

# **Glennelg Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan**



**2021-2025**



# CONTENTS

<b>1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT</b> .....	3
<b>2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS</b> .....	8
<b>3. PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP</b> .....	10
<b>4. PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVER-POPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES</b> .....	15
<b>5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION</b> .....	17
<b>6. NUISANCE</b> .....	19
<b>7. DOG ATTACKS</b> .....	22
<b>8.DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS</b> .....	24
<b>9. DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES</b> .....	26
<b>10. OTHER MATTERS</b> .....	28
<b>11. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING</b> .....	29
<b>12. SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2021-2025</b> .....	31



# 1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) has been prepared to provide a strategic framework for Glenelg Shire Council for policy direction and action plans related to animal management during the four-year period between 2021-2025.

Council has a responsibility to enforce State legislation and its own Local Laws together with educating our community on issues associated with animal management and the role of the pet owner.

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act) requires council to prepare a Domestic Animal Management plan every four years.

The plan must set out a method for evaluating whether the animal management services provided by council are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Act and regulations.

**The plan must also outline programs for the training of authorised officers along with programs, services and strategies to:**

- ❃ Promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- ❃ Ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation
- ❃ Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
- ❃ Address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
- ❃ Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
- ❃ Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
- ❃ Effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations
- ❃ Provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable
- ❃ Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it deems necessary
- ❃ Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan

Council is required to review and where appropriate amend the plan and publish an annual evaluation of its implementation of the plan to Council.



## 1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

In preparing this plan, the following methodology has been applied:

- ❦ Existing animal management operations were reviewed including existing procedures, local laws and orders.
- ❦ A community survey was conducted via the YourSay Glenelg portal in July 2021. This survey sought input on a range of issues, including open spaces, animal registration and nuisance cats and dogs.
- ❦ 306 survey responses were received, 298 via online and 8 hardcopy submissions.
- ❦ Results of this survey across all subject matter showed the following areas caused the most concern for residents:
  - Concern regarding dogs not under effective control in off and on leash areas
  - More education around dog faeces due to sighting uncollected waste on a regular basis (including support for enforcement and more availability of biodegradable dog waste bags).
  - Areas of concern for dog waste were Fawthrop Lagoon, Nuns Beach, Portland Botanic Gardens, Ploughed Field, Portland foreshore cliff tops, Casterton Main Street
  - More signage for dog zones and dog prohibited areas
  - Support for the reduction of puppy and kitten breeding in the shire
  - A stand-alone Facebook page for animals found at large
- ❦ The plan also identifies the need for authorised officers to undergo training on recognising factors of family violence and responding to disclosures to better understand the link between animal abuse and family violence, and to better understand how different genders experience animal ownership differently.



## 1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL PROFILE OF COUNCIL

### Acknowledgment of Country

The Glenelg Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the traditional lands and waters of the Gunditjmara people, Bunganditj people, Jardwadjali people and their respective cultural heritages. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People provide an important contribution to Australia's cultural heritage and identity.

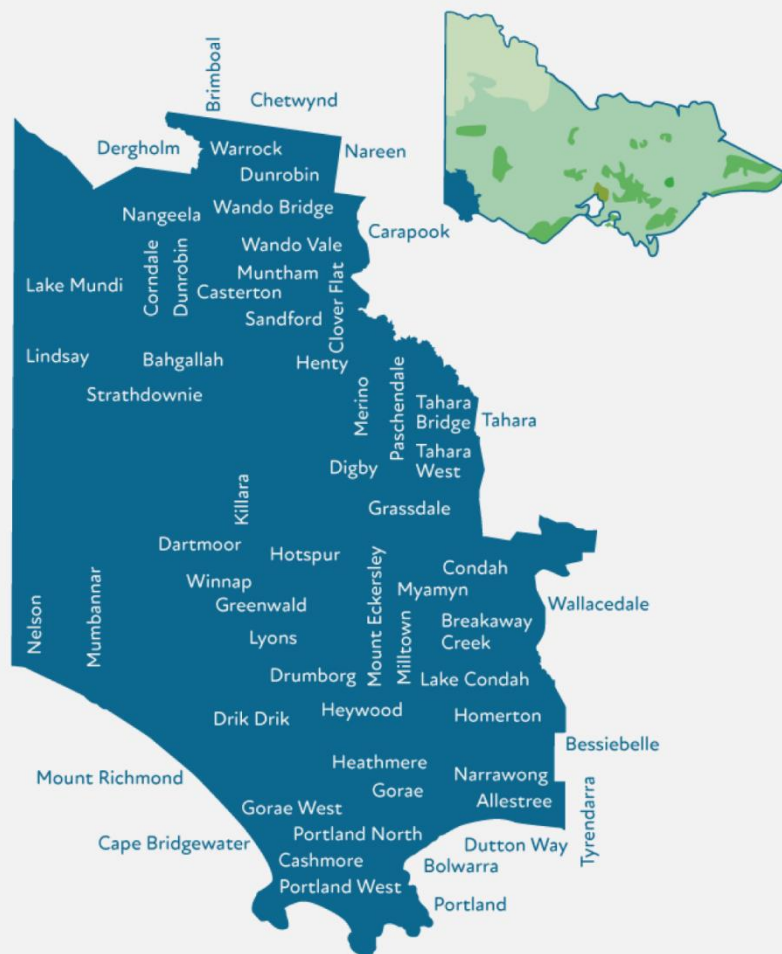
We respectfully acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait community living throughout the Glenelg Shire and the contribution they make to the Glenelg Shire's prosperity and wellbeing.

