



Weipa Town Authority

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC PLAN

2026–2030



Area: 11km²



Established: 1961



Population: 4,097*

** Population as at 2021*

Weipa Town Authority

Foreword

Pets play an important role in our homes and community by providing companionship, opportunities for socialisation and exercise, and fostering community connections. It is well known that pets contribute to both physical and mental well-being while offering unconditional love to their owners.

Weipa promotes responsible pet ownership through state and local laws, along with proactive programs that encourage registration, desexing, microchipping, and effective pet management. Owning a pet is a long-term commitment and a privilege, but it also comes with significant responsibility.

The Weipa Town Authority (WTA) plays a vital role in maintaining a safe and liveable town for all residents. Through a range of services and effective local laws, WTA ensures that pet owners uphold responsible ownership practices that support community safety and well-being.

As Weipa continues to grow and evolve, it is essential to review and update our animal management policies and local laws to reflect the changing needs and expectations of residents. This strategic plan provides a dedicated roadmap to proactively address emerging trends and challenges in animal management.

Across Queensland, there have been too many instances of pets, particularly dogs, causing harm or injury. In response, the state government has introduced stricter legislation to enhance public safety. This plan aligns with these legislative changes and reinforces our commitment to ensuring the safety of all residents while promoting responsible pet ownership.

I am proud to say that the WTA team and our stakeholders are dedicated to achieving the best outcomes for our community. It is with great pleasure that I present the Weipa Animal Management Strategic Plan 2026–2030, a plan that aligns with WTA's strategic direction and reinforces our commitment to a safe and healthy environment for all.

Jaime Gane

Chairperson

Weipa Town Authority

Contents

1. Executive Summary	6	6. Legislative Framework – Animal Management	14
2. Introduction	7	7. What Does Responsible Pet Ownership Look Like?	16
3. Purpose of the Weipa Animal Management Strategic Plan 2026–2030	8	8. Key Issues and Challenges	18
4. How This Strategic Plan was Developed	10	Key Issue 1: Animal not under effective control	19
4.1 Strategic Alignment	10	Key Issue 2: Unregistered Dogs	21
4.2 Alignment with Community, Partner and Stakeholder Contributions	10	Key Issue 3: Unidentified Cats and Dogs	22
4.2.1 Community Consultation	10	Key Issue 4: Unwanted Cats and Dogs	23
4.2.2 Key Consultation Insights	10	Key Issue 5: Animal Noise Nuisance	23
5. Our Vision, Goals and Objectives	12	Key Issue 6: Animal Management Policies and Procedures	24
5.1 Vision: “Your Pet Your Responsibility”	12	Key Issue 7: Community Education and Awareness	25
5.2 Strategic Pillars	12	9. Strategic Plan Implementation Review, Performance and Reporting	26
5.3 Objectives	13		



1. Executive Summary

The Weipa Animal Management Strategic Plan 2026–2030 establishes a structured framework to promote responsible pet ownership, enhance public safety, and improve community well-being. Developed through comprehensive stakeholder consultation, this plan outlines key challenges and strategic responses to ensure a harmonious and pet-friendly community.

Key Objectives:

- Increase pet registrations by 20% over the next three years, boost microchipping rates by 15%, and encourage desexing through targeted incentive programs to reduce stray populations.
- Strengthen enforcement of pet management laws to reduce public nuisances and safety risks.
- Improve management of off-leash areas and provide better resources for pet owners.
- Collaborate with local veterinarians, shelters, and enforcement agencies to strengthen animal management practices and support effective rehoming efforts

Strategic Approach:

- Educate the community on responsible pet ownership through targeted campaigns.
- Implement proactive inspections and enhanced enforcement to address non-compliance.
- Implement noise-monitoring technology in high-complaint areas and improve pet identification through microchipping and registration compliance.
- Foster partnerships with key stakeholders to support effective animal management.

This strategic plan reflects the Weipa Town Authority's (WTA) commitment to creating a balanced, safe, and pet-friendly community, ensuring a harmonious coexistence between residents and animals.



2. Introduction

Pet owners play a crucial role in ensuring the health, well-being, and care of their animals. Many households in Weipa own pets, and recent changes to tenancy laws and other services have made pet ownership more accessible. These changes allow more people to enjoy the companionship of pets within the community.

However, owning a pet comes with significant responsibilities. Legislation and strategies – such as the Weipa Animal Management Strategic Plan 2026–2030 – help pet owners meet their obligations to both their animals and the broader community. Responsible pet ownership contributes to community safety, neighbourhood amenity, and positive animal welfare outcomes.

