

# **City of Hobart Dog Management Policy 2026 - 2031**

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## 1. Introduction

Hobart, Tasmania's capital city, is one of the most attractive cities in Australia. Mt Wellington / Kunanyi provides a striking backdrop to the west of the city, with the mighty Derwent River providing the eastern boundary. These stunning features have resulted in the city stretching right along the bank of the river and into the low foothills.

This closeness to the natural environment means that residents and visitors have access to the foreshore, bushland areas and developed urban spaces all within striking distance of the city centre.

The City of Hobart provides a major role in the planning, development and management of the urban and natural areas of the City. This includes the management of dogs. The municipal area includes over 23,000 households, 50 sports fields and facilities, 130 urban parks and reserves, 4,600 hectares of bushland reserves that boast 250 kilometres of tracks and trails, as well as 440 kilometres of footpaths. The majority of trails and footpaths are accessible by dogs on a lead, and provide a wonderful opportunity to explore Hobart with your canine companion.

The City's Animal Management Unit has responsibility for providing animal management and services within the municipal area, and dog control is a key role. The Unit also co-ordinates with external animal welfare providers to offer a pound facility.

## 2. Principles and Objectives

This management policy ensures that the City of Hobart complies with the *Dog Control Act 2000* (the **Act**) which requires councils to create a code for dog management in their municipal area.

Under the Act, the policy must include

- A code relating to the responsible ownership of dogs
- The provision of declared areas
- A fee structure, and
- Any other relevant matter

The City of Hobart must review the management strategy at least every five years, and this process must include community consultations. The City is committed to ensuring all voices in the community are heard; both those of dog owners and non-dog owners.

This policy was reviewed in 2025 and the City is grateful to the members of the community and organisations who took the time to provide feedback.

Dogs contribute enormously to the wellbeing of many Hobart residents, and the City is committed to ensuring that the appropriate infrastructure and guidelines are in place so that our canine companions can enjoy our beautiful city.

The City also acknowledges that dog ownership places significant responsibility on the City, and on owners themselves to ensure that dogs do not become a nuisance, pose a danger to the community or damage the environment.

The City is committed to ensuring the needs of all residents are met, and this management plan helps to ensure that dogs, their owners and other residents can live in a safe and peaceful community.

The City will continuously collect data to assess the rates of dog ownership in the council area and the effectiveness of this management policy.

### **3. Code of Dog Ownership**

The Code for Responsible Dog Ownership has been developed to help dog owners or prospective dog owners to understand the importance of being a responsible owner and to encourage more responsible behaviour by dog owners.

Whilst this code is voluntary it outlines best practices to achieve a caring and responsible environment for dogs and their owners with the aim of minimising neighbourhood inconveniences, animal welfare concerns and the destruction of wildlife and its habitat.

Responsible dog ownership means accepting full responsibility for your dog's needs including health, nutrition, safety, behaviour, and emotional well-being, and the standards set in relation to dog management within our community.

#### **3.1 Council's Responsibilities**

The City seeks to promote responsible dog ownership within Hobart, ensure adequate facilities for dog owners, and reduce the negative impacts caused by dogs.

As a City, we will:

- Promote and educate members of the community about responsible dog ownership
- Provide a broad range of experiences for people with dogs
- Respond to complaints about dogs in the community
- Maintain and develop areas where dogs can exercise and socialise
- Patrol the municipality

#### **3.2 Owner's Responsibilities**

The privilege of owning and enjoying the companionship of a dog carries responsibilities of care for the animal, and respect for your neighbour and the local community.

The following guide is designed to help you decide whether dog ownership is right for you, what type of dog you are considering, and then to ensure your dog is a healthy and happy member of your family and the Hobart community.

