



City of Mount Gambier

DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT PLAN



2007 – 2012

Version 1.0

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 26A of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 states:

26A - Plans of management relating to dogs and cats

- (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 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.*

This plan has been prepared in accordance with the section of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 ('the Act').

This summary acknowledges the work done by Officers of Wattle Range Council in preparing a draft plan, on which this plan is based.

Councils must enforce the provisions of the Act that relate to dogs.

Councils may enforce the provisions of the Act that relate to cats. The City of Mount Gambier has not appointed any Officers under Part 7 - Management of Cats - Division 1 of the Act and therefore does not administer nor intend to administer that section of the Act relating to cats.

This Plan does however make reference to encouragement for cat owners to look after their pets but does not propose that Council itself enforce the provisions of the Act relating to cats.

This Plan covers the period 2007 - 2012.



2. VISION STATEMENT

Promote responsible dog and cat ownership in the Council area and within the wider region.

3. AIMS

- To increase public safety.
- To increase welfare of animals.
- To educate and encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- To reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.
- To promote the effective management of dogs and cats (including encouragement of the de-sexing of dogs and cats).
- To reduce the number of dog and cat complaints received by Council.
- To reduce dog attacks.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1 Increase Public Safety and Provide Effective Management and a Suitable Environment for Dogs within the Community

Actions:

- Operate in accordance with the Dog and Cat Management Act.
- Ensure Council policies and By-Laws concerning dogs are adequate.
- Provide specific areas where dogs may be 'off leash'.
- Ensure that 'off leash' areas are adequately signed.
- Manage nuisance caused by barking by community awareness, personal contact with dog owners and if required by regulatory methods.



- Reduce the number of dogs wandering at large minimize public nuisance, and increase public safety by improving community awareness and regulatory controls.
- Co-ordinate relationships and links with neighbouring Councils to share expertise and support.
- Trial new initiatives and alternative approaches to dog and cat management.
- Support the concept of humane trapping and destruction of feral cats.

4.2 Promote and Encourage Responsible Dog and Cat Ownership

Actions:

- Provide community education and training information relating to responsible pet ownership.
- Support and encourage dog obedience and socialization programs.
- Encourage desexing and microchipping.
- Obtain maximum registration and identification of dogs to facilitate reuniting pets to owners where possible.
- Encourage selection of the right pet to suit lifestyle and circumstances and appropriate advice for the keeping of pets e.g. Select a Pet Program, train and educate children at Schools to be responsible pet owners.
- Promote the welfare of dogs and cats in the community.
- Encourage the keeping of cats inside at night, encourage de-sexing and identification and increase the awareness of the impacts of cat ownership on the community.

4.3 Provide for and Ensure the Welfare and Safety of Dogs and Cats

Actions:

- Promote de-sexing of dogs and cats (possibly through incentive schemes).
- Maintain adequate local impounding facilities for temporary protection of lost or abandoned animals. Police regulations regarding standards of local companion animal businesses, breeding establishments or boarding facilities.
- Ensure the provision of prompt veterinary attention to sick or injured animals in Council's care.



- Enforce provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act.
- Identify and register dogs to enable reunion with owners and control un-owned animals.
- Encourage pet owners to undertake routine preventative health measures such as vaccinations, de-worming, heartworm protection and other forms of parasite control.

5. THE LAW / GUIDELINES

All Councils in South Australia are responsible for administering the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 in their own area.

The Act provides for the appointment of the Dog and Cat Management Board which has responsibilities to promote, advise and monitor on effective management and issue guidelines and assistance to Councils on their responsibilities under the Act. The Board also has the responsibility to provide advice to the Minister, to keep the Act under review, to undertake research and to provide education programs and provide community awareness information.

The Act also provides that Councils must, for dogs and may for cats, appoint an officer (or officers) for its area and can make By-Laws relating to dog and cat management within its area. Under the Act, Councils are required to administer and enforce the provisions relating to dogs within its area.

