

AIAM Position Statement: “Managing Dog Aggression in the Community”

The Institute believes that *all* dogs should be managed by their owners to ensure community safety. The Australian Institute of Animal Management advocates the prevention of dog aggression as a community goal. The Institute promotes the idea that Animal Management needs to be more than just good at responding to dog aggression incidents - it needs to be good at prevention also. The Institute supports the notion that best practices in aggression prevention can ultimately be derived from best practices in aggression incident response.

The Institute encourages all levels of government to implement legislative and regulatory systems that effectively assess, declare and subsequently control dogs that have shown signs of inappropriate aggression. The Institute advocates consistency (at regional, State and National levels) in the standard operating procedures that are employed in responding to dog aggression incidents.

The Institute emphasises the need for an evidence-based approach to the formulation of strategies for reducing dog aggression in the Australian community. The Institute has identified the following actions that can immediately be implemented by different levels of Government along these lines:-

1. Standardising State legislation pertaining to dog aggression
 - a) Ensuring that Standard Operating Procedures are applied to the process of investigating reported dog aggression incidents
 - b) Ensuring that Standard Operating Procedures are used to categorise the level of dangerousness exhibited in each case
 - c) Ensuring that all officially recorded declarations of dangerousness automatically hold valid across all municipal and state borders in Australia
2. Organising a National Dangerous Dog Database that draws data using a standard data capture format from *every* recorded dog aggression incident in all States of Australia.
3. Enabling the statistical analysis of all such data on an annual basis for the identification of trends, benchmarks and best remedial options.
4. Improving prevention through a standard range of Local Government Animal Management Service delivery system measures.

Note that this Position Statement links to a more complete supporting document.

Supporting paper for the AIAM Position Statement on “Managing Dog Aggression in the Community”

Introduction

The main purpose of the Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM) is to support initiatives that offer practical solutions to companion animal management problems. The purposes of this position statement (together with this supporting paper) on minimising dog aggression in the community are in that vein. The objectives of this paper are summarised as follows:

- Advocate Animal Management a competence in aggression *prevention* that matches (or exceeds) its expertise in aggression *response*
- Provide an overview of background factors pertinent to the regulation and control of aggressive dogs.
- Emphasise the objective of fairness in delivering consistently equitable outcomes for owners, victims and dogs
- Encourage the development of uniform (best practice) protocols (SOPs) across municipal and state boundaries for the regulation and control of aggressive dogs.
- Make recommendations regarding the minimisation of harm, both physical and emotional, to humans and other animals that can result from dog aggression
- Promote the drafting of legislative remedies which are evidence-based, operationally functional and measurably assessable
- Emphasise the essential need for consistency across all Australian States and Territories in dealing with and preventing dog attacks.

Definitions – note that these definitions are (of necessity) an attempted “best fit” from a range of separate legislation and sources

Aggression - Aggression is usually defined by canine behaviourists as "the intent to cause fear or do physical harm". A range of *different* types of dog aggression are recognized. More than one of these motivating influences may be in play in any one incident.

Amicability – The canine personality dimension labelled “amicability” consists of 5 attributes: easy going, friendly, non-aggressive, relaxed and sociable.¹ Amicable could easily be referred to as the opposite of “dangerous”. Dogs could be selected for breeding based on desirable levels of certain traits, which if reliably measurable (for amicability), would assist in producing offspring with suitable temperaments.¹

Behaviour –The term behaviour refers to the overall actions or reactions of an individual animal in response to external or internal stimuli. Behaviour of an individual is influenced by its genetic make-up, previously learnt past experiences and the environment it lives in.

Bite - If a dog seizes something, or attempts to close or actually closes its jaws on something, and the teeth of the dog enter, grip or wound that thing, a bite has occurred whether or not the skin is damaged.²

Breed specific legislation – see restricted breed definition

¹ Ley, J., Bennett, P., Coleman, G., 2008. Personality dimensions that emerge in companion canines. Applied Animal Behaviour Science 110, 305-317.

² From research being currently carried out at the Anthrozoology Research Group and Animal Welfare Science Centre, Monash University by PhD student Tammie King

³ From the Dog Bite Law site (<http://dogbitelaw.com/what-is-a-bite/what-is-a-bite.html>).

Conformation - Different breeds of dogs are identified as being different from each other on the basis of their appearance. Judgements regarding “trueness to type” in dog showing are based on conformational characteristics such as general appearance, size, coat type, coat colour, etc. In Australia the only official keeper of breed standards is the Australian National Kennel Council.

Dangerous - The National Consultative Committee on Animal Welfare position Statement #24 (1995) says: “The definition of a dangerous dog should be based on the individual dog’s behaviour, *not* on an individual breed”.³ Degrees of dangerousness can be established on the basis of injury severity in dog attack incidents.⁴ These categories of dangerousness include “menacing” or “threatening” behaviour that does not involve a bite being inflicted.

Dangerous dog -The term “dangerous dog” in State legislation may include two categories of “dangerousness”:

- a) Those “deemed” to be dangerous – determined on the basis of purpose regardless of whether or not they have actually behaved aggressively
- b) Those “declared” to be dangerous – determined on the basis of an officially recorded incident of aggressive behaviour.

Declared dog – A “declared dog” is a dog that has been declared dangerous or menacing, or is a prescribed breed by an authorised person or body. This definition includes attacks on people and/or other animals.

