



WAKEFIELD
REGIONAL COUNCIL

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

10 August 2017 to 10 August 2022

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1. Mission Statement

To promote and facilitate responsible ownership of dogs and cats, animal welfare and the benefits of animal companionship focusing on the legitimate needs of pets and their owners while respecting the rights of other members of the community and protecting the environment.

2. Aims

1. Provide for the welfare and safety of dogs and cats.
2. Acknowledge the importance of dogs and cats in society.
3. Promote responsible dog and cat ownership.
4. Encourage the enjoyment of and benefits from dogs and cats by people.
5. Ensure public safety and amenity in relation to dogs and cats.
6. Protect native fauna and flora from the impact of dogs and cats.
7. Ensure the expenditure of registration fees addresses the needs of pet owners as well as domestic animal management issues.

3. Objectives

1. Enforce provisions of Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 and Dog and Cat Regulations 2017, and the amendments to the Act & Regulations being introduced in 2017 & 2018.
2. Enforce identification of dogs and cats and registration of dogs to enable reunion of lost pets with their owners (and control of un-owned dogs and cats).
3. Maintain adequate local impoundment facilities for temporary protection of lost or un-owned animals.
4. Promote mandatory de-sexing and micro-chipping of dogs and cats through differential registration fees and incentive schemes, education and enforcement to comply with legislation.
5. Formulate and implement an education campaign to facilitate responsible pet ownership.
6. Provide adequate and appropriate areas for off-leash running exercise of dogs.

4. The Law/Guidelines

Substantial changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 were passed in Parliament during July 2016. The main changes relate to:

Microchipping - introducing a requirement for all dogs and cats to be microchipped by the proposed age of three months from 1 July 2018.

Desexing - introducing a requirement to desex all dogs and cats born after the proposed date of 1 July 2018 and by the proposed age of six months.

Breeders – introducing a requirement that a person must not sell a dog or cat they have bred unless they are registered as a breeder with the Dog and Cat Management Board.

Sellers – introducing a requirement for certain information to be provided to the buyer.

Council powers – providing councils, which are responsible for dog and cat management in their local areas, with greater powers to administer and enforce the Act.

Assistance Dogs – changing who can accredit animals

The responsibilities for dog and cat management in South Australia are prescribed in the Dog and cat Management Act 1995. Under the Act Councils are required to administer and enforce the provisions relating to dogs within its area. Prescribed responsibilities include the appointment of a Registrar, maintenance of a Dog Register, the appointment of an authorised person and to make arrangements for dogs and cats seized, and its other obligations under the Act. Councils are also able to make By-Laws relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area.

The Act also provides for the appointment of the Dog and Cat Management Board, which has responsibilities to plan, promote, and advise on effective management of dogs and cats in the State, to monitor Councils management of their responsibilities, to issue Guidelines for Councils, to advise and assist Councils to undertake their responsibilities. The Board also has a role to provide advice to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment and Conservation to keep the Act under review, to undertake research into companion animal management and to provide education programs for Authorised Persons and community awareness information.

While these provisions provide the legal framework for the Councils responsibilities and the penalties that can be imposed on dog owners for non compliance, this Plan seeks to implement a balanced approach that caters to everyone's needs, that will not only benefit dogs and their owners as a group with legitimate needs, but also the wider community as well as those charged with the responsibility of animal management By-Laws.

5. Animal Management Strategy:

A. Pet Ownership

There are three factors, which contribute to successful pet ownership. They are:

- a) The *Owner*, who needs to be aware of responsibilities of pet ownership, to ensure that the dog is registered, microchipped, immunized, and de sexed. The owner is also responsible to ensure that the dog is trained, and to be aware of the dogs behaviour at all times, including when away from the home such as at work. The owner is also responsible to ensure that the dog has adequate food, water and shelter and that the dog is regularly exercised.
- b) The *Breed* determines the size, and often the temperament of the dog and its susceptibility to genetic defects. When selecting a pet it is important to seek appropriate advice on the soundness of animals being considered, and their suitability to the home / yard that the dog will be kept in, and the family that the dog will be joining, particularly if small children are involved.
- c) The *Home environment* is made up of the part of the home that the dog will have access to. In most cases this will include an enclosed yard and possibly part of the house. Important factors are the adequacy of the fencing, whether the dog can see out of the yard through a gate, adequacy of food, water and shelter, and whether there are children, closeness of neighbors, and other dogs and access to on/off leash exercise areas are all important factors.

