



NORTH SYDNEY LOCAL COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN



prepared

by

North Sydney Council

September 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Sydney Council implemented a Local Companion Animals Management Plan in May 1999 to improve strategies to deal with the responsible management of companion animals.

The Department of Local Government encourages the development of local companion animals management plans, however, this remains an optional activity for local councils. The Local Government Act 1993 requires councils to develop management plans. The Department advises that, *“while having a companion animal management plan is good practice, there is no compelling reason why such plans should not become part of their overall management plan for a council, rather than making them a separate or additional requirement.”*

The implementation period of 3 years since the adoption of the initial plan has now expired and a review has been conducted. The actions contained in the initial plan have for the most part been implemented. The review has identified those objectives which should be in place for the long term to ensure appropriate management of companion animals in the local area. These have been incorporated into the North Sydney Council Local Companion Animals Management Plan 2004 - 2007. However, it is envisaged that future strategies would form part of Council’s overall management plan and also be incorporated into the plans of management of parks and reserves.

There is increasing recognition that enforcement approaches will not, on their own, result in lasting changes in human behaviour. They need to be supplemented with a range of non-regulatory approaches such as community education to achieve responsible pet ownership.

The revised Plan is divided into two parts. Part 1 is the Strategic Framework and is divided into five sections, i.e:

1. Introduction - with an explanation of the Plan and the scope which is covered by it;
2. Companion Animals Management: A New Agenda for Local Government - discusses the key issues arising from the Companion Animals Act 1998;
3. The Local Context - analyses the existing situation in the North Sydney Local Government Area (LGA);
4. Objective and aims; and
5. Community Consultation.

The Action Plans are contained in Part 2. They have been grouped into ten key issue areas i.e.

- Education and dissemination;
- Identification and registration;
- Dogs in public places;
- Faeces management;
- Wandering dogs;
- Excessive barking;
- Dangerous dogs and restricted breeds;

- Cat management;
- Animal welfare and safety;
- Keeping of Domestic Animals other than Dogs and Cats

The action plan establishes objectives and timeframes to ensure the ongoing management of companion animals in the local area with greater community involvement over the next three years.

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PART 1: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Local Companion Animals Management Plan

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* introduced changes to the way dogs were managed by local authorities and, for the first time, introduced controls over domestic cats.

The *Review of the Companion Animals Act 1998* by the Department of Local Government (published in June 2004) has demonstrated an overall satisfaction with the underlying principles of the Act: management and care for companion animals, while identifying a number of possible areas in which changes may be considered appropriate. An amending Bill is still pending at the time of writing this plan, however, amendments are predicted to be of a minor, clarifying nature only.

A *Local Companion Animals Management Plan* (LCAMP) is a document, which provides a means for Council to fulfil its responsibilities under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* by determining relevant objectives and priorities along with a clear program of implementation.

1.2 The Outline of this Plan

The LCAMP is divided into two parts:

Part 1 (Sections 1-5) is entitled *Strategic Framework*. It examines relevant issues and responsibilities in relation to companion animal management. It culminates in an objective and aims of the LCAMP.

Part 2 (Section 6) is entitled *Action Plans*. It outlines the actions necessary for Council to reach and achieve the *Plan's* objective and aims as outlined in the Strategic Framework.

1.3 Scope of the Plan

The initial plan was confined to an examination of domestic dogs and cats. However, it is considered appropriate to broaden the plan to include the management of other domestic animals. The Act provides for an avenue that animals, other than dogs and cats, which are kept as pets, may be included if there is sufficient evidence that such an inclusion is justified.

Specific issues include those prescribed under relevant legislation as well as the generally understood notion of socially responsible pet ownership.

This *Plan* consolidates achievements which have resulted from the strategies contained in the initial plan which was derived from the developing expertise in companion animal management around Australia, to produce a program of action to be undertaken by Council for the future. The plans for a three period and includes annual reviews.

2. COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* heralded a new era for Council's management of domestic cats and dogs. The days when animal control consisted largely of dog registrations and pound management have ceased. Today's management environment consists of both dogs and cats and includes a wider range of issues including the environment, animal welfare, removal of dog faeces, the question of on- and off-leash areas, and barking dogs complaints. What was once a relatively straightforward part of Council activity is now highly emotive, attracting interest from both pet owners and non-pet owners alike.

Reliance on laws will probably always be the backbone of companion animal management, however, there is now more emphasis on the development of non-regulatory approaches such as public education.

There is also a role for the use of design of both domestic dwellings and public open space to help people to be responsible pet owners and to reduce the incidence of conflict. This implies a role for Council in disseminating appropriate design guidelines but also in modifying the planning and design of public parks.

In the North Sydney Local Government Area (LGA), the urban character is such that the vast majority of dwellings and developments provide boundary fencing sufficient to constrain the roaming of dogs and is stipulated in the *North Sydney Development Control Plan 2002*.

The following section examines key issues in greater depth as outlined in the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

2.1 **Registration and Identification of Companion Animals Update** **(*Companion Animals Act 1998, Sections 8 & 9*)**

Registration and identification are crucial components of animal management because they provide:

- A database for returning lost pets;
- A method of identifying offending animals;
- An avenue to communicate with pet owners; and
- A source of funds for education and enforcement.

Under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, a companion animal must be microchipped from 12 weeks of age (Section 8), although there are transitional provisions to accommodate existing owned dogs. A companion animal must be registered from six months of age (Section 9). Existing owned cats are exempt from the new provisions.

2.2 Dogs

2.2.1 Off-Leash Areas (Companion Animals Act 1998, Section 13)

Council can declare a public place to be an off-leash area. Such a declaration can be limited so as to apply during a particular period or periods of the day or to different periods of different days. However, under the Companion Animals Act 1998, there must at all times be at least one public place in any Local Government Area that is an off-leash area.

All Council parks and public reserves are off-leash areas with the exception of:

- St Leonard's Oval (No. 1 and 2);
- All playing fields whilst organized sporting events are in progress;
- Areas as discussed in Part 2.2.2 (Public Places Where Dogs Would Be Excluded);
- All bushland areas;
- Cremorne Reserve, Clark Park and Acrum Street Park.

This information and more about dogs in the North Sydney LGA is available in Council's free booklet, Dog Control in North Sydney and may be obtained through Council's Ranger Services Department or Customer Service Centre.

2.2.2 Public Places where Dogs would be Excluded (Companion Animals Act 1998, Section 14)

Under the Companion Animals Act 1998, dogs are also prohibited in the following public places:

- In or within 10m of any children's play areas;
- Food preparation and/or consumption areas (unless it is a public thoroughfare such as a road, footpath or pathway);
- Recreation areas where dogs are declared prohibited;
- Public bathing areas where dogs are declared prohibited;
- School grounds (unless with the permission of the person controlling the grounds);
- Child care centers (unless with the permission of the person controlling the center);
- Shopping areas where dogs are prohibited (unless secured in a vehicle, with the permission of the person controlling the place or going to or from a vet or pet shop); and

- Wildlife protection areas.

Thus Council can prohibit dogs from particular recreation areas, public bathing areas, shopping centers and wildlife protection areas.

2.2.3 Dog Faeces **(Companion Animals Act 1998, Section 20)**

Unretrieved dog faeces present problems for health, environmental and amenity reasons. Under the Companion Animals Act 1998, owners are required to remove their dogs' faeces immediately and properly dispose of them. In practice, this is extremely difficult to enforce on the street and remains a priority for Council's public education program.

Council must provide sufficient rubbish receptacles for owners to dispose of their dogs' faeces in areas that are commonly used for exercising dogs.

2.2.4 Nuisance Dogs **(Companion Animals Act 1998, Section 21)**

Under Section 21 of the Companion Animals Act 1998 a dog is a nuisance if it:

- Is habitually at large;
- Makes a noise by barking or otherwise, that persistently occurs or continues to such a degree or extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises;
- Repeatedly defecates on another person's property;
- Repeatedly chases any person, animal or vehicle;
- Endangers the health of any person or animal; or
- Repeatedly causes substantial damage to anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept.

