

# Sportsground lighting trial for dogs

Community engagement  
summary report

September 2022



**Bayside**  
CITY COUNCIL

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## Overview

The 2022 winter sportsground lighting trial took place between 30 May and 19 August 2022. The trial gave dog walkers the opportunity to enjoy night-time access to three selected Bayside sportsgrounds, outside of scheduled training sessions and match play:

- RJ Sillitoe Reserve, Hampton, 5:30pm and 8:30pm on Mondays
- William Street Reserve, Brighton, 5:30pm and 8:30pm on Tuesdays
- RG Chisholm Reserve, Sandringham, 5:30pm and 8:30pm on Fridays

The purpose of the trial was to understand if the increased night-time access to well-lit off-leash dog areas was considered to be a benefit by local dog owners. The trial program was used to measure the expected use, and also to both understand and address any impacts on sportsgrounds stemming from increased use.

Community engagement on the sportsground lighting trial was open for the duration of the program trial. 95 community members completed the consultation survey. The trial program received strong support and the majority of respondents expressed support to expand the program:

Comments	Count
Great idea	25
Able to exercise dog after work	11
Continue with trial	8
Finish at 7:30	5
Lights on daily	4
Weekdays 5-9pm	4

## Next steps

Evaluation of the trial incorporates feedback from dog owners, sports clubs, and neighbouring residents; ground inspections, and Local Laws Officer feedback relating to use, and adherence to pet owner responsibility gathered during on-site patrols.

Council will review feedback to determine if further program trials will go ahead, and if additional sportsgrounds will be included.

## 1 Background

This document provides a summary of stakeholder and community feedback on the sportsground lighting trial for night-time off-leash dog use.

One of the key activities identified in the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP), was to trial the use of outdoor lights at selected sportsgrounds over winter to expand access to open space for dogs off-leash. Council identified three sportsgrounds to trial the program during the winter months (RJ Sillitoe Reserve, William Street Reserve and RG Chisholm Reserve).

To select locations for the trial, sportsgrounds were assessed against three key criteria:

1. Are identified Dog Off-leash areas,
2. Has no scheduled sporting activity on the selected evening, and
3. Has available sportsground lighting.

The three sportsgrounds selected met all criteria and were identified as suitable locations for the trial.

In conjunction with community feedback, Local Laws Officers documented observations from regular patrols of each sportsground to provide data on community use and dog owner compliance with responsible pet ownership requirements.

Additionally, routine inspections of sportsgrounds were conducted to assess the condition and cleanliness – in particular uncollected poo and holes dug by dogs which require urgent maintenance to prevent sports injury.

## 2 Definitions and scope

### 2.1 Glossary

Within this document, reference is made to stakeholders. These stakeholders are:

- Dog walkers.
- Sports club members/players.
- Neighbouring residents.

### 2.2 Related Council documents and consultations

- [Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022 – 2026 \(DAMP\)](#)

## 3 Consultation process

### 3.1 Consultation purpose

The consultation was designed to receive feedback from users of each sportsground to determine if the program was being utilised, and if winter lighting programs should be continued.

The scope of consultation included:

- Whether the trial program is continued at the sportsgrounds included in the 2022 trial
- Off-leash sportsgrounds to be considered for Winter 2023, should the program continue

#### Project timelines

- Winter off-leash sportsground lighting trial 2022: 30 May - 19 August 2022
  - Evaluation: September - October 2022
- Future winter off-leash sportsground lighting program: Winter 2023, pending outcomes of the 2022 trial.

### 3.2 Consultation methodology

Details	Activity
<b>Online survey</b> <b>95 respondents</b>	<b>Have Your Say</b> Online engagement through Have Your Say, including opportunities to provide input for future trials and provide feedback.

## Key tools for communicating the project

- Large scale signage at sportsgrounds included in the trial
- Postcards distributed to residents within approx. >350m radius of sportsgrounds and available at Bayside libraries and Corporate Centre.
- Website news stories and This Week in Bayside e-newsletter
- Direct email to key stakeholders
- Social media, including community pages
- Local Laws Officer patrols

## Key methods for gathering feedback

- Online engagement through Have Your Say, including opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback
- Conversations with Local Laws Officer on patrol at sportsground included in the trial
- Correspondence including email, phone and mail.

