

COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2009

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Prepared by Planning & Economic Development
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1 INTRODUCTION

The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 defines companion animals as domesticated dogs and cats. Companion animals play an integral role in society, but can cause neighbourhood conflict when issues of irresponsible pet ownership arise.

AlburyCity Council uses a range of education and enforcement mechanisms to encourage and achieve compliance with the requirements of the Act. Council's Companion Animals Management Plan 2009 identifies the key issues in companion animal management and contains strategic actions to address these issues.

Council recognises the important role of companion animals within the community and encourages responsible pet ownership through education and promotional activities. Responsible pet ownership improves the quality of lifestyle for residents by highlighting animal welfare issues which are often the catalyst for nuisance behaviour by domesticated animals.

The development of the Plan has been undertaken to address the key issues in companion animal management and provide a guide to companion animal services and actions for AlburyCity officers and the community in general.

The education and promotion of responsible pet ownership is the consistent principle behind the Plan. Many of the issues identified for companion animal management can be directly attributed to irresponsible pet ownership. By encouraging improved responsible behaviour by animal owners, many of the Plan's objectives may be achieved.

The Plan concentrates on three primary themes in companion animal management – domesticated animals, the community and the natural environment. Specific actions have also been included in the Plan to provide a clear indication of the Plan's outcomes.

The Plan aims to:

- Balance the needs of the community, the environment and companion animals,
- Identify any weaknesses in the current strategies,
- Provide a framework for prioritising actions, and
- Provide clear indicators for a review

AlburyCity's Companion Animals Management Plan 2009 has been developed utilising the experience and knowledge of Council officers who have a primary responsibility for animal control matters.

2 PLAN STATEMENT

AlburyCity Council recognises the importance of companion animal management to the community, natural environment and for the welfare of individual animals. Council, through the community of Albury and interested parties will encourage all pet owners in the Albury area to be responsible for their pet's actions by using a range of skills and tools for education and enforcement.

Principles

Officers and interested parties will be guided by the following principles of responsible pet ownership:

- Appropriate pet selection,
- Basic animal health and welfare principles,
- Identification,
- Registration,
- Desexing,
- Secure confinement,
- Environmental factors,
- Animal socialisation,
- Training, and
- Lifetime commitment

Objectives

Our objectives in companion animal management are:

- To promote the permanent microchip identification and lifetime registration of all companion animals in Albury to facilitate the prompt return of lost companion animals to their owners.
- To provide a fast and efficient service for customers when updating or registering details on the NSW Companion Animals Register.
- To facilitate the prompt return of seized animals to the owner and reduce the number of animals that need to be impounded.
- To provide a best practice animal management facility and transport procedure for seized animals.
- To minimise the numbers of unwanted or unidentified animals that are euthanased.
- To ensure Council staff regard animal welfare as a high priority in all dealings with the community and companion animals.
- To encourage companion animal owners to provide a stimulating environment for their animal which will improve animal welfare and reduce any adverse impact on the general community.
- To improve community awareness in the importance of safety around companion animals.

- To improve owner's awareness of their responsibility to maintain their animal under effective control in public places.
- To ensure an efficient and effective response to reported dog attacks.
- To provide leash free exercise areas for dogs across the Albury area that is as safe as possible for dogs and people.
- To minimise any noise pollution caused by companion animals and improve community amenity.
- To minimise the negative impact of companion animals and their faeces on the natural environment.
- To increase owner awareness of the potential impact of companion animals on the natural environment including flora and fauna, through predation.

Mission

Enhance the quality of lifestyle for all Albury residents through community education and promotion of responsible pet ownership to improve neighbourhood amenity, highlight animal welfare issues and protect the natural environment.

3 RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

Objectives

- The education and promotion of responsible pet ownership is the consistent principle behind the Plan. Many of the issues identified in companion animal management are directly linked to irresponsible pet ownership. By improving the current level of understanding of animal behaviour, many of the Plan's objectives will be achieved.
- AlburyCity aims to encourage all pet owners within the local government area to be responsible for their pet's actions through the use of education programs and enforcement procedures where necessary.

