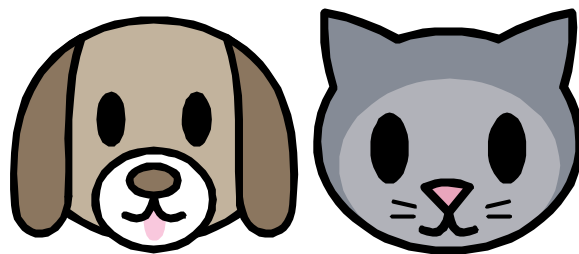




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# COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012 – 2015



*Ref: WINT/09/2961*



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# COMPANION ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012-2015

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION FOR DOG & CAT OWNERS IN NSW

APPENDIX 2: RESPONSIBLE BREEDING

APPENDIX 3: DOGS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

This Management Plan may be amended from time to time by Council. Proposed amendments are required to be advertised and exhibited in draft form and any submissions received must be considered by Council before the amended Plan is adopted. Persons using the Plan should ensure that they have the current copy of the Plan including any amendments.

## 1. BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

The keeping of animals and the domestication of dogs, cats and other animals as companions has evolved as a part of human existence. It is estimated that up to 60% of households own a dog or cat or both. Many people think of their dog or cat as their closest companion and give it the care and attention they would give to other valued family members. Yet every year an estimated 80,000 animals are put down in shelters around NSW, indicating that some see animals as disposable items. Some owners fail to meet their responsibilities to the community by not preventing their animals from becoming a nuisance or a danger to others.

With increasing urbanisation, tension between different interest groups in the community has increased, necessitating a new approach to the management of companion animals.

The NSW Companion Animals Act 1998 is intended to actively promote the welfare of companion animals and responsible ownership. It is intended to strike a balance between the needs of the people in the community who own companion animals and those who do not. Responsible ownership means considering the needs and interests of other community members and the impact of companion animals in agricultural areas and on native wildlife in the environment.

The focus must be moved from only using enforcement and control to incorporate education and best practice principles. Under the Act, a proportion of the permanent identification and lifetime registration fees are being used to provide ongoing community education programs in relation to the benefits of having companion animals and to encourage responsible ownership. Specific Codes of Practice for the Care and Management of Companion Cats and Dogs are consistent with standards developed of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979.

This Local Companion Animals Management Plan aims to provide a balanced approach and to outline the community expectations and the role and responsibilities of various stakeholders (including Local Government).

## 2. VISION

To recognise that companion animals are part of the community and contribute to the quality of life of the citizens.

To ensure the needs of animals and their owners are accommodated.

To pursue responsible pet ownership in the Walcha Council area.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

- (i) Encourage responsible pet ownership and minimise nuisance effects of pets.
- (ii) Provide for identification and registration of companion animals.
- (iii) Identify areas where companion animals may need to be restricted.
- (iv) Outline companion animal control, handling and enforcement approaches.

To support these broad objectives the Management Plan will focus on the following issues or campaigns:

- Responsible companion animal ownership
- Identification and registration
- Breeding and desexing
- Facilities
- Enforcement
- Sensitive Areas

## 4. RESPONSIBLE COMPANION ANIMAL OWNERSHIP

### CONTEXT

Being the owner of a companion animal is a big responsibility. Owners are responsible for ensuring that it is safe and healthy. It must be well fed, well housed, wormed and vaccinated, microchipped, groomed, well socialised and properly educated and exercised. A well cared for companion animal can provide great enjoyment, companionship and pleasure.

Owners have responsibilities towards other members of the Community, such as neighbours, as well as their companion animals. In the Walcha Community, including National Parks and farming and grazing properties, this responsibility extends to the natural environment and rural livestock operations.

The responsibilities of owning a companion animal are well balanced by the rewards of companionship that an animal can bring. Companion animals can contribute to the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of their owners. By understanding and fulfilling responsibilities, owners can help maximise the benefits of companion animal ownership for the companion animal, themselves, their neighbours and the Community.

### EXISTING SITUATION AND APPROACH

Focus on education campaigns has until now been centred around the activities of the New England Regional Companion Animals Shelter. Much is undertaken by Community Groups (such as the RSPCA) which rely heavily on volunteers or centralised campaigns (e.g. "A Pet's for Life" at Christmas).

KEY NEW INITIATIVES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Integrate with State Govt funded education campaigns	Council	Ongoing
Make available animal welfare groups contact details	Council	Ongoing
Provide dog obedience and training instructions	Community Groups	Ongoing

KEY ONGOING COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Provide an identification and registration service	Council	Ongoing
Provide an implanting service for microchips	Private Sector	Ongoing
Media Campaigns	Council	Annually
Prepare Guidelines on responsible pet ownership (including buying, lifestyle needs, registration and identification, de-sexing, training and obedience, animal care)	Council/ Community Groups	Ongoing
Distribute Guidelines on responsible pet ownership	Council	Ongoing
Prepare and supply brochures on roles, responsibilities and contact details of interest groups	Community Groups	Ongoing

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST

As a companion animal owner you can assist by:

- Selecting the right companion animal for your lifestyle
- Containing your companion animal within your property
- Keeping your dog on a leash when in public
- Promptly disposing of faeces deposited in public areas
- Ensuring your dog or cat is readily identified (collar and identification tags)

## FURTHER READING AND ASSISTANCE

More specific details on responsible companion animal ownership are detailed in Appendix 1.