State Government Laws and Council By-Laws direct some of the actions within this plan. Those legislations and policies include:

- South Australian Legislation - Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 as amended
- Dog and Cat Management Regulations 1995
- Local Government Act 1999
- Public and Environmental Health Act 1986
- Development Regulations 1993 - Section 3
- Council By-Law
- Dog and Cat Management Board Policies
- Code of Practice for Pounds and Shelters

The City of Mount Gambier has resolved to take no action in relation to the administration of cats as provided for in the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.



6. DOG MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Strategy A - Promote and Educate the Community on Dog Management

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 and has developed many educational initiatives based on a careful assessment of the needs of the whole community. The board maintains regular media advertising campaigns which promote key issues such as education of dog owners and their families as well as training of the dogs and educating other people about how to behave around dogs. A singular method of enforcement cannot provide a full solution to dog owners and dog problems.

Actions:

Educate the community by -

- Providing information to the media on dog obedience training classes in the community, educating members of the public how to act around dogs, educating dog owners and non-dog owners of their rights and responsibilities, providing education on the benefits of exercising dogs, dogs in public places, 'off leash' area policy and Council By-Laws.
- Distributing resource material at Veterinary Clinics, Pet Shops, Council Libraries and community centres and ensuring that these centres are regularly supplied with up to date materials.
- Providing advice to the community on website links such as RSPCA, Animal Welfare League, Select a Pet Program and newsletters from Dog Association and Obedience Clubs and other websites including;
 - Dog and Cat Management Board www.dogsncats.asn.au
 - Pet Care www.petnet.com.au
 - Monforda Pet Advice www.monforda.com.au
- Mailing out renewal notices to all registered dog owners with information on the responsibilities of dog ownership.
- Active involvement in School programs educating children on the 'Delta Dog Safe' program initiated by the Dog and Cat Management Board, the Animal Welfare League's, 'Responsible Pet Ownership' program and 'Select the right pet' program.
- Promoting the reporting of all dog attacks in public places and private property.



- Advertise in the community:
 - The due date for dog registration
 - Responsible dog ownership, costs and benefits, e.g. de-sexing
 - Dogs 'off-leash' provisions
 - Amendments to legislations, policies, and By-Laws

Strategy B - Registration and Identification of Dogs

Successful dog management may be achieved through an increase in dog registration and micro-chipping so more dogs will be reunited with owners and less dogs placed in shelters.

Actions:

- Promote responsible dog ownership.
- Enforce the legal requirements such to register dogs.
- Investigate concessions for registrations and micro-chipping.
- Promote Council's on-line payment option as a convenient way to complete registration transactions.
- Promote information on Council's policy and legislative requirements concerning dog registration.

Strategy C - De-sexing Dogs and Cats

Dog and cat owners should be encouraged to have their pets de-sexed.

De-sexing has the following benefits:

- Reduction of unplanned breeding.
- Reduction of aggressive behaviour, predominantly in male dogs, improved temperament.
- Reduction of life threatening diseases.

Actions:

- Encourage all Veterinary Surgeons in the Council areas to promote the benefits of de-sexing, both male and female dogs and cats.
- Explore opportunities of providing a greater incentive and reward for de-sexing of dogs and cats.



Strategy D - Dogs in Public Places

Amendments to the Dog and Cat Management Act which came into effect on 1st July 2004 requires all dogs to be on a leash when in a public place.

For the purpose of Section 26A(2) of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995, the City of Mount Gambier nominates the following public places to be 'off leash' areas:

- Hastings Cunningham Reserve
- Corriedale Park
- Don McDonnell Reserve
- Blue Lakes Sports Park
- Northumberland Avenue
- Frew Park

All other public places within the City of Mount Gambier are 'on-leash' areas.

Strategy E - Dogs Wandering at Large

A dog is deemed to be wandering at large when it is in a public place and is not under effective control of a person. The owner, or person who is responsible for a dog wandering at large, is committing an offence and may be subject to penalties under the Dog and Cat Management Act. Dogs wandering at large can be a threat not only to the dog but also to the community, serious attacks may occur in these circumstances.

