

Barking

Barking is a dog's natural means of communication and often signifies his alertness to danger and intruders. However, a dog that persistently barks in a way that is considered not normally habitual, may constitute a nuisance.

If a dog barks continually the cause may be insufficient exercise, loneliness, inadequate shelter, ill health, lack of training and deliberate or unintentional provocation by people or other animals. Rangers will investigate reports of dog barking, liaise and provide advice to the dog owner so that the nuisance can be abated. Rangers cannot act on anonymous tips and will need information from the caller to be able to proceed with the investigation. All personal information provided is kept confidential and not divulged to other parties, for more information please refer to the barking dog brochure.

Behaviour problems

Should you have a problem with your dog barking, escaping or not fitting in with your household, contact your local vet to discuss and obtain further advice.

Exercising your dog

Every dog, regardless of breed and age should be walked daily. Keeping a dog in a large backyard is not adequate to keep it stimulated and happy.

There are several beach and reserve areas in the City of Bunbury where your dog can be exercised off lead. Ensure that your dog will respond to your commands and that you carry a lead in these areas just in case it is needed. Even though you may be in an off-lead area, you must still have effective control of your dog. There are some exercise areas that are shared with sporting facilities and any sporting activities take precedence and dogs must be on lead during sporting activities.

There are also some beach and reserve areas where dogs are prohibited regardless whether or not the dog is on or off a lead. In all other places your dog must be kept on a leash at all times. This is for the protection of the general community as well as for you and your dog.

Dangerous dogs/restricted breeds

Dogs that have shown a tendency to attack or repeatedly rush, threaten or chase people or animals may be declared dangerous by the Council. Restricted breed dogs, such as Pitbull Terriers, Japanese Tosas and their crossbreeds, have the potential to be dangerous and owners of dangerous dogs and/or restricted breeds must ensure the following are complied with:

- Dogs to wear a special collar
- Dogs to be muzzled in public
- Dogs to be microchipped
- Dog must be sterilised
- Have a specified warning sign at all entries to the property.
- Dog is not to be allowed off lead in any public area

Animal Management Facility (Pound/doggie jail)

A dog whose owner cannot be identified (no collar, tags or microchip) will be held in the facility for a minimum of three days (72 hours). A dog whose owner can be readily identified (by collar/tags or microchip with correct details) will be held for a minimum of seven days.

After this time the dog may be rehomed or, as a last resort, may have to be euthanised. If your dog is impounded and is wearing a collar, tags or microchip you will be notified at the address you registered your dog. It is essential you notify the Council and the microchip database company of any changes to your contact information. Owners of impounded dogs will incur a fee for the dog being impounded and a fee for sustenance for every day or part of a day that the dog is impounded.

In addition, a registration fee will be required to be paid if the dog is unregistered at the time and the dog will be required to be microchipped prior to release.

Fines may also be issued to the owner of the dog when the dog is released for any contravention of the Dog Act.

Current penalties

Dog not held by leash in public place	\$200
Dog in place without consent	\$200
Unregistered dog	\$200
Dog without a microchip	\$200
Microchip details not updated	\$200
Inadequate fencing/confinement	\$200
Dog attack or chase causing injury	\$400
Dog attack or chase causing no injury	\$200
Dog without collar and tags	\$200
Keeping more dogs than allowed	\$200
Fail to dispose of dog excreta (poop)	\$200

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DOGS IN THE COMMUNITY

Information for dog owners



Five Questions to ask before getting a dog

1. Do I have the time available to spend exercising and enjoying the company of a dog?
2. Can I afford the annual registration and vet bills?
3. Is the dog I want suited to my home?
4. Have I researched the temperament and exercise requirements of the dog breed?
5. Do I know how long the dog will live for?

For many Australians a pet is an important part of the family. While owning a pet can be extremely rewarding, it is important to remember that pet ownership is also a huge responsibility. As a pet owner you will be committed to providing for all the requirements of your pet – food, exercise, housing, grooming and veterinary care. It is absolutely essential to thoroughly research the basics of pet care before acquiring any new pet to ensure you have the capacity to meet the physiological, behavioural and social needs of the animal.

It is recommended that you take the time to research the species or breed/crossbreed you are purchasing well before bringing them home, so that you are positive your choice of pet will be appropriate for your lifestyle and you are well prepared for their arrival.

Purchasing a pet should never be an impulsive decision. RSPCA shelters receive thousands of unwanted and abandoned animals each year and these are often the result of an ill-considered decision. Before you make the decision to become a pet owner you need to be aware of the following points.