## 5. IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

### CONTEXT

In the event of separation, identifying animals increases the opportunity for companion animals to be returned or retrieved by their owner. The introduction of Companion Animals legislation addresses this issue with arrangements for the identification and registration of companion animals. Since 1 July 1999 all dogs and cats in NSW must be microchipped at point of sale, change of ownership or by 12 weeks of age, whichever occurs first.

### EXISTING SITUATION AND APPROACH

The legislation requires:

- If you purchase a puppy, kitten, dog or cat in NSW, under the Companion Animals Act 1998 it must be microchipped first. If it isn't then you should report this to your local council for investigation and action if appropriate.
- All cats born after 1 July 1999 to be microchipped and lifetime registered on the Companion Animals Register.
- Cats born prior to 1 July 1999 that change owners to comply with the requirements for permanent identification and lifetime registration
- Dogs must wear a collar and tag detailing contact information (Cats are not legally required to wear contact details although it is strongly encouraged).
- Owners to advise the Companion Animals Register through Council of any changes to registration or contact details within 14 days.
- If you are moving into the Walcha Council area, and intend to be here for 3 months or longer, you must lifetime register your pet by contacting Walcha Council. Registration from another State or Territory is not transferable to NSW.

Lifetime registration fees are as follows:

Entire (undesexed ) cat or dog	\$182
Entire cat or dog owned by a recognised breeder	\$49



Desexed cat or dog \$49

Desexed cat or dog owned by a pensioner \$19

Current exemptions to identification and registration include:

- Farm working dogs (used for the purpose of droving, tending, working or protecting stock) and which reside on land rated as farmland.
- Greyhounds registered with the Greyhound Racing Council

As these animals are valuable to their owners it is strongly recommended that these animals be identified and registered.

Companion animals can help people to maintain their social, emotional and physical wellbeing. Increasingly, research is showing that companion animals can contribute to the recovery and maintenance of both physical and mental health. Trained assistance animals (e.g. seeing eye dogs) must be identified and registered but the registration fee is not applied. The legislation at present does not recognise the therapeutic values of other companion animals (e.g. cared for in a nursing home, hospital or the like) however; Councils do have the ability to waive the collection of these fees in their Management Plans.

KEY NEW INITIATIVES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Investigate a subsidy scheme for de-sexing if there is any evidence that de-sexing charges are creating a barrier to registration	Council	Receipt of evidence

KEY ONGOING COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Provide a registration system in accordance with legislative requirements	Council	Ongoing
Provide for a subsidy for registration fees for therapeutic companion animals on production of supporting evidence.	Council	Ongoing

Primary responsibility for implanting to remain with the local veterinary profession	Veterinarians	Ongoing
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## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST

As a companion animal owner you can assist by:

- Selecting the right companion animal for your lifestyle
- Containing your companion animal within your property
- Keeping your dog on a leash when in public
- Promptly disposing of faeces deposited in public areas
- Ensuring your dog or cat is readily identified (collar and identification tags)

## 6. BREEDING AND DESEXING

### CONTEXT

The average lifespan of domestic cats and dogs is around 10 years. This means that for every 100 companion animals in the community there will be 10 deaths each year. These 10 deaths could be replaced by the offspring of a single breeding pair and would certainly be replaced by retaining only 5% of the companion animal population as breeders. Unless 95% of the companion animal population is removed from the pool of breeding animals there will always be an excess number of unwanted companion animals entering pounds and refuges. As every 1,000 unwanted animals causes unnecessary cruelty and costs the community around \$50,000, our most urgent task is to convince the public that desexing is the most humane and inexpensive option for the majority of companion animal owners. It is important that owners realise that it is less expensive to register a desexed than an entire animal. We also need to encourage those that choose to breed to do so in a responsible way.

The aim of responsible breeding is to match the number of companion animals produced each year with the number that are lost from natural causes. When the annual number of births equals the number of deaths the number of unwanted animals residing in pounds and refuges will drop dramatically.

Breeding animals involves a lot of responsibility and is not to be taken on lightly. As a breeder, whether registered, professional or not, the first responsibility is for the welfare of the parent animals and the kittens or puppies which they will produce. Before undertaking breeding, the owner should contact a veterinarian as well as organisations such as Dogs NSW or the NSW Cat Fanciers Association, which can provide advice on the standards of nutrition, shelter and health care, required for breeding animals.

It is important that owners realise that responsible breeding is usually an inexpensive, time and energy consuming hobby, not a professional business. Breeders should be encouraged to join bodies such as Dogs NSW or the NSW Cat Fanciers Association

It is important to make sure that the animals, which are allowed to be born, will have good homes and that they will not add to the many thousands of unowned and unwanted animals that are put down in NSW each year.

