



# Dog and Cat Management Plan 2019–2024

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# 1 Introduction

Around 62% of Australian households own a pet – 39% own a dog whilst 29% of households own a cat<sup>1</sup>. This is reflected within the City of Adelaide with our many dog parks becoming a social hub for local residents and the broader community. The 2016–2020 City of Adelaide Strategic Plan contains an action to increase participation by the broadest range of residents in the community life of their neighbourhood. Pet ownership is a great way for members of a community to engage and socialise.

In South Australia, the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (the Act) provides the framework for the management of dogs and cats in the community. Its objectives are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats
- Promote the effective management of dogs and cats (including through the requirement for microchipping and the desexing of dogs and cats).

Councils are responsible for administration of most of the requirements in the Act. This includes a requirement for all councils to produce a management plan relating to dogs and cats within their local area.

The plan includes strategies to manage dogs and cats within our community and sets out how those responsibilities under the Act will be addressed.

The Dog and Cat Management Plan is developed and approved every five years.

# 2 Background

The City of Adelaide is required to administer and enforce the provisions of the Act relating to dogs and cats in the City and North Adelaide.

There is substantial evidence which suggests that domestic animals, primarily dogs and cats, provide significant benefits to not only their owners, but the community in which they live. Owning a pet provides opportunities for meeting other people socially, promotes companionship and has educational benefits for children when managed appropriately. Responsible pet ownership is rewarding and provides a common interest amongst different members of the community.

South Australia's rate of dog ownership is higher than the national average. There are over 1000 dogs registered within the City of Adelaide Area and nearly 292,000<sup>2</sup> registered dogs throughout the state, or one for every two households.



1 (2016) Pet Ownership in Australia, Animal Medicines Australia  
2 (2019) Annual Report for the Dog and Cat Management Board



### 3 Strategic Outline

The City of Adelaide has several key priorities for managing companion animals in an urban capital city environment. A strategic approach to addressing these issues is included in this plan.

The City of Adelaide’s Strategic Plan (2016–2020) has relevance to animal management and key areas of focus are set out below.

Strategic Goal	Relevant Strategies	Goals for the Dog and Cat Management Plan
The number of people living in the City will grow from 23,000 to 28,000 by 2020	3.1.06 Increase participation by the broadest range of residents in the community life of their neighbourhood	Assist pet owners in planning and recovering from emergencies Investigate ways to assist pet ownership amongst vulnerable populations
	3.1.10 Work with neighbouring councils and the State Government to enhance facilities, attractions, landscapes and movement networks in the Park Lands to meet the needs and expectations of growing high density communities living in and near the City	Consider partnership opportunities to improve animal management outcomes and achieve better use of resources
A nation leading wellbeing and resilience measure will be applied and influences our work	3.3.05 Enhance the role of the Park Lands in increasing levels of physical activity and wellbeing through formal and informal sport and recreation opportunities	Recognise the role pets play in promoting an active lifestyle
	3.3.06 Deliver sport and recreation activity hubs consistent with the Active City Strategy and Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy	Improve and provide further facilities for dog walkers and other Park Land users



## 4 City of Adelaide's Responsibilities

The City of Adelaide's responsibilities under the Act are as follows:

- Ensure all dogs are registered from three (3) months of age
- Ensure that all dogs are identified by an identification tag
- Maintain a register of dogs containing the information required by the Dog and Cat Management Board (The Board) (which may be kept in electronic form) and that is to be readily available for public inspection; and ensure that the Board is provided with information contained in the register as required by the Board from time to time
- Appoint a suitable person to be Registrar
- Appoint the equivalent of one full-time animal management officer or make other satisfactory arrangements for the exercise of the functions and powers of animal management officers
- Make satisfactory arrangements for the detention of dogs seized under the Act
- Make satisfactory arrangements for fulfilling other obligations under the Act, which include:
  - » Management and control for dogs found to be wandering at large
  - » The issuing of expiations where a person responsible for a dog has failed in their responsibilities under the Act and/or Regulations; including:
    - › Investigation and management of barking (nuisance)
    - › Investigate chase, harass or attack complaints







## 5 Legislative Changes

The State Government has implemented recent changes to the Act and the *Dog and Cat Management Regulations 2017*. These changes came into effect on 1 July 2018, and included:

### 5.1 Microchipping

All dogs and cats are now required to be microchipped before the age of 12 weeks.