### Demographic and People

The Glenelg Shire is located in south-west Victoria covers an area of 6,212 square kilometres and is approximately 360 kilometres from the Melbourne CBD.

The Glenelg Shire is prosperous in the agricultural, fishing and forestry industries.

The customer service centres based in Portland, Heywood and Casterton accept animal registrations, and receive requests and complaints raised by the community regarding animal welfare, animals wandering at large, dog attacks and other general enquiries that require investigation by authorised officers.



## 1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

### Micro-chipping and desexing

In 2019, Council in partnership with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), held two high volume cat desexing programs in Portland during April and October. Cat and kitten owners within the municipality were invited to access the low-cost program. Over 120 felines were desexed as a result. Owners were able to have their animals microchipped and vaccinated at a reduced cost and a free animal registration was included.

### Off leash dog park

An off leash fenced dog park was sought by the community and a petition with over 900 signatures was presented to Council in support. Council successfully received State Government funding. In July 2021 two adjoining off leash dog parks were officially opened providing a separate space for large and small dogs to run off lead.



### Registration

Registration numbers have remained consistent over several years with no significant increase or decrease in animal numbers. Anecdotal evidence suggests that numerous animals in the community remain unregistered particularly when a significant number of cats, kittens, dogs and puppies admitted to the animal shelter are not identifiable.

All registered animal owners that did not renew the registration of their pet/s received a follow up phone call. Approximately 590 animals were not renewed in 2021 by 10 April.

Council continues to try and find new and innovative ways to encourage voluntary compliance by animal owners to register their animals in accordance with the Act.

### Pound Services

Council will be taking on the operations of the municipalities' animal shelter and pound services from January 2022. This service has been undertaken by the RSPCA in the past. Council is committed to ensuring animal welfare and enrichment is at the forefront of decision making, including reuniting lost animals with their owners as soon as possible.



## 1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA

<b>GLENELG SHIRE – KEY STATISTICS</b>		<b>2020-2021</b>
<b>COUNCIL INFORMATION</b>		
Current Population		19,777
Area		6,212 sq.km.
Rateable Properties		14,500
Number of Authorised Officers		5
<b>DOGS</b>		
Dogs (2020 – 2021 financial year)		
Number registered on Council database		4,138
Number impounded by officers		149
Number brought in by public as stray		45
Number brought in by public surrender		49
Number dogs reclaimed by their owner		119
Number declared menacing		8
Number declared dangerous		3
Number registered restricted breed		0
<b>CATS</b>		
Cats (2020 – 2021 financial year)		
Number registered on council database		1,646
Number impounded by officers		225
Number brought in by public as stray		94
Number brought in by public surrender		74
Number cats reclaimed by their owner		21



## 2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

### 2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The functions and responsibilities for animal management are delivered by the Local Laws Team, within the Corporate Services Department.

Local Laws Unit comprises eight staff in total consisting of one (1) manager, four (4) full-time officers, and one (1) part time officer. Assistance is provided by two (2) part-time administration officers.

