



SHIRE OF WYNDHAM | EAST KIMBERLEY

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

2019

Letter from the CEO

I am pleased to present the Shire's Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Pets are an important part of our community and can benefit our families in a myriad of ways; providing us with love, laughter and a more active lifestyle. Coupled with the benefits is also a serious responsibility to ensure proper care is taken of your pet. The decision to introduce an animal into your home should be based on sound research and careful consideration, to ensure you get the most out of what can be a lifelong commitment.

Management of pets within the Shire requires a comprehensive understanding of both the issues and the importance these animals have in our lives. Complaints involving dogs and cats have been consistently high for some years, and to help address these issues the Shire enters into annual revisions of all Policies and Procedures carried out by the Shires Ranger Services.

With this revised version of our Domestic Animal Management Plan, the Shire hopes to bring about a greater understanding of our approach toward cat and dog issues currently affecting our community. It is designed not only to help animal owners clearly understand their responsibilities but for everyone to understand the Shires role and the processes we follow.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the community for their support and compliance in these matters.

Carl Askew

Chief Executive Officer

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Establishing an Animal Management Plan

Domestic animals perform a range of cultural, social and economic functions in society, they are kept as companions, as guards, for hunting, or as service animals. Owning a pet can enhance our psychological and physiological well-being. Recent evidence suggests that people with pets visit their doctors less, use fewer medications and have lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. There is no denying that the coexistence of pets and humans is a mutually beneficial experience, however, it also presents a very unique set of issues. ***The Dog Act of 1976*** and more recently ***The Cat Act 2011*** are Acts that aim to address some of these issues, and assist the municipalities of WA in their endeavour to create safe and rewarding animal ownership practices.

Pets that are well managed cause few problems and rarely come to the attention of authorities. It is only when animals are acquired without careful consideration to personal circumstance and the requirements of the legislation aren't met with, that problems can and do occur.

To facilitate and promote responsible pet ownership, The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley developed a Domestic Animal Management Plan. The plan recommends the manner in which domestic animals ought to be housed, kept and controlled. The information covered in this plan highlights the role the Shire takes in educating and enforcing animal management issues.

Most importantly, the goal of this plan is to achieve a balance between meeting the needs of pet owners and the needs and expectations of others in the community. The community are entitled to feel safe, enjoy peace and quiet in their homes and have access to neat and tidy amenities. If pets are managed well, this helps to contribute towards these community objectives.

The benefits of effective animal management

For pet owners:

- You know exactly what your responsibilities are,
- You are offered support by the Shire,
- You understand what will happen if your pet is involved in an incident or you do not meet your legal obligations.

As a member of the community:

- You are supported by the Shire,
- The guidelines and processes are clearly explained,
- You know exactly what you have to do if you wish to request action or comment,
- You know who to contact in case of an incident or accident.

As a Shire:

- We know clearly what our responsibilities are and can respond with help and advice,
- We can target our community education programs to make them more effective for pet owners who lack awareness and information,
- We can learn from the experiences of other local governments across Australia.

How to use the Animal Management Plan

The plan is a practical guide; it is designed to help dog and cat owners understand their responsibilities in accordance with the Shire's Local Laws and State Legislation. It addresses the most common issues associated with pet ownership and the most common areas of complaint.

It is important to remember that the Animal Management Plan is **ONLY** a guide. Its application is subject to relevant legislation and Shire policy and will be amended from time to time.

Contact Numbers:

Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley:

- Ranger Services 9168 4100
- After hours assistance (Emergency only) 9168 4166



What statutory obligations must the animal management plan meet?

