

CITY OF PALMERSTON

COMPANION

Animal

MANAGEMENT

PLAN

2016



Introduction



THE CITY OF PALMERSTON IS SITUATED 20KM'S SOUTH OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY'S CAPITAL, DARWIN, AND HAD A POPULATION OF MORE THAN 35,000. IN 2016, APPROXIMATELY 6,000 DOGS WERE REGISTERED.

Of the 6,000 dogs registered in the City of Palmerston approximately 4,000 were de-sexed. The number of registered dogs is expected to increase proportionately with the increase in population.

The population growth and consequential increase in dog numbers over the last 10 years has highlighted many identifiable challenges for Council in relation to ensuring effective domestic animal management for Palmerston residents.

Pets, particularly dogs, are an integral part of our community, culture and society. Pet ownership should be regarded as a privilege which comes with fundamental responsibilities towards the animal itself,

the community and to the environment. The purpose of the Palmerston (*Animal Management*) By-laws is to "provide for the keeping of animals within the municipality in a manner compatible with the enjoyment by residents of a congenial living environment."

After a thorough examination of the By-laws and Council Policies, Council has drafted new Animal Management By-laws which will be enacted within the foreseeable future.

The Companion Animal Management Plan (CAMP) has evolved from development of existing Animal Management strategies, public consultation, community education requirements and proactive planning. The CAMP will be reviewed annually.

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You, your dog and Council



HOUSEHOLD PETS, INCLUDING DOGS, ARE PART OF THE FAMILY IN MANY PALMERSTON HOMES. THEY ARE WONDERFUL COMPANIONS AND VERY MUCH LOVED.

The health and social benefits of having pets are widely recognised. Most pet owners are usually healthy, more active, feel more secure and are less likely to suffer from depression and stress.

Children who grow up with pets have higher self-esteem and improved social skills with a good understanding of discipline and responsibility. Children learn how to share their time with a pet, and are more likely to be responsible pet owners in the future.

People need to treat pets with respect and take responsibility for them. Pets depend on us for food and shelter. A pet owner is responsible for a pet for its entire life. Owners need time every day to devote to pet care and well-being. Pets cost money

for a variety of reasons such as their food, health care, supplies and registration.

Council wants residents to enjoy their pets, be responsible pet owners and be considerate of others in the community who may not have pets.

Managing pets is a complex issue. We want to balance your right to own a pet along with the community's need for safety, amenity and peace and quiet.

Please read the following information which is our CAMP and guide to the Council By-Laws. If you require more information about the plan or the Council By-Laws, please contact us on 8935 9922.

What is a Companion Animal Management Plan?

The City of Palmerston's Companion Animal Management Plan is designed as a practical guide and information source for pet owners and non-pet owners.

It provides information to assist pet owners to understand their legal responsibilities as well as educational material to enhance the relationship between pets and owners, whilst minimising any negative impact on the urban environment.

The plan outlines Council's animal management role in the community along with strategies that will encourage responsible pet ownership to improve public safety and reduce the number of animal related complaints.

The plan provides practical information for Palmerston residents and visitors in relation to effective animal management.

The CAMP can be used as a clear step-by-step guide to the complaint procedures for residents who are negatively impacted by irresponsible pet ownership.

What is Council's Role?

The aim of Council's Companion Animal Management Plan is to ensure community safety and to preserve the urban amenity by promoting and encouraging responsible dog ownership through education, services, facilities and compliance with the Animal Management By-laws.

Council maintains a register of dogs kept in Palmerston that records details of owners and their dogs. The register assists in returning stray dogs to their owners as well as providing a history of any contraventions of the Animal Management By-laws.

Objectives



THE COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN WILL GUIDE COUNCIL ACTIONS THROUGH FOSTERING AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP IS ENCOURAGED AND VALUED BY THE COMMUNITY AND UNDERPINNED BY RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE.

The City of Palmerston's Companion Animal Management Plan will drive improvements by:

1. Delivering achievable strategies focusing on high priority actions which meet the needs of the community
2. Improving the effectiveness of Council's animal management services
3. Providing robust and appropriate compliance activities delivered in a balanced and 'outcome focused' way

4. Increasing community awareness of the need to responsibly manage companion animals, and

5. Monitoring and reporting on performance against this plan

This plan was developed in conjunction with a range of stakeholders including industry experts and community members. The overriding objective is to reduce the impact of the three key issues on the community.

The City of Palmerston Ranger Services section deals principally with the investigation and resolution of requests for service through the delivery of both reactive and proactive services. Whilst the response to requests is a significant component of the role, officers regularly participate in initiatives such as registration audits and community events that promote responsible pet ownership. The following key services are consistently delivered:

- Reactive investigation of dog attacks and aggressive dogs
- Reactive investigation of general dog requests for service
- Proactive approach to the registration of dogs and multiple dog licence approvals

- Return and impounding of stray and wandering dogs
- Proactive patrols of public spaces
- Education through partnership at public events (eg. Defence Expo, Darwin Show, Animal Awareness Day).

Although these activities have been important in maintaining a successful animal management program, the introduction of the Companion Animal Management Plan will provide a more structured framework through which the identification of key issues, initiatives and strategies can better align with the Council's corporate goals and the public's expectations.

Service Profile

Council employs a team of Rangers who are trained in all aspects of animal control and animal education. Rangers conduct regular proactive patrols and respond to and investigate a wide variety of animal related complaints, including dog attacks, dog menaces, dogs wandering at large and, in cases where neighbours are unable to resolve dog barking issues themselves, will respond to barking complaints and provide strategies for dog owners to mitigate nuisance barking.

Rangers impound stray dogs and convey them to the safety of the Council pound facility to await collection by their owners.

A variety of fact sheets are available on Council's website, www.palmerston.nt.gov.au that provide information about all aspects of dog ownership, including, selecting a puppy, dog safety, pets and thunderstorms (and fireworks), barking, separation anxiety and emergency planning in the event of a cyclone.

The City of Palmerston has identified three key issues relating to animal management which impact the community. The Animal Management Plan provides a strategic direction for delivering improved outcomes over the next three years:

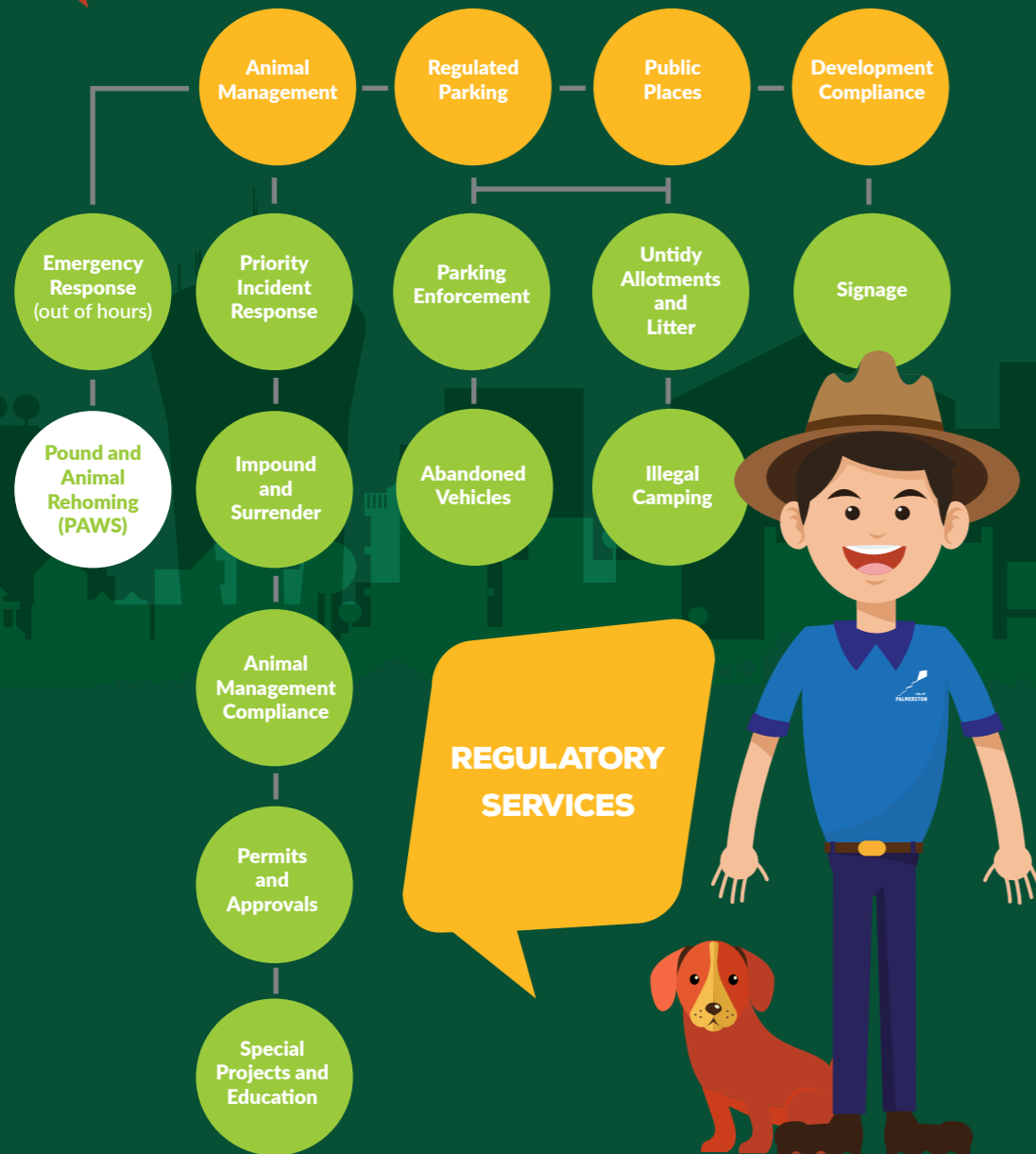
1. **The impact that companion animal ownership has on the community's expectation of a safe and healthy environment**
2. **Reducing the ratio of dog owners who choose not to register their animal, and**
3. **The attitude of the community to compliance with animal ownership responsibilities**

The effective management of companion animals requires a collaborative commitment from both Council and the community of Palmerston. In an environment of continual legislative and social change, the ability to manage the social benefits of owning an animal with

community expectations for responsible pet ownership at minimal cost presents a complex set of challenges. This plan provides a framework that supports responsible pet ownership by driving improvement in the key areas identified.

Key Issues

Ranger Services Structure



BEING A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER

There is no doubt that owning a dog is rewarding. Council acknowledges the benefits of dog ownership and encourages dog owners to be responsible for their pet.

Dog owner responsibilities include:

- Microchipping
- Annually registering your dog with the City of Palmerston
- Ensuring that your dog can be clearly identified by Council
- Providing adequate food, water and shelter
- Providing exercise and mental stimulation to deter boredom
- Provide a safe environment for the dog with suitable fencing
- Arranging annual vaccinations from your vet
- Preventing heartworm and other intestinal worms
- Controlling external parasites like fleas and ticks
- Seek veterinary advice if the dog is sick or injured
- De-sexing the dog if not used for breeding to prevent unwanted litters
- Walking the dog on a lead at all times unless in a designated off-lead area
- Cleaning up after your dog when exercising in a public place
- Providing training for the dog so that it does not become a nuisance to others

REGISTRATION

All dogs in the Palmerston Municipality must be registered annually. The following are benefits to registration.

- It is your proof of ownership
- Your dog is provided with a registration tag
- Council can return lost pets to their owners quickly
- You can be easily contacted if your pet is involved in an accident/incident and requires veterinary treatment

In addition to registration, a licence to keep more than two dogs is required and is only issued under exceptional circumstances. Additional fees will apply.

CURRENTLY CATS DO NOT NEED TO BE REGISTERED IN PALMERSTON.

Managing Dogs

Dog Owners Guide

There's no doubt owning a dog is rewarding. Council wants to make sure your adopted furry family member is cared for, and that includes making sure your dog is registered every year, gets plenty of exercise and attention and has regular vet check-ups. Council encourages dog owners to be responsible for their pets within the municipality.

As a dog owner, your responsibilities include:

- Yearly registration with the Council
- Providing adequate food, water and shelter
- Providing exercise and mental stimulation to deter boredom
- Providing a safe environment for the dog with suitable fencing
- Yearly vaccinations from your vet
- Preventing heartworm and other intestinal worms
- Controlling external parasites like fleas and ticks
- Seeking veterinary advice if your dog is sick or injured
- Desexing your dog to prevent unwanted litters
- Walking your dog on a lead at all times unless in a designated off-lead area
- Cleaning up after your dog when exercising in a public place
- Providing training for your dog so it doesn't become a nuisance to neighbours or other members of the community

REGISTRATION

All dogs over the age of three months must be registered annually with the City of Palmerston. All registrations are due for renewal by 1 August each year.

New dogs to the Municipality must be registered within 14 days of arrival, but the fact is, the sooner the better. Moving to a new home may cause your dog some anxiety and it's best to register with Council as soon as possible to ensure we can return your new dog quickly and safely if it escapes your yard.

Dogs younger than three months old can be registered for \$10.00.

Even if your dog has a microchip, it must be registered with Council. Council must be notified if your dog dies, is lost or changes address.

REGISTRATION COSTS

If you wish to keep more than two dogs you require a licence, which must be applied for and renewed annually. Licences will only be granted under exceptional circumstances and your neighbours will be consulted in the application process.

For registration costs please visit Fees and Charges on Council's website.

REGISTRATION TAGS

All dogs must wear their registration tags at all times. Tags will assist Council in returning your dog if it strays.

MICROCHIPS

Microchips are not compulsory in Palmerston; however, we will record the microchip details with the dog's registration information. Council has introduced a discounted registration fee for microchipped dogs. Ensure you have updated your personal contact details as soon as possible after relocating. If you're not sure if your dog's microchip details are current contact Central Animal Records on (03) 9706 3100.

DESEXED DOGS

Desexing your dog has many advantages in a suburban environment. A desexed dog is less likely to roam and reduces the number of stray and unwanted litters. Council also offers a discount when registering desexed dogs.

