ADELAIDE HILLS

# *Animal Management Plan Phase 1 Consultation*

A snapshot of the process,
what we heard and where to next.




Adelaide Hills
COUNCIL

Council acknowledges that we conduct our business on the traditional lands and waters of the Peramangk and Kaurna people. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging as the Custodians of this ancient and beautiful land.

***Thank you to everyone who took part in the Animal Management Plan Phase 1 Consultation for the Adelaide Hills Council.***

# The engagement process

The community engagement process was conducted from **29 March to 2 May 2023**.

This was the first phase of the overarching **Animal Management Plan** development.

The feedback in this report and all feedback provided by participants will shape the next Animal Management Plan.

**609** people participated in the consultation.

This report will be available to those who participated in the consultation and will be available on Council's Community Engagement Hub platform as well as included in a report to Council.




***Making it easy for our community to participate (signage at Balhannah dog park).***

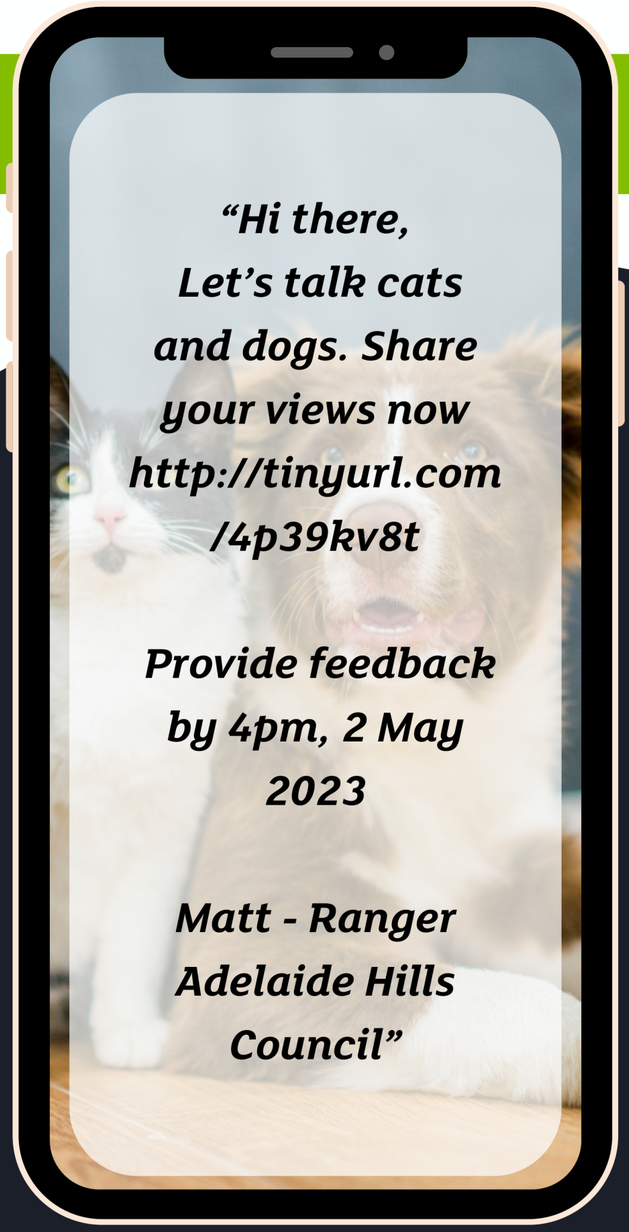


# What we wanted to know

- What dog and cat related issues you are experiencing or are aware of and where?
- What solutions or opportunities you think are possible to reduce the risk of the issues?
- How issues and possible solutions could be prioritised?

# How the survey was promoted

- **SMS** to all owners of registered dogs and cats sent by our Ranger team
- **Courier** column heading
- **Hills Voice**: your Adelaide Hills e-Newsletter article
- Community Engagement Hub Project Page (over 3.57k visits)
- **AHC social media**l (Facebook, Twitter) (18,057 reach)
- **Direct emails** to all Community Engagement Hub registrants
- **Posters, information sheet** and **hardcopy feedback forms** available at **customer service centres and libraries** at Gumeracha, Stirling and Woodside
- **Districts signage** around the Council area and at dog parks
- **Posters and signage distributed to all veterinary clinics and pet shops** in Adelaide Hills (direct email contact)
- **Council website**



# Tools available to provide feedback

- Hardcopy survey
- Online survey
- Online mapping tool
- Email
- Letter
- Phone contact
- Online webinar

**Supporting tools developed as part of the consultation included:**

- Project fact sheet
- Hard copy feedback form
- List of dog poo bag dispensers
- Sharable poster
- FAQs on Community Engagement Hub

All documents were also available
at Council customer service centres.