### 5.2 Desexing of Dogs and Cats

All new generation dogs and cats born as of the 1 July 2018 or by the age of 6 months will be required to be desexed. Owners will be encouraged to but not be required to desex dogs and cats born before 1 July 2018.

Mandatory desexing is intended to reduce the large number of unowned and unwanted cats and dogs in the community.

### 5.3 Breeders and Sale of Dogs and Cats

All breeders and owners of dogs and cats who wish to sell litters are now required to be registered with the Dog and Cat Management Board (the Board). Those who are not registered will be investigated jointly by the Board and Council. All breeders and sellers of dogs and cats are also required to provide the following information in writing to the new owners:

- Identity of the seller
- Identity of the breeder
- Vaccination details
- Any other treatment details
- Micro-chip number
- Desexing certificate
- Any Controls Orders, including all relevant details pertaining to the Order.

## 6 By-Laws for Dogs and Cats

### 6.1 Dogs By-Law 2018

Provides for the control and management of dogs within the City of Adelaide including;

- Limiting the number of dogs per dwelling
- Outlining dog free areas and areas that are on leash
- Requirements for owner's responsibility for removing of dog faeces.

### 6.2 Cats By-Law 2018

Provides for management of cats within the City of Adelaide by:

- Limiting the number of cats per dwelling

The restriction on the number of cats and dogs that can be kept on a property without a permit is a requirement that is in line with the vast majority of council animal management plans.

## 7 Introduction of the Dog and Cat Online Registration System (DACO)

The Dog and Cat Online (DACO) registration system is a one-stop online customer service portal for all registration payments, microchipping and breeder information.

DACO has replaced the 69 individual council dog and cat registers and serves as a single online database that is accessible 24/7.

DACO has been developed to allow pet owners to instantly update registration or microchip details if they move house, change phone numbers etc., as well as pay annual registration fees.

DACO assists councils, shelters and the general public to reunite lost pets with their owners, through notification on the whereabouts of pets on DACO by owners, councils, and shelters. DACO helps to identify the movement of dogs, and inform future owners about control orders i.e. barking/dangerous etc., that may be placed on a dog.

DACO is designed so the primary source of data input is from the owners of dogs and cats.

Microchip implanters, vets and breeders also have obligations to upload microchip information into DACO.

Future opportunities to integrate other databases (microchipping, dog incidents, breeder registration) will provide a powerful management tool, without the need to manually maintain the system nor the on-going task of inputting the majority of the data.



## 8 Statistics

The following tables outline statistical data for the 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 years within the City of Adelaide and includes impounding data, incident reports and registration details.

### 8.1 Impounded Dogs

Impounded dogs	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Difference
Dogs impounded	8	6	6	25% Decrease
Dogs returned to owner (not impounded)	21	22	16	23 % Decrease
Dog impounded then returned to owner	8	3	5	37% Increase
Dogs wandering at large	63	52	42	33% Decrease
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>28% Decrease</b>

A decrease in dog impounding and dogs returned to owner indicates that pet owners are being responsible with identification and ensuring properties are secure.

A higher rate of dogs being returned to owner prior to impounding reflects an increase in microchipping uptake and improved data records.

### 8.2 Dog Incident Reports

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Difference
Dog attack/harassment/chased	19	22	38	50% Increase
Barking dogs	39	29	34	13 % Increase
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>24% Increase</b>

NB: The marginal increase in reports can be contributed to an increase in community confidence in Council and a willingness to report these matters.

### 8.3 Dogs Registered

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Difference
Number of registered dogs	824	855	1011	22% Increase
Number of non-standard registrations	179	164	110	62% Decrease
<b>Total number of standard dogs (de-sexed and microchipped)</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>691</b>	<b>901</b>	<b>39% Increase</b>

Dog registration numbers have increased over the last three years. This is partially due to the implementation of the new Dogs and Cats Online state-based registration system that has made it easier to register a dog and transfer dogs when they move between councils and owners. Rates of desexing and microchipping have also increased as puppies are now required to be microchipped before sale and veterinarians are now required to update microchipping and desexing data on Dogs and Cats Online after each procedure.

### 8.4 Cat Incident Reports

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Difference
Number of cat reports (Wandering into private property/stray cats/lost cats)	2	2	6	66% Increase



## 9 Stakeholders and Partners

Organisations with an involvement or interface with dog and cat management in the City are listed below. Building partnerships can improve outcomes for the community and achieve a more effective use of resources.

