



July 2021



Moreton Bay Regional Council

## Dog Off Leash Area Planning and Design Guidelines

A guideline for the appropriate planning and design of dog off leash areas under Council control

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# 1. Introduction

Dog Off Leash Areas (DOLAs) are a popular recreational facility in the Moreton Bay Region. They provide an area where dogs can safely play, exercise and socialise with other dogs.

## 1.1 About this document

The *Dog Off Leash Area Planning and Design Guidelines* (the guidelines) provide practical advice on the design and location of future DOLAs within the Moreton Bay Regional Council area. The guidelines will assist developers and consultants to create and design DOLAs that are safe for both people and animals, while protecting the amenity of the area.

Council will apply discretion in the application of guidelines to ensure an appropriate level of service provision for the wider community. For example, where there are local environmental or geographic constraints that result in minor changes to the DOLA configuration.

These guidelines are not a planning instrument and are not enforceable. The guidelines are not intended to be retrospectively applied to existing DOLAs in the Moreton Bay region. The designation of beach areas as DOLAs is subject to compliance with State Government Guidelines and as such these guidelines are not intended to be applied to beach areas.

**The guidelines are structured to provide advice on each step of designing a DOLA:**

1. Assessing demand
2. Deciding on a site and layout
3. Choosing a DOLA standard
4. Planning and design principles

## Definition

A Dog Off Leash Area, or DOLA, is a public area that has been designated by Council as an area for dogs and their human companions to legally play, exercise and socialise without being on a leash.

## 1.2 Dog off leash areas in the Moreton Bay Region

DOLAs are designated areas of public land, where dogs may legally be taken without a leash. These areas are usually fenced in areas within parks or other Council managed land.

Council has the authority to designate dog off leash areas under Local Law 2 – Animal Management (2010). At a minimum, the area must be clearly defined with a legible boundary and be appropriately signed in prominent places for public notification.

Users of DOLAs do not need to keep their dog on a leash while in the designated area, but they are responsible for:

- Keeping their dog under effective control at all times
- Removing dog waste
- Being considerate of other users of the DOLA
- Keeping their dogs out of areas that are not designated for use by dogs.

Parks with designated DOLAs in the Moreton Bay Region are listed on Councils website at [moretonbay.qld.gov.au/Services/Sport-Recreation/Dog-Parks-and-Beaches](http://moretonbay.qld.gov.au/Services/Sport-Recreation/Dog-Parks-and-Beaches).

### 1.3 Benefits of DOLAs

Council supports the creation of DOLAs due to the well documented benefits for dogs, people and the broader community. DOLA designers should seek to maximise these benefits where possible.

Benefits for dogs include:

- Physical and mental exercise, which is both good for their health and reduces negative behaviours like excessive barking
- Opportunities to socialise with other dogs, making them healthier and happier and less likely to become aggressive
- A safe area to run and play away from hazards like cars.

Benefits for people include:

- Opportunities to socialise with other dog owners, create social networks, and increase community resilience
- Social and emotional wellbeing through a sense of belonging and connectivity
- A safe space for vulnerable community members, including the elderly and people with a disability, to exercise their dogs.

Benefits for the community include:

- Support for responsible dog ownership, reducing the likelihood of dog owners letting their dogs off leash in other public spaces and impacting other users
- A free and accessible recreation option for residents
- Providing a safe rest area for travellers where their dogs can exercise safely.

## 2. Assessing demand

The first step of planning a DOLA is to assess and document the need for such a facility. This includes:

- Consideration of existing DOLAs nearby
- Consideration of other nearby land uses that might conflict with a DOLA, such as sensitive environmental areas
- Consideration of the current and anticipated future demand based on planned development in the area

The Moreton Bay Regional Council area is forecast to experience rapid and sustained population growth. Most new development areas are dominated by smaller lot sizes, increasing the demand for DOLAs. As the population of Moreton Bay grows, so will the demand for these facilities.

### 2.1 Supply and demand analysis

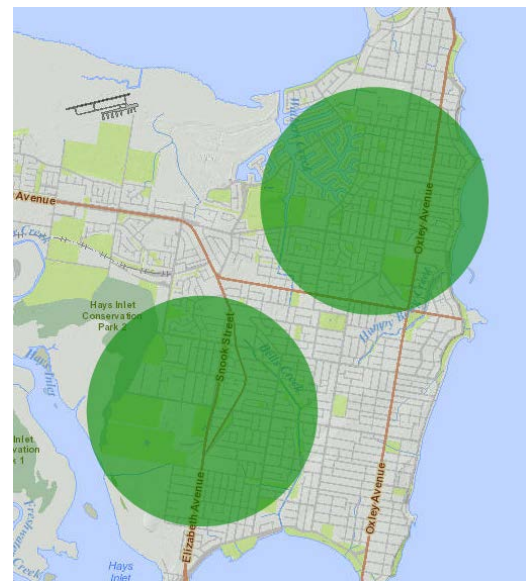
For each proposed off-leash site, an assessment is to be undertaken which evaluates demand and addresses the following considerations:

- Is a facility of this nature and scale required?
- What is the likely demand or frequency of use?
- What is the type and function of infrastructure required?
- Are alternative locations or sites available that may be more effective?