## 4 Consultation findings

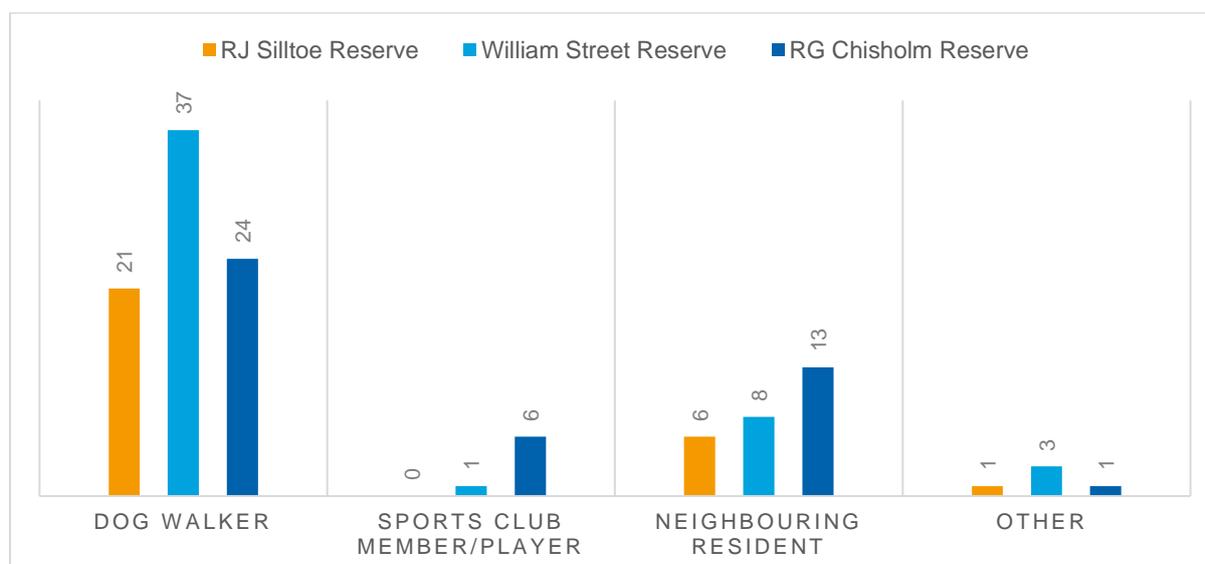
The following section summarises key themes identified through community feedback about the trial. In the interest of stakeholder and community privacy, individual quotes have not been included within this public document. Where a topic or items have been raised multiple times, the number is indicated in brackets and italics.

### 4.1 Support for actions

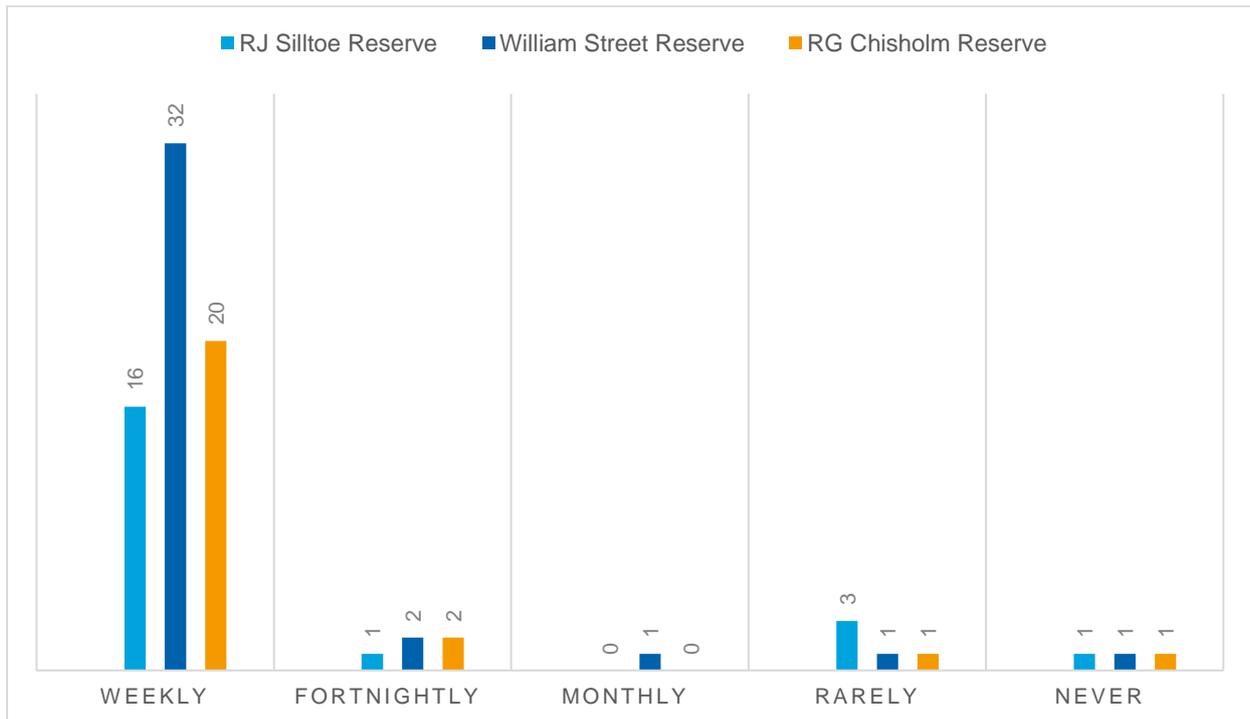
Overall feedback received from the community was positive with strong participation from regular attendees of the sportsgrounds (82% already visited once or more a week).

