



# Willoughby City Council

## Local Companion Animals Management Plan

### 2008

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ACTION PLANS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>REVIEW PROCESS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT IN WILLOUGHBY</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>DOGS</b>	<b>2</b>
OFF-LEASH AREAS (SECTION 13 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	2
BENEFITS OF OFF-LEASH AREAS	2
OFF-LEASH AREAS - GENERAL COMMENTS	4
PUBLIC PLACES WHERE DOGS ARE EXCLUDED (SECTION 14 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	4
DOG FAECES (SEC 20 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	6
NUISANCE DOGS (SECTION 21 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	6
DANGEROUS DOGS & RESTRICTED BREEDS (SECTION 34 & 51 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	7
RESTRICTED DOGS(SECTION 55 & 56 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	7
<b>CATS</b>	<b>8</b>
AREAS FROM WHERE CATS ARE PROHIBITED (SECTION 30 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	8
NUISANCE CATS (SECTION 31 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	10
<b>GENERAL ISSUES</b>	<b>11</b>
REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION OF COMPANION ANIMALS (SECTION 8 & 9 COMPANION ANIMALS ACT)	11
ENFORCEMENT OR EDUCATION?	11
THE BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP	12
FUNDING	12



<b>ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 1 - REGISTRATION &amp; IDENTIFICATION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 2 - DOGS IN PUBLIC PLACES</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 3 - BARKING DOGS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 4 - DANGEROUS DOGS &amp; RESTRICTED BREEDS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 5 - CAT MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 6 - ANIMAL WELFARE &amp; SAFETY</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 7 - BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 8 - PROVISION OF FACILITIES</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 9 - EDUCATION</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 10 - ENFORCEMENT</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 11 - FUNDING</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>ACTION PLAN 12 - REVIEW</b>	<b>35</b>



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## Local Companion Animals Management Plan

### Introduction

The Companion Animals Act 1998 is the legislation that gives legal effect to the way dogs and cats are managed by local authorities.

This Local Companion Animals Management Plan provides Willoughby Council's approach to the fulfilment of its responsibilities under the Act by determining the relevant objectives and priorities, along with a clear program of implementation.

### Objectives

The objectives Council is seeking to achieve through this Management Plan are as follows:

- To ensure that all pets in the community are well cared for.
- To ensure that pet owners are able to maximise their enjoyment of companion animals.
- To encourage the permanent microchip identification and lifetime registration of all companion animals in Willoughby.
- To ensure that owners' activities and those of their pets do not adversely affect the rest of the community or the environment.
- To identify and prioritise current and future animal management issues.
- To develop action plans designed to address animal management issues.
- To involve key players in the community in the animal management process to facilitate community ownership and successful program implementation.
- To educate the community about the rights and responsibilities of animal owners.

### Action Plans

In order to achieve the objectives, Action Plans have been developed as part of the Plan. These Action Plans outline the implementation strategy and the Performance Measures.

### Review Process

This is the second Companion Animal Management Plan adopted by Council. This Plan is the result of a review of the first Plan and takes into consideration contemporary issues relating to the care, control and management of Companion Animals and their affect on the environment. An important component of any Management Plan is the ongoing review to examine performance, achievement of objectives and, if necessary, to consider new issues and priorities. One of the duties of the Willoughby Local Companion Animals Advisory Committee will be to monitor and review the Plan.



## **Companion Animals Management in Willoughby**

The Companion Animals Act embraces requirements for the care, control and management of both dogs and cats and includes a wider range of issues including the environment, removal of dog faeces, the question of on and off-leash areas and a higher incidence of barking dog complaints. What was once a relatively straightforward duty of Council is now highly emotive, often the cause of conflict between neighbours and attracting interest from both pet owners and non-pet owners alike.

In recent times, the State Government has reacted to several serious dog attack incidents by strengthening the laws relating to the ownership of restricted and dangerous dogs. These requirements have resulted in additional responsibilities for Council, in particular, the regulatory staff who are on the “front line” dealing with these matters.

Reliance on legislation will probably always be the backbone of companion animals management; however, there is now more emphasis on the development of non-regulatory approaches such as public education. The State Government and local councils are developing education campaigns. Council develops its own education programs to highlight local issues and these supplement the work of the State Government.

There is also a role for use of design principles in 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 to modifications in the planning and design of public parks and the installation of appropriate facilities in public areas.

## **DOGS**

### ***Off-leash areas (Section 13 Companion Animals Act)***

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, there must at all times be at least one public place in any council area that is an off-leash area.

### ***Benefits of off-leash areas***

- There are benefits for humans - exercise, socialising with other dog owners and the fact that for some people a dog is their main form of recreation.
- To avoid concentration of off-leash activity in one or a small number of areas;
- As a compliance tool - by providing reasonable off-leash opportunities, Council can expect and appeal for compliance with leash requirements in other areas.



- The exercise of animals relieves the boredom and leads to a more contented lifestyle.
- The problem of a large dog in a small, confined area can be overcome by the use of off-leash areas.

