



DRAFT Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020



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Disclaimer

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Contents

Executive summary	4
1 Introduction	5
1.1 What is animal management?.....	5
1.2 Purpose	5
1.3 Objectives	6
1.4 Sunshine Coast – the region's cats and dogs in context	6
1.5 The role of Local Government in Animal Management.....	9
1.6 Managing customer requests	9
2 Strategic framework.....	11
2.1 Guiding principles	11
2.2 Action Plan	12
3 Conclusion	17
4 Definitions	18
5 References.....	20
Appendix One – Density of registered dogs by suburb.....	21
Appendix Two – Density of registered cats by suburb.....	22
Appendix Three – Legislative and policy context	23
Appendix Four – Community Education Resource.....	25
Owning a cat or dog – the social benefits	26
Responsible pet ownership.....	27
Selecting the right pet for you.....	27
Registration, desexing and microchipping for cats and dogs	28
Containment of cats and dogs.....	30
Managing dogs	30
Managing Cats.....	37
Lost and found pets.....	38
Pets in emergencies.....	38
Unable to keep a pet.....	39
Education, initiatives and services.....	39
Pound operations	40

Executive summary

Council understands that pets are an important part of people's lives and contribute to enhanced wellbeing and the provision of companionship in many homes and families. In Queensland, 40% of households own a dog, whilst almost a third of households own a cat¹.

The Sunshine Coast boasts a strong cat and dog population, which is due to increase in line with urban development and population growth. Sunshine Coast Council is committed to educating the community about their obligations as responsible pet owners, so that animals and community can coexist harmoniously.

The Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 acts as a tool for promoting and enhancing responsible pet ownership, whilst informing the community about council's role and future priorities in animal management.

The objectives of the Strategy are to:

- enhance education and awareness around responsible pet ownership and its benefits
- ensure pets in the community are appropriately controlled and contained
- improve the uptake of animal identification and reuniting of pets with their owners
- provide services and infrastructure in line with population growth and animal trends.

The development of a Domestic Animal Management Strategy for the Sunshine Coast region is specifically directed by the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2014-2019*, to deliver the objectives of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and council local laws.

The Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 endorses the vision of 'your pet, your responsibility', signifying that keeping a cat or dog is a considerable and often long-term commitment and responsibility both socially and economically.

Cat and dog numbers on the Sunshine Coast will continue to increase with population growth. This means that there will be growing demand on animal management services and infrastructure. In order to provide a sustainable level of service into the future, the advancement of responsible pet ownership performance is fundamental.

Council, its affiliates and most importantly, the community will need to work together in progressing the employment of responsible pet ownership practices and associated key outcomes, which when implemented effectively, ultimately lead to enhanced community wellbeing for all.

The strategy includes a vision, guiding principles and priority outcomes to guide the intent, direction and actions in the coordination of animal management for the Sunshine Coast region over the next six years.

¹ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 18.

1 Introduction

Sunshine Coast Council is committed to educating the community about responsible pet ownership.

Council understands that pets are an important part of people's lives and contribute to enhanced wellbeing and the provision of companionship in many homes and families. In Queensland, 40% of households own a dog, whilst almost a third of households own a cat². Pets require affection, shelter, food and maintenance to lead happy and healthy lives. Keeping a pet is a considerable and often long-term commitment and responsibility both socially and economically.

The Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 assists in outlining the requirements that exist for keeping a cat or dog, to enhance the wellbeing and successful integration of animals and community. See [Appendix Four – Community Education Resource](#).

1.1 What is animal management?

Animal management centres on the control and regulation of domestic animals, i.e. cats and dogs. Animal management is a council role and service that aims to:

- minimise risk to community health, safety and amenity
- reduce environmental harm or environmental nuisance
- support animal owners to keep their animals in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of the community
- promote all facets of responsible pet ownership.

Council achieves this by:

- raising public awareness
- controlling and enforcing regulation
- providing required infrastructure.

Animal management is firmly governed by legislation at both a state and local level.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of the Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 is to act as a tool for promoting and enhancing responsible pet ownership. It is intended to help animal owners understand their responsibilities whilst informing the community about council's role and future priorities.

The strategy investigates and outlines governing legislation and council's response in the planning and delivery of animal management, and subsequently provides an approach to further promote and encourage responsible pet ownership across the region.

The strategy considers:

- the legislative and policy context which guides council's response to, and the community's obligations in, animal management
- how council conducts its business and handles requests or complaints relating to animal management operations and planning
- what council currently does and what it needs to do in the future to enhance operations and further support responsible pet ownership.

² Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 18.

The strategy includes a vision, guiding principles and priority outcomes to guide the intent, direction and actions in the coordination of animal management for the Sunshine Coast region.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of the Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy are to:

- enhance education and awareness around responsible pet ownership and its benefits
- ensure pets in the community are appropriately controlled and contained
- improve the uptake of animal identification and reuniting of pets with their owners
- provide services and infrastructure in line with population growth and animal trends.

1.4 Sunshine Coast – the region’s cats and dogs in context

The Sunshine Coast Council area is a rapidly growing residential and tourist area, with substantial rural, rural-residential and parkland areas. The region boasts a strong cat and dog population, which is due to increase in line with urban development and population growth. **Note:** The following figures are only applicable to the Sunshine Coast Council area and are exclusive of Noosa data.

1.4.1 Cat and dog registration statistics

The official estimated resident population of the Sunshine Coast as at 2013 was 278,202 persons, as released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics³. When compared to the residential population, the number of registered cats and dogs equate to over 16% of this figure.

Table 1: Cat and dog registration key statistics (as at June 2014)

Sunshine Coast Council	2013/14
Registered dogs	37,565
Registered cats	6,854
Regulated dogs	55
TOTAL	44,504
As at April 2014:	
• 87% of all registered dogs were desexed, and 72% microchipped	
• 93% of all registered cats were desexed, and 75% microchipped.	

Using State trend averages of 20 dogs and 12 cats per 100 people, it is estimated that the actual population of cats and dogs, taking into account those that are not registered, would more closely amount to approximately 53,000 dogs and almost 32,000 cats⁴. This means that three quarters of the estimated total dogs on the Sunshine Coast are registered, in comparison to only one quarter of the estimated total cats being registered.

Across the Sunshine Coast region, there are clearly identifiable 'hotspots' in registered animal densities. The areas with the highest rate of registered dogs and cats include Buderim, Little Mountain, Nambour and Maroochydore. See [Appendix One: Density of registered dogs by suburb](#) and [Appendix Two: Density of registered cats by suburb](#).

Data also indicates that the high rate of desexing and microchipping has remained relatively steady for registered cats and dogs over the past three years.

As is common with population growth, the number of registered animals is consistently rising.

³ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Regional Population Growth, Australia 2012-2013*, and Sunshine Coast Community Profile.

⁴ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 19.

1.4.2 Impounded cat and dog statistics

The following outlines the impounding statistics of cats and dogs over the past three years.

Table 2: Cat and dog impound key statistics (as at June 2014)

Sunshine Coast Council	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Number of dogs impounded	1,100	973	913
Number of cats impounded	409	480	402
Reason for impound			
Percentage impounded for roaming	84%	82%	94%
Percentage surrendered by owner	12%	12%	5%
Outcome of impound			
Percentage returned to owner	42%	40%	43%
Percentage rehomed	41%	42%	31%
Percentage euthanised	15%	18%	21%

Dogs are more likely to be impounded than cats, with roaming being the significant attributor of the reason for impoundment.

Over half of the dogs impounded are returned to their owner. There are significantly less cats returned home in comparison to dogs.

Table 3: Cat and dog impounds returned to owner (as at June 2014)

Sunshine Coast Council	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Percentage of cats returned to owner	12%	15%	17%
Percentage of dogs returned to owner	54%	53%	56%

Cats are often not identifiable through either registration or microchipping, or are never claimed.

Council can play a role in trying to reduce the number of impounded cats and dogs, and increase the number of cats and dogs returned home by enhancing education and initiatives around microchipping, registration and appropriate containment enclosures.

1.4.3 Cat and dog customer request statistics

Over the past three years, council has received over 11,000 requests regarding the management of cats and dogs in relation to the following.

