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Governance and Strategic Planning for Animal Management – how to link it all up

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A strategic plan for animal management needs to be more than just an operational plan. While a check list of things that need doing (in an operational sense) may be a very good thing to have, such a list does not constitute a strategic plan. A strategic plan does however need to *include* operational matters, but it should *be more than this. It must, in a technical sense,* be a comprehensive statement of governance compliance. To achieve this objective, a strategic plan needs to successfully describe the *enabling* mechanisms *behind* operations as well as it does the operations themselves. In this day and age, a strategic plan should also demonstrate a dynamic capacity to accommodate anticipated (and perhaps significant) changes in an operating *environment.*

The two principal users of Local Government Strategic Animal Management Plans are the Councils themselves *and* their clients (i.e. residents, visitors, industry and special interest groups etc). To *be* meaningful for *both* of these user groups, Strategic Animal Management Plans need to satisfactorily explain the "why" and the "how" of Council's approach to Animal Management as thoroughly as they explain the "what" and the "when".

Good Strategic Animal Management Planning requires, perhaps before all else, a comprehensive "user friendly" format. There is no advantage in having a strategic plan that does not "work" at the community level. Such plans need to be clearly structured, easily understood and readily available for community review and comment.

Introduction – What is strategy?

The purpose of a Strategic Plan is to determine direction. Johnson and Scholes[1] define strategy as:

*"the **direction** and **scope** of an organisation over the **long-term**: which achieves advantage for the organisation through its configuration of **resources** within a challenging **environment**, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfil stakeholder expectations"*

In other words, strategy is about direction, scope, advantage, resources, environment and stakeholders.

Developing a business strategy is not a new concept in the corporate world, without them, surviving the recent global financial crisis (GFC) would have been an unlikely scenario for many. For local government however, their vulnerability to the GFC was less challenging because "market choice" is not an option for its customers. Given this scenario, has local government positioned itself to navigate through a crisis and has strategic business planning been a priority or has it slipped under the radar?

If the answer is "slipped under the radar do not despair, the tide is beginning to turn. 2009 saw in Queensland the introduction of a dynamic piece of legislation the *"Local Government Act 2009"*. This Act was dynamic in that prescriptive legislation, once an iconic beacon for all things legal had been removed, and was replaced with a "principles based" drafting platform. For the first time since Federation, local government had a *statutory* obligation to apply transparency, democracy, good governance, sustainability and ethics in its decision making process.

Why have Strategic Animal Management Planning in Local Government?

To encourage local government compliance with the new Act, the Queensland Parliament legislated that local government *must* develop and implement Community Plans, plans built in collaboration with and driven by its community. Parliament rightly believed that the liveability of a community or a local government area is generally driven by the cumulative decisions of local government and its residents. A Community Plan was viewed as the vehicle by which Council and the community could develop a strategic direction for the region, improve relationships, develop long term partnerships and build on that capacity to help maintain and enhance the vitality, sustainability and liveability of the local government's area.

1   Exploring Corporate Strategy 1st Paperback Edition 1998

Liveability of the local government's area

Given that Australia continues to have one of the highest levels of pet ownership in the world, with an estimated 63% of households owning a pet (53% owning a cat or dog), long term planning for pets is not only necessary, its a "no brainer".

The question here in the context of this paper is: *Could/should* this governance model be used for the purpose of developing Strategic Animal Management Plans? And the answer is probably: *Yes, it must.*

If this model was adopted for Animal Management there is a strong likelihood of some very quick and significant wins. For example, imagine a workplace where your community appreciates the work that you do, elected representatives and executive directors having a better understanding of what companion animals mean socially, environmentally and financially to the regions economy, and also consider what it might be like working for an organisation that has a clear direction, strategic goals and achievable objectives. This model given its power *can only* enhance the liveability of the region, lift community confidence in Council and empower Council staff to make good informed decisions.

Creating the linkages between Council's Strategic Animal Management Plan, Council's Community Plan and Council's Corporate Plan is a significant enabler that will help ensure that there is an integrated approach to planning for pets in the community. A Strategic Animal Management Plan if developed along these lines, can comment on a wide range of decisions and add value to other Council plans and projects also.

Given that Australia continues to have one of the highest levels of pet ownership in the world, with an estimated 63% of households owning a pet (53% owning a cat or dog)2, long term community planning for pets is not only necessary, its a "no brainer".

What is (and what is not) a Strategic Animal Management Plan

An internally focussed *Operational* Plan does not constitute a *Strategic* Plan. This is not to suggest that Operational Plans for Animal Management should be scrapped - they should not be scrapped – they are an integral and essential part of Strategic Planning. Operational components are an important element of strategic planning, but they are not, in themselves, strategic in scope.

According to standard governance principals, to be strategic, an Animal Management Plan must:

1. represent the needs and the expectations of the entire community;

2. be responsive to the evolving landscape; and

3. be flexible enough to amend at any time whilst maintaining community confidence[3])

When Community and Corporate Plans have been developed on the understanding of what is happening at a global, national, regional and local level in accordance with current convention, there is a strong likelihood that in this framework pets and their management will surface as a critical issue in most communities and proper planning is essential.

