

Dog and Cat Management Board

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025



The effective management of dogs and cats is an important component of community wellbeing



Government of South Australia
Dog and Cat Management Board

From the chairperson

On behalf of the Dog and Cat Management Board, I present this five-year strategic plan for managing dogs and cats across South Australia. It is an evolving program based on informed decision-making.

Effective dog and cat management is an important component of community wellbeing and community expectations of dog and cat owner responsibilities and animal welfare is increasing.

The Board is committed to working effectively with local government and key stakeholders, providing support and keeping dog and cat management legislation under review.

The Board's previous strategic plan delivered the following significant actions.

-  Legislative change.
-  Mandatory desexing and microchipping of dogs and cats.
-  Helping to reduce unwanted litters and the high volume of animals euthanised in pounds or shelters. We've made the pet trade—particularly dog and cat sellers—accountable through mandatory registration. This is also bringing puppy farm operators into the open.
-  The introduction of the Dogs and Cats Online (DACO) system which combined 69 individual databases across the state and built relationships with long-standing and new key stakeholders. There is now a centralised point for managing the details of every known dog and cat in the state, such as microchip and desexing information, dog incident and breeder history.
-  Empowering dog and cat owners to register pets, update details and link microchip details at any time, on-line. Most importantly, lost pets are now easily identified and returned to owners and local government boundaries are no longer a barrier in this process.
-  Individual pet owners, the RSPCA, the Animal Welfare League and Vets are now registering and updating microchip details free of charge on DACO, eliminating national microchip database fees.

These achievements have delivered substantial savings for local government through reduced postage and administration costs, and streamlined annual reporting and registration processes.

Over the next five years, we will build on this work by delivering two key program areas. This five year strategic plan outlines a number of priority actions which underpin the key program areas and the Board's objectives.

I look forward to this five year journey along with our other knowledgeable, committed Board members and staff.



DAVID FAIRALL
Chairperson
Dog and Cat Management Board





Introduction

The Dog and Cat Management Board (the Board) is a corporate body established by the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act)*. The objectives of the Act are:

-  to encourage responsible dog and cat ownership;
-  to reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats; and
-  to promote the effective management of dogs and cats.

The Board, which is subject to the direction of the Minister, administers the Act and associated regulations. Staff of the Dog and Cat Management Board unit are employed by the Department of Environment and Water under a service level agreement with the Board. The Board's activities are funded through a portion of dog registration fees paid to South Australian councils and breeder registration fees through the Dogs and Cats Online (DACO) system.

The Board plays an important advocacy and consultation role in dog and cat management to peak bodies. It manages the DACO system and provides expert advice to the South Australian Government, the Local Government Association (LGA), and South Australian councils and staff.

The Board also takes a leadership role in community safety and education, with a focus on informed dog and cat ownership, and strategies to reduce:

-  the incidence of dog attacks;
-  nuisance caused by cats;
-  unchecked dog and cat breeding; and
-  euthanising lost and unwanted dogs and cats detained in pounds and shelters.

Board functions

The Board's functions are defined by the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 (the Act)* which are outlined here in simple terms.

-  Plan for, promote, and provide advice about the effective management of dogs and cats throughout South Australia.
-  Oversee administration and enforcement of the Act.
-  Keep the Act under review and make recommendations to the Minister.
-  Advise the Minister or the Local Government Association on operations relating to the Act or issues directly relating to dog or cat management in South Australia.
-  Undertake or facilitate research relating to dog or cat management.
-  Manage, maintain and enhance Dogs and Cats Online (DACO) system.
-  Develop policies, procedures and guidelines to administer dog and cat management.
-  Monitor council's administration and enforcement of the Act.
-  Undertake or facilitate educational and training programs relating to dog or cat management and the DACO system for authorised persons and industry groups.
-  Provide advice, support and assistance to councils about matters relating to the administration or enforcement of the provisions of the Act.
-  Accredit assistance dogs.
-  Accredit training programs for dogs and owners.
-  Keep and maintain registers pertaining to the Act.
-  Consider all proposed by-laws referred to the Board.
-  Fix fees and charges pertaining to the Act.
-  Carry out any other function assigned to the Board by the Minister.





