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Wyndham dogs strike

EMERGENCY SERVICES 3 JUL 12 @ 05:00AM BY SARAH ANDERSON

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DOG attacks on people have almost tripled in Wyndham in the first half of this year.

Wyndham Council has received 26 reported dog attacks on humans in 2012 compared with an average of nine for the past three years.

There have been 31 reports of attacks on dogs this year.

In 2011, there were 10 reported attacks on humans and 33 on dogs, in 2010 there were eight reported attacks on humans and 33 on dogs, and in 2009 there were 10 reported against people and 27 on dogs.

Of these dog attack reports, 19 cases were taken to court - all with guilty findings - and 12 of the 19 dogs were destroyed.

More than 930 Melburnians visited hospital emergency departments with dog-related injuries in the 2010-11 financial year.

More than 550 were admitted to hospital for treatment.

Of these, 140 people suffered head, face or neck injuries and 57 were children under five.

Off-leash parks are identified as being areas where a lot of attacks occur.

There are more than 19,000 dogs registered in Wyndham of which 54 are dangerous or restricted breeds.

There are 14 dog off-lead areas in the municipality.

Wyndham chief executive Kerry Thompson said the council had five dedicated animal officers who patrolled the dog off-lead areas on a random basis on weekdays and on weekends.

Animal behaviourist Late Mornement said any breed of dog could attack, if it felt threatened or afraid.

"We must remember that dogs are animals with instincts to chase small animals, such as cats, rabbits and chooks," Ms Mornement said.

RSPCA Victoria spokesman Tim Pilgrim said the best way to prevent a potential attack was to socialise your dogs with both people and other animals.

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