

Alpine Planning

help guide the future of Victoria's parks



FACT SHEET

DOMESTIC DOGS

Background

Parks Victoria recognises that dogs are popular recreation companions and contribute to people's health and well-being. Walking with a dog has many benefits, such as reduced stress, enhanced mood, increased heart and lung fitness and a number of social benefits. Many people enjoy walking with their dog in natural areas, such as parkland, open space, bush and coastal areas and Parks Victoria provides a wide range of opportunities throughout Victoria for people to experience the great outdoors with their dogs.

As a general rule, dogs are permitted in parks or areas of parks where the primary management purpose is for recreation, e.g. Metropolitan Parks, Reservoir Parks, Regional Parks and Forest Parks.

Dogs are generally not permitted in parks and reserves where the primary management purpose is for conservation, e.g. parks managed under the *National Parks Act 1975 (Vic.)* and nature conservation reserves.

National Parks

Generally, domestic animals and other introduced animals such as dogs are not permitted in national parks established under the National Parks Act. This is to ensure that the park is managed in accordance with its objectives, to preserve and protect the natural environment and to conserve flora and fauna.

Park rangers are often asked by visitors "why can't I take my dog into the national park?" First and foremost, national parks are there to protect Australia's native wildlife. They are vitally important for the many species whose

survival is in danger. Dogs can have negative impacts on the natural and cultural values of parks, as well as impacts on the enjoyment and safety of other visitors. Dogs can compete with or harass, chase, trample or prey upon native fauna, especially ground-dwelling species. Dogs can also disturb wildlife by their scent, sounds, scratching and digging. Dogs may also transmit diseases and parasites to native fauna, and their urine and excrement may attract wild dogs and foxes. Even if a dog is on a lead and is very obedient it would be impossible to have a rule which allowed some dogs (the quiet or small ones) into national parks and similar reserves but not others (the big and the boisterous).

Dogs are a potential source of annoyance, distress and sometimes harm to park visitors especially in camping and picnic areas, and when the animals are not under control. Some visitors are frightened of dogs or object to seeing dogs in parks because they are not part of the natural environment and make wildlife more difficult to observe. Dog droppings can cause offence to visitors, and have environmental, amenity and health impacts.

Dogs are permitted in national parks for specific purposes. These include:

- Dogs which assist disabled people with their disability are permitted in all parks and reserves, with the exception of Wilderness Parks and areas closed to the public, e.g. Reference Areas
- Dogs assisting police, SES or Defence Force in search and rescue or surveillance
- Dogs in vehicles which are in transit through a national park on a major through-road / route travelling on bitumen roads which pass through national parks.



Where are dogs allowed in the planning area?

Dogs are allowed at Walhalla, Grant, Howqua Hills, Mount Wills, and Mount Murphy Historic Areas. Within the Historic Areas, hunting deer with the aid of gundogs is permitted all year. In addition, hunting with the aid of scent trailing hounds is permitted in Historic Areas during the hound hunting season (in accordance with the *Wildlife (Game) Regulations 2001*). (see *Recreational Deer Hunting Discussion Paper*).

Park Web contains a full list of parks and reserves where dogs are permitted: www.parkweb.vic.gov.au. For more information, contact Parks Victoria on 13 1963.



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Join us at www.weplan.parks.vic.gov.au or phone 13 1963 for more information