



DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2022 – 2031



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Fraser Coast Regional Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the region. Council is committed to working in partnership with the Traditional Custodians, and to be an organisation that recognises and respects Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's history and culture which are developed through diversity, opportunities and respectful relationships.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Council wishes to thank all contributors and stakeholders involved in the development of this document.

DISCLAIMER

Information contained in this document is based on available information at the time of writing. All figures and diagrams are indicative only and should be referred to as such. Whilst the Fraser Coast Regional Council has exercised reasonable care in preparing this document, it does not warrant or represent that it is accurate or complete. Council or its officers accept no responsibility for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from acting in reliance upon any material contained in this document.

INTRODUCTION

As the community of the Fraser Coast region continues to grow and evolve, so too, does the diversity of lifestyles and the ways in which pets engage in our daily lives.

Pets play an important role and contribute to the wellbeing of many people within our region. Increasingly, pets are becoming more than ‘just a pet’ – they offer companionship and are part of the family. Council understands however, that pets may not be for everyone.

We recognise that people have different experiences, connections, and views about pets and are all impacted by them in different ways. Some people prefer the ability to venture and enjoy public places that are completely pet free, whereas others would prefer to immerse themselves completely in the ‘pet friendly’, all-inclusive lifestyle.

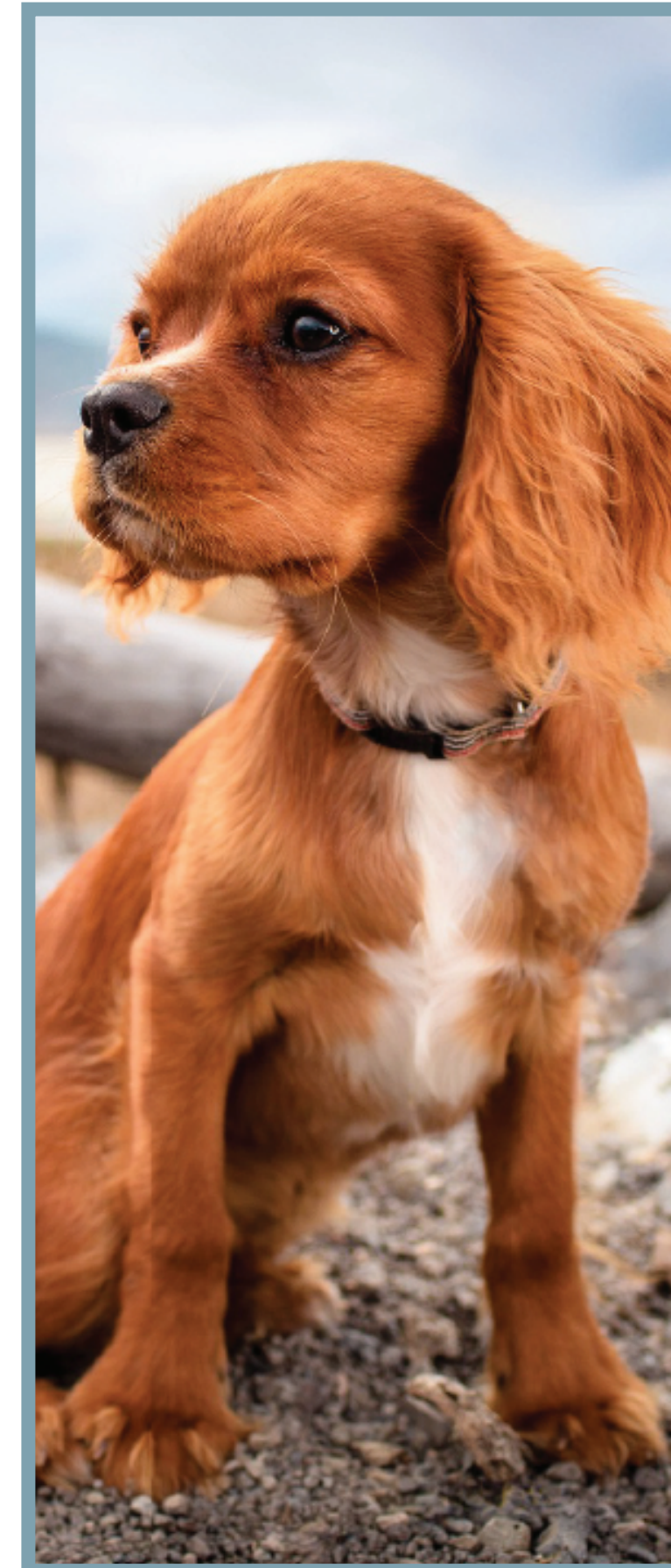
For these reasons, Fraser Coast Regional Council considers domestic animal management to be vital in ensuring a harmonious co-existence between people, pets, and places, both now and in the future.

Fraser Coast Regional Council, as a local government body, plays an important leadership role in supporting and promoting responsible pet ownership, community safety and healthy living through a well-informed community.

We recognise that as the entity at the forefront of this responsibility, that effective domestic animal management is key. Effective animal management, that contributes to harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places begins with responsible pet ownership.

Under the Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008, Local Law No.2 (Animal Management) 2011 and Subordinate Local Law No.2 (Animal Management) 2011, Council has an obligation to work with the community to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership through information, education, investigation and enforcement.

Consequentially as part of effective animal management and to be responsive to the needs and wants of our community, Council has developed the Domestic Animals Management Strategy (the strategy).



OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the strategy 2022-2031 are:

Education:

- ❖ To ensure pet owners are educated and aware of the principles of responsible pet ownership.

Customer Service:

- ❖ To provide a high level of customer service interactions and offer alternative service delivery options where appropriate.

Enforcement:

- ❖ To encourage compliance with State legislation and Local Laws; and to apply increased and proportionate enforcement response to matters of non-compliance or continued non-compliance.

