

Responsible dog and cat ownership

Information sheet



Your pet, your responsibility

We all love our animals, whether they be native species or domestic pets, and it's our aim at Tweed Shire Council to ensure the maximum enjoyment of companion animals while protecting our precious environment.

We strive to do this through the harmonious coexistence of pets, pet owners and the wider community through our commitment to inform, educate and motivate pet owners to be responsible in public and at home.

Responsibilities in a public place

Dogs must be controlled by a lead

Any time a dog is in a public place it must be under the effective control of its owner or other responsible person (over the age of 16 years). Unless in a designated off-leash area, this must be done by way of chain, cord or leash being held by the person controlling the dog.



Most dog attacks in the Tweed Shire occur as a result of dogs not being under the effective control of a responsible person and often such attacks occur with dogs that have previously shown no signs of aggression towards other dogs or people.

Any person who fails to ensure their dog is under effective control may attract a **\$330 on-the-spot fine** (per dog not under control). Under Section 13 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, a court may impose a **maximum penalty of \$1100 or \$11,000** in the case of a dog deemed to be dangerous, menacing or of a restricted breed.

Dog attacks

Unfortunately, dog attacks continue to frequently occur across the Tweed Shire, particularly along the Tweed Coast when dog owners fail to secure their dog on a lead. Attacks also commonly occur when dogs manage to escape their property and attack another animal or person.

There are many misconceptions about what constitutes an attack. The *Companion Animals Act 1998* defines a dog attack as: 'a dog that rushes at, attacks, bites, harasses or chases any person or animal (other than vermin), whether or not any injury is caused to the person or animal'.

Council takes alleged dog attacks seriously and all reported incidents are thoroughly investigated by our rangers. Various enforcement options may be taken against a person found guilty of an offence under Section 16 of the Companion Animals Act 1998, including an **on-the-spot fine of \$1320** as well as the potential to have your dog deemed menacing or dangerous. In the case of a dog deemed to be dangerous, menacing or of a restricted breed, a court may impose a **maximum penalty of \$11,000 or \$44,000**.

Prevention is always better than cure. Preventing an attack from occurring can be as simple as demonstrating responsible pet ownership: ensure your dog is well trained and well socialised, ensure your dog cannot escape your property, and maintain effective control of your dog any time you are in a public place.

Prohibited areas

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* allows specific areas to be prohibited to dogs and cats for a variety of reasons. These areas are signposted by Council. Please refer to Council's website for a full list of prohibited areas – www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/walkmydog. Any breach of this can incur an on the spot penalty infringement notice.



Off-leash areas

Tweed Shire Council currently offers 14 designated dog off-leash areas, which are all signposted.

It's your responsibility to ensure your dog is within reasonable proximity and you are able to control your dog at all times in the off-leash area. Please refer to Council's website for mapping of all off-leash locations.

Beaches

- **South Cabarita Beach** – 200m south of Norries Headland to a point 1km north of Cudgera Creek.

- **South Fingal Head/Kingscliff Beach** – access from Murphy's Road Kingscliff to a point ½ km south of the beach access point at the Fingal Head Quarry.
- **South Kingscliff Beach** – from the boundary of Salt residential area north to the rock wall of Cudgen Creek.
- **South Pottsville Beach** – 200m south of the main bathing area at Pottsville Beach to 200m north of Black Rocks.



Parks/reserves

- **Banora Point** – The riverbank reserve at the end of Old Ferry Road, Oxley Cove.
- **Banora Point** – Amaroo Park on the corner of Darlington Drive and Amaroo Drive, which has a bag dispenser.
- **Banora Point** – Hibiscus and Oyster Point Park at the bottom of Bushland Drive.
- **Chinderah** – Corowa Park, corner of Chinderah Road and Terrace Street.
- **Chinderah** – Turnock Park, corner of Chinderah Road and Chinderah Bay Drive, which has a bag dispenser.
- **Murwillumbah** – Frangela Drive Reserve, Frangela Drive.
- **Murwillumbah** – River Street Park, from 73 to 89 River Street, which has a bag dispenser.
- **Terranora** – Bilambil Road Park on the corner of Naponyah Road and Bilambil Road.
- **Tweed Heads** – Ducat Park, Ducat Street.
- **Tweed Heads West** – Boyds Family Park, off Piggabeen Road.

