



Sunshine Coast Council  
Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs)  
2021- 2030



Our region.  
Healthy. Smart. Creative.

# Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Sunshine Coast Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the region, the Kabi Kabi Peoples and Jinibara Peoples. Council is committed to working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians to support self-determination through economic and community development opportunities.

June 2021 edition

[sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

T 07 5475 7272

Locked Bag 72 Sunshine Coast Mail Centre Qld 4560

© Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2009-current.  
Sunshine Coast Council™ is a registered trademark  
of Sunshine Coast Regional Council.

## **Acknowledgements**

Council wishes to thank all contributors and stakeholders involved in the development of this document.

## **Disclaimer**

Information contained in this document is based on available information at the time of writing. All figures and diagrams are indicative only and should be referred to as such. While the Sunshine Coast Council has exercised reasonable care in preparing this document it does not warrant or represent that it is accurate or complete.

Council or its officers accept no responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting in reliance upon any material contained in this document.





LOVE  
♥  
PETS

# CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>7</b>	Animal Welfare advocacy	28
<b>Our Goal</b>	<b>8</b>	Customer experience	28
Harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places	8	Innovation and technology	29
What is Animal Management?	8	<b>Outcome 1: Informed Educated People</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>About the Sunshine Coast Council Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs) 2021-2030</b>	<b>11</b>	What our community told us	30
Purpose of the Plan	11	Objectives	30
How the Plan was developed	12	Our Commitment	31
Community engagement	12	How we'll track our progress	31
The Sunshine Coast Council Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs) 2021-2030: Harmonious co-existence between People, Pets and Places	13	<b>Outcome 2: Happy Healthy Pets</b>	<b>32</b>
Our Key Partnerships	14	What our community told us	32
Education is for everyone	14	Objectives	32
<b>Our Animal Pound</b>	<b>17</b>	Our Commitment	33
Lost Pets	17	How we'll track our progress	33
Animal Welfare	17	<b>Outcome 3: Safe Inclusive People</b>	<b>34</b>
Rehoming Animals	17	What our community told us	34
Stories from the Pound	18	Objectives	34
<b>Who we are on the Sunshine Coast</b>	<b>22</b>	Our Commitment	35
<b>Opportunities and Challenges</b>	<b>25</b>	How we'll track our progress	35
Your pet, your responsibility	25	<b>Legislation and Animal Management</b>	<b>37</b>
Population growth	25	Commonwealth Government	37
Accessibility	26	State Government	37
Environmental impacts	26	Local Government	37
Inclusive places	26	<b>How Council works together</b>	<b>39</b>
Homelessness	27	<b>How the Plan aligns with other Council strategies</b>	<b>40</b>
Disaster management response	27	Next steps	41
Pets are family and friends too	28	Measure and evaluate	41
		<b>Glossary</b>	<b>42</b>
		<b>References</b>	<b>42</b>



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our community continues to grow and evolve, as does the diversity of lifestyles and the ways in which our pets engage in our daily lives.

Pets play an important role and contribute to the wellbeing of many people in our region. Increasingly, pets are more than ‘just a pet’ – they offer companionship and are part of the family. Council understands that pets are not for everyone. We recognise that people have different connections and experiences with pets and are impacted by them in different ways. Some people don’t like animals and prefer to enjoy places that are pet free. Others may not have a pet of their own but still enjoy being around pets in shared open spaces such as dog parks and dog off-leash areas.

The *Sunshine Coast Council Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs) 2021-2030* (the Plan) aims to address all aspects of responsible pet ownership in our region by exploring their relationship to PEOPLE, their value and impact as PETS and the ability to create PLACES for all to enjoy. Effective animal management is vital to ensure the harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places. Council is committed to guiding and supporting pet owners to ensure a harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places. We are committed to being responsive to the needs and concerns of our community.

Council is committed to empowering our community through education; improving accessibility to information, services, infrastructure and locations that cater for pet owners and the wider community. The Plan outlines our commitment to exploring and incorporating creative innovations and smart technology to improve access to information and services and the overall customer service experience. Council has an outstanding Animal Pound that provides

a safe environment for lost or surrendered pets, and has been designed to cater for projected growth. Our officers always seek to reunite/rehome before placing an animal at the pound. In circumstances where we are unable to reunite an animal with their owner, the animal is placed in the pound.

Our officers will continue to work closely with key partners such as SCARS<sup>1</sup>, 4PAWS<sup>2</sup> and RSPCA<sup>3</sup> to place abandoned or surrendered pets with a loving family as often as possible. We will continue to invest in our people, equipping and empowering them to provide service excellence with respect, compassion and understanding.

We are passionate about actively engaging with our community to ensure our services are reflective and inclusive of the collective needs and expectations of the region. We are committed to providing and maintaining services, programs and infrastructure that supports responsible pet ownership and contributes to safe, strong, inclusive and harmonious communities. We are committed to ensuring that pet ownership on the Sunshine Coast, contributes to the overall liveability of our region.

<sup>1</sup> Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge; <sup>2</sup> 4 Paws Animal Rescue Inc Sunshine Coast;

<sup>3</sup> Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

# OUR GOAL

## HARMONIOUS CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE, PETS AND PLACES.

The Sunshine Coast is a beautifully diverse community. From the beach to the hinterlands and everywhere in between – are people with different stories to share, connections to place and experiences with pets and animals. We are mindful of the different expectations and needs our community have as we plan for the future. We are committed to providing animal management services and initiatives that cater to the needs and expectations of our community both now and in the future.

## WHAT IS ANIMAL MANAGEMENT?

Animal management is defined as ‘the responsibility animal owners have to be considerate of the wellbeing of their neighbours’<sup>4</sup>. Pet owners must care for their pet in such a way that the safety and amenity of their neighbourhood is preserved.

Effective animal management that contributes to harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places, begins with responsible pet ownership. Under the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011, Subordinate Local Law No. 2 and Compliance and Enforcement Policy –

Council has an obligation to work with the community to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership through information, education and investigation. The mitigation of risk from aggressive dogs may require escalated actions such as formal enforcement or prosecutions.

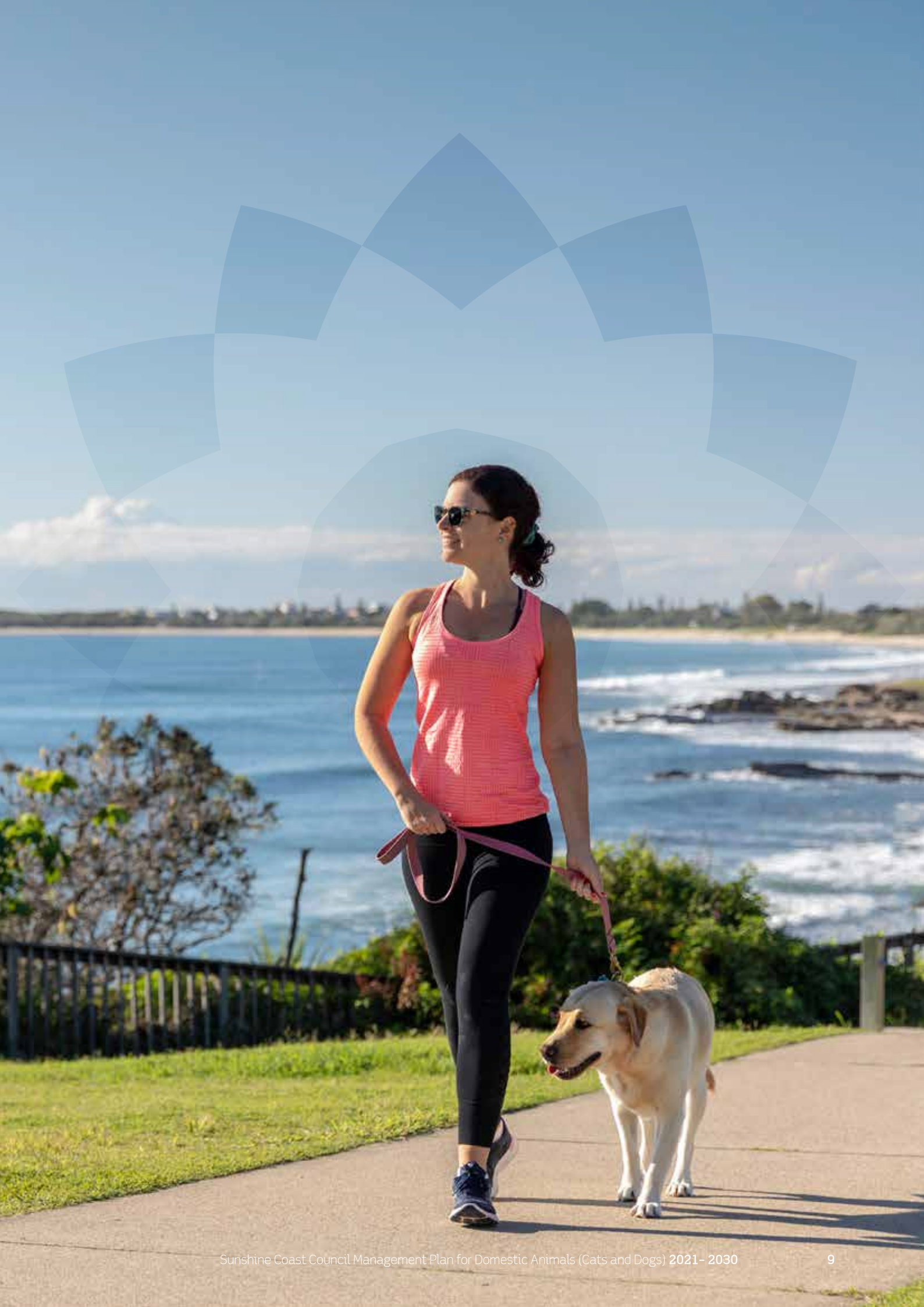
We believe that education is one of our highest priorities in relation to animal management – for both pet owners and non-pet owners.