Responsible Pet Ownership:

- ❖ To encourage pet owners to embrace responsible pet ownership with respect to registration, micro-chipping and desexing and ensuring pets in the community are appropriately controlled and contained.

Community Facilities and Off-Leash Areas:

- ❖ To improve and increase community-based facilities for dog owners.

Animal Facilities (Pound)

- ❖ To provide an animal management facility appropriate for the welfare, housing and reclaim of impounded animals.

Training of Authorised Officers:

- ❖ To provide knowledgeable and trained staff to respond to matters of domestic animal management.

Animal management is more than just regulation and enforcement. **We believe that effective animal management contributes to the overall health and wellbeing of the community.**

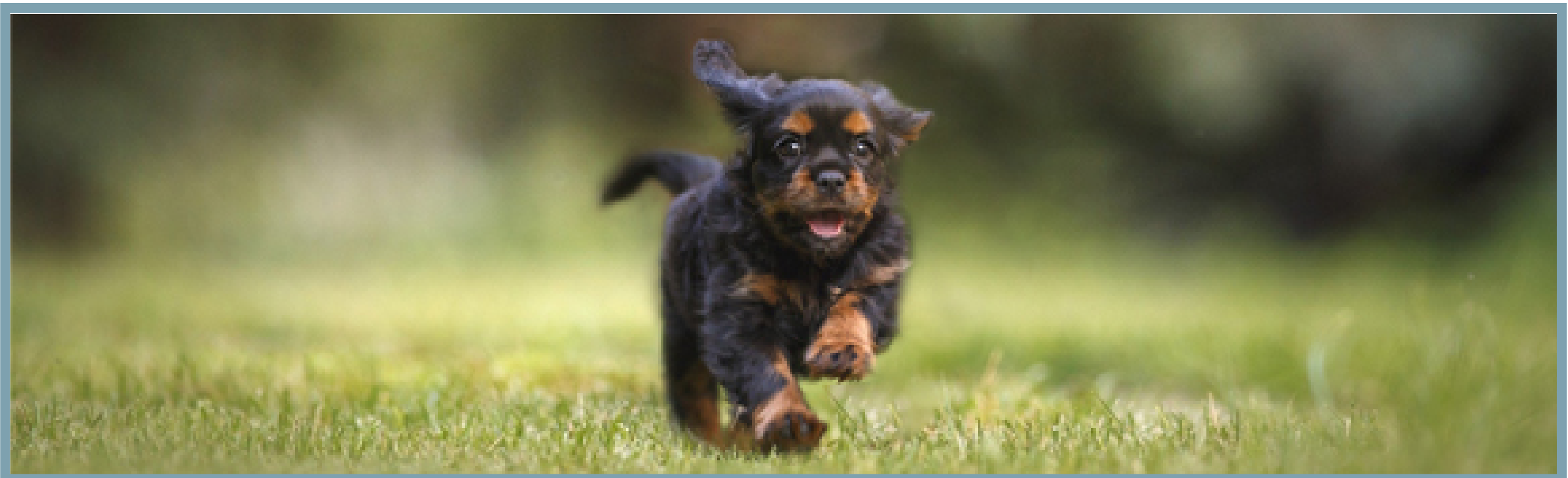
Animal management encapsulates community responsibility through responsible pet ownership and expectations of our community are focused on pet owners being accountable for the privilege of looking after the needs of an animal in the best interests of neighbours, the local community, the environment and the pet itself.

PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

- ❖ Allow Council to address key challenges and opportunities when determining operational planning and budgets for immediate and future years.
- ❖ Provide the framework for how Council will work with the community to achieve harmonious co-existence between people, pets and places.
- ❖ Provide direction for Council's domestic animal management services and initiatives over the next 10 years.
- ❖ Help Council achieve the purposes of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and *Fraser Coast Regional Council (FCRC) Local Laws*.

OUR GOAL

- ❖ Educate the community and seek voluntary compliance of the principles of responsible pet ownership including registration; micro-chipping; desexing; control of pets in public places; and providing safe and secure enclosures.



HOW THE PLAN WAS DEVELOPED

- ❖ Council invited the community, both pet owners and non-pet owners, to have their say on responsible pet ownership and the delivery of animal management services and initiatives over the next 10 years, that were important to them.

We connected with the community through:

- ❖ Key stakeholder groups and networks;
- ❖ Social media;
- ❖ Media release, Council weekly news and advertising;
- ❖ Engagement hub and community engagement register;
- ❖ Pop-up kiosks at markets and shopping centers around the region; and
- ❖ Displays in the community and municipal libraries, and the Customer Service Centers.

Feedback received through the engagement process has helped Council identify objectives and prioritise what is important:

- ❖ Education and responsible pet ownership;
- ❖ Enforcement;
- ❖ Training; service and facilities; and
- ❖ Safe and inclusive places.



We will connect with the community through:

