

CITY OF PALMERSTON

**Notice of Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee Meeting
To be held in Council Chambers
Civic Plaza, Palmerston
on Wednesday 28th August 2019 at 5:00pm.**

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

2 OPENING OF MEETING

3 APOLOGIES

- 3.1 Apologies
- 3.2 Leave of Absence
- 3.3 Leave of Absence Request

4 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

- 4.1 Committee Members
- 4.2 Staff

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

- 5.1 Confirmation of Minutes

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the minutes of the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee Meeting held Wednesday, 26th June 2019, be confirmed.

6 CORRESPONDENCE

7 OFFICER REPORTS

- 7.1 Receive and Note Reports
 - 7.1.1 Managing Barking Dogs PAMAC9/022
 - 7.1.2 Update on Top End Animal Management Collaboration Projects PAMAC9/023

8 OTHER BUSINESS

9 NEXT MEETING

10 CLOSURE OF MEETING



PALMERSTON ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT

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AGENDA ITEM:	7.1.1
REPORT TITLE:	Managing Barking Dogs
REPORT NUMBER:	PAMAC9/022
MEETING DATE:	28 August 2019
Author:	Director Governance and Regulatory Services, Chris Kelly
Approver:	Chief Executive Officer, Luccio Cercarelli

COMMUNITY PLAN

Family and Community: Palmerston is a safe and family friendly community where everyone belongs.

PURPOSE

This report seeks to advise the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee of the process for managing barking dog complaints.

KEY MESSAGES

- Barking dogs are the most common animal management complaint Council receives.
- Council undertakes proactive engagement to inform dog owners of their responsibility.
- Council follows the process outlined in the report to manage barking dog complaints.
- Council's Animal Education Ranger will soon commence with Council and will be reviewing Council's Barking Dog Procedure.
- A further report will be provided to the Committee on the outcome of that review; however the Committee is welcome to provide initial feedback.

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Report Number PAMAC9/022 entitled Managing Barking Dogs be received and noted.
2. THAT a further report be provided to the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee on the outcomes of the review of barking dog procedures.

BACKGROUND

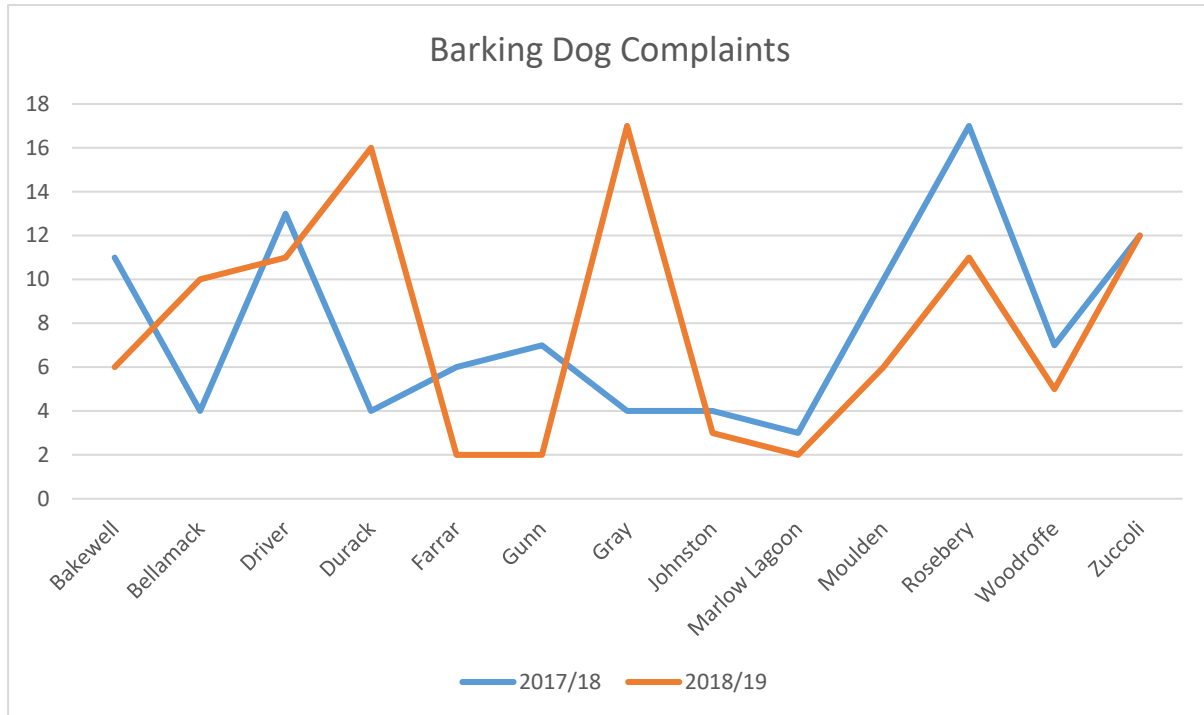
One of the animal management responsibilities of Council is to reduce the nuisance caused by barking dogs, particularly in response to community complaints. This report is provided for the information of the Committee to outline the process Council staff undertake to address complaints.