***Most respondents used the online survey tool.***

# Who participated?

## 609 people participated



90% provided their feedback using the online survey tool

96% of respondents were rate payers or residents of the Adelaide Hills Council area

Highest responding age categories were: 35-49 (25%), 50-59 (24%), 60-69 (20%) and 70-84 (11%)

32% of the participants owned or looked after a cat

77% of the participants owned or looked after a dog

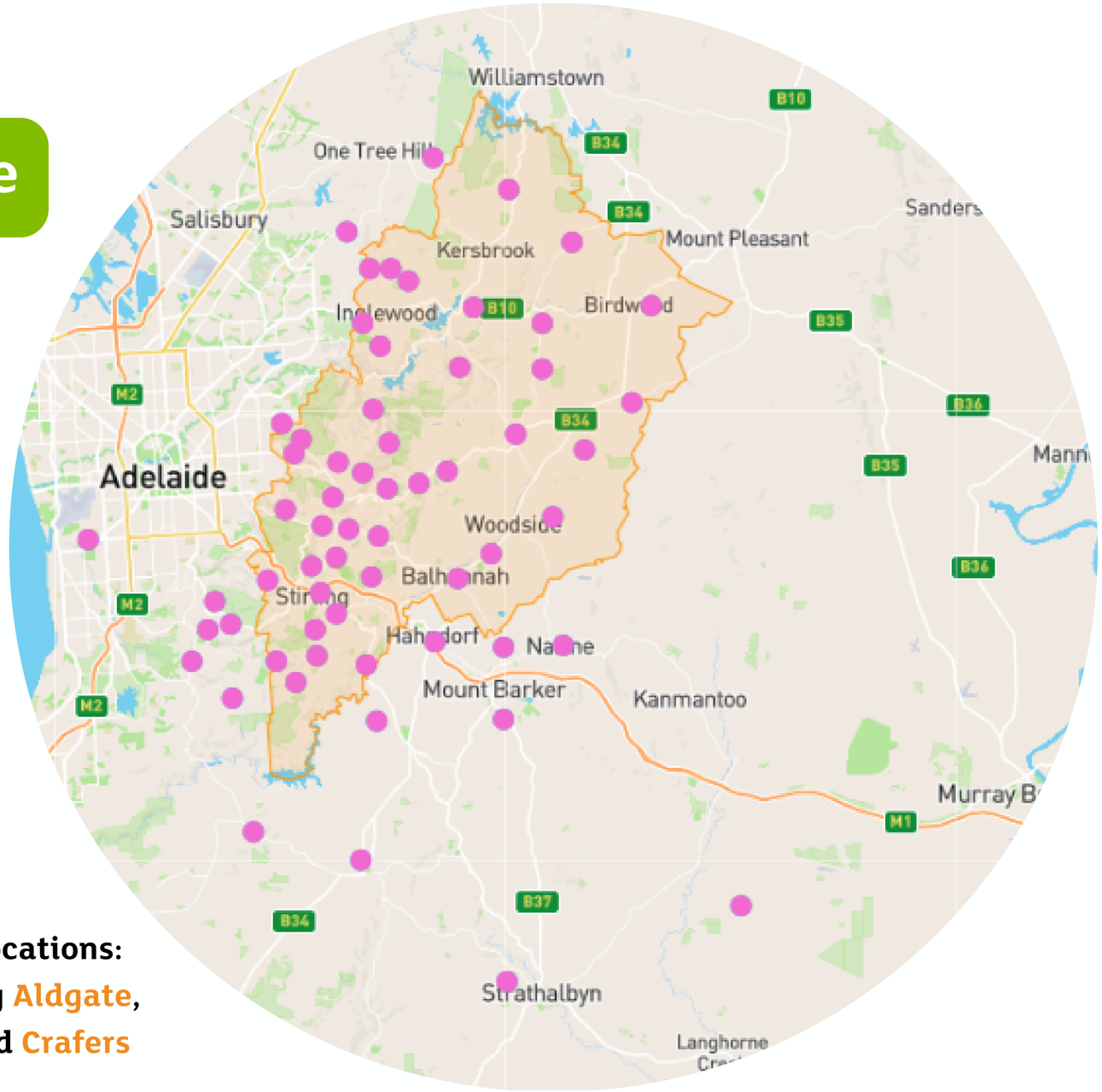
39% of those who responded to the online survey heard about the consultation by SMS, 23% social media and 23% email