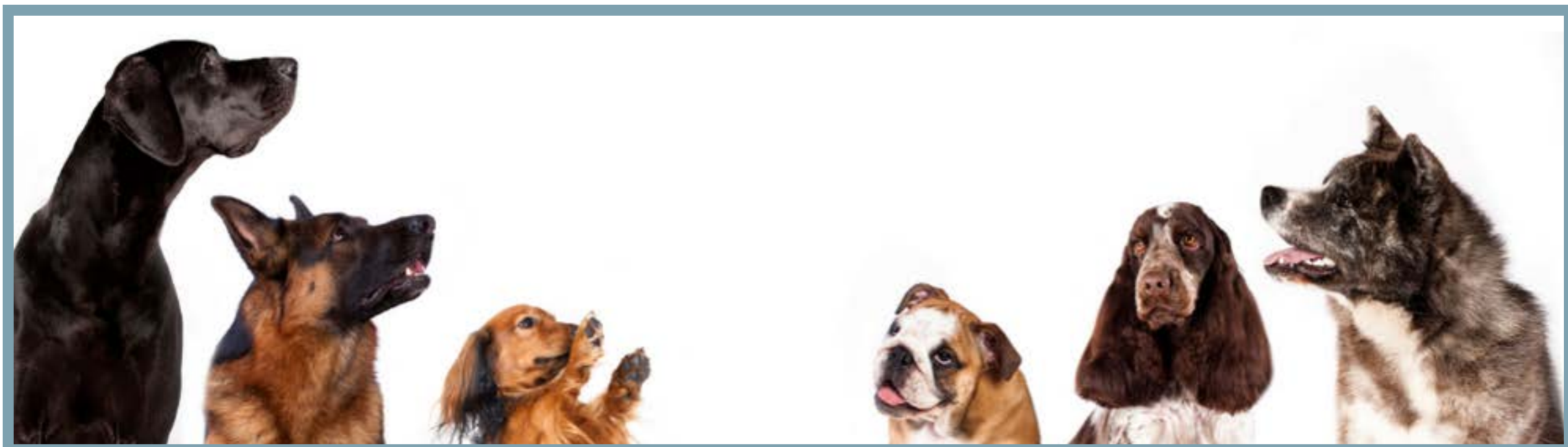
- ❖ **Increasing public awareness of the need to responsibly manage companion pets, thereby reducing the number of domestic animal related nuisances;**
- ❖ **Improving community participation through understanding what we currently do;**
- ❖ **Prioritising reactive services provided to the community through proposed actions; and**
- ❖ **Improving co-ordination of proactive services through future considerations or opportunities.**

LINK TO COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN

- ❖ **Council's Corporate Plan is the principle strategic planning document that sets the future direction for Council activities and guide the delivery of quality services to our community.**

GOALS

- ❖ **To be a diverse, strong and well-governed region of vibrant places, with an innovative and diverse economy and connected as a whole by our community spirit and respect for our natural environment.**
- ❖ **To make a positive difference for the region and the lives of our community members by ensuring we provide a service that is forward looking and well managed.**



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2009

Although not containing specific provisions relating to animal management the *Local Government Act 2009* provides the framework on when and how a local government may develop a local law.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Council is responsible for the administration and enforcement of a range of State legislation and Local Laws through the Fraser Coast Local Government Area. The legal framework associated with Animal Management in this region includes:

- ❖ *Animal Management (Cats & Dogs) Act 2008;*
- ❖ *Animal Management (Cats & Dogs) Regulation 2019;*
- ❖ *Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011 and Subordinate Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2011;* and
- ❖ *Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011 Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011.*

These legislative provisions allow council to respond to or act upon complaints/incidences, enforce compliance and collect revenue through fee-based services such as registration, to be expended in a manner that contributes to the promotion and encouragement of responsible pet ownership.

STRATEGIC LINKS TO OTHERS

Local government must ensure the strategy does not breach the requirements of other legislation. Legislation local government needs to consider includes the:

- ❖ *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001;* and
- ❖ *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011.*

Education, Enforcement & Responsible Pet Ownership

EDUCATION

There are a range of strongly held views in the community on the relative merits of education versus enforcement with regard to domestic animal management. In reality there is a role for both. Education is for everyone. Council is committed to providing community education opportunities that encourage responsible pet ownership and support the wider community safely and confidently to co-exist with pets.

Whilst voluntary compliance and/or behavioural changes are preferable, there will be a need from time to time for regulatory action to be instigated. The latter approach can be time consuming and comes with some financial cost to Council and therefore ratepayers. While the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* is prescriptive in many of its requirements, there is scope for an educational approach.

What that means to the community

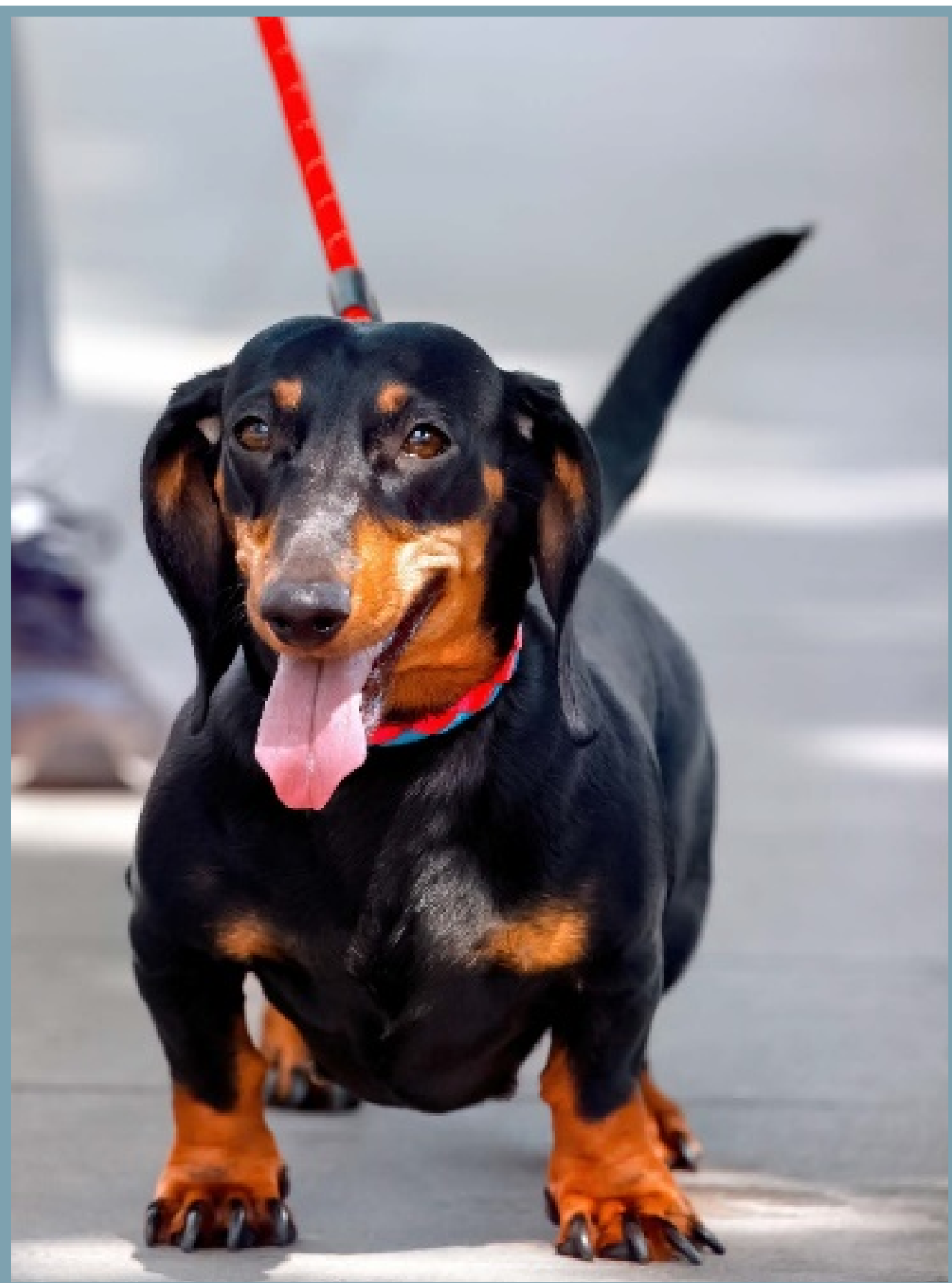
“...Would be great to have more pro-active animal education programs out there – maybe start with young kids in schools...”

