



Vision for the City of Clarence

Clarence... a vibrant, prosperous sustainable city.

Dog Management Policy

Introduction

In accordance with Section 7 of the Dog Control Act 2000 council must develop, make, and implement a policy relating to dog management within its municipal areas. The policy must be reviewed every five years and must include each of the following elements:

- code of responsible dog ownership
- fee structure
- schedule of declared areas
- any other relevant matter

Aim

To achieve a harmonious relationship between people, dogs, and the environment.

Council's role in achieving this aim

Within available resources and consistent with council service provision priorities, council will:

- Provide information for dog owners and non-dog owners of their rights and responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 2000.
- Understand that exercise areas should recognise the needs of people and dogs, as well as considering impacts on the environment including flora and fauna when planning dog exercise options.
- Appreciate the needs of dog owners and non-dog owners in the development of future recreation and urban management planning processes.
- Administer the provisions of the Dog Control Act 2000.

Direction Statements

- The importance of dog companionship is recognised.
- Benefits to the health and welfare of dogs, and benefits to the owner are recognised.
- That the value of education and promotion of responsible dog ownership is the first guiding principle for dog management issues within the City of Clarence.
- Regulatory measures are used where education has previously been provided and a subsequent offence is detected, or where a serious offence against the Dog Control Act 2000 has occurred.

Code of Responsible Dog Ownership

Purpose

To provide guidelines for dog owners and prospective owners on actions that will assist in producing healthy and happy dogs and provide a harmonious community for all residents.



Objectives

Dogs are an important part of society and we value their companionship. As with any animal there are standards of care and welfare that need to be observed. The views and concerns of neighbours and other members of the community need to be considered.

Responsible dog ownership requires accepting full responsibility for dogs in terms of their needs and the standards for dog management that are expected by the wider community.

The following code has been developed to help owners maximise

- Appropriate dog behaviours
- Understanding of dog control regulations
- The health and welfare of dogs
- Promoting adherence to the voluntary code of responsible dog ownership

Pre-Purchase Guidelines

Dogs are a valuable companion animal that require an ongoing commitment to their care. In order to fully understand the obligations and responsibilities of dog ownership, research should be taken prior to making the final decision to bring a dog into your home.

Some issues that need to be considered before acquiring a dog are:

- The breed of the dog and its suitability to the home environment.
- The number and age of family members.
- Compatibility to any other pets you own.
- The size of your yard and suitable fencing.
- Proximity of neighbours and any pets they may own.
- Access to a kennel or other shelter when outside.
- Your current lifestyle and activity levels.
- Vaccinations, desexing and microchipping before 6 months of age
- Arrangements for care if you are away or unavailable - proximity and cost of boarding kennels, pet minders or in-house sitters.
- Location and access to dog exercise areas and proximity to any prohibited or restricted areas.
- Location and access to other services such as veterinary and pet services.
- Initial and continuing costs – including but not limited to purchase or adoption costs, vaccinations, microchipping, desexing, registration costs, on-going and unexpected veterinary costs, pet insurance, dietary requirements from pup to adult, obedience classes and grooming.
- Socialisation and education of your dog and providing access to a variety of experiences.
- Familiarisation with regulations relating to dog ownership - Dog Control Act 2000, Animal Welfare Act 1993, and council's Dog Management Policy.

Post-Purchase Guidelines

Having made the decision to bring a dog into your family the following actions are recommended to ensure a healthy and happy dog:

- Microchipping and desexing before six months of age
- Registration with council at six months of age
- Annual vaccinations and veterinary checks
- Appropriate diet from puppy through to adulthood
- Puppy school and obedience training
- Opportunities for exercise, play and socialisation
- Adherence to all regulatory requirements

Consideration of Others

There are responsibilities for us all to consider the impact of our actions, and our dog's actions, on others and this includes taking actions to:

- Ensure your dog does not bark or howl excessively and cause a nuisance to others.
- Contain your dog to your property and ensuring your dog does not jump fences or wander off.
- Clean up after your pet by removing and disposing of dog waste immediately.
- Keep no more than two dogs on your property without a kennel licence or council approval.
- Make sure your dog is on-lead at all times and only taken off-lead in designated off-lead areas.
- When in an off-lead area keep your dog under effective control at all times. Effective control is defined as being:
 - within line of sight
 - in close proximity
 - your dog being immediately responsive to your command.
- Do not allow your dog to become a nuisance to others when in a public place. Your dog's enthusiastic or playful activity such as jumping at people and rushing to other dogs might not be appreciated by other people or dogs.
- Compliance with the Dog Control Act 2000 and other regulatory requirements.
- Understanding your responsibilities as a dog owner.

