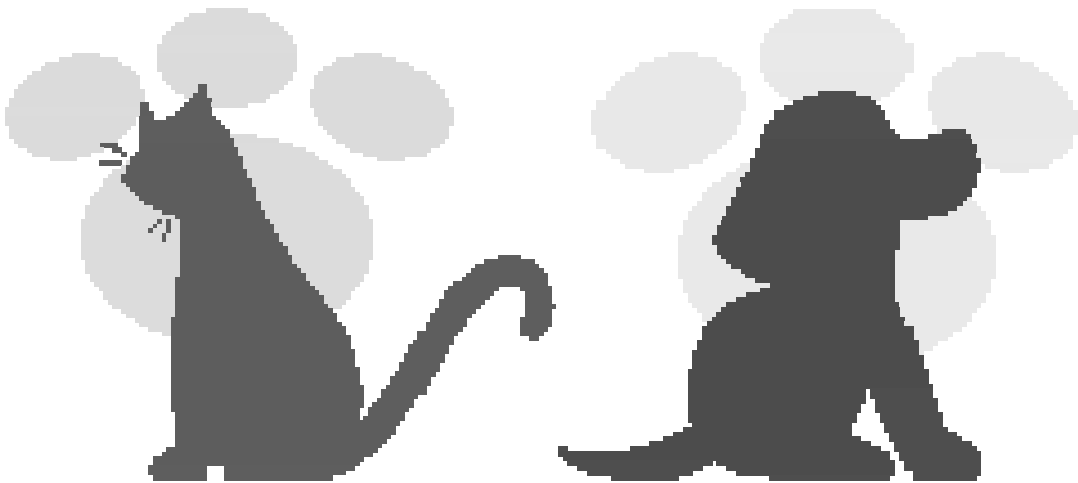


District Council of Mallala

Animal Management Plan

2007 - 2012



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1. DOG MANAGEMENT OFFICER SUMMARY

1.1 BACKGROUND

The District Council of Mallala currently has a registered dog population of approximately 4400; this figure fluctuates annually as demonstrated in the dog registration figures on page 15. Council impounds between 60 and 100 dogs annually with approximately 30% of this total claimed by their owners. Council staff investigates dog attacks, noise nuisances and promote and enforce dog registration compliance throughout the district.

Currently the District Council of Mallala has an estimated cat population of approximately 1800.

This Animal Management Plan is prepared in response to the requirements of Section 26A of the Dog and Cat Management Act, 1995. Section 26A of the Act requires that, the plan must allocate parks to be designated for dogs "on leash" and "off leash" areas where they can be exercised under effective control. The initial Plan must cover a 5 year period and should be presented to the Dog and Cat Management Board by June 2007 for approval to meet the statutory deadline of 1 July 2007.

The plan has been developed in consultation with self nominated members of the community, interested in contributing towards an Animal Management Plan for the area. The Plan also addresses problems that are common throughout most rural and regional Council areas.

The Animal Management Plan identifies strategies and actions to implement the mission, aims and objectives for the management of animals. This Plan contains recommendations for a wide range of actions to be undertaken by the Council.

There is now considerable evidence to support the benefits of owning pets. This implies a potentially new role for Council in harnessing the benefits of pet ownership or at least maintaining the ability of the community to continue to own dogs and cats. This plan will provide Council with a sound basis and direction from which it can co-ordinate and make future decisions to meet the needs of the community over the next five years.

1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNCIL AREA

The District Council of Mallala is situated 60 kilometres north-north east of Adelaide, within the northern Adelaide plains. Its western boundary is the coastline of the St Vincent Gulf. The northern boundary abuts the Wakefield Regional Council and to the east is the Light Regional Council. The Gawler River is situated to the south of the Council area and serves as a boundary, separating the District Council of Mallala from the City of Playford.

The topography of the area is mainly flat becoming slightly undulated toward the eastern boundary with several areas of uncleared natural scrub, scattered throughout the area. The southern half of the Council area is prone to flooding and under normal conditions the risk of bushfire is moderate.

The District includes several townships that are surrounded by rural areas. The main townships in the Council area are Two Wells, Dublin and Mallala.

Residential settlements within the area are Lewiston, Redbanks, Lower Light and Fischer, whilst the main coastal settlements consist of Parham, Thompson Beach, Webb Beach and Middle Beach.

