



City of
Mount Gambier



Dog and Cat Management Plan

2024 - 2028



The City of Mount Gambier acknowledges the Boandik Peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the land and water our city sits upon today.

We respect and recognise the deep feelings of attachment and the spiritual relationship our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples have with the land and water.



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Mayor's Message

Pets hold a special place in our hearts as integral members of many families in our community, providing not only love and companionship but also profoundly influencing our physical and mental well-being. They motivate us, influence our emotional state and offer stability —especially during times of increased stress.

Amidst the joy our pets bring, we share a responsibility—to keep them safe and healthy. It is crucial for each of us to contribute to their well-being by socialising and training them to interact safely with other animals and our community. Owners must therefore follow regulations designed to enhance public safety and minimise nuisances.

The City of Mount Gambier plays a pivotal role in providing regulatory services to enforce laws that safeguard the health and safety of our community. Our commitment extends to services such as a local pound for reuniting lost dogs with their owners, addressing cat nuisance complaints and providing and maintaining facilities that people can enjoy with their pets.

The Dog and Cat Management Plan 2024-2028 outlines a strategic approach to animal management and ownership, guiding us over the next five years to meet the evolving needs of our community.

Your active participation is instrumental in making this plan a success. Together, we can foster a community where both pets and residents, whether with or without pets, thrive.

Thank you for playing your part as your support for this plan will contribute to a positive environment for everyone in our community.

Lynette Martin OAM
Mayor
City of Mount Gambier



Executive Summary

Every council in South Australia is required under section 26A of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act) to prepare a plan of management relating to dogs and cats every five years.

Council has prepared this plan to guide the direction of the City of Mount Gambier's dog and cat management priorities for the next five years (2024-2028). This plan provides Council with an opportunity to address dog and cat management at a strategic level and consider initiatives that address the requirements of pet owners, non-pet owners and visitors within the local community.

This plan takes into consideration local priorities and feedback from the community, Elected Members and staff. Community engagement was undertaken via an online survey through Have Your Say Mount Gambier, community consultation forums and email with 70 participants providing valuable feedback in addition to input from local animal care and welfare providers within our community.

This plan is divided into two parts: (i) context and background and (ii) objectives and actions for dogs and cats.

The key objectives and action areas include:

Objective 1: Promote responsible dog and cat ownership

Action areas: Community education and compulsory desexing and microchipping of dogs and cats.

Objective 2: Enhance the amenity and environment and increase public safety

Action areas: Proper handling of dog waste and adequate and accessible facility to exercise dogs.

Objective 3: Ensure Council delivers effective and efficient dog and cat management services

Action areas: Authorised management officers, animal pound, cat management.

This plan's objectives and Council's role in relation to them are aligned with Council's Strategic Plan and vision for an inclusive city where people can lead fulfilling lives.





**Part One:
Background
and Context**

Background

This section describes the background and context to the Dog and Cat Management Plan including:

- The community and geographic profiles of the City of Mount Gambier that might have a bearing on the Dog and Cat Management Plan;
- The Dog and Cat Management Act and Council's animal management by-laws, and
- Council's existing animal management service.



City of Mount Gambier

Mount Gambier is the major service centre for the Limestone Coast. Located half way between Melbourne and Adelaide, Mount Gambier has a population of approximately 28,000 people.

In 2021, the majority of residents live in separate houses. 24.5% of dwellings were in the form of medium or high-density housing compared with 12.4% for the broader Limestone Coast region and 10.8% for Regional South Australia. 30.8% of City of Mount Gambier residents rent, which is also higher than the Limestone Coast region and broader regional South Australia.

City of Mount Gambier has a high proportion of its population that is post-retirement age (27.4%), however in comparison to regional SA, it has a higher percentage of young people between 18 to 34.

The majority of residents (87.6%) speak English at home. Of the other languages spoken at home, the most common are Karen, Italian and Filipino.

The City of Mount Gambier boasts a unique natural environment, home to the Blue Lake/Warwar, craters, caves, sinkholes, underground waterways and beautiful gardens. These natural assets are home to a diverse range of native plant and animal species, some of which are threatened or endangered.

Legislation and by-laws

Dog and Cat Management Act 1995

Owning dogs and/or cats is great for our health and wellbeing, but to balance community expectations it must be managed effectively. In South Australia that is the purpose of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act).

Each council is responsible for administering and enforcing the provisions of the Act relating to dogs and cats within its area. Some elements of dog and cat management such as welfare and wildlife are governed by other acts.



The objects of the Act are:

- to encourage responsible dog and cat ownership,
- to reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats,
- to promote the effective management of dogs and cats (including through encouragement of the desexing of dogs and cats).

The Act was reviewed in 2022 and is currently being updated. This Plan therefore is developed with consideration of likely legislative change during its lifetime.

Council responsibilities

The responsibilities delegated to councils under the Act (Section 26) that apply to the preparation of this Plan are outlined below.