Successful pet ownership has both financial and time commitments and it is therefore important that people contemplating pet ownership endeavour to match their choice of pet for their particular home and family circumstances.

Strategy:

That people contemplating obtaining a dog be encouraged to consider the factors affecting the suitability of successful pet ownership in their particular circumstances, that sources of this information may include:

- Advice being available from the Councils Authorised Person.
- Advice that Online information regarding breeds and assistance in pet selection is available on:
 - The Dog and Cat Management Board's Good Cat SA (<https://www.facebook.com/GoodCatSA/>) and Good Dog SA (<http://www.facebook.com/gooddogsau/>)
 - The Dog and Cat Management Board of SA (www.dogandcatboard.com.au)

To discourage people from obtaining dogs and cats from other than registered breeders, and to ensure that the dog/cat is sound from defects, immunized, microchipped and de-sexed.

That people contemplating obtaining a dog be encouraged to become familiar with the responsibilities of dog ownership prior to obtaining a dog.

Council will inform and educate people in regards to the above strategies, by using Councils Website, Newsletter, other media resources as required and also with day to day contact with the public.

B. Dogs in Public Places (On Leash Areas / Off Leash Areas)

While the Act provides that a dog can be in a public place provided that it is under the effective control of a person, and that effective control will be by means of a chain, cord or leash not more than two metres in length. The Act also provides that a dog can be in a "Park" provided that it is under effective control by command, the dog being in close proximity to the person and the person being able to see the dog at all times.

"Park" as defined by the Act: "A park, garden, reserve or similar public open space, or foreshore area, within the area of a Council".

Strategy:

Council will be active in identifying "Park Areas" suitable for "Off Leash Areas" and "Park Areas" to be "On Leash Areas" and may also define areas where "Dogs are prohibited". These areas will be identified as such by means of clear signage. These areas will be identified and discussed with the local area management groups. These areas will be identified and continue to be provided as community requirements change during the period of this plan. Councils Authorised Person's will regularly patrol these areas to ensure that dog owners are keeping their dogs under effective control or if the dogs are wandering at large.

The principles that have been applied to determine those circumstances are:

- Where there is a congregation of people and traffic movements
- Where there is a congregation of children
- Where there is a congregation of families in a recreational setting

C. Identification/Registration

The cornerstone of successful domestic animal management is identification and that includes microchipping and registration. The purpose of registration fees are used to fund important dog management services and initiatives in the community, including:

- To fund animal management programs;
- To allow lost pets to be reunited with their owners;

- To encourage responsible animal management through discounted registration fees;

In recent years, Council officers have undertaken a registration drive by doorknocking within the Council area on a town by town basis. This approach will be continued.

Council will continue to promote various issues and programs, including microchipping & desexing, through local media and its own Newsletter.

Strategy:

To continue to promote responsible dog and cat ownership by:

- Enforce legal requirements such as identification and registration.
- Educate animal owners about community issues such as roaming, nuisance, faeces disposal and environmental damage caused by dogs and cats.
- Promote and facilitate socialisation and training of dogs, especially puppies
- Promote de-sexing, including contribution to concessional schemes.
- Display information regarding Dog Registration on Councils Website, Councils Newsletter and Local Papers.
- Display Council Signage with Dog Registration Renewal advice.

D. Wandering at Large

A dog will be taken to be 'wandering at large' when it is in a public place (other than a park) or a private place without the consent of the owner and no person is exercising effective control of the dog by means of a physical restraint no more than 2 metres in length, or if in a park, and no person is exercising effective control by command and the dog being in close proximity to the person and the person being able to see the dog at all times. The owner, or person who is responsible for the dog wandering at large, has committed an offence and is responsible for the prescribed penalties under the Act.

A dog wandering at large can be a threat to members of the public, and Council is aware that serious attacks can arise in these circumstances. Council will therefore implement strategies to minimize its occurrence in the community.

