

PURPOSE

Wollongong City Council (Council) has a legislative responsibility to provide a minimum of one (1) off-leash dog area as per the Companion Animals Act 1998 (Part 3 Responsibilities for control of dogs). Council additionally has a responsibility to provide an overarching education and compliance program to ensure effective and responsible care and management of dogs within the Wollongong Local Government Area (LGA).

Council currently provides dog owners with six (6) established off-leash dog parks and has also identified a number of beach locations as off-leash dog areas from Stanwell Park in the north to Perkins Beach in the south, adding a further 10 (ten) off-leash dog areas within the LGA. In addition, we provide eleven (11) beach locations that are available for timed on-leash access.

This level of service provides for a minimum of one (1) off-leash dog area of either a park or a beach, within a five (5) kilometres distance from most residences within the Wollongong LGA.

Council will continue to provide for dog management on beaches, parks and public places within the LGA by:

- Declaring, promoting and regulating designated dog off-leash and timed on-leash areas
- Declaring, promoting and regulating native wildlife and environment and aboriginal heritage protection areas and other control areas, where dogs are prohibited
- Controlling and regulating nuisance, menacing, dangerous and restricted dogs in accordance with the legislation, and
- Developing and implementing educational materials and programs aimed at promoting responsible dog ownership through microchipping, registration, de-sexing, and managing nuisance and aggressive dog behaviour.

POLICY INTENT

This Policy describes Council's process and systems for the management of dogs on beaches, parks and public places within the Wollongong LGA. Dedicated off-leash areas are identified, as well as other areas where specific dog controls are in place as required by law. The main objectives of this policy are to have a Dogs on Beaches and Parks Policy that:

1. Meets accepted planning guidelines
2. Is balanced and generally meets the dog-owning and non dog-owning community's needs
3. Is valued by the community
4. Specifies conditions under which dogs are permitted on beaches and parks / reserves across the LGA
5. Establishes / clarifies dog control areas including off-leash areas, on-leash areas, and locations where dogs are prohibited
6. Restates dog owner's responsibilities in respect to behaviour of dogs in public places
7. Supports environment, heritage, wildlife and threatened species protection, and
8. Provides dog owners with adequate access to open space for exercising their dogs.

The Policy also provides the community with general information relating to:

- Council requirements relating to the Companion Animals Act 1998
- dog owner responsibilities when their dog is in a public place
- outline of dog control areas, including the traffic light system of green, orange and red zones
- identification of dedicated dog beach and park areas
- Council's focus on education and awareness raising, and
- Council's compliance and enforcement role.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The following legislation governs Council's requirements regarding managing and enforcing responsible pet ownership:

- *Local Government Act 1993*, and
- *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

WOLLONGONG 2035 OBJECTIVES

This Policy is a direct contributor to the delivery of 'Our Wollongong Our Future 2035':

Goal 2 We have well planned, connected and liveable places:

- 2.1 Urban areas are planned and well maintained to provide a healthy and safe environment for our community to live, work and play.
- 2.14 Plan and deliver an accessible, safe, clean and inviting public domain.

BACKGROUND

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* (the Act) commenced in 1998 and Council commenced implementation of the Act in 1999 with an emphasis on promoting responsible dog ownership and providing the community with access to dog exercise areas. Off-leash areas were generally established on beaches and parks where people tended to already regularly exercise their dogs off-leash.

It is estimated that there are approximately 40 dogs per 100 people in the Wollongong LGA. This is calculated based on a population of approximately 215,000 people (as per 2021 census data), and approximately 86,112 dogs (as per Office of Local Government data), which identifies both registered and microchipped (only) dogs. Council ensures that access for these dogs in our public places is provided in a way that is consistent with demand arising from this high dog ownership rate.

DOG OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Dog owners have an obligation to ensure that their dog does not adversely affect any other person or animal:

- People with dogs in public places should be aware of other dogs and their owners, the general public and children in particular and should move to avoid conflict where it is anticipated, and
- In natural areas such as reserves or beaches, dog owners should be mindful of native flora and fauna and keep dogs on established tracks and away from foredunes and other sensitive areas.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Dog on-leash:

Throughout NSW dogs are required to be on-leash at all times in public places. The *Companion Animals Act 1998* requires all dogs to be under effective control by cord or leash while in a public place. Signage is not required to enforce this effective control provision as it is NSW State Legislation applying throughout the State. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, all public road reserves, carparks, footpaths and park areas allow access for dogs, but they must be maintained on-leash.