When people are informed of their rights and responsibilities, have ease of access to information and services, they are empowered to make good decisions resulting in voluntary compliance with regulations. This actively contributes to a harmonious community.



<sup>4</sup> SA Govt – Dog and Cat Board







# ABOUT THE SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DOMESTIC ANIMALS (CATS AND DOGS) 2021-2030

Animal management is more than just regulation and enforcement. We believe that effective animal management contributes to the overall health and wellbeing of the community as a whole. Our goal of harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places was informed by our commitment to achieving the following three outcomes by 2030.

These outcomes being:

- Educated Informed People
- Happy Healthy Pets
- Safe Inclusive Places

## PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The *Sunshine Coast Council Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs) 2021-2030* replaces the *Sunshine Coast Council Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020*.

The Plan allows council to address key challenges and opportunities when determining operational planning and budgets for the immediate and future years.

The Plan provides the framework for how council will work with the community to achieve harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places through to 2030.



The purpose of the Plan is to:

- empower responsible pet ownership through education
- provide service excellence in animal management
- ensure places and spaces are safe, sustainable, accessible and environmentally friendly
- build capacity for council and the community to work together
- guide and strengthen partnerships with 4PAWS, SCARS and the RSPCA
- cultivate creative and innovative approaches and technologies that support harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places.

The Plan provides the direction Council's animal management services and initiatives will follow over the next 10 years and our approach to measuring and reporting on our progress.

We recognise that our communities are always growing and changing, as such the Plan allows council to be responsive to the evolving needs and expectations of our community.

‘Co-existing within my community and allowing my pet to live a great life, having a range of areas to exercise, while not impacting on anyone around other than in a positive way,’ survey respondent.

## HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

Our goal of harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places was developed with the safety, health and wellbeing of our community in mind. The Plan was developed through community engagement and stakeholder feedback.

As part of the process for developing the Plan, we invited the community, both pet owners and non-pet owners, to have their say on what responsible pet ownership means to them, with a focus on the next 10 years. Their feedback has reinforced our goal for harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places.

We connected with our community through:

- Key pet partners
- Pop-up stalls
- Social media
- Online and face-to-face surveys
- Community health groups
- Multi-cultural and key sector networks.

‘Making sure my pet has adequate shelter, food and water, can be outside safely and does not disturb native wildlife or other people,’ survey respondent.

### OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US THEY VALUE:

We heard about the importance of educating the community to encourage responsible pet ownership and how creating awareness can assist in reducing nuisance animal behaviour. We also heard how residents value our environment (flora and fauna) and the importance of creating a place we can share together as a means of fulfillment, to enjoy the beautiful Sunshine Coast region.

We listened to views on high-density living and the increasing volume of pets, the need for compliance to be achieved in all off-leash and on-leash areas and the need to feel safe within our community.

The community feedback has helped us to identify our objectives and to prioritise what is important.



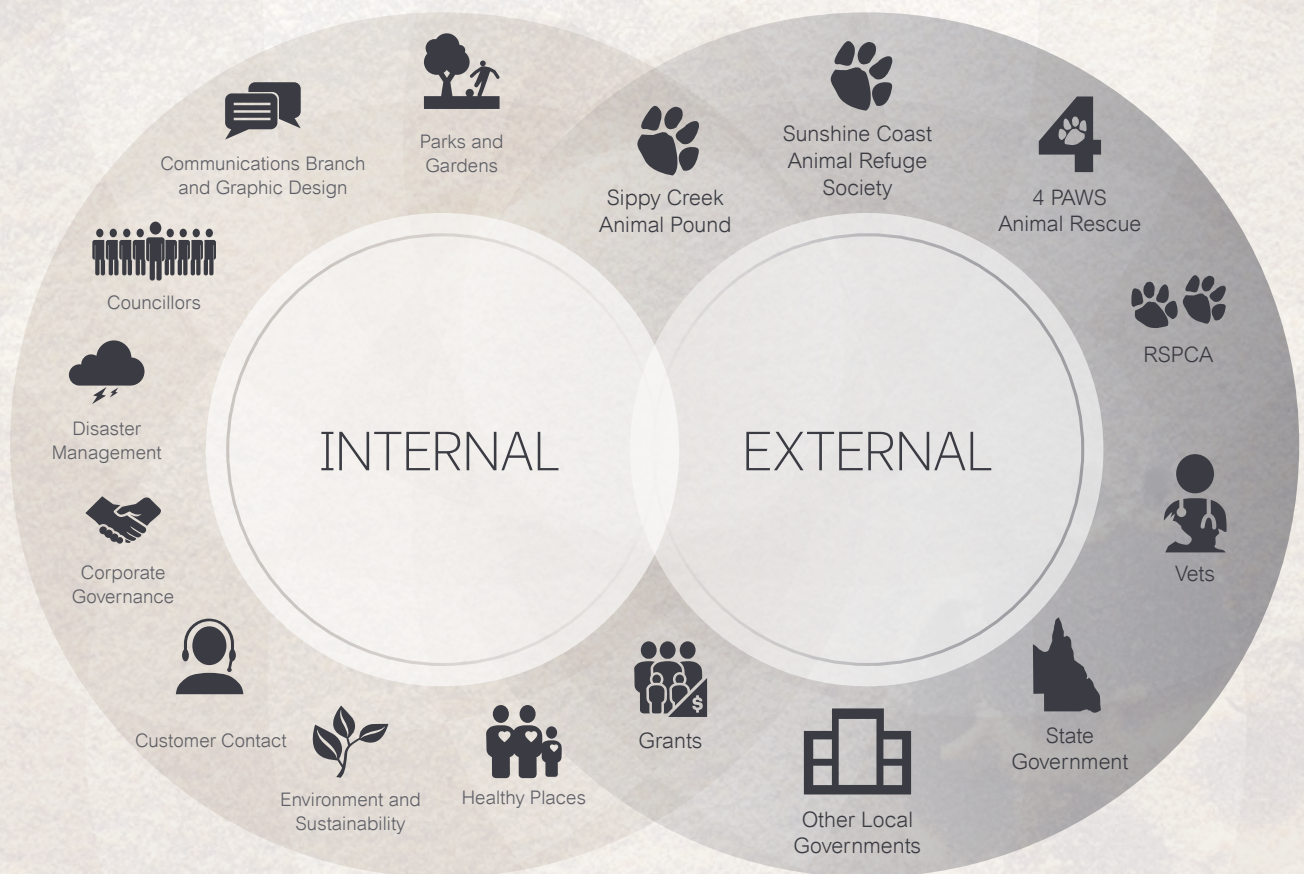
## THE SUNSHINE COAST COUNCIL MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR DOMESTIC ANIMALS (CATS AND DOGS) 2021-2030: HARMONIOUS CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN PEOPLE, PETS AND PLACES

The Plan provides the strategic direction for our animal management services and initiatives over the next ten years and contributes to council's vision of being Healthy. Smart. Creative. It will be guided by the following three outcomes:



## OUR KEY PARTNERSHIPS

Harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places can best be achieved when our partnerships are maximised. When assets and resources are shared, information and services can be more effective and widespread helping to deliver better value to our community. Increased engagement and collaboration with our partners ensures council is well positioned to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.