However, breeders' responsibilities are not over once a litter of healthy puppies or kittens have been reared and good homes for them to go to have been found. Under the Animal Welfare Codes of Practice, puppies can not be sold or given away until they are at least 8 weeks old, and kittens can not be sold or given away until they are at least 10 weeks old. Under the Companion Animals Act, breeders cannot sell or give away a puppy or kitten without having it permanently identified by microchip. All puppies or kittens will need to be microchipped by the age of 12 weeks but if they are sold or given away before this age, breeders are still responsible for ensuring that they are microchipped before they leave their ownership.

Before the animals are six months old, they will need to be registered with the Companion Animals Register through Council. If animals are not being kept for breeding, they should be desexed prior to 6 months of age and owners should obtain a desexing certificate from their veterinary surgeon. These desexed animals will attract a significantly reduced lifetime registration fee. Anyone who is not a member of a recognised breeding organisation who keeps an animal for breeding, or who keeps an animal entire after the age of six months, must pay the maximum lifetime registration fee. Entire animals owned by breeders of a recognised breeding organisation will pay the same fee as for desexed animals.

It is important that the new owners of puppies and kittens understand their responsibilities under the Act as well as their responsibilities for the health and welfare of the animals. Information should be available by the breeder, and should be available from Council or veterinarians, to assist in getting kittens and puppies off to a good start.

## EXISTING SITUATION AND APPROACH

Organisations such as Dogs NSW or the NSW Cat Fanciers Association provide education for breeders. Councils, Veterinary Clinics and Welfare agencies also provide information on the health care and benefits of desexing and guidelines for owners wishing to breed from their stock.

KEY NEW INITIATIVES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Prepare Guidelines on desexing	Community Groups	Annually
Prepare Guidelines on responsible breeding	Community Groups	Annually

KEY ONGOING COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Distribute Guidelines on desexing and responsible breeding	Council	Ongoing

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST

Before breeding contact a veterinarian and organisations such as the Dogs NSW or NSW Cat Fanciers Association who can provide advice on standards of nutrition, shelter and health care for breeding animals.

Before breeding, make sure that good homes are available.

Ensure that puppies or kittens are microchipped (The Companion Animals Act 1998 requires this by the age of 12 weeks) or before they are sold or given away.

Do not sell or give away puppies less than 8 weeks old or kittens less than 10 weeks old.

Provide advice on how to be responsible companion animal owners to new owners.

Consider desexing at 4 – 5 months (desexed dogs attract significant reductions in lifetime registration fees)

## FURTHER READING AND ASSISTANCE

More specific details on breeding and desexing are detailed in Appendix 2.

## 7. FACILITIES

### CONTEXT

Public places are for the enjoyment of everyone. When dog owners take their dogs into a public place they must make sure that it does not interfere with the safety or enjoyment of other people.

Under the Companion Animals legislation Councils are required to provide off-leash dog exercise areas. This is in recognition of the benefits to dogs from the chance to run freely. These areas should be appropriately signposted, include rubbish bins for dog faeces and fenced or landscaped if required. To assist in the maintenance of these areas owners are requested to pick up dog faeces and place in bin provided.

In some instances animals not under the effective control of their owners may need to be detained. Facilities to hold these animals must be provided to contemporary animal welfare standards.

### EXISTING SITUATION AND APPROACH

#### *Off Leash Areas*

An Off-Leash Dog Exercise Area has been provided as follows:

- Levee Banks between Middle Street Bridge & Fitzroy Street Bridge

#### *Animals Shelter / Pound*

Animal Shelters and Pounds are located as follows:

Walcha Council Depot, 120w North Street, Walcha. 6774 2515

KEY INITIATIVES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Monitor animal health practises to ensure animals are treated humanely	Council	Ongoing

Monitor condition of all Walcha facilities for holding lost & stray animals.	Council	Ongoing
Examine alternatives to individual Council operating facilities.	Council	Ongoing

KEY ONGOING COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Maintain existing Off-Leash Dog Exercise Area.	Council	Ongoing

### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST

Take your puppy to Puppy Pre-School, and your dog to Obedience Training.

Use Off-Leash Dog Exercise Areas in your locality.

Suggest improvements for Off Leash Areas.

Suggest locations for new Off Leash Areas.

Look after you dog or cat to prevent its detention at the Animal Shelter.

## 8. ENFORCEMENT

### CONTEXT

The Companion Animals Act provides for the enforcement of control for companion animals and provides for the application of penalties where the relevant controls have not been complied with. The focus of enforcement procedures is primarily on controlling nuisance situations particularly barking, biting and straying.

Management of companion animals that relies simply on enforcement will achieve little apart from public resentment. The Ranger is viewed simply as a “thief” or bureaucrat insensitive to the needs of the owner. This can create a hostile environment with the public being uncooperative, harassing the employee, releasing impounded dogs illegally or not releasing the animal at all. This places a financial burden on the Council and ultimately the ratepayer to care for the animal or possibly destroy the animal.

Enforcement needs to work hand in hand with educations and incentives to achieve the overall goal of responsible companion animal ownership and animal control.