Before you buy a dog, there are a few things to think about:

- Is your home and yard big enough for a dog?
- Do you have a secure yard or do you need to improve or install fencing?
- Are you able to meet any costs for its care including food, toys and veterinary care?
- Is your chosen dog of the appropriate size and temperament to suit your individual circumstances? Think about the people who may come into contact with your dog such as children or vulnerable people
- Do you have the time to exercise and train a dog?

Once you've decided to bring a dog into your home, you have the responsibility of keeping them healthy and happy. This means:

- Getting your dog vaccinated and microchipped

- Consider de-sexing your dog. The City strongly encourages you to do this by offering a discounted registration fee for de-sexed dogs.
- Taking your dog to see a veterinarian regularly
- Training and exercising your dog
- Keeping your dog in a secure, clean location
- Giving your dog access to food, clean water, and comfortable shelter
- Spending time with your dog; they are social animals who need companionship and affection

It is also crucial that you take steps so that your dog doesn't cause a nuisance and is compliant with Council regulations and the Act:

- Ensure your dog is registered once it turns 6 months old and wears a sturdy collar with its registration tag attached at all times
- Keep your dog under effective control when out in public. Your dog must always be on a lead unless in a declared off-lead area.
- Clean up any dog faeces in a public place and on private property immediately
- Prevent the dog from going into a prohibited area (see section 9 for a list of prohibited areas)
- If you own more than two dogs, you need to apply for a kennel licence (see section 4.1)
- Prevent your dog from barking at, chasing or threatening people, other animals or vehicles.

### **3.3 Reporting and Managing Nuisance Behaviours**

The City's Animal Management Unit rely on members of the community reporting incidents and nuisance behaviours to ensure that we can work with dog owners to ensure a safe and happy community.

If you have any concerns or something to report, please don't hesitate to contact us:

- email: [coh@hobartcity.com.au](mailto:coh@hobartcity.com.au)
- telephone: 03 6238 2711
- in writing: to the CEO, City of Hobart, GPO Box 503, Hobart 7001
- in person: Customer Service Centre, 16 Elizabeth Street, Hobart

#### **3.3.1 Roaming Dogs**

Dog owners may be fined if their dogs roam the streets on their own.

If you find a dog roaming your street, please report it immediately to the City,

If it is safe for you to do so, we recommend you capture the dog and keep it securely on your premises until one of our Animal Management Officers can collect it or it can be returned to its owner.

#### **3.3.2 Dog Attacks**

If a dog attacks or chases any person or animal the owner of the dog is guilty of an offence.

If you have been involved in an incident with an aggressive dog please let us know by:

- Completing and submitting the Dog attack investigation request (available on the City of Hobart website).
- By email to coh@hobartcity.com.au
- By telephone: 03 6238 2711
- In writing: to the CEO, City of Hobart, GPO Box 503, Hobart 7001
- In person: Customer Service Centre, 16 Elizabeth Street, Hobart

The Act requires the owner of a dog that has attacked a person to notify the council about the attack within 24 hours.

### **3.3.3 Barking**

All dogs bark as it is their main form of communication, but if you believe it is happening more often and more loudly than is reasonable, our officers may be able to assist. In some cases the owner may not realise that the barking is causing a problem, particularly if it is happening when they are not home.

If you have a problem with a barking dog in your area you can complete and submit the Dog barking investigation request which can be found on the City of Hobart Website or alternatively contact us:

- By email to coh@hobartcity.com.au
- By telephone: 03 6238 2711
- In writing: to the CEO, City of Hobart, GPO Box 503, Hobart 7001
- In person: Customer Service Centre, 16 Elizabeth Street, Hobart

Once we receive a request there are two stages involved in dealing with barking problems.

#### Stage 1

A letter is sent to the dog owner stating when the barking is occurring, providing them with advice and measures to reduce the dogs barking, the legal responsibilities of dog owners and the penalties involved for continued barking.

#### Stage 2

If there has been no improvement, the complainant can submit Dog Barking Formal Investigation Request (which can be found on the City of Hobart website). This attracts a fee determined by the Council annually in accordance with its fees and charges process, which is refunded if the matter is proven. Once this request is received, we will conduct an investigation and decide if formal action is required for nuisance barking.