The successful delivery of the Plan relies on our strong partnerships and collaborations. Increased engagement and collaboration with our rehoming partners ensures Council is well positioned to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

There are a number of existing partnerships between council and community organisations with regards to animal management which include:

- SCARS
- 4PAWS
- RSPCA
- Local vets
- Education hubs such as schools and childcare centres

We are committed to working with our partners to support and guide responsible pet ownership, advocate for animal welfare and promote strong messages to 'adopt, don't shop'.

## EDUCATION IS FOR EVERYONE

Education is for everyone. Council is committed to providing our community education opportunities that encourage responsible pet ownership and support the wider community safely and confidently co-exist with pets.

Our relationship with key partners plays a valuable role in enabling us to take a collaborative approach to education and services. By working in partnership, we are able to extend our animal management communications, enhance our programming and initiatives and deliver relevant services and infrastructure.

Our Pet Awareness Program ignites these opportunities to encourage responsible pet ownership within the community.

These programs include:

- PE4K (Pet Education for Kids) program for children 3-5 years
- Smart Paws education program for children 5-12 years
- Education pop-up booths, information booths at various locations regarding animal management
- Local and national events involving the collaboration with key stakeholders
- Community education events, such as free barking seminars and microchipping days to provide services that encourage responsible pet ownership
- The development of council mascots *Sunny* and *Sasha* to be incorporated into the education programs and events to promote responsible pet ownership messages.

We believe teaching children responsible pet ownership and how to stay safe around cats and dogs from a young age, is an invaluable life lesson. Research shows that the majority of a child's learning is done before they start school<sup>5</sup>. Our education programs cater for pre-school aged children through to upper primary. Over the next ten years, we are committed to growing and extending this program to support our next generation of responsible pet owners and support safe interactions with dogs and cats in the community.

Our objective is to build a responsible pet ownership culture from the ground up – empowering and equipping pet owners to be responsible for the benefit of their pet, themselves and the community that live, play and work within our region and those visiting. We want the wider community to know how to safely interact with pets and how to respond to any nuisances or welfare issues that may arise.

<sup>5</sup> We are family – Victorian Government

When a pet is found roaming, council will try to identify and return the pet to its registered home.





## OUR ANIMAL POUND

Our Sunshine Coast Animal Pound, located in Tanawha – cares for surrendered and impounded animals. Council opened the brand new facility in February 2017, replacing the previous 30 year old Animal Pound. Our **primary mission** is to **reunite** identifiable animals with their owners and work with SCARS<sup>1</sup>, 4PAWS<sup>2</sup> and the RSPCA<sup>3</sup> to safely rehome unwanted animals. Placing an animal at the pound is an officer's last resort. Through a number of strategies including our pet awareness programs and microchips initiatives, we have been able to significantly reduce the number of animals that have been impounded.

Our pound has been designed with sustainability as a key feature and is classified as a world-class facility. It can house up to 34 dogs and 38 cats at any one time and also has the provisions to expand to accommodate larger numbers in line with the projected population growth for our region. Poultry and livestock can also be accommodated at the animal pound as required.

- No adult is home or unable to attend
- An owner cannot be identified through microchipping or registration information
- An owner cannot be contacted.

Registered and microchipped animals whose details are up to date allow them to be reunited with their family as quickly and easily as possible.

### LOST PETS

Council understands that a lost pet is a difficult and emotional situation for both pet and owner. We care about our community's pets and their health and wellbeing. Our first priority is ensuring that the pet and the community are safe.

Our Animal Management Officers and the team at the pound, work tirelessly to reunite pets with their owners. Officers use all available resources such as microchip details, registration details and databases to reunite pets with their owners. Placing an animal at the pound is an officer's last resort.

When a pet is found roaming, council will try to identify and return the pet to its registered home. The pet will **only** be taken to the Animal Pound if:

<sup>1</sup> Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge; <sup>2</sup> 4 Paws Animal Rescue Inc Sunshine Coast;  
<sup>3</sup> Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

### ANIMAL WELFARE

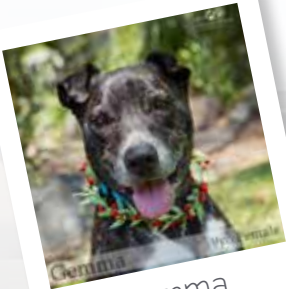
The *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* delegates power to the RSPCA to investigate and manage all animal welfare matters. We are committed to advocate for animal welfare. The animal pound works with the local RSPCA at times in relation to welfare complaints.

### REHOMING ANIMALS

Through strong partnerships with SCARS, 4PAWS and the RSPCA we are committed to advocating for the rehoming of abandoned and unclaimed pets. Through our education program, Council advocates the 'adopt, not shop' message. Our education program also focusses on ensuring pet owners choose appropriate breeds for their circumstances.

## STORIES FROM THE POUND

Below are some wonderful stories of animals that have been reunited or successfully rehomed. Our partnerships with SCARS, 4PAWS and RSPCA have made it possible for surrendered animals to be adopted.



Gemma

### NEW HOME FOR SURRENDERED DOG

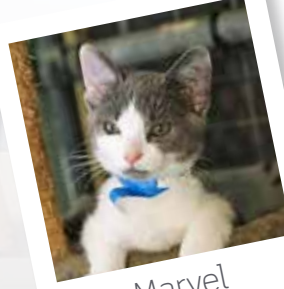
Ten year-old female staffy-cross was in the pound with major health issues. SCARS quickly took her in, removed a life-threatening tumour and she was placed in foster care. The foster carers fell in love and adopted her. Gemma now gets to have the retirement she deserves, in a loving forever home.



Peter (Rabbit)

### NEW HOME FOR UNCLAIMED DOG

A young wolf hound-cross was left unclaimed in the pound. SCARS helped by looking after the young dog and identified him as a potential assistance dog. Compass Inc Assistance Dogs was contacted and Peter is currently doing exceptionally well in his training.



Marvel

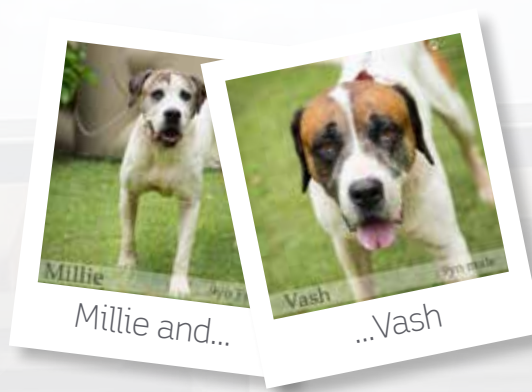
### NEW HOME FOR UNCLAIMED CAT

Marvel had an unfortunate beginning. An officer from the pound found him in a paper bag and took him straight to SCARS for assistance. He was only a few days old, was bottle fed and cared for around the clock. He now lives a loving life with his new adopted family.

### CAT REUNITED AFTER TWO YEARS

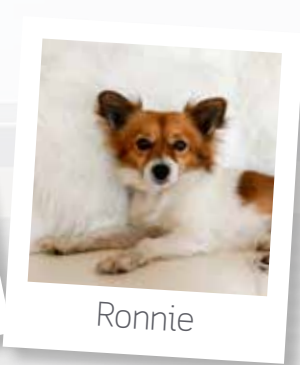
Council received a report of a cat being caught in a trap in Maroochydore. As it was microchipped and we were able to contact the owners, who advised that their cat had been missing for two years and they were now living in Mackay. They were absolutely overjoyed and were able to have the cat flown to Mackay on the same day it was impounded.

