

THE CITY *of*



## **Animal Management Plan 2007 – 2011**

April 2007

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# 1 Introduction & Summary

This plan has been prepared to guide Council's management of dogs and cats within the City of Unley for the next 5 years (2007-2011).

It follows a recent amendment to the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act) which now requires all Councils to have a 5 year plan in place for the management of dogs and cats no later than July 2007.

To assist with the development of the Plan, Council appointed Virginia Jackson of Harlock Jackson Pty Ltd to prepare the Plan. Virginia works with Councils nationally in this area and has recognised expertise in the developing area of domestic animal management.

The Plan integrates the developing expertise in animal management around Australia with the Council's own investigations to produce a program of action to be undertaken over the next five years (2007-2011). Relevant issues include those prescribed under relevant legislation and by-laws as well as the generally understood notion of responsible pet ownership.

## Structure of the Plan

Section 2 provides a brief overview of animal management in the City of Unley.

Sections 3 and 4 provide the strategic context and framework to the Plan. It includes a vision for animal management in Unley in 2030, an overall goal for animal management, aims and guiding principles. There are 11 Key Issue Areas and these are addressed in Sections 5-15. Each Key Issue Area contains objectives, identification of target groups, a discussion and action plans.

Recommendations for implementing the Plan are provided in Section 16.

## Summary of key recommendations

### Identification of target groups

The Plan identifies target groups because in some cases, non-pet owners or the wider community are the appropriate target group for action (to reduce dog attacks for example we should consider educating children in bite avoidance).

To target the City of Unley's efforts more effectively, the Plan also classifies pet owners into 3 groups:

- existing pet owners;
- new owners; and
- prospective pet owners.

*Existing pet owners* are the core group of pet owners. However their habits are potentially more difficult to change. They are relatively easy to contact because of the data base of registered pet owners.

*New pet owners* (pet under 1 year of age) are potentially more open to new information about responsible pet ownership as they are bringing a new animal into their family. This group will also have several encounters in the first year with a range of external stakeholders as they obtain, immunise, identify, register and train their pets and will often be on the lookout for information on pet ownership. It highlights the importance of developing partnerships with external stakeholders.

*Prospective pet owners* are important because they need to think about appropriate breed selection and the responsibilities of pet ownership before they obtain a pet. However this is the hardest group to target.

### Access to public open space by dogs and their owners

The existing mix of on and off leash and no dog areas is considered to work well and the provisions are not proposed to be changed with the exception of McLeay Park, which should be redesignated from a "Dog Exercise Area" to a "Dog on Leash Area".

The designations within individual parks e.g where the on and off leash and no dog provisions apply are confusing and will need to be reviewed. A signage strategy is also required. It is recommended that a code of conduct be developed for the effective operation of Dog Off Leash Areas.

### Dog faeces management

The Plan recommends Council should not be responsible for providing people with "dog poo" bags. Council should continue to provide "dog poo" bags in designated and high use areas including Dog Exercise Areas but it will be made clear in all communications with dog owners that these are provided as a backup and that owners should provide their own bags.

Council should amend By-law no 3 to require dog owners to carry a bag with them to pick up their dog's faeces. It is recommended that the distribution of pooch pouches will be reintroduced to dovetail with this requirement.

In Year 1-2 of the plan the City of Unley will focus on getting people to take bags with them when they walk their dog. In Year 3-5 the focus will be on getting the people to pick up after their dogs.

## Cat management

It is not proposed to introduce cat controls at this time. Council considers that the introduction of cat controls is something best addressed on a state-wide basis, through changes to the legislation in the Dog and Cat Management Act.

## Education in responsible pet ownership

Education is now integral to animal management. However to be successful, education programs need to be carefully designed and targeted. The City of Unley does not have unlimited resources to spend on education. This aspect should form a major part of the Unley Rangers' role. This may require a review of resources to achieve this.

During the life of this Plan, the City of Unley will focus on:

- Providing information to prospective and new pet owners on responsible pet ownership.
- Encouraging dog owners to remove dog faeces from public places.
- Effective operation of areas where dogs can be exercised off leash, compliance with leash and no dog requirements in other areas.
- Holding an Annual Dog Day Out Festival as a positive way to get the responsible pet ownership message across. This could be held on its own or tied to other local events.

## Partnerships with key external stakeholders

The City of Unley will develop and strengthen partnerships with key external stakeholders. This will maximise the reach of the responsible pet ownership message, particularly during the first year of a pet's life when a new pet owner is likely to have numerous encounters with external stakeholders as they obtain, identify, vaccinate, register and train their pet.

A register of external stakeholders will be developed and a program will be developed for communicating with them and encouraging them to help extend the reach of the responsible pet ownership message.

## Implementing the Plan

The Plan's recommendations have been prioritised and scheduled through 2 phases of implementation over the 5 year horizon.

Phase 1: Short term 1 year.

Phase 2: Medium term 2-4 years.

Phase 3: Longer term 5 years plus.

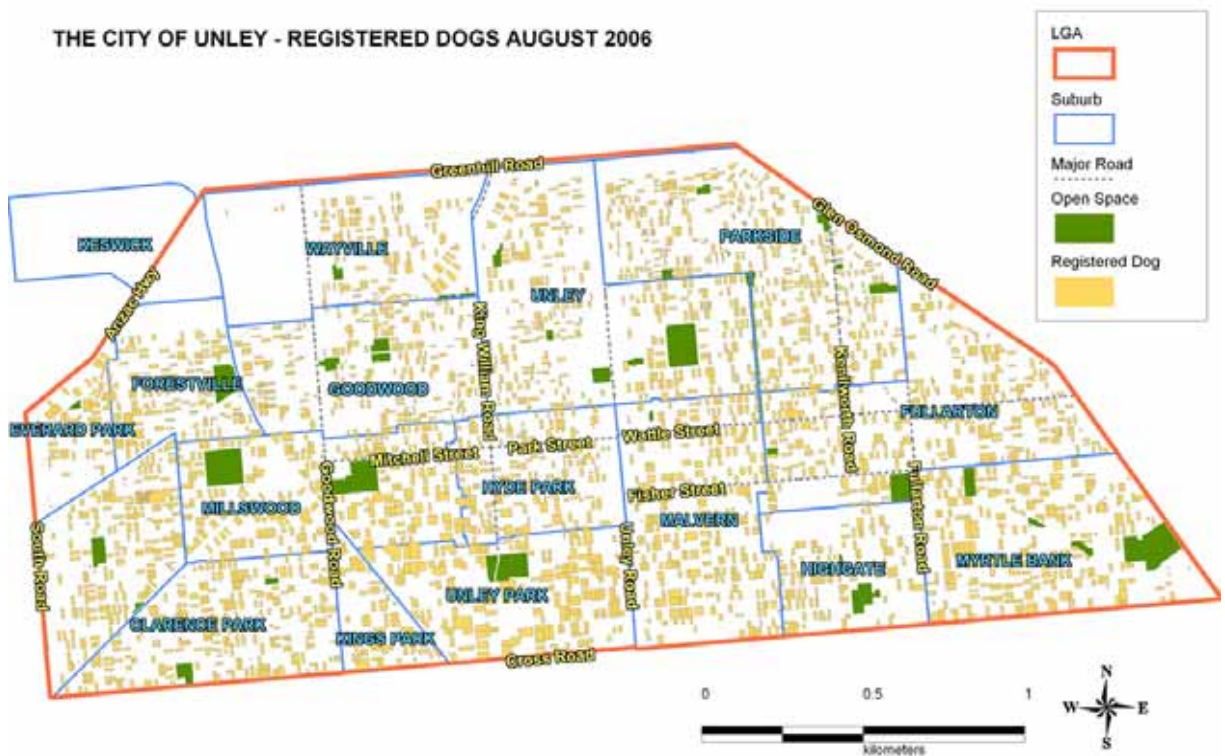
## 2 Animal Management in Unley

### Pet Ownership in Unley

Approximately one in three households in Unley owns one or more dogs (approximately 5000 registered dogs). This is consistent with the national average. The distribution of registered dogs is illustrated in Figure 1.

Cats are not required to be registered so there is no data on cat ownership.

