

city of
Victor Harbor



City of Victor Harbor Strategic Dog and Cat Management Plan 2007 - 2011

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Table of Contents

1.	Executive Summary	
	1.1 Background	Pg 3
	1.2 Strategic Outline	Pg 3-4
2.	Mission Statement	Pg 4
3.	Aims	Pg 4 - 5
4.	Objectives	Pg 5 – 6
5.	The Law/Guidelines	
	5.1 Objectives and Aims	Pg 7
	5.2 Legislation	Pg 7 – 9
	5.3 Summary of Changes to Act	Pg 9 - 10
	5.4 Unchanged Provisions of the Act	Pg 10
	5.5 By Laws	Pg 11 - 14
6.	Dog and Cat Management Strategies	
	6.1 Community Education and Promotion	Pg 14 – 15
	6.2 Registration and Identification	Pg 15 – 16
	6.3 De sexing Dogs and Cats	Pg 16 – 17
	6.4 Selecting Appropriate Pets and Pet Friendly Housing	Pg 17 – 18
	6.5 Bite Avoidance and Reducing Dog Attacks/Harassment	Pg 18 – 19
	6.6 Management of Dog Faeces in Public Places	Pg 19 – 20
	6.7 Developing Dog 'On Leash', 'Off Leash' and Prohibited Areas	Pg 20 – 22
	6.8 Minimising Dogs Wandering at Large	Pg 22
	6.9 Promoting Dog Socialisation and Training	Pg 22 – 23
	6.10 Reducing Excessive Barking Nuisances	Pg 23 – 24
	6.11 Management of Domestic Cats	Pg 24 – 26
	6.12 Ensuring Compliance	Pg 26 – 27
	6.13 Staff Training and Public Perception	Pg 27
	6.14 Risk Management	Pg 28
	6.15 Service Levels	Pg 28
7.	Community Consultation	
8.	Policy Content & Strategic Drivers	
9.	Appendices	

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Background

The *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act)* was reviewed in 2004 and, as a result, significant changes were implemented. Dog and Cat (Animal) Management Plans were recognised in Section 26A of *the Act* as important documents that could facilitate the future planning of dog and cat management for local government. Consequently, all South Australian Councils are now required to develop and implement five (5) year Strategic Dog and Cat Management Plans (SDCMP) by July 2007, to set the direction for the management of dogs and cats within their communities. Council can review its plan at any time, but must review it at least once every five years.

In late 2006, Council staff drafted a five year SDCMP for the City of Victor Harbor. In early 2007 community consultation regarding the draft plan was undertaken via a survey. As well, an advisory committee was formed comprising of the following representatives: two Elected Members of Council, two local veterinarian representatives, dog and cat management and open space management staff from Council, and two representatives from the community with an interest in dogs and/or cats.

The advisory committee assisted in providing a broad community perspective and oversight to changes implemented in response to community feedback from the survey. The community consultation process was undertaken in April 2007 via the distribution of a survey questionnaire to City of Victor Harbor households, with results of data gathered being published in the report titled 'Dog and Cat Management Community Consultation Report 2007'. The community survey revealed the need for increased management of dogs and cats. Following the inclusion of community requests, particularly regarding cat management, the City of Victor Harbor SDCMP 2007-2011 was presented to Council and the Dog and Cat Management Board for endorsement.

The plan identifies directions and actions for dog and cat management that aim to meet the Council's mission, aims and objectives. Council recognises the importance of pet ownership; it also recognises that enforcement of legislation alone will not bring about long-lasting changes in dog and cat ownership behaviour, including voluntary compliance. Dog and cat management needs to be integrated and enhanced via a range of measures such as education programs and effective signage. The plan will be reviewed regularly to ensure its alignment to Council's strategic plan.

1.2 Strategic Outline

The City of Victor Harbor's management of dogs and cats has the potential to impact on the health and welfare of the environment, community, economy, as well as the cats and dogs in the City. This plan establishes a framework for Council and the community of Victor Harbor for the next five years to work together in setting the direction of dog and cat management. The SDCMP is therefore relevant to dog and cat owners and the wider community.

Details of Council's legislative requirements are outlined in the Plan, and Council is required to administer and enforce the provisions of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (see Section 5.1).

The Plan intends to build on the existing policy foundation established over many years that encourages responsible dog and cat ownership, so that people and pets can live safely and in harmony within the Victor Harbor community.

The Plan sets a foundation and direction for future decision making by Council for dog and cat management and contains recommendations for a wide range of actions to be undertaken by Council over the next five years.

It proposes strategies and actions to achieve the mission, aims and objectives, including:

- Community education and promotion
- Registration and identification
- De-sexing dogs and cats
- Selecting appropriate pets and pet friendly housing
- Bite avoidance and reducing dog attacks/harassment
- Management of dog faeces in public places.
- Developing dog leash 'on' or 'off' areas
- Minimising dogs wandering at large
- Promoting dog socialisation and training
- Reducing excessive barking nuisances
- Management of domestic cats
- Ensuring compliance
- Staff training and public perception
- Risk management
- Service levels

This Plan emphasises the proactive combination of **education, encouragement** and **enforcement** to achieve Council's objectives of increased voluntary compliance. The non-regulatory approaches of education and encouragement are the key priorities in changing behaviours and attitudes to achieve an increase in responsible pet ownership. At the same time, it is recognised that Council must continue to be proactive in compliance with and enforcement of the relevant legislation and By-Laws, including the introduction of new dog and cat management By-Laws as requested by the community. While it is anticipated that there should be a progressive decline in complaints and less reliance on enforcement, this will only occur over an extended period of time. However, there may be a counter-balancing effect due to increasing community expectations and the increased profile of inspectorial staff due to education and the encouragement of incident reporting.

2. Mission Statement

To maintain public safety and quality of life for our local community, our visitors and future generations via the combination of education, encouragement and enforcement to highlight the benefits and responsibilities of dog and cat ownership in the City of Victor Harbor.

3. Aims

1. Maintain health, safety and quality of life and reduce the negative impacts caused by dogs and cats on the environment, the people and the pets in our local community, our visitors and future generations.

2. Use education, encouragement, and enforcement to improve understanding in the community of the benefits and responsibilities of dog and cat ownership to increase voluntary compliance.
3. Introduce continuous improvement approaches to dog and cat management.
4. Identify locations, provisions and plans for set areas and facilities where pets will be prohibited and can be exercised on and off leash.

4. Objectives

This section outlines the objectives of the SDCMP and how these objectives can be implemented.

4.1 **Maintain health, safety and quality of life and reduce the negative impacts caused by dogs and cats on the environment, the people and the pets in our local community, of our visitors and future generations.**

- Improve the management of barking dog nuisance complaints.
- Improve the management of problems associated with nuisance cats – domestic and stray.
- Reduce the number of dogs wandering at large and dog attacks/harassment, to minimise public nuisance and increase public safety.
- Encourage all dog owners to carry dog waste bags and pick up after their dogs so there is a reduction in the amount of dog faeces discarded in the environment and public places.
- Promote the welfare of dogs and cats in the community.