Willoughby Council has the following designated off-leash areas:

1. **Park** behind 48 Barcoo Street, Roseville.
2. **Open space** alongside 52 Mowbray Road, bordering Eastern Valley Way, Willoughby.
3. **West Street Reserve** - off Grafton Avenue, Naremburn (grassed area only adjacent to road).
4. **Naremburn Park** - off Park Road, Naremburn. (The children's fenced off playing area **IS PROHIBITED**).
5. **Reserve** - off the southern side of Parkes Road, Artarmon between Hampden and Cleland Roads.
6. **Artarmon Oval** - off Burra Road, Artarmon. (Surrounding bushland, children's playing facilities and barbecue areas **ARE PROHIBITED**.)
7. **Blue Gum Park** - off Dulwich Road, Chatswood West, opposite Peckham Avenue.
8. **Campbell Park** - opposite 63 Dalrymple Avenue, Chatswood West.
9. **O.H. Reid Oval** - end of Reid Drive, West Chatswood. (Surrounding bushland, children's playing facilities and barbecue areas **ARE PROHIBITED**.)
10. **Castle Cove Oval** - off Holly Street, Castle Cove, from 4.00pm through to 10.00am only. (Surrounding bushland, children's playing facilities and barbecue areas **ARE PROHIBITED**).
11. **Beauchamp Park Oval** - off Nicholson Street, Chatswood. (Children's playing facilities and barbecue areas **ARE PROHIBITED**).
12. **Bales Park** - off Sydney Street, Stanley Street and Ranelagh Crescent, Chatswood. (**Only to be used between the daily periods of one hour before sunset through to one hour after sunrise the following day.** Children's playing facilities **ARE PROHIBITED**.)
13. **Willoughby Park - Oval No. 2** - Warrane Road, Willoughby.  
**RESTRICTED USE, as follows:**  
Allowed Times:  
Eastern Standard Time.....6.00am - 8.00am                      4.30pm - 6.30pm



Daylight Saving Time.....5.30am - 7.30am  
8.30pm

6.30pm -

### ***Off-leash areas - General Comments***

There have been some concerns that Council would expose itself to public liability insurance claims in the event of a dog attack in a leash-free area. In considering this it is important to understand the reason why dogs won't necessarily behave in the same way in the neutral territory of a public park. Attacks on private property frequently occur when a dominant, protective or injured dog is not adequately supervised with children and visitors. These triggers are not present in the neutral territory of a public park when a dog is with its owner. Most data collected on this issue suggests that dog attacks are more likely to occur in and around the family home or another home.

Preliminary advice from the Local Government and Shires Association suggests that:

- Providing proper consideration is paid to siting issues (including signage), a Council which complies with a statutory requirement to provide a facility is less likely to be exposed to liability risk than a Council which provides such facilities of its own initiative;
- The Act places liability for such claims with the offending dog owner; and
- Section 371 of the Local Government Act gives protection to Councils and their officers for acts done in good faith for the purpose of executing that or any other Act.

If deemed appropriate, the off-leash parks could be provided on a timeshare arrangement (eg dogs are allowed off-leash at certain times of the day - usually early morning and evening). Council has taken this option with several off-leash areas eg Willoughby Park No.2, Bales Park. Timeshare works well, however it is important to recognise its disadvantages.

- (a) It concentrates potential problems into a restricted number of hours;
- (b) Unremoved dog faeces may be a problem at other times; and
- (c) Some dog owners may be disadvantaged if they work irregular hours or have small children. Timeshare may also not suit the elderly who wish to use time available during the day.
- (d) Enforcement during the times when dogs must be leashed outside the allocated times that these reserves permit the exercising of dogs unleashed.

### ***Public places where dogs are excluded (Section 14 Companion Animals Act)***



Under the Act dogs are prohibited in the following public places:

- In or within 10m of any children's play areas.
- Food preparation 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 centres (unless with the permission of the person controlling the centre);
- 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 elect to prohibit dogs from particular recreation areas, public bathing areas, shopping centres and wildlife protection areas.

#### **In Willoughby:**

- Chatswood Oval has been declared as a prohibited area for dogs.
- Wildlife Protection Areas (WPAs) have been established in certain bushland reserves in the City. The WPAs have been set up on a two tier basis –

- Level 1 – bushland areas which do not contain any formal walking tracks.

- a) H D Robb Reserve – at Castle Cove
- b) Castlecrag North Escarpment - Castlecrag
- c) Willis Park – at Castle Cove and Middle Cove

**Council is asking residents to keep their pets out of these areas entirely.**

- Level 2 – bushland areas containing designated walking tracks.

