

A photograph of a large, grey and white speckled dog (likely a Weimaraner) standing over a small, tan and black dog (likely a Rottweiler puppy) lying on its back in a grassy field. The large dog is leaning down, and the small dog is looking up at it with its mouth open, appearing to play or interact. The background is a soft-focus green lawn.

DOG OWNER'S HANDBOOK

A collaboration between

Kingborough Council and
Kingborough Dog Walking Association

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Kingborough

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Accessibility

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Reference and resource links were active at time of publication.

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Contents

Let's Get a Dog!	1
Choosing a Dog	1
Responsibilities of Owning a Dog	2
Dogs and Children.....	2
Thinking About a Puppy?	4
Socialisation	5
Legal Responsibilities.....	6
Re-Homing	6
Exercise and Enrichment	7
Exercise.....	7
Enrichment	8
Where Can I Walk My Dog?	10
Car Travel.....	10
Understanding Your Dog	11
Reading your dogs' body language.....	12
Should I Pat the Dog?	13
Finding a Trainer	13
Dogs and the Community	14
State Legislation	14
Dog Management Policy.....	14
Yay, we've got a dog!.....	15



Let's Get a Dog!

Adding a dog to your life can bring great joy through companionship, exercise and meeting like-minded people. It also brings great responsibility for your dog's wellbeing, both physical and mental, and for its interaction with the community.

This handbook contains information to help you enjoy your canine friend. Much of this may be familiar, but there are bound to be some surprises.

Choosing a Dog



Whether you re-home a dog from the Dogs' Home¹ or somewhere similar^{2,3,4,5}, or get a new puppy from a registered breeder, owning a dog is a long-term commitment that requires careful planning for success.

Here is a list of questions that may help you choose the right dog for you and your family.

- 🐾 Is your life style compatible with owning a dog (e.g. work, children, travel)?
- 🐾 Would it be an inside dog or an outside dog?
- 🐾 Is your home and garden suitable to accommodate a dog? Are you willing to modify it?
- 🐾 Do you want to re-home a dog, or choose a pure-breed or mixed-breed puppy?
- 🐾 For the dog type you have chosen, are there specific training, exercise and health issues?
- 🐾 Do you want a puppy or an older dog? What size and temperament are you looking for?
- 🐾 How much time and attention do you have for exercising and training?
- 🐾 If it's a puppy, how much understanding, stamina and tolerance do you have?
- 🐾 Where can you take a dog for exercise (on and off lead) in your area?
- 🐾 Is anyone in your family afraid of dogs, or allergic? Some breeds shed less than others.
- 🐾 Do you have other animals with needs you must consider?
- 🐾 Where do you get help and advice on modern dog management practices?
- 🐾 Is there a veterinarian practice nearby?

- 🐾 What are your legal responsibilities as a dog owner?
- 🐾 What are the ongoing costs (e.g. de-sexing, vaccination, registration, food, bedding, training, insurance, vet bills and kennelling)?
- 🐾 What happens if you make the wrong choice of dog?

If you want a dog that is generally well behaved and a joy to be around, you have to put in a lot of consistent work, effort and training to help your best friend reach their potential. This is what it is to be a responsible dog owner.

Choosing by breed⁶ can increase the chances of getting the dog you want, but it doesn't guarantee a perfect temperament. Dogs are like humans in that they are individuals – both nature (genetics) and nurture (experience and training) play a part in who they are.

¹ Dog's Homes of Tasmania, dhot.com.au/

² Brightside Farm Sanctuary, brightside.org.au/

³ Greyhound Adoption Program Tasmania, www.gaptas.org.au/

⁴ PetRescue, www.petrescue.com.au/

⁵ RSPCA Tasmania, www.rspcatas.org.au/

⁶ Dog breed selector, www.optimumpet.com.au/dog-advice/dog-selector/

Responsibilities of Owning a Dog

Having decided to get a dog, you need to consider your responsibilities to yourself, to your dog and to the community in which you live. The benefits of having a dog are well documented, but it will require some effort. This means setting aside time each day to bond with your dog through physical exercise, both on and off lead, and mental exercise (by training it to sit, fetch, come when called, and maybe a few other behaviours) and also through puzzle-feeding or other enrichment exercises.

Feeding time is most important. It is the highlight of a dog's day, and a balanced diet will keep them healthy longer. A combination of fresh meat, some fruit and vegetables (those that are safe for dogs), dry food and the occasional raw bone or pig's ear for their teeth is a good place to start. Constant access to fresh water in a clean bowl is essential. Feeding should be supervised, keeping dogs separate from each other and children. Also consider breaking their meals up into training exercises or exploration and fun (such as playing hide-and-seek with kibble).

There are a number of ongoing responsibilities; annual Council registration, vaccinations, worming, and regular check-ups. Unless you want to breed, give serious consideration to de-sexing your dog. This will help with socialisation, health and general behavioural issues in the long term.

