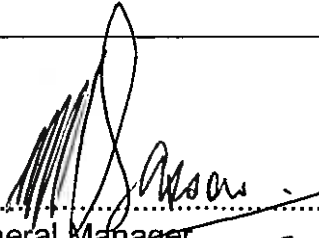




GLEN INNES SEVERN COUNCIL

Strategic Companion Animals Management Policy

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General Manager

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Strategic Framework

1. Introduction

1.1 What is a Strategic Companion Animals Management Policy (SCAMP)?

The Strategic Companion Animals Management Policy (SCAMP) is designed to provide guidance for Council in fulfilling its responsibilities under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and Regulations. The Policy also assists in determining the relevant issues and priorities of the local community.

Glen Innes Severn Council's SCAMP aims to facilitate a higher level of responsible companion animal ownership and create an environment of co-operation and mutual benefit between companion animal owners and other residents.

1.2 Key Areas

- i. Identification and Registration;
- ii. Nuisance Animal Management;
- iii. Menacing Dog Management;
- iv. Dangerous Dog and Restricted Breed Management;
- v. Dogs in Public Places;
- vi. Seizure of Animals;
- vii. Cat Management;
- viii. Animal Welfare and Safety;
- ix. Community Education; and
- x. Co-ordination with other Companion Animal Stakeholders.

2. Companion Animal Management

2.1 Identification and Registration

Under the provisions of section 8 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* it is required that a companion animal be permanently identified (microchipped) from 12 weeks of age or before point of sale if less than 12 weeks of age. Section 9 of the Act requires companion animals to be registered by 6 months of age. Some animals are exempt from the registration requirements. These include; working dogs ordinarily kept on farmland (this does not include Rural Residential), assistance animals (e.g. Guide Dogs) and Greyhounds registered with Greyhound Racing NSW.

The NSW Companion Animals (Pet) Register provides Council with the ability to reunite lost animals with their owners, record types of registrations and fees paid, provide companion animal reporting functions for Council, identify nuisance and dangerous dogs and provides some funding for education and enforcement.

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2.2 Nuisance Animals

A Nuisance Dog, under section 32A of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, is a dog that:

- is habitually at large; or
- 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; or
- repeatedly defecates on property (other than a public place) outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept; or
- repeatedly runs at or chases any person, animal (other than vermin and, in relation to an animal, otherwise than in the course of driving, tending, working or protecting stock) or vehicle; or
- endangers the health of any person or animal (other than vermin and, in relation to an animal, otherwise than in the course of driving, tending, working or protecting stock); or
- repeatedly causes substantial damage to anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept.

A Nuisance Cat, under Section 31 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, is a cat that:

- makes a noise 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; or
- repeatedly damages anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept.

Nuisance Animals are often difficult to manage and therefore expend a large proportion of Ranger's time. The ability to determine if a problem is 'habitually', 'persistently' or 'repeatedly' occurring is the first hurdle that needs to be crossed. The gathering of evidence from residents, often unwilling to become involved in the matter, can also hinder Rangers ability to solve a problem.

2.3 Menacing Dog

A dog can be declared menacing under the provisions of section 33A of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* if it:

- has displayed unreasonable aggression towards a person or animal (other than vermin); or
- has, without provocation, attacked a person or animal (other than vermin) but without causing serious injury or death.

Menacing dog declarations are designed to enable authorised officers to be proactive in dealing with instances of unacceptable behaviour in individual dogs and address the potential of a dog to cause problems in the future. Owners of Menacing Dogs are required to control their animal under the requirements of the Act.

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2.4 Dangerous Dogs and Restricted Breeds

A dog can be declared dangerous under the provisions of section 33 of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* if it:

- has, without provocation, attacked or killed a person or animal (other than vermin); or
- has, without provocation, repeatedly threatened to attack or repeatedly chased a person or animal (other than vermin); or
- is kept or used for the purposes of hunting (not including dogs used to locate, flush, point or retrieve birds or vermin).

Dogs that have attacked or killed are generally easy to declare dangerous. However, all other reasons for declaring a dog dangerous are difficult to pursue as they are subjective or problematic (as with hunting dogs). Owners of dangerous dogs are required to control their animals under the requirements of the Act.

