STEP ONE

Keep the dog safe.

• If you find a wandering dog and it is friendly, contain it, either on a lead or in your yard or some other area that it cannot escape from, if you are able to. Lost dogs are in danger of getting hit by a car or getting themselves into some other kind of trouble and need our help to find their way home.

• If the dog is shy or fearful and will not let you approach or keeps running away from you, take things slowly. Assess the situation – is it safe to crouch low, avert your face and eyes, and watch out of your peripheral vision? Speak in a calm voice. Offer food treats. Let the dog come to you. Don't clap your hands, chase or lunge toward him. If the dog will not come to you, go to Step 3.

• If the dog is behaving aggressively, stay away and contact the Council Animal Management Department immediately. The dog may be frightened or in pain. You need to keep yourself safe.

STEP TWO

Check for ID and Return the Dog

Don't assume the dog does not have a caring owner. Accidents happen and dogs can get out of their yards. The owner may be looking for their dog or unaware it has escaped.

• If the dog has a collar with phone number, call the owner immediately and leave a message with your contact details and location.

• If no external identification, the dog may have a microchip. Take the dog to the nearest vet clinic or animal shelter to be scanned for a microchip number. The number can be searched in the microchip database on-line to find the owner, provided they have kept their contact details up to date. If legally allowed to do so, often vets will keep the dog safely at the clinic until the owner can collect the dog. Remember – finders is not keepers, this is not your pet.

• If the dog has a registration tag, call the local council Animal Management department or shelter. They will look up the records and will usually provide the owner's details if the owner has given permission, or may contact the owner to pick up the dog directly from you, to prevent the dog having to be impounded. This is preferable to avoid distress for the dog, and possible abandonment if the owner cannot easily get to the pound, or afford the council impound fees.

• If you are unable to care for the dog until the owner is found, council animal management staff may come and collect the dog and hold it in their pound/ shelter.

  • Check how long the dog will be held in the pound and what the next step is i.e. are all the dogs rehomed or transferred to a local animal welfare shelter or rescue group with high rehoming rates?

  • If you are able to adopt the dog, leave your number as a person to be contacted if the owner does not come forward.

  • Keep looking for the owner – Steps 3 - 6

  • Call again before the holding period ends to remind the pound staff you are still interested in adopting, if you have the interest and ability to responsibly care for the dog.

STEP THREE

Contact Local Lost and Found Community Web and Social Media Sites

List the found pet with a photo on your local community and Lost and Found Facebook pages and websites e.g. www.petsearch.com.au and www.lostpetfinders.com.au Also check if an owner has posted a lost report.

STEP FOUR

Contact Your Local Vet Clinics, Shelters, and Pounds

Report the dog as found, and check if it has been reported to them as lost. Send a copy of the photo to add to their report. They may also display it in their clinic/pound office.

STEP FIVE

Take a Photo and Door-Knock in Surrounding Streets Where the Dog was Found

Ask all the neighbours if they know where the dog lives. You may be able to walk/drive the dog home. If the dog is shy or fearful, or has had to be collected by animal management staff, you can let the owner know where their dog is.

STEP SIX

Make Simple Fliers/Posters

Distribute fliers to letterboxes around the streets, AND place giant neon posters on street poles* or in local shops in at least a 1 km radius from where the dog was found. Frightened dogs can run kilometres away from their homes.

On posters, include FOUND DOG, a PHOTO of the dog, YOUR PHONE NUMBER and any unique features (people driving past will have 5 seconds to read it so 5 words max). Make multiple copies using an A4 flier template at www.g2z.org.au/lost-pets

Write a simple message on your car back window.

*Note: Check with your Council on laws related to displaying community posters.

STEP SEVEN

If you have tried all of the above strategies and cannot find the owner, consider adopting the dog or asking friends or family if they can adopt the dog.

If the law requires taking a dog to the local council pound/shelter for the mandatory stray holding period:

- Check how long the animal will be held at the pound, and stay in touch to see if the dog has been reclaimed or is still being held.
- Leave your number as a person to be contacted as a potential adopter.
- Keep looking for the owner.
- Before the mandatory holding period expiry date, remind the pound that you are interested in helping by adopting and desexing the animal.

STEP EIGHT

When You Find the Dog's Home

Thank and share the happy news with Council, neighbours, vets and businesses

- Take down posters
- Share the strategies you've learned with others to help them find their dogs
- Help the owners to prevent losing their dog again by encouraging them to:
  - Update their microchip details
  - Fit a collar with current phone number and registration tag
  - Desex the dog
  - Carefully contain their dog within their property
  - Provide plenty of walks, socialization with people and other dogs, and activities to keep the dog happy.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

https://missionreunite.org/

THIS RESOURCE IS A PARTNERSHIP PROJECT BETWEEN

Australian Institute of Animal Management

www.aiam.org.au

G2Z GETTING 2 ZERO

www.g2z.org.au

FOUND A DOG?

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO KEEP HANDY IN CASE YOU FIND A DOG

Don't delay! Think lost not stray!