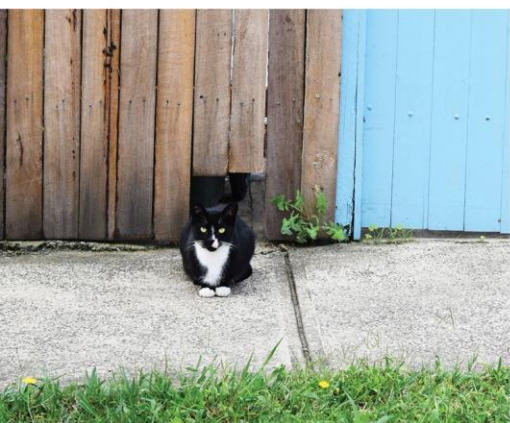


# Companion Animal Action Plan

## 2019-2023



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## Part 1 Executive Summary

### 1.1 What is the CAAP

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* (the Act) requires local government to be responsible for many issues regarding companion animals.

The Inner West Council Companion Animal Action Plan (CAAP) 2019-2023, as contained in this document, details the manner in which Inner West Council intends to manage companion animal related matters for the next 4 years.

- Part 1:** Executive Summary
- Part 2:** Existing Companion Animal Matters
- Part 3:** Companion Animal Matters for Attention
- Part 4:** Action Plan

### 1.2 How the CAAP fits

The Inner West Community Strategic Plan, *Our Inner West 2036* identifies the community's vision for the future, long-term goals and strategies and how to measure progress towards that vision.

The Community Strategic Plan is structured around a guiding principle: to work together in a way that is creative, caring and just. This reflects the values of the Inner West community, underpins community expectations of how Council will interact with its residents and is the foundation for all decision-making, actions taken and management of resources.

Reviewed annually, the detailed four-year Delivery Program and annual Operational Plan will show the activities Council will undertake during its term of office to help achieve the long-term objectives set out in *Our Inner West 2036*.

The CAAP is a long-term rolling action plan designed to detail how Inner West Council intends to deal with companion animal related matters and will be implemented over four years.

As outlined in the diagram below, the CAAP responds to the Community Strategic Plan, strategic direction 4; *Caring, happy, healthy communities* and Delivery Program Outcome 4.3; *The community is healthy and people have a sense of wellbeing*.

The CAAP has also been developed in line with:

- Recreation Needs Study: A Healthier Inner West
- Community Engagement Framework
- Marrickville Biodiversity Strategy 2011-2021
- Leichhardt Environmental Sustainability Plan 2015-2025
- GreenWay Biodiversity Strategy

Our Inner West 2036  
Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

Alignment of **Companion Animal Action Plan** with the **Community Strategic Plan** and **Delivery Program**

### Vision Statement

We are Inner West, land of the Gadigal and Wangal peoples, whose rich cultures, heritage and history we acknowledge and respect. We are identified by our diversity of people, places and ideas. We are an inclusive, vibrant, caring and progressive community where everyone is welcome, people and nature live in harmony, and creativity is a way of life.

### Strategic Directions

These are the big picture results which the community would like Council and its many partners to focus on achieving.



### Strategic Direction 4

Caring, happy, healthy communities

### Outcomes

These are the results that come out of each strategic direction. They are more specific but still focus on the end result rather than on how to get there. In this context, an outcome is the realisation of a strategic direction.



### Outcome 4.3

The community is healthy and people have a sense of wellbeing

### Strategies

These guide the specific actions related to this plan and define how to achieve the outcomes.



### Strategies

1. Provide the facilities, spaces and programs that support wellbeing and active and healthy communities
2. Provide opportunities for people to participate in recreational activities they enjoy

### Actions

These are the detailed sets of activities and initiatives that Council will undertake to help achieve the community vision.



### Actions

Companion Animal Action Plan

## 1.3 Action Plan Lifecycle

The CAAP has a four-year lifecycle with updates reported to Council annually.

## 1.4 Background

### 1.4.1 Companion Animals Act 1998

Introduced by the NSW State Government in 1998, The *Companion Animals Act 1998* (the Act) and the *Companion Animals Regulation 2018* (the Regulation), are to provide for the effective and responsible care and management of companion animals.

Inner West Council's response to companion animal management is influenced by Council's obligations under the Act. The Act defines "companion animal" as any of the following:

- a dog,
- a cat,
- any other animal that is prescribed by the regulations as a companion animal.

The current regulations do not list any other type of animal as being a companion animal.

The fact that an animal is not strictly a "companion" does not prevent it being a companion animal for the purposes of the Act. All dogs are treated as companion animals, even working dogs on rural properties, guard dogs, police dogs and corrective services dogs.

The Act sets down a number of controls. These include:

- the registration and identification requirements for dogs and cats;
- the need for dogs in a public place to be on a leash and under effective control at all times, except when in a designated off-leash area;
- the circumstances that a dog and cat may be declared a nuisance;
- the circumstances that if a dog rushes at, attacks, bites, harasses or chases any, whether or not any injury is caused to a person or animal, the owner of the dog, or person in charge of the dog is guilty of an offence;
- the areas in which dogs and cats are prohibited;
- the reason a companion animal may be lawfully seized;
- the requirement that a dog owner or person in charge of a dog must dispose of any dog faeces deposited by their animal in a public place; and
- procedures for dealing with seized or surrendered animals.

The Office of Local Government calculate a quarterly reimbursement for each council based on the Registrations received from cats and dogs residing in their area. The Companion Animals Act requires councils to use all money paid from the Fund for managing and controlling companion animals in their area. The actions in this CAAP will be partly funded by the Companion Animals fund.

### **1.4.2 Number of Companion Animals in the Inner West Local Government Area**

The exact number of companion animals in the Inner West LGA is not known. Various sources of information allow Council to estimate the number of companion animals which might currently exist in the LGA.

The NSW Companion Animals Register (CAR) is a website database for dogs and cats microchipped and registered under the NSW Companion Animals Act 1998. In May 2019, there were approximately 35,500 dogs and 29,200 cats identified on the CAR as residing within the Inner West LGA.

It is acknowledged however, that there are likely to be more companion animals in the Inner West local government area than identified on the CAR.

Animal Medicines Australia's report on *Pet Ownership in Australia, 2016*, states there are more than 24 million pets in Australia, with 38% of households owning a dog and 29% of households owning a cat.

Based on the CAR database information, in the Inner West LGA, approximately 42% of households own a dog and 35% of households own a cat.

### **1.4.3 Additional Companion Animal Resources**

Links to additional companion animal management information, including information regarding the health risks and benefits of companion animal ownership, can be found on Council's website at [www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/pets](http://www.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/pets).

Council's Companion Animal Services Facebook group, *Inner West Pets*, provides a valuable platform for Council to directly deliver responsible pet ownership information to pet owners and prospective pet owners. The Inner West Pets group also provides an educational forum for community members to share local pet related information. Moderated by Council's Companion Animal Services Team, this Facebook group allows Council to gain direct insight into the concerns of the community and tailor services to meet community need. Additional functions of the *Inner West Pets* group are listed under Section 2.4.