In urban areas, no or low front fence requirements make it difficult for owners to confine their dogs to their property.

Complaints relating to barking problems are often not easy to resolve and consume large amounts of Council officers' time.

Since nuisance problems are often difficult to define and measure, they can prove difficult to enforce. The words 'repeatedly' and 'habitually' are important in determining if a nuisance exists. However, this determination rests without appeal with an authorised officer of Council.

2.2.5 Dangerous Dogs

(Companion Animals Act 1998, Sections 34 and 51)

Council can declare a dog kept in its area as dangerous. Once a dog is declared dangerous, the owner must comply with specified conditions including keeping the dog in a childproof enclosure.

2.2.6 Restricted Dogs

(Companion Animals Act 1998, Sections 55 and 56)

The Companion Animals Act 1998 states that the following are restricted dogs:

- Pit bull terriers
- American Pit Bull Terriers;
- Japanese Tosas;
- Argentinian fighting dogs;
- Brazilian fighting dogs; and
- Any other dog of a breed, kind or description prescribed by the regulations as restricted for the purposes of this Division (e.g. dogs used as guard dogs by security personnel could be prescribed as restricted dogs).

The owner of a restricted dog must also comply with specified conditions including keeping the dog in a childproof enclosure.

2.3 Cats

The issues of cat management relate predominantly to the impact of cats on wildlife. Cats can also be a nuisance to surrounding neighbours.

Council can prohibit cats from entering public places. Other options for protection of wildlife include:

- Cat curfews
- Education to encourage people to keep their cat indoors;
- Cat proof fences and enclosures; and
- Use of housing design to help owners to responsibly confine their cat.

2.3.1 Areas Where Cats Would Be Prohibited

(Companion Animals Act 1998, Section 30)

Under the Companion Animals Act 1998, owned domestic cats are

prohibited in the following public places:

- Food preparation or consumption areas (unless it is a public thoroughfare such as a road, footpath or pathway); and
- Wildlife protection areas.

A wildlife protection area is a public place that has been declared by Council for the protection of wildlife.

2.3.2 Nuisance Cats **(Companion Animals Act 1998, Section 31)**

A cat is a nuisance if it:

- Makes a persistent noise; or
- Repeatedly damages anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept.

This will be similar to handling nuisance dog complaints, although cats are more difficult to confine to a property than dogs.

2.4 Enforcement or Education

An ongoing debate in animal management is the relative merits of enforcement versus education. Laws will probably always be the backbone of the management task. However, the advantages of taking a legal approach should not blind us to its shortcomings. It is inherently inefficient because of its focus on means rather than ends and because it consumes vast resources in maintaining an enforcement presence for benefits that are not always assured (i.e. an officer cannot control what happens after he or she leaves an area).

3. THE LOCAL CONTEXT

3.1 The North Sydney LGA

The North Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) covers 10.5 square kilometers. The area is divided into four wards: Tunks, Cremorne, Victoria and Wollstonecraft, which are further broken into 13 suburbs and 24 precinct areas. Within this boundary reside 56,549 people in approximately 28,507 households. North Sydney LGA has boundaries with three local government areas: Lane Cove, Willoughby and Mosman, with Sydney Harbour to the south of the area.

Council's Planning and Environmental Services Division recognises that approximately 61.5% of the land in the North Sydney LGA is zoned residential, and 1.42% commercial. Approximately 21.5% of land is zoned for open space/recreation, 7.4% is for special land use (education, health, defence, public utilities). The area is characterized by the North Sydney Central Business District, and a number of smaller commercial/retail centers mainly in Neutral Bay/Cremorne and Crows Nest/St Leonards.

The North Sydney Recreation Needs Study (1997) states that the North Sydney LGA has approximately 148 open space areas covering 137 hectares, with most urban households having reasonable access at a safe walking distance of approximately 300 metres to a local open space area. Key features of the area include the significant areas of remnant bushland along the harbour foreshore, harbour views, and a number of significant parks.