Figure 1: Registered Dogs in the City of Unley



## What is animal management?

Animal management today encompasses issues associated with:

- Registration and identification of dogs (and cats potentially in the future, subject to changes in legislation).
- Safety of humans and animals from attack by dogs.
- Confinement of dogs (and cats potentially in the future, subject to changes in legislation).
- The environment particularly the impact of cats on wildlife.
- Nuisance eg excessive barking, wandering of cats.
- Amenity eg removal of dog faeces from public places.
- Access to public open space by dogs and their owners – on leash, off leash, no dogs allowed.
- Welfare – protection of animals from cruelty, numbers entering welfare shelters, overpopulation. Although this is not strictly a responsibility of the City of Unley, it has a role to play in improving animal welfare through the encouragement of responsible pet ownership.

Pet owners are subject to the legal requirements of the Dog and Cat Management Act and relevant Council by-laws.

Today, most Councils are focussed on educating their communities in responsible pet ownership with a range of programs being trialled and implemented around Australia.

Whilst there is limit to what can be achieved at the local level, this Plan will identify education priorities for the City of Unley to implement over the next 5 years, recognising that pets are integral to many people's lives; the health benefits of owning pets are also well recognised.

## Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995<sup>1</sup> was introduced in response to this changing environment. The objects of the Act are:

- to encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- to reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.

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<sup>1</sup> Refer [www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Catalog/legislation/Acts/D/1995.15.un.htm](http://www.parliament.sa.gov.au/Catalog/legislation/Acts/D/1995.15.un.htm)

- to promote the effective management of dogs and cats (including through encouragement of desexing of dogs and cats).

The Act prescribes responsibilities and procedures to be undertaken in relation to the management of dogs.

Whilst the Act refers to cats, their management (eg requirements for cats to be registered, identified, confined and desexed) is left to the discretion of individual councils. At this time, there are no restrictions on cats in Unley.

## Council By-Laws

In addition to requirements under the Dog and Cat Management Act, Councils can also introduce by-laws under the Local Government Act to manage dogs and cats.

At this time, Unley has no by-laws relating to cats.

Council's **By-law No 3** limits the number of dogs that can be kept and provides for control of dogs in public places.

It limits the number of dogs kept in small dwellings to one dog and in other premises to two dogs. (An application can be made to Council to keep more dogs).

It also provides Council with the power to declare Dog Free Areas (where dogs are not permitted), areas where dogs are required to be leashed and Dog Exercise Areas (areas where dogs can be exercised off the leash providing they are kept under effective control of their owner). The by-law requires that signs be erected in all public places to advise people of the requirements.

The areas declared are set out below. The Dog Exercise Areas are illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Unley Dog Exercise Areas



### Dog Exercise Areas 5:00pm to 10:00am

- Dog exercise area at all times – when organised sporting activities are not being conducted

### ***Dog Exercise Areas***

The following areas are designated as “off leash” exercise areas at all times:

- Goodwood Oval, Millswood.
- The Orphanage, Millswood.
- Unley Oval, Unley (except when organised events are taking place on the oval).
- Ridge Park - oval area.

The following areas are designated as “off leash” exercise areas from 5pm to 10am every day. Outside the times, dogs must be on leash.

- Forestville Reserve, Forestville – open play areas of the park, south of the central car park.
- Page Park, Clarence Park – open play area of the park.
- Wayville Reserve, Wayville – open play area of the park.
- Soutar Park, Goodwood – open play area of the park and south of east/west path.
- Heywood Park, Unley Park – open play areas of the park (western sector).
- North Unley Play Park – open play areas of the park.
- Village Green, Unley.
- McLeay Park, Parkside – open play area of the park.
- Howard Florey Reserve, Parkside – open play area of the park.
- Fullarton Park, Fullarton – open play area of the park fronting Fisher Street.
- Scammell Reserve, Myrtle Bank – open play area of the park.
- Fraser Reserve – open play area of the park.

Dogs can be exercised off the leash in these areas providing no organised activities are taking place and the person responsible for the dog maintains effective control at all times (pursuant to Sections 7 and 8 of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995).

Organised activities are those that have a formal booking of the park with the City of Unley. In most cases this relates to organised sporting events but from time to time it may relate to other recreational and community events. The booking relates to the part of the park specified in the booking (usually the whole oval for a sporting event).

### ***Dog-Free Areas (no dogs allowed at any time)***

Dogs are prohibited from:

- Playgrounds (defined as any enclosed area in which there is equipment or other installed devices for the purpose of children’s play (or within 3m of such devices if there is no enclosed area)).

In practice the City of Unley also discourages dogs from being present on any sporting ground during times of organised sport (ie those activities that have a formal booking with the City of Unley for exclusive use of the ground).

### ***Dog on Leash Areas***

- All public streets, lanes, thoroughfares and car parks under the care and control of the City of Unley.
- Any portion of community land where No Dog Exercise Area applies.
- Soldiers' Memorial Gardens, Unley.
- Princess Margaret Playground, Black Forest.
- Dora Gild Playground, Clarence Park.
- Simpson Parade Reserve, Wayville.
- Morrie Harrell Playground, Unley.
- Leicester Street Playground, Parkside.
- Henry Codd Reserve, Parkside.
- Haslop Reserve, Malvern.
- Hackett Reserve, Parkside.
- Fern Avenue Reserve, Fullarton.
- Highgate Reserve.
- Yeo Avenue Reserve, Highgate.
- Ferguson Avenue Reserve, Myrtle Bank.
- Heywood Park, Unley Park – eastern sector.
- Soutar Park, Goodwood – north of east/west park.

**By-law No 1** prohibits any person from interrupting, disrupting or interfering with any person's use of park lands or reserves. Any person must comply with any reasonable demand from an authorised person relating to the person's use of the land, the person's conduct or behaviour, the person's safety on the land and the safety and enjoyment of the land by other persons.

In addition, if an animal is found on Council land in breach of a by-law, the animal must be removed or an authorised person may remove it.

### Section 254 of the Local Government Act

This provides Councils with the power to make an order that requires a person to do or refrain from doing the thing specified in the order in order to abate a nuisance or a hazard to health or safety associated with a live or dead animal or animals, or other wise to deal with an animal or animals. This might include keeping an excessive number of animals, keeping animals so as to generate excessive noise, dust or odours to attract pests of vermin, keeping an aggressive animal or keeping an animal in a situation where it cannot be adequately contained or may cause danger to the public.

## The statistics

The statistics for the last financial year are as follows:

Barking dog complaints .....	239
Dog attacks .....	31
Impounded dogs .....	103
Off leash dogs complaints .....	16
Unregistered dogs .....	108
Dogs wandering at large complaints ....	462
Welfare concerns raised.....	2
Infringements issued .....	216
Cautions issued .....	123

## Funding of animal management

Funds received from dog registrations must be spent on dog management. It cannot be spent on cat management or directed to general revenue.

A proportion of all registrations is forwarded to the Dog and Cat Management Board which administers *the Dog and Cat Management Fund*. This is used to fund the administration of the Board and state-wide education programs.

Without registration of cats, alternative funding would be required for any of the cat management recommendations contained in this Plan or it would need to come from general revenue.

## City of Unley's practices

In addition to meeting Council's enforcement responsibilities under the Act, the City of Unley provides information to the public on animal management responsibilities and obligations and helpful tips for dealing with animal behaviour problems. This information is available on the City of Unley website and in hard copy.

The City of Unley has established policies and procedures for dealing with its animal management responsibilities.

Rangers go into schools to educate primary school children in responsible pet ownership and bite avoidance.

The City of Unley provides pooch pouches to dog owners (pouches that can be attached to a dog's collar that can carry a bag for picking up dog faeces).

Bag dispensers are provided in every 24-hour off leash park.

The City of Unley provides the Delta Dog Safe program to local schools (refer Other Stakeholders below).

The City of Unley website includes suggestions on how neighbourhood cat nuisance can be managed. As a last resort, the City of Unley has traps available for hire for the trapping of cats.

## Other stakeholders

External stakeholders play a vital role in animal management. Those relevant to Unley are listed below:

The **Dog and Cat Management Board** undertakes a range of responsibilities associated with the administration and enforcement of provisions of the Act. It also undertakes or facilitates research and educational programs relating to dog and cat management.