Continue to implement compliance operations in accordance with the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*.

4.2 **Introduce continuous improvement approaches to dog and cat management.**

- Undertake research into 'best practice' methodology for dealing with dog and cat management issues.
- Introduce Council policies and By-Laws in relation to dogs and cats in the community in relation to community requests from consultation process.
- Implement new management practices as a result of amendments being made to the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*.
- Use effectively local statistics and demographics where appropriate when making decisions that may influence policy directions.
- Summarise and report on all data gathered in relation to dog and cat management, so that other relevant departments of Council can utilise the information when reviewing their policies.
- Trial new dog and cat management initiatives.
- Establish, encourage and coordinate relationships with adjoining Councils, local community and other interested stakeholders to enable information and knowledge to be communicated effectively, and best practice principles to be proposed and implemented.

4.3 Use education, encouragement, and enforcement to improve understanding in the community of the benefits and responsibilities of dog and cat ownership, to increase voluntary compliance.

- Continue to enforce compliance in accordance with the requirements of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* and By-Laws.
- Continue the movement towards a change of emphasis from primarily enforcement to a more integrated proactive approach of education, encouragement and enforcement.
- Encourage community education in relation to de-sexing, socialisation, training and identification of dogs.
- Obtain maximum registration and identification so that pets can be re-united with their owners efficiently.
- Educate and encourage people to keep cats inside at night (dusk until dawn), promoting compulsory cat de-sexing, registration and micro chipping and increase the awareness of the impacts of irresponsible cat ownership on the community, especially in light of new By-Laws relating to cat ownership being introduced by Council.
- Encourage selection of a suitable pet in relation to lifestyle, accommodation and circumstances with the appropriate provisions for the keeping of pets (e.g. fencing, adequate size yard, etc).
- Recognise and promote the fact that there is a large percentage of responsible pet owners within the community.
- Improve community recognition and understanding in relation to the role of Dog and Cat Management Officers.
- Reduce the number of dog attacks and harassments through bite avoidance education and by encouraging residents to report all dog attacks.
- Update, develop, present and circulate educational and informative materials and programs, including school and community presentations and forums.

4.4 Identify locations, provisions and plans for set areas and facilities where pets will be prohibited and can be exercised on and off leash.

- Environmentally sensitive areas must be considered and Council is considering restricting dog access to sensitive areas and providing alternative opportunities of special areas for dogs (e.g. fenced off-leash dog socialisation parks).
- Ensure compliance of the new laws relating to “dogs on leash on streets, roads and footpaths” as amended in the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*.
- Propose suitable locations and infrastructure to allocate pet prohibited and exercise areas of both on-leash and off-leash
- Ensure that Council’s Open Space strategy is consistent with the amendments to the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*.
- Review and introduce new policies and By-Laws where necessary to ensure adequate and appropriate access to open space areas and including off-leash areas.

5. The Law/Guidelines

State Government laws and Council By-Laws dictate some of the actions in this plan. It is planned to introduce further Council By-Laws in relation to dog and cat management due to community requests gathered via the community consultation process.

Those laws include:

Dog & Cat Management Act 1995

Local Government Act 1999

Council By-Law No. 5 - Dogs

5.1 Objectives of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (Section 3) states:

The objectives of this Act are –

- i. to encourage responsible dog and cat ownership;
- ii. to reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats;
- iii. 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. The Act also provides Councils with the ability to independently introduce By-Laws for the management of dogs and cats under Section 90 (see section 5.5).

5.2 Legislation

In 2001 the State Government initiated a review of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. An Amendment Bill was passed by Parliament in 2004 and changes to legislation came into effect on 1 July 2004. One of the changes that affected all Councils was Section 26A regarding management plans for dogs and cats. Section 26 of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* relates directly to Council's responsibilities, which states:

Council responsibility for the management of dogs:

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:
 - (i.) 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
 - (ii.) ensure that the Board is provided with information contained in the register as required by the
 - (iii.) Board from time to time; and
 - (iv.) appoint a suitable person to be Registrar; and

- (v.) make satisfactory arrangements for issuing and replacing certificates of registration and registration discs; and
 - (vi.) 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
 - (vii.) make satisfactory arrangements for the detention of dogs seized under this Act; and
 - (viii.) make satisfactory arrangements for fulfilling other obligations under this Act.
2. The arrangements made by a Council under this section must be to the satisfaction of 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 –
 - i. fees for the provision of extracts from registers kept under this Act; and
 - ii. fees (which may be differential) approved by the Minister –
 - for the registration of dogs or businesses under Part 5; and
 - for late payment of registration fees; and
 - 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:
 - i. if the dog is desexed;
 - ii. if,
 - the dog has been implanted with a microchip for the purpose of identification; and
 - the information contained in the microchip is up-to-date;
 - iii. 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).

Management Plans relating to dogs and cats

Another change to the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* in the 2004 review is the requirement for all Councils to prepare a plan relating to management of dogs and cats within their area. Section 26A of *the Act* states:

Plans of management relating to dogs and cats:

1. Each Council must, in accordance with this section, prepare a plan that relates 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:
 - i. The first plan must cover a 5 year period and be prepared and presented within 3 years after the commencement of this section;
 - i) 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. Council animal management plans must be first approved by the Dog and Cat Management Board before they can come into 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.

5.3 Summary of Changes to Act

Under the *Dog And Cat Management Act 1995* each Council has the responsibility for the management of dogs and cats within its own area.

Legal Age For Dog Registration

Previously the legal age for a person to register a dog was 18 years of age. However, this has now been changed to 16 years of age as a part of the review of *the Act*. Every dog three months of age or older must be registered and is required to wear a collar with a registration disc attached. Registration expires on 30 June each year and must be renewed by 31 August in the same year.

Dogs On Leads

All dogs must be on leads (no longer than 2 metres in length) on footpaths, streets, roads and all public places (except parks unless otherwise specified by Council).

Increased Fines

Expiation fees and maximum penalties for offences have been increased. Where offences continue and are considered by a Magistrate to be of a serious nature, Council can seek the removal and disposal of a dog in a manner specified by the court, and may recover costs and/or compensation.

Dog and Cat Management Plans

Council and their communities are required to introduce a Five (5) Year Dog and Cat Management Plan by 30th June 2007.

Mandatory Reporting by Medical Practitioners - Dog Attacks

The Act now requires the mandatory reporting of dog attacks on humans by Medical Practitioners within South Australia, to the Dog And Cat Management Board.

Two Additional Concessions For Dog Registration

Two new registration concessions now apply – micro-chipping and accredited trained dogs. Refer Section 26 (7) of *the Act*.