3.2 Animal Management in the North Sydney LGA

Within the North Sydney LGA, approximately 9.25% of households (or approximately 2,600 residences) are owners of dogs with 1,945 dogs presently registered. There are also 761 cats registered from a total cat population of 1926 in the North Sydney LGA.

Within the LGA, there are 126 acceptable open space locations for off-leash dog exercise, and other open space areas where dogs may be exercised on-leash only. Of these locations, six have specific receptacles for the disposal of dog faeces:

The *North Sydney Recreation Needs Study (1997)* refers to a national *Recreation Participation Survey*, which states that 13.2% of the Australian population participates in "walking the dog" as an "away-from-home" recreation/leisure activity. This is a relatively low proportion of the population but it sustains the second highest frequency of participation of all recreation/leisure pursuits undertaken, i.e. although more people participate in other forms of recreation/leisure activities, they do not participate as often as those "walking the dog".

North Sydney Council is currently undertaking a further Recreation Needs Study. It is anticipated that the results will be known by November 2004.

The Ranger Services Department, within Council's Corporate Services Division, controls all companion animal matters and applies standard operating procedures based on the current *Companion Animal Act 1998*.

3.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

Council currently has a three-year master *Management Plan*, which is reviewed and reported quarterly to Council meetings, as prescribed by *The Local Government Act 1993*. Likewise, Divisions within Council develop management plans in relation to specific tasks, property or issues requiring more detailed management. Again, some of these plans are mandatory under *The Local Government Act 1993* and/or other acts relating to specific legislation.

The table below lists the management plans which contain specific mention of companion animals management in the North Sydney LGA. It is advised that these plans should be referred to in conjunction with the LCAMP. In most instances the plans discuss allocation of dog walking areas, predation management and public health issues.

Note: This list details the principal plans where direct reference is made to cats and dogs and omits plans which have only a circumstantial reference.

Table 6: Management Plans

Management Plan Title	Section Relating to Companion Animals
North Sydney Council Management Plan 2004-2007	Governance & Participation 7.4 Ranger Services p70
St Thomas Rest Park Plan of Management (November 2001)	Planning Issues: 3.5 Structures pp. 16-17 3.6 Pollution p. 17 Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Recreational Opportunities and Constraints p. 28
Sportsgrounds Plan of Management (February 2003)	Foreword p. 1 Planning Issues: 3.2 Recreational Usage pp.

	10-11 Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Usage p. 21
Bradfield Park Plan of Management (June 2001)	Planning Issues: 3.4 Recreational Opportunities and Constraints p. 15 Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Recreational and Leisure p. 31
Neighbourhood Parks Plan of Management (September 2002)	Planning Issues: 3.3 Recreational Usage p. 11 Policy Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Recreational Use p. 21
Forsyth Park Plan of Management (August 2001)	Characteristics and Resources: 2.5 Current Activities within the Park pp. 11-12 Planning Issues: 3.4 Recreational Opportunities and Constraints p. 14
St Leonards Park Plan of Management (July 2003)	Park Characteristics and Resources: 2.7.3 User Attitudes p. 20 Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Recreational Opportunities and Constraints p. 41
Bushland Plan of Management (1995 amended 1997)	Bushland Characteristics and Resources: 2.3.5 Fauna p. 12 Planning Issues: 3.3 Fauna Management pp. 19-20 Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Fauna Management p. 34
Foreshore Parks and Reserves Plan of Management (June 2002)	Planning Issues: 3.3 Usage p. 15 Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Recreation and Leisure p. 35

