

District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula

**5 Year
Animal Management Plan**



DECEMBER 2006 to NOVEMBER 2011

Executive Summary

The District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula is situated approximately 650km from the Adelaide CBD and has a population of 4258.

During 2004 / 05 the Council registered 1007 dogs and in 2005 / 06, 1038 dogs were registered & in 2006 / 07 it is now 1047.

The number of dogs impounded in 2005 / 06 was 15.

In addition the Council investigated 12 dog attacks/harassments, 2 noise complaints and attended to 32 complaints of dogs wandering at large.

This Animal Management Plan has been prepared in response to the Council adopting a planned approach to undertake its responsibilities pursuant to the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995, and will guide domestic animal management by the Council over the next 5 years.

The Plan identifies aims and objectives and strategies to implement the mission, for domestic animals management. The Plan has been prepared by drawing information from a broad range of stakeholders, with the community asked to comment on the draft prior to its adoption by the Council.

The Plan's Mission is to promote and facilitate responsible ownership of dogs and cats, while respecting the rights of other members of the community and protecting the environment.

The Dog and Cat Management Act was enacted in 1995 and brought in a new legal framework to South Australia covering both dogs and cats. The objectives of the Act are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats, and
- To promote the effective management of dogs and cats (including through the encouragement of de-sexing of dogs and cats)

Animal control has widened into a greater array of contexts following the introduction of the Act. Knowledge of both animal and human behaviour is now a requirement of working in the field.

There is growing recognition that enforcement of laws will not, on its own, result in lasting, voluntary changes in behaviour. It needs to be supplemented by a range of non-regulatory approaches such as public education and improved signage.

This strategy will provide Council with a sound basis and direction from which it can plan, co-ordinate and make future decisions to meet the needs of the community over the next 5 years.

The Law and Guidelines

The responsibilities for dog and cat management in South Australia are prescribed in the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. Under the Act, Councils are required to administer and enforce the provisions relating to dogs within its area. Prescribed responsibilities include the appointment of a Registrar, maintenance of a Dog Register, the appointment of an Animal Management Officer and to make arrangements for dogs seized, and its other obligations under the Act. A Council is also able to make By-Laws relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area.

The Act also provides for the appointment of the Dog and Cat Management Board, which has responsibilities to plan, promote, and advise on effective management of dogs and cats in the State, to monitor Councils management of their responsibilities, to issue Guidelines for Councils, to advise and assist Councils to undertake their responsibilities. The Board also has a role to provide advice to the Minister, to keep the Act under review, to undertake research into companion animal management and to provide education programs for dog management officers and community awareness information. The Act also provides that a Council may appoint a cat management officer for its area of responsibility.

While these provisions provide the legal framework for the Councils responsibilities and the penalties that can be imposed on dog owners for non compliance, this Plan seeks to implement a balanced approach that caters for everyone's needs that will not only benefit dogs and their owners as a group with legitimate needs but also the wider community as well as those charged with the responsibility of animal management.

Mission Statement

"To promote responsible pet ownership within the District whilst ensuring the needs of animals and their owners are accommodated and recognising the differing needs of non pet owners".

Aims

- To provide effective management of dogs and cats within the community whilst recognising the needs of pet owners and non pet owners
- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- Increase public safety.
- Reduce the public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.

Objectives

- 1. Provide effective management of dogs and cats within the community whilst recognising the needs of pet owners and non pet owners.**
 - Operate within and enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995
 - Maximise dog registration and identification
 - Minimise the number of dogs wandering at large
 - Encourage the identification of cats
 - Encourage the community to report all dog attacks and harassments to Council
 - Limit the number of dogs per dwelling
 - Provide suitable on and off leash areas for dogs

- 2. Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.**
 - Encourage desexing and microchipping of dogs and cats
 - Encourage dog owners to socialize and train their dogs
 - Promote the benefits of identifying dogs and cats to increase the possibility of them being reunited with their owners when the need arises
 - Educate the dog and cat owners about their responsibilities regarding their pets welfare and responsibilities pursuant to the Dog and Cat Management Act

- 3. Increase public safety.**
 - Reduce the number of dog attacks and harassments on humans and livestock through education and encouraging the community to report of all dog attacks
 - Conduct regular patrols to ensure compliance with legislative requirements

- 4. Reduce the public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.**
 - Manage the nuisance caused by barking
 - Reduce the number of dogs wandering at large
 - Encourage dog owner responsibility with regard to the picking up of dog faeces
 - Encourage keeping cats in at night

Strategies

1. Provide effective management of dogs and cats within the community whilst recognising the needs of pet owners and non pet owners.

(a) Operate within and enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act

The Animal Management Officer shall endeavour to enforce the requirements of the Dog and Cat Management Act.

Council will appoint a Registrar of Dogs and maintain an up to date register of all dogs registered within the District.

Ensure ongoing training is provided to Animal Management Officers.

(b) Maximise dog registration and identification.

Educate pet owners that registration and identification assists with the prompt return of their pet in the event that it becomes lost or wanders.

Promote the registration concessions which are available.

Follow up dog owners who fail to reregister dogs, and enforce legal requirements.

(c) Minimise the number of dogs wandering at large.

Conduct regular patrols.

Return identified dogs to their owners where possible and impound unidentified dogs in accordance with the Dog and Cat Management Act.

Encourage dog owners to confine their pets during thunderstorms and fireworks.

Educate dog owners of the consequences of allowing their dog to wander at large.

Educate dog owners about the need for a suitable enclosed area for their dog.