Highest responding locations: Birdwood, followed by Aldgate, Stirling, Woodside and Crafers

# Where engagement participants live

**We received most feedback from residents within Adelaide Hills Council Area.**






**Highest responding locations: Birdwood, followed by Aldgate, Stirling, Woodside and Crafers**



# Number of cats and dogs per household

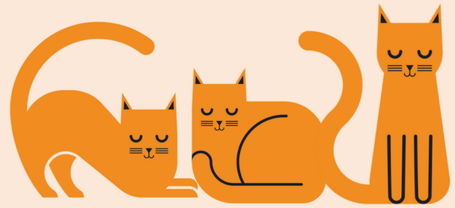
**Of the 32% of survey participants indicated they owned a cat...**



**57% had one cat**



**29% had two cats**



**8% had three cats**

6% had more than 3 cats

**Of the 77% of survey participants indicated they owned a dog...**



**66% had one dog**



**27% had two dogs**



**4% had three dogs**

3% had more than 3 dogs



# Leash’s and dog parks

## On or off leash?

Most participants preferred walking their dogs **on leash in local streets.**

The main reason dog owners **do not use a dog park or off leash** areas is because they were **too far away from their home.**

## Other reasons participants don‘t visit a dog park:

Dog safety concerns, unaware of dog park locations - Easy access from their home to an oval area and a preference not to go to dog parks - Don’t want to drive to a dog park - Not happy with Crafers dog park - Doesn’t suit shy or anxious dog - Dog park issues regarding fencing, hygiene, overcrowded, disease concerns, poor maintenance, intimidation from other dogs - Size too small.



# Awareness of Council By-laws

## Most participants were aware that:

- Dogs must be on a leash at all times in public spaces, unless in an area designated an off-leash area
- Since 1 January 2022, Adelaide Hills Council's Cat By-law has required all domestic cats to be kept at home at all times (unless on a leash or similar).
- All cats residing in the Adelaide Hills Council must be desexed, microchipped and registered.
- All dogs in South Australia are required to be desexed, microchipped and registered.
- Dog owners must have effective control of their dog at all times in a designated off-leash area. Effective control means their dog returns immediately when called, doesn’t approach strangers uninvited and is under constant supervision.



# Upgrade the animal pound or use an external service provider?

## Adelaide Hills Council currently provides a pound facility for dogs.

These facilities require upgrading and ongoing maintenance to allow Adelaide Hills Council to continue to provide this service, as well as providing the same service for cats.

**Most people** who completed the survey felt that the **Council owned pound facility** should be **upgraded** and that the solution needs to be **cost effective, local, Council managed, the best animal care and most humane option**.

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# Dog behaviour in our community

## Top behaviours participants observed about dogs

- Dog owners who have their dogs on leash when they are meant to
- Dogs in public spaces who are friendly and well behaved
- Dog waste that hasn’t been picked up by dog owners
- Dogs happily playing under supervision
- Dog owners picking up dog waste



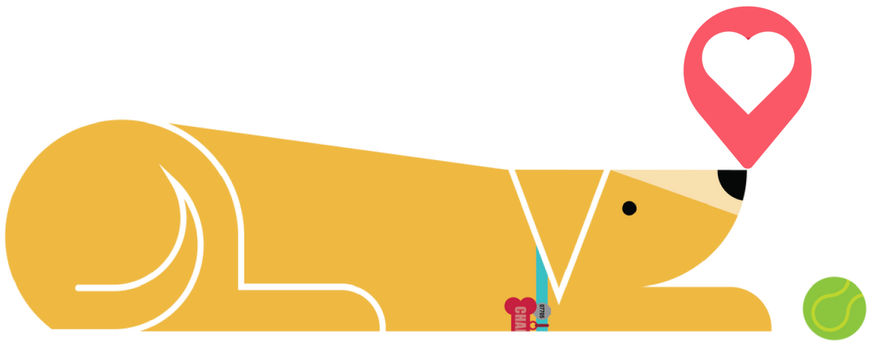
# Other animal related management issues or comments