Smoothey Park Plan of Management (June 2001)	<p>Characteristics and Resources: 2.2.4 Fauna pp. 10-11</p> <p>Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Recreational Opportunities and Constraints p. 29</p>
Cremorne Reserve Plan of Management (Draft 26 August 2003)	<p>Reserve Characteristics and Resources: 2.3.4 Fauna p. 8 2.4 Current Activities within the Reserve p. 10</p> <p>Basis for Management: 4.2.2 Management Objectives p. 22</p> <p>Policy, Implementation and Performance: 5.1 Recreation and Leisure p. 40</p>
Recreation Needs Study (1997 - in the process of review)	<p>Literature Review: 2.1 Recreation and Cultural Needs p. 5</p> <p>Recreation and Cultural Trends: 4.1.1 1991 Recreation Participation Survey pp. 18-19 4.4 Implications p. 24</p> <p>Community Consultation: 6.4 Public Meetings p. 40 6.6.3 Parks and Reserves P. 43 Analysis of Recreation Needs p. 47</p> <p>Appendix C4: Public Meeting No. 1 3/2/97</p>
State of Environment Report (2003)	<p>Water: 2.2 Catchment condition p. 21</p> <p>Biodiversity: p. 19 3.3 Responding to declining specie diversity p. 19</p> <p>Noise: p. 15 7.2 Noise Complaints p. 15</p>

(The Plans listed above are available at Stanton Library and on Council's Website - www.northsydney.com.au)

4. OBJECTIVE AND AIMS

The objective for the *North Sydney Local Companion Animals Management Plan* is:

To promote and facilitate responsible ownership of dogs and cats, animal welfare, the benefits of animal companionship and to co-ordinate responsible management strategies under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

The aims of the Plan are:

- To ensure Council meets its obligations under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*;
- To investigate the best mix of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches to achieving responsible pet ownership in the North Sydney LGA; and
- To establish priorities for companion animals management for the next three years.

The Action Plans are practical actions that Council can undertake to ensure these aims materialise. These are set out in Part 2.

5. COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Community consultation plays an important role in the production of any management plan. It provides Council with a sound understanding of relevant local issues from people who have companion animals as well as those who do not. To a large degree, the direction for the future development of local companion animal issues is based on the views expressed by the community.

Community involvement and consultation generates an understanding of Council's management aims, combats misinformation and misunderstanding, and fosters support for Council's programs and policies. The consent and co-operation of the community facilitates management and lends weight to the status of the management plan.

The Environmental Services Committee oversees the implementation of the Plan.

5.1 Writing a Submission

Submissions give the community an opportunity to express their opinions, provide information and suggest alternatives to Council's proposed management strategies for companion animal issues in the North Sydney LGA over the next 3 years.

To ensure submissions are as effective as possible:

- List all points according to the section and page number in the management plan;
- Briefly describe each subject or issue you wish to discuss;
- State which strategies you agree or disagree with, and give reasons; and
- Suggest alternatives to deal with any issue with which you disagree.

Written submissions should be addressed to:

The General Manager
North Sydney Council
PO Box 12
NORTH SYDNEY NSW 2059

Attention: Kerry Gilbert

Fax Number: 02 9936 8177

PART 2: ACTION PLANS

6. KEY ISSUE AREAS

6.1 Key Issue Areas

The key issue areas include:

- Education and dissemination;
- Identification and registration;
- Dogs in public places;
- Faeces management;
- Wandering dogs;
- Excessive barking;
- Dangerous dogs and restricted breeds;
- Cat management;
- Animal welfare and safety;
- The keeping of Domestic Animals other than Dogs and Cats;
- Funding and review.

6.2 Strategies and Implementation

The strategies established in this *Plan* provide the framework for management consistent with anticipated availability of resources. The priority ratings outlined on the following pages are subject to the availability of necessary staff and funds, and may require modification if special circumstances arise.

6.3 Codes Used to Define Priorities

Codes used to define priorities in the following Action Plan:

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 | = | High Priority (within 6 months) |
| 2 | = | Medium High Priority (6 to 12 months) |
| 3 | = | Low Priority (18 months to 3 years) |

Note: This management plan is designed for three years and shall be reviewed annually and extensively reviewed at the end of the three year period.

6.4 Education and Dissemination

Summary of Issues:

Education is the key to lasting voluntary changes in human behaviour. It involves education of animals, their owners and prospective owners. It also involves showing non-pet owners, especially children how to behave around animals.

