



DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT PLAN

2022-2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Holdfast Bay is a thriving metropolitan area that stretches along 8.6 kilometres of coastline located approximately 11 kilometres from the Adelaide central business district.

The vibrant seaside community is home to around 37,000 people and receives 1.4 million visitors annually.

Holdfast Bay is part of the lands of the Kurna people, who are the traditional owners of much of metropolitan Adelaide.

The City's parks, foreshore and beaches are well used by residents and visitors for a variety of activities, including exercising dogs.

During the 2020–2021 registration period, 4,650 dogs and 550 cats were registered in the City of Holdfast Bay via Dogs and Cats Online (DACO).

Council's approach to the management of dogs and cats is detailed in the City of Holdfast Bay's Animal Management Plan (2017–2021), which must be updated every five years, in line with the requirements of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act).

This updated plan draws on the 2017–2021 Animal Management Plan and Council's Strategic Plan — Our Place 2030. It also addresses new issues that have emerged over the past five years. Input for this updated plan was gathered from relevant stakeholders, including elected members and the community.

This plan:

- Recognises that pets are integral to many people's lives and provide a range of health and social benefits.
- Aims to educate the community about responsible pet ownership.
- Aims to create a safe and enjoyable environment for people and animals.
- Reflects broad community sentiment.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In South Australia, the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the 'Act') provides for the management of dogs and cats in the community. The objectives of the Act are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- Reduce public and environmental nuisances caused by dogs and cats.
- Promote the effective management of dogs and cats.

Section 26A of the Act creates a statutory obligation on councils to develop a plan relating to dog and cat management in their area. The plan must cover a five year period and be presented to the Dog and Cat Management Board (the Board) for comment six months before taking effect. This updated plan takes into consideration local priorities and feedback from the community, elected members and staff. It also responds to changes to the Act which occurred after the last plan was endorsed, including:

- Microchipping — all cats and dogs over three months must be microchipped, and the details recorded in Dogs and Cats Online (DACO).
- Desexing — dogs and cats born after 1 July 2018 must be desexed by six months of age.
- Breeders — anyone who breeds dogs and cats for sale must register as a breeder.
- Sellers — anyone selling cats or dogs must provide specific information to buyers.
- Council powers — authorised officers have greater powers.
- Penalties — additional offences are expiable.
- Registration fee structure — discounts apply to standard dogs (dogs that are registered and microchipped).

In addition to the powers in the Act, the City of Holdfast Bay has specific by-laws for dogs and cats. The main features of these by-laws are:

Dog By-law number 5

- Limits the number of dogs permitted in private premises unless Council has granted an exemption.
- Prescribes controls for dog exercise areas, dogs on-leash areas and dog prohibited areas.
- Requires anyone in control of a dog to carry a suitable receptacle to collect dog waste.

Cat By-law number 6

- Limits the number of cats that can be kept on private premises unless Council has granted permission.
- Requires cats to be registered into DACO within 14 days of arrival.
- Makes owners responsible for any nuisance caused by their cat(s).

OUTLINE

The Council's management of urban animal issues impacts the local environment, the health and wellbeing of community members and the welfare of animals in the City. This plan is designed to meet the needs of animal owners, non-owners and visitors to Holdfast Bay.

The Act requires Council to administer and enforce:

- Responsible dog and cat ownership.
- Public and environmental nuisances caused by dogs and cats.

This plan outlines a range of strategies and actions to achieve these requirements, including:

- Educating and promoting responsible pet ownership.
- Enforcing desexing and microchipping requirements.
- Reducing the number of dog attacks.
- Eliminating dog faeces in public places.
- Reducing the number of dogs wandering at large.
- Promoting dog socialisation and training.
- Reducing nuisance barking complaints.
- Upskilling staff.

Education, Encouragement and Enforcement

Our plan emphasises the combined use of education, encouragement and enforcement to achieve Council's objectives. Education and promotion play a key role in changing attitudes about responsible pet ownership. At the same time, Council must proactively investigate issues and implement preventative measures where possible.

Encouragement is a Graduated Response to Achieve Compliance

Enforcement is needed in some situations. However, this must be balanced with community expectations and commensurate with the severity of the offence. The long-term goal is to reduce animal management problems.

Mission Statement

To create an environment that encourages responsible pet ownership, where people and pets integrate safely and harmoniously. To recognise that companion animals are part of the community and contribute to people's quality of life. To ensure that the needs of animals and their owners are accommodated while recognising the wider community's needs, including non-pet-owners and visitors.

