



2013 - 2018

# Animal Management Plan

Adopted September 2013

Creating a Better  
*Future* with pride



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### Public Submissions

The community were invited to have input into this plan through a community engagement process.

The engagement process, which included advertisements, website and social media was undertaken between July-September 2013.

At the close of the engagement process, no submissions were received.

Council adopted this plan at its 17 September 2013 meeting.

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## Executive Summary

In 2005 a reference group developed an Animal Management Plan for the Coorong District Council as per the requirements of 26A of the Dog and Cat Management Act 2005. This current Animal Management Plan 2013-2018 will continue to guide animal management by the Coorong District Council over the next 5 years.

The Plan's intent is to promote and facilitate responsible ownership of dogs and cats to meet the needs of pets and their owners while respecting the rights of other members of the community and protecting the environment. This strategy will provide Council with a sound basis and direction from which it can plan, co-ordinate and make future decisions to meet the needs of the community over the next 5 years.

The implementation of this Plan is an action in Council's 2012-2016 Strategic Management Plan, which addresses a strategy to ensure Council meets its responsibilities under the Dog & Cat Management Act and provides adequate and appropriate dog control.

## The Law and Guidelines

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 a dog management officer and to make arrangements for dogs seized, as well as its other obligations under the Act. A Council is 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, and to advise and assist Councils to undertake their responsibilities.

The Board also has a role to provide advice to the Minister to keep the Act under review, to undertake research into companion animal management and to provide education programs for dog management officers, and to provide community awareness information. The Act also provides that a Council may appoint a cat management officer for its area of responsibility.

While these provisions provide the legal framework for the Council's 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 the needs of both pet owners and the wider community

## Mission Statement

The original mission statement of the Animal Management Plan was *“to recognise that animals are part of the community, contributing to its quality of life, and to ensure that the needs of animals and their owners are accommodated while recognising the differing needs of non animal owners of the community.”*

## Plan Aims

- Provide effective management of dogs and cats within the community.
- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- Ensure public safety and amenity in relation to dogs and cats.
- Provide for the welfare and safety of impounded dogs and cats.
- Ensure the expenditure of registration fees is directed to domestic animal management issues.

## Plan Objectives

- 1. Provide effective management of dogs and cats within the community.**
  - 1.1 Ensure that Officers of Council effectively administer the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.
  - 1.2 Encourage education of dog and cat owners.
  - 1.3 Maximise dog registration.
  - 1.4 Minimise the number of dogs wandering at large.
  - 1.5 Enforce identification of dogs and encourage the identification of cats.
  - 1.6 Encourage the community to report all dog attacks and harassments to Council.
  - 1.7 Provide suitable on-leash and off leash areas.
  - 1.8 Maximise the understanding of the roles of the Dog Management Officer and Council in the community.
  - 1.9 Maintain data collection to better understand dog and cat management issues.
- 2. Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership**
  - 2.1 Provide education material to residents, students and visitors to the Council area.
  - 2.2 Enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act.
- 3. Ensure public safety and amenity in relation to the activities of dogs and cats**
  - 3.1 Prevent, as far as possible, the following detrimental impacts of dogs and cats;
    - Barking dogs
    - Wandering dogs
    - Dog attacks/harassment
    - Dog faeces in public places
    - Nuisance caused by cats
- 4. Provide for the welfare and safety of impounded dogs and cats**
  - 4.1 Ensure that impounded dogs are returned to owners as soon as practical.
  - 4.2 Ensure that all impounded dogs and cats have clean safe facilities while impounded.
- 5. Ensure the expenditure of registration fees is directed to domestic animal management issues**
  - 5.1 Conduct annual reviews of income and expenditure to ensure that Council is using best practice with available funds.

# Strategies

## Strategy 1

### Provide effective management of dogs and cats within the community

#### 1.1 Ensure that officers of Council effectively administer the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

The strategies to ensure that officers of Council operate within the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act are:

- To ensure that relevant staff have the necessary experience, knowledge and skills to perform the required functions;
- Provide for ongoing training and development of skills; and
- Provide appropriate policy and procedural guidance.

#### Recommendations

- 1.1.1 That Council continues to review staff training and development needs as an integral part of annual performance reviews.
- 1.1.2 That Council continues to include animal management training and development needs in their annual training plan.
- 1.1.3 That Council review its current policy and procedures relating to animal management annually.

