

The Canberra Dog Model

Responsible dog ownership for a safer, more pet-friendly community



ACT
Government

Transport Canberra and
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MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Canberra should aspire to have world's best practice for the management of dogs. To achieve this we need to have the right rules, the right enforcement of the rules and an engaged community.

The Canberra Dog Model builds on extensive consultation by the ACT Government on animal welfare and domestic animals as well as the outcomes of an independent expert review into the management of dogs. All of which support the delivery of a model for dog management that puts the onus squarely on those holding the leash, not just the dog at the end of it.

The best way to deliver a safer community, and a community that prioritises the welfare of dogs, is to ensure that responsible pet ownership is engrained in the community. Just punishing dogs for the failures of their owners is inconsistent with the values of our community.

An increase in responsible pet ownership, regular dog registration, desexing and microchipping their dogs is the key to decreasing dog attacks.

We will reduce the number of off-leash areas and provide absolute clarity on the rules. For those who choose to do the wrong thing we will continue to focus on compliance. The ACT has the strongest dog laws in the country and we will take both proactive measures to enforce these laws and action against wrongdoing.

The Canberra Dog Model also introduces actions which will make our community safer over time. Annual registration of dogs will support better ownership through incentives for owners who do the right thing. While education programs for children on 'bite prevention' and how to be safe around dogs will help to protect our most vulnerable.

Together, as a community, we can look forward to an even safer community where all dogs are well cared for.



Chris Steel
Minister for City Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The ACT will be a leader in animal welfare and management. This document outlines how our community will manage dogs responsibly, effectively and fairly for a safer, more pet-friendly Canberra.

The ACT now has some of the strongest laws and robust regulatory processes for managing dangerous dogs. Our focus is now on the on-ground actions we will take to change human behaviour and attitudes towards responsible dog ownership.

International best-practice shows that a combination of education, marketing, effective regulatory tools and strong compliance is the most effective way to reduce dog attacks.

The Canberra Model is built on three key principles:

- 1. A safe community
- 2. Responsible dog ownership
- 3. Animal welfare.

Based on these key principles, six main objectives have been addressed to pave the way for achieving the Canberra Model for best-practice dog management:

- 1. All dog owners are responsible
- 2. Productive partnerships
- 3. An educated community
- 4. Compliance is enforced
- 5. The rules are clear
- 6. Responsible dog owners are rewarded.

Significant progress is planned against each of these objectives to encourage responsible dog ownership, target compliance action and clarify the rules for dog owners in public places.

The actions in this document are all based on best-practice dog management, including actions from the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy 2017-2022 (the Strategy) and advice presented in the Independent Expert Review into the Management of Dogs in the ACT (the Review).

The actions, principles and objectives of the Canberra Dog Model will establish Canberra as a leader in dog management and improve community safety for both our people and our pets.

ACTION PLAN



INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP CAMPAIGN	> Roll out a new Education and Awareness Strategy > Implement a new campaign > Produce and deliver materials > Increased social media presence	MAY 2019 ROLL OUT AND ONGOING
TARGETED EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	> Roll out education programs for children, such as through long day care centres and/or through stalls at school events > Roll out education programs in prenatal centres in hospitals	WINTER - SPRING 2019 AND ONGOING
NEW COMPLIANCE PROGRAM	> Implement dedicated compliance resources > Target irresponsible dog ownership > Target key trends and locations using improved data	JUNE 2019 AND ONGOING
OFF-LEASH AREA CHANGES	> Implement new on-leash and off-leash restrictions > Increased and clearer signage > Communicate the changes to the community	JUNE 2019
DESEXING PROGRAM	> Partner with the RSPCA ACT to implement a targeted discounted desexing program > A zero tolerance approach to non-desexed dogs	COMMENCE IN JULY 2019
FREE MICROCHIPPING AND REGISTRATION DAYS	> Hold a free microchipping and registration day in 2019 > Partner with stakeholders, including the RSPCA ACT	MAY 2019 REPEAT IN 2020
THE YELLOW DOG CAMPAIGN	> Roll out the Yellow Dog campaign > Market and incentivise participation in the campaign	WINTER 2019 AND ONGOING
PET CENSUS	> Conduct a Pet Census > Consult on restricting lead length to 2 metres > Report on the results and use the data to inform decision-making	WINTER 2019
ANNUAL REGISTRATION	> Implement annual registration > Encourage dog owners to update their registration details in advance of an annual registration system	COMMENCE IN 2020-2021
INCENTIVES FOR RESPONSIBLE OWNERS	> Dog bins and bags in key areas across the city	2019-2021 AND ONGOING

BEING A RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNER

For many Canberrans, owning or caring for a dog is an important part of the Canberra lifestyle. This is clear when moving about our Bush Capital, as it doesn't take long to spot people enjoying a walk with their dogs in our many parks, shared paths and trails.

We know that responsible dog ownership is crucial to Canberra becoming a safe, pet-friendly city and a leader in dog management, but what exactly makes a responsible dog owner?

1. Responsible procurement

Do your research before choosing a dog. Staff at Domestic Animal Services (DAS) or other animal rescue organisations can assist in helping you pick the dog that's right for you. Be careful not to buy from illegal breeders and instead source your new dog through a legitimate organisation or a licensed breeder.

2. Meet your dog's basic needs

All dogs need adequate food, water, space, exercise, shelter, veterinary treatment, grooming and general attention to keep them happy and healthy. Responsible dog owners are committed to meeting these needs.

3. Desex your dog

Owners must desex their dog if it is over six months of age unless they have a special permit. Studies show there is a strong correlation between non-desexed dogs and dog bites.