### 9.1 The Dog and Cat Management Board (the Board)

The functions of the Board are to:

- Plan for, promote, and provide advice about the effective management of dogs and cats
- Oversee the administration and enforcement of the provisions of the Act relating to dogs
- Inquire into and consider all proposed By-laws referred to it under the Act, with a view to promoting the effective management of dogs and cats, and to the extent that the Board considers it appropriate, the consistent application of By-laws throughout South Australia
- Advise the Minister or the Local Government Association (LGA), either on its own initiative or at the request of the Minister or LGA, on the operation of the Act or issues directly relating to dog or cat management in South Australia
- Undertake or facilitate research relating to dog or cat management
- Undertake or facilitate educational programs relating to dog or cat management
- Keep the Act under review and make recommendations to the Minister with respect to the Act and Regulations made under the Act
- Carry out any other function assigned to the Board by the Minister or under the Act
- Responsible for the management and updating of DACO system.

The proportion of the funds collected from dog registrations paid to the Board is 24%. The Board also audits each SA council's animal management services every one to two years to ensure processes and procedures are being conducted as per the Act and the Regulations. This ensures consistent procedures relating to the management of animals between all 69 areas.

### 9.2 Pet Owners

Pet owners have a number of obligations in relation to their pets. These include caring for the health and wellbeing of their pet and compliance with the following legislation:

- *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*
- *Animal Welfare Act 1985*.

Pet owners need to ensure that their dogs and/or cats are microchipped (registered on the new online DACO registration system) and all dogs and cats born after the 1 July 2018 are desexed.

Dog and cat owners are responsible for the behaviour of pets within their community. A well trained and socialised dog or cat is less likely to disrupt others within their community.

Owning a pet has health benefits to the owner, promoting an increase in exercise and lowering levels of anxiety.

Owning a pet can also help children develop a sense of responsibility and learn to care for another living being.



### **9.3 Neighbouring Councils**

The City of Adelaide neighbours seven councils:

- City of West Torrens
- City of Charles Sturt
- City of Prospect
- The Corporation of the Town of Walkerville
- City of Norwood, Payneham and St Peters
- City of Burnside
- City of Unley

There is potential to improve the sharing of information and resources with these and other councils either formally or informally on an ongoing basis.

### **9.4 Animal Welfare Organisations**

The City of Adelaide utilise the Animal Welfare League (AWL) facility for the impounding of dogs and cats located in council area. AWL and council work to reunite pets with their owners by advertising when a dog or cat has been impounded on the AWL and council websites.

The City of Adelaide and the AWL have collaboratively worked together to host a microchipping event to assist pet owners with identification and to comply with the recent changes to the Act requiring all dogs and cats to be microchipped.

### **9.5 Local Government Authorised Persons Association (APA)**

The APA facilitates professional development of Authorised Persons and seeks to facilitate the sharing of information and resources and standardisation of work practices amongst councils. This includes training, seminars and conferences to further a good working relationship and develop networking and more consistent approach.

### **9.6 Veterinarians**

Veterinarians are usually an early point of contact for owners of puppies and kittens and can assist with making education material available to new owners. Some veterinary clinics run puppy pre-school classes which provide owners of puppies with information on raising dogs and early socialisation benefits, along with basic obedience skills.

Veterinarians are also required to directly upload the details of the animals they desex and microchip in DACO assisting both customers and councils with maintaining accurate records.

## 10 Dog and Cat Management

### 10.1 Management of Dogs

Key measures have been developed to measure the success of the plan; those are:

Measures	Timelines	Resources
Increase in registration	Ongoing	Existing
Increase in the percentage of desexed and microchipped pets	Ongoing	Existing
Decrease in number of dogs wandering at large	Ongoing	Existing
Decrease in barking dog reports	Ongoing	Existing
Ongoing regular education programs on responsible pet ownership	Ongoing	Existing

### 10.2 Dog Parks

A dog park is a designated public area that has been set aside for dog owners to exercise, play and socialise with their dogs off-leash in a secure environment.

Two parks located within the City of Adelaide area are fully fenced and have amenities that make it clear that dogs are invited, not just permitted.

- North Adelaide between Medinidie Road and Robe Terrace – Bragg Park/Ngampa Yarta (Park 5).
- Southern Park Lands off Glen Osmond Road – Pelzer Park/Pityarilla (Park 19).