Deemed dog - Certain types of dogs, e.g., restricted breeds, patrol dogs, hunting dogs, attack trained dogs etc. are, in some jurisdictions, identified and officially labelled “dangerous dogs”. They are “officially” considered to have dangerous potential, sufficient to warrant specific controls and restraints being placed on the conditions under which they are kept by their owners.

Personality – Personality refers to an individual’s thoughts, feelings and behaviours which differentiate it from others. Individual differences in behavioural attributes can be described in terms of an animal’s underlying inherent temperament and its personality (a combination of temperament and past experiences). Dogs have personality (REF). Personality can be inferred from how an individual behaves in certain situations

Restricted breeds - “The following five dog breeds are currently classed as prohibited Australian imports: Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino, Presa Canario, Fila Brasileiro, American Pit Bull Terrier. All state and Territory governments in Australia, with the exception of the ACT, have followed this Federal Customs importation prohibition cue and placed legislative restrictions on the keeping of these breeds of dogs. It should be noted that dogs that belong to Restricted Breeds are not necessarily dangerous. The terms: “restricted breeds” and “dangerous dogs” should not be used synonymously.

Temperament – Temperament is the component of an animal’s behavioural repertoire that is of genetic (inherited) nature. It can be described as relatively consistent dispositions inherent in the individual which are present from a young age. The heritability of different behavioural traits can vary between breeds and individuals.

Causal factors

AIAM recognizes that there are multiple factors which influence the expression of aggression in dogs. These factors may have a compounding effect when more than one applies in any given case. The framework of factors includes the following:

³ NCCAW was a non-statutory body established by the then Minister for Primary Industries and Energy in 1989. Its functions among other things was to assess and advise the Federal Government on the national implications of welfare issues affecting animals

⁴ See Appendix 1.

- The competence of the owner to adequately select, socialise, train, manage and control their dog in accordance with socially acceptable standards
- The temperament of the dog
- Environmental triggers at the time of an aggression incident
- The health of the dog

With respect to causal factors in aggression expression, it is important to also note the following observations:

- A range of different types of aggression are recognized. These include predatory aggression, fear aggression, protective aggression, dominance aggression and territorial aggression. Predatory aggression is differently *motivated* to territorial or defensive aggression. More than one of these motivating influences may be in play in any one incident. Because of this, determination of dangerousness is to some extent context specific; a dog that behaves in an aggressive manner in one circumstance may be benign in the absence of the specific triggers involved with that type of aggression.
- Dangerousness is to some extent determined by a dog's physical capacity to harm. A smaller or less strong dog may not be able to inflict wounds as severe as a larger dog. It is not possible, however, to draw a defining line on this qualification.
- There are multiple levels in the recognition of severity in aggressive dog incidents. Injuries inflicted in dog attacks may range from those in which no physical harm is done, to those with fatal consequences. A template for categorizing levels of aggression in response to dog attacks is attached to this document – see Appendix 1.
- A dog of any breed or type can be aggressive. Breed can be associated with particular “normal” behavioural tendencies that, without appropriate management, may be problematic.

NOTE: It is only from known incidents of aggression, that a reliable determination of “dangerousness” can be made. It is also only from such known incidents that a better understanding of aggression prevention can be derived. Much more will be understood about aggression *prevention* if aggression *incidents* are handled in a thoroughly professional pro-active, investigative manner.

Brief history of BSL in Australia

More than a decade ago, the Federal Government enacted border protection legislation (Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulation 3 - Schedule 1 - Item 26) prohibiting the importation of list 1 dogs that are used in other countries for dog fighting. As dog fighting is not an accepted part of Australian culture, this prohibition made good sense. In the case of the Pit Bull Terrier however this import prohibition came too late to prevent significant numbers of these dogs from being already established in all States of Australia. All Australian State Governments (except ACT) subsequently therefore, supported the Federal Government's import prohibition legislation by enacting State legislation that restricted the keeping and breeding of these restricted breeds. It has been problematic that the Pit Bull Terrier was never a true breed as such. They were always a multi-cross breed, purpose bred “type” of dog rather than a breed of dog in the usual sense. As a consequence of this non-specific origin, they can vary considerably in appearance and, in many cases, look little different from many other types of commonly owned Australian “mid-large-sized” dogs.

A number of attempts have been made to “make” BSL legislation workable in the context of its original purpose. But these attempts (that include among other things) the use of identification templates and DNA testing, have proven problematic also. Most existing Pit Bull Terriers quickly changed name from Pit Bull Terrier to something else and have now, as a consequence, merged with the background of other common types of generally similar sorts of household companion animals.

BSL is widely accepted now in Animal Management circles as being of little use in remedying dog aggression problems. Rather than wasting more time trying to make this single measure work, it seems a better idea to move on to more comprehensive and a more useful model.

Breed bias

The behaviour of dogs tends to vary both within and between breeds. Differences in behaviour between breeds (where they exist) are the result of selective breeding in the past that related to the original purposes of the different dog breeds. Such breed typical “functional / original use” based behaviour tendencies persist long after those original utility functions have become redundant.

For *breed* to reliably link with *behaviour*, including trends towards aggression, both the following prerequisites must hold true:

- Assumption 1: That the breeds in question are homogeneous with respect to the expression of traits in question. This is in fact never the case, because genetically dependent traits can be bred *out of* as easily as they can be bred *in to* any given breed line - and they routinely are - either by design or by chance.
- Assumption 2: That the expression of the behaviour in question is *not* going to be influenced by a given dog’s developmental and physical environment. This is never the case either.

