



ONE IN FOUR IPSWICH RESIDENTS *Has Four Legs.*

Let's plan for a future that includes cats and dogs
as valued members of our community.

CAT AND DOG MANAGEMENT PLAN 2010-2013





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WE NEED TO PLAN FOR POPULATION GROWTH: **HUMAN, CANINE AND FELINE**

By 2026 the number of cats and dogs in the Ipswich City Council (ICC) area is going to increase to an estimated 111,938. This number represents about one third of the 318,000 humans who are projected to be living here by 2026. That's a lot of pets, and a lot of good reasons for getting a *Cat and Dog Management Plan (CDMP)* in place now.

Until now the Ipswich City Council hasn't had a strategic plan for the management of cats and dogs. This inaugural plan will guide cat and dog management in the Ipswich local government area for a three year period from 2010 to 2013. Ongoing evaluation of outcomes will be reviewed annually to ensure the plan is effective and relevant to the needs of the community, animals and environment.

The CDMP will contain recommendations for a wide range of actions to be undertaken by Ipswich City Council. These actions will be implemented in line with the vision and objectives identified in *Ipswich 2020 and Beyond* and in Council's Corporate Plan 2007-2012.



WE'VE LOOKED AT IT FROM **EVERYONE'S POINT OF VIEW**

An important part of the planning process has been assessing the needs and wants of different residents. Dog and cat owners want their pets to be happy and safe. People who don't have pets do occasionally have some concerns about neighbourhood animals. So do environment groups and Ipswich City Council workers. It's been our job to balance those views and find a common ground.

One of the first things we did was to create a vision to guide our plan.

IPSWICH CITY COUNCIL WANTS TO HELP CREATE A COMMUNITY WHERE CATS AND DOGS ARE A VALUED LIFELONG COMMITMENT

From this vision, the concept of responsible pet ownership began to emerge. Through promotion and education, the Ipswich City Council will encourage the community to embrace this concept. Responsible pet ownership is about making the right decisions for your pet's health and happiness. It's also about ensuring the public's safety, protecting the environment and enhancing the wellbeing of your community.

WHAT IS RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP?

Australian statistics show that around 60% of households have pets. The actions of those households can have a major impact on not just the lives of cats and dogs, but also those of almost all of their neighbours. Most pet owners are aware of this and just need some guidance on what it is the community expects them to do.

The Greater City of Geelong Council has recently worked through a similar process and they found that there were three distinct stages of pet ownership. People who have had a pet for a while, people who have only recently taken ownership of a pet, and people who are thinking about getting a pet. If you look at the chart on the right you'll see that the issues change as you move through each stage of pet ownership. Owners will need to understand and find ways to address the issues identified in these stages of pet ownership. At the same time, Ipswich City Council will adopt relevant initiatives that help to define the responsibilities for you.

1. Issues for Prospective Pet Owners

- Type of pet
- Size of property
- Property security for pet confinement
- Age of family
- Size of pet
- The type of area you are living in
- Whether you have sufficient time to train your pet and socialise it
- Whether you have sufficient income to feed, vaccinate and maintain the health of your pet
- Avoiding the present trap*
- The laws for pets
- The benefits and myths of desexing

2. Issues for New Pet Owners

- Registration and identification of your pet
- Microchipping
- Desexing your pet
- Obedience training

3. Issues for Existing Pet owners

- Immunisation
- Socialisation
- Pet confinement to property
- Regular exercise
- Feeding and grooming
- Problem barking
- Picking up after your dog

*** Appropriate pet selection is the first stage to responsible pet ownership. You want to be the one who makes the decision to own a cat/dog and you have lots of things to consider before you commit. As Stabler (1999) observes, pets received as gifts, impulse buys and cheap pets are more often surrendered to council animal shelters and welfare organisations. The Newcastle City Council (2004) say that the privilege of owning and enjoying the companionship of a cat and/or dog carries with it the dual responsibilities of care for the animal and respect for the community.**

CDMP OBJECTIVES

Towards the back of this document you will see how the *Cat and Dog Management Plan (CDMP)* and its key themes dovetail with the Ipswich City Council's Corporate Plan 2207-2012. This connection has enabled us to develop CDMP goals that are aligned with our vision for the community's future. The objectives we have identified within the CDMP are:

- The promotion of responsible cat and dog ownership
- Encouraging owners to recognise the health, social and community value of cats and dogs
- Reducing public nuisances and environmental harm from cats and dogs
- Increasing the awareness of the needs surrounding cats, dogs and their owners during a declared disaster or emergency
- Ensuring Council delivers effective, efficient and innovative cat and dog management services

WORKING WITH AGREED LAWS

There are a number of laws regarding cats, dogs and other animals that are already in place. At the time of writing this plan it is believed that a new set of local laws will commence in 2011. Council staff and the community will all have a chance to have input into the development of these new local laws, including those relating to cats and dogs. However, the current pieces of legislation that have set the framework for Ipswich City Council's *Cat and Dog Management Plan* are:

- ICC Local Law 7 Dogs and subordinate local law
- ICC Local Law 4 Keeping and Control of Animals and subordinate local laws
- *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and regulation
- *Sustainable Planning Act / Ipswich City Council Planning Scheme* (development approvals required for kennels and catteries)

A number of policies and procedures have been developed to ensure the community complies with this legislation. Owners also need to be aware of their responsibilities under the *Animal care and Protection Act 2001*. Sometimes the Ipswich City Council will act in a proactive manner, other times the Council will be required to react to complaints.



