

Dog park design made simple

The Dog and Cat Management Board has launched a guide to assist South Australian councils in creating dog parks that are well-designed, well-used and enjoyable for both dogs and their human friends.

Board Chair Jan Connolly said *Unleashed: a Guide to Successful Dog Parks* would be a useful resource to support councils in the planning, design and management of effective off-leash parks.

“It is a useful toolkit for councils to design and introduce the best possible dog parks, with designs tailored to the needs of individual communities,” Ms Connolly said.

“We have learnt a lot as dog parks have been introduced around the world and this guide reflects that learning and experience.

“Dog parks provide a space for exercising and socialising dogs in a safe and controlled environment for the benefit of both owners and their pets.

“We hope this will help increase the number of happy, healthy dogs and hopefully also happier, healthier dog owners.”

South Australia’s rate of dog ownership is higher than the national average, with nearly 298,000 registered dogs around the state, or one for every two households.

Planning Institute of Australia (SA) State President Dr Iris Iwanicki said she particularly liked the emphasis on both human and canine needs and behaviour in the guide.

“It reminds us that the benefits of dog ownership include responsibilities to care for the physical and psychological needs of the animal,” Dr Iwanicki said.

“In turn, the mental and physical health benefits of owning and loving a dog, including reducing social isolation and loneliness, make our urban environment a more connected and sociable place in which to live.

“By making a safe space for companion animals and people, dog parks add to the range of recreational experiences that are available in an urban context.

“The guide also complements planning initiatives such as *Streets for People and Healthy by Design* and the Planning Institute of Australia’s national guide *Healthy Places, Healthy Spaces*.”

Unleashed was released at the Local Government Association’s Good Vibrations 2014 Council Innovations Showcase on Thursday, 10 April at AMMI Stadium.

It is now being distributed to all councils across South Australia and is available online at www.dogandcatboard.com.au.

The release of the dog park design guide follows the Dog and Cat Management Board’s release earlier this year of a guide and template to assist councils in creating cat management by-laws.

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