Barking dog complaints are often protracted and difficult to resolve.

#### Advice for managing barking

Dogs bark to communicate with each other, and this may become a nuisance behaviour if it is frequent or sustained. More frequent barking is often caused by dog feeling lonely, bored or distressed. If your dog is barking, we recommend you take the following steps to try and manage it;

- Take your dog for more regular walks

- Enrol your dog in obedience training, or have a look at some videos online and give it a go at home. This provides mental stimulation that is very important for dogs
- Block the ability of your dog to see people moving past a boundary fence if that triggers the barking
- Ensure your dog is left with adequate food and water when alone, as well as a few toys to play with
- Consider enrolling your dog in day-boarding if they struggle with separation anxiety
- Seek professional advice from a veterinarian or a qualified, accredited dog trainer

The use of aversive devices (such as anti-barking collars, shock collars, or other punitive tools) is not recommended and should be avoided, as these can negatively impact animal welfare.

## 4. Fees

All fees payable under the Act, including registering your dog and applying for a kennel licence, are set annually by the City of Hobart.

Once a dog is six months old it must be registered by a person over 18 years of age. If a dog belongs to a child, the registration must be in the name of a parent or guardian.

The registration period is between 1 July and 30 June each year. Renewal notices will be issued prior to the expiration of your dog's registration. Please ensure that you promptly pay the renewal fee and update any incorrect details to ensure that your dog remains registered and the records accurate. Failure to pay the registration fee means that your dog is not registered and you may be issued with a fine. The City will send you a registration reminder, however, it is your responsibility to renew your dog's registration.

For new dog registrations you can complete and submit the dog registration application online. Once we receive your application one of our officers will contact you to arrange for the payment of the registration fee. Your dog's registration tag will then be posted to you.

Alternatively you can print the dog registration application from our website and submit with payment in one of the following ways:

- by mail: GPO Box 503, Hobart, 7001
- in person: Customer Service Centre, 16 Elizabeth Street, Hobart

### Fee Structure

The fee for registration is set annually by the Council in accordance with section 205 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

A standard annual fee is set for non-desexed dogs. Higher fees apply to dogs that are;

- Declared dangerous
- Guard dogs
- Restricted breeds

Lower fees apply to dogs that are;

- De-sexed\*
- Greyhounds registered with Greyhound Racing Tasmania
- Working dogs\*\*

It is free to register Guide Dogs.

Pensioners receive a discount on dog registration.

\* Please note that owners must provide evidence to the City of sterilisation (defined in the Act as render permanently incapable of reproduction) in the form of a veterinary certificate.

\*\*Owners of working dogs must provide evidence the dog meets the definition of a working dog in the Act.

### **Change of Circumstances**

If your dog moves out of the municipal area or in the unfortunate circumstances of your dog's death, you are required to notify the City in writing. This can be done using our Change of Circumstances for dog registration form available on our website or by writing to Council:

- By email to: [coh@hobartcity.com.au](mailto:coh@hobartcity.com.au)
- in writing: to the CEO, City of Hobart, GPO Box 503, Hobart 700

The following refund will be available:

- A full refund if notified between July and September
- A 50% refund if notified between October and December;
- No refund is notified between January and June.

### **Transfer of Registration**

If you have moved to the City from another municipal area and provide evidence of your dog's registration from your previous council for the current financial year, no registration is payable for the balance of that financial year. You will be required to purchase a City of Hobart dog registration tag.

## **4.1 Kennel Licences**

If you want to keep more than two dogs over the age of six months on your property (or four dogs in the case of working dogs) you must submit an application for a kennel licence.