### EXISTING SITUATION AND APPROACH

Council enforcement approach is based on controlling nuisance – dogs barking, attacking and straying. The most significant of these is straying animals (especially dogs).

#### *Straying*

Virtually all straying dogs in our Community are owned and have a home base from which they roam. Almost all dogs impounded have an owner. The current approach is to identify the animal and return to the owner without penalty or fine and caution the owner on their responsibilities under the legislation. This reduces the burden on the Community to care for the animal at the Animal Shelter. For repeat offenders the animal is returned to the owner with the appropriate fine.

Where the owner cannot be contacted or identified the animal will be taken to the Animal Shelter and the animal detained until the owner seeks its release (subject to the payment of any “fine”). Animals that are not retrieved (14 days for



identified animals, 7 days for unidentified) are destroyed in accordance with the Act.

### ***Barking***

Barking is a frequent cause of nuisance between neighbours and in extreme cases results in escalating neighbour disputes.

The current approach is to visit the site and verify the extent of the issue (including discussion with neighbours). The dog owner is given a warning and suggestions are provided on how the issue may be resolved. Repeated visits result in a Nuisance Dog Order being issued.

### ***Dog Attacks***

Attacks by dogs fortunately are an uncommon event. In cases of a dog attack Council Staff will seize the dog if necessary and prosecute owners. If the dog is not at large it will be restrained on the property, if the owner is able to secure it effectively, and the owner prosecuted. If it is not possible to restrain the dog, Council Staff will seize it. A Magistrate is the only authority to order the destruction of a dog.

KEY ONGOING COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Maintain approach to handling straying dogs (i.e. return and caution first; return and fine second)	Council	Ongoing
Maintain approach to dealing with barking dogs.	Council	Ongoing
Maintain approach to dog attacks in accordance with the Companion Animals Act.	Council	Ongoing

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST**

- Confine your pet to your property.
- Report incidents of stray dogs to Council.

- Report to Council incident of companion animals causing a nuisance (e.g. barking dog).
- Report dog attacks immediately to Council.

#### FURTHER READING AND ASSISTANCE

More specific details on enforcement are detailed in the Companion Animals Act.

For further information contact your local Council

## 9. SENSITIVE AREAS

### CONTEXT

The town of Walcha is surrounded by farming and grazing properties, which in turn are in close proximity to National Parks.

At the interface of urban and rural areas and rural properties and National Parks there is the potential for companion animals to have an impact. In these areas it is important to understand the impacts companion animals can have on livestock or native fauna.

### EXISTING SITUATION AND APPROACH

There is ample evidence that straying dogs and cats have a negative impact on livestock (e.g. sheep kills) and native fauna.

In addition roaming dogs can pick up hydatid tapeworm and cats can contract toxoplasmosis, which can be transmitted to humans with tragic results.

Landowners need to understand the potential impacts and to take simple steps to minimise these impacts.

A regulatory approach to restricting companion animals in these sensitive areas is not provided for in the current legislation. On this basis the focus will be to educate the community on these potential impacts and the possible solutions.

KEY NEW INITIATIVES	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Distribute education material on the impact of companion animals on livestock and native fauna	Council	Ongoing

KEY ONGOING COMMITMENTS	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMING
Maintain education material on living with wildlife and Pets in the Bush.	Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers Inc	Ongoing

## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO ASSIST

As a companion animal owner you can assist by:

- Identifying and registering your companion animal
- Vaccinate and worm regularly
- Desex
- Keep well fed, exercised and housed securely
- Maintain basic hygiene after handling pets

## 10. FURTHER READING AND ASSISTANCE

More specific details on sensitive area refer to Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers Inc “Living with Wildlife” series.

Feel free to contact your local Council to discuss any issues in further detail.

You may find the following contact list useful in reference to the contents of this Management Plan:

- RSPCA
- Northern Tablelands Wildlife Carers
- Royal Canine Council
- NSW Cat Fanciers’ Association
- Breeders
- Animal Shelter
- Councils
- Police
- NPWS
- Vets
- WIRES

# APPENDIX 1 – INFORMATION FOR DOG AND CAT OWNERS IN NSW



## Remember...

A little chip will go a long way toward providing you with peace of mind. Microchip your dogs.

## For more information

Contact your local NSW council or visit [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au)

## Responsibilities of pet owners

To ensure the comfort, safety and health of the whole community the Companion Animals Act places certain responsibilities on all pet owners.

Here is a summary of the responsibilities of dog owners under the Act:

- If your dog is in a public place it must be under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash. The exceptions to this are: dogs exhibited at a show or engaging in obedience or agility trials or a dog secured in a cage or vehicle or in an approved off-leash area;
- If your dog is being exercised in an approved off-leash area it must always be under effective control of a competent person;
- You are not permitted to walk more than four dogs at any one time in an on-leash area or an off-leash area;
- Greyhounds must be muzzled at all times when in a public place;
- If your dog defecates in a public place it is an offence not to remove the faeces;
- Dogs are prohibited in children's play areas, food preparation/consumption areas, recreation areas, public bathing areas, school grounds, child care centres, shopping areas and wildlife protection areas.