## **Part 2 Existing Companion Animal Matters**

### **2.1 Identification of Companion Animals**

Under the Act, all dogs and cats must be microchipped (identified) from the time they are 12 weeks of age. Dogs and cats must not be sold or given away unless they have been microchipped.

More than 150,000 dogs and cats are lost or stolen every year in NSW. Many are impounded because their owners cannot be identified.

Early microchipping and lifetime registration is highly recommended as a large percentage of puppies and kittens under 6 months of age are regularly lost

### **2.2 Lifetime Registration of Companion Animals**

Council operates as a registration agent for companion animals and provides information regarding registration requirements. Council has previously run companion animal registration and microchipping events as a means of encouraging pet owners to lifetime register their animals.

The companion animal registration process is administered by the Office of Local Government through, registration agents, Service NSW or online via the NSW Pet Registry. The registration fee is set by the Companion Animals Act 1998. It is a once-only payment, which covers the cat or dog for its lifetime in NSW, regardless of any changes in ownership.

Discounts apply for desexed cats and dogs, eligible pensioners and cats and dogs purchased from certain rehoming organisations, including council pounds and shelters.

The NSW Government has granted a 12-month grace period for the introduction of annual permits for owners of non-desexed cats and dangerous and restricted dogs.

From 1 July 2020 owners of cats not desexed by four months of age will be required to pay an \$80 annual permit in addition to the once-only lifetime registration fee. Exemptions will be in place for cats that are registered by 1 July 2020 and those kept for breeding purposes by members of recognised breeding bodies.

From 1 July 2020 owners of dogs of a restricted breed or declared to be dangerous will be required to pay a \$195 annual permit in addition to the once-only lifetime registration fee.

The introduction of annual permits is an effort by the NSW Government to improve health and wellbeing of pets, reduce euthanasia rates and to help address concerns about unowned cats.

### **2.3 Council's Companion Animal Services Team**

The Inner West Council's Companion Animal Services team is within the Regulatory Services division. This team is solely dedicated to the care and management of companion animals and consists of a Team Leader, Strategy and Education Officer, Senior Companion Animal Officer and four Companion Animal Officers. The team's responsibilities include reuniting found companion animals with their owners, investigating dog attacks, managing dangerous, menacing & restricted dogs, investigating nuisance complaints, proactive and reactive patrols of public areas and implementing relevant actions associated with Council's Companion Animal Action Plan. Proactive daily park patrols by officers, community workshops & events and the placement of a mobile information stand in local parks also provide the Companion Animal Services team with opportunities to educate and assist residents with responsible pet ownership matters.

## 2.4 Reuniting Companion Animals with Owners

Companion animals wearing an identification tag with owner contact details have a greater chance of being reunited with the owner within a shorter period of time, reducing the amount of stress experienced by a lost animal. The Inner West Council's *Tag Me, I'm Yours* program offers engraved pet tags to residents, free of charge. Initially the program was jointly funded by the Inner West Council and the NSW Office of Local Government Responsible Pet Ownership grant program. Due to the impressive community response the Inner West Council continues to fund the printing of engraved pet tags for its residents, with over 1,500 tags ordered as of June, 2019.

Council's Companion Animal Officers perform the function of collecting stray dogs from public places. The Companion Animal Services team make every effort to contact the owner of found animals in order to transport the animal back to their place of residence, including utilising social media via the *Inner West Pets* Facebook page, comprised of over 1,300 members from the local area. If Council is unable to contact the owner of a found pet, the animal is transferred to an approved premise; a local veterinary hospital or Council's contracted animal shelter.

Companion Animal Officers occasionally have reason to collect cats. Unlike dogs, it is lawful for cats to roam unattended in most public and private places. The Act provides only certain circumstances where a person may lawfully seize a cat.

Once a companion animal is seized, the requirements of the Act are such that the person in charge of the animal shelter must hold an animal for 14 days if a person who appears to be the animal's owner is known or 7 days if the animal's owner is not known.

In instances where lost animals are not claimed by their owners, Inner West Council takes the position that, wherever possible, lost animals should be re-homed. The animal shelter facility used by Council has been selected, in part, due to its relatively high level of success in finding new homes for animals which are not claimed by their owner.

The table below reflects an increase in the number of companion animals transferred to an animal shelter. The reason for this increase is the restricted access to Council's temporary holding facility at the St Peters Works Depot during business hours due to Companion Animal Services staff relocation following amalgamation. The use of this facility is deemed to be unlawful if it is unstaffed.

**Table 1:**

<b>Inner West Council Seizure of Dogs and Cats</b>						
Financial year	Total Seized		Returned to owner		Transferred to animal shelter	
	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats
2016/2017	93	17	38	0	55	17
2017/2018	50	0	7	0	43	0
2018/2019	115	3	46	0	69	3



## 2.5 Park Planning and Recreation Policy and Strategy

The activities which occur in Council's parks are guided by a park Plan of Management. A valid Plan of Management is required for each area of community land managed by Council. Plans of Management are prepared according to the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Council's Parks Planning and Engagement department are responsible for the management of open space and parks. The Dog Off-Leash Areas in Parks Policy identifies appropriate dog off-leash areas in parks so that public spaces can be enjoyed by all members of the community and natural areas are protected.

'Walking the dog' is one of the Inner West's most popular recreational activities as evidenced by over 1000 community surveys across the LGA (*Recreational Needs Study: A Healthier Inner West, 2018*.)

### Providing for and managing recreation with dogs

Decisions regarding areas of open space suitable for dog off-leash exercise areas are reflected in the *Recreation Needs Study - A Healthier Inner West*.

Through the *Recreation Needs Study – A Healthier Inner West*, the Inner West Council recognises a need for:

- Development of new dog off leash areas
- Provision and maintenance of existing dog off leash facilities
- Management of existing park spaces to ensure spaces are shared and used appropriately
- Increased resources to provide for responsible pet ownership education for residents

This CAAP addresses these areas of need through the 'Actions' listed in the appendix of this document.

## 2.6 Dog Off-leash Exercise Areas

The Companion Animals Act 1998 requires each Council to have at least one (1) off-leash dog exercise area.

In 2019, there are 44 dog off-leash exercise areas in the Inner West LGA. Some dog off leash exercise areas operate on a time-share basis, meaning dogs can only be exercised off leash between designated hours each day or when sporting or training activities or special events are not taking place.

Council's Companion Animal Services Team have developed a dog off leash etiquette. Dog off leash etiquette signage has been installed in designated dog off leash areas and Council recommends that dog walkers follow these tips so that everyone is able to enjoy our shared spaces.

Areas and conditions where dogs are permitted to exercise off leash are;

### Annandale

Park	Area / Conditions
Cohen Park	Available for leash-free dog exercise except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash. Dogs are not permitted in the fenced court areas.

Smith Hogan and Spindlers Park	A designated area of the park (between the bridge near Taylor Street and the underpass at The Crescent) is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day except when organised sporting activities are taking place, at which time dogs must be on a leash. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground area.
Whites Creek Valley Park	A designated area on the eastern side of Whites Creek Valley Park – bound by Whites Creek, Piper Street, Smith Street and Wisdom Street – is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this area. Dogs are not permitted in the small separate section adjacent to Arguimbau Street.

