

2026-2031

DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT PLAN



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Ngadlurlu tampinhi,
ngadlu Kaurnayartangka
inparrinhi. Ngadlurlu parnuku
tuwila yartangka tampinhi.

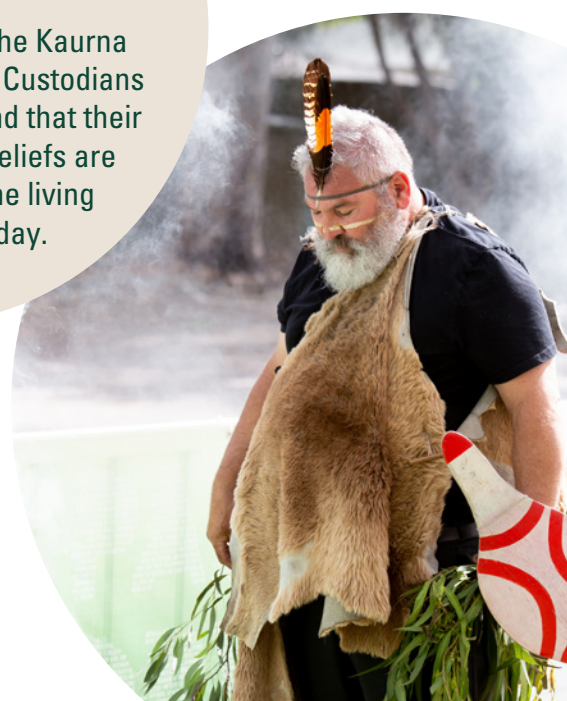
Ngadlurlu Kurna Miyurna yaitya yarta
mathanya Wama Tarntanyaku tampinhi.

Parnuku yailtya, parnuku tapa purruna
yalarra puru purruna.

*Kurna Translation provided by Kurna Warra Karrpanthi

We would like to
acknowledge this land is the
Traditional Lands for the Kurna
people and that we respect their
spiritual relationship with their country.

We also acknowledge the Kurna
people as the Traditional Custodians
of the Adelaide region and that their
cultural and heritage beliefs are
still as important to the living
Kurna people today.



PLAN SUMMARY

The *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (the Act) requires all councils in South Australia to prepare a management plan relating to dogs and cats every five years.

This Dog and Cat Management Plan will guide the City of Unley's management of dogs and cats for the years 2026–2031.

Dogs - ongoing services and strategic project

Ongoing Council services

- **Registration** - setting registration fees, promoting registration, and maintaining a register of dogs.
- **Dogs wandering at large** - collecting, returning, impounding.
- **Dog off and on-leash exercise areas** – designating and managing areas.
- **Management and enforcement** – Authorised Officers oversee all Act responsibilities, respond to complaints, work with owners and issue orders and fines.
- **Customer service** – answering enquiries and registering complaints.
- **Education** – providing education materials about responsible dog ownership and behaviour in Council open space.

Strategic project

- Off-Leash Areas Review.

Cats - ongoing services and strategic project

Ongoing Council services

- **Registration** - promoting registration of cat microchip numbers and desexing details and maintaining a register of cats.
- **Management and enforcement** – Authorised Officers oversee all Act responsibilities, respond to complaints and work with owners.
- **Stray cats** – redirecting enquiries to the Animal Welfare League for collection and rehoming.
- **Customer service** – answering enquiries and registering complaints.
- **Education** – providing education materials about responsible cat ownership.

Strategic project

- Cat Management Options Study.

1. ABOUT THIS PLAN

The *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* requires all councils in South Australia to prepare a management plan relating to dogs and cats every five years.

These plans must be approved by the Dog and Cat Management Board and include provisions for parks where dogs may be exercised off-leash and for parks where dogs must be under effective control by means of physical restraint and may include provisions for parks where dogs are prohibited.

This Dog and Cat Management Plan will guide the City of Unley's management of dogs and cats for the years 2026–2031.

This plan has been informed by:

- a review of statistics about the numbers of dogs and cats in the Council area and the issues relating to them.
- consideration of relevant legislative requirements and policy.
- engagement with our community about their ideas for future dog and cat management.