## Penalty notices issued under the Act

Animal not permanently identified (microchipped) . . . . .	\$165
Animal not registered . . . . .	\$165
Failure to notify change of address/owner . . . . .	\$165
Failure to prevent dog escaping . . . . .	\$220
Dog not on lead in public place . . . . .	\$220
Failure to remove dog faeces . . . . .	\$275
Failure to take seized animal to pound/shelter . . . . .	\$550
Dog in prohibited place . . . . .	\$330
Own or in charge of attacking dog . . . . .	\$550

**For further explanation and other offences refer to the Companion Animals Act 1998 and Companion Animals Regulation 1999**

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## Two steps for lifetime protection of your pet

The Companion Animals Act 1998 was introduced in New South Wales on 1 July 1999 to protect pets, people and the wider community.

More than 150,000 dogs and cats are lost or stolen every year in NSW. Many are impounded because their owner cannot be contacted. Some may end up being rehomed or even destroyed. To decrease the number of pets that are euthanased each year, the Companion Animals Act requires that all NSW dog and cat owners have their pets permanently identified and registered for life.

### Microchipping and Registration

Microchipping and Registration is a two part process that requires dog owners to:

1. Have their animals implanted with a microchip from the time they are 12 weeks of age, at point of sale or change of ownership (whichever occurs first).
2. Register their animals with their NSW local council by 6 months of age.

**Please note:** your dog is required by law, when in a public place, to have a collar around its neck with a tag attached that shows the dog's name and the address or phone number of the dog's owner.

Technological advances have made it easier to keep track of your pet through the implantation of a microchip.

About the size of a grain of rice, a microchip contains a unique 15 digit identification number that is quickly implanted under your pet's skin between the shoulders, which can be scanned in the event the pet is found lost or stolen.



## Lifetime protection for your pet.

For peace of mind it is always advised that the new owner makes inquiries with the council to ensure the details are changed and as much information is provided in case your animal becomes lost or is stolen. The more information and contact numbers available on the Companion Animals Register the more likely you are to have your pet returned to you.

The Register is a database that lists all dogs and cats within NSW that have been microchipped and/or registered with the local council. Recorded with their microchip number are the address where the animal is normally kept and their owner's contact details. The information on the database can only be accessed by authorised persons for the purposes of reuniting lost pets with their owners, or for updating information. All forms for the Register are available at your local council.

**If you sell or give away a dog it is your responsibility as the 'old' owner to update the new owner's details on the Companion Animals register at your local council, otherwise penalties may apply. Please contact your local council for more information.**

### What to do when your dog is missing

When you notice that your dog is missing contact your local council or pound as soon as possible. Council will update your dog's record on the Register to show your dog is missing and verify that your contact details are correct. That way, when your dog is found the council or pound can return your dog to its home.

**REMEMBER, ALL DOGS IN NEW SOUTH WALES MUST BE MICROCHIPPED AND REGISTERED ON THE NSW COMPANION ANIMALS REGISTER**

### Responsibilities of pet owners

To ensure the comfort, safety and health of the whole community, the Companion Animals Act places certain responsibilities on pet owners.

Here is a summary of responsibilities of cat owners under the Act:

- All cats must be identified by a form of identification that enables a local authority to ascertain the name of the cat and the address or telephone number of the owner;
- Cats are prohibited in wildlife protection areas and food preparation/consumption areas;
- You must ensure your cat does not interfere with the peace, comfort or convenience of any person in any other premises, or
- Repeatedly damage anything outside the property on which it is ordinarily kept.

### Penalty notices issued under the Act

Animal not permanently identified (microchipped) . . . . .	\$165
Animal not registered . . . . .	\$165
Failure to notify change of address/owner . . . . .	\$165
Failure to take seized animal to pound/shelter . . . . .	\$550
Failure to comply with nuisance cat order . . . . .	\$165
Cat in prohibited place . . . . .	\$110
Cat not wear identification . . . . .	\$110
Obstruct authorised officer . . . . .	\$165