## Balmain

Park	Area / Conditions
Ann Cashman Reserve	Available for leash-free dog exercise between the hours of 4pm and 10am during non-daylight saving time, and 5pm and 10am during daylight saving time, weekends and public holidays. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of these times. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground area.
Birrung Park	A designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day.
Elkington Park	A designated area of Elkington Park – the north-western section between Tilba Avenue and White Horse Point – is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day. The rest of the park is available for leash-free dog exercise between the hours of 4pm and 10am during non-daylight saving time, and 5pm and 10am during daylight saving time, weekends and public holidays. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of these times. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground area.
Ewenton Park	Ewenton Park is available for leash-free dog exercise between the hours of 4pm and 10am during non-daylight saving time, and 5pm and 10am during daylight saving time, weekends and public holidays. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of these times.
Illoura Reserve	A designated area of Illoura Reserve – the grassed area between the playground and Peacock Point – is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground area.
Lookes Avenue Reserve	Available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day.
Paringa Reserve	A designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day.
Propeller Park	A designated area (the grassed area between Hart Street and Gilchrist Place) is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this area.
Punch Park	A designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day except when organised sporting activities are taking place, at which time dogs must be on a leash. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this area. Dogs are not permitted in the children's playground and tennis courts.

## Birchgrove

Park	Area / Conditions
Birchgrove Park	A designated area – around the sporting ground area and north of The Terrace – is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the playground, or within the fenced sporting ground perimeter. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of these areas.
Mort Bay Park	A designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times. Outside of this area, and within the Village Green when community events are taking place, dogs must remain on a leash. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground.

## Camperdown

Park	Area / Conditions
O'Dea Reserve	A fenced area is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day.

## Croydon

Park	Area / Conditions
Bede Spillane Reserve (beside Centenary Sports Field)	A fenced area between Croydon Road and the Wests Sports car park is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day.

## Dulwich Hill

Park	Area / Conditions
Johnson Park	A designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise between the hours of 6am to 9am and 5pm to 7pm (6pm to 8pm during daylight saving time). Dogs must be kept on leash at all other times.

## Enmore

Park	Area / Conditions
Enmore TAFE Park	The entire Enmore TAFE Park contains a fenced area available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day.

## Leichhardt

Park	Area / Conditions
36 <sup>th</sup> Battalion Park	The southern half of 36th Battalion Park (the open grassy part) is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this area. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground.
Blackmore Park	The sporting ground area is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of the sporting ground area.

Hawthorne Canal Reserve	A designated area – bounded by Hawthorne Canal, the light rail pathway and canal bridge, the train line and the car parking area on Canal Road – is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this area. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground.
Pioneers Memorial Park	The eastern area is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times. Dogs must remain on a leash in the western area of the park. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground.
War Memorial Park	The southern area is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times. Dogs must remain on a leash in the northern area of the park. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground.

## Lewisham

Park	Area / Conditions
Morton Park	A designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times. The on-site signage indicates where dogs are permitted on leash, off leash or are prohibited.

## Lilyfield

Park	Area / Conditions
Balmain Road Sporting Ground, Callan Park	The sporting ground is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash.
Glover Street Sporting Ground, Callan Park	The sporting ground is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash.
Leichhardt Oval No. 2	The sporting ground is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash. Dogs must remain on a leash at all times in the surrounding parkland, including the Bay Run.
Leichhardt Oval No. 3	The sporting ground is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash. Dogs must remain on a leash at all times in the surrounding parkland, including the Bay Run. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground.
Waterfront Oval	The sporting ground is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash.

## Marrickville

Park	Area / Conditions
Enmore Park	A designated area – bound by Llewellyn Street and the two diagonal paths leading inwards from each corner of that side of the park – is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this area.

Henson Park	A designated area on the eastern side is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day, except during official match play when dogs must remain on a leash.
HJ Mahoney Reserve	Dogs are allowed off leash on the sports ground at all times except when in use for organised sports training and match play. When the sports ground is in use, dogs must be kept on a leash.
Marrickville Park	A designated area on the eastern side is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this designated area.
McNeilly Park	A designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of this designated area.

## Newtown

Park	Area / Conditions
Camperdown Memorial Rest Park	A designated area – bound by Federation Road, Church Street, the St Stephens Church wall and the diagonal path leading from the church boundary to Federation Road – is a timed off leash dog exercise area 24 hours a day on weekdays, and between the hours of 5pm and 9am daylight saving time and 4pm and 9am non-daylight saving time on weekends. Dogs must be on a leash in all other areas of the park at all times.

## Petersham

Park	Area / Conditions
Petersham Park	A designated area on the southern side – adjacent to Wentworth Street and Brighton Street – is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day. An additional designated area is available for leash-free dog exercise between the hours of 6am to 9am and 4pm to 6pm (5pm to 8pm during daylight saving time). On-site signage indicates where dogs are permitted on leash, off leash or are prohibited.

## Rozelle

Park	Area / Conditions
Bridgewater Park	The section between the bay and the sporting ground is available for leash-free dog exercise at all times. The sporting ground area is also available for leash-free dog exercise except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash. Dogs are not permitted within 10 metres of the children's playground.
Easton Park	The western part – bounded by Lilyfield Road, Denison Street, Burt Street and the path leading to the toilet block – is available for leash-free dog exercise. The sporting ground area is available for leash-free dog exercise except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash. Dogs are not permitted within the fenced children's playground.

King George Park	The sporting ground areas of King George Park are available for leash-free dog exercise except during organised sporting games, training and events, when dogs must be on a leash. Dogs must remain on a leash at all times in the surrounding parkland, including the Bay Run. Dogs are not permitted within the fitness station area, or within 10 metres of the children's playground
Elliott Park and Balmain Cove	Available for leash-free dog exercise. On-site signage indicates when and where dogs are permitted on leash, off leash or are prohibited.

## Stanmore

Park	Area / Conditions
Weekley Park	A designated area between Percival Road and the central pedestrian path running down the centre of the park is available between the hours of 5pm and 9am daylight saving time, and 4pm and 9am non-daylight saving time.

## Summer Hill

Park	Area / Conditions
Cadigal Reserve	Located adjacent to Hawthorne Canal; the fenced area is available for leash-free dog exercise any time of the day.

## Sydenham

Park	Area / Conditions
Sydenham Green	A fenced area is available for leash free dog exercise at any time of the day. An additional designated off leash area – at the corner of Henry Street and Park Road, bound by Park Lane – is available for leash-free dog exercise at any time of the day. Dogs must remain on a leash outside of these areas.

## Tempe

Park	Area / Conditions
Tempe Lands	A fenced area is available for leash free dog exercise between the hours of 6am and 9:30pm every day.

Except for the places (and times) listed above, dogs in a public place in the Inner West LGA must remain under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash that is attached to that person.

Even when on a leash, dogs are or may be prohibited from particular public places. These places are listed at *clause 14* of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and include: within 10 metres of children's playing apparatus or food preparation or consumption apparatus; school grounds and childcare centres (unless permitted), public bathing or recreation areas.

