

15 May 2006



# Townsville Bulletin

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### Dog pack attacks woman in park

By [JESSICA JOHNSTON](#) and [VIKKI CAMPION](#)  
16may06

A YOUNG mother ran home dripping with blood after a pack of dogs attacked her in a Townsville park.

Toni Ferguson said the dogs' owners stood by and watched as their mutts mauled and terrorised her and her tiny puppy Millie in Annandale last week.

"I was screaming and crying and they watched. They didn't yell for their dogs. Nothing," Mrs Ferguson said.

The dogs attacked her in the leash-free dog enclosure at the Murray Complex on Friday afternoon.

As she approached the enclosure she noticed a large dog squatting as if preparing to pounce.

"He looked calm so I walked inside," she said.

"Another dogs came up close to me and then a whole lot of them did."

Mrs Ferguson said the pack started circling as the owners looked on. The pack then set upon her little dog.

"I panicked," she said, "I could have been mauled too, and all these women did was stand there."

When she pulled her dog from beneath the pack, the dogs attacked her, scratching and pawing at her legs and body.

"All I remember is the dogs were large. I was covered in paw marks and blood. I was just screaming and kicking them away. Millie was coated in their saliva.

"I ran off with Millie and a lady stopped me and said, 'Are you okay?'"



Toni Ferguson with son Josh and dog Millie yesterday at the park where she was attacked (SM456181)

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<b>CONTACT US</b>	You're bleeding', and that was the first I knew of it. I had no idea I had been hurt."
Jobs@NQN	
Editorial	Mrs Ferguson suffered scratches up her back, stomach and legs as the result of the attack.
Display Advertising	
Classifieds	She said she was thankful her youngest son Josh, 2, was not with her in the park.
The Sun	
Website team	"It could have been a tragedy," she said. "I wonder if those women would have helped a child.
<b>ADVERTISING</b>	
Advertising info	"People need to be responsible pet owners, no one deserves to go through an ordeal like this."
News Ltd websites	Mrs Ferguson reported the incident to police and council, but could not describe the dogs or their owners.
	Townsville City Council Community Safety Committee chairwoman Cr Jenny Hill said leash-free areas were not a dumping ground for pets.
	Cr Hill said council had successfully prosecuted pet owners for not controlling their dogs within leash- free areas.
	"People have a responsibility to ensure their dogs are properly restrained," Cr Hill said.
	"It would have been quite frightening to go through something like that.
	"I would like to think people would be more responsible in leash-free areas, they are a privilege."
	Dog attack complaints were becoming more common in Townsville, Cr Hill said.
	Eleven dog attack cases had been prosecuted in Townsville between January and March this year.
	Thirty-nine complaints were made, compared to 36 in the same period last year.
	With 17,000 dogs registered in the city, Cr Hill said Townsville needed tough dog laws.
	Cr Hill said council would continue to prosecute dog owners over severe attacks.
	"Dog attacks are unacceptable," she said. "All members of the community have a right to walk in public free of the threat of being attacked by dogs.
	"Dog owners are legally responsible for their pets and they need to be aware that the council will prosecute over dog attacks wherever there is sufficient evidence."
	Cr Hill said council would follow up the Murray Complex incident if Mrs Ferguson could remember details of the dogs or their owners.

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