Behaviour assessment

While the behaviour of different breeds was originally “shaped” by selective breeding for different utility roles such as hunting, retrieving, fighting, herding and hauling, the dog’s most common role in our society today is that of human companion. The ability of dogs to perform this companion role varies between individuals. The selective breeding of dogs for behaviour traits that are specifically beneficial to this utility role is currently underutilized.

The *validity* of many existing behavioural assessment techniques is questionable, and assessment for negative traits (that might be selected against) is problematic. Ethical considerations may arise when using particular stimuli to elicit high levels of fear and/or aggression. Because of this, currently there is strong scientific interest focusing on the measurement of *desirable* (as distinct from undesirable) behaviour traits in dogs. These are traits that the public view as preferable in companion dogs. Identifying these traits offers a positive means of improving behaviour through managed genetic selection in companion dog breeding programs.

The role of human companion is a complex function to define. A recent survey⁵ indicated that most people consider how a dog behaves as being more important than how it looks. More specifically, the Australian public prefer a dog which is safe with children, housetrained, comes when called, doesn’t escape their property, is non-destructive, obedient, friendly and affectionate. These behaviours closely parallel a canine personality dimension previously identified and referred to as ‘amicability’.⁶ It can be assumed that dogs which possess these attributes are more likely to satisfy their owners. Conversely, dogs which do not possess these attributes may not be considered appropriate or suitable as companion animals by the majority of people. It is necessary to test if these behavioural attributes can be measured accurately and reliably in order to identify individual dogs which possess the desired traits. To do this, an objective canine behaviour assessment is required.

The ability to accurately assess amicable canine behaviour has a number of advantages which include:

⁵ King, T., Marston, L.C. and Bennett, P.C., 2009. Describing the ideal Australian companion dog. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science* 120, 84-93.

⁶ The Canine Amicability Assessment (CAA) was developed by researchers at Monash University, Melbourne, and aims to measure these characteristics in adult companion dogs. The protocol involves exposing a dog to an unfamiliar environment and an unfamiliar person in the presence and then absence of the dog’s owner. The dog’s behaviour is video recorded and later analysed for specific behavioural sequences. Currently data is being analysed to determine which behaviours correlate with owner and expert assessments of individual dogs

- Having the ability to measure aspects of behaviour that contribute positively to the ownership experience
- Enabling breeders to select and breed from animals most suited for life in the modern world
- Training behaviour assessors to evaluate dogs in a constructive and legally defensible manner

Incident investigation – response and prevention: Imperatives of the evidence based approach

The analysis of data accumulated from expert incident investigation can directly assist in the development of *evidence-based* remedial strategies. It is clear that the best preventative measures will inevitably be derived from the best methods of incident investigation. A standard approach to recording incidents needs to include the following aspects:

- Identification of the officer reporting
- Identification / description of the dog
- Details of the dog’s relevant history
- Description of the victim / the nature of the injury/s / treatment of the injuries / DNA sampling of wounds
- Details relevant to prevailing environmental circumstances at the time of the attack
- Identification of the category of dangerousness displayed
- Identification of management, control and restraint measures that might have prevented the incident occurring
- Record of action taken by the regulating authority

In Animal Management circles it is often said that concentrating on the *prevention* of dog aggression incidents is a better option than focussing on responding to them after the event.

This is true and on the face of it no one would disagree.

But on close examination, the two measures are mutually supporting.

Best practices in post incident recording will ultimately be the driver of best knowledge for prevention.

Every dog aggression incident that is attended by local government regulatory service officers should be assessed, reported and responded to in an officially approved manner.

- Best practices of incident investigation are an efficient way to most reliably identify the steps necessary, for assessing, reporting and taking post-incident action.
- Failure to follow such best practices can compromise the technical integrity of process and may reflect (with reference to liability) on the technical competence of the investigating officer.
- It is important, in terms of ensuring correct Council (and if required), subsequent police response to a dog aggression incident, that the incident details as well as dangerous dog details are *both* properly recorded.
- In situations where damage caused to persons or another animal in a dog attack are attended to by hospitals, paramedics, medical or veterinary practitioners, all such cases need to be *promptly* referred to Local Government Animal Management for incident investigation.

Specific immediate (process) recommendations

The adoption of a nationally uniform dog aggression incident response methodology is (along the lines described in this document), *the* most important immediately actionable bite risk minimization measure that can be taken at this time. This is not necessarily a matter Local Government authorities

do anything new as it is about investigating aggression incidents in a more thorough, more consistent, more effective and .

1. The AIAM recommends that in each case where an aggressive dog incident has been reported through Local Government, if through subsequent routine investigation, some degree of formally recorded aggressive behaviour is proven, *all* council and victim costs incurred in the incident should be recovered from the owners of the dog in question by the Council involved.

These costs should include all expense associated with investigating, recording, reporting, processing, interpreting and publishing the case information via a National Dangerous Dog Incident Database. These costs will be additional to any other Council by-law infringement penalty/s that might coincidentally have also been involved in the case.

The adoption of such a comprehensive “user pays” post incident response process can not only serve to provide essential risk minimisation research data. It can also lift the cost burden of proper incident investigation from Local Government operating budgets and at the same time, be an active (financial penalty) deterrent in itself.

