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ANALYSIS OF DOG ATTACKS 2010/11

The purpose of this Circular is to advise councils of the release of the Dog Attack Report for the period 2010/11. The report presents analysis of information related to dog attacks which has been provided to the Division of Local Government by local councils. The report is available on the 'Publications' page of the Division's website.

Main findings

There was a 17% increase in the number of attacks reported by councils between 2009/10 and 2010/11. While council compliance with dog attack reporting requirements may have contributed to this increase, other relevant factors may include:

- o increasing public awareness of the importance of reporting dog attacks to councils, and
- o substantial increase in the number of dogs kept as pets (8% increase since 2009/10).

The report indicates that the key characteristics of attacks have remained largely unchanged since 2009/10. This includes the most common injury outcome in attacks on people (no injury), the most frequent action taken against attacking dogs (destruction), and the most frequent actions taken against the owners of attacking dogs (further investigation, followed by issuing a warning).

Ongoing compliance matters

Councils' compliance with the requirements of the Companion Animals Regulation 2008 to report dog attacks within 72 hours of receiving information about an attack has significantly increased the accuracy of information about dog attacks. This will assist councils to implement effective strategies to reduce dog attacks in their areas.

It is important that councils finalise the dog attack incidents they report on the Register. This ensures that accurate data is recorded on the outcomes of attacks.

The NSW Companion Animals Register includes a function for searching and viewing incidents and a detailed dog attack report for each local government area. These useful tools can assist council managers and authorised officers to manage dog attack investigations and determine the deployment of resources in their area.

Since April 2009, the Division has also published on its website a summary of dog attacks reported by councils in the previous quarter.

These reports are published in accordance with the NSW Government's commitment to openness and transparency in public sector decision making. The information collected from councils assists the Division compile profiles of the nature of dog attacks in NSW. Accurate identification of the circumstances of dog attacks also assists in the development of appropriate policy and legislative responses aimed at reducing the incidence and minimising the impact of dog attacks on community safety

Your ongoing assistance in the timely and accurate reporting of dog attacks is appreciated.



Ross Woodward
Chief Executive, Local Government
A Division of the Department of Premier and Cabinet