The education program should consider educational courses, brochures, communication in the media, etc.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Plan and Implement an ongoing local education program.	1	Manager Ranger Services in association with Communications Manager	Education program implemented	Monitor and report to Council annually
In order to optimise the dissemination and enforcement effort, hold on the job induction sessions to brief new relevant staff (enforcement, parks, maintenance, etc.) in the leash provisions (including the environmental and social reasons for prohibiting dogs from specified areas).	1	Manager Ranger Services / Parks and Reserves Manager	Induction information compiled and presented following appointment	Ongoing

6.5 Identification and Registration

Summary of Issues:

Identification and registration is important for reunion of lost pets with their owners and as a source of funding for animal management programs. It also provides a database for Council to communicate with its pet owning population.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Ongoing education of the community about the importance and need for micro chipping and registering dogs and cats.	Ongoing	Manager Ranger Services/ Customer Service Manager	Increase registrations from current level of 1,945 (dogs) and 761 (cats)	Ongoing
Enforcement action for non-compliance.	Ongoing	Manager Ranger Services	Continue to increase registrations through enforcement and other animal management programs	Ongoing

6.6 Dogs in Public Places

Summary of Issues:

Dogs and their owners are significant users of public open space, however some dogs cause problems for other park users and the environment.

There may be a case to prohibit dogs from some public places. These issues need to be decided in consultation with the local community.

The provisions in the *Companion Animals Act 1998* relating to dogs' access to public open space need to be disseminated widely to the community. Appropriate signage is essential.

Off-leash areas need to be protected from conflicting uses or development. This is best done by integrating the provisions into relevant plans of management.

Over time, improved planning and design can be used to reduce conflicts between different public open space users and resources.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Undertake a review of community land classifications with regard to the establishment of Wildlife Protection Areas.	3	Director of Open Space and Environmental Services	Review completed by target date	September 2007
Ensure appropriate signage is displayed for on-leash areas.	1	Director of Open Space and Environmental Services	Appropriate signage is in place	Ongoing
Consider leash provisions in the development of Plans of Management for public open space.	2	Director of Open Space and Environmental Services	Draft Plans of Management to be referred for comment to the appropriate officer	

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Enforcement action for non-compliance.	1	Manager Ranger Services	Enforcement action taken when appropriate in accordance with Standard Operating Procedure	Ongoing

6.7 Faeces Management

Summary of Issues:

Removal and disposal of dog faeces by dog owners is required under Section 20 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. It is important for environmental, health and amenity reasons. However it is recognised that this requirement is difficult to enforce. Encouraging owners to pick up and remove their dog's faeces a priority for public education.

It is Council's duty to provide sufficient rubbish receptacles for the disposal of dog faeces in areas commonly used for exercising dogs (pursuant to Section 20).

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Maintain sufficient rubbish receptacles for the disposal of dog faeces.	1	Director of Open Space and Environmental Services	Options for disposal of dog faeces reviewed	Ongoing
Enforce the requirement for people to remove and dispose of their dog's faeces.	1	Manager Ranger Services	Enforcement action taken when appropriate in accordance with standard operating procedure	Ongoing
Educate the community about the importance of removing and disposing of dog faeces and options available.	1	Manager Ranger Services / Customer Service Manager	Input into the public education program	Ongoing

6.8 Wandering Dogs

Summary of Issues:

Dogs wandering at large contribute significantly to the dog management task.

Identification and registration are central to management of wandering dogs.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Educate the community about the importance of properly confining their dogs.	2	Manager Ranger Services	Promote and enforce identification and registration of dogs (and cats) to enable safe return of companion animals	Ongoing
Impounding procedures implemented.	1	Manager Ranger Services	Wandering dogs are impounded in accordance with standard operating procedure	Ongoing

6.9 Excessive Barking

Summary of Issues:

Barking complaints are problematic due to their inherent subjectivity and the fact that they are not easily resolved.

Options for improvement include use of a diary system by complainants, staff training in negotiations and the introduction of a referral system to a specialist animal behaviourist.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Implement procedures for dealing with barking complaints.	1	Manager Ranger Services	All barking dog complaints dealt with in accordance with standard operating procedure	Ongoing

6.10 Dangerous Dogs and Restricted Breeds

Summary of Issues:

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* provides special procedures for dealing with dangerous dogs and restricted breeds.