2. All relevant authorities are encouraged to improve general levels of dog owner competency through education and public awareness – including safety aspects of dog ownership – to help minimise the risk of aggression incidents occurring.^{7,8}
3. AMOs and other relevant Local Government Regulatory Services personnel should be appropriately trained to ensure a good understanding of all the following:
 - a) Causes of aggression
 - b) Types of aggression
 - c) Signs of aggression
 - d) Prevention of aggression
 - e) The fundamental concepts of owner competency
 - f) The essential relevance of restraint and confinement regulations
 - g) Responding to aggression incidents
 - h) The National Policy on Dog Aggression
 - i) Legislative obligations associated with the handling of dog aggression incidents
4. Community self-regulation options regarding aggression minimization can be developed to include the following suggestions:
 - a) Only dogs of an acceptable temperament should be bred for sale to the general public
 - b) Dogs that behave aggressively during any aspect of showing or judging, should be permanently disqualified from competition
 - c) Breed clubs should develop codes of practice that ensure that behaviour is tested as thoroughly as is conformation in judging “quality” at show
 - d) No dog (male or female) that has behaved aggressively should be used to breed pet animal (household/family) retail stock
 - e) All dogs sold by pet shops or re-homed by pounds and shelters should pass valid amicability tests
 - f) All dogs at point of acquisition should, as far as possible, be “matched” with suitable prospective owners by evaluating the requirements and, therefore, the suitability of the potential pet dog prior to purchase
 - g) General education should be provided to children on how to behave around dogs
 - h) Dog owners should be advised that all dogs have the potential to bite

⁷ See AIAM publication, “Dogs 101” at www.aiam.com.au

⁸ See also DCMB SA publication, “Dog Owners Handbook” at www.goodownerssa.com

- i) Dog owners should be informed about how to choose an amicable dog by knowing the characteristics they should be looking for
- j) Dog owners should be informed of the advantages of desexing all pet dogs.

Coordination and consistency

AIAM has developed a universal template approach⁹ to the handling of dog aggression incidents. This position statement has been based on the opinion and recommendation outcomes from delegate workshops at the National UAM conferences in Melbourne (2001), Alice Springs (2002) and Caloundra (2003). There is a strong emphasis on having a *single* national strategy for the following basic reasons:

1. Interstate mobility - Management of “aggressive dogs” has to allow for pet animal mobility throughout all Australia. Like all other pet animals, dogs with “aggressive” records will move from town to town and from state to state. Declarations of dangerousness and the consequential owner constraints associated with that declaration should be consistent wherever the dog subsequently goes, anywhere in Australia.
2. Clarity of responsibility – Responsibilities of dog owners and local authorities with respect to dog aggression will have greater clarity in all communities throughout Australia if there is genuine uniformity of policy and process. Public awareness programs will clearly be more cost-efficient if everyone is working to the same plan and using the same (best quality) public education resources.
3. Research and development – The pathway to best practice in aggression management lies in the competent interpretation of data gathered from the professional investigation of reported dog aggression incidents. More complete data capture provides for more complete analytical analysis. This all depends on there being a coordinated national approach and a uniformity of policy and process.

Minimizing risk

Risk mitigation is the obvious goal of any control/ regulatory process. The challenge with aggressive dog related incidents is to identify research based interventions which reduce the likelihood of an incident occurring as opposed to focussing solely on education for behaviour change and post incident penalties. For example:

Research evidence^{10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18} supports the hypothesis that intact male dogs are, on the whole, more aggressive than neutered male dogs, and intact male dogs are the most common group of dogs displaying dominance aggression. Evidence from both epidemiology

⁹ See Appendices 1, 2, 3 & 4 attached to this document

¹⁰ Duperrex, O., Blackhall, K., Burri, M., & Jeannot, E. (2009). Education of children and adolescents for the prevention of dog bite injuries (review). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD004726. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004726.pub2*

¹¹ Gershman, K., Sacks, J., & Wright, J. (1994). Which dogs bite? A case-control study of risk factors. *Pediatrics, 93*(6): 913-917.

¹² Guy, N., Luescher, U., Dohoo, S., Spangler, E., Miller, J., Dohoo, I., & Bate, L. (2001). A case series of biting dogs: characteristics of the dogs, their behaviour, and their victims. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science, 74*: 43-57.

¹³ Haddon, W. (1980). Advances in the epidemiology of injuries as a basis for public policy. *Public Health Reports, 95*(5): 411-421.

¹⁴ Messam, L., Kass, P., Chomel, B., & Hart, L. (2008). The human–canine environment: A risk factor for non-play bites? *The Veterinary Journal, 177*: 205-215.

¹⁵ Reichler, I. (2009). Gonadectomy in cats and dogs: a review of risks and benefits. *Reproduction in Domestic Animals, 44*(Suppl. 2): 29-35.

¹⁶ Sacks, J., Lockwood, R., Hornreich, J., & Sattin, R. (1996). Fatal dog attacks, 1989 -1994. *Pediatrics, 97*(6): 891-895.

¹⁷ Shuler, C., DeBess, E., Lapidus, J., & Hedberg, K. (2008). Canine and human factors related to dog bite injuries. *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 22*: 542-546.

¹⁸ Wright, J. (1985). Severe attacks by dogs: characteristics of the dogs, the victims, and the attack settings. *Public Health Reports, 100*(1), 55-61.

and animal behaviour research also demonstrates a direct correlation between desexing dogs and a reduced risk of dog attack.

Desexing dogs is an example of manipulating the environment we live in to be less risky, rather than relying on human behaviour change or regulatory intervention post incident, to reduce the toll of injury resulting from dog attacks. This sort of population health focus has a long history of success in injury control that has yet to be applied to the problem of dog bites in the community.