“...education of animal owners is essential, but if it is not backed by effective action/enforcement, it will be a wasted resource...”

What we currently do

- ❖ **Media releases** – registration, vaccination, micro-chipping; desexing; Approved Inspection Programme;
- ❖ **Facebook posts** – impounded animals; adoption animals; reminders of unpaid registrations; and
- ❖ **Website factsheets.**





Proposed actions

- ❖ **Develop a responsible pet ownership program to ensure the community is aware of the requirements for keeping animals in the local government area;**
- ❖ **Schedule community events throughout the year to better engage with, and educate the community on animal management; and**
- ❖ **Ensure the currency and accuracy of promotion materials, forms and factsheets, and that these are available on the FCRC website.**

Future considerations or opportunities

- ❖ **Establish an operational team who proactively operate within the community and promote responsible pet ownership and education as their primary function, whilst providing early intervention opportunities;**
- ❖ **Produce improved promotional advertising across increased platforms such as TV and radio; and**
- ❖ **Seek opportunities to educate and promote the responsibilities of dog ownership and the benefits attributed to a healthy lifestyle for individuals and dogs through creating/participating in local Dog Walking Associations and Obedience Clubs.**



RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

When there is a lack of responsible pet ownership, there are serious impacts to people, pets, and places. Council recognises the importance of taking a strong stance in relation to responsible pet ownership and the role we play in promoting and advocating for such.

Council plays an important leadership role in supporting and promoting responsible pet ownership through an informed community.

Our objective is to build a responsible pet ownership culture from the ground up – empowering and equipping pet owners to be responsible for the benefit of their pet, themselves and the community that live, play and work within our region and those visiting.

What that means to the community

“Being a responsible pet owner means being a responsible citizen and being considerate to others and other pets.”

“Good to see council pro-actively addressing responsible ownership.”



A Code for Responsible Pet Ownership has been developed to help pet owners or prospective owners to understand the importance of being, and to encourage more responsible behaviour.

This code outlines best practices to achieve a caring and responsible environment for pets and their owners with the aim of minimising neighbourhood inconveniences, animal welfare concerns (including oversupply and homelessness) and the destruction of wildlife and its habitat.

The code will guide councils' education program in focusing on responsibilities of ownership.

Code of Responsible Pet Ownership

As a responsible pet owner, it is expected that;

- ❖ **Your property, lifestyle and budget are suited to the pet.**
- ❖ **Your property is secure to ensure your pet is confined and any impacts on public safety are minimised.**
- ❖ **You understand the needs and requirements of the type and breed of the pet including correct practices in relation to exercise, housing, dietary and grooming.**
- ❖ **When you are in public places, ensure that dogs are under effective control by means of a lead (except in off-leash areas).**
- ❖ **If you are exercising your dog in bushland reserves – understand that the dog has an impact on bushland habitat and wildlife. Ensure to minimise any impact by way of the pet always being on a lead, stay on established tracks and trails, only exercise during daylight hours, and keep away from wildlife.**
- ❖ **You register your dog annually with Council and comply with all legislative requirements.**
- ❖ **You ensure your pet does not cause nuisance to neighbouring properties and doesn't wander from your residence.**
- ❖ **Your pet is micro-chipped to enable quick identification and returning of the pet if it becomes lost or escapes from your residence.**
- ❖ **Your pet is desexed in accordance with applicable legislation.**
- ❖ **You always clean up after your pet.**



PET REGISTRATION

Annual dog registrations have fluctuated over the years, and data collected via the Australian Bureau of Statistics, indicate around 40% of Australian households include at least one dog, making them the most popular type of pets.

Our goal is to improve the number of registrations in the region. The Council registration database is an important tool used for returning lost dogs and identifying offending animals. It is important that owners' details are kept up to date.