#### 1.2 Encourage Education of dog and cat owners

Through annual statistics it is known that registration of dogs and general compliance with the Act is relatively high throughout the community. Council must do everything in its power to ensure that residents and visitors understand their obligations to act as responsible pet owners.

#### Recommendations

- 1.2.1 That Council continues to provide information and educational literature through the community newsletter, council offices, and schools and with mail outs of registration renewal reminders.
- 1.2.2 That Council encourages dog obedience training.

#### 1.3 Maximise dog registration

Legislation in SA requires all dogs of or over 3 months of age must be registered. Councils cannot expect to obtain an acceptable level of dog management without obtaining maximum registration. This can therefore be seen to be an important issue and is the key factor controlling all other effective and successful dog management strategies. Dog registration ensures that:

- Owners are identified as well as their dogs.
- Appropriate funding is available for Councils to carry out responsibilities under the Act.
- Responsible dog owners and the rest of the community do not have to financially support irresponsible and neglectful dog owners.

#### Recommendations

- 1.3.1 That Council conducts surveys on dogs not re-registered through various methods.
- 1.3.2 That Council continues to provide registration renewal reminders on an annual basis.

#### **1.4 Minimise number of dogs wandering at large**

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

Under the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act it is an offence to allow a dog to wander at large. A dog will be considered wandering at large if it is in a public place, or a private place without the consent of the occupier, and no person is exercising effective control by way of a physical restraint.

The strategies are in two parts; the first to encourage owners to have adequate fencing and control over their dog and the second is the actions of the Council to the dogs wandering at-large.

##### **Recommendations**

- 1.4.1 That owners be made aware of their responsibilities to;
  - Adequately fence their property to control their dog,
  - Train their dog so as not to leave their premises,
  - Keep their dog under effective control when in a public place.
- 1.4.2 That a dog management officer conducts random patrols of public areas and detain dogs wandering at large.
- 1.4.3 That Council respond to calls from the general public of a dog wandering at large. The priority of the Council will be to return the dog to the owner except where the dog is found to be repeatedly wandering.
  - Unidentified dogs and repeat offenders will be impounded in accordance with the Act.
  - Unclaimed dogs that are suitable as pets will be eligible for distribution to persons seeking a pet, (subject to Council approval). Dogs being re-homed under this program will be required to be registered.
  - Unclaimed dogs, which are unsuitable as pets, will be euthanised.
- 1.4.4 To encourage compliance, the principal dog management officer will give warnings to first offences that are of a minor nature where no harm to a person or property has occurred. Penalties prescribed by the Act will be applied for re-offenders.

#### **1.5 Enforce identification of dogs and encourage identification of cats**

Identification of dogs is imperative to provide sound animal management practices. Residents and visitors to the area must identify their dogs at all times. Generally speaking pet owners within the Council area do not allow their pets to wander at large.

Accidental escape accounts for approximately 90% of dogs wandering at large. Often these dogs are not identified and therefore cannot be returned to the owner. The costs associated with impounding unidentified dogs and cats and the stress this places on the animals and their owners can be avoided.

##### **Recommendations**

- 1.5.1 That Council staff enforce identification of dogs. That Council educate the public regarding the correct identification of dogs and cats.
- 1.5.2 That Council staff encourage cat owners through education of the need to identify their cats so that in the event that it is trapped, it is not deemed to be a stray and consequently destroyed.

## **1.6 Encourage the community to report all dog attacks and harassments to Council**

Knowledge is the Council's best tool to reduce the number of dog attacks that occur in the community. The collection of data will enable Council to understand the situations that lead to such attacks and therefore the community must be encouraged to provide information regarding all attacks regardless of their severity.

### **Recommendations**

1.6.1 That Council continues to promote the reporting of all dog attacks and harassment by dogs on humans and livestock throughout the community.

1.6.2 That Council provides for the formal reporting, in person or via telephone, and follow up, of dog attacks and harassment by dogs, through use of its complaint forms.

## **1.7 Provide suitable on-leash activity areas**

Providing suitable on and off leash activity areas is beneficial to the success of animal management. Dog owners need suitable areas to exercise their dogs safely.

Equally, other members of the community must have the ability to use the amenities without fear of harassment by uncontrolled dogs. In areas such as streets, roads, and places the public congregate such as shopping areas, dogs must be restrained effectively.

Dogs must be restrained effectively in all public places. 'Public place' means a place which the public has access (whether an admission fee is charged or not) and includes streets, roads, footpaths, shopping centre car parks, ovals and sporting arenas.

