

COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

2022 - 2026

A BALANCE OF
MANAGEMENT AND
EDUCATION



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Foreword

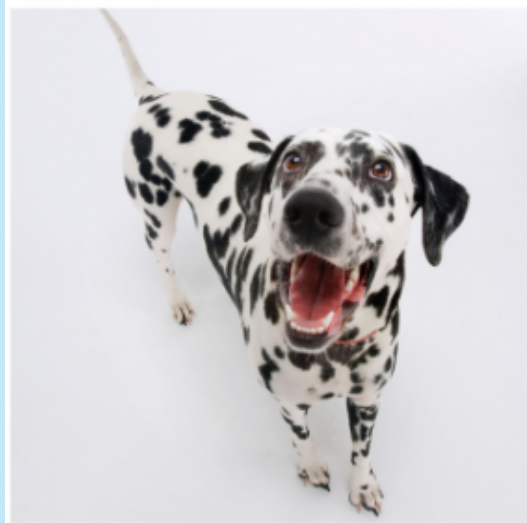
The Cessnock Local Government Area (LGA) covers 1,966 square kilometres within the beautiful Hunter Valley, NSW.

Our region is sustained by a diverse business environment, and is home to over 60,000 residents. Offering 28 schools, multiple childcare options, 72 parks and playgrounds, great libraries, an entertainment centre and the Hunter Valley Zoo, the Cessnock LGA is a great place to live and raise a family.

Many of our region's households include much-loved companion animals; cats and dogs who enrich the lives of our community members and add an important aspect to our local profile.

Throughout this Plan, you will find fun facts and statistics that show how diverse our pet population is. These are taken directly from the NSW Companion Animals Register reporting function, which assists us in understanding the dynamics of our companion animal community.

This Plan has been created to provide our community with a clear, considered and open approach to Council's provision of Companion Animal services. Our team functions with the safety of the community at the heart of what we do.



1. Introduction

Cessnock City Council is a 'pet friendly' Council and we recognise the significant role pets play in the daily lives of our residents.

Responsible pet ownership provides several benefits to people, including:

- Physical health benefits: increased cardiovascular health, increased physical activity
- Mental health benefits: promoting empathy, decreased depression, enhancing social connection and comfort.

RSPCA Australia (<https://kb.rspca.org.au/knowledge-base/what-are-the-health-benefits-of-pet-ownership/>)

The Companion Animal Management Plan has been adopted to address issues related to companion animal ownership in association with Council's legislative requirements under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (the **Act**) and the Companion Animals Regulation 2018 (**Regulation**). It also serves to help fulfil our responsibility to preserve the important natural resources in our region.

1.1 Objectives


The aims and outcomes for this Companion Animal Management Plan are:

- To ensure Council meets its obligations under the Act and Regulation, whilst exploring the correct balance between necessary regulatory approaches and community education.
- To provide regular information to our community to support and encourage responsible pet ownership.
- To identify and prioritise companion animal management issues relevant to our community.
- To create awareness within our community, and to seek active compliance with, the provisions of the Act and Regulations, including the permanent microchip identification and registration of companion animals.
- To foster positive working relationships and maintain constructive communication with individuals and organisations who have expertise in companion animal management.

This Plan is considered a 'living' document and, while it is anticipated that the document will be reviewed in line with Council's delivery program, it may be updated earlier in the event that the relevant legislation should substantially change.

This Plan is separated into five (5) key sections:

1. Companion Animals,
2. Animal Welfare,
3. Our Community,
4. Compliance and Enforcement, and
5. Lost, Found, Unwanted and Seized Companion Animals.



Did You Know?
Cessnock LGA is
home to 50,824
cats and dogs

2. Companion Animals

2.1 Definition of a Companion Animal

In accordance with the Act, and for the purpose of this Management Plan, a companion animal means;

- (a) a dog,
- (b) a cat, or
- (c) any other animal prescribed by the regulations as a companion animal.