BARKING DOGS

Noise issues such as barking dogs can easily become the cause of neighbourhood disputes. If you suspect that your dog might have a barking problem, Council officers can provide information on ways to overcome nuisance barking. You may also contact Ranger Services on 8935 9922 for information about hiring an anti-barking collar. If you have a complaint about a barking dog, please contact Ranger Services on 8935 9922 for information about our Barking Dog Procedures. You will be required to fill in a barking diary to support your complaint.

PICKING UP AFTER YOUR DOG

As a dog owner, it's your responsibility to clean up after your pet in public.

DOG COMPLAINTS

If you have a dog complaint, please contact Ranger Services on 8935 9922. You will need to give your name, address and telephone number (*held in confidence*) and details of the nature of your complaint. A description of the dog and details of the address or location must also be provided. This information is recorded and a Ranger will investigate and take appropriate action.

MISSING, LOST OR FOUND DOGS

If your dog goes missing, you should notify the RSPCA, local vets and the Top End Lost and Found website and Council as soon as possible so we can let you know if it is found. You can also check out our online dog pound at www.palmerston.nt.gov.au.

If you find a dog within the municipality of Palmerston, contact Council on 8935 9922 and if necessary report as soon as possible to the RSPCA or local vets.

Please Note

All dogs must be registered with the Council, even if they have a microchip.

Nuisance Barking

Barking dogs are the most common animal behaviour problem Council is asked to deal with.

Ongoing barking is often a symptom of another problem, and taking time to understand what makes dogs bark - especially your pet or other dogs in your neighbourhood - is the first step towards solving this problem, both for the dog involved and your neighbours.

WHY DO DOGS BARK?

- Dogs are social animals and often bark when they are lonely
- Separation from an owner can cause dogs to stress
- Barking may also be the result of boredom and frustration
- Barking is a dog's way of seeking attention from its owner
- Dogs bark out of fear - this can be fear of people, objects, or other dogs
- Dogs bark when there is a threat to their territory
- Playing with your dog often stimulates barking
- Some breeds have a reputation for barking, and
- Dominant dogs bark until they get what they want.

ALL DOGS BARK, BUT SOME BARKING DOGS BECOME A REAL NEIGHBOURHOOD NUISANCE - GREATLY REDUCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THEIR NEIGHBOURS AND INCREASING NEIGHBOURHOOD TENSIONS.

CONTROLLING BARKING

The most important first step is to work out why your dog is barking. Once you know the cause, you can find the cure. Barking can be controlled through several small behavioural changes. Some behavioural changes could be as small as walking your dog twice a day to relieve boredom.

MY NEIGHBOUR'S DOG BARKS - WHAT CAN I DO?

Talk to your neighbour as soon as the problem arises. They may not be aware that their dog is barking or that their dog's barking is bothering you.

Give your neighbour this information letter (*Refer to page 16*) and if the barking persists after a week or two, speak with your neighbour again to provide feedback.

If your neighbour is unapproachable, or if the approach does not work, there are a number of possible options including:

- Using the Community Justice Centre for help in working it out together (telephone 1800 000 473)

- For information to assist with nuisance barking complaints please refer to Council's website www.palmerston.nt.gov.au
- Making a formal complaint to Council. A nuisance barking complaint form can be found on Council's website

DID YOU KNOW?

Dogs bark for a reason, and barking is often a symptom of loneliness, boredom, stress or another problem.

- Barking can be effectively controlled
- Excessive barking is a neighbourhood nuisance and owners may be fined, so ask for help from your vet or council
- Owners are responsible for everything their dog does, all the time



Why do Dogs Bark?



LIKE THEIR HUMAN COMPANIONS, DOGS NEED TO COMMUNICATE. THEY CAN DO THIS BY BARKING, WHIMPERING, GROWLING, HOWLING, YELPING AND MOANING.

When dogs make any communication sounds persistently in close proximity to neighbours, the constant noise may become a problem.

Dogs do not bark without a reason. Barking can occur when a dog is excited, when it threatens or warns, when it seeks its owner's attention or when responding to a sound or signal.

To deter a dog from barking excessively, owners need first find out when and why the dog is barking. The problem should then be treated in the early stages, as prolonged and habitual barking is very difficult and time consuming to correct.

SOME CAUSES OF PERSISTENT BARKING

Excitement

Dogs that are excitable by nature will bark when over stimulated. This frequently occurs during play or when the dog is chasing something in the garden.

Some breeds of dogs are naturally excitable, whereas some are more likely to react to confinement or isolation. Prospective

owners need to carefully select a dog suitable for their lifestyle and home environment.

Visitors

A dog will often bark at visitors arriving, whether they are strangers or friends, especially if the dog is behind a fence or barrier. Whenever possible, in situations where owners do not want their dog to bark at specific people, introduce the dog to visitors so that it won't be so vocal when they arrive next time.

Anxiety

Many dogs are anxious or insecure when their owners are absent and may cope with the stress of separation by barking, digging or chewing.

Ways of overcoming anxiety for dogs before an owner leaves home or during their absence are as follows:

- Provide mental stimulation such as toys or bones to provide a distraction for the dog's anxiety
- Give minimal attention to the dog before departing, so that the emphasis is not placed on your absence

- Possibly leave on the radio or television at a low volume near the dog's area for noise consistent with when somebody is at home
- When arriving home, defer making immediate contact with the dog if the dog is very excitable, instead wait a few minutes until the dog settles down, then the dog can associate praise being given for calmer behaviour
- Talk to your vet if the anxiety is quite severe, as there may be other alternatives

Confinement

Dogs will bark at any noises or movements they can see, hear and smell but are not able to investigate or reach. People or dogs passing by, birds flying overhead, lawnmowers, ringing telephones, a knock on the door, cats or the sounds of other dogs may trigger a bout of barking.

Dogs are social animals and will actively seek the company of other dogs and people. When left alone in backyards all day they may bark for attention. A well-socialised dog that has been given a variety of experiences and exposure when young is less likely to overreact to outside distractions.

Most dogs can adapt to being left on their own if conditioned to do so from an early age. Leaving the dog alone for short periods at first and then gradually increasing the time can help the dog to adjust.

Owners can assist by walking the dog regularly, not only for the dog's own health but also for establishing a routine for the

dog. This will give your pet an opportunity to become familiar with its neighbourhood.

DOGS LEFT INSIDE THE HOUSE

Some dogs who stay inside the house regardless of whether the owners are home or away may still cause nuisance barking when left on their own. Similar to treating anxiety, a radio, television or music can be left on while the owners are out to comfort the dog.

Discomfort

Dogs that are hot, wet, cold or without shelter may bark, as will dogs that are sick or in pain. A dog that is hungry, thirsty or tangled in their chain would experience enough stress that it may bark constantly.

All dog owners must always ensure that their dog has access to shelter, bedding, water, perhaps food, and familiar toys throughout the day.

Changes in a dog's life

The effect of a major change in a dog's lifestyle or environment varies greatly depending on the dog. Moving house, a new baby at home, working longer hours or family members moving out are some examples of changes that can create stress for dogs.