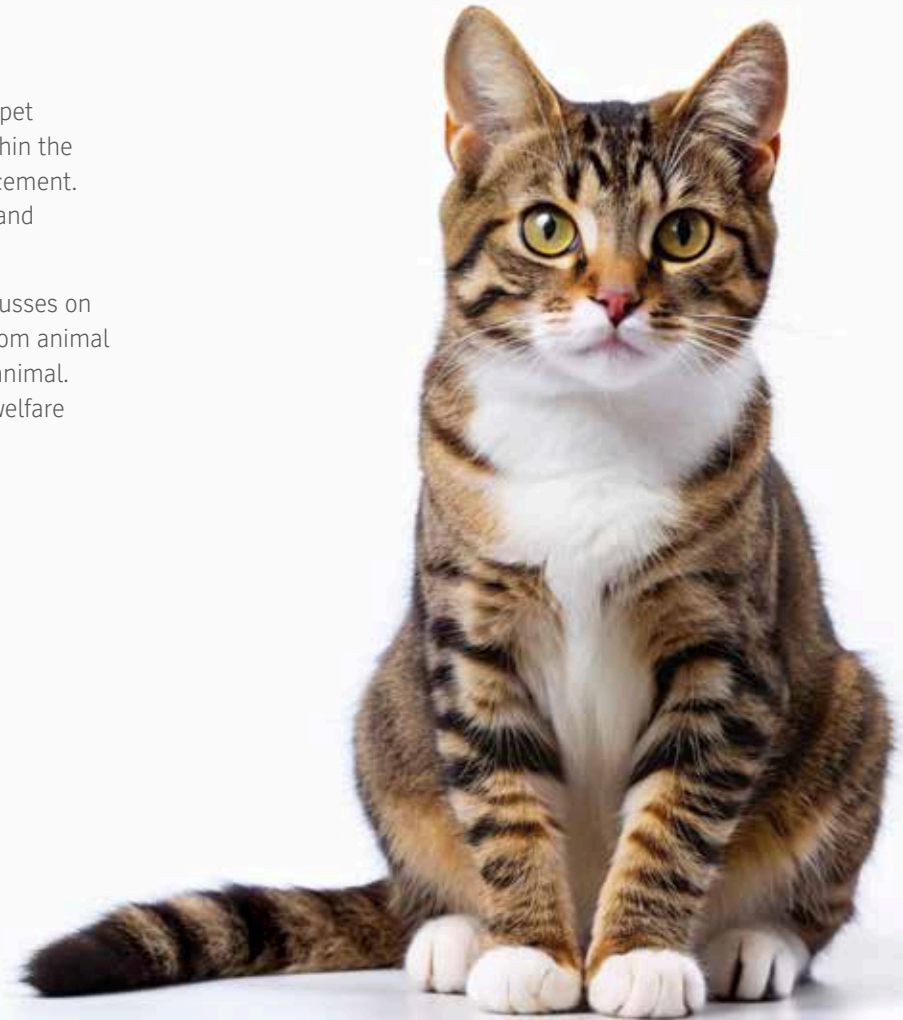
This strategic plan ensures that domestic pets, particularly cats and dogs, are managed safely and responsibly, with minimal impact on the community and environment. It builds on previous reviews of Weipa's animal management laws, ensuring they remain relevant, effective, and aligned with community expectations and evolving legislation. Through this strategic plan, the Weipa Town Authority reaffirms its commitment to fostering a safe, harmonious, and pet-friendly community.



3. Purpose of the Weipa Animal Management Strategic Plan 2026–2030

The purpose of this strategic plan is to promote responsible pet ownership and encourage long-term behavioural change within the Weipa community through education, awareness, and enforcement. By doing so, the WTA aim to support the safety, well-being, and liveability of the Weipa Township.

The strategic plan addresses animal management which focusses on the health and well-being of the community. It is different from animal welfare which focusses on the health and well-being of the animal. Under the *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001*, all animal welfare matters are investigated and managed by the RSPCA.





4. How this Strategic Plan was developed

4.1 Strategic Alignment

This strategic plan aligns with the Weipa Town Authority's (WTA) Corporate Plan, which aims to create a safe and liveable community. The Corporate Plan sets the vision and priorities for Weipa Township, focusing on enhancing the quality of life for residents through the services WTA provides.

By fostering a safe, healthy, and accessible community, this strategic plan directly supports the goals of the Corporate Plan. Like the Corporate Plan, the Animal Management Strategic Plan is centred on the concept of community, working to promote a secure and liveable environment for residents, visitors, and pets alike.

4.2 Alignment with Community, Partner and Stakeholder Contributions

This strategic plan has been developed in close collaboration with the community to ensure it reflects local concerns and priorities. Through the *Have Your Say* engagement platform on the WTA website, residents were encouraged to provide feedback, contributing to the strategy direction.

4.2.1 Community Consultation

Key Stakeholder Engaged

In addition to community feedback, input was sought from key internal and external stakeholders to strengthen the Plan's effectiveness:

Tableland Veterinary Service: Tableland Veterinary Service operates a local practice in Weipa, offering veterinary care, training, and advice for all animals. They provide a full range of products for pets and livestock and offer expert guidance to support responsible pet ownership.

Cape Animal Protection Shelter (CAPS): As a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation, CAPS provides temporary refuge and rehoming services for abandoned, stray, and unwanted dogs. WTA relies on CAPS to assist in rehoming animals, and efforts are underway to formalise an agreement outlining the process for transferring animals into their care.

Department of Primary Industries, Queensland (DPI): DPI oversees animal welfare in Far North Queensland and works closely with the RSPCA. Any animal welfare concerns are directed to DPI for investigation and action.

Queensland Police Service (QPS): QPS supports WTA in animal welfare investigations, enforcement actions, and the seizure of animals, when necessary, under Local and State legislation.

Neighbouring Councils: Collaboration with regional councils strengthens animal management efforts. WTA engages with:

- Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council,
- Napranum Aboriginal Shire Council,
- Aurukun Aboriginal Shire Council.