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

2.2 Microchipping and Registration

In New South Wales the identification and registration of companion animals is compulsory (with some exceptions). It is important that you:

- Have your cats and dogs microchipped from 12 weeks of age (or at the time they are sold or given away if this falls prior to the animal being 12 weeks of age).
- Lifetime register your pet on the NSW Companion Animals Register (incorporating the NSW Pet Registry) by the time the animal is 6 months old.
- Inform Council when there is a change in either the ownership, place of residence, contact information or in the event of the death of your pet(s).

Microchipping and registration are not only legislative requirements but are also crucial components of animal management and responsible pet ownership. The identification and registration of cats and dogs provides the following benefits:

- Lost or straying animals can be returned to their owners quickly.
- Reduces the cost to owners for the seizing, kennelling and care and release of the animal, as well as reducing stress on the animal.
- The ownership of a pet can be legally established in the event where liability has been incurred because of animal behaviour or where civil disputes concerning ownership arise.

Owners of cats not desexed by four months of age are required to pay an annual permit in addition to their one-off lifetime pet registration fee. This adds a financial incentive to desex your pet cat. Improving desexing rates eases the burden on pounds and shelters, reduces euthanasia rates, and helps to address concerns about feral, stray and roaming cats and their effect on wildlife.

Council Rangers are authorised identifiers under the Regulation and our team offer free microchipping in accordance with Council’s adopted fees and charges on a by-appointment basis.

Any animals found without a microchip that are impounded by Council Rangers must be microchipped and registered before being released to their owner. If an animal is already microchipped and is impounded, they must be registered before being released to their owner.

2.3 Registration Fees

The [Office of Local Government](#) sets Companion Animal Registration fees. Council has no control or discretion over these fee amounts, nor can Council implement 'payment plans' for prescribed fees.

In 2016, the Office of Local Government (OLG) launched the NSW Pet Registry. The Registry allows pet owners to create a 'user profile' and update their contact details, transfer ownership of pets, report their pet missing or deceased, and pay most lifetime registration fees online.

The introduction of the Pet Registry means pet owners do not have to attend or contact Council to change their pet's details, benefiting those residents who live in remote or rural areas or those who are unable to attend during Council's core business hours. The NSW Pet Registry can be accessed at <https://petregistry.nsw.gov.au/>.

2.4 Selling or Giving Away a Companion Animal

As of 1 July 2019, people advertising kittens, cats, puppies or dogs for sale (which includes giving away at no cost) in New South Wales need to include an identification number in advertisements. The identification number can be:

- a microchip number, or
- a breeder identification number, or
- a rehoming organisation number

The advertising requirement applies to all advertisements, including those in newspapers, local posters, community notice boards and all forms of online advertising, including public advertisements on websites such as the Trading Post, Gumtree and social media sites. Changing the ownership details of a companion animal can be done by logging on to your user profile at <https://petregistry.nsw.gov.au/> or printing a copy of the relevant NSW Companion Animals Register form from [the Office of Local Government website](#).

| OUTCOME SOUGHT | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <i>All eligible cats and dogs in Council's local government area are microchipped and lifetime registered on the NSW Companion Animal Register.</i> | |
| KEY ACTIONS | TIMEFRAME /COMMENT |
| Promotion of the identification and registration requirements in educational materials, including brochures, press and social media releases and updated information on Council's website. | Quarterly |
| Undertake Council's registration compliance audit. | Bi-annually |
| Promote Council's free microchipping days. | Bi-annually |
| Continued provision of free microchipping to residents. | Ongoing |
| Ongoing maintenance and input of data into the Companion Animals Register. | Daily |
| Microchipping and registration of animals seized before being released to owners from Council's Animal Management Facility. | All seized animals |
| PERFORMANCE INDICATOR | MEASUREMENT TOOL |
| The number of cats and dogs microchipped and registered in the area increases. | NSW Companion Animal Register |

3. Animal Welfare and Safety

Animal welfare is considered to be providing appropriate nutrition, shelter, exercise, and interaction to enhance the physical and mental well-being of an animal. With pet ownership comes a responsibility to manage the welfare of the animals in your care. Every owner has an obligation to take reasonable care of their animals and to prevent any adverse impacts on the community from improper or negligent animal control.

