

ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

2022 - 2027



DISTRICT COUNCIL OF PETERBOROUGH

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DISTRICT COUNCIL OF PETERBOROUGH'S PLAN OF MANAGEMENT RELATING TO DOGS AND CATS

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Government area of the District Council of Peterborough comprises an area of approximately 2995 sq kms and is bounded by the District Council of Orroroo Carrieton in the northwest, Northern Areas Council to the southwest, and the Regional Council of Goyder to the south, with unincorporated areas controlled by Outback Communities Authority, to the north and east.

The main towns in the Council area are Peterborough, Yongala and Oodla Wirra.

The Council area is located approximately 250kms to the north of Adelaide, and close to the southern end of the Flinders Ranges. The town of Peterborough sits on the intersection of the east-west railway linking Port Pirie and Broken Hill, and the north-south railway linking Adelaide to Alice Springs via Quorn.

The town is strategically located to key tourism areas of regional SA, the District Council of Peterborough area provides major road access from the eastern states to the Flinders Ranges, the Spencer Gulf cities and to the southern areas of the Clare Valley, Barossa Valley and the historic town of Burra.

DOG AND CAT OWNERSHIP

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

VISION AND MISSION

Council wishes to maintain a balance between competing interests in the community. To address domestic animal management whilst promoting responsible ownership of dogs and cats, animal welfare, and the benefits of animal companionship, focusing on the legitimate needs of pets and their owners whilst respecting the rights of other members of the community and protecting the environment.



LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PLAN OF MANAGEMENT RELATING TO DOGS AND CATS

(Section 26A of the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995)

The *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* (the Act) provides the framework for the management of dogs and cats in the community. Its purpose is to:

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

Council is responsible for implementation of the Act within the Council area, in accordance with Section 26A of the Act. Council is required to prepare a management plan relating to dogs and cats within their local area and review and update this plan every 5 years.

Section 26A – Plans of management relating to dogs and cats, states:

- Each Council must, in accordance with this section, prepare a plan relating to the management of dogs and cats within its area.
- A plan of management must include provisions for parks where dogs may be exercised. Off leash and for parks where dogs must be under effective control by means of physical restraint and may include provisions for parks where dogs are prohibited.
- A plan of management must cover 5-year periods and each plan must be prepared and presented to the Board at least 6 months before it is to take effect.
- A plan of management must be approved by the Board before it takes effect.
- A Council may, with the approval of the Board, amend plan of management at any time during the course of the 5-year period covered by the plan.



2. BACKGROUND

Council's Strategic Plan provides a broad overview of Council's strategic direction for the period 2020-2022.

Key Result Area 3 – Community Well-Being

Although animal management is not specifically mentioned within Council's Strategic Plan, it is embraced under the above key strategy.

This Animal Management Plan has been prepared by the District Council of Peterborough in consideration of its responsibilities under the Act and will guide domestic animal management by the Council over the next 5 years (2022 – 2027).

The Council conducted a large scale community consultation survey in 2021, calling for the opinions and suggestions of residents, in regards to the previous Animal Management Plan, their priorities moving forward, cat registration/confinement and impact of unidentified and unowned cats in the district, along with any other relevant issues. This source of information has been invaluable in the Plan's creation.

The Plan identifies strategies and actions to implement the mission, aims and objectives for domestic animal management, which relates back to the wider policy context. The Plan has been prepared by Council, who consulted with the public and the Dog and Cat Management Board on the draft prior to its adoption by Council.

The Plan outlines a wide range of actions to be undertaken by the Council.

This new Plan provides Council with the opportunity to address animal management at a strategic level and implement initiatives to address the legislative changes to the Act.

CURRENT STATISTICS AND FIGURES AT A GLANCE:

DOGS:

	2016-2017	2019-2020	2020-2021
REGISTRATION			
Number registered	656	595	563
% that are desexed	40%		58%
% that are microchipped	25%		77%
IMPOUNDING			
Number impounded		11	20
Number returned to owner		9	16
INVESTIGATIONS			
Barking Dogs		42	56
Wandering at large		50	64
Attacks on humans		2	2
Attacks on animals		4	5

CATS:

	2019-2020	2020-2021
REGISTRATION		
Number registered	143	158
% that are desexed	95%	94%
% that are microchipped	96%	96%
COMPLAINTS		
Number received	98	116

Council introduced optional cat registration in 2019/2020, and at the end of the year there were 143 registered cats.

In 2020/2021, registration of cats became compulsory in the district and all cats are expected to be registered within the Dogs and Cats Online system, as per the Cats By-Law No 6.