4.2.2 Key Consultation Insights

In October 2025, the Weipa Town Authority (WTA) conducted an online community consultation survey to support the development of the Animal Management Strategic Plan 2026–2030. The purpose of the consultation was to better understand community awareness, satisfaction, and priorities regarding the management of animals within the Weipa Township.

Community Engagement Summary

Weipa Town Authority values the important role pets have in our community, providing friendship and improving the health and well-being of many residents. Our goal is to ensure that all residents and pets can live harmoniously and safely together in our vibrant community.

In October 2025 we asked you for feedback to help develop and shape the 2026–2030 Animal Management Plan. The purpose was to better understand community awareness, satisfaction, and priorities regarding the management of animals within our community.



75

Valid Survey Responses Received

What We Learned

Our Focus Area

68%

PET OWNERS

68% of participants are pet owners.

32%

NON PET-OWNERS

32% of participants are non-pet owners.

65%

OF RESPONDENTS

are aware of current animal management laws.

"Wandering dogs. I no longer take my dogs for a walk solo as they've been attacked multiple times by wandering hunting dogs."

– Weipa Resident

"Education campaigns would be a great way to build community, dogs do bark, help for some residents that are having issues would encourage some tolerance."

– Weipa Resident

"Stronger enforcement, more penalties to hold people accountable."

– Weipa Resident

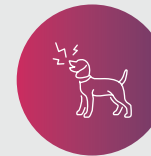
Local Concerns

Top 3 local concerns identified by our survey participants.



01.

WANDERING AND STRAY DOGS



02.

BARKING DOGS

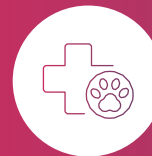


03.

ENFORCEMENT & COMPLIANCE

Community Pet Education

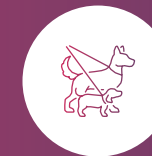
Top 3 education topics identified by participants.



DESEXING EDUCATION



PET OWNERSHIP LAWS & REGULATIONS



LEASH AND REGISTRATION RULES

84%

Support increased community education on the benefits of desexing.

74%

Consider partnership between WTA, veterinarians & CAPS "very important".

5. Our Vision, Goals and Objectives

5.1 Vision: “Your Pet Your Responsibility”

“To create a safe, responsible, and pet-friendly community through effective animal management and responsible pet ownership.”

5.2 Strategic Pillars

- **Enhanced Public Safety:** Ensuring pets are managed responsibly to protect residents, visitors, and other animals.
- **A Future-Ready Approach:** Adapting to emerging challenges and legislative changes to maintain best-practice animal management.
- **Sustaining Liveability:** Supporting a clean, safe, and pet-friendly environment that benefits both pet owners and the broader community.
- **Collaboration and Advocacy:** Partnering with stakeholders, local organisations, and government bodies to strengthen responsible pet ownership initiatives.





5.3 Objectives

1. Promote Responsible Pet Ownership

“Indicators of Success”

- All dogs and cats are registered, with a significant increase in the number of animals microchipped and desexed.
- Reduction in enforcement and prosecution cases related to irresponsible pet ownership.
- Responsible pet ownership initiatives are supported and delivered across Weipa.

2. Ensure Pets are Appropriately Controlled and Contained

“Indicators of Success”

- Reduced instances of cats and dogs causing public nuisances (wandering, attacking, barking).
- Fewer animals requiring impoundment.
- Decrease in enforcement actions related to uncontrolled pets.

3. Improve Animal Identification and Reunification

“Indicators of Success”

- Fewer unidentifiable or unwanted cats and dogs.
- Increased proportion of wandering or impounded animals reunited with their owners.

4. Encourage Voluntary Compliance with State and Local Laws

“Indicators of Success”

- Reduction in enforcement actions as more residents comply with animal management laws.
- Increase pet registrations by 20% and microchipping rates by 15% within the next three years.
- Reduce animal nuisance complaints by 10% within two years through increased community education and enforcement.

5. Ensure Fair, Efficient, and Humane Interventions

“Indicators of Success”

- Minimised complaints regarding WTA's animal management intervention.

6. Legislative Framework – Animal Management

The *Commonwealth Aluminium Corporation Pty Ltd Agreement Act 1957* (Comalco Act), under Clause 45, grants Rio Tinto the authority to perform local government functions in Weipa.

The WTA has in place an Enforcement Policy that aligns with the Corporate Plan's approach to delivering service excellence. The policy advocates for voluntary compliance with the law and articulates how WTA will approach this. This strategic plan supports this policy position with a strong focus on education, engagement and partnership.

The WTA has a statutory obligation to administer, monitor, and enforce compliance with various State and local laws related to animal management across the Weipa township. E.g.:

- *Local Government Act 2009*,
- *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008 and Regulation 2019*,
- *Weipa Town Authority Local Law No. 1 (Administration) 2018*, and
- *Weipa Town Authority Local Law No. 2 Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2018 and Subordinate Local Law No. 2*.

The framework has Strategic Links to Other Legislation and the WTA must ensure the strategic plan does not breach the requirements of other legislation. Such as *Animal Care and Protection Act 2001* and the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*.

The following provides an overview of the legislation that is key to the WTA's management of Animals (Cats and Dogs) in the Weipa township.

Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008:

This is the Primary legislative document that directs our animal management services. It provides a mechanism for the WTA to:

- address domestic animal related matters and concerns to respond to or act on 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.

