

# ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

2007 – 2012

Building a Better Community

The logo for Berri Barmera Council features the words "Berri Barmera" in a white, sans-serif font, with a small yellow sun icon above the letter "i" in "Berri". Below this, the word "COUNCIL" is written in a smaller, white, all-caps sans-serif font. A thin blue horizontal line is positioned between "Berri Barmera" and "COUNCIL". The entire logo is set against a dark blue background that is part of a larger curved banner at the bottom of the page.

Berri  
Barmera  
COUNCIL

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## **Executive Summary**

As a result of changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act Council are now required to prepare an Animal management Plan. This plan must cover a five year period.

The objectives of the Act are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats, and
- To promote the effective management of dogs and cats.

The following Mission Statement have been adopted:

**“To recognise that companion 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 pet owners of the community. To ensure that animals are being managed responsibly and humanely at all times while held by the Council.”**

A total of nine objectives have been identified to achieve the objectives of the plan. These objectives are:

- To provide effective management and a suitable environment for dogs and cats within the community
- To promote responsible dog and cat ownership
- To increase public safety through the reduction of public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats
- To provide for the welfare and safety of dogs and cats
- To acknowledge the importance of dogs and cats in society
- To encourage the enjoyment of and benefits from dogs and cats by people.
- To ensure public safety and amenity in relation to dogs and cats
- Protect flora and fauna from the impact of dogs and cats.
- Ensure that the expenditure of registration fees addresses the needs of the pet owners as well a domestic animal management issues.

Numerous strategies have been identified to achieve each of these objectives and are detailed within the Plan.

This draft plan was subject to a process of public consultation in accordance with Councils public consultation policy. Council also sought the comments of the Dog and Cat Management Board on a draft of this plan prior to it being adopted. One representation was received in response to the consultation. Council considered the comments received and where appropriate have made changes to the plan.

## 1. Introduction

The Berri Barmera Council is situated approximately 265 km from the Adelaide CBD and has a population base of around 14500 persons as per the 2001 Census. Townships include Berri, Barmera, Cobdogla, Loveday, Monash, Glossop, Winkie and Overland Corner. The Council covers about 508 square kilometres in area.

During the 2006/07 financial year the Council registered 2522 dogs and impounded 178 dogs, investigated 291 dog attack/harassment and barking dog complaints.

As from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004 significant changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act) were implemented. As a result of these changes the Council is now required to prepare an Animal Management Plan to set the direction for the management of dogs and cats within its area. To satisfy the legislation this plan must cover a five year period.

The objectives of the Act are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats, and
- To promote the effective management of dogs and cats

Animal control has widened into a greater array of contexts following the introduction of the Act. Knowledge of both animal and human behaviours is now a requirement for those working in this field. There is growing recognition that enforcement of laws will not, on its own, result in lasting, voluntary changes in behaviour. It needs to be supplemented by a range of non-regulatory approaches such as public education, improved signage and facilities.

There is now considerable evidence to support our understanding of the benefits of owning pets. This implies a potentially new role for Council in harnessing the benefits of pet ownership or at least maintaining the ability of the community to continue to own dogs and cats. In this new environment, it is essential that Councils take a strategic approach to managing domestic pets in its community.

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 five years. It aims to establish management guidelines where people and their pets can integrate harmoniously within the Berri Barmera community.

## **2. Council's Strategic Plan**

The Council's Strategic Plan has a broad vision that seeks to build a better community. Its mission statement seeks to enhance the quality of life, the natural character and economic potential of the district through sustainable management, service delivery and development opportunities.

Council's corporate objectives seek to drive the vision and mission. The corporate objectives related to social and community development state the following:

- Encourage community participation and active inclusion in Council decisions and activities
- Enhance lifestyle, quality of life and social development
- Ensure effective management of community facilities to meet community needs that includes rationalisation, accessibility and fit for purpose.

This Plan has been developed by Council's Environmental Services department, who are responsible for administering the Act in consultation with the Dog and Cat Management Board. The community's comments were sought in accordance with Council's Public Consultation policy. Any comments received were considered by the Council and where appropriate included in this Plan.

## **3. Relevant Legislation**

The responsibilities for dog and cat management are set out in the Dog and Cat Management Act. Under this act the Council is required to administer and enforce the provisions relating to dogs within its area.

Each Council is required to administer and enforce the provision of the Act in relation to dogs. It must:

- Maintain a register of dogs containing relevant information that must be available for public inspection
- Appoint a suitable person to be the Registrar of Dogs.
- Ensure that the Dog and Cat Management Board is provided with information contained in the registers
- Make arrangements for the issuing/replacement of certificates of registration and registration discs
- Appoint a Dog Management Officer
- Make satisfactory arrangements for the detention of dogs seized under the Act
- Make satisfactory arrangements for fulfilling other obligations under the Act.

Legislation in South Australia requires that all dogs of or over three months of age must be registered. Ensuring that acceptable levels of registration are achieved is a key factor in dog management. Dog registration ensures that:

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

In relation to cats, each council can appoint a Cat Management Officer. The Berri Barmera Council does have a cat management officer however it does not have a registration program for the keeping of cats. Under the Regulations, a cat is considered identified if:

- It has a collar around the neck and the collar or tag secured to the collar is marked with the current address or telephone number of the owner or other person entitled to possession of the cat or,
- The cat has a micro chip implanted in its body containing information that may be used to obtain the current address or telephone number of the owner or other person entitled to possession of the cat and has the letter M tattooed on the inside of either of its ears.

A Cat Management Officer may lawfully seize, detain, destroy or otherwise dispose of an unidentified cat and in some circumstances, an identified cat, in accordance with Part 7 Division 2 and 3 of the Act.