## 2.7 Customer Request Systems

When a customer contacts Council with regards to a companion animal issue, the customer's complaint or request for information/action is entered into this system, assigned a reference number and then allocated to a particular officer for further action. Customers may also lodge their own request online through the Customer Request Management System.

Requests are categorised according to subject. Requests for information/action in regards to companion animals have been categorised according to the subject headings listed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 included below. Note that Table 4.1 includes customer reports from all three former council areas, and the category names differ from those in Table 4.2 due to the commencement of a new customer request system.

Table 4.1:

<b>Companion animal related requests created during the 2018 calendar year (January - November)</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Requests</b>
<b>Dog related request</b>	
Barking dog	201
Park complaint	155
Street complaint	111
Dog to be collected	91
Dog attack – other location	73
Lost dog	72
Dog attack – park related	33
Dangerous dog inspection	8
Restricted dog inspection	5
<b>Cat related request</b>	
Lost cat	90
Cat threaten injury/death	16
Cat Noise/damaging property	12

Table 4.2:

<b>Companion animal-related requests created during December 2018 – June 2019</b>	
<b>Category</b>	<b>Requests</b>
<b>Dog related request</b>	
Barking dog	254
Dog complaint	187
Dog to be collected	121
Dog attack in Street or Private Property	59
Dog attack in Park	42
<b>Cat related request</b>	
Cat complaint	16
<b>Other requests</b>	
Order Animal Pet Tag	297
Companion Animal Register Enquiry	205
Dog or Cat Lost	140

## Part 3 Companion Animal Matters for Attention

### 3.1 Content of Action Plan

The action plan contained in Part 4 of this document addresses companion animal matters which have been identified through;

- companion animal surveys
- feedback provided directly to Companion Animal Officers and via Council's social media platforms
- Customer Request Management System
- the Recreational Needs Study: A Healthier Inner West 2018
- the NSW Companion Animal Taskforce Group

Many actions identified in the former Marrickville Council's Companion Animal Action Plan 2014, have continued to be important and therefore have remained in this 2019 plan. Similarly, the former Ashfield Council's Companion Animal Management Plan 2009 provided a guide to responsible pet ownership and where relevant, has been transferred into this plan. It is noted that the former Leichhardt Council did not have a Companion Animal Action Plan.

### 3.2 Matters Identified in Companion Animal Surveys

In 2018, Council officers developed a companion animal survey to seek information from residents to assist in the planning and implementation of companion animal management strategies.

A summary of matters identified in the surveys is provided below:

- A need for community education regarding responsible pet ownership
- A need for improved community engagement and compliance through social media promotion and communication
- A need for Council to educate dog owners and professional dog walkers in regards to community expectations of appropriate etiquette and responsible behaviours when utilising off-leash areas
- Safety concerns in off-leash areas for dogs – including the need for more fenced parks, concerns around dog baiting incidents and owners failing to control their dogs in public
- Cat containment strategies
- Discounted microchipping and desexing programs
- Community access to dog agility equipment in local parks
- Providing biodegradable dog waste bags in parks
- Providing clear signage in off-leash areas and areas in which dogs are prohibited
- Access to reputable and affordable dog trainers and veterinary behaviourists

### 3.3 The Companion Animals Regulation 2018

In 2012 the NSW Companion Animal Taskforce produced a report containing 22 recommendations which provide a strategy to reduce the number of stray cats and dogs that are impounded and euthanased, improve the current regulatory framework around the breeding, sale and management of cats and dogs and promote socially responsible pet ownership to the whole community.



The recommendations aim to address the following key strategic objectives identified by the Taskforce:

- SO1** - Reduce the number of surrendered or abandoned cats and dogs
- SO2** - Reduce the number of cats and dogs that are unnecessarily euthanased
- SO3** - Improve the ability to trace ownership of cats and dogs throughout their lifecycle
- SO4** - Improve standards for the breeding and sale of cats and dogs
- SO5** - Improve public understanding of socially responsible pet ownership
- SO6** - Increase compliance with microchipping and registration regulations

The *Companion Animals Regulation 2018* commenced on 31 August 2018 and aims to address these objectives through;

- changes to registration fees to encourage the adoption of companion animals from rehoming organisations
- enforcement measures to encourage pet owners to microchip and register their animals, reducing the number of companion animals transferred to impound facilities
- access to the Companion Animals Register extended to various authoritative bodies including NSW Police and greyhound racing inspectors
- enforcement measures to encourage pet owners to manage their pets in a responsible manner

The recent changes to the Regulation – outlined below – also implement the government’s response to the Joint Select Committee on Companion Animal Breeding Practices in NSW and a recent statutory review of the *Companion Animals Regulation 2008*.

- Registration fees increased on the face of the Regulation to reflect current amounts in the current Companion Animals (Adjustable Fee Amount) Notice
- Provision for a late fee of \$15 to be charged if a registration fee has not been paid after 28 days
- Eligibility for access to a 50% discount on the registration fee of de-sexed animals extended to animals sold by rehoming organisations
- Register information for an animal should include the number of the microchip implanted in the female parent of the animal, if known to the animal’s owner
- Access to the Register is extended for certain purposes to greyhound racing inspectors, NSW Police, the Commissioner of Fines Administration (or a person authorised by the Commissioner) and the Chief Executive of the Office of Environment and Heritage (or a person authorised by the Chief Executive)
- The maximum penalty notice amount that may be imposed for certain offences has increased.
- Increased Penalties for offences relating to assistance animals

Consideration of the government's response to the Taskforce recommendations has been given and where applicable, provided for within the actions of the Inner West Council Companion Animal Action Plan.

## Part 4 Action Plan

### 4.1 Responsible Companion Animal Ownership

#### **Objectives**

- Encourage prospective companion animal owners to carefully consider the implications of obtaining a companion animal.
- Educate prospective companion animal owners and existing companion animal owners of the responsibilities associated with owning a companion animal in an urban environment.
- Promote the benefits of training and socialising dogs so as to minimise the risk of 'nuisance' behaviours and improve dog behaviour around people and other animals.

#### **Explanation**

Companion animal ownership brings responsibilities. A greater level of community awareness regarding the responsibilities associated with owning a companion animal is likely to result in reduced levels of conflict between companion animals and people. Prospective companion animal owners should have an understanding of the appropriateness of particular dogs and cats for particular dwelling types. Some living arrangements are not conducive to the ownership of particular breeds of dogs or cats. By choosing to obtain a companion animal from an animal shelter or pound, prospective companion animal owners can provide assistance to companion animals which might otherwise remain homeless.

Prospective companion animal owners should be aware of their responsibilities in regards to such matters as:

- complying with the requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*;
- choosing a companion animal which is appropriate for their lifestyle and living arrangements;
- the cost of keeping a companion animal, such as preventative medical/health costs, feeding, grooming, boarding etc.;
- keeping control of their companion animal;
- reducing the potential for their companion animal to harm or annoy members of the community;
- reducing the potential impact their companion animal has on the environment;
- providing appropriate amounts of food and water for their companion animal;
- grooming their companion animal;
- seeking medical attention for their companion animal if it is unwell;
- responsibly socialising and training their companion animal; and
- providing sufficient exercise and mental stimulation for their companion animal.