- Maintain a register of dogs (26 (1) (a)),
- Appoint a suitable person to be the Registrar (26b),
- Make satisfactory arrangements for issuing and replacing certificates of registration and registration discs (26c),
- Appoint at least one full-time authorised person or make other satisfactory arrangements for the exercise of the functions and powers of authorised persons (26d),
- Make satisfactory arrangements for the detention of dogs seized under this Act; (and may make such arrangements for cats seized under this Act) (26e),
- Make satisfactory arrangements for fulfilling other obligations under this Act (26f).

The City of Mount Gambier currently has its own pound facilities for the mandatory 72-hour holding period for dogs seized under the Act. If a dog is not reclaimed within this timeframe, the animals are then transferred to either a volunteer-run animal rescue organisation or another local council that has an established rehoming program.

City of Mount Gambier does not currently have an active cat management program and as such does not have arrangements in place.

Money received

Money received by a council under the Act must be expended in the administration of the provisions of this Act relating to dogs and cats (26(3)).

Payment into fund

Council must pay into the fund the percentage fixed by regulation of the dog registration fees received by the council (26(5)).



Setting of fees

Council has the responsibility for setting registration fees (26(6)).

Dog and cat plans of management

Each council must prepare a plan relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area (26A).

These plans must include provisions for parks where dogs may be exercised off-leash and for parks where dogs must be under effective control by using physical restraint, and may include provisions for parks where dogs are prohibited.

The Dog and Cat Management Board must approve the plan of management before it can take effect.

Establishing by-laws

Councils can pass a by-law for the control and management of dog and cats within their area (under Section 90 of the Act).

The City of Mount Gambier has a dog by-law no.5 which covers:

- Limits on dog numbers in private premises,
- Dog exercise areas,
- Dog on leash areas,
- Dog prohibited areas, and
- Dog faeces collection.

You can read more about the dog by-law on the City of Mount Gambier [website](#). Council's current dog by-law is due to expire on 1 January 2026.

Effective management of dogs and cats

Council works with the community to educate, encourage and enforce the Act's provisions relating to:

- Dog registration,
- Dogs wandering at large,
- Dog attacks, harassments and barking issues,
- Dangerous dogs,
- Dogs of a prescribed breed,
- Greyhounds,
- Guard dogs,
- Destruction and control orders,
- Microchipping and desexing,
- Monitoring dog off-lead parks,
- Administering additional dog permits,
- Undertaking dog control order inspections, and
- Other obligations under the Act as they may arise.





Other relevant legislation

- Local Government Act 1999,
- Local Nuisance and Litter Control Act 2016,
- Animal Welfare Act 1985,
- Planning, Development and Infrastructure Act 2016,
- Landscape South Australia Act 2019.

Key stakeholders and partners

Council cannot do this work alone and would like to acknowledge the work of other organisations within the community that assist with the care and management of dogs and cats within our community. These include veterinary practices, animal welfare and rescue groups (i.e. South East Animal Welfare League and Wet Noses Animal Rescue), RSPCA SA, pet retail providers, animal behaviour trainers, groomers and animal boarding and day care facilities.

Pets in communities

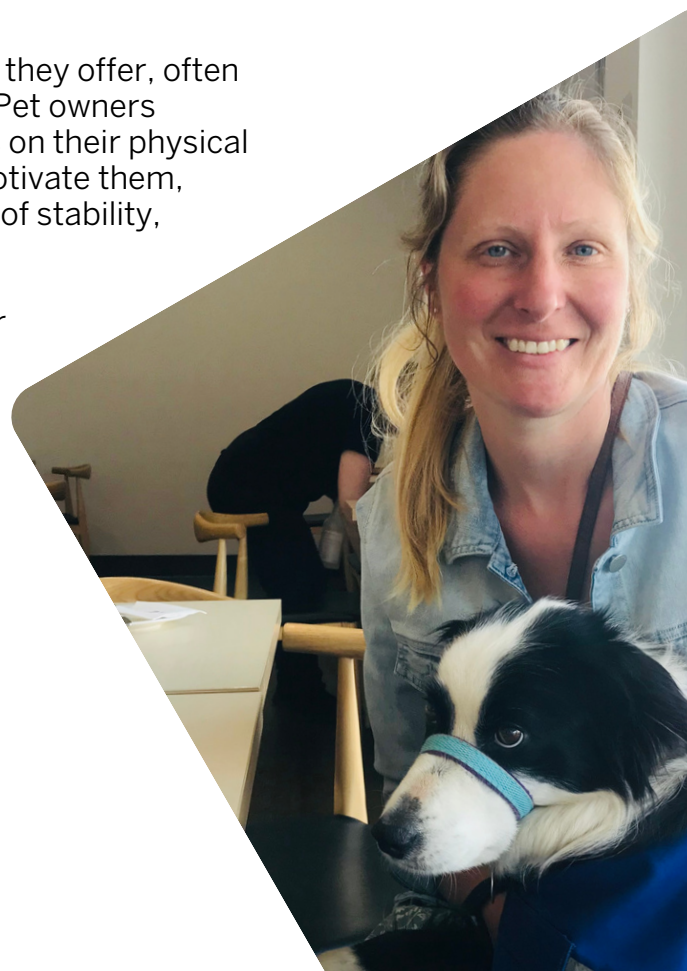
The following is a summary of some information presented from the Animal Medicine Australia Report (2022), *Pets in Australia: A national survey of pets and people*.

