



Renmark
Paringa
Council



Animal Management Plan 2026 -2031

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Contents

Why do we need an Animal Management Plan?	4
Changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995	5
About Renmark Paringa Council	6
Review of the previous plan	7
Animal Management Programs and Services	8
Strategies for Improved Animal Management	9
Dog Management Areas in Renmark Paringa	15

WHY DO WE NEED AN ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN?

The responsibilities for dog and cat management in South Australia are prescribed in the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. This includes the responsibility under Section 26A, where Council's must prepare a plan relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area. This plan must include provisions for parks where dogs may be exercised off-leash and for parks where dogs must be under effective control by means of physical restraint, and may include provisions for parks where dogs are prohibited.

Councils are required to administer the provisions within the Act and have prescribed responsibilities including the appointment of a Registrar, the maintenance of a Dog Register, the appointment of Authorised Persons and defined arrangements for dogs detained under the Act. The Act also provides that Council may appoint a Cat Management Officer.

The Act provides for the appointment of the Dog and Cat Management Board, which has the responsibility to plan, promote, and advise on effective management of dogs and cats in South Australia, to monitor council management of their responsibilities, to issue guidelines for councils and to advise and assist councils to undertake their responsibilities. The Board also has a role to provide advice to the Minister for Environment and Water, to keep the Act under review, to undertake research into companion animal management and to provide community awareness information.

Renmark Paringa Council is able to make by-laws relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area, these by-laws were renewed in 2024/25. The above provisions provide the legal framework for councils to manage dogs and cats at a local level and the penalties that can be imposed on dog and cat owners for non-compliance.

The Renmark Paringa Council also works collaboratively with the Berri Barmera and Loxton Waikerie Councils under Section 25C (c) of the Act.

This Plan seeks to implement a balanced approach that caters to everyone's needs and will not only benefit dogs and cats and their owners as a group with legitimate needs; but also the wider community and those charged with the responsibility for animal management.

CHANGES TO DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT ACT 1995

The objectives of the Act are to:

- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats, and
- Promote the effective management of dogs and cats

In July 2016 the Dog and Cat Management Amendment Bill was passed in the South Australian Parliament with implementation dates set for the 1 July 2017 and 1 July 2018.

CHANGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION FROM 1 JULY 2017

- Dog registration - Registration categories of 'Standard Dog' and 'Non-Standard Dog', replacing the rebates for desexing, microchipping and training.
- Breeder registration – introducing a requirement for anyone who breeds dogs and cats for sale to register as a breeder at dogsandcatsonline.com.au administered by the Dog and Cat Management Board.

CHANGES FOR IMPLEMENTATION FROM 1 JULY 2018

- As of 1 July 2018, the changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act include mandatory microchipping, desexing of dogs and cats, and new rules for breeders who sell dogs and cats.
- All dogs and cats born after 1 July 2018, must be desexed with exemptions to working dogs and registered breeders.
- Dogs and cats must be desexed by (6) months of age or (28) days after purchase by the new owner. Working livestock dogs as well as dogs and cats owned by registered breeders will be exempt from the requirement to desex, however will still need to be microchipped.
- Anyone who breeds dogs or cats for sale must register as a breeder at dogsandcatsonline.com.au administered by the Dog and Cat Management Board.
- Benefits to Council and the community from the changes to the Dog and Cat Management Act will include an increase in the number of dogs and cats returned to their owners through mandatory microchip identification and a reduction of unwanted animals being left abandoned after being impounded.
- For Council, long term benefits will include less dogs being impounded meaning a decreased amount of time Authorised Persons spend on pound maintenance, including weekend maintenance (feeding & cage cleaning) impounded dogs.

ABOUT RENMARK PARINGA COUNCIL

Renmark Paringa Council covers an area of approximately 407 square kilometres and is home to approximately 10,000 residents. The Council was formed in 1996 after the amalgamation of the Corporation of the Town of Renmark and the District Council of Paringa. The area has three major settlements being Renmark, Paringa and Lyrup.