4. Microchip your dog

Even responsible owners who make every effort to properly contain their dog can come home to find their dog is missing one day, whether someone let them out, they were frightened by fireworks or they are simply a very skilled escape artist. Microchipping, combined with registration, is a reliable tool to help reunite you with your dog and is mandatory under the legislation.

5. Register your dog

It is a requirement to register as well as desex and microchip your dog. Registration contributes substantially to service provision and also provides other benefits such as quality data and allows us to target services where they are needed, better align policies, identify trends and identify owners.

6. Reinforce positive behaviour

All dogs must be kept under effective control at all times. Dogs are smart, but they can't read minds. Take the time to teach your dog the house rules and acceptable behavioural standards that apply at home and outside. What one person sees as harmless fun may be interpreted very differently by others and all Canberrans should feel safe and comfortable enjoying our beautiful outdoor spaces. It is important to know your dog and manage any behavioural issues to prevent an incident from occurring.

7. Provide your dog with adequate socialisation

Dogs are social beings and exposure to others, particularly from a young age, can dramatically reduce their chances of being involved in an attack or harassment incident. Using legitimate businesses, taking your dog for walks around other dogs in appropriate circumstances or letting your dog play in one of Canberra's dog parks under supervision are all ways you can keep your dog well-socialised.

ASK YOURSELF...



Will I have the finances to cover registration, veterinary treatment, grooming, dog walking, boarding, toys, bedding, food, bowls and a leash and harness?



Will the dog suit my lifestyle and activity levels?



Will I have the time to care for, exercise and entertain the dog?



Does my home have enough space?

KEY PRINCIPLES

The Canberra Dog Model is underpinned by three key principles. These are a safe community, responsible dog ownership and animal welfare.

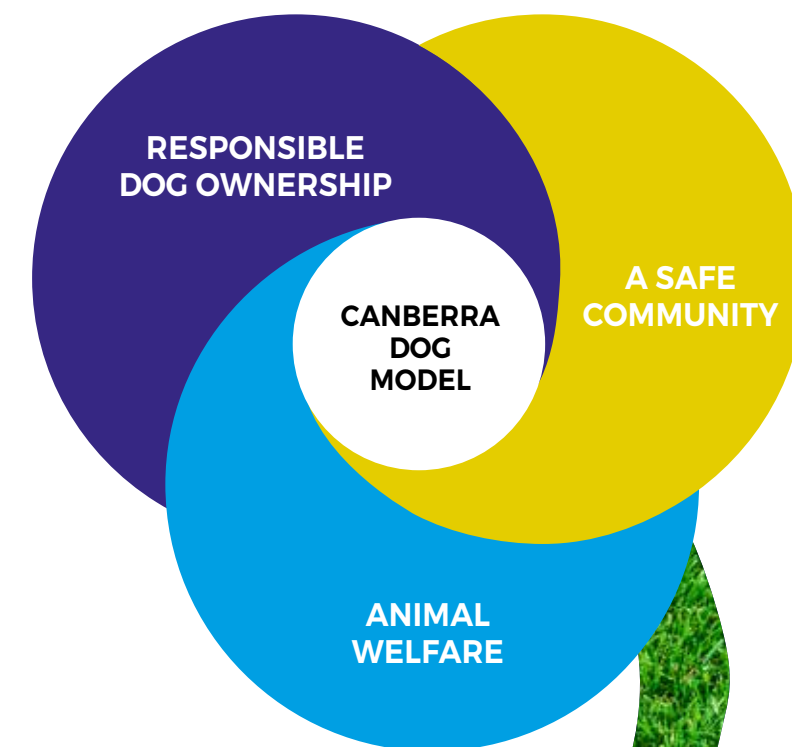
A Safe Community

The ACT Government considers community safety to be the highest priority when it comes to the management of dogs in the Territory. The Canberra Dog Model will see a reduction in the number of dangerous and high-risk dogs in the community thanks to strong regulation and enforcement of the dangerous dog laws, increased compliance activities and increased education and awareness of responsible dog ownership. Data improvements will also assist DAS in taking an evidence-based approach and targeting proactive patrols where they are needed.

Responsible Dog Ownership

Human behaviour is the primary factor behind domestic dog attacks. All dogs have the capacity to be dangerous if they are not managed responsibly by the people around them. Regulation and enforcement of the legislation is only part of the solution to dangerous dogs. Promoting and ensuring responsible dog ownership alongside effective regulation and enforcement is essential to reducing dangerous dogs in the community and improving public safety. For a reduction in dangerous dogs there needs to be long-lasting cultural change in the Canberra community towards responsible dog ownership.

The ACT Government is pursuing this through a comprehensive education and awareness campaign and through targeted compliance activities to hold irresponsible dog owners accountable.



CANBERRA DOG MODEL

The below diagram outlines the primary principles and objectives that form the Canberra Dog Model. Significant steps forward have been achieved in each of the below objectives since the release of the Animal Welfare and Management Strategy in 2017 and further work is upcoming to build on this progress.

It is important to note that these principles and objectives are not ordered. Each overlaps and interconnects to form a holistic vision for dog management. The Canberra Model is not a static destination; it will be an evolving model for dog management that strives for best-practice in every way for a safer, more pet-friendly community.



EMPOWERING CANBERRANS THROUGH RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP FOR A SAFER, MORE PET-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY.

CANBERRA DOG MODEL ALL DOG OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE

Responsible dog ownership is a proven and effective way to reduce dog attacks, achieve improved community safety and promote the welfare of dogs.

All dogs can bite if not managed effectively. Dogs that are healthy, microchipped, registered, desexed, well-socialised and kept under effective control are unlikely to pose a threat to public safety.