Restricted breed dogs are:

- American Pit Bull Terrier or Pit Bull Terrier;
- Japanese tosa;
- Dogo Argentino;
- Fila Brasileiro;
- Any other dog of a breed, kind or description whose importation into Australia is prohibited by or under the *Customs Act 1901* of the Commonwealth;
- Any dog declared by an authorised officer of a council under Division 6 of this Part to be a restricted dog; and
- Any other dog of a breed, kind or description prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this section.

Restricted breed dogs are required to be kept in the same manner as Dangerous Dogs under the requirements of the Act.

2.5 Dogs in Public Places

Management of dogs in public places is generally concerned with owners not keeping their dogs under effective control (by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash). Dog faeces is a problem for health and amenity reasons; however it is very difficult to enforce the regulations related to picking up faeces. Council is required to provide sufficient rubbish receptacles in areas commonly used for the exercising of dogs, including off-leash areas.

Council has three (3) designated off-leash areas in Glen Innes: Lynch Oval, Lions Park and the north-east section of the Centennial Parklands. Off-Leash Areas are also at Bicentennial Park Glencoe, Recreation Reserve Park Street Emmaville and Recreation Reserve Corner of Short and Fraser Streets Deepwater.

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2.6 Seizure of Animals

The identification of seized animals is important in order to reunite lost animals with their owners and thereby reducing the number of animals that could be euthanased if not claimed.

In the 2015/2016 financial year Council's Rangers were able to rehome 82% of cats and 90% of dogs that came through Council's Pound facility. In comparison, in the 2011/2012 financial year, only 68% of cats and 74% of dogs were re-homed.

2.7 Animal Welfare and Safety

The most important action that an animal owner can undertake to manage the welfare of their animals is through desexing. This will help to reduce the number of unwanted animals surrendered or dumped. In 2015/2016 only 59% of dogs registered were desexed, compared to 95% of cats. Education on the needs of animals should also be used to stop problem behaviours such as wandering, also assisted by desexing, and excessive barking.

2.8 Cat Management

The management of cats is difficult for Council as there is not the legislative framework for regulating cats that there is for dogs. Cats do not have to be confined to their property and it can be difficult to prove nuisance issues. Feral cats are a problem in all areas as dumped domestic cats can breed quickly to create a large population of feral animals. Council has Cat traps that can be given out free of charge as a community service to try and reduce the number of feral and unwanted cats.

2.9 Community Education

Education is the way to provide lasting changes in the community, as enforcement alone cannot solve all animal management issues. The education of children regarding safety around dogs and general animal welfare is important in bringing about change in the community. The use of the internet and written publications to provide access to the legislation and local information about companion animals will allow a high proportion of the community to be reached.

2.10 Co-ordination with other Companion Animal Stakeholders

To fully enable Council to manage companion animals, it needs to be involved in a co-ordinated approach involving all stakeholders. These stakeholders include but are not limited to:

- RSPCA;
- Animal Welfare League;
- Veterinarians;
- WIRES;
- Dogs NSW;
- Cat Fanciers Association;

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- Police;
- National Parks and Wildlife Service;
- Local Community Groups; and
- Local Land Services.

Action Plans

3. Key Areas

- Identification and Registration;
- Nuisance Animal Management;
- Menacing Dog;
- Dangerous Dog and Restricted Breed Management;
- Dogs in Public Places;
- Seizure of Animals;
- Animal Welfare and Safety;
- Cat Management;
- Community Education; and
- Co-ordination with other Companion Animal Stakeholders.

3.1 Identification and Registration

The permanent identification and registration of companion animals is a requirement under the provisions of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. This enables Council officers to reunite animals with their owners, identify animals in breach of the Act and provides some funding for education and enforcement.