East of the Two Wells township in Lewiston there is a unique Rural Living (Animal Husbandry) Zone. Many dog breeding kennels are situated within this area. Redbanks is another township where larger numbers of dogs are kept for breeding purposes. The number of dogs in the Rural Living (Animal Husbandry) Zone is expected to increase significantly, as more land becomes available.

1.3 STRATEGIC OUTLINE

Council's management of animal issues has an impact on the health, well being and lives of the whole community and the welfare of animals kept within the Council area. This Plan is therefore designed for everyone in the District Council of Mallala, from owners of a dog or a cat, to those who keep other animals as pets and for those in the community that keep animals in larger numbers for animal husbandry purposes.

Council's Strategic Management Plan acknowledges the unique animal husbandry keeping area, and strives to further facilitate low scale animal keeping and/or animal breeding in the appropriate areas.

1.4 MISSION STATEMENT (District Council of Mallala)

"To foster an environment of trust throughout the animal community by listening to their ideas and providing the necessary facilities, educational programs and accountability in the enforcement of legislation and in the control and care of domestic animals".

2. AIMS



1. Promote responsible dog, cat and other animal ownership.
2. Improve safety and amenity in relation to dogs and cats.
3. Improve public safety in regard to stray stock.
4. Promote the unique locality of the animal husbandry area throughout the District whilst also recognising and respecting other community members.

5. Ensure the expenditure of registration fees are used in accordance with the Dog and Cat Management Act, 1995 and the objectives of this plan.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act are carried out effectively.
2. Enforce identification and registration of dogs to enable the reunion of lost pets with their owners and control of all unowned animals.
3. Maintain adequate facilities and arrangements for the temporary protection of lost or unowned animals.
4. Promote the de-sexing of dogs and cats through incentive schemes.
5. Provide appropriate off-leash areas for the running exercise of dogs and identify, develop and promote other reserve areas for dog facilities as the need arises.
6. Formulate educational and reward programs that promote responsible dog, cat and animal ownership and recognise examples of good management.
7. Support community, local dog obedience clubs and other community recognised animal training programs.
8. Explore and initiate an action plan to reduce the incidents of “dog harassment” from inadequately fenced properties.

4. THE LAW/GUIDELINES

The District Council of Mallala has a legal responsibility under the following:

- Dog and Cat Management Act, 1995;
- Impounding Act, 1920;
- Local By-Laws; and
- Local Government Act, 1999 - Order Making Policy.



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 their area. Responsibilities associated with the Act include the appointment of a Registrar, maintenance of a Dog Register and the appointment of a Dog Management Officer to manage Council's obligations under the Act.

The objectives of the Act are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership;
- Reduce the 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).

The Act also provides for the appointment of the Dog and Cat Management Board (the Board), which has responsibilities to plan, promote, and advise on effective management of dogs and cats in the State. The Board also monitors Councils management of responsibilities, issues guidelines for Councils to advise and assist them to undertake their responsibilities.

The Board also has a role to provide advice to the Minister, keep the Act under review and undertake research into companion animal management. Furthermore, the Board works to provide education programs for Dog Management Officers and community awareness information.

The Board provides general guidelines to Councils in the areas of dog attack investigation and barking complaints. Councils are able to make By-Laws relating to the management of dogs within its area. The District Council of Mallala has developed By-Laws that enable Council to control the number of dogs kept on a property.

The Local Government Act, 1999 has a Section on Order Making that may be applied and assist in the area of dog management.

These provisions provide the legal framework for Council to apply penalties to dog owners for non compliance. However, this Plan seeks to implement a balanced approach that will benefit the wider community.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Council Officers utilise relevant legislation to assist with compliance throughout the area.

5. ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

5.1 PET OWNERSHIP



The following factors contribute to successful pet ownership.

- Ensuring the dog/s are registered, immunized, and desexed.
- Training the dog/s.
- Having awareness of the dog/s behaviour at all times, including when the owner is away from the home.

The *Owner* is responsible to ensure that the dog has adequate food, water, shelter and is exercised regularly.

The *Breed* determines the size, and often the temperament of the dog. When selecting a pet it is important to ensure the dog is suitable for the owners needs.

