

News

## Dramatic decrease in dog attacks

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THERE has been a major drop in the number of recorded dog attacks and complaints about them in Manukau.

The city council's dog policy and practices annual report for 2004-2005 shows a big decrease in dog attacks, as well as reduced dog-related complaints.

Total dog attacks on people were 271, down 26.6 per cent from 370 in the previous year. Dog complaints numbered 7760, which is a 1.4 per cent dip from 7874 recorded 12 months earlier.

The council claims the report "demonstrates the success of measures introduced as part of Manukau's policy on dogs 2004", which focused on responsible dog ownership.

Initiatives included registration blitzes in areas with high numbers of complaints, school education programmes, information packs for registered dog owners and to all pet shops and veterinary clinics across the city.

There were also rewards for dog owners demonstrating responsible behaviour in public places and an "early bird" registration competition.

The results please the council's environmental management and urban design committee chairman, councillor Noel Burnside.

"The release of Manukau's policy on dogs in 2004 highlighted the need to support responsible owners and to target irresponsible owners," says Mr Burnside.

"We also realised that council needed to work together with dog owners and the public to achieve this.

"By targeting owners of unregistered dogs, introducing education programmes for owners, rewarding responsible ownership and raising awareness of the part dogs play in the community, we're beginning to reduce the distress and nuisance from dogs to the public."

Mr Burnside says he acknowledges the majority of Manukau's dog owners "who do the right thing".

The report, which is required by law, says the council animal management contractors seized 1020 unregistered dogs, issued 2378 instant \$300 fines to owners who didn't register dogs, while handing out a \$750 fine to one owner who provided false registration information. The annual dog report can be viewed in full on the council's website [www.manukau.govt.nz](http://www.manukau.govt.nz), or at any city library.