Issues

- Responsible pet owners should consider appropriate pet selection, including its basic health and welfare, identification, registration, desexing, secure confinement, environmental factors, socialisation, training and lifetime commitment.
- Appropriate pet selection is the first step to responsible pet ownership. By choosing an animal most suited to the owner's lifestyle and property constraints, nuisance behaviour can be minimised. Choosing the right animal creates a relaxed environment and promotes a lifetime commitment to the animal by the owner. The privilege of owning and enjoying the companionship of a pet carries with it the dual responsibilities of care for the animal and respect for the neighbouring community. Responsible pet owners will:
 - when at home, confine their animal in their yard to prevent negative impacts on public safety and the environment;
 - when in public places, ensure that their dog is under effective control by means of a leash (except in leash free areas);
 - keep their animals out of prohibited areas;
 - ensure their animal is identified with a microchip, collar and tag to assist in returning the animal if it becomes lost;
 - register their animal through Council or relevant authority;
 - investigate and consider desexing their animal to minimise nuisance behaviour and the numbers of unwanted animals; and
 - clean up after their animal and be aware of environmental factors.

Council officers will encourage and emphasise the importance of responsible pet ownership when dealing with animal owners. Many of the Plan's actions involve the owner being familiar with the aspects of responsible pet ownership.

Actions

1. Develop and provide education programs within schools and community to encourage responsible pet ownership.
2. Use of enforcement procedures only when necessary

4 ANIMAL ISSUES

An integral component of the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 is the permanent microchip identification and the recording of registration details through the NSW Companion Animals Register.

Animal welfare and behavioural issues often reflect the environmental factors within which a confined animal has been kept. The safety of officers, the seizure, transport and impounding process of companion animals are also of high importance.

4.1 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Objectives

- To encourage the permanent microchip identification of all companion animals in Albury to facilitate the prompt return of lost or stray animals to their owners.
- To encourage lifetime registration of all companion animals in Albury in accordance with the Act.
- To provide a fast and efficient service for customers updating or recording animal registration details on the NSW Companion Animals Register.

Background

The Companion Animals Act requires companion animals to be microchipped by 12 weeks of age and registered by 6 months of age. The microchip and registration process allows for lost or stray companion animals to be easily identified and returned to their owners as quickly as possible. When an animal is microchipped and registered, Council officers will attempt to contact the owner using the recorded information avoiding the need for the animal to be impounded and the associated costs being applied.

Since the introduction of the Act, microchipping has become a mandatory procedure for companion animals. Microchipping must be carried out by authorised individuals such as veterinarians, breeders and animal welfare officers. A number of Council officers are authorised to provide microchipping services enabling Council to assist members of the community to microchip their animals during scheduled events and promotional activities.

Statistical information recorded by Council indicates that an unknown number of cats and dogs in Albury are likely to be neither microchipped or registered. Council uses education, promotional and enforcement mechanisms where necessary, to minimise these issues with animal identification and registration.

Issues

- Not all authorised individuals provide Council with the relevant animal and ownership details within the statutory time limitation of 7 days.
- There remains community confusion over the two step process for the requirements of animal microchipping and registration.
- Officers continue to seize companion animals from within the community that are microchipped but not registered and in some situations, neither.
- Not all companion animal owners notify any change of address details on the register through Council.

Actions

1. Develop and provide educational material to local companion animal service industries to promote identification and registration of companion animals.
2. Liaise with interested organisations, clubs or businesses to schedule community events and promotional activities to increase awareness of the requirements for identification, registration and responsible pet ownership.
3. Develop and provide information packs containing registration, desexing and educational material to owners of companion animals when their animal is microchipped.
4. Continue to provide reduced cost microchipping services to members of the community during community events and promotional activities.
5. In conjunction with local veterinarians and interested parties, investigate and develop mechanisms to promote the two step microchip and registration process and encourage simultaneous microchipping and registration by animal owners.

4.2 Impounding Animals

Objectives

- To facilitate the prompt return of seized animals to its owner and reduce the number of animals that need to be impounded.
- To provide a best practice animal management facility and transport procedure for seized and impounded animals.
- To minimise the numbers of unwanted or unidentified animals that are ultimately euthanased.

Background

Council officers respond to complaints and carry out patrols for stray or unidentified animals found in public places. Once an animal is seized by a Council officer, the following procedures shall apply:

- The animal is scanned for a microchip.
- Once the microchip number is identified the officer will locate the owners contact details from the Companion Animals Register.

