

DISTRICT COUNCIL OF
KAROONDA EAST MURRAY



RURAL ANIMAL
MANAGEMENT PLAN

2006-2011

1. Executive Summary	3
1.1 <i>Background.....</i>	3
1.2 <i>Strategic Outline.....</i>	3
2. Mission Statement.....	5
3. Aims.....	5
4. Objectives	5
5. The Law/Guidelines.....	6
5.1 <i>Objectives and Aims.....</i>	7
5.2 <i>Legislative Requirements – Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.....</i>	7
6. Animal Management Strategies	9
6.1 <i>Education and Promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership.....</i>	9
6.2 <i>Educate our Community and promote the following issues through our newsletters, written material and the media;.....</i>	10
6.3 <i>Dogs off leash and on leash provisions.....</i>	10
7. Management of Cats	11
7.1 <i>Other Urban Animals.....</i>	11
7.2 <i>Roosters, Chickens, birds, bees and other animals</i>	11
8. Strategic Plan	12
9. Implementation Strategies.....	12
9.1 <i>Reporting Structure</i>	12
9.2 <i>Resources – Small Rural Council.....</i>	12

1. Executive Summary

1.1 *Background*

In 2006 an Animal Management Reference Group was established by the District Council of Karoonda East Murray to develop a five year Animal Management Plan for the Karoonda and East Murray council district.

The Reference Group was represented by Justin Cooper Officer in charge of Karoonda Police, Ms Catherine George Principal /Bob Muster Deputy Principal Karoonda Area School, Jill Roz resident from Wynarka, Councillor John Wooldridge, Kevin Radloff Groundsperson and John Claydon Manager of Corporate Services.

After a community consultation phase the draft will be submitted to Council for adoption and from there to be endorsed and approved by the Dog & Cat Management Board.

The Dog & Cat Management Act 1995 legislature requires Councils to prepare a 5 year plan relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area. This should be completed by no later than the 1st October, 2006.

A plan of management must 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. Council has only one park in its township – Apex Park and there will be an area where dogs can be exercised off leash set aside here.

1.2 *Strategic Outline*

The District Council of Karoonda East Murray is a small rural Council. In the development of this Plan it is recognised that Council only has approximately 400 registrations of which over half are working farm dogs.

Council does not have the degree of problems, complaints or the physical and monetary resources that larger rural or city Councils may have.

With this in mind Council will now outline its strategy for the management of dogs and cats in its district.

The Councils management of animal issues has an impact on the health, wellbeing and lives of the whole community and the welfare of animals in our district. The Animal Management Plan is designed for everyone, both animal owners and non-owners. The Plan has a predominant focus on dogs and cats, however also identifies other animals which are kept within our community.

Dogs and cats represent by far the most significant number and type of animals and have the most significant impact on our community, our environment, our health and well being.

Details of Councils legislative requirements and a summary of the relevant legislation are outlined in the Plan. The Council is required to administer and enforce the provision of this Act. The objects of the Act are to

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

This plan contains recommendations for a wide range of actions to be undertaken by the Council to achieve these objectives. It provides a sound basis and direction from which it can plan and make future decision over the next five years and relates back to the wider Council policy context. It identifies strategies and actions to implement the mission, aims and objectives including,

- Educating and promoting responsible pet ownership
- Highlighting the importance of de-sexing of cats and dogs
- Obtaining the right pet and pet friendly housing
- Reducing dog attacks and bite avoidance
- Managing dog faeces in Public Places
- Developing dog “off leash” and “on leash” areas
- Improving dog impounding temporary kennels
- Reducing the number of dogs wandering at large
- Promoting the important of training and dog socialisation
- Reducing dog barking and nuisance
- Encouraging responsible cat management
- Reviewing Officer image and staff training
- Meeting our Corporate responsibilities
 - Risk Management
 - Service levels
- Identifying other urban animals
 - Roosters, chickens, birds, sheep, horses, goats, pigs, rabbits, bees, wasps, vermin

These animals are sometimes considered pests by the community, while for others they form an important part of their lifestyles and culture.