In Australia, it is estimated that around 69% of households own a pet: 47.8% owning a dog and 33.3% owning a cat.

Benefits of pet ownership

Pets are cherished for the love and companionship they offer, often being considered as integral members of families. Pet owners frequently emphasise the positive influence of pets on their physical and mental well-being, noting how their animals motivate them, enhance their emotional state and provide a sense of stability, especially during times of increased stress.

Furthermore, pets enrich the social aspects of their owners' lives, teaching children responsibility and empathy, fostering connections in the community and facilitating interactions that might not occur otherwise, both in physical spaces like dog parks and virtual communities such as online forums for tropical fish enthusiasts.



Barriers and challenges

While 69% of Australian households now have a pet, many more would like a pet, or an additional pet.

Housing limitations and affordability concerns are significant obstacles for both prospective and current pet owners aiming to expand their pet families.

Those who don't own their own home, particularly renters and people living in apartments frequently cite unsuitable housing and challenges related to landlords, body corporates, and strata laws as key barriers to pet ownership.

Despite acknowledging the benefits of having pets, a substantial 79% of current owners report experiencing difficulties, which has increased from 66% in 2019. This rise in challenges may be attributed to combination of factors including cost of living pressures and an evolving public perception of responsible pet ownership.

Desexing and microchipping

The rates of desexing for dogs and cats have notably decreased since the survey undertaken in 2019, with 73% of dogs and 83% of cats owned by respondents being desexed, down from 81% and 89% respectively. There are minimal demographic differences between pet owners who choose to desex their animals, although older individuals are more likely to do so. In the City of Mount Gambier council area 71% of registered dogs and 90% of registered cats are desexed.

Microchipping rates have also slightly decreased, going from 86% to 82% for dogs and 77% to 74% for cats, with regional dogs more likely to be microchipped compared to their metropolitan counterparts (87% vs. 80%). The opposite is true for cats with 77% of metro cats microchipped versus 63% of rural cats. In the City of Mount Gambier council area, 93% of registered dogs and 92% of registered cats are microchipped.

In South Australia, the Act requires that owners microchip their dogs and cats and must ensure that their dog or cats are desexed in accordance with any requirements set out in the regulations.



Snapshot of dogs and cats in the City of Mount Gambier



The following is a snapshot of City of Mount Gambier's dog and cat statistics for 2022/2023.

Dogs	
Dog registrations	5,570
Dogs registered that are desexed and registered	4,033
Dogs registered that are microchipped	5,180
Total number of dog complaints (inc. dogs wandering complaints)	374
Dogs wandering complaints	227
Dogs collected and returned to the owner without impounding	155

Cats	
Cats registered in DACO	2,015
Cats registered in DACO that are microchipped	1,834
Cats registered in DACO that are desexed	1,774
Cat complaints	26





Registration trends

	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023
Total dogs	5,167	5,024	5,108	5,493	5,570
Total cats*	887	1,404	1,966	1,905	2,015

*Cats with their microchip details recorded in DACO.

Dog management customer requests

Customer request	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023
Dog attack	2	1	2	2	4
Dog noise	19	16	24	23	21
Dog nuisance	136	143	132	136	122
Dogs wandering at large	229	207	210	244	227
Total	386	367	368	405	374

In 2022/2023 there were 374 dog complaints, and wandering dogs accounted for 60% of complaints. From these complaints, 90% of the dogs seized wandering at large were reunited with their owners.

Council's aim is to reunite wandering dogs as soon as possible with their owner. If a dog can be identified via a microchip, collar or tag with contact details every effort is made to ensure that the animal is taken home or collected the same day rather than be impounded at Council's pound which offers a short-term (72 hours) detention. If a dog is not claimed within 72 hours, the animal is transferred to one of Council's rehoming partners for rehoming, where possible.



Existing services

The responsibility for the management of dogs and cats within the City of Mount Gambier rests within the Corporate and Regulatory Services Department. Council has authorised persons who are approved to carry out specific functions and powers under the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act).

Council's dog management services are funded by a combination of general rate revenue and fees generated under the provisions of the Act, including dog registrations and fees from penalties and fines for breaches of the Act.