Am I prepared to care for a pet for its whole life?

The average lifespan of a dog is around 12 years, with some dogs living until 15 or even 20 years of age so it's a long-term commitment. While puppies are adorable, they will get larger and you will need to be prepared to provide for an adult animal too. In the case of some dogs, a much larger animal will require considerable exercise and have a sizeable appetite.

Can I afford a pet?

There are many costs involved with pet ownership. Upfront costs for dogs include vaccinations, microchipping and desexing. However, you will need to be prepared to pay for ongoing costs associated with registration, food, worming, annual health checks, vet bills, training, boarding, toys and bedding for the life of the animal. If an emergency or accident occurs, you will also need to ensure you can pay for any emergency veterinary treatment required.

The costs of pet ownership will vary depending on the type of animal you choose. Remember that pets are an expensive addition to the family.

Do I need to register my dog?

All dogs over the age of three months must be registered with your local Council. With the exception of lifetime registration, all registrations expire on 31 October regardless of the date you registered your dog.

The State Government determines the registration fees which are as follows:-

	1 Year	3 Years	Lifetime
Unsterilised	\$50	\$120	\$250
Sterilised	\$20	\$42.50	\$100

If your dog is sterilised you will be required to prove this before you can register your dog at the discounted rate.

A sterilisation certificate is ideal, however sighting an ear tattoo or completing a Statutory Declaration will be acceptable.

Pensioners are entitled to 50% reduction on the above fees upon production of a Pensioner Concession Card.

Dog owners must be over the age of 18 years to register a dog.

Microchipping for all dogs

As part of the Dog Act 1976, all dogs must be microchipped. This is an added safety measure if they lose their collar, Rangers and vets can scan the dog to help reunite them with their owners. Microchip details need to be kept up-to-date especially when you move or change phone numbers so that you can be contacted if the dog is found. Please contact the registry service your dog is microchipped with.

Who is responsible for a dog?

Apart from the owner of the dog, any person including those living at the property where the dog lives, or a person who has the dog in his/her possession/control is responsible for the dog. This includes ensuring the dog is registered and microchipped and ensuring the dog is confined to the property and does not wander.

What type of fences do I need to keep a dog?

As part of the registration conditions that you will sign, it is a requirement that you have fences adequate to contain your dog. This means something suitable to stop the dog from escaping your property and includes measures to stop the dog digging under the fence and a gate that can be locked to prevent other people opening the gate and letting your dog out without you knowing. A damaged fence is not an excuse for your dog wandering; you must be prepared to make the backyard escape proof to keep your dog inside. Your fence must also be high enough to stop them getting over it, a lot of small dogs can jump higher than what you may expect.

What if I move?

Once your dog is registered with a WA local government, the dog registration is valid through Western Australia. If you move, you will need to inform the local government where your dog is registered of your new address and phone numbers. Alternatively, you can attend your new local government office and transfer the dog registration to

What if my dog dies and I get another one, can I put the old tag on the new dog?

Dog registrations are not transferable between dogs. A new registration form must be completed for each dog.

What do I do if the dogs rego tag is lost?

Replacement registration tags can be arranged at the Council office for a small replacement fee.

What identification do dogs need to wear?

Dogs must have a collar with their current registration tag. It is also recommended that you attached a sturdy name tag with two phone numbers as this will help members of the public and Rangers to return your dog if it becomes lost.

I only put a collar and tags on my dog when I walk it. Is this ok?

You cannot predict when your dog will escape from your property. As such, dogs should wear a collar with appropriate tags at all times. This way should the dog escape you can be assured of your dog being returned.

How many dogs can I keep?

Each property is allowed to keep two dogs and the puppies of these dogs under three months of age. An application to keep more than two dogs can be made to Council, but to keep any more than six dogs requires a kennel licence. Kennel establishments may only be approved in areas that are zoned as such under the Town Planning Scheme.

Poo bags

When walking your dog you are required to pick up your dog's droppings and dispose of them legally. The City of Bunbury provides Pooch Pouches and bins in its parks and beaches so owners can clean up after their pets.

Dog attacks

A dog attack is a very serious matter. If your dog attacks a person or another animal, you may be held responsible even if you were not there at the time of the attack. Any person who is looking after your dog can also be held liable if your dog attacks.

A dog attack includes a dog aggressively rushing at, chasing or attempting to attack a person or animal, as well as tearing clothing, biting or causing physical injury.