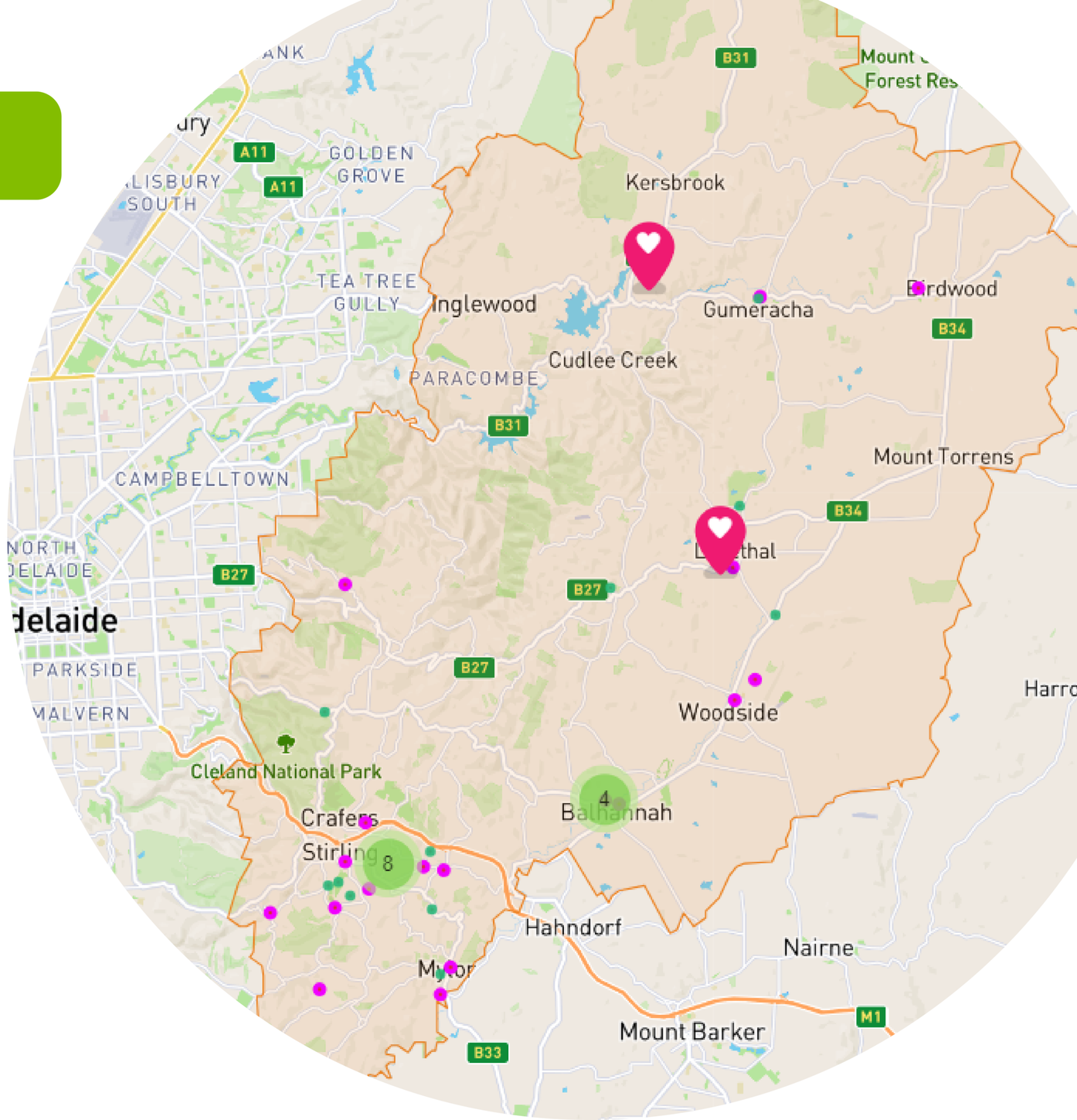
- **Enforcement** of **by-laws**, **opposition to some by-laws** as well as other respondents wanting **more by-laws for both cats and dogs**. A recognition for a need for **more resourcing to ensure laws are able to be enforced**.
- Other animals (**livestock, rabbits, rats, wildlife, horses** etc.)
- **Environmental and wildlife protection**
- **Animal safety** (environments they're in, from people and other animals etc.)
- **Education** (good pet ownership, current laws, how to report non-compliance, etc.)
- Cat related issues included **support for cat confinement** and **non-support for cat confinement, cat traps, feral cats and cat control**.
- **Community safety and wellbeing** was also raised as an issue which included: **aggressive** and **unwanted behaviours towards pets and people**, **places to walk safely off roads** as well as people wanting to **feel safe**, enjoy their residence and **supported when assisting enforcement**.
- Dog related issues managed included **dog nuisance** (barking, dog poo, poorly behaved dogs), a request for **more off-leash areas** and **more dog parks**.
- Council communications (information provided hardcopy and online for responsible pet ownership, reporting nuisance behaviours and trespass, current laws in place, etc)
- **Reporting** (support, how to, follow through with enforcement)
- **Registration** of dogs and cats