### 4.2 Companion Animal Identification and Lifetime Registration

#### **Objectives**

- Educate companion animal owners of their legal obligation to have their companion animal microchipped and lifetime registered.
- Inform companion animal owners of the benefits associated with microchipping and lifetime registration.

#### **Explanation**

*The Companion Animals Act 1998* requires companion animals to be microchipped by 12 weeks of age (or at the time of sale) and registered by 6 months of age. Lifetime registration is a one-off process that applies for the lifetime of the animal.

Council operates as a companion animal registration agent. If an animal owner's address or contact details change, the owner must notify Council so that the NSW Companion Animals Register can be updated. Microchipping and lifetime registration are useful processes in the management of companion animals as lost animals that are microchipped and lifetime registered are more likely to be reunited with their owners.

## 4.3 Companion Animal Education

### **Objectives**

- Use existing and new communication techniques to better inform existing companion animal owners, prospective companion animal owners and the wider community of companion animal matters.
- Use these communication techniques to improve poor companion animal practices and attitudes.
- Inform dog and cat owners of the benefits of training and socialising companion animals so as to minimise the risk of 'nuisance' behaviours and improve animal behaviour around people and other animals.
- Educate the community in regard to appropriate human behaviour around dogs and cats.

### **Explanation**

The identified actions associated with education are actions which rely upon an effective education campaign targeted at prospective companion animal owners and existing companion animal owners. Council has a number of existing and established communication devices which are used to interact with the community. These existing devices can be used to better educate the community in regard to companion animal matters. It is also possible that new techniques could be used to help change existing patterns of behaviour.

## 4.4 Dogs

### 4.4.1 Dog access to public space

#### **Objectives**

- Educate dog owners in regard to dog leashing requirements.
- Effectively convey information regarding the location and times of existing off-leash areas.
- Effectively patrol parks where dogs are frequently exercised.

#### **Explanation**

Public space, particularly in the inner western suburbs of Sydney, is a precious commodity. Public space, including park space, is used for a range of different purposes. Park spaces are used for both active recreation pursuits and passive recreation pursuits. People of all ages have a right to use the public space areas located within the Inner West LGA. Dog owners are amongst those members of the community who have a right to use public spaces in a responsible manner.

It is imperative that dog owners be aware of the potential for uncontrolled dogs to scare and possibly harm other park users. Some people may feel threatened by dogs displaying boisterous behaviour – even if that behaviour could be considered by the dog owner to be 'playful' rather than 'aggressive'.

Section 13(1) of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* requires that a dog in a public place be under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, chord or leash that is being held by a person. Exceptions to this requirement include a situation where the dog is in a declared off-leash area or where the dog is tethered to a fixed object or structure. Where a dog(s) is being exercised in a declared off-leash area, the dog(s) must still be accompanied by a competent person. The total number of dogs accompanied by a competent person is 4.

Section 14 of the Act prohibits dogs from some public places, including school grounds, child care centres and within 10 metres of a children's playing apparatus or food preparation or consumption apparatus (unless that area is part of a public thoroughfare, such as a road or footpath), school grounds and child care centres (unless permitted), public bathing or recreation areas.

Council is required to provide at least one off-leash dog area. In 2019, there are 44 off-leash areas in the Inner West Council LGA. The arrangements for these areas are described in the above Section 2.6 of this document.

#### **4.4.2 Dogs and the environment**

##### **Objectives**

- To reduce the amount of dog faeces left uncollected in public places.
- To reduce the negative impact of companion animals upon the environment.

##### **Explanation**

The sight of uncollected dog faeces in public places is unpleasant for all residents. Uncollected dog faeces may potentially enter natural water courses and cause health and environmental problems.

The *Companion Animals Act 1998* requires an owner or person in charge of a dog to immediately remove a dog's faeces and properly dispose of it. Degradable waste bags are provided by Council on over seventy (70) bag dispensers attached to waste bins located in popular dog walking locations.

Although Council's Companion Animal Officers have the power to impose fines, there are difficulties associated with enforcing compliance in regard to this issue, particularly when officers are not present when the offence is committed.

Council will continue to use its existing powers under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* so as to discourage dog owners from leaving dog faeces in public places.

#### **4.4.3 Uncontrolled, nuisance and aggressive dogs**

##### **Objectives**

- To reduce the number of incidents involving uncontrolled, nuisance and aggressive dogs.
- To reduce the likelihood of dogs causing harm or annoyance to people.

##### **Explanation**

Fear of uncontrolled and aggressive dogs limits the extent to which some people use public space. This fear may arise from people having experienced or witnessed aggressive or uncontrolled dog behaviour.

Accordingly, it is important that actions be taken to reduce the number of incidents involving uncontrolled and aggressive dogs. The *Companion Animals Act 1998* provides Council with the power to take action in regard to nuisance and aggressive dog actions and, where possible, Companion Animal Officers can fine those dog owners or person in charge of the dog who do not prevent their dog from acting in an uncontrolled manner. Despite the actions of Council's Companion Animal Officers, the responsibility for the behaviour of a dog is something which rests with the owner or person in charge of that dog.

It is highly desirable that dogs be well-behaved, socialised and handled in a manner which reduces the likelihood of them being uncontrolled, a nuisance or aggressive. For example, verbal commands may assist some owners in controlling their dog. However, education, particularly for children, regarding appropriate ways to interact with dogs, can also help people to avoid being harmed by dogs.

Council will continue to use its existing powers under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* so as to discourage people from allowing their dogs to act in an uncontrolled, nuisance or aggressive manner.

#### **4.4.4 Roaming dogs**

##### **Objective**

- To reduce the number of roaming dogs

##### **Explanation**

Dog owners have an obligation to confine their dogs in a manner which prevents them from escaping the owner's or carer's property. Roaming dogs can cause problems in regard to human safety, traffic safety, interference with wildlife and environment.

Roaming dogs are generally collected by Council as a result of complaints by residents. Council may request a local veterinary hospital hold an animal short-term whilst efforts are made to contact the owner. Pets for which owners are unable to be contacted are transferred to Council's contracted animal impound facility.

#### **4.4.5 Contribution made by dogs and their owners to the community**

##### **Objectives**

- To harness the benefits associated with responsible dog ownership.
- To encourage responsible dog practices by recognising the contribution that dog ownership can make to the community.

##### **Explanation**

Pet ownership can contribute to creating a positive sense of community, particularly when pet owners meet in public places. The use of Council parks by dogs and their owners can increase the amount of activity in those parks, particularly in the early morning and during the evening. This increased activity, if conducted in a responsible manner, can help to make parks safer.

It is necessary to acknowledge that, especially in a densely developed, inner city environment, dog ownership may also have some negative impacts upon the community. This Action Plan has sought to identify negative impacts and actions which may reduce the severity of those impacts.

It is possible that by drawing attention to the positive behaviour of some animals, pet owners might be encouraged to manage their pets in a responsible manner. Any efforts to publicly acknowledge the contribution that pet ownership can make to the community could seek to encourage responsible pet ownership by making a distinction between those pets which are well managed and those pets which are not well managed.

#### **4.4.6 Other dog matters**

##### **Objective**

- To provide a mechanism for the community to encourage change in regard to particular companion animal practices - particularly those practices which are affected by legislation which Council is bound to enforce or those practices over which Council does not have any control.