Dogs that are left alone at home all day and everyday can get bored and might start barking, digging or, even worse, chewing inappropriate objects. Neighbours will complain eventually if your dog barks excessively. However, if your dog gets attention and exercise morning and evening, it might be quite OK being left home alone while you are at work.

Dogs are excellent escape artists and will want to follow you when you leave the house, or just explore the neighbourhood when they are bored. A dog at large is at risk from cars, snakes and other dogs, and can cause concern to members of the public, particularly near schools, and can be impounded. Fences need to be secure so that your pet cannot jump over or dig under them.

If you are living in a flat or unit, there must be somewhere for the dog to go to the toilet whenever needed. It should be able to exercise on its own, get some fresh air or smell all the lovely scents that dogs love to experience.

Dogs and Children

We all know children love a fluffy puppy that they can cuddle up with. While this allows children and dogs to get used to each other from a young age, there can be problems when a child greets another dog who may not be used to children. All children must be taught not to rush up to dogs, particularly those not known to them, as this may frighten the dog. Children must learn to read the body language of the dog and ask permission from the dog's owner before approaching the dog. That may well not be given if the owner feels that the dog is worried or frightened. Not all dogs like attention from strangers.

There is more information on dog body language in the section on "Understanding your dog". Most importantly, children should never run away from a dog. It is much better to freeze and look away, hard as that may seem at the time. Delta Dog Safe⁷ is one example of a program that teaches children appropriate and safe behaviour around dogs.



⁷ Delta Society, Delta Dog Safe,
www.deltasociety.com.au/pages/delta-dog-safe.html



Thinking About a Puppy?

Raising a puppy⁸ requires time and effort. In the first 6 months it will be your responsibility to teach them many things. They have left their mum and their litter mates, so they may be quite lonely. You must be able to provide them with a safe enclosure, where they feel happy and nurtured. This might be a crate or play pen, or behind child gates. A warm place, with perhaps a ticking clock and some pheromones⁹ and snuggly bedding will be necessary.

An important learning opportunity, called the socialisation¹⁰ period, takes place between 4 and 16 weeks of age¹¹. This is when your puppy is inquisitive and open to learning about the world and all its curiosities. Good socialisation will help them develop resilience and cope with new situations later in life without becoming fearful. The next section gives more information about this very important process.

Puppies will need to be toilet trained, which means providing them with frequent toileting opportunities through the day and night. Be prepared for accidents- this is quite normal and doesn't call for punishment. More teaching and praise is what is required so they learn the location you want them to toilet in. It can be useful to associate a phrase with toileting (such as "busy, busy"). Say this every time they go to the toilet. This phrase can become a useful prompt when stopping on long car trips or last thing at night.



Your puppy will be teething and exploring, so provision of bountiful and safe chew items, toys and food-releasing puzzles will be essential. You will need to modify your home so it is safe for the puppy.

Puppies require vaccinations, worming, microchipping, registration and de-sexing. Attending puppy pre-school and early training classes will set you up for success. These are costs you need to be prepared for before you embark on this exciting journey.

There are State Government regulations¹², regarding the health, veterinary care, nutrition and removal of very young puppies from their mother and litter mates, enforceable by the RSPCA. Breeders and potential puppy owners should make themselves aware of these common sense regulations.



⁸ Books to help raise a puppy, www.dogstardaily.com/free-downloads

⁹ Information about pheromones, www.adaptil.com.au

¹⁰ Puppy socialization, avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Puppy-Socialization-Position-Statement-FINAL.pdf

¹¹ Australian Veterinary Association guide for dog trainers, www.ava.com.au/siteassets/policies/animal-welfare-principles-and-philosophy/reward-based-training-brochure-web.pdf

¹² Tasmanian Government Animal Welfare Act, www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1993-063 See particularly sections 3, 17 and 21.

Socialisation

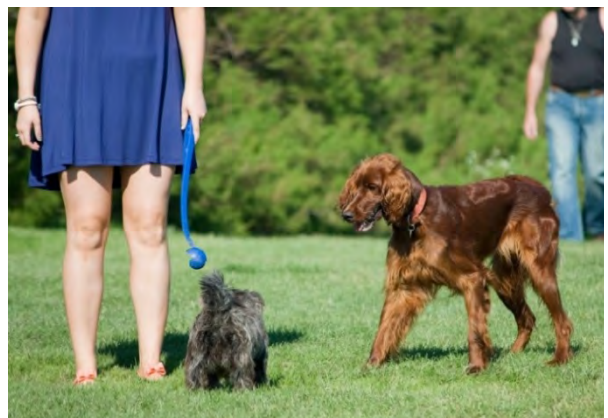


Socialising your dog early in its life is important in helping it feel comfortable and happy both in your house and out in the community. There is a crucial period of ‘brain wiring’ that occurs between 4 and 16 weeks of age. But socialisation might not be quite what you think! The following paragraph is part of an article by the Canine Transformations Learning Centre¹³:

“A big part of socialising is ‘seeing’ people and dogs without responding – passing by, approach and pass, walking behind and the sounds that might be encountered. A dog does not have to greet all dogs or people and choice should be a part of that also. Teaching a dog how to walk properly on lead when distractions appear should also be a part of socialisation.”

