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Little penguin attack at Wynyard could lead to crackdown on pet owners

• Meg Powell

Local News

A crackdown on owners of pets which kill wildlife is on the cards after yet another attack on penguins.

42 little penguins were found dead near Wynyard on Thursday, sparking community outrage and an investigation by the Parks and Wildlife Service. A dog attack was suspected.

Waratah-Wynyard Mayor Robby Walsh said he was devastated by the deaths, and would push for increased surveillance in the area, should the investigation find the attacks were by a dog.

"If it was dogs, we must take a good look at ourselves and what we can do," he said.

"We need physical patrols from rangers and community groups.



Mass attack: 42 little penguin carcasses were discovered at Doctors Rocks on Thursday afternoon.
Picture: Brodie Weeding

"If we have patrols there people will know we're serious about this, we mean business."

He encouraged people to ring the 24 hour emergency phone line for the council if they saw anything.

"This counts as an emergency," he said.

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He also ruled out the possibility of a dog-proof fence.

"Once they get a taste of them, they'll be back... even an elephant fence wouldn't stop them," he said.

"We can't fence off the coast. The responsibility lies with the owners."

Penguin Rehab and Release president Kathy Grieveson said their needed to be clearer dog exclusionary zones.

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Cr Robby Walsh

"There are too many confusing signs around, where dogs are allowed at this hour in this month and not this hour and time," she said.

"In saying that, there are signs at every single access gate to the penguin sanctuary, big signs. There's no excuse for that."

Ms Grieveson said she regularly monitored beaches as a Landcare volunteer.

"Every time we go down to the colony there are dog tracks all through them," she said.

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"If it means fining owners then... that seems to be the only thing that

"If it means fining owners then... that seems to be the only thing that people take notice of - if it hits the back pocket."

Premier Will Hodgman said the State would be reviewing and strengthening relevant laws if necessary.

"We need to ensure the laws are strong enough to deter people from not keeping an eye on their pets," he said.

He said extra rangers were being deployed to danger areas and the government was "elevating all efforts" to look at ways to reduce such incidents.