Table 4: Cat and dog customer request statistics (as at June 2014)

Sunshine Coast Council	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Dogs			
Roaming nuisance	1,105	1,384	1,358
Noise nuisance	1,475	1,459	1,689
Dog attack – on an animal	362	224	316
Dog attack – on a person	139	125	88
TOTAL	3,081	3,192	3,451
Cats			
Roaming nuisance	152	491	427
Noise nuisance	4	82	74
Cat attack – on an animal	5	58	60

Cat attack – on a person	2	15	11
TOTAL	163	646	572
GRAND TOTAL	3,244	3,838	4,023

For dogs, noise nuisances are consistently the most common type of customer request reported. Roaming nuisances are the main cause of report for cats, and the second most common type of report for dogs.

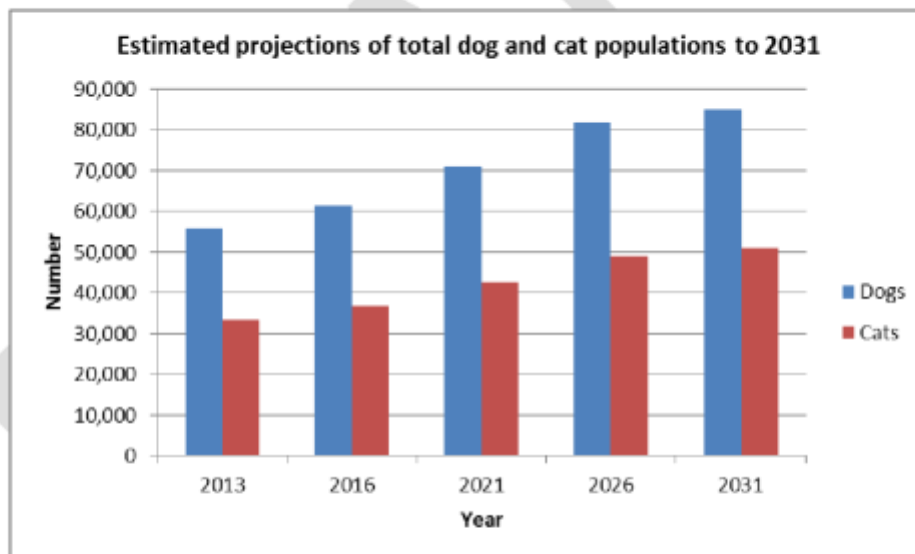
The areas of registration, microchipping, desexing and mitigation of nuisance behaviours are fundamental in the advancement of responsible pet ownership performance. It is important for council and its affiliates to focus operational efforts towards these priorities to progress key outcomes in the employment of responsible pet ownership.

1.4.4 Growth considerations

Population forecasts indicate that by 2021, the estimated population of the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area will be approximately 350,000 people. By 2031, this is estimated to increase to approximately 425,000 people⁵.

Using State trend averages, the following forecast estimated dog and cat population figures can be aligned to projected estimated population growth for the Sunshine Coast Local Government Area.

Graph 1: Estimated projections of total dog and cat populations up to 2031



By 2031, it is estimated that there will be a total 85,000 dogs and 50,000 cats within the Sunshine Coast Council region.

Cat and dog numbers on the Sunshine Coast will continue to increase with population growth. This means that there will be growing demand on animal management services such as dog off leash areas, microchipping and desexing initiatives, and animal pound facilities.

With the delivery of upcoming urban developments across the region, consideration will need to be given to the potential for higher density living combined with proposed smaller lot sizes. Council

⁵ Queensland Government, *Population Projections 2013 edition* (Queensland Treasury and Trade).

will need to undertake considerable planning within these areas to assess demand, and plan for the provision of dog off leash areas that is balanced with the needs of other users of the open space network.

Similarly, the provision of dog off leash areas along foreshores and beaches will need to be considered in relation to growing human and animal populations. Council will need to appropriately manage the environmental and social impacts of dogs exercising in these spaces in line with increasing demand for access to these finite land areas.

1.5 The role of Local Government in Animal Management

The legislative and policy context guiding animal management has been investigated at federal, state and local levels. Within all levels of government, there are a number of relevant documents that aim to protect domestic animals, promote responsible pet ownership and enhance community wellbeing.

Council administers animal management requirements as set out in applicable legislation, in particular the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and *Local Law and Subordinate Local Law No. 2*. This legislation authorises council to enforce compliance, and respond to or act on animal complaints and incidents in a manner that is consistent with the powers as granted in regulation. This legislation also directs council to collect revenue through fee-based services such as animal registration and impounding, to be expended in a manner that contributes to the promotion and encouragement of responsible pet ownership⁶.

Council works with the community to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership through information, education, investigation, and as a last resort enforcement and prosecution. Council is also responsible for the provision and maintenance of a range of infrastructure, services and programs that support animal management.

Council has a dedicated animal management team consisting of specially trained officers. These officers are well equipped to control and enforce matters pertaining to animal management in the best interests of the community, and in compliance with legislation.

See [Appendix Three – Legislative and policy context](#) for an overview of documents that guide and inform animal management at federal, state and local levels.

1.6 Managing customer requests

Council responds to all reports of cat and dog complaints and customer requests. Council's response to managing animal complaints and requests works on a sliding scale, usually in the following order:

- Information
- Education
- Investigation
- Enforcement
- Prosecution.

The action taken is dependent on the cooperation of the customer and the degree of risk associated with the legislative breach. Reports deemed to have a high risk associated with them, such as dog attacks, are dealt with immediately, whereas low risk assessments, such as barking nuisances, may only require the provision of information and education to resolve the matter.

⁶ Note: Council is not responsible for the administration of the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* as this work is carried out by animal welfare agencies.

Investigation, enforcement and prosecution are generally the least preferred methods of achieving compliance, and are only applied after there has been a breakdown of negotiated outcomes between the parties, or where urgent remedial action is necessary.

Council's *Compliance and Enforcement Policy 2009* openly documents how council will, as a requirement of meeting its statutory obligations exercise its compliance and enforcement actions. Council advocates firm but fair regulation that provides positive community outcomes.

Council ensures that confidentiality is upheld in the management of all complaints and requests. Council does not pass on any details that identify the complainant.

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2 Strategic framework

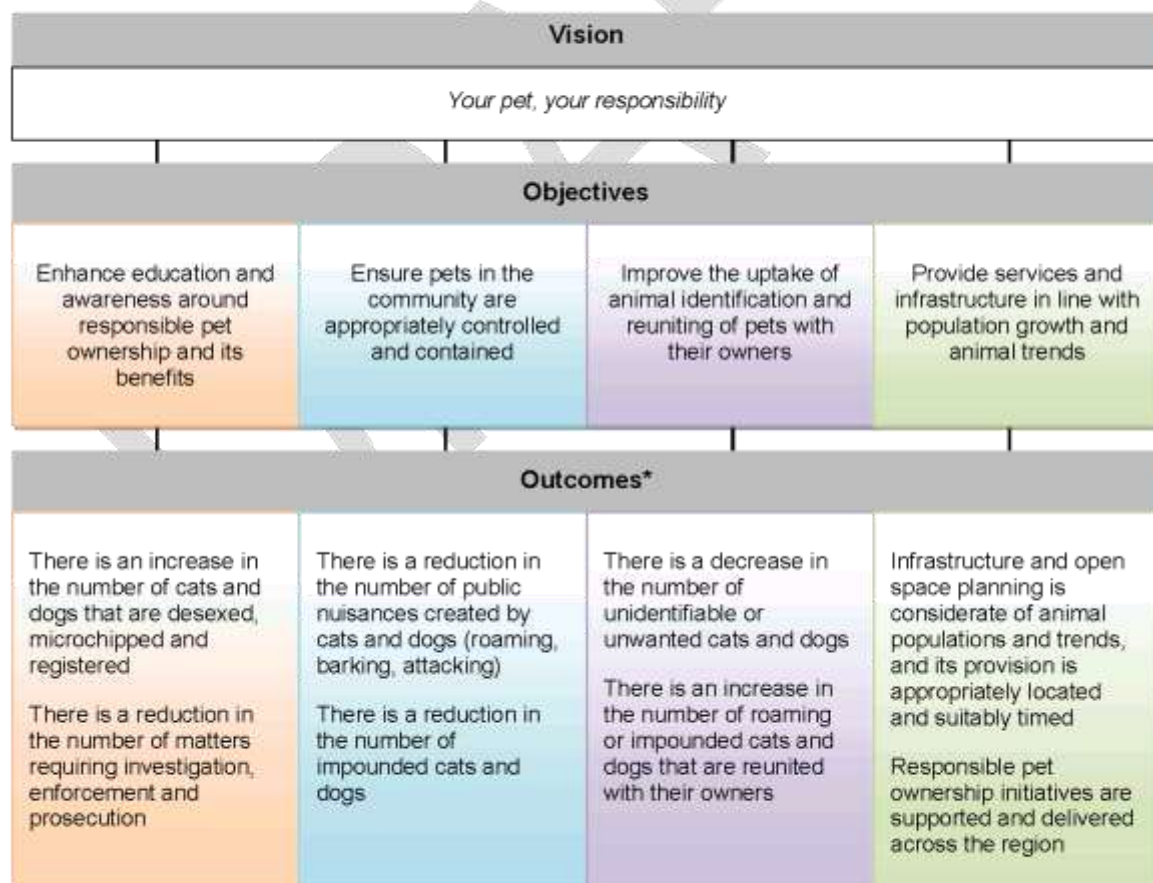
This section illustrates the overarching strategic framework for animal management operations and planning. The framework directs service and infrastructure delivery and support, and helps in informing decision-making processes.