Dogs in Utilities and Tray Tops

Dogs travelling in the back of utilities, trucks or similar vehicles are required by *the Act* to be harnessed so that no part of the dog can be extended beyond the tray of the vehicle. Working dogs will be exempt, under certain conditions.

Prescribed Breeds

The Presa-Canario breed of dog has now been added to the list of prescribed breeds in South Australia. Ownership of this breed of dog has not been banned, unlike other prescribed breeds. However, special conditions do apply for keeping this breed in South Australia.

Attack-Trained, Guard Dogs and Patrol Dogs

Section 45D of *the Act* has new provisions in relation to attack-trained dogs, guard dogs and patrol dogs. This includes the use of micro-chips that meet Australian standards AS 5018 and AS 5019. These provisions came into effect on 1 July 2006, and the new requirements for these categories of dogs have been published in the Government Gazette.

Menacing Dog Order

New powers have been given to Councils in relation to menacing dogs. A 'menacing dog' is described as a dog that poses a threat of such a nature and extent that the mind of an ordinary person of normal stability and courage might be influenced or made apprehensive so as to accede unwilling to the demand. Although the test is objective, evidence of the alleged victim's reaction may be admissible in a court of law. A menace need not necessarily be of violence, injury or accusation.

Greyhounds

Greyhounds must remain muzzled and controlled on a leash when being exercised in a public place. In addition, the Dog and Cat Management Board has determined that all GAP (Greyhound Adoption Program) accredited and trained dogs are exempt from wearing muzzles and will be required to wear a GAP collar only which is black material collar with the wording GAP in the weaving.

Guide Dogs and Hearing Dogs

Applications received for guide dog and hearing dog status will require proof to be provided to Council, in the first instance. In the event that Council is not satisfied with

such proof, the owner will be referred to the Dog and Cat Management Board for the appropriate assessment of accreditation eligibility.

Disability Dogs

Dogs will be eligible for free dog registration as a disability dog, subject to conditions as set down by the Board and subject to receiving appropriate accreditation prior to endorsement by Council's Registrar of Dogs.

5.4 Unchanged Provisions of the Act

General offences, dogs are not permitted to:

- Wander at large.
- Attack or harass persons or owned animals, whether or not actual injury is caused.
- Cause injury to a person who is lawfully entering a premises.
- Enter the grounds of a school, kindergarten, child care or preschools except with the permission
- Of the person in charge.
- Enter any shop unless it is a pet shop, grooming parlour or premises associated with a registered
- Veterinary surgery.
- Rush at or chase vehicles in public places.
- Enter places where food or drink is prepared or sold.
- Cause a nuisance, by barking excessively.

Seizure of Dogs

Animal Management Officers have the powers to seize and detain dogs in the following circumstances:

- If a dog is wandering at large in private or public places.
- To prevent a dog attacking, harassing or chasing a person or an owned animal or bird.
- To carry out the requirements of an Order issued under this legislation.

Where urgent action is required, Dog and Cat Management Officers have the power given by the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* to subdue a dog by any means necessary, if the dog cannot be seized or detained because of its savagery or other sufficient cause.

Orders

Councils have the power to issue Destruction, Nuisance, Menacing and Barking Control Orders in certain circumstances, whether on the Council's own initiative or on complaint.

Cat Legislation

At present, the powers under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* only relate to unidentified cats that are causing a nuisance. No amendments were made to *the Act* when it was reviewed in 2004. However, it is the intention of this Plan to identify, research and prepare recommendations for consideration by Council and the Dog and Cat Management Board, to address cat issues within the community.

5.5 By-Laws

Councils have the ability to make By-Laws for the control or management of dogs or cats in their area under Section 90 of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. However, By-Laws must be consistent with the aims and objectives of *the Act*. Council intends to introduce additional dog and cat management By-Laws in response to community requests revealed in the community consultation process. The majority of additional By-Laws will pertain to cat management. The statistical results of the community consultation survey can be viewed in the report titled 'Dog and Cat Management Community Consultation Report 2007' which is available for reading at the Council's Civic Centre.

Section 90 of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* states:

1. A District or Municipal Council may make By-Laws for the control and management of dogs or cats within its area.
2. Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the By-Laws may—
 - i. limit the number of dogs or cats that may be kept on any premises;
 - ii. fix periods during which dogs or cats must be effectively confined to
 - iii. premises occupied by a person who is responsible for the control or entitled to
 - iv. the possession of the dog or cat;
 - v. require dogs or cats to be identified in a specified manner or in specified
 - vi. circumstances;
 - vii. require dogs or cats to be effectively controlled, secured or confined in a specified manner or in specified circumstances;
 - viii. set aside specified areas where dogs are prohibited or for specified activities
 - ix. relating to dogs to be carried out in a specified manner or in specified
 - x. circumstances;
 - xi. (f) make provision for a registration scheme for cats (including payment of a fee
 - xii. for registration) and encourage the desexing of cats;
 - xiii. (g) exempt (conditionally or unconditionally) classes of persons or activities from
 - xiv. the application of the By-Laws or specified provisions of the By-Laws.
3. By-Laws under this Act—
 - i. may be of general application or limited application;
 - ii. may make different provision according to the matters or circumstances to
 - iii. which they are expressed to apply;
 - iv. may provide that a matter or thing in respect of which By-Laws may be made
 - v. is to be determined according to the discretion of the council.

Current By-Law No. 5 – Dogs

The Council currently has in existence By-Law No.5 – Dogs, which was reviewed in 2004.

By-Law No.5 states:

To limit the number of dogs kept in premises and to provide for the control of dogs on local government land.

1. Definitions

In this By-Law:

- i. 'dog' means a dog of the age of three months or older;
- ii. 'small dwelling' means the premises of a self-contained dwelling either:
 - commonly known as a flat, service flat, home unit or the like; or
 - on an allotment less than 560m² in area.
- iii. 'public place' means all streets, roads, parklands, reserves, open space and all other land in the ownership of the Council or under the care, control and management of the Council;
- iv. 'approved kennel establishment' means a building, structure or area approved by the relevant authority, pursuant to the Development Act 1993, for the keeping of dogs on a temporary or permanent basis.
- v. 'foreshore' means the area between the low water mark on the seashore and the nearest boundary of:
 - vi. a road;
 - vii. a section;
 - viii. a public reserve; or
 - ix. land comprised in a land grant, Crown Land or Crown Licence
- x. 'low water mark' means the lowest meteorological tide;
- xi. 'the Council' means the City of Victor Harbor.

2. Limit on dog numbers

- i. The limit on the number of dogs kept:
 - in a small dwelling, shall be one dog; and
 - on premises other than a small dwelling, shall be two dogs.
- ii. A person must not without Council permission keep any dog on any premises where the number of dogs being kept on those premises exceeds the limit unless the premises are an approved kennel establishment.

