



Longreach Regional Council  
**Domestic Animal Management Strategy**  
2024-2028

SNAPSHOT



**Longreach  
Regional Council**  
Ilfracombe Isisford Longreach Yaraka

## Executive summary

The Longreach Regional Council's Domestic Animal Management Strategy 2024-2028 (the Strategy) presents a comprehensive framework focused on enhancing domestic animal management over the next five years. The scope of the Strategy pertains to domestic animals, specifically defined as companion pets that can be domesticated and trained, such as dogs and cats.

The core purposes of the Strategy are to guide Council's animal management services, determine operational targets and budget requirements, and ensure compliance with State legislation and the Council's Local Laws. As a central goal, the Strategy aims to facilitate responsible pet ownership and encourage voluntary compliance with pet-related regulations.

The Strategy was developed using significant community input via the 'Pets, People and Places' survey, which attracted 140 responses, equating to 3.75% of the Longreach region's population. Community and stakeholder engagement will be ongoing throughout the implementation of this Strategy. The engagement process highlighted three key themes for improving animal management in our region:

- » Content Pets: The community emphasised the importance of proactive services and initiatives that encourage responsible pet ownership
- » Educated People: The need for strategic initiatives to promote knowledge sharing and awareness around responsible pet ownership, including an understanding of related laws and regulations
- » Inclusive Places: The community supported the provision of pet-friendly facilities and spaces while maintaining public safety

Strategic initiatives proposed to achieve the desired outcomes of content pets, educated people and inclusive places include:

- » Enhanced community services
- » Positive incentives for responsible pet ownership
- » Upgrading facilities and innovative amenities for a pet-friendly community
- » Fostering responsible pet ownership through education, engagement, and advocacy
- » Equipping pet owners with essential disaster preparedness supplies
- » Revamping animal-related signage across the region
- » Collaborating with businesses to determine spaces that are safe and welcoming to pets and people
- » Proactive enforcement and innovative solutions for pet-related compliance
- » Internal continuous improvement (such as technology introductions, policy reviews, and updating of processes)

The Longreach Regional Council's Domestic Animal Management Strategy 2024-2028 is a robust, comprehensive and community-oriented framework designed to guide the Council's animal management services over the next five years. This Strategy acknowledges the growing importance of pets in our society. It aims to enhance public services, promote responsible pet ownership, provide improved facilities, and enable strategic community engagement. With its focus on content pets, educated people, and inclusive places, this Strategy marks a decisive step towards promoting harmonious relationships between pets, their owners and the broader community in the Longreach Region.

A complete review of the Strategy is planned for 2028, with minor revisions to be carried out annually to align with evolving best practices, legislative changes and lifestyle trends.



## Introduction

Pets play an important role in our community, contributing to the wellbeing of many people within our Longreach Region. They provide companionship and comfort and are, for many people, a vital member of the family. More than ever, people are choosing to live life alongside a furry friend, with pet ownership rapidly increasing across the country in recent years.

Longreach Regional Council recognises the diversity of lifestyle preferences, including experiences and views about pets. While some prefer to enjoy our communities and public places without pet interaction, others may like to take their pets with them during day-to-day activities.

## Objectives

For Council to deliver on the purposes of the Strategy, the following key objectives have been identified as the principal outcomes:

- » **Responsible Pet Ownership** – Encourage voluntary compliance with responsible pet ownership principles and legislation, particularly registration, microchipping, desexing and effective control. Ensure that pet owners are educated and aware of the principles of responsible pet ownership
- » **Community Facilities and Spaces** – Improve and increase community-accessible facilities that support responsible pet ownership and meet community expectations. Provide safe and enjoyable access to public spaces
- » **Framework** – Ensure that Council's Local Laws are appropriate to consider lifestyle preferences and harmonious enjoyment of our communities
- » **Compliance and Enforcement** – Apply an appropriate enforcement process to address non-compliance with State legislation and Local Laws. Develop a clear and robust enforcement directive to ensure consistent compliance action.
- » **Animal Management Facility** – Provide a fit-for-purpose animal management facility appropriate for the welfare, housing and reclaiming of impounded animals