It is Council's aim to:

- Encourage permanent identification (microchip) and registration of companion animals;
- Facilitate the return of seized companion animals to their owners; and
- Enforce permanent identification (microchip) and registration requirements of *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

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Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Implement discounted or free microchipping days in conjunction with other Animal Rescue Organisations.	Medium	Increase in permanently identified animals; increase in registered animals.	Ongoing
Educate the community on requirements of <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> .	Medium	Increased awareness of identification and registration requirements.	Ongoing
Continued enforcement of overdue registrations and non-microchipped animals.	Medium	Decrease in overdue registrations; reduction in processing time and labour.	Monthly, ongoing

3.2 Nuisance Animal Management

Nuisance dogs include those that are habitually at large, that make noise (barking, howling) persistently in a manner that interferes with other residents' peace, comfort or convenience and those that cause damage outside their property. Nuisance cats are those that make noise persistently in a manner that interferes with other residents' peace, comfort or convenience and those that cause damage outside their property.

It is Council's aim to:

- Reduce the number of Nuisance Dog Orders issued;
- Reduce the number of complaints regarding nuisance dogs; and
- Increase compliance with Nuisance Dog Orders.

Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Provide anti-barking collars for hire to the public.	Medium	Decrease in complaints of nuisance barking.	Ongoing
Compliance checks with owner and complainant.	Medium	Decrease in continued nuisance behaviour.	Ongoing

3.3 Menacing Dog Management

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Menacing Dogs are those dogs that have been declared Menacing by Council after they have displayed unreasonable aggression towards a person or animal (other than vermin), or have, without provocation, attacked a person or animal (other than vermin) but without causing serious injury or death.

Menacing Dogs that display aggressive behaviour should be objectively judged to determine if the aggression was unreasonable in the circumstances where the aggression was shown. In other words, an authorised officer should consider whether an ordinary dog placed in the same circumstances of the allegedly menacing dog would have behaved in such a manner. These provisions recognise situations where a dog may have come to the attention of an authorised officer because it has displayed unreasonable aggression towards a person or animal – to the extent that it causes fear or apprehension of an attack. Such a dog poses a threat to people and animals.

Menacing Dogs are required to be controlled as per the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

It is Council's aim to:

- Reduce the number of Menacing Dogs Orders issued; and
- Ensure Menacing Dogs are controlled as per the requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

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Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Educate the community about the new legislation, especially on the severity of the consequences of Menacing Dog attacks, and the causes of behaviour problems which lead to this.	High	Decrease in dog attacks.	Ongoing
Pursue dog attacks to enforcement stage where possible.	High	Continued enforcement of dog attacks.	As required
Inspect premises of Menacing Dogs to ensure compliance with <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> .	High	Increase in compliance with control requirements.	Annual compliance check

3.4 Dangerous and Restricted Dog Management

Dangerous dogs are those dogs that have been declared dangerous by Council or the Court after they have without provocation, attacked or killed a person or animal (other than vermin), or without provocation repeatedly threatened to attack or repeatedly chased a person or animal (other than vermin). Restricted dogs are those of the breeds stated in the Act. Both Dangerous and Restricted Dogs are required to be controlled as per the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

It is Council's aim to:

- Reduce the number of Dangerous Dog Orders issued; and
- Ensure Dangerous and Restricted dogs are controlled as per the requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Pursue dog attacks to enforcement stage where possible.	Medium	Continued enforcement of dog attacks.	As required

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Inspect premises of Dangerous and Restricted breed dogs to ensure compliance with <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> .	High	Increase in compliance with control requirements.	Annual compliance check
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3.5 Dogs in Public Places

Residents with dogs are significant users of public open spaces; they can however have adverse impacts on other users if they do not comply with the requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. The provision of off-leash areas and enforcement of leash requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* are essential to reduce conflicts between groups of public open space users.

It is Council's aim to:

- Educate the public of leash requirements as per the *Companion Animals Act 1998*;
- Enforce compliance with the leash requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*;
- Promote use of leash-free areas;
- Educate the public on proper disposal of dog faeces as per the requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*; and
- Enforce compliance with proper disposal of dog faeces requirements of *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Provide a free leash to first time offenders breaching the leash requirement.	Low	Increased compliance with leash requirements of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> .	Ongoing
Enforce leash requirements through Penalty Infringement Notices.	Medium	Increased compliance with the leash requirements of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> .	Ongoing
Advertise leash-free areas and promote their benefits.	Low	Continued use of leash-free areas and the facilities provided.	Ongoing

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3.6 Seizure of Animals

Roaming dogs and stray cats create problems for residents including fighting, defecating and mess created when rummaging for food in rubbish bins. These animals often end up in Council's Pound facility with a large number not being claimed.

