

DRAFT - SEPTEMBER 2007



**DISTRICT COUNCIL
of
COOPER PEDY**

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS



1st September 2007 to 30th June 2012

1. Executive Summary

As from the 1st July 2004, significant changes to the Dog & Cat Management Act 1995 were implemented. As a result of these changes, Council is now preparing this Plan, to set the direction for the management of dogs and cats within our community for the next 5 years to meet the requirements of the new legislation.

The objectives of the Act are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership;
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats, and
- Promote the effective management of dogs and cats (including encouragement for the de-sexing and identification, through registration and micro-chipping of dogs and cats).

The Plan aims to establish management guidelines to create an environment which encourages responsible pet ownership, where people and pets integrate safely and harmoniously within the Coober Pedy community.

The District Council of Coober Pedy's Animal Management Plans have been developed in consultation with the Community and the Dog & Cat Management Board.

2. Vision Statement

"To at all times encourage responsible pet ownership through education and other management strategies, to ensure that the needs of animals and their owners are accommodated, while recognizing the differing needs of non pet owners of the community".

3. Aims

- 3.1 To provide effective management and a suitable environment for dogs and cats within the community, that can be achieved within Council's Resources.
- 3.2 To develop innovative and proactive approaches to dog and cat management.
- 3.3 To encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- 3.4 To increase public safety through the reduction of public and environment nuisance caused by dogs and cats.

4. Objectives

4.1 Provide effective management and a suitable environment for dogs and cats within the community.

4.1.1 Operate in accordance with the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.

4.1.2 Continued change of emphasis from only enforcement to a proactive approach of "education, prevention, encouragement and enforcement".

4.1.3 Undertake community consultation to ascertain the views of the community in relation to Council's strategies and policy directions, relating to dog and cat management.

4.1.4 Co-ordinate approach between Community Land Management Plans and the Dog & Cat Management Plans to ensure the needs of both the general community, pet and pet owners are accommodated in Open Space Areas.

4.1.5 Implement effective policies relating to dog and cat management controls and review by-laws where necessary, to ensure adequate and appropriate access to open space areas including *off* leash areas.

4.1.6 Improve community recognition and understanding of the role of Animal Management Officers.

4.2 Develop innovative and proactive approaches to dog and cat management.

4.2.1 Research best practice methodology for dealing with animal management issues.

4.2.2 Gain "in principal" support for the identification and promotion of dog expiation fees to be directed towards specific dog related education and encouragement programs.

4.2.3 Effective use of statistics when making decisions and influence policy directions.

4.2.4 Trial new initiatives and different approaches to dog and cat management.

4.3 Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.

- 4.3.1 Encourage and provide community education concerning pets in the environment in conjunction with other animal agencies.
- 4.3.2 Establish ongoing programs for de-sexing, socialization, training and micro-chipping.
- 4.3.3 Obtain maximum registration and identification, re-uniting pets to owners where possible.
- 4.3.4 Promote the welfare of dogs and cats in the community.

4.4 Increase public safety through the reduction of public and environment nuisance caused by dogs and cats.

- 4.4.1 Ensure adherence to the new "dogs on leash on streets, roads and footpath" amendments in the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.
- 4.4.2 Implement strategies to assist pet owners/public that are experiencing difficulties with pets (barking collars, re-homing, cat cages etc).
- 4.4.3 Reduce the number of dog attacks and harassments through bite avoidance education and encourage the reporting of all dog attacks.
- 4.4.4 Reduce the number of dogs wandering at large to minimize public nuisance and increase public safety.
- 4.4.5 Encourage dog owners to pick up dog faeces and carry dog waste bags to reduce the amount of dog faeces in the environment.

4.5 Increase the public's understanding of the enforcement provisions pursuant to the Dog & Cat Management Act 1995.

- 4.5.1 Council's Animal Control Officers will enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act in the Council area.
- 4.5.2 The approach of the Council in the first instance will be to encourage people to accept their responsibilities of pet ownership and comply with the provision of the Act voluntarily.
- 4.5.3 Ensure the general public is aware of enforcement measures as outlined within the Act, through ongoing promotional material (displays on Animal Control Notice boards etc).

5. The Law / Guidelines

5.1 Listed below is the main legislation that influences the management of dogs and cats, which Council has a responsibility to adhere to:

5.1.1 Dog & Cat Management Act 1995

5.1.2 Local Government Act 1999

5.1.3 Public and Environment Health Act 1987

5.1.4 Domestic & Feral & Nuisance Animal Act 1987

5.2 In addition, Council is also able to make by-laws and to adopt policies for the control and management of dogs and cats within its area. The District Council of Coober Pedy currently has adopted the following By-laws and Policies, which will influence the management of dogs within its area:

5.2.1 Policy; C94-04, Dog Free Areas (see appendix 'A')

5.2.2 Policy; C95-04, Dog Off Leash Exercise Areas (see appendix 'A')

5.3 While the provisions as listed above, provide a legal framework outlining Council's responsibilities and the penalties that can be imposed on dog and cat owners for non compliance, this Plan seeks to implement a balanced approach that caters to the communities needs that will not only benefit dogs, cats and their owners as a group, but also the wider community.