Socialisation also involves young dogs experiencing noises that are part of everyday life (e.g. vacuum cleaners, fireworks, the postie on his motorbike) so that they are familiar with them and do not react badly later in life. Walking on different surfaces, seeing different people, with helmets on or umbrellas opening and closing are all experiences they need to learn about during this special time.

Dogs can and do read our body language and they will react to try and protect their owner. If you are concerned at something happening, your dog will be also, so make allowance for that and try to be one step ahead of your dog’s reactions so that you can manage the situation. If you know your dog well, you can often foresee and prevent any problem before it happens. For example, if you are frightened of thunder and lightning your dog will be too!



¹³ Canine Transformations Learning Center, www.caninetlc.com

Legal Responsibilities

The Tasmanian State Government *Dog Control Act 2000* (the Act)¹⁴ together with the Kingborough Council Dog Management Policy¹⁵ set out your legal responsibilities. Much of it is common sense and is discussed in greater detail in a later section.

Ultimately, you and your dog should be a positive part of the community. In brief, this means your dog is contained on your property except for walks, does not bark excessively, is walked on or off lead only where allowed, and that you pick up your dog's poo. Remember too that some humans are a little afraid of dogs, so your dog should not be allowed to approach strangers unless this is clearly OK.

Re-Homing

If you decide that the dog you have doesn't suit your lifestyle, or is beyond your capabilities to train, it might be time to consider re-homing it. While this is a difficult and challenging decision that emotion (guilt) often prevents us from making, it might be the kindest thing to do. A dog that requires more exercise than you can provide, or needs another dog's company, might be better suited to a family or farm that can meet that need. A dog that doesn't get along with your other animals is unlikely to be a good fit, either, without lots of guidance from an accredited trainer or behaviour veterinarian, and dedicated vigilance and supervision from you. Safely re-homing a dog is part of being a responsible dog owner.

¹⁴ Tasmanian Government Dog Control Act, www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2000-102

¹⁵ Kingborough Council Dog Management Policy, www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Policy-4.3-Dog-Management-Policy-September-2018-FINAL.pdf



Exercise and Enrichment

These are two related but different concepts. Very simply, *exercise* is for a dog's physical health, while *enrichment* is for their mental health. Dogs need both.

Exercise

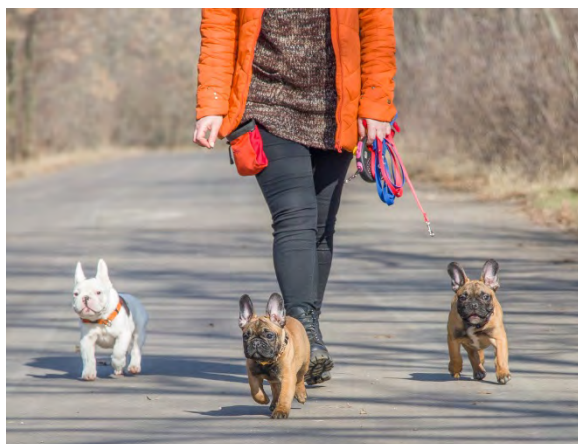
The amount of exercise a dog needs varies depending on its age, breed, size and overall health. Basically, your dog should have between 30 minutes and two hours of exercise every day. Breeds in the hunting, working, or herding groups (e.g. Labrador retrievers, hounds and shepherds) will need the most exercise.

Adequate exercise will calm your dog and may reduce the risk of excessive barking or destructive behaviour. Providing your dog is well socialised and is under effective control (see box to right), off-lead exercise is an ideal way for your dog to be active as it allows your dog to 'follow its nose', interact with other dogs, and move at its own speed. Kingborough has a number of designated dog exercise areas for your use^{16,17}. Remember that, when in these areas, you are legally required to have effective control of your dog and exercise that control whenever needed so that your dog does not harass, annoy or inconvenience other dogs or people sharing that space.

While on-lead walking is less energetic, it still provides valuable exercise especially if you let your dog set the pace and accept 'sniffing-and-weeing' as part of the exercise - after all, it's their walk. Vary your route to add interest and to give you and your dog maximum stimulation. Training your dog to walk well on-lead¹⁸ means that you can enjoy the walk too.

So, how much exercise is enough? If, after a walk, your dog settles down for a sleep, you've got it right. If not, then a second walk, a longer walk or more energetic exercise is needed. Combining a walk with a training activity makes the walk more interesting and uses up more canine energy.

Can you over-exercise a dog? Yes! Care needs to be taken with growing puppies and with certain breeds.