- Contact with the owner is established and arrangements made to return the animal.
- The officer returns the animal to the address of the owner.
- Where the owner cannot be contacted or identified the officer will transport the animal to the Animal Management Facility in accordance with the legislation.
- Any animal displaying injury or illness will be assessed by a veterinarian prior to being impounded.

Council wishes to return as many stray or lost animals to their owner as possible. However, legislation requires that animals must be impounded when an owner cannot be identified or contacted. When these animals are impounded, further attempts occur to contact the owner and advise of the circumstances. The animals are held for a minimum of 7 days and are then either offered for sale or euthanased. Animals that are unsuitable for resale due to illness or aggressive behavioural problems are euthanased in accordance with legislation.

Issues

- There are at times, difficulties in returning companion animals to their owners as they are not contactable, not home or have changed address.
- Whenever animals are impounded, disease transmission and other animal welfare factors such as stress are considered.
- Owners are liable to the relevant costs of impounding and sustenance fees where animals have been housed at the Animal Management Facility.
- Animals are humanely euthanased where they remain unclaimed or determined to be unsuitable for sale.

Actions

1. Monitor the animal transport and impounding process to reflect best practice guidelines provided by the NSW Department of Local Government.
2. Investigate technological advances such as wireless communications to improve efficiency of database checking and facilitate prompt animal return to the owner.
3. Investigate the potential for digital photos of unidentified stray animals to be placed on Council's website to facilitate the release of animals from the pound and reduce the current rates of euthanasia.
4. Encourage authorised individuals to record and provide as much owner contact information within the required time frame of 7 days to improve the prompt return of animals.
5. Develop an understanding with local veterinarians, kennel clubs and interested parties to educate companion animal owners in the importance of accurate details being recorded onto the NSW Companion Animals Register.

4.3 Animal Welfare

Objectives

- To ensure Council officers regard animal welfare as a high priority in all dealings with community member and their companion animals.
- To encourage companion animal owners to provide a stimulating environment for their companion animal that improves animal welfare and reduces any adverse impact on the local community.

Background

Animal welfare is defined as providing appropriate nutrition, shelter, exercise and social interaction to enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of an animal.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) is the responsible authority in managing animal welfare issues throughout NSW. AlburyCity is actively involved in other aspects of companion animal management. Subsequently, it is important for council officers to cooperate with the RSPCA to ensure that animal welfare issues are appropriately addressed. In many cases, poor treatment of animals gives rise to nuisance complaints such as barking or straying.

Many urban pet problems arise from animals experiencing frustration or boredom causing reactions such as barking, chasing and other behavioural problems. By providing a stimulating environment such as the addition of cognitive, dietary, physical, sensory and social activities, the animal's physiological and psychological well being can be improved.

The desexing of companion animals is encouraged through the registration fee structure incorporated into the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998. Council officers shall investigate the potential for partnerships with community organisations and veterinarian practices to promote the benefits of desexing animals. Early desexing can reduce the potential for pet behaviour problems such as roaming, mounting and urine spraying.

Issues

- Excessive numbers or unsuitable animals kept in confined spaces can result in animal welfare issues and nuisance behavioural patterns. There is no restriction on the numbers of companion animals permitted on a single property under the current legislation.
- Undesexed animals are at greater risk of contracting diseases and are more likely to display behavioural problems than desexed animals.

Actions

1. Encourage and promote the benefits of desexing of companion animals.
2. Investigate the potential to provide discounted rates for desexing of companion animals through partnerships with veterinary practices.
3. Provide information to the community on appropriate animal housing and welfare as recommended by the RSPCA.
4. Research and provide information on established linkages between nuisance behaviour such as barking and animal welfare issues.

4.4 Public Safety

Companion animals play an important role in Australian society and culture. Many in the Albury community assimilate companion animals into their every day life while others prefer not to associate with such animals. Balance and harmony between these two groups can be difficult to achieve at times, but it should be based on mutual respect and responsibility.

Objectives

- To improve community awareness of the importance for safety around companion animals.
- To improve owner's awareness of their responsibility to maintain their animal under effective control at all times in public places.
- To ensure an efficient and effective response to any reported dog attacks by Council officers.

Background

Dog attacks compromise public safety and affect the right of the community members to safely walk the streets and undertake recreational activities.