The Council will use two strategies to approach wandering at large issues in the community. The first is to encourage owners to have adequate fencing and control over their dog. The second is that council staff will take actions to manage dogs 'wandering at-large in the community.'

Strategy:

1. That owners be made aware of their responsibilities to:
 - Register their dog by advertising the registrations are due, on the Council website, Council Newsletter, Local papers and Council Signs.
 - Authorised Officers will give advice to owners if the dog has escaped due to inadequately fenced property and how better to control their dog.
 - To keep their dog under effective control when in a public place.
2. That Council's dog management officer:
 - Conduct random patrols of all public areas and detain dogs wandering at large.
 - Respond to calls from the general public of a dog wandering at large, & assess the complaint to follow Councils & LGA's standard operating procedures for dogs wandering at large.
 - Return the dog to the owner where possible.
 - Impound un-identified dogs in accordance with the Act.
 - Ensure that unclaimed dogs that are suitable to be pets are taken to the Animal Welfare League or similar authority for re homing, and dogs which are unsuitable for re homing are euthanased in a humane manner.
 - Encourage compliance by giving warnings for first offences of dogs wandering at large, which are of a minor nature where no harm to a person or property has occurred. Penalties prescribed by the Act may be applied for re-offenders.

E. Barking Dogs

Barking dog complaints are one of the most difficult and time-consuming areas of Council responsibility. Barking dog complaints are subjective depending on an individual's tolerance for dog noise. Council is obligated to investigate and resolve this type of complaint. In order for Council to resolve the complaint they require the full cooperation from the complainant to collect meaningful evidence suitable to a Court of Law. In order to do this Council's Authorised person has developed a standard procedure that he follows for all dog noise nuisance complaints.

The complainant must follow these standard procedures, as failure to do so will result in the matter being set aside by Council. On receipt of a complaint Council will provide information to the dog owner about their responsibility in regards to noise nuisance. If the noise nuisance continues Council Officers will investigate further and supply diaries to the complainant and other relevant neighbours (for evidence collection). If and when the diaries are returned, further investigation will follow. Upon substantiation the Council will take the appropriate course of action.

Strategy:

That Council continue with its Policy for the investigation of noise nuisance complaints. That Council continues with the education brochure for the dog owner and complainant to be sent out in the event of a complaint regarding dog noise nuisance. Council will continue to educate the public with issues in the Council Newsletter and on Council's Website

F. Dog Attacks/Harassment

All dog attacks/harassments must be recorded and investigated. In order to reduce the incidents of dog attacks/harassments Council must educate the public to act responsibly. The issue of dog attacks and harassment is of great concern to the general community, particularly in relation to children and the elderly.

Also of great concern is the number of unreported attacks and the fact that the majority of attacks occur on private property.

While a minority of dogs are involved in attacks and harassment, all dogs have the potential to bite, regardless of size, age, breed and temperament, particularly in situations where they are frightened, dominant, protective or possessive. How to avoid being bitten or how to read a dog's body language are important issues on which to educate the public.

Strategy:

That Council continues to collate statistics related to dog attacks and harassment. Examine the types of breeds of dog in the Council area to determine any trends applicable. Educate the public how to be more responsible with dog control. Promote the level of risk relating to litigation and public safety.

Ensure all dog incidents/attacks are recorded on DCMB incident reporting system.

Council offers a discount off dog registration for dogs which have passed obedience training with a qualified trainer/ obedience club to encourage owners to understand their dog and its behaviour.

Statistics recorded is provided to the DCMB.

Education of the public by advice given, also contact with their Vets

Issuing Control Orders for the different severities of the attacks.

Authorised Person maintains a good relationship with the Local Vet.

G. Dog Faeces in Public Places

The management of dog faeces is an important environmental and health issue. Anecdotally, large amounts of dog faeces pollute our waterways and public places each year and it is an issue on which the community has strong feelings. Although the responsibility lies with the dog owners an increasing number of Councils are providing leadership in this area by providing dog tidy bags

to promote the picking up of dog faeces. It is widely acknowledged that Councils that provide faeces removal dispensers dramatically reduce the incidence of discarded faeces in the community. These problems will be reduced by placing dispensers in areas of high visibility such as, Sporting Ovals, reserves, walking trails and any other area they are considered to be necessary. It is also an offence for dog owners or the persons in control of the dog not to clean up dog faeces in public places. It is also a breach of Councils By-Law if a person with a dog does not carry a suitable container/receptacle for the collection of dog faeces.

