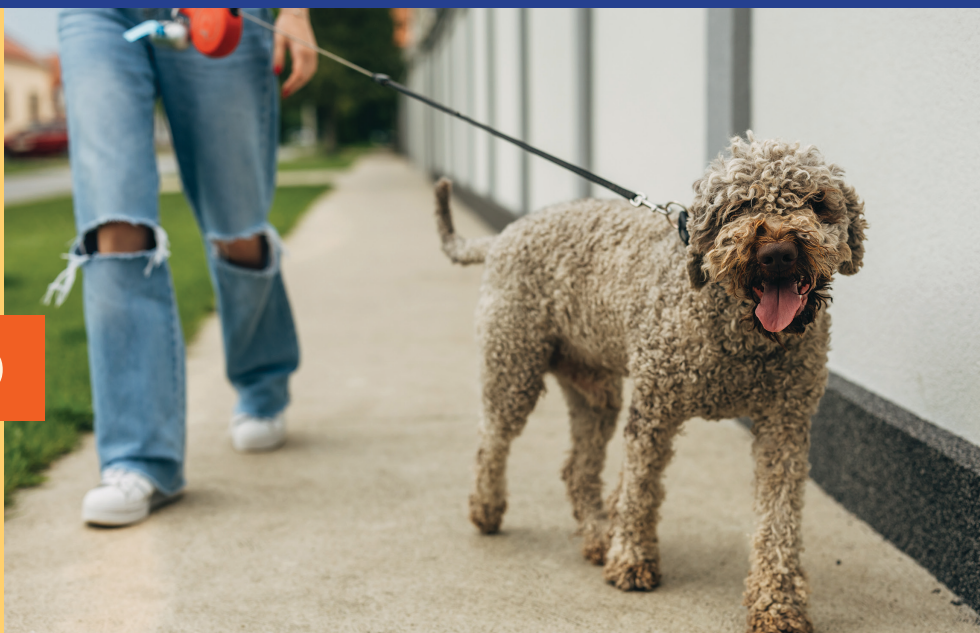


Responsible pet ownership



Being a responsible pet owner is a commitment that extends beyond providing food and shelter.

Responsible pet owners respect local laws and regulations, clean up after their pets, prevent nuisance behaviors, and are considerate of their neighbors and community.

REGISTER YOUR PET

The *NSW Companion Animals Act 1998* requires all dogs and cats in NSW to be microchipped and registered by 12 weeks of age.

COLLARS AND TAGS

Make sure your pet can always be easily identified. When not on their owner's property, all dogs and cats must wear a collar and have a tag that shows the name of the animal and address or telephone number of the owner of the animal.

PICK UP AFTER YOUR DOG

Are you the type of dog owner who carries a plastic bag and picks up their dog's poo?

Or are you the type of owner who turns the other way - pretending to notice?

People who do not clean up after their dogs are a constant source of irritation for other members of the community.

Aside from the stinky mess, there are health and environmental reasons for picking up your dog's poo. It keeps nutrients from entering waterways and reduces the risk of diseases being spread from direct or indirect human contact with faeces.

All dog owners are required by law to clean up after their pets if they defecate in a public place. Fines up to \$880 can apply if you don't pick up your dog's poo.

BARKING DOGS

Barking dogs are a common complaint made to Council. These matters are often very difficult to resolve because:

- Different people have different views about what is a noise nuisance. This varies from the location of the dog in relation to the person making the complaint; the noise tolerance level of the complainant; the type of barking and the time/length of the barking.
- Gathering evidence and completing a 'barking dog diary' is time consuming and difficult.
- Council Rangers require the person making the complaint to be a witness in Court and provide evidence if the matter is to proceed.
- The owners are often unaware their dog is barking excessively.

Council encourages people to discuss their concerns with the owner of the dog before lodging a complaint with Council. The dog owner may not be aware their dog is barking, particularly if it is only when they are out.

In most cases owners want to do the right thing and will cooperate.

Why am I barking?

I get bored when my owner is not at home with me. They don't even know I bark a lot, but the neighbours sure do!



KEEP YOUR DOG UNDER CONTROL

Most dogs are generally well behaved but there are always exceptions. In the interests of public safety, state legislation mandates that all dogs in public places be on an adequate chain, cord or leash that is controlled by a competent person.

If a person allows their dog to be uncontrolled in a public place they may be issued with a fine exceeding \$330.

Rangers prefer not to issue fines but they do patrol the Ballina Shire and will fine people who are not responsible.

DOG ATTACKS

Council Rangers have noticed an increase in the number of dog attacks being reported to and investigated by Council.

It is an offence for a dog to attack a person or animal (other than vermin). If a dog rushes at, attacks, bites, harasses or chases any person or animal (other than vermin), whether or not injury is caused to a person or animal, the owner of the dog or the person in charge of the dog at that time is guilty of an offence. Fines exceeding \$550 may be issued by Council for a dog attack and if Court action is taken a maximum fine of \$5,500 may apply.

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* legislation gives Council the power to target dogs deemed 'menacing', even if they have never killed or caused injury. A dog that has tried to attack a person and/or animal, or has displayed 'aggressive tendencies' may be considered menacing under the Act.

If Council declares a dog menacing an owner will be required to desex the dog, keep them muzzled and leashed, and in the control of a person over the age of 18 years every time they are out in the public.

LIABILITY FOR INJURY OR DEATH

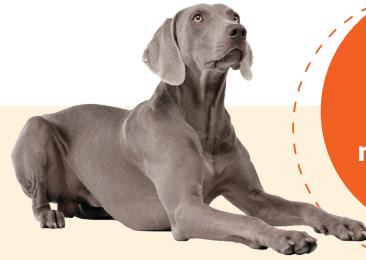
Dog owners need to be aware that as the owner of a dog that has attacked they are liable for bodily injury to a person and damage to the personal property of a person.

The owner of a dog is also liable for damages in respect of injury (whether or not fatal) to another animal (other than vermin) caused by the dog attacking or chasing it.

COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Ballina Shire Council's Companion Animals Management Plan acknowledges the importance of pets to many people and works with the community to promote responsible pet ownership, and to provide a healthy environment in which animals, their owners and the wider community can comfortably live.

The Plan not only outlines off-leash areas for dogs in the shire, it also defines where dogs are not allowed. One prohibited area is the Flat Rock Reef which is an important site for migratory and shore birds.



10 essential tips for good dog management

1. Avoid unwanted puppies and have your dog desexed at an early age.
2. Ensure your dog is microchipped and registered with Council by 12 weeks of age.
3. Do not allow your dog to roam. Always walk your dog on a leash. It is an offence against the Companion Animals Act for any dog to be outside its own property at any time, unless it is under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash, that is attached to the dog and that is being held by (or secured to) the person.
4. Always carry a bag with you to pick up any dog poo.
5. Never console a frightened, aggressive or barking dog. Reprimand undesirable behaviour and only praise good behaviour.
6. Do not allow your dog to bark at things that are not a threat to your security, such as passing pedestrians, the postman, neighbours, stray dogs, birds etc.
7. Be a responsible dog owner and remember a good watchdog makes for a happy neighbourhood.
8. Seek professional help if your dog is too difficult for you to handle, and if so, don't feel like you have failed. Humans are naturally human trainers and it takes special skills to be able to train dogs successfully.
9. Wherever possible confine your dog at night to reduce any annoyance to your neighbours.
10. Keep your dog healthy and happy.