The youngest members of the community, children are a high-risk group in terms of dog attacks.

Information suggests that the majority of dog attacks on children are:

- From a dog they know
- In their own or a friend's backyard
- To children aged 0-5 years

Council officers have a number of options available to them under legislation when investigating a dog attack. The legislation provides a framework for determining the appropriate course of action, from warnings and education to prosecution, dangerous dog declarations and, if needed, destruction orders. It also allows officers to perform audits of premises housing a declared dangerous dog.

AlburyCity Council provides a school based education program to provide information to children about the appropriate way to approach and handle companion animals. This program is designed to minimise the risk of dog bites on children and to reduce the potential for serious injury.

Issues

- Owners of dangerous dogs do not always continue to comply with the relevant requirements under legislation.
- Investigating dog attacks and monitoring any ongoing compliance for a dangerous dog can be resource intensive.

Actions

1. Investigate any dog attack in Albury to identify recurrent or seasonal trends and adapt education and enforcement procedures accordingly.
2. Develop and conduct 6 monthly audits of any premises where a declared dangerous dog is housed to ensure compliance including the adequacy of child proof enclosures.
3. Continue to provide Council's school education program and utilise the education staff and resources of the RSPCA to assist in program delivery where appropriate.
4. Investigate options for community involvement to assist Council officers in identifying irresponsible pet ownership and remind owners of their responsibilities under the Companion Animals Act.

4.5 Leash Free Areas

Objectives

- To provide leash free areas for dogs in designated areas of Albury that is safe for dogs and people.
- To provide opportunities for dogs and their owners to engage in stimulating activities.

Background

Council has the authority to designate specific areas of public land for dogs including:

- Prohibited areas where dogs are banned
- Areas where dogs are permitted to exercise off lead (leash free areas)
- The balance of public areas, where dogs are only permitted when on a leash and/or under effective control.

The purpose of leash free areas are to allow dogs to exercise freely where they can 'burn off' excess energy in a safe environment without being a nuisance to the general public. These areas also provide socialisation experiences with other dogs. By providing these opportunities, dogs are less likely to exhibit nuisance behaviour due to boredom and frustration when continually confined to their yard.

Under the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998, Council is obliged to provide at least one leash free area for community for use.

AlburyCity has five designated leash free areas where dog owners can freely exercise their animals. All leash free areas are sign posted for easy identification with animal waste disposal bins provided. Council staff are currently investigating and consulting with local kennel clubs and interested parties on the needs of animals and their owners to ensure they get the maximum benefit from Albury's leash free areas.

Issues

- Leash free areas are traditionally open parklands which don't offer a stimulating environment or different activities for dogs.
- Some owners fail to remove dog faeces from leash free areas and do not maintain effective control of their animal.
- Complaints are still received regarding unleashed and out of control dogs being observed in public areas outside the designated leash free areas.

Actions

1. Investigate the potential to upgrade leash free areas to provide further options for stimulating and exercising dogs.
2. Investigate the possibility of holding activity days in key leash free areas to promote the use of the facilities by dog owners.
3. Continue to incorporate patrols of leash free areas to manage inappropriate use as part of the normal patrolling duties.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The interaction and relationships of companion animals with the environment is an important consideration of the Companion Animals Act.

There are a number of environmental factors that need to be considered and management procedures identified and implemented to ensure sustainability and harmony for all areas of the community.

5.1 Community Amenity

Objectives

To minimise the noise pollution caused by companion animals and improve community amenity.

Background

AlburyCity officers are regularly in receipt of complaints relating to barking dogs. Investigations into barking complaints can result in extensive use of resources and a source of conflict amongst neighbours.

There are three basic options available for the management of barking dog complaints in the community:

- AlburyCity Council's Compliance officers can provide information and advice to encourage negotiation between neighbours, Council may initiate enforcement procedures if officers are satisfied that the dog is consistent in its behaviour to the extent that it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises.
- The Community Justice Centre (CJC) is an independent, government funded centre that specialises in settling neighbourhood disputes. Affected neighbours can seek to mediate a solution to the barking problem if cooperation with their neighbour can be established.
- The Local Court may be utilised to issue Noise Abatement Orders. These orders may be issued where it is clearly demonstrated that the barking has caused a nuisance and attempts to resolve the issue by other means have failed.

