
CLARENCE CITY COUNCIL

DOG MANAGEMENT POLICY

November 2015



Vision for the City of Clarence

Clarence...diverse communities working together for a vibrant and prosperous and sustainable city.

Dog Management Policy

Aim

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

Council's role in achieving this aim

Council will within available resource allocation, and consistent with its priorities for service provision, provide:

- Information for dog owners and non-dog owners of their rights and responsibilities under the Dog Control Act 2000;
- Exercise areas that recognise the needs of people and dogs, taking into account any impacts on the environment;
- For the needs of dog owners and non-dog owners in the development of future recreation and urban management planning processes; and
- Administer the provisions of the Dog Control Act 2000.

Direction Statements

- That the importance of dog companionship is recognised.
- That benefits to the health and welfare of dogs, and benefits to the owner through exhibiting responsible dog ownership is recognised.
- That the value of education, for dog owners and non-dog owners, is the first guiding principle for dog management issues in Clarence.
- That regulatory measures are used where education has previously been provided and a subsequent offence is detected, or where a serious offence has occurred.

Fee Structure

Objectives

- To minimise the reliance on the general rate contribution to dog management costs.
- To maximise the level of dog registration in the City of Clarence.
- To maintain total revenue received from dog registration fees in real terms.
- To recognise responsible dog ownership in establishing a scale of fees.

Policy

That Council aim to reduce the reliance on the general rate to 20%.

- This will be achieved through a combination of setting appropriate registration fees, ensuring that all dogs are registered, and in containing costs.

Categories for registration

That registration fees be set in line with these objectives and with the following categories of fees being identified:

- Entire Dog
- Guide Dogs/Hearing Dogs
- Desexed Dog
- Working Dogs
- Greyhounds
- Pure Bred Dog
- Guard Dog
- Dangerous Dog

Evidence required prior to registration of a dog in a particular category

That the evidence required in each category be as follows:

1. **Guide Dog/Hearing Dog** – Same meaning as provided under the Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs Act 1967 or subsequent relevant legislation.
2. **Desexed Dog** - Certificate of Sterilisation from a veterinary surgeon or other documentation confirming that the dog is sterilised, or the provision of a statutory declaration.
3. **Working Dog** – Provision of evidence which proves to the satisfaction of the City Rangers that the dog is a true working dog as defined under the Dog Control Act 2000. For stock working dogs this may include a demonstration of stock working abilities. For working dogs other than stock working dogs, supporting documentation is required from that organisation or business.
4. **Greyhound** – Racing Services Tasmania ID card or appropriate paperwork from Racing Services Tasmania

5. **Pure Bred Dog** - Certificate of registration and pedigree issued by the Tasmanian Canine Association (TCA) trading as Dogs Tasmania, or equivalent interstate certification, together with a current membership card of Dogs Tasmania.

Level of Fees

1. That Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs are not charged for registration.
2. That a lesser rate be provided for a desexed dog in recognition of the responsible attitude shown by owners in relation to breeding. This rate to be set at 30% of the rate for an entire dog.
3. That a lesser rate be provided for a working dog and for a greyhound in recognition that these categories have been recognised in previous legislation since 1987. Further, dogs in this category are likely to be well trained which would reflect the outcomes relating to responsible dog ownership. A high number of these dog owners would have an association with formal breeding and event organisations that would further enhance ethical issues covered under the Pure Bred dog category. This rate to be set at 40% of the rate for an entire dog.
4. That a lesser rate be provided for a Pure Bred Dog in recognition that dog owners are members of and have registered their dog with the Tasmanian Canine Association Inc. (Dogs Tasmania). This involves considerable expense and requires adherence to the Association's Code of Ethics relating to responsible dog ownership, including the keeping, welfare, breeding, selling and disposing of dogs by members. This rate to be set at 40% of the rate for an entire dog.
5. That the fee for a Guard dog be set at twice the rate of an entire dog in recognition that it is declared dangerous for reason of its duties.
6. That the fee for a Dangerous Dog be set at ten (10) times the level of that for an entire dog and that no discount is provided for early payment. Any declaration of a Dangerous Dog made prior to the adoption of this Dog Management Policy (2015) the fee is to be set at five times the entire dog rate.

For any pensioner registering a dog, a 20% discount will apply to the appropriate category of dog registration. The discount will only apply to one dog. A pensioner, for the purpose of this discount, is a prescribed pensioner under the meaning of the Local Government (Rates and Charges) Remissions Act 1991.

Payment and setting of fees

1. That registration fees be paid annually.
2. All fees will be rounded to the nearest 10c.
3. That registration fees in all categories be increased by a minimum of CPI (Hobart) for the twelve-month preceding period, to the end of the March quarter.
4. That a discount of \$5 will apply to all registrations paid before 1 August each year.
5. That registration charges be due and payable before the 1st of August each year.
6. That kennel licence fees be established annually on the basis of a single fee for application and for renewal. That these fees be increased by a minimum of CPI (Hobart) to the end of the March quarter.

