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Ms Christine Embleton
Ms Amy Weir
Bayside City Council
76 Royal Avenue
SANDRINGHAM VIC 3191

Dear Ms Embleton and Ms Weir,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Bayside City Councils (BCC) Domestic Animal Management Plan review. The below commentary focusses on the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary (RPMS) area.

As outlined in the RPMS management plan, RPMS is identified as a significant site in the statewide system of marine protected areas across Victoria. This site has been protected and is specifically recognised for its contribution to the representation of the eastern shoreline environments of Port Phillip. The sanctuary protects a significant natural roosting site on the eastern side of Port Phillip and is an important feeding area of regional significance migratory, threatened and resident shorebird species such as Crested Terns, Sharp Tailed Sandpiper, Pacific Gulls, Pelicans, various Cormorant Species, Silver Gills and a recent sighting of a Little Stint.

The vision for RPMS is to maintain the marine ecosystems in its natural state, to be enjoyed by visitors and protected by the impacts of inappropriate development and activity. Management actions within the RPMS management plan identify the need to maintain/improve the intertidal reef platform habitat, seagrass communities for migratory and other shorebirds.

Dogs are considered incompatible with the aims and objectives of areas managed under the National Parks Act including our marine national parks and sanctuaries and are generally prohibited from these areas, however a number of areas have been set aside within RPMS to allow dog walking provided dogs are leashed, under control and restrained from causing annoyance to people and wildlife.

The RPMS management plan (section 6.6) describes the current regulations and also notes Parks Victoria to liaise with BCC to encourage an integrated approach to dog management.

In your consideration of potential changes to dog regulations on BCC foreshore beaches, we highlight below the complicated nature of mixed on-lead/off-lead access areas at RPMS.

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Whilst Parks Victoria understands the popularity of this site for dog walkers, dog owners are often witnessed without effective control of their dogs resulting in harassment of wildlife and accessing areas that are not permitted.

The mixture of on-lead/off-lead areas significantly contributes to confusion amongst visitors to the site. Parks Victoria Rangers regularly interact with the public providing details of these bylaws and boundaries between differing access restrictions however continue to experience confusion regarding differing zones.

Parks Victoria supports a review of the dog regulations in this area to achieve an outcome in line with the protection of the marine sanctuary, noting that any expansion of the dog off leash boundaries would not be in the interest of the RPMS for the above reasons.

Parks Victoria recommends all foreshore adjacent to RPMS revert to on-leash only, mimicking the seasonal and time restrictions for the remainder of the dog on leash areas throughout the Sanctuary. This would increase protection and enhancement of the marine sanctuary, continue to provide access for dog walkers and greatly reduce confusion resulting in increased levels of compliance.

Should you require further advice on this matter please contact Emily Verey, Ranger Team Leader – North Port Phillip on 0419 553 012.

Yours sincerely



Reece Taranto

A/District Manager - Port Phillip/Western Port
Parks Victoria