- a) Explosives Reserve – Castle Cove
- b) North Arm Reserve – Middle Cove
- c) Harold Reid Reserve – Middle Cove



- d) Flat Rock Gully – Naremburn and Northbridge
- e) Ferndale Park – Chatswood West

**Residents may walk their dogs on-leash through these areas using the formal walking tracks. No off-leash walking is allowed in these areas.**

**Blue Gum Park – has been designated as a Wildlife Protection Area with no pets allowed in the lower section but on-leash walking permitted in the upper section on the walking track between Dulwich Road and Kooba Avenue.**

### ***Dog faeces (Sec 20 Companion Animals Act)***

Dog faeces are a problem for health, environmental and amenity reasons. Under the Companion Animals Act, owners are required to remove their dogs' faeces and properly dispose of them. In practice, this is extremely difficult to enforce but, through public education, Council is endeavouring to instil an acceptance of the need to collect and dispose of dogs' droppings by owners.

Local authorities must provide sufficient rubbish receptacles for owners to dispose of their dogs' faeces in areas that are commonly used for exercising dogs. At a minimum, off-leash areas would need to be provided with suitable disposal receptacles. Further, Council may need to consider other public areas where a need is demonstrated for the siting of receptacles.

Council has installed Dog Litter Bag Dispensers in four of its most popular off-leash areas at Beauchamp Park, Castle Cove Oval, Willoughby Park No 2 and O H Reid Oval. Additional dispensers are progressively being installed in other off-leash areas.

Another initiative could involve the introduction of dung beetles into the park system which dispose of dog faeces naturally.

### ***Nuisance dogs (Section 21 Companion Animals Act)***

Under Section 21 of the Act a dog is defined as 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 also make it difficult for owners to confine their dogs to their property. For example, in certain streets such as the Burley Griffin areas of Castlecrag, there are restrictions on owners erecting fences around their properties.

The rise in barking complaints over recent years appears to be consistent with the experience in other areas. Such complaints are often not easy to resolve and consume large amounts of Council Officers' time. Council's Rangers have an established procedure they follow to determine the veracity and extent of a barking problem. This includes surveillance, questionnaires to neighbouring property owners and counselling of the dog's owner.

On the face of it, the dog nuisance provisions of the Act seem straightforward, however, in practice they can be difficult to enforce given nuisance problems are often difficult to define and measure. The words 'repeatedly' and 'habitually' are important in determining if a nuisance exists.

### ***Dangerous dogs & Restricted Breeds (Section 34 & 51 Companion Animals Act)***

Council can declare a dog kept in its area as dangerous. Once a dog is declared dangerous, the owner must comply with the conditions specified in Section 51 of the Companion Animals Act 1998. Such conditions include amongst others:

- it must be desexed and registered,
- it must be kept in a childproof enclosure,
- the owner must ensure that the dog is under the control of a competent person (over the age of 18 years old) and is leashed and muzzled at all times when it is outside the property where it is normally kept,
- the owners are also required to notify councils when the dog is moved to new premises.

When a dog is declared dangerous, Council must enter the details in a Dangerous Dog Register and notify the Department of Local Government of the Order.

### ***Restricted dogs(Section 55 & 56 Companion Animals Act)***

The following breeds are defined in the Act as 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 (eg 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.

## **CATS**

The issues of cat management relates predominantly to the impact of cats on wildlife. Cats can also be a nuisance to surrounding neighbours. A distinction needs to be made between feral cats and owned domestic cats.

Council can now prohibit cats from entering public places.

### ***Areas from where cats are prohibited (Section 30 Companion Animals Act)***

Under the Companion Animals Act, cats are prohibited in the following public places:

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

A wildlife protection area is a public place that has been declared by Council for the protection of wildlife. Council has declared the following areas as Wildlife Protection Areas:

- Level 1 – bushland areas which do not contain any formal walking tracks.
  - a) H D Robb Reserve – at Castle Cove
  - b) Castlecrag North Escarpment - Castlecrag
  - c) Willis Park – at Castle Cove and Middle Cove
- Level 2 – bushland areas containing designated walking tracks.
  - a) Explosives Reserve – Castle Cove
  - b) North Arm Reserve – Middle Cove
  - c) Harold Reid Reserve – Middle Cove
  - d) Flat Rock Gully – Naremburn and Northbridge
  - e) Ferndale Park – Chatswood West

**Council is requesting cat owners to ensure that their pets are kept out of these areas at all times.**

Other options for protection of wildlife vulnerable to attacks by cats include:



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



### ***Nuisance cats (Section 31 Companion Animals Act)***

A cat is a nuisance if it:

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

Dealing with nuisance cat complaints is difficult, and more complex, than handling nuisance dog complaints. The main reason for this is because cats are more difficult to confine to a property than dogs. Each complaint needs to be examined on a case-by-case basis.

It is important to note that a domestic cat which is not declared a nuisance by Council cannot be legally trapped and impounded. Such a cat must be returned to its owner.



## GENERAL ISSUES

### **Registration and identification of companion animals (*Section 8 & 9 Companion Animals Act*)**

Registration and identification are crucial components of animal management as a source of funds for education and enforcement, as a database for returning lost pets and identifying offending animals and as a way of communicating with pet owners.

Under the Companion Animals Act a companion animal must be microchipped from 12 weeks of age. A companion animal must be registered from 6 months of age.

