

ADDITIONAL ITEM



Item No: 1.4
Title: Administrator's Minute - Responsible Pet Ownership Policy
Department: Administrator

27 April 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting

Reference: F2020/00039 - D14600276
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The Central Coast has the highest population of dogs in the State. Currently, there are 143,000 registered dogs that reside within our Local Government area. For the thirteen Rangers that are employed by Council, that's 11,000 dogs per Community Safety Officer (Ranger).

Whilst the overall number of dog attack incidents on the Central Coast has decreased over the previous four years, given our high rate of dog ownership, the Central Coast leads the State for the highest rate of dog attacks in NSW. Dog attacks are a serious issue facing the community and Council's Community Safety Section.

A dog attack is defined as an incident where a dog 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. Dog attacks are most likely to involve other dogs followed by humans; however, human victims also emerge where a person has tried to intervene in a dog attack on another animal. Cats and livestock are also victims of dog attacks.

Statistics indicate that, on average, 60% of animal victims sustained either a minor injury or no injury due to a dog attack. There were seven (7) dog deaths in 2019 & five (5) dog deaths in 2020 due to a dog attack.

The most likely place for a dog attack to occur on the Central Coast is on a public road or footpath. Less than 10% of attacks happen in public areas such as beaches and reserves, which are patrolled by Rangers.

The consequences for owners of attacking dogs includes a \$1320 fine and Dangerous and Menacing dog orders, which can be issued. These orders require owners to comply with control requirements that are enforceable by law. Further information on these orders can be found on the Office of Local Governments website.

Community concerns have been raised after a recent dog attack that resulted in the fatality of a dog named 'Buddy' and serious injuries to his owner. This matter has deeply disturbed me in terms of the trauma it has caused for Buddy's owner. This Administrator's Minute has the intent of promoting more responsible dog ownership as well as for the Council to take a zero tolerance approach to dog attacks where there is a fatality.

I formally move:

- 1 *That Council develops a 'Responsible Pet Ownership' Policy, which provides a framework for what is expected of pet owners on the Central Coast.*
- 2 *That Council adopts a zero-tolerance approach for dog attacks with mandatory penalties where an attack has led to the fatality of another dog unless there are extenuating circumstances and they are reviewed by an Enforcement Review Panel led by a Council Executive.*
- 3 *That Council writes to the Minister/Premier, seeking a review of the list of dangerous dog breeds.*