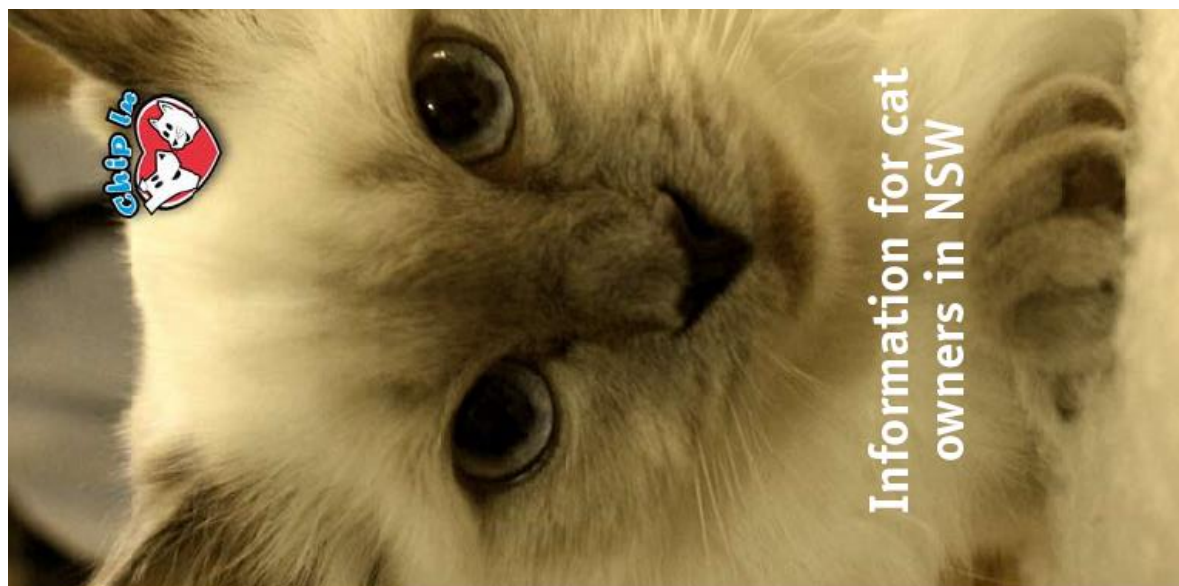
**For further explanation and other offences refer to the Companion Animals Act 1998 and Companion Animals Regulation 1999 or contact your local council.**

### Remember...

A little chip will go a long way toward providing you with peace of mind. Microchip your cat.

### For more information

Contact your local NSW council or visit [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au)



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## Two steps for lifetime protection of your pet



### Lifetime protection for your pet.

The Companion Animals Act 1998 was introduced in New South Wales on 1 July 1999 to protect pets, people and the wider community.

More than 150,000 dogs and cats are lost or stolen every year in NSW. Many are impounded because their owner can't be contacted. Some may end up being rehomed or even destroyed. To decrease the number of pets that are euthanased each year, the Companion Animals Act requires all New South Wales dog and cat owners to have their pets permanently identified and registered for life.

#### Microchipping and Registration

Microchipping and Registration is a two step process that requires cat owners to:

1. Have their animals implanted with a microchip by the time they are 12 weeks of age, at point of sale or change of ownership (whichever occurs first).
2. Register their animals with the NSW local council by 6 months of age.

**Please note:** Cats settled with their owners before the commencement of the Companion Animals Act on 1 July 1999 are exempt from lifetime registration. However, they must be identified by either a microchip or a collar with a tag attached that shows the name of the cat and the address or phone number of the owner.

Cats that are born before 1999 lose their exemption if they are impounded by the local council, or if they are found in breach of the Act. They also lose their exemption if they are sold or given away. This means they then must be microchipped and lifetime registered.

Technological advances have made it easier to keep track of your pet through the implantation of a microchip.

About the size of a grain of rice, a microchip contains a unique 15 digit identification number that is quickly implanted under your pet's skin between the shoulders, that can be scanned in the event that the pet is found, lost or stolen.

The details relating to this microchip include the animal's address, and the owner's contact details. The owner can also choose to list a secondary contact in case they cannot be contacted.

There is nothing stopping you registering your new kitten as soon as possible. Early microchipping and registration is highly recommended as a large percentage of kittens under 6 months of age are regularly lost from their homes.

**If you sell or give away a cat, it is your responsibility as the 'old' owner to update the new owner's details on the NSW Companion Animals register at your local council, otherwise penalties may apply. Please contact your local council for further information.**

#### Registration Cost

Registration can be completed at any NSW local council. The fees are set under legislation as follows:

- \$40 for a desexed cat;
- \$150 for an entire or undesexed cat;
- \$40 for an entire or undesexed cat owned by a registered breeder;
- \$15 for a desexed dog or cat owned by an eligible pensioner.

The above fees are one-off registration fees for each cat.

#### Updating your information:

When you become the owner of a cat either by purchasing the animal or being given the pet, ensure that the previous owner or breeder sends the local council a completed and signed change of owner form.

For peace of mind it is always advised that the new owner makes inquiries with the council to ensure the details are changed and as much information is provided in case your animal becomes lost or is stolen. The more information and contact numbers available on the Companion Animals Register the more likely you are to have your pet returned to you if it becomes lost.

The Register is a database that lists all dogs and cats within NSW that have been microchipped and/or registered with the local council. Recorded with their microchip number are the address where the animal is normally kept and their owner's contact details. The information on the database can only be accessed by authorised persons for the purposes of reuniting lost pets with their owners, or for updating information. All forms for the Register are available at your local council.

#### What to do when your cat is missing

When you notice that your cat is missing contact your local council or pound as soon as possible.

Council will update your cat's record on the Register to show your cat is missing and verify that your contact details are correct. That way, when your cat is found the council or pound can return your cat to its home.



**REMEMBER, ALL DOGS AND CATS IN NEW SOUTH WALES MUST BE MICROCHIPPED AND REGISTERED ON THE NSW COMPANION ANIMALS REGISTER**

# APPENDIX 2 RESPONSIBLE BREEDING

## Responsible dog breeding

Breeding a litter of puppies can be very rewarding, but if you are new to breeding, you should remember that it can also be a costly and time consuming experience. The Responsible Dog Breeding leaflet is full of useful information if you are considering becoming a breeder and we hope established breeders will use it as a reference tool.