3. Dogs to be on a leash in a public place

No person shall in a public place cause, suffer or permit any dog (except guide dogs guiding a person who is wholly or partially blind; or wholly or partially deaf), under that person's control, charge or authority to be or remain in that place unless such dog is restrained by a strong leash not exceeding 2 metres in length and either tethered securely to a fixed object or held by a person capable of controlling the dog and preventing it from being a nuisance or danger to other persons.

4. Exempt public places

Paragraph 3 does not apply to a public place or part of a public place, which the Council has, by resolution, declared to be exempt from the operation of this By-Law.

5. Dog free areas

No person shall in any public place to which this paragraph applies, cause, suffer or permit any dog (except guide dogs in training or a guide dog guiding a person who is wholly or partially blind; or wholly or partially deaf) under that person's control, charge or authority to be in, or remain in that public place.

6. Dogs on foreshore

To which this paragraph applies, between the hours of 10 am and 8 pm on any day during the period of daylight saving cause, suffer or permit any dog under that person's control, charge or authority to be or remain on the foreshore unless such dog is restrained by a strong leash not exceeding 2 metres in length and either tethered securely to a fixed object or held by a person capable of controlling the dog and preventing it from being a nuisance or a danger to other persons;

7. Signs

Signs shall be erected to denote the land to which clause 6 applies, and information shall be provided to the public in a manner determined by the Council's Chief Executive Officer to inform the public about such land.

8. Application of paragraphs

Any of the paragraphs 3, 4, 5 or 6 of this By-Law shall apply only in such portion or portions of the area as the Council may determine from time to time (in accordance with section 246 (3) (e) of the Local Government Act 1999).

6. Dog and Cat Management Strategies

There are a series of fundamental tenets that underpin Council's dog and cat management strategies:

6.1 Community Education and Promotion

Education is integral to any law enforcement authority to increase the level of voluntary compliance undertaken by the wider community. A community education and encouragement process is a practical approach to dog and cat management that will accompany enforcement. Education must consider the full range of stakeholders, including pet owners, prospective owners, the wider community and future generations of pet owners. Different programs are needed to cater for the various stakeholders. Any Council education programs will need to complement the programs already developed and implemented by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

Proposed Actions:

1. Provide up-to-date information on Council's website.
2. Develop pet information kits and submit informative articles to 'The Times' newspaper.
3. Make dog and cat information pamphlets/packages available at the Council office and library, veterinary clinics, pet shops and tourist/accommodation operators.

4. Conduct a review of educational and promotional publications, including the Dog and Cat Management Board's publications and programs.
5. Add links to other appropriate websites, including the Dog and Cat Management Board, pet care and Select-a-Pet, to the Council's website .
6. Review and monitor resource material available to ratepayers at the Council's Civic Centre.
7. Provide information displays in the Victor Central Shopping Centre, to promote responsible pet ownership, including dog and cat registration, dog obedience training and bite avoidance training, etc.
8. Provide promotional signage on strategic roads within the Council area.
9. Develop education programs for various stakeholders, particularly school children programs linked to the Delta Dog Safe program.
10. Continue to utilise local radio stations to notify of impounded dogs and present educational information to the public.

6.2 Registration and Identification

1. Registration

The *Dog And Cat Management Act 1995* requires all dogs over three (3) months of age to be registered. Registration of all dogs within the City of Victor Harbor will be pursued as an important component of responsible dog ownership. Council can only be expected to sustain an acceptable level of dog and cat management services if it achieves an optimum number of dog registrations. The income received from dog registration funds a significant proportion of the general inspectorate services provided by Council. This is a major factor impacting on all other effective and successful dog and cat management strategies. Compulsory registration of cats will be introduced in 2008-09 via a new Council By-Law to assist in the funding of the increased service requirements of cat management. The community consultation survey indicated that 75% of households believe compulsory cat registration should be introduced.

Dog and cat registration ensures that:

- Owners, and their dogs and cats, are registered.
- Adequate funding is available for Council to carry out its responsibilities under *the Act*.
- Responsible dog and cat owners and the rest of the community do not have to support financially the behaviour of irresponsible dog and cat owners.

One positive outcome that may occur by implementing the actions outlined in the 2007-2011 Plan would be an increase in the number of dogs (and cats) registered during that period.

Proposed Actions:

- i. Conduct regular registration compliance programs to maximise registration.
- ii. Pursue active engagement with the Dog and Cat Management Board in relation to the setting of registration fees.

- iii. Lobby the Dog and Cat Management Board to advocate for a review of annual dog registrations with consideration of three or five year registration terms in the future and increasing the differential to provide a greater incentive for dog owners to de-sex their dogs.
- iv. Encourage Dog and Cat Management Officers to continue to use their professional discretion in issuing Warning Notices.
- v. Continue to prepare and send out registration reminder notices to dog and cat owners in the first week of July each year.
- vi. Promote to the community Council's policy and legislative requirements concerning dog registration.
- vii. Educate the wider community on the cat registration By-Law, which will assist funding increased cat management measures in the Council area.

2. Identification

Legislation in South Australia requires dogs to be identified by means of a collar and registration disc. There will be requirements for cats to be identified via compulsory registration and micro-chipping under an additional By-Law that is to be introduced. The 2007 dog and cat management survey results indicated that 75% of households believe compulsory micro-chipping should be introduced in the City of Victor Harbor. The Dog and Cat Management Board endorses micro-chipping of dogs and cats as a support identification method. Identification tags are also regarded as a support method of identification, especially for cats. Micro-chipped animals can be identified anywhere in Australia.

Benefits of Identification

- Significantly increases the number of pets reunited with their owners, especially micro-chipped cats.
- Pet owners can be contacted in the event of their pet being involved in an accident, which may result in veterinary treatment being required.
- Reduction in the number of pets being re-homed by Council and animal shelters if not reclaimed by their owners after the specified 72 hour period.
- Identification of pets anywhere in Australia when lost outside of the Council area.

Proposed Actions:

- Ensure regular use of microchip scanners at the point of dog and cat pick up by officers, so they can be identified and returned to their owners as soon as possible.
- Promote identification tags for dogs and cats, supplementary to registration tags.
- Promote the benefits of micro-chipping of dogs and cats, and give consideration to holding micro-chipping days and /or incentives.
- Research opportunities to obtain low price micro-chipping to make this economically attractive for all dog and cat owners in the community.

6.3 De-sexing Dogs and Cats

Dog and cat owners should be encouraged to have their pets de-sexed, irrespective of whether they are male or female.

Benefits of de-sexing dogs and cats:

- Reduces excessive, unnecessary and unplanned breeding
- Reduces the likelihood of aggressive, territorial or dominant behavior, which predominantly occurs in male un-desexed dogs and cats.
- Reduces the number of dogs wandering at large.
- Reduces the likelihood of interaction with stray animals.
- Improves the temperament and significantly reduces life threatening diseases in both male and female dogs and cats.

Statistics indicate that in the City of Victor Harbor 65% of registered dogs are de-sexed. The 2007 survey revealed that 98% of surveyed households had their cats de-sexed, indicating that the introduction of a By-Law regarding compulsory cat de-sexing will not be a burden on the majority of cat owners. The 2007 survey also indicated that 82% of surveyed households called for compulsory cat de-sexing.