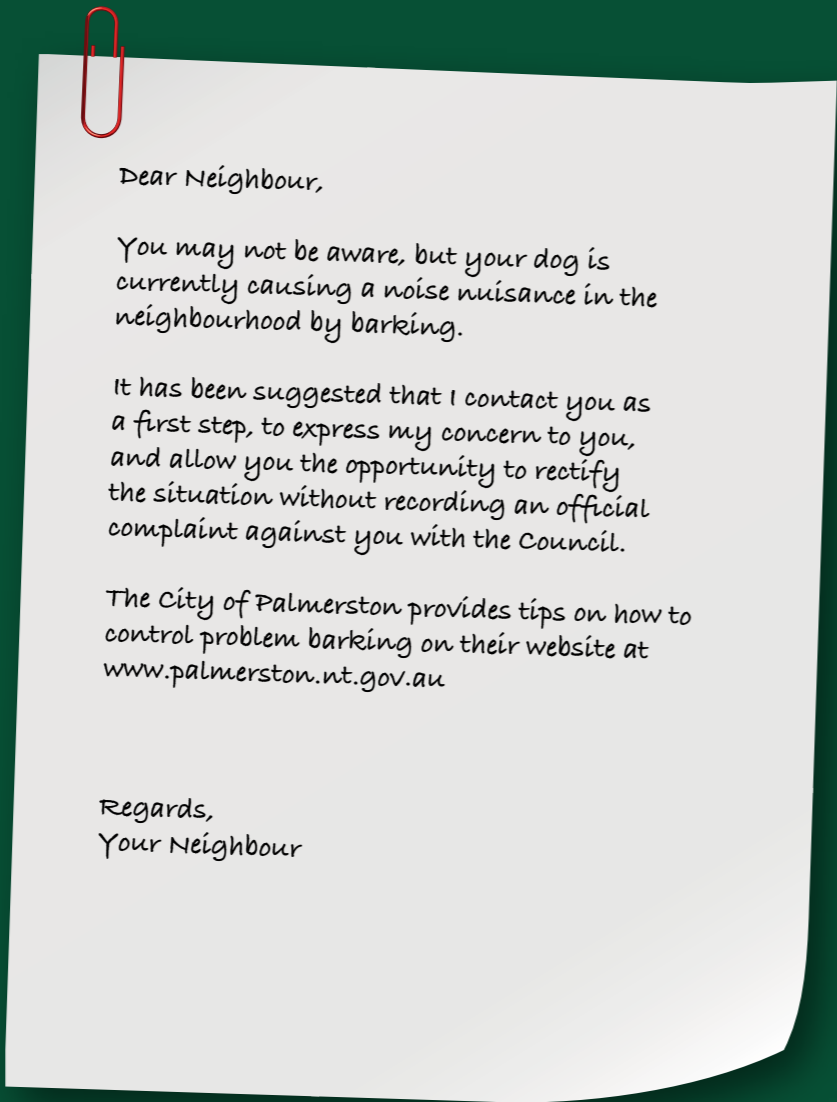
In most cases, the amount and type of attention given to a dog can vary during these times. Instead of ignoring the dog, owners should establish a new routine that includes exercise, training and play. This will make the transition easier for the dog to cope with during the change.

Fence-line distractions

Many of the frustrating problems experienced by dog owners living in suburbia are distractions from walkways adjoining properties, hostile neighbours and people teasing or tormenting dogs.

Dog owners should always ensure that the property where the dog is kept has high well-maintained fences. The location of the dog's kennel or run shouldn't be too close to neighbours or the fence-line. In some cases, dog owners may put measures in place to restrict visual distractions for dogs prone to growling, barking or lunging at passersby.

INFORMATION LETTER



REWARDING GOOD BEHAVIOUR

Different training techniques may be required depending on the severity of the barking.

A dog attempting to get their owner's attention by barking should be ignored. The dog will soon realise that this behaviour is ineffective.

With patience and perseverance, dogs rewarded by being silent should begin to anticipate and learn that non-barking behaviour is rewarding. A reward can be anything from giving attention to the dog, praise, treats or taking it for a walk.

HOW COUNCIL CAN HELP

While at times there may be only a vague understanding of why a barking dog is a problem, it is always evident that it is a problem.

Finding solutions to barking dogs is a process that requires patience and co-

operation from both the dog owner and the community. Establishing what triggers the dog to bark excessively can assist in minimising the effect of these triggers.

Sometimes, it may be necessary to turn to professional advice from your veterinarian or a dog behavioural specialist if all other measures have been unsuccessful.

ANTI-BARKING COLLARS

A citronella anti-barking collar is a device that is attached and worn like a normal dog collar around the dog's neck. As the dog barks, the device releases a spray of citronella which the dog finds undesirable.

It is effective when the dog can make the association between barking and the offending spray.

Citronella collars are available for hire by contacting Ranger Services on 8935 9922.



Separation Anxiety and Dogs



SEPARATION ANXIETY IS DISTRESSED BEHAVIOUR OFTEN CAUSED BY THE ABSENCE OF A PERSON OR ANIMAL TO WHOM YOUR DOG IS USUALLY STRONGLY ATTACHED.

Other causes can include moving to a new house, a changed routine and past bad experiences like abandonment, long-term boarding or animal shelters.

Dogs can display several signs when they suffer from separation anxiety, including changes in their body language, to house soiling, barking or howling when left alone and to more destructive behaviour like damaging property.

Owners who follow a set routine on most mornings may find that simple things can cause the dog to start fretting, such as the sight of your bag or the sound of car keys. This is because the dog is pre-empting your departure.

Dog owners are often unaware if their dog has separation anxiety because they are absent while the dog is distressed. Usually the only way owners find out that their dog may have a case of separation anxiety is from their neighbours or signs of destructive behaviour when the dog is left alone.

If you return home to find your dog has damaged your property, it is best to not punish the dog as this may in fact heighten your dog's anxiety. Instead, every effort

must be made to relieve the tension caused when your dog is left on its own.

WHEN AT HOME

Dogs are highly social animals, so it is understandable that most dogs feel more secure when in the presence of their owners. Most dog owners would agree that having a dog trained and socialised from an early age can prevent social problems for the dog later in life, but it is important to be consistent no matter how well-trained the dog appears to be.

Have a routine of exercise and playtime with your dog. If the dog is well-socialised, encourage regular social outings at designated off-lead areas. Provide a variety of toys and other stimulating items for the dog to play with.

Maintain who is the leader in your household. Don't allow any dog to follow you around everywhere in the home. This may seem cute at first, but in the long term it can increase the dog's dependency on its owners. There is no simple remedy to treat separation anxiety; often a dog owner has to try a combination of things to find the best solution.

BEFORE LEAVING HOME

Don't pay too much attention to the dog before leaving and when you arrive back home, as this can highlight the act of leaving and returning in the dog's mind. Once the dog has settled after the initial excitement of you returning home, give praise for quiet behaviour.

Give the dog something to look forward to when they are left alone, like a juicy bone or a treat.

If possible, leave the radio or television on for company. This can seem as though there is still activity in the home and can help relieve tension for the dog.

BE PERSISTENT

Overcoming separation anxiety may take time so it can be beneficial to ask your neighbours to help you, or at least advise them that you are working on the problem so they can be more supportive, particularly in the case of noisy dogs.