7. That a discount of \$20 apply to all kennel renewals paid before the 1st of August each year.

Reductions and Reimbursements

- **Applications for registration made after 31st December**

1. A 50% reduction be applied to the applicable registration fee provided the dog has attained the age of six months in the preceding four weeks, or the dog is registered within four weeks of purchase, and the registration application is made voluntarily.
2. Where registration is made at the direction of an authorised officer, no reduction is to apply.

- **Reimbursement of Dog Registration on Death of Dog**

On receipt of a certificate of euthanasia from a recognised veterinary clinic or submission of a Statutory Declaration, refund of dog registration charges will be provided according to the rates given under:

1. dog deceased within 3 months of date of registration - 75% refund of registration fee paid;
2. dog deceased after 3 months and within 6 months of date of registration - 50% refund of registration fee paid;
3. dog deceased after 6 months and within 9 months of date of registration - 25% refund of registration fee paid;
4. dog deceased after 9 months - no refund.

Refunds are only to apply if application is made in the same financial year as registration has been paid.

- **Reimbursement of Dog Registration Fee in the event of Spayed Dog**

This reimbursement is to apply to all registered dogs that are subsequently spayed, and is based on the difference between the registration fee paid and the spayed rate.

On receipt of a certificate of neutering from a recognised veterinary clinic, refund of dog registration rates will be allowed according to the rates given under:

1. dog spayed within 3 months of registration - 75% refund of difference;
2. dog spayed after 3 months and within 6 months of registration - 50% refund of difference;
3. dog spayed after 6 months of registration - 25% refund of difference;
4. dog spayed after 9 months of registration - no refund.

Refunds are only to apply if application is made in the same financial year as registration has been paid.

- **Reduced Fees for Obedience Trained Dogs**

Where the owner of a dog presents evidence that the dog has satisfactorily completed an obedience course run by an accredited officer, a one off discount will apply at the rate specified.

Grade	Description	Reduction	Period of discount
3	Some off-lead training	25%	One off discount
4	All off-lead training	50%	Applies for the life of the dog

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 the Dogs' Home of Tasmania, R.S.P.C.A and G.A.P.

Dogs adopted from the Dogs' Homes of Tasmania, the R.S.P.C.A and the Greyhound Adoption Program (G.A.P.) will have free registration until 30th June following the date of purchase. This is in recognition of:

- the responsible behaviour of the owner in adopting a dog that is desexed, wormed, fully vaccinated and microchipped; and
- the valuable work undertaken by the Dog's Homes of Tasmania, the R.S.P.C.A. and G.A.P. in all areas of dog management.

Implementation

- The policies are to commence from the adoption of the revised policy by Council.
- Fees are to be set annually by Council, under Section 80 of the Dog Control Act and the Local Government Act.
- Approaches are to be made to organisations that offer neutering of dogs to encourage a discount rate for pensioners in order to facilitate neutering of dogs.
- Publicity of the policy is to be undertaken.

Declared Areas

Classes of Declared Areas

The Dog Control Act 2000 defines specific classes of declared areas:

1. Exercise Areas

An area where a dog may be exercised subject to any specified conditions. The two types of exercise areas are:

- **On-lead exercise area**
A dog can only be exercised on-lead, subject to any restrictions specified.
- **Off-lead exercise area**
A dog can be exercised off-lead, subject to any restrictions specified. Dogs must remain within reasonable proximity, sight and be immediately responsive to the controller's commands.

2. Restricted Area

An area where dogs are restricted from entering during specified days, hours or seasons; or during specified hours, days or seasons.

3. Training Areas

An area where a dog may be trained subject to any specified conditions.

4. Prohibited Areas

An area containing sensitive habitat for native wildlife.

Declared Areas Policy

Objectives

- To recognise the needs of people in Clarence who own dogs.
- 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.
- To protect sensitive areas including areas of cultural significance, native flora and native fauna.
- To recognise the needs of non-dog owners in the appropriate declaration of areas.
- To provide safe and appropriate environments for the community.

Process of Declaration

1. 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.
2. That Council will primarily exercise this authority on parcels of land under its ownership.
3. That Council may, where it is considered appropriate, 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.
4. That where negotiations are conducted, discussions will also be held in relation to management, policing and provision of signage for that land. In conducting such negotiations, Council will only exercise those functions over its own land, unless there is mutual benefit in deciding otherwise.
5. 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. For areas where this is not feasible, separation of restrictions is to be visually obvious to the user.

Principles for declaration

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

- Where possible the provision of either an on-lead or off-lead area within reasonable walking distance of the majority of residences in each suburb;
- Recognition of the community's desire to exercise their dogs in natural areas;
- Protection of natural flora and fauna, and areas of cultural significance;
- Recognition of the community's desire to exercise their dogs in beach environments;
- Shared and restricted access rights to beaches during summer periods;
- Consistency of restriction provisions across 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, eg. sporting fields and perimeters, play equipment, family oriented parks; and
- Consistency with land management and development plans, recognised by the Council.

Priorities for development of future exercise areas

If it is not possible to provide exercise areas within reasonable walking distance, future plans for the development of exercise areas within suburbs 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; and
- Lower priority will be given to those areas where there is low residential density and large lot sizes.