The Victorian Kennel Club suggests that a puppy should receive five minutes of exercise each day for every month of its age. This can be done in one or two walks per day but, until your puppy is at least a year old, it should be taken for no more than two walks per day. Over-exercising a growing puppy can result in joint problems, particularly with giant breeds like the Scottish Deerhound or the Great Dane. Remember, very large dogs can continue to grow for up to two years.

Effective control

Off-lead: your dog must be close to you and in sight at all times and respond to your commands, and in particular should come to you when called.

On-lead: your dog must be held on a lead not more than two metres long by a person able to control the dog.

Short-snouted breeds such as the French Bulldog and the Pug risk serious health problems if they are over-exercised. You can check with a vet or on the Internet for exercise recommendations for your breed of dog.



¹⁶ Kingborough Council dog exercise areas, www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/recreation-facilities/dog-areas/

¹⁷ Kingborough dog walks and off-lead exercise areas, www.dogwalkingtas.org.au/kingborough-dog-exercise-areas

¹⁸ Train your dog to walk on-lead, www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFgtqgiAKoQ

Some general guidelines for all breeds:

- 🐾 Don't exercise your pet immediately before or after they've eaten as this can cause potentially fatal problems such as bloating, especially in deep-chested dogs.
- 🐾 Dogs can easily over-heat so, on hot days, avoid exercising in the middle of the day and be aware of hot surfaces which can burn a dog's paws.
- 🐾 Avoid exercise that puts your dog at risk, e.g. repetitive jumping, excessive fetching or walking long distances on hard surfaces. Puppies need greater care here than grown dogs.
- 🐾 Swimming is great exercise for dogs.

Enrichment

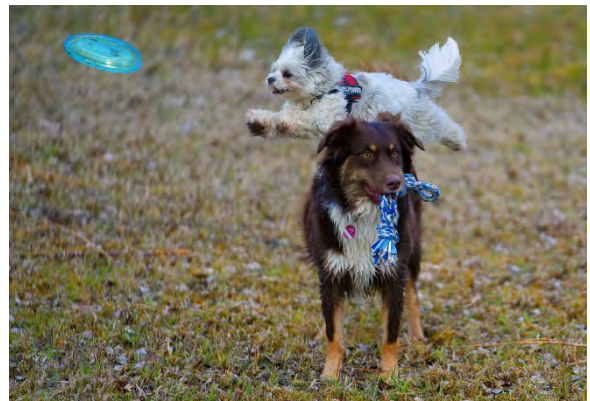
Dogs want to live active lives. Physical activity is wonderful for your dog but it's not the only kind of activity that dogs thrive on; they need mental exercise as well¹⁹. You can tire out your dog's body, but don't forget that your dog's mind needs a workout too.

Enrichment activities^{20,21} provide exercise for your dog's mind; they entertain and occupy, and can often be combined with physical exercise. They do more than just alleviate boredom - they can also help your dog live a longer, happier life, and improve your bond. Shelters have discovered that enrichment can make dogs more adoptable²².



You can provide enrichment in many ways:

- 🐾 Social enrichment – which provides safe opportunities for your dog to spend time with other animals and people in new, different environments, e.g. play-dates, group walks.
- 🐾 Cognitive enrichment²³ – which provides opportunities for thinking and problem-solving, e.g. training sessions, agility activities, puzzle toys.
- 🐾 Physical enrichment – which enhances your dog's living space by changing or adding complexity to the environment, e.g. pop-up tunnels or blanket forts or tents.
- 🐾 Sensory enrichment – which stimulates any of the five senses, e.g. nose-work, grooming, and noise familiarisation²⁴.
- 🐾 Feeding enrichment – which makes mealtime more challenging and interesting. This includes how you present their food, e.g. hiding treats, using puzzle feeders.
- 🐾 Toy enrichment²⁵ – providing objects that can be manipulated in some way—explored via paws, tail, and mouths! (Always take age into consideration).



¹⁹ Eight ways to enrich your dog's quality of life, blog.smartanimaltraining.com/2014/02/06/enrichment-8-easy-ways-to-increase-your-dogs-quality-of-life/

²⁰ Dog enrichment games and exercises, www.rover.com/blog/dog-enrichment-z/

²¹ Facebook public group on canine enrichment, www.facebook.com/groups/canineenrichment/

²² Enrichment for dogs in shelters, resources.bestfriends.org/article/enrichment-dogs-shelters

²³ Ways to keep your dog busy indoors, www.puppyleaks.com/easy-ways-to-keep-your-dog-busy-indoors/

²⁴ Sound therapy for pets, www.dogtrust.org.uk/help-advice/dog-behaviour-health/sound-therapy-for-pets

²⁵ Dog toys you can make, barkpost.com/life/3-dog-toys-you-can-make-from-things-around-the-house/