Advantages of Registration

- ❖ **Pets are more likely to be returned to owners in a timely fashion;**
- ❖ **It reduces the need for unidentified animals to be re-homed or euthanised;**
- ❖ **It reduces the number of days/time spent in the facility;**
- ❖ **It helps to ensure owners comply with their statutory requirements to have their pet registered;**
- ❖ **It allows a history to be maintained on Council's systems;**
- ❖ **It can be utilised to directly contact relevant owners to provide information and education material on pet ownership; and**
- ❖ **It acts as a 'proof of ownership' identification system for all registered pets.**

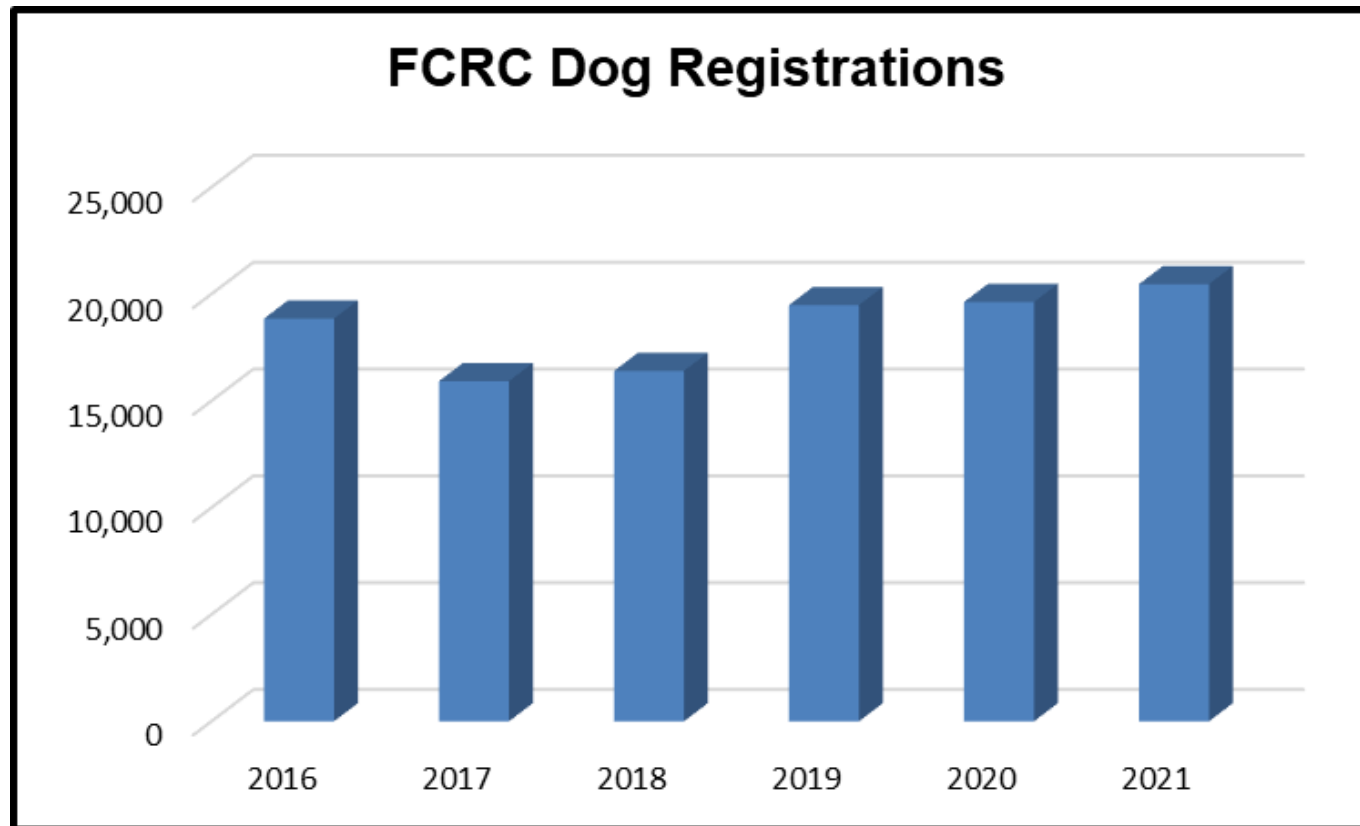
What that means to the community

“Council should consider the implementation of a lifetime registration for both cats and dogs once micro-chipped & desexed.”

“If you can't afford registration then ... in reality you can't afford to own a dog”



Fraser Coast Region dog registration numbers



* Numbers reflect total registration renewal notices issued at this point in time.

* Reporting on figures within the region will fluctuate given some owners may register or leave the council area during the life of this document.

What we currently do

- ❖ Provide free **first-time registration for dogs (up to the end of the current renewal period)**;
- ❖ Offer lower registration renewal rates for dogs that are **desexed and micro-chipped**;
- ❖ Return wandering pets without impounding if they are **registered and micro-chipped (restricted hours Mon-Fri)**;
- ❖ Provide dog tags upon registration (and free replacement tags upon request);
- ❖ Provide dog off-leash areas across the region; and
- ❖ Provide dog bags through dispensers at locations across the region, including beach access and off-leash areas.



Proposed actions

- ❖ **Simplify the registration fee structure;**
- ❖ **Enforce process and fee-related matters at the point of return of impounded animals that are not desexed and/or micro-chipped (ensuring they are returned in accordance with relevant legislative requirements – State and Local);**
- ❖ **Review service level expectations and align staffing/resourcing to meet community needs;**
- ❖ **Encourage community, through education, to embrace responsible pet ownership;**
- ❖ **Encourage voluntary compliance with State and Local Laws; and**
- ❖ **Apply increased and proportionate enforcement response to matters of non-compliance or continued non-compliance.**

Future considerations or opportunities

- ❖ **Implement free and/or subsidised micro-chipping days at community locations for cats and dogs;**
- ❖ **Undertake proactive patrols across the region, including weekends and after-hours; particularly in off-leash areas;**
- ❖ **Develop an education plan, and implement across the community on matters of responsible pet ownership; and**
- ❖ **Investigate effective council concession opportunities for desexing of animals.**



ENFORCEMENT

Council has an obligation to work with the community to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership through information, education and investigation. The mitigation of risk from recalcitrant owners and in particular the management of aggressive dogs, may require escalated actions such as formal enforcement or prosecution.

Council is authorised to investigate matters pertaining to both State legislation and Fraser Coast Regional Council Local Laws.