6. Strategic Direction

6.1 The District Council of Coober Pedy's Strategic Plan provides a broad overview of the Council's strategic direction for the period 2002-2007.

*One of the **key strategies** is to ensure the provision of services and facilities that reflect the needs and the demographic composition of the community.*

Although animal management is not specifically mentioned within the District Council of Coober Pedy's Strategic Plan, it is embraced under the above key strategy.

The key actions of the District Council of Coober Pedy's Animal Control Program is to:

6.1.1 Compile and implement an Animal Management Plan.

- 6.1.2 Introduction of a de-sexing and micro-chipping program in conjunction with the visiting veterinarian, to improve the identification of domestic animals and to reduce the number of unwanted animals within the Township.
- 6.1.3 Encourage re-homing practices, where pet owners determine they are no longer able to care for their pets.
- 6.1.4 Maintain and upgrade the Animal Control Compound.
- 6.1.5 Continue to provide appropriate staff training to relevant officers, to improve knowledge and skills in the area of Dog & Cat Management.

7. Definitions

- 7.1 To avoid public confusion the following is a list of definitions of the terms used in the Dog & Cat Management Act. This list along with the District Council of Coober Pedy's Animal Management Plans will be available for public viewing at the Council's Offices.

Term	Definition
Effective Control	<p>A person is exercising effective control of a dog by means of a physical restraint if -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the dog is on a chain, cord or leash that does not exceed 2 metres in length; 2) the dog has been effectively secured by placing it in a cage, vehicle or other object or structure; or 3) by tethering it to a fixed object by means of a chain, cord or leash that does not exceed 2 metres in length. <p>A dog is also taken to be under effective control if the owner is able to control the dog on command, with the dog being in close proximity to the person and the person being able to see the dog at all times.</p>
Wandering at large	<p>A dog is taken to be wandering at large while in large a public place (other than a park) or a private place without the consent of the occupier, and no person is exercising effective control of the dog either by physical constraint or by command (refer above definition).</p>
Dangerous Dog	<p>A Dangerous Dog means a dog in relation to which -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Council has made a Control (Dangerous Dog) Order; or 2) A court has made an order the terms of which generally correspond to a Control (Dangerous Dog) Order.
Guard Dog	<p>A Guard Dog means a dog that is kept on premises primarily for the purpose of guarding or protecting a person or property at those premises.</p>
Attack Trained Dog	<p>An Attack Trained Dog means a dog trained, or Dog undergoing training, to attack a person on command.</p>
Prescribed Breed	<p>A Prescribed Breed means any of the following breeds:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) American Pit Bull Terrier 2) Fila Brasileiro 3) Japanese Tosa 4) Dogo Argentina 5) Presa Canario

8. Animal Management Strategies

The following Animal Management Strategies have been developed to address various issues relating to the management of animals within our Community. Each strategy is seen to play an essential part in the overall success of this Plan.

With the ongoing commitment of Council and the community by working collaboratively in implementing this Plan, it is felt that the most appropriate outcomes will be able to be achieved.

8.1 ***Educating and promoting responsible pet ownership.***

8.1.1 **Statement:**

Encourage and provide community education concerning pets in our community.

A combination of education, encouragement and enforcement is seen to be the most successful method of animal management. A singular method of enforcement can not provide a full solution to pet owner and pet issues.

8.1.2 **Strategies:**

- a) Continue to provide education to the community via, Council's brochures, website, pet information kits, Council's Newsletter, promotional banners, Customer Service Staff, Council Notice Boards and Council 's information column in the local newspaper.
- b) Provide educational material for display in the Council Library and Civic Centre.
- c) Review educational and promotional materials, including Dog & Cat Management Board publications.
- d) Provide links on Council's website to other appropriate websites, such as the Dog & Cat Management Board, Pet Care, Animal Welfare League, Select a Pet.
- e) Investigate the possibility of holding free "Responsible Pet Ownership" education sessions, in conjunction with the visiting Vet.
- f) Review and monitor resource material available at the Public Library.
- g) In conjunction with the visiting Vet, provide education to school students to encourage responsible pet ownership from an early age.

- h) Encourage Council's "Responsible Pet Ownership Scheme".
- i) Active improvement in school education with the State-wide 'Delta Dog Safe' Program.
- j) All staff to promote our 'Responsible Pet Ownership' philosophy in their day to day interactions with the community.