‘Introducing our latest foster Tequila. This beautiful girl was a bit tentative at first but soon enjoyed the drive. She is settled in now and has the most beautiful nature as well. Absolutely the easiest foster we have had the pleasure to care for.’



**NEW HOME FOR SURRENDERED DOGS**

Both mastiffs came to the pound at nine years old with multiple health issues. SCARS was able to help these gentle giants by attending to their health quickly and rehoming them together to a lovely couple.



**NEW HOME FOR SURRENDERED DOG**

Ronnie, a Papillion-cross who at the age of six was surrendered to the pound in 2016. Ronnie was having seizures and required veterinary treatment and investigation into further health issues. The pound worked with 4PAWS to relocate this young dog. He is now stable on medication and in a permanent care home.

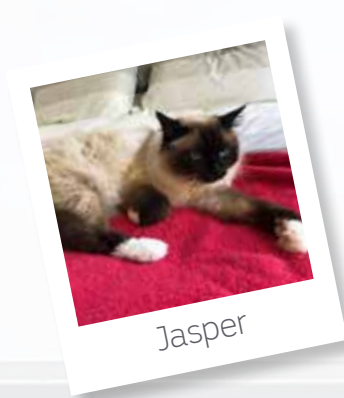


**NEW HOME FOR SURRENDERED DOG**

This is Tequila. She was surrendered to the pound by her owner due to multiple behaviour issues. The pound initially struggled to rehome her due to her fearful temperament so we asked QSAR (Qld Staffy and Am Staff Rescue) who are affiliated with 4PAWS for help. They took a chance on her and she was put in foster care. The foster carer fell in love with her so much that they adopted her.

**CAT REUNITED AFTER SIX MONTHS**

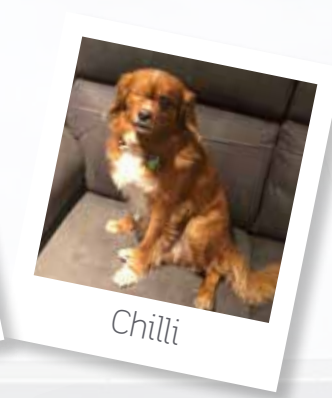
A cat owner moved to a new address and in the process, his cat went missing. He continued to pay the registration renewal and updated the microchip details. Six months later, a cat was brought into the pound. A microchip was detected and the owner contacted. Owner and cat were reunited on that same day, both very happy.



Jasper

### NEW HOME FOR SURRENDERED CAT

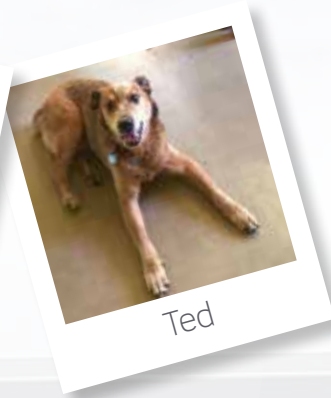
Jasper, a beautiful young cat surrendered to the pound. He initially was very unwell and tested positive for an auto immune disease. He soon became 4PAWS permanent resident in care with a lovely senior couple. Now living his best life by their side.



Chilli

### NEW HOME FOR UNCLAIMED DOG

Chilli, a one-eyed Cavalier cross was not collected by their owners at the pound. Julie from 4PAWS was happy to assist council with his rehoming and he was quickly placed with a foster family. While this family did not suit Chilli, he was soon adopted by another family within a week who adore him.

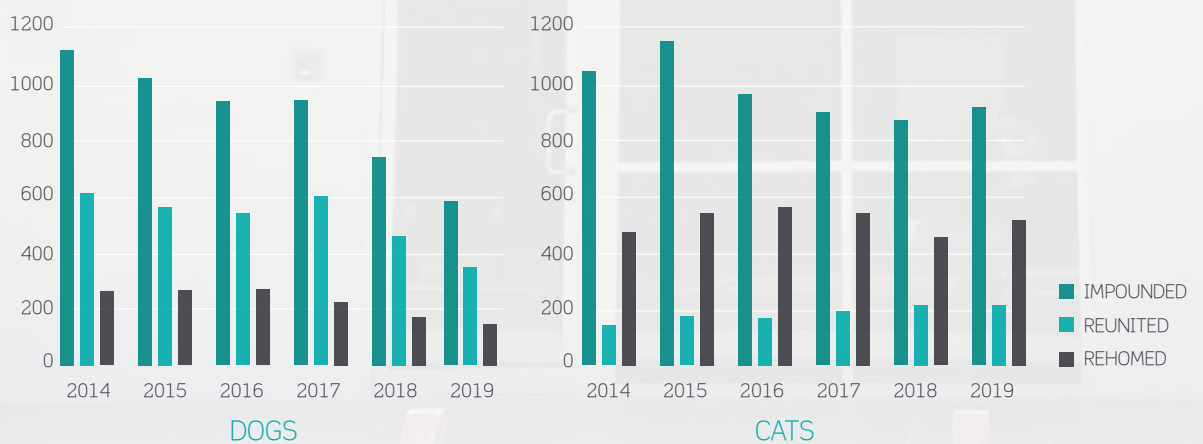


Ted

### NEW HOME FOR SURRENDERED DOG

Ted, a senior cattle-dog cross was surrendered to council due to ill health. Council worked with 4PAWS to see if he could be fostered in a loving home, where he found permanent care and is now enjoying long relaxing days.

### IMPOUNDED, REUNITED AND REHOMED DOGS AND CATS 2014-2019 ON THE SUNSHINE COAST



'He will need medication for the rest of his life and we are thankful that Sunshine Coast Council gave us the opportunity to save him and many other dogs and cats that have needed extra help'. JULIE (4PAWS)



# WHO WE ARE ON THE SUNSHINE COAST



## POPULATION

Projected to **exceed 400,000 by 2031.**

Annual growth rate of **2.2%** (approx. 8300 people per year).

Largest population increase

will be those **aged 40-44 years** more established families.

2021-2041 population figures sourced from Queensland Treasury, Queensland Government population projections, 2018 edition, medium series. [www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Experience-Sunshine-Coast/Statistics-and-Maps/Population-Growth](http://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Experience-Sunshine-Coast/Statistics-and-Maps/Population-Growth).



## TOURISM

**3.5 million** domestic visitors travelled to the Sunshine Coast to holiday in 2018

**19% of dog owners** and

**2% of cat owners** take their pets on holiday

[www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Council/News-Centre/Tourists-flocking-to-Sunshine-Coast-according-to-new-data-090119](http://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Council/News-Centre/Tourists-flocking-to-Sunshine-Coast-according-to-new-data-090119). [www.rspcapetinsurance.org.au/pet-care/guides/pet-travel-guide](http://www.rspcapetinsurance.org.au/pet-care/guides/pet-travel-guide)



## PET OWNERS

In Australia **40% own dogs** and **27% own cats**

Most popular dog breeds are mixed breeds being **Kelpie,**

**Maltese, Jack Russell, Staffordshire, Cattle** and **Labrador retriever**

Most popular cats range in the domestic

**short hair 'moggies'** followed by **purebreds**

[animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au](http://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au)