Board members

The Board comprises nine members appointed by the Minister. Four members are nominated by the Local Government Association and four by the Minister. The Chair is jointly nominated by the LGA and Minister.

Mr David Parkin
Chairperson, former Mayor of the City of Burnside. Member since January 2020.

Dr Ron Somers
Former Director, Epidemiology, Health Intelligence Unit, South Australian Department of Health. Member since June 2015.

Dr Susan Hazel
Senior Lecturer, Animal Behaviour, Welfare & Ethics, School of Animal & Veterinary Sciences, University of Adelaide. Member since July 2013.

Mr Rocky Warren
Regulatory Services Coordinator with the Mid Murray Council. Member since January 2015.

Mrs Gemma Russell
General Manager Customer and Community Services with the District Council of Yankalilla. Member since June 2018.

Dr Moira Jenkins
Mayor of the City of Victor Harbor. Member since June 2019.

Dr Duncan McFetridge, retired Veterinarian and former State Member of Parliament. Member since June 2019.

Dr Philip Roetman
Environment and Sustainability Officer with the City of Burnside and Adjunct Professor with University of South Australia. Member since June 2019.

Cr Shiralee Reardon, Councillor with the City of Salisbury. Member since June 2019.



Purpose of this plan

This strategic plan has been developed by the Board to guide its activities and communicate its strategic directions and priority actions for the period 2020 to 2025. The plan is purposely focused on action.



Situational analysis

The effective management of dogs and cats is an important component of community wellbeing.

A number of factors have forced significant changes to priorities and operations since the Board's last strategic plan.

These include the community's heightened expectations of dog and cat owner responsibility and animal welfare; a growing appreciation of the role assistance animals have in enhancing the lives of people living with disabilities; modified town planning approaches to urban infill and public space design; and greater consciousness about the pet-trade industry and unwanted pets.

During this time, the Board supported effective dog and cat management by managing the following key initiatives.

- The coordinated review of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (the Act) led to significant changes in legal requirements (including compulsory microchipping and desexing, and registering all people breeding and selling pets).

- The design and build of Dogs and Cats Online (DACO), the first centralised register for both dogs and cats to replace individual council registers.

Future challenges and opportunities identified by Board Members which will guide future decision making

Challenges

- Meeting the needs of diverse stakeholders.
- Addressing cat management and building consensus around cat management approaches.
- Resolving issues with the current legislation.
- Effectively engaging stakeholders and communicating key messages to target audiences.
- Managing current and future activities within a limited budget.

Opportunities

- Maximising the functionality of Dogs and Cats Online .
- Sharing effective dog and cat management outcomes nationally.
- Identifying dog and cat management interventions based on evidence and analysis.
- Building effective partnerships to reduce red-tape.





Our programs and priority actions — What we are going to do



To meet the objectives of the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (the Act), the Board has set strategic directions with supporting priority actions over a five year period. Priority actions are those which must be achieved. However the Board understands priorities may need to change over time due to circumstance, so will remain flexible. To alter, remove or add new priority actions to this plan, a resolution of the Board is required.

Program 1

Responsible ownership and effective management of dogs and cats

Strategic directions

-  Inform and educate the community about dog and cat management.
-  Equal focus on cat management to the same level as dog management.
-  Reduce the incidence of dog attacks.
-  Reduce the numbers of unwanted dogs and cats.
-  Support and encourage research on responsible ownership and effective dog and cat management.
-  Develop capacity to fulfill the requirements of the Act.

Priority actions

Priority action 1.1

Educational program delivery opportunities

Why: Undertaking or facilitating educational programs relating to dog or cat management is a statutory function of the Board (s21(1)(f)).

The current 'Living Safely with Pets' (LSWP) contract ends 30 September 2020. This program (provided under contract with the Victorian government) aims to teach children how to live responsibly and safely with dogs and cats. This is a costly program and can't be easily evaluated.

How: The Board will bring the LSWP program to a managed close and investigate options to provide and facilitate new educational materials/program for primary school aged children. This may include sponsoring an existing educational provider.

When: June to December 2020

Who: A working group of Board members, the manager and communications and engagement officer.





Priority action 1.2
Develop and implement a cat management strategy and plan

Why: To assess and address issues with cat management which have been identified by some councils such as: ‘barriers’ in the Act and regulations; issues identified in the RSPCA/AWL ‘Cat Management Plan for SA’. The Board will implement a strategy with councils over the next three to five years.