# 1. Outcome one: Content PETS

'Content Pets' are happy, healthy and well behaved when interacting with other people and animals in our communities. **Content pets are welcomed in our community, as they are less likely to cause nuisance or put the safety of others at risk.** When pets are content, their needs are met and their wellbeing is cared for, the community becomes a safer place for people and pets to co-exist. For many people, pets are incredibly important and become members of the family. **We are committed to supporting and encouraging pet owners to meet their pet ownership requirements, allowing pets to be accepted as part of the community.**

## 1.1 What our community told us

The community has emphasised the importance of responsible pet ownership and the integral role of pets in our society. Pets form a significant part of many households. There's a strong desire among community members for pet owners to manage their pets' behaviours, such as barking and wandering. Managing these behaviours are crucial, as they can impact the wellbeing of pets and the harmony of the community.

Findings from the Pets and People Community Survey 2023 include:

- » Most community members support the implementation of stricter penalties for irresponsible pet owners. Many have had personal experiences with issues related to wandering or barking dogs
- » Council services have strong support for immediate response to aggressive animals, discounts on registration fees for desexed and microchipped pets, and a robust enforcement approach for irresponsible pet ownership
- » Overall, the community supports measures that encourage responsible behaviours and discourage irresponsible ones

Insights from key stakeholders, including veterinary, biosecurity and rehoming services, include:

- » Better education and incentives for pet wellbeing, such as the importance of desexing, is needed to improve pet wellbeing, enhance biosecurity and aid in rehoming. Dogs' tendency to wander and the resulting issues, such as aggression and skin diseases, are often linked to a lack of desexing
- » The prevalence of pet obesity and the lack of ongoing preventive care as significant barriers to pet wellness
- » Socioeconomic factors, such as the cost of fencing and discounts on desexing, should be considered when enforcing compliance
- » Further collaborative efforts between local law enforcement, veterinary professionals and biosecurity officers could enhance public understanding and support for animal welfare initiatives

## 1.2 What we're working towards

The proposed strategic initiatives highlight the importance of responsible pet ownership and immediate response to disruptive pet behaviour. These include:

- » Enhanced community services, such as initiatives that promote responsible pet ownership through community education, behaviour training and complaints handling
- » Positive incentives for responsible pet ownership, such as discounts on registration fees for desexed and microchipped pets
- » Proactive enforcement and innovative solutions for pet-related compliance. Emphasising the enforcement of penalties for irresponsible pet owners and working on immediate response mechanisms for aggressive animals

## 1.3 How we'll track our progress

Our progress in this area will be measured by:

- » The number of new community service initiatives and the number of people and pets positively impacted
- » Uptake of incentives for responsible pet ownership
- » Decrease in dog attack incidents
- » Increase in pets cared for in line with or above Council's minimum standards



## 2. Outcome two: Educated PEOPLE

‘Educated People’ refers to every person in our community, whether they own a pet or not, being aware and informed of what responsible pet ownership means. People must also understand the diverse community that we live in and acknowledge that not all people wish to closely share the community with animals. **Our community is made up of people from various backgrounds, with differing experiences and feelings towards pets and animals.** We are committed to encouraging voluntary compliance with responsible pet ownership principles and animal-related State and Local Laws, by improving access to information and services that reflect our community’s preferences and requirements.

### 2.1 What our community told us

Findings from the Pets and People Community Survey 2023 include:

- » The balance between preferences for education and enforcement leans slightly towards education, indicating a community preference for understanding and compliance over punitive measures
- » There’s a preference for a greater emphasis on education and information about responsible pet ownership rather than focusing solely on microchipping or desexing
- » The community has also expressed a desire for the Council’s website to be a more comprehensive and accessible source of information

Insights from key stakeholders, including veterinary, biosecurity and rehoming services, include:

- » Resource allocation should prioritise education
- » Opportunities for joint information sessions with Council to improve community education on the signs of a content and healthy pet
- » Education on the reduced caloric needs of desexed dogs could help address the issue of pet obesity
- » Educational initiatives in schools by local law officers could foster a cultural shift towards compliance and prevention of dog attacks
- » The need for animal behavioural specialists and a comprehensive introduction to pet ownership for newcomers to the community