All officers are multi-skilled and provide animal management as well as general Local Laws services.

A rotating after-hours call out service is provided to the community for the following concerns:

- 🐾 Contained stray dog or cat
- 🐾 Stock at large
- 🐾 Dog attacks

Table 1 sets out the training status for our officers and training proposed during the forthcoming four-year period.

### 2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

**TABLE 1: TRAINING STATUS FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS**

Authorised Officer Training	Current	Planned
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	Completed by two officers	Remaining officers to enrol over the duration of the Plan
Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance)	Completed by two officers	To be completed by third officer
Animal handling (Aggressive dog and cat, stock animals)	Completed by four officers	Officers to complete every 18 months
Firearms Licence	Completed by four officers	Newly appointed officers to achieve
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act Authorisation	Completed for all officers	Newly appointed officers to achieve
In-house training on relevant subject matter such as brief preparation, statement taking, tactical communication.	Ongoing	Officers to attend training as needs are identified
In-house training and e-learning modules (OHS, Code of Conduct, Fraud and Corruption, Gender Equality, Family Violence Awareness)	Ongoing	Officer to attend as part of Organisational Development Training
Induction program for new staff	Completed	Compulsory internal training
Industry seminars and workshops	Ongoing	Officers to attend as training is available and required





## 2.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 1:** To identify training opportunities and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by authorised officers to ensure ongoing competency of officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Tailored training program for tactical and effective communication in the field	Year one of plan (2022)	Training delivered
Tailored training program for taking witness statements and leading investigations	Year two of plan (2023)	Training delivered
Animal husbandry skills, livestock, and domestic animals.	Year two of plan (2023)	Training delivered
Identify additional training opportunities	Annually	Performance conversations and individual officers' training plans

**Objective 2:** Maintain training for officers as part of performance planning, ensuring they have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete a development plan process with each staff member	Annually	Completion of all identified training activities in development plan
Authorised officers to receive training on prevention recognising factors of family violence and responding to disclosures	Year two of plan (2023)	Training delivered

# 3. PROGRAMS TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

## 3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

**Council’s approach to compliance is guided by the notion of Educate, Encourage, Enforce.**

Education is the highest priority, with enforcement generally occurring as a last resort when methods have failed, or as an immediate response to wilful non-compliance for serious matters.

Welfare cases often require ongoing management and monitoring.

Every interaction with an animal owner provides an opportunity for officers to build a relationship and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance.

This Plan focuses on continuing best practice for the management of cats and dogs in Glenelg Shire and to promote responsible pet ownership.

### Current programs

Council was successful in obtaining a desexing grant from Animal Welfare Victoria in July 2021 which will be used to desex 100 cats and kittens in the community by August 2022. This is a low-cost program to support disadvantaged members of our community with animal ownership.

### Over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates

- 🐾 Night-time curfew for cats (7pm – 7am)
- 🐾 Low-cost cat desexing programs
- 🐾 Focus on rehoming animals
- 🐾 Cat trapping programme (traps available to the community for free)

### Registration and identification of dogs and cats

- 🐾 Information on the council website to advise of the registration period and requirements
- 🐾 Discounted registration for eligible community members
- 🐾 Follow up pet owners that have not renewed their pet registration
- 🐾 Annual door-knock program
- 🐾 Improve the accuracy of council’s registration database with Microchip Registry data annually

### Nuisance

- 🐾 Regular patrols of parks and reserves allow officers to interact, educate and advise pet owners on responsible pet ownership.
- 🐾 Signage in parks to remind dog owner of the rules when visiting a park
- 🐾 Dog barking diaries and officer intervention for dog barking complaints
- 🐾 Dog waste bins, bags and drinking fountains provided at parks
- 🐾 Carry bags containing waste bags given to dog owners at the opening of the off-leash dog park.