In many cases, animal welfare issues give rise to nuisance behaviours such as barking or straying and therefore Council has a supplementary role in such matters. Many pet problems reported in residential areas arise from animals experiencing frustration or boredom. This can cause reactions such as barking, escaping, chasing, and jumping up. By providing environmental enrichment such as the addition of cognitive, dietary, physical, sensory and social stimuli, the animal's physiological and psychological well-being can be improved.

Problems can be addressed by:

- attending to pet health and welfare including exercise, training and socialising as appropriate to the breed ,
- seeking the assistance and advice of animal specialists such as veterinarians and accredited dog trainers,
- confining dogs within the perimeter of the home property to prevent straying,
- taking measures to minimise any adverse effects toward neighbours, such as excessive barking, and
- complying with relevant legislation (leash laws, removal of faeces from public places, maintaining dogs under effective control when in public areas).

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) is the lead agency in managing animal welfare in NSW. If you witness any animal cruelty or an emergency involving an animal, please contact RSPCA NSW straight away. The animal emergency hotline number is 1300 CRUELTY (1300 278 3589) or, alternatively, you can make a report [online](#). Council Officers are not authorised under the [Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979](#) and therefore are unable to take action in matters of animal welfare and cruelty.

| OUTCOMES SOUGHT | |
|--|-------------------|
| Promote the desexing of companion animals. | |
| Promote identification and registration requirements of companion animals to enable their safe return. | |
| Promote responsible pet ownership. | |
| Promote the appropriate reporting of animal welfare matters to the RSPCA for investigation. | |
| KEY ACTIONS | TIMEFRAME/COMMENT |
| Develop education & publicity campaigns about the importance of desexing pets. | Annually |
| Run education and publicity campaigns about the importance of microchipping and registering all dogs and cats. | 3 x per year |
| Develop and promote education & publicity campaigns about the importance of being a responsible pet owner. | Bi-annually |
| Report animal welfare matters to the RSPCA for investigation by close of business. | As required |

4. Our Community

4.1 Dogs in Public Spaces

Council recognises that while the vast majority of the population enjoy the benefits of pet ownership and pets are welcomed in many areas across the Local Government Area, they must be under the effective control of their owner. Roaming or uncontrolled animals cannot only ruin the amenity of an area, but can also cause concern amongst residents.

The Act outlines the locations that dogs are prohibited from entering if they are not registered as assistance animals, or a police or corrective services dog. The following table provides a summary of these prohibited locations:

| Location | Applies to Dogs |
|--|-----------------|
| Children's play areas (within 10 metres of any playing apparatus). | YES |
| Food preparation or consumption areas (within 10 metres of any apparatus used for the preparation of food or for the consumption of food) unless it is a public thoroughfare such as a road, footpath or pathway. | YES |
| Recreation or public bathing areas where dogs are declared prohibited by the local authority through signage. | YES |
| School grounds or child care centres unless with the permission of the person controlling the grounds or centre. | YES |
| Shopping arcades/complexes where dogs are prohibited unless the dog is secured in a vehicle, with the permission of the person controlling the place or going to or from a veterinarian, pet shop or similar establishment. | YES |
| Wildlife protection areas declared prohibited by the local authority through signage. | YES |

Dogs are not prohibited from entering outdoor dining areas in cafes and restaurants provided they have permission from the operator of the business and:

- The dog is under the effective control of some competent person and is restrained by the means of an adequate chain, cord or leash that is attached to the dog;
- The person does not feed the dog or permit the dog to be fed; and
- The dog is kept on the ground.

Fun fact:
Cessnock is home to 192 singular or 'pure' dog breeds

4.2 Roaming Cats and Dogs

On average Cessnock City Council receives up to 1000 requests for service concerning stray or roaming cats and dogs per year. Roaming animals affect the amenity of surrounding neighbourhoods in many ways, including:

- Defecating, urinating or damaging gardens or property;
- Engaging in fights with other animals; and
- Injury or destruction of native wildlife or other companion animals.

Dog owners must take reasonable precautions to prevent their dog from escaping the property on which it is ordinarily kept. Failure to do so can result in a penalty infringement notice (fine) being issued.

