Stage 1 Engagement Summary Report

Produced by *Conversation Co.* on behalf of the City of Port Phillip

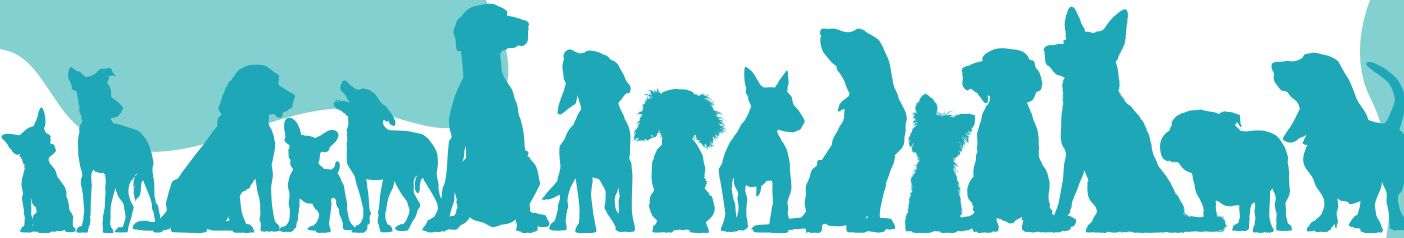


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About the project



There are over **8,000** dogs registered in the City of Port Phillip.

Whilst many of Port Phillip's parks, sporting fields and beaches provide space for dogs to be off-leash, there has been growing concern from the community that the spaces are no longer suitable.

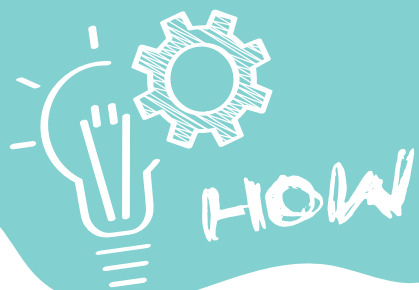


As with other inner-city municipalities, there is limited public space and there are challenges involved in balancing the desires of dog owners with the views and needs of all other users of Council's beaches and public spaces.

In response, the City of Port Phillip is developing Dog Off-Leash Guidelines which will outline Council's position on the provision, distribution, design, and management of dog facilities in public open spaces.

This report summarises the community engagement findings for the first phase of the engagement program.





The engagement program



The engagement program ran from

**13 December 2022
to 29 January 2023.**

The purpose of this phase of the engagement program was to:



collect community thoughts and ideas on how parks and beaches can be shared with dogs



understand how to deliver dog off-leash areas in the future, including their distribution, and design



encourage participation in the deliberative community panel for the next phase of the engagement program

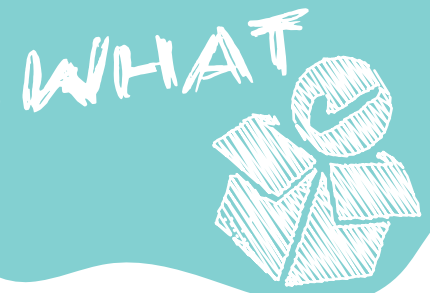
A range of engagement techniques were used to obtain feedback from people with a variety of interests and experiences relating to the project.



Working well in the parks
Where dogs are
off-leash?



What did we ask?



What should be considered when planning for dog off-leash areas?



What's working well in the parks and beaches where dogs are allowed off-leash?

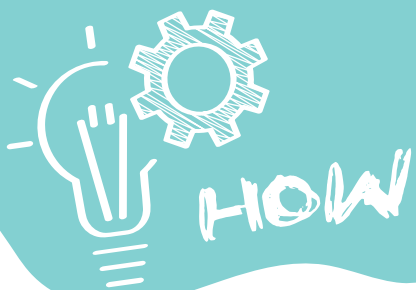


What doesn't work well in the parks and beaches where dogs are allowed off-leash?



When would it be okay to limit times for dogs off-leash in parks or at the beach?





How did we engage?



18 pop-up and intercept sessions in parks and beaches across Port Phillip

385
participants



1 Online survey via Council's 'Have Your Say' portal

2195
participants



1 online forum on Council's 'Have Your Say' portal

48
participants



Interviews with key stakeholder groups

2
participants

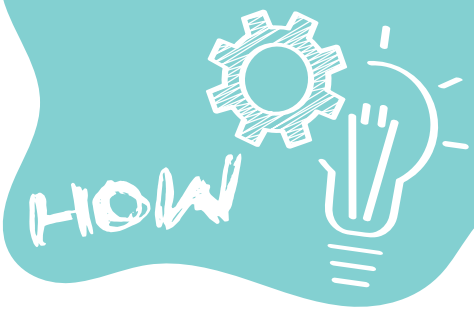


3 x workshops with 10 impacted community organisations

10
participants



How did we promote?