Assistance in these matters can be provided by Council through the hire of Anti Barking Collars (ABC). Council offers this service to assist animal owners to adjust nuisance barking by the delivery of a squirt of citronella from the collar.

Noise from cats fighting, usually during night time hours is a less common complaint but is still a source of community noise complaint at times.

Issues

- Investigation into alleged barking complaints are labour intensive and often require monitoring out of normal operational hours.
- Barking can be caused by many different things such as separation anxiety, attention seeking, boredom, or perceived territorial incursion. Barking may occur at any time of the day or night.

Actions

1. Monitor and review complaint data to ascertain outcomes, the most successful control techniques, problematic areas of the city and success rates in reducing barking.
2. Investigate the feasibility of purchasing and hiring out 'recording collars' for barking dog complaints. The information obtained may assist dog owners to understand how their dog behaves when unsupervised or detect the catalyst for the nuisance behaviour.
3. Investigate and research any linkage between nuisance behaviour such as barking and animal welfare issues.
4. Encourage confinement of cats between dawn and dusk to reduce the noise nuisance caused by cats fighting.

5.2 Water Pollution

Objective

To minimise the impact of companion animals and their faeces when entering the stormwater disposal system and then into the creeks and riverine areas of Albury.

Background

Companion animal faeces can be an environmental and public health issue in urban areas. Pollution of domestic yards, footpaths, parks and reserves by animal faeces and the consequent pollution of waterways by stormwater run-off presents a number of challenges. Pet droppings contribute to phosphorous and other potentially harmful nutrients entering our waterways.

Diseases through parasites, protozoa and bacteria can be transmitted to people and animals via faecal material and contaminated stormwater. There is also a potential risk for infections to be passed to humans and animals such as Hookworm and Roundworm. Eggs from these worms can remain dormant in the environment for up to one year. Animal faeces are a known contaminant in recreational waters with faecal coliform levels in waterways often rising during periods of rain.

To minimise the volume of animal faeces being left behind to contaminate our waterways, animal waste disposal bins are provided in leash free areas. Council officers also encourage animal owners to collect and remove their dog's droppings through community events and promotional activities.

Issues

- Council staff receive occasional reports of companion animal owners not picking up their dog's droppings.
- Provision of waste bins in leash free areas have assisted in reducing the levels of dog faeces in the environment.

Actions

1. Investigate the success or otherwise of the use of specific strategies which have been trialled in other municipalities for disposal of animal faeces in leash free areas.
2. Continue to promote and educate community members on the importance of picking up after their animals.
3. Investigate and respond appropriately to areas of Albury where the extent of dog faeces being left in the environment is an issue.
4. Investigate and analyse the benefits of providing specifically designed animal waste bins as opposed to general purpose bins for all waste including servicing and maintenance costs.

5.3 Native Flora and Fauna

Objective

To increase the awareness of animal owners and minimise the potential impact of their companion animals on Albury's native flora and fauna.

Background

AlburyCity is made up of a diverse range of natural and built environments. In a number of areas across the city we have urban development adjoining rural and environmentally sensitive areas which include native flora and fauna. It is vital that feral animals and companion animal management strategies be implemented to assist with protection of threatened and vulnerable species.

Feral and free-ranging domestic cats are responsible for a significant number of wildlife deaths every year. It is therefore important that appropriate emphasis be placed upon the care and control of domestic cats, especially to limit their nocturnal predatory activities.

Community education and information programs encourage cat owners in particular to secure their animal inside during the night time hours or in an approved cat pen.

Issues

- The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 prohibits cats from specific areas including:
 - food preparation and consumption areas, and
 - wildlife protection areas.Owners can be fined if their companion animal is found within these designated areas.
- Domestic cats provide a reservoir of breeding animals for wild populations and continually increase feral cat numbers.
- The provision of cat traps to residents through Council is labour intensive due to a high demand, particularly during the warmer months of the year.

Actions

1. Increase community awareness regarding the impact of companion animals on native fauna, and environmentally sensitive areas.
2. Investigate and identify specific local areas that inhabit threatened or endangered species that could benefit from a focussed companion animal community education program.
3. Investigate the potential benefits of a community awareness campaign highlighting the benefits of keeping cats inside, particularly during night time hours including a voluntary cat curfew and education program.
4. Investigate and consider the prohibition of companion animals from new residential developments adjacent to areas designated environmentally sensitive.
5. Continue to provide cat traps to the community on request.
6. Encourage and promote the benefits of desexing of companion animals to reduce feral and stray cat numbers.

