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# **Code of Responsible Dog Ownership**

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## **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.

## **Guidelines**

### **Pre- Purchase**

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;
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- Initial and continuing costs - purchase, vaccination, desexing, veterinary costs, registration costs, dietary requirements, obedience classes, grooming; and
- Regulations governing dog management - Dog Control Act 2000, Dog Management Policy, Animal Welfare Act 1993.

### **Post-Purchase (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;
- Identification for the dog prior to registration;
- Desexing if being undertaken;
- Appropriate diet; and
- Registration by six months of age.

### **Ongoing**

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 others. 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;
- Distribution by City Rangers in daily activities;
- Distribution through participating organisations; and
- Education through schools and community events.

## **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 full review of this policy will be undertaken in conjunction with the review of the Council's Strategic Plan or within five years of the implementation of this policy.