

## Walking your dog in the ACT—what's changed in 2016?

*This fact sheet is for general information purposes and is not legal advice. It provides a brief overview only of this area of the law. If you require legal advice relating to your particular circumstances you should contact the ADO or your solicitor.*

This fact sheet looks at changes to the rules about where you can have your dog on or off leash in the ACT.

### When did the new rules start?

The changes came into effect on Monday 11 January 2016.<sup>1</sup>



### Why did the rules change?

The changes aim to make the rules about where you can and can't take your dog consistent across the ACT.

### What happens if a dog keeper or carer doesn't comply with the new rules?

Dog keepers and carers can be fined between \$150–\$750 for breaching the new rules.<sup>2</sup>

### What are the main changes?

**Footpaths:** Dogs must be on-leash on *all* footpaths in the ACT.

**Cycleways:** Dogs must be on-leash on *all* cycleways in the ACT.



### Sports grounds and ovals

Dogs can be off-leash except when formal sport or events are occurring.<sup>3</sup> These areas are now known as 'conditional' dog off-leash areas.

This will mean some areas changing from dog off-leash areas to 'conditional' off-leash areas. These include playing fields, showgrounds and ovals in Amaroo, Hall, Nicholls, Holt, Spence, Campbell, Dickson, O'Connor, Reid, Deakin, Kingston, Narrabundah, Red Hill, Yarralumla, Garran, Lyons, Mawson, Calwell, Gordon, Kambah and Wanniasa.



<sup>1</sup> *Domestic Animals (Exercise Areas) Declaration 2015 (No 1)*.

<sup>2</sup> Fines of \$150 can be given for not complying with the rules (Schedule 1 to the *Magistrates Court (Domestic Animals Infringement Notices) Regulation 2005*). If contested in court, at time of writing the maximum penalty is \$750 (section 44 of the *Domestic Animals Act 2000*).

<sup>3</sup> Enclosed sportsgrounds remain dog prohibited areas.

## **Major parks**

Dogs are allowed on-leash in major parks.

This includes Lennox Gardens and Weston Park in Yarralumla, and Black Mountain Peninsula in Acton.<sup>4</sup>



Blaxland Park in Griffith will trial the first ‘timeshare arrangement’ in the ACT. Dogs can be off-leash between 6pm–7am. The trial will last until Thursday 31 March 2016.

The William Slim Drive pedestrian parkland in Lawson has changed to a dog off-leash area.

## **Wetlands**

The rules for wetlands have not changed. This means that Dickson and Lyneham wetlands and the Flemington Road ponds remain as dog off-leash areas.



### **Playground equipment**

Dogs are prohibited near public playground equipment.

### **Barbeque areas**

Dogs are prohibited near public barbeque areas.

## **Where can I find more information?**

You can also find out where you can and cannot take your dog by viewing the [Dog Recreation Areas 2015 map](#).

The Territory and Municipal Services Directorate is seeking comments from the community about these changes:

<http://www.timetotalk.act.gov.au/consultations/?engagement=review-of-dog-exercise-areas>. The consultation period ends on Thursday 31 March 2016.

### **About the Animal Defenders Office Inc.**

The Animal Defenders Office Inc. (ADO) is a community animal law practice specialising in public interest animal law. We aim to support, empower and advocate for individuals and groups in the ACT and surrounding regions who want to use the law and legal system to protect animals. We aim to do this by providing information, advocacy and advice. If you have a query about anything in this Fact Sheet, or would like the Animal Defenders Office to help you to protect animals, please email us: [contact@ado.org.au](mailto:contact@ado.org.au)

To learn more about the ADO please visit our website: [www.ado.org.au](http://www.ado.org.au)

### **DISCLAIMER**

*While all care has been taken in preparing the information on this fact sheet, it is not a substitute for legal advice. For any specific questions we recommend you seek legal advice. The Animal Defenders Office accepts no responsibility for any loss or damage suffered by people relying on the information on this fact sheet.*

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<sup>4</sup> These three sites were originally dog prohibited areas. Some areas within these parks remain dog prohibited.