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Samoa

Implementation of the Canine Control
Act – Establishment Phase Review

September 2014

This report has been prepared to support the forward planning for implementation of the Canine Control Act. It has been prepared by Rochelle Deane (Auckland Council) and Frances Sullivan (LGNZ) after an assignment under the Pacific Technical Assistance Programme in September 2014. This report is the opinion of Rochelle Deane and Frances Sullivan. The report was developed after discussions with stakeholders and site visits. It should be used in conjunction with other reports and information and does not necessarily reflect the views of Local Government New Zealand, Auckland Council or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



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1. Summary and recommendations

The Dog Management Unit (DMU) has established robust procedures and practice to ensure the health and safety of the team and the welfare of the dogs, and the team culture is positive and enthusiastic.

Communication, education and awareness is ongoing with further outreach planned into villages around Upolu. Additional messaging regarding the need to keep dogs on your property was developed to help people understand their responsibilities as dog owners.

The DMU are working with APS in both outreach and school education and this is proving beneficial to both parties.

Trapping wandering dogs has proven to be effective. The temporary shelter is clean and the dogs are well cared for. A review of the euthanasia methodology confirmed that the captive bolt is the most appropriate method for euthanasia of unwanted dogs at this time. The DMU officers are confident and very competent in handling the dogs that are trapped and in handling these dogs at the shelter. This minimises the stress on dogs.

Construction of the new shelter should begin soon to reduce the cost of repairs in the temporary shelter and to provide materials for a shelter in Savaii. Registration and control activities cannot begin in Savaii until a shelter is available. Depending on the programme for the construction of the new shelter then registration could begin in the first quarter of 2015.

It is important to note that as the communities awareness of the dog management programme grows so too will complaints. This should be seen as an indicator of the success of the DMU in establishing themselves as the go to unit for dog management issues.

The DMU are to be congratulated on the support shown for the team and their work.

It is not an easy task to successfully introduce a new regulatory regime as it requires an in-depth understanding of the application of the law and the community where it will be applied and we are indebted to Afamasaga Michael Soonalole for his guidance of both the DMU and the local government advisers as this programme has been developed and established.

Education and awareness

1. *Promotion of dog registration requirements (and the reason for dog registration) should be continued to lift registration rates in Apia and ensure people outside of Apia are aware of the village outreach programme.*
2. *Introduce the key messages (see Appendix 1) to communications on the dog programme. This is additional to existing messaging on registration requirements.*
3. *Registration should commence on Savaii early in 2015 (if the development of a shelter on the Island supports this).*
4. *DMU officers should continue to participate in the school education programme.*
5. *Communicate the DMU phone numbers to the public along with messaging on the DMU services (note messaging should include a statement that says if you have a query about a dog's health then call APS).*

Control activities

1. *We recommend the provision of 15 extra traps for ongoing control work and the permanent placement of traps on Savaii.*
2. *The Ministry of Police and Prisons make budget provision for replacement catch-poles and wires on a quarterly basis (subject to the durability of heavy use catch-poles discussed in 3).*
3. *The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade approve the purchase of 6 heavy duty catch-poles*
4. *The DMU Team leader trains all animal management officers in how to gather evidence for prosecution files*

Savaii

1. *A shelter will be provided on Savaii for the provision of dog control activities.*
2. *A protocol should be developed with the Police for the provision of limited dog control services on Savaii, in particular initial investigations in relation to attacks, while DMU officers are dispatched to the Island.*
3. *That provision is made in (at least one) DMU vehicle for lock up of euthanasia equipment for transport and use on Savaii.*

Training and development

1. *DMU leadership (Afamasaga Michael Soonalole and Maseiga Lauina) is hosted by Auckland Council to look at team structures and management and decision management system for a dog databse.*
2. *That all new recruits to the DMU are placed in New Zealand for a week to gain experience in animal management culture and welfare issues as part of their induction to the DMU.*
3. *Training is provided to the DMU on dog behaviour.*
4. *An audit of the euthanasia process is undertaken in mid to late November to mitigate any potential for deterioration in practice.*
5. *Regular follow-up is provided to the DMU to provide support and advise on further development of team members and the programme.*

Provision for these suggestions can be made in the PacificTA programme.