## MOST POPULATED LOCALITIES

### Dogs

1. Buderim
2. Little Mountain
3. Maroochydore
4. Mountain Creek
5. Nambour

### Cats

1. Buderim
2. Nambour
3. Mountain Creek
4. Maroochydore
5. Sippy Downs



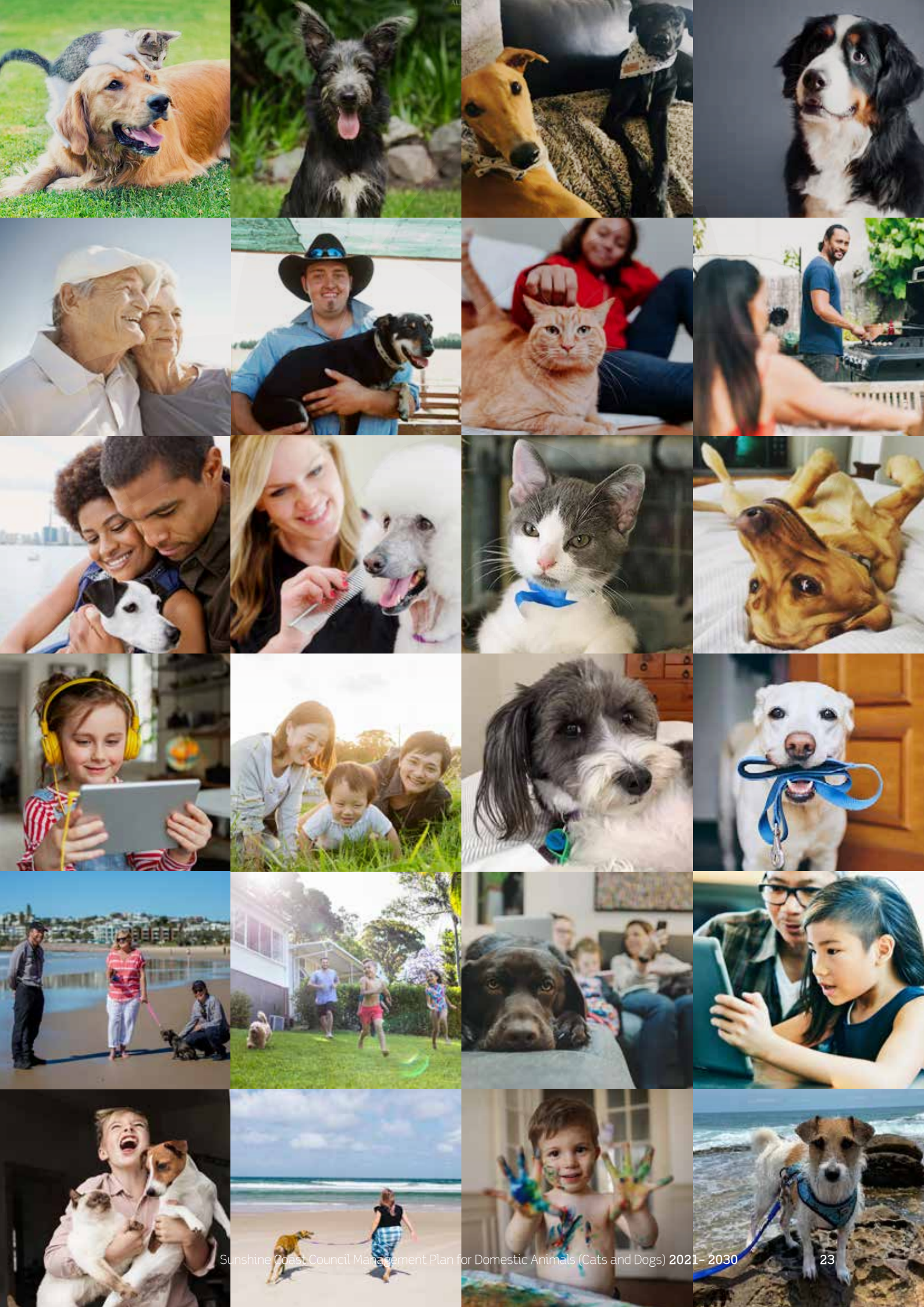
## OPEN SPACE AREAS

**13km** of off leash dog beaches in the Sunshine Coast local government area

**30 dog park exercise areas** 14 are fenced

A number of **specific dog prohibited areas** that relate to:

- ▶ Beaches
- ▶ Parks/reserves
- ▶ Childrens playgrounds/BBQ facility







# OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The role pets play in people's lives is continually evolving and Council is committed to evolving with its community. The Plan's framework, whilst providing the overarching direction for Council's animal management over the next ten years, also allows responsive change reflective of its community's needs and preferences.

We recognise that in order to achieve the goal of this Plan by 2030 and providing service excellence to our community now – we need to understand the opportunities and challenges that emerge over the next ten years.

## YOUR PET, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

There can be serious impacts to people, pets and places when there is a lack of responsible pet ownership. Roaming animals can lead to attacks on people and pets, turn into wild or feral animals, destroy native wildlife and animals and also spread disease.

Biting and aggression is a matter Sunshine Coast Council takes very seriously. An attack on a pet or person can result in serious trauma both physically and psychologically. Council is committed to work with pet owners to ensure effective animal management, voluntary compliance and responsible pet ownership to keep people, pets and places safe for everyone.

Council takes a strong stance in relation to responsible animal ownership with regulation and/or enforcement action undertaken where animals and/or owners are found to have acted contra to the relevant legislation or laws. This approach is applied consistently to dogs and dog owners across the Sunshine Coast, and reflects how seriously council and the community take the obligations imposed with animal ownership.

## POPULATION GROWTH

The Sunshine Coast is a growing community with an increase of almost 8300 residents a year. It is predicted that our population will be over 500,000 people by 2041. Forecasts identify that this growth will come predominantly from people 65 years or older and young families<sup>6</sup>.

Such a significant increase in our population will also result in a marked increase in our cats and dogs population. Using State trend averages, it is estimated that by 2031, there will be approximately 85,000 dogs and 50,000 cats in the region<sup>7</sup>.

Population growth will lead to greater demand on animal management services and community facilities such as microchipping and de-sexing initiatives, dog parks and off leash areas and the animal pound. Increased density in urban areas may also have an impact on the amenity of neighbourhoods due to increased potential for animal nuisances such as barking dogs or roaming cats.



<sup>6</sup> SCC – Population Growth Info Graphics 2016-2026. <sup>7</sup> Queensland Government, Population Projections, 2018 edition.

## ACCESSIBILITY

Careful planning is essential to ensure our community of pet owners and non-pet owners continue to thrive harmoniously. As urban development in our region grows and expands, the result is the potential for high density living combined with smaller lot sizes.

Council's Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017 notes how population growth will result in increased demand and potential conflict for community access to our open space network. The Strategy outline's Council's commitment to effective and considerate planning that allows equitable community access to an open space network that can 'host a wide variety and diverse range of activities' while recognising that it is also a unique and finite resource that requires protection.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Council is committed to appropriately managing the impacts that pets have on our natural environment and wildlife.

There is an increasing demand for access to our open spaces, including foreshores and beaches for both people and pets and only finite open space.

The Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017 outlines how the natural environment and landscapes are 'central to our lifestyle' and 'critical to support our economy and community'.

We have a responsibility to carefully manage the impacts that pets, including roaming and feral animals, can have on our environment and wildlife and threatened species.

Pet waste that is not disposed of responsibly, including improperly disposed bagged waste, has significant impact on the environment and waterways. Council is committed to delivering responsible pet ownership education that focusses on the impact that pets can have on how responsible ownership can contribute to the protection of our environment and wildlife.

Strong partnerships within council and our local community and effective planning will be essential.

## INCLUSIVE PLACES

As an organisation, we are committed to building inclusive places that promote harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places whilst also promoting and protecting the liveability of our region.

As noted in the Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041, 'when a community has opportunities to participate socially and economically, the desired impacts range from economic benefits, social cohesion and community harmony'(Carter, 2015).

We will strive to ensure that our animal management services and initiatives support and appropriately regulate:

**Events** that are culturally significant to the region and attract tourism and that are permitted to allow pets for leisure or support

**Commercial Business** that are compliant with permit conditions regarding pets in open spaces

**Places for everyone** – provision of dog parks, dog off leash areas, on leash only areas, dog prohibited areas.

**Commercial pet facilities** – The Sunshine Coast Council Planning Scheme definition for Animal keeping refers to ‘premises used for boarding, breeding or training of animals. The use may include ancillary, temporary or permanent holding facilities on the same site and ancillary repair servicing of machinery.’ While Council’s Response Services team is committed to managing animal management concerns, all enquiries and complaints related to pet resorts are monitored and actioned by Council’s Development and Compliance department and Environmental Health Officers.

We strive to ensure that there are places that cater for pet owners, for those who enjoy managed pet places and those who do not feel comfortable or are unable to be around pets.

## HOMELESSNESS

Each year the Sunshine Coast is experiencing increasing population growth. And while our median household income levels are improving, the availability of social housing is still low in comparison to population growth. As a result there is evidence of increasing housing stress and homelessness.