This conflict of opinion needs to be managed effectively and in accordance with regulation, policies and by laws.

Education, Prevention, Encouragement and Enforcement

This Plan emphasises the proactive combination of education, prevention, encouragement and enforcement to achieve Council objectives. Education and promotion are key priorities in changing attitudes to result in an increase in responsible pet ownership in the future. At the same time Council must be proactive in investigating and implementing preventative measures where possible and by providing encouragement and enforcement where necessary to comply with our policies and regulations.

2. Mission Statement

To create an environment which encourages responsible pet ownership where people and pets integrate safely and harmoniously within the District Council of Karoonda East Murray.

3. Aims

1. To provide effective management and a suitable environment for all animals within the Community.
2. To develop innovative and proactive approaches to animal management
3. To encourage responsible animal ownership focusing predominantly on dog and cat ownership.
4. To increase public safety through the reduction of public and environmental nuisance caused by animals.

4. Objectives

This section outlines the objectives of the DCKEMAMP and how these objectives will be implemented.

- a. Provide effective management and a suitable environment for all animals within the community.
 - Operate in accordance with the Dog and Cat Management Act
 - Continual change of emphasis from only enforcement to a proactive approach of “education, prevention, encouragement and enforcement”.
 - Effective use of local statistics and demographics where appropriate when making decisions and influencing policy directions.
 - Development of Councils Open Space Strategies in line with the Dog and Cat Management Act. Review policies to ensure that there are appropriate access to open space areas including on leash, off leash and prohibited areas.
 - Review of Council policies and by laws concerning all animals in our community.
 - Improve community recognition and understanding of the role of Animal Management Officers.
2. Develop innovative and proactive approaches to urban animal management
 - Organise a suitable training course for dog owners to train their dogs in obedience classes. It could be held at Apex Park subject to sufficient interest
 - Continued contact with Council’s Animal Management Reference Group to identify issues and make recommendations for effective animal management – meet at least two times a year or when necessary.
 - Effective use of statistics to justify decisions or to influence policy directions.
 - Improve dog impounding facility at depot.
 - Look at providing dog dropping bag dispensers in the main street, oval and Apex Park.
 - Dogs to be prohibited from RSL playground.

- Appropriate signage to be installed
3. Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership
- Encourage and provide community education concerning pets in the environment in conjunction with other animal agencies. Provide literature and information through Community Newsletter, schools and from the Council offices.
 - Encourage the keeping of cats inside at night, de-sexing and identification and increase the awareness of the impacts of cat ownership on the community.
 - Encourage selection of the right pet to suit lifestyle and circumstances and appropriate provisions for the keeping of pets, eg fencing and adequate yards.
 - Recognise and promote responsible pet owners within our community.
 - Encourage all dog owners to register their dogs.
 - Promote that dog registration fees go towards dog and cat related education, encouragement and improved dog facilities.
4. Increase public safety through the reduction of public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats
- Ensure adherence to the new dogs on leash on streets, roads and footpath as per the Dog and Cat Management Act.
 - Manage nuisance caused by barking.
 - Reduce the number of dog attacks and harassments through bite avoidance education and encourage the reporting of all dog attacks.
 - Reduce the number of dogs wandering at large to minimise public nuisance and increase public safety.
 - Encourage dog owners to pick up dog faeces and carry waste bags to reduce the amount of dog faeces in the environment.
 - Explore ways to address nuisance/harassment issues of dogs frightening people from inside their properties particularly in circumstances where a dog may be able to access the public through the fence or where the fence is not secure or effective.

5. The Law/Guidelines

State Government laws dictate some of the actions within this plan.