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley is required to provide an animal management service to ensure that animals do not degrade public amenities or jeopardise community safety. The Shire is required to respond to customer requests and complaints, and provide enforcement of the relevant Acts, Regulations and Local Laws. In doing so, the Shire must comply with the following:

- *Dog Act 1976*
- *Dog Regulations 2013*
- *Animal Welfare Act 2002*
- *Local Laws Act 2003*
- *Health Local Laws 2003*
- *Cat Act 2011*
- *Cat Regulations 2012*
- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Fines, Penalties and Infringement Notices Enforcement Act 2006*

The Shire reviews the Animal Management Plan regularly.

Animal management staffing and structure within the Shire

Shire Structure:

Chief Executive Officer

Director Infrastructure Services

Senior Ranger and Emergency Services Coordinator

Rangers

Animal management duties are undertaken by three (3) full time Rangers.

Education

Legislation and enforcement alone will not encourage pet owners to be responsible. Support through education and advice is another important element of effective animal management.

The education services provided by the Shire are designed to provide support to all pet owners and increase their understanding of responsible pet ownership, now and into the future.

Education tools provided

Website Information

You can access information about animal management through the Shire's website including;

- Registration fees and conditions
- Information on common animal complaints
- Current legislation
- Shire strategies, including this Animal Management Plan
- Fees and charges associated with infringements
- How to lodge a complaint
- Upcoming events and activities

Community Awareness Campaigns

The Shire runs regular community education campaigns, to help remind pet owners about their responsibilities, obligations and the consequences of non-compliance. These campaigns are designed to address common areas of complaint or make owners aware of upcoming dates ie; registration expiry.

The Shire undertakes Post Office box drops, issuing the public with relevant brochures and utilises social media to disseminate information throughout the community.

Staff Education

The Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley is committed to maintaining and where possible improving the performance level of its staff. Skilled staff, with access to ongoing training and development, are better informed and more likely to achieve productive and positive interactions with the community.

The Shire has a well-trained team that is dedicated to animal management and education. Rangers have basic training in animal management and handling. They have also undertaken training in other related matters including; complaint investigation, evidence gathering and conflict resolution. Rangers keep abreast of all current Shire policies and procedures.



DOGS

Managing dogs

Being a responsible dog owner

Before you make the commitment to introduce a dog into your life, please consider the following:

- Your responsibilities under the law and the penalties that apply for offences.
- Can you ensure your dog has adequate food, shelter and water at all times?
- Are you able to meet the ongoing costs in caring for your dog such as vaccinations, maintenance of health and welfare, de-sexing, microchipping and registration obligations?
- Can you provide appropriate obedience training which will help meet your dog's emotional and social needs?
- Can you exercise and socialise your dog regularly?

If you can't fulfil all of the above obligations, you may need to re-evaluate and perhaps consider another type of pet that requires less maintenance. It is important for you to remember that all pets are a life-long commitment and should not be taken home, without first considering the financial and social implications they bring with them.

Finding the right dog for you

If you decide that you do have the ability to care for a new dog, then the next step is choosing a dog that is right for your lifestyle. Finding the right dog can be fun, but takes time, planning and lots of research. You should select a breed that best suits your lifestyle and the amount of time you can spend with your pet. When selecting a breed also consider your home environment, including:

- The size of your yard
- The sections of the house or yard the pet will have access to and
- Visual access to public areas such as thoroughfares, footpaths and local parks.

By spending a little time considering your pet's environment, you can avoid boredom and anxiety for your pet. Anxiety in dogs can often lead to unwanted behaviour like; barking, digging or even aggression toward other dogs and people. If undesirable behaviour goes unchecked, it may start to affect your relationship with your neighbours and other members of the community.

Consider adopting or fostering

Every year large numbers of dogs are abandoned or unwanted, usually through no fault of their own. The number of animals euthanised because their owners can't be identified or do not wish to come forward, could be reduced each year if more people chose to adopt a pet rather than buying one. Kimberley Animals Nature Education Inc. (KANE Inc.) is an

organisation run by the Kimberley Vet Centre in Kununurra, one of its programmes aims to rehome dogs with loving families.