6. *DMU team members attend the New Zealand Institute of Animal Control Officer annual conference held in Wellington in September.*

2. Programme achievements to date

The Dog Management Unit (DMU) has established robust procedures and practice to ensure the health and safety of the team and the welfare of the dogs, and the team culture is positive and enthusiastic.

The leadership and team members are to be commended for establishing a dog management programme that is operationally effective and has the support of their community.

It is not an easy task to successfully introduce a new regulatory regime as it requires an in-depth understanding of the application of the law and the community where it will be applied. We are indebted to Afamasaga Michael Soonalole for his guidance of both the DMU and the local government advisers as this programme has been developed and established.

It is important to note that as the communities awareness of the programme grows so too will complaints of noise, nuisance and dog attacks. This should be seen as an indicator of the success of the DMU in establishing themselves as the go to unit for dog management issues.

The October 2013 report on implementation of the Canine Control Act outlined four key elements of a successful dog control programme as follows:

1. Education and awareness;
2. Registration;
3. Dog control and enforcement; and
4. Housing for dogs / dog pound / shelter prepared

This report document progress to date against these themes.

2.1 Education and awareness

The DMU began a community awareness programme with TV and radio coverage ahead of registration which started 17 June (2014). The registration campaign was officially launched by the Prime Minister the following week.

The villages covered in this campaign were Alamagoto, Vaimoso, Vailoa, Lepea, Vaitele, Saina, Toamua, and Puipaa. These villages could be described as in and around Apia, the agreed priority for implementation in October 2013. However, as evidenced by the dog registration records there are a limited number of dog owners from other villages on Upolu who are registering their dogs.

Community awareness activities continued with outreach programmes held in 10 villages in July/August. The outreach programme was held in conjunction with the Animal Protection Society (APS) and promoted dog registration while also providing de-sexing and vaccination clinics for dogs. This programme was extremely successful on both counts with over 700 dogs registered and 461 dogs de-sexed over the 10 days of outreach. APS had organised for student veterinarians from Massey University and vets/vet nurses from South Pacific Animal Welfare (SPAW) to assist with de-sexing and this was the most successful de-sexing campaign they had run.

The villages covered in this campaign were Alamagoto, Vaimoso, Vailoa, Lepea, Sinamoga, Lotopa, Tulaele, Vaitele, Saina, and Faleata. These villages could be described as in and around Apia, the agreed priority for implementation in October 2013. However, as evidenced by the dog registration

records there are a limited number of dog owners from other villages on Upolu who are registering their dogs.

DMU team members have also begun to participate in school education in partnership with APS. This began the week of the review and includes the provision of information on the registration of dogs and teaching children to be safe around dogs.

The DMU are to be congratulated on the support shown for the team and their work. Informal feedback from business owners and others indicates that there is high public satisfaction in Apia with the work of DMU at this time. Good Morning Samoa has publicly congratulated the team and the Prime Minister has also written a letter to the DMU acknowledging their efforts.

2.2 Registration

As of the week ending Sunday 14th September, 4905 dogs have been registered.

The DMU office on Beach Road was a convenient location for people to register their dogs. From observing the DMU officers undertaking registration during this visit and the previous visit in June we are confident they are following the correct processes and ensuring that people who are registering dogs understand what is required and why.

The registration form meets the requirements of the Canine Control Act (2013). Dog owners are asked to provide the following information.

1. Name of the owner.
2. The address and contact details.
3. The description, colour and sex of the dog.
4. Whether the dog has been de-sexed
5. And other details as required.

(Section 8 (5) Canine Control Act 2013)

The DMU record the registration number allocated to the dog on each registration form.

Individual files are kept for each dog owner, initially in hard copy, which is then entered into excel spreadsheet. The filing system and spreadsheet enables a search under tag number to identify a dog owner. The hard copy files are kept in a locked cabinet and digital copies are backed up daily. Although during a peak in registration the input of data fell a little behind we are confident that this was rectified quickly and registration process continues to be well administered.

