

Penguin kills 'absolutely preventable'

BY LACHLAN BENNETT

THE repeated slaughter of penguins on the Coast is "absolutely preventable", a Burnie dog owner says.

Grante Parke said he spent six weeks training his Golden Retriever Loui to not attack wildlife and was aware not everyone had the time for that.

But he said dog owners could still do their bit to protect penguins by staying out of conservation zones and keeping dogs on a leash when walking away from the water.

"It comes under education for people about how to train their dogs and what they should be doing to not let things happen," Mr Parke said.

"Obey the signs and obey the rules."

Mr Parke implored dog owners to do the right thing after five penguins were mauled to death at Cooee last week.

Investigators from the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment conducted postmortems and confirmed "the penguins died from injuries consistent with a dog attack".

"Investigations into the incident continue," a spokesman said.

The Cooee attack occurred in a dog-prohibited zone and follows a spate of incidents in recent years.

Dogs are banned from large swathes of the coast, however, there are dog exercise areas at South Burnie



RIGHT APPROACH: Grant Parke and Greg Pennaneach with their dogs Nova and Loui at one of Burnie's dog-friendly beaches. **Picture: Brodie Weeding**

Beach, Wivenhoe Beach, Tioxide Beach and Cooee Creek Beach.

Cooee to Camdale Coast-care coordinator Kathy Grieveson found the latest lot of dead penguins and said the dog-exclusion zones were "designated as such to protect our vulnerable wildlife".

"It's not a matter of demonising the dogs or their owners," she said.

"It's about dogs being in the right places, responsible dog ownership and people being aware that dogs have an impact on their environment."

Ms Grieveson said dogs can have a big impact on wildlife without even attacking them because the scents

they leave on the beach could attract more vicious animals.

She also said the "adrenaline surge" penguins experience when they come face to face with a dog can take a toll of their physical health.

"The animals doesn't even have to be touched. It's just the fear that does it," she said.

Ms Grieveson warned that dog exclusion areas were being monitored and said "severe penalties apply" if dogs are found in protected areas or cause harm to wildlife.

Anyone with information about the Cooee penguin attack is asked to contact the Parks and Wildlife compliance unit on 0488 184 847 and/or Crime Stoppers anonymously on 1800 333 000.