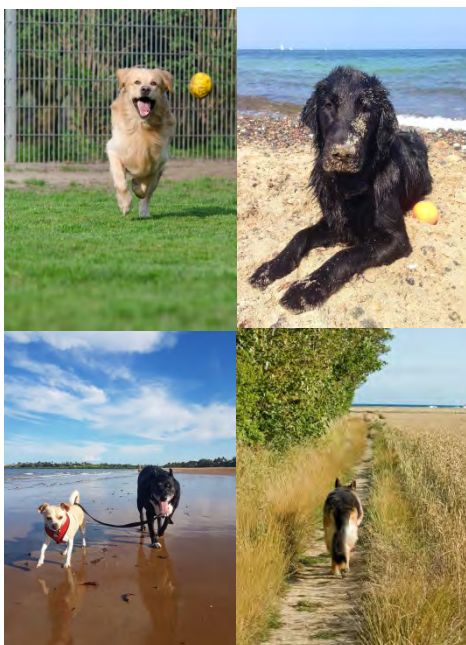


Where Can I Walk My Dog?

Kingborough Municipality is home to many walking tracks of varying landscape and difficulty²⁶. Of these, there are 31 tracks managed by Council where you are allowed to take your dog on a lead, and one (Suncoast Drive Track) where dogs are allowed off-lead.

When walking your dog, it is essential to keep it under effective control and on-lead if required. Remember, tracks and pathways are shared spaces. If you encounter a horse, bike rider, jogger, other dogs or other walkers, move away to create plenty of space between your dog and the action, and to reduce any trip hazard for others. Stay calm and relaxed and, if necessary, distract your dog with treats or a game to prevent them from being startled.

There are also some grassy areas and beaches where dogs are encouraged to get their daily exercise, and some of these areas are fenced, have a water source and provide poo bags and bins. The Kingborough Council Dog Management Policy lists these areas complete with maps¹⁵. There is also an unofficial collection of dog walks and off-lead exercise areas on the KDWA web site¹⁷. Remember that unless an area is specifically designated as off-lead, your dog must be kept on-lead. It's no good excusing your dog being off-lead by saying "it's OK, she's friendly". The on-lead dog might feel there is no way to escape an inquisitive off-lead dog, and this can escalate into a dangerous situation.



Car Travel

In our mobile society, it is inevitable that your dog will become a frequent car traveller, whether it is to new and exciting places to explore, or to the vet. It is important to provide a safe place in your car for your dog in case of sudden braking or car accidents²⁷. A crate is an excellent way to transport a dog, or in the back of a station wagon or SUV with safety mesh behind the rear seats. Otherwise you could fold the rear seats flat and provide somewhere for them to lie. An old bean bag works exceptionally well because it provides a lot of support for your dog against the movement of the car.

Some dogs, particularly young ones, may get car sick. This can diminish or disappear with age. If your dog starts panting, open a window, but not enough so they can put their head outside. Never leave your dog in a car in the sun - always park in the shade and leave all the windows down enough to allow heat to escape and fresh air to enter, but not enough to allow your dog to escape.

The *State Dog Control Act 2000* states²⁸, "The owner or person in charge of a dog must restrict the dog sufficiently while it is in or on a vehicle so that it is unable to leave the vehicle or attack any person or animal outside the vehicle". To prevent serious injury to your dog, the *Animal Welfare Act 1993* states²⁹, "Dogs should be restricted when in open vehicles in such a way that the restraint does not allow the animal to reach over the side of the vehicle".



²⁶ Kingborough Municipality tracks and trails, www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/recreation-facilities/tracks-trails/

²⁷ Pet safety, www.centerforpetsafety.org/

²⁸ Control your dog in or on a vehicle, www.dpac.tas.gov.au/divisions/local_government/legislation/dog_control/general_dog_control_issues

²⁹ Tasmanian Government Animal Welfare Act, www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-1993-063

Understanding Your Dog

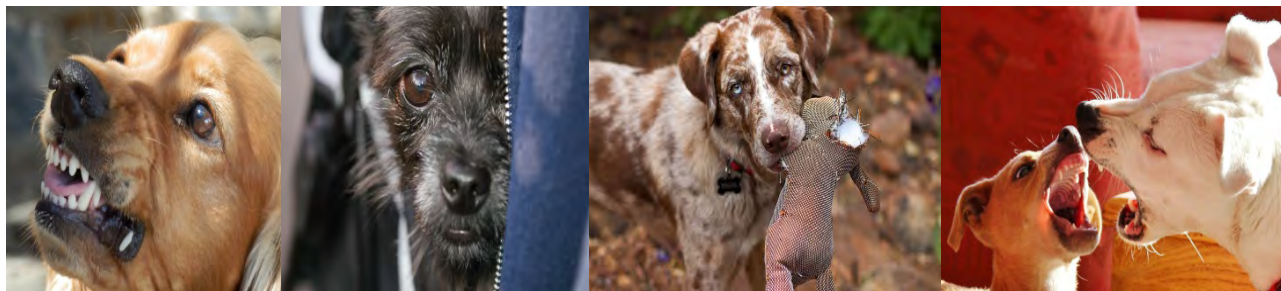
Dogs have co-existed with humans for at least 15,000 years. They are not wolves and they are not programmed to dominate us. Humans and dogs have chosen to live together in harmony.