Consistent with the provisions of the Act Council has no regulatory powers however to restrict domestic cats from roaming or straying, unless they are causing a nuisance which can be substantiated by evidence.

Cats are prohibited in the following areas:

- Food preparation or consumption areas (within 10 metres of any apparatus used for the preparation of food or for the consumption of food) *unless* it is a public thoroughfare such as a road, footpath or pathway
- Wildlife protection areas declared prohibited by the local authority through signage.

Cats or dogs may exhibit behaviour/s which deem them to be a nuisance under the Act. These behaviours are referenced in [section 5.3](#) of this Plan. These animals can be issued with a Nuisance Order under sections 31 (for cats) or 32A (for dogs) of the Act. In addition to such Orders, penalty infringement notices (fines) can be issued.

4.3 Off-Leash Areas

Designated off-leash areas are recognised as providing important benefits to both dogs and their owners. It provides the dog with space to exercise and 'burn off' excess energy in a specifically designated 'dog-friendly' environment without being a nuisance to the general public. It also allows dogs to socialise with other dogs and people.

It is important to keep in mind that, just as not every experience is right for every human, off-leash dog areas are not necessarily right for every dog. Whilst these designated areas welcome pet owners and their dogs they should still be reliably controlled (i.e. by recall), well behaved and social if utilising the space at the same time as others in our community.

Council provides a number of Off-Leash Dog Exercise Areas in the region that are regularly patrolled by Council Rangers. While dogs are permitted to be off-leash in these areas, they must be accompanied by and under the effective control of a competent person. Owners of off-leash dogs that attack, rush at, harass or chase any person are held liable, even in these designated areas. When using our off leash exercise areas:

- dogs must be supervised by a competent person (of or above the age of 16)
- dogs must be controlled and return to the handler on command
- dog owners/handlers must remove their dog faeces

Council's 'Off-Leash Dog Exercise Area Plan' details the location of existing and planned spaces, and can be accessed via Council's [website](#).

4.4 Educational Activities

Council recognises that our greatest asset in effective companion animal management is our community. Our aim is to educate not only current pet owners, but also potential future pet owners, about the underlying principles of responsible pet ownership. It is our desire to educate the broader community so that every member of the Cessnock Local Government Area understands the rights and responsibilities of pet owners and other community members in the region in relation to Companion Animal Management.

Council will conduct regular education programs to promote responsible pet ownership. These will involve ongoing programs and scheduled educational initiatives put together by our Officers, targeting issues that are relevant to our community. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Social media campaigns,
- Print campaigns,
- Bulk mail-outs to registered companion animal owners,
- Community engagement whilst operational in the field (ad-hoc opportunities),
- Attendance at Community Events, and
- Officer-led events (e.g. Free Microchipping Day).

Our Ranger Services team are committed to engaging in educational activities that are innovative and results-focused. These activities may be one-off events, seasonal promotion of factors relating to responsible pet ownership, or ongoing campaigns. Council's registration audit campaign provides an opportunity for pet owners and Officers to work together to ensure the NSW Companion Animals Register remains an accurate reflection of our local pet population with microchip details accurately recorded and ownership details kept up to date.

Council is committed to ensuring our Ranger team engages with the community in positive, educational settings to build rapport and bridge the gap between education and enforcement. Our team recognises the need to enforce the provisions of the Act, and to provide direction and general advice in matters relating to companion animal management. This is considered critical in the effective management of pets across the Local Government Area, and integral to the effective execution of their duties.

| OUTCOME SOUGHT | |
|---|--------------------|
| Educate pet owners about their rights and responsibilities. | |
| | |
| KEY ACTIONS | TIMEFRAME /COMMENT |
| Promotion of Companion Animal registration audit campaign. | Bi-annually |
| Operate education programs initiated by the Ranger Services team. | Quarterly |
| Provide two free microchipping days per year. | Bi-annually |
| | |



5. Compliance and Enforcement

5.1 Council's Enforcement Powers

The Act and Regulation provides for the effective and responsible care and management of companion animals. Council Rangers are guided by the principles of the Act and their work is constrained by the provisions set within it.