This plan describes:

- Key legislation and plans.
- Responsibilities of dog and cat owners and council management.
- Statistics about dogs and cats in the City of Unley.
- Ongoing Council dog and cat management services.
- Strategic projects City of Unley will focus on over the next 5 years.



2. KEY LEGISLATION AND PLANS

Legislation or plan	Description
<i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>	Seeks to encourage responsible dog and cat ownership, reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats and promote the effective management of dogs and cats. Sets roles, responsibilities and requirements for the Dog and Cat Management Board, councils and dog and cat owners. Also establishes penalties for non-compliance by dog and cat owners.
Statewide Cat Management Strategy	The Department for Environment and Water is developing a new Statewide Cat Management Strategy to protect and manage all cats, while considering the social, environmental and economic impacts they cause. The Strategy had not been released at time of consulting on this draft Dog and Cat Management Plan.
The City of Unley has a Dog By-Law 2022 (By-Law No.5)	Limits the number of dogs allowed to 2 per premise and sets dog controls for dog exercise (off-leash), on-leash and prohibited areas, and for dog faeces.



3. RESPONSIBILITIES IN DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT



This section outlines roles and responsibilities for dog and cat relating to the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* and Council's Dog By-Law 2022 (By-Law 5).

3.1 GOVERNMENT AND ORGANISATIONS

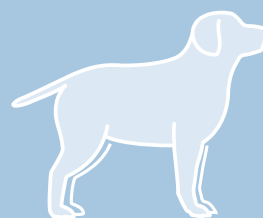
Organisation	Responsibilities
The Dog and Cat Management Board*	• Oversee administration and enforcement of the <i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>. • Support councils with resources and funding. • Manage Dogs and Cats Online (DACO) online registration platform. • Deliver public education on responsible dog and cat ownership. • Support research into dog and cat management. • Undertake accreditation of assistance dogs. • Administer the Dog and Cat Management Fund (the Fund) which is used for initiatives. • Approve council Animal Management Plans and council by-laws.
Councils*	• Prepare Dog and Cat Management Plans. • Promote use of DACO to residents to register dogs and cats. • Maintain a register of dogs kept in the council area. • Appoint Authorised Officers to undertake dog and cat management responsibilities (e.g. enforcement, collection of wandering dogs, education). • Provide suitable dog detention facilities for collected dogs. • Set dog registration fees. • Pay a percentage of dog registration fees collected into the Fund. • Are able to set by-laws for dogs and/or cats.
Vets	• Desex cats and dogs. • Provide puppy schools.
Welfare and allied organisations	• Provide foster and adoption services. • Respond to welfare complaints. • Provide subsidised microchipping and desexing services. • Dog training services.

3.2 DOG AND CAT OWNER RESPONSIBILITIES

Category	Responsibilities	Relevant legislation
Registration of dogs	Dogs to be registered (paid) annually through Dogs and Cats Online (DACO).	<i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>
Registration of cats	Registration of microchip and owner details must be registered in Dogs and Cats Online (DACO).	<i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>
Number of dogs per household	- No more than two dogs per household. - A permit is required from Council to keep more than two dogs.	City of Unley Dog by-law (No. 5)
Dogs in public places	If you are walking your dog, he/she must be on-leash on local streets, and in shopping centre car parks.	<i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>
	There are designated areas for dog exercise (off-leash), and in these areas, you must still carry a leash and always have your dog under effective control.	City of Unley Dog by-law (No. 5)
	Dogs are not permitted within three metres of children's playgrounds, whether restrained or otherwise.	City of Unley Dog by-law (No. 5)
Faeces management	In a public place, dog owners must carry a bag or other suitable container for the collection and lawful disposal of any faeces that the dog may deposit.	City of Unley Dog by-law (No. 5)
	If the dog defecates in a public place and the person responsible for the control of the dog does not immediately remove the faeces and dispose in a lawful and suitable manner a penalty may apply.	<i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>
Desexing/microchipping of dogs and cats	- All dogs and cats must be microchipped. - Dogs and cats over the age of 6 months must be desexed, unless there is an exemption.	<i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>
Dog containment	Dogs to remain on their property and not wander onto the streets.	<i>Dog and Cat Management Act 1995</i>

4. DOGS AND CATS IN THE CITY OF UNLEY

4.1 STATISTICS



4819

dogs registered
in 2024/25

TOP BREEDS



Labrador



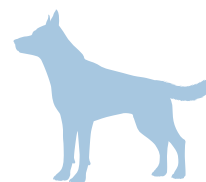
Cavalier King
Charles Spaniel



Border
Collie



Maltese



Kelpie

296

dog complaints
2024/25



54%

wandering at large



34%

barking



12%

harassment

The number of wandering
dogs collected has
halved since 2022.