Dog behaviour is purely a response to the environment they live in. Dogs will bark to alert their humans and to communicate with other dogs. They will dig for pleasure or to make a nest or bury a bone. Dogs will chew items for fun, exploration and food. No behaviour is chosen to annoy us. They are just dogs being dogs. Our job is to direct that doggy behaviour so that it meets our human desires and expectations. That involves teaching and providing outlets so dogs can express their normal dog behaviour.

Getting to know your dog is simple. It involves observation, since dogs 'talk' with their bodies. Once you know what is 'normal' for your dog, you will be able to see signals when your dog is unhappy or anxious and also when he is excited and happy.

A relaxed or happy dog is soft and/or wriggly. Their actions are loose and flowing. Their tail may be half-mast or doing helicopter circles. They might offer play bows or reverse up to you for a back scratch, or be snoring upside down on the sofa.

An irritated or bored dog is fidgety. He may lick himself, scratch his collar or sniff the floor. When you see a sudden change in behaviour such as this, it is time to give your dog a break from whatever was happening.



An unhappy or nervous dog is tense. Muscles are pulled tight and their actions are often stilted and jerky. Many of us are familiar with obvious signs such as a tucked tail or cowering when a dog is scared, but there are many more very subtle signs³⁰. It is important to be able to read these indicators, because it is your job to protect your dog from his fears and keep him safe. Also, if he is cornered or unable to escape from the thing he is worried about, he might have to defend himself by growling, snapping or, ultimately, biting.

Warning signals include:

- 🐾 Vocalisation (growling, frantic barking, whining)
- 🐾 Refusal to accept food
- 🐾 Excessive or frantic activity level

- 🐾 Freeze reaction ('frozen' in place, maybe with one front paw lifted)
- 🐾 Fight reaction (aggression- wrinkled muzzle, showing teeth, biting)
- 🐾 Flight reaction (running away)
- 🐾 Yawning when not tired
- 🐾 Licking of lips
- 🐾 Dilated pupils
- 🐾 White rim around eye
- 🐾 Drooling or salivating
- 🐾 Ears pinned back on head*
- 🐾 Not making eye contact or direct, unbroken stare
- 🐾 Panting when not hot or over-exerted
- 🐾 Tucked tail*
- 🐾 Head turned away
- 🐾 Hackles raised (hair standing up on back)*

* There are differences between dogs as to how they express themselves. For example, the tail of a whippet or greyhound can be naturally tucked, even when relaxed, and a pug or a bulldog has very little tail movement. The long, pendulous ears of a Basset Hound, Dachshund or Cocker Spaniel do not change position easily. Rhodesian ridgebacks have a raised hairline down their back, which is not an indicator of "raised hackles".

Not all dogs do the same thing. Dogs have different body shapes and characteristics which might alter how they communicate. It is best to get to know your dog well, and it is important to look at the whole dog to interpret their mood.

Bear in mind:

- 🐾 A wagging tail is not always a sign of friendliness; it can be, but it can also indicate assertiveness and anxiety.
- 🐾 Panting is not a smile. It is an indicator of anxiety, or of over-heating and exertion.

If you see your dog exhibiting some of the warning signs:

- 🐾 Move your dog away from the thing your dog is worried about, or the situation
- 🐾 Distract your dog (ideally before they react) and keep their mind working so they don't focus on the stressor
- 🐾 Praise your dog when they have relaxed

- 🐾 Protect your dog in future from things they are not ready to cope with
- 🐾 Implement a desensitisation program to help your dog get used to things they don't like or are scared of (see a trainer or behaviourist for professional help)
- 🐾 Give your dog the opportunity to continually practice their good doggy social skills so they don't get rusty (socialisation is for life!)