The exceptions to this rule are:

- Dogs accompanied by a person within a declared Council off-leash area
- A dog participating in an obedience class or trial
- A dog being exhibited in a show
- A dog working stock
- A Police dog or
- A dog secured in a cage or vehicle or tethered to a fixed object or structure.

Dog off-leash:

All dogs within designated off-leash areas, including both off-leash beaches and off-leash parks, must be supervised by a person. In off-leash areas the person with the dog is required to ensure that the dog does not attack, harass or chase any person or animal. This means that the dog must be controlled so that other users of the area are not affected.

The person in charge of any dog within these areas, (which have been provided as a facility for enjoyment by the community), MUST:

- Be a competent person 16 years of age or over
- Be able to control the dog (by voice command or other means)
- Not allow restricted breeds, or dogs declared as menacing or dangerous, to use the off-leash area, and
- Not allow dogs suffering from contagious disease, skin irritation or parasitic infection to use the area.

NOTE: The owner of a dog, or the person present at the time of the offence who is in charge of the dog, is legally responsible if the dog attacks a person or animal (as per the *Companion Animals Act 1998* – Part 3 Responsibilities for control of dogs – Clause 13 Responsibilities while dog in public place).

Collar and Name Tag:

A dog that is away from the premises of the owner must wear a collar and tag. The tag must show the name of the dog and the address or telephone number of the owner.

Microchip and registration:

Dogs over the age of twelve (12) weeks of age must be microchipped and lifetime registered, and be recorded on the NSW Companion Animal Register.

Cleaning up after your dog:

If a dog defecates in a public place the dog owner must immediately remove the faeces and dispose of it in a proper manner. The need for bins and dispensers has been highlighted as an essential requirement in reducing dog faeces problems on beaches and along bike track and pedestrian walking areas in particular. Each off-leash area will have sufficient bins and dispensers and the bike track adjoining the orange zones will also be provided with bins and dispensers.

Council will provide waste disposal bins in all dog leash free areas where possible and may also supply faeces disposal bags for the community's convenience. When no bins or bags are available, dog owners are required to provide and use their own disposal bags and remove the used bags from the area.

No more than four (4) dogs:

Any one person, either the dog's owner or a person in control of a dog, can only have a maximum of four (4) dogs under their control. This applies to dogs on-leash and dogs in an off-leash area. This does not apply if a dog has been declared as menacing, for which different rules apply as outlined by the issued Menacing Dog Order for that dog.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

DOG CONTROL AREAS

The three (3) tier approach (as in traffic lights) has been chosen as it is a suitable, easily understood way in which to explain the three (3) levels of access for dogs along the foreshore, beaches and parks/reserves. This approach also enables a diagrammatic view of the access provisions along our coast. The green areas are off-leash areas at all times, the orange areas are time-share access areas where dogs are required to remain on-leash only, and the red areas are dog prohibited (banned) areas.

Council also have general public place areas as defined by State legislation. Where a beach has not been identified as a specific zone, it is therefore a public place and dogs are required on-leash in these areas at all times.

All dog control areas declared by Council, require near the boundaries of those areas and at reasonable intervals, notices or signage detailing the relevant control areas.

OFF-LEASH GREEN BEACH ZONES

The green off-leash beach zones have been provided to meet the needs of dogs and dog owners given the significant population in our community.

The following beaches are declared as off-leash areas, which means they are accessible for dogs to use off-leash at any time. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of these areas.