The *Home environment* is made up of the part of the home that the dog will have access to. In most cases this will include an enclosed yard and possibly part of the house. Important factors are the adequacy of shelter, food, water and fencing. Where it is found that a dog is a habitual fence runner and is a nuisance to 'passers by' Council will request the owner to take appropriate measures to improve the situation. For example, the owner may be asked to erect an inner fence, which acts as a buffer between the dog and the boundaries of the property. Other important factors are whether there are children in the home, closeness of neighbours and other dogs and access to on leash and off leash exercise areas.

Successful pet ownership has both financial and time commitment considerations. It is important that people contemplating pet ownership should choose an appropriate pet for their particular home and family circumstances.

Proposed Strategy:

1. That people contemplating obtaining a dog and/or other animal be encouraged to consider the factors affecting the suitability of successful pet ownership in their particular circumstances. Consideration of the environment that the pet will be kept in will be especially important.
2. Inform people of online information regarding breeds and assistance in pet selection from the following sites:

Petcare Information and Advisory Service
www.petnet.com.au

The Dog and Cat Management Board of SA
www.dogsncats.asn.au

The South Australian Canine Association
www.saca.caninenet.com

Cat-World
<http://www.cat-world.com.au/>

Horse SA
<http://www.horsesa.asn.au/zeolite/zsection/2>

Australian National Kennel Council
<http://www.ankc.aust.com/>

Animal Welfare League
<http://www.animalwelfare.com.au/>

3. To encourage people to obtain dogs and/or other animals from members of recognised bodies, and to ensure that the animal is sound from defects, and immunised.
4. That people contemplating obtaining a dog and/or other animal be encouraged to become familiar with the responsibilities of pet ownership.
5. Encourage new dog owners to consider training for their pet.
6. That people who obtain a dog, cat and/or other animal, ensure it is kept comfortable and adequately contained wholly within the property.
7. Promote the Code of Practice that has a standard for dog shelters/enclosures.
8. Promote responsible ownership through permanent identification of dogs (micro chipping).

5.2 DOGS IN PUBLIC PLACES

The Act requires that a dog can be in a public place provided it is under the effective control of a person by means of a physical restraint i.e. dog lead (not more than 2 meters in length). Dogs can be in a park or designated open space providing they are under effective control by command of that person who is in close proximity to the dog, and the person is able to see the dog at all times.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Council after community consultation will identify suitable areas to be utilised as off leash, on leash and dog prohibited areas. These areas will be identified and established within 5 years of the ratification of the plan.
2. Provide signs to identify these reserves.
3. Provide dog faeces disposal facilities in these areas.

5.3 WANDERING DOGS

A dog is deemed to be 'wandering at large' when it is in a public place, 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.



Proposed Strategy:

1. Dog owners are made aware of their rights and responsibilities to ensure their dog is retained within the property by adequate fencing and to keep their dog under effective control when in a public place.
2. Conduct random patrols of all public areas and detain dogs wandering at large.
3. That Council responds to reports of a dog wandering at large.
4. Dogs impounded for wandering at large will be returned to their owners where possible.

5. Unidentified dogs will be impounded in accordance with the Act.
6. Unclaimed dogs that have been kept for the statutory time limit in accordance with legislation, will then be passed on to a Board approved and registered animal shelter.

5.4 BARKING DOGS

Barking complaints are difficult to resolve and depend largely on the co-operation of the dog owner and complainant.

Procedures regarding dog barking complaints are investigated. The collection of evidence involves full co-operation including diary keeping by the complainant and dog owner and any witnesses. Noise complaints lodged about kennels in the animal husbandry area require a specific procedure to be implemented.

Proposed Strategy:

1. That Council implements a policy for the investigation of noise nuisance complaints. This will include the availability of education brochures for the dog owner and complainant, to be sent in the event of a complaint.

5.5 IDENTIFICATION REGISTRATION

Under provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act, it is an offence for Council to use funds generated by dog control activities including dog registrations for any other purpose than dog management. The purpose of registration includes:

- To fund animal management and administration which includes the collection of registration fees;
- To fund animal management projects to improve amenity;
- To allow lost pets to be reunited with their owners;
- To provide proof of ownership and to assist an authorised officer in identification of the dog;

The Dog and Cat Management Board have conducted testing on all available micro-chip scanners and have provided Council with a scanner for use on each dog impounded.

Proposed Strategy:

Promote responsible dog ownership:

1. Enforce legal requirements such as identification and registration.
2. Educate owners about animal welfare issues such as food, shelter and exercise.