8.2 ***De-sexing and micro-chipping programs, in conjunction with visiting vet.***

8.2.1 **Statement:**

To enable pets to be re-united with their owners and to ensure they can be identified a pro-active approach through achieving an increase in dog registration plus micro-chipping for dogs and micro-chipping of cats will be promoted.

Encouragement of dog & cat owners to have their pets de-sexed, irrespective of whether it is a male or female animal, as de-sexing of animals has the following benefits:

- a) Significant reduction of life threatening diseases in both male and female dogs when de-sexed at an early age.
- b) Reduction of excessive, unnecessary and unplanned breeding.
- c) Reduction of the likelihood of aggressive behaviour, predominantly in male not de-sexed dogs.
- d) Reduction of dogs wandering at large.
- e) Ability to identify and return cats to owners that are caught in cat traps.

8.2.2 **Strategies:**

- a) Through ongoing budget commitment, provide incentives to the community to assist in the 'De-sexing & Micro-chipping Program' undertaken by the visiting Vet for dogs and cats.
- b) Availability of cat cages for hire.
- c) Encourage the Local Vet to promote the benefits of pet de-sexing.

- d) Gain "in principal" support for the identification and promotion of dog expiation fees to be directed towards specific dog related education and encouragement programs.
- e) Provide education to ensure community are aware of the legislative requirement, that all dogs over 3 months of aged are to be registered.
- f) Undertake dog Registration door knock program to maximize dog registration and to assist with maintaining accurate data.
- g) Provide facilities to enable community to re-register dogs via the internet.
- h) Encourage prompt payment of dog registrations by offering an incentive/reward to one lucky owner who registers their animal prior to the due date.

Specific Dog Management Strategies:

8.3 *Develop off leash areas for dog owners to exercise their pets.*

8.3.1 Statement:

As a result of the changes to the Act that came into effect 1 July 2004, all dogs must be on a leash when in a public place "*means a place to which the public has access*". This means places such as streets, roads, footpaths, shopping centre car parks etc. but does not include parks and reserves.

8.3.2 Strategies:

- a) The District Council of Coober Pedy to identify the various Parks and Reserves within the Council area, that they consider dogs should either on-leash, off-leash, prohibited, or subject to Special Restrictions.
- b) Special Restrictions will relate to the Triangle Oval areas where dogs will be permitted to be exercised off leash during a designated period each day (e.g. early morning). At all other times dogs must be on-leash.

- c) Maintain and review the times and level of patrols in Council areas in line with service standards.
- d) Dog owners are encouraged to exercise their dogs off leash within designated Parks and Reserves, while demonstrating effective control at all times.

8.4 ***Reduce numbers of dogs wandering at large.***

8.4.1 **Statement:**

A dog will be taken to be 'wandering at large' while it is in a public place (other than a park) or a private place without the consent of the occupier, and is not under effective control of a person. The owner, or person who is responsible for the dog wandering at large, has committed an offence and is responsible for the prescribed penalties under the Act.

As a dog wandering at large can be a threat to members of the public, Council will implement strategies to minimize the occurrence of dogs wandering at large within the community and to increase public safety.

8.4.2 **Strategies:**

Owner's Responsibilities:

- a) All dog/s over three (3) months of age are to be registered.
- b) Adequately fence their property or provide an enclosure within the property boundary to control their dog.
- c) Train their dog so as not to leave their premises.
- d) Keep their dog under effective control when in a public place.

Council's Responsibilities:

- a) To assist in the reduction of dogs wandering at large, a combination of education, encouragement and enforcement along with maximizing dog registration and identification will ensure more impounded dogs are returned to owners with less risk to the animal and to the community.

- b) Un-identified dogs will be impounded in accordance with the Act.
- c) Unclaimed dogs that are suitable as pets will be eligible for distribution to persons seeking a pet through Council's Re-homing Program. Dogs being re-homed under this program will be required to be de-sexed, immunized and registered.
- d) Owners taking a dog/s under the Re-homing Program are also encouraged to have their pet micro-chipped.
- e) To encourage compliance, Animal Control Officer/s is encouraged to reinforce complying behaviour, particularly in children. At the discretion of the Animal Control Officer/s, warnings (except in the case of unregistered dogs) may be given to first offences which are of a minor nature where no harm to a person or property has occurred. Penalties prescribed by the Act will be applied for re-offenders.
- f) Ensure the general public is aware, via advertisements, of the times when Fireworks Displays and Defence Force Manoeuvres to ensure dogs are securely confined.

8.5 ***Promote dog training.***

8.5.1 **Statement:**

Encourage dog owners to socialize and train their dogs to an acceptable level within the community as 'Training = Discipline = Pet Ownership Enjoyment'.

8.5.2 **Strategies:**

- a) Support and promote the establishment of a local Dog Obedience Club.
- b) To promote the success of the Responsible Pet Ownership Program, hold an annual 'get together' where owners and animals can socialize.