12% of these fees are payable to the Dog and Cat Management Fund as required under the Act and administered by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

The remaining funds are allocated to animal management and initiatives within the City of Mount Gambier including:

- Responding to dogs wandering at large,
- Reuniting lost dogs and cats with their owners,
- Investigating cat nuisances,
- Providing cat traps for community cat trapping,
- Providing after-hours and weekend animal management services,
- Investigating incidences of dog attacks and nuisance barking,
- Liaising and educating pet owners about responsible pet ownership,
- Providing Council pound facilities for dogs, and making adequate arrangements for rehoming dogs not reunited with their owners after the 72-hour mandatory holding period,
- Providing dog waste bags and stations throughout the city, and
- Maintaining Hasting Cunningham Reserve Dog Park and other off-leash open spaces.

Existing on-leash, off-leash and dog prohibited areas

The City of Mount Gambier provides a range of public open space where dogs can exercise on and off-leash, including sporting ovals, parks and reserves, linear walking trails and a fenced dog park.

You can read more about the current off-leash, on-leash and dog prohibited areas in Appendix A.



Cat ownership

It is estimated there are as many as 400,000 pet cats in South Australia, similar to the number of pet dogs. The management of cats is generating community and media interest and there are increasing expectations around responsible cat management.

There are currently 2,015 cats registered in the City of Mount Gambier on DACO, and 92% of registered cats are microchipped with 90% desexed.

Cat management has become an increasing priority within the city of Mount Gambier which was captured as part of the feedback in developing this plan.

Currently, Council manages cat nuisance complaints under the Local Nuisance and Litter Control Act 2016.

Council also supplies cat trapping cages for hire (fees apply).

If a trapped cat is:

- Identifiable via a collar, tag with contact details or microchip, then the cat must be returned to the owner by the person who trapped the cat
- Un-identifiable then the cat must be taken to the Council's nominated veterinary provider, who will decide whether the cat is to be euthanised or rehomed.

Beyond this, City of Mount Gambier does not currently actively manage cats.

A state-wide approach is recommended as part of updates to the Act which will set the framework for managing cats at a local level. It is with this in mind that City of Mount Gambier will review its cat management approach during the life of this plan, once the legislative requirements are confirmed.

Council however acknowledges that other strategies can be employed in the interim to educate and support the community to responsibly own cats and reduce the number of semi-owned and unowned cats within the community.



Part Two: Objectives and Actions



Action plan

Key objectives and action areas contained in this plan include:

Objective 1: Promote responsible dog and cat ownership

- Community education
- Compulsory desexing and microchipping of dogs and cats.
- Cat management

Objective 2: Enhance the amenity and environment and increase public safety

- Wandering dogs and harassment
- Nuisance Barking
- Dog faeces

Objective 3: Ensure Council delivers effective and efficient dog and cat management services

- Authorised management officers
- Animal pound
- Dog friendly parks and accessibility.

Monitoring progress

This plan is reviewed annually to track implementation and progress against the performance measures.



Objective 1: Promote responsible pet ownership

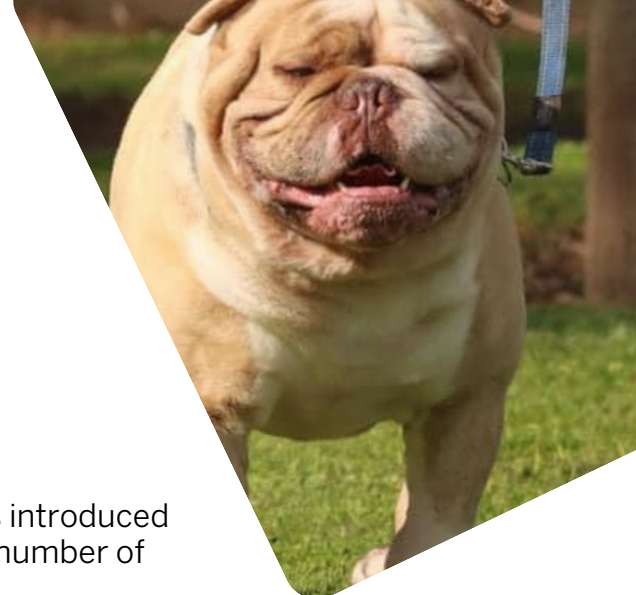


Community education

City of Mount Gambier recognises that community education is an important aspect of animal management to raise pet owners' understanding of their legal obligations and of responsible pet ownership. Council reinforces and distributes the Dog and Cat Management Board's (DCMB) messages regarding responsible pet ownership to pet owners and the broader community via social media, council publications and at community events.

Community education, combined with legislation enforcement, can improve pet owners' understanding of responsible pet ownership. Council also recognises the importance of working with other stakeholders such as qualified dog trainers, veterinarians, and other animal organisations in educating current and prospective pet owners and the broader community on responsible pet ownership.