The Renmark Paringa economy is centered on irrigated primary production land, with viticulture being the major industry, supported by an expanding almond industry. The area is also supported by a strong citrus, stone fruit and vegetable industries. Dry land farming is also a major primary industry in the district. Tourism plays a major part in our economy with the River Murray the predominant tourist attraction.

DOG AND CAT OWNERSHIP

Council is committed to fostering an environment in which the community can continue to harness the benefits of pet ownership. In this environment, it is essential that Council takes a strategic approach to managing domestic pets, allowing it to plan for and address the needs of the community over the next five years.

MISSION

To create an environment within the Renmark Paringa community that encourages responsible pet ownership, where people and pets integrate safely, whilst ensuring the needs of animals and their owners are accommodated for, whilst ensuring the differing needs of all members of the community, such as non pet owners, are recognised.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The below staff are involved in the management of animals within Renmark Paringa.



ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Registration fees for dogs are set by Renmark Paringa Council as prescribed by the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. As of 1 July 2018, Council's contribution to the Dog and Cat Management Fund will be 12% of dog registration fees collected.

The income from collecting dog registration fees are spent on services provided by Council for dog and cat management. Renmark Paringa Council Regulatory Services staff provide the following:

- recreational areas for the safe exercise of dogs
- dog faeces disposal bags throughout the area
- collection and return of dogs found wandering at large
- investigation of reported dog harassments and attacks
- investigation and mediation of barking dog complaints
- investigation of nuisance cat complaints
- enforcing and administering clauses of By-Law 5 - Dogs and By Law No 6 - Cats
- registration of dogs within the area
- collection and provision of statistics to the Dog and Cat Management Board

RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

Legislation:

- Dog and Cat Management Act 1995
- Expiation of Offences Act 1996
- Local Government Act 1999
- Dog and Cat Management Regulations 2017
- Local Nuisance and Litter Control Act 2017

Related Council Documents:

- Renmark Paringa Council Community Plan 2024-2034
Liveable —Healthy|Active|Safe|Inclusive
COMMUNITY SAFETY L5
Deliver Council's Animal Management Plan and continue to promote improved animal management
- Renmark Paringa By Laws No. 5 - Dogs
- Renmark Paringa By Laws No. 6 - Cats

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS PLAN

The plan is a useful tool for Council's Animal Management Officers and has been well received by community groups. Below are facts at a glance from various initiatives implemented from the previous plan:

FACTS AT A GLANCE:

	2019/20		2021/22		2023/24
Population in the Renmark Paringa Council area	9,475		9,783		10,107
REGISTRATION					
Number of registered dogs	1,781		1,842		1,896
Percentage of registered dogs that are desexed	N/A		N/A		64.8%
Percentage of registered dogs that are microchipped	N/A		N/A		96.5%
IMPOUNDING					
Total expiations issued	78		36		235
Total number of dogs impounded	39		30		20
Total dogs impounded and returned to owner	N/A		N/A		12
INVESTIGATIONS					
Official barking dog complaints	29		33		24
Official wandering dog complaints	19		33		38
Number of Cat Complaints	18		9		11
PET MANAGEMENT SERVICES					
Number of permits issued for keeping additional dogs	9		2		1
Number of enclosed dog off leash parks	1		1		1
Number of doggy bag dispensers	8		8		8
Number of cat cages hired per annum	14		18		36

*Note: Population statistics are from the closest relevant Census from the Australian Bureau of statistics

**Note: N/A Statistics not available

The rise in expiations for dog-related offences can be attributed to several key factors highlighted below:

- Public education campaigns and heightened awareness about responsible pet ownership have led to more residents reporting incidents such as dogs wandering at large, barking nuisances, and attacks.
- Councils have implemented stronger compliance measures due to the feedback received from the Community Satisfaction Survey conducted in 2023, including adjustments to proactive patrols and follow-up investigations, which has led to an increase in the detection and enforcement of offences.

Annual statements shall be presented during the life of the 2026-31 plan for the community to evaluate its successes.