Aims

- To provide effective management and a suitable environment for dogs and cats within the community.
- To encourage responsible dog and cat ownership.
- To ensure public safety and amenity through the reduction of public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats.
- To advocate and provide for the welfare and safety of dogs and cats.
- To acknowledge the importance of dogs and cats in society.
- To encourage the enjoyment of and benefits from dogs and cats by people.
- To ensure public safety and amenity in relation to dogs and cats.
- To protect native fauna and flora from the impact of dogs and cats.
- To ensure the expenditure from registration fees addresses the needs of pet owners as well as domestic animal management issues.

Current Service

Council's Community Safety Officers undertake a range of animal management* activities that help to protect the safety and welfare of animals and the community, including:

- Daily patrols of reserves and beaches.
- 24-hour, seven day a week service responding to complaints.
- Education and enforcement.
- Dog attack and harassment investigations.
- Responding to barking dog complaints.
- Retrieving wandering dogs and returning them to their owners.
- Providing advice about animal management.
- Dealing with animal nuisance complaints.
- Implementing a variety of proactive cat management strategies.

One of the unique challenges for the City of Holdfast Bay is the high number of visitors from other council areas that use our beaches to exercise their dogs. The income from registration fees, intended to cover the cost of local animal management, does not account for the impact of visiting dogs.

Despite this, Council's Community Safety Officers and supporting Council departments continue to provide a safe and clean environment for residents and visitors.

Overall, compliance with state legislation and local by-laws is good, notwithstanding the challenges of animal management in a popular tourist destination.

*animal management refers to dog and cats throughout the plan.

Other Urban Animals

While Council mainly manage dogs and cats, from time to time Council receive complaints about other animals. These complaints are dealt with on a case by case basis using the Local Nuisance and Litter Control Act ensuring the animals do not cause a nuisance from smells and noises. Officers will also rescue stray rabbits and ducks and take them to a shelter.



STRATEGIES

Legislation and Education

The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 and Council's dog and cat by-laws stipulate the rules and powers for Community Safety Officers. Council's policies and procedures provide clear direction to ensure matters are dealt with consistently and fairly.

To support compliance, residents and visitors need to be made aware of their legislative obligations. Council uses various channels to inform and educate people about their responsibilities, including multimedia platforms and direct discussions with officers.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Ensure officers have adequate skills and knowledge and operate within the provisions of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 and other relevant delegated authorisations.	Ongoing review of staff training and development to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of the legislation.	Added to the Community Safety Officers (CSOs) performance plans.
	Annual performance review for all staff involved in animal management.	Increased skills and knowledge
	Update procedural guidelines for staff	Procedures updated.
Educate the community on statewide legislation and local by-laws and responsible dog and cat ownership requirements.	<p>Ensure adequate, relevant information about the legislation is displayed in public areas via signage and on Council's website.</p> <p>Encourage officers to take every opportunity to educate the community. Consider holding 'Hounds of Holdfast' or other similar animal welfare events.</p> <p>Ensure the public has access to all relevant legislation.</p>	<p>Information current on the website.</p> <p>Increased awareness in the community.</p> <p>Reviewed in performance reviews. Event hosted.</p> <p>Information current on the website.</p>

Dog and Cat Registrations, Microchipping and De-sexing

The Act requires all dogs over three months of age to be microchipped and registered via Dogs and Cats Online (DACO). Cats over three months of age must also be microchipped and their information entered in DACO.

Additionally, dogs and cats born after July 2018 must be desexed by the age of six months (subject to legislative exemptions).

Ensuring maximum levels of microchipping and registration enables officers to identify owners and take appropriate action to educate, encourage and enforce animal management issues.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Maximise dog and cat registrations, microchipping and desexing.	Use media to inform the public about dog registrations requirements. Use DACO to identify owners that have not entered their microchip details and/or re-registered their animal(s) and apply Council's enforcement policy.	Promoted on Council's media platforms. Increased registrations and microchip numbers.
	Educate the community to register their dogs annually.	Increased registrations and microchip numbers.
	Enforce the mandatory microchipping of cats and dogs.	Increased microchip numbers.
	Promote microchipping days.	Events promoted.



Wandering Animals

Wandering dogs and cats can be a threat to members of the public, native wildlife and themselves. The Act and Council's dog and cat by-laws do not allow dogs or cats to wander except where off-leash provisions allow.

Council uses education, encouragement and enforcement to prevent wandering. When a pet dog wanders, the priority is to return it home as safely and quickly as possible — provided it can be safely contained without risking its welfare. The introduction of DACO and mandatory microchipping has significantly improved this process, with approximately 150 dogs returned each year.