Both categories of dog are required to be kept in a child-proof enclosure. The Review of the Companion Act recommends clarification of the meaning of a child-proof enclosure. A suggested definition is an enclosure which is sufficient to restrain the dog and will prevent a child from having access to the dog.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Implement procedures for dealing with dangerous dogs and restricted breeds.	1	Manager Ranger Services	In accordance with standard operating procedures	Ongoing

6.11 Cat Management

Summary of Issues:

New born cats are now required to be identified and registered under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

Council can prohibit cats from entering specified public places. There are also procedures for dealing with nuisance cats.

Some of the options proposed in other areas (eg, cat bans, cat curfews, etc.) are extremely difficult and expensive to enforce. Public education is required to increase awareness of the need to identify and register cats and about responsible cat ownership.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Undertake a review of community land classifications with regard to the establishment of Wildlife Protection Areas.	3	Director of Open Space and Environmental Services	Review completed	September 2007
Enforce procedures for dealing with nuisance cats and where applicable for dealing with cats entering wildlife protection areas.	1	Manager Ranger Services / Director of Open Space and Environmental Services	Actions in accordance with Standard Operating Procedure	Ongoing
Educate the community about responsible pet ownership and the need to identify and register their cats.	1	Manager Ranger Services / Customer Service Manager	Input into education program as an early priority	Ongoing

6.12 Animal Welfare and Safety

Summary of Issues:

Animal management needs to ensure appropriate animal welfare and safety.

Of particular importance is to promote de-sexing of non-breeding pets so as to reduce the occurrence of animal wandering and unwanted animal births.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Promote de-sexing of companion animals.	1	Manager Ranger Services / Customer Service Manager	Input into education program	Ongoing
Promote and enforce identification and registration of dogs and cats to enable safe return of companion animals	1	Manager Ranger Services	Input into education program	Ongoing

6.13 Keeping of Domestic Animals other than Dogs and Cats**Summary of Issues:**

Local government can have a role in promoting responsible pet ownership of other domestic animals as well as establishing and enforcing policies which will assist in managing nuisance animals and promoting the welfare of such animals in an urban environment.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Develop a policy to achieve an harmonious co-existence between residents and animals.	2	Manager Ranger Services	Policy provides a legal framework to manage other domestic animals in the North Sydney Council area	30 June 2005

6.14 Recognising the Benefits of Pet Ownership

Summary of Issues:

Local government has a role to play in promoting the health and social benefits of owning domestic pets.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Promote the health benefits of owning pets in the local community	2	Director of Community and Library Services	Actively promote the health benefits of pet ownership. Develop or provide brochures to the local community.	Ongoing
Assist tenants and landlords with queries about owning pets in rental accommodation		Director of Community and Library Services	Distribute literature on keeping pets in rental accommodation to the local community	Ongoing

6.15 Review

Summary of Issues:

Once adopted, the Plan needs to be subject to ongoing review as new issues and priorities emerge.

A detailed record system is important to ensure Council can accurately track trends in registrations, complaints, infringements and orders and pound activity.

Incorporation of companion animal management activities into other relevant Council Management Plans should be an aim for the future as the legislation and adopted strategies become an acceptable norm by the community. Otherwise, the Plan should be completely reviewed within three years.

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Ensure the LCAMP is implemented and reviewed.	3	Director of Corporate Services	Facilitate the LCAMP's implementation and review through regular meetings with the Environmental Services Committee advice to Council	Monitor and report annually
Investigate the incorporation of companion animals strategies in to other Council Management Plans.	3	Director of Corporate Services	Relevant Management Plans contain specific objectives relating to the management of companion animals	September 2007

STRATEGIC ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBILITY	TARGET/ PERFORMANCE	EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE
Review records system.	2	Director of Corporate Services	Audit record system to ensure detailed records are kept on all animal management activities	30 June 2005

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