ALIGNMENT WITH OUR COMMUNITY PLAN

The following goals and strategies contained within our Community Plan influence the structure and direction of the Animal Management Plan.



LIVEABLE

A safe and welcoming place to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

PROSPEROUS

A place that attracts, retains and supports talented people, underpinned by diverse regional industry, tourism and access to housing.

ENVIRONMENT

A place that is resilient to the effects of extreme weather, protects its river, is green and limits its impact on the natural environment.

LEADERSHIP

A Council that is a trusted partner that delivers what it promises in an efficient and effective way.



STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVED ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

KEY RESULT 1. PROMOTE THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP

- Raise awareness of the benefits of pet ownership to the community as a whole
- Facilitate and encourage rehoming abandoned and seized animals
- Provide safe detention facilities

Community Plan Alignment: L5.2, LE1.2, LE2.2 & LE7.1

KEY RESULT 2. CREATE A SUSTAINABLE “PET - FRIENDLY” ENVIRONMENT

- Identify and enforce dog ‘on leash’ and ‘off leash’ areas to provide appropriate opportunities for exercising dogs
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dog faeces
- Proactively manage feral cats within the local council area

Community Plan Alignment: L5.2, LE2.2 & LE7.1

KEY RESULT 3. PROVIDE A STRONG REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

- Maintain an appropriate mix on relevant laws, systems and procedures for animal management
- Promote new requirements for local dog and cat breeders
- Continuously improve the role, profile and capacity of authorised persons

Community Plan Alignment: L5.2, LE.2, LE2.2 & LE7.1

KEY RESULT 4. ENCOURAGE GOOD ANIMAL BEHAVIOURS

- Educate residents about mandatory desexing requirements
- Monitor compliance with the mandatory desexing requirements
- Reduce the impact of barking dogs in the community

Community Plan Alignment: L5.2, LE2.4, LE2.2 & LE7.1

KEY RESULT 5. ENCOURAGE LIFETIME IDENTIFICATION

- Educate residents about mandatory microchipping requirements
- Increase number of dogs and cats microchipped and displaying ID tags within the council area

Community Plan Alignment: L5.2, LE2.1, LE2.2 & LE7.1

One of the key trends and opportunity for improvement from Council’s Community Satisfaction Survey (CSS) highlighted that dog and cat management needs improvement to address concerns over feral cat and nuisance dogs. Council has identified strategies for improved animal management, which are set out in the key result areas within the Animal Management Plan.

Key Result 1: Community Benefits of Pet Ownership

Pets are an integral part of our lives as Australians. Most Australians have had an animal companion at some time. Pets are important in children's lives as they provide enjoyment and help children develop responsibilities transferable to adulthood. Sometimes pet relationships are ranked higher than certain kinds of human relationships for comfort, esteem, support and confidence. Some benefits of pet ownership have been identified in areas of child development, family harmony and even health.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Having a relationship with a pet can help develop such skills as:

- Nurturing
- Responsibility
- Empathy
- A caring attitude
- Communication

HEALTH

The relaxation and relief from stress provided by animal companionship also yields health benefits for parents. In comparison with their pet-less counterparts, pet owners:

- Have a decreased risk of cardiovascular disease
- Have fewer minor illnesses and complaints
- Visit the doctor less often

Objective	Actions	Measurable
Raise awareness of the benefits of pet ownership to the community as a whole.	Promote responsible pet ownership, pet selection and breed selection through appropriate media	2 articles published per annum through social media and/or Council's e-newsletter
Enable and encourage rehoming abandoned and seized animals	Facilitate the assessment of the animal to ensure they are suitable for re-homing. Advertise via media sources for a new home.	Advertise the "Expressions of Interest to adopt a pet" as required.
Provide safe detention facilities for lost and found dogs and cats.	Minimise the risk of cross contamination illnesses (e.g. parvo) through ensuring the pound complies with the Dog and Cat Management Board's guidelines for animal husbandry	Pound is maintained daily to the Dog and Cat Management Board's requirements

Key Result 2: Sustainable Pet Friendly Environment

Pets are an important part of the family and require ongoing care and nurture. Owners have many considerations to ensure their pet is well cared for physically and mentally and that they don't develop nuisance behaviours. Both the home and public open spaces should provide opportunities for pets to play, socialise and interact safely and sustainably.