Responsibilities at home

Microchipping and registration

Microchipping

In NSW, all cats and dogs other than those with exemptions (see website for details), must be microchipped by 12 weeks of age, or before being sold or given away, whichever happens first. These animals must also be registered with the NSW Pet Registry.

If your animal changes ownership, address or you change phone numbers, it's your responsibility to advise Council by updating the details online at www.petregistry.nsw.gov.au or by completing the relevant form available at Council offices or via the website. Council aims to return lost animals promptly to their owners but delays can occur due to a failure to microchip and/or incorrect or out of date information is contained on the Pet Registry.

Failure to have your pet microchipped by 12 weeks of age is an offence under Section 8 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and may attract a **\$180 on-the-spot fine** or **maximum penalty of \$880 or \$5500** for a dog deemed to be dangerous, menacing or of a restricted breed if imposed by the court.



Registration

All cats and dogs, other than those with exemptions, must be registered by six months of age. The registration fee is a once-only payment, which covers the animal for its lifetime in NSW.

We encourage you to have your cat or dog desexed before registering on the NSW Pet Registry. Discounted rates apply to cats desexed prior to 4 months of age and dogs desexed prior to 6 months of age. Desexing can help reduce straying, fighting, aggression and anti-social behaviour. It also helps reduce the number of unwanted animals born each year.

NSW Companion Animals Registration fees are used to provide animal management services to the community throughout NSW. These services may include ranger staff, pound facilities, education and other related activities. For current fees please see Council's website.

Failure to have your pet registered by age 6 months is an offence under Section 9 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and may attract a **\$330 on-the-spot fine** or a **maximum penalty of \$6600 or \$7700** for a dog deemed dangerous, menacing or of a restricted breed if imposed by the court.

Barking dogs

Barking dogs have the potential to impact surrounding neighbours when the noise is considered to occur on a continual or habitual basis. As a dog owner, it's your responsibility to ensure your dog does not make noise, by barking or otherwise, that persistently occurs or continues to such a degree that it unreasonably interferes with the peace of your neighbours.

Dogs bark for a variety of reasons including boredom, separation anxiety, lack of exercise and visual stimulation. If you feel your dog barks unnecessarily, visit our website for some great tips and tricks that may help reduce or stop the issue.

If Council receives a barking dog complaint, we may choose to investigate the allegation and a Nuisance Order may be issued requiring you to prevent further noise from occurring. Failure to comply with a Nuisance Order is an offence under Section 32A of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and may attract a **maximum penalty of \$880 for the first offence and \$1650 for any subsequent offence.**

Containing your animal

Dogs

A dog not under effective control and not adequately contained to the property in which it normally resides has the potential to cause a number of issues including:

- defecating on public or private properties
- destructive behaviour towards property
- potential for traffic accidents
- harassing/aggressive behaviour towards other animals or people
- an attack on another animal or person.

It is a dog owner's responsibility to ensure their dog is contained on the property in which it is normally kept and prevented from escaping into a public place. Forms of containment can include fencing, dog runs and enclosures.

Failure to prevent your dog from escaping is an offence under Section 12A of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* that may attract a **\$220 on-the-spot fine** or a **maximum penalty of \$880 or \$5500** for a dog deemed dangerous, menacing or of a restricted breed if imposed by the court.

Cats

While it is not a requirement under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* to contain your cat on the property in which it is normally kept, Council highly encourages all cat owners to implement measures to prevent their cat from roaming any time of the day or night.



Cats instinctively hunt day and night and have the potential to significantly impact on native animals. It is estimated a domestic cat can, on average, kill a whopping 740 animals per year which equates to two billion reptiles, birds and mammals killed each year in Australia by cats allowed to roam freely.

Keeping your cat indoors or in an enclosure is recommended in the interests of both your cat's safety and that of our beautiful Tweed eco-system. Visit our website for further information on how to contain your cat and prevent it from roaming.

More information

Tweed Shire Council

Phone: 02 6670 2400
Web: tweed.nsw.gov.au/pets
Email: tsc@tweed.nsw.gov.au

Environmental Protection Agency

Web: epa.nsw.gov.au and search for 'dealing with barking dogs'

Office of Local Government

Web: olg.nsw.gov.au/public/dogs-cats
Web: petregistry.nsw.gov.au

Community Justice Centre

Phone: 1800 990 777
Web: cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au

Customer Service | 02 6670 2400

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