There is a strong link between non-desexed dogs and dog bites. Desexing of all dogs over six months of age is a requirement under the Domestic Animals Act 2000 unless a special permit is granted.

Compliance will be strictly enforced as part of the Canberra Dog Model to reduce the number of unwanted and dangerous dogs in Canberra.

The current lifetime registration system in the ACT does not require owners to update their details regularly or to notify DAS if a dog is no longer in their care. This means that we don't have an accurate understanding of Canberra's dog population to target services to where they are needed.

To achieve a high compliance rate of dog registration, the ACT Government will introduce an annual dog registration scheme. Partnerships with businesses and non-government organisations will assist in the transition by supporting and incentivising owners to register their dogs under the new system, update their details and microchip their dogs. When introduced in 2020-21, there will be no fee associated with annual registration other than the current upfront fee.

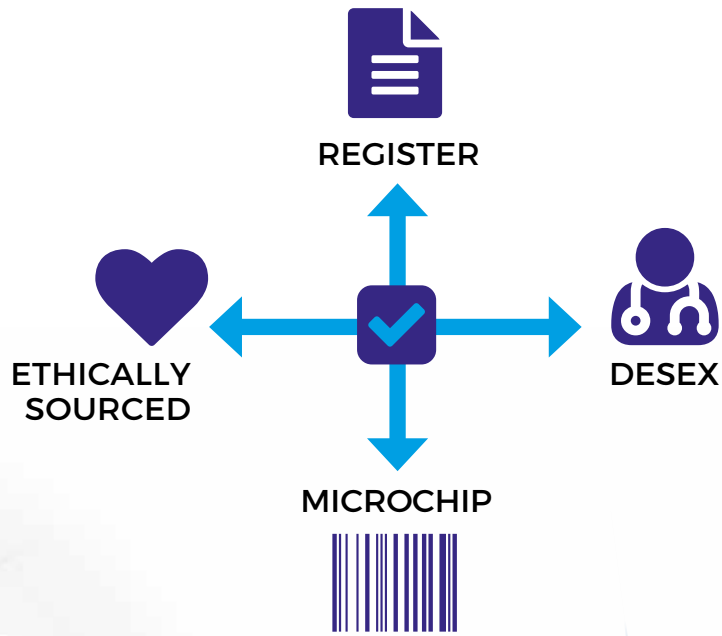
WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- > A community that understands and practices responsible dog ownership
- > High compliance rate for dog registration
- > High compliance rate for dog desexing
- > All dogs microchipped
- > All dogs in Canberra are legally sourced



ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

- > Roll out the new Education and Awareness Strategy
- > Implement targeted programs for children and parents
- > Increase signage in public open spaces
- > Implement the Yellow Dog campaign
- > Targeted compliance program and on-ground promotion of responsible dog ownership
- > Develop and implement annual dog registration system
- > Take a zero tolerance approach to desexing, registration and illegal breeding
- > Implement the Pet Census 2019 to obtain accurate baseline data
- > Identify options for rewarding responsible dog ownership



CANBERRA DOG MODEL

ALL DOG OWNERS ARE RESPONSIBLE

Responsible procurement of dogs is also a major issue for dog welfare and community safety. Strict regulations on dog breeding have now been introduced and work will continue to further restrict illegal dog breeding as part of the Canberra Dog Model.

A new compliance and engagement program will have a proactive focus on desexing, partnered with targeting the illegal sourcing and selling of dogs.

The ACT Government will monitor the legal avenues for purchasing dogs and take a zero tolerance approach to non-desexing of dogs to enforce compliance and ensure Canberra achieves a high rate of dog desexing. This will mean that:

- > Infringement notices will be issued
- > Owners who refuse to desex their dogs without obtaining an approved permit will be subject to mandatory home impoundment of their dog or seizure of their dog until compliance is achieved
- > It is an offence to break mandatory home impoundment conditions and those who do can be fined \$750
- > Where action is still not taken, DAS can cancel registration of a dog where a person does not demonstrate responsible dog management, care or control.

If you cannot desex your dog for any reason, we encourage you to make contact with DAS so they can work with you. Desexing incentivisation initiatives are also planned as part of the Canberra Dog Model.

Desexing and registration are two essential aspects of responsible dog ownership and we will be working closely with the community to ensure Canberra achieves high rates of desexing and registration.

A FINE OF \$500 CAN BE ISSUED AND YOUR DOG CAN BE SEIZED IF YOU KEEP A NON-DESEXED DOG WITHOUT A SPECIAL PERMIT.

CASE STUDY: CALGARY, CANADA

In Calgary a 90% compliance rate with annual licensing (registration) was achieved through a multi-pronged approach using education, marketing and compliance combined with an annual registration scheme and rewards program.

Calgary achieved a 91% citizen satisfaction rate and, over 18 years, reduced dog bites and chases by 50% while the human population doubled.

The Canberra Dog Model has considered this multi-pronged approach in the Canberra context, recognising that it can also take time for change to take hold in a community.



CANBERRA DOG MODEL

PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

The ACT is home to many devoted organisations, businesses and official bodies that promote the welfare and effective management of dogs. Utilising this expertise is a fundamental component of the Canberra Dog Model.

The Review called for the ACT Government to work with Canberra's extensive network of dog welfare and management entities by establishing and fostering collaborative partnerships that facilitate information sharing, cooperation and stronger dialogue between Government, industry, professionals, animal welfare groups, volunteers and the broader community.

The ACT Government has established relationships with most of these stakeholders and will work to strengthen these partnerships throughout the implementation of the Canberra Model.