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* governs animal identification requirements as well as provisions in relation to dog attacks and regulated dogs.

Local Law No.1 (Administration) 2011 and *Local Law No.2 (Animal Management) 2011* along with their subordinates, govern the keeping of animals and the prescribed requirements for doing so.

What that means to the community

“More patrols/enforcement needed along the beach.”

“More enforcement of cats being kept in their own yards; they should also be registered.”

“Service is fine but people flaunt the rules when there is limited enforcement”



What we currently do

- ❖ **Respond to customers within business hours to domestic animal related matters including: dog attacks; aggressive dogs; wandering pets (cats and dogs); dogs off-leash; and livestock on Council controlled roads;**
- ❖ **Respond to after-hours calls that are or are a possible threat to public safety - dog attacks, and livestock on Council controlled roads;**
- ❖ **Facebook posts and Media releases; and**
- ❖ **Website factsheets.**

Proposed actions

- ❖ **Implement an enforcement manual and associated staff training to provide measured and appropriate responses to irresponsible pet owners within the community;**
- ❖ **Undertake a review of the local laws to:**
 - **provide staff the appropriate legislative tools to enable better response and manage pet-related issues**
 - **ensure staff are appropriately authorised to undertake regulatory enforcement**
 - **ensure animal management processes align with community expectations and needs**
 - **ensure the Local Laws recognise and promote good practice in animal management**
- ❖ **Review service level expectations and align staffing/resourcing to meet community needs;**
- ❖ **Review and develop internal enforcement and review/appeal processes policy, which will support officers in making sustainable, objective decisions surrounding matters of animal management, and in the interest of community health and safety; and**
- ❖ **Undertake proactive patrols across the region, including weekends.**

DOG ATTACKS (INVESTIGATION)

The impact of an attack or experiencing an aggressive dog is not only an immediate risk, but quite often results in long lasting physical and emotional trauma for all parties involved.

Council takes all reports of dog attacks and aggressive behaviour seriously, and as such highlights the importance of triaging, prioritising, and providing immediate response to matters of such nature.

Proposed actions

- ❖ Investigate options to create a team dedicated to the investigation of dog attacks and aggressive domestic animals;
- ❖ Provide specialist training for the dedicated team to be knowledgeable and competent in investigation, decision-making and enforcement related to these matters;
- ❖ Develop a decision-making framework to work in partnership with the enforcement manual providing clear process for the investigation of and enforcement action taken as a result of a dog attack incident; and
- ❖ Deliver high level of customer service and response to all parties involved through consistent, clear and concise communications, and updates until such time as the matter is finalised.

# complaints	2019	2020	2021
Dog Attacks	220	212	230
Aggressive Dogs	211	237	270

Whilst dog attacks and complaints about aggressive dogs remain consistent in reporting numbers each year, anecdotal evidence suggests that this figure is not indicative of the actual incidents occurring within the community. This occurs for a number of reasons including but not limited to:

- ❖ Victims failure to report;
- ❖ Parties settling without Council intervention;
- ❖ Other external organisations reporting mechanism failures; and
- ❖ Potentially a community accepting behaviours such as this from animals as “natural”.

BARKING DOGS

Dogs barking is a natural behaviour and it is important this is understood. At times however, sometimes unbeknownst to the animal owner, pets can adversely impact other community members. Council acknowledges and understands the impact a noise nuisance can have upon members of the community and their lives and seeks to provide a more customer centric approach to such requests that upholds and withstands the evidentiary requirements should a matter progress beyond initial investigation and enforcement.

# complaints	2019	2020	2021
Barking Dogs	695	551	595
Other noise nuisances	41	55	74

What that means to the community

“I cannot get action over an intimidating barking dog”

“Current process to complain about dogs barking inappropriate & ineffective.”