Strategic Animal Management Plans put simply, are a tool for Council *and* its community. To be complete, and to conform with standard governance methodology, Strategic Animal Management Plans should include all the following (important) components:

1. the linkages between other existing council strategic documents and policies with respect to Animal Management service provision must be transparent;

2. a summary of the council's governance framework (the legislative authority and obligations) with reference to Animal Management service provision must be clear;

3. fiscal and asset management with reference to Animal Management service provision by council documented;

4. human resource requirements with reference to Animal Management service provision within council explained;

5. long term council planning for growth, with reference to Animal Management service provision (i.e. financial sustainability, population diversity, climate change and peak oil demand etc) must be articulated ;

6. information detailing the relevant Acts, Regulations, Local Laws and Codes of Practice relevant to Animal Management service provision highlighted;

7. Councils regulatory framework detailed;

8. linkages to other council projects and initiatives clearly defined;

9. Councils community engagement strategy documented; and

10. community members, key stakeholders, industry, advocates, Council staff and elected representatives acknowledged in the plan.

2   Power of Pets 2009, Australian Companion Animal Council

3   Appendix 1 this paper

When *all* of these components have been accommodated in a Strategic Animal Management Plan, nothing important will have been left out. In the absence of this level of discipline, Animal Management Operational Plans tend to focus on the "what and when" of Animal Management service without reference to essential underpinning policies that pertain to "how and why". In the absence of a strong "how and why" components, the following key issues may tend to be "smudged" over or perhaps even omitted altogether:

1. consistency with stated council's vision. mission and goals;
2. consistency with stated council's policy and philosophy frameworks;
3. commitment to governance standards;
4. compliance with relevant State legislation;
5. explanation of Animal Management purpose;
6. explanation of budget, expenditure and funding methodology;
7. commitments to human resource needs and obligations;
8. description of all the various separate service components that are embraced in Animal Management etc; and
9. identification of performance indicators to allow effective benchmarking.

None of these matters can be omitted because they all serve to provide the necessary (and required) depth of clarity and transparency in the planning process.

The look, feel and content of Strategic Animal Management Plans will vary to some degree across the nation, from State to State and from region to region to meet differing priorities – and so perhaps "no one shoe will ever fit all". However, in an holistic landscape, it has often been observed that (in Animal Management), the animals are essentially the same, the people are essentially the same, the problems are essentially the same and it is very likely the solutions for Animal Management problems are going to be the same also.

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Similarly, the same global issues affect each and everyone of us, issues such as the global financial crises, natural resource market decline, peak oil,

climate change, land degradation, population growth, development and social/demographic change will likely affect all of us to some degree and there is likely to be some level of consistency in planning for companion animals in the long term.

The "enabling" of Strategic Animal Management Plans involves having an Operational Plan in conjunction with a solid background of:

- foresight;
- risk planning;
- information access;
- inter-agency communication;
- peer group support;
- negotiation; and
- commitment to resourcing, often over several years.

It should be noted that not outcomes in a strategic plan will be achievable. It may even be that some outcomes may even become irrelevant within the time frame of the plan itself. But they should still be considered and included.

Meaningful community engagement

The first and most important challenge faced by Council in drafting a well structured Strategic Animal Management Plan lies in preparing for, and the successfully carrying out of a meaningful community engagement strategy. Lose-lose scenarios are likely unless the process is managed skilfully by a competent and suitably trained person/group.

Meaningful engagement in this context means *"engaging and consulting with as many people as possible across all sectors and geographic locations within the community"*. This will involve not just "consultation" with community members about what should be in a strategic plan document, but also, it should be about providing residents with a range of opportunities to be involved in ways that suit them.

Traditionally, local government has used public meetings, workshops and surveys as the preferred method of engagement. But increasingly, it would seem that these conventional approaches attract fewer people. As such, there is a significant risk that they may not represent the community at all. Such conventional consultation processes may produce unbalanced outcomes by excessively being "focus group" or "vested interest group" oriented. , Engaging a broad cross section of the community now requires innovative approaches (i.e. social and media networks and/or more tailor-made and specific engagement of groups and individuals).

It is important to understand what makes a community tick and how the key decision makers

and stakeholders are structured. Seeking the advice of "in house" council specialist's staff from the Community Services area is a great place to begin. Establish who are the key people, groups and where natural "hubs" in the community can be found.

Remember that (like most everything else) there is "no one" community engagement model guaranteed to succeed, however the tips below in **Table 1** may assist.

There is likelihood that some community groups or members might identify what might be called "non negotiables" (i.e. things that simply can't or won't

be able to be provided). Whilst it's important that those consulted are developing a wish list, acting on these agendas can often require finite resources that simply are not available. In mitigating the risk of allegations relating to poor community engagement practises, careful consideration needs to be given to representation and the level of input that are practical and achievable.

A number of methods are available for engaging people in community planning. Some common methods are detailed below in **Table 2**.