This plan adopts the principles that responsible pet owners can own pets in a variety of housing situations, including small spaces. With proper safeguards, public open space and community land provides a valuable opportunity for people and pets to come together on a larger scale to help build a sense of community.

Whilst promoting responsible pet ownership we also need to manage feral cats. Feral cats live outdoors and have little or no human contact. They resort to killing native wildlife and scavenging for food. They are not vaccinated against diseases and can be responsible for spreading disease to native and domesticated animals.

Members of the community are encouraged to report populations of feral cats to Council for further action. Council also hires out cat traps to the public to assist with managing feral cats.

Objective	Actions	Measurable
Identify and enforce dog 'on leash and 'off leash' areas to provide appropriate opportunities for exercising dogs.	Patrol dog on-leash, off-leash and prohibited areas and educate owners on responsibilities. Strategic placement of signs that promote legislative requirements, dog etiquette and owner responsibilities.	Make educational material available to the public at the Civic Centre and Council's website on what is effective control of dogs. Promote dog agility and obedience classes on Council's website to encourage good dog owners.
Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dog faeces	Install dog bag dispensers in parks and areas where people frequently walk dogs No reported parvovirus outbreaks during the life of the plan	A number of dog bag dispensers are located in in high profile areas including Renmark Riverfront and Dog Park, all ovals and public parks. Install signage advising it is an offence not to clean up after your dog
Proactively manage feral cats within the council area	Facilitate a cat trap hire service to Renmark Paringa residents Ensure the Renmark Paringa public is aware Council can assist with unidentified cats.	Maintain at least 5 cat traps to be available for hiring by residents. Facilitate relationships between Council and external companies on assisting trapping e.g. Riverland Pet Rescue

Key Result 3: Strong Regulatory Framework

For people and pets to live well together in a community there needs to be agreed expectations, clear structure, rules and procedures for:

- promoting responsible, community-minded behaviours
- protecting our environment and public health
- encouraging compliance with legislative and policy requirements
- dealing with any nuisance caused by dogs and cats.

The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 sets out councils responsibilities for regulating dog and cat management, including the maintenance of a dog register, development of by-laws, appointment of Authorised Officers, enforcement of legislative responsibilities and the issuing of Dog Control Orders.

Council has recently revised its Dog and Cat By-laws to complement the changes to the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995*. *The revisions shall improve regulatory services in controlling dogs and cats and cat breeders.*

Processes for dog and cat management activities are outlined in Council's standard operating guidelines for the keeping and control of animals. Standard operating procedures are reviewed to incorporate changes to Council's legislative requirements and to have continuity with the industry's best practice approaches.

Objective	Actions	Measurable
Establish an appropriate mix of relevant laws, systems and procedures for animal management.	Conduct scheduled reviews of Council policies and standard operating guidelines to reflect legislative changes and best practice.	Up to date policies. Up to date standard operating guidelines.
	Contribute to stakeholder consultation conducted by the Local Government Association, the Board and the South Australian Government.	Incorporation or consideration of Council's ideas and position in new legislation, regulation, procedures and systems.
Promote new requirements for local dog and cat breeders.	Educate known breeders regarding legislative requirements.	Known breeders are registered with the Board within (14) days.
Continuously improve the role, profile and capacity of authorised persons.	Provide ongoing training and support to authorised persons.	Reduction in number of incidents reported.

Key Result 4: Encourage Good Animal Behaviours

Responsible pet ownership information is provided on Council's website, social media, in the newsletter quarterly and the daily activities of authorised persons.

All dogs and cats must be microchipped with the microchip number recorded in Dogs and Cats Online (DACO). This is important because accidental litters and roaming animals in heat can cause public nuisance, puts owned dogs and cats at risk of injury and add financial burdens to owners. From a public safety perspective, desexed dogs are also believed to be less likely to be involved in dog attacks.