Actions:

- Council has in place protocols to deal with calls from the public of a dog wandering at large.
- Ensure officers have access to dog registration details to enable the return of dogs to owners where reasonable and practicable to do so.
- Un-identified dogs will be impounded in accordance with the Act.
- Make owners aware of their responsibilities to register their dog, to provide an adequate enclosure within the property boundary, to train their dog so as to not leave their premises, and to keep their dog under effective control when in a public place.
- Encourage pet owners to confine their dogs and cats during firework and thunderstorm events.
- Make the community aware of the consequences of dogs wandering at large.
- Encourage dog obedience training and socialization.



Strategy F - Barking Dogs

Barking complaints make up a significant percentage of complaints received by Council and are often complex and very difficult to deal with effectively.

Education is recognized as the key strategy to reduce this nuisance in the long term.

Actions:

- Investigate options that allow neighbours to resolve this issue before Council is involved.
- Respond to calls from the general public in a timely manner during normal working hours.
- Encourage the complainant to keep a diary of the incidents.
- Assist owners to determine the cause of the barking and to put in place an appropriate remedy before enforcement procedures commence.
- Improve awareness of owner responsibilities to prevent the dog repeating the behaviour.
- Encourage dog obedience training.

Strategy G - Dog Attacks on Humans and Livestock

Dog attacks and harassment are a great concern to the community particularly when children and the elderly are involved. All dogs have the potential to bite, regardless of size, age, breed or temperament, particularly in situations where they are frightened, dominated or protective.

Actions:

- Collate statistics and examine the types and breeds of dogs involved in attacks to determine any trends applicable.
- Promote and encourage the reporting of all dog attacks on humans and other animals.
- Educate children and the elderly on methods of bite avoidance.
- Encourage dog obedience training.

Strategy H - Dog Obedience Training

There are many health and social benefits of owning pets, they have been shown to stimulate conversation between strangers and they improve people's sense of security,



both in home and in public places. Pets are also wonderful companions helping to combat loneliness and social alienation. The benefits are as important for the elderly and single person households as they are for households with children. The decision to acquire a pet is a very important one for the owners, the animals and the community in general. All too often unwanted dogs become statistics, being given away, abandoned or relinquished to shelters. Council's endeavour will be to encourage dog owners to socialize and train their dogs to an acceptable level within the community. It is recognized that some dog owners and their pets are in need of assistance with training. Training has the potential to overcome most behavioural problems and should be promoted as part of responsible ownership along with education.

Actions:

- Support and promote Dog Obedience Training.
- Explore opportunities to provide a greater incentive and reward for trained dogs.
- Establish a Dog Obedience Training Level bench mark being:
 1. Come on command on or off lead
 2. Walk at heel, sit on command on lead
 3. Come on command on lead (short recall)
 4. All the above off lead

Strategy I - Management of Cats

Very few complaints regarding cat problems are received. Council will encourage owners to de-sex their cats and keep cats inside at night.

Actions:

- Encourage responsible cat ownership (including containing cats at night).
- Promote de-sexing of cats as a means of cat control.

Strategy J - Animal Management Officer/Training

A strategy to ensure appropriate staff are employed and are adequately trained to respond to all aspects of dog management in the community. Information to improve community knowledge and understanding of the role and services provided by Council dog management staff will be disseminated.

Actions:

- Dog management officers - to receive ongoing training in line with Board policy.
- Increase involvement with network relationships.



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- Encourage mediation skill development for all dog management officers.

7. RESOURCES

Revenue is derived from two principle sources, registrations and expiation fees for breaches to the provisions of the Act. Council has little scope to increase revenues from these sources other than by achieving a higher level of dog registrations and enforcement action for breaches of the Act.

The Act requires that revenues raised from the provisions of the Act shall be applied to dog and cat management in the area.