Both parks consist of two areas; one for all dogs and one for small dogs and puppies. They feature water play areas, tunnels, and turf areas for plenty of fun for dogs as well as shelter and seating for owners.

Exercise helps to increase the number of happy, healthy dogs and hopefully also happier, healthier dog owners.

The mental and physical health benefits of owning and loving a dog include reducing social isolation and loneliness and making our urban environment a more connected and sociable place in which to live. By making a safe place for companion animals and people, dog parks add to the range of recreational experiences available in an urban context.

### 10.3 Dog Registration

The Act requires all dog owners to register their pet when it reaches three months of age. Failure to do so is an offence under the Act.

There is an annual registration fee (July to June), which includes a life time disc (and number).

The City of Adelaide's initiatives regarding dog registration include:

- Sending Reminder Notices to dog owners who have not registered by 30 August
- Follow up visits to properties where dogs were previously registered and have not been re-registered
- Possible expiation notices and penalties to owners with unregistered dogs





It is important to register dogs as this assists Council to identify and return dogs to their owner. Some common reasons people don't register their dog(s) include:

- Not understanding the difference between registration (i.e. an annual activity) and micro-chipping (i.e. a lifetime activity)
- Not knowing the age at which dogs require registering
- Residents moving from interstate not understanding South Australian requirements
- Unable to afford the registration fees

The following table outlines the actions, key measures and timelines developed to measure registration uptake progress over the next five years.

Actions	Timelines	Key measures	Resources
Actively promote dog registration including incentives and rebates	Ongoing	Reviewing the number of dog registrations	Existing
Develop a brochure promoting benefits of registration for dog owners	Ongoing	Brochures developed and distributed, and advertisements posted on social media	Existing
Monitor and enforce dog registration at regular intervals	Annually	Inspections of properties where dog/s were previously registered and have not renewed	Existing

#### 10.4 Microchipping and Desexing

The Act requires all dogs and cats born from 1 July 2018 to be desexed and all dog and cats, regardless of when they were born, to be microchipped. The below table outlines actions, key measures and timelines to promote and educate our community to continue to desex and microchip their pets.

Actions	Timelines	Key measures	Resources
Organise educational events promoting microchipping	Ongoing	Microchipping events held	Existing
Develop a brochure promoting the benefits of de-sexing and microchipping and the new legal requirements.	Ongoing	Brochures developed and distributed, and advertisements posted on social media	Existing
Continue with current registration rebates to promote micro-chipping and desexing.	Ongoing	Increased microchipping and desexing rates	Existing

#### 10.5 Dogs Wandering at Large

A dog wandering at large is when:

- A dog is in a public place (other than a park) or a private place without the consent of the occupier, and the dog is not being held on a leash; or
- The dog is in a park and no person is controlling the dog by either:
  - » holding it on a leash; or
  - » by command, which means that the dog is in close proximity to the person and the person can see the dog at all times.

In the interest of public safety and for the welfare of the animal, dogs found wandering at large that are contained will be collected. Dogs will be held until their owners can be identified and reunited with their pet or if that is not possible, the dog will be transferred to the Animal Welfare League.

The table below outlines key measures, actions and timelines on educating the community on their responsibilities for good pet ownership.

Actions	Timelines	Key measures	Resources
Reduce the instances of dogs wandering at large	Ongoing	Decrease dog wandering at large report numbers	Existing
Produce promotional material on owner responsibilities	Ongoing	Decrease dog wandering at large report numbers	Existing

## 10.6 Dog Barking

Barking is a natural behaviour for dogs, however barking excessively can be a nuisance to the community.

The cause of dogs barking can vary. For information to assist you as the owner of a dog or a neighbour or friend whose dog is excessively barking, please visit [dogandcatboard.com.au/barking-dogs](http://dogandcatboard.com.au/barking-dogs)

The table below outlines key measures, actions and timelines to achieve this.

Actions	Timelines	Key measures	Resources
Responding to and providing education relating to dog barking nuisance reports	Ongoing	Decrease in dog barking nuisance complaints	Existing
Promote and encourage options that support neighbours to attempt to resolve the issue before Council becomes involved.	Ongoing	Decrease in Council involvement in nuisance dog barking reports. Community is empowered to self resolve.	Develop process
Early intervention/education material	Ongoing	Decrease in dog barking nuisance reports	Develop material

## 10.7 Community Education

Education plays a key role in the effective management of pets in the community and includes educating the public, dog and cat owners and prospective pet owners.