If you are hesitant about taking the step of owning your own dog and want to make sure it's right for you first, you may be eligible to foster a dog. When you foster a dog you contribute toward the care and training of a dog, up until the time it finds its forever home.

The Shire and you

When you bring a dog home, you are not only introducing it into a new family and household but also into the wider community. Much the same way as you lay down ground rules for your dog inside the home, the Shire has laws for the way your dog interacts within the community that you are responsible for upholding. The Shire's Ranger team are responsible for enforcing these laws and handling non-compliance issues when they arise.

The issues that are commonly addressed by our Ranger service team include:

- Registration / Microchipping
- Nuisance barking
- Dogs at large
- Off-lead areas
- Dog attacks
- Dog defecation
- Restricted areas for dogs



Registration / Microchipping

Registration

All dogs that are over three (3) months of age and permanently reside within the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley must be registered.

There are many benefits to registration.

- It is your proof of ownership
- Shire Rangers can return lost pets to their owners quickly
- You can be contacted easily if your pet is involved in an accident/incident and requires veterinary treatment
- The fees contribute to the Shire's education and enforcement programs along with dog friendly parks, pound facilities and a full time ranger service.

To register your dog you must agree:

- To have your dog microchipped
- To adequately contain your dog at all times
- To apply for a permit if you intend to keep more than two (2) dogs.

Dog registrations fall due on the 31st October each year and can be paid in person at either of the Shires administration offices at 20 Coolibah Drive, Kununurra or Koolama Street, Wyndham. If you are a pensioner in possession of a concession card, you are entitled to a discount on registration fees. In the event that your circumstances change i.e. you move house, you are required to contact the Shire to update your details.

Microchipping

Microchips are small subcutaneous devices that are implanted just under the skin, between the shoulder blades at the base of your pet's neck. They allow Rangers and Veterinary staff to quickly identify your dog by scanning them with a microchip reader. The microchip gives your dog a unique number, which can be matched on databases that store information about your dog as well as your contact details. This helps with the speedy return of dogs that are lost, at large (wandering) or injured.

Section 21 of the *Dog Act 1976* requires that dogs are microchipped when they reach 3 months of age and must be microchipped before they can be registered with the Shire. When you register your dog, you will be required to provide proof that the dog has been microchipped, by providing us with the microchip number.

Microchipping is performed at veterinary clinics. If you have forgotten your pet's microchip information you can request a Vet or Ranger scan your dog for you. If your dog is picked up by the Ranger team, they will not be returned to you unless they are microchipped. This will mean an additional expense at collection time.

Licence Requirements

Under the local laws, owners can keep two registered dogs on one property. If you want to keep more than two dogs on your property, you will need to apply for permission from the Shire. When the Shire assesses the application, they will search for any previous complaints registered against you as a pet owner, consult with your neighbours and check the premises is suitable and has adequate fencing.

Specific conditions may be placed on the licence for you to adhere to.

Enforcement

The Shire has in its employment three (3) Rangers. Their job is to enforce registration requirements. If your dog is not registered and microchipped or you do not have a licence (if required), you may be fined in accordance with State and Local Laws.

Nuisance Barking

Nuisance dog barking can be a great source of irritation to some people in our community and can generate a lot of complaints. We all want to live in a community that is pleasant and congenial and one where dog owners take responsibility for their dog's behaviour.

Everyone has different levels of tolerance and sensitivity to dog barking. When the Shire is investigating a complaint, firstly the presence of a 'nuisance' is established, especially as dogs naturally bark. If possible, evidence is gathered from multiple sources.

The Shire works with complainants and pet owners to investigate, substantiate and to find a resolution that works for everyone.

Reporting Nuisance Barking

If a dog is making a noise, including barking, which is persistent and interferes with the peace, comfort and congenial living of a person on other premises, you can lodge a complaint with the Shire.