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Appendix I. (Template for identifying levels of aggression)

Dogs that have been declared “dangerous” by authorities as a consequence of a reported dog attack should be graded for level of dangerousness according to this table

DESCRIPTION	CONSEQUENCE
1 Dog that exhibits unacceptable aggression without actually biting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dog must be identified using an Australian Standard microchip with data on an accredited registry b. Owner and dog must undergo approved training courses c. Dog must be on leash and under control at all times when off the owner’s property d. Must not have access from the driveway to the front door of the owner’s property
2 Dog that bites once after provocation (where the response was unreasonable given the provocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dog must be identified using an Australian Standard microchip with data on an accredited registry b. Owner and dog must undergo approved training courses c. Dog must be on leash and under control at all times when off the owner’s property d. Must not have access from the driveway to the front door of the owner’s property e. Dog must be desexed at the owner’s expense.
3 Dog that bites after provocation and causes multiple wounds (where the response is unreasonable given the provocation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dog must be identified using an Australian Standard microchip with data on an accredited registry. b. Owner and dog must undergo approved training courses c. Dog must be on leash, under control and muzzled at all times when off premises. d. Must not have access to path between gate and front door and with an approved warning sign. e. Dog must be desexed at owner’s expense. f. Must wear an approved identifying collar g. Owner must obtain public liability insurance to keep the dog.
4 Dog that has nipped or bitten once without provocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Dog must be identified using an Australian Standard microchip with data on an accredited registry. b. Owner and dog must undergo approved training courses c. Dog must be on leash, under control and muzzled at all times when off premises. d. Must not have access to path between gate and front door and with an approved warning sign. e. Dog must be desexed at owner’s expense. f. Must wear an approved identifying collar g. Owner must obtain public liability insurance to keep the dog.
5 Dog that bites and causes multiple wounds without provocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Euthanasia unless Council is satisfied that the owner is going to make exceptional efforts to comply with all of the above for levels 4 & 5 plus confinement to a child/dog proof enclosure b. The completed incident report may be referred to police service for their consideration of there being a case for criminal law action against the owner.
6 Attack involving and causing a Human Fatality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Euthanasia unless Council is satisfied that the owner is going to make exceptional efforts to comply with all of the above for levels 4 & 5 plus confinement to a child/dog proof enclosure b. The completed incident report should be referred to police service for their consideration of there being a case for criminal law action against the owner or responsible carer.

Appendix 2: (The universal aggression incident reporting form)

This aggression incident reporting format is intended to achieve FOUR important outcomes in that it will:-

1. Assist Animal Management Officers by helping to ensure error free investigation of dog aggression incidents by authorized officers
2. Ensure the reliable and consistent identification of the “degree of dangerousness” involved in every investigated dog attack case
3. Allow the accumulation of high quality attack incident data for the purpose of understanding causal factors in dog aggression better
4. Enable the process of benchmarking (on a national basis) towards best practices in aggression minimization in the community.

Risk mitigation is the obvious goal of all control/ regulatory process. The challenge with dog aggression is to identify remedies that are *evidence-based and acceptable* to the public. The analysis of data accumulated from a comprehensive and standardized method of mandatory incident investigation is the best (and the quickest) approach for the derivation of meaningful *statistics, trends, KPIs and benchmarks* relevant to the minimisation of dog aggression.

The mandating of a nationally uniform dog aggression incident response methodology along the lines described in this document is, without doubt, *the* most important immediately actionable risk minimization measure that can be taken at this time. This recommendation is not so much a matter of doing anything new as it is a matter of ensuring that the most essential basics are simply done properly. The adoption of more comprehensive and more consistent post incident response will provide essential research data and be an active deterrent in itself.

AGGRESSION INCIDENT

UNIVERSAL DATA ENTRY CAPTURE FORM

A. REPORTING JURISDICTION

Council/Municipality	Council Name:	Council Reference number :		
	Name of Officer :	Date:		
Contact Number	Mobile:	Landline:	Office:	
Address	Street:			
	Suburb/Town:	State:	Postcode:	
Do we have permission to contact Owner/keeper again? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown: <input type="checkbox"/>				

B. ATTACKING Animal and Owner /Keeper INFORMATION (one form per animal)

ANIMAL OWNER/Keeper Details				
Name				
Address	Street:			
	Suburb/Town:	State:	Postcode:	
Contact Number	Mobile:	Landline:	Office:	

C. INCIDENT INFORMATION

Incident Detail	Person: YES/No Number: _____ Animal: YES/No Number: _____			
Incident classification	Threatening: YES / NO	Menacing: YES / NO	Dangerous: YES / NO	
Potential Restricted Breed	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
Date and Time of Incident	Date:	Time:		
Incident Address	Street:			
	Suburb/Town:	State:	Postcode:	

Place of occurrence	At Owner/Keeper Home <input type="checkbox"/>	At a Dog Park <input type="checkbox"/>	On public footpath <input type="checkbox"/>
	Home of friend/family <input type="checkbox"/>	In a vehicle <input type="checkbox"/>	Open space/farm/school <input type="checkbox"/>
	Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		
Were there any witnesses? If yes, provide details	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>
Did the injured person know the dog? If yes, provide details	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>
What happened? (No. of victims, witness statements etc - Attach an A4 sheet if required)			
Was the attacking animal provoked?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>
Was the attacking animal on a leash?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>