REACTING TO COMPLAINTS

Ipswich City Council responds to all complaints and customer service requests made regarding cats and dogs. A high risk assessment triggers an immediate response. A low risk assessment might lead to a resolution through communication. Perhaps all that's required is a letter and a brochure being sent out to let people know how they can comply with legislation. If a person stays in breach of the legislation, the risk increases and inspections may be required to resolve the issue.

BEING PROACTIVE

Checking for restricted dog breeds

Operation Dog Safe (ODS) is an example of ICC taking a proactive stance. ODS was originally initiated in 2003 to seek out Pit Bull Terriers in the council area after the commencement of legislation relating to restricted breeds in the *Local Government Act 1993 (Chapter 17A)*. In 2006/2007 two fulltime officers were given the task of targeting suburbs in the ICC area, visiting properties to determine ownership and registration status for dogs. Officers were also able to check fencing and establish the number of animals on each property.

Identifying cats in the community

Proactive actions shouldn't be limited to the dog population. We need to get on the front foot when it comes to the management of cats too. That's why a Cat Management Operational Plan is in the process of being drawn up. When complete it will recommend that actions be taken to identify and register cats in the community. These actions will include a 'census' of the cat population and checks at each address to see if fencing is adequate and if cats are being discouraged from encroaching on neighbouring properties. These actions link in with the Strategic Action Plan and the aim of increasing the number of registered cats in the community.



WHAT'S BEING DONE NOW?

Cats and dogs have been part of our community for many years. Over that time ICC has developed and evolved several services for cats, dogs and their owners. So we're already doing quite a lot. The CDMP will simply redefine our role and our objective for the years ahead. Here are some of things that are already being done by Council.

Compliance, Shelters and Rehoming

What happens to unwanted or lost pets? Who feeds them? Running the animal shelter and reuniting animals with their owners is only part of the job. Here are some of the many responsibilities ICC has taken on:

- Reuniting tagged cats and dogs with their owner
- Accepting surrendered cats and dogs at the shelter
- Providing food, shelter and care for impounded animals
- Rehoming unwanted cats and dogs through:
 - Pet of the Week
 - Animal Welfare League
 - RSPCA
- Investigating complaints about barking, roaming, etc.
- Responding to and investigating dog attacks

Education and Promotion

It's important to get into the community and spread the word about responsible pet ownership. The education process starts early with school visits. Here are some of the ways ICC informs pet owners and promotes a positive message:

- Promotion in schools about living with cats and dogs
- Active Owners = Active Pets program for dogs
- Promoting dog friendly walking groups and other healthy activities
- RSPCA Million Paws Walk (primarily a dog event, but cats are welcome too)
- Pet packs containing:
 - Responsible pet ownership booklet
 - Leash with poo bag holder
 - Collar from Advance
 - Information leaflets
- General education on the ICC website
- Increasing awareness through other marketing mediums

Infrastructure

Council has a responsibility to provide infrastructure for four-legged residents too. Maintaining animal shelter facilities is a substantial undertaking both in terms of management and ongoing costs. Off leash parks in the community give dogs the chance to stretch their legs and make new friends.



WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE FUTURE?

Many of the roles ICC performs today will remain in the future. New initiatives will enhance those roles. To understand how things will change, let's look at the Strategic Action Plan.

ACTION NO.	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TARGET/PERFORMANCE	TIMEFRAME
CAT AND DOG POPULATION				
A1	<i>Encourage and promote responsible cat and dog ownership</i>	Promote the benefits of cat and dog registration, desexing and microchipping through any or all of the following mediums: Education programs, marketing and advertising campaigns (ongoing and one-off), events, financial incentives.	Information /program developed and distributed	Yearly
A2	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Increase community access to pay cat and dog registration fees (online and in person)	Systems, processes, information developed and implemented	Year 1
A3	<i>Encourage and promote responsible cat and dog ownership</i>	Increase the number of cats and dogs registered	Increase in cat and dog registration numbers	Yearly
A4	<i>Encourage and promote responsible cat and dog ownership</i>	Increase the number of cats and dogs registered as desexed and/or microchipped	Increase in recording of cats and dogs recorded in Council systems as desexed and/or microchipped	Yearly
A5	<i>Encourage and promote responsible cat and dog ownership</i>	Implement a proactive cat registration campaign	Increase in cat registration numbers	Year 1
OPERATION DOG SAFE				
A6	<i>Encourage and promote responsible cat and dog ownership</i>	Continue with Operation Dog Safe: target those suburbs where dog registration compliance needs improving	Increase in dog registration numbers for those targeted suburbs	Yearly
A7	<i>Encourage and promote responsible cat and dog ownership</i>	Implement a cat and dog registration review of renewals (separate to/ or a sub plan of Operation Dog Safe)	Increase in cat and dog registration renewal rates	Year 1
DOG OF LEASH PARKS				
A8	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Undertake research and engagement to understand why only 20% of dog owners surveyed in 2009 use dog off leash parks.	Findings of research presented to Council for noting with recommendations of any improvements/ amendments to current policies and design standards.	Year 1
A9	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Update the Leash Free Dog Area Council Policy with the council endorsed recommendations from research undertaken in the action above.	Presentation of updated Policy to Council for endorsement	Year 1