- Stanwell Park Beach from the northern side of the lagoon in Stanwell Park reserve through to the northern end of the beach, approximately 140 metres east of the Maxwell Crescent and The Drive intersection in Stanwell Park
- Sharkey's Beach from the most northern point of the Sharkey's Beach carpark through to the Brickyard Point boundary, approximately 200 metres north of the Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark
- Little Austinmer Beach from the Headlands rock platform boundary approximately 50 meters north of Headlands Beach Hotel, through to Austinmer Beach boundary at the end of Toxteth Avenue, Austinmer
- McCauley's Beach from Corbett Avenue, Thirroul through to the Sandon Point rock platform boundary, approximately 120 metres east of Garaban Court, Bulli
- Bellambi Harbour from the Bellambi rock pool boundary through to the carpark at the Bellambi boat ramp
- East Corrimal Beach from the Bellambi boat ramp through to the public space area boundary, approximately 230 metres north/east of the Murray Road Carpark, East Corrimal
- Puckey's Beach south from the Fairy Meadow Beach SLSC Carpark boundary through to a point on Puckey's Beach which is approximately 250 metres north of the lagoon in Stuart Park, Wollongong
- Coniston Beach from the Bank Street, Wollongong Beach entry point to Port Kembla Harbour
- MM Beach from the Port Kembla rock platform boundary south through to Fisherman's Beach rock platform boundary, and
- Perkins Beach from the south end of the southern Port Kembla SLSC carpark through to the Perkins Beach access off Murrie Street, Windang.

Note that where lifeguards patrol beaches, the area between the dunes and the edge of the surf zone and within any patrolled zone indicated by the flags, and areas within 100 metres of the patrolled zone are

prohibited, even if on a green zone beach. These areas will generally be identified by temporary lifeguard 'No Dogs' signs in these areas.

OFF LEASH DOG PARKS

The following parks are declared as off-leash areas, some being open dog park facilities, and some providing a fenced dog park facility. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of these areas.

- Figtree Park, Figtree
- Proud Park, Helensburgh
- Riley Park, Unanderra
- Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra
- King George V Park, Port Kembla
- Reed Park, Dapto

NOTE: Signage is used to determine alternatives to on-leash areas including where dogs are prohibited. With the exception of the current parks identified as off-leash areas, other specific parks and sports fields have been determined to prohibit dogs. These areas will have No Dogs signage, incorporated into the Public Place signage that is displayed. The signage has been determined as appropriate in the past and will be enforced by Council under the *Local Government Act 1993*.

ON-LEASH ORANGE BEACH ZONES

The orange zone is a time-sharing zone. This zone allows dogs on beaches on-leash only and only within certain times. This time-sharing zone is an important zone that allows additional access for dogs and their owners in a controlled manner, and access for the public at other times with no dog access allowed.

Dogs are declared prohibited in the following places except at the detailed times and only when on-leash:

- Dogs are allowed on-leash on orange zone beaches before 9am and after 6pm in summer
- Dogs are allowed on-leash on orange zone beaches before 9am and after 4pm in winter, and
- Dogs are not allowed on orange zone beaches in between these prescribed times.

Summer months are defined as being from the beginning of the September school holidays to Anzac Day, (in line with lifeguard and SLSC patrols), and winter months are taken to mean the balance of the year. This zone is on-leash only and within the times designated to minimise impact to fauna and flora, sensitive dune areas, as well as in some areas aboriginal heritage, from unrestrained dogs. It also provides limited access to designated times to provide dedicated beach zones for those who may not want to interact with dogs. Keeping dogs on-leash within the limited times has the added benefit of reducing unwanted aggressive behaviour due to the increased control of the dog.

The following beaches are declared on-leash beaches only. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of these areas.

- Stanwell Park Beach from the southern side of the lagoon in Stanwell Park reserve through to the boundary of the Coalcliff rock platform, approximately 80 metres east of the Kallaroo Avenue and Lower Coast Road intersection in Stanwell Park