The fee for a new kennel licence and renewal is set annually by the Council in accordance with section 205 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

### **How do I apply for a licence?**

#### **Step 1: Contact us**

If you are thinking of having more than two dogs on your property and haven't spoken to us we encourage you to do so. This will allow us to answer any questions you may have and go through the application process with you. You can contact our Animal Management team on 03 6238 2182 during business hours Monday - Friday.

#### **Step 2: Advertise your intention to apply for a licence**

You will need to advertise your notice of intent to apply for a licence in the Mercury newspaper (there is no specific day that it is required to be shown). To make sure the required information is included in the advert please refer to the Notice of intention to apply for a kennel licence template which can be found on our website. This can be printed off and

completed. Please note the cost to place the advertisement payable to the Mercury is in addition to the licence application fee.

Any person who lives within 200 metres of the property may submit a written objection to the City of Hobart within 14 days of the Mercury advertisement.

### **Step 3: Submit your application**

Once the application has been advertised, you can complete and submit the kennel licence application. You will need to attach a copy of the Mercury advertisement. Once we receive your application one of our officers will contact you about payment of the licence fee.

Alternatively you can print the form available through the City of Hobart website and submit in one of the following ways:

- email: coh@hobartcity.com.au
- post: GPO Box 503, Hobart City Council
- in person: 16 Elizabeth Street, Hobart (corner of Davey Street)

### **What happens next?**

After we receive your application and payment of the licence fee, we will arrange to visit your property to assess the suitability of the premises, including the yard size, fencing, shelter, bedding, and health of the dogs.

We cannot consider your application until 28 days after the 'Notice of Intention' has been published, in accordance with the Act.

When assessing whether or not to grant a kennel licence, the following factors will be taken into account:

- The proximity of shelter to a fence or boundary.
- The size of the area where you propose to keep the dogs.
  - The area must be fully secure and large enough for all of the dogs to be able to roam freely.
  - The area must be safe for dogs, and this includes being cleared of any hazardous materials (such as barbed wire) and chemicals.
- That there is adequate ventilation and insulation in any indoor spaces where the dogs will be kept.
- That there is a strategy for managing faeces and other waste, including the provision of appropriate equipment as required.
- Whether having three or more dogs at that property is likely to cause a nuisance.
- The breed of the dogs you propose to acquire.
- That there are adequate provisions for the welfare, health and control of all the dogs kept at the property.

## **5. Out and About with Your Dog**

Throughout the City, there are a range of spaces where you can exercise your dogs both on and off lead.

To support dog owners and increase the amenity for all users, the City has installed dog tidy dispensers in its parks, reserves and bushland.

Under the Act, a person is only allowed to the following number of dogs with them in public:

- no more than 2 dogs on lead on a footpath at any one time (excluding, dangerous dogs or restricted breed dogs); or
- no more than 4 dogs in total in a public place at any one time (excluding, dangerous dogs or restricted breed dogs).

## 5.1 Prohibited areas

There are some areas under s28 of the Act where dogs are prohibited from entering:

- Grounds of a school, kindergarten, crèche or other place for the reception of children without prior permission of the individual in charge
- Any shopping centre (defined in the Act as a collection of shops in an enclosed area covered by a roof or forming a courtyard or square, excluding any area provided for the parking of vehicles) or shop
- A public swimming pool,
- Any playing area or sportsground where sport is being played; or
- Within 10 metres of a children's playground

The exemptions to this are specified in the Act and include:

- Guide Dogs and hearing dogs may enter any premises
- Pet or pet-grooming shops
- Veterinary premises
- Other premises related to the care of dogs

## 5.2 Dog recreation and exercise areas

The City of Hobart provides many locations to exercise your dog both on- and off-lead.

Regular exercise may reduce nuisance behaviour such as uncontrolled barking and digging, as it helps relieve boredom and release pent-up energy.

There are **off-lead**, **on-lead** and **restricted areas** (either time restricted or, in the case of sports fields, activity restricted) dog exercise areas within Hobart.