Strategy:

That Council implement strategically placed signage to encourage responsible dog ownership in the area of faeces removal. That Council continues to provide dispensers and dog tidy bags, as required in parks and areas where people frequently walk dogs. To improve the management of dog faeces in public places. Councils Authorised persons to randomly monitor parks/footpaths where faeces are a problem and to take the appropriate action by issuing expiations or warnings to the dog owners who do not pick up after their dog.

Install signage advising it is an offence, in areas where faeces is an identified issue.

H. Provide for the Welfare and Shelter for Dogs

Ensure that impounded dogs are returned to owners as soon as practical. Ensure that all impounded dogs have clean safe facilities while impounded. Council dog handling facilities are currently of a particularly good standard. Council is currently considering the relocation of the Balaklava Pound and updating it, into a Works Depot to be built in a industrial area, which is being developed. The Snowtown pound is currently used as a temporary holding facility until the dogs can be transferred to the Balaklava pound.

To ensure that the Council operates its dog handling facilities in accordance with the DCMB Guideline for Council facilities used for the detention of dogs and cats under the Dog and Cat Management Act.

Strategy:

That Council continue to provide the welfare and shelter of impounded dogs and conducts regular reviews of pounds for compliance.

Council Authorised Officer's will ensure impound register records are kept for all impounded dogs. Records are also kept at the pound for every dog regarding feeding, cleaning, dates, and description.

I. Domestic Cat Management

Under the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 an unidentified cat can be trapped when found wandering on private property. If the occupier traps the cat and it is identifiable, the cat must be released unless the cat is more than one kilometre from a genuine place of residence. Under the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Regulations 2017, a cat will be taken to be identified by way of a collar with ownership details or by way of a microchip. The Council currently has a number of cat traps available for loan to residents. A \$20 refundable deposit is required. Liability for the correct use of the traps is with the resident. Residents must dispose of unidentified cats in accordance with the Act. A person who traps an unidentified cat must deliver it within 12 hours to a registered vet, RSPCA, AWL, a facility that is nominated by council and approved by the Board. Any trapping must be done humanely and in accordance with the Animal Welfare Act 1985, and a person who traps a cat is not able to dispose of it themselves (unless they are one of the authorised people listed under section 63 of the Dog and Cat Management Act. The present system used by Council is working well and continues with the following strategy.

Strategy:

1. Continue to promote responsible cat ownership in the community by:
 - Educating owners to ensure that cats have an identification collar and microchip
 - Council to make owners aware of the mandatory requirement to ensure that their cat is de-sexed & Microchipped. Council will advertise this on the Council website, Council Newsletters & Local papers and with any Posters etc. that are supplied to make the public aware.
 - Encourage owners to be responsible for their cat's behaviour and take positive timely action to avoid nuisance to neighbours and damage to property.
 - Mandatory microchipping of all cats and dogs
 - Mandatory desexing (for dogs and cats born after 1 July 2018) which has been proposed in the draft Regulations
 - If Cats need to be impounded Council will use the local Vet and make arrangements with AWL if required. For Re homing or euthanizing, unowned cats, as appropriate.
 - Council keeps records of all complaints received about nuisance cats.
2. Provide traps for residents experiencing problems with stray cats.

J. Benefits of Pet Ownership

There is a wealth of scientific evidence to support the benefits of owning pets and their use in therapy. However, until recently this evidence has not been considered by local government, which has focused instead on the negative aspects alone.

Evidence of a link between pet ownership and better health has been demonstrated by a range of different studies. More work needs to be done to determine whether this link is causal or merely correlational (ie: do pet owners share some other factor which yields health benefits?), and not all studies demonstrate a link between pet ownership and better health outcomes. However, as the evidence mounts, the public health profession is starting to take note, eg:

- The National Health and Medical Research Council's Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Overweight and Obesity is considering dog walking as one key to getting overweight and obese people moving.