3. Educate owners about community issues such as roaming, nuisance, faeces disposal and environmental damage caused by dogs.
4. Promote and facilitate socialisation and training of dogs, especially puppies.
5. Promote desexing, including contributing to concessional schemes.
6. To work with local veterinarians to develop a consistent approach to micro chipping and the identification of animals.



5.6 FAECES MANAGEMENT

Dog owners, when in public areas are legally required to collect and dispose of their dog's faeces for health, environmental and amenity reasons. Education and the development of strategies are an important part of long term dog faeces management in the District Council of Mallala.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Promote responsible dog ownership by increasing community awareness of the penalties associated with failing to remove dog faeces in a public place.
2. Provide dog faeces disposal bins within the townships and public parks and encourage dog owners to utilise them.
3. Explore options for the disposal of waste matter (for the benefit of dog owners who hold current Business Registrations).

5.7 PROVISION FOR THE WELFARE AND SHELTER OF DOGS

Council is required to operate its dog handling facility in accordance with the "code of conduct for pounds and shelters" as set down by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

The District Council of Mallala's dog handling facility is currently of a high standard. It is essential that Council guarantee all impounded dogs have a clean and safe facility. It is also a requirement that Council ensure impounded dogs are returned to owners as soon as practical.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Council continues to provide the welfare and shelter for dogs and conducts regular reviews of pounds for compliance.

District Council of Mallala - Two Wells Dog Pound



5.8 DOMESTIC CAT MANAGEMENT

The District Council of Mallala recognises that community education is the key to effective long term cat control. Council currently loans out cat traps and gives residents advice in accordance with the Act.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Promote responsible cat ownership in the community.
2. Encourage owners to ensure their cats are de-sexed, immunised, kept free of parasites, and provided with adequate food and shelter.
3. Encourage owners to be responsible for their cat's behaviour and take positive timely action to avoid nuisance to neighbours and damage to the environment.
4. Take note of and investigate any complaints relating to colony cats that could be operating in the Council area.
5. Explore a voluntary curfew for cats, and encourage cat owners to embrace such a curfew through an education program.
6. Investigate the possibility of supporting CATS Inc in exchange for practical assistance with colony cat problems.
7. Continue the practice of making traps available to residents to capture nuisance cats.



5.9 BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP

There is a scientific link to support the benefits of owning pets and their use in therapy for better health. For example, dogs encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and improve people's sense of security both in the home and in public places.

Evidence is escalating and the public health profession is starting to take note, for example:

- The National Health and Medical Research Council's Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Overweight and Obesity considers dog walking as a key to getting overweight and obese people moving.
- A public health symposium was hosted by the National Centre for Health Promotion in Sydney in 1998 to generate a research agenda for dog ownership and public health.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Promote the benefits of pet ownership to the community.



5.10 EDUCATION AND PROMOTION

Education in the animal control area has many facets. It includes education of pet owners as well as training of pets (usually dogs). Another focus receiving attention is educating other people about how to behave around dogs.

Different programs cater for different needs; and Council will target its education activities based on a careful assessment of the needs of the whole community, whilst complementing and avoiding duplication of education activities offered by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Educate the community on the responsibilities of pet ownership:
 - a. Mail out renewal notices to all registered dog owners in late June. Included with that notice, information on the responsibilities of pet ownership, contact details of dog obedience clubs.
 - b. Advertise dog registration requirements in the local media and in Council's newsletter.
 - c. Provide contact details of specialised dog trainers.
 - d. Encourage dog obedience schools to promote information to the media of dog obedience classes in the community.
2. Advertise in the community when Council is planning dog registration door-knocks to encourage voluntary dog registration.
3. Provide information to the media on the factors of successful pet ownership and any other animal matters of interest.

5.11 ENFORCEMENT

The Dog and Cat Management Act requires Councils to enforce the provisions of the Act in their Council area. The District Council of Mallala encourages people to accept their responsibilities of pet ownership and comply with the provisions of the Act voluntarily.

To ensure provisions of the Act are complied with, the community requires public places to be monitored and the availability of a Dog Management Officer to respond to concerns and serious breaches of the Act. It is Council's responsibility to make arrangements for efficient and effective services.