The **RSPCA** at Lonsdale and the **Animal Welfare League** at Wingfield takes lost and unowned animals.

The City of Unley is not equipped to handle cats. **CATS Incorporated** will trap, desex and return cats to where they were picked up.

The **Delta Society** has a wealth of information available on animal behaviour and management. The Society also runs the Delta Dog Safe Program which is a school based program that provides training for primary school children in bite avoidance.

**Veterinarians** are an important point of contact especially in a pet's early years. They have an important role to play in maintaining the health of pets and educating pet owners.

The **South Australian Canine Association** and the **Governing Council of the Cat Fancy of South Australia** provides codes of ethics for breeders and owners.

**Trainers** and **dog clubs** have an important role to play in training dogs, socialising pups and educating pet owners. There are several training programs available within Unley. In particular the **Unley Dog Obedience Group** holds weekly classes at the Village Green and at Unley Oval.

The City of Unley will utilise the **local media** to provide information regarding pet and activities to assist with educating pet owners.

**Pet owners** themselves have a role to play in choosing an appropriate pet to suit their lifestyle, training and socialising their dog and adhering to the City of Unley requirements. Responsible pet owners have an important education role by setting an appropriate example to other pet owners.

## 3 The Strategic Context

### City of Unley Community Plan 2015

Council's Community Plan 2015 is Council's primary planning framework for the years 2004-2015. The Plan describes what Council believes must happen during this time to ensure that the City is developed according to community expectations in achieving the City of Unley Vision and to provide a framework to achieve a sustainable city.

The Community Plan is based on the following vision:

*A Sustainable City is one that recognises the current values of the community, the importance of the history of the City, and the character of its built environment. Based on this information, the City is then in a position to ensure that it has long term goals for maintaining, and moving further towards becoming, a community that: is caring, informed, connected and accessible; pursues economic prosperity; provides social equity; and acts in an environmentally responsible way.*

The Vision to 2015 is:

*In the next decade, the City of Unley will be recognised for community spirit, desirable character, and business success in a sustainable, safe environment.*

### Open Space and Recreation Strategy 2004

The Open Space and Recreation Strategy (OSRS) contains Guiding Principles and a Vision for open space in Unley, which are of relevance to a consideration of dogs and their access to public open space. These include:

- Whole of Council Approach.
- Functionality.
- Traditional ownership.
- Health and Safety.
- Accessibility.
- Quality Open Space.
- Multi Use Open Space.
- Shared Use.
- Sustainability.
- Partnerships.
- Promotion.
- Community Ownership.

The OSRS acknowledges and lists Council's Dog Exercise Areas. In addition, separate to these designated areas, the Strategy states that it is desirable to develop purpose built dog parks that are fenced and include recreational/exercise equipment for dogs such as troughs, tunnels and bowls. The benefit of dog parks is that they provide opportunities for dogs to exercise without creating the potential for conflict with other users.

In preparing the OSRS, two survey of park users indicated that the City of Unley's provision of open space in relation to areas for exercising dogs exceeded their

expectations. However a key area of concern identified in focus group meetings (held for the OSRS) was the lack of dog specific exercise areas. Dog owners also expressed interest in having more specifically designated areas that are off leash at all times.

Strategy 4.2 is to:

*Ensure that dog owners are able to exercise and recreate with their pets without having a negative impact upon other open space users.*

The actions arising out of this strategy are to:

*Review Council's Dog Policy.*

*Develop purpose built 'dog exercise areas' that are fenced and include recreational/exercise equipment for dogs such as troughs, tunnels and bowls here dogs can exercise off leash (ideally with a catchment of 1.5-2km). A 'pilot' dog exercise facility could be developed in Orphanage Park, with further consideration for a second park at either Scammell Reserve or Ridge Park or within the linear park between these 2 reserves (but well away from junior play facilities).*

## The City of Unley Environment Strategy 2004-2009

There is no mention of dogs or cats in the Environment Strategy.

The Plan notes that Council has implemented a number of biodiversity projects in local parks. Four of these, Wayville Reserve, Forestville Reserve, Heywood Park Ridge Park 'Ourpatch' Planting and Goodwood Oval are in Dog Exercise Areas.

## Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan 2005

This Plan is relevant to the Animal Management Plan for the potential conflicts between cyclists, pedestrians and off leash dogs and because many pedestrians are also dog walkers.

The Proposed Pedestrian Network identifies primary and secondary recreation routes. It proposes secondary pedestrian routes through 4 Dog Exercise Areas: Heywood Park, Fullarton Park, Scammell Reserve and Ridge Park. Secondary recreation routes provide additional utility to the primary recreation routes and provide additional linkages to local facilities. There are no proposed bicycle routes or shared use paths proposed through any Dog Exercise Areas.

## 4 The Strategic Framework to the Animal Management Plan

### Our Goal

Our GOAL for animal management in the City of Unley is to:

*Promote and achieve responsible pet ownership of dogs and cats, animal welfare and the benefits of animal companionship.*

### Our Aims

The AIMS of the Plan are to:

- Ensure Council meets its obligations under the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.
- Investigate the best mix of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to securing responsible pet ownership in the City of Unley.
- Consider ways the City of Unley could harness the benefits of owning pets.
- Establish priorities for animal management in the City of Unley for the next 5 years.

### Our Guiding Principles

In delivering animal management services to the community, the City of Unley is committed to the following GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- Achieving responsible pet ownership in the City of Unley.
- Focusing on preventative approaches to animal management.
- Protecting the community and the environment from the negative impacts of dogs and cats.
- Balancing the need of pet owners and non pet owners.
- Recognising that pets contribute to quality of life.
- Reducing the number of healthy animals that are euthanased.
- Using the most up to date techniques, processes and technologies available.
- Achieving an efficient and effective use of available resources.
- Adopting a whole of community approach to animal management. In particular, the City of Unley will strengthen partnerships with key stakeholders to deliver improved outcomes.

## Key Issue Areas

There are 11 KEY ISSUE AREAS.

These are as follows:

1. *Prospective and new pet owners.*
2. *Registration and identification.*
3. *Excessive barking.*
4. *Dog attacks and bite avoidance.*
5. *Confinement and wandering at large.*
6. *Access to public open space.*
7. *Dog faeces.*
8. *Cat management.*
9. *Animal welfare.*
10. *Public education.*
11. *Harnessing the benefits of pet ownership.*

Each KEY ISSUE AREA has objective/s, identified target groups, a discussion and action plans. The identification of target groups is important as in some cases non-pet owners or the wider community is the appropriate target group.

The key issue areas are presented in Sections 6-16.

Implementation of the Plan is then considered in Section 17.

## 5 Prospective and New Pet Owners

### Objectives

*5.1 Encourage prospective pet owners to consider the responsibilities of pet ownership before obtaining a pet.*

*5.2 Encourage prospective pet owners to select a breed that is appropriate to their lifestyle and home environment.*

*5.3 Encourage prospective pet owners to consider obtaining a pet from an animal shelter.*

*5.4 Ensure new pet owners identify and register their pets.*

*5.5 Ensure new pet owners vaccinate their pet.*

*5.6 Encourage new pet owners to desex their pet.*

*5.7 Encourage new pet owners to socialise their pet around other humans and animals.*

*5.8 Encourage new pet owners to provide appropriate obedience training.*

*5.9 Encourage new owners to provide their pet with an enriching home environment.*

*5.10 Ensure new pet owners are able to confine their pet to the home.*

*5.11 Ensure new pet owners exercise their dog in accordance with the requirements of the City of Unley.*

### Target groups

- New pet owners.
- Prospective pet owners.

## Discussion

The City of Unley believes that many animal management problems could be eliminated or minimised if prospective and new pet owners attend to the requirements outlined in the above objectives. Council believes this is a crucial period in pet ownership.

Prospective and new pet owners are potentially more open to receiving new information when a new animal comes into their family. They are also likely to have more encounters with key stakeholders than at later stages of pet ownership (ie breeders, trainers, veterinarians) as they obtain, identify, register, train, desex and immunise their pet. Key external stakeholders can help to pass on the responsible pet ownership message.