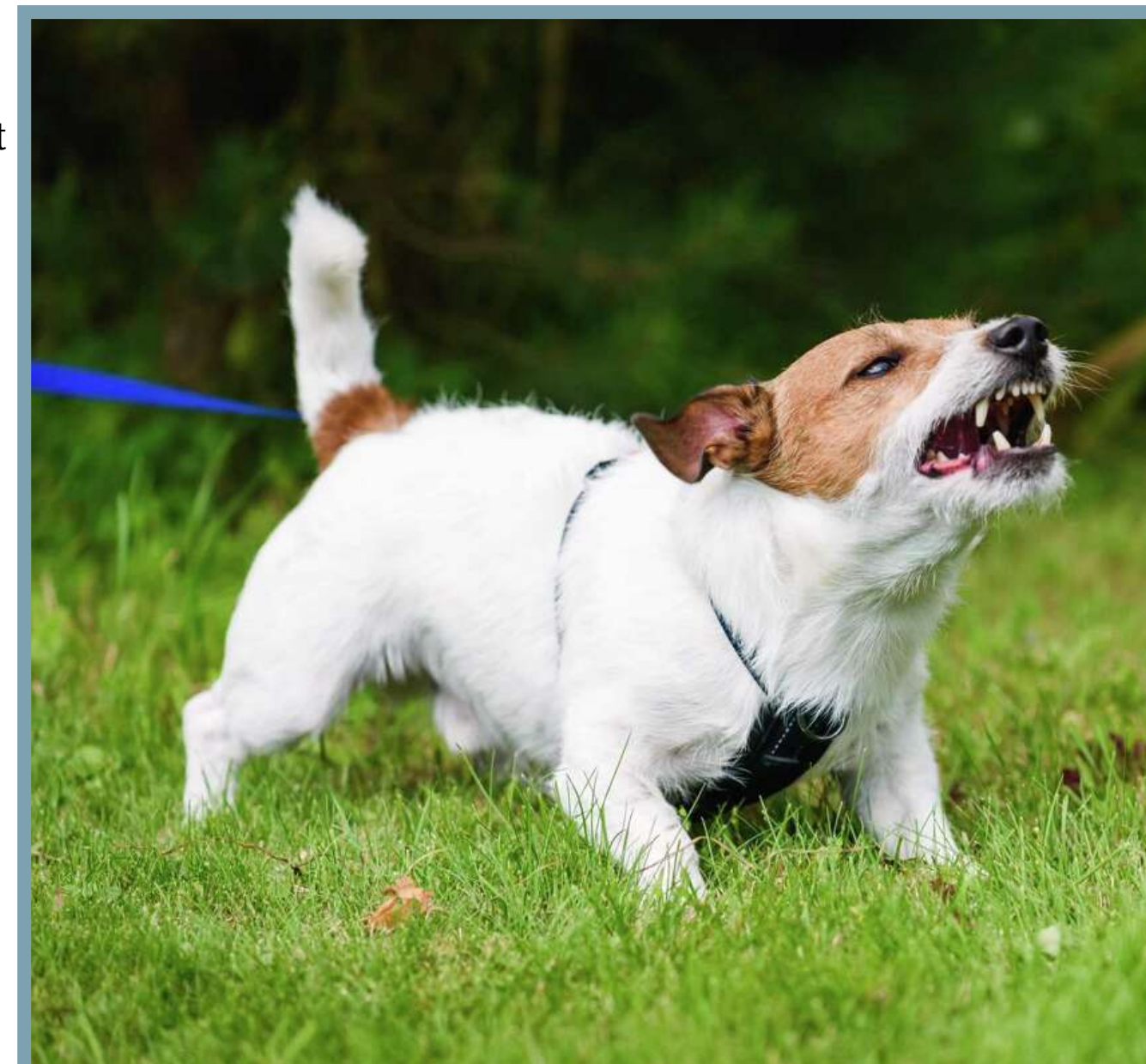


What we currently do

- ❖ Investigate instances of alleged nuisance via diary collated data.

Proposed actions

- ❖ Implement a barking dog information pack which outlines (for both the customer and owner), the process for investigation and determination of animal noise nuisances;
- ❖ Incorporate both traditional officer intervention and investigation with utilisation of scientific noise monitoring devices; and
- ❖ Improve legislative provisions surrounding noise nuisance (local laws) and provide officers with clearly defined framework for investigation and enforcement.



TRAINING, SERVICES, AND ANIMAL FACILITIES

TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Council recognises that competent and motivated staff are its greatest asset. Recruitment and ongoing training are key to delivering high quality, consistent and transparent service in accordance with already established legislation, policies and procedures.

Council will focus on ensuring Officers are appropriately trained and experienced to educate, investigate and enforce the legislative provisions within their authorisations and delegations.

What that means to the community

“Our local ranger has visited a few times.....each time it has been an education for both of us and a pleasant experience.”

“Differing information is provided depending on which staff member you speak to.”

“This should be the absolute priority. The old idea of the ‘dog catcher’ is dead and gone. We need to promote the education standard and qualifications the officers possess.”



What we currently do

- ❖ Offer basic induction training and on-the-job training to our officers including in relation to Council systems; local laws and legislation; and
- ❖ Offer opportunity to staff to undertake education courses in relation to domestic animal regulation.

Proposed actions

- ❖ Implement a detailed induction and training plan for new staff;
- ❖ Implement an enforcement manual and associated staff training to provide measured and appropriate responses to irresponsible pet owners within the community;
- ❖ Undertake a review of the local laws to provide staff the appropriate legislative tools to better respond and manage domestic animal related issues;
- ❖ Commit to increasing the authorised officer qualifications; and
- ❖ Require specific levels of skills and experience at employment.

Future considerations or opportunities

- ❖ Review service level provision in order for Council to deliver the appropriate and required management response to the community demand; and
- ❖ Add to the current induction & training plan that will focus on:
 - providing staff the appropriate legislative tools to enable better response and manage animal-related issues;
 - ensuring staff are appropriately authorised to undertake regulatory enforcement;
 - ensuring animal management processes align with community expectations and needs; and
 - ensuring the Local Laws recognise and promote good practice in animal management.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES / OFF-LEASH AREAS

Dog off-leash areas provide the opportunity for owners to exercise and socialise their dogs. Pets that are well socialised and exercised are likely to be healthier, happier and less aggressive.

Dog off-leash areas are valued by the community and, while primarily for the benefit of our beloved pets, off-leash parks offer just as many benefits to humans as they do dogs. They are areas to exercise, to socialise, to bond with others and their pets and to meet with like minded community members and groups.



What that means to the community

“More fenced parks with two areas, not just one area.”

“I think the local laws need to be changed so that there are no off-leash areas except for dedicated fenced enclosures.”

“I think Council is better than most in providing off-leash facilities, both in terms of quality and location.”



What we currently do

- ❖ Provide and maintain secure off-leash dog parks across the region;
- ❖ Provide signage at beach access points indicating whether an on or off-leash area; and
- ❖ Provide dog dispenser bags at strategic locations throughout the community.

Proposed actions

- ❖ Review and identify areas of high use to better accommodate our growing community;
- ❖ Identify ways to improve existing purpose-built facilities that contribute to harmonious co-existence of pets and people in the community;
- ❖ Install additional & high-visibility signage at off-leash locations; and
- ❖ Review service level provisions with the view to increase ranger patrols across the region, particularly in areas of off-leash beaches and parks.

Future considerations or opportunities

- ❖ Amendment to local laws in line with community needs and wants around off-leash areas.

CUSTOMER & BUSINESS SERVICES

Council recognises the importance of having effective channels of communication and full accessibility to council services.

We are committed to removing barriers that customers may face in accessing staff, information, services and technologies by introducing new and innovative solutions and smart technology.

Council is committed to a culture of continuous improvement, ensuring our animal management services and initiatives support the needs of the community through accessibility, ease of use, innovation and creativity.

What that means to the community

“Out of hours rangers are essential and not provided.”