Common themes in the comments received included it being a great idea, builds a sense of community, and increased feelings of safety (for people and dogs). The majority of respondents (91% RJ Sillitoe, 88% William Street and 77% at RG Chisholm) strongly supported continuing the program.

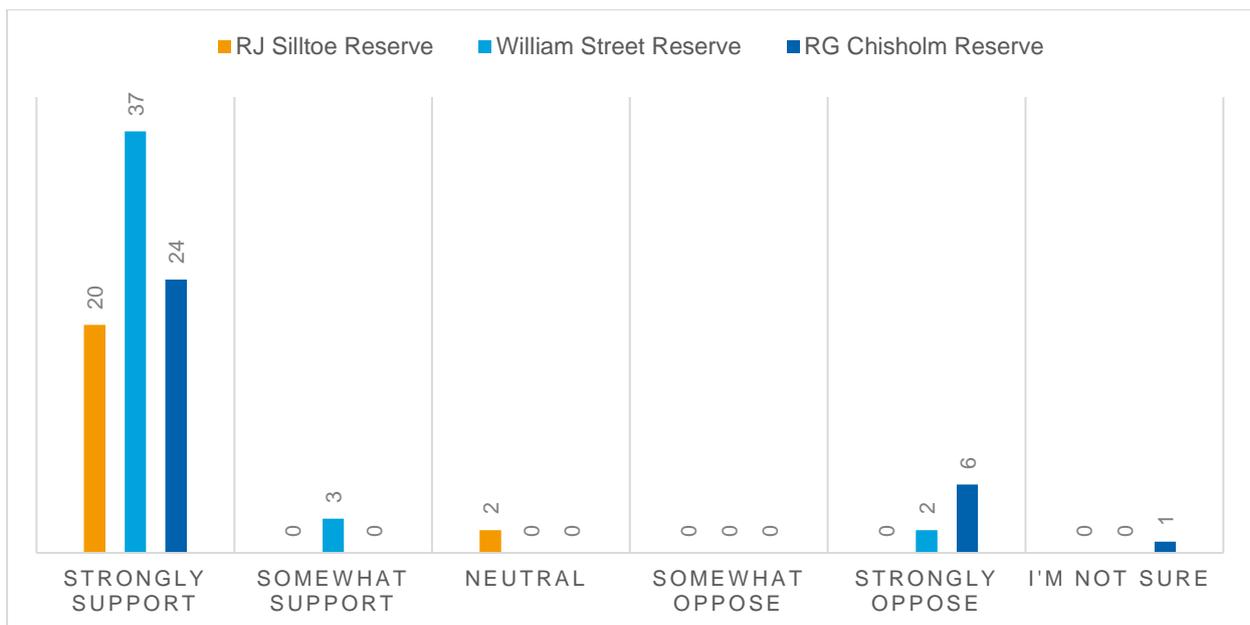
**Chart 1: What is your connection to the reserve?**



**Chart 2: How often will you use Reserve if the program is continued?**



**Chart 3: What is your level of support for continuing the program?**



In addition to the online survey, Local Law Officers attended the reserves, for approximately 90-minutes each visit, and observed a 97% compliance rate. The most common issues of non-compliance were dogs not under effective control, entering the reserve unleashed, playing too close to playground, and not picking up after a dog.

## 4.2 Item specific feedback

### 4.2.1 Travel to off-leash sportsgrounds

Most respondents (63%) walked to the off-leash sportsground in the trial, with the remaining respondents driving.

## 4.2.2 Experience of visit to sportsground during trial

Participants were asked to rate their most recent visit to the sportsground(s). An overall average of 4-stars (highest rating being 5-stars) was received for each sportsground.

When asked why they provided that rating, participants responded:

Great idea	18%
Provided a sense of community	15.5%
Friendly atmosphere	11%
Well maintained oval	8%
Great park, makes me feel safer, can exercise dog after work	7.1%

Participants were asked to suggest other sportsgrounds for future off-leash programs. Responses included:

Other Sportsground to include	Percentage
Dendy Park	16.1%
Banksia Reserve	6.35%
Donald McDonald, Hurlingham Park, WL Simpson, Elsternwick Park	4.8%

## 4.3 Possible improvements

A number of improvements were identified for potential future program trials.

Some lights were not turned on during the allocated times early in the trial. Council will need to ensure maintenance contracts are in place, and the lights/ timers are operational to prevent these issues from reoccurring.