51 dogs collected

32 returned to owner

19 Impounded
in 2024/25



1354

cats registered
in 2024/25

Only

2

cat complaints
2024/25



4.2 COMMUNITY SURVEY FEEDBACK

- **Top dog-related issues:** not enough places to exercise dogs, dog waste in public areas, owners who fail to control their dogs.
- **Top cat-related issues:** killing or injuring wildlife and wandering or stray cats.
- **Cat management:**

70%
of respondents
support restrictions
on cat
movement.

79%
support a limit on
the number of cats
per property.

71%
support introducing
a cat By-Law.

78%
support mandatory
registration
of cats.

Source:
April 2025 Council
survey. 412 responses.
54% were dog owners,
21% were cat owners.

5. COUNCIL DOG SERVICES AND PROJECTS

5.1 ONGOING SERVICES

Council will continue to deliver the following services:

Service	Description
Dog registration	Council sets registration fees, promotes registration through the State Government Dogs and Cats Online registration portal (DACO), and maintains a register of dogs.
Dogs wandering at large	Council collects dogs found wandering at large and attempts to return them to their owners. Where an owner cannot be reached, Council impounds dogs in a suitable facility (shared with the City of Burnside) for three working days after which, if no owner is reached, the dog is assessed for rehoming through animal welfare organisations.
Off-leash and on-leash exercise areas	Council designates spaces in its parks and reserves where dogs can be exercised off-leash. It also designates spaces where dogs must be under effective control by using physical restraint, and spaces where dogs are prohibited. Council provides clear signage as well as supporting infrastructure such as compostable dog waste bags and bins. Information about off-leash areas can be found on Council's website.
Management and enforcement	Council appoints Authorised Officers to oversee Council's responsibilities under the Dog and Cat Management Act and other acts. They respond to enquiries and complaints about dog behaviour (e.g. barking, attack), welfare and dogs wandering at large. Their priority is to work with owners to prevent recurring issues and are authorised to issue orders and fines.
Customer service and complaints	Council customer service staff answer questions about dog ownership and management and register complaints relating to dog behaviour or dogs wandering at large.
Education	Council provides education including online information, brochures, and signage to encourage responsible dog ownership and dog behaviour in Council's open space.

5.2 STRATEGIC PROJECT

In addition to its ongoing services, Council will focus its efforts on the following strategic project over the next 5 years.

5.2.1 OFF-LEASH AREAS REVIEW

Council acknowledges that finding the right balance of managing open space for off-leash dog exercise and other uses is challenging - especially given the limited open space in our Council area.

Dogs are an important part of many people's lives. They support wellbeing and provide an avenue for social connection. Dogs need access to space for regular exercise and stimulation to stay happy and healthy and prevent behavioural issues.

Access to open space is also essential to the wellbeing of our community. Our open spaces are used for exercise, sport, play, events, and to gather with friends or family or to rest and connect with nature.

It is important that our open spaces are managed in a way that provides people and dogs with fair access to do the things they need to do for their wellbeing. Not every park can be for every use, but across the Council area, there needs to be fair and reasonable access for a variety of uses and users.

This project will undertake a review of on/off-leash and dog exclusion areas across Council's open spaces. It will:

- Develop a list of principles, consistent with those in Council's Open Space Strategy, to guide dog management requirements in Council's open space.
- Identify a fair and reasonable distribution of off-leash areas (and times where relevant) across the Council's open space that considers the needs of other park users, including where dogs should be on-leash or excluded.
- Identify where new infrastructure or landscape elements should be considered to support the safety of people and dogs (e.g. fencing of playgrounds or dog exercise areas) and amenity of open spaces (e.g. bins, dog waste bag dispensers, shade, drinking water).
- Consult with the community on proposed changes.
- Develop an implementation and transition approach to bring any changes into effect.
- Promote resulting on/off-leash areas through new educational maps, resources, signage, and communications.