D. INJURED ANIMAL INFORMATION (one form per animal)

Animal Owner Details

Name:

Incident Address	Street:		
	Suburb/Town:	State:	Postcode:
Phone	Mob:	Landline:	
Council/Municipality			

Animal Details

Name			
Species:	Breed:	X/Breed: YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Breed 2:		Colour:	
Physical Description:			
Size of Animal:	Small <input type="checkbox"/>	Medium <input type="checkbox"/>	Large <input type="checkbox"/>
Sex:	M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>	Desexed? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> Age:

Nature of most severe injury

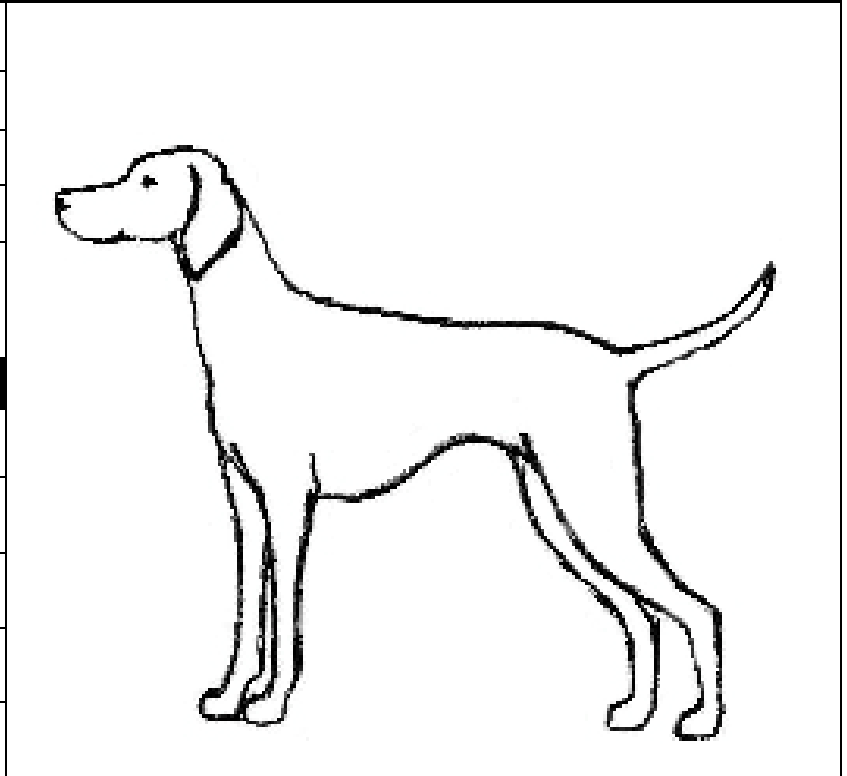
Superficial Abrasion <input type="checkbox"/>	Bruise <input type="checkbox"/>	Puncture <input type="checkbox"/>	Penetrating Wound <input type="checkbox"/>	Cut/Laceration <input type="checkbox"/>
Crushing Injury <input type="checkbox"/>	Fracture <input type="checkbox"/>	Fatality <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe) <input type="checkbox"/>	

Body part affected (Also circle image)

Head <input type="checkbox"/>	Back <input type="checkbox"/>
Abdomen <input type="checkbox"/>	Tail <input type="checkbox"/>
Neck <input type="checkbox"/>	Hind legs <input type="checkbox"/>
Forelegs <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other (Specify)	

Outcome/Treatment

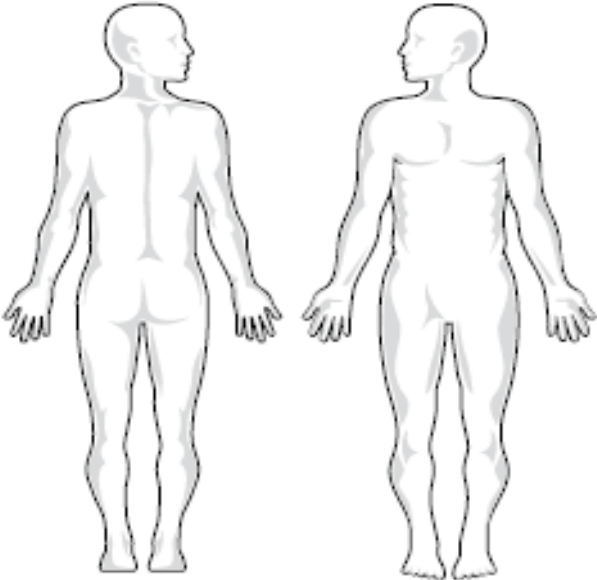
Hospital Admission <input type="checkbox"/>
Vet Consult <input type="checkbox"/>
Death/ Euthanasia <input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>
None <input type="checkbox"/>