### Dog attacks

Dog owners are encouraged to implement one of more of the following measures to reduce dog attacks:

- 🐾 Match dog breed choice with the dog owner’s lifestyle
- 🐾 Have dogs desexed to reduce their aggression or desire to wander at large
- 🐾 Implement early socialisation and training for the dog
- 🐾 Provide suitable conditions for confining the dog at its home
- 🐾 Provide environmental enrichment at its home to relieve pent up energy
- 🐾 Regularly exercise the dog



### Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

- ❗ Information is provided to owners of these dogs to inform them on their responsibilities when choosing such breeds
- ❗ One-on-one education to owners is available on request

### Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB)

- ❗ Council updates DAB operators on any changes to legislation or codes of practice that relates to their business
- ❗ Businesses are regularly inspected upon renewal of their registration

### Emergency Management

- ❗ Uphold the Municipal Emergency Management Plan by ensuring effective and timely delivery of animal welfare services
- ❗ Update the community on the management of animals impacted by an emergency

## 3.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### DOG CONTROL AREAS

**Dogs must be under effective control** at all times by means of a chain, cord or leash, within a designated on-leash area and not allow the dog to attack, rush at or chase any person.

**Prohibited Areas** – A dog must not enter a prohibited area. The prohibited areas within Glenelg Shire Council are Yarraman Park and the Portland Foreshore from the Yacht Club to Trawler Wharf Road, along the water's edge, which includes the Playgrounds and the All Abilities Playspace. See *Exhibit 1: Prohibited Area along Portland foreshore*



*Nine animal owners have been prosecuted for a variety of animal related offences in the 2020-2021 financial year.*

**Dog Off-Leash Areas** – An enclosed dog park is located at Henty Park, Portland that allows exercise off a chain, cord, or leash.

**Dog On-Leash Areas** – Dogs must be under control, at all times, by means of a chain, cord, or leash when on a road, street or Public Place in areas designated by council to be dog on leash areas.

**Portland On-Leash Areas:**

- 🐾 Flinders Park
- 🐾 Henty Park
- 🐾 Cavalier Park
- 🐾 Hanlon Park
- 🐾 Alexandra Park
- 🐾 Nelson Park
- 🐾 Friendly Society Reserve
- 🐾 Dutton Bluff Playground
- 🐾 Ploughed Field Playground
- 🐾 Rosdell Street Playground
- 🐾 Nuns Beach (Between 9.00am and 6.00pm from 1 December until midnight Easter Tuesday)



**Heywood On-Leash Areas**

- 🐾 Heywood Football Ground
- 🐾 Apex Park

**Casterton On-Leash Areas**

- 🐾 Island Park

**Merino On-Leash Areas**

- 🐾 Merino Showgrounds

**Removal of dog excrement** – A person in control of a dog must be equipped to remove dog faeces at all times and must clean up after the dog.

**CAT CONTROL ORDERS**

**Cat Curfew** – All cats must be securely confined to the owner’s property between the hours of 7.00pm and 7.00am.

**CURRENT LOCAL LAWS**

**General Local Law No 3 (Animals)** – Among other things, this local law regulates the keeping of animals in Glenelg Shire with the following two conditions:

1. It requires a permit from council to keep more than two dogs and two cats within a designated area (inside town boundaries), or;
2. It requires a permit from council to keep more than either six (6) dogs or six (6) cats or a combination of either cats or dogs not exceeding six (6) within designated areas of the municipality (outside of town boundaries).



### 3.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 3:** To reduce the number of compliance actions by educating the community about its legislative obligations.

