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Service Delivery Division

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Local Government Bulletin

Implementation of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*

Purpose

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide advice to local government officers on the introduction of the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008*.

Background

On 11 December 2008 Parliament passed the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* (the Act). The Act has been developed with a strong focus on protecting the health and safety of the Queensland community and its environment. The Act provides a consistent regulatory approach for the management of cats and dogs across Queensland through the introduction of compulsory registration and micro-chipping for certain categories of cats and dogs along with statewide standards for the keeping of restricted, dangerous and menacing dogs.

Commencement

The Act commences generally on 1 July 2009. From this date the regulated dog provisions commence, requiring all local governments to prepare for the regulatory implementation of these particular provisions.

However, the Act provides a phase-in period for specific local governments to introduce compulsory registration and micro-chipping for certain categories of cats and dogs. All ten South-East Queensland councils and Toowoomba, Gladstone and Central Highlands regional councils are required to introduce these requirements from 1 July 2009. All remaining local governments have been granted a period of no later than 10 December 2010 to prepare for, implement and regulate these requirements.

Overview of the micro-chipping/registration and regulated dog legislative provisions

Registration and micro-chipping

The Act introduces compulsory registration and micro-chipping requirements for certain categories of cats and dogs. It is important to note compulsory registration and micro-chipping for cats and dogs is only mandatory once the legislative provisions commence in an individual local government area, unless of course it is already required under the provisions of a local government local law in that area.

Another important aspect to note for the micro-chipping requirements is that micro-chipping will only be mandatory in circumstances as follows:

- cats and dogs under 12 weeks of age on the date of commencement of the relevant provisions in the local government's area; and
- cats and dogs subject to change of ownership through sale or gift after the date of commencement of the relevant provisions in the local government's area; and
- declared regulated dogs under the Act.

While pet owners are encouraged to have their pets micro-chipped as an effective identification tool, the Act specifically limits the mandatory application of this requirement to the above circumstances.

Regulated dogs

The Act also introduces statewide regulation of certain dogs. The Act amends the *Local Government Act 1993* by removing Chapter 17A Restricted Dogs and duplicating similar provisions in the new Act. The new Act also expands on these powers by introducing two further categories of regulated dogs, being menacing dogs and dangerous dogs.

The Act introduces minimum requirements for the keeping of such dogs, including, for example, permit, enclosure, signage and identification requirements.

These provisions commence statewide from 1 July 2009.

Local government's responsibilities

Local governments have been vested with the powers to enforce the provisions of the Act in their individual local government area. It is important for local government officers to familiarise themselves with the content of the Act in preparation of the commencement dates. It is also strongly recommended local governments begin to review and prepare amendments to any local laws to remove prospective inconsistencies with the Act prior to commencement.

In conjunction with the State, local governments can also play an important role in promoting community awareness on the new legislative requirements. In the lead up to, and following commencement of the Act, it is anticipated there will be an increase in enquiries from the community on the impacts to pet owners.

Local governments will also be responsible for keeping registers for cats and dogs and specific regulated dog data for incorporation into a statewide regulated dog database.

Resources and training

Approved forms, templates, fact sheets and flowcharts will be available soon on the Department of Infrastructure and Planning's (DIP) website to assist local governments with the Act implementation.

DIP officers will also be conducting training workshops on a statewide basis. To find out about workshops being held in your region, please contact:

| Region | Regional Director | Telephone |
|-------------------|--------------------------|------------------|
| South-East Region | Bill Gilmore | (07) 3381 7570 |
| South-West Region | Ray Currie | (07) 4616 1980 |
| Central Region | Leisa Dowling | (07) 4971 2337 |
| North Queensland | Jo Stephenson | (07) 4799 7195 |
| Far North Region | Gillian Long | (07) 4039 8550 |

A copy of the Act can be found through the Office of Parliamentary Counsel's website at <http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/OQPChome.htm>.

Further information

Any further enquiries on this matter should be directed to your respective Regional Director, on the above mentioned contact details.

All recent Local Government Bulletins issued by the Department are available at www.lgp.qld.gov.au/Default.aspx?ID=3295. You can also subscribe free of charge on the Department's website to receive Bulletins by email.

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