Those laws include;

South Australian Legislation – Dog and Cat Management Act
Local Government Act 1999
Public and Environmental Health Act 1986
Development Regulations 1993 – Section 3

5.1 Objectives and Aims

The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (Section 3) reads

The objectives of this Act are;

- a. To encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- b. To reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.
- c. To promote the effective management of dogs and cats (including through encouragement of the de-sexing of dogs and cats).

The aim of the Act is to provide a balanced range of options for the management of dogs and cats within Council areas.

5.2 Legislative Requirements – Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

- (1) Each Council is required to administer and enforce the provisions of this Act relating to dogs within its area and for that purpose must
 - (a) maintain a register of dogs containing the information required by the Board (which may be kept in the form of a computer record) that is to be readily available for public inspection; and
 - (b) ensure that the Board is provided with information contained in the register as required by the Board from time to time; and
 - (c) appoint a suitable person to be Registrar; and
 - (d) make satisfactory arrangements for issuing and replacing certificates of registration and registration discs; and
 - (d) appoint at least one full time animal management officer or make other arrangements for the exercise of the function and powers of animal management officers; and
 - (e) make satisfactory arrangements for the detention of dogs seized under this Act; and
 - (f) make satisfactory arrangements for fulfilling other obligations under this Act.
- (2) The arrangements made by a Council under this section must be satisfactory to the Board.
- (3) Money received by a Council under this Act must be expended in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this Act relating to dogs.
- (4) Each council must keep separate accounts of money received under this Act and of money expended in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of this Act relating to dogs.
- (5) A Council must pay into the Fund the percentage fixed by regulation of the dog registration fees received by the Council.

- (6) Councils may charge –
- (a) fees for the provision of extracts from registers kept under this Act; and
 - (b) fees (which may be differential) approved by the Minister –
 - (i) for the registration of dogs or businesses under Part 5; and
 - (ii) for late payment of registration fees; and
 - (iii) for meeting any other requirement imposed on councils under this Act.
- (7) Without limiting the matters that may be taken into account when setting fees to be approved by the Minister, council's must provide for a percentage rebate of the fee that would otherwise be charged for the registration of a dog in the following cases:
- (a) if the dog is desexed;
 - (b) if,
 - (i) the dog has been implanted with a microchip for the purposes of identification; and
 - (ii) the information contained in the microchip is up-to-date;
 - (c) if the dog has passed a specified training program accredited by the Board, (and, if more than one rebate applies in respect of a particular dog, the rebates are to be aggregated and deducted from the registration fee that would otherwise be charged)

Plans of management relating to dogs and cats

Section 26 of the Act reads as follows:-

- (1) Each council must, in accordance with this section, prepare a plan relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area.
- (2) A plan of management must 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.
- (3) A plan of management must be prepared and presented to the Board members as follows:
 - (a) the first plan must cover a 5 year period and be prepared and presented within 3 years after the commencement of this section;
 - (b) subsequent plans must cover subsequent 5 year periods and each plan must be prepared and presented at least 6 months before it is to take effect.
- (4) A plan of management must be approved by the Board before it takes effect.
- (5) A council may, with the approval of the Board, amend a plan of management at any time during the course of the 5 year period covered by the plan.

By-laws

Councils have the ability to make By-laws for the control or management of dogs or cats in their area however by-laws must be consistent with the aims and objectives of the Act.

Section 90 (1) of the existing Act reads as follows:-

- (1) A district or municipal council may make by-laws for the control or management of dogs or cats within its area.

6. Animal Management Strategies

There are a series of fundamental principles which underline all our management strategies.

1. To encourage the Karoonda East Murray community to take ownership of issues and we should wherever possible facilitate self help strategies for the community.
2. We acknowledge the potential to build significant social capital within our community by implementing our strategies and will take every opportunity to maximise this.
3. We recognise the importance of community consultation and will seek feedback wherever possible. We also realise the benefits of educating the younger members of the community and engaging them in our campaign towards willing compliance.
4. We will look for opportunities to work collaboratively with our neighbouring Councils and state bodies to maximise the effectiveness of our strategies

6.1 Education and Promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership

A combination of education, encouragement and enforcement is seen to be the most successful method of animal management. The Dog and Cat Management Board promotes this method. A singular method of enforcement cannot provide a full solution to dog owner and dog problems.