2.1 Guiding principles

The following principles guide the application of this strategy:

- Cat and dog owners are responsible for the health and welfare of their pet
- Cat and dog owners are responsible for managing the impact that their pet has on the community and environment, in compliance with legislation
- Council rewards and encourages responsible pet ownership behaviours by offering discounted fees and incentives for microchipping and desexing cats and dogs
- Council develops legislation, policies and procedures to impose and effect responsible pet ownership behaviours
- Council undertakes education and enforcement programs relating to responsible pet ownership
- Council utilises strategic partnerships to help deliver and extend responsible pet ownership education, promotion and initiatives.

Diagram 1: Strategic overview



* Measuring the above outcome areas and the following action plan items is conducted per capita to reach truly indicative data trends in consideration of population growth.

2.2 Action Plan

The objectives of the Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 are achieved through the following actions. Each action considers:

- Responsibility – the council branches that will lead and support the implementation of the specific action
- Funding – the allocation of resources from within existing or new budget items
- Timeline – when the action will be implemented
- Measures – how the success in achieving the objective is determined.

1. Enhance education and awareness around responsible pet ownership and its benefits						
	Action	Responsibility		Funding	Timeline	Measures
		Lead	Support			
1a	Market and promote the Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 and its vision through council marketing tools and partnership networks	Community Response	Partners	Core budget	Ongoing	Number of views on council's website Number of strategies distributed Number of partnering networks distributing strategy
1b	Review, redesign and develop responsible pet ownership information and educational resources, and extend distribution through key partnership networks	Community Response	Communications	Core budget	Ongoing	Development of resources Review and redesign of resources Number of views on council's website Number of resources distributed Number of partnering networks distributing resources
1c	Implement a regular and proactive media and marketing campaign that communicates and reinforces key responsible pet ownership messages	Community Response	Communications	Core budget	Ongoing (monthly)	Number of media articles issued Increase in number of cats and dogs registered, microchipped and desexed Reduction in number of cat and dog nuisances reported
1d	Undertake ongoing monitoring and investigation of options to promote and effect responsible pet ownership	Community Response	Corporate Governance	Core budget	Ongoing	Number of initiatives implemented Number of partnerships engaged in Review and modification of local laws

1. Enhance education and awareness around responsible pet ownership and its benefits						
	Action	Responsibility		Funding	Timeline	Measures
		Lead	Support			
						Reduction in number of investigation, enforcement and prosecution activities undertaken
1e	Review the Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 on an as needed basis to ensure compliance with updated legislation and operations	Community Response	Corporate Governance	Core budget	As required	Review and modification of strategy
1f	Explore the use of online and mobile technologies to provide promotion and education around animal management services, legislation and infrastructure.	Community Response	Information Communication Technology Services	Core budget	2015/2016	Development of online tools

2. Ensure pets in the community are appropriately controlled and contained						
	Action	Responsibility		Funding	Timeline	Measures
		Lead	Support			
2a	Conduct a series of bark stopping seminars across the region that incorporates the use of a reputable animal behaviourist. Target seminar availability to offending barking nuisances	Community Response	NA	Core budget	Annually	Number of dog owners attending seminars Reduction in the number of barking nuisances reported – particularly in prior offenders
2b	Investigate opportunities to partner with local animal shelters and veterinary services to implement and promote reduced fee desexing initiatives	Community Response	Partners	Core budget	Annually	Number of partnerships engaged in Number of initiatives offered Number of cats and dogs desexed
2c	In conjunction with key partners, implement a proactive campaign about the effective management and containment of cats and dogs	Community Response	Partners	Core budget	Ongoing	Number of partnerships engaged in Reduction in number of roaming nuisances reported Reduction in number of cats and dogs impounded Reduction in number of cat and dog attacks recorded
2d	Undertake a containment monitoring program for serial reports of roaming nuisances	Community Response	NA	Core budget	Ongoing	Number of monitoring visits undertaken Reduction in number of roaming nuisances reported – particularly in prior offenders Reduction in number of cats and dogs impounded

3. Improve the uptake of animal identification and reuniting of pets with their owners						
	Action	Responsibility		Funding	Timeline	Measures
		Lead	Support			
3a	Market the vision of "Your pet, your responsibility" through various marketing tools and partnership networks	Community Response	Communications	Core budget	Ongoing	Decrease in number of surrendered cats and dogs Decrease in number of cats and dogs impounded Increase in number of cats and dogs registered, microchipped and desexed
3b	Undertake a stronger support and promotion role with existing deliverers of reduced fee microchipping initiatives for cats and dogs	Community Response	Partners	Core budget	Annually	Number of microchipping days conducted Number of cat and dog owners attending microchipping days Increase in number of cats and dogs microchipped Decrease in number of cats and dogs impounded Increase in number of impounded cats and dogs returned to their owners
3c	Promote the adoption of microchipped and desexed cats and dogs	Community Response	Communications	Core budget	Ongoing	Increase in number of adopted microchipped and desexed cats and dogs Decrease in number of cats and dogs impounded Decrease in number of unidentifiable cats and dogs Decrease in number of kitten and puppy litters surrendered Increase in number of impounded cats and dogs returned to their owners

4. Provide services and infrastructure in line with population growth and animal trends						
	Action	Responsibility		Funding	Timeline	Measures
		Lead	Support			
4a	Develop a set of dog off leash area (DOLA) guidelines, in consideration of the <i>Open Space Strategy</i> directions, with a desired level of provision and design criteria to guide the future assessment and supply of dog off leash areas, particularly in consideration of higher density living, and environmental impacts and increased demand on beaches and foreshores	Parks and Gardens	Community Response	Core budget	2014/2015	Development of guidelines Number of dog off leash areas that comply with criteria and provision levels
4b	Undertake ongoing monitoring of existing dog off leash areas to review and assess compliance with DOLA guidelines and <i>Open Space Strategy</i> criteria	Community Response	NA	Core budget	Ongoing	Number of dog off leash areas assessed Number of dog off leash areas that comply with criteria and provision levels
4c	Advocate for the inclusion of appropriate dog off leash area provision in the future planning of the open space network, in consideration of the directions contained within the <i>Open Space Strategy</i> and DOLA guidelines	Parks and Gardens Environment and Sustainability Policy	Community Response	Core budget	Ongoing	Number of dog off leash areas provided in new urban growth open space areas Number of dog off leash areas delivered that comply with criteria and provision levels
4d	Undertake ongoing monitoring and review of existing pound facilities to meet the demands of a growing Sunshine Coast community	Community Response	NA	Capital works	Ongoing	Review and modification of pound

3 Conclusion

Enhancing responsible pet ownership behaviours and achieving harmonious communities takes a collective and balanced approach. The Domestic Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Strategy 2014-2020 aims to coordinate the delivery of the action plan in order to promote and obtain the key messages of the vision.

To advance responsible pet ownership behaviours, council has a role in helping prospective and existing pet owners to interpret and carry out the commitment and responsibility that is associated with keeping a cat or dog.

Through implementing the actions contained within this strategy, council in partnership with key stakeholders and the community can extend communications, enhance services, achieve key outcomes, and contribute to a vibrant, green and diverse region that is celebrated by both animals and the community alike.