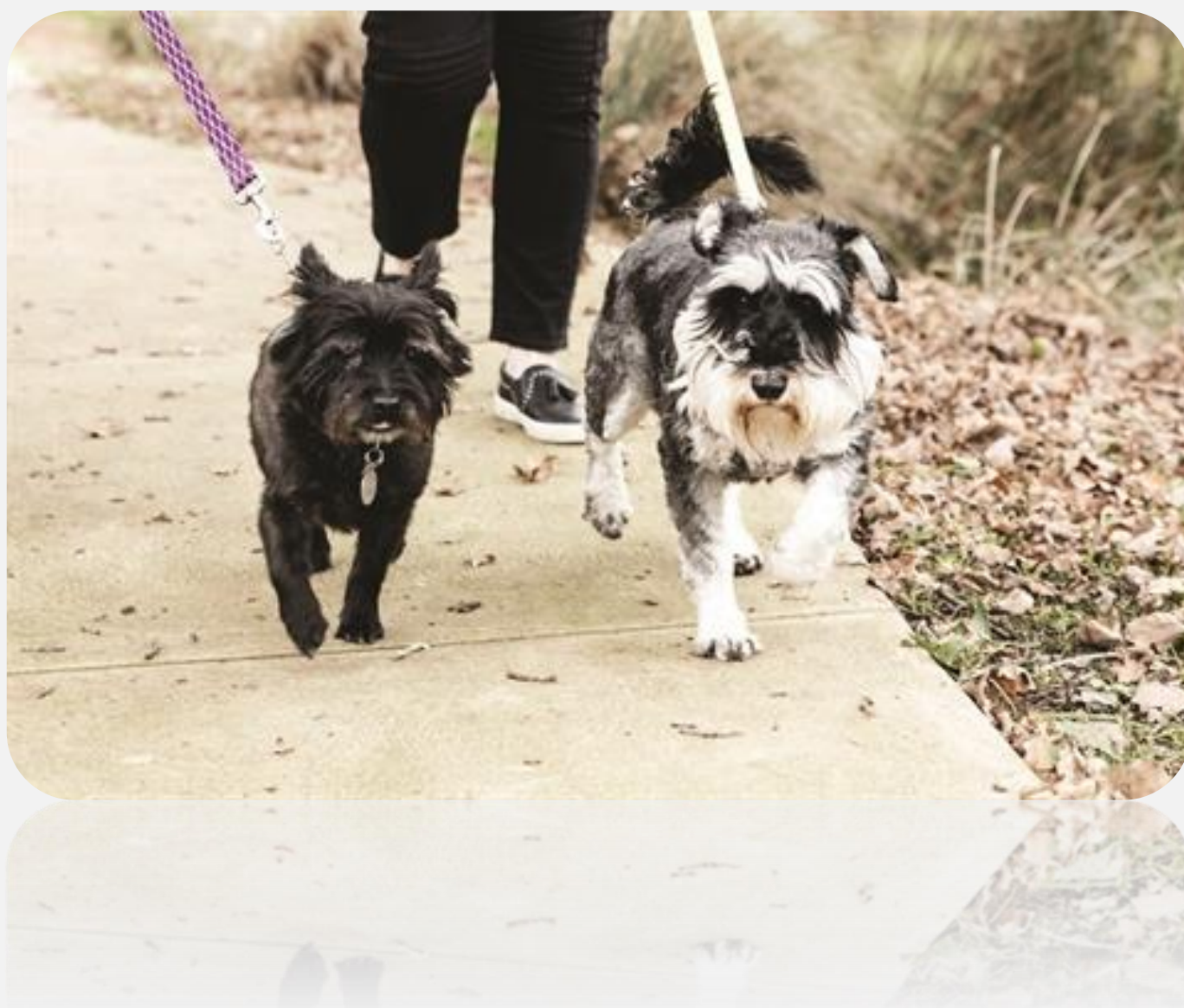
Activity	When	Evaluation
Development and distribution of animal ownership fact sheets and web content regarding legislative obligations.	Sent annually with renewals and with all new registrations	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners.
Develop a council Facebook site dedicated to domestic animal services.	Mid-2022	Facebook site created.
Educate and enforce the requirement for dogs to be under control by means of a chain, cord or leash in designated on-leash areas via various media platforms.	Ongoing	Reduction in reported incidents in public places with dogs not under effective control in off and on leash areas. Communications distributed.
Use of dog poo stencils on public places such as walking tracks, entries to parks and on footpaths.	Commencing mid-2022 and Ongoing	Decrease in complaints around dog poo being left by dog owners. Less excrement in public places.
Undertake an audit of all poo bag stations in the shire.	End-2022	Poo bag stations installed following audit.
Regular reserve and park patrols for educating the community across the shire.	Ongoing	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners. Consistent hours' spent patrolling.
Continue to use electronic notice board, social media and footpath stencils for pet registration renewals.	Annually	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners.
Schedule alerts and bulletins to be published in local newspapers and social media outlets that meets the needs of the community.	Ongoing	Articles published meet the relevant demands, needs and trends of the community.

**Objective 4:** To undertake a comprehensive review of dog control areas in the shire to ensure an effective balance of existing on leash and off leash areas, inclusive of any newly developed areas /infrastructure over the four-year period.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review all signage at locations with dog control orders in place across the shire.	End-2022	Installation of new signage and improved compliance.
Conduct a review across the shire of areas that have no designated dog controls, with a focus on enhancing community safety. Areas such as Fawthrop Lagoon, Playgrounds, and the Portland Botanical Gardens.	Commencing 2022 and ongoing for newly developed infrastructure.	Renewed Local Law Schedule with updated dog control area clauses by way of Council resolution.