Awareness

Ongoing awareness of this Code will be provided through:

- City Rangers in their daily activities
- Council staff in community events such as Dogs Day Out
- Promotion through Dog News, council's website and social media platforms
- Support of education programs in local schools and community organisations for example, those run through Dogs' Homes of Tas and Delta Dog Safe

Other Relevant Matters

Kennel Licences

The Dog Control Act 2000 provides that a kennel licence is necessary if more than two dogs over the age of six months are to be kept at a property, or in the case of working dogs, four working dogs being kept at a property. The Act does provide for a temporary exemption when a dog is being cared for a short period of time if it meets the criteria for a temporary exemption.

An application for a Kennel licence will only be considered in the following circumstances:

- The premises are in non-residential styled zoning, and
- The property has an area equal to or greater than 1 hectare

Council's assessment of a kennel licence will include consideration of issues such as zoning of the land including any adjacent residential styled zoned properties. It will also take into account the location of residential zoned buildings, local amenity, environmental health issues and animal welfare. Council will be taking into consideration the kennel standards for dogs which reflect the State Government's draft Animal Welfare Standards and Guidelines for Dogs in respect to the keeping of dogs on private premises.

A kennel licence will not be granted if the premises to which the licence relates is deemed to be unfit for the purpose for which it is to be used, if it is not in the public interest, or if it is not compatible with the principles within council's Code of Responsible Dog Ownership.

In extenuating circumstances, where the criteria outlined in the Dog Control Act 2000 cannot be met, and the property does not meet the minimum standards in terms of size and zoning, a short-term kennel licence may be sought from council. The issuing of a licence in this circumstance would be at the discretion of the General Manager and would apply for a set period and only for the dogs specified on the licence.

Lost Dogs

If your dog is missing it may have been collected by the City Rangers and taken to the Dogs' Home of Tasmania, located at 101 Scots Road in Risdon Vale.

Fee Structure

Policy

The objective of the fee schedule is to set the reliance on the general rate to 30%. This is in response to the increasing demand on Ranger Services by users of Clarence City Council facilities from other municipal areas and reflects the provision of non-dog areas and services for non-dog owners. The financial impost of providing a ranger service is to be achieved through a combination of setting appropriate fees and ensuring that all dogs are registered.

Objectives

- Maximising the level of dog registration in the City of Clarence.
- Recognising responsible dog ownership in establishing the scale of fees.
- To minimise the reliance on the general rate contribution for dog management costs.

Registration Categories

| Category | Level of fees | Documents for eligibility |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Entire Dog | Fee adopted each financial year by council | |
| Desexed Dog | 30% of the Entire Dog fee | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Certificate of Sterilisation issued by a veterinary surgeon/surgery, or• other documentation which confirms that the dog is sterilised such as previous council documents or microchipping certificate, or• a signed statutory declaration |
| TCA Member | 50% of the Entire Dog fee | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• annual verification through Tasmanian Canine Association |
| Guide Dog (inc Hearing dogs) | No fee charged | Identification card issued by Guide Dogs Australia or Hearing Dogs |
| Guard Dog | 2 x the Entire Dog fee | Documents may be requested by council to confirm the dog will be guarding a non-residential property |
| Dangerous Dog | 10 x the Entire Dog fee | Formal Dangerous Dog declaration or written advice from a council that made the declaration |

Guidelines for setting and payment of fees

- Kennel licence renewal fees are raised annually and will be set at the Entire Dog fee.
- The registration fees are to be paid annually and based upon the financial year 1 July to 30 June.
- Renewal notices will be sent prior to 30 June each year.
- Registration fees are due before the 1st of August each year.
- All fees will be rounded to the nearest 10 cents.
- All registration and kennel licence fees will be increased by a minimum of CPI (Hobart) for the twelve-month preceding period to the end of the March quarter.

• Reductions and Reimbursements

Pension concessions

20% discount will apply to dogs registered to a pensioner. In this policy a pensioner is defined under the meaning of the Local Government (Rates and Charges) Remissions Act 1991.

Registrations made after 30 April

A 100% reduction be applied to dogs registered after 30 April each year until 30 June of that year unless the registration is made at the direction of an authorised officer.

Obedience Trained Dogs

An ongoing 50% discount will apply to the registration fee for dogs that have received a Grade 4 training certificate which has been issued by an accredited training organisation. Grade 4 training is recognised as being all off-lead training. The principle behind this fee reduction is to encourage and support owners to have well trained dogs when in off-lead environments.