3. THE LAW / GUIDELINES

Requirement	Legislative Instrument
Mandatory desexing of dogs and cats born after 1 July 2018	Dog and Cat Management Act
Mandatory microchipping of all cats and dogs	Dog and Cat Management Act
Registration of all dogs	Dog and Cat Management Act
Registration of all cats	Council's Cats By-law No.6 of 2018
New rules for breeders who sell cats and dogs	Dog and Cat Management Act
Introduction of state-wide registration system, Dogs and Cats Online (DACO)	Dog and Cat Management Act
Controls regarding wandering at large - Cats	Council's Cats By-law No.6 of 2018
Exercising dogs in public places including playgrounds and Council land	Council's Dog By-law No.5 of 2018 Dog and Cat management Act
Limit of 2 dogs/cats per property without permission from Council	Council's By-laws

Council has two Authorised Persons under the Act, one being the Property and Regulatory Services Officer (PRSO) and one being the Infrastructure & Operations Manager, plus an additional Animal Management Officer.

The Authorised Persons primary role in dog and cat management is regulatory through the administration of the Act and relevant Council By-laws. Their subsequent role is to be an advocate for responsible dog and cat management ownership. In addition, they also provide critical business functions by way of reactive request management (picking up wandering dogs, investigating dog attack and barking dog reports) and proactive services (patrolling on-leash and dog prohibited areas, information provider, advocate, promoting the identification and microchipping of dogs).

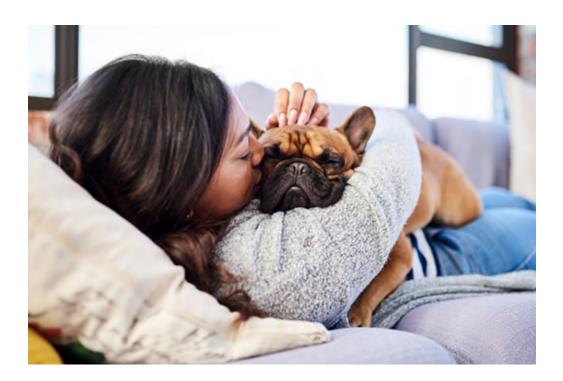


4. REVENUE

Registration fees for dogs are set by Council as prescribed by the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995.* As of 1 July 2018, Council contributes to the Dog and Cat Management Fund from dog and cat registration fees collected.

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

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



5. COUNCIL'S MANAGEMENT OF DOGS and CATS

MANDATORY DOG AND CAT REGISTRATION

Pursuant to the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* and Council's By-laws, all dogs and cats in the District must be registered on the Dogs and Cats Online system.

Whilst we encourage dog and cat owners to participate with self-registration and the updating of their pet's details on the Dogs and Cats Online system, Council assists the process by making available Customer Services for owners wishing to register or update their pet's details directly with us.

MANDATORY MICROCHIPPING OF DOGS AND CATS

Pursuant to 42A of the Act all dogs and cats must be microchipped.

Council actively promotes microchipping and will continue to subsidise microchipping days to assist dog and cat owners to comply with the legislation.

Council staff have equipment to scan for microchips, so that we can re-unite owners with lost pets as quickly as possible.

The microchip number is the link to the owner's contact details which are held on the state-wide database (Dogs and Cats Online), and owners are requested to review and update details regularly.

DESEXING OF DOGS AND CATS

The Act has mandated the desexing of all dogs and cats born after 1 July 2018.

Pursuant to section 42E of the Act, dogs and cats must be desexed before the age of 6 months, or within 28 days of possession.



OFF-LEASH DOG PARK

Council has provided an Off-Leash Dog Park in the town of Peterborough for residents and visitor alike to utilise.

The area provides a very pleasant environment for dogs and their owners, especially during the summer months.

Items such as bench seats, dog exercise equipment, bag dispensers and drinking points have also been installed for the benefit of the parks users.



Council intends to continue developing the Off-leash Dog Park with an expansion of the area and facilities.

PICKING UP AFTER YOUR DOG

It is an offence to fail to pick up after a dog, as per the Dog and Cat Management Act 1995, Part 5, Section 45A (6). Council has installed many dog waste bag dispensers which encourages responsible pet ownership through the removal of dog faeces from public places. These dispensers are located across the Council area; within parks and reserves for the benefit of dog owners and our community in keeping our district a comfortable and pleasant place to enjoy.



LOST ANIMALS

Council makes every effort to reunite a dog as soon as possible with their owner.

