

17 December 2019

NORTHERN BEACHES COUNCIL BY-PASSING CROWN LANDS NOW RISKS ALL BEACHES BEING TURNED INTO DOG PARKS

Palm Beach Protection Group today said the Northern Beaches Council's desire to ram through new regulations that would by-pass Crown Lands risks turning all beaches on the peninsula into dog parks.

In August, despite the serious concerns of the NSW Department of Industry and from the local community about the environmental impact, the Northern Beaches Council voted in favour of an off-leash dog trial at Station Beach.

The trial was on the provision that a licence be provided by Crown Lands. This has yet to be provided, so to appease local activists, it appears Council is looking to by-pass Crown Lands and run its own licencing program.

"Once again, this is a failure of process, there has been no community consultation or public notification. It is simply about finding ways to by-pass Crown Lands and other NSW Government agencies that hold serious reservations about this dog trial at Station Beach," said Richard Kovacs from the Palm Beach Protection Group.

"It is clear that the timing of the proposal is to ensure there is zero public transparency or accountability," Mr Kovacs said.

Furthermore, the Council's last-minute new 'policy on the run' is now seeking to overturn the former Pittwater Council Dog Control Policy. The policy which is still in force states that *all beaches are prohibited areas for dogs*.

"If you amend this policy, you are providing a green light for any pristine beach on the peninsula to also be turned into a dog park," Richard Kovacs said.

"Council approved a temporary trial and now we are seeing an aggressive push to change the current dog policy across the peninsula. Our community deserves better planning processes and the current use of our beaches should not be threatened by policy on the run," Richard Kovacs said.

"The new policy proposal for Station Beach has also failed to provide any clarity on the defined western boundaries, markers to define the boundaries, timeframes and how this policy will be enforced, environmental assessments, protection of vulnerable seagrass or if in fact Crown Lands rejects the Council's licence application?"

The NSW Department of Industry has expressed concerns about environmental and compliance risks in correspondence to Council and has stated its preference for an alternative site.

"To ram this new policy through would be a gross miscarriage of due process," Richard Kovacs concluded.

For more information contact: info@protectpalmbeach.com.au