TABLE 1

No	Tip	Method
1.	Build relationships	Gain personal trust and presence
2.	Go to them	Engage with natural community hubs
3.	Keep people informed	Provide feedback about their input to the plan
4.	Maintain balance and focus	Remember the "silent majority" are just as important as the vocal groups or individuals
5.	Logistics	Find neutral venues, hold meetings at an appropriate time of day, venues must be easy to travel to, and have food and drink available.
6.	Structure	Be upfront about the structure, provide adequate procedures for input, feedback and a framework for evaluation
7.	Facilitation	Engage a professional facilitator that is over the topic and has the interpersonal skills in discussing issues with people, information gathering and capacity to assess and feedback information
8.	Accountability	The evaluation of the engagement process needs to be rigorous and defendable, workable and simple
9.	Ownership	Stakeholders must have and perceive ownership of the plan
10.	Pace	Be flexible with timeframes

TABLE 2

No	Method	How
1.	Working groups	Formed from the general community to reflect the demographics of the community, special interest or business groups
2.	Workshops	Hold at suitable times, usually evening, half day or even full day events. Use of a professional facilitator is recommended
3.	Public meetings	Advertise and manage well
4.	Forums	Select which particular groups (i.e. youth/seniors etc) because people often know each other and issues are focused
5.	Surveys	Allow a broad cross section of the community to have input, other than those who attend meetings or workshops. There is a risk of low return rates and can be expensive
6.	Social/media networks	Innovative method of engagement, they engage different groups in a way that suits them
7.	Community conversations	Informal discussions are held with relatively small groups of people in communities. They suit situations where there has been previous "over-consultation", local people have limited time, issues are particularly contentious or people prefer "kitchen table" discussions rather than larger meetings
8.	Focus groups	They provide a comprehensive range of views from a small group of people
9.	Combination of methods	Engagement should be based on the preferred methods of different sectors and communities according to community "contacts" or discussion with local informed people. People also need to have multiple opportunities to participate such as a combination of workshops, informal discussions, feedback forms etc.

Compilation and drafting

Comments from stakeholders will need to be recorded and wherever possible the information structured around the key themes and/or issues this will allow strategies and actions to be developed or refined and the plan drafted using the framework available in appendix 1 to this document.

Once drafted, the strategic animal management plan will require validation and it is advised that a "Reference Panel" already in place and inclusive of community and stakeholder representation should be convened specifically to review the plan. This can be carried out by a facilitated workshop or panel discussion where recommendations for improvements are suggested.

The second and most important stage of validation is Councils review of the draft plan. Councillors will need to be very aware that the issues have come from a comprehensive community engagement process and that any amendments will require significant consideration before major changes are made. However, Council also can use its knowledge, community understanding and capacity to clarify strategies and actions. Additional information or data may be necessary to substantiate priorities and strategies.

Once the draft plan has been validated, it is crucial to source feedback from the community, particularly those that participated in the engagement events. It is advisable at this stage to engage with Councillors so that they are aware of what will be going out to the community.

This is effectively a second phase of engagement where residents review the plan and suggest changes. It also builds community support and can mobilise residents and other stakeholders to participate in actions and/or provide comment under submission.

Following validation and feedback, the draft plan is finalised. Changes are made to the draft and an advanced draft is formally provided to Council. Councillors debate the advanced draft and may make changes directly and/or request further information or justification. Direct changes by Council need to reflect community views and the engagement process undertaken, in accordance with the community engagement strategy. Councillors may wish to consult constituents further about aspects of the plan. Once appropriate changes are made to the advanced draft, a final draft would be presented to Council for adoption.

Implementation

The key role of Council in implementing the Strategic Animal Management Plan is to:

1. consider actions that are core Council business and look to incorporate them into operational plans and budgets over the next several years;

2. maintain communication with the broader community about progress with the plan;

3. provide leadership for the community on achieving the aspirations and actions in the plan. Across Council, staff need to have ownership and take responsibility for the plan;

4. continually engage a range of organisations and stakeholders for them to participate in implementing actions. Council acts as a "steward" for implementation as well as implementing relevant actions itself;.

5. ensure that the time for implementation matches the resources available. While many desirable actions are written into the plan, the pace at which they can be put in place depends on available resources. Some make take years to be implemented;

6. small visible actions that can be implemented within six months of the release of the plan need to be identified and achieved. These low cost actions are crucial to demonstrating concrete results from the planning process. This generates community enthusiasm and trust, reducing possible criticism that the process is all talk and no action; and

7. promote the product so there is greater community awareness of actions and how groups and individuals can be involved.

Reference group

It is important that a reference group including some Councillors, Council staff and the community be established to guide and monitor implementation. This group would need to meet regularly and should be coordinated by an appropriate officer within Council.

Annual report

The reference group should report annually to Council on the status of the plan.

Summary and conclusions

Developing a Strategic Animal Management Plan is a no brainer, but it desperately requires an organisation to acknowledge the importance of the human/companion animal relationship. Readers need refer no further than Dr David Paxton's paper of Wednesday 17 October 2012 at the Australian Institute of Animal Management National Conference Penrith, New South Wales, Australia "Invisible Paws in Human Affairs" to unravel the complexity of the human, companion animal bond.