Any change of ownership of a Companion Animal requires the animal to be microchipped. Owners are required to notify a change of address to their local council so that the NSW Companion Animals Register can be updated. Obviously, it is important for the Register to be kept up-to-date so that lost or impounded animals can be safely and quickly returned to their owners.

### ***Enforcement or education?***

An on-going debate in animal management is the relative merits of enforcement versus education. Legislation will 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 (ie an officer cannot control what happens five minutes after they leave).

By contrast, voluntary compliance, if it can be achieved, will just about always provide more meaningful, lasting changes in behaviour. It depends more on overcoming ignorance, indifference and incompetence than in prescribing concrete forms of acceptable behaviour. However, education changes behaviour slowly, it can be expensive and is hard to evaluate.

Since the Companion Animals Act was introduced, community attitudes and awareness have changed appreciably in a number of areas, specifically:

- Cleaning up after dogs in public places – more people carry bags with them when they walk their dog to clean up and dispose of their pet's faeces.
- Not allowing dogs to roam in public places whilst under the control of a responsible person.
- Confining cats inside their place of residence at night to prevent them from roaming and hunting local wildlife. This practice also stops pets from being attacked by other feral or un-owned cats thus reducing the risk of injury and disease.



Accordingly, it is imperative that Council adopts an approach that takes advantage of both the legal and educative components.

The secret is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of each and how they operate in different policy contexts.

The Companion Animals Act anticipates that the State Government will undertake community education from the money allocated to the Companion Animals Fund.

As part of this Plan, Council will undertake its own education programs either to augment the message of the statewide campaign or where its priorities vary from those of the State Government.

### ***The Benefits of Pet Ownership***

The health and social benefits of owning pets are now well understood and have been documented in numerous scientific studies. At one level this means a balanced approach to managing domestic pets. At another more implicit level, there is an emerging understanding that pets contribute to quality of life, a positive that could perhaps be fostered by local government.

Part of the challenge involves removing barriers to owning pets. The Petcare Information and Advisory Service has recently published brochures for landlords and tenants outlining rights and responsibilities of people wishing to own pets in rental accommodation.

Other initiatives may be explored in the development of local public health initiatives.

### ***Funding***

Funding of Companion Animal facilities and programmes come primarily from the fees received when animals are registered in the Companion Animals Register.

Councils are required to remit the monthly registration fees it receives to the Department of Local Government. The Department will repay a proportion (nominally 85%) of the fees collected back to councils.

The fees retained by the Department cover the cost of maintaining the Companion Animals Register and any State-wide education programmes.

The fees repaid to councils are used to provide services associated with companion animal control and facilities, eg Ranger Services, animal pound fees, maintenance and updating of the Companion Animals Register, local education programmes and facilities for companion animals in the community.



## **ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

Companion animals can adversely affect the environment in a number of ways – noise pollution, water pollution, faecal pollution and predation on native fauna.

Educating companion animal owners to take responsibility for their animals will help the owner to redirect their animal's activity to minimise the impact on the surrounding environment.

### **Noise Pollution**

The predominant form of noise pollution emanates from barking dogs. Council's Rangers spend a considerable amount of time dealing with complaints about barking dogs. The Rangers have a standard procedure to investigate such complaints involving random surveillance, questionnaires, interviewing owners and neighbours etc.

Cats can also be the cause of noise complaints when they fight at night. Council encourages cat owners to confine their pets indoors or in specially designed cat enclosures at night to reduce the incidence of fighting and to keep their pets safe. It is extremely difficult for the Rangers to control this type of problem so education of owners is seen as the best method of dealing with it.

### **Water and Faecal Pollution**

Companion animal faeces are a significant environmental and public health issue in urban areas. Pollution of backyards, footpaths, parks and reserves by animal faeces and the consequent pollution of waterways by stormwater runoff is of great environmental concern.

To counteract the problem of Companion Animal faeces entering the water systems, Council is committed to:-

- a) Educating pet owners to clean up after their pets and dispose of the waste into the rubbish system
- b) Providing dog poo bags at leash free exercise areas so that owners can collect their pets droppings and dispose of them
- c) Providing waste bins at parks and reserves where owners can dispose of their pet's droppings.

### **Predation on Native Fauna**

Council has identified sensitive areas within the City where native habitats exist and, if not protected, could be damaged by companion, un-owned or feral animals.

Wildlife Protection Areas have been established to help protect these native habitats and Council is requiring the public to not allow companion animals to enter these areas.



Council's Open Space Branch conducts fox baiting programmes on an annual basis to protect native animals. They also carry out cat trapping programmes at certain times during the year to catch cats that enter these protected areas or areas where there is a known problem with cats entering bushland reserves.

Feral and un-owned cats may also cause harm to native wildlife. Council's education programmes emphasise the need for domestic cats to be confined indoors at night and to limit their nocturnal wandering. Not only does the confinement of domestic cats help protect wildlife but it also prevents them from being injured by feral cats and it reduces the opportunity for uncontrolled breeding.