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4 Definitions

Assistance dog

A dog trained to perform identifiable physical tasks and behaviours to assist a person with a disability to reduce the person's need for support (*Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* (Qld) sch. 4 (Austl.)).

Cat

An animal of the species *Felis catus*, or domestic cat (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) s. 11 (Austl.)).

Compliance

An agency, corporation or person meeting or taking steps to comply with relevant laws and regulations (Sunshine Coast Council 2009).

Declared dangerous dog

A dog is declared dangerous if it:

- (a) has seriously attacked, or acted in a way that caused fear to, a person or another animal
- (b) may, in the opinion of an authorised person having regard to the way the dog has behaved towards a person or another animal, seriously attack, or act in a way that causes fear to, the person or animal (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) s. 89 (Austl.)).

Note: See 'serious attack' definition

Declared menacing dog

A dog is declared menacing if it has acted in a way as mentioned in the 'declared dangerous dog' definition above, except that the attack was not 'serious' (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) s. 89 (Austl.)).

Dog

An animal of the species *Canis lupus familiaris*, or domestic dog (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) s. 11 (Austl.)). Dog means a dog other than a regulated dog (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) s. 52 (Austl.)).

Effective management

For dogs, see definition provided under section [3.4.2 Roaming dogs](#). For cats, see definition provided under section [3.5.1 Roaming cats](#).

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).

Guide dog

A dog trained to be an effective guide for a person with disability attributable to a vision impairment (*Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* (Qld) sch. 4 (Austl.)).

Hearing dog

A dog trained to be used as an aid by a person with disability attributable to a hearing impairment (*Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009* (Qld) sch. 4 (Austl.)).

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).

Regulated dog

A regulated dog is:

- (a) a declared dangerous dog; or
- (b) a declared menacing dog; or
- (c) a restricted dog (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) s. 60 (Austl.)).

Restricted dog

Restricted dog breeds include:

- Dogo Argentino
- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileira
- American Pit Bulls (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry 2012).

Serious attack

To seriously attack means causing bodily harm, grievous bodily harm or death (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) s. 89 (Austl.)).

Working dog

A dog that is usually kept or proposed to be kept:

- on rural land, and
- the owner is a primary producer or a person employed by a primary producer, and
- the dog is droving, protecting, tending, or working stock, or being trained in droving, protecting, tending, or working stock.

Note: does not include a class of dog prescribed under a regulation (*Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (Qld) sch. 2 (Austl.)).

5 References

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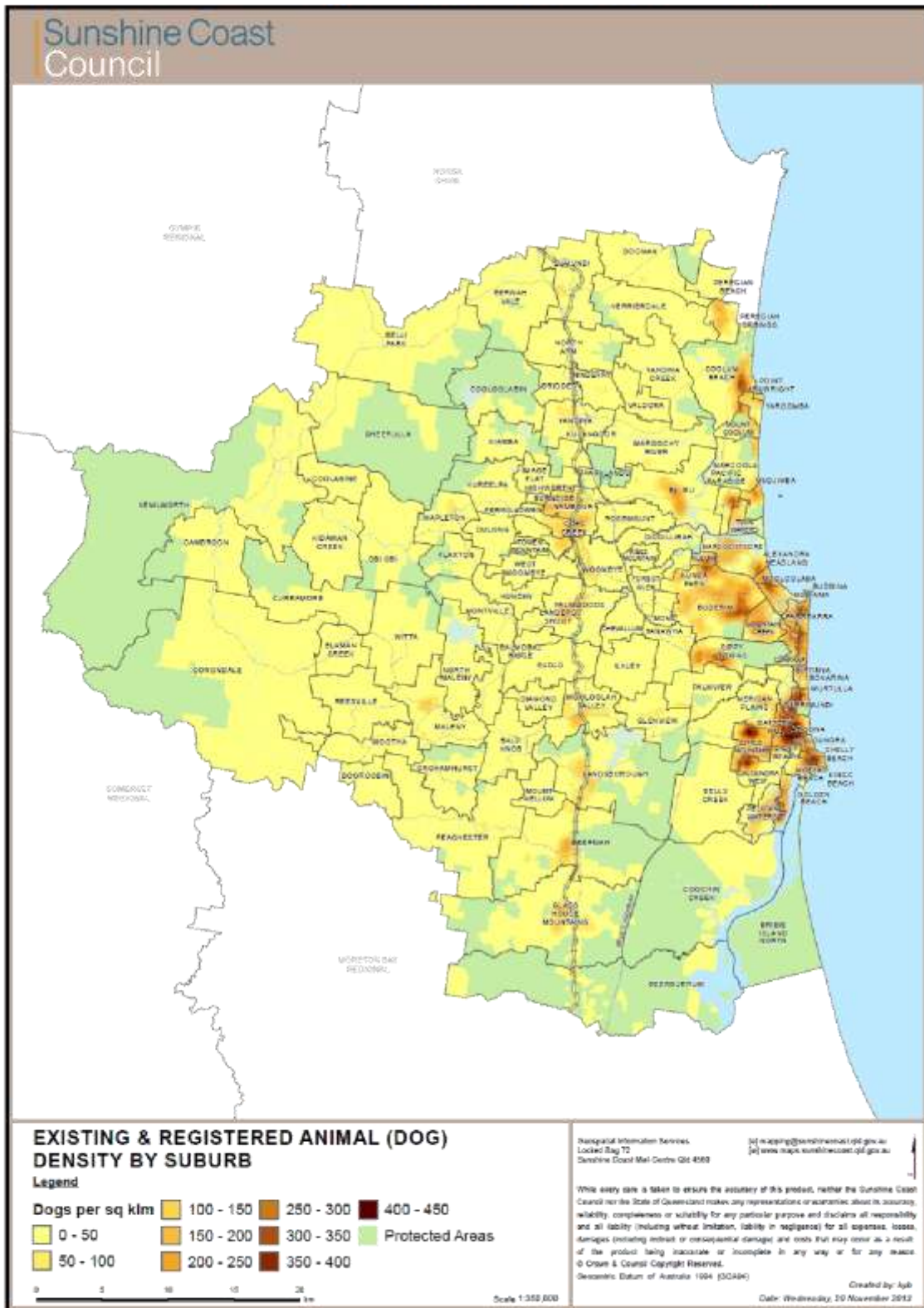
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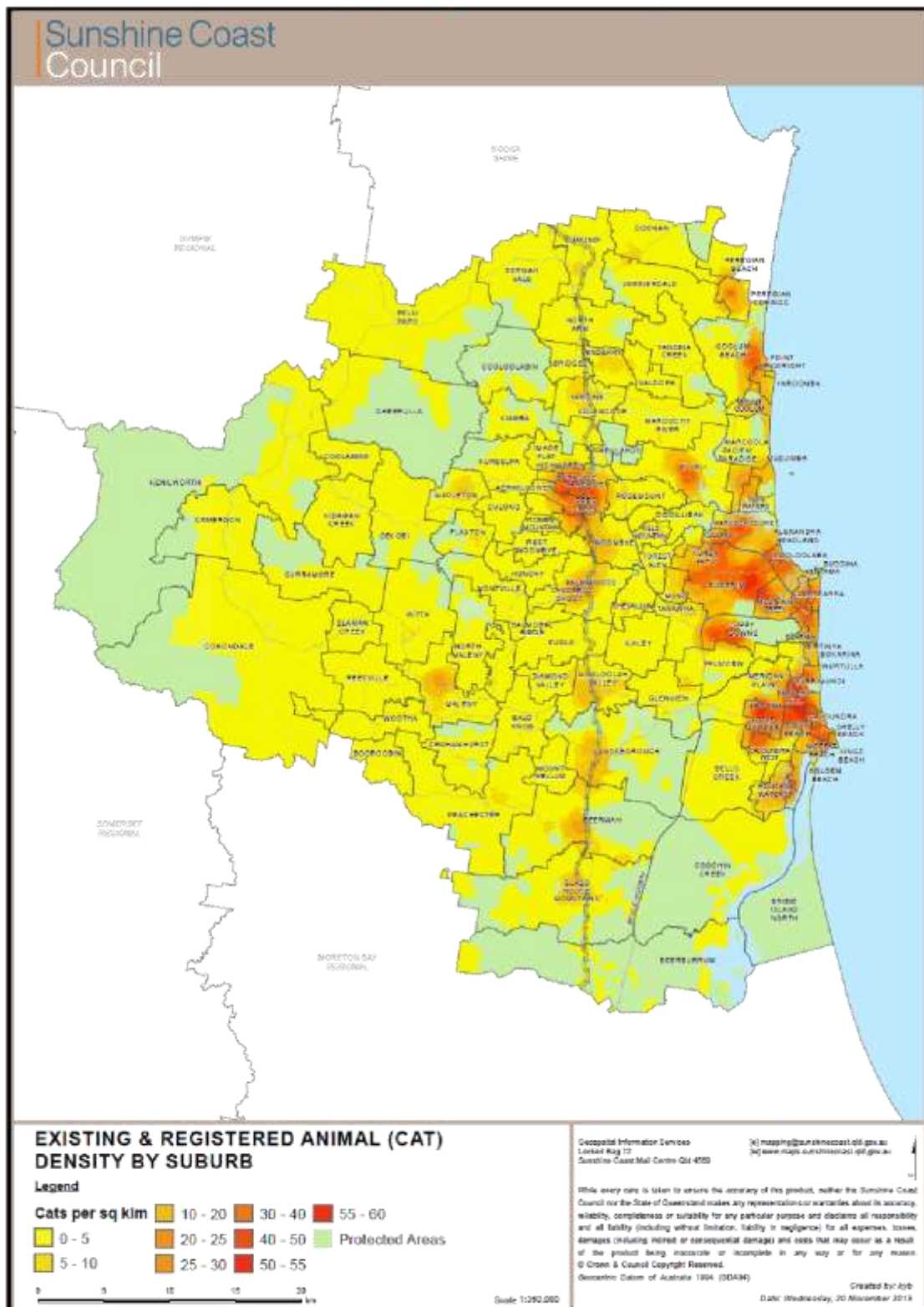
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Appendix One – Density of registered dogs by suburb