The purpose of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* is to:

- provide for the identification of cats and dogs,
- provide for the registration of dogs and if adopted, cats,
- provide for the effective management of regulated dogs,
- promote the responsible ownership of cats and dogs, and
- prohibit the ownership of and particular dealings with dogs of particular breeds.

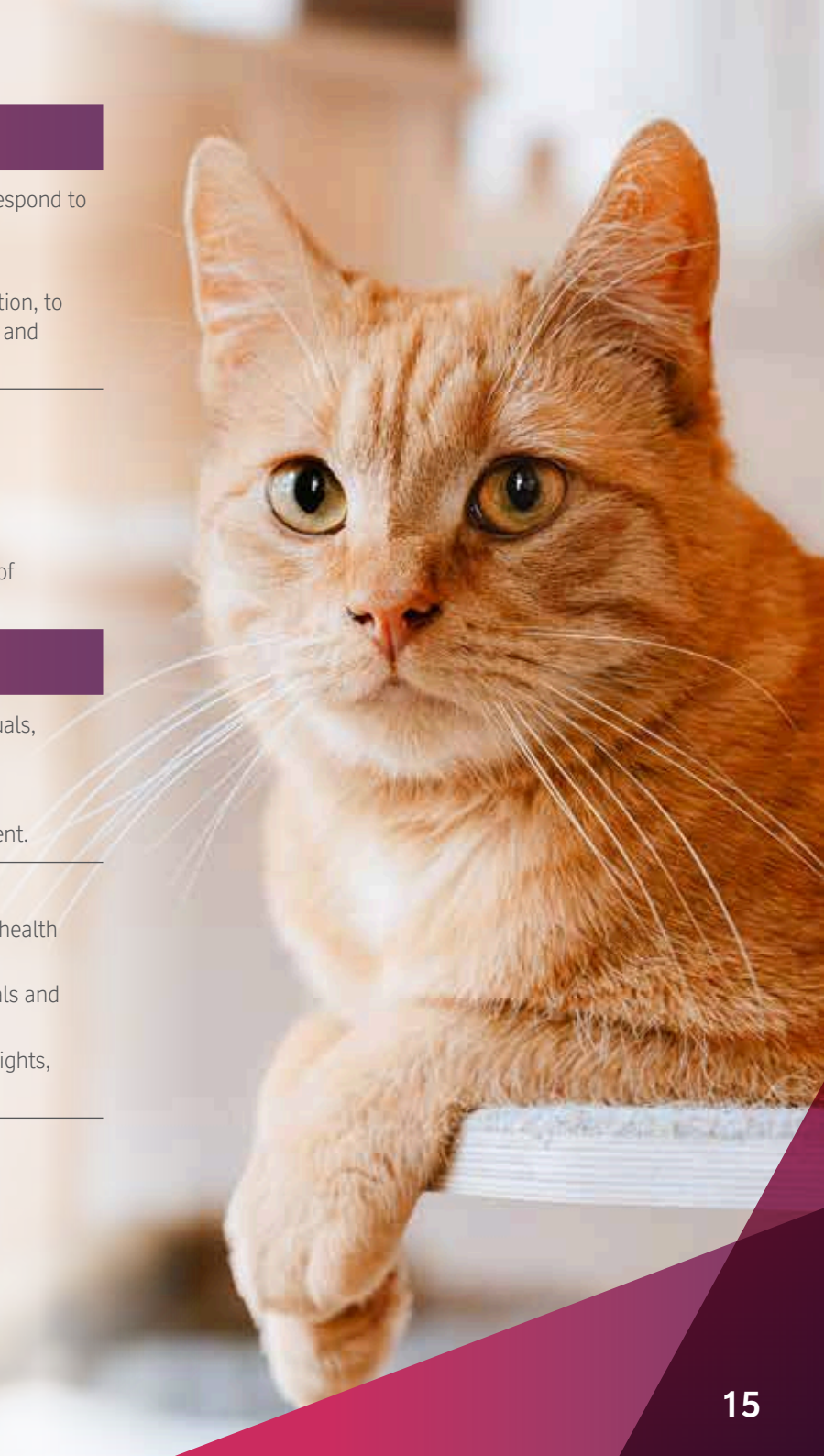
Weipa Town Authority Local Law No. 2 Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2018

The purpose of this local law is to regulate and manage the keeping and control of animals in the Weipa area in a way that:

- balances community expectations with the rights of individuals,
- protects the community against risks to health and safety,
- prevents pollution and other environmental damage, and
- protects the amenity of the local community and environment.

The Aims of this local law is to:

- protect the community from risks of injury and damage,
- prevent animals from creating nuisances or risks to human health and safety,
- minimise environmental harm or nuisance caused by animals and preserve local amenities, and
- ensure animals are kept and used in ways that respect the rights, expectations, and enjoyment of the community.