# Mapping tool

**The community were able to place a pin on a digital map to indicate where they like to take their dog for a walk, and make comments and suggestions for this area.**

**107 participants visited the mapping tool page.**
**14 pins were placed by 10 people**





# Snippets from the comments and suggestions added on mapping tool



## Locations mapped by community:

Hender Road, Heathfield, Onkaparinga Valley Scenic Drive, Balhannah, Swamp Road, Balhannah, Lobethal Road, Lobethal, River Street, Balhannah, Ayr Street, Bridgewater, Heysen Trail, Aldgate, Kain Avenue, Bridgewater, Glenside Road, Crafers

This is a great cleared area that has a dog bag facility and bin. It would be great to have as a small off leash area as lots of people walk through the park to Stirling and back and as you cannot sit by the lake and let the dog off leash, this would be a good alternative. Small off leash area for dogs at Woorabinda Bushland Reserve area.

Wonderful open space but large amounts dog faeces left behind. Increased surveillance of this area. Many dogs off leash and not under effective control. Additional resourcing to manage Heathfield Oval – dog behaviour and faeces pick up.

Moving the poo bag dispenser to inside the oval would be better. If possible 1 next to the play park and 1 next to the clubhouse covering both gates to the oval.

Love walking the dog along Grasby Road, as it is quiet and not a lot of foot traffic. The Balhannah dog park is great, however very busy with dogs and owners at certain times. I'm not sure how often the waste bin gets emptied as it is always full of dog waste. Thank you for adding another waste bag dispenser inside the park.

I love this dog park. A water tap and maybe a seating area would be a great addition. My friends around the hills all think this is the best dog park in the hills because it so spacious.

Section of Heysen trail from Honeysuckle Grove to Bridgewater Oval. Is off-leash before 10am and after 4pm but I wish it was all day.




# Email, Webinar, Social Media feedback

**Participation rates across these platforms:**

19 emails

12 participants in Webinar

16 social media comments



# Snippets from email feedback

Would like exemption for rural property / farm cats so they can control rodent populations which are an issue. Use of poisons impact wildlife too. Responsible cat ownership in these circumstances has minimal impact on wildlife.

Data analysis integrity and respondent unidentifiable important. Consider dogs inside after 10pm

Loves walking in Lobethal Mill Road Pocket Forest but needs a dog poo dispenser and public rubbish bin

Witnessed dog attack and ongoing irresponsible dog ownership (off leash and unrestrained). Need enforcement, signage, penalties and education)

Support cat confinement and AHC laws around cats. Support feral cat humane destruction. More areas for dogs on and off leash. Unsafe dogs should be destroyed humanely and increase fines for aggressive and/or roaming dogs. Well I.D'd pets can be returned by neighbours.

Support current Cat By-Law. Needs to be enforced due to as a lot of non-compliance. Require cat runs and education. Important to protect wildlife and the environment. Also consider removal of foxes.

Exemptions for old, rural property and working cats. Concerns around cat trapping. Feral cats are an issue. Part 3, clauses 8.1 and 8.2 in the by-law mention a term ‘nuisance’ – this term needs to be defined, people will interpret it differently and it will be hard to resolve such disputes . By-laws allow exemptions



# Snippets from webinar feedback

Is there any thought to deal with wandering dogs who are not secured on their properties and just wander around the neighbourhood regularly? – Please contact Council if the dog or dogs are wandering on 8408 0400. If it's after-hours please call the Council number 8408 0400 and follow the prompts to speak to an operator. A Ranger will assess whether it's appropriate to attend the area.