Councils [Compliance and Enforcement Policy](#) establishes clear guidelines and principles to assist staff, Council and the community to understand and apply best practice enforcement procedures. This ensures Officers act promptly, consistently and effectively in response to allegations of unlawful activity whilst upholding the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice.

5.2 Barking Dogs

On average Cessnock City Council receives over 240 complaints concerning barking or nuisance dogs per year. Council recognises that barking dogs can cause considerable distress and annoyance to surrounding properties, and can cause friction and tension between neighbours. Additionally, it also causes tension between the community and Council as the process to solve the problem can be considered lengthy and complex.

5.3 Nuisance Animals

A cat or dog can be declared as a "nuisance" under sections 31 and 32A of the Act respectively. A summary of the conditions required to declare the animal to be a nuisance is outlined below:

| Behaviour | Applies to Dogs | Applies to Cats |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| Habitually at large | YES | NO |
| Makes a noise, by barking or otherwise, that persistently occurs to the extent it unreasonably interferes with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises | YES | YES |
| Repeatedly defecates on property (other than in a public place) outside the property where it is ordinarily kept | YES | NO |
| Repeatedly runs at or chases any person, animal (other than vermin or in the course of droving or protecting stock) or vehicle | YES | NO |
| Endangers the health of any person or animal (other than vermin or in the course of droving or protecting stock) | YES | NO |
| Repeatedly causes damage, substantial damage in the case of dogs, to anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept | YES | YES |

If your cat or dog is declared a nuisance, the Order itself prescribes what behaviour you need to address in relation to your pet.

Initially, you will be issued with a 'notice of proposed nuisance (dog/cat) order'. This notice will clearly set out the requirements you will need to meet should the Order be issued, as well as advising you of your right to object to the proposed order within the prescribed timeframe. You are welcome to make representations stating either why the Order should not be made, or about the terms of the Order. Should you make no written representations to Council in this time, the authorised officer may proceed to issue the Order.

5.4 Dog Attacks

Council's Authorised Officers respond to, and investigate, dog attacks. In accordance with the *Act*, a dog attack means an incident where a dog *rushes at, attacks, bites, harasses or chases any person or animal (other than vermin)*. It is important to realise that there is no need for any injury to be caused to the person or animal for the act to be deemed a dog attack.

On average Council Rangers investigate around 60 dog attacks in the Local Government Area each year.¹

Dog attacks can occur due to a number of factors including, but not limited to:

- Dogs escaping their yard,
- Dogs not being under the effective control of a competent person,
- Inadequate socialisation and training, or
- Choosing the wrong type of dog for your personal situation.

5.5 Menacing Dogs

A dog can be declared a menacing dog by Council if the dog has displayed unreasonable aggression towards a person or animal (other than vermin) or has, without provocation, attacked a person or animal (other than vermin) but without causing serious injury or death.

Before a dog is declared as menacing, the owner is notified of the proposed declaration and given a timeframe prescribed by the relevant Act and Regulations to make a representation as to why the dog should not be declared as such. Should no representation be made, or upon consideration of any representation it be adjudicated that the Order should be placed upon the dog, there are many requirements an owner of a menacing dog must meet in order to be compliant with the provisions of the Act and Regulations.

The control requirements for a declared menacing dog are prescribed by the [Regulation](#) and yearly inspections are carried out to ensure all requirements are being complied with. Failure to comply with requirements relating to a declared menacing dog can result in the dog being seized by Council and only returned if it is believed that each of the requirements of the declaration are capable of being complied with. There are also various notification obligations for the owner of a menacing dog such as moving house, becoming lost, being involved in a further attack or if the dog is deceased.

It is an offence to transfer (including sell or give away), or to accept ownership, of a menacing dog.

A Menacing Dog Order is for the life of the dog and is recorded on the NSW Companion Animals Register.

The owner of a declared menacing dog may apply to Council to have the declaration revoked. Detail regarding this process and the responsibilities of Council in such applications are detailed in our '[Revocation of Dangerous/Menacing Dog Declarations Policy](#)', which can be found on our website.

