



Animal Management By-Laws

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When were the first City of Palmerston Animal Management By-Laws created and why change them now?

The Palmerston (Animal Management) By-Laws came into force in 1999, 25 years ago. Since then, we've seen significant population growth and gaps within the By-Law scope have emerged. Best practice relating to animal ownership, welfare and regulation have evolved and it's time we amend our By-Laws to reflect community expectations and better govern domestic animal ownership.

2. What are the gaps and issues City of Palmerston hopes to address in the new Animal Management By-Laws?

City of Palmerston is looking to address dog attacks and menaces, the ability to declare dogs dangerous, better manage nuisance behaviours, licensing differences including limiting the total numbers of animal per property, cat management including registration and regulation of cats 'at large'.

3. What happens if I have more than the allowable limit for existing animal licenses?

A licence or registration issued, granted or renewed under the former By-Laws that is in force immediately before the commencement continues as if the licence or registration were issued, granted or renewed under these new By-Laws.

4. When will the new Animal Management By-Laws come into effect?

Scheduled for 1 July 2024.

5. Are there any anticipated costs associated with the proposed changes to the By-Laws?

For information on costs associated with the By-Laws, including registration fees for dogs and cats, please refer to the 'Applicable Fees & Charges' document on the City of Palmerston website, at palmerston.nt.gov.au

6. How did City of Palmerston decide on By-Law amendments?

Regulatory Services worked with key service providers and other Local Government Areas to develop a concept idea and a community consultation delivery plan. The idea was to gain an understanding of key areas of interest and changes within animal management, to ensure the effective adoption of desired changes by the community.

The first community consultation ran for 60 days in 2021, with feedback from the community being a significant factor in formulating the new Animal Management By-Laws.

7. What are City of Palmerston Animal Management By-Laws?

A set of By-Laws govern the way we manage domestic animals within the municipality.

8. Why are the payable fines in the 'sliding scale of fines' for dog attacks so expensive?

The maximum fine for dog attacks under the current Animal Management By-Laws is \$250, which is not an adequate deterrent as penalties have not increased in more than 20 years and are no longer comparable to other jurisdictions.

9. My dog has never attacked another animal or person, but now I feel worried about a significant fine if there's a one-off incident.

The payable fine for a dog attack will be suited to the severity of the attack, with an investigation to take place first. The sliding fine scale is not designed for Council to apply the maximum payable fine for every attack, but rather to have greater flexibility in administering fines and regulations to ensure the safety of animals and people in Palmerston.

10. What is the difference between the categories of dog attacks?

- A dog attack involves physical contact with the person or other animal; or
 - damage to anything worn by the person or the animal; or
 - damage to other property in the immediate possession or under the immediate control of the person.
- A serious dog attack can involve any of the following:
 - Multiple and deep punctures from a single bite.
 - An injury requiring hospital or veterinary treatment.
 - Infection or deep bruising around the wound or wounds from the dog shaking its head from side to side.
- An aggravated offence is where the result was loss of limb or death.

11. What do you mean by 'nuisance animal' behaviour?

Examples of nuisance animal behaviour:

- Constant or loud barking, caterwauling, crowing or squawking, especially when pedestrians walk past the premises.
- Noxious smelling coops or cages used for keeping poultry.

Please note that separate policies will be created to manage the offences.

12. Do I need a licence if I have two dogs and two cats?

No, an owner may keep a maximum of two (2) registered dogs and two (2) registered cats on their premises without a licence.

13. If I have three or more dogs or cats, how do I obtain a licence?

Contact City of Palmerston for a licence to be issued, which will be subject to meeting assessment criteria on application. Assessment criteria includes, but is not limited to, the suitability of the animal's environment, welfare and enrichment.

14. Why are you introducing compulsory cat registrations?

The 2021 survey provided strong community sentiment around Council introducing cat management. Cat registration helps to identify the owner and reunify as quickly as possible.

15. What do you mean by cats 'at large'?

A dog or cat is considered 'at large' when it is outside the premises where it is kept and is not under effective control.

Cat owners are encouraged to contain their cats by way of preventing their cat hunting, cat calling, fighting, and being injured by cars or other animals.

16. What 'other animals' will require a licence?

Poultry.

17. If I have domestic livestock and poultry, what do I need to do?

An owner of domestic livestock and poultry must apply for a Property Identification Code (PIC), which is an 8-character code identifying the property where livestock is kept.

18. Will there be a grace period for compulsory cat registrations?

Cats are required to be registered by 1 September.

19. Will there be a grace period for mandatory microchipping for dogs?

There will be a six-month grace period for mandatory microchipping, from the date of registration.

20. What happens if I don't comply with registration requirements?

If an owner fails to comply with conditions of registration, renew the registration, or keeps more than the prescribed number of dogs or cats on their premises without a licence, the City of Palmerston may:

- Issue the owner with an infringement notice;
- Prosecute the owner;
- Cancel, suspend or vary the registration or licence of the owner; or
- Impound the dog or cat.

21. What will happen to my animal licences when I change address?

Please email palmerston@palmerston.nt.gov.au and we will provide you with up-to-date instructions at the time.

22. How will you limit the number of 'other animals' kept on premises, when these animals don't need to be registered?

Dogs, cats and poultry will be the only animals that Council can impose a limit on.

23. How can feedback be submitted on the Animal Management Policy?

Residents can ask questions and provide feedback via email animalmanagementbylaws@palmerston.nt.gov.au or on 08 8935 9922 between 14 May – 4 June 2024.