Section 26A of the Act requires that Councils must prepare a plan for the management of dogs and cats in its area.

The Local Government Act allows Councils to create By-laws. In 2006, Council reviewed and adopted the following relevant By-laws:

- By Law No. 1 - Permits and penalties – This allows Council to issue permits and penalties in relation to breaches of its By-Laws.
- By Law No. 5 – Dogs - This places limits on the number of dogs that can be kept on a premises and allows for the management of dogs in public places.

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 the communities needs that will not only benefit dogs and cats and there owners as a group with legitimate needs but also the wider community as well as those responsible for dog and cat management. A copy of the By-Laws is attached at Appendix 1.

#### **4. Mission Statement**

“To recognize that companion 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 pet owners of the community. To ensure that animals are being managed responsibly and humanely at all times while being contained by the Council.”

#### **5. Objectives**

To achieve this Mission, the Plan establishes the following objectives:

- To provide effective management and a suitable environment for dogs and cats within the community
- To promote responsible dog and cat ownership
- To increase public safety through the reduction of public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats
- To provide for the welfare and safety of dogs and cats
- To acknowledge the importance of dogs and cats in society
- To encourage the enjoyment of and benefits from dogs and cats by people.
- To ensure public safety and amenity in relation to dogs and cats
- Protect flora and fauna from the impact of dogs and cats.
- Ensure that the expenditure of registration fees addresses the needs of the pet owners as well a domestic animal management issues.

## **6. Strategies**

### **6.1 To provide effective management and a suitable environment for dogs and cats**

- Review staff training and development to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of animal management practises
- To introduce performance reviews for all staff involved in animal management
- Establish procedural guidelines for all animal management staff to follow.
- Produce a brochure and make it available to the general public detailing their obligations under the Act in relation to dogs and cats.
- To undertake a survey for unregistered dogs
- That dog registration information be sent out with Rates notices.
- That Council staff enforce the identification of dogs
- That Council staff encourage the identification of cats
- That Council implement an education program that targets the reporting of all dog attacks /harassments throughout the community
- That Council make available dog attack/harassment forms and establish procedures
- That Council conduct an audit of all its parks and reserves to ascertain its suitability for off leash dog activities, on lead activities and dog prohibited areas.
- That Council staff undertake public information sessions to inform the public of current animal management issues.
- That Council inform the community of its By-laws on the number of dogs that can be kept at a premise.
- To provide information to the public on enquiry of registered dog breeders in the Council area.

### **6.2 To promote responsible dog and cat ownership.**

- To encourage people who are contemplating obtaining a dog or cat consider the factors affecting the suitability of successful pet ownership in their particular circumstances by referral to an appropriate advisory service
- To discourage people from purchasing dogs and cats other than from a registered breeder to ensure that the animal is sound from defects, immunised and de-sexed.
- To enforce the provisions of the Act as a disincentive for those who are not responsible pet owners.

### **6.3 To increase public safety through the reduction of public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.**

- That Council implements a standard procedure for the assessment of noise complaints (barking dogs)
- That Council prepare an information brochure for dog owners who pets are the subject of barking dog complaints
- That Council collate statistics in relation to dog attacks/harassments.
- That Council will implement strategically placed signs to encourage dog owners to remove faeces.
- Council will investigate the feasibility of providing dispenser and dog tidy bags.
- Provide signage on the location of on/off leash dog areas
- Council will continue to provide cat traps to residents experiencing problems with cats
- To implement procedures for the loan of cat traps

#### **6.4 Provide for the welfare and safety of dogs.**

- Ensure that the pound is maintained in accordance with the Code of Practice for pounds and shelters and with current OHWS standards.
- To provide a new pound
- Relocation /rehousing of suitable unclaimed dogs.

#### **6.5 Acknowledge the importance of dogs and cats in society.**

- Council will promote the benefits of responsible dog and cat ownership within the community.

#### **6.6 Encourage the enjoyment of and benefits from dogs and cats by people.**

- Council will seek to encourage and be involved in the promotion and development of day outs for dog and cat owners within its budgetary constraints.

#### **6.7 Ensure public safety and amenity in relation to dogs and cats**

- Council will conduct regular patrols of the area to ensure compliance with the Act
- Council will facilitate the management of dog and cat faeces in the environment by establishing appropriate means of disposal.

#### **6.8 Protect native flora and fauna from the impacts of dogs and cats.**

- Council will continue to work with National parks officers by providing assistance where required.

#### **6.9 Ensure that expenditure of registration fees addresses the needs of pet owners as well as domestic animal management issues.**

- Conduct regular reviews of income and expenditure to ensure that Council is using best practise with available funds.

#### **6.10 Plans of management relating to dogs and cats**

- Provisions for parks where dogs may be exercised off-leash and for parks where dogs must be under effective control by means of physical restraint, and may include provisions for parks where dogs are prohibited

### **7. Summary**

The Council has been actively seeking to improve its level of services to the community in accordance with this management Plan.

To promote the many issues associated with dogs and cats the Council regularly uses its newsletters to provide information to the broader community. It considers this is an important vehicle for disseminating information. Dog registration renewal notices are sent out with rates notices. Council has also produced a number of information sheets that it has made available to the broader community.

In recognition of the need to provide suitable facilities to hold dogs and cats the Council has set aside monies in the 2007/08 budget to allow for the design and investigation of a new pound. This is to be designed to accommodate the latest standards and facilities to satisfy the relevant requirements and Occupational Health Safety and Welfare issues.

The Council continues to recognise the importance of dogs and cats in the community and seeks to facilitate the development of this social need by establishing and developing the strategies detailed in this report.

**8. Appendix 1**