Complaint Process for Nuisance Barking

The Shire has an established process for dealing with complaints about nuisance barking. By following this process, the Shire intends to place more responsibility on the dog owner and help them with professional advice and guidance on behaviour patterns.

The Shire follows the following procedure when dealing with nuisance barking:

- Encourage you to first approach the dog's owner in a neighbourly manner and discuss your concerns with them. There is a chance they may not be aware of the issue. If you are not comfortable approaching your neighbour the Shire can provide you with a sample "Dear Neighbour" letter. (Available from the Shire Website)
- If your neighbour fails to take action or does not agree that a problem exists, the Shire's Rangers may be called upon to investigate.
- When you report a barking complaint to the Shire, you will be invited to make the complaint in writing with details about the nuisance that is being caused.
- You will be required to keep a diary of the dog's nuisance barking over the next ten (10) days. If the Ranger feels there is an issue they will attend the property and discuss the issue with the owner
- You, the complainant will then be required to keep a further diary for ten (10) days to establish if the nuisance is continuing.
- Should this diary show that the nuisance is continuing then a notice to comply will be issued to the dog owner. This notice is a Shire direction and must be complied with by the dog owner. A third diary must be kept by the complainant to establish the dog owner's adherence to the notice.
- Should the nuisance barking complaint remain unresolved, the dog owner may be issued with a fine (or infringement notice) or be prosecuted.

Enforcement

Should further barking complaints be received and substantiated, the dog's registration may be cancelled by the Shire. This allows the Shire to obtain a warrant and remove the dog from the property. The dog will be held at the Shire's animal management facility for a minimum of 7 (seven) days. If the owner makes no attempt to appeal the decision or find an alternate property outside of the Wyndham East Kimberley municipality, the dog may be destroyed or otherwise disposed of.



Dogs at Large (Wandering)

Dogs require exercise and socialisation outside of their own backyard. It is natural for dogs to want to explore different environments. As such, dogs that are not regularly exercised tend to roam, making them susceptible to many dangers.

Dogs that roam outside their yards usually have a shorter life span – they often become lost, injured, killed or stolen while roaming unattended in the street.

When is a dog considered to be at large (wandering)?

Dogs are commonly found by Rangers in public areas without an owner being present, this is termed 'at large' or more commonly "wandering". A dog in a public place should always be held on a lead by a person who is capable of controlling it, and should only be in a non-public place if permission has been given for it to be there. There are dog exercise areas within the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley where a dog may be off lead so long as they remain under effective control by the owner. Effective control will be covered in the off-lead areas section of this document.



Often dogs will escape from yards without their owner's knowledge, either through a gate that has been left unlocked or by jumping over or digging under the fence.

Under the *Dog Local Laws 2003* you are obliged to fence your property in a manner capable of confining your dog. The fence must be constructed in such a manner that takes into consideration the breed, size and physical condition of your dog as to prevent the dog at all times from passing over, under or through it.

To help prevent your dog from wandering you should ensure it receives the right amount of exercise and stimulation throughout the day.

Enforcement

When a wandering dog is reported to the Shire, a Ranger will attend, locate the dog and look for identification such as a registration tag or microchip.

The dog is secured in the rear cage of a Shire vehicle and taken to the Shire's Animal Management Facility. If the dog's owner can be notified, the animal can be picked up from the Shire administration office.

When you collect your dog from the Shire, you:

- Will need to pay fees to cover the time your animal has spent in the Animal Management Facility
- Will need to register your dog (if not already registered)
- Will need to microchip your dog (if not already microchipped)
- May be issued an infringement notice if the animal was found to be in breach of State or Local Laws

If the Shire cannot identify the owner, the dog is impounded and a photo is placed on the Shire's website and Social Media platforms. Impounded dogs are kept for a minimum of three

(3) working days. If the dog has not been claimed after the three days, the Shire may attempt to rehome or dispose of the animal accordingly.