The following are some suggestions to guide the assessment:

- Complete a spatial analysis of the surrounding area to identify any nearby existing DOLAs.
- Determine if the off-leash area will serve either a neighbourhood or regional catchment (outlined in *Table 1*).
- Consider any major barriers such as train lines, rivers and major roadways which limit connectivity between the proposed site and residences.
- Consider if the locality is planned to experience population growth and how this will affect future levels of use of the facility.

#### Planning catchment



The image indicates that DOLAs service specific catchments.

### 3. Deciding on a site and layout

The placement and layout of a DOLA within a park or other public space can have both positive and negative impacts on both DOLA users and other park users. It's important to consider how the DOLA will integrate with the park and surrounding areas.

Council has minimum requirements as well as guidelines to improve the outcomes of DOLA planning. At a minimum, the following must be considered in designing a site layout.

#### 3.1 Location

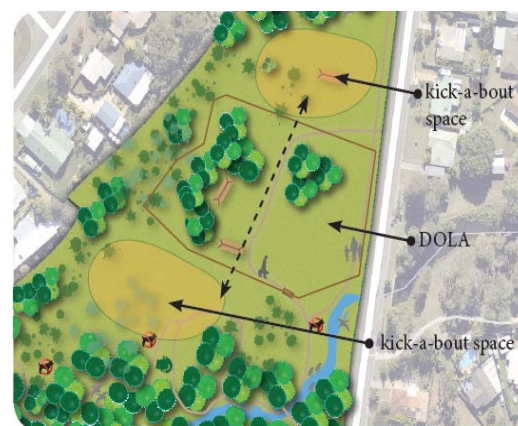
A good DOLA location has the following features:

- Easily accessible by road
- Adequate car park provision
- Good connections to existing pedestrian paths
- Within a 10-minute walk of residential areas
- Is visible from public areas
- Has good drainage, some established trees and a natural variation in slope
- Opportunities to share existing infrastructure with other park users, such as public toilets and lighting.

#### 3.2 Site connectivity

Council supports the concept of the 10-minute walkable community. As part of this, DOLAs are usually separated by a 1.5km buffer distance. In assessing sites, the 1.5km buffer distance should not cross major barriers (see Section 2.1 above) which limit the ability to walk from residential areas.

##### Transition zones and connectivity



The scale of this DOLA reduces the overall functionality of the park. A small off-leash area which encouraged north/south connectivity would have been a better outcome.

#### 3.3 Existing uses and interests

Planning should aim to integrate the DOLA with surrounding areas without impacting existing recreational, environmental or other activities. Off-leash areas should not unduly impact or limit other recreation opportunities within the park.

#### 3.4 Buffer areas

Council has designated specific buffer requirements to minimise the negative impacts of DOLAs on adjoining properties. The buffer dimensions prescribed in section 4.3, Table 1 should be adhered to.

##### Transition zones and buffers



Example of a DOLA which has access from many points and does not interfere with connectivity between zones.

### 3.5 DOLA Size

DOLAs should have enough space to meet the minimum requirements designated for the nominated DOLA standard (see section 4). Minimum area requirements are contained in section 4.3, Table 1. As a general rule, subject to other considerations, larger areas are more appropriate than smaller areas.

The DOLA should be large enough to include an appropriate mix of spaces to suit the behavioural needs of dogs and their human companions. This includes:

- High activity zones where dogs can run and exercise, including obstacles or agility equipment
- Quieter zones where dogs can spend time sniffing and interacting with their owner or other dogs
- Gates with airlocks at entry and exit points.

### 3.6 Environmental considerations

Environmental features and associated values near the proposed site must be considered when locating a DOLA. The first step is to undertake a desktop analysis to identify the following:

- Native vegetation (check Council's VMA mapping)
- Protected and endangered species (NCA mapping)
- Essential habitats (NCA mapping)
- Overland flow paths (use Q100 level as a guide)
- Koala habitat areas (Koala mapping)
- Proximity to protected areas: national parks, conservation areas, and state forests.

The proposed site should be reconsidered if potentially significant environmental planning impacts are identified. Where appropriate control measures can be implemented to address these concerns, Council might consider a facility in more constrained parks.

### 3.7 Avoiding conflict with Koalas

Wherever possible, DOLA facilities should avoid Koala habitat areas and preferably not contain Koala food trees. If an alternate site cannot be identified, then specific fencing and other design interventions will be required. Council may need to close facilities from time to time to ensure the safety of Koalas where they are observed in or around a DOLA.