Perhaps your neighbours can encourage the desired behaviour by offering the dog a treat when it is being quiet, or monitor the times when the dog is at its worst and keep you informed of any progress.

SEVERELY STRESSED DOGS

Dogs that suffer minor separation anxiety may only be at their worst for the first 20-30 minutes after the owner initially leaves the dog on its own. For severely stressed dogs this process take a lot longer.

In some cases where there is significant

damage to property, self-inflicted wounds, or even just excessive barking for long periods of time, dogs that are suffering from severe separation anxiety may need medication or similar types of therapy to keep them calm.

Talk to your local vet about available alternatives. It may also be worthwhile to ask a qualified dog trainer to provide specific advice for your dog.

DOG OWNERS ARE OFTEN UNAWARE THAT THEIR DOG HAS SEPARATION ANXIETY BECAUSE THEY ARE ABSENT WHILE THE DOG IS DISTRESSED.



Roaming Dogs

AT
LARGE



TO HELP PREVENT YOUR DOG FROM ROAMING YOU SHOULD ENSURE IT IS PROPERLY CONTAINED.

WHEN IS A DOG AT LARGE?

According to the By-Laws, a dog is at large if it is:

- Not properly contained within the owner's property
- When outside its property including your vehicle, not under effective control by the owner

To help prevent your dog from roaming you should ensure it is properly contained, it receives the right amount of exercise and your yard is appropriately fenced. You must have your dog on a lead when you take it outside your property. When you are in an off-lead area, you must still ensure that your dog is under effective control and you must have a lead with you.

When a roaming dog is reported to Council, a Ranger will attend, locate the dog and look for identification such as a council tag or microchip. Council will attempt to identify and contact the owner and return the dog to them. If the owner cannot be contacted the dog will then be taken to the pound while further attempts will be made to contact the

owner. If ownership cannot be established, a photograph of the dog will be placed on the pound register on the Council website. The Council website has a direct link to 'Top End Lost and Found'.

The impacts of uncontrolled animals in the community and the environment are potentially severe. Evidence gathered by the Animal Management Program clearly demonstrates that there is a clear link between wandering animals and a range of issues identified by this plan:

- Attacks on people and animals (*companion and wild animals*)
- Incidents of aggression involving people and animals
- Risk of injury or death to the companion animal
- Motor vehicle accidents caused by the animal wandering across roadways, and
- Stimulates noise nuisance through barking, with, or at other dogs

DOGS, FENCES AND ROAMING

Owning a dog is a serious responsibility and requires anyone who owns a dog to take appropriate action for containing their dog to their property.

Fences and gates protect dogs from the dangers of roaming, prevent it from causing a nuisance in the neighbourhood, and ensure that the dog doesn't hurt other animals or people.

While many people keep dogs as security to deter unauthorised people from entering their property, it is important that people who are legally passing near properties that house dogs are safe to do so.

A straying dog causes distress to the community. Dogs that are not kept safely contained to a property can risk being injured or causing injury to others.

Roaming dogs can also become a traffic hazard for motorists, are a bite risk to children and others in the community, can display territorial aggression, are an annoyance to other animals in the community and can cause property damage. Irresponsible owners will be liable for any injuries or damages that their dog causes.

Fencing Requirements

As a responsible pet owner, it is important to ensure that the fence or dog enclosure is:

- High enough that the dog can't jump over
- Low enough that the dog can't dig under
- Strong enough that the dog can't push it over, and

- Hole proof so that the dog can't escape through it

It is also important that the fence is designed so the dog can't attack people through it.

Community Expectations

People in the community have a right to live without interference from other people's pets. Unaccompanied dogs roaming the streets are at risk due to factors such as motor vehicle accidents, being attacked by other animals or becoming lost.

Roaming dogs may also become a nuisance to residents by causing other dogs to bark, defecating and urinating in public places and destroying property. They may also attack other people's pets or animals including livestock.

Rescue and Recovery

Council provides a service to the community to rescue and impound stray dogs to keep them safe while attempting to locate their owner.

When Council Rangers find a roaming dog, every effort is made to return the dog to its registered owner. If an owner cannot be contacted or there is no one home to receive the dog, the dog will be taken to the Council Pound.

This service must be conducted on a user pays basis. A fee is to be paid before the release of the dog. If the dog is unregistered then a registration fee is also to be paid before it is released. Refer to fees and charges on Council's website.

Pets and Thunderstorms

Territoriality

Roaming also increases the amount of territory the dog considers their own (possibly the entire street or as far as the dog can see) and this means they are more likely to challenge any animal or person they consider an intruder within this extended territory.

This may have the unwanted effect of increasing nuisance barking and the potential for the dog to be involved in an attack.

Pet Care and Training Services

There are a number of businesses in the Palmerston and Darwin areas that offer dog walking, minding and grooming services. These services assist owners with management of their pets, such as daycare facilities, bark prevention training, obedience training and animal exercising. Please refer to the Telephone Phone Directory or Internet for contact details for these businesses.



IT'S NOT UNCOMMON FOR DOGS AND OTHER ANIMALS TO BE FRIGHTENED OF THUNDER, FIREWORKS AND OTHER LOUD SOUNDS.



As a dog's sense of hearing is highly developed and superior to humans, they can hear sounds outside the normal spectrum and at higher frequencies, so it isn't hard to understand why dogs react the way they do when a storm approaches.

Most behaviour displayed by dogs before or during a thunderstorm is anxiety.

Signs of this can include trying to escape by digging, chewing, climbing over fences, barking, crying or soiling the house.

THE WRONG APPROACH

Punishing your dog for its behaviour during storms will only make it more anxious. Try also not to console or calm your dog if it reacts badly to a storm as to the dog this is praise for acting frightened. When the next storm comes they may elevate their reaction and become progressively worse, making it more difficult to re-train the dog.

THE RIGHT APPROACH

Distracting the dog

This method works best when the dog is just beginning to get anxious when the owners are home. Redirect the dog's attention to

distract it from behaving fearfully. It may not completely work every time, but it may delay the anxiety for longer.

Providing a safe place

Dogs who try to escape the yard during a storm are actually trying to escape to a place where the sounds of the thunderstorm are less intense. A secure area for the dog that is enclosed (like a den) and dark can serve as the dog's "sanctuary" whenever it feels fear.

Some dogs may automatically have an area where they like to hide. This indicates that the dog feels secure there so, if possible, encourage the dog to go there during a thunderstorm.

If it's a new area, train the dog to go there by offering a treat or occasionally feed the dog in that area. The dog can then associate the area as a pleasant place to be. Encourage the dog to go to that area whenever a storm approaches, this is particularly useful if the dog is left at home alone.

Behaviour modification

Desensitisation is a gradual process involving getting the dog used to the offending sound,

Pets and Emergency Planning

in this case thunder and lightning, until the dog no longer responds to it. The dry season is an ideal time to start desensitising your dog before the next wet season storms begin.

Start by playing a recording of thunder sounds and exposing these sounds to your dog at a low volume that doesn't initially frighten them.

Occupy the dog with a treat or a game so that the dog ignores the sounds in the background. Seek professional advice if your dog's anxiety/fears continue and increase.

Gradually increase the volume over time as you continue to offer the dog something pleasant in return. Through this process, the dog will come to associate pleasant experiences with the previously feared sound.