If you have lost your dog, please notify the Shire and check the website regularly - (www.swek.wa.gov.au)

Off-lead areas

We recognise that pet owners need suitable areas to exercise their dogs safely. Equally, others must be able to use our wonderful open spaces without fear of harassment by uncontrolled dogs.

Off-lead areas for dogs include:

Kununurra

- Lot 381 Casuarina Way - the area surrounding Lakeside Resort
- Lots 1321 and 1296 vacant blocks on the corner of Barringtonia Street and Hidden Valley Way (adjacent to the Kununurra Cemetery. Added to this was a portion of the unused Cemetery Land being Lot 241 extending from the western boundary for 150 metres.
- The areas at the pump station at the junction of Messmate Way and the Victoria Highway extending south easterly to the Lily Creek Lagoon and westerly for 100 metres along the Victoria Highway.
- Lots 500 and 501 at Swim Beach extending from the west boundary of the Sailing Club for 150 metres bounded by Millington Road.

Wyndham

- Lot 1236 Wyndham Oval, Great Northern Highway, Wyndham.

What is effective control?

Under the *Dog Act 1976*, a dog can be off leash in a designated dog exercise area, provided that the person responsible is capable of controlling it.

Having effective control of your dog means that:

- The dog responds to your commands, and in particular returns when called
- The dog remains a reasonable distance from you at all times
- You are carrying with you a leash, harness, cord or chain designed to tether a dog.

Dog owners must also be mindful that under *Section 30 Dog Act 1976* a dog in a public place must be wearing a collar with a securely attached registration tag. Failure to comply with this legislation can result in a fine.

Bicycle and walking paths

In the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley all footpaths are for shared use. You may walk your pet on the path if you are in control and it is on a lead. Please be considerate of other pedestrians who have the right to walk without interference from your dog.

Enforcement

Rangers routinely patrol off-lead areas. If your dog is not under effective control in an off-lead area, you may be issued with a notice or fined.

If your pet is anywhere other than a designated off-lead area and not on a lead, you may be fined.

Dog Attack

Being bitten or chased by a dog can produce serious physical, psychological and emotional effects, not only for the person who is attacked but also for the owner of the attacking dog.



All dog owners hope their pet won't show aggression towards other animals or people, but it can happen for many reasons. Often it is a sign of irresponsible ownership and is against the law. Pet owners are always responsible and legally liable for the actions of their animals.

The Shire relies on members of the public to report all dog attacks, especially those that have occurred on private property. Reporting all incidents helps the Shire address the problems appropriately and identify emerging issues.

What is a dog attack?

Under the *Dog Act 1976*, a dog attack is broadly defined as one of the following:

- (1) If a dog attacks or chases any person or animal and physical injury is caused to the person or animal that is attacked or chased, every person liable for the control of the dog commits an offence.
- (2) If a dog attacks or chases any person or animal without causing physical injury to the person or animal that is attacked or chased, every person liable for the control of the dog commits an offence.

Reporting a dog attack

If you are attacked by a dog on private or public property please report it to the Shire as soon as possible on 9168 4100. This will help Rangers respond quickly and effectively. You will need to give the Shire certain details about the event, including date, time, location and the sequence of events. The Ranger will talk you through the appropriate complaint process, which initially involves the completion of a dog attack complaint form.

Enforcement

If your dog is responsible for an attack on someone or another animal, you may be guilty of an offence. In most cases the offending dog is seized and an investigation is conducted by the Shire Rangers. As a result of the investigation, the most applicable method of enforcement as fits the incident is rewarded. Rangers use a classification system to help scale the attack.

Classification of Attack:

Level 0 No bite or aggression shown.	Level 1 Aggressively rushing/attempting to bite/no physical contact	Level 2 Attack on person/animal resulting in scratching or minor bruising.
Level 3 Attack on person requiring minor treatment or bruising or on an animal requiring minor to moderate treatment	Level 4 Attack on person requiring moderate treatment or on an animal requiring major veterinary treatment or death	Level 5 Attack on person requiring major medical treatment (life threatening or resulting in death to a person)

The Rangers have at their disposal several ways of dealing with the owner of an offending dog. Those options include; written warning, issuing infringements, declaring the dog dangerous and electing to prosecute.