- Coalcliff Beach from the boundary of the Coalcliff rock platform, approximately 150 metres south/east of the Coalcliff train station, through to the Scarborough to Coalcliff rock platform boundary which is located approximately 85 metres south of the Coalcliff SLSC
- Scarborough and Wombarra Beaches from the Scarborough to Coalcliff rock platform boundary, approximately 130 metres north/east of Jim Allen Oval, Wombarra, through to the northern side of the Wombarra rock pool
- Brickyard Point from the southern boundary of Sharkey's Beach, approximately 200 metres north of the Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark through to the most northern point of Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark
- Thirroul Beach from the Austinmer Beach boundary, which is located approximately 130 metres south of the Austinmer rock pool, through to Corbett Avenue, Thirroul
- Sandon Point Beach from the southern side of the Sandon Point SLSC through to the most northern point of the Bulli SLSC carpark
- Bulli Beach from the southern side of the Bulli rock pool through to the northern side of the Woonona rock pool
- Woonona and Bellambi Beaches from the Woonona rock pool through to the northern side of the Bellambi rock pool
- Corrimal Beach from the public space area boundary, approximately 80 metres east of the Murray Road Carpark, East Corrimal through to Towradgi Pool
- Towradgi and Fairy Meadow Beaches south from the Towradgi rock pool boundary through to the Puckey's Beach boundary which is located approximately 150 metres from the most southern point of the Fairy Meadow SLSC carpark
- Puckeys Estate from the entrance on Squires Way through the estate to the entrance on Elliotts Road, and
- Fisherman's Beach from the Fisherman's Beach rock platform, south to the Port Kembla Beach and rock pool boundary, approximately 40 metres east of the Sewerage Treatment Plant entrance.

Note that where lifeguards patrol beaches, the area between the dunes and the edge of the surf zone and within any patrolled zone indicated by the flags, and areas within 100 metres of the patrolled zone are prohibited, even if on an orange zone beach. These areas will generally be identified by temporary lifeguard 'No Dogs' signs in these areas.

PROHIBITED RED BEACH ZONES

Dogs are declared prohibited in public bathing areas - meaning any public place or any part of a public place that is used for or in conjunction with public bathing or public recreation (including a beach), whether or not they are leashed or otherwise controlled. Please see the attached maps for a diagrammatic depiction of red zone beaches.

- All lifeguard patrolled beaches including the area between the dunes and the edge of the surf zone and within any patrolled zone indicated by the flags and areas within 100 metres of the patrolled zone
- Windang Beach from the Lake Illawarra entrance to the Perkins Beach access off Murrie Street, Windang
- Port Kembla Beach from the beach access at the south end of the southern Port Kembla SLSC carpark, through to the Fisherman's Beach boundary, approximately 40 metres east of the Sewerage Treatment Plant entrance

- The entire Wollongong to North Wollongong Beach area (Wollongong City Beach and North Beach) from the Bank Street, Wollongong Beach entry point to a point on Puckey's Beach which is approximately 250 metres north of the lagoon in Stuart Park, Wollongong. This area includes Belmore Basin
- Sandon Point from the eastern side of the Sandon Point SLSC through to the McCauley's beach boundary, approximately 120 metres east of Garaban Court, Bulli.
- Austinmer Beach from the Thirroul Beach boundary which is located approximately 130 metres south of the Austinmer rock pool through to the Little Austinmer Beach boundary at the end Toxteth Avenue, Austinmer
- Headlands Beach from the Little Austinmer Beach carpark through to the most northern point of Austinmer Boat Ramp carpark, and
- Coledale Beach from the most northern point of the Sharkey's Beach carpark through to the northern side of the Wombarra rock pool.

Dogs are also declared prohibited in the following places (whether they are leashed or otherwise controlled):

- Children's play areas - within 10 metres of any playing apparatus provided in a public place for the use of children
- Food preparation areas - within ten (10) metres of any food preparation areas or food consumption areas such as BBQs, public tables and picnic shelters, except where these areas are in a public thoroughfare
- School grounds and child care centres - unless with the permission of the person in charge
- Wildlife protection areas - meaning any public place or any part of a public place set apart by Council 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 e.g. on all rock platforms, and
- Recreation areas where dogs are prohibited - these areas include any public place, or part of a public place, provided for public recreation or the playing or organised games and in which Council has ordered that dogs are prohibited and in which, or near the boundaries of which, there are conspicuously exhibited at reasonable intervals, notices to the effect that dogs are prohibited in or on that public place or part.

POLICY REGULATION

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Council will continue to provide ongoing education to the community in the following manner:

- Website information
- Community Newsletters
- Media Releases, including Social Media, at appropriate intervals following an incident
- Development and use of a Beach and Park Dog Access Locations brochure
- Animal Compliance Officer in-field education
- School education, and

- Promoting the Policy at Council and community events, including information days, and microchipping days.

