



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.” While some people might think this is harmless exploring, 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.

Dogs wander for many reasons; they might be looking for a mate, they have been scared away from their home by loud noises, or a gate has simply been left open.

We understand...

...desexed dogs are less likely to roam.

New laws on desexing and microchipping start from **1 July 2018**

Wandering: the Fast Facts

- If your dog is found wandering, local councils can legally seize it.
- 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...

...your dog being lost is stressful for you and your dog. Microchips are mandatory from 1 July 2018, and are the best way to ensure whoever finds your dog can help reunite you safely.



The benefits of identification

Your local council is responsible for dealing with dogs that are wandering at large.

In most instances, if the dog is registered, it can be returned to its owner. From 1 July 2018, your dog must also be microchipped. It must also wear a collar with current registration disc, and a name tag with your mobile phone number listed is a good idea, too.

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 set by law and offer adequate and appropriate facilities for the short term holding of dogs. You can be sure any dog you find will be safe for the short term if surrendered to a council or recognised shelter.

If the dog does have a name tag with contact details listed, try calling its owners before taking it to the relevant council, as this saves time and money for all involved.

If you lose your dog

If your dog is lost or missing, you should act immediately. 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

Before you bring a dog into your life, it's a good idea to do an "escape audit" of your home. Is your fence secure? Could a dog burrow under gates or squeeze between gaps? Is there anything in the neighbourhood that might frighten your dog and cause it to flee?

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