Criteria and level of declaration

Beaches

1. Where appropriate, beaches in the Clarence Municipal Area will be subject to shared and restricted usage by dog owners.
2. Where appropriate during the approximate summer period, 1 December to 1 March, dogs will not be permitted on most Council beaches between the hours of 10.00 am and 6.00 pm.
3. At all other times of the year, effective control provisions will apply to dogs on beaches unless separately declared otherwise.
4. The definition of beach will include the foreshore area of the beach only, and not extend to the dune system, or approved tracks on dunes parallel to the beach. Access ways are excepted.

Horse Trails

Tangara Trail to be subject to effective control provisions under Dog Control Act 2000.

Multi User Pathway

Will be designated as being an on-lead exercise area. Under the provisions of the Dog Control Act 2000, all dogs in road or road-related areas in a built up area, 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. This declaration includes areas immediately adjacent to the track to a distance of 2 metres.

Natural Recreation Areas

Where there is a need to protect natural flora, fauna and/or areas of cultural significance, on-lead exercise will be allowed for dogs provided, exercise is limited to defined track areas.

Natural Areas Managed by Parks and Wildlife

On request by Parks and Wildlife, Council may consider the declaration of areas under the management of Parks and Wildlife.

Regional Parks

Depending on the use and facilities provided in the park dogs may be restricted, on lead or effective control provisions will apply.

Sporting Recreation Grounds and Perimeters

Dogs will not be permitted on Sporting recreation grounds and perimeters.

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, effective control provisions shall apply.

Training Areas

Those 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 under the Dog Control Act

In addition to the list provided above, the Dog Control Act 2000 requires the following areas be prohibited to dogs:

- 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; or
- Any area within 10 metres of a children's playground.

Areas where restrictions are not defined

When restrictions are not defined normal effective control provisions apply.

For road or road related areas in most residential areas, this means a dog is required to be on a lead.

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.

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.

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 many 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 community.

The following code has been developed to help owners maximise:

- Appropriate dog behaviours;
- Understanding of dog control regulations; and
- The health and welfare of dogs

Adherence to Code

The code is a voluntary code, which defines best practice actions to achieve the aim and objectives of the code.

Pre- Purchase Guidelines

Dogs are valuable companion animals that require a commitment to their welfare over their entire lifespan. In order to fully understand the obligation, research should be undertaken prior to making the final purchase decision.

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

- The breed of the dog, and its suitability to the home environment e.g. the number and age of family members, compatibility with other pets, size of the yard, adequacy of fencing, proximity of neighbours, housing of dog;
- Vaccinations and ongoing veterinary requirements;
- Dietary requirements;
- Arrangements if going on holidays - proximity and cost of kennels;
- Familiarisation with the community environment - e.g. proximity and location of dog exercise areas, areas in which dogs are prohibited, location of veterinary clinics, location of pet shops, availability of obedience classes;
- Initial and continuing costs - purchase, vaccination, microchipping, desexing, veterinary costs, registration costs, dietary requirements, obedience classes, grooming; and

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- Regulations governing dog management - Dog Control Act 2000, Dog Management Policy, Animal Welfare Act 1993.

Post-Purchase Guidelines (First Six Months)

Having made the decision to purchase a companion animal, the following actions are recommended to ensure a healthy and happy dog:

- Socialisation and education of your dog, providing access and exposure to a variety of experiences;
- Appropriate vaccination and veterinary checks;
- Access to training and opportunities for playing;
- Microchipping
- Identification for the dog prior to registration;
- Desexing if being undertaken;
- Appropriate diet; and
- Registration by six months of age.

The previous actions are important in the first six months, but an ongoing commitment in the following areas is important to ensure the happiness and safety of your dog and to add to your enjoyment:

- Health and welfare aspects;
- Ongoing obedience training;
- Opportunities for exercise and play; and
- Adherence to regulatory requirements.

Consideration of Others

As a member of the broader community, there are obligations for us all in considering the impact of our actions on others. For the dog owner this includes taking action to:

- Ensure your dog does not bark excessively;
- Ensure your dog does not wander off your property boundary;
- Clean up after your pet;
- Keep no more than two dogs on your property without a kennel licence;
- Ensuring your dog is under effective control at all times; and
- Not allowing your dog to jump at, or lick people. This playful nature might not be accepted by all persons.

Lost Dogs

If your dog is lost, it may have been collected by the City Rangers and transported to the Dogs' Home. Owners should make every effort to locate missing dogs by contacting the Council or the Dogs' Home.

Implementation

Implementation of the code and ongoing awareness will be provided through the following mechanisms:

- Distribution to owners of newly registered dogs;
- Promotion by City Rangers in daily activities;
- Promotion through participating organisations; and
- Education through schools and community events.

Other 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; in the case of working dogs this is higher at four dogs.

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 and 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 proposed 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 unfit for the purpose for which it is to be used, if it is not in the public interest or it is not compatible with the principles of the Code of Responsible Dog Ownership.

In the event of extenuating circumstances a short term exemptions may be issued for a kennel licence to be granted in residential styled zoned premises. This would be at the discretion of the General Manager and apply for a set period only.

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

A review of this policy will be undertaken within five (5) years of the adoption of this policy.