¹ NSW Companion Animal Registry State Reporting Statistics for previous 5 financial year to 2021-2021

5.6 Dangerous Dogs

A dog can be declared as a dangerous dog if the dog has, without provocation, attacked or killed a person or animal (other than vermin) or has, without provocation, repeatedly threatened to attack or repeatedly chased a person or animal (other than vermin). A dog can also be declared as a dangerous dog if it is kept or used for the purposes of hunting.

It is important to note that the declaration of a dog as dangerous is considered whereby the severity of the incident involving the dog is such that a menacing dog declaration would be insufficient. A dangerous dog declaration brings with it more restrictive controls than that of a menacing dog, as well as an additional yearly permit fee payable to the State Government in the same way as registration is paid.

Before a dog is declared as dangerous, the owner is notified of the proposed declaration and given a timeframe prescribed by the relevant legislation to make a representation as to why the dog should not be declared as such. Should no representation be made, or upon consideration of any representation it be adjudicated that the Order should be placed upon the dog, there are many requirements an owner of a dangerous dog must meet in order to be compliant with the provisions of the Act and Regulation.

The control requirements for a declared dangerous dog are prescribed by the [Regulation](#) and yearly inspections are carried out to ensure all requirements are being complied with. Failure to comply with requirements relating to a declared dangerous dog can result in the dog being seized by Council and only returned if it is believed that each of the requirements of the declaration are capable of being complied with. There are also various notification obligations for the owner of a dangerous dog such as moving house, becoming lost, being involved in a further attack or if the dog is deceased.

It is an offence to transfer (including sell or give away), or to accept ownership, of a dangerous dog.

A Dangerous Dog Order is for the life of the dog and is recorded on the NSW Companion Animals Register.

The owner of a declared dangerous dog may apply to Council to have the declaration revoked. Detail regarding this process and the responsibilities of Council in such applications are detailed in our '[Revocation of Dangerous/Menacing Dog Declarations Policy](#)', which can be found on our website.

5.7 Restricted Dogs

The Act recognises certain breeds (and crossbreeds of such) to be restricted breeds in Australia. A current list of these can be found in the [Regulation](#). The most common breeds available in Australia however are the American Pit Bull Terrier and Pit Bull Terrier.

Where there is a dispute as to the specific breed of the dog, the Act provides for an independent breed and temperament assessment to be carried out by an approved assessor on behalf of the owner of the dog.

The control requirements for Restricted Breed dogs are the same as those of the control requirements for the keeping of a Dangerous Dog. They are prescribed by the [Regulation](#) and yearly inspections are carried out to ensure all requirements are being complied with. Failure to comply with requirements relating to a declared restricted dog can result in the dog being seized by Council and only returned if it is believed that each of the requirements of the declaration are capable of being complied with. There are also various notification obligations for the owner of a restricted dog such as moving house, becoming lost, being involved in a further attack or if the dog is deceased.

It is an offence to transfer (including sell or give away), or to accept ownership, of a restricted dog.

5.8 Cat Compliance

The implementation of the Act introduced significant control over domestic cats in New South Wales, and for the first time placed certain responsibilities on the owners of cats including the requirement for identification (microchipping) and lifetime registration.

There are no provisions in the legislation to prohibit cats from being outside and straying from the property on which they are ordinarily kept except in prohibited areas of food preparation or consumption areas, or wildlife protection areas. As such, Council has no obligation to impound stray or roaming cats.

Council recognises that roaming cats can be perceived as a nuisance to surrounding property owners and recommends that all cats be kept indoors or at least prevented from roaming at night. Any cats with outdoor access should be fitted with a collar with an identification tag to ensure their identification, and a bell to ensure the safety of wildlife.

| OUTCOME SOUGHT | |
|--|--|
| To provide effective companion animal control services to the community in accordance with the relevant legislation. | |
| KEY ACTIONS | TIMEFRAME /COMMENT |
| Regulation of Menacing, Dangerous and Restricted dog requirements via the yearly inspection program | Annually |
| Prompt reporting of dog attack incidents via the NSW Companion Animals Register | Within 72 hours as per Regulations |
| Tailor enforcement to be consistent with education programs | As per Council's Compliance and Enforcement Policy |
| Review procedures as required and in line with any relevant legislation changes | Annually and as required |
| PERFORMANCE INDICATOR | MEASUREMENT TOOL |
| Conduct inspections in relation to Council's Menacing, Dangerous and Restricted Compliance program as scheduled | Monitor and internal reporting system |

