

Responsible Dog Ownership

For more information contact
Council on 02 4677 1100



Dogs can provide excellent companionship, but part of owning a dog means being a responsible dog owner.

In accordance with the Companion Animals Act 1998 NSW, dog owners are required to:

- Microchip before 12 weeks of age or before being rehomed
- Lifetime Register by 6 months of age
- Prevent the dog from escaping your property
- Keep the dog on a lead whilst in a public place, unless the dog is in an 'Off Leash Area' – the dog must always be under effective control of a competent person

Desexing your dog is not compulsory but is highly recommended, however it reduces the cost of Lifetime Registration and will prevent unwanted litters and minimise excessive roaming and territorial/aggressive behaviour.

As a dog owner you are also required to provide adequate care and basic welfare to your pet. This includes:

- Providing appropriate food and clean water
- Providing adequate shelter suitable for all weather conditions
- Ensure that your dog is well socialised, trained and exercised
- Ensure your dog's good health by providing vet checks, worming, tick and flea treatments

Nuisance Dog Behaviour

In accordance with the Companion Animals Act 1998 a dog is a nuisance if it:

- Constantly roams
- Makes persistent, excessive noise
- Repeatedly defecates on private property where it is not ordinarily kept
- Repeatedly runs at or chases a person, animal (other than vermin) or vehicle
- Endangers the health of a person or animal (other than vermin)
- Repeatedly causes substantial damage to anything outside the property where it is ordinarily kept

As a dog owner it is your responsibility to ensure that your dog is not causing a nuisance. If it is found that your dog is causing a nuisance, a Nuisance Order can be placed on the dog requiring the owner to prevent the nuisance behaviour. Penalty notices can also be issued and the fine amount increases for repeat offences.

Dog Attacks

The Companion Animals Act 1998 states that *"If a dog rushes at, attacks, bites, harasses or chases any person or animal (other than vermin) whether or not any injury is caused to the person or animal, the owner of the dog, or another person above the age of 16 who is in charge of the dog at that time is guilty of an offence."*

Council have a responsibility to investigate reports of dog attack incidents and take appropriate enforcement action. This may include the issuing of a Nuisance Order, Menacing Dog Declaration or Dangerous Dog Declaration as well as issuing Penalty Notices for the offence

As a dog owner, it is your responsibility to ensure that your dog is secure in your property and cannot pose a threat to a person or animal. Having adequate, secure fencing is essential in minimising the risk of your dog being involved in an incident.

Many people keep a dog to deter trespassers and burglars. There is no problem with this, providing the dog does not

become a danger to other people or animals, which includes displaying unreasonable aggression. Even if a dog is confined to its property, it must not display unreasonable aggression.

If your dog is involved in a dog attack incident and is declared a Menacing Dog or Dangerous Dog, the legislation requires the dog owner to comply with strict control requirements and specific rules about how the dog is to be kept and housed whilst on your property.

What else can you do to be a responsible dog owner:

- Ensure you have adequate and appropriate fencing for the type of dog/s you own
- Desex your dog
- Provide enrichment toys for your dog to keep the dog amused
- Provide a comfortable environment for your dog
- Ensure your dog is well socialised with people and other dogs
- Seek training to try and resolve any problem behaviours
- Provide quality interactions with your dog every day by going for walks, throwing a ball, practicing new skills, grooming your dog or just spending time patting your dog