7. What Does Responsible Pet Ownership Look Like?

Your Pet Your Responsibility: The Weipa community is encouraged to not only comply with their regulatory requirements but to foster “Responsible Pet Ownership” which involves:

- Ensuring your cat or dog is registered by the time they reach 12 weeks of age.
- Ensuring your pet wears a collar with a registration tag and contact number.
- Having your cat or dog microchipped and keeping your contact details up to date so they can be returned to you if lost.
- Considering desexing your pet helps prevent unwanted litters, reduces roaming, and can benefit their health. Speak to your vet for more information.
- Keeping your pet appropriately vaccinated and protected from ticks, worms, and fleas.
- Taking responsibility for your pet’s behaviour both at home and in public, including managing barking and other anti-social behaviours.
- Only allowing your dog off-leash in designated off-leash areas. Regardless of whether your dog is on or off-leash, ensure they are under effective control at all times.
- Using off-leash areas appropriately – remember, not all dogs are suited or safe to be off-leash.
- Regularly checking your pet’s enclosure or fencing to ensure it is secure and appropriate for safely containing your pet.

The importance of responsible pet ownership

While most pet owners act responsibly, ensuring their animals are well cared for and appropriately managed, there are instances where irresponsible pet ownership can have serious consequences for the broader community.

Why Responsible Pet Ownership Matters

Irresponsible pet ownership can lead to various challenges, including:

- **Safety risks** – incidents such as dog attacks, threatening encounters, or unrestrained animals on roads.
- **Community amenity concerns** – uncontained animals roaming in public areas, creating disturbances.
- **Road safety hazards** – animals on roads causing accidents.
- **Nuisances** – excessive barking, and poor animal hygiene.
- **Environmental impacts** – threats to local wildlife and ecosystems.

These issues not only affect individuals but also the overall well-being of the Weipa community. The impacts can be categorised as follows:

Social Impacts

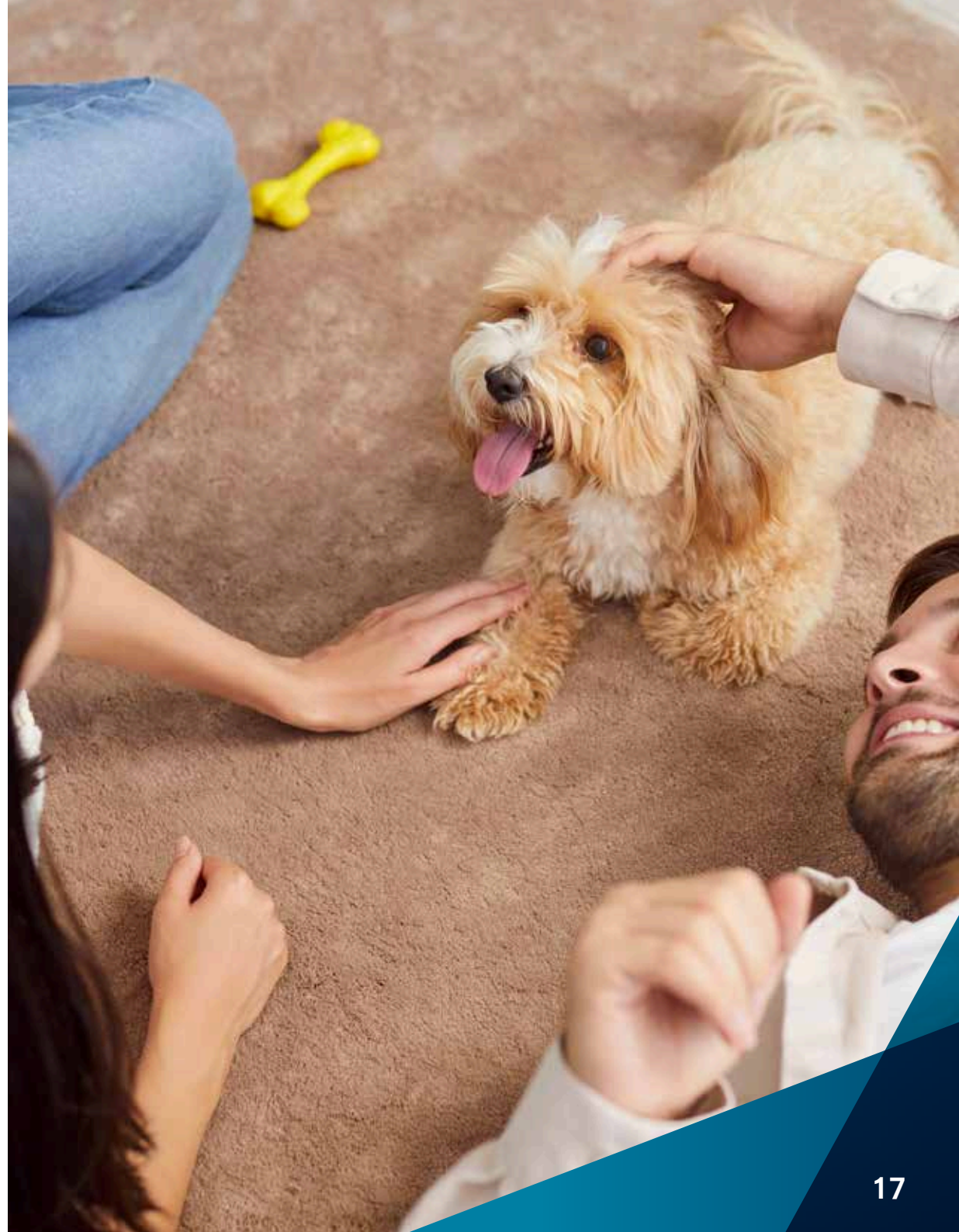
- Risks to public safety, including injury or, in extreme cases, loss of life.
- Reduction in community amenity, affecting Weipa's reputation and appeal.
- Increased fear among residents, discouraging the use of public spaces and designated pet areas.
- Escalation of anti-social behaviour by pets and their owners.
- Public health concerns due to animal-related hygiene issues.
- Disruptions to service providers accessing properties.
- Increased frustration and complaints from residents.

