

## Responsibilities of pet owners

To ensure the comfort, safety and health of the whole community, the Companion Animals Act places certain responsibilities on all pet owners.

Here is a summary of the responsibilities of dog owners under the Act:

- If your dog is in a public place it must be under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash. The exceptions to this are: dogs exhibited at a show or engaging in obedience or agility trials, working, tending or droving stock; or in an approved off-leash area;
- If your dog is being exercised in an approved off-leash area it must always be under effective control of a competent person;
- You are not permitted to walk more than four dogs at any one time in an on-leash area or an off-leash area;
- Greyhounds must be muzzled at all times when in a public place;
- If your dog defecates in a public place it is an offence not to remove the faeces;
- Dogs are prohibited in children's play areas, food preparation/consumption areas, recreation areas, public bathing areas, school grounds, child care centres, shopping areas and wildlife protection areas.

## Penalty notices issued under the Act

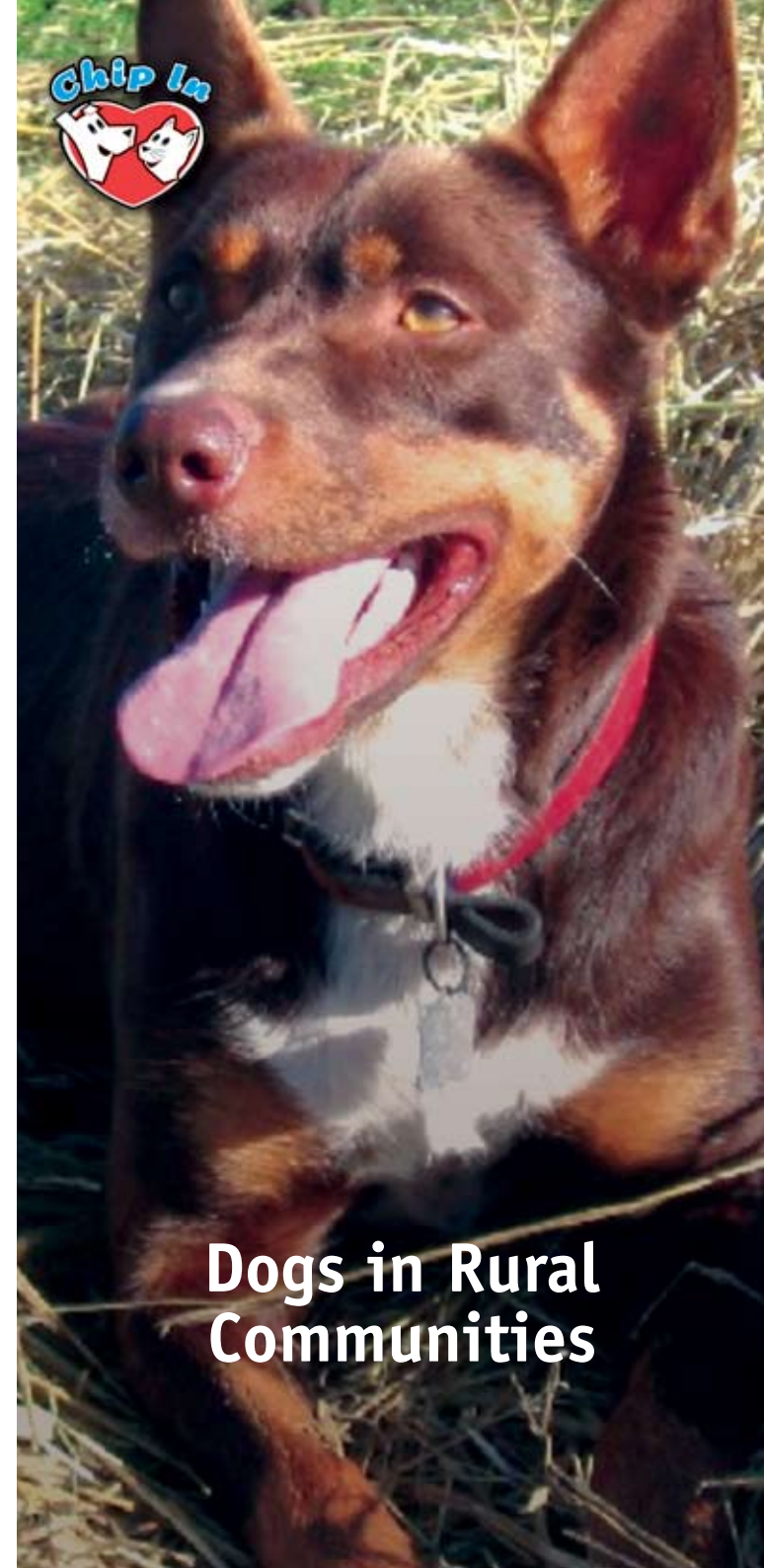
Animal not permanently identified (microchipped) . . .	\$165
Animal not registered . . . . .	\$165
Failure to notify change of address/owner . . . . .	\$165
Failure to prevent dog escaping . . . . .	\$220
Dog not on lead in public place . . . . .	\$220
Failure to remove dog faeces . . . . .	\$275
Failure to take seized animal to pound/shelter . . . . .	\$550
Dog in prohibited place . . . . .	\$330
Own or in charge of attacking dog . . . . .	\$550

**For further explanation and other offences refer to the Companion Animals Act 1998 or contact your local council.**

**Remember: a little chip will go a long way toward providing you with peace of mind. Microchip your dog.**

## For more information

Contact your local NSW council or visit [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au)



# Dogs in Rural Communities

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS BROCHURE IS NOT INTENDED TO BE COMPREHENSIVE, COMPLETE OR TO CONSTITUTE LEGAL ADVICE. WHILE ITS CONTENT IS CORRECT AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION, CHANGES TO THE COMPANION ANIMALS ACT AFTER THIS DATE MAY IMPACT UPON THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED.

