

## COUNCIL REGULATIONS RELATING TO DOGS AND CATS

The *Companion Animals Act, 1998* enshrines the rights and responsibilities of pet ownership in NSW. It covers the following:

### Microchipping

All dogs and cats born or who have changed owners since July 1, 1999 are required to be **microchipped by 12 weeks of age**.

Cats born before July 1, 1999 that leave the owner's property at any time, must be identified either by a microchip or a tag worn on their collar with their name and the owner's phone number on it.

When a **dog** is not on the property it usually occupies, it must wear a collar and tag with its name and the owner's telephone number on it.

### Registration

Most dogs and cats require **lifetime registration by six months of age**. The fees are a **one-off payment** for the life of the animal and a change of details or ownership attracts no additional fee.



### Rights and Responsibilities

While you are responsible for providing proper care for your cat or dog to ensure it is healthy, well nourished, groomed, vaccinated, exercised and socialised, you are also responsible for ensuring that it does not harm or threaten any other person or animal. As an owner of either a dog or cat you must make sure that your animal is not causing a nuisance - either persistent noise, straying or interfering with other people's property.

### Dogs

For **dog owners** this means containing your dog on your property, and when you are in public with your dog, keeping it on a leash, except in specially designated areas. Dog owners are also required to promptly **dispose of any faeces left by the dog** anywhere outside your property.

Owners of **restricted breeds of dogs**, including American Pit Bull Terriers, have a range of **more stringent responsibilities**, as do owners of dogs declared '**dangerous**' (see over).

## Cats

**Owners of cats** are encouraged to teach them to stay inside at night to reduce the chances of them fighting or hunting other animals. Studies have shown the overwhelming majority of car accidents and fights which result in injury to cats occur at night. You are also required to ensure your cat stays out of restricted areas including food preparation and wildlife protection areas. A cat may be declared a **nuisance cat** if it persistently makes noise or interferes with neighbours' wellbeing or damages other people's property.

## Exercising your Dog

When your dog is out in public it must be on a lead and under the control of a person who is capable of restraining it. The Act requires Councils to provide 'off-leash' areas for the exercise of dogs. In the Hawkesbury City Council area there is an off-leash area at Pool Park on the corner of Ham and Cox Street South Windsor. This area contains bins for the disposal of dog faeces.



## Barking Dogs

Persistent barking is antisocial behaviour and where a serious on-going problem is identified by a council officer, under the Act a **nuisance dog order** can be issued which requires the owner to stop the dog's persistent barking. If the problem continues, the owner may be liable for a maximum penalty of \$550 for a first offence and \$1100 for further offences.

## Dangerous Dogs

Councils can declare a dog dangerous if it has, without provocation attacked or killed a person or animal, or repeatedly threatened to do so. **There are strict conditions for the control and restraint of dangerous dogs.** Five breeds of dogs have also been declared **restricted breeds.** **Contact Council for more information about dangerous dogs and restricted breeds.**