2.3 Dog control activities

The DMU control programme is almost entirely based on trapping. The placement of traps has evolved as control activities have been undertaken and the public have seen the benefits of the programme. The trapping programme now has three key drivers for the placement of traps.

1. Maintenance of public spaces.
2. Invitations to private compounds e.g. village for the elderly, church, university.
3. Invitation to trap in and around business enterprises eg market, tourist accommodation and restaurants.

The trapping programme has been established to avoid the heat of the day. Traps are placed in the late afternoon and evening. Traps are located where there is shelter for the dogs. The dogs are collected from traps in a timely manner and transported to the shelter. Generally traps are collected in the morning but some traps are collected on a call in basis i.e. the property owner calls the DMU when a dog has been caught.

The DMU was also requested to undertake some control work during the Teuila Festival as uncontrolled dogs were attracted to the food stalls.

The DMU officers are confident and very competent in handling the dogs that are trapped and in the transport of these dogs to the shelter. This minimises any additional stress on trapped dogs.

Re-home / Adopt / Euthanasia

The DMU are working collaboratively with APS in registration and de-sexing drives and also in rehoming. APS have taken some dogs, mostly puppies from the shelter for rehoming. Formal arrangements for APS to visit the shelter are in place but it is apparent that the DMU contact APS as required – at times on a daily basis.

In response to concerns raised about using a captive bolt for euthanasia of unwanted dogs we reviewed our 2013 recommendation for this methodology. Consideration of the following factors was part of this review.

- veterinary capacity to administer intravenous drugs
- affordability
- competence of the DMU officers in application of the captive bolt
- the potential for stress on the dogs

Discussions with local vets, the volunteer with APS and Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, reinforce there continues to be a chronic shortage of veterinary capacity in Samoa and their capacity to administer intravenous drugs would be very limited.

The dogs in Samoa have to be constrained for both captive bolt and intravenous euthanasia. For dogs that are under nourished it can be difficult to find a vein and this will prolong the stress on a dog.

Intravenous drugs cost approximately \$2.50 per 20-30kg dog. Captive bolt costs are approximately 0.25cents (NZ) per dog. Both costs exclude labour charges.

The DMU officers received comprehensive training over a period of 3 weeks from a New Zealand animal management officer with over 30 years experience in captive bolt euthanasia. They are confident and competent users of this technique. This minimises the stress on the dog and ensures the dog is killed immediately.

We believe that the captive bolt is the most appropriate method for euthanasia of unwanted dogs at this time.

2.4 Temporary shelter

The temporary shelter, located in an industrial area in the village of Vaitele was completed in early August. The services available to the public at the Vaitele centre include dog registration and

claiming of impounded dogs after the payment of the impoundment fee. These services are provided from an office space at the front of the building.

There is a member of the DMU at the shelter at all times.

The temporary shelter has the capacity to hold 60 dogs in individual kennels and a separate room with a head crush for euthanasia of unclaimed dogs. As recommended for safety and security, the kennels are not accessible to the public without being accompanied by a DMU officer.

Kennels have individual raised beds, dry dog food and water at all times. It has been noted that most dogs did not use the beds for resting and some were fouling on the bed. The DMU continue to provide the beds except where fouling is a significant problem.

Daily cleaning includes the manual collection of solid faecal matter and water blasting of the kennels (a water blaster is required due to low water pressure to the shelter). When empty, the kennels are disinfected with Safe 4 All which is a virucide, effective for Parvovirus.

The standard of cleanliness is very high and there is no smell. There was good air flow through the shelter and there was no evidence of heat stress in the dogs (early to late afternoon observations).

Dogs were not overly distressed. They showed normal signs of anxiety for dogs when first entering a shelter. This was most evident in owned dogs i.e. those that are registered.

The temporary shelter was constructed as an interim measure while a permanent shelter was constructed. It is recommended that the new shelter be progressed quickly as it is apparent that the 6 month design life of the temporary shelter cannot be extended without ongoing repair work and potential risk of harbouring disease long term.

