Bathurst Regional Council

Strategic Companion Animal Management Plan
2007-2010
Bathurst Regional Council has formulated this Strategic Companion Animal Management Plan for the care and control of animals living within the Bathurst Regional Council area.
FOREWORD

In 1998 The Companion Animals Act was legislated. This legislation replaced the Dog Act 1966. Major changes to the old Dog Act 1966 were necessary, as there needed to be cohesive and constructive legislation which could be implemented equally throughout New South Wales in urban and rural areas.

The major changes which were implemented in 1998 were:

- Dogs and cats to be micro-chipped and lifetime registered
- Declared designated off leash areas
- Nuisance dogs and cats
- Restricted breeds and
- Control of dangerous dogs

Bathurst Regional Council plays an important role in the welfare of companion animals, regardless of their stature.

Bathurst Regional Council needs to ensure that a balance between responsible companion animal ownership and the needs of the general community is achieved.

The Companion Animals Act 1998 requires the Strategic Companion Animals Management Plan to be implemented, managed and used on a daily basis. This requires all sections of Bathurst Regional Council to work within these guidelines.

The Bathurst Regional Council comprises of urban, rural, industrial and commercial areas and companion animals live in all of them.

The companion animals which are regulated under the Companion Animals Act 1998 are dogs and cats, and responsible pet ownership of these animals needs to be encouraged.

The legislation covers many areas of pet ownership, including:

- Identification and registration of dogs and cats
- Straying dogs
- Nuisance dogs
- Nuisance cats
- Dog attacks
- Dangerous dogs
- Restricted dogs
- Education
- Enforcement

These areas are explained below.
IDENTIFICATION AND MICRO-CHIPPING

All companion animals are required to be identified and registered. An animal must be micro-chipped at an age no later than 12 weeks and lifetime registered from the time the animal is 6 months old. Some exemptions do apply;

- Working dogs
- Greyhound racing dogs and
- Assistance animal

However, these animals are required to be registered if they become impounded. Micro-chipping plays an important role in reuniting pets with their owners.

A proportion of funds raised from animal registrations are used for educational programs.
DESIGNATED OFF LEASH AREAS

All dogs are required to be on a leash when in a public place, except in a designated off leash area.

Designated off leash areas are located in most suburbs of Bathurst. Council has 11 designated off leash areas, two of these areas have specified times of use, and one is fully fenced (see details below).

Site 1  Eglinton Showground at the rear of Cottonwood Drive
Site 2  Land next to the old Dog Pound, bounded by the Vale Creek, Russell Street and Eastment’s property in Russell Street
Site 3  The reserve between McMenamin Place, Rivett Place and Bell Place, Kelso
Site 4  The Vale Creek side of the Brian Booth Oval, Perthville
Site 5  Lavis Park and the reserve between Napoleon Street and Adrienne Street, Raglan
Site 6  Drainage reserve on the corner of Bradwardine Road and Evernden Road, Windradyne
Site 7  Hector Park and the Rocket Street Reserve adjacent to the Basketball Stadium, West Bathurst
Site 8  Between Evans Bridge and the George Street Bridge, subject to operating hours before 8 am and after 5 pm
Site 9  Centennial Park, subject to exclusion of playground area and operating hours before 8 am and after 5 pm
Site 10  Jaques Park, South Bathurst
Site 11  Kefford Street, between Peel and Stewart Streets. This area is fully fenced.
NUISANCE DOGS

Dogs may be declared a nuisance dogs if they are:

- habitually at large
- barking excessively
- defecating on another persons property
- repeatedly chases any person or animal
- endangers the health of any person or animal
- repeatedly causes substantial damaged to anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept
DANGEROUS DOGS

Council has the power to declare a dog dangerous if it is deemed necessary by an Authorised Officer of Council. All declared dangerous dogs must be kept in a child proof enclosure and certain regulations apply to these enclosures and must be adhered to.
RESTRICTED BREEDS

Council has the authority to ensure the dog owner complies with the breed identification process, and restricted breeds also need to be kept in child proof enclosures.

The following dogs are restricted dogs for the purposes of this Act:

(a) American pit bull terrier or pit bull terrier,
(b) Japanese tosa,
(c) dogo Argentino,
(d) fila Brasileiro,
(d1) 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,
(e) any dog declared by an authorised officer of a council under Division 6 of this Part to be a restricted dog,
(f) any other dog of a breed, kind or description prescribed by the regulations for the purposes of this section.
CATS

Cats are prohibited from being in a food preparation area, and wildlife protection area. Cats can be removed from these areas.