“Can’t get to speak with anybody concerning animal problems.”

“There needs to be 24/7 availability to rangers in regards to lost/found/wandering animals.” “There are not enough Animal Management officers to adequately deal with the issues.”

“Customer service is always friendly.”



What we currently do

- ❖ Provide services Monday-Friday for all matters, with attendance to matters being triaged and subject to officer availability;
- ❖ Provide after-hours on-call services for emergency situations only (threats to public safety including dog attacks and livestock on Council controlled roads); and
- ❖ Provide domestic animal facilities open to the public from 10:00am-2:00pm Monday to Saturday.

Proposed actions

- ❖ Provide a high level of customer service interactions and offer alternative service delivery options where appropriate;
- ❖ Develop a clear decision-making framework to demonstrate transparency of decision-making as a result of a request;
- ❖ Provide customer relations training including conflict resolution;
- ❖ Review opportunities for extended service provisions to the public, particularly in relation to wandering pets, proactive education and pound operating hours; and
- ❖ Increase business service efficiencies for processing customer requests and complaints.

POUNDS AND ADOPTION CENTRE

Fraser Coast Regional Council is one of the few local governments in Queensland which operates both a Pound and Adoption Centre. In fact, we operate two facilities – one in Maryborough (Pound only) and one in Hervey Bay (Pound & Adoption Centre).

Our staff operate a ‘fear free’ centre, with all having undergone training to ensure they can look after the animal physical and emotional wellbeing while housed in our facility.

We understand that a lost pet is a difficult and emotional situation for both a pet and the owner. We care about the community’s pets and their health and wellbeing. Our first priority is to ensure that pets and the community are safe.

What that means to the community

“Hours of operation are inadequate.”

“The staff are doing their best, but the facilities are outdated, and cats are not adequately housed.”

“We have moved a lot and I was happy to meet great staff, clean facilities and reasonable adoption fees in this region.”

“There is an increasing need for more facilities.”

“Opening hours ...some variation between days, e.g. open early to mid-morning some days and late afternoon to evening other days to allow for those who work.”



What we currently do

- ❖ **Reunite lost pets with their owners;**
- ❖ **Re-home pets where they can't be reunited;**
- ❖ **Ensure the health and well-being of all animals that come through the centre;**
- ❖ **Work in conjunction with local refuges and foster groups to re-home as many pets as possible;**
- ❖ **Educate the community; and**
- ❖ **Apply appropriate enforcement actions when required.**

Proposed actions

- ❖ **Continue building relationships with rescue and foster groups in and out of the region to increase re-homing rates;**
- ❖ **Construct a new cat quarantine building to minimise communicable disease and spread;**
- ❖ **Ensure continuing promotion of good practice in ensuring care, treatment and welfare of impounded animals while meeting the required welfare regulations and community expectations;**
- ❖ **Develop and implement training plans for all current and new staff including in welfare and care of animals and compliance/enforcement matters; and**
- ❖ **Review operating days and times to meet demand of the community.**

Future considerations or opportunities

- ❖ **Investigate options to construct a centralised purpose-built facility in recognition that the region continues to grow and our current facility may not meet growth and demand predictions; and**
- ❖ **Review service level provisions with the view to ensuring any dog or cat leaving the facility is micro-chipped and desexed (impounded adopted animals).**

Did you know?

Our facility in Hervey Bay currently has capacity to house the following:

# capacity	Pound	Adoption Centre
Dogs & Puppies	24	24
Cats & Kittens	32	10
<i>We have limited capacity to house small livestock or poultry</i>		

In 2020/2021 we impounded, returned to owners, adopted or rescued were able to send to rescue, the following animals:

# animals impounded	2020	2021
Dogs & Puppies	682	626
Cats & Kittens	605	567
Other	93	91

# animals returned to owner	2020	2021
Dogs & Puppies	411	366
Cats & Kittens	122	111

# animals adopted or rescued	2020	2021
Dogs & Puppies	153	108
Cats & Kittens	240	196

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE SPACES

The relationship people have with pets is changing. For many people, they are not just a pet to enjoy at home, they have become friend and family. They participate in everyday activities within the community – walks on the beach, enjoying a visit to the local café, play dates in the park, festivals and events.

We are committed to improving the livability of our region, providing safe and accessible places that everyone can enjoy. Places that foster connectedness to people and place, health and wellbeing, whilst maintaining and preserving our natural environment and wildlife for future generations. Community safety is a priority for Council.

What that means to the community

“When on the beach I do not know where on/off-leash starts and stops.”

"Visible patrols are needed to ensure the locals do the right thing in our parks and beaches"

Council’s role is to support the community, ensuring safety and enforcing regulation where necessary. We are committed to supporting open public places that:

- ❖ Are safe and accessible with clear signage to ensure harmonious usage where appropriate;
- ❖ Are inclusive of community needs;
- ❖ Protect the natural environment and wildlife; and
- ❖ Are responsive to changes in the local community needs.

Council will work with pet owners to ensure the safety and amenity of the broader community is maintained. Collaborative, proactive and enduring partnerships with community and other government agencies to support responsible animal management are core outcomes sought in the future directions led by this strategy.

The outcomes and success of both proposed and projected actions will achieve and deliver on the goal of safe and inclusive spaces which accommodate and consider the needs of the entire Fraser Coast Community.

NEXT STEPS

The delivery of objectives and commitments set out in the plan will be supported through implementation of key priorities combined with potential funding. The approach taken will ensure that the outcomes align with community sentiment, that over the life of the plan objectives can be monitored, evaluated, changed and improved where required, and provide for service excellence and delivery in animal management activities undertaken by Council.

YEARLY REVIEW

The proposed actions & future considerations or opportunities will be reviewed annually to:

- ❖ Ensure they align with the current objectives of Council's corporate and operational plans.**
- ❖ Ensure they are achievable and align to ongoing community expectations.**