The City of Victor Harbor currently provides a 40% concession on registration fees for de-sexed dogs, and this concession will also apply to the compulsory cat registration fees.

Proposed Actions:

1. Seek out opportunities to obtain low price de-sexing for dogs.
2. Promote opportunities for low price de-sexing of cats for low income earners and pensioners through C.A.T.S Inc (Cats Assistance To Sterilize), especially prior to sexual maturity.
3. Encourage veterinary surgeries in the Council area to continue to promote the benefits of de-sexing pets.
4. Promote a united campaign by all dog & cat stakeholders to the Dog and Cat Management Board to consider the possibility of offering low price de-sexing to members of the general public.
5. Introduce a compulsory cat de-sexing By-Law, as requested by the community.

6.4 Selecting Appropriate Pets and Pet Friendly Housing

Many pet behavioral problems can be attributed to inappropriate housing and inappropriate pet/breed selection. This strategy is designed to create a safer and happier environment for dogs and cats. Pet ownership requires the commitment of time and money to be a successful, pleasant and beneficial experience for both the owner and animal. When thinking about obtaining a pet, it is imperative that the person's choice is one that matches their particular residence and circumstance. The home environment is the most important factor as this is where the pet will spend the majority of its time, in most cases. Important factors to consider are adequate fencing, what the pet can see throughout a day, adequate shelter and comfort, adequate food and water, closeness of children and neighbours, distractions that may be present and types of amusement and

exercise that will be available. When these are considered, it is easier to choose the appropriate type of pet or breed to suit.

Proposed Actions:

1. Promote the 'Select-a-Pet' website to assist potential pet owners in the selection of an appropriate type of pet or breed of dog for their lifestyle.
2. Encourage residents to use resources (books/videos) which are available that promote the need to make appropriate arrangements for pets when the owners are going away on holidays.
3. Promote the benefits, responsibilities, requirements and costs of pet ownership.
4. Encourage a Pet Shop Code of Conduct to be developed by the Dog and Cat Management Board that promotes the responsible selection of a pet that suits the purchaser's lifestyle and circumstances.
5. Encourage the local pet shop and breeders to provide dog registration forms and information kits.
6. Liaise with the Dog and Cat Management Board to develop a set of regulations that will address the backyard breeding of dogs and cats in South Australia.
7. Provide advice on appropriate pets and the associated costs and requirements of pet types and breeds.
8. Provide advice on appropriate design for the keeping of pets, taking into consideration the following:
 - Maximising the space available to pets
 - Environment enrichment
 - View of the outside world
 - Confinement
 - Acoustic separation
 - Enclosures required to maintain safety and well being of pet, environment and community
 - Provision of a safe and comfortable environment
 - Amount of time available to spend with a pet.

6.5 Bite Avoidance and Reducing Dog Attacks/Harassment

A strategy needs to be developed that will assist in reducing the number of dog attacks and harassments and will encourage the reporting of all dog attacks and harassments to Council. Dog attacks and harassment incidents are of great concern to the general community, particularly when incidents involve children and the elderly. There is a real concern within local government in relation to the number of unreported attacks that occur and the fact that the majority of the attacks (in the order of 70%) occur on private property. While it is a minority of dogs in the community that are 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 scared, dominant, protective or territorial.

Proposed Actions:

1. Promote information on legislative requirements and the potential of litigation in relation to dog attacks.
2. Continue to support and assist in the facilitation of the 'Delta Dog Safe' Program in all schools.
3. Collate dog attack statistics and examine the types and breeds of dog registered in the City of Victor Harbor to determine any trends that may be applicable to the Council area.
4. Promote and encourage the reporting of all dog attacks and harassments, whether they occur in public places or on private property.
5. Review current and research new education material and methods on bite avoidance, and stress the importance of adult supervision of children at all times when they are with any dog.
6. Promote the use of devices that prevent dogs from achieving a bite, such as restrictive muzzles.
7. Educate the wider community that any dog has the potential to bite, attack or harass a person or another animal, and promote how to read a dog's body language and avoid being bitten.

6.6 Management of Dog Faeces in Public Places

The Plan endeavours to develop an approach that will educate and encourage dog owners to pick up their dogs' faeces in public places in order to reduce the volume of dog faeces that is potentially harming the environment and ruining the enjoyment of others in public places. The management of dog faeces is an important environmental, health and community issue, particularly when large quantities of dog faeces pollute the environment, ecosystems, catchments and significant public places each year, while also posing a health risk for humans and other animals. Dog owners are required under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* to clean up and dispose of their dogs' faeces appropriately while in a public place.

The City of Victor Harbor currently provides a number of dog waste bag dispensers, and is responsible for the associated installation and ongoing maintenance. It should be noted that Council Officers spend a significant amount of time each week refilling and maintaining the dispensers. Council will be introducing a By-Law requirement for people to carry on their person waste bags at all times while having a dog under their control in a public place. This will ensure persons in control of a dog will remove their dog's faeces.

Proposed Actions:

1. Establish a set of guidelines for the installation of additional dispensers and dog waste bags in Council reserves and on the foreshore and, in particular, any new off leash areas that may be developed in the future.

2. Consider dog waste dispensers in a 'dogs in open space' policy.
3. Introduce a By-Law requiring all persons in control of a dog in a public place to carry waste bags at all times to ensure dog faeces are removed, regardless of Council dog waste bag availability. The offence will attract a \$187.50 expiation.
4. Educate dog owners on their responsibilities under *the Act* and new By-Law, including the impact of dog waste on the environment and community, and the related \$55.00 expiation for an offence of failing to remove the faeces and the \$187.50 expiation for failing to carry a waste bag when in control of a dog in a public place.
5. Develop and install signage related to the requirements and subsequent expiations of failing to remove dog faeces in a public place and failing to carry a waste bag while in control of a dog in a public place, especially in high dog traffic areas.
6. Ensure bins are located in high dog traffic public places and where dog waste bags are provided by Council.
7. Provide dog owners with 'pooch pouches' as a waste bag storage and carrying device when registering their dog/s.
8. Promote dog waste bag dispensers and bins locations within the City.

6.7 Developing Dog 'On-Leash', 'Off-Leash' and Prohibited Areas

Council has determined the need in the community for parks and reserves where dogs may be exercised off-leash or on-leash under effective control, and areas where dogs are to be totally prohibited. Section 26A of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* requires that the plan of management must include provisions for these types of areas. Consideration needs to be given to the proximity of these areas taking into account the presence of children, vehicle traffic, sports and other recreational pursuits. Community consultation has also determined the need to develop such reserves and parks within the City of Victor Harbor.