E. ATTACKING DOG INFORMATION (one form per dog)

DOG OWNER'S Name:			
Owner Address:	Street:		
	Suburb/Town:	State:	Postcode:
DOG'S Name:		Unknown <input type="checkbox"/>	
Breed:	X/Breed: YES <input type="checkbox"/>		NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Breed 2:	Colour:		
Sex	M <input type="checkbox"/>	F <input type="checkbox"/>	UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Description (Colour, markings, etc.)			
Was the dog involved in any previous incidents or complaints? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN <input type="checkbox"/>			
If yes, please provide details (attach A4 where relevant)			
What in your opinion what was a possible reason(s) for the attack?			
IN RETROSPECT for this THIS CASE – Would any of the following actions helped prevent is aggression incident?			
Having the dog on leash in a public place – compliance with leash laws...			Y / N
Having the dog effectively confined within the boundary of its home property – compliance with fencing laws...			Y / N
Having had the dog properly obedience trained and under effective control – compliance with owner competency...			Y / N
Owner having responded better to previous threatening incidents – compliance with owner competency...			Y / N
Owner having a better understanding of the risk of bites and dog behaviour in general - compliance with owner competency ...			Y / N
Owner having better supervision of the dog's reaction to visitors - compliance with owner competency...			Y / N
Owner having better supervision of the dog's reaction to other members of the household - compliance with owner competency...			Y / N
Other possibly preventative measures that are not mentioned above...			Y / N

F. INJURED PERSON INFORMATION

Name:		
Owner Address:	Street:	
	Suburb/Town: State: Postcode:	
Gender:	Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
Nature of most severe injury:		
Fracture <input type="checkbox"/>	Cut/Laceration <input type="checkbox"/>	
Bruise <input type="checkbox"/>	Crushing Injury <input type="checkbox"/>	
Puncture <input type="checkbox"/>	Other (describe) <input type="checkbox"/>	
Do we have permission to contact them again? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
Were multiple bites delivered by a single attacking dog? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
Did the injured person know the dog? YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>		
If Yes , give reason		
Body Part Affected (Also circle image)		
Head/Face <input type="checkbox"/> Back <input type="checkbox"/> Neck <input type="checkbox"/> Arms/Hands <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach <input type="checkbox"/> Legs/Feet <input type="checkbox"/> Chest <input type="checkbox"/> Backside <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		
Outcome/Treatment:		
None <input type="checkbox"/>		
Hospital <input type="checkbox"/>		
GP Consult <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		
Fatality <input type="checkbox"/>		
Age of Person victim (approximate if unknown)	Infant (under 12 months) <input type="checkbox"/>	Pre School Child (1-5Y) <input type="checkbox"/>
	Child (5-10) <input type="checkbox"/>	Adolescent 10- 18 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Young Adult (18-25) <input type="checkbox"/>	Adult 25 -65 <input type="checkbox"/>
	Senior 55 Plus <input type="checkbox"/>	

G. INCIDENT OUTCOME

Has this incident already been reported? YES NO UNKNOWN

<p>If yes, reporter details</p>	<p>Name Phone Number:</p>
<p>ADDRESS DETAILS</p>	<p>Street:</p> <p>Suburb/Town: State: Postcode:</p>
<p>Entity to report to</p>	<p>Council <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Vet Clinic: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Hospital: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Medical Practice: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Ambulance: <input type="checkbox"/> SES: <input type="checkbox"/> Police : <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Filled in By</p>	<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Signature: _____</p> <p>Position: _____</p>
<p>What was the outcome? (Attach A4 Sheet if required)</p>	

Appendix 3. (Officer summary form for post incident process recording)¹⁹

Officer Summary

To be completed and forwarded to Team Leader/Coordinator with results from the Dog Attack Matrix PRIOR to a Summons or Infringements being issued.

Action taken and/or proposed;	Date of incident : ___/___/___
<input type="checkbox"/> ID confirmed Date ___/___/___	<input type="checkbox"/> Statements taken
<input type="checkbox"/> Evidence secured	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographs & DNA samples where necessary
<input type="checkbox"/> Record of Interview	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical/Vet Report
<input type="checkbox"/> No action required – does not constitute an attack	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog released by Council
<input type="checkbox"/> Entered on impounded register	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog surrendered to Council
<input type="checkbox"/> Owner cautioned	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog seized by Council
<input type="checkbox"/> Owner issued penalty notices	<input type="checkbox"/> Notification of seizure sent & date sent
<input type="checkbox"/> Owner paid costs \$_____ Date ___/___/___	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog released by Council
<input type="checkbox"/> Victim reimbursement \$_____ Date ___/___/___	<input type="checkbox"/> Officer inspection of property and photos taken
<input type="checkbox"/> Brief of evidence to be prepared/recommend prosecution	<input type="checkbox"/> Dog destroyed by owner
<input type="checkbox"/> Impounded register updated	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration database updated if destroyed
<input type="checkbox"/> Victim notified of action taken	<input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous/Menacing dog declaration required
<input type="checkbox"/> Prepare Officer's report and recommendation for DAA Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Request Domestic Animals Act Committee Meeting
<input type="checkbox"/> Dog missing	<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Management Agreement developed and signed
<input type="checkbox"/> Prior history check completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Registration Certificate printed for Court

Other notes, comments etc (Summary of incident etc)

Recommendation from investigating Officer to Team Leader/Coordinator Local Laws

Attending Officer/s _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Outcome

Team Leader/Coordinator _____

¹⁹ This Officer report summary format was provided for this Position Statement support document by courtesy of Mitchell Shire Council, Victoria

Appendix 4. (Template for responding to dog attack causing human fatality)²⁰

PURPOSE

To provide guidance to Animal Management personnel when responding to an animal attack incident resulting in the death of a human.

SCOPE

This procedure details actions to be taken by Gold Coast City Council Animal Management personnel in the event that they are first to arrive at a scene where a person has been attacked and killed by an animal or subsequently locates an animal believed to be involved in such an incident.