Social media

20,373
unique views



Signs in parks and
beaches around
Port Phillip

60
signs



Youtube video

35,499
unique views



Council newsletters

2,873
recipients



Total clicks from
paid social media
advertisements

1,074
total clicks



Email to registered
dog owners

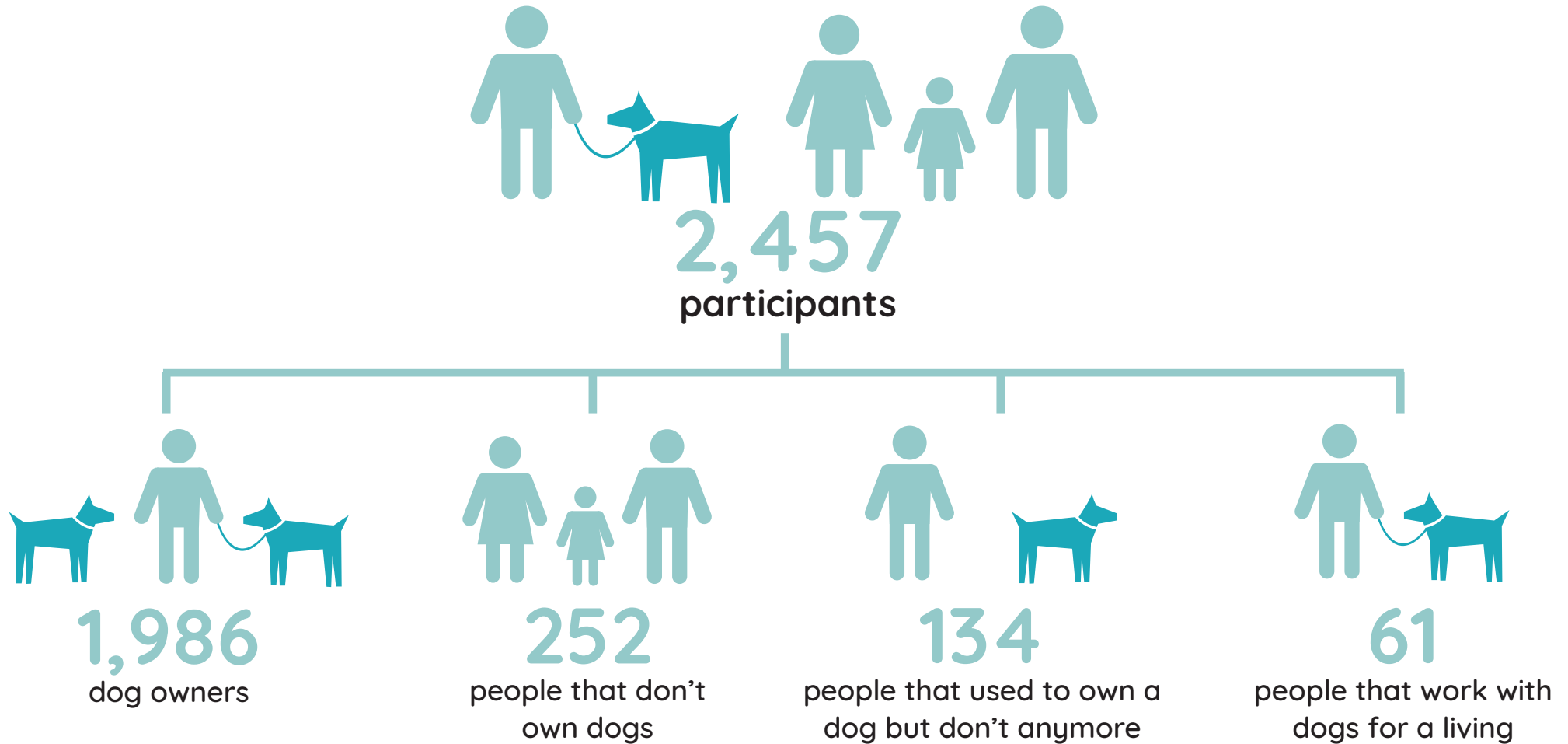
