

the BURRA Blurb

NEWSLETTER OF THE BURRA URILA RESIDENTS' AND RATEPAYERS' ASSOCIATION

Welcome to the first edition of *the BURRA Blurb*, the official newsletter of the Burra Urila Resident and Ratepayers Association (BURRA).

The newsletter won't be a regular monthly event, but will cover important topics in our community as and when the need arises.

This first edition focuses on the ever-growing problem of dog attacks in our area.

Come to the BURRA meeting on 25 May and help the community find a solution to this menace.

BURRA CONTACTS:

Bruce Bacon 6236 3329

Wendy Bell 6236 3445

Ros Bush 6236 3536

Email: 2burra@vtown.com.au

BURRA Meeting

Friday 25 May 2007

7.00pm Burra Hall

Subject: Dog Attacks
– enough is enough.

What our community can do to prevent future attacks on pets, livestock and wildlife

See page 4 for more information about our guest speakers

Don't miss this important meeting

Oh, no – not *my* dog

How does your adorable “Fluffy” turn from this ...



into an animal that can do something like THIS ...



Slain alpacas belonging to Nerida and Walter Hart of Candy Road, Burra.

According to one of the world's leading experts on animal behaviour, Temple Grandin PhD, just because your “Fluffy” is the cutest, sweetest-natured little mutt when he's around you and your family, he isn't automatically going to be the same, harmless creature when he gets out and about. Why? Read on...

Oh, no ... not *my* dog

My dog isn't capable of attacking anything!

According to Grandin, all dogs are capable of being killers. Furthermore, the predatory instinct is actually hard-wired into their brains. The carnage done to the alpacas pictured on the previous page might suggest a frenzied rage on the part of an inherently vicious animal. However, dogs DON'T have to be 'angry' to attack. Research has found that predators, including dogs, enjoy the kill, and enjoy having their predatory killing circuits turned on. Experiments show that they will turn the circuits on themselves if you teach them how.

My dog isn't interested in stalking or hunting!

Not all dogs are equally motivated to hunt prey down and kill it. For example, if you have two dogs, Grandin says, you might find that one of them is more motivated to hunt and kill than the other. But all dogs have the

predatory hunting pattern hard-wired into their brains, and this can sometimes be stimulated by rapid movements. In the case of people, the rapid movement that stimulates an attack can be falling down, bending over suddenly, or dropping a tool. Toddlers are especially prone to making the sort of rapid movements that stimulate the predatory sequence. Farm animals moving in a paddock can also trigger the attack.

My dog wouldn't know how to kill another animal!

Many prey animals, including dogs, bite the prey and then shake it to kill it, or, if the prey is too large, they bite the neck and hold on until the prey (someone's sheep, alpaca or horse) collapses and sometimes dies of suffocation. The "killing bite" is another hard-wired behavioural sequence that all dogs are born with, and is also known as the "quiet bite" because it isn't done in a state of rage, but is actually part of an instinctual behavioural sequence.

The injuries sustained by the victim in these attacks can be horrific.

"Each individual member of a species is born knowing how to perform the killing bite, and each individual member of a species performs the killing bite in the same way" says Grandin.

Grandin stresses that, "left to their own devices, dogs can become dangerous to other dogs, to cats, and to humans, and you can easily train a dog to be hideously ferocious if that's what you want".

My dogs know it's wrong to attack!

The answer, says Grandin is socialisation. You have to teach a puppy that your two year old, or your sheep, or your horse are not prey.

Unfortunately, it's not that simple to teach dogs that NO toddler, NO sheep, and NO horse, is prey, because, Grandin says, dogs DO NOT generalise. They can't automatically go from knowing that, because it's wrong to attack YOUR children, alpacas or sheep, it's wrong to attack ALL children, alpacas and sheep.

"A puppy doesn't automatically generalise don't-attack-Johnny to don't-attack-Joey" says Grandin.

I still don't believe my dog could do such a terrible thing!

Still not convinced "Fluffy" could be responsible? Grandin's work is supported by an Australian study of 1,400 dogs that attacked livestock. The study, reported in a Canadian Government Factsheet, found most of the dog owners,



when approached by authorities, refused to believe their dog could have killed or injured any sheep. They believed their dogs were too small, too young or too friendly to harm sheep.

