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HAVE YOUR SAY: Wyndham laws keep dogs in

COUNCIL 23 NOV 10 @ 01:39AM BY KELLIE CAMERON



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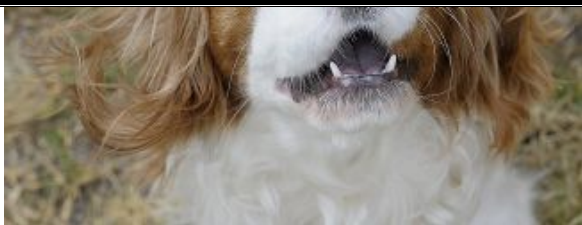
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NO DOG owners have been fined under a controversial new law to control dogs behind their owners' fences in Wyndham.

But the council says the law, now in place for more than three months, is proving "very effective".

Meanwhile, the city's cat control order, or curfew, has expired after 10 years, without a single person being fined under it. Wyndham's stray cat population continues to grow.

About 1100 cats were impounded in Wyndham in 2009-10, with 935 of these put down.

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Under the new dogs law, it is an offence for dogs to behave in an offensive or threatening way by striking, biting or jumping at people or animals beyond the boundary of the property the dog is on.

The fine is \$234.

As of last month, the council had taken five complaints relating to dogs breaking the law.

It said all complaints had been solved through education and training.

No fines were issued.

Council corporate services acting director Scott Walker could not say if the number of complaints was more or less than expected but said the laws were working.

"The new local law has been very effective as there are now consequences if the owner of the dog does not rectify the animal's behaviour.

Previously, there was no legislation for matters such as this to be addressed," he said.

The council could not say how many complaints it was taking about cats wandering at night, saying these were not recorded.

On why no one had been fined under the curfew, prohibiting cats being off their owners' property from 10pm and 6am and banning them from public areas, the council said most residents did not know where wandering cats came from.

It also said most trapped cats had no identification and were never claimed, meaning there was no one to fine.

The council said it would not re-introduce the curfew, as updates to a Victorian Act covering animals provided equal or greater control

of local cats.

Residents have until December 1 to have a say on the council's proposed plans to manage the city's many cats and dogs.

View the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan, and make a submission, at wyndham.vic.gov.au

<http://www.wherelive.com.au>



All times AEST