Environmental Impacts

- Harm to local wildlife, including injury and loss of native species.
- Spread of animal-borne diseases such as Parvovirus and Feline Influenza.
- Increased presence of pests, parasites, and other health hazards.

Financial Impacts

- Loss of revenue due to unregistered pets.
- Increased demand on WTAs resources to manage complaints instead of proactive initiatives.
- Delays in responding to service requests.
- Reduced ability to fund and implement community programs.



8. Key Issues and Challenges

In this section, the key issues are identified, and the strategic responses outline the WTA's approach to addressing each challenge. The WTA will adopt the following when addressing each of the key issues:

Key Issue 1 – Animals not being under effective control

Key Issue 2 – Unregistered dogs

Key Issue 3 – Unidentified cats and dogs

Key Issue 4 – Unwanted cats and dogs

Key Issue 5 – Animal noise nuisance

Key Issue 6 – Animal management policies and procedures

Key Issue 7 – Community education and awareness



Key Issue 1 – Animal not under effective control

These dogs account for the majority of animals impounded by the WTA and generally have escaped under, over, or through a fence, gate or property boundary and have not been under the control of their owner or keeper. Animals not securely enclosed, wandering or not under effective control may result in:

- attacks causing physical injury to a person,
- emotional impacts on the victim, dog owner and families,
- attacks on animals (pets and livestock) causing injury or death,
- rush or menacing attacks causing fear,
- motor vehicle accidents,
- spread of disease (such as Parvo Virus and Feline HIV) and parasites,
- propagation of unwanted litters,
- fouling of footpaths and properties, and
- disturbance or nuisance in the neighbourhood.

The impact of an attack or experiencing aggressive behaviour from an animal is not only immediate but often results in lasting physical and emotional trauma. While dog attacks and complaints about aggressive dogs are received anecdotal evidence suggests that the number of complaints is not indicative of the actual incidences occurring. This may be due to:

- victims may not report attacks or aggression because of the potential ramifications for themselves, their families or friends,
- owners and victims may settle through agreement to provide compensation, payment of vet/medical bills etc,
- organisations such as hospital, police and vets not having established clearly defined reporting or recording mechanisms linking with the WTA, and
- people accepting attacks and aggressive behaviours are natural (dogs chase cats, and dogs guard properties etc.).

STRATEGIC RESPONSES (SR)

SR 1.1 – Dog Attacks and Aggressive Dogs To Be Given Priority Attention

The WTA will ensure dog attacks and aggressive dogs continue to be given priority attention.

The WTA will:

- respond immediately to dog attacks,
- ensure that dogs surrendered due to an attack will be subject to a behavioural assessment and an owner notification process before any euthanasia decision is made. A 24-hour cooling-off period will apply, but appeals will be accepted and reviewed by WTA before action is taken,
- regulate dog declarations, and penalties will be applied in accordance with the circumstances and legislative requirements,
- ensure that aggressive dog complaints will be given investigation priority to reduce WTA risk of exposure to the potential of the aggressive behaviour, subsequently resulting in an attack causing injury or even death, and
- inform customers of the outcome of investigations and WTA actions in relation to dog attacks and threats of attack – subject to privacy considerations.



8. Key Issues and Challenges (continued)

SR 1.2 – Dog Off-Leash Areas Will Be Effectively Managed

Dog off-leash areas are valued by the community and provide the opportunity for owners to exercise and socialise their dogs.

The WTA will:

- require dogs to be under effective control within off-leash areas and be on-leash in transit to and from the facility,
- design off-leash areas to separate large and small dogs and to minimise nuisance to the adjoining community,
- include dog off-leash areas and their access routes in rostered local law patrols,
- use dog off-leash areas to publicise activities relating to dog training, behaviour and barking control to encourage voluntary compliance,
- alert users of dog off-leash areas to region wide disease outbreaks, and
- attach to regulatory signs “Manners” for owners and their dogs using the off-leash areas to encourage appropriate behaviour and voluntary compliance.

The Local Laws Unit will continue to provide advice and guidance as to suitable locations and designs for future off-leash areas.

SR 1.3 – Wandering Animal May Be Returned On First Offence

The WTA will:

- return free of charge non-aggressive dogs found wandering to their owner on the first offence prior to being impounded when the dog is registered and microchipped and where the “owner is able to be contacted and available to secure the dog immediately”,
- provide the owner advice as to the requirement to contain the dog at all times and arrangements will be made to conduct a gate and fence check with the owner to ensure the dog can be secured on the property in future, and
- if impounded and the dog is a “first impound”, the dog may be released free of charge – but only if the dog is registered and microchipped, is claimed within one day and it has not been previously returned to the owner, otherwise standard impoundment release procedures will apply.

Other animals found wandering may be returned to their owner prior to being impounded where the owner is able to be contacted and available to secure the animal immediately.

Key Issue 2 – Unregistered Dogs

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* places a mandatory requirement for dogs over 12 weeks of age to be registered with the relevant local government/authority.