Declared dangerous dog register

Once a dog has attacked, the Shire may list the animal as a "Dangerous Dog" and the owner will have to comply with special conditions listed in the *Dog Act 1976 and Regulations 2013*. When a dog is classified as dangerous the owner must:

- Ensure the dog is registered with the Shire as a dangerous dog
- Ensure the dog is always muzzled and on a leash in a public place
- Ensure the dog does not attack or worry another person or animal
- Display a sign advertising a dangerous dog on the premises
- Provide and maintain a proper and effective enclosure to prevent the dog from escaping.

Any dog can be dangerous no matter what the breed. However the *Dog Act* has identified three types of dangerous dogs:

- A dog that has been declared dangerous by a Local Government
- A commercial security dog OR
- A restricted breed dog

Restricted breeds

Certain breeds of dogs have been identified by the Commonwealth Government as being particularly aggressive. They have been banned from import into Australia and each State and territory has introduced legislation to protect the community from these breeds.

The following breeds are classified as restricted:

<p>Dogo Argentino – Argentinian Fighting Dog</p>	
<p>Filo Brasileiro – Brazilian Mastiff / Brazilian Fighting Dog</p>	
<p>Tosa Inu – Tosa Fighting Dog / Japanese Fighting Dog</p>	
<p>American Pit Bull Terrier – Pit Bull Terrier / American Pit Bull</p>	

Perro de Presa Canario



The regulations also provide for a restricted breed dog to include any dog of a mixed breed that visibly contains any of the above prohibited breeds.

All restricted breed dogs must be sterilised and made to comply with the same regulations as a dog that has been declared dangerous.

Dog defecation

We all want to enjoy our public places and waterways and protect our natural environment.

Dog faeces is an environmental and health issue as it can result in unnecessary pollutants in our waterways and public places. In particular, stepping in dog faeces is unacceptable to us all.

The owner's responsibility

As a dog owner, you are responsible for picking up after your own dog and getting rid of the faeces so that you do not cause offense to anyone else.

Bin bags and bins are provided for the disposal of animal waste throughout the Shire. However, you should carry a collection bag when walking your dog to ensure any defecation can be disposed of correctly.

Enforcement

As part of their job, Rangers are responsible for enforcing this local law (*Dogs Local Law 2003*)

If you fail to collect/remove your dog's faeces, you may be issued a notice or fined.



CATS

Managing cats

Being a responsible cat owner

Cats are intelligent, resourceful and highly independent. Their independence can sometimes lead owners to believe that they do not require as much care and attention as other pets. But cats need attention, companionship, feeding and a suitable space to live and play.

You need to be aware of your responsibilities as a cat owner:

- Ensure your cat has adequate food, shelter and water at all times.
- Meet the ongoing costs in caring for your cat such as vaccinations, maintenance of health and welfare, de-sexing, microchipping and registration.
- Be aware of all relevant legislation.
- Create a suitable home environment before bringing your cat home

Suburban environments pose too many risks to allow cat's complete freedom. If you meet all their needs, de-sexed cats are happy to live inside your home or in a suitable enclosed area. Research shows the average lifespan of a cat kept inside is 12 years. The life expectancy of a cat allowed to roam at will is generally less.

It is natural for a cat to hunt, even those that are well fed and cared for. By keeping your cat inside or in a suitable enclosed area, you are helping reduce the level of predation on our native wildlife.

Keeping your cat inside will ensure that it does not mix with the feral cat population, reducing potential health issues for your cat and preventing the introduction of disease into the domesticated cat population. It will also help stop the feral cat population from growing.