DISCUSSION

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.

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Barking dogs are the most common animal behaviour problem Council is asked to deal with. Reported instances of barking dogs has been consistent for the last two years, with 102 cases in 2017/18 and 103 in 2018/19. A breakdown by suburb is shown below:



Council currently provides resources on its website addressing why dogs bark and steps owners can take to address barking dogs. It also provides resources to assist other residents to manage barking dog complaints. This information includes a template letter, factsheets, complaint form and suggested forms of mediated outcomes. Council proactively engages with the community, mainly at events such as Brekkie in the Park, the Royal Darwin Show, Fred's Pass Show and various expos with key messages on responsible animal ownership, including how to reduce the causes of barking dogs.

The solution to managing barking dog complaints often lies in identifying and addressing the cause. Dogs may be barking because:

- dogs are social animals and often bark when they are lonely;
- separation from an owner can cause dogs to stress;
- boredom and frustration;
- a dog is seeking attention from its owner;
- fear - this can be fear of people, objects, or other dogs;
- threat to their territory;
- playing with your dog may stimulate barking; or
- dominant dogs bark until they get what they want.

People generally turn to Council to assist the management of barking dogs. When a complaint is received, the process Council follows is:

- The complainant is encouraged to place a note in the alleged offending dog owner's letterbox to advise them of their barking dog and to ask them to address it. A template is provided on Council's website.
- Council then writes to the alleged offending dog owner stating a complaint has been received and to offer the owner assistance in reducing the barking.
- Within 2 business days of receiving the complaint, Council Rangers attend alleged offending dog owner's address to observe possible causes of barking.
- Random patrols are carried out to substantiate barking.
- After 7 days, Council contacts the customer to find out if barking has decreased to a satisfactory level. If yes, Council closes out the case.
- If no, Council contacts offending dog owner to discuss steps they are going to take to reduce barking.
- After further 7 days, Council contacts the customer to find out if barking has decreased to satisfactory level. If yes, Council close out the case.
- If no, the customer is advised to complete a 5 day diary. Council also gathers further information from neighbours regarding barking.
- Council continues to work with offending dog owner to work out a plan to reduce barking if substantiated.
- Customer can advise at any time if the barking has reduced to an acceptable level, or if no further contact has been made from customer after 21 days, the matter is generally closed out.

As the process intensifies, further information is gathered which can be used as evidence to issue an infringement, however it is Council's preference in the first instance to work with the dog owner to reduce the barking. Council has not issued any barking dog infringements in the previous financial year.

It has been recognised that as the community continues to grow, barking dog complaints may rise. Council will continue to provide assistance in addressing barking dog complaints. Council acknowledges that more can be done, and the Animal Education Ranger, who will shortly commence with Council, will increase Council's proactive engagement with dog owners and undertake a review of Council's policy in relation to barking dogs.