A dog wandering at large can be at risk of injury, a threat to livestock and members of the public, and Council is aware that serious attacks can arise in these circumstances. Council therefore implements procedures to minimise its occurrence in its community.

In accordance with the Act, it is an offence to allow a dog to wander at large. A dog will be taken to be wandering at large if it is in a public place, other than a park, or a private place without the consent of the occupier and no person is exercising effective control by way of a physical restraint.

A dog will also be considered to be wandering at large if in a park and no person is either exercising physical restraint or by command, the dog being in close proximity to the person and the person being able to see the dog at all times.

Where a dog is identified (ie microchip, registration disc) Council's Officers will make every effort to reunite the animal with their owner. Unidentified dogs will be impounded in accordance with the Dog and Cat Management Act and unclaimed dogs that are suitable as pets will be made eligible for re-homing to persons seeking a pet. Unclaimed dogs, which cannot be re-homed, as a last resort, will be humanely euthanised.

Warnings are issued to first offenders of a minor nature, that is, where no harm to a person or property has occurred, however penalties prescribed by the Act will be applied for re-offenders.

The Council Administration Office is open from 9.15am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. An after-hours call system is provided by Council, in accordance with Council's Dog and Cat Management Procedure Manual.



OUR FACILITIES:

Impounded Dogs and Cats

Council maintains fit for purpose Temporary Containment Facilities for the impounding and safe keeping of dogs and cats.

Facilities consist of four individual sheltered pens behind a common secure entrance with two door access. Dogs and cats have access to clean dry bedding, food and water, and are regularly monitored.

Any dog and cat held temporarily by Council is regularly monitored by an Animal Management Officer.

UNIDENTIFIED AND UNOWNED CATS

Department of the Environment and Energy (Tackling Feral Cats & their Impacts - Factsheet FAQs):

There are millions of feral cats in Australia (female feral cats can produce two litters every year), killing many millions of native animals every day, and we know feral cats have contributed to over 20 mammal extinctions already, as well as threatening survival of at least another 124 native Australian animals at risk of extinction.

Even small numbers of feral cats in some areas can cause severe declines in native species. The threat of feral cats to Australian mammals is almost double that of foxes, which is the next highest threat, and substantially greater than habitat loss.

PeTA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) Australia (PeTA website: The Issues / Australia's Feral Cat Problem):

It's estimated that feral cats kill 75 million native animals every night across Australia, including birds, frogs, small mammals, and reptiles. Trapping and, if necessary, euthanising feral cats is the only way to take these animals out of the environment humanely. Cats are not native wildlife and do not fit into the predator-prey ecosystem. Their hunting instincts exist no matter how well fed they are. They terrorize, maim, and kill countless native birds and other small wild animals.

As you can see from the reliable sources above, unidentified and unowned cats pose significant risks to native wildlife through predation in addition to possible disease transmission.

Council regularly receives complaints regarding these cats wandering onto properties, participating in nuisance behavior, including cat-fights, provocation of barking dogs, damage to property including marking of territory, damage to gardens and vehicles, attacking and killing native wildlife and scavenging for food.

They are a nuisance to humans and a health risk to owned domestic cats. They are not vaccinated against diseases and can be responsible for spreading disease to native and domesticated animals.

Members of the community who feed unidentified and unowned cats should either fully adopt the cat, ie register, desex and microchip it, or to hand them in to Council.

CAT TRAPS

To support responsible cat management within the community, Council has developed a procedure and hire agreement form in relation to the hiring of cat traps. This will assist in reducing the number of unidentified cat complaints and to address the impact they cause to the community and the environment by providing a cat trap hire service.

Cat traps can be hired, for a fee, from the Council offices to residents for a minimum hire period of 5 days. A deposit is payable upon collection of the cage which is refunded in full if the cage is returned by the hire return due date in a clean and undamaged condition.

When a cat is caught and retrieved by Council's Authorised Officer, it will be scanned with 2 different scanners by the Officer, plus there will be an extra observer during this procedure (Council employees only). If the cat can be identified through a microchip or identification tag, the Authorised Officer will contact the owner and arrange for the cat to be collected. The Officer will also endeavour to promote to the owner the importance of responsible pet ownership and of containing the cat within the boundaries of their property. On a case by case basis, if a cat is deemed unowned and is without identification, it will be humanely euthanized.



6. OBJECTIVES / STRATEGIES / MEASURES (KPI)

ACTION PLAN FOR IMPROVED ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

KEY RESULT 1: PROMOTE THE COMMUNITY BENEFITS OF PET OWNERSHIP

- Raise awareness of the benefits of pet ownership to the community.
- Increase awareness of the benefits of well-behaved and social dogs in the community.
- Facilitate and encourage re-homing of unowned and impounded animals.
- Provide safe and secure temporary containment facilities for lost and found dogs and cats.
- Ensure promotional material is available and current.