Your Council will also need to allocate the resources that will allow individuals to focus their time and energy on preparation, consultation, research, design and the writing of the document. A Strategic Animal Management Plan cannot be written in isolation, it must be supported across the entire organisation and be representative of community input. Only with this chemistry is there likely to be success.

As Council acts as a "steward" for the plan the time frame for implementation needs to match the resources available. While many desirable actions are written into the plan, the pace at which they can be put in place depends on available resources. Some make take years to be implemented.

Some actions will not only require additional funding and services but also partnerships and coordination between existing organisations and services. Although local resources maybe limited, there is often scope for them to be better coordinated and used in innovative ways. Actions will often depend on matching priorities in the plan with the scope and motivation of existing organisations and individuals. Plans need to be promoted so there is good community awareness of actions and how groups and individuals can be involved.

It is good practice to review the plan annually to ensure that as priorities change or tasks get completed they are recorded, where necessary projects reprioritised and action plans updated.

At the time of writing this paper neither the Sunshine Coast nor Townsville City Council's have yet developed Strategic Animal Management Plans for their region. The authors of this paper live in hope that one day that Strategic Animal Management Plans will be an essential function of local government equally as important as preparing the annual financial plan. An article written by Mr. Alex Shaw, Director Planning and Infrastructure, Town of Gawler SA in the AIAM Publication, The Phoenix May 2012 (below), has lifted our spirit and we recall that "Rome was not built in a day⁴"—

Alex wrote...

Through my attendance (AIAM Conference 2011 Townsville Qld), my awareness and understanding of some significant areas of our business was brought forward in my consciousness and quickly identified that this area of Council responsibility and operation was not only grossly underestimated in regard to its community and risk management contribution but was clearly a cohesive and evolving mainstream profession. As a profession, they are grappling now with scenarios and community evolution issues that are fundamental and lead indicators in Council strategic planning.

Alex Shaw went onto to state—

By way of example, one of the most fundamental considerations in service delivery by Councils' is the identification and qualification of the demographic being serviced and their expectations. AIAM has recognised this and has done significant research into this issue. It should also be recognised that General Inspectorial and Animal Management Officers deal with these issues at the coalface on a day-to-day basis. It has been identified, and supported by other research, that the population growth Australia wide is going to be, in large, resultant of immigration. Due to the diversity of immigrants, they bring with them different expectations and behaviours, cultures, religions / beliefs, base diets and animal husbandry traits etc.. An unprecedented new set of dynamics that will change our demographic profiles forever. This will not only challenge our Bylaws, and in fact State and Federal governance, but will also test grassroots neighbourhood behaviours and interactions. Fundamental issues, some of which are now starting to emerge, which will change our Society and subsequently Councils are, but not limited to:

- recent evolution of zoological and homological diseases which now cross species and threaten the community and habitat;
- introduction of "exotic" diseases and health complaints in both human and
- Animal;
- demand and expectation of different types of "pets" which bring with it different control problems and social challenge;
- cultural difference and practice of different animal husbandry norms that challenge existing communities; and
- change in predominant pet breeds and their associated behavioural, environmental and committee impacts

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4   from a French proverb, 'Rome was not made all in one day,' which was recorded in 'Li Proverbe au Vilain' (c. 1190)

Considering the above one can see that impacts on communities can range from serious issues such as disease control and environment to as minor as dog barking and attack issues resultant from changing breed dominations or type. One can also take this to another level and consider the demands and expectations of this new demographic in regard to animal husbandry practices and requirements, shared space expectations, neighbourhood character, pet controls and so on.

In short, if one is to turn one's mind to the issues that come from these simple premises it is easy to see how they will affect not only animal management but also planning, community services and a myriad of other Council strategies and responsibilities.

APPENDIX 1

What should a Strategic Animal Management Plan look like

1. FOREWORD

A *Strategic Animal Management Plan* has to include a foreword, written by either Council's Chief Executive Officer or Mayor.

The purpose of the forward is to introduce and provide a precise summary of the plan. It should also in general, validate the process by which the plan was drafted. An example of the 1st and 2nd paragraph of the foreword is detailed below:

"This Strategic Animal Management Plan and the underlying processes that it supports, are fundamental to ensuring that companion animals kept in the region are supported by a management framework that assist Council in making informed decisions that are consistent with community expectations.

A Strategic Animal Management Plan is not just a good idea; in some states throughout Australia there development is a mandatory requirement under State legislation. They are viewed as vital for audit reporting and recording, and for benchmarking the status of service delivery across state and local boundaries".

The plan also clearly aligns to Council's publicly stated overarching vision for the region and its commitment towards meeting its obligations of transparency, democracy, good governance, sustainability and ethics in its decision making.

2. INTRODUCTION

The first few sentences of introduction carry the most importance message and lay a foundation of creditability. An introductory paragraph should attempt to do three things:

* introduce the topic with some indication of its inherent interest or importance, and a clear definition of the boundaries of the subject area;
* indicate the structure and/or methodology of the plan, with the major sections clearly stated; and
* state the need, preferably in a single, arguable statement with a clear message.

An example of a strong introduction is detailed below:

"Unlike many State-managed public services that are legislated for and regulated under State jurisdictions, Animal Management is legislated in part by the State Government and is regulated by Local Government with the assistance of local laws. It is Local Government that enables and implements Animal Management legislation and it is Local Government together with its

community that is best placed to understand how to most effectively deliver this important service.

