

## Media Release

07 February 2018

### Dogs in Kaipara - Owners Rights and Responsibilities

Dogs are very special animals. They make great family pets or working dogs and can be extremely loyal. Dogs depend on their owners and their human family to provide for all of their needs to be met; the needs of warmth, shelter, food, water, medical care and adequate exercise for the size, type and breed of dog.

Under the Dog Control Act 1996, Kaipara District Council is charged with ensuring that all the legal requirements of the Act are met, this includes carrying out door to door checks for unregistered dogs together with undertaking enforcement procedures with regard to any dogs that are not being kept under control by their owners. This may include issuing infringement notices for non-registration, no dog ID microchips or failure to control or confine where dogs may be wandering or aggressive or where a dog attack has occurred. Impounding of dogs, prosecution of owners and euthanasia of dogs together with recovery of enforcement costs incurred are options that Council will also follow up for non-compliance by dog owners.

- Rights - under the Dog Control Act 1996, anyone over the age of 16 may legally own a dog, however, responsibilities include; ensuring your dog is cared for at all times; that it is currently registered and microchipped (where applicable); and that it is kept under control at all times.
- Problem dogs - While renowned as man's best friend, too often a minority of dogs may be scary, annoying and aggressive or practice socially unacceptable habits such as fouling on property other than their own home turf. These behaviours may be directly linked to irresponsible dog ownership.
- Dogs are descended from the wolf and they sometimes show behavioural traits associated with wild animals, for example, they may bite when frightened, injured, threatened or when they attempt to be dominant or territorial. These behaviours may be directly linked to a result of poor training or lack of control by the owner.
- Legal consequences - biting is not an acceptable behaviour which can result in serious consequences for the dog, its owner and the victim. Dogs responsible for attacks on people or other animals can be seized, the dog owner charged with an offence under the Dog Control Act 1996 and may be liable on conviction by the Court to a fine together with a destruction order against the dog.

Reporting a problem dog, a barking dog, a wandering dog or an aggressive dog in your area:

- Telephone Armourguard Animal Control on 0800 105 890 - this number is available 24 hours per day and 7 days per week.
- Dogs can move very quickly - over fences, under hedges and across properties. If at all possible take photographs of the offending dog and if known note the address from where the dog is homed.
- If a non-aggressive habitual roaming dog is causing a nuisance - if possible contain it and call Armourguard Animal Control on 0800 105 890 to come and uplift the dog.
- Dog traps are available for loan on request to Armourguard Animal Control.

- Dogs may bark for a variety of reasons, if a dog is habitually barking, they may be suffering from boredom - perhaps lack of exercise or attention, they may be distressed; as a pack animal, if in isolation or “home-alone”, barking may be their only means of communicating their distress. Prolonged loud and incessant barking should be reported to Armourguard Animal Control where details will be logged and remedial action sought with the dog owner.
- If you have been a victim, witness or are the owner of an aggressive or dangerous dog that has attacked, you should advise Armourguard Animal Control of the incident as soon as it occurs.
- All details, medical reports and marked clothing from an attack should be kept as evidence to build a case against the owner should a prosecution proceed.
- When lodging a complaint ask the officer taking the details to contact you with the outcome advising the best time that suits you for a return call.

With regard to any complaint received regarding dog nuisances, the information the complainant provides will be priority rated and an Enforcement Officer will investigate and respond in relation to the extent of the information received. Dog attacks are always a priority 1 rating which must be responded to immediately.

Continued vigilance by Council's Contractor remains a priority to ensure that first-rate customer service is maintained and to ensure prompt enforcement response timeframes are met.

Want to know more about dog owners rights and responsibilities - telephone Armourguard on 0800 105 890 or check out Council's website [www.kaipara.govt.nz](http://www.kaipara.govt.nz) for comprehensive information on Council's current Dog Policy and general information with regard to responsible dog ownership.

ENDS

***For more information contact Ben Hope 09 439 1124***