Dogs on-leash - Streets, Roads and Footpaths

As of 1 July 2004, all dogs are deemed to be wandering at large if not held on a leash when in a public place, or a private place without the consent of the occupier. A public place means a place to which the public has access, which includes streets, roads, footpaths, shopping centre car parks etc. However, if a dog is in a park or reserve the person in control of the dog must have effective control of the dog either by command, with the dog responding to commands, being in close proximity and able to be seen at all times, or by means of a physical restraint (leash, chain or cord not exceeding two (2) metres). South Australian Councils must determine the appropriate uses and provisions for dogs on-leash/off-leash in other open spaces such as parks, reserves and gardens in their own Council area.

Dog's off-leash

Currently the City of Victor Harbor provides opportunity for dog owners to have their dog/s off-leash at all beaches and foreshore areas before 10am and after 8pm during daylight saving time. Outside daylight saving time, dogs can be off-leash at these locations at any other time, provided the dog is under effective control.

Effective control of a dog means:

- The dog must be controlled on a chain, cord or leash not exceeding 2m in length (not relevant in off-leash times).
- The dog must be responsive to command and in close proximity to the person with the person being able to see the dog at all times (relevant at off-leash times).
- A dog is placed in a cage, vehicle or other object or structure (not relevant at off-leash times).
- A dog is tethered to a fixed object by means of a chain, cord or leash not exceeding 2 metres in length (not relevant at off-leash times).

Council's existing dogs on foreshore By-Law No.5 is working well and no change to this By-Law is anticipated, as 66% of households surveyed in 2007 agreed with By-Law No.5. It is recognised that the majority of dog owners (both residents and visitors to the area) visiting our foreshore are responsible people. A continued combination of education and enforcement is required for ongoing compliance. Council Officers occasionally experience difficulties with non-compliant and aggressive people. It is recommended that a continued proactive approach be continued to address this issue. A visible presence of Council Officers will encourage a safer and cleaner environment and provide the opportunity to educate and encourage responsible dog ownership. Where necessary, written caution and expiation notices will be issued.

Parks and Reserves within the City Of Victor Harbor

In recent times, suggestions have been received from dog owners regarding the provision of adequate open space where dogs can be exercised off-leash. The majority of the City of Victor Harbor reserves and parks remain off-leash areas. This is supported by the community consultation survey results. Dog owners are encouraged to provide their dogs with off-leash exercise while demonstrating effective control at all times. Council is proposing to prohibit dogs from Kent Reserve, Soldiers Memorial Reserve (CWA and Rotary), Soldiers Memorial Gardens and Warland Reserve. The locations of all Council reserves are identified in the 'Community Land Register – City of Victor Harbor' document available at the Civic Centre. Dogs will be required to be held on a leash within 20 metres of play equipment or cooking and eating facilities, such as barbecues and combined table and chair facilities. A By-Law will need to be developed for the management of people and their dogs at these locations. Any offence detected will attract a \$187.50 expiation. Appendix 1 shows the parks and reserves in the City of Victor Harbor that will be categorised for the different types of dog access, and Appendices 3, 4 and 5 indicate the reserves proposed for "fenced dog off-leash at all times" areas for safe dog socialisation. The community consultation revealed the CWA Reserve on the corner of Hindmarsh Valley and Adelaide Roads was the preferred location. Council has applied for grants to assist with funding and development of at least one fenced dog off-leash socialisation park.

Proposed Actions:

1. Identify issues and make recommendations relating to dogs and open space planning in line with amendments to current legislation.
2. Assess the feasibility of the CWA Reserve site as a fenced dog off-leash socialisation park, subject to availability of funding, grant approvals and further community consultation.

3. Develop new categorised dog areas as identified in the community consultation process.
4. Introduce and educate the community on the new By-Law requirements in relation to dog prohibited zones, and the requirement for dogs to be on-leash within 20 metres of any play equipment and cooking or eating facility.
5. Maintain and review the methods, times and level of patrols in dog traffic areas in line with service standards.
6. Council Officers to maintain a proactive, visible and approachable image.
7. Continue to issue cautions and expiations, where appropriate.

6.8 Minimising Dogs Wandering At Large

A dog is considered to be wandering at large when it is in a public place and is not under effective control of a person. The owner of the dog wandering at large is committing an offence under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* by allowing it to occur. Council plans to reduce the number of dogs wandering at large and reduce the public nuisance caused by dogs, while increasing public safety. In 2005/2006, Council impounded 65 dogs found to be wandering at large. Dogs wandering at large can be a threat not only to the dog itself but also to members of the community. During fireworks events and intense storm conditions, dog owners should be encouraged to securely confine their pets, as these are peak times when “dog wandering at large” offences occur.

A combination of education, encouragement and enforcement, dog registration and identification will ensure more impounded dogs are returned to owners as soon as possible, with less risk to the animal and to the community.

Proposed Actions:

1. Encourage pet owners to confine their pets during fireworks events and thunderstorm warnings.
2. Ensure Council Officers have access to dog registration details to enable the return of lost dogs to their owners via use of PDA units and laptop computers.
3. Promote lawful requirement of dog identification and registration to enable prompt return to owners of wandering dogs.
4. Dog and Cat Management Officers to pursue all possible options for returning wandering dogs to their owners before impounding the dogs.
5. Publicise the consequences of dogs wandering at large in the community.
6. Encourage dog owners to adequately fence their property to control their dog/s.
7. Conduct random patrols of all public areas and detain dogs wandering at large.
8. Euthanase wandering dogs that are impounded, unclaimed and not suitable for re-homing.
9. Promote to the wider community, via local radio and the ‘dog wanted’ database, wandering dogs that are impounded and unclaimed, but suitable for re-homing.

6.9 Promoting Dog Socialisation and Training

Council has identified the need for dog owners to properly socialise their dogs with other people and with other dogs, and obtain obedience training to an acceptable level. Dog socialisation and obedience training have the potential to overcome most dog behavioural problems and should be promoted as a part of responsible ownership, along with education. Dog socialisation and training with other people and dogs reduce the incidence of dog attacks. It is ideal to train dogs from an early age, but dogs of all ages generally respond well to appropriate training techniques. Consistent training brings about the best long-term results. Dog owners in the City of Victor Harbor can acquire training for their dogs through local dog obedience trainers and animal behaviour experts.

Proposed Actions:

1. Support and promote initiatives of obedience clubs, private dog trainers and veterinarians.
2. Encourage dog owners to read reference material made available in the Civic Centre.
3. Promote dog obedience training and animal behaviour experts to reduce negative impacts on the community resulting from untrained dogs.
4. Encourage new dog owners to socialise their dog around other humans and animals regularly.
5. Develop dog 'off-leash' fenced socialisation park(s) at CWA Reserve, Porters' Hill Reserve and/or Back Valley Recreation Grounds.

