

	DRAFT Policy No. 37 – Dog Management	
	CM Ref:	DOC/26/12717
	Adopted:	21 February 2011 Minute 24/11
	Version:	5 (Draft)
	Reviewed Date:	Last reviewed 20 September 2021 Minute 154/21
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1. OBJECTIVE

The Dorset municipality is defined by a unique natural environment, and Council plays a key role in the management of many of these areas, including dog management.

This policy, ensures that Dorset Council complies with the *Dog Control Act 2000* (the Act) which requires Council to create a policy for dog management in the municipal area, be reviewed every five (5) years and include:

- A code relating to the responsible ownership of dogs
- The provision of declared areas
- A fee structure
- Any other relevant information

Dorset Council is committed to ensuring that this policy helps to ensure that dogs, their owners and other residents can live in a safe and cohesive community.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all individuals responsible for a dog within the Dorset Council area, including both residents and visitors.

3. LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES

- *Local Government Act 1993 (Tas)*
- *Dog Control Act 2000 (Tas)*
- Dog Control Regulations (Tas)
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*
- *Animal Welfare Act 1993 (Tas)*
- *Customs Act 1901 (Cth)*
- Schedule of Fees and Charges

4. DEFINITIONS

As per *Dog Control Act 2000*.

Approved training – In Tasmania, Dog users and trainers' rights are under the Tasmanian Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs Act 1967.

Assistance Dog - A dog which is an assistance animal as defined in section 9 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*. Assistance dogs are not to be confused with therapy/emotional support/companion dogs. Such dogs are not considered an assistance dog, as the owner may not have a disability and/or the dog has not been trained to undertake

specific, identifiable tasks and behaviours to reduce the person's need for support. The dog is therefore not recognised under legislation.

Effective Control - A dog is considered to be under effective control if it is secured and restrained by a lead not more than 2 metres long, held by a person able to control the dog, or if it is tethered to a fixed object by a lead not more than 2 metres long for a period not more than 30 minutes. In areas where dogs are not required to be on a lead, a dog is under effective control if it is in close proximity to the person, in sight of the person, and the person is able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of an authorized person that the dog is immediately responsive to the person's commands.

5. CODE OF DOG OWNERSHIP

5.1 Council Responsibilities

Council seeks to promote responsible dog ownership and will:

- Promote and educate members of the community about responsible dog ownership
- Respond to complaints about dogs in the community
- Maintain and develop areas where dogs can exercise and socialise, including the Scottsdale Dog Park.
- Patrol the municipality

5.2 Dog Owner Responsibilities

Responsible dog owners will:

- ensure that their dog is kept under effective control at all times;
- ensure that their dog is registered and microchipped once it is six (6) months of age (and older);
- ensure that their dog is appropriately housed and contained within a secure yard;
- ensure that their dog wears its Council identification tag;
- ensure that their dog receives necessary care, exercise and attention in accordance with good veterinary practice, and is supplied with adequate food, water and shelter;
- ensure that the welfare of their dog is protected as required by the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that their dog does not cause a nuisance to any person, whether by persistent and barking/howling or by other means;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that their dog does not injure, endanger, intimidate, or cause distress to any person;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that their dog does not injure, endanger, or cause distress to any livestock, poultry, domestic animal(s) or protected wildlife;
- take all reasonable steps to ensure that their dog does not damage or endanger any property belonging to any other person; and
- clean up after their dog.

5.3 Community Education

Council will provide education to the community on responsible dog ownership as a preventative approach to common dog-related issues and education tools will include:

- signage in dog-exercise areas
- availability of guides and resources outlining the requirements of the *Dog Control Act 2000*;
- regular reminders and information through various media and communication channels such as social media, Council's website, community newsletter and the newspaper;
- provide public information session via various mechanisms on dog ownership issues and responsibilities.

Council Officers will undertake ongoing professional development to ensure they maintain a high level of aptitude in the undertaking and provision of dog management services.

5.4 Complaints and Nuisance Management/Mitigation

Council will consider each complaint objectively. Issues raised will be investigated in a manner that ensures all facts are considered to avoid vexatious and false complaints being supported.