Partners such as veterinary practices and non-government organisations can assist by displaying marketing materials to promote responsible dog ownership in line with the renewed education and awareness campaign. These stakeholders can also assist by reaching out to their members, particularly considering each organisation will connect the campaign to a specific audience.

In addition, establishing and maintaining productive partnerships will be used to gain a broad range of perspectives and guidance from stakeholders on particular actions and policies being rolled out under the Canberra Dog Model.

There are also positive opportunities for Government to partner with stakeholders on incentivisation events such as desexing initiatives and registration and microchipping days.

Productive partnerships allow for DAS to reach beyond Government resourcing to achieve strategic goals in a meaningful and long-lasting way. For example, we will work with partners on identifying non-desexed and non-registered dogs.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- > A strong network of animal welfare and management stakeholders that contribute meaningfully to achieving the objectives of the Canberra Dog Model



MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

- > **RSPCA ACT and other rescue organisations**
- > **Assistance dog and guide dog organisations**
- > **Other non-government organisations, such as the Animal Defenders Office and Dogs ACT**
- > **DAS' dedicated volunteer network**
- > **The Animal Welfare Advisory Committee**
- > **The Australian Veterinary Association**
- > **The Veterinary Surgeons Board**
- > **Veterinary practices**
- > **Animal industries e.g. dog walkers, pet shops, etc.**
- > **Other ACT Government agencies e.g. Access Canberra and ACT Policing**

ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

- > **Work collaboratively with stakeholders in delivering the Canberra Dog Model**
- > **Act on stakeholder feedback and advice**
- > **Partner with stakeholders on developing and implementing registration, microchipping and desexing initiatives**

CANBERRA DOG MODEL

AN EDUCATED COMMUNITY

Education and awareness is central to Canberra becoming a leader in dog management. Comparisons between jurisdictions show the stark difference this approach can make in improving compliance and achieving a reduction in dog attacks.

All dogs have the potential to bite, but it is the behaviour and actions of the people around them that determines the likelihood of this happening. Studies on dog attacks suggest the majority of attacks occur in the home, with many cases involving children.

Case studies of other jurisdictions that have used education and awareness programs aimed at children and families have proven highly successful, including in Australia.

The Canberra Dog Model follows this approach as part of the new Education and Awareness Strategy being rolled out in 2019, which will be developed and implemented by a dedicated Education and Awareness Officer.

The Education and Awareness Officer is responsible for implementing the Education and Awareness Strategy for responsible pet ownership and the 2019 Pet Census. This position is designed to work closely with DAS staff, stakeholders and the community to achieve on-ground outcomes under the Canberra Dog Model.

DAS structural changes implemented in early 2019 will further enhance education and awareness as a greater number of Rangers on the ground will promote responsible dog ownership to the community.

In the long-term, the improved public amenity, safety and animal welfare outcomes resulting from an educated and aware community will have compounding benefits for all Canberrans.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- > A well-informed community that understands and practices what is acceptable as a dog owner and what is required under the legislation
- > Higher rates of registration, microchipping, desexing, effective control and socialisation of dogs in Canberra

CANBERRA DOG MODEL

AN EDUCATED COMMUNITY

CHILDREN AND YOUNG FAMILIES

Targeted education and awareness programs were a recommendation of the Review and will be rolled out in 2019 at prenatal centres in hospitals to educate new parents on how children should behave around dogs. Education programs may be offered through long day care centres to reach children during early childhood and additional educational sessions and information stalls will be held at school events, such as fetes, to reach children of all ages.

One study in the US found that children have dangerous misconceptions on how to behave around dogs and that their parents shared these views. In addition to this, education in early childhood can significantly reduce dog attacks. Another study estimated that 90% of dog bites on humans, including those that go unreported to authorities, occur in the home and could be prevented by changes in human behaviour and responsible dog ownership.

NEW CAMPAIGN ON RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

A dedicated Education and Awareness Officer will roll out a new campaign around responsible pet ownership in 2019. Effective marketing is essential to ensure the Education and Awareness Strategy reaches all Canberrans.

It is expected that the new marketing campaign will be fully implemented by mid-2019 and increased signage and promotional materials will be seen around Canberra as part of this. The campaign is in the final stages of design and will ensure consistency in messaging.