### **Recommendations**

1.7.1 That Council continues to allow off-leash exercise of dogs at its three dog parks located on Railway Terrace, Taillem Bend, Railway Terrace, Coonalpyn and Dukes Highway, Tintinara.

1.7.2 That it be a requirement that all dogs in public areas eg: road and footpaths, are required to be on a lead. In any other Council reserve besides the above mentioned off leash areas, dogs must be on lead also.

## **1.8 Maximise the public's understanding of the Dog Management Officer and the Council's role in the community**

The role performed by animal management officers and Council is not always fully understood by the general community. Ongoing communication and education can assist in this regard, to avoid possible misunderstanding of animal management initiatives.

### **Recommendation**

1.8.1 That Council continue to regularly inform the public of their role and current animal management issues.

## **1.9 Maintain data collection to better understand dog and cat management issues**

Council must have accurate information in order to fully understand animal management issues. All complaints, and follow up details, are therefore recorded via the complaint form. Actions initiated by staff are recorded on formal incident report sheets all of which are retained, together with correspondence and other records, in a dedicated file in Council's records management system.

### **Recommendation**

1.9.1 That Council continues to maintain accurate data and conduct annual analysis of complaints/actions to identify, report on, and respond to, any trends regarding animal management issues.

## Strategy 2

### Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership

#### 2.1 Provide education material to residents and visitors to the Council area

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

- The *Owner*, who needs to be aware of responsibilities of pet ownership, ensures that the dog is registered, 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. The owner is also responsible to ensure that the dog has adequate food, water and shelter and that the dog is regularly exercised.
- 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.
- 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 shelter, food/water, whether there are children, closeness of neighbours and other dogs, and access to on leash and off leash exercise areas.

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.

#### Recommendations

- 2.1.1 Provide advice that online information regarding breeds and assistance in pet selection is available at Petcare Information and Advisory Service [www.petnet.com.au](http://www.petnet.com.au) or the Dog and Cat Management Board of SA [www.dogandcatboard.com.au](http://www.dogandcatboard.com.au)
- 2.1.2 That people contemplating obtaining a dog or a cat be encouraged to become familiar with the responsibilities of dog or cat ownership prior to obtaining a dog or a cat.
- 2.1.3 That people who obtain a new dog are encouraged to have it trained.

#### 2.2 Enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act

Consistent enforcement of the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act is an important factor in educating the public to act responsibly with their pets.

Responsible pet owners expect irresponsible pet owners to be dealt with through the provisions of the Act. Effectively there cannot be an incentive to act responsibly with our pets unless there is a disincentive for those who are not responsible.

#### Recommendation

- 2.2.1 That the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act be consistently enforced in accordance with Council policy.

## Strategy 3

### Ensure public safety and amenity in relation to the activities of dogs and cats

#### 3.1 Reduce the following detrimental impacts of dogs and cats

##### **Barking dogs**

Barking dog complaints are one of the most difficult and time consuming areas of Council responsibility and are subjective, depending on an individual's tolerance for dog noise. However, Council must investigate and resolve this type of complaint.

In order for Council to resolve the complaint they require full cooperation from the complainant to collect meaningful evidence suitable to a Court of law, if the complaint cannot be readily resolved with the owner of the dog(s). On receipt of a complaint Council will provide information to the dog owner and, if the problem continues, diaries to the complainant. If and when the diaries are returned, and the complaint substantiated, Council will take the appropriate course of action.

##### **Recommendations**

- 3.1.1 That Council continues to follow the above procedure for the investigation of noise nuisance complaints.
- 3.1.2 That Council will provide educational material to dog owners to assist in changing barking behaviour in the event of a complaint regarding dog noise nuisances.

##### **Dog attacks/harassment**

As previously stated all dog attacks/harassment must be recorded and investigated. In order to reduce the incidence of dog attacks 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.

While a minority of dogs are involved in attacks and harassment, all dogs have the potential to bite, regardless of size, age, breed or 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.

##### **Recommendations**

- 3.1.3 That Council collates statistics related to dog attacks to determine any trends applicable.
- 3.1.4 That Council provides the opportunity to people who have been attacked/harassed, or whose stock has been attacked/harassed, to report the incident.
- 3.1.5 That Council maintains a history of dogs that have attacked/harassed and makes appropriate Orders where considered necessary.

##### **Dog faeces in public places**

The management of dog faeces is an important environmental and health issue and is an issue on which the community has strong feelings. Ongoing education on responsible dog ownership including the need to prevent dogs fouling public places and private property is required.