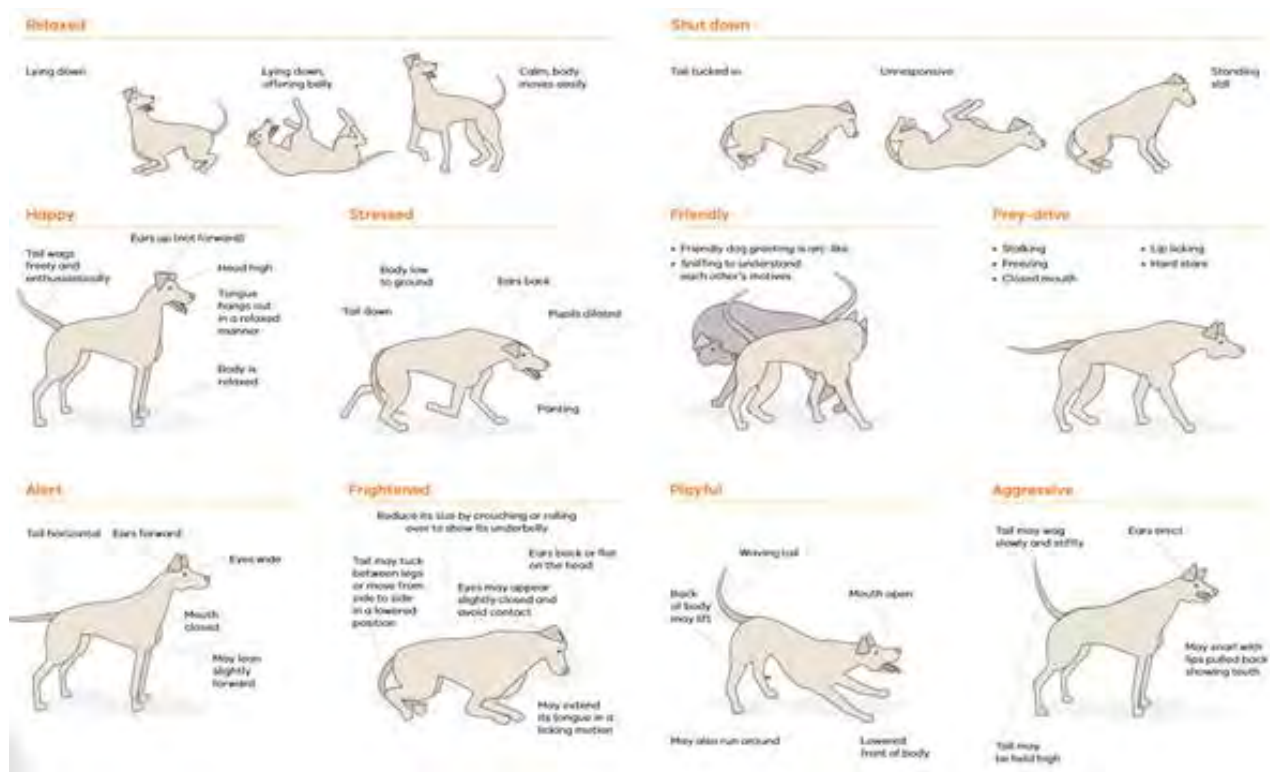
DO NOT PUNISH YOUR DOG FOR GROWLING. A growl is a cry for help. Listen to them and help them get out of the situation. Verbally telling your dog in a calm voice that everything is OK may reassure them.

If you see an unfamiliar dog exhibiting these signs towards you:

- 🐾 Freeze. Do NOT run away.
- 🐾 Turn your head slowly away from the dog
- 🐾 Do not make eye contact with the dog
- 🐾 Fold your arms
- 🐾 Wait for the dog to go away

³⁰ Subtle signs of fear and anxiety in dogs, drsophiayin.com/blog/entry/dog-bite-prevention-week-poster-on-the-body-language-of-fear-and-aggression/

Reading your dogs' body language



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Should I Pat the Dog?

A common message given to children (and adults) is that they should ask the owner if they can pat their dog before doing so. There are two things to take very careful note of first:

- 🐾 Many dogs do not like being patted by unfamiliar people, especially on the head. They cannot see where the unknown hand is going, and it is generally an unpleasant sensation- try it on yourself!
- 🐾 Children should not be encouraged to approach any dog. Many dogs prefer to be ignored, just like we don't like strangers encroaching on our personal space. It is much safer to encourage children to be polite and leave dogs alone. This is OK- the dog will not be offended, in fact it may be much happier!

However, if your dog wants to meet people and is in need of socialisation (the acceptance of the proximity of others, not necessarily playing with others), allow this meeting to take place as long as the stranger is not too exuberant or excited. Make sure they touch your dog where he likes to be touched (you can tell them where this is) and make sure your dog will see where that hand is going. Often it can be best if the stranger simply offers the back of their hand for the dog to sniff and lets the dog choose to approach or not.

Finding a Trainer

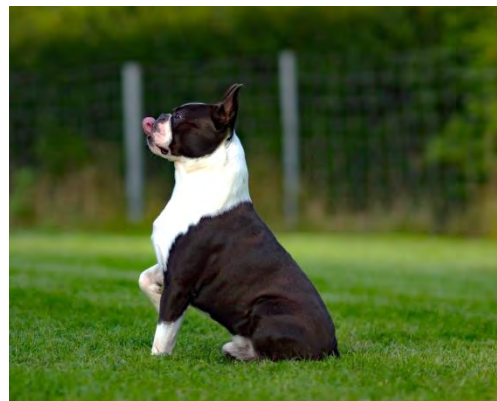
There are many options for obtaining help with training your dog in Kingborough. A number of organisations and businesses conduct puppy and obedience classes, and there are also private training providers that will offer individual help. While these are easily found by searching the internet or Yellow Pages, there are a number of important factors to consider before settling on a trainer.



The dog training industry is unregulated in Australia so anyone can label themselves a dog trainer or behaviourist. Some will have completed certificate programs, while others will have more formal

academic qualifications. There are professional Australian organisations^{31,32,33} that will only accept members who abide by a strict code of ethics to protect dogs from punitive training methods. Finding a trainer/behaviourist who belongs to one or more of these will be a great start.