Where a DOLA cannot avoid potential conflicts with koalas, the provisions contained within the Koala Safety Fencing and Measures Guideline (Qld Govt, 2011) are highly recommended. At Council's discretion, restricted facility usage times (between sunset and sunrise) and additional notification signage may also be required.

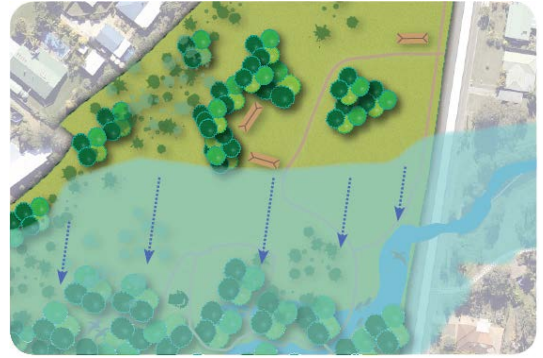
### 3.8 Flooding and overland flow

DOLAs should ideally be in areas that are not subject to overland stormwater flow or flooding. Where a site is subject to inundation, the DOLA should be located away from high velocity overland flow paths or above a Q20 flood inundation level.

If no suitable site can be identified, then a site risk assessment must be undertaken to document the frequency and potential impacts to infrastructure from overland flow and flooding.

Council will not support the development of a DOLA with a moderate or high-risk rating. Council may consider development of a DOLA facility if the risk rating is low and no other alternate nearby sites are available.

Flooding and overland flow considerations



Locating the DOLA within the floodable area, will increase the likelihood of damage to fencing and other infrastructures.

### 3.9 Utilities and service infrastructure

The proposed location should have access to all required utility services, most notably a water connection point.

## 4. Choosing a DOLA standard

Selecting the appropriate standard for a DOLA is important to ensure it meets the identified demand in the community. This decision will also impact the design requirements and minimum standards applied.

DOLA's are typically designated as;

- Neighbourhood - accommodating a smaller catchment area, typically within a 10 minute walk or;
- Regional - which serve a much broader catchment.

### 4.1 Neighbourhood dog off leash areas

The planning intent of the neighbourhood DOLA is to provide the base level of service to a local catchment area. These DOLA's generally meet the needs of a residential catchment area within an approximately 10-minute walk (up to 1.5km).

Neighbourhood DOLA's must be fenced in to restrain dogs and avoid impacts on other park uses, particularly junior playgrounds and picnic areas. They must be designed to minimise impacts on nearby homes or other sensitive land uses. They should be located in parks and open space areas with the capacity to accommodate increased demand. Table 1 outlines the service provision standards for neighbourhood DOLAs.

### 4.2 Regional dog off leash areas

The planning intent of the regional classification level is to provide the highest standard of service within the region. These DOLA's serve a catchment area of up to 15 km. Most demand will be generated from the wider region and potentially from adjacent local government areas.

Regional DOLA's must be in open space areas in parks with the capacity to cater for significant numbers of patrons, especially at peak times and weekends. Table 1 outlines the service provision standards for regional DOLA's.

## 4.3 Service Provision Standards

Table 1 (below) outlines the minimum standards required for both neighbourhood and regional DOLA's.

Table 1 Service provision standards

Planning considerations	Planning standards - neighbourhood	Planning standards - regional (In addition to standard neighbourhood provisions)
Dimensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DOLA's are to be a minimum of 800m<sup>2</sup> in area but preferred no larger than 2500m<sup>2</sup></li> <li>Where small dog enclosures are provided the large dog area must be no less than 800m<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DOLA's are to be a minimum of 2500m<sup>2</sup> in area</li> <li>Include separate enclosures for small dogs and large dogs.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rectangular shaped DOLA's are promoted and to have no less than a 2:1 length to width ratio</li> <li>DOLA's shall not be of a scale that dominates the broader park and or restricts opportunities for other recreational or established uses and interests</li> <li>Size, layout and configuration are to be commensurate with the broader design intent of the park</li> <li>Enclosed areas shall encourage safe entry points for dogs and their handlers by utilising the designated clearance distances and entry/exit specifications outlined in Section 6 of the guidelines</li> </ul>	
General Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Located within the public open space network</li> <li>Connected to the internal and external pathways and or recreational trail network</li> <li>The existing natural elements of the park are retained - vegetation, terrain and water bodies shall be incorporated into enclosed DOLA's where practicable</li> <li>Located near to essential services such as water, electricity and sewage if applicable</li> </ul>	
Minimum buffers and clearances	<b>Existing use/interest</b>	<b>Buffer distance</b>
	Active recreation/sports field/court or any of the like	20 metres
	Environmentally sensitive area	20 metres
	Residential properties	20 metres (40m preferred)
	Playgrounds	10 metres
	Passive areas	5 metres
	Pedestrian/cycle thoroughfares	5 metres
	Roads	5 metres
Flooding considerations	DOLA's are not to be located in areas identified at risk of flood inundation (below Q20) or areas subject to overland flow, unless no suitable alternate site is identified, and a site-specific risk assessment is completed that determines a low risk of damage to infrastructure resulting from the inundation.	
CPTED considerations	The general principles of the Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Guidelines are to be incorporated in the design of DOLA's.	