Key issues for owners to be aware of

Cat owners have legal responsibilities under the *Cat Act 2011* and Shire Local Laws. These specifically address cat registration, microchipping, sterilisation and the limitation on the numbers you can own. These requirements are addressed in detail in this section.

Registration and Microchipping

Registration

All cats over six (6) months of age must be registered with the local government in the district the cat is ordinarily kept.

There are many benefits to cat registration.

- It is your proof of ownership
- Shire Rangers can return lost pets to their owners quickly
- You can be contacted easily if your pet is involved in an accident/incident and requires veterinary treatment.
- Fees contribute to the Shire's education and enforcement programs.

The owner of a registered cat must ensure that it:

- Is microchipped
- Is sterilised (unless otherwise exempt)
- Is wearing its registration tag when in public.

Microchipping

It is a legal requirement under the *Cat Act 2011* that all cats be microchipped once they reach six (6) months of age. Microchips allow Rangers and veterinary staff to quickly identify your cat by scanning them with a microchip reader. The microchip gives your cat a unique number, which can be matched on databases that store information about your cat and your contact details. This helps with the speedy return of cats that are lost, roaming or injured.



Sterilisation

Under the *Cat Act 2011* the owner of a cat that has reached six (6) months of age must have their cat sterilised by a Veterinarian.

Sterilising your cat is not only a legal requirement but can have many advantages for you, your pet and the wider community. An unsterilized cat is more likely to wander great distances in search of a mate, this increases their risk of being hit by a car or getting into a fight with another cat. De-sexing your pets can have added health benefits, helping to prevent cancers such as testicular and prostate cancer in males and mammary tumours in females.

Your cat may be exempt from the requirement of sterilisation if your veterinarian has supplied you with a certificate stating that sterilisation may adversely affect the health and welfare of the animal. Furthermore, if you have intention of breeding your cat and you have obtained an approved breeder licence from the Shire you are exempt from this section of the act.

Licence Requirements

Under the Shire's *Health Local Laws 2003* there is a limitation to the number of cats each household may keep. Without exemption in writing from the Shire, a person shall not keep more than three (3) cats over the age of three (3) months on premises on any land within the district. If you wish to keep more than three cats you may apply to the Shire in writing for an exemption. The exemption will only be granted if the Shire is satisfied that the number of cats to be kept will not be a nuisance to your neighbours or dangerous to your health and the wider community.

Enforcement

It is the role of a Ranger to enforce registration requirements. If your cat is not registered, microchipped and de-sexed or you do not have an exemption if required, you may be fined in accordance with the local laws and state legislation.

Roaming Cats

Cats are usually well loved members of a family. However, even a pet cat that is well fed and looked after, may still roam and hunt.

Cats that roam outside their yards usually have a shorter life span – they often become lost, injured, killed or are stolen while roaming unattended in the street. Their behaviour can be a nuisance to other people.

Sometimes cats are abandoned by their owners and are left to become strays and join the feral cat population. Feral cats scavenge for food and prey on native wildlife populations. Occasionally well-meaning members of the public begin to feed or encourage stray cats that frequent their neighbourhood. This creates a large population of stray/feral cats which pose many issues for cat owners, community members and the Shire.

Trapping roaming cats



When a complaint is received about a cat being at large, the Shire Rangers will follow an established process to try to resolve the matter to everyone's satisfaction.

If the owner of the cat involved in the complaint cannot be identified, Rangers will offer the complainant a cat trap. Cat traps are free to hire and require twice daily checks to be made. Once a cat is caught, Rangers should be notified.

If the captured cat can be identified via a microchip or other means, the owner of the animal will be notified. Captured cats that cannot be identified will be taken to the pound and managed according to the *Cat Act 2011* and the Shire's pound procedures. If the cat is deemed feral it may be destroyed immediately. Other animals will be impounded for three (3) days to see if an owner comes forward.