Ragdoll's
are the second
most popular cat
breed with 489
living locally

6. Lost, Found, Unwanted and Seized Companion Animals

Council is committed to reuniting lost pets with their owners wherever possible. In order to be successful doing so, Council requires the assistance of pet owners throughout the community. Please ensure your pets microchip details are updated whenever a change to their ownership or the owner's contact details occurs.

Do you know your pet's microchip number? This is a critical piece of information for you to have as a pet owner. You can find out your pet's microchip number by reviewing any paperwork you received when you acquired your pet, or by contacting your vet clinic to see if they have the microchip number in their records. If you are unable to find your pet's microchip number, speak to your local vet clinic about taking your pet in to be scanned and having the microchip number verified.

The NSW Office of Local Government operates the NSW Pet Registry – a database that contains a record of every microchipped and registered cat and dog in the state. Pet owners, breeders and authorised identifiers are able to register and create their own login at petregistry.nsw.gov.au. By creating your own Pet Owner profile, you are then able to login at any time and ensure your contact details are kept up to date in case your pet goes missing. You are also able to transfer ownership of your pet should you be in the position where you need to rehome it. By keeping your contact details updated you are doing your best to ensure that you can be reunited with your pet should it go missing.

Council have implemented a [lost animal's web page](#) where companion animals that have been found and seized by our Rangers are listed in an attempt to reunite lost pets with their owners. This saves owners the costs of collection, kennelling, and impounding of pets.

6.1 Found a stray or lost a pet?

Losing a pet can be a stressful experience. If you find a lost dog or cat wearing a collar or tag with identification, try contacting its owner first. If you cannot contact the owner, you can arrange for the animal to be transported to an approved animal welfare organisation, such as the RSPCA Hunter shelter, where they can provide them with a safe place to stay whilst they attempt to contact the owner.

A member of the community who seizes an animal must arrange for the animal to be delivered as soon as possible to its owner or to any approved premises.



OUTCOME SOUGHT

To promote the safe and prompt return of lost companion animals to their owners.

KEY ACTIONS

TIMEFRAME /COMMENT

Promote the review and update of companion animal details on the NSW Companion Animals Register

Bi-annually

Actively seek to assist in 'cleaning up' the NSW Companion Animals Register by means of promptly updating details for owners

Bi-annually

Actively seek to assist in 'cleaning up' the NSW Companion Animals Register by offering complimentary 'register/details checks' at events

Quarterly



7. Further Information

7.1 Definitions

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Act | The <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> (NSW) |
| Council | Cessnock City Council |
| Dangerous Dog | A dog declared under section 33 of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> |
| Menacing Dog | A dog declared under section 33A of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> |
| NSW Companion Animal Register | A state-wide database for the identification and registration of companion animals in NSW, not accessible to the public. |
| NSW Pet Registry | A platform operated by the NSW Office of Local Government providing companion animal owners with the capability to update their pet's microchip details without the need to attend their local Council or authorised facility. |
| OLG | The Office of Local Government |
| Regulation | Companion Animals Regulation 2018 (NSW) |
| Restricted Dog | A dog declared under section 58A of the <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> |

7.2 Plan Administration

| | |
|--|---|
| Business Group: | Planning and Environment – Ranger Services |
| Responsible Officer: | Team Leader Ranger Services |
| Protocol Review Date: | Three (3) years from date of adoption unless legislated otherwise |
| File Number / Document Number: | DOC2021/155159 |
| Relevant Legislation: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Companion Animals Act 1998</i> (NSW)• Companion Animals Regulation 2018 (NSW) |
| Related Policies / Protocols / Procedures / Data Source | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSW Companion Animals Register reporting function• Fun facts and figures sourced from NSW Companion Animals Register |

7.3 Plan History

| Revision | Date Approved / Authority | Description of Changes |
|----------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | | New plan adopted |



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