3. Programme going forward

The DMU have begun their own review of requirements for the team and structure for the Unit. A request has been made for a further 5 staff (4 field officers and one administration role).

The DMU are establishing the unit as the primary point of contact for all matters relating to dogs. Over time this will encourage members of the public to contact the team with dog issues.

In the interests of maintaining community confidence in dog management processes it is important that the DMU are seen to apply the legislation in a transparent, fair and consistent manner. This has already been taken into account in decisions around application of the legislation. For example the Canine Act allows the DMU to summarily destroy any dog that has attacked any person or animal, or which the officer believes to have reasonable grounds to have attacked any person or animal dogs should be seized and a full investigation undertaken (section 14 (f)). The DMU policy is to seize any dog that has been reported as in breach of this section and carry out a full investigation i.e. gather all evidence before any decision is made. We support this decision as it is important that the DMU are seen to apply the legislation in a transparent, fair and consistent manner.

3.1 Registration and education

Outreach programmes have proven to be extremely productive in getting dogs registered and also provide an opportunity to raise awareness on responsible dog ownership.

As every local authority in New Zealand knows fostering and maintaining public support for dog registration and dog control activities can be difficult and it is important that the DMU continue to promote the reason for dog registration and dog control on the radio and TV so that the community understands the benefits of this programme to them as individuals, and their community. It is also timely to consider what responsible dog ownership means in Samoa.

Registration

Registration numbers have plateaued in Apia. On-going media coverage would be useful to encourage those people who have not done so to register their dogs, and to raise awareness in other villages that the DMU will be coming (over the next few months) to make it easier for them to register their dog.

The DMU will continue to roll out registration on Upolu in conjunction with APS where possible. With the agreement of village leaders this programme will continue up to December.

Village outreach will put the Unit under some pressure as they will need to continue with registration and control activities in and around Apia to maintain public confidence in the unit and encourage further registration activity. The Beach Road office will need an officer present and ongoing shelter and trapping work requires a minimum of three people (i.e. 4 officers are required for ongoing activity). This is doable within existing staff levels if the current volunteer is recruited onto the team. There is little scope for sick leave or holidays however and there will be an increase in reports of incidents from the public. With the Unit working long hours in order to be as responsive as possible, proposals to recruit extra staff are prudent.

We do not recommend that registration outreach is extended to Savaii in the near term. People's willingness to register a dog can be indicative of their wish to have control activities and this is not feasible without a shelter and will put unnecessary pressure on the DMU as they continue to establish their programme in Apia and around Upolu. Ideally, registration should commence on Savaii in early 2015. As re-registration of all dogs in Samoa is required in January / February 2016 Savaii should be completed in January and February of 2015 (subject to progress with construction of the shelter to enable materials to be re-used for construction of a shelter on Savaii).

Education and awareness

The participation of DMU team members in school education provides a great opportunity to develop broad understanding of what responsible dog ownership means in Samoa. It has significant long term benefits and also mitigates the potential for the DMU to be seen as focused on catching and impounding dogs. If the Unit is perceived in this way it will reduce their overall effectiveness in delivering on the long term goals of the programme – a secure and safe environment for visitors and the people of Samoa.

We strongly support DMU activities in the schools and recommend they take all opportunities to educate the community on how to be safe around dogs and on responsible dog ownership.

Feedback to the DMU indicates that people are thinking about how to comply with the law beyond the need to register their dog. In essence they want the answer to “what does responsible dog ownership mean”? Discussions on this suggest that for now, this is not about fencing or constraining dogs (this can increase aggressiveness and behavioural issues and most of the dogs are well socialised) but dog owners must encourage their dog to stay on the property and not allow them to rush or harass those who are passing the property. While key messages of the report in October 2013 focused on why people should register their dogs and what the new requirements under the canine Control Act meant for dog owners e.g. the need to register your dog and impoundment processes etc. it is now timely to introduce new messaging to support this understanding as follows:

Your dog should stay on your property.