*Prospective pet owners* need to consider the responsibilities of pet ownership and appropriate breed choice to avoid later problems and to reduce the likelihood that they will later relinquish their pet. The City of Unley should also encourage people to obtain a pet from an animal shelter or at least tap into information on appropriate breed choice eg *Selectapet*. Whilst this group is hard to target, general messages in local media should not be ignored.

*New pet owners* (pet under 1 year of age) can reduce much of the animal management task later on if they:

- Identify their pet.
- Register their pet.
- Immunise their pet.
- Socialise their dog around other animals.
- Undergo basic obedience training with their dog.
- Provide an enriching home environment for their pet.
- Confine their pet to the property.
- Provide their dog with regular exercise in accordance with Council requirements (comply with leash requirements, maintain effective control and abide by code of conduct in off leash areas, carry bag to pick up dog faeces and pick up when dog has defecated).

There is a wealth of information available for prospective and new pet owners from many sources. The City of Unley should give consideration to sponsoring or developing a single package of information with specific relevance to prospective and new owners. The package can be made available on the City of Unley's website and distributed to key stakeholders for distribution. Since this is a relatively ambitious task, its development and implementation is a medium term priority. Key stakeholders could assist with the development and implementation of the package.

The City of Unley will encourage new pet owners to take their puppies to puppy pre school.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Develop a package of information designed specifically for prospective and new pet owners. It should include things to think about before obtaining a pet, how to select a breed appropriate to one's lifestyle, obligations and responsibilities of pet owners, the importance of training and early socialisation, the advantages of puppy preschool, tips for developing good habits from an early age and ways to overcome common behaviour problems. The package should be developed in conjunction with key stakeholders.	Medium term	Parking and rangers	
Develop a dissemination strategy for the New Pet Owners Package.	Medium term.	Parking and rangers	
Implement the dissemination strategy for the New Pet Owners Package.	Medium term	Parking and rangers	
Depending on the outcome of the Puppy Pre-School feasibility study, establish the Puppy Pre-School program.	Medium term.	Parking and rangers	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- All other Key Issue Areas.

## 6 Registration & Identification

### Objectives

- 6.1 To ensure all dogs are registered as required.
- 6.2 To encourage dog and cat owners to identify their cat by way of a microchip.
- 6.3 To formalise criteria for setting registration fees for dogs.

### Target groups

- New pet owners.
- Dog owners.
- Cat owners.

### Discussion

Dogs are required to be registered but at this time cats are not.

A high proportion of dogs in the City of Unley are believed to be registered although the actual number of unregistered dogs is not known. Council should constantly seek ways to boost the proportion of dogs that are registered.

The City of Unley considers it is inappropriate to introduce a registration requirement for cats in isolation of other Councils. It is considered this is something that is best addressed on a state-wide basis through changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act.

Identification by microchip is also highly desirable however a by-law requiring dogs to be microchipped is not proposed to be introduced at this time.

### Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Develop comprehensive strategy for maximising registrations including door knocks, mail outs, one off checks by rangers in the field etc.	Medium term.	Parking and rangers	
Encourage new registrations at the Dog Day Out Festival (refer Section 15)	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Prepare a press release for rotational release on the importance of registering your dog.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Consider holding an annual Microchipping day in conjunction with other councils.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Review criteria for establishing registration fees.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Evaluate the value of Microchipping days.	Medium term.	Parking and rangers	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- New and prospective pet owners.
- Cat management.
- Community education.

## 7 Excessive Barking

### Objectives

*7.1 Reduce the number of barking dog complaints.*

*7.2 Maximise the number of successfully resolved barking complaints.*

### Target groups

- Prospective dog owners.
- New dog owners.
- Owners of dogs that bark excessively.
- Complainants.
- New home owners.

### Discussion

Barking dog complaints have increased over the last 20 years with the rising incidence of pets being left alone during the day, increases in housing density and declining levels of tolerance generally.

Excessive barking has several causes:

- Separation anxiety.
- Boredom.
- External stimuli (eg passers by, other dogs barking, possums, cats).
- Territorialism (visitors to the property).
- Communication.

Often the owner is not at home to hear or stop excessive barking.

**Prevention** of barking dog problems should be the starting point for managing excessive barking because once excessive barking is entrenched it is often hard to resolve.

Some breeds are genetically pre-disposed towards excessive barking. However excessive barking is often an acquired behaviour that can occur in any breed or sex of dog. Nevertheless The City of Unley could encourage prospective pet owners to avoid breeds that have a genetic predisposition to bark.

Habitual barking often develops at an early age. New dog owners should be encouraged to teach their puppies that excessive barking is not allowed. Obedience training can also help owners to control their dog's behaviour.

The City of Unley should encourage owners to exercise their dogs regularly. The City of Unley should also maintain accessible opportunities for off leash exercise.

Providing dogs with an enriching home environment helps to minimise problem barking (toys, view of the outside world, shade, shelter and comfort).

Design guidelines exist for pet friendly housing that address ways housing design can minimise problem barking. The City of Unley should make these guidelines available through the building and planning departments.

Council always suggests that complainants speak to their neighbours before contacting the City of Unley. The City of Unley should encourage people to do this as early as possible - before the excessive barking becomes an entrenched habit and before complainants are literally at their wits end when they make the complaint to the City of Unley. As these people are not able to be targeted, the City of Unley should provide this message through the general local media and on the City of Unley website.

**Not all barking dog complaints can be prevented. The objective is to resolve complaints as quickly and smoothly as possible.**

Once a complaint has been made, the City of Unley needs to **decide if a problem exists**. This is not easy.

First there is the need for reliable data. The City of Unley issues complainants with diaries to complete before a complaint will be acted upon. This practice is used by Councils throughout Australia and should be retained.

In the last 2 years, bark counters have been developed. These are attached to a dog's collar (eg for a week) and provide a printout of the time and duration of barking. Council could purchase one or more of these collars and use them in resolving barking dog complaints. This could provide additional data but should not replace the diary system. These are different to citronell

Second, there is the question of determining what level of barking is excessive. The City of Onkaparinga is presently working on establishing a standard for excessive barking. Council will monitor the progress made and review its procedures in light of this and other developments.

Once established, **barking dog problems need to be resolved**. Again, this is not easy. There are no perfect solutions eg getting a second dog will help in some cases but aggravate the problem in others.

The City of Unley assists dog owners with suggestions to help with problem barking and makes citronella collars available to help control barking. The City of Unley should continue to update staff skills in relation the understanding and diagnosis of excessive barking and solutions available.

Sometimes the behaviour is so ingrained that professional advice is required. In these cases, advice from a veterinarian or referral to a qualified animal behaviourist should be required. The City of Unley should develop a panel of behaviourists to whom problem barkers can be referred. This should be reviewed annually.

The City of Unley has procedures for dealing with barking dog complaints including a checklist and flow chart of procedures to follow and forms officers use to complete the investigations. It is considered that the procedures should be reviewed every 2 years for updated information and practices.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Distribute guidelines for pet-friendly housing to City of Unley town planning and building departments.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Ensure locally provided puppy pre-school and dog training programs include material on ways to minimise barking dog problems from developing.	Short term.	Parking and rangers.	
Prepare a press release on preventing barking problems from occurring for rotational inclusion in the local media.	Short term.	Parking and rangers.	
Continue to focus on resolving barking dog complaints informally.	Continue existing practice.	Parking and rangers.	
Encourage potential complainants to speak to their neighbour as early as possible to help avoid the barking from becoming entrenched. (including through the general local media)	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Continue to issue complainants with diaries in which to record incidences of excessive barking.	Continue existing practice.	Parking and rangers.	
Consider the purchase of one or more barking counters and/or citronella collars.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Review the procedures for dealing with barking dog complaints every 2 years.	Short term/medium term	Parking and rangers.	
Ensure new staff receives early training in diagnosis and treatment of barking dog complaints.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Continue to update and extend officers' skills in diagnosis and treatment of barking dog complaints.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Maintain a panel of behaviourists to whom problem barkers can be referred.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- Prospective and New Pet Owners.
- Public education.

## 8 Dog Attacks & Bite Avoidance

### Objectives

*8.1 To reduce the incidence and severity of dog attacks in the City of Unley.*

*8.2 To establish formalised procedures for dealing with dog attack/harassment complaints.*

### Target groups

- Prospective dog owners.
- New dog owners.
- Existing dog owners.
- Children.
- All members of the community.