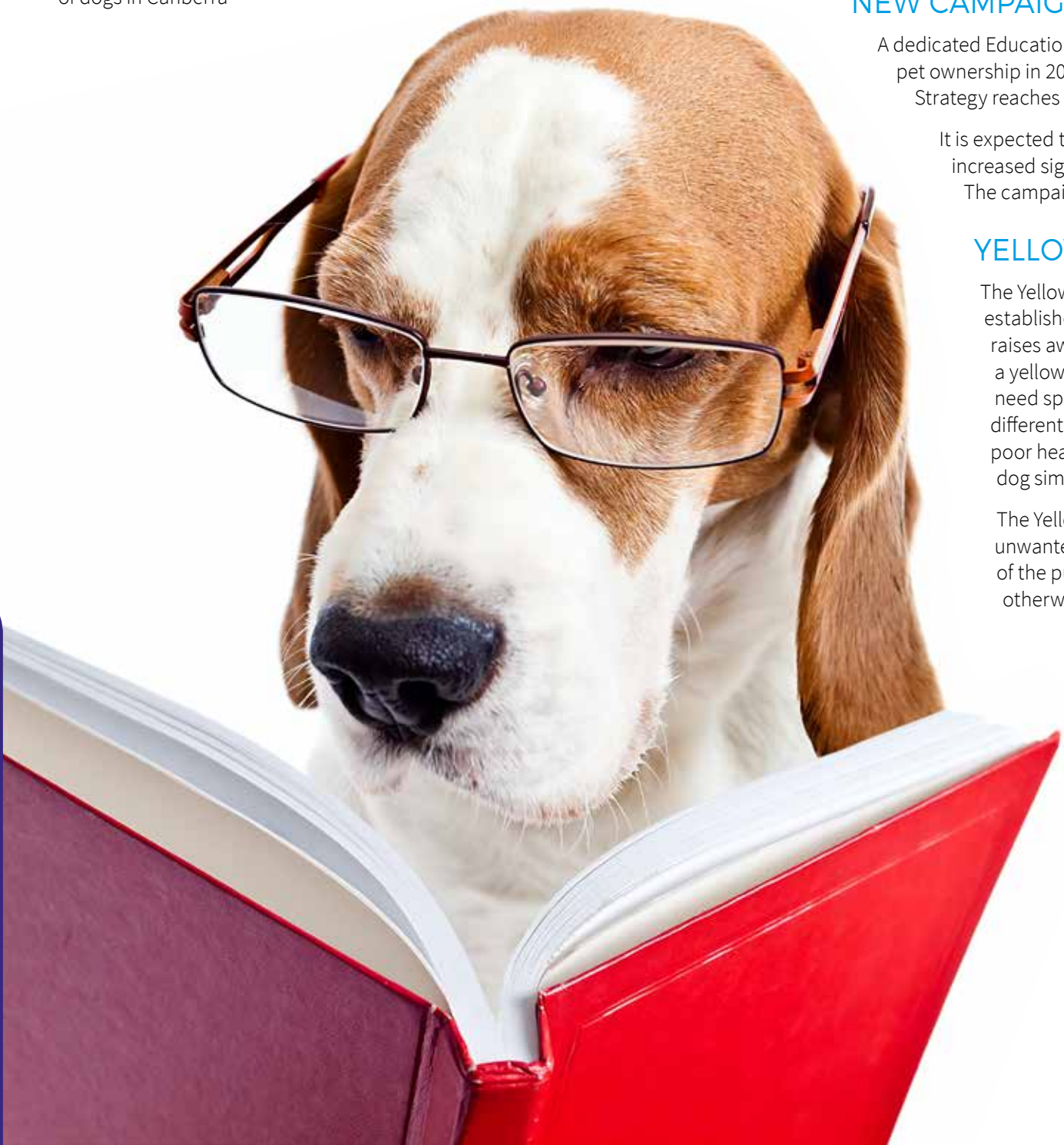
YELLOW DOG CAMPAIGN

The Yellow Dog campaign is a global trend established by a not for profit organisation that raises awareness through visual cues (such as a yellow vest, ribbon, etc.) that some dogs may need space out in public places. There are many different reasons a dog may need space, such as poor health, behavioural issues, training, or if a dog simply gets nervous around other dogs.

The Yellow Dog campaign helps prevent unwanted or risky interactions with members of the public and their dogs who may have otherwise approached the dog. The concept has proven very successful and Canberra will adopt this campaign in 2019 to educate the community on the importance of exercising caution around dogs to reduce the likelihood of dog attacks and harassments.

ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

- > Roll out the new Education and Awareness Strategy through a dedicated Education and Awareness Officer
- > Education programs for children and young families
- > Increase signage around Canberra
- > Launch a new campaign
- > Increase the presence of DAS Rangers in public spaces and distribute information packs and merchandise
- > Roll out the Yellow Dog campaign
- > Produce information packs, handouts and merchandise for dog owners
- > Implement annual registration in 2020-21



CANBERRA DOG MODEL

COMPLIANCE IS ENFORCED

The ACT Government is increasing enforcement to improve compliance and to keep the community safe from dangerous dogs.



15 The Canberra Dog Model

A strategic balance between regulation and enforcement and education and awareness is essential for Canberra to become a national and international leader in dog management and this proven approach is at the core of the Canberra Dog Model.

The education and awareness campaign under the Canberra Dog Model will support enhanced compliance activities by building a culture of responsible dog ownership where the community understands the rules and is supported to do the right thing.

A fair, flexible and escalating enforcement approach will be used to deter irresponsible dog ownership, encourage compliance and issue fines. The DAS fine framework has been updated to support this approach.

DAS Rangers will have an increased presence in the community to give advice, communicate the rules, issue warnings and issue infringements to irresponsible dog owners. The new campaign will also ensure the community is aware of their responsibilities and know the consequences of non-compliance.

The DAS Accountability Commitment was released in 2018 and outlines an escalating enforcement approach, focused on engaging and educating first, followed by strict compliance action. This document is available on the Transport Canberra and City Services website.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- > Improved safety with lower incidences of dog attacks and harassments
- > Enforcement demonstrates the consequences of non-compliance

ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

- > A targeted compliance program
- > Zero tolerance to owning a non-desexed dog using home impoundment measures, conditions and seizure powers
- > More fines and warnings issued more often for non-compliance
- > Localised targeted compliance blitzes, such as entire suburbs at a time

CANBERRA DOG MODEL

COMPLIANCE IS ENFORCED

TARGETED COMPLIANCE ACTIONS

Changes are being put in place, including increasing compliance resources, to allow DAS Rangers to be on the ground more often. This will include more proactive patrols to address non-compliance, educate the community and a targeted DAS presence in dog off-leash areas. It will also include localised blitzes for a localised compliance response.

TARGETED COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

A targeted compliance program will be rolled out in 2019 to take a proactive and serious approach to compliance with responsible dog ownership. This will be supported by targeted education and awareness activities and the new marketing campaign for responsible dog ownership.