Actions	Performance Measures	When
Review and update content on the City of Mount Gambier website to ensure it has easy to access responsible pet ownership links and resources for the community.	Content is reviewed in Year 1, with regular updates made as required throughout the life of the Plan.	Year 1 & ongoing
Continue to promote the state-wide statutory requirements on compulsory microchipping of dogs and cats .	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Promote educational materials that educate prospective dog and cat owners about responsible purchase of dogs and cats .	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
In partnership with local veterinary clinics, provide easy 'how-to' guides for people to register their dog or cat in DACO at the time they are microchipped.	Information flyers/posters via veterinary clinics and information on Council's website.	Year 1 & ongoing



Compulsory desexing and microchipping of dogs and cats

In 2018, the requirement for compulsory desexing was introduced by the Dog and Cat Management Board to reduce the number of unwanted litters of puppies and kittens.

Desexing not only helps to ensure fewer unwanted and homeless animals, but also research shows that desexed animals can actually live longer and healthier lives.

Desexing also provides many other benefits for you and your pet:

- Desexing reduces the risk of serious health issues like mammary cancer, uterine infections, and false pregnancies.
- It prevents disruptive reproductive cycle behaviors such as cats 'calling' during heat and yowling, and male dogs persistently seeking females in heat.
- It eliminates the risks associated with pregnancy, birthing, and raising young, including eclampsia, fetal loss, difficult births, and infections.
- Desexed pets are less likely to roam, reducing the risk of accidents, fights, and exposure to infectious diseases.
- They exhibit less aggressive behavior, decreasing conflicts with other animals in the household and the neighbourhood.
- Desexed animals are less likely to scent mark by urinating on objects, compared to undesexed animals.

Actions	Performance Measures	When
Continue to promote the Dog and Cat Management Board's information about mandatory de-sexing of dogs and cats.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Investigate the implementation of a subsidised, low-cost desexing and microchipping initiatives in partnership with a local veterinarian(s) for those pet owners who are concession card holders and/ or experiencing financial hardship.	Investigation completed and considered for implementation.	Year 2
Continue to review the DACO database to identify dogs and cats that are not desexed and/or microchipped and follow up.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing



Cat management

Under the Dog and Cat Management Act, individual councils in South Australia have the power to implement a by-law Under section 90 of the Act, for the control or management of cats.

The Dog and Cat Management Board's publication 'A Guide to Preparing a Cat By-Law' identifies the type of provisions a Council may address in a cat by-law including cat registration, limits on the number of cats per property, curfews, confinement and wandering at large. Currently, there are no cat by-laws within the City of Mount Gambier.

The management of cats is generating community and media interest, and there are increasing expectations around responsible cat management. In reviewing the current Dog and Cat Management Act, the Dog and Cat Management Board reported that the call for stronger cat controls across South Australia is driven by a number of perspectives:

- Limiting cat wandering is widely recommended by veterinary healthcare, government animal management, and animal welfare agencies due to its positive impact on cat health and safety, reducing disease exposure, road accidents, dog attacks, and cat fights.
- Changing attitudes about what constitutes a nuisance in neighbourhoods and a revaluation of the different treatment of dogs and cats.
- Concerns for the environment have grown with research on the impact of cats on wildlife, with estimates indicating that cats in Australia cause the deaths of millions of reptiles, birds, mammals, invertebrates, and frogs daily, primarily due to feral cats in the wild, but also involving stray cats in towns and domestic cats.

This is consistent with the feedback from our community who raised cat management as the most prominent issue during the consultation process for this Plan (refer Appendix B), with 60% of respondents raising issues/ concerns with regard to stray/ wandering/ trespassing cats and 42.5% raising issues/ concerns with cats preying on wildlife.

To address these issues, respondents indicated a desire for a by-law to assist with cat management with reference in particular to a cat curfew.

Actions	Performance measures	When
Review City of Mount Gambier's current procedure for the management of cats trapped in council-leased cat traps , including a pathway for rehoming those cats that are deemed suitable.	Procedure developed and implemented over the life of this plan.	Year 1 & ongoing
Continue to promote the Dog and Cat Management Board's information about mandatory desexing and microchipping of cats .	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Develop a target campaign to encourage the use of cat runs and other appropriate containment measures to prevent cats from wandering.	Campaign developed and implemented over the life of this plan	Year 2
Encourage people to take full responsibility for unowned cats they are feeding including desexing and microchipping of cats.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Encourage cat owners to register their cats on DACO .	Increase in number of cats registered on DACO over the life of this plan.	Year 1 & ongoing
Determine future directions for cat management in the city including a cat by-law (if applicable). Future directions to be informed by pending changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act.	Investigation conducted and recommendations for consideration.	Year 2 & ongoing (subject to legislative updates).
Continue advocacy with State Government regarding cost and resourcing implications of effective cat management .	Provide feedback and input to relevant consultations and forums.	Year 1 & ongoing



Objective 2: Enhance the amenity and environment and increase public safety

Wandering dogs and harassment

Dogs that wander or roam from their property can “cause a nuisance, are often distressed and may attack or harass people or other animals. In some cases, they cause road accidents resulting in injury to the dog and on occasion to vehicle occupants and may cause property damage – all of which becomes the responsibility of the owner of the dog.”- DCMB, 2014.