Council has found from past practice that these services are best provided by Council employees, who are able to represent all facets of Council's Animal Management Policies; and at the same time supplement other compliance responsibilities of the Council.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Council will enforce the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act in its Council Area.
 - a. Council is required to maintain the appropriate standard of Registrar duties and ensure that adequate arrangements are in place for the enforcement of its legislative responsibilities.
 - b. Council will maintain a Dog Register, which is current and represents the known ownership and dog details of all dogs in the community.
 - c. Council will endeavour to monitor all public places for compliance with the provisions of the Act.
 - d. Council will respond to calls and complaints from members of the public regarding possible non compliance with the provisions of the Act.
 - e. Council, in consultation with community members will develop an assessment process to determine when a dog is barking “to such a degree or extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of a person”.
2. Dog Management Officers will be encouraged to reinforce examples of responsible pet ownership with all dog owners and younger adults.
3. Dog Management Officers will be required to enforce the provisions of the Act in a manner which can be openly viewed as a “progression of justice”.

5.12 STRAY STOCK

Council currently works in conjunction with the Police on any stray stock incidents that are reported or observed. Stray stock incidents are investigated to determine a suitable course of action, dependent on the circumstances.

Council has developed a By-Law, which allows a \$100 expiation to be issued for any stray stock that is unattended on the roadways.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Investigate stray stock incidents.
2. Liaise with the Police if necessary.
3. Utilise Council’s By-Law and Impounding Act 1920.
4. Consider the use of Council’s Order Making Policy in suitable cases.
5. Explore the use of a property for the shelter of small stray animals, under a Council sponsored program.
6. Provide owners with guidelines of suitable fencing for all types of animals.

6. RURAL LIVING (Animal Husbandry) ZONE

The Rural Living (Animal Husbandry) Zone is an area of approximately 2300 hectares bounded by Gawler River Road on the South, Gawler Road to the North, Aunger Road to the East and Williams Road to the West and encompasses sections of both Two Wells and Lewiston. This area was created by Council to cater for animal husbandry activities such as horse and pedigree dog breeding as well as the establishment of training facilities for horses and greyhounds.

The District Council of Mallala has encouraged this type of activity in its Development Plan, by implementing zoning policies to encourage animal husbandry activities. It is estimated that nearly 80% of South Australia's greyhound breeders live north of Adelaide and about 50% of them reside in the Rural Living (Animal Husbandry) Zone.

During the 2004-2005 financial year 105 business registrations were issued to multiple dog owners. The Animal Husbandry Area recorded 83 business registrations in this period. A smaller proportion of business registrations, are located within the general farming areas and are scattered throughout the Council area.

Proposed Strategy:

1. Ensure the community has continued liaison with Council on issues that impact on animal husbandry practices.
2. Support an education program for community residents covering animal husbandry matters.
3. Support the establishment of parks/trails/facilities for the community.

7. STATISTICS ON DOG MANAGEMENT

Financial Year	Total Registered Income	Expiations	Dog Registration Numbers	Business Registration Numbers	Business Registration Income	Dogs Impounded	Dogs Returned To Owners
1999-2000	\$53,472	30	3,798	60	\$12,865	85	30
2000-2001	\$51,260	31	4,585	68	\$14,860	93	41
2001-2002	\$52,785	60	4,801	78	\$16,080	80	44
2002-2003	\$57,587	70	4,675	79	\$17,797	70	22
2004-2005	\$90,414	12	4,542	106	\$26,500	69	19
2005-2006	\$88,827	56	4,395	100	\$25,000	75	16

Please Note:

The total 'Dog Registration Numbers' include Business Registrations, calculated using an average of 15 dogs per registered business.

The 'Total Registration Income' includes Business Registrations.

8. FIVE YEAR STRATEGY

This Plan will be reviewed throughout the next five years, by management together with the Dog Management Officer, to ensure that the objectives are being met.

The District Council of Mallala will continue to provide submissions to the Dog and Cat Management Board on relevant issues.

9. EPILOGUE

The proposed strategies in this Plan have been developed for the District Council of Mallala. Council would like to recognise the efforts of community members that contributed to this Plan.

Janet Allan, Wilfred (Bill) Egan, Cr. Rudi Fabrici, Sandra Foote, Dr. Chris Girling, Judi Hurley, Dr. John Katakasi, Cr. Terri Keen, the late Raylene Lea, John Newton, Cr. Michael Picard, Mariann Roberts, John Spolder, Cr. Tom Summerton, Julie Yates.