SIGNAGE

The Policy will continue to be implemented effectively through consistent appropriate regulatory and educational / information signage. Signage is acknowledged and recognised as particularly important in providing clarity and consistency about the Policy requirements and appropriate signage will continue to be erected and maintained. Signage includes:

- Zone explanatory signage
- Off-leash rules signage
- Access path signage
- Dogs prohibited signage, and
- Directional / demarcation signage.

To improve conditions for users of off-leash areas, conditions of use have been included on signage at each off-leash area.

Council staff will also regularly review signage across all control Zones particularly where ongoing non-compliance occurs and consider where signage should be increased for compliance and education purposes.

ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement will be undertaken in accordance with Council's current Compliance and Enforcement Policy and Compliance and Regulation procedures. The Regulation and Enforcement Division commits to providing regular compliance patrols of public land, particularly enforcement on hotspot beaches, and high use parks. The various levels of access within the three (3) zones have a varying degree of risk associated with them in relation to unwanted attention or aggressive behaviour of dogs. Responsibility for a dog's behaviour sits with the owner or person in control of the dog. Advice received by Council is that the Tort of Duty of Care arises under the common law of negligence and that Council has no responsibility, as off-leash areas are allowed and specified under the Act.

Irrespective of this advice, Council maintains a compliance presence to monitor responsible pet ownership and behaviour in the declared zones. By providing clear access options and signage, the community is able to decide which area they wish to frequent and assume the risk associated with that area. Education advice will also be provided to the community in relation to risk.

Council also has included conditions of use for each off-leash area that will reduce risk of aggressive behaviour to users. Council Animal Compliance Officers will enforce under the *Local Government Act 1993* and/or the *Companion Animals Act 1998* when dog owners fail to comply with these conditions.

Should an attack occur in a public place, including an off-leash area, Council will ensure that all matters are investigated, and the appropriate enforcement action taken. Action can include issuing Fines and/or having a dog declared a dangerous, menacing or nuisance dog. Any injury or damage as a result of an attack, is the responsibility of the attacked person to take civil legal action against the owner of the offending dog, through the Court process.

An on-call after hours emergency service is also provided for dog attacks, aggressive and dangerous dogs at large, and in response to NSW Police requests.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

The Customer Service action request system is used to register and monitor complaints in relation to dogs in public places. This information will be used in future reviews of this Policy.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed a minimum of once every term of Council, or more frequently as required.

Significant consultation as part of review of the Policy has occurred in 2002, 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018 and 2023.

REPORTING

Progress on the proactive compliance program for companion animals in public places is reported to Council in both the quarterly and annual reports.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Manager Regulation & Enforcement is responsible for reviewing and updating the Policy.

Compliance & Regulation Manager is responsible for the implementation of the Policy, including reviewing and updating the relevant dog access signage in beach, foreshore and park areas, ensuring that beach and foreshore areas are patrolled proactively and that the appropriate enforcement action is taken against offenders, and the community is educated about responsible dog ownership.

RELATED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Compliance and Enforcement – Council Policy

RELATED STRATEGIES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Document title of related procedures and their location. Do not document the procedure here.

Procedures are related to task orientated areas and are not to be included in the policy. Procedures may require EMC approval in accordance with the Policy Framework.




APPROVAL AND REVIEW	
Responsible Division	Regulation and Enforcement
Date adopted by Council	25 May 2026
Date/s of previous adoptions	26/02/2024, 22/07/2019, 24/11/2014, 26/11/2012, 27/04/2011, 28/09/2010
Date of next review	25 May 2029