6 ALBURYCITY COMPANION ANIMALS ADVISORY PANEL

The creation of a Companion Animals Advisory Panel will assist in the management of the Plan and provide a direct link between the community, interested parties and Council.

It is proposed to seek expressions of interest through veterinary practices, kennel clubs, the local RSPCA and interested parties on the membership and agenda for such a panel.

The Companion Animals Advisory Panel would:

- assist in the development of companion animal strategies,
- provide input into the implementation of companion animal strategies,
- monitor and review the progress of companion animal strategies, and
- communicate and report on the operations and achievement of the strategic objectives contained in the plan.

The following criteria could be used as a guide in assessing individuals seeking appointment to the Panel:

- Animal welfare, understanding or background.
- Veterinary experience.
- Feline background and understanding.
- Canine background and understanding.
- Parks and playground management.
- Social welfare, understanding or background.
- Environmental protection - wildlife and stormwater.

AlburyCity's Companion Animals Advisory Panel should contain a minimum of 8 members representing a cross section of the key stakeholders for companion animal management and include:

- AlburyCity Councillor.
- Local veterinarian.
- Kennel club member.
- Feline club member.
- AlburyCity Compliance representative.
- AlburyCity Parks representative.
- Community representative.
- RSPCA representative.

Council officers would remain responsible for the day to day operational duties for companion animal issues. The role of Council officers on the Panel would be to provide administrative support and:

- Prepare statistical reports to the panel on the progress of the Plan on a quarterly basis
- Provide regular updates on any operational or community issues
- Provide experience and advice of recommendations to the panel on any emerging and continual issues, and
- Advise the panel on community expectations and concerns regarding companion animal management

Panel membership would be reviewed annually, with members being encouraged to provide feedback from the interest groups or organisations they represent during their tenure. Meetings should be scheduled on a quarterly basis unless circumstances require otherwise.

7 MONITORING REVIEW AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

AlburyCity aims to monitor review, and continually improve the implementation of the Companion Animals Management Plan to provide efficient and sustainable management of companion animals.

Monitoring is integrated into the Plan so that if a strategy or program becomes ineffective, then adjustments or actions can be initiated. Periodic reviews of statistical information will also help to analyse the actions within the plan's objectives. Continuous improvement will ensure the long term viability of the AlburyCity Companion Animals Management Plan.

As part of the monitoring and review process, it is proposed to provide Council with an annual report on effectiveness of the Plan. A complete review should be carried out at 5 yearly intervals.

8 APPENDIX 1 – SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TABLE -

UPDATED

3 June 2014

SUBJECT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COMPLETION DATE
Responsible Pet Ownership	1. Develop and provide education programs within schools and community to encourage responsible pet ownership.	Team Leader Compliance	Ongoing
	2. Use of enforcement procedures only when necessary.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
Identification and Registration	1. Develop and provide educational material to local companion animal service industries to promote identification and registration of companion animals.	Team Leader Compliance	Programs developed on an ongoing basis
	2. Liaise with interested organisations, clubs or businesses to schedule community events and promotional activities to increase awareness of the requirements for identification, registration and responsible pet ownership.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
	3. Develop and provide information packs containing registration, desexing and educational material to owners of companion animals when their animal is microchipped.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
	4. Continue to provide reduced cost microchipping services to members of the community during community events and promotional activities.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
	5. In conjunction with local veterinarians and interested parties, investigate and develop mechanisms to promote the two step microchip and registration process and encourage simultaneous microchipping and registration by animal owners.	Senior Ranger	Companion Animals Task Force Discussion Paper completed 2012. One step process discussed- recommendation to be developed