- Education needs to focus on the importance of responsible dog ownership, dog training and appropriate socialisation, pet selection and safe interactions between children and dogs.
- Building partnerships with residents is vital to promote responsible pet ownership within the community.

It is also important to have educational material available at the point of contact with pet owners such as at dog parks and through the registration process.

Public awareness programs promote and support responsible pet ownership and collaboration with external stakeholders assists us to deliver programs. These programs focus on the importance of dog selection, appropriate training, puppy socialisation and good dog etiquette in public places. The table below outlines actions, key measures and timelines for community education on the responsibilities of being a good pet owner.

Actions	Timelines	Key measures	Resources
Revise website to include links to appropriate sites such as Dog and Cat Management Board, AWL and RSPCA.	Ongoing	A decrease in enquiries relating to general dog and cat information relating to DACO, microchipping, lost pets and the changes to the legislation.	Existing
Promote responsible pet ownership at events.	Ongoing	Decrease in nuisance pet reports	Existing
Implement an annual display in libraries and community centres on responsible pet ownership.	Ongoing	Decrease in nuisance pet reports	Existing
Implementing promotional marketing on responsible pet ownership and importance of microchipping and desexing through social media and website.	Current	Decrease in nuisance pet reports and number of enquiries from residents.	Existing

## 10.8 Management of Cats

The nature of reports received regarding cats are generally in relation to nuisance behaviour of neighbouring cats entering private property. We support the 'Good Cats Play at Home'<sup>3</sup> strategy and encourage all cat owners to contain their cats to their property. The table below outlines actions to decrease reports and to educate the community on responsible cat ownership.

Actions	Timelines	Key measures	Resources
Collect and maintain data on cat reports	Current	Ongoing	Existing
Develop a fact sheet to address nuisance cats (entering neighbouring properties) and encourage residents to contain their cat(s)	Current	Decrease in nuisance cat reports and enquiries	Existing
Prepare or distribute educational material on the need and benefits of de-sexing and microchipping of cats.	Current	Increase in number of desexed and microchipped cats	Existing
Educational material on feeding stray (un-owned/semi-owned) cats	Ongoing	Reduce un-owned/semi-owned cat population	Existing
Investigate the feasibility and predicted effectiveness of joining the National Desexing Network	Current	Assist low income residents to desex their cats and reduce unwanted litters	TBD

## 10.9 Other Animals and Pests

Animal	Responsible Organization	Phone	Website
Farm Animals	Department of Primary Industries and Regions SA	8226 0995	pir.sa.gov.au
Bats	Department for Environment and Heritage	8204 1910	environment.sa.gov.au
Mosquitoes	South Australian Department of Health	8226 6000	sahealth.sa.gov.au
Pigeons	South Australian Department of Health	8226 6000	sahealth.sa.gov.au
Chickens	South Australian Department of Health	8226 6000	sahealth.sa.gov.au

<sup>3</sup> Available online at [goodcatssa.com](http://goodcatssa.com)



## 11 Dog On and Off Leash Areas

A strategic approach is taken to identifying community needs in relation to the development of 'on and off leash' areas within the city and North Adelaide.

### 11.1 Off Leash Areas

Many of council's parks and squares are off leash areas, (except when organised sport is being played, or in/on a playground) however dogs must be exercised under effective control. Effective control means the dog:

- Responds to the owner's commands, and is in close proximity to the owner
- Is within sight of its owner at all times.

### 11.2 On Leash Areas

Dogs must be on leash in all public places other than a park or square.

All dogs must be on a strong leash no longer than two (2) metres in:

- Areas of Victoria Park (as per the Community Land Management Plan for Park 16)
- Sporting areas when organised sporting activities are in progress
- Children's playgrounds; and
- Nominated zones as declared by Council.

Actions	Timelines	Key measures	Resources
Identify 'on leash' and 'off leash' areas to provide appropriate opportunities to exercise dogs.	Ongoing	Information is developed and made available to the community about on leash and off leash parks Signage at parks	Existing
Establish on leash areas via the Dogs By-Law 2018	Ongoing	On leash areas established Signage at on leash areas	Existing

## 12 Further information and contact details

For further information on dog and cat management, please visit:

[gooddogsa.com](http://gooddogsa.com)

[goodcatsa.com](http://goodcatsa.com)

or contact the **City of Adelaide Customer Centre**

Ph: (08) 8203 7203

25 Pirie Street, Adelaide.





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