5.4.1 *Nuisance Barking*

Barking dogs can be a difficult issue to deal with as every situation is different. The Act specifies a barking nuisance as a noise that consistently occurs or continues to such an extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any premises or public place.

Barking Complaints Will Follow a Structured Response:

1. In the first instance, residents should contact the owner of the dog directly to resolve the problem, as this is proven to be the most effective approach and assists in maintaining neighborhood harmony.
2. If unable to resolve the issue of a barking dog directly with the owner, then the Council should be notified. The Council may elect to contact the dog owner to discuss their dog's behavior and make suggestions as to how owners can remedy any problems.
3. A person may make a formal complaint to the Council; this must be lodged on the Council's official complaint form and the appropriate fee must be paid. Any fee paid will be refunded in the event that a complaint is substantiated.
4. In response to a formal complaint, the Council may require the person making the complaint to keep a record of instances for a period of not less than 14 days (or otherwise determined by the Council). In considering this action, the Council will have regard to any other collaborating evidence.
5. Where considered necessary, Council will institute proceedings against a dog owner, or person in charge of a dog, that creates a nuisance (e.g. via excessive and unreasonable barking activity, or behaves in a manner that is injurious or dangerous to the health of any person).

5.4.2 *Dog at Large*

Any dog that wanders off its own property without being under the effective control of a person, is contravening the *Dog Control Act 2000*. If a dog is found 'at large' and able to be contained or is causing a safety issue, a member of the public can call Council's Customer Service or After-Hours number.

5.4.3 *Managing other Nuisance Complaints*

Council will consider complaints received relating to an alleged nuisance/ alleged breach to the *Dog Control Act 2000*; however, it may not act upon anonymous or unsubstantiated complaints. Concerns should be submitted to Council in writing and issues raised by complainants will be investigated in a manner which ensures that all facts are considered. A Council Officer may make enquiries as to the validity of a complaint by speaking to the dog owner, the complainant and surrounding neighbors and/or witnesses. Where necessary, Council will institute proceedings against a dog owner for an offence relating to a nuisance or when dogs attack, threaten people or animals, or compromise community safety and health.

Enforcement actions Council may take include:

- issuing a warning, an abatement or infringement notice
- impounding roaming dogs; and/or
- prosecuting when an offence or the impact of an offence is significant.

Council will provide rubbish receptacles for deposit of dog faeces in appropriate public locations. Where considered necessary, Council will institute proceedings against a person in charge of a dog that fails to immediately remove and dispose of faeces left by the dog in a public place or a place not legally occupied by the person.

5.5 Municipal Dog Pound

Council will operate a municipal dog pound in accordance with the requirements of the *Dog Control Act 2000* and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Every reasonable effort will be made to secure an alternative home for dogs admitted to the pound and not claimed.

A dog owner will be required to pay any fees and charges relating to the impoundment and daily maintenance of a dog. Any veterinarian fees incurred during impoundment are the responsibility of the owner.

Information will be provided to advise community members to contact the Council in the event of losing their dog; which will duly assist Council officers in seeking to reunite impounded dogs with their owners.

5.6 Welfare of Dogs

Council does not manage sick or injured dogs. If your dog is sick or injured, please take it to your local vet. If you believe a dog is suffering neglect or abuse, please contact the RSPCA Animal Cruelty Helpline on 1300 139 947 to report.

RSPCA Animal Welfare Inspectors are authorised, under the *Animal Welfare Act 1993*, to investigate acts of animal cruelty, then seize or request the surrender any vulnerable animals.

6. Kennel Licences

A licence is required for any person who wishes to keep on any premises (i) more than 2 dogs over the age of 6 months or (ii) more than 4 working dogs over the age of 6 months. An application for a licence to the General Manager must be on the prescribed form and accompanied by payment of the prescribed fee. All Kennel Licences are to be renewed at the beginning of each financial year in line with the Schedule of Fees and Charges as determined by Council.

If the applicant wishes to operate commercially from a premises a planning permit will be required in addition to the requirement for a licence. A kennel to house dogs for commercial purposes (such as a boarding kennel or breeding kennels) will be required to be constructed to the applicable standards.