Planning considerations	Planning standards - neighbourhood	Planning standards - regional (In addition to standard neighbourhood provisions)
Standard infrastructure provision items	<p>Typical embellishment items include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fencing 1.2m high with mowing strip</li> <li>• Entry/exit enclosure (airlock system)</li> <li>• Maintenance access gates</li> <li>• Tidy bag dispenser</li> <li>• 240lt bin within enclosure</li> <li>• Potable water for handler and animal</li> <li>• Advisory signage</li> <li>• Koala warning signage (if applicable)</li> <li>• Pathway connection</li> <li>• Seating</li> <li>• Shelter</li> <li>• Small dog enclosure</li> </ul>	<p>Additional embellishment items include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dog agility equipment</li> </ul>

## 5. Planning and design principles

The shape and configuration of the DOLA should be generally in accordance with Council's standard design drawings which are available for download on Council's website. The drawings can also be made available in CAD format to consultants undertaking facility designs.

General design principles include the following.

M = Mandatory

D = Desired

### 5.1 Layout

The Layout of the facility should comply with the following:

Facilities should be large enough to sustain peak use whilst preserving grass cover.	M
Inclusion of larger activity areas and longer run lengths.	D
Consideration of separate areas for small dogs and large dogs.	D
Designed to be a primarily rectangular shape with a minimum 2:1 length/width ratio.	D
Designed so that entrapment zones are minimised (by including rounded / truncated corners within the enclosure).	M
Orientated so that entry and exit points maximise connectivity to pedestrian/cycle thoroughfares.	M
Designed so that all points of entry are easily accessed. (including maintenance access)	M
Fences are to be provided except in extenuating circumstances such as where facilities are located on beaches.	D
Siting and orientation addresses CPTED principles.	M

### 5.2 Gradient and Slope requirements

Maximum slope requirements should comply with the following:

Activity areas within enclosed DOLAs are not to exceed a cross fall gradient of 1:6.	D
General external recreation areas near to DOLA are not to exceed a cross fall gradient of 1:4.	M
Access paths must accommodate persons with disabilities.	M
Access points for operational and maintenance vehicles must also be considered and not exceed a 1:6 cross fall gradient.	M

### 5.3 Surface Treatments

Surface treatments must comply with the following:

The layout and configuration of the enclosed DOLA should encourage a spread of activities across the area to preserve grass cover.	D
Natural ground surfaces are primarily used within the enclosure.	M
Concrete ground surfaces are to be used at entry and exit points and other high wear areas as shown in standard details and at the discretion of Council officers.	M
A concrete maintenance strip is required under fencing.	M

### 5.4 Signage

Signage for the DOLA should address the following:

All signage is to comply with Council's Open Space Signage standards	M
Standard regulatory and information signage is to be displayed at a prominent place at all off leash areas	M
Koala advisory signage is to be specifically included in facilities located within known Koala habitat areas	M

### 5.5 Equitable Access

Entry/exit points for the DOLA should be:

Designed to comply with Australian Standards	M
Connected to the pathway or recreational trail network and desirably setback at least 5 metres from the main trail/pathway	D
Sited to encourage safe thoroughfare for other park users	M
Where included, small dog enclosures require a direct access point so that users do not have to traverse through the general off-leash area.	D

### 5.6 Infrastructure Provision and Siting

Infrastructure provision and siting within the DOLA should address the following:

Siting requirements are in accordance with the setbacks and clearances outlined in Table 1.	M
Infrastructure items should not be placed within the tree preservation zone of habitat trees.	D
Where ancillary infrastructure items are located near to entry and exit points, allow sufficient clearance to allow for safe entry and limited entrapment potential.	M
Shade shelter locations must have regard for peak usage times, typically early morning and afternoon use.	M

Additional seating is encouraged and should be located ideally with outlook along the edges of enclosed areas or under shade structures and trees to maximise run length and activity areas.	D
Standard infrastructure items are to be sited outside of the Q20 flood level to avoid damage from flooding, unless where agreed by Council.	D
Agility equipment is to be considered in accordance with Council's "Dog Off Leash Areas Agility Equipment Guidelines".	D

## 5.7 Planting and Shade Provision

Provision of planting and shade trees needs to be included within the DOLA in accordance with the following:

The retention of native trees is to occur in all circumstances, unless an assessment by a trained arborist identifies safety or management concerns. Trees requiring removal must be replaced.	M
The installation of additional shade trees is encouraged to assist with shading the area for facility users.	D
All plantings must comply with Council's Landscape Design Guidelines.	M
In circumstances where high use warrants additional rest and shade areas, hardened shade structures may be implemented in combination with planting where agreed by Council.	D

## 5.8 Environmental Considerations

Further to the elements outlined in Section 3 above, DOLA's are to be designed taking into consideration the following elements:

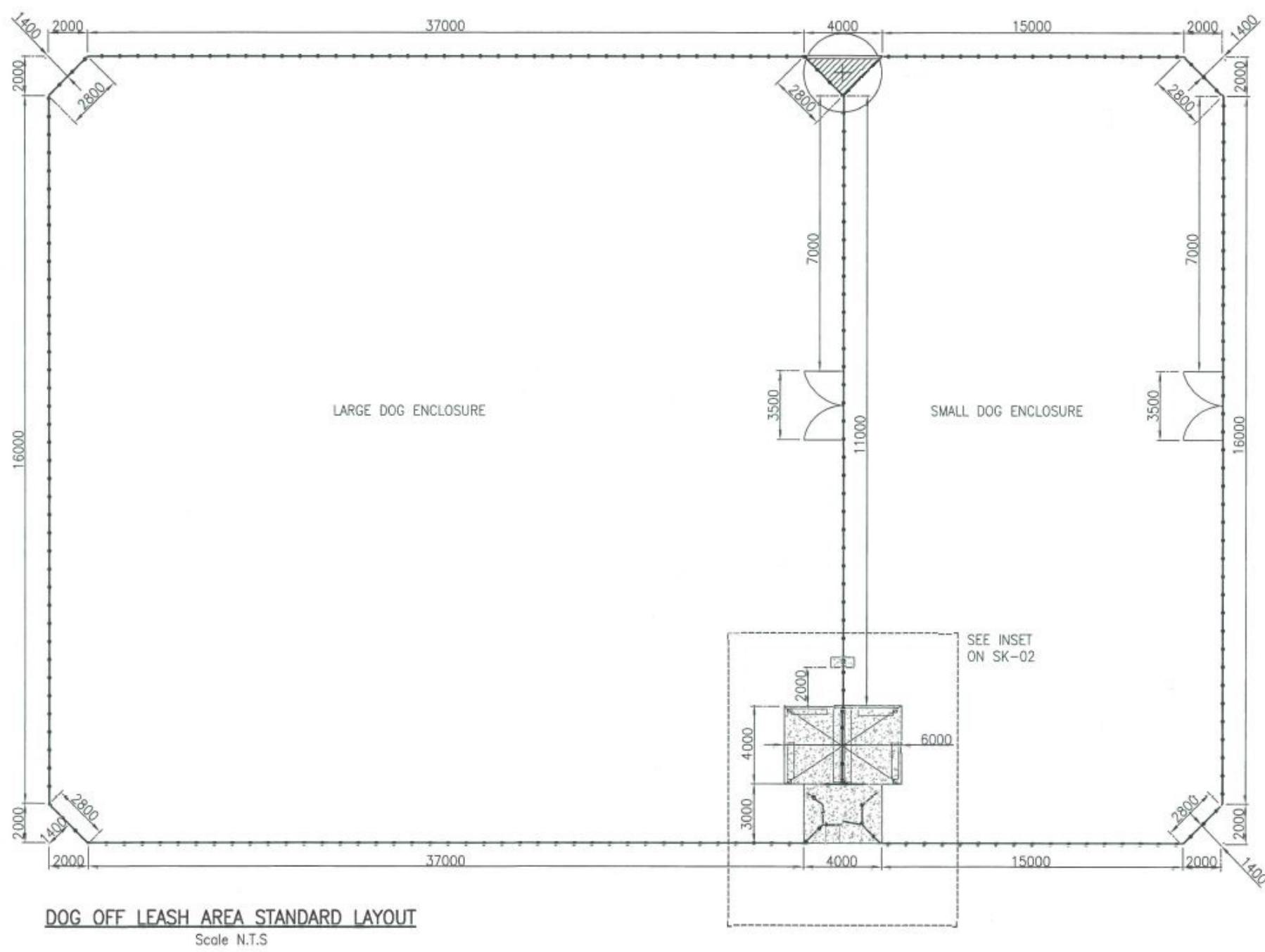
Siting of off-leash facilities must consider environmental factors associated with the site and surrounds.	M
Off-leash facilities should ideally not be located within known koala habitat areas.	D
If no alternative site exists then consideration must be given to, the provision of escape poles to assist small mammals, marsupials and koalas to escape the enclosure.	M
Wildlife corridors within parks must not be negatively impacted and fenced areas are to be sited accordingly.	M
Within Koala habitat the provisions of Section 3.5 must be applied including provisions contained within the Koala Safety Fencing and Measures Guideline (Qld Govt, 2011), restricting the hours of use to between sunrise and sunset and the erection of appropriate Koala signs at entry/exit points.	M