Appendix Two – Density of registered cats by suburb



Appendix Three – Legislative and policy context

The legislative and policy context guiding animal management has been investigated at federal, state and local levels. Within all levels of government, there are a number of relevant documents that aim to protect domestic animals, promote responsible pet ownership and enhance community wellbeing.

Federal Government

Specific aspects of animal management are guided by commonwealth legislation as outlined below.

Federal Government Acts and Codes

Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customs Act 1901
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code - Standard 3.2.2 - Food Safety Practices and General Requirements 2012

State Government

A number of state legislative objectives aim to contribute to the responsible management of cats and dogs and the welfare of all, as outlined in the documents below.

State Government Acts

Act
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local Government Act 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal Care and Protection Act 2001
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* directly supports council's *Local Law and Subordinate Local Law No. 2*, which provide the framework for council to assist residents and pet owners with domestic animal related concerns and matters.

The purposes of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* are to:

- provide for the identification of cats and dogs, and*
- provide for the registration of cats and dogs, and*
- provide for the effective management of regulated dogs, and*
- promote the responsible ownership of cats and dogs.*

Local Government (Sunshine Coast Council)

The leading legislation that local government operates under is the *Local Government Act 2009*.

The development of a Domestic Animal Management Strategy for the Sunshine Coast region is specifically directed by the *Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2014-2019* to deliver the objectives of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and council local laws.

For matters relating to animal management, council is guided by *Local Law and Subordinate Local Law No. 2*. The purpose of this local law is to assist the local government in the management of animals by:

- minimising the risk to community health, safety and amenity, and
- reducing environmental harm or environmental nuisance, and

- (c) supporting animal owners to keep their animals in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of the community.

Sunshine Coast Council operations and planning are also guided by a number of corporate strategic documents that are relevant to animal management. These are identified below.

Sunshine Coast Council plans and strategies

Key plans and strategies relevant to Animal Management	
• Access and Inclusion Plan	• Positive Ageing Strategy
• Compliance and Enforcement Policy	• Social Infrastructure Strategy
• Open Space Landscape Infrastructure Manual	• Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme
• Open Space Strategy	• Wellbeing Charter



Appendix Four Community Education Resource



Owning a cat or dog – the social benefits

"Today there are more pets living in Australia than people, confirming their importance in modern Australian society⁷." The term 'pet' as quoted in the context of the *Pet Ownership in Australia* report includes cats, dogs, fish, birds, small mammals and reptiles. In the context of this strategy and the focus on domestic animals, the ensuing scope is limited solely to cats and dogs.

Research is more widely confirming the positive impact that a connection with a cat or dog can have on one's physical, social and psychological quality of life. From the benefits of enhanced health and wellbeing, improved social and learning development, and increased community interactions, domestic animals can play a powerful role in helping people to lead happier and healthier lives⁸.

The main reason for adopting a cat or dog into the home is for companionship⁹. A cat or dog can assist in reducing feelings of social isolation, and can provide company and comfort for people of all ages.

In contemporary society, cats and dogs are commonly considered a valued member of the family. In fact, nearly 90% of cat and dog owners affirm this. Coming to be an integral unit within the family household, cats and particularly dogs are no longer consigned to a life of living outdoors. "Today 92% of cats and 76% of dogs are welcomed into homes¹⁰."

Dogs in particular are strong motivators for encouraging healthier lifestyles in their owners, requiring frequent exercise and stimulation. It is more likely for people to interact with members of their neighbourhood, or other dog owners as a result of exercising their dog¹¹.

Pet ownership has also been linked to various human health benefits including:

- fewer doctors visits
- improved cardiovascular health
- assistance in coping with diseases, chronic illness and grief
- alleviation of depression, stress and overall improvement in mental health¹².

Owning a cat or dog through childhood can assist children with cognitive and learning development, understanding the concept of life and death, and developing compassion and responsibility through caring for an animal¹³. Furthermore, children who own a dog between the ages of 5-6 are less likely to be overweight or obese in comparison to those who do not¹⁴.

For the older population, particularly those that live independently, pets can provide a significant means of "companionship, physical contact and antidote to stress and bereavement". Assistance animals also play an important role in enhancing independence and quality of life for the aged and people living with a disability¹⁵.

Owning a cat or dog plays a significant role in the family household and the lives of the members who reside in that environment. With Australia having one of the highest rates of pet ownership in the world¹⁶, it is important to acknowledge the positive emotional, social and physical impacts that pets can have on their owners, and for council to ensure that pet owners are educated and supported in the responsible management of their cats and dogs.

⁷ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 10.

⁸ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 81.

⁹ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 81.

¹⁰ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, pp. 26-27.

¹¹ Wood, L 2009, *How Companion Animals can help Strengthen Social Fabric*, p. 9.

¹² O'Haire, M 2012, *Pets as a Prescription for Health: The benefits of companion animals for mental wellbeing*.

¹³ Tipper, B 2012, 'A dog who I know quite well': everyday relationships between children and animals.

¹⁴ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 82.

¹⁵ Wood 2009, *How Companion Animals can help Strengthen Social Fabric*, p. 55.

¹⁶ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 11.

Responsible pet ownership

Cats and dogs provide unconditional love and companionship. Owners are responsible for keeping their animals healthy and safe. However, they are also responsible for ensuring their animal is well behaved, does not create a nuisance or endanger others.

Council's top tips for being a responsible pet owner

- Do your research and select a pet that is appropriate for your lifestyle and circumstances
- Purchase your pet from a reputable breeder or adopt from an animal shelter. Ensure your pet is microchipped at the time of purchase
- Register your pet with council
- Microchip and desex your pet
- Keep your pet contained on your property by providing a suitable enclosure
- Exercise your pet
- Keep your pet under effective management in public places or if exercising your dog in designated off leash areas, you must be able to control your dog
- Pick up pet faeces and dispose of it responsibly
- Respect neighbours – if your pet is becoming a nuisance learn how to change its behaviour
- Vaccinate and worm your pet
- When travelling in a vehicle with your pet, make sure it is secured properly. Do not leave pets unattended in the car.