6.10 Reducing Excessive Barking Nuisances

Council is aware of the nuisance caused by barking dogs. Barking complaints make up a moderate percentage of complaints received by the Council's Inspectorial Services section. Some complaints are complex and time consuming. Barking dog complaints have increased in recent years. Many factors influence the reasons dogs bark at a nuisance level. Most revolve around three components: the owner; the dog breed; and the environment in which the dog lives. Council takes an educative and encouraging approach, rarely needing enforcement, by promoting communication and liaising between owners and neighbours, and raising awareness of the influencing factors behind excessive and nuisance barking.

Common reasons for excessive and nuisance barking are:

- Communication
- Boredom
- Changes to environment or lifestyle
- Separation anxiety
- Teasing or hostility from other people
- Distractions, such as cats and vermin and other dogs barking
- Health problems
- Territorial behaviour
- Inadequate training

Proposed Actions:

1. Undertake a review of Dog Barking Procedures and investigate alternative methods of monitoring barking dog nuisance complaints.
2. Encourage both parties involved in a barking dog dispute to resolve their issues prior to the Council being involved.
3. Where specialist expertise is required, Council Officers to provide information or provide dog owners with the contact details of animal behaviourists and dog trainers who may be able to assist them.
4. Introduce a By-Law requiring the keeping of cats inside at night, to assist in reducing the number of barking nuisance complaints.
5. Advocate continued mediation between complainants and dog owners, when required.
6. Continue to provide 'anti-barking' collars for hire, along with research into more effective control measures.
7. Educate and encourage the community on the Council's nuisance barking policies and procedures.
8. Promote breeds not prone to excessive barking.
9. Promote early intervention from both neighbours and owners so that nuisance barking does not become a well-established habit in the dog.
10. Promote an enriched and interesting home life for the dog, to avoid boredom.
11. Purchase dog bark counting collars for use in determining nuisance level and times of barking dog issues.

6.11 Management of Domestic Cats

Under the current provisions of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*, Part 7 – Management of Cats, if a member of the public finds an unidentified cat (no collar with identification tag with contact details to determine the owner of the cat, or no microchip tattoo in the inside of the cat's ear) then the cat can be seized and removed from the property and transported within 12 hours to a registered veterinary surgeon or dog and cat management officer. If the cat is not identifiable via a microchip, the cat may be disposed of in a humane manner by a registered veterinary surgeon or Dog and Cat Management Officer. *The Act* also states that if the cat is identified then it must be released where it was seized. However, if a cat is found in a remote place, being more than one (1) kilometre from any place genuinely used for a place of residence, then any person may lawfully seize, detain and destroy or otherwise dispose of the cat. If a cat is destroyed that is identifiable, then the person responsible for seizing and destroying the cat must take reasonable steps to notify the owner of the cat.

In 2002, the State Government consulted Councils on their views regarding cats in the community, via a survey distributed to all South Australian Councils. At that time, it was indicated that the legislation relating to dogs would be reviewed and completed prior to cat legislation being addressed by the Government. It is anticipated that the State

Government will instigate a more detailed consultation process in the future, in relation to effective cat management.

The City of Victor Harbor receives a considerable number of complaints regarding cat-related problems each year, particularly nuisances caused by both stray and domestic cats between dusk and dawn. There are numerous negative impacts upon the environment and community caused by both de-sexed and non-de-sexed domestic cats, such as:

- Well cared for domestic cats kill on average 30-35 native animals per year, ranging from birds, mammals and insects to bats and reptiles.
- Cats with a single bell attached to collar can learn to hunt very effectively. More than two bells are required, to be effective to slow hunting kill rates.
- De-sexed cats have a roaming range of up to one kilometre.
- Non-de-sexed have a roaming range of up to two kilometres.
- Free roaming cats can spread diseases harmful to humans and other animals.
- Free roaming cats cause noise, disturbance and excrement nuisances, and exaggerate the nuisances caused by barking dogs.
- Non-de-sexed cats contribute significantly to the numbers of stray and feral cats.
- Feral and stray cats have driven numerous native animals to endangerment and even extinction.

The City of Victor Harbor is aware of, and concerned about, the negative impacts of cats on the environment and community. However, cat management has the potential to have serious resource implications for Council and requires further research and consideration. Resources and other associated cost implications should be considered before providing any additional cat management services. Council cat management can only be improved via the development of a new By-Law. Therefore, Council is planning the introduction of an additional By-Law regarding compulsory cat registration, compulsory cat de-sexing, compulsory cat curfew, compulsory limit of cats per property related to size of property and compulsory cat micro-chipping. Offences under the new By-Law will attract a \$187.50 expiation in accordance with all other By-Laws. The community consultation survey revealed the need for increased cat management and the new By-Law has been planned in response to these community requests. The results of the survey can be viewed in the report titled 'Dog and Cat Management Community Consultation Report 2007'.

Council's current involvement in cat management is as follows:

- Free hire of cat cages for the first week and a \$15.00 charge for every week thereafter (\$50.00 refundable deposit applies).
- Referral to C.A.T.S. (Cats Assistance To Sterilize).
- Provision of education/promotional information on responsible cat ownership.

Proposed Actions:

1. Introduce compulsory de-sexing of cats via an additional By-Law to avoid unplanned breeding and 'stocking' of the feral population. Community consultation highlighted this need.
2. Introduce compulsory cat registrations via an additional By-Law, in light of increased cat management requirements. Community consultation highlighted this need.

3. Introduce a By-Law limiting the number of cats that can be kept on a property, namely two (2) cats maximum per property over 560m² in area and one (1) cat per property under 560m² in area. This is in line with By-Law No.5 regarding the number of dogs allowed to be kept. Community consultation highlighted this need.
4. Introduce a permit system for residents who wish to keep more than the allowed number of cats on their property. Community consultation highlighted this need.
5. Introduce a compulsory night-time curfew for cats via an additional By-Law. This will reduce community nuisance caused by cats and increase the safety of cats in the community. Community consultation highlighted this need.
6. Refer residents who require assistance with low price de-sexing of cats and assistance with de-sexing of cats to C.A.T.S. (Cats Assistance To Sterilize).
7. Monitor and review cat cage hire and ensure adequate cages are available to residents.
8. Evaluate the impact of a By-Law limiting the number of cats per household, after the first twelve (12) months of operation.
9. Educate cat owners and encourage responsible cat ownership.
10. Encourage the use of cat enclosures, to reduce the number of cats wandering.
11. Research and examine the cat management models used by Councils in South Australia and interstate, with a view to continuously improving our management of cats.
12. Consult further with the State Government, the Dog and Cat Management Board, pet owners and the wider community of Victor Harbor, regarding making appropriate amendments to the legislation and Council By-Laws in relation to cat management and control.

6.12 Ensuring Compliance

The *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* requires Councils to enforce the legislation of *the Act* in the Council's area. The City of Victor Harbor encourages responsible dog and cat ownership by complying voluntarily. The community requires that public places are monitored and patrolled to ensure compliance of *the Act* and investigate breaches of *the Act* and Council By-Laws. Council employs three Dog and Cat Management Officers (General Inspectors) who enforce the requirements of *the Act*, and also enforce other legislation and By-Laws relevant to the Council.