## Action Plan 1 - Registration & Identification

The identification and registration of pets is important as it:

- assists Council with their animal control activities
- enables the identification of lost pets and facilitates contacting owners
- is a source of funding for animal management activities

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicators</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To educate the community about the importance and need for microchipping &amp; registering dogs &amp; cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use Dept of Local Govt brochures and other brochures produced by Council for distribution to pet shops, vets, etc. about microchipping and registering dogs and cats</li> <li>• Incorporate information about dog and cat registration and microchipping in information aimed at school children.</li> <li>• Include information in school project material and school talks by Council staff.</li> </ul>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Comp Animals C'ttee</li> <li>• Rangers</li> <li>• Administrative Services staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the percentage of dogs registered in the City.</li> <li>• Number of dogs and cats returned to their owners</li> </ul>



<b><i>Strategic Action</i></b>	<b><i>Tasks</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	<b><i>Performance Indicator</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote the importance of lifetime registration through education &amp; publicity campaigns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brochures for distribution through pet shops, vets etc</li> <li>Articles in Council publications eg. Willoughby City News</li> <li>Advertising in local newspapers</li> <li>Follow up with owners who do not register their pets after they are microchipped by letter and visiting the premises.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Low</p> <p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Comp Animals C'ttee</li> <li>Rangers</li> <li>Administrative Services staff</li>   <li>Administrative Services staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the percentage of dogs registered in the City</li> </ul>



## Action Plan 2 - Dogs in Public Places

- All dogs in public places must be under the control of their owners.
- Dogs on public roads must be on a leash and under the control of a responsible person.
- Dogs are prohibited from the following public spaces:
  - Within 10m of any children's play areas
  - Recreation areas where dogs are declared prohibited
  - School grounds during school times (unless with the permission of the person controlling the centre)
  - Shopping centres where dogs are prohibited
  - Level 1 Wildlife protection areas
- Council has designated certain unleashed dog exercise areas with appropriate signage and facilities where owners can allow their pets to exercise off leash
- Dog owners should ensure that their property is adequately fenced to confine their pet and that there is sufficient room and amenity on the premises for the welfare of their dog.
- Dog owners must be educated to remove and dispose of their pets' faeces for environmental, health and amenity reasons
- Council has declared certain reserves to be Wildlife Protection Areas (WPA). There are two categories of WPAs:
  - Reserves where no dogs are permitted. These are generally reserves where there are no formal walking tracks.
  - Reserves where dogs are permitted on leash provided they stay on the walking tracks.



<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
To provide appropriately located and well utilised unleashed dog exercise areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake periodic reviews of unleashed dog exercise areas regarding usage, suitability, effectiveness of facilities</li> <li>Consideration of requests for new unleashed dog exercise areas.</li> <li>Publicise the location of all unleashed dog exercise areas</li> </ul>	<p>Med</p> <p>Med</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Rangers</p> <p>Open Space Branch</p> <p>Corp Serv Div Open Space Branch</p> <p>Corp Serv Div</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of complaints from people using unleashed dog areas.</li> <li>Requests received for new unleashed areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To introduce controls to protect prohibited public areas from dogs and cats</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consideration of public areas from which dogs &amp; cats may be prohibited</li> <li>Enforcement of protected areas</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Corp Serv Div</p> <p>Rangers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of designated and signposted prohibited areas.</li> <li>Reduction in complaints about unleashed dogs in public areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To educate and enforce leash provisions in public areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicity campaigns to inform owners of leash provisions.</li> <li>Enforcement of legislation re: unleashed dogs in public areas.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Local Comp Animals C'ttee</p> <p>Corp Serv Div</p> <p>Rangers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in complaints about unleashed dogs in public areas.</li> <li>Reduction in fines issued by Rangers re: unleashed dogs in public areas.</li> <li>Number of fines issued</li> </ul>



<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide facilities for the exercise of dogs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate other facilities for animals in suitable areas eg dog training areas, dog agility areas.</li> <li>Erection of signage in all unleashed dog exercise areas re: times, conditions of use, facilities available, etc.</li> </ul>	<p>Med</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Local Comp Animals C'ttee Corp Serv Div Open Space Branch</p> <p>Corp Serv Div Open Space Branch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All unleashed dog exercise areas displaying appropriate signage.</li> <li>Number of complaints re: inappropriate usage of unleashed areas.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To implement the environmental improvement and protection principles contained in the Act</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publicise &amp; encourage dog owners to remove &amp; dispose of their pets' faeces from public areas.</li> <li>Enforcing the requirements of the Act re: removal &amp; disposal of dog faeces.</li> <li>Installation of dog tidy bag dispensers in leash free areas</li> <li>Participation in special programmes to educate the community about the importance of removing dog faeces e.g. "Community Watchdog Programme".</li> </ul>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p> <p>Med</p> <p>Med</p>	<p>Corp Serv Div Open Space Branch</p> <p>Rangers</p> <p>Administrative Services</p> <p>Rangers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribution of dog brochures</li> <li>Number of fines issued.</li> <li>Number of dispensers installed</li> <li>Visits to schools</li> <li>Distribution of dog control brochures</li> </ul>