The forward program of compliance will focus on key aspects of responsible dog ownership, including:

- > Desexing
- > Dogs that are off-leash in an on-leash area

- > Effective control of dogs in all public spaces
- > Registration
- > Microchipping
- > Illegal breeding
- > Owners not picking up after their dog.

In addition, the program will use improved data to target known hot spots and DAS Rangers will have an increased presence at dog parks.



CASE STUDY: LAKE GINNINDERRA

There are sections around Lake Ginninderra, Belconnen that are on-leash areas where Canberrans can enjoy Canberra's open space without coming into contact with off-leash dogs.

Unfortunately, DAS has received complaints about dogs regularly being off-leash in these on-leash areas despite there being separate designated off-leash areas nearby.

To address this, increased and clearer signage will be installed around the area to ensure dog owners are aware of where their dogs can and cannot be off-leash. In addition, targeted compliance and education will be undertaken in the area.

CANBERRA DOG MODEL

RULES ARE CLEAR

Clear rules mean that people know what their responsibilities and obligations are and that these rules are easily accessible, understood and enforced. This leads to people being informed to do the right thing.

A zero tolerance approach will be taken to ensuring dog owners and carers maintain effective control of their dogs at all times. Effective control is clearly defined in the legislation.

In an on-leash area or if you are unsure:

- > The dog must be on a leash
- > The person must be able to prevent the dog from approaching other animals or people.

In an off-leash area:

- > The dog must be on a leash unless the dog is in sight of the person and responds to and follows the person's commands
- > The person must be able to prevent the dog from approaching other animals or people.

In a dog park:

- > The dog must respond to and follow the person's commands, and behave appropriately and safely.

A zero tolerance approach will be taken to dogs clearly not under effective control. Fines apply under the *Domestic Animals Act 2000* in cases where a dog's owner or keeper fails to keep the dog under effective control.

The ACT Government strongly recommends that a leash of no longer than two metres is used. Where a leash longer than two metres is used, a person must clearly be able to demonstrate they still have effective control of their dog. The Government will be consulting on this issue as part of the Pet Census.

If in doubt, keep your dog on a leash.

WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- > Enforcement of the regulatory framework, with a risk versus harm approach that upholds public safety as a priority
- > More people aware of, understanding and complying with the rules

CANBERRA DOG MODEL

RULES ARE CLEAR

Information will be easily accessible online so that people can quickly and easily see where a dog can and cannot be off-leash simply by using their phone. New and improved signage will support this and include QR codes that connect people to relevant information. People doing the wrong thing will face compliance action and compliance capacity will be improved in 2019.

A trial of certain off-leash areas around Canberra's suburbs has now concluded and off-leash zones across Canberra will be finalised. ACTmapi will be updated to reflect these areas. The maps will reflect the following principles:

- > All streets, including the verge and footpath, will be dog on-leash areas
- > Footpaths and cycle paths, and reserves on either side, will be dog on-leash areas
- > Playgrounds and BBQs will be dog prohibited within 10 metres
- > Sportsgrounds will be off-leash except during formal sporting events. Dogs on sportsgrounds must be under effective control, which means using a leash unless you can control your dog with certainty
- > Lakes, unless otherwise signposted, will be dog on-leash areas
- > Off-leash areas around suburbs will be significantly reduced in scope and rules made clear.

CASE STUDIES ON EFFECTIVE CONTROL:

- > Pete is walking his large dog, Reggie, on a leash. However, Pete is not strong enough to stop Reggie pulling and approaching other dogs. Reggie is not under effective control. Pete could be fined \$250
- > Sue is walking her dog, Bailey, on a retractable leash. However, Sue has the leash length greater than two metres and Bailey approaches another person. Bailey is not under effective control. Sue could be fined \$250
- > Jack is walking his dog, Lucy, in an off-leash area without a leash. Another dog comes into sight. Lucy starts running towards them and does not respond when Jack calls Lucy back. Lucy is not under effective control. Jack could be fined \$250

ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

- > On and off-leash areas made more easy to find
- > Off-leash areas confined to ovals and certain large nature strips away from streets and footpaths
- > A zero tolerance approach to not having effective control
- > Improved and increased signage in public open spaces
- > Updated and easy to access DAS website
- > An education and awareness campaign to not use a leash that is over two metres in length and consultation with the community
- > Targeted consultation on leash length restrictions through the Pet Census

YOU MUST HAVE EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF YOUR DOG AT ALL TIMES. IF YOU DON'T, YOU WILL BE FINED.

CANBERRA DOG MODEL

RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS ARE REWARDED

Whether you care for a dog or not, responsible dog ownership benefits the entire community. The more people are motivated to responsibly manage their dogs, the safer our Bush Capital will be for people and animals.

Successful case studies from around the world show that using incentivisation to promote responsible pet ownership achieves the highest rates of compliance, as opposed to focusing solely on regulation and enforcement.

HOW CAN WE INCENTIVISE?

- > Desexing vouchers
- > Provide discounted vests and kits for people using the Yellow Dog campaign
- > Free or discounted training and/or behaviour sessions
- > Rewards and competitions with our partners
- > Free registration and microchipping days
- > First ride home free for dogs with responsible owners
- > Bins and bags provided in key off-leash areas and urban nature reserves

The main areas of incentivising responsible pet ownership in other jurisdictions are registration and desexing initiatives. The ACT Government has been exploring options for building incentivisation into these two key areas in ways that apply to the Canberra context.

Desexing vouchers are already offered by DAS in certain circumstances. Another incentivisation initiative will involve free microchipping and registration days, the first of which will be held in the first half of 2019.

The ACT Government will identify options for incentivisation of responsible dog ownership that can be implemented through internal processes or through productive partnerships with other organisations. For example, a discounted desexing initiative in partnership with the RSPCA ACT will be explored for 2019.

