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DOGS ON BEACHES & PUBLIC SPACES

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Responsible Officer: SCO

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It can be a wonderful experience for both the dog and their owner to walk on the beach or in a park. However there are laws that apply, which are intended to ensure that all beach and park users enjoy the experience, not just dog owners.

The Dog and Cat Management Act states that a dog must be on leash at all times when on a road, footpath, playgrounds or car park, but may be off leash whilst in a park, garden, reserve, foreshore or similar open space (unless signs and local laws say it must be on a leash). Therefore a dog can be off leash on a foreshore or a park, but in the majority of cases a dog can only access a foreshore via a road or a car park, therefore all dogs must be kept on a leash until they reach the foreshore or park.

Dogs are permitted on a foreshore or park (unless signage indicate otherwise) at all times subject to the following conditions:

- Dogs must be on a lead no more than 2 metres in length
Or
- Dogs can be exercised off lead but they must be kept under effective control.

Your dog is considered to be under **Effective Control** if

- You can see your dog at all times (cannot be walking behind you, it must be kept in your vision)
- Your dog is kept in close proximity
- You are able to control your dog in any circumstance
- Your dog does not run up to other people or animals
- Your dog does not attack, chase, harass or otherwise endanger the health of a person or an animal or bird owned by or in charge of another person (whether or not actual injury is caused)

If your dog is not under effective control you may receive an \$210 on the spot fine for dog wandering at large.

Dogs should not be allowed to;

- Jump up on/harass or scare other public place users, especially young children.
- Act aggressively towards other dogs
- Run uncontrolled amongst other public space users.

Many people, both adults and children are scared of dogs. If your dog runs up to a person and they become scared or frightened, your dog has technically committed the offence of dog attack as it has frightened another person. Although your dog might not “hurt a flea” in your mind, other people or animals may be frightened by the sheer presence of your dog running up to them. This type of incident is the lowest degree of a dog attack, which can result in a dog owner receiving a \$315 on the spot fine issued by a Council Officer or Police.

If you don't think you could call your dog back under distraction of other dogs or other people, please do not take your dog off lead.

The beaches of the Yorke Peninsula provide important nesting for several species of resident beach nesting birds. They lay their eggs on the beach, above the high water mark or in the sand dunes, close to their food source from late spring and into summer, when the beach activity is at its highest. The eggs are generally speckled and blend in with the sand. This camouflage effect gives the eggs protection against native predators, but also means they are difficult for humans and dogs to see who could accidentally step on them. When accompanied by a dog, people have a greater impact on beach nesting birds, especially if a dog is unleashed. Birds are easily frightened off their nest by dogs.

It is very important that the human impact and their dogs on beach nesting birds is kept to a minimum. Walk your dog along a beach near the water edge, you are guaranteed to do no harm because the birds nest above the high tide mark. If care is not taken to protect these birds, Council will need to consider policy changes that restrict vehicles and dogs on our beaches and open spaces.

If you require further information, please contact one of Council's Dog Management Officer's during office hours on 8832 0000.