If an animal cannot be identified, it is taken to a suitable animal holding facility where it is kept while further attempts are made to find its owner.

The management of wandering cats is more challenging. A much lower proportion of cats are microchipped, making it difficult for officers to notify owners. More promotion is needed to ensure cat owners comply with microchipping requirements and enter their cat's details in DACO.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Reduce the number of dogs and cats wandering.	<p>Make owners aware of their responsibility to microchip their pets and enter this information on DACO.</p> <p>Ensure dog owners adequately fence their property to control their dog.</p> <p>Ensure cat owners do not allow their cat to travel onto neighbouring properties.</p> <p>Encourage dog owners to train their dog not to leave their premises.</p> <p>Ensure dog owners keep their dog under effective control when in a public place.</p>	<p>Educational campaign implemented.</p> <p>Reduced number of wandering animals.</p> <p>Increased compliance with dog owners controlling the dogs.</p> <p>Fewer complaints about wandering cats.</p> <p>Increased compliance.</p> <p>Reduced complaints.</p>
	<p>Animal Management Officers to monitor public areas for wandering animals.</p> <p>Ensure animals are returned to their owners as soon as possible.</p>	<p>Increased proportion of animals successfully returned to their owners.</p> <p>Officers follow scheduled patrols.</p>
	Respond to calls from the general public.	All calls responded to.
	Provide a 24-hour, seven day a week service.	Service remains effective.

Responsible Ownership – Residents and Visitors

Successful pet ownership involves both financial and time commitments. It is crucial that people who are contemplating pet ownership endeavour to match their choice of pet to their particular home or family circumstances. This responsibility starts with training and effective animal management strategies and extends beyond the home, where pets must behave appropriately in public areas.

Because City of Holdfast Bay beaches and parks attract a high number of visitors, we must adopt various methods to educate both locals and visitors, applying the same principles of education, encouragement and enforcement to maximise compliance with local laws.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Work with the community and individual dog and cat owners on responsible ownership.	Promote the benefits of responsible pet ownership. Develop and implement an education plan on responsible ownership and management. Enforce animal management.	Education plan implemented. Education plan implemented. Warning notices and/or expiation notices issued.
Encourage dog owners to socialise and train their dogs.	Education plan.	Education plan implemented.





Nuisance Barking

Barking dog noise is one of the most time-consuming and challenging animal management issues that councils deal with. The level of nuisance is subjective, depending on an individual's tolerance for dog noise. Dogs are allowed to bark for various reasons — the difficulty lies in defining what is reasonable and legal. In some situations, what is legal may still cause a nuisance to neighbours.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Investigate and attempt to reduce the impact of barking dogs.	Refine procedures for barking noise complaints.	Procedures updated.
Encourage dog owners to socialise and train their dogs.	Educate dog owners and those affected by a barking dog on strategies to reduce the barking.	Reduce the number of barking dog complaints over time.
	Promote force-free alternatives to help reduce excessive barking.	Education plan implemented.
	Work with dog owners and those affected by the barking to help reduce excessive barking.	Reduce the number of barking dog complaints over time.

Public and Animal Safety

All dogs have the potential to bite regardless of size, age, breed or temperament — particularly in situations where they are frightened, dominant, protective or possessive. Owners are responsible for ensuring that their dog behaves and can handle various conditions so that it does not harass or bite another animal or person. They must also have effective physical and voice command control over their dog to prevent incidents from occurring.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Increase public and animal safety by maintaining current initiatives to reduce risks of dog attacks.	Collate statistics related to dog attacks and intervene where possible.	Information collected.
	Promote dog training.	Education program implemented.
	Provide education on how to manage dogs effectively.	Education program implemented.
	Conduct patrols in busier dog exercise areas.	Patrols undertaken as per schedule.
	Investigate attacks/harassments and take appropriate enforcement action.	All attacks investigated, and enforcement action and education undertaken as required.

Environmental Protection

The management of dog faeces is a significant environmental and health issue. It affects the ambience of our beaches, foreshore and parks and has the potential to pollute our waterways. It is an issue about which the community has strong feelings. As a tourism destination, animal faeces littering our public places would have a detrimental impact on our reputation and local economy.

To address this, Council has established a by-law requiring dog owners to carry a suitable receptacle for picking up dog faeces, in addition to state legislation requiring owners to pick up after their dog.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Maintain a clean environment for residents and visitors.	Continue to provide dispensers and dog tidy bags in various locations.	Dog dispensers kept stocked.
	Enforce the by-law requiring people to carry a suitable receptacle for collecting dog faeces.	Scheduled in general patrols.
	Provide adequate signage encouraging people to pick up after their dog.	Signage installed.
	Field Services staff to keep areas clean and respond to complaints.	Cleaning schedules. 100% response to all complaints.