### Discussion

Whilst the number of dog attacks is not high in Unley, managing them is a critical part of effective animal management.

The City of Unley believes all dog owners should be encouraged to take their dog to a recognised puppy preschool. This introduces basic training, helps the owner to understand his or her responsibilities and importantly helps with early socialisation of the dog that will help to minimise aggressive tendencies later on.

The City of Unley will encourage all dog owners to have their dog desexed as this will reduce aggressive tendencies.

The City of Unley believes all dog owners should be encouraged to attend obedience training with their dog. This will provide continuing socialisation and help owners to manage and/or reduce potentially aggressive tendencies in their dog. Council will strengthen partnerships and links with approved training organizations to promote the training of dogs in Unley.

Regular exercise including exercise in off leash areas is important in order to reduce the incidence of aggression in dogs. Regular outings also help to socialise dogs around other people and dogs.

All dogs are required to be effectively confined to their property. This is a requirement under the Dog and Cat Management Act. The City of Unley will continue to inform dog owners of the importance for dogs to be confined.

People should be reminded that every dog has the capacity to bite and understand how to behave around dogs. Children should be supervised around dogs at all times. Dog owners should be made aware of the potential implications for their dog if it bites.

Council believes all school children in the City of Unley should receive instruction in bite avoidance. This is particularly important for children who don't have any

experience with dogs. The rangers presently visit schools on a regular basis. It is recommended that the City of Unley develop a 3 year rotational plan to visit each school in the City of Unley and provide all 5-8 year old children with instruction in bite avoidance. The City of Unley will investigate the use of volunteers to disseminate these programs.

Breed specific restrictions are the cause of much debate. Whilst some people say particular breeds should be banned, others say we should blame the deed not the breed. Whatever the case, the City of Unley believes it cannot introduce breed specific restrictions in isolation of other Councils. the City of Unley believes that if breed bans are deemed appropriate then it needs to be carried out at a state-wide level. Nevertheless the City of Unley can encourage people to select a breed of dog that they believe they can manage. It should also be noted that several breeds of dog are already banned under the Act.

the City of Unley has procedures for dealing with dog attacks and harassment complaints. They should be formalised as approved procedures under this Plan and reviewed during the life of the Plan.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Ensure the City of Unley has one or more officers who are trained presenters for the Delta Dog Safe Program.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Seek volunteers to be trained and assist in delivering the Delta Dog Safe Program.	Medium term	Parking and rangers.	
Develop a program to visit each primary school in the City of Unley every 3 years to provide 5-8 year old children with instruction in bite avoidance.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Develop a press release on the implications for your dog if it attacks and bites an animal or person for rotational inclusion in local media.	Short term.	Parking and rangers.	
Develop a press release on bite avoidance for rotational inclusion in local media.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Approve the procedures for dealing with dog attacks/harassment complaints.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Review the procedures for dealing with dog attacks/harassment complaints.	Medium term	Parking and rangers.	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- Prospective and New Pet Owners.
- Confinement and Wandering at Large.
- Access to Public Open Space.
- Public Education.

## 9 Confinement and Wandering at Large

### Objective

*9.1 Ensure dog owners confine their dog to their property.*

*9.2 Encourage cat owners to confine their cat to their property.*

*9.3 Review procedures for dealing with detained animals.*

### Target group

- Existing pet owners.
- New pet owners.
- Prospective pet owners.

### Discussion

Dogs that are wandering at large contribute to a significant proportion of dog management problems especially as there is mounting evidence to suggest that the majority of dog attacks are the result of inadequate confinement.

The City of Unley has procedures for dealing with complaints about dogs wandering at large. The procedures operate effectively now and only need to be formalised as approved procedures under this Plan. If a dog found wandering at large is not claimed within 72 hour notice period, the dog may be destroyed, given away or sold.

Prospective dog owners should be encouraged to choose a breed that may be less likely to wander and can be contained behind a secure fence (some breeds can scale a fence easily). Advice on this can be obtained from external stakeholders, e.g. The Canine Association, The Dog and Cat Management Board or Obedience Clubs. Desexed animals that are less likely to wander so Council should continue to encourage people to have their pet desexed. Lost animals can only be returned to their owners if they are properly identified. Pet owners will be encouraged to have their pets microchipped.

Cats are not as easily confined as dogs. The City of Unley does not propose to introduce a requirement at this time in isolation. Instead it is proposed to focus on educating the community about the benefits and importance of confining their cats.

Design guidelines for pet-friendly housing are available and should be promoted by the City of Unley to promote confinement.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Identify breeds of dog that may be less likely to wander and are more able to be confined by a secure fence. Include this information in all relevant City of Unley publications.	Short term.	Parking and rangers.	
Include information on ways to confine cats in all City of Unley information sources (benefits and successfully confining cats, cat runs and enclosures, cat proof fences.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Encourage pet owners to microchip their pets in all promotion and education material.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Distribute the pet-friendly housing guidelines to Council's planning and building departments.	Medium term	Parking and rangers.	
Continue to treat incidences of dogs wandering at large as an issue warranting priority attention.	Continue existing practice	Parking and rangers.	
Approve the procedures for dealing with dogs wandering at large.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Review the procedures for dealing with dog wandering at large.	Medium term	Parking and rangers.	
Review existing practices for detaining dogs found at large and consider other options.	Medium term.	Parking and rangers.	
Educate the community about the benefits and importance of confining cats.	Short term.	Parking and rangers.	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- Prospective and new pet owners.
- Registration and identification.
- Cat management.
- Animal welfare.
- Public education.

## 10 Access to Public Places

### Objective

*10.1 Minimise the impact of dogs using public open spaces.*

*10.2 Provide for the needs of dogs and their owners who wish to use public open space.*

*10.3 Maximise the success of designated Dog Exercise Areas.*

*10.4 Achieve compliance with leash requirements on streets, footpaths and designated Dog On Leash Areas and no dog requirements in Dog Free Areas.*

### Target groups

- Dog owners.
- All park users.

### Discussion

Dogs are required to be leashed on all streets and footpaths.

Section 26A (2) of the Act requires the Plan to include 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. By-law no 3 also provides for Council to declare parks to be dog on leash, dog off leash or no dog areas. In addition to providing off leash areas, some Councils in South Australia have introduced or considering introducing purpose designed Dog Parks which are fenced areas designed specifically for dogs and their owners.

There is a strong case for the City of Unley to provide for off leash exercise of dogs in parks:

- Dogs need to be socialised around other dogs and humans.
- Dogs need exercise. Regular exercise can also alleviate pent up energy associated with some unwanted behaviours by dogs at home. Whilst dogs can be exercised on leash, most dogs also benefit from “free running” off leash exercise.
- Dog owners are a significant group of park users. Many enjoy exercising their dog and meeting other dog owners in off leash parks. Council recognises that dogs can be an inducement for dog owners to exercise and recent research has shown strong social dynamics amongst dog owners who meet other dog owners regularly in the park.

On the negative side however:

- Unleashed dogs can be a problem in environmentally sensitive areas particularly where native fauna is present or being encouraged.

- Dog attacks may be more likely to occur where dogs are unleashed (however statistics indicate that dogs may be more aggressive in and around the home than they are in the neutral territory of a public park.
- Unruly dogs can annoy other park users and detract from people's recreation experience. Some people are frightened of dogs and/or don't wish to encounter unleashed dogs in the park.
- There are some places where unleashed dogs may be unsuitable eg in the immediate vicinity of children's play equipment, around picnic areas and bbqs, in the vicinity of bicycle paths.

The City of Unley currently has a number of parks where dogs can exercise on and off lead.

The designation of all parks was reviewed in the development of this Plan. The criteria for assessing each park's suitability as an off leash park is set out below. There is inevitably some balancing of the criteria. In addition, the high use parks were observed at different times of the day for the types of users present including dog owners and evidence of responsible pet ownership.