Without having the benefit "hands on" working experience in Animal Management service delivery, it is difficult for State government officers to know what is required, which advice is sound and genuinely in the community's interest and which is self-serving lobbying.

Animal Management has long history of emotional public volatility that can easily link to political difficulty. Issues are unfortunately often presented by the media in such a way as to incite public outrage, together with crisis levels of community division and political stress.

If it is agreed that companion animal management is a significant issue for local government, then its only fair and reasonable that animal management policy, legislation and processes should be shaped by the community with local government being the enabler. There is strong evidence available that shows, a failure to engage with residents about how they see the future of their community, results in they becoming more of a hindrance than a help..."

3. PURPOSE

Because Council has recognised the importance of pet ownership and its linkages to the quadruple bottom line (i.e., social capital, economic benefit, environmental enhancement and good governance), it makes good corporate sense to promote the Strategic Animal Management Plan to public opinion.

The success of the plan, because of its ties to public opinion, which can be a malleable and fickle beast, will rely heavily on everyone involved in its design, to be "singing from the same page". For this reason, the purpose of the plan must be stated and referred to when public opinion begins to wane.

A plans purpose, should be designed around three core open questions:

* what is the current position? (Situation Analysis);
* where does the community want to be? (Goals and Objectives); and
* how to get there? (Strategies and Action Plans).

For the purpose of the exercise only, a structured "purpose of the plan" paragraph is presented as a guide:

"The purpose of this plan is to document the philosophy that has been applied to its development and includes a scan of the current animal management landscape within Council's geographical area and the service delivery models available to Council in meeting community expectations.

A long term planning approach is considered absolutely necessary given the—

> – *importance of pet ownership to Australian families,*

> – *Council's large capital and operating expenditure*

> – *importance of facilitating positive pet outcomes*

> – *need to consider population growth and the diversity of cultures within our communities.*

The strategic animal management plan links directly to, and supports the outcomes sought from both the Community and Corporate Plans, their goals, policies and vision for the region. The plan does however, focus directly on pet ownership and is supported by a number of strategies with key outcomes linked to achievable and cost effective action plans..."

4. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The plan must document clearly defined objectives that provide a sound basis for defining its long term aspirations, the short and medium term landscape, where the community wants to be at a particular time and the measures for whether the objectives can and have, in fact, been accomplished.

The objectives of the plan which must be documented upfront, must be achievable and can include:

* a financial statement;
* how infrastructure and assets will be purchased, managed and disposed of;
* human resource requirements;
* trend data on population growth and cultural diversity;
* how information access and dissemination is to be managed; and
* how community engagement will remain a priority.

5. TIMEFRAME

A Strategic Animal Management Plan should define its lifecycle, generally 5-10 years is considered reasonable, but **must be** subject to regular reviews.

Importantly, a Strategic Animal Management Plan should not be viewed as a static document. It must remain flexible, subject to modification and improved based on experiences in implementing actions and to manage changing circumstances.

Whilst there are no crystal balls, there is strong scientific evidence, economic data and population growth statistics available from reliable sources that can accurately reflect the likely scenarios over its lifecycle.

6. LIMITATIONS

A disclaimer should always accompany the Strategic Plan. The disclaimer must inform on the plans limitations and include information that relates to—

* where the information/data was sourced;

- the model being designed on existing service levels;
- the financial forecasting period; and
- the level of community consultation... etc

7. SCOPE

Scope statements may take many forms and should capture, in very broad terms, the product of the project, for example, *"developing a 10 year Strategic Animal Management Plan that describes the future aspirations, goals, strategies and key action plans for the management of companion animals kept in the local government area"*.

8. STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

The strategic overview of the plan will include the *vision, mission, core values* and *the overall objective sought from the plan.*

9. VISION STATEMENT

During the community engagement process, it is vital for residents to develop a vision for their community and their Strategic Animal Management Plan. However, the one non negotiable is the vision, must link to Council's Community and Corporate Plans. For example, the Sunshine Coast Council's Community Plan, proposes that the region be the most sustainable in Australia and the Corporate Plan compliments this statement by proposing that the Sunshine Coast be Australia's most sustainable region, vibrant, green, and diverse.

It therefore follows logically that the vision for the Strategic Animal Management Plan must not only compliment both the key strategic documents; it must also be aspirational and above all else achievable. The vision should not be a broad "motherhood statement" descriptor that doesn't specify enough detail of how the future of the region will look.

A vision can be represented in several ways, but a worded statement, describing the preferred future situation for the region will suffice.

10. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

To ensure that the vision of the Strategic Animal Management Plan is cohesive with the Community and Corporate Plans, it is important to regularly revisit the documents to ensure that the linkages are there and they are transparent for all to see. This process will assist in identifying the challenges that Council and the community face and the opportunities that can be pursued under the plan.

