

Dogs on Beaches:

Participants indicated that not much was working and we were struggling to protect the natural values of the coastline from the impacts of dogs. One volunteer who's area of management sits under a committee of management expressed concerns that the Shire could not enforce on their land. I explained the Barwon Coast model for them to discuss with their DELWP representative and work collectively with the Shire for this to change. All participants expressed concern that there are no PINS as only Councils can fine if the processes are in place. All participants agreed compliance officers need to come from within the committees.

Signage issues ranked second highest, and we need to clearly explain the rules, including land boundaries such as marine parks etc. Even when signage has been installed for the protection of wildlife, nearly in every instance the dogs are off leash and run past the signs, past the animal in question with no control from the owners. Even through community consultation processes you will find a number of individuals that say 'not my dog'. It was agreed that the education component needs to be applied first in those areas of concern before regulation enforcement. However this has already been rolled out in other areas and is still not working.

There was concern that the quiet or no go zones are being used by problem dogs.

Consensus was for compliance officers within committees of management and streamline of existing dog regulation. We should be promoting alternatives such as the land base alternatives and education into why we have the regulations, and why some times the use of the coastal zone may not be appropriate be it for natural values or of the dangers to your dog. Requirement for more appropriate signage or consolidation of signage, being mindful that signage itself becomes visual litter. Groups need to work with DELWP to engage councils to assist with education and to understand the role council must play.