Animal Welfare

The welfare and safety of animals are paramount. Incidents of animal harm are immediately reported by Council staff to the RSPCA. Staff also advocate for change where any risk to the safety of animals is identified.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Advocate and support measures that protect the welfare and safety of dogs and cats.	Advocate to relevant stakeholders on behalf of Council to ensure animal safety and prevent cruelty to animals.	Welfare concerns actioned or reported.
	Consider animal welfare in the development of new council plans.	Animal welfare considered in relevant plans.
	Educate residents about breeder registration requirements and enforce compliance.	Education plan implemented.

Fee structure

Under provisions of the Act, Council must use income generated from dog registrations for the purpose of animal management.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Allocate monies from dog registration for animal management.	Ensure monies raised from registrations are used for animal management.	Budget allocation.



Cat Management

The management of cats is problematic when no individual owner can be identified. It is common for a wandering cat to be fed by one or more households that do not claim ownership of the animal and therefore cannot be held accountable for any nuisance it causes. Feral cats are similarly troublesome. However, there is no evidence of a significant feral cat problem in the City of Holdfast Bay.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Encourage responsible cat ownership. Educate the community on cat management strategies to minimise nuisance complaints.	Ensure cats have one responsible owner that can take full responsibility for the welfare of the cat.	Education plan implemented.
	Promote and enforce the Council's cat by-law.	Enforcement action taken.

Monitor and Review

This plan requires a mechanism to be implemented, monitored, reviewed and updated where appropriate.

Objective	Strategies	Key Performance Indicator
Ensure the plan is implemented, monitored, reviewed and updated.	Board to approve the plan Assign council officer to implement the plan.	Plan implemented. KPI's met for each objective.
	Establish an internal team to meet regularly to review the plan	Recorded on Community Safety Officers minutes.
	Review annually.	Recorded on Community Safety Officers minutes.

Dog and Cat Bylaws:

holdfast.sa.gov.au/council/council-documents/by-laws

Dogs Off-Leash Areas in the City of Holdfast Bay

All parks and reserves (except the beach and foreshore areas as per below restrictions) are off leash areas*, this includes but is not limited to the below list:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Alf Smedley/Mel Baker Reserves | 24. Kauri Sports Centre |
| 2. Angus Neill Reserve | 25. Keelara Reserve |
| 3. Baddams Green | 26. Kingston House Grounds |
| 4. Bindarra Reserve | 27. Kingston Park Coastal Reserve |
| 5. Blackburn Avenue Reserve | 28. Kiwanis Park |
| 6. Bob Lewis Reserve | 29. Les Scott Reserve |
| 7. Bowker Oval | 30. Lewis Street Reserve |
| 8. Brian Nadillo Reserve | 31. Lions Club Reserve |
| 9. Brighton Ovals | 32. Margaret Messenger |
| 10. Colley Reserve | 33. Mawson Oval Reserve |
| 11. Da Costa Park Reserve | 34. Moseley Foreshore |
| 12. Dover Square | 35. Old Gum Tree Reserve |
| (dogs are prohibited inside the signed and fenced off area at Dover Square Reserve). | 36. Paringa Park Reserve |
| 13. Dulcie Perry Park | 37. Parkinson Reserve |
| 14. E. G. Gregory Reserve | 38. Partridge House Grounds |
| 15. Fordham Reserve | 39. Patawilya Reserve |
| 16. Gemmell Green | 40. Rossall Road Reserve |
| 17. Gilbertson Gully | 41. Sandison Reserve |
| 18. Glenelg North Community Centre/
Kibby Avenue Reserve | 42. Seaforth Reserve |
| 19. Good Neighbour Gardens | 43. Shannon Avenue Reserve |
| 20. Graymore Park | 44. Stewart Reserve |
| 21. Jack Chaston Reserve | 45. Susan Grace Benny Reserve |
| 22. Jimmy Melrose | 46. Sutherland Reserve |
| 23. John Miller Reserve | 47. Tarniwarra Reserve |
| | 48. Wattle Reserve |
| | 49. Wheatland Street Reserve |
| | 50. Wigley Reserve |

When dogs are required to be leashed in the City of Holdfast Bay

Current restrictions require dogs to be leashed on the beach and foreshore from 10am to 8pm during daylight savings, consistent with neighbouring beaches.

Additionally, our by-laws require dogs to be leashed near Hooded Plover breeding sites.

*dogs must be under effective control at all times.



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