<b><i>Strategic Action</i></b>	<b><i>Tasks</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	<b><i>Performance Indicator</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To reduce the number of uncontrolled dogs in public places</li> </ul>	<p>Educate the community about the importance of properly confining their dogs.</p> <p>Encourage developers, home owners to provide adequate fencing to contain dogs.</p> <p>Target areas where unleashed dogs in public places are a problem with random patrols and educational material.</p>	<p>High</p> <p>High</p>	<p>Local Companion Animals C'ttee</p> <p>Corp Serv Div</p> <p>Env Serv Div</p> <p>Rangers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in complaints about dogs wandering unattended in public areas.</li> <li>Number of fines issued fir unleashed dogs</li> </ul>



## Action Plan 3 - Barking Dogs

- Nuisance dog barking affects the amenity of an area, giving rise to complaints to Council which are difficult and time-consuming to resolve.
- Council's Rangers have adopted a set procedure to deal with barking dog issues involving surveys of surrounding residents, regular patrols, use of diaries to identify problem times, discussions with owners.
- Advice to owners about means to overcome excessive barking i.e. specialised training, citronella collars, changes to dog's behaviour.
- Improvements to housing designs to take into account the needs of dogs eg adequate exercise area, fencing, shade.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enforce the barking dog provisions of the Act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instigate standard procedures for the investigation &amp; resolution of all barking dog complaints.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in ongoing barking complaints.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To educate the community re barking dog provisions of the Act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate advice about control methods to dog owners whose pets are subject of complaints about excessive barking.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in number of complaints about repeated barking.</li> </ul>



<b><i>Strategic Action</i></b>	<b><i>Tasks</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	<b><i>Performance Indicator</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide assistance to owners of barking dogs to reduce problems created by their dog.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire citronella collars to owners.</li> </ul>	Med	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of times collars are hired</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice about specialised training courses.</li> </ul>	Med	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in ongoing barking complaints.</li> </ul>





## Action Plan 4 - Dangerous Dogs & Restricted Breeds

- The Companion Animals Act provides special procedures for dealing with dangerous dogs and restricted breeds.
- Council maintains a Dangerous Dog Register.
- Dangerous dogs are notified to the Department of Local Government and to the Statewide Register.

<b><i>Strategic Action</i></b>	<b><i>Tasks</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	<b><i>Performance Indicator</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To enforce the dangerous dog and restricted breed provisions of the Act.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review procedures for dealing with dangerous dogs &amp; restricted breeds to ensure compliance with Act.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of dangerous dogs on Council's Register</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor on a regular basis properties where dangerous dogs are kept</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that childproof enclosures are properly used and maintained</li> </ul>	High	Rangers	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure that appropriate signage is displayed in accordance with the Act.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers	



## Action Plan 5 - Cat Management

- Cats are required to be identified and registered under the Companion Animals Act.
- Council can prohibit cats from entering specified public places.
- Public education programs are required to inform cat owners about
  - \* the need to identify & register their pets
  - \* responsible cat ownership
  - \* the damage cats can cause to native wildlife
- Improved housing design could assist owners to responsibly confine their cats.
- Encourage cat owners to install cat enclosures in their properties.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To educate the community about responsible pet ownership &amp; the need to identify &amp; register their cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brochures to be distributed to pet shops, vets, schools, libraries</li> </ul>	High	NSW Comp Animals C'ttee  Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in number of complaints re: cats.</li> <li>• Number of brochures distributed.</li> <li>• Number of new cats identified &amp; registered.</li> </ul>



<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To implement procedures for cat control and the protection of sensitive wildlife areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wildlife protection areas have been identified in the City.</li> </ul>	High	Open Space Branch Local Comp Animals C'ttee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing review of WPAs</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce procedures for dealing with nuisance cats and, where applicable, for cats entering wildlife protection areas.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers Open Space Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in ongoing complaints re: nuisance cats.</li> <li>Number of cats trapped in wildlife protection areas.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue cat trapping program in sensitive bushland areas and wildlife protection areas</li> </ul>	High	Open Space Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of cats trapped in wildlife protection areas.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish communication links with residents living adjacent to Wildlife Protection Areas and other sensitive bushland areas</li> </ul>	High	Open Space Branch Bushcare Volunteer Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information distributed to residents in nominated areas.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate owners of the benefits of keeping their cats indoors at night.</li> </ul>	High	Corporates Services Rangers Open Space Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distribution of cat control brochures</li> <li>Articles in newsletters eg Willoughby City News etc</li> </ul>



## Action Plan 6 - Animal Welfare & Safety

The Companion Animals Act provides that pet owners must ensure the welfare and safety of pets.

Public education programs are required to inform pet owners about the standards of care and safety for pets.