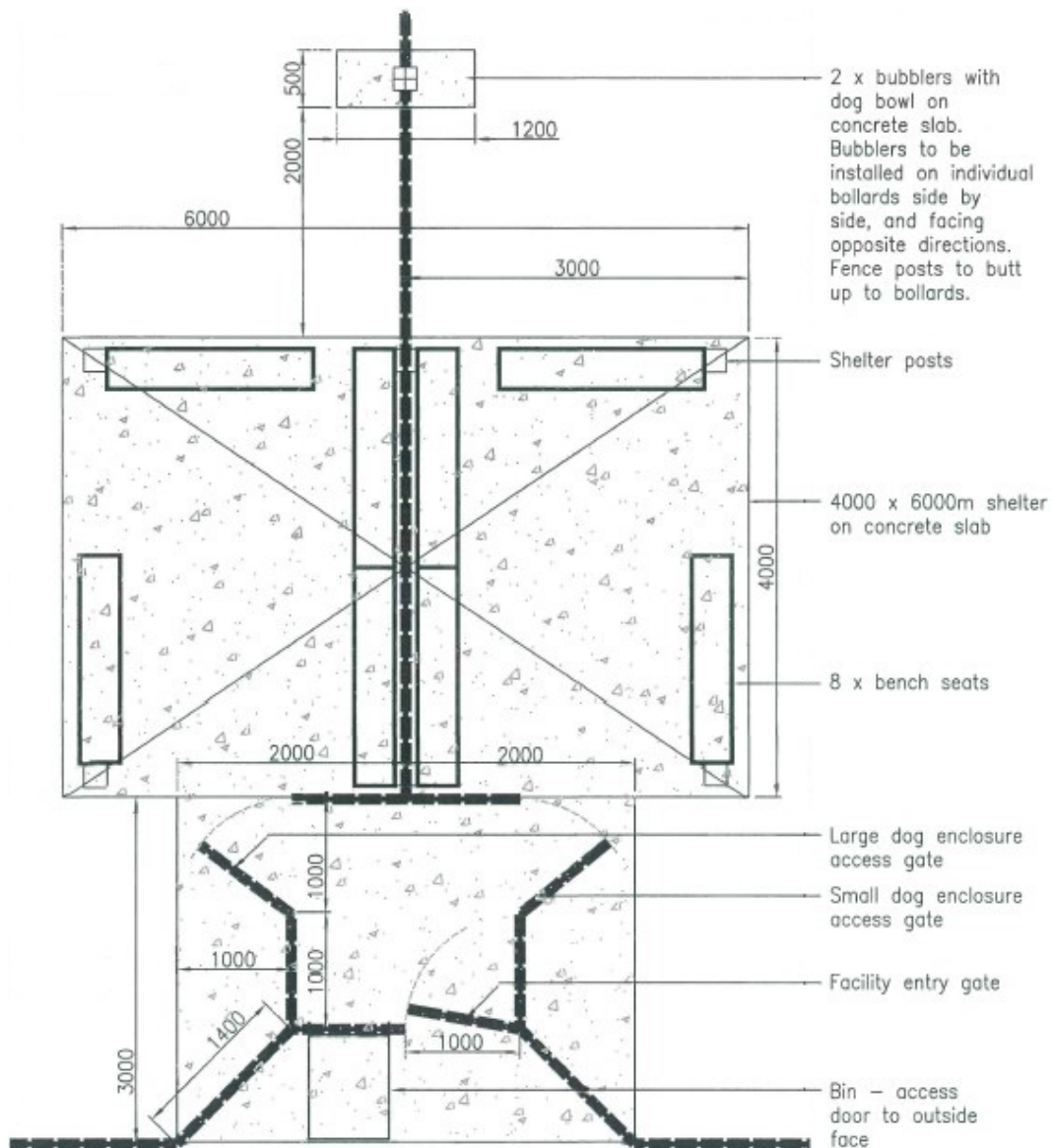
## 5.9 Maintenance and Access

DOLA's are to be designed and located to address the following maintenance and access requirements:

DOLA's must be designed to optimise universal public access and prevent access by unauthorised and or private vehicles.	M
DOLA's are to have at least 1 maintenance gate of minimum 3.5 metres width and comply with the infrastructure specification standards in Section 6.	M
Facilities are to be sited so that maintenance vehicles and staff can safely access from adjacent road verges, internal parking areas or dedicated access corridors in larger parks.	M
The approach route and movement of maintenance and Emergency Services vehicles must be considered.	M