My dog is the wrong breed/sex/age to attack!

The researchers caught dogs from 3 months to 12 years of age, intact and sterilized dogs of both sexes, purebred and mongrel, all attacking livestock. Most of these dogs were well fed, friendly, family pets, running at large. Selective breeding has not suppressed the tendency of any breed of dog to attack and kill livestock. Animal behaviourists say it is not possible to predict whether a particular dog will attack sheep or not.

My dog goes out alone, he isn't in any pack!

People often think that roving packs of dogs cause most livestock predation problems. It's true that dogs in a pack can be much more aggressive than one dog on its own. However, of the 1,400 dogs caught or observed attacking livestock in the Australian study; 40% of attacks were by single dogs, 51% of attacks by a pair of dogs – usually a male and a female, and just 9% were by 3 or more dogs.

So, while “Fluffy” might be a treasured family pet who appears to be harmless to YOUR livestock, he isn't necessarily going to be harmless when it comes to other people's.

Where's the harm in the dog killing a few animals? He's just having a bit of fun!

Attacks on pets, livestock and wildlife are emotionally traumatising and can be financially devastating. Even if they recover from the horrible trauma of being stalked and mauled by a predator, surviving animals usually do not do well. Pregnant females may abort and injured animals endure pain and must be treated. Their owners must spend time and money to treat attacked animals and to prevent future attacks.

References:

- 1 *Animals in Translation* (2005) Temple Grandin and Catherine Johnson, Bloomsbury.
- 2 *Factsheet 8/02* Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food

YOU are legally responsible for your dog's actions

Landowners are entitled to SHOOT your dog if it threatens livestock

STOP YOUR DOG ROAMING AND KEEP YOUR DOG UNDER CONTROL AT ALL TIMES

Learn more at the BURRA meeting

Friday 25 May 2007

7.00pm Burra Hall

Subject: Dog Attacks – enough is enough

What our community can do to prevent future attacks on pets, livestock and wildlife

See page 4 for more information about our guest speakers

Don't miss this important meeting

Other news

Join BURRA now

Membership is free - yes, FREE!!

Just fill in the form included with this newsletter and return it to the mailbox at 1088 Burra Road, or BURRA, PO Box 775, Queanbeyan, NSW, 2620

Boundary Change: Petition sent to the NSW Local Government Minister

BURRA has now lodged the petition and submission to request a boundary change to include Burra, Urila and all of Royalla in the Queanbeyan City Council area.

Thank you to everyone who supported the petition. The final

number of individual signatures was 315 which is in excess of the required 250 or 10% of enrolled voters.

In summary, our grounds for requesting the boundary change were:

- our area has a strong economic, social and political ties with Queanbeyan, and little or no community of interest with Bungendore, Braidwood, or the rest of the Palerang Shire;
- the inability of Palerang Shire to service our area despite massive rates increases;
- the potential for economies of scale if Queanbeyan City Council were to provide our services

We'll keep you informed as the submission progresses.

Volunteer Small Equipment Grants

BURRA has been successful in obtaining a grant from the Federal Government to purchase a projector and screen to help us improve the way we present information to you at our meetings.

Thank you to the Department of Family and Community Services, and to our Federal member, Gary Nairn MP, who phoned us personally to say we had been successful.

BURRA

Burra Urila Residents' and Ratepayers' Association Meeting

Friday 25 May 2007

7.00pm Burra Hall, Burra Road, Burra

(11.6 kms on the right after the Burra Rd turnoff from the Old Cooma Road)

All residents of Burra, Urila, Royalla, Little Burra and Mount Campbell are invited

Subject: Dog Attacks - enough is enough
What our community can do to prevent future attacks on pets, livestock and wildlife

Guest experts:

- Ann and Richie Butler – experienced dog trainers and handlers
- Nerida Hart – the livestock owner's perspective
- Palerang Council – Council's role, nuisance and dangerous dogs

Don't miss this important meeting

Tea, Coffee and light refreshments served