KEY RESULT 2: CREATE A SUSTAINABLE 'PET-FRIENDLY' ENVIRONMENT

- Identify and enforce dog 'on-leash' and 'off-leash' areas to provide appropriate opportunities for exercising dogs.
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dog faeces.
- Proactively manage unidentified and unowned cat colonies within the local Council area.

KEY RESULT 3: PROVIDE A STRONG REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

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

KEY RESULT 4: ENCOURAGE GOOD ANIMAL BEHAVIOURS

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

KEY RESULT 5: ENCOURAGE LIFETIME IDENTIFICATION

- Educate residents about mandatory microchipping requirements.
- Increase number of dogs and cats microchipped within the Council area.



STRATEGIES

Key Result 1: Community Benefits of Pet Ownership

Pets are an integral part of our lives as Australians. About 80% of Australians have an animal companion at some time. Pets are important in children's lives as they provide enjoyment and help children develop responsibilities transferable to adulthood. Sometimes pet relationships are ranked higher than certain kinds of human relationships for comfort, esteem, support and confidence. Some benefits of pet ownership have been identified in areas of child development, family harmony and even health.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE
Raise awareness of the benefits of pet ownership to the community	 Promote responsible pet ownership, pet selection and breed selection through appropriate media. Implement various campaigns, such as wandering dog and cat campaigns and benefits of identification to highlight various issues relating to responsible pet ownership. 	 Articles published through social media and/or Council's newsletter The Informer. Reduction in expiations issued. Number and type of campaigns. Reduction in dog and cats wandering at large. Reduction in dogs and cats found not microchipped or desexed.
Increase awareness of the benefits of well-behaved and social dogs in the community	 Make available publications at the front counter of Council's office. 	 Favourable feedback from the community. Noticeable reduction in reports of aggressive dog behaviour.
Facilitate and encourage re- homing of unowned and impounded animals	 Assess animal to ensure they are suitable for re- homing. Advertise via media sources for a new home. 	 Maximise occurrences of animals being re-homed compared to being euthanised.
Provide safe and secure temporary detainment facilities for lost and found dogs and cats	 Ensure team members are trained, qualified and experienced in their responsibilities by providing ongoing training to authorised persons. Ensure facilities comply with the Dog and Cat Management Board's guidelines for detainment. 	 Number and type of training undertaken. Favourable audits conducted by the Dog and Cat Management Board. Regular maintenance of facilities.
Ensure promotional material is available and current	 Review and update promotional material regularly to ensure it is accurate. 	 Number of reviews undertaken.

Key Result 2: Create a Sustainable 'Pet-friendly' Environment

Pets are an important part of the family and require ongoing care and nurture.

Owners have many considerations to ensure their pet is well cared for physically and mentally and that they don't develop nuisance behaviours. Both the home and public open spaces should provide opportunities for pets to play, socialise and interact safely and sustainably.

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

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

Members of the community are encouraged to report populations of unidentified and unowned cats to Council for further action. Council also hires out cat traps to the public to assist with managing unidentified and unowned cats. A condition of hire form must be read and signed and a refundable deposit received prior to hiring a cat trap.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE
Identify and enforce dog 'on- leash' and 'off-leash' areas to provide appropriate opportunities for exercising dogs	 Patrol dog on-leash, off- leash and prohibited areas, and educate owners on responsibilities. Strategic placement of signs that promote legislative requirements, dog etiquette and owner responsibilities. 	 Make educational material available to the public from Council's front counter and on Council's website on what is effective control of dogs. Number of expiations issued.
Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dog faeces	 Maintain dog bag dispensers in parks and area where people frequently walk dogs. Promote the existence of dog bag dispensers, and the requirement for owners to pick up after their dog. Proactively enforce non- compliance where possible. 	 Minimal reports or complaints of dog faeces on public space areas. Increase in expiations issued for non-compliance. Ensure dispensers are checked and refilled as necessary, especially during busy holiday periods. Install signage advising it is an offence not to clean up after your dog.
Proactively manage unidentified and unowned cat colonies within the local Council area	 Facilitate a cat trap hire service to residents in the area. Ensure the public is aware that Council can assist with unidentified and unowned cats. Promote and educate the community on cat management issues. 	 Number of cat traps hired by residents. Number of unidentified and unowned cat complaints received. Number of enforcement actions taken.

