

## **Official Opening of Yarra Vista Dog Exercise Park by His Worship, Mayor Logan K Howlett, JP, City of Cockburn on Saturday, 2 May 2015**

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Good Morning Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys.

I bid you a warm welcome to the official opening of Yarra Vista Dog Exercise Park.

I acknowledge the Whadjuk people of the Nyungar Nation and pay respect to their Elders, both past and present and extend that respect to Indigenous Australians who are with us today.

I acknowledge the presence of:

Deputy Mayor Carol Reeve-Fowkes and her husband Martin;

- Councillor Lyndsey Wetton;
- my wife, Patricia;
- Representatives from the Harvest Lakes Residents Association;
- Representatives from Connecting South Lake;
- City of Cockburn members of staff including:
  - Mr Charles Sullivan, Director Engineering & Works, City of Cockburn;
  - Mr Bruce Mentz;
  - Ms Lynn Windram;
  - Mr Heath Williams;
  - Mr Dave Watson;
  - Mr Ian Hargense;
  - Mr Peter Godrich;
  - Mr Bruce Moorman;
  - Mr Andy Jarman;
  - Marilyn McLean;
  - Sandra Edgar
- Ladies and gentlemen, girls & boys.

Requests for a dog exercise park have been raised on and off for several years now and generally been opposed by residents not wanting To have such a park near their homes.

Well it has finally happened with an area been allocated in this lovely setting.

In the City of Cockburn approximately 40% of households own one or more dogs, many of these regularly use the Dog Exercise areas where owners are allowed to run their dogs off lead.

There are 29 Dog Exercise areas spread throughout the City. These parks provide an alternative environment where dogs can play off lead in a specified area with other dogs.

The development of a dog park provides dog owners with a fenced off and landscaped area with equipment where dog owners can take their dogs to play and exercise in a pleasant and relaxing environment.

The park also provides an outlet for meetings by Dog Training Organisations dealing with dog nuisance issues and a venue for future annual events such as Pets in the Park.

These venues would also provide occasions for rangers to educate dog owners and provide leaflets giving information in relation to preventing and dealing with dog attacks, dog registration, and dog barking nuisances as well as educating them about responsibilities in relation to vet care.

A vote of thanks is due to the volunteers from the Cockburn Men's Shed for making the doggy exercise equipment. It certainly focuses our attention on how valuable partnerships across our community are, especially in relation to our volunteers - these partnerships are further strengthened when staff from the City are included - leading us to a dog exercise park like we have before us today.

My thanks to all the volunteers and staff for achieving a great outcome.

### **Just some stats on dogs**

Firstly we know that they come in all shapes, sizes, colours, temperaments, fads on what they will eat and what they'll turn their noses up at, we know their loyalty is unquestionable and how they can break the hearts of their owners when they are sick, injured or pass on.

In Cockburn there are 8733 dogs registered

Last Financial Year:

695 dogs were picked up by Rangers;

- 167 returned directly to owners;
- 528 dogs taken to the pound;
- 407 collected by owners;
- 108 re-homed; and
- 13 euthanized (gravely ill)

Aside from being family pets there are dogs that contribute to other causes including:

- Our Customs and border protection;
- The Australian Defence Force;
- WA Police;
- State Emergency Services;
- Mental Health facilities;
- Sight Impaired;
- Search & Rescue; and a myriad of other contributions across our community.

So, as they say a dog is man's best friend and that is evident today with so many owners out with their dogs enjoying the opportunities that facilities like we find here at Yarra Vista Park.

I thank you being here today, many with your dogs to share in the fun and excitement of watching them explore this latest dog exercise park.

I now have great pleasure on behalf of elected members and staff from the City of Cockburn to officially declaring open the Yarra Vista Dog Park and trust that it will provide a further avenue for your dogs to be out and about in a defined area.

Thank you.