It is Council's aim to:

- Facilitate the return of identified seized companion animals to their owners;
- Reduce the need for euthanasia of seized unclaimed, unidentified animals; and
- Provide appropriate pound services for the surrendering of animals.

Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Continue to re-home animals through Animal Rescue Organisations.	Medium	Decrease in euthanasia of companion animals.	Ongoing
Advertise unidentified seized animals on Council's Pound Facebook page.	Medium	Increase in claimed / re-homed animals.	Ongoing

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3.7 Companion Animal Welfare

A large proportion of Council's animal management problems are caused by poor animal welfare. Unwanted litters are often given away, dogs wander to find bitches in season, male cats fight at night when allowed to roam and dogs bark when not given attention, are bored or are not sufficiently mentally stimulated. Non desexed animals are often given away by owners to others who aren't in a position to have an animal. This is done in preference to seeing the animal euthanised. Council makes an effort to rehome all animals in the first instance. This is often a significant cause of nuisance issues when the animal can't be adequately cared for.

It is Council's aim to:

- Promote Desexing of Companion Animals;
- Educate the public on the needs of animals; and
- Ensure Council provides shelter facilities that comply with legislation.

Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Maintenance of Companion Animal Shelter.	Medium	Continuing maintenance as need arises and funding becomes available.	Ongoing
Upgrade of Companion Animal Shelter.	Low	Upgrading of Companion Animal Shelter.	Ongoing
Conduct random compliance checks of properties where known breeding animals exist.	Medium	Greater compliance with Micro-chipping legislation.	Ongoing

3.8 Cat Management

Cat management is difficult as under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* there is no provision for roaming cats, as there is for dogs, who are a nuisance, because they are habitually at large. Unwanted cats and kittens are often dumped creating problems for neighbouring land owners and native fauna.

It is Council's aim to:

- Decrease the adverse impact of cats on the community and native fauna.

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Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Educate cat owners of the benefits of keeping cats contained at night.	Medium	Reduced complaints of nuisance cats.	Ongoing
Actively trap / destroy feral cats at known problem areas.	Medium	Decrease in the number of feral cat complaints.	Ongoing
Greater penalties for those caught dumping litters.	Medium	Decrease in the number of dumped cats and feral cat numbers.	Ongoing

3.9 Community Education

Enforcement alone cannot solve all animal management issues. It is necessary to educate and inform residents of their responsibilities and rights in regard to companion animals. This process can take place through written or electronic material as well as social media.

It is Council's aim to:

- Reduce the incidence of dog attacks;
- Increase community awareness of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and Council enforcement; and
- Promote responsible companion animal ownership.

Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Provision of pamphlets and brochures at Council offices.	Medium	Increased compliance with <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> and greater understanding of the need for enforcement.	Ongoing
Educate and encourage the community regarding the basic needs of animals.	Medium	Decrease in animal welfare complaints.	Ongoing

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3.10 Co-ordination with other Companion Animal Stakeholders

Management of companion animals involves a wide variety of stakeholders including animal welfare organisations, veterinarians and local community groups.

It is Council's aim to:

- Continue re-homing companion animals through Animal Rescue Organisations.

Action	Priority	Performance Indicator	Time Frame
Continue to build on the relationship with these groups to re-home unclaimed impounded Companion Animals.	Medium	Continued Re-homing program implemented.	Ongoing

4. Review

Glen Innes Severn Council's SCAMP is intended to be used to manage current trends and issues. It will therefore need to be reviewed at least every four (4) years to remain a relevant tool in companion animal management.

5. Implementation and Communication

Prior to Council adopting the final document it will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days for public comment. The draft document will be available on Council's website and made available for viewing at Council's Grey and Church Street offices and the Post Offices at Emmaville, Deepwater and Glencoe.

On adoption the SCAMP will be promoted on the Glen Innes Severn Council's Facebook page's and Council's website.

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