ATTACHMENTS: MAPS OF ZONE AREAS

Attachments: Maps of Zone Areas

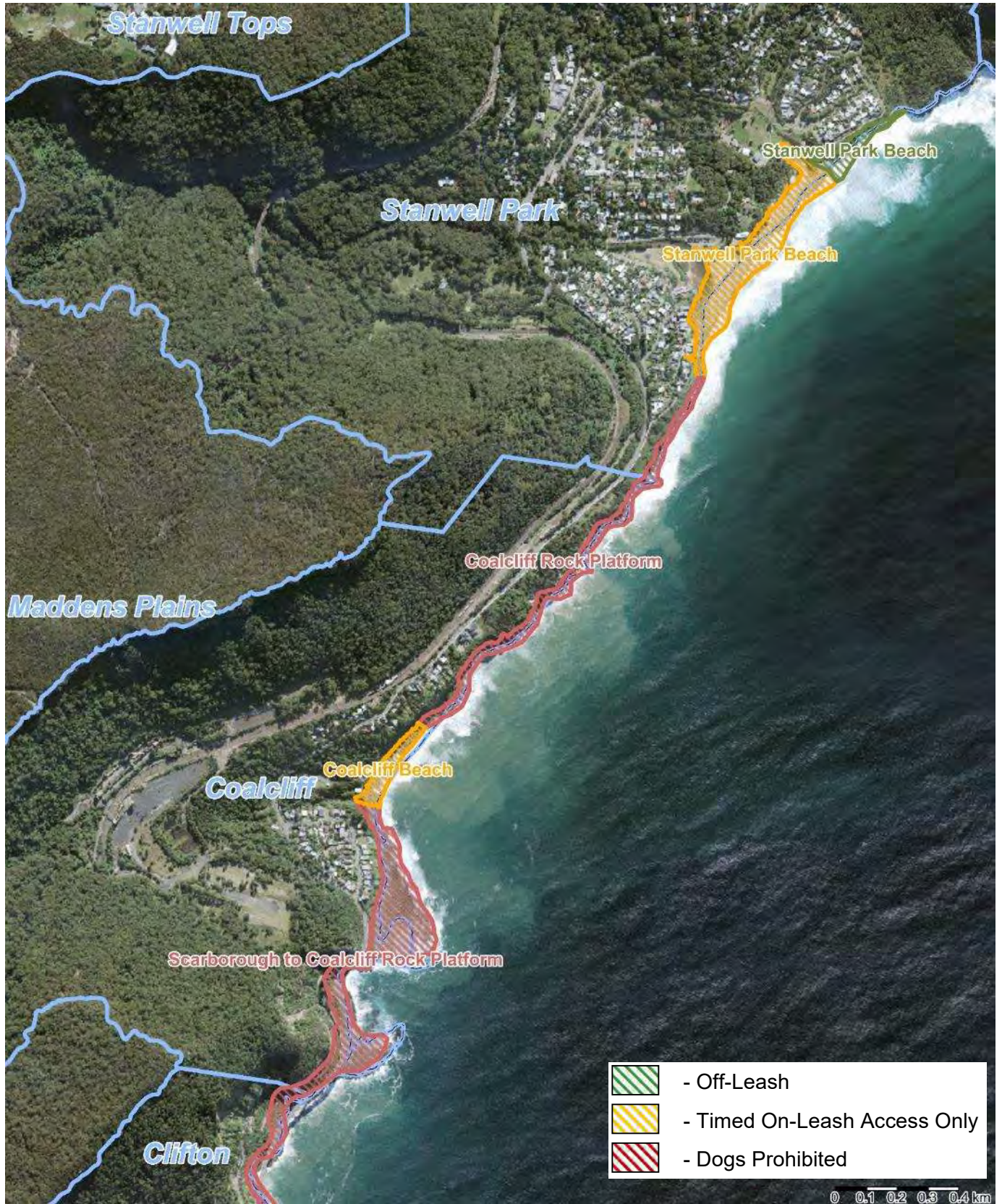
The following maps depict all declared control areas across Wollongong City Council. All dog control areas are identified using the following legend.

