



DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT PLAN 2019–2024



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This will be Council's third Dog and Cat Management Plan. The first plan (2007-2011) focussed on Council's direction relating to companion pet management encouraging responsible pet ownership and minimising the negative impacts of dogs and cats in the City of Victor Harbor. The second plan (2013-2018) had a strong focus on planning, engagement, education and compliance.

This plan closely aligns with those amendments to the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. The vision and objectives of the plan are focussed on matters that the amended Act seeks to address, matters that are known to make a positive impact on dog and cat behaviour within our community.

OUR VISION FOR THIS PLAN

Our Dog and Cat Management Plan 2019-24 aligns with the objectives of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. It also sets out a vision for animal management in our city. Our aim is to maintain a suitable environment for dog and cat ownership that enables the benefits of companion animals to be realised, while minimising nuisance behaviour and its negative impact on our community.

This links with Council's vision for our city to be a place of opportunity and lifestyle, and particularly relates to the object of an attractive lifestyle and inclusive community.

The *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* sets out our responsibilities for the management of dogs and cats. Our Plan is consistent with the priorities of the Act and are focussed on implementing the provisions of the Act.

OVERVIEW OF THE CITY OF VICTOR HARBOR

The City of Victor Harbor is situated 84 kilometres south of Adelaide on the Southern Fleurieu Peninsula and encompasses an area of approximately 385 square kilometres with 32 kilometres of foreshore. The landscape of our city is varied, including hills, coast, rural farmland, suburban blocks, light industry and vineyards.

Our city has approximately 15,000 residents however as a major tourist destination the population increases and can grow to more than 30,000 with holiday makers from December to February each year.

The City of Victor Harbor's registered dog population for the period 2018-19 was 3,178 and cat population of 789.

OPEN SPACE, ON-LEASH AND OFF-LEASH AREAS

The city has approximately 176 reserves, diverse parks and, depending upon daylight savings times, 32 kilometres of foreshore available to exercise dog's off-leash providing they are kept under effective control.

While there is a diverse range of public spaces available for the off-leash exercise of dogs, a number of parks, reserves and beaches throughout our city have dog controls placed over them. These include, dogs on-leash and from time to time dog prohibited areas.

BY-LAW REQUIREMENTS

Council's 'By-law 5 – Dogs' establishes Council's policy position on how many dogs may be kept on premises, the requirement on dog owners to carry a bag in a public place to pick up after their dog and for the management and control of dogs in the council area.

Further, the by-law provides council with the power to determine, by resolution, part or parts of the Council where dogs must be kept on-leash, where dogs may be exercised off-leash on the foreshore, and where dogs are prohibited.

Council's 'By-law 6 – Cats' establishes Council's policy position on how many cats may be kept on premises, the requirement for cats to be registered and for the management and control of cats in the council area.

By-law 5 was reviewed and remade, and By-law 6 was enacted in 2016 and will be in effect for the life of the Dog and Cat Management Plan.



RESOURCING

Council is responsible for the management of dogs and cats under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. The Act includes requirements and administrative procedures for dealing with identification and registration, animal control and responsibilities, dangerous dogs, destruction and control orders, assistance dogs and seized animals.

The Act also outlines the roles of the Dog and Cat Management Board and Dog and Cat Management Fund.

Council has four General Inspectors, who are Authorised Persons (previously Dog and Cat Management Officers) under the Act. An Inspector's primary role in dog and cat management is regulatory through the administration of the Act and relevant Council By-laws. Their subsequent role is to be an advocate for responsible dog and cat management ownership. In addition, they also provide critical business functions by way of reactive request management (picking up wandering dogs, investigating dog attack and barking dog reports) and proactive services (patrolling on-leash and dog prohibited areas, information provider, advocate, promoting the identification and microchipping of dogs).

OUR LEGISLATIVE OBLIGATIONS

Council's animal management services are funded through revenue, received from dog registration and enforcement of the Act and council By-laws.

All dog and cat registration income received by Council is expended on dog management. In addition council has a legislative requirement, provided for within the Act, to pay a fixed percentage (12%) of registration income into the Dog and Cat Management fund.