7,381
recipients



Engagement outcomes



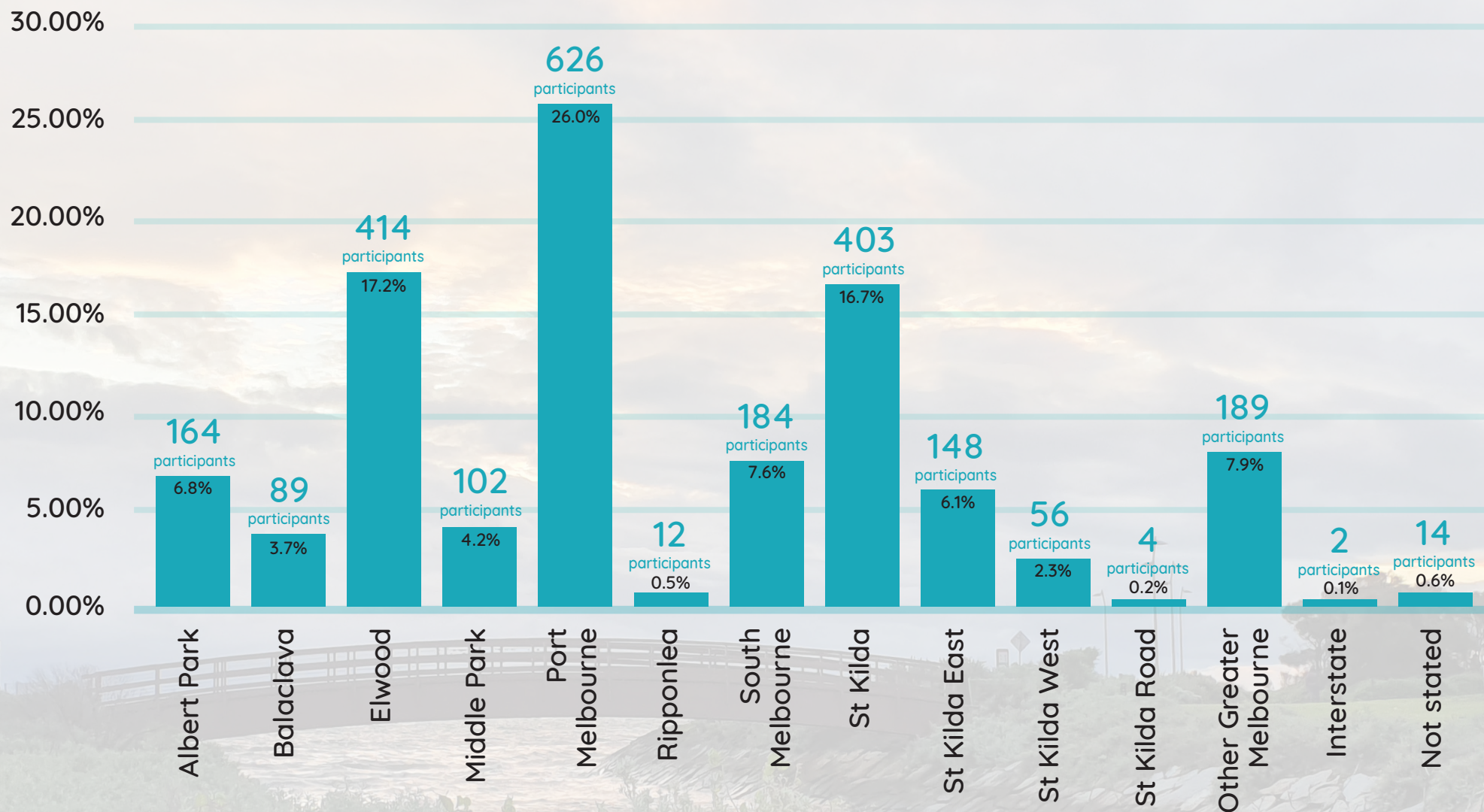
Who did we hear from?



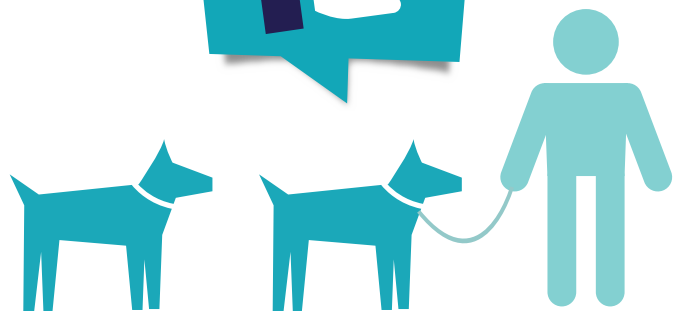
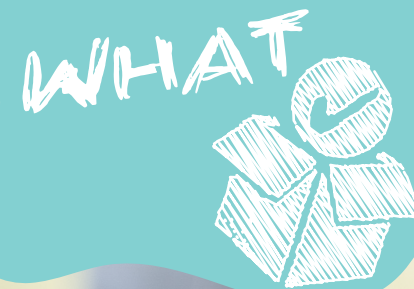
Note: Not all participants responded to the question of dog ownership.



Suburb of residence



What's working well?