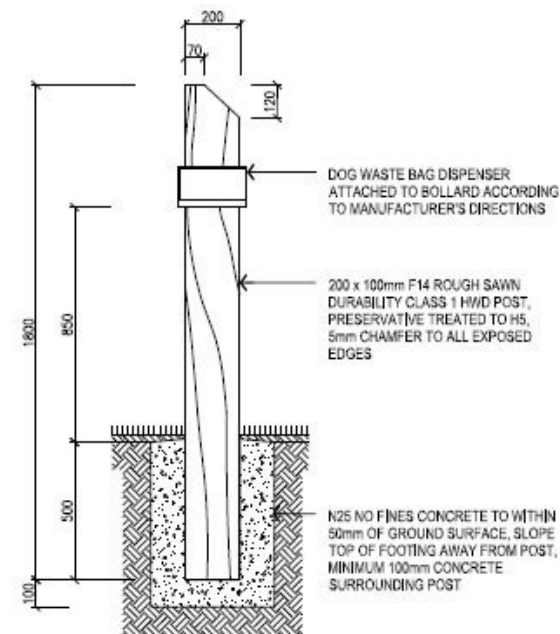
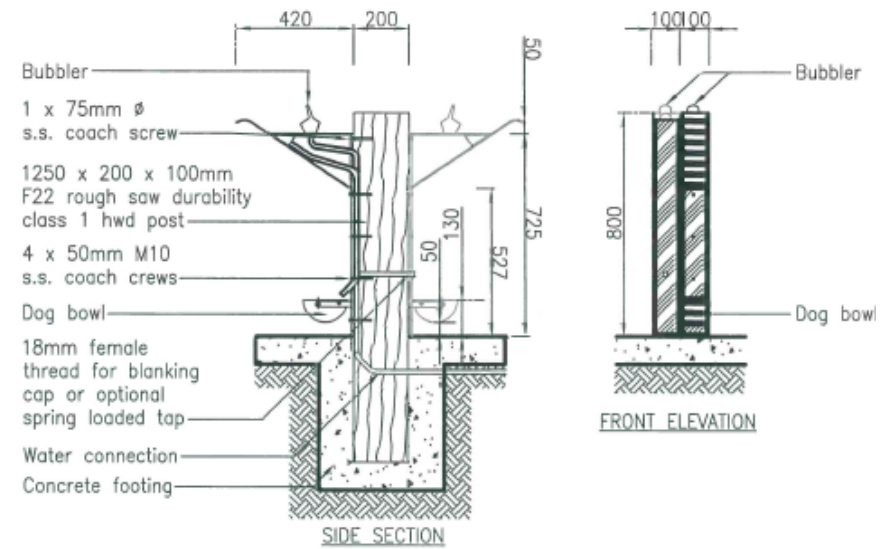
# 6. Infrastructure Specification Standards





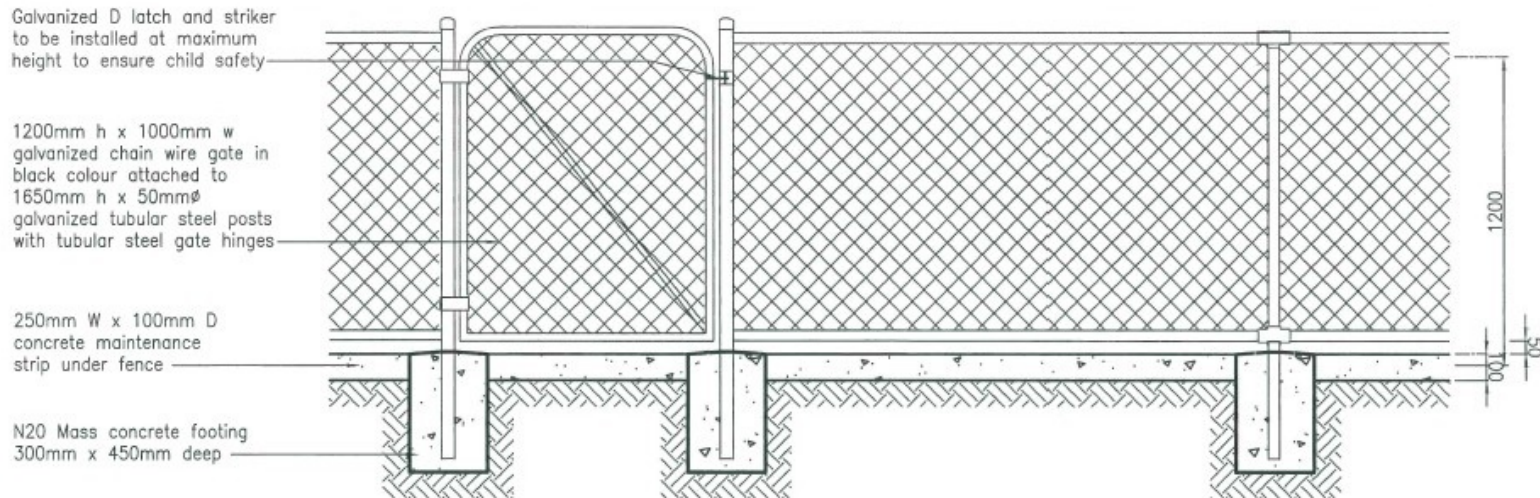
**DOG OFF LEASH AREA STANDARD ENTRY LAYOUT**

