TOUGH DOG BY-LAWS MUST BE UNLEASHED

Local Government Minister Elliot McAdam has called on Local Government councils to tighten their dog laws following a spate of attacks in the Territory as well as other jurisdictions.

Mr McAdam has written to all Municipal and Community Government Councils about the inadequacy of current by-laws to control dangerous dogs.

“There have been some recent well publicised cases in other jurisdictions where dogs have caused serious and sometimes fatal attacks on people,” Mr McAdam said.

“There have also been cases in the Northern Territory where attacks have caused serious injuries and death.

Mr McAdam said Darwin City Council reports in the financial year of 2005-06 showed there were 129 dog attacks recorded – with 63 of those attacks on people.

“Darwin City Council is one of the few councils that has in fact tightened controls – for which they must be congratulated – however I think now is a timely reminder to all councils to follow the lead.”

Mr McAdam said he understand that there were significant difficulties for councils to restrict or ban a certain breed or breeds because of problems in identifying the breed, particularly where some breeds have been crossed with other breeds.

“However I urge all councils to re-examine their existing by-laws, and introduce by-laws to enable tighter controls on what type of dogs are permitted in the Northern Territory,” he said.

“Councils have the powers to enact by-laws, and these might include more stringent approaches to fencing and other safety measures.

“Of course it is ultimately up to dog owners—and I would urge people in any case to train their dogs properly, or seek advice from professionals in the field.”

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