Proposed Activity

6.2 *Educate our Community and promote the following issues through our newsletters, written material and the media;*

1. Responsible pet ownership, costs and benefits
2. De-sexing, registration and identification of dogs
3. Selecting an appropriate pet to suit lifestyle and circumstances and appropriate fencing and housing.
4. Dog attack, bite avoidance and reporting of all dog attacks in public places and private property.
5. Dogs on footpaths, reserves and faeces management, environmental and social effects.
6. Dogs off leash and on leash provisions.
7. Dogs wandering at large and effective control.
8. Socialising and training.
9. Dog barking and nuisance.
10. Cat Management
11. Officer Image
12. Communicate policies and by laws.

6.3 *Dogs off leash and on leash provisions*

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

Councils have three years to determine what is appropriate use and provisions for dogs on lead/off lead in other spaces such as parks, reserves and gardens.

The District Council of Karoonda East Murray has only one park where a section could be sealed off to allow for both on and off leash areas. This would have to be fenced and appropriate signage installed as the public use this park for recreational activities.

Other reserves that consist mainly of mallee scrub could be considered but fencing would be expensive.

Residents usually walk their dogs on leashes around the town and use the railway reserves when no one else is around to allow their dogs to be exercised off lead. The off lead and on lead provisions are difficult to manage considering only one park is available.

7. Management of Cats

A strategy to encourage responsible cat ownership and support the de-sexing of cats as a means of cat control.

The Council receives few complaints regarding cat problems and these relate to stray cats wandering in neighbours yards.

Council does supply cat cages to control unidentified cats. Our Environmental Health officer can take action where insanitary conditions prevail from keeping excessive numbers of cats.

Proposed Activity

Educate and encourage responsible cat ownership through usual Public consultation policy methods – newsletter, media and website. Investigate a by law limited the number of cats which can be owned and kept on a property to two cats.

Purchase a more efficient cat cage to reduce unwanted and stray cat numbers.

Conduct public consultation within the community and focus groups to determine if there is a general concern about stray and unde-sexed cats and whether there is support for Council to restrict the number of cats kept on a property to two.

7.1 Other Urban Animals

While this plan mostly incorporates animal management relating to dogs and cats, animals such as roosters, chickens, birds, bees and other animals impact on the community and therefore have been incorporated into the plan as supplementary items.

7.2 Roosters, Chickens, birds, bees and other animals

Animal owners are required to keep animals in such a way as not to cause a nuisance or a hazard. Section 254 of the Local Government Act gives Councils the power to issue orders to require animal owners to abate a nuisance or hazard caused by animals.

Owners who keep animals also have a responsibility under the Public and Environmental Health Act 1986 to ensure the property is kept in a clean and sanitary condition. Council can issue notices where the keeping of animals is causing an insanitary condition to occur. Examples of insanitary conditions include offensive odours caused by an accumulation of animal faeces on the property, infestation of rodents as a result of failing to construct and maintain an adequate poultry enclosure.

8. Strategic Plan

This Animal Management Plan is consistent with our objectives

- a. To provide improved regulatory services
- b. Introduce appropriate by laws if and where necessary to enhance and protect the quality of life and
- c. To develop and implement a community awareness program to achieve responsible pet ownership.

9. Implementation Strategies

9.1 Reporting Structure

Performance on achievement of the strategies and actions will be reported to Council on a six monthly basis.

9.2 Resources – Small Rural Council

The funding of the plan will be in accordance with the annual budget of the Council and will take into account that there is only limited staff resources dedicated to animal management. See Executive Summary 1.2 Strategy Outline.