##### **Explanation**

Whilst the *Companion Animals Act 1998* does have the effect of involving Council in many companion animal matters, there are some companion animal matters over which Council does not have any control. There may be a desire on the part of the community to bring about change in regard to particular companion animal practices, for example, limited opportunities for pet ownership in rental accommodation.

## **4.5 Cats**

### **4.5.1 Cat management**

#### **Objectives**

- To promote the welfare of cats.
- To reduce the negative impact of cats upon the environment and native wildlife.
- To reduce the negative impact of cats upon residential amenity.

#### **Explanation**

Cats have much greater levels of freedom than dogs under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. Cats are free to roam beyond their owner's property and are free to enter private property. Cats are, however, prohibited from entering particular places, such as food preparation/consumption areas and wildlife protection areas. Under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*, a cat can be seized if it is necessary to protect a person or other animal from injury or death.

A cat is considered to be a 'nuisance' if it makes a noise that unreasonably interferes with the peace or comfort of a person or if it repeatedly damages anything outside the property on which it is normally kept. Although action can be taken against the owner of a 'nuisance' cat, the relevant provisions of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* are difficult to enforce.

There are benefits associated with keeping cats indoors, particularly at night. Cats which are kept indoors are unable to harm wildlife and habitat. Cats which are kept indoors are also less likely to be injured or contract disease from other animals. The desexing, microchipping and lifetime registration of cats all contribute to responsible cat management.

It is important to realise that a difference exists between those cats which are owned by a particular person (and which are generally fed and cared for by that person) but which are able to roam freely – and those cats (which could be described as unowned cats) which are not owned by a particular person and which tend to live on the street and may be fed and cared for by a group or single volunteer carer.

### **4.5.2 Contribution made by cats and their owners to the community**

#### **Objectives**

- To harness the benefits associated with responsible cat ownership.
- To encourage responsible cat ownership practices by recognising the contribution which cat ownership can make to the community.

#### **Explanation**

Cats play an important role in providing companionship to many members of the community. If cats are cared for in a responsible manner, they make a positive contribution to the community. Any efforts to publicly acknowledge the contribution that cat ownership can make to the community could seek to encourage responsible cat ownership by making a distinction between those cats which are well managed and those cats which are not well managed.

It is necessary to acknowledge that, especially in a densely developed, inner city environment, cat ownership can also have some negative impacts upon the community. This Action Plan has sought to identify negative impacts and actions which may reduce the severity of those impacts.

### **4.5.3 Other cat matters**

#### **Objective**

- To provide a mechanism for the community to encourage change in regard to particular companion animal practices - particularly those practices which are affected by legislation which Council is bound to enforce or those practices over which Council does not have any control.

#### **Explanation**

Whilst the *Companion Animals Act 1998* does have the effect of involving Council in many companion animal matters, there are some companion animal matters over which Council does not have any control. There may be a desire on the part of the community to bring about change in regard to particular companion animal practices, for example the limited opportunities for pet ownership in rental accommodation.

## Appendix: Table of Actions

**Note:** Actions in **red** are repeated actions.

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Responsible Companion Animal Ownership</b>				
<b>4.1.1</b>	<b>Companion animal care</b>				
1	Educate prospective and existing companion animal owners of responsibilities and issues associated with companion animal ownership by using various media avenues, Council's website, social media platforms, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, portable signage and information boards	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Professional speaker x 6 – \$3,000 per year</li> <li>■ Professional speaker information video - \$1,000 per year</li> <li>■ Promotional and educational items for residents - \$30,000</li> <li>■ Print media - \$2,000 per year</li> <li>■ Notice boards x 6 – \$6,000</li> <li>■ Educational/regulatory A-frames x 12 - \$4,000 every 4 years</li> </ul> Total - \$46,000
2	Promote the relative merits of obtaining a companion animal from an animal shelter or pound by using various media avenues, Council's website, social media platforms, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Promotion campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
3	Educate prospective companion animal owners on choosing a companion animal that is suitable to their lifestyle and accommodation by using various media avenues, Council's website, social media platforms, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
4	Implement a discount desexing program for companion animals where Council and/or other agencies offer to subsidise the cost of desexing	Companion Animal Services	1 year and ongoing	Discount desexing program implemented	Council subsidised desexing program - \$20,000 per year Total - \$20,000
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Companion Animal Identification and Lifetime Registration</b>				



Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
5	Educate prospective and existing companion animal owners of microchipping/ lifetime registration requirements and the associated welfare benefits by using various media avenues, Council's website, social media platforms, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Microchipping/ lifetime registration education campaign conducted	Financial implications factored into Action 1
6	Conduct regular lifetime registration audits on the NSW Companion Animal Register for unregistered companion animals in the Inner West Council LGA	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Lifetime registration audits conducted	Within current budget
7	Identify lifetime registration strategies employed by other local government areas which have relatively high rates of companion animal registration. Emulate these strategies where appropriate	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Research conducted; strategy developed and implemented	Within current budget
8	Maintain a 'companion animal' information package for prospective and existing companion animal owners. This package would include information regarding the particular needs of Guide Dogs, Assistance dogs and their owners, advice regarding the selection, desexing, microchipping, lifetime registration and responsible ownership of companion animals, the requirements of the Companion Animals Act 1998, the need to report dog attack incidents, and the benefits of socialising companion animals so as to reduce the threat which companion animals may present to other people or other animals.	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Keep the companion animal information package updated	Financial implications factored into Action 1
9	Distribute 'companion animal' information package through various media avenues, at seminars, information events, with promotion via social media platforms, Council's website, posters, pamphlets and Information boards	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Package distributed	Financial implications factored into Action 1
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Companion Animal Education</b>				
10	Promote the benefits of desexing companion animals by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Promotion campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1

Action No	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
11	Promote discount desexing program for companion animals by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional products, posters and Information boards	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Discount desexing program promoted	Financial implications factored into Action 1 and 4
12	Inform owners of the process of reporting a lost companion animal by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Owners informed	Financial implications factored into Action 1
13	Keep the companion animal information section on Council's web site regularly updated.	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Website content reviewed monthly and updated as required	Within current budget
14	When opportunities arise, use alternative media to reinforce the benefits of positive companion animal practices – these devices could (subject to further investigation) possibly include media releases and the distribution of material with rates notices	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Alternative media devices used	Financial implications factored into Action 1
15	Incorporate relevant companion animal educational material into Council's environmental education programs	Companion Animal Services in consultation with Environment and Sustainability section	Current and ongoing	Information incorporated into various programs	Within current budget
16	Conduct regular companion animal information and/or microchipping events	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Companion animal information and/or micro chipping events held monthly	Financial implications factored into Action 1
17	Investigate opportunities for inviting veterinary students to assist in the running of a possible companion animal information and/or microchipping event	Companion Animal Services	1 year	Opportunities investigated and acted upon	Within current budget
18	Investigate opportunities for Inner West Council Companion Animal Officers to engage in more regular dialogue with officers from other Councils around companion animal issues	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Opportunities investigated and acted upon	Within current budget