There is one off leash (fenced) dog park within the Renmark Paringa Council, allowing owners to socialise and exercise their dogs safely. Owners are required to keep their dogs under effective control at all times by leash, or where permitted off leash, provided the dog is kept close and is responsive to verbal commands.

Objective	Actions	Measurable
Educate residents about mandatory desexing requirements	Promote the new legislative requirements for dogs to be desexed through various communication channels	That all dogs registered after are desexed or have the applicable exemption.
Monitor compliance with the mandatory desexing requirements	Measure and monitor the trends of desexed and non-desexed animals Encourage local vets and dog clubs to promote mandatory desexing requirements of all new dogs and cats	Reduction in the number of non-desexed dogs and cats being impounded. Authorised officers to annually request vets & animal clubs to display material.
Reduce the impact of barking dogs within the community	Provide educational material to dog owners to assist them with changing a dog's barking behaviour Include educational information in the local paper or community newsletter about why dogs bark and how to address/avoid the issue	Barking dog materials from the Board are made available to residents One article per year to appear on Facebook page and local paper. Continual maintenance of barking dog information on website.

Key Result 5: Increase lifetime identification

Owners of dogs are required to register their dog annually with the local council and for their dog to wear their registration disc when off the premises they are kept. Annual dog registration is a critical element to dog management in South Australia. It provides statistical information on the dog population and provides funding to facilitate strategic projects such as the location of fenced dog parks and dog faeces disposal bags, target education programs and opportunities for new initiatives. The registration data is also used to quickly reunite owners with found dogs and in investigations relating to nuisance reports and dog attacks.

From July 2018, all dogs and cats in South Australia are required to be microchipped. Microchipping also supports Council to return dogs and cats to their owners that become lost, escape or are found injured or should their registration disc or collar have come off. Owners are required to keep the contact details up to date on Dogs and Cats Online. The Dog and Cat Management Board has introduced a centralised registration system, 'Dogs and Cats Online' (DACO), during the five years of the Plan which aims to further assist Councils locate owners and to inform state-wide strategic planning initiatives. More information on Dogs and Cats Online, can be found on Council's website.

Objective	Actions	Measurable
Educate residents about mandatory microchipping requirements	Information to be posted on the Council's website and social media Support D&C Management Board by local advertising of Board produced information and website links	Information is posted quarterly using social media platforms.
Increase number of dogs and cats microchipped within the council area	Partner with other organisations such as local vets/Lost Pets of SA (LPSA) for discounted microchipping Deliver training and provide support to authorised personnel on the implantation of microchips. Develop/provide posters and brochures to vets, pet shops, dog training schools	Organise and assist in facilitating 1 chip blitz day per year. Percentage of microchipped dogs/cats increased over the life of the plan.

DOG MANAGEMENT AREAS IN RENMARK PARINGA COUNCIL

Dog Off Leash (fenced) Park — (dogs must be under effective control)

Corner of Paringa and Seventeenth Streets Renmark

Areas where dogs are required on leash

Plush's Bend Renmark

All riverfront areas between New Landing Way and Patey Drive Renmark

Darnley Taylor Park, Renmark Avenue Renmark

Madigan Reserve, Wattle Street Renmark

TM Price Park, Sturt Highway Renmark

Bert Dix Park Paringa

SS Ellen Park, Thayne Terrace Lyrup

Areas where dogs are prohibited

- all playing surfaces at the Number 1, 2 & 3 Ovals Renmark
- the Renmark Netball Courts, and
- the entire land comprised of the Renmark Swimming Pool

Lyrup Oval Lyrup

Paringa Oval Paringa

The Dog and Cat Management Act 1995 prohibits dogs from all South Australian school grounds, kindergartens, child care centres and preschools without prior permission from the person in control of that site.

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Contact Details

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Web	renmarkparinga.sa.gov.au
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Opening Hours

Monday	9am – 5pm
Tuesday	9am – 5pm
Wednesday	9am – 5pm
Thursday	9am – 5pm
Friday	9am – 5pm

Social Media

	RenmarkParingaCouncil
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