Dogs encourage people to enjoy the outdoors. They have been shown to stimulate conversation between strangers in public places and they improve people's sense of security - both in the home and with their owner in public places. Pets are also wonderful companions, in some cases helping combat loneliness and social alienation. These benefits are as important for the elderly and single person households as they are for households with children.

Part of the challenge involves removing barriers to owning pets.

Local Government has a role to play in harnessing these benefits - not to encourage people to buy a pet but to even up the balance in the consideration of domestic animals issues and by removing unnecessary barriers to pet ownership.

Strategy:

Continue to promote the benefits to the community of responsible pet ownership with the Dog and Cats Management Boards publication "You and Your Dog" and "You and Your Cat" and other relevant publications.

K. Education / Promotion

Education in the animal control area has many facets. It includes education of pet owners as well as training of the pets (usually dogs). Another focus receiving attention is educating other people about how to behave around dogs. Within each category there are further segments, eg pet owners may be adults or children and as required in the Act the Child must be 16 years or older to register a dog; they may also be prospective owners. Council will encourage and assist where possible with training programs and obedience training of dogs. This may be by way of Grant applications or other funding that may become available. Council will also assist with public awareness of these groups by free advertising in the Council Newsletter.

Different programs cater for different needs; and Council needs to target its education activities based on a careful assessment of the needs of the whole community, bearing in mind the need to complement and avoid overlapping or duplication with education activities of the Dog and Cat Management Board.

Strategy:

1. To continue to educate the community on the responsibilities of pet ownership by:
 - Mailing out renewal notices to all registered dog owners in late June. Include with that notice information on the responsibilities of pet ownership.
 - Advertising dog registration requirements in the local media and in Council Newsletter.
 - Promoting in the media and in Council Newsletter dogs in public places, on-leash and off-leash areas policies and the need to exercise dogs for successful pet management.
 - Providing information to the media and Council Newsletter on how to act around dogs
 - Providing information to the media and Council Newsletter of dog training classes in the community
2. Provide information to the media and Council Newsletter on when Council is planning dog registration door-knocks to encourage voluntary dog registration.
3. Provide information to the media and Council Newsletter on the factors of successful pet ownership and where information is available to assist people select the right pet for them.

L. Enforcement

The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995, requires the Council to enforce the provisions of the Act in the area of the Council. The approach of the Council in the first instance will be to encourage people to accept their responsibilities of pet ownership and comply with the provisions of the Act voluntarily.

However the community requires that public places are monitored to ensure that the provisions of the Act are complied with, and that a authorised person is available to respond to concerns of the community and breaches of the Act. It is Council's responsibility to make arrangements for the provision of these services that are efficient and effective and that employ Best Practice.

Council has found from past practice that these services are best provided by Council employees, who are able to represent all facets of Council's Animal Management Policies and at the same time supplement other compliance responsibilities of the Council.

Strategy:

Council will continue to enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act in its Council Area by:

- Council will continue to have a Registrar and at least one dog management officer and will ensure that these officers are trained to undertake their respective duties.
- Council will maintain a Dog Register, which is current and represents the known ownership and dog details of all dogs in the community.
- Council's Authorised person's will patrol and monitor all public places for compliance with the provisions of the Act
- Council's Authorised person's will respond to calls / complaints from members of the public regarding possible non-compliance with the provisions of the Act.
- Council Authorised person's will be encouraged to re-enforce examples of responsible pet ownership.

6. Resources

The Act requires that revenues raised from the provisions of the Act shall be applied to animal management of the area.

Revenue is derived from two principle sources, from registrations and from expiation fees and fines for breaches to the provisions of the Act. Dog expiation fees and fines are set down by the Act and Regulations. Council therefore has little scope to increase revenues from this source other than achieve a high level of dog registration and monitor the area for breaches of the Act.

7. Five Year Strategy

1. To continue to increase dog registrations by reducing the number of unregistered dogs until the registration level per thousand population is the highest in the group of similar Councils by size and location.
2. To fully expend the revenues from the Act on the implementing of Council's responsibilities under the Act.
3. To continue to allocate part of the expenditure to support pet selection awareness, dog training, benefits of pet ownership (includes cats) and community awareness of how to act around dogs.

8. Measurement of Performance.

Wakefield Regional Council wants to ensure the performance of its Animal Management area, and in doing so, have the following Key Performance Indicators (KPI's).