Dogs adopted from animal welfare bodies

In recognition of the valuable work undertaken in the field of animal welfare, a free first year registration will be given until 30 June (following date of purchase) if adopted from one of the following organisations:

- Dogs' Homes of Tasmania
- RSPCA
- GAP – Greyhound Adoption Program



Implementation

- Changes to the fee structure will generally come into effect on 1 July.
- Fees are to be set annually by Council in accordance with the Dog Control Act and the Local Government Act.
- Information on the fee structure is to be made available on Council's website and social media platforms, via DogNews and through the council offices.

Declared Areas

Classes of Declared Areas

The Dog Control Act 2000 defines specific classes of declared areas

Exercise Areas

Areas where a dog may be exercised subject to any specified conditions, and either:

- On-lead
- Off-lead

Training Areas

An area where a dog may be trained subject to any specified conditions. Dogs being exercised in these areas are not expected to be under effective control when taken off-lead if their owner is actively engaged with them.

Restricted Area

Areas where dogs are restricted from entering during specified hours, days or seasons or at all times.

Prohibited Areas

Areas containing sensitive habitat for native flora or fauna where dogs are prohibited

Objectives

- To recognise the needs of people in Clarence who own dogs.
- To recognise the needs of non-dog owners in the appropriate declaration of areas.
- To provide safe and appropriate environments for the community.
- To protect sensitive areas including areas of cultural significance or containing native flora and fauna.
- To facilitate responsible dog ownership and support compliance to leash laws by providing a range of opportunities for dog exercise in the City of Clarence.
- To consider the provision of dog exercise areas in planning for future public recreation areas.
- To provide training areas where dog training is conducted on a formal basis.

Principles for declaration

Dog owners are encouraged to have their dogs on-lead when entering into and using all shared use areas, including tracks, trails, pathways, regional parks and bushland reserves unless separately declared otherwise. Under the provisions of the Dog Control Act 2000 all dogs in road or road-related areas in built up areas, are required to be on-lead. The definition of road-related area includes any footpath or track that is designed for use by cyclists or pedestrians. A built-up means an area in which:

- there are buildings on land next to the road and
- there is street lighting at intervals not over 100 metres for a distance of 500 metres or if the road is shorter than 500 metres, for the whole road.

Council is the only authority with the ability to declare areas for the exercise, restriction or prohibition of dogs under the Dog Control Act 2000. This authority will be primarily utilised on parcels of land which come under council's management.

Where it is considered appropriate, council may enter into negotiations with the owners of other parcels of land for the declaration of their land in relation to exercise, restriction or prohibition of dogs. When negotiations are conducted, discussions will also be held in relation to management, policing and appropriate signage for that land. In conducting such negotiations council will only exercise those functions over its own land, unless there is a mutual benefit in deciding otherwise.

For areas seen by the public as a single parcel of land, but under management by different authorities, a consistent pattern of use in relation to dog exercise will be maintained over the entire parcel of land, if feasible. Where this is not feasible, the separation of restrictions is to be made visually obvious.

Subject to above, areas will be declared according to the following principles:

- Recognition of the community's desire to exercise their dogs in natural areas.
- Recognition of the community's desire to exercise their dogs in beach environments.
- Delivering shared and restricted access to beaches during summer periods for all users.
- Providing a consistency of restriction provisions across contiguous parcels of land.
- Recognition of the need to retain some areas as dog free, due to the use of those areas by other groups in the community, e.g. sporting fields and perimeters, play equipment, family-oriented parks.
- Providing consistency with council's Reserve Activity Plans and other development plans recognised or endorsed by the council.
- Potential sites for future dog exercise areas be investigated in growing and developing communities.

Priorities for future exercise areas

Where possible, council will seek to provide a dog exercise area within reasonable walking distance of the majority of residences in each suburb. If it is not possible to provide an exercise area within reasonable walking distance, future plans for the development of exercise areas within suburbs will be prioritised on the basis of:

- Areas of urban consolidation and where registration levels are above the average registration level for the population of that suburb.
- Areas in which there is a high level of population growth, in which case the provision of exercise areas should be considered in relation to public open space requirements for any subdivisions.
- Lower priority will be given to those areas where there is low residential density and large lot sizes.