If you are contemplating breeding, there are certain questions that you will need to ask yourself before proceeding:



- Have I the time to devote to a litter until the puppies are old enough to go to their new homes, which is usually around ten weeks?
- Am I knowledgeable enough to advise new owners about the various aspects of caring for their puppies, including rearing, diet, training and health problems? Can I afford to pay for the recommended health tests for the bitch prior to mating her and, where necessary, her litter?
- Do I know enough to help the bitch during the whelping, if necessary?
- Can I afford to pay for a caesarean should the dam have difficulty whelping the litter?
- Could I cope with a very large litter of, say, 10 or 12 puppies?
- Do I have sufficient knowledge to rear the litter correctly, including on worming, vaccinations and socialisation?
- Would I be able to find good homes for the puppies?
- Am I in a position to take back or re-home any puppies if it becomes necessary?

If you have not been able to say yes to all of the above questions, then breeding may not be for you. You may

therefore wish to consider having your bitch spayed to prevent unwanted or unplanned pregnancies; your breed club or the breeder of your bitch may be able to provide you with further expert advice.

If you have been able to say yes to all of the above questions, do not forget that you will also need to keep the following in mind:

- Responsible breeders believe that each litter that they breed, should be an improvement on the parents.
- Responsible breeders give careful consideration to health issues, temperament and soundness.
- Responsible breeders plan ahead of each mating so as to ensure that each puppy produced will be bred in the best possible environment.

## Dog breeding checklist

Below is a list of important factors you should consider when considering breeding from your bitch:

### Before Breeding

- Transfer the dog into your registered ownership if you have not already done so.
- Ensure your dog is microchipped and registered in your name
- Check that no breeding restriction has been placed on your dog's records.
- Ensure your dog is healthy and suitable (especially in temperament) to whelp a litter.
- Carry out all relevant health checks e.g. hip scoring, elbow grading, eye testing and DNA testing.
- Contact a breed society for more breed specific information.
- Ensure that the health status of the proposed stud dog is satisfactory.
- Talk to the breeder of your bitch, as they may be able to help you.

### Before the Whelping

- Decide what whelping facilities, including bedding, are most appropriate.
- Ensure that you have the necessary equipment to deal with the whelping.
- Inform your vet when your bitch is due to whelp and keep their phone number to hand.

### After Breeding

- Ensure the puppies details are correctly recorded on the NSW Companion Animals Register
- Ensure all "Change of owner" forms are submitted by you to your Local Council
- Provide all new owners with detailed instructions on the care and feeding of their new puppy.
- Provide a puppy contract with all puppies sold.

### Microchipping

Micro-chipping provides a permanent, inexpensive form of identification that cannot be lost, altered, or intentionally removed. The process is quick and painless and can help ensure a happy reunion should a dog become lost or stray. Once you microchip your litter, you must submit a "Change of owner" form to your Local Council once the puppies change ownership. One of the benefits of micro-chipping your litter is that you can arrange for your details to be included as the second carer after they have gone to their new home, and if anything goes wrong, you may be contacted.

For further information regarding breeding a litter of puppies contact your vet or Dogs NSW

Postal Address: PO Box 632 St Marys NSW  
1790, Australia  
Email: [info@dogsnsw.org.au](mailto:info@dogsnsw.org.au)  
Phone: (02) 9834 3022 OR 1300 728 022  
<http://www.dogsnsw.org.au>

# APPENDIX 3 DOGS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



**Remember: a little chip will go a long way toward providing you with peace of mind. Microchip your dog.**  
**For more information**  
Contact your local NSW council or visit [www.dlg.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au)

## Responsibilities of pet owners

To ensure the comfort, safety and health of the whole community, the Companion Animals Act places certain responsibilities on all pet owners.

Here is a summary of the responsibilities of dog owners under the Act:

- If your dog is in a public place it must be under the effective control of a competent person by means of an adequate chain, cord or leash. The exceptions to this are: dogs exhibited at a show or engaging in obedience or agility trials; working, tending or driving stock; or in an approved off-leash area;
- If your dog is being exercised in an approved off-leash area it must always be under effective control of a competent person;
- You are not permitted to walk more than four dogs at any one time in an on-leash area or an off-leash area;
- Greyhounds must be muzzled at all times when in a public place;
- If your dog defecates in a public place it is an offence not to remove the faeces;
- Dogs are prohibited in children's play areas, food preparation/consumption areas, recreation areas, public bathing areas, school grounds, child care centres, shopping areas and wildlife protection areas.

