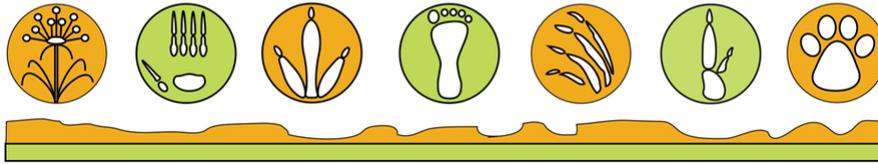


# BARKLY REGIONAL COUNCIL



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**7 September 2016**

## **Animal welfare committee to deliver strategic program**

An animal management committee is being set up by Barkly Regional Council (BRC) to deliver an animal welfare management program in towns and communities across the Barkly region.

The committee, which will consist of elected members, senior council staff, representatives from Territory Housing, the Barkly Vet Services and Parks and Wildlife, plans to meet this month to investigate a range of solutions, strategies and options for animal welfare management, which includes dogs, cats and other feral animals.

Initially, the committee will work on solutions to reduce the menace of roaming and aggressive dogs on the streets of Tennant Creek and in Barkly communities.

The committee will also consider strategies and options to incorporate within a framework in which to deliver an animal welfare management program in towns and communities across the region.

Director of Community Services Stephen Dawkins said this week that one of the main aims of the committee will be to work on education campaigns regarding dog and animal management so that everyone, whether it's government, communities or an individual, is clear about their responsibilities.

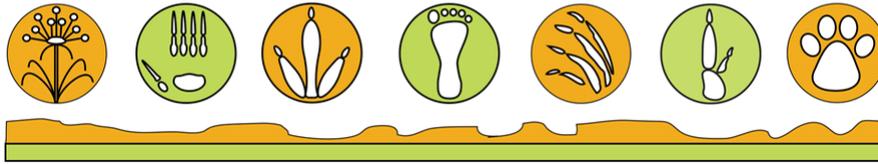
"Elected members and staff are as concerned about the dog problem as residents are," he said.

"However, Council can't fix this problem on its own and needs the backing of the community, from residents up to government department representatives, to assist in coming up with solutions and strategies."

Council is keen to encourage responsible pet ownership in the community, and for pet owners to be aware of their responsibilities in relation to their pets, other animals and the general public.

"Individuals need to take responsibility for their own animals, even if it's as small as shutting a gate so dogs don't escape," said Mr Dawkins.

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“Dogs must be kept on a leash when out on the streets and must be kept securely in their yards, not out chasing vehicles and bikes. Residents also need to know that only two dogs per household are allowed, unless permission for more has been granted.”

In Tennant Creek, the animal control team patrols every day, setting traps and picking up roaming and aggressive dogs.

“The animal pound can only hold 10 dogs at any one time,” Mr Dawkins said. “If the dogs are not registered or collected after four days they are euthanized, albeit in the most humane manner by the veterinarian.”

Mr Dawkins said the animal control team is euthanizing about five dogs a week in town, which is not ideal, but if pet owners are not registering their dogs and allowing them to roam the streets the team has little choice.”

Other problems faced by the animal control team include abusive behaviour from pet owners when approached about an aggressive or troublesome dog, gates left open and people freeing dogs captured by the traps.

This year, Council has been focusing on reducing the number of unregistered dogs that are roaming the streets and improving the response time after receiving a complaint.

“The ideal response time would be within 15 minutes of receiving a complaint, but with one full-time animal control officer that could take as long as two hours, especially if that worker is already on a job,” Mr Dawkins said.

Council strongly recommends de-sexing pets to avoid indiscriminate breeding resulting in unwanted, abandoned and neglected animals. Council also encourages micro-chipping as this is the best method of identification to return lost animals to their owners.

Surgical desexing, parasite treatment and micro-chipping of dogs and cats are available at the vet clinic, which is co-located at the Council Depot on 1 Maloney Street.

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