There are also areas where dogs are not allowed and you may be fined if you walk your dog in those areas or allow a dog off the lead in an on-lead area.

## 5.3 Managing your dog's behaviour while out and about

When you are out in public it is essential that your dog is always kept under effective control. This means that the dog is not being aggressive, and is responding to your commands. Dogs must be in control of someone strong enough, so it is important you closely supervise children who are walking or playing with dogs. When your dog is happy and relaxed, they are less likely to cause a nuisance or pose a danger to other dogs and people.

The best way to ensure your dog is happy and calm in public is to ensure they start by having lots of safe, on-lead exposure. Keeping your dog on lead even in off-lead areas allows you to exercise more control until the dog can learn appropriate behaviours.

Remember that not everyone feels comfortable with dogs.

## 5.4 Walking your dog

There are certain things that you need to remember when walking your dog that are set out in the Act .

- When in a designated off-lead area, dogs must remain under effective control of the person in charge of the dog at all times.
- If your dog poos in a public place you are required to pick up after it. The City provides dog tidy bags in the majority of its parks to dispose of your dog's droppings, so please use them. You should also always carry your own plastic bags.
- Dogs must remain on lead at all times when on a road or road-related area such as footpaths and nature strips.
- Restricted breeds and dogs declared dangerous are still subject to conditions in an off-lead exercise area.
- You are not permitted to walk more than two dogs at a time on a footpath.
- Greyhounds must be muzzled at all times when in a public place unless the greyhound has successfully completed an approved greyhound suitability program.

## 6 Captured Animals

If officers become aware of a stray dog whilst on patrol or received a complaint, they will attend the scene and capture the dog.

Once a dog has been captured, it will be checked for a microchip. If the dog has a microchip, then the owners will be contacted and advised that their dog has been captured. The officers at their discretion may return the dog to the premises, or take the dog to the Dogs Home of Tasmania (DHOT) for collection.

Once the dog has been taken to the DHOT, owners have **five days** to go and collect the dog. If the dog has not been collected within five days, it will become the property of the City and the DHOT will have the right to re-home the dog. If you wish to go and collect the dog after more than five days, you will have to go through the formal adoption process with the DHOT.

When collecting your dog from the DHOT, you will be required to pay an impounding fee, and a maintenance fee for each day the dog spent in care, which covers the daily care of the dog.

The dog will not be released until the City's registration fee has been paid.

## 7 Dangerous dogs

The City prioritises public safety, and any incidents involving a dog will be quickly and thoroughly investigated. If a dog has been found to cause serious injury, or demonstrates that it is likely to do so, the General Manager may declare the dog to be a dangerous dog.

If you have any questions about Dangerous Dogs, please contact the City's Animal Management team before taking any further action.

## 7.1 Declaring Dogs Dangerous

The General Manager has the power to declare a dog dangerous.

If you disagree with this declaration, you can lodge an appeal of this decision in the Magistrates Court within 14 days of being informed of the General Manager's declaration.

## 7.2 Requirements for owning a Dangerous Dog

If you own a dangerous dog, you must ensure your premises and dog meets the requirements of the Act. You cannot keep more than two (2) dangerous dogs on your property at any one time.

Under the Act dangerous dogs must:

- Be de-sexed and micro-chipped; and
- Wear an approved collar advising that it is a dangerous dog at all times; and
- Be muzzled when in a public area, and never be let off lead even in an off-lead area; and
- Be kept in an approved enclosure when on private property.

The Dog Control Regulations prescribe the following minimum requirements for an enclosure:

- Be childproof, with a self-closing and latching gate; and
- Have a minimum height and width of 1.8m; and
- each dog must have an area of 10 square metres; and
- Have solid or sturdy mesh walls, roof and gate; and
- Have a sealed concrete floor with adequate drainage; and
- Have a sleeping area for the dog out of the elements; and
- Be on a part of the property that does not have to be walked through to access any other part of the property.

Warning signs must also be placed on the perimeter of the property.