How: Develop and implement a project to:

-  work with councils and engage stakeholders (council authorised officers/LGA, shelters, rescues and foster organisations, and the Australian Veterinarian Association); and
-  develop a plan with suitable strategies and communication materials to implement relevant elements of the plan.

When: Commence framing the strategy with input from Board members during 2020, with at least one Board workshop. Engage with local government and possibly establish a working party in late 2020. Aim to have any legislative proposals settled before June 2022.

Who: A working group comprising Board members, the manager and the legislative advice and policy officer initially. Then a working party if required.

Priority action 1.3 – Develop a plan for improved dog attack data and dog attack counter measures

Why: Dog attacks, including those requiring hospitalisation, have risen steadily over the past seven years. Hospital admissions do not represent all dog attacks which have occurred.

The dog incident reporting function of DACO is not being fully utilised. Councils need to be encouraged or provided with incentives to record incidents. Further research into the multiple factors affecting dog attack risks is needed.

How: A workshop is proposed early in the project to scope out the issues, work to be done, timelines etc and appoint a working group of Board members and staff.

When: Commence in the second quarter of 2020.

Who: A working group of Board members, the manager, DACO team leader and data analyst.





Priority action 1.4 Advise the Minister and LGA on amendments required to the Dog and Cat Management Act

Why: Keeping the Act under review and making recommendations to the Minister is a function of the Board (s21(1)(g)). There have been recent calls from councils and animal welfare organisations to change the Act.

How: By being prepared to contribute to an Act review which the Minister must cause under s90A.

The Board will monitor and evaluate the operations defined in the Act as part of its day-to-day operations in consultation with stakeholders.

When: In relation to s21(1)(g) on an ongoing basis, or as the Board determines from time to time. In relation to s90A, the Minister must cause a review to occur during the last half of 2022.

Who: The Board, the manager, legislation advice and policy officer with additional support as required.

Priority action 1.5 Monitor emerging issues

Why: The Board has identified a significant number of matters requiring careful, detailed consideration. A program of workshops and briefings to identify emerging issues and potential paths forward will provide a structured approach to planning and scheduling Board projects and actions. Early topics may include matters such as:

-  Rescue groups and foster carers.
-  Breeders—determining what's happening on a national level.
-  Greyhounds—determining what's happening on a national level.
-  Assistance dogs—to seek national consistency.
-  Dogs and Cats Online reporting—determine what other data can be obtained from Dogs and Cats Online.
-  Remote Communities.
-  Desexing initiatives.
-  Engaging veterinarians.

How: A forward program is proposed for briefings or workshops every second month (also refer to priority action 2.4).

When: Briefings or workshops as programmed by the Board.

Who: A working group of Board members, the manager, legislative advice and policy officer and other staff.



New dog and cat laws began 1 July 2018. **Compulsory microchipping and desexing apply.** Visit dogandcatboard.com.au



Pay your registration renewal
DOGSANDCATSONLINE.COM.AU



For more information visit dogandcatboard.com.au

Dog & Cat Laws

From 1 July 2018

Microchipping
All dogs and cats must be microchipped

Desexing
All dogs and cats born after 1 July 2018 must be desexed

Breeders
People who breed dogs and cats for sale must register as a breeder

Registration
One central location for dogs' and cats' microchip details, registration payments and breeder registration.

DOGS AND CATS ONLINE.COM.AU



New dog and cat laws began 1 July 2018. **Compulsory microchipping and desexing apply.** Click for here more information



New rules for breeders. Click here for more.





DOGS AND CATS ONLINE.COM.AU

Dog and cat* registration online
One dog registration number for life
Select how you receive information
Registration disc options
Reducing environmental impact

Manage your information online
24/7 access
Add temporary carer's address
Report your lost dog or cat
Transfer ownership

SA microchip database
Linked microchip and registration
Update details in one location
Free to update

Breeder registration
Public register of breeders

Microchipping and desexing
Verified by vets and implanters online

For more information visit dogandcatboard.com.au



*Where applicable

Program 2 Effective Board and organisational performance

Strategic directions

-  Reinforce an evidence based approach to addressing issues.
-  Ensure the Board and unit operate at a high level.
-  Maximise the benefits of DACO.
-  Ensure the quality of data.
-  Build and invest in relationships and partnering.
-  Collaborate nationally to manage dogs and cats.
-  Address policy and legislative gaps.
-  Effective financial management.