7. Dangerous Dogs

Council prioritises public safety, and any incidents involving a dog will be quickly and thoroughly investigated. If a dog has been found to cause serious injury, or demonstrates that it is likely to do so, the General Manager may declare the dog to be a dangerous dog.

The General Manager has the power to declare a dog dangerous. If you disagree with this declaration, you can lodge an appeal of this decision in the Magistrates Court within 14 days of being informed of the General Manager's declaration.

If you own a dangerous dog, you must ensure your premises and dog meets the requirements of the Act. You cannot keep more than two (2) dangerous dogs on your property at any one time.

Under the Act dangerous dogs must:

- Be de-sexed and micro-chipped; and
- Wear an approved collar advising that it is a dangerous dog at all times; and
- Be muzzled when in a public area, and never be let off lead even in an off-lead area; and
- Be kept in an approved enclosure when on private property.

The Dog Control Regulations prescribe the minimum requirements for a dangerous dog enclosure.

If you own a dangerous dog or restricted breed, you cannot give or sell your dog to a new owner unless you have sought prior permission from Council by writing to the General Manager. The General Manager can refuse to give permission, and you can appeal this decision in the Magistrates Court.

8. Restricted Breeds

If a dog is registered, listed or recognised as one of the following breeds or types, it must be declared under the Act as a Restricted Breed dog. Restricted breed dogs do not include cross breeds.

- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)
- Dogo Argentino (or Argentinean Mastiff)
- Fila Brasileiro (or Brazilian Mastiff, Brazilian guard dog or Cao de Fila)
- Japanese Tosa (or tosa Inu, tosa fighting dog or Japanese fighting dog)
- Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- any other breed, kind or description of dog whose importation into Australia is prohibited by or under the [Customs Act 1901](#) of the Commonwealth

If your dog has been declared a restricted breed dog you may appeal against the declaration.
An appeal must be made within 28 days of the service of notice of the declaration.

9. Fees

Dog registration and other fees are set for each financial year as part of the adoption of fees as charges in accordance with section 205 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Council will set its dog fees at an Ordinary Council Meeting. Fees will be advertised and standard renewal notices will be provided to all persons who have a dog registered under an annual registration.

Council endeavours to set dog registration fees that are affordable for dog owners whilst enabling recovery of costs associated with the delivery of dog management services. In developing registration fees each year, Council will apply the following principles:

- Registrations for de-sexed dogs will be discounted.
- Registrations for non-desexed dogs will attract a higher fee.
- Registrations for dogs owned by pensioners will be discounted to alleviate cost pressures.
- Owners with an I.D card from an approved Training Institute who keep guide dogs or hearing dogs will not be charged a registration fee.

Owners seeking concessional registration (e.g. pensioners, owners of sterilised dogs) may need to produce written evidence of eligibility as prescribed in the Act.

Lifetime registration for dogs involves a once off payment of the prescribed fee. In the event of the registered dog dying within the first three (3) years of lifetime registration, 50% of the registration fee paid at the time of registration commencement will be returned to the owner.

10. Declared Areas

To ensure residents have areas to walk their dogs without conflict with non-dog owners, some areas will be declared restricted to dogs (excluding guide dogs or hearing dogs) during certain hours and periods of the year, or will be prohibited to dogs (excluding guide dogs or hearing dogs accompanying their owner) entering altogether. Other areas will be open to exercise dogs year-round. Council will consider the provision of further exercise areas along with training areas, prohibited areas and restricted areas as needs are established. Importantly, dogs must be under the effective control of a person at all times in public places.

The municipal area will be actively patrolled by Council staff and infringement notices may be issued where a dog is observed being active in a declared area that is in contravention of this Policy. Special care must be taken to ensure that dogs are not at large in coastal areas during the breeding times of native birds and animals.

