

Responsible pet ownership – managing your animals in Strathbogie Shire

Strathbogie Shire is a popular place to own pets and livestock. Pets form an important part of our community's lives and our rural location means there are many primary producers with livestock on their properties.

Is my dog allowed to walk off the lead?

Strathbogie Shire Council requires dogs to be leashed in all public areas of the municipality, unless you are in a designated off-leash area in a park.

Dogs must be kept under control by means of a chain, cord or leash.

Dogs are prohibited to be off-leash at Council's designated Off-Leash Dog Park, Charles St, Euroa.

Where can my dog get the chance to be free off the lead?

Dogs are prohibited to be off-leash on private properties only with the permission of the property owner.

You can also visit the Euroa Off-Leash Dog Park, Charles St, Euroa. Be sure to follow the park guidelines to ensure there is a safe and happy environment for all park users.

Why can't I walk my dog off the lead if I'm confident with its behaviour?

A dog of any size or breed can become aggressive when defending its territory. If you are walking with your dog in public, it will consider you to be its territory.

Things can go wrong with even the most friendly, well-behaved dogs. Most dog attacks in public places occur on the footpath or road bordering the attacking dog's property.

You can never predict another dog's behaviour around your dog, therefore having control of the situation reduces the risk of dog attacks.

What are the rules around keeping my dog in my yard?

Legally, you are required to securely confine your dog to the property. Confining dogs to their property could prevent 80 per cent of dog attacks in public places.

This means:

- your yard must have a closed gate and an escape-proof fence that your dog cannot jump, get under or through
- visitors must also have safe access to your front door without being stopped by your dog.

If your dog could get through your gates or fencing, you can be fined even if your dog doesn't leave your property.

- If securely confined, your dog will be:
- safe from traffic injuries
- safe from fights with other dogs
- prevented from wandering and becoming lost

What do I do if I see an animal wandering unattended?

You should immediately report the incident to Council via 1800 065 993 at any time of the day or night.

What are the penalties for wandering or off-leash dogs?

Pet owners can be charged the following amounts for dogs that are not on a lead or wandering unattended:

- Between sunrise and sunset: \$278.00 per dog
- Between sunset and sunrise: \$370.00 per dog

What do I do if I see someone walking their dog off the lead?

If the dog approaches you, you should:

- Stand still, don't run.
- Keep your hands by your side.
- Stay quiet, try not to make any noise.
- Avoid eye contact with the dog, look at the ground.
- Once the dog has lost interest, slowly back away.

You should immediately report the incident to Council via 1800 065 993 at any time of the day or night.

What should I do if I am approached by an aggressive dog?

It is important to know how to approach dogs safely and what to do if you are approached by an aggressive dog. Children, particularly those aged 0-4 years old, are most at risk of serious dog bite injuries.

Children need to be taught how to behave around dogs and parents need to be aware of the importance of active supervision.

If you are approached by an aggressive dog you should:

- Stand still, don't run.
- Keep your hands by your side.
- Stay quiet, try not to make any noise.
- Avoid eye contact with the dog, look at the ground.
- Once the dog has lost interest, slowly back away.

What is the best way to approach a dog to ensure it is not aggressive towards me?

Always ask the owner if you can pat their dog.

Approach the dog from an angle, rather than directly from the front or rear.

Slowly extend the back of your hand with your fingers curled under and allow the dog to sniff.

Stroke the dog on the side of the chest, the shoulders or under the chin (not on top of the head).

Don't continue patting the dog if it backs away or doesn't sniff your hand.

What happens when my dog attacks?

If your dog rushes at or chases someone, you can be fined, and your dog declared a dangerous/menacing dog. If your dog attacks a person or animal, penalties can include:

- court action
- fines
- damages
- declaration of your dog as dangerous
- your dog may even be put down.

'Rush at' means that the dog has approached a person within 3 metres, displaying aggressive behaviour such as snarling, growling, barking and/or raising the hackles.

Owners can be jailed for up to 10 years, or for up to 5 years if their already declared dog endangers someone's life, under the [Crimes Act 1958](#).

What is the difference between a ‘restricted dog breed’ and a ‘declared dangerous/menacing dog’?

Restricted breed dogs are defined as dogs that fit the Approved Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria (standard). These may be pure or cross bred:

American Pit Bull Terriers (or Pit Bull Terriers)

Perro de Presa Canarios (or Presa Canario)

Dogo Argentinos

Japanese Tosas

Fila Brasileiros.

Restricted breed dogs have not attacked a person or animal or displayed signs of aggression. However, they are considered a higher risk to community safety than other breeds of dogs.

A dangerous dog is one that Council has declared to be dangerous because it has bitten or attacked a person or animal, causing serious injury or death.