- **Number of off leash parks:** achieve as many Dog Exercise Parks as practicable. Maximising the number of off leash parks enhances accessibility for all dog owners and avoids individual parks being dominated by dogs.
- **Distribution:** where possible, achieve an even distribution of Dog Exercise Parks across Unley.
- **Other users:** avoid areas of high human activity, minimise conflicts with other user groups. Seek areas that are not intensively used. Keep well separated from play equipment, picnic areas/bbqs, heavily used bicycle paths.
- **The whole of the park should be off leash:** where possible the whole of the park should be designated for off leash activity. However it is recognised that in inner suburban areas like Unley, this is not likely to be practicable for all Dog Exercise Parks. Where only part of a park is to be off leash the different areas should be well separated from sensitive uses and where possible the boundary should be legible on the ground to avoid the need for fencing and excessive signage. Look for existing and/or natural barriers like a drainage reserve.
- **Context:** large parks are best, open areas for dogs to run are best.
- **Facilities:** off-street car parking is ideal but not required, no other facilities required.
- **Accessibility:** seek multiple points of access and provision for off street parking.
- **Boundaries:** parks that are enclosed by other properties are safest (although enclosure can reduce accessibility).
- **Fencing:** perimeter fencing is generally not required and should be avoided due to cost of installation and barriers created. Fencing to the street would

be required where the park is very small or adjacent to an arterial or other busy road. Where they exist, natural barriers are preferred over fencing.

It is considered that all parks currently designated as Dog Exercise Areas suitably meet this criteria with the exception of McLeay Park, Parkside. This park is small and has scattered play equipment. There is very little separation between the play equipment and any off leash dogs. It is therefore recommended that it be removed as a Dog Exercise Park. This park is reasonably close to although not, it is acknowledged, within walking distance of Howard Florey Reserve, Unley Oval and North Unley Play Park. It is also noted that this area is also reasonably close to the Dog Exercise Area of the City of Adelaide (bounded by Greenhill Road, East Terrace, Wakefield Road and Fullarton Road). By-law No 3 will need to be amended to remove this park.

The City of Unley does not have a lot of public open space compared with other municipalities. It is considered that there are no other suitable candidates for potential consideration as Dog Exercise Areas.

The City of Unley has a 3m limit around play equipment within which dogs are prohibited in accordance with the By-law. It is considered that this is appropriate. If a dog is more than 5m away from its owner, it could be a hazard to other children entering the playground. It is considered that there are no other areas that warrant adding to the list of Dog Free Areas.

It is considered that By-Law No 3 be amended to include Dog Exercise Areas, Dog Free Areas and that all other parks be designated as Dog On Leash (instead of listing them). A default is considered appropriate to minimise the need to provide signs in all parks and to remove the possibility that a park or a part of a park is somehow not included in any category.

In practice the City of Unley discourages dogs from being present on any sporting ground during times of organised sport (ie those activities that have a formal booking with the City of Unley for exclusive use of the ground). It is considered important that this be formalised by amendment to By Law No 3 to prohibit from parks that have formal bookings with the City of Unley during times of organised play. The amendment should specify that the restriction applies to the part of the park to which the booking applies.

The designations within parks are largely appropriate. However they need to be reviewed for their description, which is considered confusing eg terms such as “the oval area” and “the open grassed area” need clarification. A colour coded map may be required.

The current Dog Exercise Area within The Orphanage is “the grassed areas” however it has been observed that dog owners use other areas of the park. It is recommended that the Master Plan currently being developed for this park consider the needs of all users including dog owners and whether dog owners may prefer only one of the ovals and the area alongside the tennis court instead. The dog access provisions should be developed in conjunction with the Master Plan for this park.

It is recommended that the introductory statement in the Dogs and Public Places brochure be rewritten more positively. It should recognise that dogs need exercise and that many people enjoy taking their dog to parks within the City of Unley, however it has to strike a balance between the needs of all park users and

accordingly the City of Unley has a mix of on and off leash areas and areas from which dogs are prohibited.

The City of Unley’s Open Space and Recreation Strategy recommends the establishment of 2 Dog dedicated off lead Parks in Unley. This recommendation arose out of community feedback collected for the development of this Strategy. It goes on to suggest that The Orphanage and Scammell Reserve are potential candidates.

Recreation paths proposed under the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan run through 4 Dog Exercise Areas (Heywood Park, Ridge Park, Scammell Reserve and Fullarton Park). Special attention to signage will be required to alert pedestrians using these paths that they are entering a Dog Exercise Area. If possible, the Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan should consider rerouting these pedestrian paths.

With regard to Ridge Park, it is recommended that a barrier be constructed along the boundary with Glen Osmond Road (and 50m west into Barr Smith Avenue) to prevent dogs running on to the road and creating a hazard for themselves and drivers.

An early focus of the Plan will be in promoting awareness, acceptance and compliance with the leash requirements. In Year 1 the City of Unley will focus on education and then move into education and enforcement in Years 2 to 5. The education activities would consist of written material (mail outs, brochures, press coverage, signage) and face to face contact (handing out leads in on-leash areas, talking to children in schools).

A code of conduct will be developed for appropriate behaviour in Dog Exercise Areas.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Consider the needs of dogs and their owners including the merits of establishing a Dog Park as part of the Master Plan for The Orphanage.	Short term.	Open space	
Construct a suitable barrier to the Glen Osmond Road boundary of Ridge Park.	Short term	Open space	
Review the Dogs in Parks brochure for more positive wording in the introduction and for clearer descriptions of the Dog Exercise Areas.		Parking and rangers.	
Consider the removal of McLeay Park as a Dog Exercise Area, include a default provision for Dog Off Leash Parks and amend the provisions of Ridge Park if required.	Short term	Parking and rangers.	
Amend By Law No 3 to prohibit dogs on parks during times of organised play (as defined by a formal booking with Council).		Parking and rangers.	
Prepare a signage strategy for dogs and their access to public open space including types of signs, graphics, appropriate wording and location. Neighbouring councils should	Short term.	Parking and rangers / Open space	

be invited to participate. This should be developed in conjunction with the development of the Code of Conduct recommended below.			
Consider rerouting the recreation pedestrian paths through existing Dog Exercise Areas or develop special signage to advise people that they are entering a designated Dog Exercise Area.	Short term.	Open space	
Seek advice on risk management strategies to reduce risk and liability.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Advise neighbouring Councils of the access and leash requirements in the City of Unley.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Prepare an education strategy to increase awareness of the access and leash requirements and achieve compliance over the life of the Plan. It should be a 5 year strategy and include written and face to face communication in accordance with the discussion included in Key Issue Area 15. The strategy should be prepared in conjunction with the education strategy for getting people to pick up their dog's faeces. It should identify external stakeholders who can assist with disseminating the message.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Develop a code of conduct for successful operation of Dog Exercise Areas. Include this in the Access and Leash Requirements brochure in addition to legislative requirements and in the signage strategy.	Short term	Parking and rangers / Open space	
Ensure the access and leash requirements are considered in all plans and strategies associated with public open space in the City of Unley especially where new bicycle paths, play equipment and picnic facilities are proposed.	Ongoing.	Open space	
Decide if the access and leash requirements should be included in the Adelaide street directory.	Longer term.	Parking and rangers.	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- Prospective and new pet owners.
- Dog faeces.
- Public education.

# 11 Dog Faeces

## Objective

*11.1 To ensure dog owners pick up their dog's faeces when outside the home.*

## Target group

- Dog owners.

## Discussion

The management of dog faeces is an important environmental and health issue. Tonnes of dog faeces pollute our waterways and public places every year and it is an issue on which the community has strong feelings.

The Dog and Cat Management Act requires people to remove their dog's faeces. However compliance with this requirement depends on people:

- Having a bag or other receptacle with them to pick up;
- Seeing the dog defecate (less likely perhaps in off leash areas);
- Overcoming the distaste factor; and
- Having somewhere to dispose of the bag conveniently.

Some of the Dog Exercise Areas in the City of Unley are on sporting ovals where unremoved dog faeces are a particular problem for sports players.

It is recommended that Council amend By-law No 3 to include a requirement that dog owners carry with them a bag or dispenser suitable for picking up dog faeces when walking their dog. This has been introduced successfully in other Council areas in South Australia.

Many Councils provide bags in parks for use by dog owners. This is a useful reminder to dog owners that picking up after their dog is now expected. The City of Unley will continue to provide dog poo bags at off leash parks and at other selected locations. However the City of Unley does not believe it should be *responsible* for providing dog owners with bags. This is because:

- If dogs are walked from home they are likely to have defecated before they get to the park.
- If the dispensers happen to be empty people can't pick up.
- People are more likely to pick up their dogs' faeces if they have a bag on them than if they have to walk over to a receptacle that may be on the other side of the park.
- The bag dispensers are prone to vandalism.