A further report will be provided to the Committee once this review is complete; however the Committee is welcome to provide any initial input on how the process can be more effective.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The following City of Palmerston staff were consulted in preparing this report:

- Ranger Services Team

The feedback of the Palmerston Animal Management Advisory Committee is sought on what additional resources can be provided and how the process can be more effective.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications for this report.

BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget or resource implications relating to this report.



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RISK, LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk, legal and legislative implications relating to this report.

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environment sustainability implications for this report.

COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.



AGENDA ITEM:	7.1.2
REPORT TITLE:	Update on Top End Animal Management Collaboration Projects
REPORT NUMBER:	PAMAC9/023
MEETING DATE:	28 August 2019
Author:	Director Governance and Regulatory Services, Chris Kelly
Approver:	Chief Executive Officer, Luccio Cercarelli

COMMUNITY PLAN

Governance: Council is trusted by the community and invests in things that the public value.

PURPOSE

This report seeks to inform the Palmerston Animal Management Committee of the Top End Regional Organisation of Council's (TOPROC) Animal Management Collaboration projects.

KEY MESSAGES

- TOPROC is undertaking a series of initiatives to improve responsible animal management.
- Two are underway, namely common dog registration renewal dates and reciprocal registration.
- This means that Palmerston's dog registration renewal date is now 1 September, and Palmerston will accept registrations of registered dogs for free from other TOPROC member councils for the balance of that registration year.
- Further opportunities for collaboration are being explored.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report Number PAMAC9/023 entitled Update on Top End Animal Management Collaboration Projects be received and noted.

BACKGROUND

The Top End Regional Organisation of Councils (TOPROC) is an organisation consisting of local governments representing Darwin, Palmerston, Litchfield, Wagait, Coomalie and Belyuen communities. This organisation works collectively to promote good governance, economic growth and a quality lifestyle for residents of the six areas. TOPROC has commenced a project to streamline animal management requirements across the local government areas.

DISCUSSION

The Top End Animal Management Collaboration project consist of a number of elements designed to make it easier for responsible dog ownership in member local government areas.

The first element of this project is common annual registration dates. This is to support reciprocal registration and enable joint marketing of shared key messages to increase impact. Currently there are different registration renewal dates across the local government areas, however it has been agreed that

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1 September will be the annual registration renewal date from 2019/2020 onwards. It has been 1 August for Palmerston in the past. The 2019/2020 registration period will conclude on 31 August 2020. Palmerston registration notices have been sent out reflecting this requirement and owners are registering their dogs with minimal reported issues. During transition owners will receive an additional month of free registration. To date, Palmerston, Darwin, Litchfield and Coomalie have aligned dates to the 1st September.

The second element is reciprocal registration. Reciprocal registration builds on uniform registration dates by allowing dog owners to transfer registration between local governments free of charge for the balance of that registration year. This incentivises dog owners to register and then the dog is on record with the new council. This has a community benefit of increasing the information shared between councils, allowing more accurate sharing of data, and improves dangerous dog tracking in the absence of uniform animal management legislation. Litchfield and Palmerston will commence reciprocal registration this year, meaning they will accept free registration of registered dogs from all TOPROC local governments, and the only requirement is that residents will be required to show proof of registration when transferring from another council.

Other initiatives that will be explored in the future are:

- alignment of registration categories;
- joint animal education and marketing campaign;
- shared registration system; and
- Dangerous Dog Register.

These initiatives require further consideration by member councils, and further updates will be provided to the Committee in future meetings.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

There was no consultation required during the preparation of this report.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications for this report.

BUDGET AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no budget or resource implications relating to this report.

RISK, LEGAL AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS

The Local Government Association of the Northern Territory is advocating on behalf of member councils for uniform animal management legislation across the Northern Territory. Council has been advised that a discussion paper will shortly be released. In the interim, Council will continue to work collaboratively with other councils to share information and manage dangerous dogs.

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environment sustainability implications for this report.



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COUNCIL OFFICER CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATION

We the author and approving officer declare that we do not have a conflict of interest in relation to this matter.

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.