Council data from 2022/2023 revealed that 60% of all dog-related complaints were related to dogs wandering, making it a recurring concern for the community over the last five years. Losing a pet can be a distressing time for both the dog and the owner. Council makes every effort to reunite dogs as soon as possible with their owners. If a dog is registered and/or can be identified by a microchip or collar and tag with contact details Council will ensure that the animal is taken home, or collected on the same day rather than be impounded which offers a short-term (72 hour) detention. If a dog is not claimed within 72 hours, the animal is transferred to one of Council's rehoming partners for rehoming where possible.

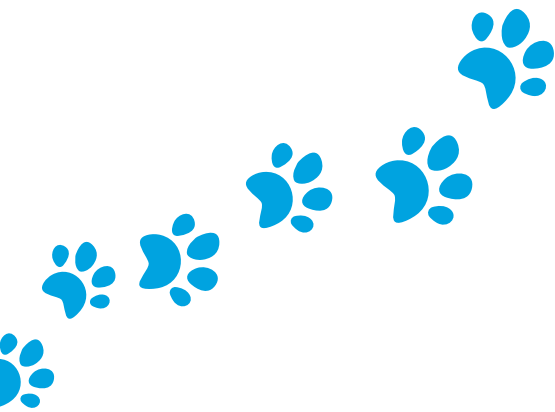
To ensure community safety and to avoid a dog escaping, dog owners are encouraged to conduct a yard check to ensure there are no areas where dogs can get out. Escaped dogs roaming the streets present a risk to the community.

Dogs escape for many reasons, such as inadequate fencing, being left alone for long periods of time and becoming bored and frustrated, fear of loud noises, thunder and fireworks or opportunistic escapes through roller doors, gates or screen doors left open.

Dogs that escape their yard may attack or harass people, other dogs, cats and wildlife. Yard security and containment is a key strategy to reducing dog harassment and attacks.



Actions	Performance Measures	When
Provide information and materials to educate dog owners on how to keep their yard 'dog secure' .	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Continue to develop City of Mount Gambier's Impounded Dogs Facebook page to assist with reuniting wandering dogs with their owners and distributing relevant rehoming and education material outlined within this plan.	Increase the number of followers and engagement with City of Mount Gambier's Impounded Dogs Facebook page over the life of this plan.	Year 1 & ongoing
Encourage the community to report to Council if dogs rush at them or their animals with the aim of preventing future acts of harassment or attack.	Information and material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing



Dog faeces

Under City of Mount Gambier's dog by-law no.5 dog owners are required to carry a bag or other suitable container for the collection and lawful disposal of any faeces that the dog may deposit. Breach of this by-law is subject to an expiation of \$80.

When owners are out and about with their dogs in public places they are required to clean up after them. This can easily be done using a scooper and a plastic bag to remove and dispose of the faeces.

Council provides dog bag dispensers and bins in various parks and reserves including its fenced dog park to encourage dog owners to do the right thing. The penalty for failing to clean up after a dog is \$210.

The issue of people not picking up and/or disposing of dog faeces properly in public parks and reserves was one of the top issues raised as part of the consultation process for this plan (refer Appendix B) with 60% of respondents rating it as one of the top five challenges with regard to responsible pet ownership.

Actions	Performance measures	When
Promote the legal requirement for dog owners to carry a plastic bag , for faeces disposal when in a public place.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, signage, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Undertake targeted campaigns around 'picking up after dogs and disposing correctly' in public places.	Education campaign implemented over the life of this plan.	Year 1 & ongoing





Nuisance barking

In 2022/2023 the City of Mount Gambier received 21 complaints related to dog noise. Excessive barking in dogs can be attributed to various factors such as boredom, loneliness, ill health, separation anxiety or reactions to stimuli in their environment, like birds, cats, or passersby. Some dog owners may be unaware of their dog's barking, especially when it occurs while they are not at home.

Council's General Inspectorate team play a crucial role in enforcing compliance and addressing nuisance barking complaints. Resolving these complaints varies in complexity, with some easily resolved while others are more challenging and time-consuming due to the subjective nature of dog noise. The investigative process can be lengthy and may require detailed evidence to substantiate noise-related concerns, which can deter some neighbours from pursuing their complaints. Encouraging dog owners to recognise and address behavioural issues leading to noise complaints and providing guidance on effective training techniques can be instrumental in resolving these concerns.