Other alternatives

In extreme circumstances, it may be necessary to medicate your dog during thunderstorms to keep it calm. Seek professional advice regarding medication that may be available on the market.

Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to give your dog any human medications without talking to your vet first.

If your dog strays during a thunderstorm

As responsible dog owners may know, some dogs can perform amazing feats to escape when overcome by the adrenalin rush they feel along with fear.

Sometimes, no matter how secure the yard, dogs can rip off wire screens on doors, or damage or scale fences which at other times would appear impossible to climb.

Always ensure that your dog is wearing a collar with its current registration tag and ID tag in case the dog escapes and becomes lost. If your dogs are microchipped it assists in the rapid return of your pet. Report any lost or found dogs to the Council, RSPCA and all local vet hospitals.

IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES, IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO MEDICATE YOUR DOG DURING THUNDERSTORMS TO KEEP IT CALM.

THE EFFECTS OF FIRES, FLOODS, EARTHQUAKES, SEVERE STORMS AND CYCLONES ON BOTH PEOPLE AND PETS CAN BE TERRIFYING AND TRAUMATIC.



Planning for your pet's requirements can assist you in the event of an emergency.

In the Top End of the Northern Territory there is a potential for cyclones during the monsoon season between November and April.

When looking after your family in any disaster, it is equally important to look after the animals that are in your care.

Secure fences

All fences should be checked and repaired on a regular basis, even when no emergency is pending. Animals left at home, with or without their owners, can try to escape when frightened during thunderstorms. If kept outdoors, keep them in a location that is safe from falling debris.

Prepare emergency supplies

Animal food, water and blankets should all be kept as part of your family emergency kit. If your animals require special medication, be sure to keep an extra up-to-date supply including regular medications such as heartworm tablets. When stocking up on food for your pets, purchase a supply to

last at least a week. If you use canned food, include a can opener in your emergency kit. Also include food and water bowls.

Cat owners should remember to store at least a week's supply of cat litter. If your pets have favourite treats (*dog bones, dry food, etc*), include those items in your kit also.

Evacuation

Sometimes it may be necessary to evacuate to the nearest shelter. Some shelters may accept caged or restrained pets at the owner's risk. It is important to find out as much information as possible regarding these shelters prior to evacuation.

Keep carriers and leads easily accessible to reduce evacuation time in an emergency.

Animals left at home

Owners who opt to leave their animals at home, particularly during a cyclone, must ensure that they are contained in a secure location. For most domestic pets, a good place may be the bathroom or laundry, with plenty of food and water available. Chaining or restraining your pet may put it at risk.

Territory Day Fireworks



Please Note
DO NOT LEAVE ANY ANIMAL TIED UP

Pet identification
Make sure that your dog is registered and microchipped. It is imperative that all dogs are wearing a fixed collar with an ID disc and Council tag attached.

For cats this can include just an ID disc.
The disc should be engraved with the animal's name, your surname and telephone number. If you have pet carriers, label them with your pets' names, description (*colour, sex, etc*) plus your name, address and telephone number.

Identify pet or animal organisations where people might return your lost animals.
Keep those organisation addresses and phone numbers with your emergency kit so that you can get to them easily should you have to search for lost pets following an emergency.

For further information contact:
City of Palmerston 8935 9922
RSPCA 8984 3795
TELAF telaf.wordpress.com

MAKE SURE YOUR DOG IS REGISTERED AND MICROCHIPPED!

While Territory Day is a day of fun and celebration, for most Top End dogs it can be the worst day of the year. The combination of loud noises and high-pitched squeals from fireworks is enough to terrify any dog and potentially risk their safety. Every year, the City of Palmerston receives a record number of calls from owners trying to track down their lost dogs in the aftermath of cracker night. Many dogs are found with injuries to their face and paws after trying to escape their backyards during fireworks.

Here are 5 valuable tips from the experienced City of Palmerston Rangers, to help keep your dog safe on Territory Day.

1. **Keep your dog contained** - where possible, it's best to keep dogs in a confined room like a laundry or bathroom while fireworks are going off. The room should be safe and familiar, with enough toys to keep your dog occupied. If you're unable to keep your dog indoors, consider a cool area or a dog carrier
2. **Tire out your dog** - during the day before fireworks start to be let off make an effort to take your dog on a long walk or hike to try and tire them out. An exhausted and well fed dog can sometimes be less irritated by the effects of fireworks

3. **Drown out the noise of fireworks** - leave a TV or radio on during fireworks to try and distract your dog. Dogs are often scared by the confronting noise of fireworks, and masking the sound may help to keep your dog calm

4. **Visit your vet** - if your dog has a history of reacting badly to fireworks and becomes extremely stressed, be proactive and visit your vet before Territory Day. In some cases, your vet may be able to prescribe a sedative to keep your dog calm and advise you on specific behavioural training

5. **In the event your dog does escape and is picked up by Council**, make sure they can be easily identified by the Rangers. The best way to do this is ensure they're microchipped and registered with a tag so we can contact you ASAP

If you have lost or found a dog - contact Council Rangers. All of the dogs picked up by Rangers are listed on our website.

Contact Council's after hours hotline on 8935 9922.

Dog Attack and Menace



DOGS ARE LIVING CREATURES AND ARE SENSITIVE TO CHANGES IN THEIR SURROUNDINGS - EVEN THE MOST DOCILE DOG CAN BITE WHILE PLAYING, FEELING UNDER THREAT OR IN A MOMENT OF ANXIETY.

While it can be impossible to prevent dog attacks, it is possible to minimise your chances of becoming a victim. Proper education and prevention is the key to ensure your family is armed with the best knowledge possible so that they know what to do in a dangerous situation.

Many actions of a dog may result in the public being injured or afraid. Council recognises a difference in these actions and therefore has specific definitions for them, the two primary definitions being a dog attack and a dog menace.

DOG ATTACK means “an action of a dog that involves the dog rushing at, biting, chasing, menacing or worrying a person or another animal and, in so doing, the dog actually touches the person or other animal or the clothing or other property in the immediate possession or under the immediate control of the person, whether or not any injury or damage occurs to the person, animal or property”.

DOG MENACE means “an action that creates a reasonable apprehension in a person that the dog is likely to attack the person, another person or an animal owned or in the control of the first-mentioned person and includes a reasonable apprehension that the dog may escape or be released from restraint to attack a person or the animal”.

Dog attacks can occur when an owner has not provided adequate fencing, control or socialisation for their dogs.

Owners have the responsibility to ensure their dogs are effectively contained, have adequate fencing and are under effective control when in a public place. This means being on a lead and being walked by a person who is physically and emotionally capable of managing the dog. Council will take action against owners who disregard their responsibility. These actions may include severe financial penalties or Court action.

Avoiding an attack on a person

Never take for granted that a dog will not bite. If you ever find yourself in a situation where you are being threatened by a dog, the following tips may prevent you from being bitten.

STOP and stand absolutely still. This is probably one of the hardest things to do, particularly as every muscle in your body is telling you to run. But if you can, you just may have averted a serious problem.