8.6 ***Reducing dog attacks and bite avoidance.***

8.6.1 **Statement:**

Reduce the number of dog attacks and harassment of people and other animals and encourage the reporting of all dog attacks and harassments.

While a minority of dogs is involved in attacks and harassment, all dogs have the potential to bite, regardless of size, age, breed or temperament, particularly in situations where they are frightened, dominant, protective or possessive.

8.6.2 **Strategies:**

- a) Support and assist in the facilitation of the Dog and Cat Management Board's 'Delta Dog Safe' Program through South Australian schools.
- b) Promote and encourage the reporting of all dog attacks whether in public places or on private property.
- c) Review current education material and methods on bite avoidance, and seek opportunities to emphasize the importance of adult supervision of children at all times.
- d) Promote the level of risk relating to litigation and public safety, through advertising initiatives.

8.7 ***Reduce barking complaints.***

8.7.1 **Statement:**

The continual nuisance of barking dogs can become a very complex and difficult issue to deal with effectively and can be rather stressful for those involved. Council promotes a collaborative approach to overcoming barking dog complaints by liaising with all parties, and attempting to have those involved resolve the issue without Council involvement if at all possible.

8.7.2 **Strategies:**

- a) Mediate between neighbours to deal with dog barking complaints, if required.
- b) Provide 'anti-barking' dog collars for hire.
- c) Promote the keeping of cats inside at night to assist in reducing barking nuisance.

8.8 ***Faeces Management.***

8.8.1 **Statement:**

As dog owners are legally required to retrieve and dispose of their dogs' faeces, we will continue to encourage dog owners to pick up dog faeces from public places in order to reduce the amount of dog faeces harming our environment and spoiling the enjoyment of others.

8.8.2 **Strategies:**

- a) Promote pet owners to carry their own dog tidy bags to enable faeces to be retrieved.
- b) Ensure bins are available within public places for the collection of dog faeces.
- c) Continue to promote individual packs of degradable dog waste bags and 'pooch pouches' for sale to the public.
- d) Provide owners with dog 'pooch pouches' at time of registration, as an incentive to pick up after their dog/s.

Specific Cat Management Strategies:

8.9 ***Encourage and implement cat management***

8.9.1 **Statement:**

Encourage responsible cat ownership and support the micro-chipping and de-sexing of cats as a means of cat identification and control.

8.9.2 **Strategies:**

- a) Continue to identify and implement various methods for educating and promoting responsible cat ownership within the community.
- b) Council will hold regular micro-chipping month's to encourage identification promotion.
- c) Consult with the visiting Vet regarding the possibility of subsidized de-sexing to support cat control, through reduced and unnecessary breeding (refer Clause 7.2).
- d) Develop a permit system process for those residents who wish to keep more than 2 cats on their property.

- e) Monitor cat cage hire and ensure adequate cages are available to residents.
- f) Encourage cat enclosures.
- g) Review Council's Cat Management Policy and introduce By-Laws as required.
- h) A grace period of 6 months will be made available regarding number of cats per household to enable residents an appropriate amount of time to make application for additional cats.
- i) Introduce random household checks to determine and control cat numbers.
- j) Commence imposing appropriate penalties for breaches of the Cat By-law after a 6 months period from the introduction of the By-Law.
- k) Advertise and offer a 3 month free cat cage hire and cat disposal fee to assist in controlling the feral cat problem within the Township.

District Council of Coober Pedy
Dogs on Community Land

Dog Control in Council Areas

In the Council Minutes on 16th November 2004, the following Resolutions were carried:

Resolution No. C94-04

That Council declares the following areas to be “Dog Free Areas”

1. The Triangle Playground
 2. The Tennis Courts
 3. The Basketball Courts
-

Resolution No. C95-04

That Council declares the following areas to be “Dog Off-Leash Exercise Areas”

1. The area of land adjacent to the Oodnadatta Road, the boundaries of which are: Oodnadatta Road from 17 Mile Road to Henri Street, south-east along Henri Street to Chadwick Road, south along Chadwick Road to Chucky Street, west along Chucky Street to the northwestern corner of Allotment 2094, south to the boundary of Allotment 1857, west along the southern boundary of Allotment 1864 and South to Seventeen Mile Road.
2. The area known as the Water Conservation Reserve as depicted in Allotment 1 on Maps 16 and 17 of the Coober Pedy Street Directory and generally regarded as that land north of Burke Street to the Old Water Tank Road, Matrix Avenue and Clarky Road.
3. The area of land adjacent to the Stuart Highway, the boundaries of which are Monument Road, Jungle Crescent, William Creek Road and the Stuart Highway
4. The Town Oval between the hours of 6:00am and 8:00am

The areas described above are further detailed on Attachments 1 and 2 to Appendix A of the Animal Management Plan.