Scale N.T.S



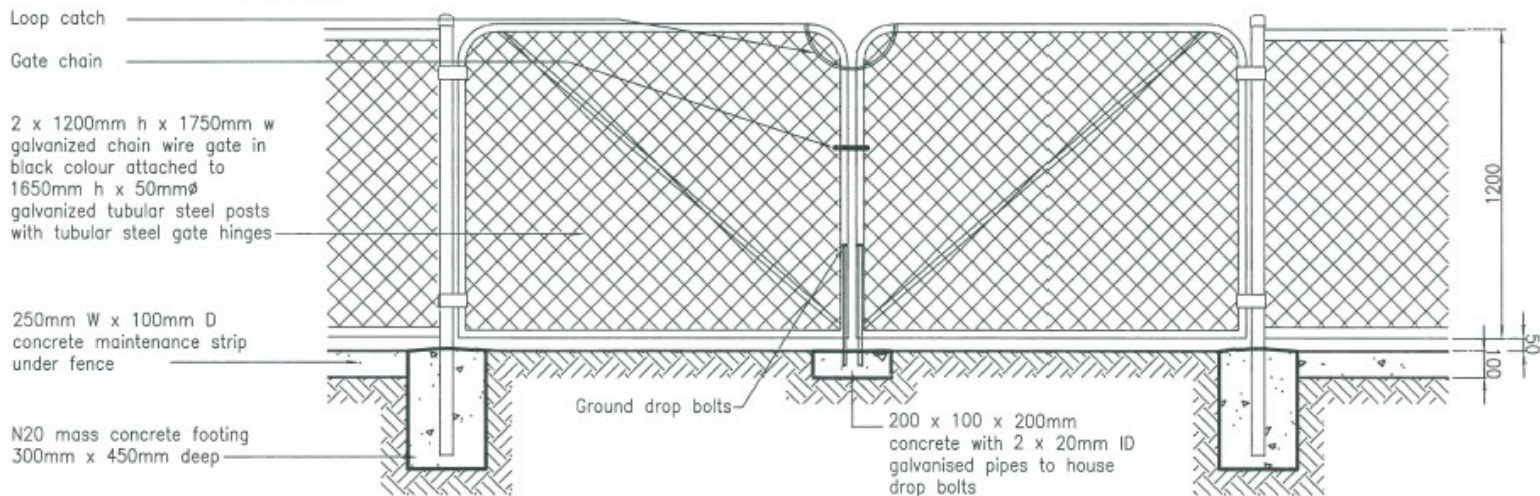
**DOG WASTE BAG DISPENSER-ELEVATION**

SCALE 1:10 @ A1



### DOG OFF LEASH AREA STANDARD GATE ENTRY

Scale N.T.S



### DOG OFF LEASH AREA STANDARD VEHICLE ACCESS GATE

Scale N.T.S

#### NOTES:

- All dimensions are in millimetres unless shown otherwise.
- Single gate: Supply and install 1200 high x 1000mm wide self-closing gate with D-latch. Fittings to be bolted to posts.
- Double gate: Supply and install 1200 high x 3500mm wide double gate with two ground latch pins and a two gatepost chain to be attached to gate to allow locking of double gates with a padlock. Gate also to be joined by loop latch. Maximum gap of 50mm under all gates.
- Construction of posts and rails shall be done using standard coupling connections only (no welds).
- Black PVC coated chain wire mesh – 50mm diamond x 2.5mm galvanised wire to AS 2423. Chain wire to be fixed using 1.6mm black PVC coated chain wire.
- Bolts to AS 1111. Nuts to AS 1112. Washers to AS 1237. Galvanised to AS 4680.
- All rails and posts galvanised steel tube to AS 1074
- Corner and end post (capped): 50mm N.B. (60.3 O.D., 3.6mm thick).
- Intermediate posts (capped): 40mm N.B. (48.3mm O.D., 3.2mm thick).
- Gate frames and braces: 40mm N.B. (48.3mm O.D., 3.2mm thick).
- Post centres: 2400mm maximum.
- Footings: 300mmØ x 450mm deep. Concrete N20 in accordance with AS 1379 and AS 3600.
- Maintenance strip: 250mm wide x 100mm deep N20 concrete.
- Shelter: 4000mm x 6000mm park shelter.
- Seats: 450 x 1800mm extruded aluminum bench seats – no back rest.
- Bin surround: 240L aluminum bin
- 45L tree installation to AS4454:2012. 100mm organic mulch to AS4454:2003

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