

DRAFT POLICY

Dogs

DOG CONTROL POLICY

The Dog Control Act 1996, section 10, contains obligations that require all owners to register their dogs, ensure they are kept under control and do not cause a nuisance to any person, cause damage to property, or injure, endanger or cause distress to any person, stock, poultry or domestic animal, or protected wildlife.

This policy is implemented through the Dog Control Act 1996, the draft Dog Control Bylaw 2009 and the Council's internal operating procedures.

1. Encourage Responsible Dog Ownership

Dog owners will be encouraged to meet their obligations under the Act to make neighbourhoods more safe and free from nuisance.

Method

- 1.1 Accept that all dog owners are responsible until otherwise demonstrated.
- 1.2 Include limitations, in the Dog Control Bylaw, on the number of dogs that can be kept on residential properties.
- 1.3 Provide, through a range of fees and controls, incentives to encourage responsible ownership of dogs.

2. Provide for Dog Access to Public Areas

Dog owners will be provided with a reasonable level of access to public places where doing so will not compromise public safety. In implementing this policy regard shall be given to:

- Dog owners are users of public places.
- Any controls on dog access to parks and reserves are well defined to the public.
- Sensitive areas such as children's playgrounds and wildlife reserves are protected from dogs.

Method

- 2.1 The Council shall make a Dog Control Bylaw to place controls where dogs:
 - May be taken in public places.
 - Must be kept on a leash, under control or are prohibited.

3. Enforce Dog Owner Obligations

The Dog Control Act 1996 powers of enforcement shall be used where necessary to ensure public safety and freedom from dog related nuisance, and to deter irresponsible ownership of dogs.

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Methods:

- 3.1 The Council shall maintain an animal control service to receive, investigate and resolve complaints about dogs.
- 3.2 The Council shall use the powers in the Act, as required, to issue infringement notices, to classify dogs as dangerous or menacing and to classify owners as probationary or disqualified.
- 3.3 **MENACING DOGS:** In accordance with section 33E(1)(b) dogs classified as menacing must be neutered.
- 3.4 The Council shall make a Dog Control Bylaw that:
 - Sets minimum standards for the accommodation of dogs
 - Requires a permit to be obtained where three or more dogs are kept in a Residential Zone. (Note Residential 4a and 4B Zones are not included in this provision)
 - Requires the containment of bitches in season, and the containment of dogs infected with a contagious disease.

4. Community Awareness about Dogs

The Council will raise awareness in the community about how responsibly owned dogs can co-exist with the public so that danger, distress and nuisance are minimised.

Method

- 4.1 Provide information, advice and education to the public and dog owners about dog behaviour, dog obedience courses available in the community and ways to manage dogs.

5. Funding for Dog Control

The Council will maintain an acceptable level of control services to implement this policy and any fees for the service shall reflect the different costs of control for different classes of dog.

Method

- 5.1 Fees will be set annually by resolution of the Council and will be:
 - Lower for neutered dogs than unneutered pet dogs
 - Lower for working dogs than unneutered pet dogs.
 - For late registration, 50% above the registration fee payable for that dog.

Note: The Council has powers under the Act to assist dog owners to meet their obligations and to address situations where those obligations are not met.

This policy recognises the benefits and problems of dogs to their owners and the community and that everyone in the community; dog owners, the public and the Council, has a role to play in order to continue to appreciate the benefits and minimise the problems.