If you are unable to comply with these requirements, you must surrender the dangerous dog(s) to the City.

## 7.3 Restricted Breeds

Restricted breeds in Tasmania are specified in the Act as:

- Dogo Argentino;
- Fila Brasileiro;
- Japanese Tosa;
- American pit bull terrier or pit bull terrier;
- Perro de Presa Canario or Presa Canario;
- Any other breed, kind or description of dog whose importation into Australia is prohibited by or under the *Customs Act 1901* (Cth).

The owners or person in charge of a restricted breed dog must ensure that;

- the dog is desexed;
- it is implanted with an approved microchip;
- the dog is on lead and muzzled when in a public place;

- the dog wears an approved restricted breed collar at all times;
- the premises where the dog is kept displays the approved restricted breed warning signs on every entrance.

#### **7.4 Transferring the ownership of a dangerous dog**

If you own a dangerous dog or restricted breed, you cannot give or sell your dog to a new owner unless you have sought prior permission from City by writing to the General Manager. The General Manager can refuse to give permission, and you can appeal this decision in the Magistrates Court.

## **8. Management Action Plan**

The City of Hobart is committed to enforcing and developing animal management in Hobart to ensure a safe and happy community for all residents and their pets.

This management action plan outlines what the City will do to ensure this goal is met.

### **8.1 Ensuring registration**

The City will continue to ensure all dogs living in the municipal area are registered through issuing reminder notices prior to the annual registration period.

The City will also conduct patrols of the municipal area to identify dogs that are not registered, and serve notice on their owners to register their dogs.

### **8.2 Public Education and promotion**

Officers work closely with the community to promote responsible dog ownership by providing guidance and support to dog owners. Officers enjoy the opportunity to educate dog owners on how to best care for their dogs, and ensure they do not cause a nuisance. By fostering a positive relationship with dog owners, officers help to create a safer environment for residents and their dogs while encouraging responsible behaviours that benefit the community.

### **8.3 Consultation and Community Partnerships**

The City is committed to community engagement, and this is reflected in the broad public consultation conducted to review this Dog Management Policy.

Between consultation periods, the City is open to feedback from all members of the community. The Animal Management team are accessible and encourage individuals to make reports and provide information about dogs throughout the municipal area.

### **8.4 Environmental Protection**

The City is committed to safeguarding biodiversity within its reserves and ensuring that dog management supports conservation goals. Research indicates that small native fauna are highly vulnerable to predation, particularly due to the combined impacts of cats and dog.

The City has completed an assessment of the biodiversity values within its bushland reserves to identify sites where these vulnerable species occur and are at risk to this predation disturbance. This assessment has identified the importance of the City's

bushland including Knocklofty Reserve, Queens Domain and Waterworks Reserve and Ridgeway Park as containing very high biodiversity value where conservation actions will be prioritised to protect, preserve and improve the City's biodiversity.

The City continues to review signage and seeks to promote awareness of these issues to dog owners and enforce dog walking provisions. Together with monitoring the health of fauna populations in these areas, the City will work with dog owners to determine if existing dog exercise areas can co-exist with maintaining biodiversity values and, if not, examine alternate locations for dog exercise.

As a dog owner you must ensure your dog does not chase and hunt other animals. Dog owners must keep their pets under effective control at all times to prevent disturbance to wildlife and maintain the integrity of sensitive habitats.

Under the Act, it is an offence and penalties where a dog injures or kills wildlife that is declared as 'sensitive wildlife' in an area that is declared as a 'sensitive area' and for allowing a dog to be in a prohibited area that contains sensitive habitat for native wildlife.

## **8.5 Patrols and Enforcement**

Patrols are undertaken by the City's Animal Management Officers throughout the municipal area to ensure compliance.

Particular areas of focus are:

- dogs in designated prohibited or restricted areas
- dogs off-lead in on-lead only areas
- dogs at large
- unregistered dogs