SUBJECT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COMPLETION DATE
Impounding Animals	1. Monitor the animal transport and impounding process to reflect best practice guidelines provided by the NSW Department of Local Government.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	2. Investigate technological advances such as wireless communications to improve efficiency of database checking and facilitate prompt animal return to the owner.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Smart Phones enabling access to dog register, in field. 2011
	3. Investigate the potential for digital photos of unidentified stray animals to be placed on Council's website to facilitate the release of animals from the pound and reduce the current rates of euthanasia.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Albury Dog Rescue links photos with ACC Website to Albury/Wodonga Animal Rescue & Pound Contractor.
	4. Encourage authorised individuals to record and provide as much owner contact information within the required time frame of 7 days to improve the prompt return of animals.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	5. Develop an understanding with local veterinarians, kennel clubs and interested parties to educate companion animal owners in the importance of accurate details being recorded onto the NSW Companion Animals Register.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
Animal Welfare	1. Encourage and promote the benefits of desexing of companion animals.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	2. Investigate the potential to provide discounted rates for desexing of companion animals through partnerships with veterinary practices.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing promotion & assistance from RSPCA desexing.
	3. Provide information to the community on appropriate animal housing and welfare as recommended by the RSPCA.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	4. Research and provide information on established linkages between nuisance behaviour such as barking and animal welfare issues.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing. Continuing providing information to public when investigating barking complaints

SUBJECT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COMPLETION DATE
Public Safety	1. Investigate any dog attack in Albury to identify recurrent or seasonal trends and adapt education and enforcement procedures accordingly.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	2. Develop and conduct 6 monthly audits of any premises where a declared dangerous dog is housed to ensure compliance including the adequacy of child proof enclosures.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing – Action to be taken if concerns raised on animal detected.
	3. Continue to provide Council's school education program and utilise the education staff and resources of the RSPCA to assist in program delivery where appropriate.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	4. Investigate options for community involvement to assist Council officers in identifying irresponsible pet ownership and remind owners of their responsibilities under the Companion Animals Act.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
Leash Free Areas	1. Investigate the potential to upgrade leash free areas to provide further options for stimulating and exercising dogs	Senior Ranger & Officers	Dogs in Open Spaces Strategy being developed by Parks staff.
	2. Investigate the possibility of holding activity days in key leash free areas to promote the use of the facilities by dog owners.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Discussions ongoing with Panel.
	3. Continue to incorporate patrols of leash free areas to manage inappropriate use as part of the normal patrolling duties.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing

SUBJECT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COMPLETION DATE
Environmental Issues	1. Monitor and review complaint data to ascertain outcomes, the most successful control techniques, problematic areas of the city and success rates in reducing barking.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
	2. Investigate the feasibility of purchasing and hiring out 'recording collars' for barking dog complaints. The information obtained may assist dog owners to understand how their dog behaves when unsupervised or detect the catalyst for the nuisance behaviour	Senior Ranger	Collars purchased and used where necessary.
	3. Investigate and research any linkage between nuisance behaviour such as barking and animal welfare issues.	Senior Ranger	Complaints investigated.
	4. Encourage confinement of cats between dawn and dusk to reduce the noise nuisance caused by cats fighting.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
Water Pollution	1. Investigate the success or otherwise of the use of specific strategies which have been trialled in other municipalities for disposal of animal faeces in leash free areas.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
	2. Continue to promote and educate community members on the importance of picking up after their animals.	Senior Ranger	Ongoing
	3. Investigate and respond appropriately to areas of Albury where the extent of dog faeces being left in the environment is an issue.	Senior Ranger	Complaints to be investigated.
	4. Investigate and analyse the benefits of providing specifically designed animal waste bins as opposed to general purpose bins for all waste including servicing and maintenance costs.	Senior Ranger	Parks staff to trial and install when needed.

SUBJECT	ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	COMPLETION DATE
Native Flora & Fauna	1. Increase community awareness regarding the impact of companion animals on native fauna, and environmentally sensitive areas.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	2. Investigate and identify specific local areas that inhabit threatened or endangered species that could benefit from a focussed companion animal community education program.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Trapping services available, complaints investigated
	3. Investigate the potential benefits of a community awareness campaign highlighting the benefits of keeping cats inside, particularly during night time hours including a voluntary cat curfew and education program.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Education and Promotional events used to promote responsible pet ownership.
	4. Investigate and consider the prohibition of companion animals from new residential developments adjacent to areas designated environmentally sensitive.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Local policy cannot be more onerous than the Act.
	5. Continue to provide cat traps to the community on request.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing
	6. Encourage and promote the benefits of desexing of companion animals to reduce feral and stray cat numbers.	Senior Ranger & Officers	Ongoing