### 2.2 What we’re working towards

The proposed strategic initiatives reflect the community’s preference for understanding and compliance over punitive measures. The community has shown interest in more comprehensive information about responsible pet ownership, beyond just microchipping or desexing. Therefore, planned initiatives include:

- » Fostering responsible pet ownership through education, engagement and advocacy.
  - Developing robust educational programs to provide necessary information to potential and current pet owners, including community education and school initiatives
  - Aligning with the education program being proposed by the Queensland Government as part of the Animal Management Act review
  - Creating accessible and comprehensive online resources and handouts
- » Revamping animal-related signage across the region
- » Equipping pet owners with essential disaster preparedness supplies

### 2.3 How we’ll track our progress

Our progress in this area will be measured by:

- » Number of education programs, total participation and participant feedback
- » Engagement with online resources
- » Completion of updates to animal-related signage and community feedback
- » Uptake of disaster preparedness supplies



## 3. Outcome three: Inclusive PLACES

‘Inclusive Places’ are the areas and spaces we share in the community, such as parks, shopping precincts, walkways, tourist attractions, community events and more. Public spaces should be safe, welcoming, and accessible for anyone who attends them, and the wildlife and natural environment must be protected. Inclusive places not only provide pet-friendly facilities to accommodate those who choose to be part of the community with their furry friends by their side but also identify places that are best enjoyed without the presence of animals. We are committed to providing infrastructure and services that support responsible pet ownership, improving the liveability of our region and promoting a strong and connected community.

### 3.1 What our community told us

Findings from the Pets and People Community Survey 2023 include:

- » A need for more pet-friendly facilities and off-leash areas
- » A desire for a more inclusive approach to public spaces, with a balance between pet-friendly areas and spaces reserved for people
- » The majority of respondents supported domestic animal-related legislation being applied across the entire council
- » Respondents expressed personal safety concerns due to dog behaviour

Insights from key stakeholders, including veterinary services, biosecurity and rehoming, include:

- » There is a strong call for off-leash dog parks to provide socialisation opportunities

### 3.2 What we’re working towards

Inclusive places represent areas and spaces that are safe, welcoming, and accessible for everyone in the community. The community feedback indicated a need for a balanced approach to public spaces, ensuring both pet-friendly areas and spaces reserved for people. Relevant strategic initiatives include:

- » Upgrade facilities and innovative amenities, such as all-inclusive Animal Management Facility and new off-leash areas
- » Collaborating with CBD businesses to create welcoming spaces for pets and dog-free areas
- » Proactive enforcement and innovative solutions for pet-related compliance

It is important to note that the proposed initiatives to create inclusive places, and increase capacity for other initiatives, largely depend on upgrading the Pound to an all-inclusive Animal Management Facility.

### 3.3 How we’ll track our progress

Our progress in this area will be measured by:

- » Completion of facility projects
- » Community satisfaction with new and upgraded facilities
- » Number of CBD businesses confirmed as ‘pet-friendly’ or dog-free



## Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Longreach Regional Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the region we share.

We pay our respects to their elders past and present, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders of other communities who may live here as the keepers of the traditions, customs, cultures and stories of proud peoples. Longreach Regional Council is committed to cultivating inclusive environments.

## Acknowledgement of contributors to the Longreach Animal Management Strategy 2024-2028

Longreach Regional Council and CPR Group express their sincere gratitude to the numerous contributors of this Strategy, including those who generously shared their valuable time and insights by responding to our survey and through direct consultations, without whose collaborative efforts this work would not have been possible.

Appreciation and photography credits for supplied images obtained via the “Pets in our Places” Pet Photo Competition, for the Animal Management Strategy 2024-2028:

- » Chris and Kathy Smith; Brian Alowishus Frankie Banjo John Smith; 11 April 2024
- » Julie Bailey-Pratt; Zoe Bailey-Pratt; 11 April 2024
- » Camilla Hearn; Azula, Zeke and Ezra; 11 April 2024
- » Alli-J Drysdale; Loki Drysdale; 11 April 2024
- » Jodie Cronin-Jones; Loki Cronin-Jones; 11 April 2024
- » Thitaporn Sriplak; Patch and Kiki Sriplak; 11 April 2024
- » Kylie Dalzell; Lil Wayne Dalzell; 11 April 2024



This project was proudly completed  
by CPR Group in April, 2024  
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