Key Result 3: Provide a Strong Regulatory Framework

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

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

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

In 2018 Council revised its By-Laws to include a Cat By-law to complement the changes to the Act.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE
Sustain an appropriate mix of relevant laws, systems and procedures for animal management	 Conduct scheduled reviews of policies and standard operating guidelines to reflect legislative changes and best practice. Contribute to consultation conducted by the Local Government Association, the Dog and Cat Management Board and South Australian Government. 	 Up to date policies. Up to date standard operating guidelines. Incorporation or consideration of Council's ideas and position in new regulation, legislation, procedures and systems.
Promote the requirements for local dog and cat breeders	Educate the community regarding legislative requirements and responsibilities.	• Work with breeders and sellers to ensure they are compliant with the Act.
Continuously improve the role, profile and capacity of authorised persons	 Provide ongoing training and support to authorised persons. Ensure team members are highly trained, qualified and experienced in their responsibilities. 	 Minimal number of incidents reported. Consistent and accurate dissemination of information to the community.

Key Result 4: Encourage Good Animal Behaviours

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

Since July 2018, owners have been required to desex their dogs and cats if they were born after 1 July 2018 (these are considered "new generation"). Exemptions are available as prescribed in the *Dog and Cat Management Regulations 2017*. This is important because accidental litters and roaming animals in heat can cause public nuisance, puts owned dogs and cats at risk of injury and adds financial burdens to owners. From a public safety perspective, there is evidence that desexed dogs are less likely to be involved in dog attacks.

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

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE
Educate residents about mandatory desexing requirements.	 Promote the new legislative requirements for dogs to be desexed through various communication channels. 	 90% of dogs registered after 1 July 2018 are desexed or have the applicable exemption. Work with vets and review schemes which assist in reducing costs to the community for desexing.
Monitor compliance with the mandatory desexing requirements	 Obtain reports from Dogs and Cats Online to identify non- desexed dogs and cats. Contact owners of non- standard animals. 	 Reduction in the number of non-desexed dogs and cats being impounded. Enforcement is activated for continued noncompliance.
Reduce the impact of barking dogs in the community	 Provide educational material to dog owners to assist them with changing a dog's barking behaviour. Make available to the public barking dog material from the Board. Include educational information for the community about why dogs bark and how to address/avoid the issue. 	 Minimal barking dog complaints. Successful outcomes between neighbours in dispute regarding barking dogs. Provide the community with the resources needed to resolve the complaint without the intervention of Council. Streamline processes to reduce frustration of all parties.

Key Result 5: Encourage Lifetime Identification

Owners of dogs and cats kept in the District Council of Peterborough are required to register their animals annually with Dogs and Cats Online.

Annual dog registration is a critical element to dog management in South Australia. It provides statistical information on the dog population and provides funding to assist with the management of dogs in the area. The registration data is also used to quickly reunite owners with found dogs and to assist in investigations relating to nuisance reports and dog attacks.

Council's Cat By-Law requires cats to be identified by means of a microchip when not on their owner's property.

Microchipping also supports Council to return dogs and cats to their owners that become lost, escape or are found injured or should their registration disc or collar have come off. Owners are required to keep the contact details up to date on Dogs and Cats Online.

More information on Dogs and Cats Online, can be found on Council's website.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE
Educate residents about mandatory microchipping requirements	 Information to be posted on Council's website and social media. Support Dog and Cat Management Board by local advertising of Board produced information and website links. 	 Minimal occurrences of those who claim to have not known the requirements. High rate of registered dogs and cats that are microchipped.
Increase number of dogs and cats microchipped within the Council area.	 Partner with other organisations for discounted microchipping. Work with local vets and review schemes which assist in reducing costs to the community for microchipping. 	 Organise and assist in facilitating microchipping days. Number of animals microchipped at organised events. Percentage of microchipped dogs/cats increase over the life of the plan.



7. APPENDIX: TABLE OF ON-LEASH AND OFF-LEASH PARKS

ON-LEASH PARKS

Location	Comments
Victoria Park, Queen Street, Peterborough	Dogs must be on-leash at all times.
Rotary Park, Main Street, Peterborough	Dogs must be on-leash at all times.
West Park, Princess Street, Peterborough	Dogs must be on-leash at all times.
Yongala Recreational Ground, Yongala	Dogs must be on-leash at all times.

OFF-LEASH PARK

Location	Comments
Opposite Steamtown, western end of Main Street, Peterborough	Dogs permitted off-leash.

DOG PROHIBITED AREAS

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

8. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Dog By Law No.5 of 2018
- Cat By Law No.6 of 2018