REFERENCE/LINKS

Reporting

SOURCE FILE RERERENCE

Tracks #31093634

APPLICABLE LEGISLATION

Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008

Local Government Act 2009

Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000

Information Privacy Act 2009

Local Law 12 (Keeping and Control of Animals) of the Local Laws of Gold Coast City Council

DOCUMENT ENQUIRIES

Position Title: Supervisor Animal Management

Contact Details: 7647

INTRODUCTION

Council officers may be requested or directed by Queensland Police Service (QPS) officers to carry out certain actions in the process of their investigation and may be requested to attend the incident scene to remove those animals involved.

Whilst it is expected that any animal attack resulting in the death of a human will ultimately become a matter for the police, correct and timely action by Gold Coast City Council officers may prevent loss or contamination of important information or evidence.

ACTIONS IF FIRST TO ARRIVE AT A FATAL DOG ATTACK

1. In the event that the animals are still posing a threat to public safety, Council officers are to take all necessary action to ensure the safety of all persons and secure the animal/s.
2. Where possible ensure all communications are conducted via mobile phone. (This is to preserve communications security and to prevent the accidental release of information to outside agencies).
3. Should the Queensland Police Service not be aware of the incident, the officer is to contact the Queensland Police Service and any necessary emergency services.

²⁰ This example of an human dog attack fatality response format was provided for this Position Statement support document courtesy of Gold Coast City Council, Queensland

4. Immediately inform either the Coordinator Animal Management, Supervisor Animal Management, or the Duty Animal Management Inspector who will assume control of the situation and direct Council officers as required. This officer will be referred to as the Council Officer In Charge (COIC).
5. The Council Officer in Charge should notify key Council emergency contact personnel to inform them of the incident.
6. One Animal Management Officer is to be delegated the responsibility of keeping an incident log. This officer is to begin a log as described in Annexure A and will ensure all events and notable conversations are entered. Should this officer leave the scene the responsibility for maintaining the log is to be delegated to another Animal Management Officer who will continue until all Animal Management operations are complete. On completion three copies are to be made of the log and distributed as detailed in Annexure A.
7. Officers are to make every effort to assist with the preservation of the crime scene and must not move, touch or interfere with any object or location unless specifically necessary to maintain public safety or directed by Queensland Police Service.
8. Council officers in attendance must identify themselves to police officers on their arrival and provide contact details for the COIC.
9. Officers are to isolate individual animal/s in separate compartments within the vehicle and ensure the vehicle is locked to prevent the dogs being seen or accessed by persons other than Council or Police Officers. It is particularly important that family of the victim, keepers of the dog or the media are not permitted to access or view the animal/s.
10. Where possible a minimum of 2 Animal Management Officers are to remain with the vehicle until released by police.
11. Ensure photos and if possible video of the animal and crime scene are taken.
12. Provide assistance to police as requested.
13. Ensure impound slip is completed and police are given a copy. Council's copy is to be retained with the incident log.
14. Obtain all relevant details of those animals involved in the incident and arrange for appropriate files to be provided to the investigating Animal Management Inspector.
15. Where Council Officers have been directed to surrender all recording equipment (photo, video, and audio) to police before leaving the scene, a receipt is obtained for each item.
16. When released by police, officers are to transport animal/s directly to the impound facility and await the arrival of police.
17. Animal/s are to remain contained in vehicle until directed by police to release it / them. Ensure all actions are recorded in the log.
18. Any veterinary treatment performed on the animal/s is to be recorded in the incident log.
19. Animal/s are to be isolated in individual pen/s in the pound's secure facility. Food / water / treatment is not to be provided to the animal/s until permitted by police.
20. Officers are to remain at the pound until released by police or the COIC.
21. Each officer in attendance is to complete a Queensland Police Witness Statement within 24 hours. Electronic copies of this statement are available on council's intranet.

22. All animal management staff are to attend a debrief with the Coordinator Animal Management or his delegate prior to concluding work. *Note posttraumatic stress counselling will be made available if required.*

ACTIONS IF DOG IS IMPOUNDED AT LOCATION OTHER THAN SITE OF ATTACK

1. Take all necessary actions to ensure the safety of all persons and secure animal/s.
2. Officers are to remain at the location of the impound and inform police via mobile phone.
3. Take action as directed by police.
4. Proceed from step 2 above.

Appendix 5. (In house record & check list immediate post serious / fatal aggression incident)

INCIDENT LOG : This log is to be completed at incident scene and copies distributed within 24 hours of the incident.

- Name and details of all Animal management staff involved in the incident.
- Address and details of incident (include a rough sketch) and how officers became aware of the incident.
- Description of animal/s including behaviour observation, the location of the animal/s at the time the initial officer arrived at the scene, how the incident occurred.
- Time and location of animal/s seizure and impoundment.
- Actions after impoundment (description of vehicle animal secured in, guarded by who).
- Description/identity/contact details of victim.
- Description/identity/contact details of owner of the animal/s.
- Description/identity/contact details of any witnesses.
- Detail all phone calls made and received.
- Detail police directions / questions.
- Details of Police Officers investigating the incident
- Detail all conversations with public / other agencies (who / when what was said and what directions were given).
- Detail all photographic and video evidence.
- Detail chain of custody of any evidence and any items surrendered to police.
- Detail arrival of new officers and to whom you reported.
- Include copies of any associated paperwork/forms.
- Incident log is to be signed by the officer completing the incident log and witnessed by another officer.
- Copies are to be provided to COIC, investigating Animal Management Inspector, Queensland Police Service, (officer to retain own copy).