Selecting the right pet for you

Selecting the right pet for you, your family and your circumstances is the first stage to responsible pet ownership. For prospective pet owners, it is extremely important to consider the following before committing to the purchase of a cat or dog:

- Type of pet – cat or dog?
- Age of pet – kitten or puppy, or adult cat or dog, and what's involved with each?
- Pets allowed – are pets permitted in your type of dwelling?
- Pet size and temperament – what pet traits would best suit your lifestyle, your family and your circumstances?
- Property size – would there be sufficient space for a pet and its needs?
- Containment – could you appropriately contain a pet?
- Income – could you adequately afford a pet for a lifespan of 15+ years, including unplanned vet bills?
- Time – would you have sufficient time to train and exercise your pet, and provide company and attention?
- Local Laws – do you understand what would be required of you as a pet owner, and could you comply with this?
- Acquiring a pet – have you investigated options for sourcing a pet that suits your circumstances? Have you checked animal shelters? Have you investigated reputable breeders?

Adopting a working dog breed would not be appropriate for a smaller size block in a family home where the owners work full time and cannot exercise or stimulate the dog to its requirements. Likewise, purchasing a cat, or a larger breed of dog without the ability to suitably contain the animal is a factor that should be considered prior to purchase. Overall, it is important to do your research before making any commitment to bringing a cat or dog into your home.

Registration, desexing and microchipping for cats and dogs

Note: Information contained throughout this document is based on applicable information at the time of writing. Legislation is subject to change, which could impact on the correctness of the content supplied, therefore necessitating the review of this document¹⁷.

There are a number of requirements relating to the effective management and ownership of cats and dogs.

Registration

It is compulsory for all cats and dogs to be registered, except working dogs and assistance animals. Dogs must be registered every year. Cat owners have the option to select from lifetime registration if their cat is desexed and microchipped, or yearly registration is available as an alternative.

Animal registration provides peace of mind for pet owners. Council issues a registration tag for registered cats and dogs. This helps council to identify the animal and reunite them with their owners if they get lost. It is important to keep registration details up to date to ensure lost animals can be reunited with their owners. Council recommends providing multiple phone numbers on the registration application form to ensure the greatest possible opportunity for contact.

Registration also provides data that helps ensure appropriate services such as dog off leash areas and litter bins are provided where they are needed.

Reduced fees apply for desexed and microchipped pets.

The minimum age for an animal owner or fee payer for registration purposes is 18 years.

Pet owners should register their cat or dog when they are three months of age or within:

- 14 days of acquiring the animal
- 14 days of becoming a new resident of the region.

For animals visiting the region for less than 14 days, there are no requirements for registration. For animals visiting the region for longer than 14 days, they are only required to be registered if they are not registered with another local authority.

Council can fine owners for keeping an unregistered cat or dog.

Council offers reduced registration fees for owners who are members of the Canine Control Council of Queensland (CCC (Q)). Owners must provide council with their membership number.

Kitten and puppy registration

All kittens and puppies are required to be registered at three months of age. Kittens and puppies under six months of age can be registered for free.

Kittens and puppies will be classed as undesexed cats or dogs for the purpose of future renewals, unless the owner provides proof that the animal has been desexed.

Registration exemptions

There are a number of dog types that are exempt from the requirements of registration¹⁸.

¹⁷ Local Laws as drafted or amended by council are subject to review by the State Government. Any new or amended Local Laws also undergo community consultation prior to council adoption.

- Assistance animals, i.e. guide dogs, hearing dogs and assistance dogs
- Working dogs.

Note: The rules of responsible pet ownership still apply, i.e. the dog cannot create a nuisance or endanger others.

Maximum number of cats and dogs

- The maximum number of cats permitted per property without approval is two.
- The maximum number of dogs permitted per property without approval is two.

For multi-unit dwellings, applicants must check with the body corporate or management whether animals are allowed on the property prior to applying for registration.

To keep more than the allowable number of cats or dogs on a property, an additional animal permit is required.

An animal permit is also required to keep one or more restricted dogs.

Desexing

Whilst desexing cats and dogs has a significant, positive impact on the reduction of unwanted kitten and puppy litters, there are also many health and behavioural benefits associated with getting a cat or dog desexed. Desexed animals usually:

- live longer, healthier lives
- have a reduced risk of cancer and other diseases affecting the reproductive organs
- are less likely to run away, roam and get into fights
- are less likely to show territorial behaviour and suffer from anti-social behaviour
- are more affectionate
- receive reduced registration fees¹⁹.

Microchipping

Microchipping an animal allows for permanent identification so that pets can be reunited with their owners if they are lost, or if they lose their collar.

A microchip is about the size of a grain of rice. It is electronically imprinted with a unique and unalterable numeric / alphanumeric code. The number is read by passing an infra-red numeric scanner over the animal in the area of the chip.

As a requirement by law, cats and dogs must be microchipped²⁰. Microchipping your cat or dog is compulsory if:

- the animal is younger than 12 weeks (but not before 8 weeks)
- the ownership of the animal changes
- a dog is a regulated dog. This could be a restricted dog or declared a dangerous or menacing dog.

¹⁸ See definitions for criteria that applies to classifying these types of dogs.

¹⁹ Animal Health Alliance 2013, *Pet Ownership in Australia*, p. 33.

²⁰ Animals obtained prior to 1 July 2009 are not required to be microchipped unless the ownership changes. However council recommends that all animals are microchipped.

To have a microchip implanted, pet owners should contact their local veterinary clinic. Microchipping days can also be offered across the region at various times throughout the year. Visit [council's website](#) to view any upcoming initiatives.

It is important to keep owner contact details up to date with the microchip supplier to ensure lost animals can be reunited with their owners quickly and easily. Council recommends providing multiple phone numbers on the microchip application form to ensure the greatest possible opportunity for contact.

Containment of cats and dogs

A person who keeps a cat or dog must maintain a proper enclosure to prevent the animal from escaping their property. Generally, this means that the enclosure provided must stop the animal from going over, under or through the fence. Considering the breed of animal and its associated traits is also important in understanding effective containment measures and ensuring that enclosures meet the animal's needs so they are safe, comfortable and cared for.

Maintaining an appropriate enclosure for a cat or dog also helps to:

- prevent roaming nuisances and lessen the potential for injuries or attacks
- lessen the impact on the natural environment and minimise harm made to natural flora and fauna caused by roaming.

As described in council's *Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [sch. 3]:

1. the enclosure:

- must be of a size appropriate to the species and breed of the animal to be enclosed, and
- must be constructed of strong materials and designed in such a way to prevent the animal from:
 - escaping over, under, through or around the fence, and
 - protruding over, under, through or around the fence, and
 - attacking or threatening to attack a person or animal over, under, through or around the fence, and
- may be constructed such that parts of a building or structure can form part of the enclosure in lieu of fencing, provided the building or structure does not have openings through which the animal can escape²¹, and
- must contain adequate shelter.

2. the enclosure's gates must be closed and latched except when in actual immediate use.

A person who provides or keeps a guard dog on premises must warn persons about the presence of the dog by displaying a sign to that effect, which is clearly visible from outside the premises.

Managing dogs

The following section outlines the requirements and recommendations for the responsible management and ownership of dogs. To understand council's complaints management process, refer to [Managing customer requests](#).

²¹ This point does not apply to regulated dogs. See the [Enclosure requirements for regulated dogs](#).

Nuisance barking

It is an offence to allow a dog to make excessive noise by barking or howling. The constant and piercing nature of a dog's bark can be very disruptive for close neighbours, and can create unpleasant neighbourhood disputes.

As outlined in council's *Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [sch. 3A] animal noise is a nuisance if it:

- is made by a domestic animal; and
- occurs more than once; and
- unreasonably disrupts or inhibits an activity ordinarily carried out on a residential premises.

For example, a barking dog is considered to be a nuisance if it disrupts a person:

- holding a conversation; or
- watching television; or
- listening to a radio or recorded material; or
- sleeping.

All barking is an indication of a kind of stress that a dog is experiencing, such as:

- Boredom – dogs are social animals. They require companionship and frequent stimulation.
- Loneliness – dogs may feel separated from the family if left outside without attention.
- Fear or threat – dogs may be witnessing a person or another animal approaching or entering the property.
- Ill health – a dog may be hurt, trapped or feeling unwell.
- Separation anxiety – dogs can suffer anxiety when their owners leave the house.

A dog's bark will alter in pitch, volume, frequency and type dependant on the nature of stress it is experiencing. Listening for and understanding the differing tones may help in identifying the cause of the barking.

Before looking for alternate solutions to the barking problem, ensure there is adequate food, water, shelter, yard space, exercise and companionship for the dog. This will vary depending on the breed, age and size.