STATISTICS

The comparison table below details animal management requests received and expiation notices issued between 1 July 2016 and 30 June 2019.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Dogs wandering at large	15	27	16
Dog attack reports	3	4	15
Barking dogs	15	12	18
Cat requests	10	50	4
Impounded dogs	32	32	38
Dogs returned to owner	30	36	34
Expiation notices issued			
Dog attack/harass	6	7	7
Dog wandering at large	16	26	17
Unregistered dogs	7	21	19
Unregistered cats	0	0	0
Nuisance cat wandering at large	0	1	0
Breach of barking dog order	-	0	1

REGISTRATION

Each year our Inspectors follow up the non-registration renewal of dogs/cats and the registration of unregistered dogs/cats found wandering at large or involved in a reported breaches of the Act or our By-laws.

If a dog/cat is not registered, a fine may be issued.

Number of registered dogs and cats in the City of Victor Harbor:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Dogs	2,920	2,727	3,178
Cats	64*	572	789

*Cat registration commenced part way through 2016/17.

MICROCHIPPING

Microchipping is a process that involves injecting a microchip about the size of a grain of rice between a pet's shoulder blades. Both cats and dogs can be microchipped. Each chip has a unique code that can be read using a scanner. The chip links to a register of information pertaining to that animal such as the name of the pet, owner's name and contact details.

Percentage of microchipped dogs and cats in the City of Victor Harbor:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Dogs	67.9%	76.5%	77.5%
Cats	65%	75%	80%

DESEXING

Desexing is a surgical procedure that prevents pets from reproducing. There are numerous benefits gained from desexing a dog or cat. These include a reduction in unwanted litters, reduced risk of certain cancers and reduction in behavioural problems. Desexed dogs are less likely to wander, be involved in a dog attack and are less likely to be aggressive or destructive.

We promote these benefits to the owners of entire dogs and cats through our annual dog registration renewal program.

Percentage of desexed dogs and cats in the City of Victor Harbor:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Dogs	75.7%	74%	76%
Cats	100%	80%	95%

IMPOUNDED DOGS AND CATS RETURNED TO OWNER

A dog or cat that wanders can pose a danger to itself and others and the owner is in breach of the Act or relevant By-law.

Our Inspectors are dedicated to reuniting owners with their lost dog or cat. On average our Inspectors return 98% of wandering dogs and cats to their owners. By returning a dog or cat directly to its owner, as opposed to impounding, our Inspectors have the opportunity to check the premises with the owner to identify how the dog or cat may have escaped and provide containment advice.

PICKING UP AFTER YOUR DOG

It is an offence to fail to pick up after a dog. The City of Victor Harbor has installed over 13 dog waste bag dispensers which encourages responsible pet ownership through the removal of dog faeces from public places. These dispensers are located across the Council area; within parks, reserves and along our foreshore areas for the benefit of dog owners and our community in keeping our city a comfortable and pleasant place to enjoy.

IMPROVEMENTS IN CAT MANAGEMENT

In July 2016 Council's Cat By-law 6 was enacted and establishes council's policy position on how many cats may be kept on premises, the requirement for cats to be registered and for the management and control of cats in the council area. Since that time we have had an increase in cat registration from 64 in 2016-17 to 789 in 2018-19.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All Authorised Persons (Inspectors) within the City of Victor Harbor are equipped with the knowledge and skills to carry out our responsibility under the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. Inspectors are also provided with ongoing professional development and are part of our annual performance review program.



DOG PARK

In March 2015 Council endorsed a design and staging plan for the Victor Harbor Dog Park for the purpose of public consultation, and that the consultation period occur concurrently with the consultation required for the development application under the *Development Act 1993*.

The general public consultation period closed in May 2015 during which 160 people were recorded to view the proposal and subsequently 29 submissions were received by Council. Representatives of the Port Elliot Dog Park from Alexandrina Council also provided some verbal feedback.

In 2017 the dog park was completed and opened to dog owners. The retention of the many trees in the park has ensured that the area provides a very pleasant environment for dogs and their owners, especially during the summer months. Snake deterrent netting encloses the park and is a unique concept providing added protection for its users.

Items such as bench seats, dog exercise equipment, bag dispensers, drinking points and rainwater tanks have also been installed for the benefit of the parks users. In addition a disability pedestrian access ramp allows the dog park to be used by all residents and visitors to our city.

The dog park has also prompted local dog owners to form a group 'Friends of the Victor Harbor Dog Park'.

