



Why might my dog wander?

The danger of wandering

Dogs that wander on the streets or in public areas without an owner present are referred to as dogs “wandering at large.” These dogs cause a nuisance, are often distressed and may attack or harass people or other animals. In some cases they cause road accidents resulting in injury to the dog and on occasion to vehicle occupants and may cause property damage – all of which becomes the responsibility of the owner of the dog.

There are many reasons why a dog wanders including behavioural traits for example looking for a mate or simply poor fencing at home or a gate left open by a visitor.

We understand...

...that along with improved health, one of the other many benefits of desexing is that it reduces the urge to wander.

Wandering: the Fast Facts

- Councils manage dogs found wandering in public.
- Many councils apply a penalty to the owners of wandering dogs.
- If a dog is found wandering, or unaccompanied, and the council cannot identify or locate the owner, the dog is taken to the council pound.
- Council Animal Management Officers will refer to their council database of registered dogs to obtain the owner’s contact details and where the dog lives.
- The council is required to place a public notice in the Council office describing the dog, colouring, sex and the time and place it was collected. Many also list impounded dogs on their website.
- As soon as you realise your dog is missing, contact your local Council, your neighbours, your local vet and visit shelters and pounds.
- If the dog is not claimed within 72 hours of the notice being placed by the council the dog legally becomes council property.

We understand...

...in most cases, the dog is distressed by being lost and the owner is distressed by losing their dog. The best option for all is the speedy and safe return of the dog to its home and family.



The benefits of identification

Dogs “wandering at large” are a potential risk to the community and the local council is responsible for their management.

In most instances if the dog is registered it can be returned to its owner. It also assists identification if your dog is micro-chipped, wears a collar with registration disc and has a nametag with your mobile phone number.

If you find a stray dog

Any person who finds a wandering dog should notify the council in which the dog was found as soon as possible.

If it is not reported, the council cannot reunite the dog with its owner.

Some people mistakenly keep the lost dog rather than notifying council. This makes it all the more difficult for the owner to find their pet. If a person keeps a stray dog and fails to notify the council, they may be guilty of “theft by finding” which is a serious criminal offence.

Dog pounds and shelters are required to meet the standards determined by the Dog and Cat Management Board. Although they are often not as comfortable as the home to which the dog is accustomed, they do offer adequate and appropriate facilities for the short term holding of dogs. It is more efficient, cheaper and much better for the dog to be returned to its owner than taken to the pound.

If you lose your dog

If your dog is lost or missing, the time for action is now. Contact your local Council, your neighbours, your local vet, plus other pet services and visit the RSPCA and Animal Welfare League shelters. You may also consider conducting a letterbox drop in your area, telling your neighbours, putting a notice in the local shop window or placing an advertisement in the Lost and Found section of the local paper.

If unclaimed and the owners cannot be contacted, most councils will give the dog to an animal shelter for re-homing. If the dog is not fit for re-homing due to poor health or poor temperament, it may be humanely euthanased.

Wandering: a Good Owner tip

As soon as you realise your dog is missing, your search begins. Was your dog accidentally let out and just curious? Was it chasing something or was it fearful and now hiding somewhere? Determining the reason your dog disappeared may help.

To find the facts and other tips on how to be a good dog owner, visit dogandcatboard.com.au



An initiative of the **DOG AND CAT MANAGEMENT BOARD** and your local council. Council information and contact details can be located at www.lga.sa.gov.au View the *Dog and Cat Management Act 1995* along with Information Sheets on selection, health, behaviour and care at www.dogandcatboard.com.au