



PROPOSED DOG MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF COUNCIL BY-LAWS

The Wagait Shire Council Dog Management By-Laws are an initiative to improve the safety of our community and the amenity, accessibility and usability of our public spaces.

In 2018-19, areas of concern identified by the community included:

- Increasing numbers of wandering dogs both on public and private property
- Incidences of dogs chasing and/or menacing members of the public including children
- Reports of dogs causing nuisance such as knocking over bins and attacking other animals

Dog Registration will assist Council keep track of dogs in the community and enable a dog-friendly and safe community for residents, their pets and the local wildlife.

Dog owners are encouraged to contact Council on 8978 5185 to report a lost or escaped dog. Your details will be entered into the lost dog register, which will assist us in returning your dog to you should it be found by Council staff or brought to Council by another resident.

Full implementation of the By-Laws as set out below will commence on 1 September 2020 after a period of Dog Registration campaign in August 2020.

Comments can be made to ceo@wagait.nt.gov.au by COB Tuesday 21 July 2020.

1. IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVES

- Education of the community in regard to responsible dog ownership, in particular, confinement of dogs to private property
- Provision of animal capture and holding services for wandering dogs
- Registration and microchip implantation services for identification of domestic dogs
- Feral dog control in addition to the work already being carried out by Wagait Shire Council

2. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

- Provision of information to community members regarding the implementation of the new dog control and management measures.
 - Letter drops to properties
 - Posters on the community notice board
 - Information published the Wagait Shire website and social media
 - Community 'dog days' with vet and other educational forums and activities
- Encourage community-wide registration and microchipping of all domestic dogs.
- Registration will be annual and due on 31 August each year, in line with all Top End Councils. Registration will be free for the first year (2020) and for dogs < 12 months.

- Wagait Shire Council proposes that the maximum number of dogs kept on premises without a license in the Council area, is two (2). Residents with more than two dogs are required to apply to Council to have their premises to be licensed for more than two (2) dogs and additional fees may apply. Properties with more than two dogs on commencement of implementing the By-laws will need to confirm to Council if they will seek a license or agree to reduce the number of dogs on the property to two (2) by natural attrition.
- All dogs over the age of 6 months must be registered and an annual fee paid for registration (with the exceptions as noted below). Registered dogs will be provided a Council identification tag, however must also have contact identification on them such as a tag with a contact number or by an implanted microchip.
- Lost Dogs reported or brought to Council will be entered into the lost dog register, which will assist to identify and return dogs to owner if they are found by Council staff.
- All dogs collected by authorised Council staff will be scanned for a microchip and returned to their owner as soon as possible. If an owner cannot be identified or contacted, the dog will be held by Council and further attempts will be made to locate the dog's owner for a period of no more than 24 hours.
- Photos of dogs held by Council that have no microchip or other form of identification will be placed on the Council website Dog Gallery and posted on the Council Facebook page.
- Dogs can be collected Monday to Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm. Proof of ownership is required to collect a dog. If the dog is not registered, owners will be required to register it and pay the registration fee before collection. If owners cannot attend Council within these hours, alternative arrangements must be made with Council to avoid penalties and charges being incurred.
- Council is committed to minimising euthanasia rates and reducing the number of dogs held by Council within the local government area. Where possible, authorised Council staff will return a found registered dog directly to its owner rather than holding the dog.
- Unclaimed dogs that are suitable for re-homing will be transferred to a re-homing organisation after 72 hours.

3. PROPOSED FEES AND CHARGES

- 3.1. All fees are annual and due on the 31 August each year.
- 3.2. Registration for first year introducing new regulations (2020) is FREE, from 2021 fees
- 3.3. will be applied as set out in Table 1 below.
- 3.4. Registration is transferrable between the following local government areas: Darwin City Council, Palmerston City Council, Litchfield Community Council, Coomalie Community Council and Wagait Shire Council.
- 3.5. Microchipping and de-sexing of dogs 6-12 months will be subsidised by Council through a voucher system to encourage responsible dog ownership.
- 3.6. Dogs captured that are registered and micro-chipped will be returned free of charge, however must be collected by 5pm same day otherwise local overnight holding and release fees will apply.
- 3.7. Dogs captured and transferred to holding pens during the day that are NOT micro-chipped will be advertised on Council webpage for 24hrs and penalty fees will apply. All owners of unregistered dogs that are impounded by Council must also pay a release fee of 1 penalty unit (\$158.00) and will be required to register the dog prior to release.

- 3.8. For repeat offences of dog at large, fines may be issued and release fees will apply, whether the dog is registered with Council or not.
- 3.9. When the owner of a dog is identified and they fail to collect their dog from the pound, they may be issued with a fine of \$316 for abandoning a dog in accordance with Dog Management By-law 37(1).
- 3.10. Declared or dangerous dogs captured will be transferred to Litchfield Council Pound and owners will be responsible for any costs imposed by Litchfield Council and Wagait Shire Council prior to release, as set out in Table 2 below. Owners of declared or dangerous dogs will have to meet additional requirements, as set out in the *Council Dog Management By-laws (2019)*.
- 3.11. Penalties (fines) will be issued for any dogs found to be unregistered, as set out in Table 2 below.

Table 1: Registration Fees and Charges

Item	Desexed		Entire		Declared/dangerous		Assistance	
	\$ - Full	\$ - Con	\$ - Full	\$ - Con	\$ - Full	\$ - Con	\$ - Full	\$ - Con
Registration/dog	20.00	10.00	50.00	25.00	250.00	NA	0	0

Penalty units are regulated under the Penalty Unit Acts 2009 and the value of a penalty unit is reviewed for each financial year, with a value unit determined in line with the Darwin consumer Price Index. Pursuant to Regulation 2 of the of the Penalty Units Regulations 2010, **the current value of a penalty unit is \$158.00**

The penalties for the most common offences under the Wagait Shire Council Dog Management By-laws are listed in Table 2 below showing: by-law reference, maximum penalty unit and prescribed infringement charges for each offence. The maximum penalty for all offences is 20 units. Depending on the severity of the offence, Wagait Shire Council may increase the infringement charges noted here.

Table 2: Penalty Units and Infringement Charges

Offence	By-law Clause	Prescribed Penalty Units	Prescribed Infringement
Unregistered dog	11	1	\$ 158.00
Failure to comply with condition of registration	12	1	\$ 158.00
Change of ownership notification	13	1	\$ 158.00
Change of address notification	14	1	\$ 158.00
Failure to comply with condition of license	17	2	\$ 316.00
Failure to properly contain a dog	27	2	\$ 316.00
Removal of identification device	28	1	\$ 158.00
Dog at large and not under effective control	31	1	\$ 158.00
Menacing dog	33	3	\$ 474.00
Dog attack	34	6	\$ 948.00
Dog chasing vehicles	35	2	\$ 316.00
Dog causing nuisance (including persistent barking)	36	2	\$ 316.00
Abandoning a dog	37	2	\$ 316.00