Proposed Actions:

1. Dog and cat management officers will conduct patrols of public places to monitor compliance.
2. Dog and cat management officers will respond to calls and complaints received regarding non-compliance of legislation.
3. Division 7 offences (dog attacks) are to be regarded as a high priority.
4. Council will maintain an after hours on-call service via the local call number **1300 559 790**.

5. Council will maintain the database of dog registration and ownership to assist with identification of dogs and owners.
6. Officers will continue to enforce legislation via expiation notices or, where appropriate, court proceedings.
7. Council will undertake registration checks and surveys to ensure the maximum number of dogs and cats are registered.
8. Council will develop a database of cat registration and ownership to assist with identification of cats and owners.
9. Council will develop and expand upon current information systems to assist in retrieval of data and incident information.

6.13 Staff Training and Public Perception

It is Council's intention to improve community recognition and understanding of the role and services provided by Dog and Cat Management Officers. In the past there has been an unfavourable public perception of Dog and Cat Management Officers, seeing them described as the "dog catcher" or "the dog destroyer". It is also recognised that Council needs to provide staff with adequate and updated training to respond to all aspects of dog and cat management in the community.

Proposed Actions:

1. Encourage Dog and Cat Management Officers to attend Dog and Cat Management Conferences and other relevant training courses.
2. Increase involvement with officer networks.
3. Promote the approachability and friendliness of Council Officers.
4. Provide an image and uniform that portrays dog and cat management officers as professional and approachable.
5. Promotion of dog and cat management officers and their role within Council.
6. Train Dog and Cat Management Officers and other customer service staff on procedures, standard responses and educational material.
7. Actively seek new opportunities to reach dog and cat owners while dispensing accurate information.
8. Identify training requirements through staff professional development programs.
9. Ensure the Registrar of Dogs receives the necessary training, guidance and assistance to carry out the Council's obligations under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*.
10. Involve Dog and Cat Management Officers in the implementation and monitoring of initiatives and recommendations in the Plan.
11. Review and develop standard operating procedures and processes for dog and cat management.

12. Encourage mediation skill development by all officers.

6.14 Risk Management

Risk management is an intrinsic factor in Council operations and has also been identified by the Dog and Cat Management Board as an important issue. Risk management enables Councils to obtain legal advice and undertake an analysis in relation to potential litigation risks of proposed actions and plans. Council will develop a risk management strategy in relation to dog and cat management in the community.

Proposed Actions:

1. Obtain legal advice, where necessary, in relation to dog on/off-leash and prohibited area provisions of the Act.
2. Undertake risk management analysis, where appropriate, and address the highest risks to Council and the community.
3. Ensure ongoing development and training of Council Officers regarding identifying risks.
4. Promote to the Council and the community the level of risk relating to litigation and public safety of dog and cat management.

6.15 Service Levels

The City of Victor Harbor covers an area of 387 square kilometres, with a residential population of over 12,000 people that increases significantly during holiday periods of the year. There were 2,179 dogs registered in the Council area in the 2005/2006 financial year and it is estimated that there are approximately 500 unregistered dogs in the community.

The City of Victor Harbor endeavours to ensure appropriate levels of service for the management of dogs and cats that meet the needs of the community. The *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* states that Councils can only use the funds raised from dog registration to manage dogs alone. Under current funding there is little scope for increased service provision in cat management. However, the introduction of compulsory cat registration will assist to fund further cat management initiatives. Council's Inspectorial Services section is part of the Planning and Regulatory Services Department of the City of Victor Harbor, and is responsible for dog and cat management, amongst other things.

Current staffing levels:

- 1 Senior Dog and Cat Management Officer (Registrar of Dogs)
- 1 Full-time Dog and Cat Management Officer
- 1 Part-time Dog and Cat Management Officer

Hours of Operation:

Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:30 am to 5:00pm. An after hours emergency service is provided Monday to Friday 5pm until 9pm and on weekends 10am until 9pm.

Resources:

The funding of this Plan will be in accordance with the Annual Budget of the City of Victor Harbor. Section 26 (3) of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* requires that “money received by a Council under this *Act* must be expended in the administration or enforcement of the provisions of this *Act* relating to dogs”. Council’s income from the administration and enforcement of *the Act* is presently derived from four principal sources, i.e. general rate revenue, dog registration, expiation fees and fines for breaches of *the Act*. Dog registration fees and expiation fees are applied by Regulations under *the Act*, whilst fines are applied as a result of court action.

Proposed Actions:

1. Adjust service levels where necessary, in line with the adopted recommendations of this plan.
2. Review service levels of patrols, subject to provisions of *the Act* and Council By-Laws.
3. Introduce compulsory cat registration to assist in funding the service requirements of cat management.
4. Maintain patrols, investigations, surveys, and enforcement and education programs to maintain and improve the funds raised from dog management to maintain and potentially improve service levels in the community.

7. Community Consultation

The general content and direction of this Plan is a mix of ‘education, encouragement and enforcement’. Given this position, Council has provided opportunities for Elected Members, stakeholders, local residents and Council staff to provide feedback on the following topics:

1. Dogs ‘off-leash’, ‘on-leash’, prohibited and enclosed areas.
2. Dogs wandering at large & effective control.
3. Socialisation and obedience training
4. Dog barking and nuisance.
5. Level of cat-related problems within the Council area.
6. By-Laws for cats, such as limiting the number of cats that can be kept on a property, night-time curfew, registration of cats, etc.
7. Economic, environmental and social implications and responsibilities of dog and cat management.

8. Policy Content & Strategic Drivers

The Strategic Dog and Cat Management Plan 2007-2011 is about creating and maintaining a community that is socially, environmentally and economically sustainable in the long term by focusing on responsible pet ownership. The plan clearly outlines the direction to be pursued by Council as well as more specific goals and key actions. The Inspectorial Services team is focused on ensuring the safety of the community through education, encouragement and enforcement. The team’s key role in this is to ensure compliance with the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* and Council By-Laws, and to encourage and educate pet owners to be responsible and voluntarily compliant, setting a new direction for the management of pets in our community with an increased emphasis on responsible ownership. To achieve optimum outcomes, partnerships with stakeholders within the

community will be pursued. It is recognised that stakeholders can make a significant contribution to the success of Council's aims and objectives within this Plan. The community consultation process and resulting data highlighted and initiated the required additional By-Laws to assist in achieving improved dog and cat management in the City of Victor Harbor.

9. Appendices

1. Map and names of Council Reserves within township area
2. Community questionnaire survey on dog and cat management
3. Proposed site for dogs off-leash area at CWA Reserve
4. Proposed site for dogs off-leash area at Back Valley Recreation Grounds
5. Proposed site for dogs off-leash area at Porters Hill Reserve
6. Location map indicating the three (3) proposed dogs off-leash reserves