

Dog and Cat Management Board 2025-2030 Strategic plan

About the Board

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

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

The Board administers the Act and associated regulations for South Australia. The Board's members are appointed by the Minister in accordance with the Act. The Chairperson is jointly nominated by the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Minister. Half of the members are nominated by the LGA with the remaining half nominated by the Minister. Board members are listed on the Board's website at www.dogandcatboard.com.au.

The Department of Environment and Water provides support services for the Board to fulfill its statutory functions under a service level agreement with the Board. The Board's activities are funded through a portion of dog registration fees and breeder fees.

The Board provides leadership and expert advice to the South Australian Government, the LGA, local governments, industry and the community on dog and cat related matters. The Board is also responsible for managing the Dogs and Cats Online system, the mandated statewide database for microchip registrations, council registrations and registers kept under the Act.

Purpose of the Plan

This strategic plan has been developed by the Board to guide its activities and communicate its strategic directions for the period 2025 to 2030.

The strategic plan is supported by annual business plans and budgets, which identify priority actions and projects for each financial year.

Effective management of dogs and cats supports community wellbeing

Situational Analysis

The Board has reflected on the solid foundations of the 2020-2025 strategic plan, and identified the importance of continuing programs that:

- Educate the community and improve community safety in relation to both dogs and cats
- Support local government to administer and enforce the Act
- Support dog and cat owners to comply with the Act
- Improve ability to undertake effective cat management
- Collaborate and align actions on shared goals with stakeholders
- Utilise research for evidence-based advice or decision making.

New challenges for the Board to address include:

- Implementation of a new, cost-recovery, breeder regulatory framework
- Transition to a new Dogs and Cats Online system
- Prioritise actions that support delivery of a statewide cat management strategy
- Resolve outstanding issues with the current legislation
- Support local governments to address detention capacity issues.



Our programs and priority actions

Program 1 - Responsible ownership and effective management of dogs and cats

Strategic directions

- Take responsibility to identify practical solutions on dog and cat management matters
- Be bold and trial new approaches to drive community behaviour change
- Invest in relationships and lead partnering to add value to outcomes
- Improve cat management to the same level as dog management
- Value the importance of research, evidence collection and information sharing

Priority Action 1.1: Deliver communication and education programs that promote dog and cat ownership responsibilities

The Board will provide statewide communication and community education materials to target desired behaviour change of dog and cat owners. This is in addition to communication strategies that promote owner compliance with registration, microchipping, desexing and wandering at large requirements.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(a), 21(1)(f)

Priority Action 1.2: Facilitate management strategies for nuisance and unwanted dogs and cats

The Board will work with stakeholders, including but not limited to, the LGA and local and state government, the veterinary sector, breeders, animal welfare organisations, shelters, and owners to streamline actions and programs that support reduction and management of nuisance and unwanted dogs and cats.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(a), 21(1)(b)(ii)

Priority Action 1.3: Implement a breeder regulatory framework

Building upon the 2018 introduction of breeder registration, the Board will focus on educating the community and leading the implementation of tougher rules in respect to the breeding of dogs and cats to achieve outcomes that reflect community expectations.

Relates to statutory obligations: Part 7

Priority Action 1.4: Deliver programs that aim to reduce the instances of dog bite

The Board has invested in the development and promotion of Good Dogs Bad Days, a campaign to improve community action in preventing dog bites. The Board recognises a long-term commitment to the campaign is required to influence a change in the current rising trends. In addition, the Board will focus on delivering programs that address contributing factors of dog bites and undertake research to articulate effectiveness.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(a), 21(1)(e), 21(1)(f), 21(2)(a) and (b)

Priority Action 1.5: Collaborate and partner with others to achieve shared outcomes

The Board is committed to maximising efforts to address issues impacting dog and cat management in South Australia. The Board will seek opportunities to lead initiatives, or work in collaboration, or to provide meaningful support, that results in impactful outcomes in dog and cat management throughout the state.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(a), 21(1)(h), 21(2)(c)

Program 2 - Effective Board and organisational performance

Strategic directions

- Build community capacity to fulfill the requirements of the Act
- Community has confidence in the Board as leaders for dog and cat matters
- Address legislative, policy and process gaps
- Ensure the Board and unit operate at a high level
- Effective financial management

Priority Action 2.1: Maintain long-term viability and sustainability of Dogs and Cats Online

Dogs and Cats Online is South Australia's microchip database for dogs and cats, as well as providing for dog and cat registration, and keeping registers required under the Act. Dogs and Cats Online is a critical system and it requires dedicated resources and funding.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(b)(i), 21(1)(bb), 21B

Priority Action 2.2: Support local councils to administer the Act

Local government performs a lead role in administering and enforcing the Act. The Board has administrative responsibilities to support local government staff, by reviewing, seeking feedback and improving its processes, policies and procedures and providing clear, contemporary guidance.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(a), 21(1)(b)(ii), 21(1)(c)

Priority Action 2.3: Advise the Minister on required amendments to the Dog and Cat Management Act

The Board is committed to staying abreast of issues directly relating to dog and cat management and the provision of timely advice to the Minister or LGA and making recommendations to the Minister in respect to the Act and regulations. Identifying issues and working toward remedies to further the objects of the Act will remain a priority for the Board.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(a), 21(1)(d), 21(1)(g)

Priority Action 2.4: Maintain long-term financial sustainability and viability of the Dog and Cat Management Board

The Board administers the Dog and Cat Management Fund, which may be applied by the Board to go towards the cost of establishing or maintaining detention facilities, undertaking research or education programs and the administrative expenses for the Board to fulfil its statutory obligations. The Board will maintain a rolling five-year financial plan to ensure financial sustainability and viability of ongoing commitments, and scheduled projects and initiatives.

Relates to statutory obligations: 21(1)(ga), 23, 25

Priority Action 2.5: Ensure the Board's operations and performance are of a high standard

The functions of the Board require detailed considerations of various matters. A mix of workshops and Board meetings is currently implemented to enable thorough investigation and discussion, as well as good governance in decision making. The Board will evaluate and reflect on its performance through policy reviews and annual self-evaluation and ensure transparency as appropriate.

Relates to statutory obligations: 17, 18, 19, 21