## Penalty notices issued under the Act

Animal not permanently identified (microchipped) . . . . .	\$165
Animal not registered . . . . .	\$165
Failure to notify change of address/owner . . . . .	\$165
Failure to prevent dog escaping . . . . .	\$220
Dog not on lead in public place . . . . .	\$220
Failure to remove dog faeces . . . . .	\$275
Failure to take seized animal to pound/shelter . . . . .	\$550
Dog in prohibited place . . . . .	\$330
Own or in charge of attacking dog . . . . .	\$550

**For further explanation and other offences refer to the Companion Animals Act 1998 or contact your local council.**

THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS BROCHURE IS NOT INTENDED TO BE COMPREHENSIVE, COMPLETE OR EXHAUSTIVE. IT IS PROVIDED AS A GUIDE ONLY AND DOES NOT CONSTITUTE A GUARANTEE OF THE ACCURACY OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED.  
AS SUCH, THIS BROCHURE IS FOR GENERAL INFORMATION ONLY, AND SHOULD NOT SUBSTITUTE PROFESSIONAL ADVICE OR YOUR OWN LEGAL JUDGEMENT AS TO THE APPLICATION OF THE COMPANION ANIMALS LAW IN RELATION TO ANY MATTER.

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## Things That Owners of Dogs in Rural Communities in NSW Need to Know

### Dog attacks in rural NSW

Farmers are the backbone of rural Australia. Dog attacks from both wild dogs and from dogs that are not properly controlled by their owners can have a negative impact on a farmer's livelihood. It is estimated that dog attacks on livestock cost farmers thousands of dollars each year in lost income.

Wild dog populations comprise of dingoes, feral dogs and crossbreeds of the two.

Dog attacks, whether by wild dogs or domestic pets, not only kill livestock, but can also reduce sheep flock production. Other impacts and threats believed to be associated with dog attacks include:

- emotional stress affecting landholders who deal with killed and injured livestock;
- a change in livestock farming from sheep to cattle, which in turn may affect land management issues such as weed control;
- a decline in farming profitability, particularly where farmers have switched from sheep to cattle to avoid heavy stock losses.



It is important that dog owners don't contribute to the problems that wild dogs cause by letting their own dogs roam free. It is an offence under the Companion Animals Act 1998 for a dog to be in a public place and not under the proper control of its owner.

### Working dogs in rural NSW

A working dog is a dog used primarily for the purpose of droving, tending, working or protecting stock, and includes a dog being trained as a working dog.

Hunting dogs and guard dogs do not have any special status as working dogs under the Companion Animals Act. Just because an animal is kept for purposes other than that of a pet, does not necessarily mean it is a 'working dog'.

Under the Companion Animals Act, dogs that meet the definition of a 'working dog' are exempt from microchipping and registering when:

- the working dog resides on land defined and rated as farmland under the Local Government Act 1993, or
- the working dog is kept in the Western Division of NSW, being not within a local government area.

All other working dogs **MUST** be microchipped and registered. However, a nil dollar (free) registration fee applies.

The lifetime registration fees are set by the legislation, not councils, as follows:

- \$150 for entire (undesexed dogs);
- \$40 for deseased dogs;
- \$40 for a dog owned by a recognised breeder;
- \$15 for pensioners with deseased dogs;
- \$0 for working dogs.

All working dogs are exempt from wearing a collar and tag while actively working on their owner's property.

The exemption from microchipping and lifetime registration for working dogs may be lost in the following circumstances:

- If the dog is seized and impounded;
- If the dog is declared dangerous;
- If the dog is the subject of a nuisance order;
- If the dog ceases to be a working dog.

### Why do dogs attack?

Lack of socialisation can often result in fearful or aggressive behaviour.

The optimum time to socialise is before the dog reaches 4 months of age.

Irrespective of whether your dog is a large 'guard' breed or a fluffy little lapdog, ALL dogs have what is called a 'prey drive' and a natural instinct to chase another animal that moves – even the best trained and well socialised ones.



Dog owners must not allow their dogs to roam free in a public place, unless in a designated off-leash area established by the council and under the control of its owner.

The owner of a dog who allows it to attack and/or injure or kill livestock is liable for the cost of the veterinary treatment for those injured animals.

The owner of the injured or killed livestock may take action against the dog owner to recover the cost of lost animals.

Under section 22 of the Act, a farmer or their employee may lawfully seize and detain a dog on a property if they reasonably believe the dog may injure or kill livestock being farmed on that property.

This includes injuring or destroying the dog in order to prevent the attack and loss of stock.

### What you can do to prevent your dog attacking livestock

You can help prevent farmers from losing their livelihood by being a responsible pet owner and doing the following:

- Don't allow your dog to roam, especially with other dogs;
- Make sure your fences are in good order and keep your dog in the yard;
- Ensure your dog is well cared for and well fed—bored and hungry dogs go looking for fun and food;
- Make sure your dog is deseased as it will be less likely to roam;
- Don't allow your dog to chase other animals such as birds and native animals for fun;
- Train your dog to be obedient and socialise with other animals in a controlled environment.

REMEMBER, ALL DOGS IN NEW SOUTH WALES INCLUDING DANGEROUS AND RESTRICTED DOGS **MUST** BE MICROCHIPPED AND REGISTERED ON THE NEW SOUTH WALES COMPANION ANIMALS REGISTER. GREYHOUNDS AND SOME WORKING DOGS EXCEPTED.