This can be achieved by the following:

- Dog owners should be the only ones to feed their dog and this must be on the property - at home.
- Provide water for your dog on the property.
- Dogs are social. Provide company for the dog on the property – this could be another dog or your own company.

Have your dog de-sexed – both males and females. They are far less likely to leave your property if they are de-sexed.

Visitor education should also be considered. Information provided to incoming visitors could suggest that visitors do not feed or approach the dogs. Clearly this would not prevent dogs rushing and potentially biting people walking past their property but if the information was provided with the historical context of dogs in Samoa it might assist with visitor perception of the wandering dogs which generally are not a problem. Visitors need to be aware that the dog situation in Samoa may not mimic that of their own country in relation to dog behaviour and laws.

Phone number for DMU

It is important that the DMU have their own phone number to support the provision of services (such as surrendering of unwanted dogs) and reports of attacks. APS is currently getting calls from the public on matters that are the responsibility of the DMU. Other calls are going to the main Police desk (22222).

It is our understanding that two phones with local SIMs are to be provided to the DMU by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. These phone numbers must be communicated to the public along with messaging which clarifies what the DMU role in dog management is e.g. queries about registration, attacks on people or animals, and surrendering unwanted dogs. If people have queries about a dog’s health, then they should call APS. This should be approved by APS before use.

See Appendix 1 for a summary of the key messages.

Recommendations:

5. *Promotion of dog registration requirements (and the reason for dog registration) should be continued to lift registration rates in Apia and ensure people outside of Apia are aware of the village outreach programme.*
6. *Introduce the key messages (see Appendix 1) to communications on the dog programme. This is additional to existing messaging on registration requirements.*

7. *Registration should commence on Savaii early in 2015 (if the development of a shelter on the Island supports this).*
8. *DMU officers should continue to participate in the school education programme.*
9. *Communicate the DMU phone numbers to the public along with messaging on the DMU services (note messaging should include a statement that says if you have a query about a dog's health then call APS).*

3.2 Control activities

Trapping

The trapping of the dogs is efficient, quick and safe for both the public and the DMU staff. At this time it remains the best method of control for un-owned and wandering dogs. With increasing interest in the programme the DMU will get more requests for assistance with wandering dogs and traps may need to be left in a single location for several days.

There will also need to be some traps on Savaii at all times to enable a timely response to complaints of nuisance and aggression, particularly the latter. Existing staffing does not enable dog management officers to be permanently stationed on Savaii and it is recommended that the traps are set by the Police stationed on Savaii while officers from the DMU make their way across (see Section 4.3 for further discussion on implementation on Savaii).

We recommend the provision of 12 extra traps.

Catch poles

Equipment used by officers is minimal but the life of the equipment is significantly less than initially anticipated. This is due to both the success of the programme and the nature of the dogs.

Catch poles are used constantly to move dogs from traps to vehicles and into and around the shelter as the dogs cannot be lead. Many of the dogs respond by chewing on the poles. To ensure the safety of the officers and their ability to work, the Ministry of Police and Prisons should make provision to regularly purchase new catch poles and replacement wires. Purchase of heavy duty catch-poles is recommended. The durability of these in Samoa is yet to be tested and will influence the schedule of replacements.

Prosecutions for attacks

The DMU Team Leader Maseiga Luaina has significant experience with prosecution matters and will train the other members of the team in gathering evidence for prosecution files. A check list of the information required when there has been a dog attack on a person or stock has been provided (see Appendix 1). Note, surrendering a dog that has attacked a person or animals and stock, does not prevent prosecution of the owner where the dog owner is in breach of the Act (Section 21, Canine Control Act 2013). Robust prosecution files will be necessary where this section is applied.

The Act (Section 22) also allows for dogs that have attacked a person or animals to be destroyed by anyone who has seen the dog attack, or the owner of the stock. We recommend people are encouraged to contact the DMU in these situations so that a prosecution file can be developed before a decision to destroy a dog is made. This will facilitate discussion with the owners of dogs so

that they are aware of their responsibilities under the Act. As per the previous paragraph this might also lead to prosecution of the owner.

