MEDIA RELEASE
Gerry Wood MLA
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MINISTER MOVE ON DOG BYLAWS WELCOME BUT....

Gerry Wood, the Independent Member for Nelson, says he believes that the Minister was right in giving the Litchfield Shire a prod over bylaws but he or his Department should not be the one who decides what type of bylaws should be developed.

Bylaws need to be practical, effective and at a reasonable cost to the ratepayers, after all the level of dog control will be proportional to a rate increase.

Gerry says that compulsory registration of dogs that the Minister seems to be advocating will cost ratepayers a fortune and will not solve the problem. The cost of administration and the practical application of compulsory registration of dogs in a rural area like Litchfield which the government intends to at least triple in size, will simply be too much and the law unworkable. Will the Minister introduce compulsory registration in all the proposed new shires? I doubt it very much.

Residents should voluntarily register their dogs either by simply putting a tag on their neck or registering them with the local vet. If they get picked up and taken to the RSPCA or the pound then that’s the owner’s problem.

Gerry says that the Litchfield Shire Council should introduce some simple by laws (not the full gamut of by laws Darwin and Palmerston have) and use those by laws in conjunction with the existing powers police have to control dangerous dogs.

One simple by law that could be introduced, is that it is an offence for any dog to be on a road unless under control. A dog continually running loose could be then targeted by a contracted dog catcher.

The government which owns much of the land in Litchfield Shire should also be looking at its own backyard. What is it doing to control wild dogs on its own land; after all you can’t register wild dogs! Will the Government develop a baiting and trapping scheme for dogs on land surrounding or adjacent to rural residential land? This dog problem is not just a council problem.

Gerry says he understands where the Minister is coming from but let’s not, in the excitement of the debate, lose sight of the reality of the problem and the difficulty of finding solutions in a rural context. Feel good statements don’t always lead to real answers.

Cessi foro gallinarum sed surgo