DO NOT make constant eye contact with the dog (*staring*). Make sure you can still see the dog with your peripheral vision (*glancing*). Back away very slowly, without running, yelling, waving your arms or kicking at the dog. Increase the distance between you and the dog. There may be times when a dog will attack without warning. If a dog knocks you to the ground, lie in the foetal position with your arms covering your face and remain still.

Avoiding dog on dog attacks

Prevention is arguably the best method of avoiding a dog attack on another dog. There are three basic steps that should be undertaken by all responsible dog owners to reduce the likelihood of dog attacks.

1. **Desexing your dog** – this is an important and routine procedure that will reduce a dog’s desire to roam and fight with other dogs. Desexed dogs are much less likely to bite.
2. **Socialising your dog** – it is beneficial to introduce your dog to many different types of people and situations so that he or she is not nervous or frightened under

normal social circumstances.

3. **Train your dog** – accompanying your dog to a training class is an excellent way to socialise him or her and to learn proper training techniques. Every member of your household should learn the training techniques and participate in your dog’s education.

Some dog attacks take place with little warning however there are some behavioural tendencies that can signal trouble, it is wise to use that opportunity to attempt to keep an attack from taking place. These behavioural cues include a hard, unwavering, targeted state, dominance posturing, such as mounting, stiff body movements and extreme body language: the tail held stiffly up or down, lips pulled tight against the teeth.

If an attack takes place, do not put your hands anywhere near the dogs’ heads or attempt to get between them as you will be at risk of being seriously injured.

Council Actions

When Council receives a complaint about a dog attack, the incident is thoroughly investigated and if the attack is substantiated, the dog owner can face possible warnings, restrictions placed on their dog’s registration and/or specific conditions placed on their license, infringement notices or prosecution in court. Actions taken against a dog owner depend on the specific circumstances involved in the attack. Every dog attack is different. In a severe attack Council can cancel a dog’s registration, requiring it to be removed from the municipality, or seek a court order to have the dog destroyed.

Council Pound

Most animals impounded by Council from public places result from escapes from private property enclosures.

This often occurs while the owners are not at home and without their knowledge, however significant numbers are left to roam outside their properties on a regular basis.

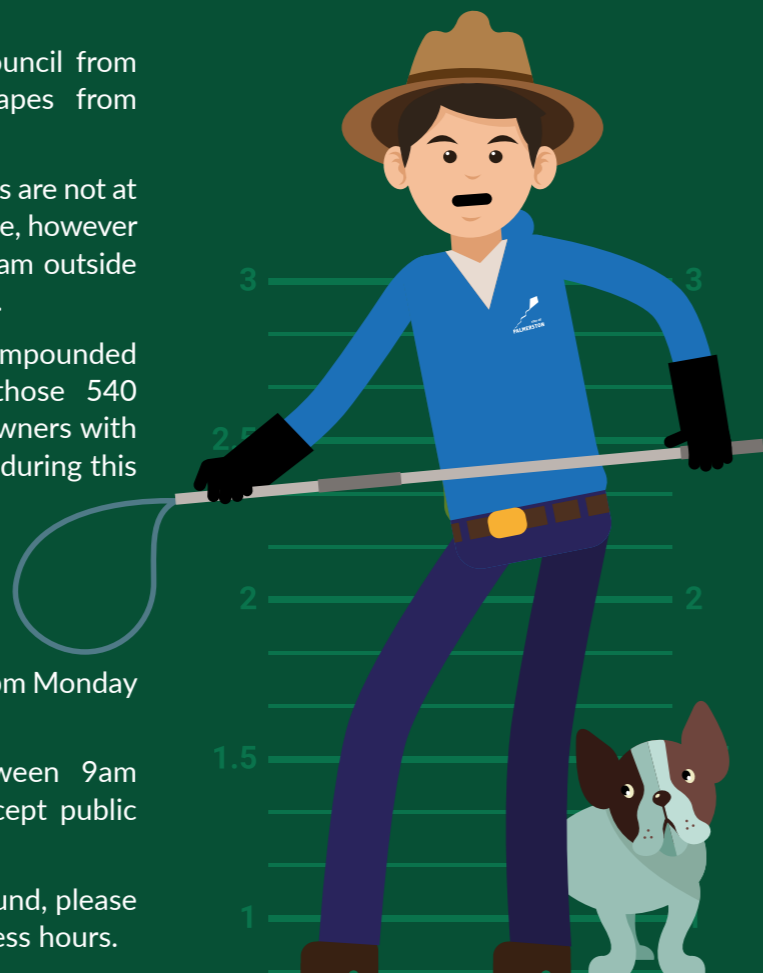
In 2015-2016 Council Rangers impounded approximately 700 dogs. Of those 540 animals were returned to their owners with approximately 80 dogs rehomed during this process.

If your dog is missing, it may have been picked up and taken to the pound.

Our office hours are 8.15am to 5pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

Pound release times are between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday, except public holidays.

If you think your dog is in the pound, please contact 8935 9922 during business hours.



Is your Dog Safe With People and Dogs?

The benefits of owning pets are well documented and dogs are the favoured pet in the Northern Territory. However there are many instances of dogs turning on their owners, family member or friends. In nearly every instance, the dog owner will say that the dog has “never shown signs of aggression before.”

Unfortunately, that first time may result in serious injury, permanent scarring, often to a child, and an ongoing fear of dogs.

What can you do to prevent your dog from attacking another dog or another person, even your own children?

This fact sheet is a guide and not a guarantee that your dog won't attack but may assist in attack prevention.

Avoiding Dog Attacks

Remember, all dogs can and may bite!

RECOGNISING DANGER ZONES

There are certain times and places where a dog is more likely to be aggressive.

By being aware of these danger zones, you may avoid being bitten, or if you are a dog owner, you may be able to prevent your dog from biting someone else or injuring another animal.

If you have a dog that is aggressive, you should seek professional advice before someone is injured.

DANGER ZONES INCLUDE

On the dog owner's property. The dog may react aggressively to people or other animals it may consider intruders.

Close by the owner's property. The dog may not recognise the boundary fence or the footpath as being the limit of its territory.

In the car, on the back of a utility truck. The dog may consider the vehicle to be part of its territory and bite anyone who comes near.

If the dog is sitting in the car, don't leave the window down far enough for the dog to lunge out and bite. *(Remember on hot days do not leave dogs in cars).*

At a local park or street where the dog regularly walks and urinates to mark the area as his territory.

When being walked on a leash, some dogs may be protective of their owners and become aggressive towards people or dogs walking by.

When a dog is near its owner or the owner's children.

If someone touches the owner, the dog may think that person is threatening the owner and bite.

When the dog is grabbed or pulled by the collar, when the dog is nervous, or feels cornered and can't run away.

When the dog has a bone or toy, or is near its food or bed.

SUPERVISING DOGS WITH CHILDREN

Dogs and small children should never be left together unsupervised.

No matter how good natured the dog is, a dangerous situation could develop if the dog is hurt, frightened, cornered or feels threatened.

Children must not hug and kiss dogs. Many bites on children's faces result from the child trying to hug a dog.

Children must be taught to handle animals gently and carefully.