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* also places a mandatory requirement on the owner of a dog to give notice of changed information to the Weipa Town Authority within seven days of the change.

“Return to sender” registration notices received following the annual mail out of renewals indicate a number of owners do not update their personal address details with the Weipa Town Authority. This impacts on WTA’s ability to reunite animals with their owners.

Delays in the payment of annual animal registration fees have resulted in the WTA needing to allocate significant resources to follow up with non-compliant owners, increasing operational pressure.

STRATEGIC RESPONSES

SR 2.1 – Community Education

The WTA will:

- educate the community on the need to register and microchip all dogs, and
- educate the community on the need to keep name, address, phone numbers and email information up to date at every interaction with the WTA.

SR 2.2 – Enable Efficient Data Management

The WTA will:

- conduct data cleansing of all unpaid dog registrations to confirm resident contact details, and
- review its information technology systems and consider the use of emerging technology.

SR 2.3 – Encourage Timely Animal Registration

The WTA will:

- offer incentives, such as fee reductions, to encourage timely annual registration of animals,
- advise owners on the consequences of late registration payments, and
- inform owners of the legal consequences of failing to register their animals, including potential penalties and enforcement actions.

SR 2.4 – Inspections and Interventions Will Be Conducted

The WTA will:

- conduct periodic systematic inspections for unregistered dogs in accordance with legislation and available staffing resources, and
- encourage voluntary compliance through an initial notice and compliance period before infringement action is considered.

SR 2.5 – Impounded Dogs Not Released Until Registered

The WTA will:

- ensure all dogs owned by Weipa residents will not be released from the pound until they are registered.

(Note: Where the owner of the dogs are not Weipa residents pound release fees will apply)

8. Key Issues and Challenges (continued)

Key Issue 3 – Unidentified Cats and Dogs

The *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* places a mandatory requirement for cats and dogs to be microchipped before they are supplied (given away, sold, exchanged) and for a person who is the owner of or becomes an owner of a cat or dog to have the animal microchipped before 12 weeks of age.

The Act also requires the owner of a cat or dog to give notice of the changed information within seven days of the change.

For example – ownership transfer of the cat or dog must be supplied to the original microchip provider to be able to ensure an animal is returned to its owner. Many animals cannot be reunited with their owner as the microchip details are not up to date, particularly the current owner's name and phone number.

Local Laws Officers carry microchip scanners and are able to identify the owner of a cat or dog if the animal's microchip details are up to date.

STRATEGIC RESPONSES

SR 3.1 – Community Education

The WTA will:

- ensure emails and mobile numbers are collected at the point of registration and explore emerging technology to publicise cat and dog microchipping requirements and the need to keep records up to date,
- promote key messages via communication channels including social media, encouraging owners to microchip their cats and dogs,
- develop a process to ensure owners are reminded to update the microchip details of their cats and dogs when moving to a new house or changing telephone numbers, and
- ensure microchipping information is provided to new or relocating residents.

SR 3.2 – Use of Incentives to Encourage Microchipping

The WTA will:

- consider offering a fee based microchipping service and investigate the training and qualifications needed by staff for this implementation, and
- implement compulsory microchipping of impounded cats and dogs at the WTA pound in line with the requirement of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and local laws.

SR 3.3 – Enforcement of Microchipping Legislation

The WTA will:

- continue to require owners to observe legislative requirements in relation to microchipping, and
- take enforcement action where required.



Key issue 4 – Unwanted Cats and Dogs

The principal cause of unwanted animals is the failure of owners to desex cats and dogs.

Dogs not desexed are more likely to be involved in bite related incidents. The volume of unwanted animals being impounded means an increasing rate of euthanasia, which is distressing to the community and especially to the vets and WTA staff who must arrange this process.

STRATEGIC RESPONSES

SR 4.1 – Community Education

The WTA will:

- conduct regular promotions to encourage responsible pet ownership including desexing, and
- ensure through an ongoing program of education the community is aware of cat and dog ownership responsibilities and ownership is regulated and infringement penalties apply.

SR 4.2 – Use Incentives to Encourage Desexing

The WTA will:

- continue to offer reduced registration fees for desexed and microchipped dogs (rewarding responsible owners),
- continue to offer desexing and microchipping incentives for qualifying persons, and
- continue to update the community when there is a change of fees and charges.

Key Issue 5 – Animal Noise Nuisance

It is natural for dogs to bark, as this is the way that dogs communicate with people and other animals.

Dogs bark for various reasons and small amounts of barking is acceptable. Nuisance barking occurs when a dog barks persistently and disturbs the peace of the neighbourhood regularly and for lengthy periods of time. Nuisance barking occurs for a variety of reasons including boredom, loneliness, anxiety, ongoing neighbourhood disturbances, pain, attention seeking, lack of food or water and/or excitement.

It is acknowledged this is becoming a greater problem in Weipa with owners working away due to shift work and only having in place an arrangement for someone to attend their residence and feed and water the dogs daily.

The first the owners may know about their dog's excessive barking in their absence, is a complaint from a neighbour or contact from the WTA.

The value and importance of neighbourhood conversations cannot be underestimated in the resolution of barking nuisances.

Where dog owners show empathy and consideration by altering their day-to-day routines to attempt to solve the barking, better outcomes are achieved. Otherwise, the WTA is required to undertake a comprehensive and impartial investigation to gather sufficient evidence to confirm that excessive barking is occurring, and the complaint is not a vexatious one.