It is important that Council educates and promotes the desexing of non-breeding pets to reduce the unowned/unwanted pet population.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote the desexing of companion animals not required for breeding purposes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop education &amp; publicity campaigns about the importance of desexing pets.</li> </ul>	High	NSW Comp Animals C'ttee Local Comp Animals C'ttee Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in surrender rates at Council Pound.</li> <li>Education campaigns to promote desexing</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote &amp; enforce identification &amp; registration of dogs &amp; cats to enable safe return of companion animals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue with education and publicity campaigns about the importance of microchipping and registering all dogs and cats.</li> <li>Fining owners whose pets are not registered.</li> </ul>	High	NSW Comp Animals C'ttee Local Comp Animals C'ttee Corp Serv Div Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in number of dogs &amp; cats microchipped &amp; registered on Statewide Register.</li> <li>Number of fines issued for unregistered pets.</li> <li>Number of pets claimed from Pound.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote responsible pet ownership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and promote education &amp; publicity campaigns about the importance of being a</li> </ul>	Med	NSW Comp Animals C'ttee Local Comp Animals C'ttee Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in the number of pets not identified and registered.</li> </ul>



<b><i>Strategic Action</i></b>	<b><i>Tasks</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	<b><i>Performance Indicator</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To promote the benefits of pet ownership.</li></ul>	<p>responsible pet owner, training &amp; socialising pets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adopt a proactive approach by ringing pet owners who advertise "free to good home" pets in local newspapers.</li></ul>	Med	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Number of telephone calls made</li></ul>





## Action Plan 8 - Provision of Facilities

Council is required to engage the services of an Animal Pound to receive lost/impounded dogs and cats.

Council has introduced the SCAM Program where dogs are housed with a local veterinarian for up to 48 hours while the owner is contacted. If the dog is not collected within the 48 hour period, it is transferred to the Council Pound.

Council has designated unleashed dog exercise areas in the City.

Council provides bins for the disposal of pet faeces at certain locations throughout the City.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide appropriate facilities for owners to exercise their dogs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the location, use, adequacy of all unleashed dog exercise areas.</li> </ul>	Med	Corp Serv Div  Open Space Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of complaints received about unleashed areas.</li> <li>Number of requests received for additional unleashed exercise areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that signage of unleashed areas is clear &amp; easily understood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop specific signage for unleashed dog areas using graphics to educate and advise park users/pet owners re the provisions of the Companion Animals Act.</li> </ul>	High	Open Space Branch  Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate signage is displayed in all unleashed exercise areas.</li> <li>Number of complaints that signage is inadequate</li> </ul>



<b><i>Strategic Action</i></b>	<b><i>Tasks</i></b>	<b><i>Priority</i></b>	<b><i>Responsibility</i></b>	<b><i>Performance Indicator</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide facilities for the removal of pet faeces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the location &amp; demand for pet faeces disposal bins.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers  Open Space Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of requests received for facilities.</li> <li>Frequency of replenishing bag dispensers .</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide a well managed and maintained animal pound for receipt of stray and lost animals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularly review and assess the performance, management &amp; facilities offered at the Council's designated Animal Pound.</li> </ul>	High	Environmental Health Branch  Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complaints received about pound operation.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide facilities for the control of cats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide advice to cat owners about enclosures to restrict movement of cats while outside</li> </ul>	Medium	Corp Serv Div  Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of requests received</li> <li>Distribution of Cat Control brochures to residents</li> </ul>





## Action Plan 9 - Education

- Educating pet owners is the key to successful implementation of the Act. Educating non pet owners is also an important consideration. The Companion Animals Advisory Board oversees State-wide education and publicity campaigns. The Local Companion Animals Advisory Committee will advise Council on the education and publicity needs for Willoughby.
- The state-wide and local education and publicity campaigns must be co-ordinated to achieve maximum impact.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To educate all pet owners and non pet owners about their rights and responsibilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to disseminate information to all stakeholders and to identify education priorities &amp; appropriate action.</li> </ul>	High	Local Comp Animals C'ttee  Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adoption of Companion Animals Plan by Council.</li> <li>• Number of brochures distributed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To target school children and educate them about responsible pet ownership.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rangers to use Dog Safety Programs to target school children in learning about responsible pet ownership</li> </ul>	High	Local Comp Animals C'ttee  Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of visits to schools.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To continue with the education of people living in sensitive areas eg adjacent to bushland or wildlife protection areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with Bushland staff &amp; Bushcare workers to educate home owners about responsible pet ownership near sensitive areas.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers  Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educational material distributed to people living in sensitive areas.</li> <li>• Number of houses visited with educational material.</li> </ul>



