

DOG AND CAT OWNERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES



The Domestic Animals Act 1994 was introduced to promote animal welfare, the responsible ownership of dogs and cats and the protection of the environment.

This brochure will assist you as a pet owner to understand the responsibilities of owning a dog or cat in the Wodonga municipality.

OWNING A DOG OR CAT IN WODONGA

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO MY DOG OR CAT?

Make sure you:

- Choose a pet that is right for you; consider the yard space, time needed for exercise and training, other family members. Also consider the costs involved such as veterinarian fees, food and council registration costs.
- Exercise your pet daily.
- Provide a healthy balanced diet.
- Have your cat sterilised.
- Have your dog sterilised if it is not intended for breeding/show.
- Ensure your dog or cat is registered (April 10 each year) and your contact details are up-to-date.
- Take responsibility for any damage your dog or cat may cause.
- Ensure your dog is under effective control when outside your property. Visit wodonga.vic.gov.au for further information.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COMMUNITY?

Dog and cat owners can be fined or prosecuted for offences in certain circumstances. You can be fined more than \$300:

- If your dog is found wandering outside your premises.
- If you encourage or cause your dog to attack, bite, worry or chase a person or animal.
- If your dog or cat is a nuisance, or you fail to comply with a notice ordering you to stop the cat or dog being a nuisance. This includes persistent barking which annoys your neighbours.
- If your dog or cat wanders on to private property without the owner's permission on more than one

occasion, and a warning has been issued by the council, an infringement notice may be issued.

- If you allow any part of the animal's excrement to remain on any road, street, nature strip, reserve, public or council land.

DO I NEED TO REGISTER MY DOG OR CAT?

All domestic dogs and cats over three months of age must be registered and micro chipped each year with Wodonga Council. Reduced registration rates apply for:

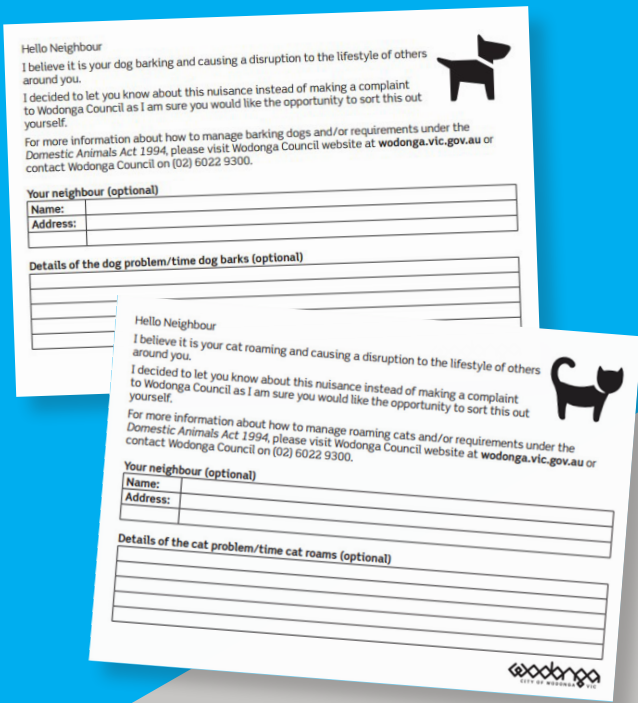
- Pension card holders.
- Sterilised dogs.
- Dogs and cats over 10 years of age.
- Dogs and cats kept for breeding on registered premises.
- Dogs registered with the Victorian Canine Council.
- Dogs that have been obedience trained by approved organisations.
- Working dogs.
- Cats registered with the Feline Control Council.

Council's Animal Registration form provides current charges for dog and cat registration.

You can be fined more than \$300 per animal if you do not register your cat or dog. Council conducts a door knock each year to ensure all dogs and cats over three months of age are registered.

HOW MANY ANIMALS CAN I KEEP?

You can keep up to two dogs and two cats, over three months of age on any residential zoned property (with the exception of properties classified as farming zones). If you wish to keep more than this number of animals you must apply to council for a permit.



WHO CAN HELP IF I NEED FURTHER INFORMATION?

Contact council's Customer Service Officers on (02) 6022 9300. You can also contact the Dispute Settlement Centre on 1800 658 528.

They can assist you with information, referral, dispute counselling and arranging mediation.

**After Hours Emergency number
(02) 6022 9300**

104 Hovell St
Wodonga VIC 3690
Phone: (02) 6022 9300
Fax: (02) 6022 9322
info@wodonga.vic.gov.au
wodonga.vic.gov.au



WHERE CAN I EXERCISE MY DOG?

Dogs may be walked in most areas of the municipality. They must be under effective control at all times, (by chain, leash or cord or under voice command). All excrement left by the dog must be removed and disposed of appropriately. You may be fined if you fail to do this.

DOES COUNCIL HAVE A CAT CURFEW?

Yes. Cats must be confined to their owner's property between 7pm and 7am, 7 days a week.

Outside the curfew hours cats may wander freely. However if a resident asks that your cat not enter his/her property and your cat repeatedly does so, after two warnings from the resident and a Notice of Objection from council, the cat may be trapped and impounded or a fine issued.

WHAT DO I DO IF A DOG OR CAT KEEPS WANDERING ONTO MY PROPERTY?

A friendly letter notifying your neighbour of a roaming dog or cat is available for download from council's website or in hard copy from the council offices. If a dog or cat continues roaming without the permission of the owner or occupier of the private property, the dog or cat may be impounded.

WHAT DO I DO IF A NEIGHBOURHOOD DOG BARKS A LOT?

You should notify your neighbour that their dog is barking. Alternatively contact council for a friendly letter notifying them of a barking dog. Sometimes the owner is unaware that their dog is causing a disturbance. If the barking continues, you can contact council and ask for a *barking dog log sheet* and then accurately record the dates and times the dog barks. Council will then ask the owner to do something about the situation. If council and the owner of the dog can't resolve the problem, the matter can be referred to court.

WHY DO DOGS BARK?

Dogs can bark for territorial reasons including movement or noises, sensing other animals or loud vehicles near the property. Alternatively the dog could become bored or lonely.

SIMPLE SOLUTIONS TO MINIMISE BARKING

- Restrict your dog's view to inside the yard. If your dog cannot see the person or vehicle on the other side of the fence, it may not bark.
- Provide regular exercise for your dog.
- Brighten your dog's environment with toys, balls, etc.
- Ensure your dog has a secure, well maintained sleeping area.
- Leave a radio going inside when you go out, so that your dog thinks you are still at home.
- Take your dog to obedience training. Local service providers offer help to train your dog. You can check the Yellow Pages for further details.
- Consult with your veterinarian.

MENACING DOGS

Council may declare a dog to be a menacing dog if it has rushed at or chased a person. There are also rules for dogs declared to be menacing. For example they should wear a muzzle and be restrained on a lead anytime they are outside the owner's premises.

WHAT IS A 'DANGEROUS DOG'?

Many dog owners believe dogs are declared "dangerous" due to their breed or size. This is not so. A dog may be declared dangerous if it attacks and seriously injures a person or another animal. There are rules for dogs declared "dangerous", such as, special identification, warning signs, the dog being muzzled when off the owners premises, etc. Further information is available from council's Civic Services team on request. There are conditions to having restricted breeds of dogs in Wodonga.