This process can be lengthy and onerous for pet owners, neighbours and WTA staff. Situations can worsen and good outcomes are much harder to achieve when an investigation is required.

STRATEGIC RESPONSES

SR 5.1 – Community Education

The WTA will:

- promote through its website helpful tips and advice about controlling nuisance barking, and
- provide information materials in neighbourhood areas where complaints of barking are prevalent.

SR 5.2 – Progressive Intervention

The WTA will:

- develop guidelines to enable Local Laws Officers to exercise discretion when handling first offences,
- adopt an operational approach of seeking to encourage compliance from animal owners in the first instance where the matters concerned do not involve risks to public health and safety or blatant or repeated disregard for WTAs local laws and relevant legislation,
- work with Weipa retailers to enable the community to more easily access technology to manage the behaviour of barking dogs, and
- research technologies, for example barking collars, to enable the monitoring of barking dogs.

8. Key Issues and Challenges (continued)

Key Issue 6 – Animal Management Policies and Procedures

Animal Management policies and procedures set the framework for officers to follow in conducting their operations in a consistent, reasonable, transparent and effective manner.

Adherence to well established procedures provides officers and WTA with direction and the ability to confidently defend allegations of legal or regulatory violations.

STRATEGIC RESPONSES

SR 6.1 – Review Animal Management Policies and Procedures

The WTA will:

- review all existing policies and procedures and create new policies and procedures in response to continuous improvement and emerging trends in animal management and consistent with the Animal Management Strategic Plan,
- assess and implement instruments including but not limited to:
 - Animal Management – Desexing Policy
 - Animal Management – Surrendered and Unclaimed Animals Policy
 - Animal Management – Impounded Cats and Dogs Registration and Microchipping Policy
 - Animal Management – Additional Animal Permit Policy.
- review the Schedule of Fees and Charges in response to any policy change, and
- identify emerging risks in animal management and create or update Workplace Health & Safety instructions ensuring alliance with WTA safety first message.



Key Issue 7 – Community Education and Awareness

Ensuring the community is adequately informed of responsible pet ownership obligations is an essential element of animal management.

Effective communication of information and engagement with key stakeholders is critical in improving animal management knowledge in the community and helping the future generations understand their responsibilities.

STRATEGIC RESPONSES

SR 7.1 – Community Education

The WTA will:

- develop a comprehensive Community Education Program scheduling appropriate events and promotions to occur for the duration of the strategic plan commensurate with available funding,
- provide information to new residents to reinforce responsible pet ownership and compliance with State legislation and WTA local laws,
- ensure the currency and accuracy of promotional materials which are available on WTA public information sources,
- use relevant media to promote legislative and local law requirements and to remind pet owners about responsible pet ownership,
- continue to develop a responsible dog ownership campaign to ensure that owners understand the risks of owning a dog and the community knows what is required of individual dog owners, and
- support owners to take action to meet community expectations, and ensure information is reported to the WTA so that Local Laws Officers can respond and take appropriate action.



9. Strategic Plan Implementation Review, Performance and Reporting

To monitor and measure the effectiveness of the implementation of this strategic plan, the WTA will prepare and maintain an Action Delivery Plan incorporating operational requirements aimed at successfully progressing the strategic responses.

The operational actions will be assigned appropriate indicators so performance against the desired outcomes can be regularly assessed. Appropriate reporting frameworks will be put in place to ensure management can monitor performance and adjust operational effort.

STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW AND REPORTING

An annual review on the strategic responses of this strategic plan will be undertaken to ensure that the plan:

- aligns to the objectives of Weipa Town Authority's corporate and operational plans,
- identifies and reflects changing priorities, operational capacity and the legislative framework,
- aligns with the community expectations where the outcomes are achievable, and
- has been afforded adequate financial and staffing resources.

An annual update on the performance of this strategic plan will be presented to the WTA members each year. Identified and emerging priorities will be highlighted for inclusion in the Action Plan for the following year.

Conclusion

The successful delivery of Animal Management services is an issue that impacts the whole community. This Plan paves the way towards cementing behaviour change across our community of pet owners to increase accountability and an understanding of their animal keeping obligations to help shape a safer, liveable town.

Acknowledgements

The Weipa Town Authority acknowledge and thank all the organisations and individuals who assisted in the development of this strategic plan. A number of stakeholders, both internal and external, along with a range of residents (both pet owners and non-pet owners) have graciously provided their thoughts, ideas and feedback to ensure the Plan meets the needs of the Weipa Township.



How to report animal management related matters

The Weipa Town Authority relies on residents to report animal management matters so they can investigate and take appropriate action. To report an animal management concern at any time, residents should:

- Call the Weipa Town Authority on 07 4030 9400,
- Use the Weipa Town Authority online 'Submit Request/Report an Issue' tool.

Emergency calls received after hours will be redirected to our on-call response team for immediate response.

Any information people report will be treated confidentially in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009 (Qld)*.



WEIPA TOWN AUTHORITY

6 Hibberd Drive
Rocky Point
Weipa QLD 4874
PO Box 420
Weipa QLD 4874
P: (07) 4030 9400

E: admin@weipatownauthority.com.au

w: www.weipatownauthority.com.au