10.1 Exercise Areas:

The following areas are areas where dogs can be exercised:

- Adams Beach – BRIDPORT
Dogs permitted off-lead all year round.
- Foreshore Walking Track – BRIDPORT
Dogs only permitted on a lead all year round.
- Trent Water Beach Area – BRIDPORT
Dogs permitted:
 - (i) on a lead on the walking track and grassed area starting from the boat ramp heading southward to the Bridport Port and Marine Area. This includes the beach area east of the walking track; and
 - (ii) off-lead in the beach area only, east of the walking track, starting from the boat ramp and heading southward to the Bridport Port and Marine Area.
- Council Land – Legerwood Carved Memorial Trees, LEGERWOOD
Dogs only permitted on a lead all year round.
- Council Land – Scottsdale Dog Park, SCOTTSDALE
Dogs permitted off-lead all year round.

10.2 *Restricted Areas:*

The following areas are areas where the activities of dogs (other than guide dogs or hearing dogs) need to be restricted:

- ALL COUNCIL OWNED OR MAINTAINED CEMETERIES
Dogs are restricted from entering all year round.
- ALL COUNCIL HALLS, BUILDINGS AND AQUATICS
Dogs are restricted from entering all year round.
- Branxholm Recreation Ground – 4 Frederick Street, BRANXHOLM
Dogs must be on a lead at all times, but are not permitted to enter the premises on days where an event is occurring.
- Branxholm Recreation Reserve – 1-7 Scott Street, BRANXHOLM
Dogs only permitted on a lead within the designated campground area.
- Bridport Football Club – Henry Street, BRIDPORT
Dogs must be on a lead and are prohibited from accessing any playing surfaces (football ground and netball courts).
- Bridport Foreshore – BRIDPORT
Off Lead
Dogs permitted off-lead from 1 April to 1 November at the beach areas of Eastmans Beach and Goftons Beach.
On Lead Map
Dogs permitted on a lead from 1st April - 1st November in the area between the Bridport Walking Track and the nominated beach areas of Eastmans Beach and Goftons Beach.
Between 1 November and 1 April, dogs are not permitted (restricted) in these areas.
- Bridport Seaside Caravan Park – BRIDPORT
With approval from the Caravan Park Manager, dogs are only permitted on a lead from 1 April to 1 November at campsites south of Eastmans Beach.
- Derby Park – Main Street, DERBY
Dogs only permitted on a lead all year round.
- Ringarooma Recreation Ground – East Maurice Road, RINGAROOMA
Dogs must be on a lead at all times but are not permitted to enter the premises on days where an event is occurring.
- Children's Reserve and Memorial Park – SCOTTSDALE
Dogs are restricted from entering the site all year round.
- Northeast Park – Ringarooma Road, SCOTTSDALE
Dogs only permitted on a lead:
 - (i) within the designated campground area; or
 - (ii) on the Ring Road.
- Recreation Ground / Showgrounds area – SCOTTSDALE
Dogs must be on a lead and are prohibited from entering inside the trotting track and accessing any playing surfaces (football ground, hockey fields and netball courts).
- Winnaleah Sports Ground – 1 Winnaleah Road, WINNALEAH
Dogs must be on a lead at all times but are not permitted to enter the premises on days where an event is occurring.

10.3 *Prohibited Areas:*

The following areas are areas where dogs (other than a guide dog or a hearing dog that is accompanying the owner) are prohibited due to the presence of sensitive habitat for native wildlife:

- Bridport Foreshore - BRIDPORT

All areas below the walking track to the high tide mark, between the Old Pier to Eastmans Beach.

10.4 *Prohibited Public Areas:*

Under Section 28 of the *Dog Control Act 2000*, a person must not take a dog into the following:

- any grounds of a school, preschool, kindergarten, creche or other place for the reception of children without the permission of a person in charge of the place;
- any shopping centre or any shop;
- the grounds of a public swimming pool;
- any playing area of a sportsground on which sport is being played; or
- any area within 10 metres of a children's playground.

This requirement does not apply to:

- a guide dog that is accompanying a wholly or partially blind person or is in training for that purpose;
- a hearing dog that is accompanying a wholly or partially deaf person or is in training for that purpose; or
- a pet shop; or
- the premises of a veterinary surgeon; or
- a pet grooming shop; or
- any other premises related to the care and management of dogs.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every five years from the date of adoption.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Version	Doc Ref	Date Reviewed	Author	Comments
5	DOC/26/12717	September 2026	Jayne Miller	Tracked changes in Policy