(d) Encourage the identification of cats.

Educate cat owners of the need to identify their cat so that in the event that it is trapped, it is not deemed to be a stray and consequently destroyed.

(e) Encourage the community to report all dog attacks and harassment to the Council.

Promote and encourage the reporting of all dog attacks and harassment from dogs on humans and livestock.

Encourage dog obedience training.

Educate the public, especially children, on methods of bite avoidance.

(f) Limit the number of dogs per dwelling.

Enforce Council policy which limits the number of dogs to two per dwelling in townships.

(h) Provide suitable on leash and off leash areas.

Educate the public about the amendments to the Dog and Cat Management Act which came into effect on 1st July 2004.

Pursuant to the Act, all dogs in public places are required to be on a leash except in areas deemed to be a park where effective control of the dog still needs to be maintained *by either physical restraint or by command whereby the dog is in close proximity to the person and the person being able to see the dog at all times.*

'Public place' means a place to which the public has access (whether an admission fee is charged or not) and includes streets, roads, footpaths, shopping centre car parks, ovals and sporting arenas.

'Park' means a park, garden, reserve or other similar public open space, or a foreshore area, within the area of a Council.

The **'on leash'** areas within the District Council of Lower Eyre Peninsula are the park areas known as;

1. Railway Triangle, Cummins
2. Playground, Louth Bay
3. Camping ground, Louth Bay
4. Caravan Park, Farm Beach
5. Dorward Reserve, North Shields
6. Playground, Tulka
7. Stan Morgan Reserve, Coffin Bay

Unless otherwise prescribed by the Council, all park areas and foreshores are considered "off leash", and all other public places are "on leash".

2. Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.

- **Encourage desexing and microchipping of dogs and cats**
Promote the registration concessions available for desexed and microchipped dogs.
Educate pet owners about the benefits of having an identified pet with regard to locating the owner of a lost pet.
Educate pet owners about the benefits of desexing their pet – the reduction of unplanned breeding, the reduction of aggressive behaviour / temperament improvement (predominantly in male dogs), and the reduction of life threatening diseases and complications.
- **Encourage dog owners to train and socialise their dogs.**
Offer a registration discount for dogs which have undertaken approved training.
Encourage dog owners to provide training for their dogs from an early age.

- **Promote the benefits of identifying dogs and cats to increase the possibility of being reunited.**

Ensure information is made available which educates pet owners of the role of Animal Management Officers in reuniting owners with pets, and that it is essential for pets to be identified if this is to occur.

- **Obtain maximum number of registrations.**

Follow up dog owners who fail to reregister their dogs.

Place dog registration reminder signs throughout the District to remind dog owners when registrations fall due.

Discourage late registration by imposing a late registration fee.

- **Education of dog and cat owners.**

Ensure educational material is available for pet owners at council offices.

Provide 'responsible dog ownership' articles for the Council 'Focus' page, and an annual explanation of Section 7 of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 'Dog wandering at large'.

Maintain the current Animal Management Plan and a link to www.dogsncats.asn.au on the Council website. Encourage the public to access the Council site.

Encourage pet owners to utilize local vets and organisations like the RSPCA, for information.

Provide pet owners with advice as to where they may gain information about the right pet to suit their lifestyle and circumstances.

Educate pet owners about their responsibilities as a pet owner pursuant to the Dog and Cat Management Act.

3. Increase public safety.

- **Reduce the number of dog attacks and harassments on humans and livestock**

Promote the need to report all dog attacks and harassments, whether on private property or in a public place.

Encourage the public to access educational material about dog behavior.

Educate the public, especially children about bite avoidance.

Educate the public about the consequences of their dog wandering onto a property which farms stock.

- **Conduct regular patrols to ensure compliance with legislative requirements**

Regular patrols throughout the district at irregular times, provides the public with a reminder of the presence of an Animal Management Officer, and the need to comply with legislation at all times.

4. Reduce the public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.

• **Manage nuisance caused by barking**

Educate dog owners about the reasons a dog may be causing a nuisance by barking.

Encourage dog owners to spend time exercising and giving attention to their dogs.

The Animal Management Officer will respond to complaints about barking.

Initially the AMO will assist the dog owner to determine what may be causing their dog to bark and how to resolve the matter.

Advise the complainant to keep a diary of barking incidents.

If the problem continues, a formal investigation will be implemented and followed through.

• **Reduce the number of dogs wandering at large**

The Animal Management Officer will conduct random (day of the week and times of day) patrols of public areas, and respond to reports from the general public if a dog is seen to be wandering at large.

Any unidentified dogs will be impounded, and identified dogs returned to the owner where possible, pursuant to the Dog and Cat Management Act.

The AMO will endeavour to reinforce complying behaviour, particularly with children and to issue a warning for first offences that are of a minor nature.

Penalties prescribed by the Act will be applied to repeat offenders.

Make information available to dog owners about the consequences of allowing their dog to wander at large, and encourage them to provide a suitable enclosed area from which their dog will not escape.

Unclaimed dogs which are unsuitable as pets will be euthanased.

Unclaimed dogs which are suitable as pets will be handed to the RSPCA for rehoming, subject to housing availability at their facility at the time.

• **Encourage dog owner responsibility regarding the picking up of dog faeces**

Educate dog owners about their responsibility pursuant to the Dog and Cat Management Act, with regard to the picking up of their dog's faeces when dropped in a public place.

• **Encourage keeping cats in at night**

Educate cat owners about the consequences of allowing an unidentified cat to wander, and the benefits of keeping it in at night.