##### **Recommendation**

- 3.1.6 That Council continues to educate the public on all aspects of responsible dog ownership throughout each year.

##### **Nuisance caused by cats**

Under the provision of the Dog and Cat Management Act an unowned cat can be trapped when found wandering on private property. If an occupier traps a 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 Act a cat must be identified by way of a collar with ownership details or by way of a microchip.

##### **Recommendation**

- 3.1.7 That Council continues to provide cat traps to residents experiencing problems with cats.

## Strategy 4

### Provide for the welfare and safety of impounded dogs and cats

#### 4.1 Ensure that impounded dogs are returned to owners as soon as practical

Council quickly follows the procedures laid down in the Act when identified and unidentified dogs are impounded, to provide the owner with the opportunity to have the dog released from the pound as soon as possible.

##### Recommendation

4.1.1 That Council continues to diligently attempt to contact dog owners as quickly as possible after a dog is impounded.

#### 4.2 Ensure that all impounded dogs and cats have clean safe facilities while impounded

Council maintains and operates its dog holding facilities in accordance with the Guideline for the Keeping of Dogs and Cats Under the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 - Management and Welfare as set down by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

##### Recommendation

4.2.1 That Council continue the above practice and conducts an annual review of its pounds for compliance.



## Strategy 5

### Ensure the expenditure of registration fees is directed to domestic animal management issues

#### 5.1 Conduct annual reviews of income and expenditure to ensure that Council is using best practice with available funds

Under the provisions of the Act Council must utilise money generated from dog registrations in the area of dog management. The implementation of this plan is a clear demonstration of Council's desire to fulfil this obligation.

Council maintains appropriate records of income and expenditure in this area and provides a budget to the Dog & Cat Management Board each year.

#### **Recommendation**

5.1.1 That Council continues to review dog management expenditure needs, from dog registration income, as part of its annual budget development processes.



## Key Performance Indicators

Objective	Goals	Actions	KPI'S
Provide effective management of dogs and cats within the community.	<p>Ensure that Officers of Council operate within the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.</p> <p>Ensure that Officers operate within predetermined guidelines in accordance with the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.</p> <p>Encourage education of dog and cat owners.</p> <p>Maximise dog registration.</p> <p>Minimise dogs wandering at large.</p> <p>Enforce identification of dogs.</p> <p>Provide suitable on and off leash activity areas.</p> <p>Maximise the public's understanding of the Dog Management Officers and the Council's role in the community.</p> <p>Introduce data collection to better understand dog and cat management issues.</p>	<p>Management Conduct Staff reviews annually.</p> <p>Regular audits of the Animal Management Plan annually.</p> <p>Compare registration compliance with previous years.</p> <p>Collect data regarding dogs impounded by Council without current registration.</p> <p>Compare dog attack/harassment reports with previous years.</p> <p>Continue undertaking door knocks for unregistered dogs annually.</p>	<p>Increase to registration figures.</p> <p>Reduction in the amount of overdue notices issued.</p> <p>Reduction in amount of dogs impounded by Council that are not registered.</p> <p>Reduce dog attacks/harassment.</p>
Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.	<p>Provide education material to residents and visitors to the Council area.</p> <p>Enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act.</p>	<p>Collate information regarding education material distributed to residents and visitors.</p> <p>Collect data of expiations issued compared with previous years.</p>	<p>Increase in advertising and education.</p>

Objective	Goals	Actions	KPI'S
Ensure public safety through the reduction of public and environmental nuisances caused by dogs and cats.	Reduce the following detrimental impacts of dogs and cats; Barking dogs Dog attacks/harassment Dog faeces in public places Nuisance caused by cats	Data collection and analysis.	Reduction in the amount of complaints received by Council.
Provide for the welfare and safety of impounded dogs and cats.	Ensure that impounded dogs are returned to owners as soon as practical.  Ensure that all impounded dogs and cats have clean, safe facilities while impounded.  Ensure that off leash areas are suitable for dogs to be exercised.  Off leash areas sign posted.	Data collection and analysis of expiations issued compare with previous years.  Review pound procedures annually.  Conduct risk analysis of off leash areas annually.	100% dogs are returned to their owners.
Ensure the expenditure of registration fees is directed to domestic animal management issues.	Conduct regular reviews of income and expenditure to ensure that Council is using best practice with available funds.	Audit conducted by the Dog and Cat management Board if needed.	100% compliance at DCMB audit.