As an example, the Sunshine Coast Council Corporate Plan 2009-2014, identified a number of themes that the organisation believed were

necessary to assist Council in becoming Australia's most sustainable, vibrant, green and diverse region. The themes included:

- a robust economy;
- ecological sustainability;
- innovation and creativity;
- health and well being;
- social cohesion;
- accessibility and connectedness;
- managing growth; and
- great governance.

Each theme (once identified) attracted a number of emerging priorities that are supported by a series of strategies to which operational plans, projects and activities are scheduled.

Table 3 below, provides an example of the hierarchy of Corporate Documents that will need to be considered in the preparation of an Strategic Animal Management Plan and how the themes, priorities, strategies, actions and outcomes surface.

For the purpose of better understanding the process, **Table 3** below has identified via the Community Plan Region Growth as its theme. The Corporate Plan in response identifies planning for healthy and sustainable communities as a priority outcome.

The key strategic issue follow and there could be several. In the example provided "infrastructure and asset management" are identified as the strategy. The Operational Plan subsequently presents an *opportunity* to review the current infrastructure and assets used by the business. The Business Plan however provides the *challenge* of preparing a long term fiscal management plan to ensure infrastructure and assets meet the growing needs of the community with consideration given to achievability of expectations.

TABLE 3

Document	Theme/Priority/Strategy/Action/Outcome
Community Plan	e.g. Regional Growth (Theme)
Corporate Plan	e.g. Planning for Healthy and Sustainable Communities (Priority)
Strategic Animal Mgt Plan	e.g. Infrastructure and Asset Management (Strategy)
Operational Plan	e.g. Review infrastructure and assets to determine future needs.(Action)
Business Plan	e.g. Prepare a long term financial plan to meet infrastructure and assets requirements (Outcome)

11. ANIMAL MANAGEMENT GOAL

In a very strategic context, the Strategic Animal Management Plan should be supported by two or three statements that clearly articulate the development of the plan, and its long term aspirations. For example:

"This animal management strategy has been developed with a common sense of purpose, mutual assistance, progressive ideas, aspirations, knowledge sharing and experience on important matters pertaining to the delivery of sustainable animal management practices and policies across the region".

12. KEY PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Plans cannot be developed in isolation; their sustainability relies heavily on the assistance of key partners and stakeholders. These groups should be acknowledged for their contribution and participation in the process. An example of the type of key partners, stakeholders etc is given below.

Key partners:
- Community – groups/hubs/locals;
- Industry Groups – business/service providers/contractors; and
- Special Interest Groups – breeders/welfare groups/clubs.

External stakeholders:
- Community;
- Ratepayers association;
- Environmental groups; and
- Other government agencies.

Internal Stakeholders:
- Elected Representatives;
- Other Business Units/Departments;
- Legal Provider; and
- Staff.

13. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITIES

Although obvious to those writing the plan, the tasks involved in animal management are not always clear. For this reason, always make a point of documenting clearly what animal management activities are carried out by Council. For example:

- Community Education – include a short narrative detailing what this means
- Community Service Obligation Services (i.e. animal impounding, complaint resolution, patrols, livestock etc)
- Pound Services (i.e. holding, releasing and disposal)

- Enforcement (i.e. Notices, Infringements, Prosecution, Dispute Resolution etc)
- Information Access (i.e. brochures, flyers, equipment etc)
- Planning process (i.e. Strategic, Business, Operational, Reporting, Policy etc)
- Partnerships/Relationships/Collaboration, Consultation, Advocacy etc
- Recruitment, Training, Mentoring, Continuing Education, Information Repository/Library etc
- Service Standards (i.e. Service Level Agreements, Community/Councillors/Staff, Reporting/Benchmarking, Surveys, Audits and Reviews etc).

14. ACTIVITY SUMMARY

For each activity provide a summary of funding and expenditure, business drivers (refer to Appendix 2), and current levels of service. The more information included the better. However, sourcing and recording data for more than a four year period can be onerous and time consuming. For this reason, gather what ever is available and make use of the content by using charts, tables and drawings to reduce the amount of text.

15. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Detail your organisational structure, the framework and the hierarchy within which your Council arranges its lines of authority and communications, and allocates rights and duties. An organisational flowchart can normally be sourced from Human Resources and generally suffices for this purpose.

16. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In order to effectively engage and create a better appreciation of Council and animal management services, it is important to provide the audience with a clear definition and understanding of the role, functions, and responsibilities of the animal management team. Providing this information will assist readers with understanding the tasks, issues, and limitations of local government, in the very complex business of animal management.

APPENDIX 2

Significant anticipated environmental influences (business driver) that need to be accommodated in your planning process

POPULATION GROWTH

In the year ending 31 December 2009, Australia's estimated resident population (ERP) had increased by 433,000 people to 22.2 million, a 2.0% increase from December 2008, this followed growth of 460,000 people (or 2.2%) between December 2007 and December 2008.

The rate of population growth has become considerably faster since the mid-2000s. Over the two decades prior to 2006, the annual growth rate had averaged 1.3%, adding an average of 234,000 people per year in that period. The recent growth rate of around 2% per year is faster than at any other time in the past several decades, and faster than nearly all other developed countries.

ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION AND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE – AUSTRALIA
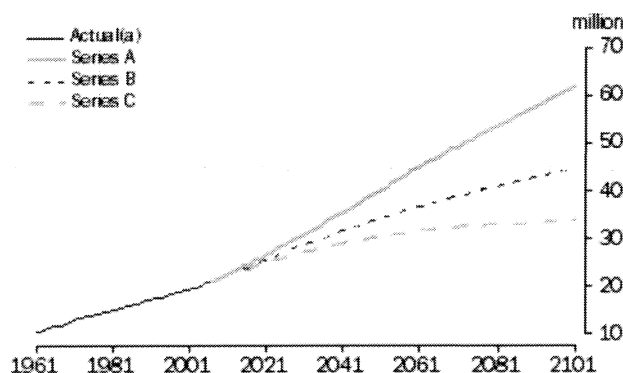
ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION
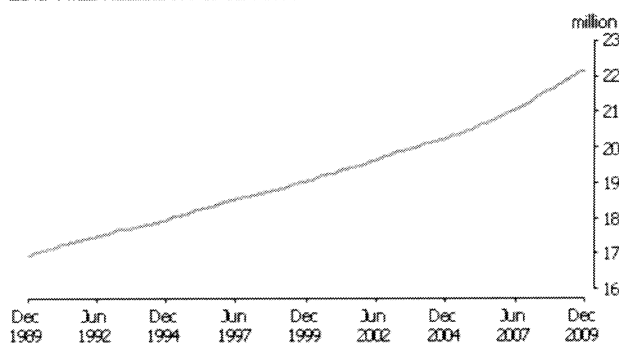
ANNUAL GROWTH RATE
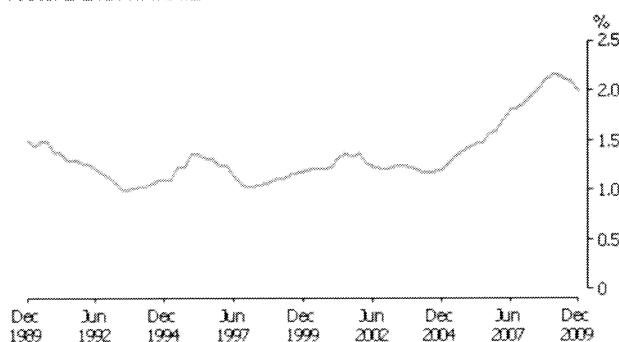
Source: ABS Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0)

With population growth expected to exceed

30 million in the next 20 years5, it is a logical conclusion to reach that pet ownership will also grow expedientially. It is in this context that Strategic Animal Management Plans must be designed if they are to be meaningful and sustainable.

ACTUAL AND PROJECTED POPULATION, 1961-2101

(a) Estimated resident population

Source: Australian Historical Population Statistics (ABS cat. no. 3105.0.65.001), Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101 (ABS cat. no. 3222.0)
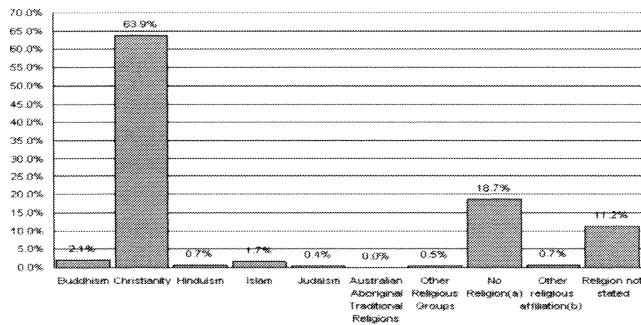
CULTURAL DIVERSITY

In 2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics recorded that in Australia, there were over 120 different religious denominations with language being a key marker of membership and culture. The data also identified that whilst the majority of Australians speak English as a first or other language, there were a significant number of people who also spoke a language other than English.

About 78% of Australians speak only English. While English is the dominant language in Australia, many people speak a language other than English within their families and communities. The following data is derived from the 2006 Census:

*   collectively, Australians speak over 200 languages. Of these, about 50 are Australian Indigenous languages.
*   about 16% of Australians speak a language other than English. Australian Indigenous languages are spoken by about 0.3% of the total population.
*   the most common languages other than English are: Italian, Greek, Cantonese, Arabic, Mandarin and Vietnamese. Collectively, Chinese languages (including Cantonese, Mandarin and other Chinese languages) have the greatest number of speakers after English, accounting for approximately 2.5% of the total population.

5   Population Projections, Australia, 2006 to 2101 (ABS cat. no. 3222.0)

Not surprisingly cultural diversity is going to be a huge business driver for many local governments particularly in our larger capital and regionally cities. Failing to acknowledge or consider cultural diversity in your Strategic Animal Management Plan could have disastrous implications.

PEAK OIL

The wide use of fossil fuels has been one of the most important stimuli of economic growth and prosperity since the industrial revolution. It is believed however that when oil production decreases, *human culture*, and our *modern technological* society will be forced to change drastically. The impact of peak oil will depend heavily on the rate of decline and the development and adoption of effective alternatives. In Feb 2010, it was predicted that by 2012, surplus oil production capacity could entirely disappear, and as early as 2015, the shortfall in output could reach nearly 10 million barrels per day.