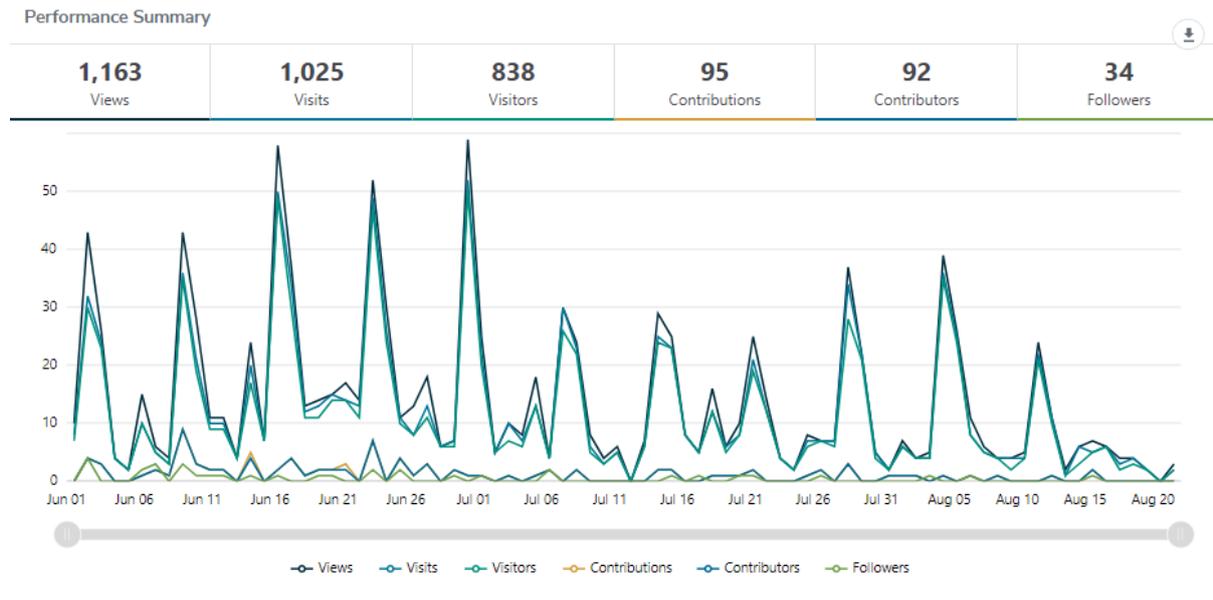
Respondents also raised an interest in greater program promotion to local residents. If further program trials are to take place, Council should review the trial locations and use effective communications channels to promote the program to local residents, including social posts and printed materials, in support of the current DAMP program.

## 5 Project evaluation

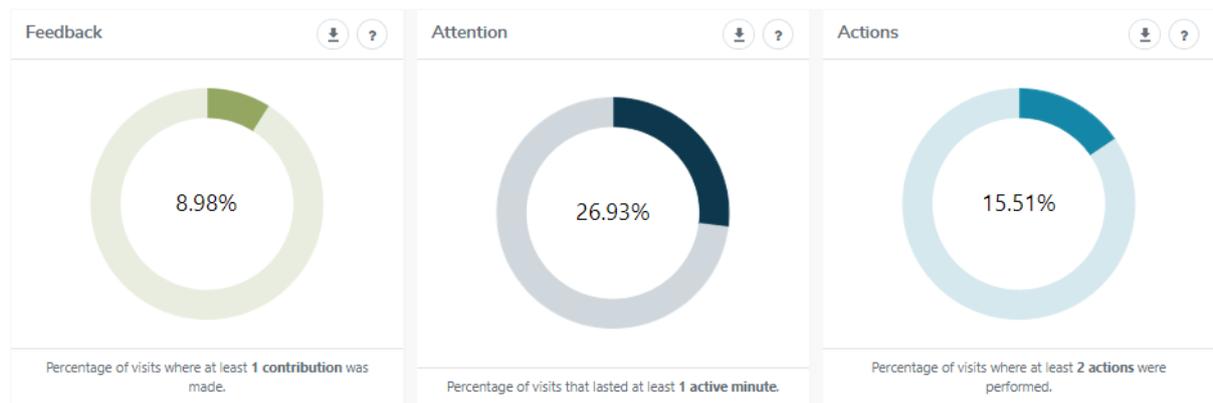
Overall feedback received from the Have your Say survey and Local Law Officer interactions with program users was positive.

Council will consider if the program will enter a second trial year and assess if additional sportsgrounds can be added to the program, depending on availability, condition of grounds and available programmable lighting.

**Figure 1: Visitation to the engagement webpage**



**Figure 2: Level of engagement with the project page**



**Figure 3: Acquisition (how people found the engagement webpage)**