Discounted and incentivised merchandise and information will be available for those who willingly participate in the Yellow Dog campaign, which encourages owners of dogs that need space to effectively warn strangers not to approach their dog using yellow items, such as a dog vest.

ACTIONS WE WILL TAKE

- > Hold a free microchipping and registration day in 2019
- > Commence a discounted desexing initiative in partnership with the RSPCA ACT
- > Introduce the Yellow Dog campaign with free Yellow Dog materials provided to owners of dogs that need space and free advice from the DAS animal behaviourist
- > Explore and implement other incentivisation initiatives, such as first ride home free for lost dogs that are microchipped, registered and desexed
- > Bins and bags will be provided in well-used dog walking areas

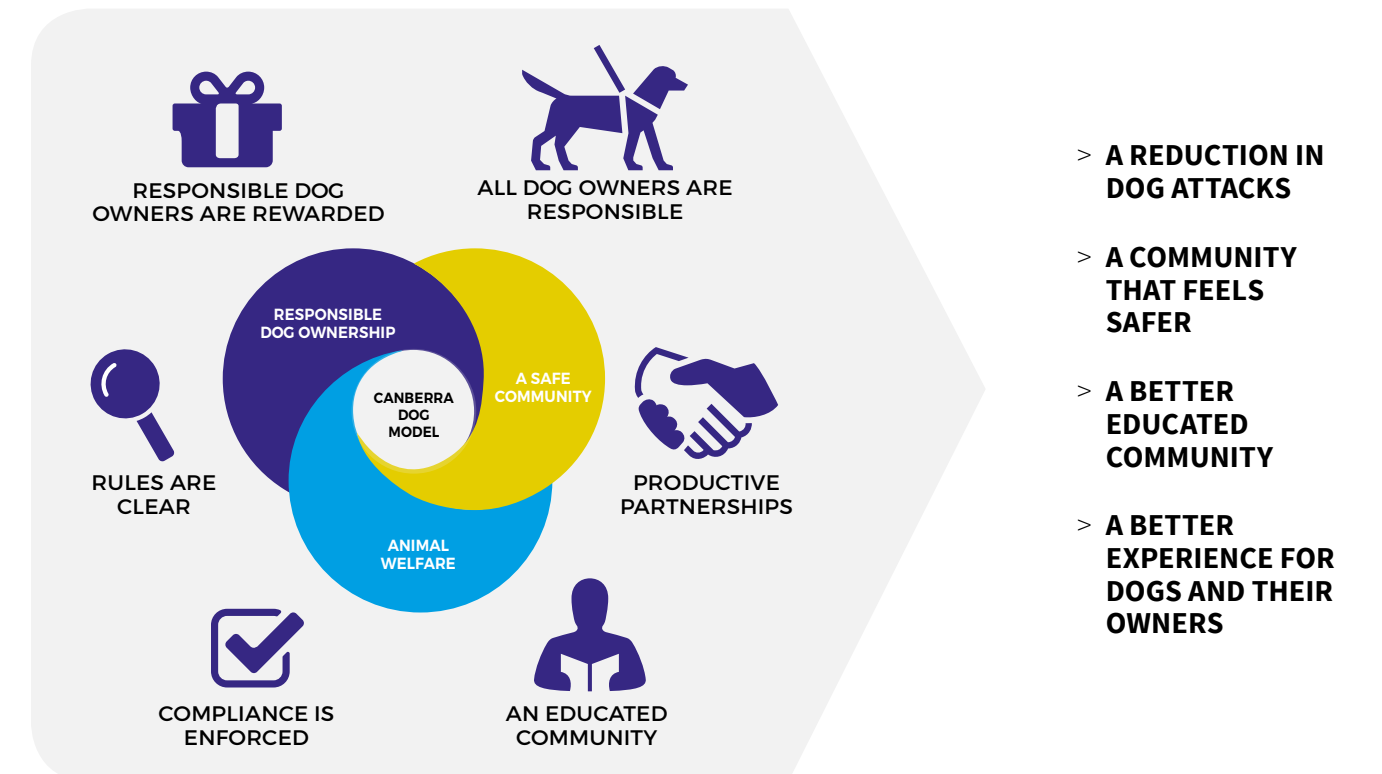
WHAT WE WANT TO SEE

- > An outcomes-focused incentivisation scheme involving registration and desexing that supports the community to embrace responsible dog ownership
- > Higher rates of dog registrations and desexing



WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE

The Canberra Model will achieve four key outcomes, three of which will be measured over time to track performance as progress is made in each of the key objectives.



- > **A REDUCTION IN DOG ATTACKS**
- > **A COMMUNITY THAT FEELS SAFER**
- > **A BETTER EDUCATED COMMUNITY**
- > **A BETTER EXPERIENCE FOR DOGS AND THEIR OWNERS**

REDUCTION IN DOG ATTACKS

The most effective way to reduce dog attacks is by combining community education and responsible dog ownership with effective regulation and enforcement. This is because the main cause behind dog attacks is a failure by the responsible person to desex, socialise or contain and control a dog.

Currently the dog attack rate per capita in the ACT is below many other jurisdictions. Reporting dog attacks and harassments is important to accurately reflect what is happening in the community and to ensure as many incidents as possible are known to DAS. This allows for regulatory and preventative action to be taken. Accurate data is also essential in reducing dog attacks as this allows for trends and patterns to be identified and services to be targeted to areas of need.

It is widely understood that the majority of dog attacks occur in the home, as opposed to in the public realm. Academic research indicates that human action or inaction is the primary cause behind most dog attacks and such attacks could be prevented through educating people living with or around dogs and promoting responsible dog ownership.

