

ITEM 2. COMPANION ANIMALS POLICY – ADOPTION**FILE NO: S084466****SUMMARY**

This report recommends that Council adopt the draft Companion Animals Policy (the Policy).

The City's existing Policy was adopted by Council on 5 December 2011. Its purpose is to encourage and reinforce the responsible management of pets for the benefit of the community through education and information, consistent with the City's responsibilities under the *Companion Animals Act*.

The existing Policy has been reviewed and updated to incorporate legislative changes, as well as guidelines issued by the Division of Local Government, since 2011. A new category of "menacing dog" is included in the changes.

The revised draft Policy at Attachment A to this report contains new subheadings to align the document with the structure and format of other City policies.

The order of the contents of the Policy have been changed to reflect the progressive stages of the responsibilities of pet owners – from identification and registration of cats and dogs, through to de-sexing, lost pets, expected behaviours of owners, barking dogs, and the more serious matters such as dog attacks.

The existing policy is included at Attachment B to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) adopt the draft Companion Animals Policy, as shown at Attachment A to the subject report; and
- (B) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive Officer to approve minor amendments to the Companion Animals Policy that are occasionally required due to legislative changes, subject to all Councillors being informed of these changes.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Draft Companion Animals Policy

Attachment B: Existing Companion Animals Policy

BACKGROUND

1. The City's existing Companion Animals Policy (the Policy) has been in place since December 2011. It was due to be reviewed in November 2013, however because of upcoming changes to the *Companion Animals Act* at that time, the review was delayed. Councillors were notified of this delay in October 2013. The existing Policy is included at Attachment B to this report.
2. The revised Policy ensures dog and cat owners are aware of their responsibilities under the legislation governing the management of companion animals, as well as requiring the education of non-dog owners (particularly children) about animal behaviour. The Policy makes reference to the management of dog waste, persistent barking, dog attacks, menacing, dangerous and restricted dogs, as well as the off-leash provisions in the City's parks.
3. The purpose of the Policy is to enable the community to understand how the City addresses companion animal issues, as well as promoting awareness through the provision of education and information to the community.
4. In December 2013, the *Companion Animals Act* was amended to make provision for a new category of "menacing dog". The *Act* imposes control requirements for owners of dogs that have been declared menacing. These control requirements fall between the control requirements of 'nuisance' and 'dangerous' dogs. This new category has been included in the revised Policy.

KEY IMPLICATIONS

5. Proposed amendments to the existing Policy are:
 - (a) the new category of "menacing dog" is included;
 - (b) the format and structure of the Policy has been amended to align with other City policies;
 - (c) the order of the contents of the Policy have been changed to reflect the progressive stages of the responsibilities of pet owners – from identification and registration of cats and dogs, through to de-sexing, lost pets, expected behaviours of owners, barking dogs, and the more serious matters such as dog attacks; and
 - (d) the Policy will be reviewed every four years instead of the previous two yearly revision. Minor amendments to the Companion Animals Policy, which are occasionally required due to legislative changes, will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer, subject to all Councillors being informed of these changes.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION

6. Local Government Act 1993.
7. Companion Animals Act 1998.
8. Companion Animals Regulations 1999.
9. Impounding Act 1983.

CRITICAL DATES / TIME FRAMES

10. The Policy will next be reviewed in June 2018.

GARRY HARDING

Director City Operations

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