AS SUCH, THIS BROCHURE IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY, AND SHOULD NOT SUBSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL ADVICE OR YOUR OWN LEGAL INQUIRIES AS TO THE APPLICATION OF THE COMPANION ANIMALS LAW IN RELATION TO ANY MATTER.

ISBN 1 920766 49 9

©Department of Local Government, June 2007

Produced by [gildadesign](http://gildadesign.com) for the Department of Local Government



# Things That Owners of Dogs in Rural Communities in NSW Need to Know

## Dog attacks in rural NSW

Farmers are the backbone of rural Australia. Dog attacks from both wild dogs and from dogs that are not properly controlled by their owners can have a negative impact on a farmer's livelihood. It is estimated that dog attacks on livestock cost farmers thousands of dollars each year in lost income.

Wild dog populations comprise of dingoes, feral dogs and crossbreeds of the two.

Dog attacks, whether by wild dogs or domestic pets, not only kill livestock, but can also reduce sheep flock production. Other impacts and threats believed to be associated with dog attacks include:

- emotional stress affecting landholders who deal with killed and injured livestock;
- a change in livestock farming from sheep to cattle, which in turn may affect land management issues such as weed control;
- a decline in farming profitability, particularly where farmers have switched from sheep to cattle to avoid heavy stock losses.



It is important that dog owners don't contribute to the problems that wild dogs cause by letting their own dogs roam free. It is an offence under the Companion Animals Act 1998 for a dog to be in a public place and not under the proper control of its owner.

## Working dogs in rural NSW

A working dog is a dog used primarily for the purpose of droving, tending, working or protecting stock, and includes a dog being trained as a working dog.

Hunting dogs and guard dogs do not have any special status as working dogs under the Companion Animals Act. Just because an animal is kept for purposes other than that of a pet, does not necessarily mean it is a 'working dog'.

Under the Companion Animals Act, dogs that meet the definition of a 'working dog' are exempt from microchipping and registering when:

- the working dog resides on land defined and rated as farmland under the Local Government Act 1993, or
- the working dog is kept in the Western Division of NSW, being not within a local government area.

All other working dogs **MUST** be microchipped and registered. However, a nil dollar (free) registration fee applies.

The lifetime registration fees are set by the legislation, not councils, as follows;

- \$150 for entire (undesexed dogs);
- \$40 for desexed dogs;
- \$40 for a dog owned by a recognised breeder;
- \$15 for pensioners with desexed dogs;
- \$0 for working dogs.

All working dogs are exempt from wearing a collar and tag while actively working on their owner's property.

The exemption from microchipping and lifetime registration for working dogs may be lost in the following circumstances:

- If the dog is seized and impounded;
- If the dog is declared dangerous;
- If the dog is the subject of a nuisance order;
- If the dog ceases to be a working dog.

## Why do dogs attack?

Lack of socialisation can often result in fearful or aggressive behaviour.

The optimum time to socialise is before the dog reaches 4 months of age.

Irrespective of whether your dog is a large 'guard' breed or a fluffy little lapdog, ALL dogs have what is called a 'prey drive' and a natural instinct to chase another animal that moves – even the best trained and well socialised ones.



Dog owners must not allow their dogs to roam free in a public place, unless in a designated off-leash area established by the council and under the control of its owner.

The owner of a dog who allows it to attack and/or injure or kill livestock is liable for the cost of the veterinary treatment for those injured animals.

The owner of the injured or killed livestock may take action against the dog owner to recover the cost of lost animals.

Under section 22 of the Act, a farmer or their employee may lawfully seize and detain a dog on a property if they reasonably believe the dog may injure or kill livestock being farmed on that property.

This includes injuring or destroying the dog in order to prevent the attack and loss of stock.

## What you can do to prevent your dog attacking livestock

You can help prevent farmers from losing their livelihood by being a responsible pet owner and doing the following:

- Don't allow your dog to roam, especially with other dogs;
- Make sure your fences are in good order and keep your dog in the yard;
- Ensure your dog is well cared for and well fed—bored and hungry dogs go looking for fun and food;
- Make sure your dog is desexed as it will be less likely to roam;
- Don't allow your dog to chase other animals such as birds and native animals for fun;
- Train your dog to be obedient and socialise with other animals in a controlled environment.

*REMEMBER, ALL DOGS IN NEW SOUTH WALES INCLUDING DANGEROUS AND RESTRICTED DOGS **MUST** BE MICROCHIPPED AND REGISTERED ON THE NEW SOUTH WALES COMPANION ANIMALS REGISTER. GREYHOUNDS AND SOME WORKING DOGS EXCEPTED.*