Note: Do not get a second dog as a companion until the first dog's barking problem is controlled, or the problem may escalate to two barking dogs.

Beyond providing the essentials, there are a number of other options to attempt to mitigate barking problems:

- Interesting environment – chew toys, raw bones and chew ropes all provide good mental stimulation.
- Family reference – an old jumper that contains the scent of a family member may offer comfort to the dog. A radio left on inside the house may give the dog the impression that it is not alone on the property.
- Training – formal or at home training can assist in curbing barking problems and making the dog feel more comfortable and happy when confined alone.
- Sight barriers – modifying fencing and enclosures can help to make dogs less aware of sights and sounds that might cause them to bark.

- Pet minding service – a neighbour may be available to check on the dog through the day, or alternately employ someone to walk or play with them.
- Anti-barking collars – citronella or barking collars are designed to provide behavioural correction when dogs are left at home alone.

Roaming dogs

It is an offence to allow a dog to roam outside of its property unattended. Roaming, straying or wandering means any dog which is not kept under effective management as defined in *Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [s. 6].

A dog is considered under effective management in a public place if it is:

- restrained by a leash, which is:
 - on a collar around the neck, muzzle or shoulders of the dog, and
 - being held by a person who is physically able to manage the dog, or
- restrained to a fixed object and is under the continuous supervision of a person who is physically able to manage the dog, or
- restrained in or on a vehicle and is unable to reach beyond the extremities of the vehicle, or
- participating in an obedience trial or being exhibited at an exhibition, or
- in a designated dog off leash area and:
 - under the direct supervision of a person who is physically able to manage the dog, and
 - not harassing, intimidating, attacking, stalking, mounting or body slamming another animal or person, or
- a drover's dog or farm work dog that is actually engaged in the movement of livestock; or
- a trained guard dog that is:
 - working and in close proximity to the owner or responsible person for the dog, and
 - being used for the purpose of guarding premises.

The main reason that dogs roam is attributable to inadequate fencing. Dog owners must take responsibility and appropriate measures for confining their dog within their property.

Dogs that are not kept safely contained can risk being injured or causing injury to others. They can:

- become a traffic hazard for motorists
- become a bite risk to innocent people
- display territorial aggression
- become an annoyance to other animals and members of the community
- cause property and environment damage.

Irresponsible owners will be liable for any injuries or damages that their animal may cause.

Dog defecation

As prescribed in council's *Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [s. 14]:

- If a dog defecates in a public place, the person who has control of the dog must immediately remove and dispose of the faeces in a sanitary way.
- The person who has control of the dog in a public place must carry a bag, implement or container suitable to pick up and dispose of the animal's faeces.

Council also provides dog tidy bins and bag dispensers for the removal of dog waste. They are located in parks and near beach accesses where dogs are permitted.

Penalties apply for not carrying a doggy bag when walking a dog. Penalties also apply for not picking up and disposing of the waste properly.

Dog attacks

People have a right to feel safe in their community. It is the responsibility of dog owners to ensure their dog doesn't bite or act aggressively towards other people and animals. The repercussions that can transpire following aggressive behaviour from a dog, actual or perceived, can be vast and extreme.

There are a number of precautions dog owners can take to mitigate the possibility of aggressive behaviour occurring, including:

- Supervising children when in the company of dogs at all times
- Using a leash when walking a dog in public
- Supervising and controlling off leash activity at all times
- Ensuring dogs are appropriately trained and socialised
- Providing adequate fencing to ensure the dog cannot escape
- Complying with special conditions for owners of regulated dogs.

If approached by an aggressive dog, it is recommended to:

- Stand still. Cross your arms or keep them by your side with your fingers curled.
- Look at your feet, not the dog
- When the dog walks away, slowly back up then walk away. Don't run.

Dog attack on a person or animal

If a dog attacks a person or another animal, there are a number of steps to follow:

- Report the incident as soon as possible to council's customer service centre
- Describe the dog and any registration or owner details. Provide sufficient details to allow for a thorough investigation
- Advise if the animal is still at large so council can try to impound it to ensure it doesn't cause further injuries
- Seek medical/veterinary attention. Ask the doctor or vet for a statement of attendance to record the visit
- Take photographs of any injuries
- Write a statement of events as soon as possible after the incident.

Council has the ability to seize any animal that is considered a threat to community safety.

Regulated dogs

A regulated dog is:

- a declared dangerous dog, or
- a declared menacing dog, or
- a restricted dog.

See [Definitions](#) for a description of each category type.

Once a dog has been declared dangerous, menacing or restricted, the owner must comply with certain requirements. Owners are required to:

- pay higher registration fees
- comply with the State Government's [enclosure requirements for regulated dogs](#)
- have the dog desexed within three months of declaration (dangerous and restricted dogs only)
- have the dog microchipped
- ensure the dog is wearing a collar and a prescribed tag
- have the dog muzzled when in a public place (dangerous and restricted dogs only)
- keep the dog on leash at all times in a public place, including off leash areas (dangerous and restricted dogs only)
- comply with council restrictions on where the dog can be exercised
- display warning signage on gates or entrances to their property
- have the dog under effective management at all times
- obtain a permit (restricted dogs only).

Exercising dogs in public places

To ensure a safe and enjoyable environment for all Sunshine Coast residents and visitors, there are a range of dog on leash and off leash recreational areas across the Sunshine Coast. Dog off leash areas in the region consist of parks as well as foreshore areas.

On leash

All dogs must be kept on a leash when in a public space, otherwise fines can apply. Dogs may only be exercised without restraint in a designated off leash area.

Council has installed signage throughout the region to regulate dog activities and to identify where designated off leash areas exist. If dog signage is not marked, dogs must be on a leash at all times.

Off leash

Council's *Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [sch. 6] provides for public places where dogs are permitted to exercise off leash. A person is still required to ensure a dog is under effective management in an off leash area.

The following rules apply when using off leash areas on the Sunshine Coast:

- Dogs must be within close proximity of the owner and be responsive to their commands.
- Dogs must not interfere with any other recreational users.
- Declared dangerous dogs are prohibited in off leash areas.
- Dog faeces must be removed and disposed of properly.
- Dogs are not allowed within children's playground areas or picnic/barbeque areas.

The Subordinate Local Law nominates the dog off leash areas and the applicable times for dog off leash activity to take place. Maps of each off leash areas are provided in the Subordinate Local Law, which can be accessed via [council's website](#) or from Sunshine Coast Council customer service centres and libraries.

Council also provides an online search of dog off leash areas across the region via its [Facilities and Recreation Directory](#).

The provision and assessment of dog off leash areas are identified as part of the *Open Space Strategy*. When assessing the provision of new dog off leash areas, there are many considerations to take into account. Certain criteria must be met before a new location can be considered appropriate. **Note:** Dog off leash areas are deemed unsuitable for most local parks, due to size constraints and close proximity to other parks users.

Outdoor dining areas

Laws regarding dogs in outdoor dining areas are directed by the *Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, Standard 3.2.2, Food Safety Practices and General Requirements*. A food business may choose to allow dogs in their outdoor dining area (this can be by sign or verbal approval), providing certain criteria are met.

Business owners will need to work with council to determine whether their premises are suitable for allowing dogs in their outdoor dining areas. Any eating establishment with an outdoor dining area that is permanently, or can be temporarily enclosed is not suitable under the definitions of the national laws to permit dogs in their premises.

The definitions under the national laws are:

Outdoor dining area means an area that –

- is used for dining, drinking or both drinking and dining; and
- is not used for the preparation of food; and
- is not an enclosed area; and
- can be entered by the public without passing through an enclosed area.

Enclosed area means an area that, except for doorways and passageways, is substantially or completely closed, whether permanently or temporarily, by –

- a ceiling or roof; and
- walls or windows or both walls and windows.

Note: All food businesses must permit an assistance animal in areas used by customers. This applies to both outdoor and indoor eating and drinking areas and any other customer areas.

The *Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Code's fact sheet – Dogs in outdoor dining areas – information for customers*, summarises the requirements that relate to animals in food premises:

Customers must maintain control of their dog at all times while dining at a food premises, to ensure the safety and comfort of other customers and dogs. To achieve this, customers should:

- keep the dog tied to a tether point or ensure the dog remains in the customer's immediate vicinity
- make all attempts to control the dog's barking and address any other behavioural issues e.g. fighting with other dogs, unwelcome physical contact with other customers, or eating from customer's plates
- remove the dog from the premises to an appropriate place, if they become aware of the dog's need to urinate or defecate
- clean up after their dog, including dog excrement, and dispose of waste appropriately
- inform a staff member immediately of any dog excrement at the premises.