- The cost of providing bags and keeping dispensers replenished is high and diverts scarce resources away from other valuable animal management programs.

All communication with dog owners will make it clear that bags are provided as a backup, that they will only be provided in selected parks and that people should always carry their own bag with them.

Council will retain the pooch pouch program. These are brightly coloured pouches attached to a dog's collar for dog poo bags to be stored in. This is another useful reminder that picking up dog faeces is now expected. Their reintroduction will dovetail well with the new requirement to carry a bag when out with their dog. It is proposed that the pooch pouches be distributed with registrations. Council will also consider making them available to key stakeholders for distribution amongst their members/clients.

A review of dog faeces management will be undertaken towards the end of the life of this Plan to assess the suitability of the by-law and education programs implemented and available.

Council believes removal of dog's faeces is best suited to education rather than enforcement. This will be a priority for education during the life of this Plan. The focus in Years 1-2 will be on ensuring people know the requirements and take a bag with them. The focus in Years 3-5 will be on ensuring people pick up.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Amend By-law No 3 to include a requirement that people to carry a bag or container for picking up their dog's faeces.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Continue the pooch pouch program distributing them with registrations and to key stakeholders.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Consider providing external stakeholders eg vets with pooch pouches to distribute to clients.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Review all information material to ensure it is clear that people are responsible for providing their own bags and that bag dispensers will only be provided at selected locations.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Ensure dog poo bags are provided at designated and high use locations including Dog Exercise Parks.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Investigate the use of environmentally friendly dog poo bags.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Ensure the dog poo bag dispensers are replenished as required.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Train staff in approaching people in the public realm to discuss picking up dog faeces (role play/develop scripts/hand out pooch pouches).	Medium term	Parking and rangers	
Evaluate the faeces management program at Unley (including a review of existing programs and identification of new approaches and products).	Medium term.	Parking and rangers	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- Prospective and new pet owners.
- Access to public open space.
- Public education.

# 12 Cat Management

## Objective

*12.1 Reduce the environmental and nuisance impacts of cats.*

## Target group

- Cat owners.
- Prospective cat owners.
- Prospective home builders.
- Designers and builders.

## Discussion

Cats that are wandering at large may attack wildlife, annoy neighbours and be harmed by cars and other cats. If they are not desexed, cats can also contribute to the population of stray and feral cats.

At this time, it is considered impractical to introduce any controls over cats in isolation of other Councils and the City of Unley considers this is best addressed on a state-wide basis by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

In the short term, the City of Unley will instead focus on educating the community about the benefits of having their cats desexed, identified and confined to their property.

And, in the event that cat controls are introduced in the future, by the State Government or, then the education efforts undertaken by Council will have assisted in raising awareness of the issue and hopefully acceptance of the future controls.

Council has a partnership with Cats Assistants To Sterilise Cats Incorporated (CATS) to assist it with the management of certain cat management issues. It is proposed that this partnership be retained and formalised.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Develop and implement an education strategy to encourage people to desex, identify and confine their cats.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Continue to make available DCMB's Information Sheet 13: I have a Cat Problem: What Can I do to complainants.	Continue existing practice.	Parking and rangers	
In the event that cat controls are introduced through the Dog and Cat Management Act or other means, prepare a cat management	Medium term if required.	Parking and rangers	

strategy.			
Formalise the current arrangement with CATS.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- Prospective and new pet owners.
- Confinement and wandering at large.
- Public education.

## 13 Keeping of poultry

### Objectives

*13.1 To establish guidelines on the keeping of poultry in residential areas.*

### Target groups

- Poultry owners

### Discussion

Some residents like to keep poultry for food (eggs or slaughter) or as a hobby (eg racing pigeons).

Keeping poultry is not covered by the Dog and Cat Management Act. It can only be covered by Council by-laws.

Councils have the power in individual circumstances to make an order under Section 254 of the Local Government Act that requires a person to do or to refrain from doing the thing specified in the order in order to abate a nuisance or a hazard to health or safety associated with a live or dead animal.

Potential problems associated with keeping poultry include:

- Noise (cooing/clucking/crowing).
- Smell.
- Potential for the spreading of disease.
- Concerns for people with respiratory problems like asthma.
- Attraction of vermin.
- With racing pigeons, the likelihood that pigeons will land in neighbours' yards.

Issues include the number of birds kept, the quality and appearance of the shed or pen in which they are kept, the slaughtering of animals in a residential area and good animal husbandry by the owner (vaccination of birds, regular cleaning of sheds, keeping feed in vermin proof containers). The recent rise of bird flu risk adds to the concerns although there is no evidence to suggest bird flu has entered Australia or is at risk amongst domestically raised poultry.

The City of Unley believes that in an inner suburban municipality like Unley, there is considerable scope for nuisance associated with the keeping of poultry. The City of Unley will investigate the effectiveness of introducing a by-law to control the keeping of poultry.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Investigate the effectiveness of introducing a by-law controlling the keeping of poultry in residential areas.	Short term	Parking and rangers	

## 14 Animal Welfare

### Objectives

*14.1 Reduce the number of unwanted litters.*

*14.2 Reduce the number of lost and relinquished animals.*

*14.3 Increase the number of returned or re-homed animals.*

*14.4 Encourage pet owners to attend to their pet's basic needs and provide a quality environment in which to live.*

### Target groups

- Pet owners.
- Prospective pet owners.

### Discussion

The number of animals impounded every year remains high. Many are returned or re-homed but many also need to be put down.

The number of animals impounded is a function of:

- Unwanted litters.
- Lost animals (unidentified and/or unregistered animals cannot be returned to their owners).
- Relinquished and/or unclaimed animals. The likelihood of a pet being relinquished or unclaimed is reduced if people 1) do not make rash decisions about getting a pet, 2) choose a breed that is appropriate to their lifestyle 3) undertake basic obedience training with their animal to reduce unwanted behaviours 4) are able to confine their pet to their property.

The number of animals put down each is a function of:

- The number returned to their owners; and
- The number able to be re-homed with new owners (this in turn is a function of the number of people willing to adopt an animal from a shelter and the temperament and ability of the animal to be re-homed).

Responsible pet ownership is fundamental to animal welfare. Key strategies to reduce the number of animals in animal shelters are therefore to increase the rates of:

- Desexing;
- Identification and registration;
- Confinement;

- Obedience training; and
- Re-homing of lost and unwanted animals i.e. encouraging people to obtain a pet from a shelter.

Most of these strategies are considered elsewhere in the Plan.

The City of Unley currently provides support to CATS (Cats Assistance to Sterilise Cats). This should continue.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Encourage prospective pet owners to consider obtaining a pet from an animal shelter.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Include information on The City of Unley's website on the reasons animals end up in animal welfare shelter, what happens to them and what pet owners and the community can do to minimise the problem.	Medium term	Parking and rangers	
Develop a series of press releases for rotational release on the reasons animals end up in animal welfare shelter, what happens to them and what pet owners and the community can do to minimise the problem.	Medium term	Parking and rangers	

Refer also Action Plans for:

- Prospective and new dog owners.
- Excessive barking.
- Confinement and wandering at large.
- Cat management.
- Public education.

## 15 Community Education

### Objectives

*15.1 Plan and implement appropriate community education programs in accordance with priorities identified in this Plan.*

### Target groups

- Pet owners.
- Prospective pet owners.
- All members of the community.

### Discussion

An ongoing debate is the relative merits of education versus enforcement. Laws will probably always be the backbone of animal control. However enforcement of laws is inherently inefficient because it is essentially reactive and can consume vast resources in maintaining an enforcement presence.

By contrast, voluntary compliance through education can provide more meaningful, lasting, voluntary changes in behaviour. It is sometimes a matter of simply overcoming ignorance and incompetence. However education changes behaviour slowly. It can be expensive and hard to evaluate. A timely factor can be the availability of resources to direct towards education.

The Dog and Cat Management Board operates education programs and activities on a state-wide basis. It is recommended that the City of Unley build on these programs and develop its own education programs to reflect local priorities.