Criteria and level of declaration

Beaches

Where appropriate, beaches in the City of Clarence area will be subject to shared and restricted usage by dog owners. During the summer period of 1 December to 1 March, dogs will not be permitted on most council beaches between the hours of 10.00am and 6.00pm. A definitive list of shared usage and restrictions is to be clearly outlined in the Schedule of Declared Areas. At all other times of the year, effective control provisions will apply to dogs on beaches unless separately declared otherwise.

The definition of beach will include the foreshore area of the beach and approved council access ways. It does not include the dune area, or any tracks on the dunes parallel to the beach.

Shared Tracks and Trails

The Clarence Foreshore Trail, Clarence Coastal Trail, rivulet tracks and roadside tracks will be designated as being on-lead exercise areas to support the increasing use of these areas by pedestrians and cyclists. This declaration includes areas immediately adjacent to the trail or track, to a distance of 2 metres where fencing within 2 metres is not present.

Tracks cutting through bushland reserves will carry the same dog exercise regulations as the reserve in which they are located. In bushland reserves, dogs are encouraged to remain on formed tracks.

Tangara Trail

The Tangara Trails is covered in the Schedule of Declared Areas within the category of Public Areas not Declared in this Schedule. In these areas, dogs may be taken off-lead but must remain under effective control at all times.

Several tracks within and that connect to the Tangara Trail network are situated in areas which are declared as on-lead in this schedule, for example Mortimer Bay Reserve, Single Hill Reserve and shared roadside tracks. In these areas the on-lead requirement takes precedence over the effective control provisions.

Bushland Reserves

Where an on-lead status is recommended in a Council endorsed Reserve Activity Plan, the Schedule of Declared Areas will be re-assessed with regard to the existing dog regulation covering that reserve.

Where a Bushland Reserve has been declared as being on-lead, dogs will only be permitted on-lead and on formed tracks within that reserve to protect natural flora, fauna, including habitat and/or areas of cultural significance.

As Reserve Activity Plans are developed and reviewed, the impacts of domestic animal within that reserve will be assessed as a standard criterion.

Parks

Under the Dogs Control Act 2000, dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of any play equipment. Due to their size, there will be some local parks where dogs will be restricted from entering as they will be in breach of this regulation or if it is not practical or is not compatible with intended use of the park. In all other regional and local parks, dogs must be on-lead at all times, unless separately declared otherwise.

Greyhounds

Council will develop a fenced off-lead greyhound exercise area at 17 Goodwins Road Clarendon Vale. This is in recognition of recent amendments to the Act which permits greyhounds to be off-lead in specified area subject to any declared conditions.

Sporting Recreation Grounds and Perimeters

In order to maintain our sporting and recreation facilities dogs will not be permitted on any of council's sporting recreation grounds and perimeters at any time.

Other Public Recreation Areas

Other public recreation areas under council control will be considered on a case by case basis having consideration to the needs of the community, and any management plans existing for the area. In areas that have not been declared, dogs must be kept under effective control.

Training Areas

Areas that are utilised by a recognised obedience club for formal obedience classes will be designated off-lead training areas. A dog in these areas is regarded as being under effective control of a person if they are actively engaged in training or agility or obedience trials.

Prohibited areas defined under the Dog Control Act

In addition to the prohibited areas declared by council the Dog Control Act 2000 requires the following areas be prohibited to dogs at all times:

- Any grounds of a school, preschool, crèche or other place for the reception of children without the permission of the 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
- Any area within 10 metres of a children's playground

Signage of Declared Areas

It is a requirement under the Act for council to erect and maintain signs sufficient to identify any exercise area, training area, prohibited area or restricted area.

Implementation

Following adoption of this policy, the council is required to formally notify by public notice the declaration of areas. This notice is also to include the date from which the declaration is to take effect.

A list of the areas to be declared is provided as an attachment to this policy.

Measurement Systems

Fee Structure

- Total Revenue
- Total Costs
- Revenue and Costs by cost/revenue category
- The total revenue received through registrations
- The total revenue received per registration category
- General Rate contribution to Dog Management as a percentage of total costs

Declared Areas

- Usage of declared areas (largely anecdotal)
- Number of complaints received
- Number of infringements served
- Changes in registration levels per suburb
- Cost of maintaining declared areas

General Indicators of Dog Ownership in Clarence

- Total number of registrations each year
- The total number of registrations per registration category
- Number of dwellings with registered dogs
- Registration levels per suburb
- Number of infringements issued by nature of offence
- Number of complaints by nature of complaint
- Number of dogs delivered to Dogs' Home

General Review

This policy when adopted will be endorsed for a period of seven years. A review of this policy will be commenced within five years of the adoption of this policy.