Dogs that are proven to bite people or attack other animals must be euthanased.

Recommendations:

- 10. We recommend the provision of 15 extra traps for ongoing control work and the permanent placement of traps on Savaii.*
- 11. The Ministry of Police and Prisons make budget provision for replacement catch-poles and wires on a quarterly basis (subject to the durability of heavy use catch-poles discussed in 3).*
- 12. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade approve the purchase of 6 heavy duty catch-poles.*
- 13. The DMU Team leader trains all animal management officers in how to gather evidence for prosecution files.*

3.3 Savaii

Observations from a (very) short visit to view a possible site for a shelter on Savaii suggest a lower dog population. With a low dog population there is no apparent need to station a permanent DMU officer on Savaii (in the same way as there will be no permanent staff on the southern side of Upolu).

There can be no implementation of dog control activities on Savaii until the opportunity to register dogs has been made available locally and there is a shelter.

The transport of dogs to Upolu is not feasible so the shelter will need to be fitted out with kennels and a euthanasia room as for the shelter on Upolu to enable dog control activities to be undertaken. Arrangements for disposal of euthanased dogs will also need to be made. It is anticipated that the shelter will be used intermittently for a period of several weeks e.g. quarterly.

There is also a need to be responsive in situations where a dog has attacked a person or animals.

We recommend that there is a protocol developed between the Police on Savaii and the DMU for responses to complaints or attacks. Assuming there are no permanent DMU officers on Savaii, the Police would be empowered to seize and impound an attacking dog. They would need to advise DMU and conduct initial investigation. They would also be responsible for the dog's welfare in the shelter until a DMU officer was dispatched.

Changes to the ferry schedule meant we were only able to get a quick view of a potential site for a shelter at the Police Station at Tuasivi. This is located next to the hospital but experience with the dogs at the Vaitele shelter indicates they do not bark much when impounded. The siting of the shelter on Savaii would benefit from more in-depth consideration. We are confident that the DMU have the understanding of what is required for siting a shelter and can identify a suitable site and design parameters for a shelter. We note however that many overseas visitors to Samoa spend time on Savaii and have expectations of a standard for a shelter to meet animal welfare requirements.

As DMU officers will need to transport euthanasia equipment to Savaii one of the vehicles (as a minimum) should be fitted with a lock up facility behind the seats.

Recommendations:

1. *A shelter is provided on Savaii for the provision of dog control activities.*
2. *A protocol should be developed with the Police for the provision of limited dog control services on Savaii, in particular initial investigations in relation to attacks, while DMU officers are dispatched to the Island.*
3. *That provision is made in (at least one) DMU vehicle for lock up of euthanasia equipment for transport and use on Savaii.*

3.4 Training and staff development

Now that the DMU is operational, the leadership would benefit from a site visit to shelters in New Zealand to look at operational structures and dog management systems and programmes.

Afamasaga Michale Soonlaloe and Maseiga Lauina are currently considering options for the structure of the DMU and a decision must be made about on-going registration processes and record keeping. They could be hosted in Auckland from mid-November.

New recruits should also be placed in New Zealand for a week to gain experience in an established shelter and animal management culture. The existing new members of the team (x 3 if the voluntary role becomes permanent) would be hosted by Hutt City animal management officers if agreement is reached to travel in October or early November.

Training on the behaviour of dogs and an audit of the euthanasia process should also be scheduled as part of the on-going development of the team and to mitigate any risk of deterioration in practice or enthusiasm.

Given the DMU has been established very recently, regular follow-up should be undertaken to provide support and advise on areas for further development in the team and the programme. An obvious example is the establishment of the new shelter. Initially this could be quarterly but move to six monthly.

These suggestions could be provided for under the PacificTA programme.

Longer term there should be opportunities for members of the team to attend the New Zealand Institute of Animal Control Officer annual conference held in Wellington in September. It is unclear how this could be supported however.