The main education options available to local government are listed below. This list is not necessarily complete but can be used as a basis to generate more options. The options are divided into antecedence strategies (those that occur *prior* to the behaviour) and consequence strategies (those that occur *after* the behaviour). The strategies can be further classified into written or documentary programs and face to face contact.

## Education Options

Antecedence Strategies		Consequence Strategies	
Written or documentary	Face to face contact	Written or documentary	Face to face contact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brochures.</li> <li>• Mail outs.</li> <li>• Press coverage.</li> <li>• Signs.</li> <li>• Videos on responsible pet ownership.</li> <li>• Information on the Internet (Council's website and links to other websites).</li> <li>• Code of conduct.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking to pet owners about responsible pet ownership.</li> <li>• Talking to children about responsible pet ownership &amp; appropriate behaviour around dogs.</li> <li>• Dog Day Out Festivals.</li> <li>• Microchipping days.</li> <li>• Demonstration (ie how to pick up dog faeces without it touching your hand).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awards - eg dog owner of the year or month accompanied by letters of congratulation and press coverage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards for responsible behaviour.</li> <li>• Sanctions (fines, warnings).</li> </ul>

Face to face contact is generally regarded as superior to written or documentary approaches. However face to face contact is time consuming and depends on the skills of the educator. Written or documentary approaches reach more people and the message lasts longer (a sign for example is seen every time someone visits a park). There is evidence to suggest that written messages work best when used in conjunction with face to face contact eg officers/veterinarians handing out brochures to pet owners.

Lessons from successful community education programs in other areas of public interest indicate that to be successful community education programs need to:

- Be targeted ie people need to feel the message applies to them (people won't hear the message about the need to train their dog if they have an old dog);
- Convey clear and specific messages (the message should not just be pick up your dog's faeces – it should be take a bag with you, pick up as soon as your dog defecates and dispose of it in any garbage bin); and
- Convey positive messages (provide a list of places where you can take your dog off the leash as opposed to a list of places where you can't take your dog off the leash).

Each Key Issue Area includes target groups to assist in designing successful education programs. The Plan also classifies pet owners into prospective pet owners, new pet owners and existing pet owners for better targeting of the responsible pet ownership message.

Partnerships with key stakeholders (vets, clubs, welfare organizations) are important to maximise the success of education programs and Council will seek to develop and strengthen these partnerships.

Council's community education priorities for the life of this Plan will be:

- Prospective and new pet owners on responsible pet ownership.
- Removing dog faeces from public places.
- Effective operation of areas where dogs can be exercised off leash, compliance with leash and no dog requirements in other areas.
- Holding an Annual Dog Day Out Festival as a positive way to get the responsible pet ownership message across.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Develop an education strategy to encourage people to desex, identify and confine their cats.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Develop faeces management education strategy to ensure all dog owners are aware of the requirement to pick up dog faeces.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Develop an education strategy for publicising Council's leashing and no dog requirements and for effective management of off leash areas.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Develop a Code of Conduct the presence of dogs in off leash and on leash areas.	Short term.	Parking and rangers / open space	
Plan and hold an annual Dog Day Out Festival for dog owners. Involve key external stakeholders.	Short term	Parking and rangers	
Conduct an annual evaluation and review of the Annual Dog Day Festival	Short term	Parking and rangers	

## 16 Harnessing the benefits of owning pets

### Objective

*16.1 Support pet owners and harness the benefits of owning pets.*

### Target groups

- Pet owners.

### Discussion

There is a wealth of scientific evidence to support the health and social benefits of owning pets, although pet ownership is a very complex, individual relationship and as such not all human animal interactions are positive.

Most of the studies suggest pet ownership is associated with a reduction in cardiovascular disease (heart attacks and stroke) associated with increased exercise. However a growing body of research indicates that there is an association between pet ownership/attachment and psychosocial wellbeing. The psychosocial benefits of pet ownership include facilitating normal child development, ameliorating loneliness and depression and facilitating social support and interaction with other humans. It has been demonstrated that dogs are a social lubricant - having a dog with you stimulates conversations and in some cases friendships with other dog owners. This is generally seen as making a positive contribution to social capital.

Local government has a potential new role to play in harnessing the benefits of owning companion animals.

There are programs in other parts of Australia (eg Pet Links in Victoria) that match frail elderly pet owners with volunteers that might walk, bath or take a pet to the vet.

Pets are often taken in nursing homes and hospitals to visit patients/residents. This could be extended to community centres.

The City of Unley could be involved in facilitating program like these.

It is recommended that consideration be given to the provision of an agility course for dogs at an appropriate location. This could become a focus for many social activities for dog owners.

The Dog Day Out Festival recommended for educating the community in responsible pet ownership could also be used as a way to generate social capital in the City of Unley.

## Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Investigate the merits of sponsoring a pet links type program.	Medium term.	Community services	
Determine if there is scope to sponsor a dog visitation program in local hospitals, nursing homes and community centres.	Medium term.	Community services	

- Public education.

## 17 Implementation and Evaluation

### Approval of the Plan

The Plan will need to be submitted to Council for its approval.

It will then need to be submitted to the Dog and Cat Management Board for approval.

### Prioritising actions

The Plan's recommendations have been prioritised and scheduled through 2 phases for implementation over a 5 year period.

Phase 1: Short term 1 year.

Phase 2: Medium term 2-4 years.

Phase 3: Longer term 5 years plus.

### Developing a sound basis for recording data

The City of Unley's procedures for recording animal control data should be renewed and upgraded to provide an accurate and comprehensive basis to assess its performance in animal management.

### Annual Plan

Although this Plan contains detailed recommendations, a more detailed annual work plan will be needed to guide those who will implement the Plan and allow the actions to be matched with appropriate budget allocations.

### Annual Progress Report

Evaluating the annual progress of the Plan is the cornerstone of the implementation and evaluation strategy. It is proposed that an Annual Progress Report be prepared that outlines the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the Plan, difficulties encountered and any changes to the Plan that are considered necessary due to new circumstances or information.

### Responsibility

A City of Unley officer should be assigned responsibility for implementation of the Plan and preparation of the Annual Plan and Annual Progress Report.

### Partnerships with external stakeholders

The City of Unley will develop and strengthen partnerships with key external stakeholders to extend the reach of the responsible pet ownership message. This includes but is not limited to the Board, the RSPCA, the Animal Welfare League, CATS and other welfare groups, veterinarians, pet shops, breeders, trainers,

animal behaviourists and volunteers. The City of Unley will develop a register of key external stakeholders and communicate with them on a regular basis.

### Staff training

It is likely that there will soon be national accredited animal management courses available for those working in animal control. The City of Unley should encourage all of its animal management officers to have completed an accredited course within 5 years. In considering applications for new animal control officers, preference should be given to applicants who have completed an accredited course. Currently, all Rangers are qualified in animal management, through an accredited course

### Funding

Funds from dog registrations must be used on dog management. Alternative funding sources need to be found for cats.

In addition to a commitment of funds, the City of Unley will explore and take advantage of other funding sources as they become available, including state government grants and public private sector partnerships.

That Council should explore alternative funding sources and opportunities federal, state and private sectors to assist in the implementation of the Plan.

### Action Plan

Action	Priority	Responsibility	Cost
Obtain Council approval of the Plan.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Submit the Animal Management Plan to the DCMB for approval.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Assign a Council officer with responsibility for implementation of the Plan.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Prepare a strategy for expenditure of income generated from dog registrations.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Identify funding requirements for the cat management recommendations contained in this Plan.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Screen Council's procedures for recording animal control data.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Encourage all staff to have completed an accredited animal management course over the life of the Plan.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
In considering applications for new animal control officers, preference should be given to applicants who have completed an accredited animal management course.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Generate a list of key external stakeholders.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Develop a strategy for communicating with	Short term.	Parking and	

key external stakeholders.		rangers	
Hold an information seminar with key external stakeholders to brief them on key elements of the Plan and their role in helping to implement the Plan.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Prepare an annual work plan to implement the Plan.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Prepare an Annual Progress Report.	Short term.	Parking and rangers	
Consider alternative funding sources to help with the implementation of the Plan.	Medium term.	Parking and rangers	