<b>Strategic Plan</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that pets are cared for according to accepted standards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Co operate with animal groups eg. RSPCA, Canine Council, Cat Fanciers Assoc to advise people about and enforce the provisions of Codes of Practice in Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, Animal Trade Regulations.</li> </ul>	High	Local Comp Animals C'ttee  Corp Serv Div  Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rangers investigate complaints received about ill treatment of companion animals.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To ensure that Council staff are properly trained to handle and give advice to pet owners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide accredited training for Rangers in the understanding, handling and welfare of dogs and cats.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rangers adequately trained to give advice on animal welfare.</li> <li>Number of Rangers attending courses in animal welfare and animal handling.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To educate people about being responsible pet owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop education programs to highlight specific issues:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cats in sensitive bushland areas.</li> <li>Owner's awareness of responsibilities before buying.</li> <li>The need to be careful when buying unwanted pets for Christmas presents.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	High	Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press releases and advertisements in local newspapers.</li> <li>Number of brochures distributed.</li> <li>Education in school talks by Rangers to highlight the problem of unwanted pets.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To open and maintain communication channels with people involved in Companion Animal management in the City.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a database of key stakeholders eg. vets, community groups.</li> </ul>	Med	Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Database to be established</li> </ul>



## Action Plan 10 - Enforcement

- Council's Rangers enforce the provisions of the Companion Animals Act.
- It may be appropriate, in order to reinforce publicity and education campaigns, for the Rangers to concentrate on enforcement of particular areas of the Act for certain specified periods.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
To provide a responsive and effective animal control service to the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review enforcement procedures as required.</li> </ul>	High	Rangers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of fines issued.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tailor enforcement to coincide with education &amp; publicity campaigns</li> </ul>	High	Rangers Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of fines issued for specific offences during specific campaign period.</li> </ul>



## Action Plan 11 - Funding

- The additional responsibilities on Council resulting from the introduction of the Companion Animals Act will require funding over and above the funds received from registrations and fines.
- Council will continue to monitor the quantity of additional funding and how these funds are to be provided.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To allow for the budgetary impact of the Companion Animals Act on Council's operations and take advantage of available funding opportunities.</li> </ul>	Build up a database of information re: funding from Statewide Registrations, costing of education & publicity campaigns, provision of facilities.	High	Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocation of funds in Council's annual budget to cover Companion Animal activities.</li> <li>• Sponsorship of dog bag dispensers in unleashed exercise areas.</li> <li>• Number of grants Council receives for Companion Animal activities.</li> </ul>
	Consider sources of funding from non-traditional areas eg. sponsorship	High	Local Comp Animals C'ttee Corp Serv Div	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To allocate funding revenue raised from fines issued under the Companion Animals Act back into activities associated with companion animals.</li> </ul>	Establish system to ensure funds from Companion Animals Act fines are directed back for use in companion animals activities.	Med	Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocation of funds in Council's annual budget to cover Companion Animal activities.</li> </ul>



## Action Plan 12 - Review

- It is important that after the Local Companion Animals Management Plan is adopted, regular reviews take place to consider new issues and changes to priorities.
- The Plan should be reviewed every two years.

<b>Strategic Action</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Priority</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Performance Indicator</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review and update the Companion Animals Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor and review the Local Companion Animals Management Plan on an ongoing basis.</li> </ul>	High	Local Comp Animals C'ttee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan reviewed every 2 years after adoption.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To monitor activities associated with implementation of the Companion Animals Act.</li> </ul>	Develop reporting procedures & database to accommodate information on activities eg number of fines issued, number of dogs impounded, number of cats trapped/impounded.	High	Rangers/Corp Serv Div	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistics available for monitoring companion animals' activities by the Companion Animals Committee.</li> </ul>



## Definitions

"**authorised officer**" means:

- (a) an employee of a local authority authorised by the local authority for the purposes of the Companion Animals Act, or
- (b) a police officer.

"**cat**" means an animal of the species *Felis catus*, whether or not domesticated.

"**companion animal**" means each of the following:

- (a) a dog
- (b) a cat
- (c) any other animal that is prescribed by the regulations as a companion animal.

"**council**" means:

Willoughby City Council

"**council pound**" means:

- (a) the pound established by Council under the [Impounding Act 1993](#), or
- (b) any other place approved by Council as a place for the holding of animals for the purposes of this Act.

"**dangerous dog**" means a dog for the time being the subject of a declaration by an [authorised officer](#) of Council or a court under the Companion Animals Act that the dog is dangerous.

"**desexed**" means rendered permanently incapable of reproduction.

"**Director-General**" means the [Director-General](#) of the Department of Local Government.

"**dog**" means an animal (of either sex, or [desexed](#)) of the species *Canis familiaris*, whether or not domesticated.

"**feral cat**" refers to an unowned cat.

"**function**" includes a power, authority and duty.

"**Fund**" means the [Companion Animals Fund](#) established by the Companion Animals Act.

"**nuisance cat**" is defined in Section 31 of the Companion Animals Act

"**nuisance dog**" is defined in Section 21 of the Companion Animals Act

"**owner**" is defined in Section 7 of the Companion Animals Act.



**"public place"** means:

- (a) any pathway, road, bridge, reserve, park or garden, and
- (b) any other place,

that the public are entitled to use.

**"Register"** means the [Register](#) of [Companion Animals](#).

**"registered"** means [registered](#) under the Companion Animals Act.

**"restricted dog"** is defined in section 55 of the Companion Animals Act.

April 2008