A cat may be a nuisance if it

- Makes a persistent noise
- Repeatedly damages anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept
- Preying on the native wildlife
COUNCIL INITIATIVES

Companion animals have a special place within our community, and indeed our own lifestyle is changing to accommodate our desire to have a companion animal.

Bathurst Regional Council wants to encourage responsible pet ownership and therefore provides the following;

- Off leash areas (fenced and unfenced) with dog poo bins
- De-sexing and micro-chipping incentive programs
- Education programs for:
  1. School children
  2. Service organisations
  3. Community groups with special needs

The de-sexing and micro-chipping initiatives are held twice a year, in conjunction with R.S.P.C.A. NSW, and members of the Australian Veterinary Association in Bathurst. Low income earners are targeted for this program. These residents need assistance in undertaking this procedure as companion animal ownership should be available to all residents. Council will continue to work with these residents and promote de-sexing and micro-chipping initiatives, as it ultimately reduces the number of unwanted litters.

Bathurst Regional Council understands the enjoyment some animals give to their owners. Medical journals recommend people should own dogs, as owning a dog encourages people to walk and therefore keeps people fitter and healthier. Also, people like to discuss the advantages of pet ownership with each other as they walk in these off leash areas.
EDUCATION

The S.P.O.T. (Safe Pets Out There) program is presented to children from Kinder to Year 2. This program is delivered in three sessions and runs for three years. It is planned that every child in the Bathurst Regional Council area will be targeted with this program.

Presentations to service clubs and community groups are delivered as required and include such topics as, legislation, education programs and personal responsibility for pet ownership.

Animal forums give pet owners the opportunity to listen to relevant changes to legislation. Pet owners will be encouraged to give feedback to Council on the advantages and disadvantages they are experiencing with problems associated with animal management.
COMPLAINTS

Bathurst Regional Council attends to many complaints each year regarding dogs and cats. Many hours are spent by Councils’ Rangers in listening, advising and reporting animal complaints. Many of these complaints come about because:

- Neighbours live too close to one another
- Young people live next door to old people
- Animals not being exercised regularly
- Animals being neglected
- Yards too small
- Fences not high enough

It is clear more complaints come from people living in urban environments rather than from people living in rural areas. The most common types of complaints received by Council are listed below:

- Barking/howling dogs, and yowling cats
- Straying dogs
- Nuisance cats
- Aggressive dogs and cats
- Unwanted puppies and kittens
- Abused and unfed dogs and cats
- Uncollected animal faeces

Council’s Rangers will assess all complaints individually and try and encourage neighbours to talk with each other, so valuable time is not spent on singular problems. All matters raised are treated confidentially and with expediency.

Council Rangers encourage dog and cat owners to have their dogs and cats micro-chipped and life-time registered. Animal complaints (where appropriate) will be attended to by a personal visit from a Ranger.

Bathurst Regional Council’s Rangers patrol the Council area on a daily basis. Rangers also provide advice on correct animal behaviour, and advise the residents of the services which are provided by Council.

Some of the services which council provides are:

- Citronella/ stop barking collars
- Cat cages
- Dog and cat traps
- Unwanted animal collection
- Removal of dead animals( special circumstances only)
SMALL ANIMAL POUND

Bathurst Regional Council has a Small Animal Pound established on the corner of Lloyds Rd and Vale Road Bathurst. This facility is open Monday to Friday from 12.30 pm till 2.00pm closed weekends and public holidays.

There are 21 dog and 6 cat pens at the Small Animal Pound. All dogs are exercised daily in covered dog runs. Dogs and cats are fed daily with food supplied by Mars Petcare Australia.

Residents are encouraged to purchase animals, from the Small animal pound. All animals which are sold are micro-chipped wormed for intestinal worms and given the 1st vaccination. Dogs are vaccinated against hepatitis, distemper and parvo-virus. Cats are vaccinated against cat flu and feline enteritis.

Prior to the release of an impounded animal all relevant fees and charges must be paid by the owner. This includes fees for lifetime registration and microchipping where applicable.
OBJECTIVES OF COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT

Bathurst Regional Council’s ultimate goal and vision for the future is for:

- a reduction in the number of dog attacks,
- a reduction in the number of animals being euthanised,
- and for residents to appreciate and care for their pets in a manner in which the pets deserve

Bathurst and the surrounding districts continue to experience strong growth, and as such effective Companion Animal Management will continue to be a priority for Council.