Restricted areas for dogs

Under council's *Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [sch.4, 5] there are a number of areas where dogs are prohibited, regardless of whether they are on leash, unless there is a sign that permits dogs to be in the area. These include:

- Shops
- National parks
- Beaches (unless signage is in place identifying the beach as an area where dogs can be exercised or permitted at certain times of the day)
- Bathing areas between the flags
- Reserves or parks (within five metres of a children's playground or BBQ facilities)
- Any areas specifically signed to exclude animals.

Council regulations also specify areas prohibiting dogs due to the sensitivity of the area. Visit [council's website](#) to view specific locations where dogs are not allowed.

Managing Cats

The following section outlines the requirements and recommendations for the responsible management and ownership of cats. To understand council's complaints management process, refer to [Managing customer requests](#).

Roaming cats

Around eighty percent of accidents involving cats happen at night. Roaming cats can get hit by cars, injured in fights, catch fatal diseases or become lost.

Cats are required to be contained on the owner's property. Roaming, straying or wandering means any cat which is not kept under effective management as defined in *Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [s. 6].

A domestic cat is considered under effective management in a public place if it is:

- contained within an enclosure, or
- on a leash.

Domestic cats that are able to roam, as well as feral cat populations, have a significant impact on the local environment and wildlife. From January 2012 to July 2013 Australia Zoo recorded 246 incidents of wildlife being injured by a cat. Of these incidents, 49% resulted in the wildlife having to be euthanised, 17% resulted in an unassisted death, and 11 % resulted in the wildlife requiring rehabilitation.

Contrary to popular belief, cats do not have to roam. Providing their basic needs are met, cats can enjoy long and healthy lives when confined at night or even twenty-four hours a day.

Ideas for keeping a happy cat

To ensure cats can remain stimulated and happy in the home, there are a number of simple ideas that can assist with play, relieving boredom and catering to their natural behaviours.

- Elevated areas – cats use elevated areas as vantage points to observe their surroundings. These are essential, and can be provided via access to platforms, shelves, climbing posts or window ledges.
- Scratching posts – scratching is a natural behaviour for cats that sharpens claws, stretches muscles and leaves scent marks. Providing a scratching post encourages this natural behaviour and can help to discourage the cat from scratching other items such as furniture.
- Catnip – cats have an excellent sense of smell, and many cats love catnip, which can be supplied as a dried herb or grown fresh in pots.
- Toys and exercise – owners can exercise their cat through play (or even by training their cat to walk outside on a harness and leash). Cats enjoy toys that move or make noise, and remind them of prey such as mice, birds, and insects. They need a variety of toys they can roll, pounce on, capture and bite, and toys should be rotated regularly to prevent boredom.
- Space – cats need their own 'personal space' at times, and this is particularly important to prevent aggression in group housing situations. Each cat requires his/her own area that provides all the essentials (food, water, bed, resting places, litter tray etc.).
- Sleeping and resting – cats like to spend a lot of time sleeping and resting in quiet areas where they feel safe and secure. Cat beds can be purchased, or blankets, towels, pillows etc. can be provided. High sided cat beds and boxes are useful to give cats a sense of 'privacy'.

Lost and found pets

Council administers an internal lost and found database for cats and dogs reported missing or recovered. If the animal and the owner cannot be reunited from reports recorded in council's database, it is recommended that the owner or finder of the animal also report the missing animal to the [Sippy Creek Animal Pound](#).

The Sippy Creek Animal Pound will contact the owner if an animal matching the description given arrives. All fees must be paid before an impounded animal is released. Registered cats and dogs have the release fee waived for the first impoundment.

Under council's *Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011*, [s. 30] cats and dogs are required to be held for a minimum of three working days.

Online sources for reporting or searching for lost and found pets

- [Lost Animal Search](#) - Council's website contains images and information on all recently found and impounded animals at the Sippy Creek Animal Pound.
- [Lost and Found](#) - The Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge (SCARS) allows animal owners to lodge details of their lost pets online and promotes this information on their website. People who have found a dog or cat can also check this resource for reports.
- There are various Facebook pages that promote lost and found pets. Simply search for Queensland or Sunshine Coast lost and found pets.

After hours reports

Council officers cease attending to cat and dog pick-ups at 4.00 pm each day, unless the report is urgent (e.g. the animal is roaming in a public place such as a school or shopping centre, the animal is displaying aggressive behaviour, the animal is regulated or injured).

If a cat or dog is reported found after 4.00 pm, but the matter is not urgent, there are a number of options:

- Personally take the animal to the pound by 6.00 pm
- Hold the animal until the next business day for collection by council officers.

Pets in emergencies

In the case of an emergency, it is the responsibility of the animal owner to prepare for the safety and welfare of their pet. All Sunshine Coast evacuation centres (except if in an educational facility) provide separate areas for domestic pets.

Cats and dogs are only accepted at evacuation centres if contained in a carry cage or wearing a muzzle. No exceptions can be made. In all cases, assistance animals are allowed to stay in evacuation centres with their owners.

'Get ready Queensland' provide a [Pet Emergency Plan](#), outlining the essential items required to care for pets in an emergency.

If not able to take a cat or dog to an evacuation shelter in the case of an emergency:

- Secure animals inside so that they do not take flight or run away
- Consider placing the animal in a boarding kennel away from the emergency zone
- Consider housing the animal in a temporary foster home.

Unable to keep a pet

Where an owner is unable to keep their cat or dog, there are a number of options available:

- Attempt to rehome the cat or dog through the newspaper or other means
- Contact the following refuges* to attempt to surrender the animal for rehoming:
 - Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge Society (SCARS)
 - 4 Paws Animal Rescue
- Take the animal to the local vet to have it euthanised
- Surrender the animal to council.

*Surrenders to the refuges above are made only by appointment, and only accepted when space is available. They reserve the right to reject any animal without explanation. A fee is payable upon surrender to assist in caring for the animal.

It is important to note when rehoming a cat or dog that:

- it must be microchipped before it is given to a new owner
- the microchipping details must be updated to reflect the new owner's contact information
- the registration details must also be updated.

Education, initiatives and services

Council delivers and contributes to a variety of animal management initiatives and services, both individually and in partnership with other stakeholders such as:

- 4 Paws Animal Rescue
- Australian Vet Association (AVA)
- Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF)
- Neighbouring local governments
- RSPCA
- South East Queensland Animal Management Group (SEQAM)
- Sunshine Coast Animal Refuge Society (SCARS)
- Wilvos.

Individually and collaboratively, council already delivers and supports a number of services and infrastructure priorities for cats, dogs and pet owners, including:

- Compliance – investigating complaints such as barking, roaming, attacks
- Pound operations – reuniting identifiable cats and dogs with their owners, accepting and caring for surrendered or impounded cats and dogs within the pound, working with SCARS and 4 Paws to rehome unwanted cats and dogs
- Programs and initiatives – delivering or supporting microchipping days, desexing incentives, seminars and classes
- Information and education – promotion and communication through various marketing tools such as brochures and fact sheets, media releases, general education on council's website
- Infrastructure – provision of pound facilities, dog off leash areas, dog tidy bins and bag dispensers.

This collaborative approach to education and services helps council to extend its animal management communications, enhance its programming and initiatives, and deliver relevant services and infrastructure to the Sunshine Coast community.

Pound operations

The Sunshine Coast Council operates two pounds, located at Tanawha and Landsborough. The Sippy Creek Animal Pound at Tanawha is the primary facility for the impounding of cats and dogs, and is located next door to SCARS. **Note:** Animals other than cats and dogs are usually held at the Landsborough pound.

Pound locations and contact details

Sippy Creek Animal Pound	Sippy Creek Road, Tanawha 4556 (07) 5494 5244
Landsborough Pound	The Landsborough Pound is only available by appointment. Contact the Sippy Creek Road Pound to arrange an appointment.

The pound does not sell animals, however suitable unclaimed cats and dogs are rehomed through SCARS and 4 Paws Animal Rescue.



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