The Canberra Model will target the well established key factors behind dog attacks. Under the Canberra Model, a targeted compliance program will be implemented in 2019 and a stronger focus on responsible dog ownership under the new education and awareness campaign will reduce dangerous dog behaviour.

A REDUCTION IN DOG ATTACKS - METRICS

- > Reduction in dog attack numbers
- > Increase in reporting from the community to accurately reflect the true number of attacks and harassments

WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE

A COMMUNITY THAT FEELS SAFE

An empowered community that feels safe is a significant priority of the Canberra Dog Model and will require a long-term commitment to achieve.

Whilst reducing dangerous dogs in the community is essential for Canberrans to feel safer, transparency and collaboration between key stakeholders will also play a significant role in improving community confidence in the initiatives that are underway.

Canberra is a fast-growing city and with more people comes more dog ownership. It is very important that all Canberrans can feel safe and know that their pets are safe when enjoying Canberra's open space.

As part of the December 2017 amendments to the Domestic Animals Act 2000, reporting of serious dog attacks is mandatory. This will lead to consistent reporting to ensure all incidents are drawn to the attention of DAS for appropriate action to be taken.

Education and awareness has and will continue to bring about widespread reporting of all attack and harassment incidents. The more that Canberrans are aware of their responsibility to manage their dogs and report dog related incidents to DAS, the safer our community will be.

Under the Canberra Model, clear and up to date information will be available to the community to build community confidence in the changes underway. For example, the DAS Investigations Manual will be released in 2019 to give transparency to existing processes and the Canberra Dog Model will be updated as needed to reflect progress.

A COMMUNITY THAT FEELS SAFE - METRICS

- > Community satisfaction
- > Increased number of compliance activities and reduced dog attacks and harassments

A BETTER EDUCATED COMMUNITY

We know the importance of an educated community when it comes to best-practice dog management and reducing the incidence of dangerous dog behaviour in our community. This is highlighted throughout the Canberra Dog Model and cannot be underestimated.

In Oregon, USA education and a focus on owner behaviour reduced repeat bite incidents from 25% down to 7%. Other studies have shown similar benefits, particularly studies involving the education of children and young families. The majority of dog bites on children involve dogs that were known to the child. Raising the awareness of children and young families on how to behave appropriately around dogs and when to give a dog space is essential and targeted education programs planned for 2019 will address this.

Education and awareness of how to prevent dog attacks and the importance of reporting them when they occur will significantly reduce the number of dog attack and harassment incidents in the community. The new Education and Awareness Strategy and new marketing campaign will focus heavily on responsible dog ownership.

A BETTER EDUCATED COMMUNITY - METRICS

- > Improved rates of desexing, registration and microchipping
- > Effective education, awareness and marketing activities that reach key audiences

WHAT WILL WE ACHIEVE

A BETTER EXPERIENCE FOR DOGS AND THEIR OWNERS

Responsible dog ownership and improved services for dog owners offer benefits for both people and pets.

The companionship between humans and their dogs has been the subject of numerous studies, particularly in respect to the considerable health and wellbeing benefits that include decreased stress levels, lower blood pressure levels and improved mental health.

The Canberra Dog Model will see a positive cultural shift towards responsible dog ownership in the ACT and this will improve the overall experience for dogs and their owners as dogs are better cared for and kept safe from attacks and abandonment.

Circumstances such as illegal breeding, roaming dogs, unwanted dogs and poorly managed dogs will be addressed to establish a positive environment where owners feel supported to manage their dogs responsibly.

The actions outlined under the Canberra Dog Model will not only bring about a better experience for dogs and their owners but will also benefit the broader Canberra community and their pets.

The initiatives as part of the Canberra Dog Model will contribute substantially to the best-practice welfare and management of dogs and subsequently to the valuable bond owners have with their dogs.



KEY ACTIONS



TARGETED EDUCATION PROGRAM

An education program aimed at children and new parents will teach young families the skills they need to safely be around dogs, which is proven to reduce dog bites.



NEW CAMPAIGN

A new campaign will be launched to ensure the community knows the rules and understands responsible dog ownership.



PET CENSUS

The Pet Census in 2019 will provide accurate baseline data to inform targeted education and awareness.



TARGETED DESEXING

Targeted desexing initiatives will contribute to reduced dog attacks. There is a strong link between non-desexed dogs and dog bites.



MICROCHIPPING & REGISTRATION DAYS

Free microchipping and registration days will be held each year to incentivise dog owners to register and microchip their dogs and/or update their details.



LOCAL BLITZES

Localised compliance blitzes will build awareness and target irresponsible dog owners.



ANNUAL REGISTRATION

Annual registration is considered best-practice by experts and necessary to reduce and manage dangerous dogs in the community. When rolled out in 2020-21 there will be no fee associated other than the current upfront fee.



YELLOW DOG CAMPAIGN

The Yellow Dog campaign will provide a mechanism to identify dogs that need space to reduce dog attacks and harassments.



EDUCATION OFFICER

A dedicated Education and Awareness Officer will implement the Education and Awareness Strategy in 2019 and facilitate the Pet Census.



REVISED OFF-LEASH AREAS

Revising our off-leash areas will provide clearer guidance for dog owners/carers as to where their dogs must be leashed. Education, signage and targeted compliance will support any changes.



TARGETED COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

A targeted compliance program will be implemented in 2019 to target compliance where it is needed and ensure irresponsible dog owners are held accountable.



INCENTIVES FOR RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERS

Incentives will be provided for responsible dog owners to encourage and reward positive behaviour.

FEWER DANGEROUS DOGS