ACTION NO.	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TARGET/PERFORMANCE	TIMEFRAME
DOG ATTACKS				
A10	<i>Reduce public and environment nuisances and harm from cats and dogs;</i>	<p>Promote how people in the community can help reduce the number of dog attacks. Particularly focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the 20-55 age group can avoid/minimise being attacked by a dog • How attacks in public can be avoided • How attacks in your own backyard and others can be avoided <p>Promotion to occur through any or all of the following mediums: Education programs, marketing and advertising campaigns (ongoing and one-off), events, financial incentives.</p>	Information/program developed and distributed; reduction in dogs attacks for the 20-55 age group	Yearly
A11	<i>Reduce public and environment nuisances and harm from cats and dogs;</i>	Partner with the Ipswich Hospital to capture relevant information for ongoing reporting needs for preventing dog attacks in the community.	Agreement between ICC and IH to share non-identified data to help reduce the number of dog attacks in the Ipswich Community	Year 1
A12	<i>Reduce public and environment nuisances and harm from cats and dogs;</i>	Review and amend how and what data is collected by Council at the time of dog attacks to keep a register that can be used in future strategic planning.	Creation of a register with appropriate data	Year 1
CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS/CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUESTS				
A13	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Ensure that customer service requests logged are entered against the correct problem code in Oracle. [this may be rectified with the current HPR problem code review]	Correct problem codes assigned to relevant customer service requests	Yearly
A14	<i>Reduce public and environment nuisances and harm from cats and dogs</i>	<p>Reduce the number of high volume complaints/service requests, particularly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roaming Dogs • Impounded Dogs • Barking Dogs • Monitor Cat complaints/service requests to ensure there are no high volume complaints/requests as a result of mandatory registration 	Decrease in complaint/service requests	Yearly

ACTION NO.	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TARGET/PERFORMANCE	TIMEFRAME
INFRINGEMENTS				
A15	<i>Reduce public and environment nuisances and harm from cats and dogs;</i>	Promote fencing and enclosure requirements for cats and dogs through any or all of the following mediums: Education programs, marketing and advertising campaigns (ongoing and one-off), events, financial incentives.	Information/program developed and distributed; reduction in infringements issued for fencing and enclosure requirements	Yearly
POUND STATISTICS				
A16	<i>Encourage and promote owners to recognise the health, social and community value of cats and dogs</i>	Increase the number of cats and dogs rehomed through Pet of the Week or other programs	Increase the number of rehomed cats and dogs; decrease in the number of euthanased cats and dogs	Yearly
A17	<i>Encourage and promote owners to recognise the health, social and community value of cats and dogs</i>	Reduce the number of cats and dogs impounded by Council	Reduction in the number of cats and dogs impounded	Yearly
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS				
A18	<i>Reduce public and environment nuisances and harm from cats and dogs</i>	Undertake a project to determine the environmental impacts by cats and dogs in the Ipswich area including researching what quantifiable data is already available.	Presentation of findings to Council for consideration	Year 2
DISASTER MANAGEMENT				
A19	<i>Increase awareness of the needs surrounding cats, dogs and their owners during a declared disaster or emergency</i>	Incorporate cat and dog issues into a review of the current ICC Disaster Management Plan.	Cat and dog issues incorporated into ICC disaster management planning	Year 1
EDUCATION AND AWARENESS				
A20	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Review current education and awareness programs	Presentation of findings to Council for consideration	Year 1
MONITOR AND REVIEW				
A21	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Monitor the progress of the CDMP through a Program Control Group set up with all internal stakeholders (responsible teams)	Meetings of PCG	Quarterly
A22	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Review the current CDMP and present progress to Council	Presentation of findings to Council for consideration	Yearly
A23	<i>Ensure Council delivers effective, efficient and innovated cat and dog management services</i>	Development of next CDMP that will start in the 2014/2015 financial year	Presentation of draft CDMP to Council for endorsement	Year 3

Based on the above Strategic Action Plan, the actions will be worked on by Council staff through developing the details in , for example, operational plans; policies; education programs; and marketing campaigns to make sure the target/performance criteria is achieved.



REFERENCES

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