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
19	Develop and administer a survey regarding companion animal matters so as to gather information regarding community attitudes to particular companion animal matters, for example the factors which influence the extent to which people report dog attack incidents, and the frequency with which dog owners walk their dogs	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Questionnaire developed and administered	Financial implications factored into Action 1
20	Investigate feasibility of establishing a companion animal related Instagram account with parallel content to that of the existing <i>Inner West Pets</i> Facebook group – promoting responsible pet ownership	Companion Animal Services in consultation with Strategic Planning and Media and Communications sections	1 year	Feasibility investigated	Within current budget
21	Brief new Council Companion Animal Officers and Customer Service Officers regarding Council's responsibilities in regards to dogs and cats	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	New Companion Animal Officers and Customer Service Officers briefed	Within current budget
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Dogs</b>				
<b>4.4.1</b>	<b><i>Dog Access to public space</i></b>				
22	Educate dog owners regarding their responsibility to keep their dogs appropriately leashed in public places by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
23	Identify and address any deficiencies in the current system of signage which is used to communicate the type of dog access which exists in open space areas throughout the LGA	Companion Animal Services in consultation with Parks Planning and Engagement	Ongoing and as the need arises	Sign audit conducted and deficiencies addressed where feasible	Within current budget

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
24	Brief new Council Companion Animal Officers regarding their powers under the Companion Animals Act 1998 and, in particular, their powers to fine dog owners and persons in charge of dogs who do not keep their dog under effective control or who do not remove and properly dispose of their dogs waste	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Companion Animal Officers briefed	Within current budget
25	Develop and implement a strategy, such as using information boards, A-frames, Companion Animal Officer patrols and interactions, information events, various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, promotional products and posters to educate dog owners on their responsibility to have their dogs under effective control when being exercised in designated dog off-leash areas.	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Strategy developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
26	Develop and maintain a list of dog access signage types and locations within open space areas within the LGA	Parks Planning and Engagement in conjunction with Companion Animal Services	2 years then ongoing	List of signage type and locations developed and kept up to date	Within current budget
27	Develop and implement a strategy, such as a roster and/or reporting system, for Council Companion Animal Officers to effectively patrol public spaces where dogs are frequently exercised	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Strategy developed and implemented	Within current budget
28	Investigate the feasibility of managing commercial dog walkers to minimise the impact on open spaces and their ability to responsibly manage dogs in their care	Companion Animal Services	1 year	Feasibility investigated	Within current budget
29	Where feasible, develop a policy to manage commercial dog walkers using open spaces	Companion Animal Services	1 year	Commercial dog walkers policy developed	Within current budget
30	Inform business chambers and associations of the obligation of businesses to allow assistance dogs entry into or onto any building or place open to or used by the public	Companion Animal Services	1 year	Local business chambers and associations informed	Within current budget
<b>4.4.2</b>	<b><i>Dogs and the environment</i></b>				

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
15	Incorporate relevant companion animal educational material into Council's environmental education programs	Companion Animal Services in consultation with Environmental Services section	Current and ongoing	Information incorporated into program	Within current budget
31	Investigate the appropriateness of the current locations of Council's dog waste bins (in open space areas) through conducting site audits, reviewing associated cost(s) and maintenance, level of use of the area by dogs, compliance by walkers to use the bins and determine whether any of the existing bins might be better placed in alternative locations or removed all together	Companion Animal Services in conjunction with Resource Recovery Operations	1 year	Dog waste bin audit conducted and deficiencies addressed where feasible	Within current budget
32	Investigate possible alternatives to existing dog waste container arrangements & dog waste bags – such as bring your own waste bag and take home, more environmentally friendly waste bags & composting	Companion Animal Services in conjunction with Resource Recovery Operations	1 year	Alternatives investigated and implemented where feasible	Within current budget
33	Ensure that dispensers of dog waste bags are kept well stocked by regularly inspecting dispensers and/or by creating a low stock reporting system	Resource Recovery Operations and Services and Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Dispensers kept stocked	Within current budget
34	Encourage dog walkers to responsibly dispose of their dog's waste and to carry plastic bags with them when leaving home with their dog (for the purpose of collecting dog waste) by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
35	Investigate the feasibility of running a specific dog poo education campaign (in conjunction with a dogs-on-leash campaign, mentioned above at Action 22)	Companion Animal Services	2 years	Feasibility study undertaken	Financial implications factored into Action 1

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
36	Investigate the feasibility of Council declaring certain public places, wildlife protection areas for the purpose of protecting wildlife by consulting with Environmental services staff to determine areas where wildlife are located and if it is reasonable to prohibit companion animals	Environment and Sustainability section in conjunction with Companion Animal Services	2 years	Feasibility study taken	Within current budget
<b>4.4.3</b>	<b><i>Uncontrolled, nuisance and aggressive dogs</i></b>				
19	Develop and administer a survey regarding companion animal matters so as to gather information regarding community attitudes to particular companion animal matters, for example the factors which influence the extent to which people report dog attack incidents, and the frequency with which dog owners walk their dogs	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing.	Questionnaire developed and administered	Financial implications factored into Action 1
37	Promote the benefits associated with dog behaviour training , such as well-behaved dogs being more manageable around unfamiliar people, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Promotion campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
38	Educate dog owners regarding their responsibility to prevent their dog acting in an uncontrolled or aggressive manner by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards, developing a professional/expert speaker video message and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
39	Promote, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public, the benefits associated with companion animal owners enriching their home environment so as to provide adequate mental and physical stimulation for their companion animal and with dogs being walked and exposed to opportunities for socialisation	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Promotion campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
40	Investigate the feasibility of Council committing additional resources to animal management matters, such as; funding of training for Council Companion Animal Officers which would help Council Companion Animal Officers act as community 'educators' in regard to animal management matters; and funding to support the activities of community animal groups to providing approved dog training type classes.	Companion Animal Services	3 years	Feasibility study undertaken	Within current budget
41	Develop and implement a strategy to educate children and adults on dog safety by developing a professional/expert speaker video message and/or providing seminar type workshop for local residents in addition to written information being delivered to residents via various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	2 years	Strategy developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
<b>4.4.4</b>	<b>Roaming dogs</b>				
5	Educate prospective and existing companion animal owners of microchipping/ lifetime registration requirements and the associated welfare benefits by using various media avenues, Council's website, social media platforms, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Micro chipping/ lifetime registration education campaign conducted	Financial implications factored into Action 1

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
42	Develop and implement a strategy to assist companion animal owners with the payment of release fees when reclaiming their animal from Council's companion animal impounding facility. Such as Council providing an option to qualified residents where payment is made to the impound facility on their behalf by Council and the resident is provided with a part payment schedule/invoice to repay Council within a suitable timeframe	Companion Animal Services	1 year	Strategy developed and implemented	Within current budget
43	Provide information to the community, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public, on the process to follow when a stray companion animal is found	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Information provided	Financial implications factored into Action 1
44	Provide information to the community, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional products, posters, information boards and Companion Animal Officer interactions, on the process to follow when they lose a companion animal	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Information provided	Within current budget
45	Educate dog owners, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public, regarding their responsibility to prevent their dog from escaping their property	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
46	Investigate feasibility of Council encouraging dog owners to install self-latching hardware to secure dogs safely within resident's properties and minimise escape risks. This could include providing DIY demonstrations and promoting through various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards, and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Feasibility investigated	Within current budget



Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
47	Investigate the feasibility of Council providing a 'found pets' register where owners can search for their lost pets by researching other organisations that provide this service and considering those implications, including resources and costs that may be incurred by Council	Companion Animal Services in consultation with Strategic Planning and Media and Communications sections	2 years	Feasibility study undertaken	Within current budget
48	Educate companion animal owners regarding their responsibility to keep their details and contact information up-to-date on the NSW Pet Registry, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
49	Ensure dogs being held in Council's holding facility are being held and cared for in accordance with the relevant legislation and code of practice by developing applicable guidelines and keeping them updated with the current relevant legislation and code of practice	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Compliance confirmed	Within current budget
50	Ensure companion animals being transported in Council vehicles are being done so in accordance with the relevant legislation and code of practice by developing applicable guidelines and keeping them updated with the current legislation and code of practice	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Compliance confirmed	Within current budget
51	Investigate alternative animal impound facilities by developing a criterion suitable for the impounding of animals in the Inner West Council area and researching alternatives that may provide an alternative to current facilities	Companion Animal Services	1 year	Alternatives investigated	Within current budget
<b>4.4.5</b>	<b><i>Contribution made by dogs and their owners to the community</i></b>				
52	Prepare a statement in regards to the contribution to the community which is made by dog owners and their dogs. If the statement is adopted by Council, identify opportunities for the display of such a statement for example on Council's website	Companion Animal Services	4 years	Statement prepared and put to Council for consideration	Within current budget

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
53	Consider Council endorsing the 'Pets as Therapy' program or similar programs	Companion Animal Services	4 years	Consideration given	Within current budget
54	Promote the benefits of owning a companion animal by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Benefits promoted	Financial implications factored into Action 1
<b>4.5</b>	<b>Cats</b>				
<b>4.5.1</b>	<b>Cat management</b>				
5	Educate prospective and existing companion animal owners of microchipping/ lifetime registration requirements and the associated welfare benefits by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional products, posters and Companion Animal Officer interactions	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Microchipping/ lifetime registration education campaign conducted	Financial implications factored into Action 1
35	Investigate the feasibility of Council declaring certain public places, wildlife protection areas for the purpose of protecting wildlife by consulting with Environmental services staff to determine areas where wildlife are located and if it is reasonable to prohibit companion animals	Environment and Sustainability section in conjunction with Companion Animal Services	2 years	Feasibility study taken	Within current budget
38	Promote, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional/educational items, posters and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public, the benefits associated with companion animal owners enriching their home environment so as to provide adequate mental and physical stimulation for their companion animal	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Financial implications factored into Action 1
43	Provide information to the community, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional products, posters, information boards and Companion Animal Officer interactions, on the process to follow when they lose a companion animal	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Information provided	Within current budget

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
46	Investigate the feasibility of Council providing a 'found pets' register where owners can search for their lost pets by researching other organisations that provide this service and considering those implications, including resources and costs that may be incurred by Council	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing	Education campaign developed and implemented	Within current budget
47	Educate companion animal owners regarding their responsibility to keep their details and contact information up to date on the NSW Companion Animal Register, by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional products, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services in consultation with Strategic Planning and Media and Communications sections	2 years	Feasibility study undertaken	Financial implications factored into Action 1
49	Ensure companion animals being transported in Council vehicles are being done so in accordance with the relevant legislation and code of practice by developing applicable guidelines and keeping them updated with the current legislation and code of practice	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Compliance confirmed	Within current budget
55	Promote the benefits associated with cats being desexed by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Benefits promoted	Financial implications factored into Actions 1 and 4
4	Implement a discount desexing program for companion animals where Council and/or other agencies offer to subsidise the cost of desexing	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing.	Discount de-sexing program implemented	Council subsidised desexing program - \$20,000 per year Total - \$20,000
11	Promote discount desexing program for companion animals by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, seminars, information events, promotional products, posters and Information boards	Companion Animal Services	1 year then ongoing.	Discount de-sexing services promoted	Financial implications factored into Action 1 and 4

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
56	Promote the benefits associated with keeping cats indoors, especially at night and creating outdoor areas for cats which are enclosed in a manner which confines a cat to a particular property that would assist to reduce the effects their cat may have upon the residential amenity of their neighbours. This could include working with the manufacturers of products that can be used to enclose outdoor areas, providing DIY demonstrations and by using various media avenues, Council's website, pamphlets, information events, promotional/educational items, posters, information boards and through interactions between Companion Animal Officers and the general public	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Benefits promoted	DIY enclosure demonstration (Bunnings) - \$500 per year + Financial implications factored into Action 1 Total - \$500 per year
57	Develop and implement a strategy where cats are only seized in accordance with the relevant legislation by developing applicable guidelines and keeping them updated with the current relevant legislation and code of practice	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Strategy developed and implemented	Within current budget
58	Encourage the operators of Council's animal impounding facility to rehome (rather than destroy) cats and to desex cats before they are rehomed by recommending this criteria be included in the animal impounding contract or equivalent document and through highlighting benefits, programs and other similar facilities which already achieve this	Companion Animal Services	Current and ongoing	Matter discussed with animal impound facility operator	Within current budget
<b>4.5.2</b>	<b><i>Contribution made by cats and their owners to the community</i></b>				
59	Prepare a statement in regards to the contribution to the community which is made by cat owners and their cats. If the statement is adopted by Council, identify opportunities for the display of such a statement	Companion Animal Services	4 years	Statement prepared for consideration	Within current budget
<b>4.5.3</b>	<b><i>Other cat matters</i></b>				
59	Develop education program to emphasise the harmful impacts of cats on native fauna and the need for cat owners to practice responsible cat management practices at all times	Companion Animal Services	2 years	Educational program developed	Within current budget

Action No.	Action	Responsibility	Timing	Indicator	Cost
60	Investigate best legislative practice in Australia (especially ACT) with respect to cat management policies and strategies e.g. compulsory microchipping and desexing of companion cats, the use confinement zones adjoining reserves, promotion of design guidelines for pet friendly housing to facilitate the confinement of cats etc	Companion Animal Services	2 years	Legislative practice investigated	Within current budget
61	Lobby the NSW State Government to incorporate best practice with respect to cat management by reforming relevant legislation (Companion Animals Act 1998) via the Responsible Pet Ownership Reference Group and other agencies and bodies	Companion Animal Services	3 years	NSW State Government encouraged to incorporate best practice	Within current budget
62	Actively work with neighbouring Councils, SSROC and other agencies and bodies to persuade the NSW State Government to reform relevant legislation to reflect best practice with respect to effective cat management and the protection of our wildlife	Companion Animal Services	3 years	Liaised with neighbouring Council's, SSROC and other agencies and bodies	Within current budget
63	Investigate, and where feasible implement, the policies and strategies of other Councils that have taken up the challenge of devising their own policies to reduce unowned cat colonies in keeping with current State legislation	Companion Animal Services	1 year	Investigation undertaken and policy and strategy implemented where feasible	Within current budget