1. That at least 85% of dog registration renewals are posted out within 7 business days from the 1st of July each year.
2. That at least 80% of dog complaints received are followed up within 7 business days of notification to Council.
3. In relation to public education and advice, that at least six articles a year are placed in the Council Newsletter and or in newspapers in relation to Animal Management.
4. KPI linked to Page 4 (c) Strategy
Re: Increase of De-sexing, Micro-chipping and or Training, to publish the Fee Schedule in local media, Newsletter and Council Website, highlighting discounts for De-sexed, Micro-chipped and or Trained dogs, no later than 1 June each year.
5. KPI : To increase Registration numbers by at least 2% each year
As per KPI (4) above, also by placing signage throughout the Council area highlighting the Due Dates for Dog Registration and the Late Fee. This is also to be advertised in conjunction in the Council Newsletter and in the above mentioned media release. (Fee Schedule)
6. KPI : Decrease in faeces Complaints
Council will supply Dispensers and bags for owners to pick-up dog faeces.
These will be placed in Public Parks, Walking Trails, Ovals and other areas where they may be required.
7. Increase in Socialisation / Training Percentages.
By continued communication with our local dog training clubs, to provide booklets, and information on the implementation and importance of socialisation or training. To liaise also with the local vet in relation to all Dog & Cat Management issues.
8. KPI Link with Page 4(c) Strategy
Community Education Issues
An increase in community awareness will be achieved by the provision of information either "in person", by booklets, pamphlets, newsletter articles or local media release, with a particular focus on community issues such as roaming, nuisance, faeces disposal and environmental damage caused by Cats & Dogs.
9. KPI Link with Page 5
Dogs wandering at large Strategy (1) A decrease of dogs wandering at large by raising community awareness of the rights and responsibilities of dog ownership via: New resident information packs to include Dog and Cat Management information, provision of printed information in the form of: Brochure, Pamphlet, Newsletter and Local Media release in conjunction with random patrols by Councils Animal Management Officer educating owners of their responsibilities under the Act.
10. To increase the number of dogs returned to the owner.
An increase of dogs returned to the owner will be a flow effect from the Registration Awareness Strategy. This is due to the anticipated increase in numbers of dogs being Micro-chipped and the increase in Registration, following the further Community Education. This is in conjunction with the dog wandering at large Strategy.

11. KPI linked with Page 6 Barking Dog Strategy
Authorised Person following the Standard Operating Procedures as highlighted in this Strategy will increase the number of cases being resolved prior to a Formal Complaint being made.
12. Decrease in the number of Dog Attacks
A decrease in the number of dog attacks is anticipated via flow effect from three key areas;
(1) Increase in socialisation and training refer to KPI 7.
(2) Community Education issues refer to KPI 8.
(3) Decrease in number of dogs wandering at large refer to KPI 9
13. Promote Micro-chipping of Dogs & Cats KPI linked to Page 8 Strategy.
Promote the Micro-chipping & Desexing of Dogs & Cats via consultation with Local Vet Clinics, and breeders.
The provision of printed information in relation to cat related issues (also included in the "Welcome Packs"), and information provided to customers in relation to identification details on collars and advise customers to preferably fit collars with a bell to help preserve wildlife.

APPENDIX A: Table of on-leash, off-leash, and dog prohibited areas

ON-LEASH PARKS	
Location/Address	Comments
Ralli Park, Balaklava Apex Park, Balaklava Liptrot Trail, Balaklava Centenary Park, Snowtown Pepper Tree Trail, Brinkworth Sporting Ground, Brinkworth Padnaindi Reserve, Blyth Silky Pratt Park, Owen Owen Walking Trail, Owen Lochiel Sporting Ground, Lochiel Light River Reserve, Hamley Bridge Apex Park, Hamley Bridge Pool Reserve, Port Wakefield Sporting Ground, Port Wakefield	

OFF-LEASH PARKS	
Location/Address	Comments
<i>Lions Walking Trail, Balaklava</i>	<i>Dogs permitted off-leash at all times.</i>

DOG PROHIBITED AREAS	
Location/Address	Comments
<i>Lindsay Park, Owen</i>	<i>Dogs prohibited at all times.</i>