6. COUNCIL CAT SERVICES AND PROJECTS

6.1 ONGOING SERVICES

Council will continue to deliver the following services:

Service	Description
Cat registration	Council promotes registration of cat microchip numbers and desexing details through the state government Dogs and Cats Online registration portal and maintains a register of cats in the Council area.
Management and Enforcement	Council appoints authorised officers to oversee Council's responsibilities under the Dog and Cat Management Act and other acts. They respond to enquiries and complaints about cats.
Stray cats	The Animal Welfare League collects and rehomes stray cats. People enquiring with Council about stray cats in the City of Unley are redirected to the Animal Welfare League.
Customer service and complaints	Council customer service staff answer questions about cat ownership and management and register complaints relating to cat behaviour or stray cats.
Education	Council provides education including online information, brochures, and signage to encourage responsible cat ownership.



6.2 STRATEGIC PROJECT

In addition to its ongoing services, Council will focus its efforts on the following strategic project over the next 5 years.

6.2.1 CAT MANAGEMENT OPTIONS STUDY

Cats make wonderful companions. Due to their independent and curious nature, if not managed properly, they can kill wildlife, roam, get injured, or be hit by cars. Keeping cats indoors or on properties can manage these risks.

There are currently no South Australian legislative requirements for keeping pet cats indoors or confined to properties. Some councils have introduced Cat By-Laws which require cat owners to be responsible for keeping pet cats on their properties (e.g. City of Mitcham). The City of Unley does not have a Cat By-Law.

The State Government Department for Environment and Water is currently preparing a Statewide Cat Management Strategy to protect and manage all cats, while considering the social, environmental, and economic impacts they cause. It is possible the new Statewide Strategy when released may include directions for legislative reform to require cat containment. However, the State Government had not yet released the Strategy at the time of preparing this Dog and Cat Management Plan.

This project will undertake a Cat Management Options Study. It will:

- Increase understanding of the number of pet cats in the City of Unley through collation of data available through Dogs and Cats Online and local vets.
- Explore council resource implications stemming from local government responsibilities in the Statewide Cat Management Strategy when released.
- Undertake benchmarking of other councils (e.g. City of Mitcham) who have introduced a cat containment By-Law to understand:
 - the rules or requirements included.
 - how councils encourage compliance (e.g. education, incentives, enforcement).
 - the benefits and challenges of the By-Law.
 - the roles, facilities and resources required for implementation.
- Explore what roles councils can play to protect wildlife and support the safety and wellbeing of cats including through education, incentives, a By-Law and the requirements of the Statewide Cat Management Strategy.
- Undertake representative market research coupled with community engagement to understand views of cat owners and other community members in the City of Unley regarding cat containment.
- Support Council to decide on changes to how it manages cats either through new requirements of the Statewide Cat Management Strategy, introducing a Cat By-Law or other means.



7. DELIVERING THIS PLAN

Council will deliver this plan between 2026 and 2031.

Delivery of ongoing services and strategic projects will be dependent on the allocation of funding in Council's Annual Business Plan and Budget and any new legislative requirements arising - such as those potentially stemming from the Statewide Cat Management Strategy if/once released.

The delivery program will follow an approximate staged cycle. Year 1 will focus on scoping activities, including project planning and cost estimation for the Strategic Projects. Years 2 to 4 will prioritise implementation of projects, subject to confirmed funding and resource allocation.



APPROXIMATE DELIVERY CYCLE

STRATEGIC PROJECT:
OFF-LEASH AREAS
REVIEW



STRATEGIC PROJECT:
CAT MANAGEMENT
OPTIONS STUDY

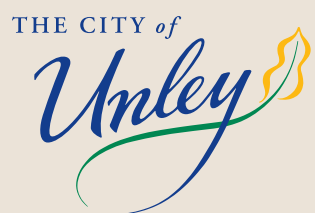


ONGOING DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT SERVICES

2026

2031





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