While it is difficult to predict precisely what *economic*, *political*, and *strategic* effects such a shortfall might produce, it surely will reduce the prospects for growth in both the developing and developed worlds. Such an economic slowdown would exacerbate other unresolved tensions, push fragile and failing economies further down the path toward collapse, and likely to have a serious global economic impact. At best, it will lead to periods of *harsh economic adjustment*. To what extent conservation measures, investments in alternative energy production, and efforts to expand petroleum production from tar sands and shale would mitigate such a period of adjustment is difficult to predict.

In 2005, the United States Department of Energy published a report titled Peaking of World Oil Production: Impacts, Mitigation, & Risk Management. Known as the Hirsch report, it stated, "The peaking of world oil production presents the U.S. and the world with an unprecedented risk management problem. As peaking is approached, liquid fuel prices and price volatility will increase dramatically, and, without timely mitigation, the *economic, social*, and *political* costs will be unprecedented. Viable mitigation options exist on both the supply and demand sides, but to have substantial impact, they

must be initiated more than a decade in advance of peaking
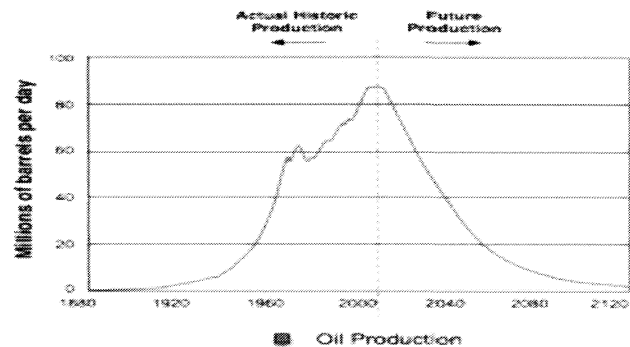
Given this prediction, the cost of fossil fuel is likely to influence the global financial landscape leaving in its wake destruction and mayhem. If putting food on the table and keeping a roof over our heads becomes a lot tougher what status or place will companion animals have in our lives...is the scenario likely to be more dumped pets?

CLIMATE CHANGE

Whilst Australia's climate is changing and its impacts are now being witnessed globally (i.e. rainfall, temperature change and extreme weather events) there is still great uncertainty about what it might mean to local government. However, a little crystal balling leads you to believe that climate change will not just impact on coastal settlements, infrastructure and buildings, it is very likely that its effects will be widespread and that no part of Australia will be immune from it.

Densely populated urban areas will likely face a different suite of problems than the less densely populated regional towns. Similarly, coastal areas will face different challenges to inland areas. Local government as the agency responsible for land use planning, infrastructure, asset development, operation and maintenance, as well community well-being and safety will need to have a better understanding of climate change science.

Climate change will lead to uncertainties and implications to land use planning, building and design across the residential, commercial and infrastructure sectors, and is an important prerequisite in considering the design of new development and retrofitting existing development.

The majority of science on climate change decisions are being made or developed at the global or national level with minimal support provided to regional and/ or local events. For example, the ability to model the areas potentially vulnerable to sea-level rise and storm surge is an essential first step to addressing the risk. The majority of Australians and their pets live close or adjacent to the coast and as such present a problem on a massive scale.

Climate change is not just limited to storm surges or sea level rises; they present a challenge for all sectors of the Australian economy but particularly for those sectors dependent on natural resources, like agriculture and forestry. The recent introduction of a carbon tax in Australia has put additional financial pressure on industry groups, many who are still coming to terms with the effects of the global financial crisis of 2008. What this might mean to pet ownership remains an unknown. A likely consequence will include the indiscriminate dumping of pets, as ownership becomes more prohibitive and costly.

Climate change will influence our actions, choices and decisions.

About the authors

SHANE SCRIGGINS

Shane Scriggins has 27 years experience in Local Government and has worked extensively in the fields of both Local Laws and Corporate Governance. He is currently Project Managing the Sunshine Coast Council's:

* Business Continuity Management Framework;
* Local law implementation roll out;
* Organisational, Strategic and Operational Policy Development; and
* The advertising and use of public land use strategy.

Shane is a strong advocate of continuous improvement and will investigate opportunities to be innovative, efficient and effective in meeting community needs and expectations. He is a transformational leader with proven senior-level experience in decision-making, determining policy direction, strategic business planning, customer relations, financial and personnel management, research and development, and change management.

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DR DICK MURRAY

Dick Murray currently holds the office of President of the Australian Institute of Animal Management. Dick was a 1973 BVSc graduate of UQ and an MSc graduate of JCU. He has been a North Queensland veterinary (companion animal) practitioner with a deep interest in animal management for about 40 years now. For work done in this field of endeavour he has been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia, an Australian Veterinary Association's Meritorious Service Award, an AVA Gilruth Prize and Fellowship of the AVA.

The conference at which this paper was presented will be the 20th national annual Animal Management conference of a consecutive sequence of conferences that commenced in Brisbane in 1992. Dick has been centrally involved with all of these conferences and will willingly admit that all of the intervening years have been a continuous learning curve about the subject of Animal Management.

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