For those experiencing homelessness, pet ownership can provide considerable comfort, companionship, safety and security.

We are committed to working with the Department of Housing and Public Works, Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge and the Queensland Police Service to ensure and support responsible pet ownership within this vulnerable community.



## DISASTER MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

In the event of a disaster or emergency, Council will provide animal management support and care to pet owners. Our evacuation centres are designed to temporarily accommodate domestic cats and dogs, while be accessible to their owners during their short stay. Pet owners will continue to remain responsible for their animals while staying at these venues.

Council strongly encourages owners to prepare and be responsible for the safety and welfare of their pet in the event of an emergency or disaster. ‘Get ready Queensland’ provides a Pet Emergency Plan outlining the essential items required to care for pets in an emergency. Further information can be found on Council’s website on our ‘Prepare your Pets’ page.

The Animal Pound is also able to temporarily accommodate pets of owners who are impacted by a disaster or emergency.

## PETS ARE FAMILY AND FRIENDS TOO

Over the past ten years, the relationship between people and pets has been changing. Pets are increasingly becoming more than 'just a pet', they have become family and friend to many owners<sup>8</sup>.

Research indicates that in Australia, one in ten people are lacking social support and one in six people are experiencing emotional loneliness (Relationships Australia, 2018). Companionship was listed as the most common reason for getting a dog (42%) and cat (35%) (Pet Ownership in Australia, 2019).

The significant benefits that a pet brings to the emotional, physical and mental wellbeing of people and community are also being more widely recognised. They have long been used as assistant animals to people with a disability or those managing PTSD. The number of schools and nursing homes that now employ 'pet therapy' as a form of support has also grown in recent years.

Council will continue to work with community organisations, other levels of government and partners to support these initiatives through education and regulation as required.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN ADDING A PET TO YOUR FAMILY

When thinking about getting a pet it's important to do your research before you make a decision. Things to consider include whether the pet is from a reputable breeder and if it is a suitable breed for your family and/or lifestyle. Council encourages owners to consider adopting a pet from a local pet refuge. This supports our local rehoming partners and

helps to save surrendered or abandoned animals. It will also ensure your animal is desexed, registered and microchipped.

In Queensland, if you breed a dog you must be registered as a breeder. Even if your dog has an unplanned litter, or you only breed puppies for family and friends, you are required by the Queensland Government to register as a breeder to be provided with a unique identification number.

## ANIMAL WELFARE ADVOCACY

The Plan addresses animal management which focusses on the health and wellbeing of the community. It is different from animal welfare which focusses on the health and wellbeing of the animal.

Under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*, all animal welfare matters are investigated and managed by the RSPCA.

Council has a strong partnership with the RSPCA and works closely with them to provide support for animal welfare advocacy. We are committed to continuing to strengthen and build our relationships with SCARS, 4PAWS and the RSPCA over the next ten years with a focus on supporting the rehoming of animals through adoption and fostering. Our collaborative approach enables us to provide and support desexing and microchipping incentives within the region.

**Desexing** has many benefits for the welfare of the pet and the community. Desexed pets are generally healthier, less likely to suffer from disease and infection. Desexing commonly reduces behaviour problems

<sup>8</sup> We are family – Victorian Government

such as roaming and aggression, prevents unwanted litters and can extend the life of the pet. Council will continue to provide desexing initiatives and support in collaboration with our partners.

## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Our animal management services and initiatives are driven by our commitment to ensuring the needs of our community are met through service excellence. We will be actively listening to the collective community voice to ensure our services are reflective of the community needs.

Our staff act as a link between the community and Council. They are supported with ongoing training and professional development to ensure they are empowered and equipped to provide excellent customer care and protect and foster harmony between people, pets and places.

## INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

We recognise the importance of having effective channels of communication. We are committed to removing barriers customers may face in accessing information and services and introducing new and innovative solutions and smart technology.

We are committed to a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring our animal management services and initiatives support the needs of the community through creativity and innovation.

The way in which people communicate and interact is rapidly changing. We are committed to investing in innovative systems and technology that improve ease of access to information and services.



Our interactive mobile-friendly website was developed to promote information about where you can exercise your dog off-leash and areas where dogs are prohibited. This information is accessible to all pet owners and non-pet owners and is available at [dogs.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://dogs.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au).

These dog exercise areas are provided by Sunshine Coast Council and are not for the exclusive use of dogs and their owners. A designated beach patrol and monitoring team patrol the Sunshine Coast foreshores, beaches and parks seven days a week to educate and enforce where required. We have a responsibility to ensure our beaches and parks are maintained to attract tourists, dog owners and support a healthy environment. This plan addresses responsible pet ownership through 'your pet, your responsibility' initiatives to encourage pet owners to be responsible for their animals in public. We will continue to explore safe and harmonious integration of pets into the community through new means of communication and technology.



## OUTCOME ONE

### INFORMED EDUCATED PEOPLE

People are the driving force behind the services we provide to our community. We recognise that our community is made up of people who have differing relationships and experiences with pets and animals. We believe that the diverse needs and preferences of the community are to be valued and respected.

We are committed to providing education and access to animal management services and supporting pet owners be compliant with Local Law regulations.

#### WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

*'Expand responsible pet ownership program to reach more of the coastal and hinterland community,'* survey respondent.

We heard that the areas of greatest concern are:

- Knowledge of regulations
- Pet owner and non-pet owner co-existence
- Accountability for the actions of the animal
- The responsibilities of owning a pet

We heard that the areas to focus on are:

- Educating the community on the laws relating to animal management
- Pet awareness programs catered specifically for families and young people
- Responsible cat ownership
- Accessibility to resources for the wider community





‘We are committed to empowering our community through education, and improving accessibility to information and services’.

### OBJECTIVES

- People are informed of their rights, responsibilities and resources available to them
- Enhanced accessibility to information and services through utilisation of smart technology and creative innovations
- Ensure access to resources for all people through the removal of any barriers such as multilingual fact sheets, internet and computer resources through library services.

### OUR COMMITMENT

Council provides education and information to inform and enable the community to:

- Be responsible pet owners
- Safely interact with pets
- Engage and partner with council or other stakeholders in relation to any issues regarding animal or community safety and wellbeing.

Council will explore options for development and utilisation of smart technology and innovative, creative solutions for improved customer service and ease of access.

### HOW WE’LL TRACK OUR PROGRESS

- Increase in the community’s access to online resources
- Continue to explore new ideas and technologies in relation to animal management
- Maintaining a high satisfaction level on education sessions and interactions with Council
- Decrease in the number of complaints received, incidence of attacks and roaming animals.





## OUTCOME TWO

### HAPPY HEALTHY PETS

Happy healthy pets are safe pets. When the needs of a pet are met, the wellbeing of the pet and the community around it is protected. Happy healthy pets are less likely to cause a nuisance or put others safety at risk.

We believe that the benefit that healthy happy pets can bring to people's lives are immense. We are committed to supporting the safe and harmonious integration of pets into our community's daily life and environments.

#### WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

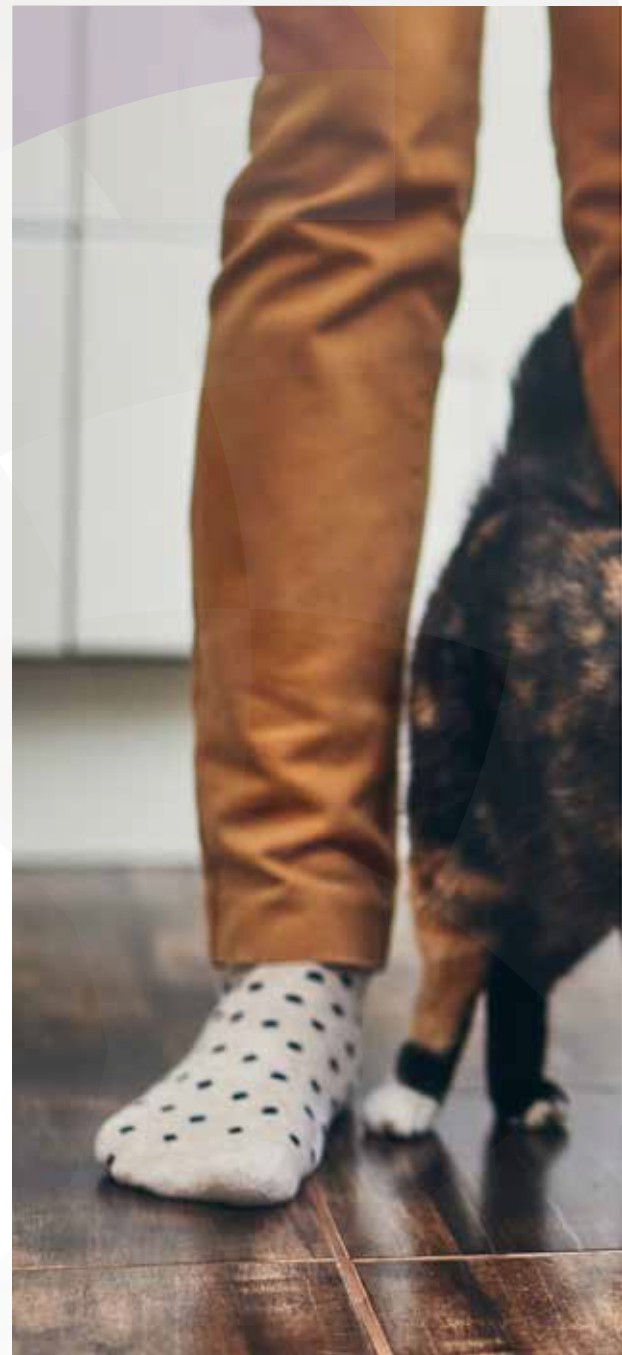
*'Information and awareness on responsible cat ownership, keeping cats indoors or building enclosures,'* survey respondent.

We heard that the areas of greatest concern are:

- Registration, microchipping and control of cats
- Barking dogs in residential areas, including apartment blocks
- Managing dog behaviour on the beaches and footpaths
- Dog waste being left behind

We heard that the areas to focus on are:

- Management of dogs in public
- Responsible cat ownership
- Education information sessions
- Initiatives with pet partners focusing on desexing and pet rehoming







‘We are committed to guiding and supporting pet owners to ensure a harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places’.

### OBJECTIVES

- Happy Healthy Pets are safe pets.
- Build strong partnerships to support animal welfare advocacy.
- Actively seek new ways to facilitate the safe integration of pets into shared spaces.
- Enhance education and awareness of responsible pet ownership and its benefits.

### OUR COMMITMENT

- Community safety is a priority for Council. Council will work with pet owners to ensure the safety and amenity of the broader community is maintained.
- Collaborative, proactive and enduring partnerships with the community and other government agencies to support responsible animal management.

### HOW WE’LL TRACK OUR PROGRESS

- Decrease in the number of complaints received, incidence of attacks, roaming animals.
- Increase in number of pets reunited with owners.
- Successful rehoming of all suitable animal with rehoming partners.
- Increase in the number of cats and dogs desexed as recorded on registration details.





## OUTCOME THREE

### SAFE INCLUSIVE PLACES

The relationship people have with pets is changing. For many people, they are not just a pet to enjoy at home, they have become friend and family. They participate in everyday activities within the community – walks on the beach, enjoying a visit to the local café, play dates in the park, festivals and events.

We are committed to improving the liveability of our region, providing safe and accessible places that everyone can enjoy. Places that foster connectedness to people and place, health and wellbeing, whilst maintaining and preserving our natural environment and wildlife for future generations.

#### WHAT OUR COMMUNITY TOLD US

*'Everyone has the right to feel safe when visiting shared public spaces, eg beaches, parks,'* survey respondent.

We heard that the areas of greatest concern are:

- Dog waste not being collected by owners on walkways and beaches
- The effective and safe management of pets in public spaces
- Roaming pets and their potential impact on the ecosystem
- Safe communities

We heard that the areas to focus on are:

- Balancing the community need for public spaces that are available for animal exercise and spaces that are pet free
- Education information sessions
- Beach patrol and monitoring programs
- Ensuring public spaces are accessible, safe and environmentally protected





‘We are committed to providing and maintaining services and infrastructure that supports responsible pet ownership and contributes to safe, strong, inclusive and harmonious communities’

#### OBJECTIVES

- Safe and harmonious integration of pets into community.
- Infrastructure supports needs of a growing community.
- Natural environment and wildlife are respected and protected.

#### OUR COMMITMENT

- Council’s role is to support the community, ensuring safety and enforcing regulation where necessary.
- We are committed to supporting open public places that are safe and accessible with clear signage to ensure harmonious usage where appropriate which are:
  - inclusive of community needs
  - protect the natural environment and wildlife
  - is responsive to changes in the local community needs.

#### HOW WE’LL TRACK OUR PROGRESS

- Decrease in the number of complaints received, incidence of attack and roaming animals.
- Number of safe and inclusive places remains proportionate to the population and level of pet ownership.
- Increased number of foreshore patrols and interactions with the community



# LEGISLATION AND ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*, is the primary legislative document that directs our animal management services. The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* provides a mechanism for Council to address domestic animal related matters and concerns. The legislation authorises Council to respond to or act on complaints/incidences, enforce compliance and collect revenue through fee-based services such as registration, to be expended in a manner that contributes to the promotion and encouragement of responsible pet ownership.

The Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011 and subsequent Sunshine Coast Regional Council Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011 allow Council to implement policy, guidelines and procedures regarding animal management within the local government controlled area.

The *Sunshine Coast Compliance and Enforcement Policy* aligns with the Corporate Plan's goal of service excellence and an outstanding organisation. The policy advocates for voluntary compliance with the law and articulates how Council will approach this. The Plan supports this policy position with a strong focus on education, engagement and partnership.

The Plan is applied in accordance with the following additional legislation and documents:

## COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

- *Customs Act 1901*
- Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code

## STATE GOVERNMENT

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*
- *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*
- *Biosecurity Act 2014*
- *Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*
- *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011
- Sunshine Coast Regional Council Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011
- Sunshine Coast Regional Council Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011

The Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme 2014, Sunshine Coast Council Local Government Area Biosecurity Plan 2017 and the Open Space Landscape Infrastructure Manual further provide a mechanism to recognise and promote animal management.



# HOW COUNCIL WORKS TOGETHER

Sunshine Coast Council’s vision is to be Australia’s most sustainable region.  
Healthy. Smart. Creative.



## A STRONG COMMUNITY

Together we thrive – in all our communities, people are included, treated with respect and opportunities are available to all.



## A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Maintaining and enhancing the region’s natural assets, liveability and environmental credentials.



## A SMART ECONOMY

A prosperous, high-value economy of choice for business, investment and employment.



## SERVICE EXCELLENCE

Positive experiences for our customers, great services to our community.

The Plan aligns with the Corporate Plan’s directive for all Council services to deliver **SERVICE EXCELLENCE** through:



Respecting and valuing our customers



Flexible and customised solutions for our customers



Regular and relevant engagement with our community



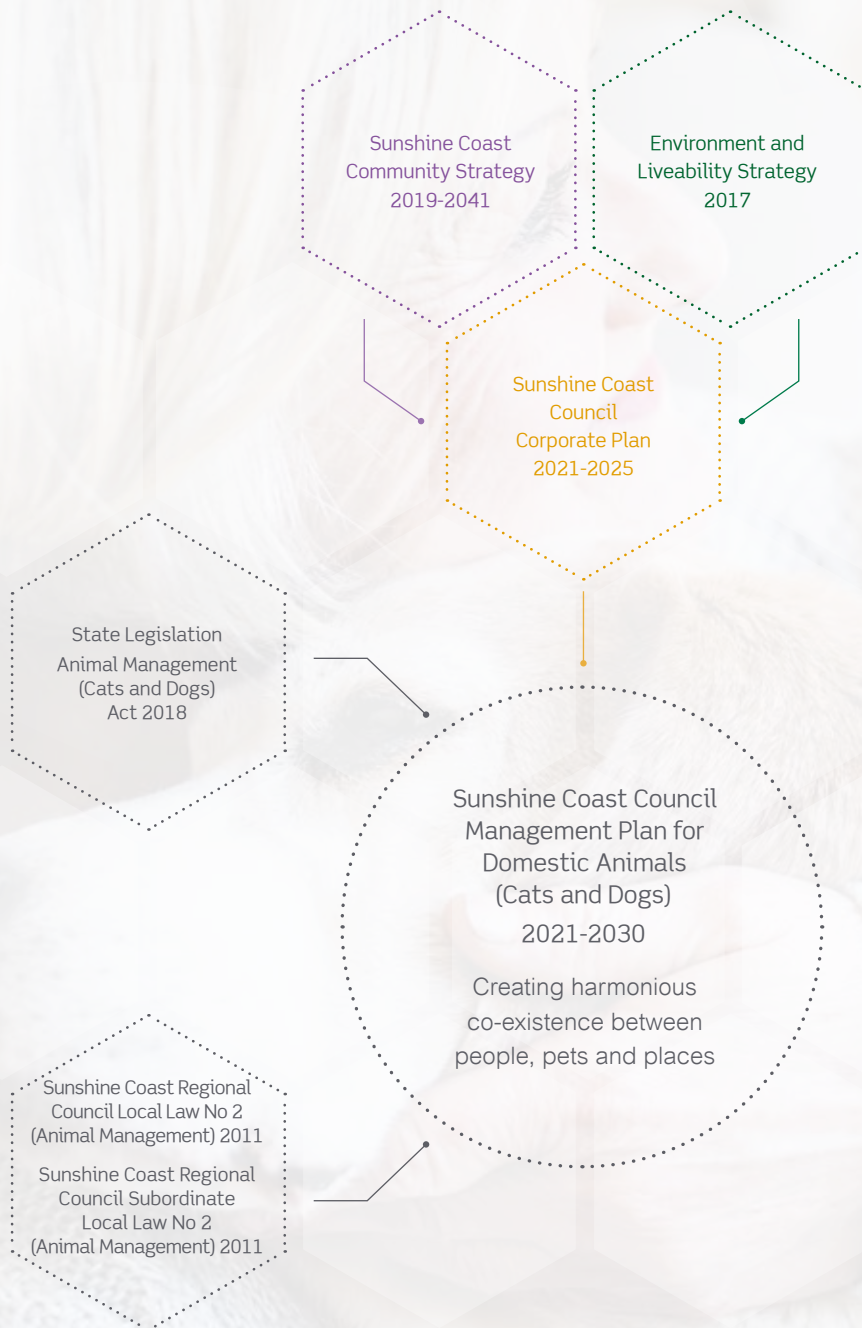
Service quality assessed by our performance and value to customers



Assets meet endorsed standards for sustainable service delivery.

The Corporate Plan outlines the strategic direction for Council for the next five years and guides Council’s delivery of animal management services.

## HOW THE PLAN ALIGNS WITH OTHER COUNCIL STRATEGIES







The other key strategies and policy that inform the Plan include the *Sunshine Coast Community Strategy 2019-2041* and the *Sunshine Coast Environment and Liveability Strategy 2017*.

The **Community Strategy** provides a long-term strategic pathway for how our community will become strong, healthy, smart, connected and inclusive where – together we thrive.

The Plan supports the implementation of this strategic direction by providing services, infrastructure and places that are respectful of the natural environment and wildlife, inclusive of needs and accessible.

The **Environment and Liveability Strategy** provides a strategic pathway to protect and maintain a healthy, liveable environment for our community and future generations. *The Management Plan for Domestic Animals (Cats and Dogs) 2021-2030* celebrates our passion for an active lifestyle and connection with the outdoors. The Plan ensures 1) the provision of places and infrastructure that are reflective and respectful of pet owners and the wider community's needs and preferences, 2) ensures equitable and inclusive access to places and infrastructure and 3) promotes and protects our region's natural assets and wildlife.

## NEXT STEPS

The delivery of the goal and objectives set out in The *Plan* will be supported through the implementation of the key priorities, timeframes and potential funding. The action plan will identify key internal and external partners who will contribute in delivering objectives outlined within the Plan.

## MEASURE AND EVALUATE

The action plan provides outcome measures that contribute to achieving harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places. A number of supporting indicators will be developed to achieve the targets, goals and deliverables.

This approach ensures that the outcomes align with the long-term goal and objectives outlined within the Plan and enables progress to be monitored and evaluated. Council is committed to service excellence in animal management and will undertake comprehensive data collection and assessment annually. Annual reviews of operational activities will allow for regular and meaningful reporting and action plan improvement. Long term objectives will be reviewed over the life of the Plan.

## GLOSSARY

CAT	An animal of the species <i>Felis catus</i> , or domestic cat ( <i>Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 (QLD) s. 11 (Austl.)</i> ).
COMPLIANCE	An agency, corporation or person meeting or taking steps to comply with relevant laws and regulations (Sunshine Coast Council 2009).
DESEXING	To castrate or spay an animal, a permanent procedure that includes the removal of the dog or cats uterus and ovaries.
DOG	An animal of the species <i>Canis lupus familiaris</i> , or domestic dog ( <i>Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 (QLD) s. 52 (Austl.)</i> ).
ENFORCEMENT	A range of procedures and actions taken by council to ensure that a person or organisation complies with their statutory obligations (Sunshine Coast Council 2009).
ENVIRONMENTAL HARM	An adverse effect, or potential adverse effect (whether temporary or permanent and of whatever magnitude, duration or frequency) on an environmental value including environmental nuisance (Sunshine Coast Council 2009).
4PAWS	An animal rescue that provides refuge for homeless dogs and cats on the sunshine coast in Queensland and beyond.
IMPOUND	To hold an animal in a pound or enclosure.
LITTERS	A litter is the live birth of multiple offspring at one time in animals from the same mother and usually from one set of parents.
MICROCHIP	A permanent method of electronic identification.
PROSECUTION	The institution and conduct of legal proceedings against a person, organisation or corporation, as defined in Corporations Law for alleged unlawful activity (Sunshine Coast Council 2009).
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder is a particular set of reactions that can develop in people who have been through a traumatic event which threatened their life of safety, or that of others around them.
RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP	Responsible pet ownership involves more than caring for the health, welfare and safety of one's cat or dog. Animal owners are civilly and legally liable for managing their pet in such a way that ensures their animal is compliant with all relevant laws, is well behaved and does not create a nuisance, whether in terms of an impact on the community or the environment, and does not endanger others.
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
SCARS	Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge Society that provides temporary refuge and find new homes for abandoned, abused, stray and unwanted dogs and cat.

## REFERENCES

- Beyond Blue (2020). What is PTSD, <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/anxiety/types-of-anxiety/ptsd>
- Carter, 2016. Benefits to society of an inclusive societies approach, GSDRC, <https://gsdro.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/HDQ1232.pdf>
- Cat and Dog Board – Government of South Australia, 2020. What is animal management? <http://www.dogandcatboard.com.au/what-is-animal-management>
- SCC (Sunshine Coast Council), 2018. Population Growth Infographic, Sunshine Coast 2016-2026. <https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Experience-Sunshine-Coast/Statistics-and-Maps/Population-Growth>
- Victorian Government (2019). Responsible Pet Ownership for Children, <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/community-and-education/responsible-pet-ownership-for-children>
- 2021-2041 population figures sourced from Queensland Treasury, Queensland Government population projections, 2018 edition, medium series <https://www.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/Council/News-Centre/Tourists-flocking-to-Sunshine-Coast-according-to-new-data-090119>
- <https://www.rspcapetinsurance.org.au/pet-care/guides/pet-travel-guide>
- Pet Ownership in Australia 2016 – [animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au](http://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au) <https://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au>
- <https://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au/2019/10/pets-in-australia-a-national-survey-of-pets-and-people/>
- <http://www.qdbr.daf.qld.gov.au>





**Sunshine Coast**  
COUNCIL

Our region.  
**Healthy. Smart. Creative.**

[sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](http://sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

[mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)

T 07 5475 7272

Locked Bag 72 Sunshine Coast Mail Centre Qld 4560

[f @sunshinecoastcouncil](#) [t @councilscc](#) [i @sunshinecoastcouncil](#)