Enforcement

A Ranger may, in any public place, seize any cat that they believe or suspect on reasonable grounds is the subject of an offence against the *Cat Act 2011*. Fines may be issued if the owner of the cat is identified.

Shire Local Laws and Related legislation

The Shire encourages you to view all local laws on the Shire's website www.swek.wa.gov.au

Of particular relevance to the Animal Management Act:

- *Dog local law 2003*
- *Health local laws 2003*

Other relevant legislation to the application of the Animal Management Plan include:

- *Dog Act 1976*
- *Dog Regulations 2013*
- *Animal Welfare Act 2002*
- *Local Laws Act 2003*
- *Cat Act 2011*
- *Cat Regulations 2012*
- *Local Government Act 1995*
- *Fines, Penalties and Infringement Notices Enforcement Act 2006*

Complaint Management

The Shire has well-established processes designed to resolve issues in a manner that takes into consideration the needs and responsibilities of all parties involved.

The general complaints management procedure identifies:

- The steps involved in resolving a complaint
- Guidelines for Shire staff to effectively resolve issues and
- How the system works.

The Shire has a process that is specific to resolving complaints associated with dogs and cats.

General complaint management procedure

- Complaint forms can be obtained from the Shire website or the Kununurra / Wyndham Shire offices.
- Complaints should be made in writing and submitted by:
 - Post to PO Box 614, Kununurra, WA, 6743
 - Email to: mail@swek.wa.gov.au
 - In person: The Shire office, Coolibah Drive, Kununurra, WA 6743
- When the complaint is received, it will be recorded in the Shire's database and the appropriate Ranger will be given the complaint for investigation/action.
- The Ranger will contact the complainant acknowledging receipt of their complaint within 10 working days.
- The Ranger will:
 - Demonstrate that they clearly understand what the complaint entails
 - Explain what will happen with the investigation/action
- After an acknowledgement is issued, the response times will be dependent upon your complaint and the investigations involved whereby Rangers will endeavour to keep you informed of the progress.
- Following the investigation of your complaint a response as to the outcome will be made either in writing or via a phone call.
- All investigations and actions, including what the eventual outcome, will be recorded on the Shires database

Anonymous complaints

Sometimes people are more comfortable making an anonymous complaint.

Your confidentiality is ensured and the Shire will not pass on any details that can identify the complainant.

The Shire will do their best to address anonymous complaints. However it can be very difficult to resolve these issues, or to enforce legislation, without the ability to thoroughly investigate and gather evidence and witness information.

Customer Service Process

1. If a customer is not satisfied with the outcome of a complaint, you have the right to request an internal review. The internal review will be undertaken by a staff member who:
 - Is not subordinate to the staff member who conducted the initial review; and
 - Is not a staff member who was involved in dealing with the complaint.
2. If a customer is not satisfied by the internal review outcome of a complaint, you have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman Western Australia.

How to Lodge a Complaint to the Ombudsman Western Australia

You can lodge your complaint by post, fax or email, or deliver it directly to the Ombudsman's office using the contact details listed below:

Ombudsman Western Australia

Level 2, Albert Facey House

469 Wellington Street, Perth, WA, 6000

PO Box Z5386 St Georges Terrace, Perth, WA, 6831

Email: mail@ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Please also refer to the Ombudsman's website for assistance and guidelines relevant to lodging a complaint: www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Summary

The effective management of domestic animals is a high priority for the Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley. Constant revision of Shire services, strategies and programmes is necessary to evaluate their effectiveness and appropriateness, in terms of meeting community expectations. Managing these expectations is achieved through education and increasing public awareness. The Shire looks forward to working with pet owners and together creating a pet friendly environment, where the benefits of ownership do not impinge on the safety of the community.

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Requests for further authorisation should be directed to the:

Director Infrastructure
Shire of Wyndham East Kimberley
PO Box 614
Kununurra WA 6743
mail@swek.wa.gov.au