It is a good idea to ask what training, qualification and certification the trainer has to equip them to train dogs, and what methods they use. Ultimately you have to make your own judgement based on the certification and experience of the trainer, the cost of their services and the confidence you feel in them being able to train you and your dog to the level you require. It is highly desirable that they use only positive reinforcement methods that are kind, fair and effective. These methods have been shown in recent research to lead to better outcomes³⁴, whereas the use of coercive or punitive techniques or equipment can lead to problem behaviours such as increased aggression^{35,36}. Your dog is a sentient and emotional animal that is in your care; you want to develop a trusting relationship which is full of fun.



³¹ Australian Association of Professional Dog Trainers Inc., aapdt.org/

³² Association of Pet Dog Trainers Australia Inc., www.apdt.com.au/

³³ Delta Institute, deltainstitute.edu.au/

³⁴ Australian Veterinary Association guide for dog trainers, www.ava.com.au/siteassets/policies/animal-welfare-principles-and-philosophy/reward-based-training-brochure-web.pdf

³⁵ American Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior punishment position statement, avsab.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Punishment-Position-Statement_bleeds-10-2018-updated.pdf

³⁶ Dog aggression is predicted by training methods and breed, www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/canine-corner/201403/dog-aggression-is-predicted-training-methods-and-breed

Dogs and the Community

About 40% of Kingborough households have at least one dog. There are many more that would like a dog when circumstances permit, but there are others that don't like dogs or are scared of them. Dogs of all types, and humans of all types, need to live together in the community. To this end, there are a number of considerations, both legal and community-minded, that dog owners should be aware of.

Kingborough Council has a compliance team that deals with complaints of all types, including occasional dog infractions. The two main issues that the team deals with on a daily basis are barking complaints and dogs at large.

It is your responsibility to ensure your dog does not become a nuisance. The compliance team is available to answer any questions you have regarding your obligations as a dog owner under the Act.

State Legislation

The most pertinent legislation for the control of dogs in Tasmania is the *Dog Control Act 2000*³⁷. Even though the Act is detailed it has a focus on achieving positive holistic community outcomes such as:

- 🐾 The ability to return lost dogs to their owners through micro-chipping and registration;
- 🐾 Provision of dedicated exercise areas for dogs;
- 🐾 Protection of wildlife through the restriction of dogs in relevant areas;
- 🐾 Provision of dog-free community areas such as playgrounds, schools and some beaches;
- 🐾 Promotion of community harmony by reducing behaviour such as nuisance barking and dog-at-large; and
- 🐾 Investigation of incidents related to dogs.

Dog owners who comply with the Act proactively promote good dog control and make the municipality a great place to interact and live with our dogs.



Dog Management Policy

The Tasmanian State Government *Dog Control Act 2000*³⁸ provides the legislative framework for the management of dogs in Tasmania. It primarily empowers the Council to enforce the provisions of the Act.

The Act specifies areas where dogs can go (either on or off lead) and areas where they are prohibited. It also empowers Councils to change some of these areas to suit local requirements.

Kingborough Council has a Dog Management Policy³⁹ which outlines where an owner can and can't go with their dog within the municipality. This document is well worth reading (it is brief and only slightly legalistic) to make sure you stay on the right side of the law.

In brief, dogs are not permitted in school grounds, shopping centres or shops (other than veterinary practices, pet shops, or any other premises related to the care and management of dogs). Dogs are also not allowed on any playing area or sports ground, or within 10m of a children's playground. Guide dogs, hearing dogs and accredited disability dogs are exempt from these restrictions.

There are many areas where dogs are encouraged to get their daily exercise use^{40,41}, and some of these areas are fenced, have a water source and provide poo bags and bins. See the earlier section on "Where can I walk my dog?"

³⁷ Tasmanian Government Dog Control Act, www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2000-102

³⁸ Tasmanian Government Dog Control Act, www.legislation.tas.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2000-102

³⁹ Kingborough Council Dog Management Policy, www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Policy-4.3-Dog-Management-Policy-September-2018-FINAL.pdf

⁴⁰ Kingborough Council dog exercise areas, www.kingborough.tas.gov.au/recreation-facilities/dog-areas/

⁴¹ Kingborough dog walks and off-lead exercise areas, www.dogwalkingtas.org.au/kingborough-dog-exercise-areas



Yay, we've got a dog!

Congratulations, and welcome to the exciting world of dog ownership. There is a lot of joy and many fun times to be had with your new friend. This will more than offset the responsibility of caring for your dog and its interaction with the community. This handbook is really just a starting point for your journey into the wonderful world of dogs. When you need it, don't be afraid to ask for advice from reputable sources such as vets and animal behaviourists. There may be ups and downs along the way but there is a wealth of good advice available that can help you be a happy and responsible dog owner.