Dog owners think these things work well in off-leash areas:



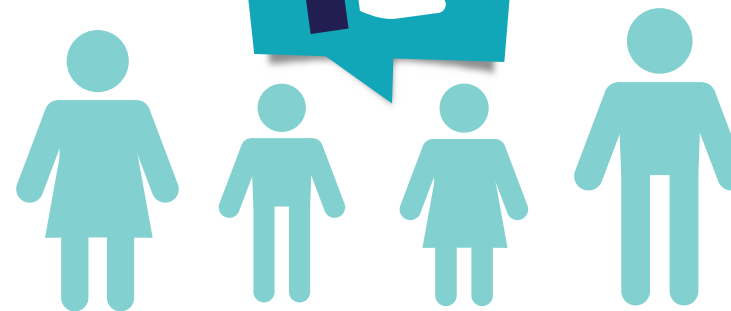
Large open areas



Access to water, shade and sensory experiences for dogs



Opportunities for dogs and owners to socialise



Non-dog owners think these things work well in off-leash areas:



When owners are responsible for their dog's behaviour



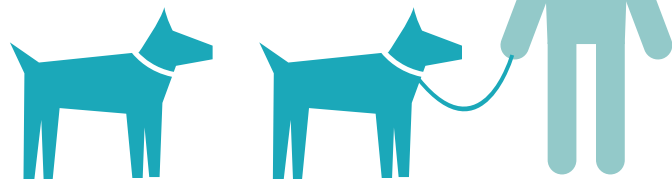
Separation between different user groups



Fences, shade and seating



What's not working well?



Dog owners think these things DON'T work well in off-leash areas:



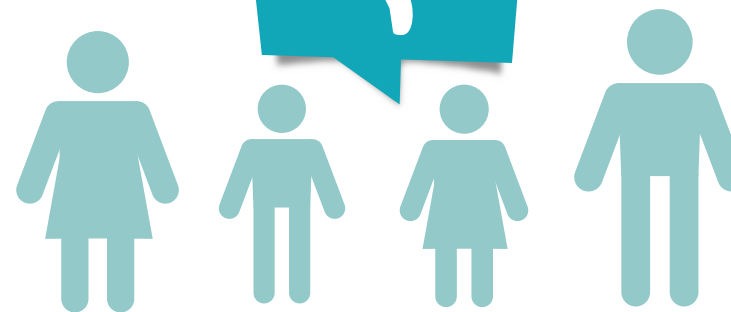
When there is a lack of bins, water or shade



When there isn't separation between user groups



When small and large dogs are together in a confined area



Non-Dog owners think these things DON'T work well in off-leash areas:



Dog owners do not have effective control over their dogs

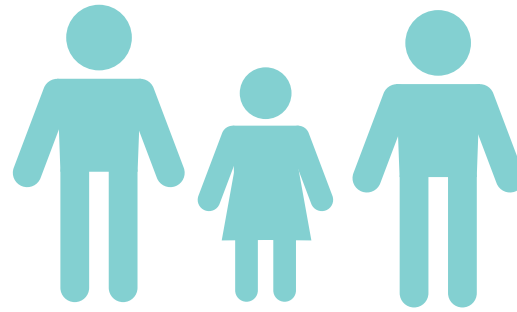
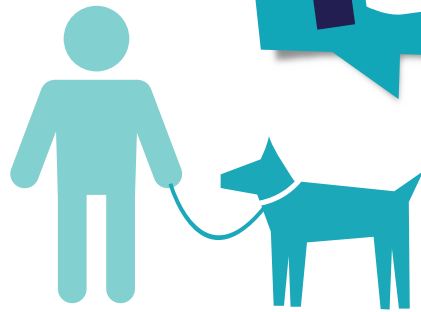
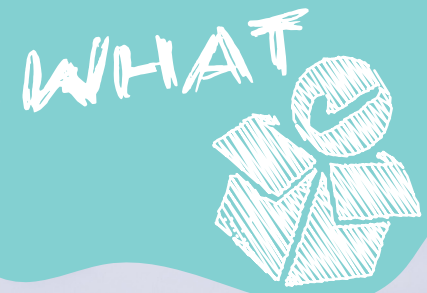


Dog owners not picking up poo/using rubbish bags



Council enforcement

Limiting access for dogs off-leash



People think it's OK to limit access for dogs off-leash when:



there is another group using the space,
eg. Sporting clubs



there is increased seasonal use,
eg. Beaches in Summer



the space is close to residents

Top 5 factors people want Council to consider when planning dog off-leash areas

1. Size of the area – the bigger the better

2. Location - Dog owners want to walk to off-leash areas.
Non-dog owners want off-leash areas away from residences due to noise.

3. Who else uses the area and what they use it for

4. How far it is set back from the road or other user groups

5. Wildlife or natural significance