Recommendations:

7. *DMU leadership (Afamasaga Michael Soonalole and Maseiga Lauina) is hosted by Auckland Council to look at team structures and management and the decision making management system.*
8. *That all new recruits to the DMU are placed in New Zealand for a week to gain experience in animal management culture and welfare issues as part of their induction to the DMU.*
9. *Training is provided to the DMU on dog behaviour.*
10. *An audit of the euthanasia process is undertaken in mid to late November to mitigate any potential for deterioration in practice.*

11. Regular follow-up is provided to the DMU to provide support and advise on further development of team members and the programme.

Provision for these suggestions can be made in the PacificTA programme.

12. DMU team members attend the New Zealand Institute of Animal Control Officer annual conference held in Wellington in September.

Appendix 1: Key messages

Key messages of the report in October 2013 report focused on why people should register their dogs and what the new requirements under the canine Control Act meant for dog owners e.g. the need to register your dog and impoundment processes etc.

Discussions on encouraging responsible dog ownership in Samoa suggest the following messages would also be useful. If people understand how to encourage their dog to stay on the property they will be more supportive in the longer term. It also keeps the communications of the dog programme fresh and interesting for people.

Responsible dog ownership

Your dog should stay on your property.

This can be achieved by the following:

1. Dog owners should be the only ones to feed a dog and this must be on the property - at home.
2. Provide water for your dog on the property.
3. Dogs are social. Provide company for the dog on the property – this could be another dog or your own company.
4. Have your dog de-sexed – both males and females. They are far less likely to leave your property if they are de-sexed.

DMU services

If you have questions about dog registration. We can speak to groups too.

If you have been bitten or rushed by a dog.

If you have unwanted dogs that you wish to surrender.

If you have nuisance dogs wandering onto your property.

Call the DMU on

We will be coming to the villages outside of Apia to undertake the registration in

Pulenu'u will also be notified of the date that registration will be coming to your village.

If you have a query about a dogs health then call APS.

The law

The key provisions of the Canine Control Act and new requirements of dog owners:

1. Under the Act all dog owners are required to register their dogs.
2. Dogs will have to be re-registered every year starting from January 2016.
3. It is an offence under the Act for dogs to attack or startle any person, horse, cattle or other animal on any highway or any public place. You can be fined and your dog can be destroyed.
4. Female dogs on heat cannot stray outside the owner's property.
5. Dangerous dogs can be destroyed.

Appendix 2: Prosecution Files (Gathering Evidence)

The Gathering of evidence is a critical step in relation to any dog attack situation.

The Officer should write the statements themselves, using the individual's words and should ask appropriate questions to gather all of the necessary information and evidence to support possible legal action. All individuals should sign their statement.

The Officer should take photos of any injuries to the victim including a close up photo of the injury as well as a more distant photo showing the context of the injury, e.g. the bite was on the victim's leg.

The Officer should take a statement from the dog owner or person in possession of the dog should they wish to provide one. If they decline the officer should note this in their diary. It is important for reasons of fairness to always ask the dog owner if they wish to give a statement.

At no time should the officer indicate to anyone what the likely outcome of the investigation might be. If asked, the Officer should say they are just there to gather information.

The Officer should check if they have gathered all the necessary information, the aggression file should then be forwarded to the Team Leader who will make a decision on the file.

Checklist for evidence gathering.

1. Name, address and contact details of victim
2. Victim statement
3. Photos of any injuries
4. Other relevant photos of the scene
5. Medical report
6. Map of scene
7. Dog Owner name address and contact details
8. Photo of dog
9. History on file of the dog
10. Registration details of the dog
11. Impound form of dog
12. Handover (relinquish form), if relevant
13. A statement from the dog owner or the person in possession of the dog(if wish to give)
14. Date of euthanasia if relevant
15. All witnesses names, addresses and contact details
16. Witness statements
17. Officer statement
18. Possible reparation invoices
19. Any Officer diary notes
20. Time line of events including any further correspondence with any party involved in the incident.
21. Sign off and recommendation from Team Leader

If the attack is on stock the Officer should also include:

1. Number of stock attacked
2. Type of stock attacked
3. Stock value information
4. Photos of the injuries to the stock
5. Veterinary reports and invoices