Adults supervising dogs with children should be aware of potentially dangerous situations:

- When there is food around.
- When the dog is nervous or exited.
- When the dog is unwell or in pain.
- When the dog has a litter of pups
- When two dogs are playing or fighting together
- When visiting children are with the dog and when children play in or near the dog's bed
- Your dog may need to be trained to wear a muzzle for safety if you are at all uncertain about how the dog will react to children

Remember dogs and children should be supervised or separated.

Remember to praise and reward your dog

for good behavior. Obedience training will help you to control your dog's behaviour.

For further information contact:

City of Palmerston 8935 9922

RSPCA 8984 3795

RECOGNISING THE EARLY SIGNS OF AGGRESSION

Does your dog ever tense up, stare, raise its hackles, growl, lift its lips or snap when:

- Eating or when food is around?
- Its ears, paws, tail or belly are touched?
- Someone goes near its bed or toys?
- Someone tries to move the dog from a comfortable spot?
- It is told off?
- Someone grabs the dog, or tries to pick it up, or pulls on its collar?
- It is approached by people, children or other dogs?
- Does your dog lunge out at people or dogs when out walking, or rush out barking and growling at passers-by?

If the answer is yes to any of these situations, then your dog may be aggressive.

These are the early warning signs. You need to seek professional advice, as your dog's behavior is likely to get worse, not better, with time.

Don't wait until someone has been seriously bitten. The sooner you seek help, the more easily the problem can be solved.

- Does your dog get very nervous, cower or try to run away from children, adults or other dogs?

If "yes" then your dog could be dangerous if it ever feels threatened or cornered, and may attack out of fear. You need to seek professional advice to help your dog

overcome its fear.

If you are concerned about your dog's behaviour, please consult your veterinarian, who may be able to help you, or refer you to an animal behaviourist.



Off Lead Areas

MARLOW LAGOON PET PARK

Open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day

The pet park was developed by the City of Palmerston in conjunction with other sponsors for use by dogs with their owners. The park consists of 8 obstacles located at the western end of Marlow Lagoon Reserve and is available for use by anyone.

When first using the park we advise keeping your dog on lead. Do not attempt the jumps off lead unless your dog is under control. Show your dog each jump before attempting it.

Your dog needs to be under control at all times. You will also need to carry your lead at all times to enable you to quickly clip it on your dog should you need to.

TIP

For health and safety reasons please do not let your dog use the obstacle course if it is not yet fully mature (ie. Under 12 months of age, this age varies according to the breed of your dog) as this may cause permanent damage to immature joints.

Park Rules:

- Bitches in season are not permitted
- Pick up after your pet (*pet poo bags are available from the dispenser on site*)
- Keep the gate to the car park shut at all times to avoid accidents

Give consideration to other park users, do not allow your dog to interfere or cause a nuisance to others.

Avoid your dog overheating by giving him/her plenty of rest and a cool drink of water. The splash trough provides a great place for your dog to submerge and cool off.



**CITY OF PALMERSTON
CURRENTLY HAS
NO BY-LAWS
PERTAINING TO CATS.**

Council offer a cat trap hire service, with a security deposit and a nominal fee to enable residents to manage feral cats. Any domestic trapped cats can be taken to a local vet for microchip scanning in an attempt to find the owner. If unsuccessful they may be handed to animal rescue groups or the RSPCA for rehoming. A voucher is provided by Council to offset veterinary costs to dispose of unwanted stray or feral cats.

Top End Rehoming Group Inc
0403 359 248
Top End Rehoming Group Facebook Page
topendrehominggroup@gmail.com

PAWS Darwin
8947 1272
www.pawstarwin.org.au
pawstarwin@gmail.com

Darwin Animal Rescue Group
0423 285 642
[Darwin Animal Rescue Group Facebook Page](#)

RSPCA Darwin Australia
8984 37985
www.rspcadarwin.org.au
80 Boulter Road, Berrimah, NT 0828

The responsibility for arranging an appropriate outcome of all trapped cats is entirely up to the cat trap hirer.

**CURRENTLY CATS
DO NOT NEED
TO BE REGISTERED
IN PALMERSTON.**



Useful Contacts

Notes

COUNCILS

	TELEPHONE	WEBSITE
City of Darwin	8930 0300	www.darwin.nt.gov.au
Litchfield Council	8983 0600	www.litchfield.nt.gov.au
City of Palmerston	8935 9922	www.palmerston.nt.gov.au
After Hours Animal Emergency	8935 9922	www.palmerston.nt.gov.au

PET SERVICES

Animal Welfare Darwin (<i>report animal cruelty</i>)	1300 720 386	www.animalwelfare.nt.gov.au
Ark Animal Hospital	8932 9738	www.thearkvet.com
After Hours Emergency	0407 391 543	www.thearkvet.com
Central Animal Records (<i>microchip inquiries</i>)	(03) 9706 3187	www.car.com.au
Darwin Animal Rescue	0423 285 642	www.darwinanimalrescue.com
Darwin Animal Rescue Group (<i>Facebook</i>)		
Girraween Veterinary Hospital	8983 1183	www.girraweenvet.com.au
Litchfield Veterinary Hospital	8983 2838	www.litchfieldvets.com.au
National Pet Register (<i>microchip inquiries</i>)	1300 734 738	www.litchfieldvets.com.au
Palmerston Veterinary Hospital	8932 2344	www.palmerstonvet.com.au
PAWS Darwin Animal Shelter (<i>pet adoption</i>)	8947 1272	www.pawsdarwin.org.au
RSPCA Darwin (<i>Animal Shelter</i>)	8984 3795	www.rspcadarwin.org.au
Top End Lost and Found Pets		www.telaf.wordpress.com
Top End Lost and Found – TELAF (<i>Facebook</i>)		
Top End Rehoming Group Inc	0403 359 248	Top End Rehoming Group Facebook Page
Top End Veterinary Emergency	0447 331 838	After-Hours Emergency Vet
University Ave Veterinary Hospital	8931 0455	www.univets.com.au
After Hours Emergency	0409 331 682	www.univets.com.au

GOVERNMENT

Animal Welfare	1300 720 386	www.nt.gov.au/environment/animals/animal-welfare
NT Government Switch (<i>Includes: Dept of Health eg. poultry and livestock inquiries, Environment etc.</i>)	8999 5511	
NT Emergency Services	8922 3630	
Police	131 444	
Palmerston Police Station	8999 3422	
Wildcare Inc. NT	8988 6121	
Wildcare	0408 885 341	
Fishwatch Hotline	1800 891 136	

WILDLIFE SERVICES (*For assistance with sick or injured native animals and snake issues*)

National Parks and Wildlife (<i>native animals</i>)	8999 4555	
Snake Callout (<i>Parks and Wildlife</i>)	1800 453 210	
Topend Animal Solutions	0477 713 030	www.territoryanimalsolutions.wordpress.com
Wildcare Darwin	8988 6121 or 0408 885 341	www.wildcarent.org.au
Wildlife Rescue - Hospital	8932 9738	www.thearkvet.com/wildlife-rescue
Wildlife Rescue and Professional Veterinary Care	0416 254 763	www.dwsnt.com.au

Notes



CONTACT US



Civic Plaza, 1 Chung Wah Terrace



8935 9922



palmerston@palmerston.nt.gov.au

www.palmerston.nt.gov.au