Priority actions

Priority action 2.1 Develop and implement a communication and engagement strategy and action plan.

Why: To promote, inform, engage and educate dog and cat owners and key stakeholders on legislative responsibilities, the DACO system, community safety, and dog and cat management. To ensure the Board has the right combination of communication tools and stakeholder engagement approaches.

How: Review current communication methods (on-line communication platforms, resources and printed publications) and methods of engagement.

Develop targeted campaigns such as breeder compliance and cat management; update training and education materials; and participate in events. An annual survey to stakeholders will be developed for evaluation.

When: The strategy will be developed in 2020 to be implemented from mid 2020.

Stakeholder engagement activities and education campaigns should align with any review of the Act.

Who: Manager and communications and engagement officer.



Priority action 2.2

Design and implement a framework and action plan for the ongoing management of DACO

Why: The DACO data management system captures dog and cat registrations with desexing, microchip and breeder information as well as incident reporting—streamlining management activities in the field.

While DACO is a very valuable system, it is resource heavy and requires dedicated resources and funding, commitment and support to the Board's stakeholders.

A framework and action plan aligning to the long-term financial plan will provide a structured approach to enhancing, maintaining and supporting DACO. This will: ensure best-value-for-money is obtained from contractual arrangements, strategically prioritise service enhancements to stakeholders, and provide valuable statistical data.

How: Create a framework, action plan and long term financial plan for Dogs and Cats Online to determine the:

- 🐾 requirements and feasibility of contractual services beyond the SRA three year contract for hosting and maintenance, the future engagement of DACO project manager beyond the next eighteen months; and

- 🐾 level of investment to continue enhancing the DACO system and provide appropriate resourcing.

DACO has delivered considerable value for local government and the Board could consider how it could be expanded interstate. This could potentially provide an additional source of income to fund the system.

When: Developing the framework and action plan will commence in 2020. It will be reviewed and updated annually.

Implementing the framework and action plan will occur throughout the full period of this strategic plan.

Who: The manager, DACO team leader and project manager.

Priority action 2.3 - Develop and implement a rolling five year forward financial projections document

Why: For the Board to successfully deliver its programs of activities, a longer term financial planning which exceeds the annual budget horizon is required. Five-year forward financial projections will assist the Board with prioritising and scheduling projects and initiatives.

These projections will also aid challenges associated with the cyclical nature of Parliamentary processes; as permission to spend can be influenced by where we are in the cycle and competing government priorities. A longer term plan will help navigate those cycles.

How: Align expenditure profiles with the Board's desired plan across the five year horizon. Design how financial data is captured so reports are meaningful and support performance monitoring and decision-making.

When: Commence 2020/2021.

Who: Board members and the manager.





Priority action 2.4 - Implement a new Board meeting cycle with meetings every second month and workshops/ briefings in the alternate months

Why: The business of the Board requires detailed considerations of various matters. These are more likely to be efficiently dealt with through briefings and workshops, followed by a formal resolution at subsequent meetings. Special meetings of the Board could still be called for urgent matters if required, coinciding with workshops and briefings.

How: A resolution of the Board would be required to implement the new arrangements. A formal review of its effectiveness would then be undertaken.

When: Implement in 2020.

Who: The manager (in consultation with the Board's chair) will implement new arrangements and review effectiveness.

Priority action 2.5 - Develop and implement a regular annual facilitated assessment of the Board's performance

Why: Contemporary practice is for Boards to undertake an annual performance assessment. Although some Boards choose to have a self-assessment process, there is greater benefit to have this managed by an independent facilitator.

Our Board is going through a stage of renewal. Facilitated assessments will help monitor its progress and identify any areas requiring improvement. This will also ensure compliance of the Act.

How: An independent facilitator would be appointed to facilitate the assessment process.

When: 2021

Who: Board members would select the independent facilitator through a request for quotations.





Reporting and review

The progress of this plan will be reported annually in the Board's annual report. The plan will be reviewed annually at a Board workshop.





Dog and Cat Management Board

Government of South Australia

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