Actions	Performance measures	When
Promote force-free/positive reinforcement trainers as a resource for residents seeking help with dog behaviour issues.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Continue to promote the City of Mount Gambier Barking Dog Complaint Kit as an effective mechanism for making dog noise complaints.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing



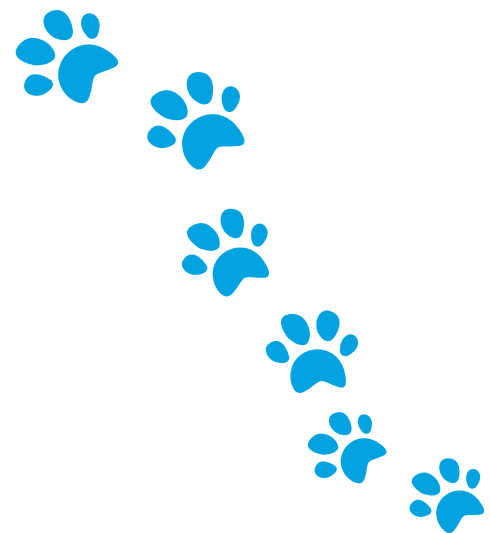
Objective 3: Ensure Council delivers effective and efficient dog and cat management services



Authorised Animal Management Officers

City of Mount Gambier's General Inspectorate team provides animal management services seven days a week and offers an on-call service for urgent animal management issues after hours. Our General Inspectors are authorised under the Dog and Cat Management Act to carry out specific functions and powers.

An educated, professional, visible and responsive team is required to deliver effective and efficient services to the community. The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 requires Council to enforce the provisions of the Act. The approach by the City of Mount Gambier is to educate and encourage people to do the right thing before the need to enforce the provisions of the Act. Maintaining a high standard of service requires staff to be educated and informed on relevant legislation and best practice in animal management. Council supports attendance at relevant professional development courses and continuous learning.



Actions	Performance measures	When
Raise awareness of council animal management services to pet owners and general community.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing
Schedule patrols to focus on peak times of animal-related activity 'hot spots' .	Patrols conducted in targeted locations. Data captured and evaluated.	Year 1 & ongoing
Ensure General Inspectors have access to learning and development opportunities that support them in delivering best practice animal management services and initiatives.	General Inspectors have a professional development plan in place each year.	Year 1 & ongoing
Collaborate with other councils to ensure the effective delivery of animal management services.	Suitable agreements in place to support effective delivery of services.	Year 1 & ongoing
Review and replace Council by-law no.5 dogs 2018 which expires on 1 January 2026.	Updated by-law in place by 1 January 2026.	Year 2 & 3



Animal pound

Effective dog and cat management services include providing the right facilities for our community. Council must also make satisfactory arrangements for the detention of dogs seized under this Act. This is undertaken by providing a local pound.

A recent review of Council's animal pound and shelter services has resulted in Council operating its own short-term pound for the mandatory 72-hour holding period and working in partnership with suitable organisations for assessment and rehoming for those dogs not reunited with their owners. This work is undertaken in accordance with City of Mount Gambier's Unclaimed Dogs Policy.

Actions	Performance measures	When
Provide suitable pound facilities to service the community and provide an environment that caters for the welfare of impounded animals and a safe environment for staff.	Pound maintained and compliant to uphold the approval of the Dog and Cat Management Board.	Year 1 & ongoing
Maintain collaborative and effective relationships with services providers who assist with the delivery of Council's pound services.	Professional Services Agreements in place with rehoming partners, veterinarians, behavioural trainers and boarding kennels, with details of partners on Council's website.	Year 1 & ongoing
Participate in discussions for state-wide solutions for animal management as part of regular advocacy.	Provide feedback and input as required to industry discussions on animal management.	Year 1 & ongoing





Dog-friendly parks and accessibility

Council provides a range of public open space where dogs can be exercised on and off leash such as sporting ovals, parks and reserves and linear walking trails, and supporting amenities such as dog water bowls, dog bag dispensers and bins. It is a statutory requirement under the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 to have dogs under effective control at all times. For dogs off leash, effective control refers to dog owners having their dogs under voice command and in close proximity so owners can see their dog at all times. You can read more about the existing off-leash, on-leash and dog prohibited areas in Appendix A.



Actions	Performance measures	When
Update designated off-leash areas at Blue Lake Sports Park in conjunction with leaseholders while ensuring suitable facilities are still available to pet owners.	Recommendation and community consultation for implementaton.	Year 1
Undertake a review of current designated off-leash areas to determine suitability and provide recommendations for any changes or additions that are required to service the community.	Review conducted and recommendations for consideration.	Years 1 & 2
In conjunction with the City of Mount Gambier Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategy, explore opportunities for strategically located dog facilities across the city with consideration of an additional fenced dog park, and master planning Hastings Cunningham Dog Park facilities in consultation with users.	Review conducted and recommendations for consideration.	Years 3 to 5
Provide information and materials to educate dog owners on dog etiquette and dog park safety and include details of dog friendly parks and walking trails as part of tourism collateral.	Promotional material posted on Council's website, social media and other formats.	Year 1 & ongoing







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Appendix A

On-leash, off-leash and dog prohibited areas

There are six off leash dog areas and one enclosed dog park within the City of Mount Gambier where dogs are welcome to exercise and play off leash.