Legend:

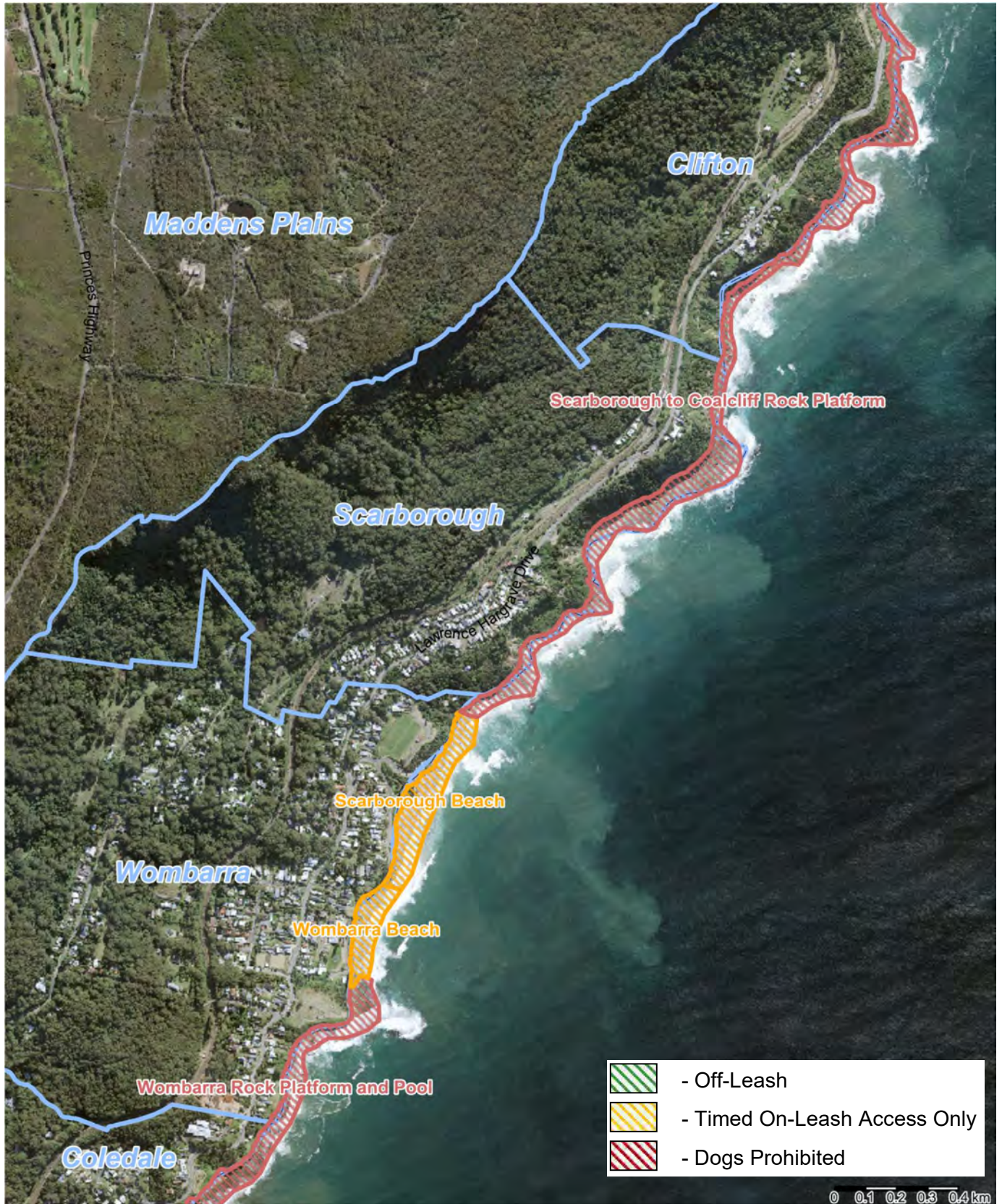
	- Off-Leash
	- Timed On-Leash Access Only
	- Dogs Prohibited

Note – any beaches not designated as above are 'Public Place'.

Map 1: Stanwell Park - Clifton



Map 2: Clifton - Coledale



Map 3: Coledale – Thirroul



Map 4: Thirroul – Woonona



Map 5: Woonona – Bellambi



Map 6: Bellambi – North Wollongong



Map 7: North Wollongong – Wollongong



Map 8: Wollongong – Port Kembla



Map 9: Port Kembla – Primbee



Map 10: Primbee – Windang



Map 11: Figtree Oval, Figtree



Map 12: Proud Park, Helensburgh



Map 13: Riley Park, Unanderra



Map 14: Eleebana Reserve, Koonawarra



Map 15: King George V Park, Port Kembla



Map 16: Reed Park, Dapto