Council provides comprehensive information on responsible pet ownership at our Victor Harbor office and on our website. Inspectors also regularly engage with our residents in the community and at community events regarding their responsibilities of companion animal ownership.

The Victor Harbor Dog Park is located on the corner of George Main Road and Oval Park Road. It is open 7 days a week and is divided into a large and small dog exercise area.



MANDATORY PROVISIONS

Under Section 26A of the Act, Council is required to develop and implement a Plan for the management of dogs and cats in its area.

26A—Plans of management relating to dogs and cats.

1. Each council must, in accordance with this section, prepare a plan relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area.
2. A plan of management must include provisions for parks where dogs may be exercised off-leash and for parks where dogs must be under effective control by means of physical restraint, and may include provisions for parks where dogs are prohibited.
3. A plan of management must cover five year periods and each plan must be prepared and presented to the Board at least six months before it is to take effect.
4. A plan of management must be approved by the Board before it takes effect.
5. A council may, with the approval of the Board, amend a plan of management at any time during the course of the five year period covered by the plan.

The Plan addresses the mandatory requirements of the Act.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

1. Educate, promote and support the community regarding benefits and responsibilities of dog and cat ownership:

- Engage with owners and provide up-to-date and relevant information;
- Support access to education opportunities;
- Promote responsible dog and cat ownership with owners, veterinarians and local companion animal clubs;
- Promote the Board's Good Dog SA website and Facebook.

2. Increase the portion of microchipped/desexed dogs and cats within the City:

- Educate owners of the mandatory microchipping and desexing requirements of the Act;
- Incentivise microchipping/desexing of dogs and cats not yet microchipped through the setting of registration renewal fees and rebates;
- Promote microchipping and desexing programs such as the National Desexing Network's (NDN) and Chip Blitz microchipping;
- Reduce the number of unwanted dogs and cats.

Key performance indicator: *Percentage increase of microchipped/desexed dogs and cats registered in our area*

3. Provide appropriate support to dog and cat owners to maintain and improve the welfare of their pets:

- Provide public accessible facilities for dog exercise;
- Encourage pet socialisation opportunities;
- Encourage 'pet friendly' home environments;
- Inspector's engagement with dog and cat owners.

4. Responsible dog and cat ownership:

- Promote microchipping and desexing;
- Offer a registration discount to owners of dogs which have passed obedience training with a qualified trainer;
- Promote the Board's Good Dog SA website and Facebook;
- Explore discounted registration of puppies to incentivise early registration of new dogs;
- Provide a response to nuisance dog and cat requests that supports customers in achieving amenity that is reasonable and acceptable, in a timely manner;
- Provide best practice advice and tools to dog owners for managing nuisance dog behaviour;
- Pursue breaches of the Act or our By-laws using powers provided to us and where necessary apply control Orders and penalties to prevent further instances and incentivise compliance.

Key performance indicators: *Reduction in the number of customer requests related to dog and cat behavioural issues and irresponsible ownership, in particular reduced response time to nuisance barking complaints achieved over the lifetime of the plan.*

5. Reduce the public and environmental nuisance caused by dog and cats:

- Dog bag dispensers are maintained and filled in parks and areas where people frequently walk dogs;
- Promote picking up after your dog and pursue breaches of the Act and Council's By-law pertaining to dog faeces;
- Manage feral cats on local government land in partnership with relevant state and commonwealth government agencies.

Key performance indicator: *A reduction in dog faeces within areas that are identified as high usage for the exercise of dogs (such as shared paths and beach entrances).*

6. Effective administration of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995:

- Maintain competencies of Authorised persons (General Inspectors);
- Continue to promote Dogs and Cats Online (DACO);
- Provide support to residents to facilitate online registration of new dogs/cats and registration renewal, transfer or changes in dog details;
- Utilise improved opportunities via DACO to communicate topical information to owners eg notification of fireworks, events or animal disease outbreaks;
- Pursue registration/microchipping/desexing of unregistered dogs and cats identified through surveys and offending.

Key performance indicators: *Inspectors are provided with ongoing professional development as part of our annual performance review program, customer experience feedback indicates increased level of satisfaction, all identified un-registered dogs and cats are registered, increase Inspector participation in proactive community engagement for example, attending community events and education initiatives.*