Off-leash areas

- Botanic Park
- Corriedale Park
- Hastings Cunningham Reserve (and enclosed dog park)
- Marist Park
- Northumberland Reserve (behind the Blue Lake/ Warwar)
- Frew Park
- Blue Lake Sports Park (excluding sporting fields and ovals - refer to below map)
- Don McDonnell Reserve.

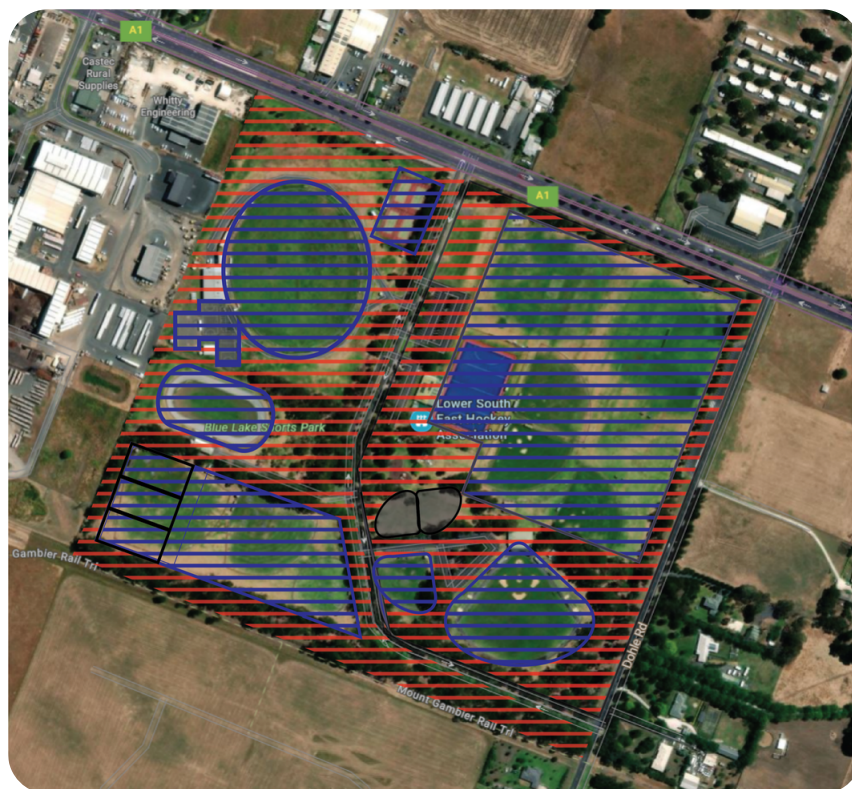
On-leash areas

- Cave Cardens/Thugi
- Engelbrecht Cave
- Lady Nelson
- Olympic Park
- Rail Trail
- Valley Lake/Ketla Malpi crater area
- Umpherston Sinkhole/ Balumbul
- Vansittart Park

Dog prohibited areas

- All playgrounds
- All sporting fields and ovals at Blue Lake Sports Park.

Blue Lakes Sports Park on-leash and off-leash areas (inc. proposed fenced dog off-leash areas)



Key



Blue = Dog prohibited area



Red = Off-leash area



Black diamonds (middle) = Proposed interim off-leash dog park



Black squares (bottom-left) = Future dog park area concept

Appendix B

Community engagement summary

The community engagement process was conducted from 14 August 2023 to 13 September 2023.

The Dog and Cat Management Plan 2024 - 2028 survey was promoted on the City of Mount Gambier Have Your Say website which had 457 page visits during the period of community engagement.

The survey was also promoted through:

- Social media
- Direct emails
- Distribution of posters and signage to veterinary clinics, pet shops and animal welfare organisations in the city of Mount Gambier.
- Posters and signage at customer service points across Council sites.
- Council community forums
- Council website.

Contributors were also able to provide feedback via email, letters or by attending a consultation forum.

Supporting tools developed as part of the consultation included:

- Project fact sheet
- Shareable poster
- Previous Dog and Cat Management Plan.

The top five challenges identified with regards to responsible pet ownership and animal behaviour were:

1. Cat management - including wandering, causing nuisance and/or preying on wildlife.
2. Dog wastes that have not been picked up by dog owners.
3. Dogs off leash where they shouldn't be.
4. Maintenance of existing dog park and requirement for additional fenced off-leash areas.
5. Dog behaviour towards other dogs.

Council also received comments and concerns from 25% of survey respondents regarding its working relationship with SEAWL and other animal welfare groups, with a desire for greater transparency on our approach.

You can read more about the community engagement activities and findings in the Phase 1 Consultation Summary - Dog and Cat Management Plan 2024 - 2028 available from Council.





City of
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