WHY are people required to PAY to hire one, I understand a bond, however if people are supposed to keep their cats contained I don't see why this is a cost to be charged to neighbours – Unfortunately this is the only way to provide the service.

It was well organised, good notice to invite people to register, reminders re attendance and good pre-reading pack to get all participants on the same starting point, good start on time and finish. It was great to have the rules for participants both prior and during the session.

How do we know that those people who hire traps and then trap cats, treat the cats in a proper way? What if they leave them in a trap with no food and/or water, plus emotional stress cats get from it. – Each time a person hires a trap from Council they are provided an information sheet of how to trap a cat humanely. If Council find that people are not using the trap humanely we would contact the RSPCA (animal welfare) and the person would not be allowed to hire a trap from Council again.

Do council follow up on the wandering dogs that aren't contained to see if the owners have erected a fence or similar? - If Council is able to obtain enough evidence that a dog is continually wandering it can issue an order on the animal/owner to contain the dog and complete appropriate works.

What is the best way to deal with a cat baiting neighbour? – Please contact Council. It is the responsibility of the cat owner to ensure the cat does not wander.



# Snippets from social media feedback

Cats should be coded and not allowed outside their home. They hunt and kill native birds. If caught outside owners should receive a large fine.

Cats to remain in their own properties. My poor dog (who is inside all day) gets teased by the cat sitting on the front lawn... very frustrating.

Management these days seems much better, I have only seen one stray cat recently after several years. Dogs are nearly always on leashes. But the rabbits abounding everywhere is irksome.

Cats should wear a bell and be allowed out during the day. How sad for all those cats that had a life before the rules changed. Depressing!!! Cheap desexing for low income earners. More doggie poo bag stations next to bins.

I am currently going through the dog barking diary process – I really hope this is something that Council is going to help us with.

All household pets should be contained inside the property, especially at night. Dogs, cats, ferrets, rabbits and unicorns.

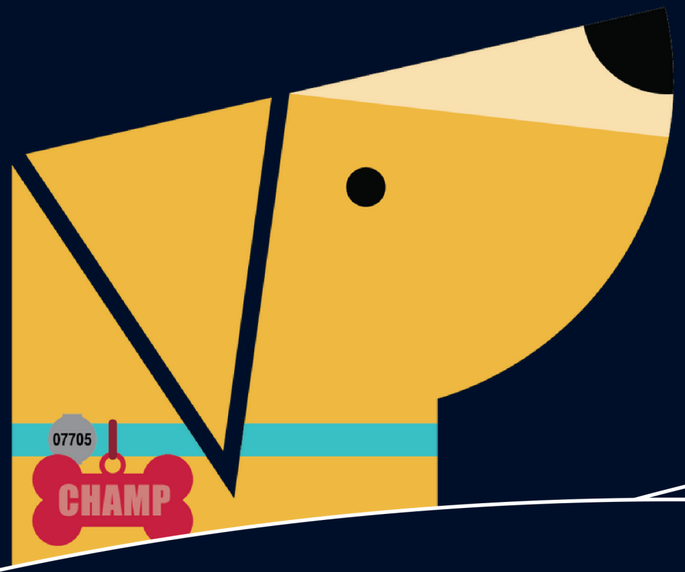
All cats should be inside cats, better protect our native wildlife.

Register cats and a program to help people build cat runs in their backyards and cheaper desexing of course.

# What's next?

- Huge thanks for taking part in the Animal Management Plan Phase 1 Consultation for the Adelaide Hills Council.
- All feedback is being considered by the project team in developing the Animal Management Plan.
- The draft Animal Management Plan will be presented to Elected Members in November 2023.
- Once we have an endorsed plan drafted we will share it with community for feedback (this is Phase 2 of the consultation).
- Your input is highly valued and we are grateful for the time taken to provide such detailed feedback.
- We encourage you to keep engaging with us on projects by registering as a participant on our Community Engagement Hub platform- engage.ahc.sa.gov.au






# Questions?

Get in touch with the Council Community Engagement Team

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Adelaide Hills COUNCIL