**Objective 5:** Promote animal welfare platforms and programs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote cat curfew via social media, council's website, newspaper and other means.	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance cats to be monitored.  Number of digital posts and articles.
Promote Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife educational material via various media platforms and new cat registrations.	End 2022 and ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance cats to be monitored.



## 4. PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVER-POPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES



*Did you know one entire female cat can produce on average 12 kittens per year?*

### 4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council is committed to reducing unnecessary euthanasia of animals. Alternatives to house, re-home or transfer must be exhausted first. Euthanasia is always the last option considered. According to the Code of Practice for the Management of Cats and Dogs in Shelters and Pounds, animals are euthanased due to disease, injury or behaviour.

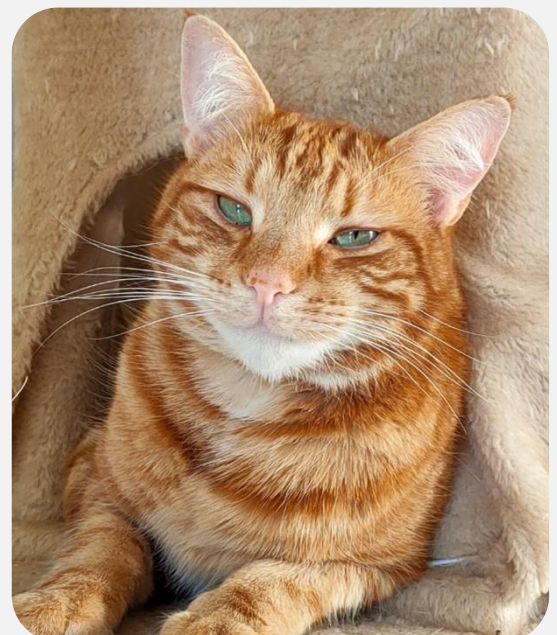
The number of animals admitted through our domestic animal shelter has remained steady over the last few years with approximately 500 to 700 animals admitted annually. Unidentified cats and kittens continue to be the largest number of animals presented locally. Over the last four years, a total of 1,677 cats/kittens have been admitted with only 82 reclaimed, which is a reclaim rate of 4.8%. This is compared with 55% of all dogs/puppies admitted being reclaimed over the last four years.

Council offers free cat trap hire to the community and is running a successful low-cost cat desexing program which will conclude in August 2022.

**TABLE 2: ANIMALS ADMITTED TO SHELTER AND EUTHANISED**

Animals	2020-2021
Impounded / Admitted Dogs	243
Impounded / Admitted Cats	393
Euthanised Dogs	20
Euthanised Cats	28

In the year 2020-2021, council invested in a number of new cat cages as part of our cat trapping program with the aim to decrease the number of wild cats in the shire. The large number of admitted cats is reflective of this program. This DAMP aims to continue with the cat trapping program.



## 4.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT ORDERS

#### Refer to 3.2

- 🐾 12-hour cat curfew – All cats must be securely confined between the hours of 7pm and 7am.

### CURRENT LOCAL LAWS

#### Refer to 3.2

- 🐾 The overpopulation of animals in Glenelg is controlled by restricting the number of permitted animals per household.

### CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- 🐾 If an animal is impounded, all reasonable efforts are made to locate the owner, house or re-home the animal. Euthanasia will always be the last option considered.

## 4.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 6:** To reduce the number of unidentifiable cats and kittens in residential, rural and public places.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide information to the community about the causes leading to overpopulation and high euthanasia rates.	Ongoing	Increase in compliance activities such as excess animal permit applications and animal registrations.
Promote and continue with our cat trapping program and offering cat traps to the community at no cost.	Annually and in summer months	Less reports of wild and nuisance cats.  Program is promoted.
Continue to participate in government grant opportunities as they become available for low cost desexing programs.	As available	Successful grant applications.  Number of cats desexed by the end of the desexing program.
Build relationships with the public when kittens are surrendered, or stray cats are brought to the animal shelter to promote desexing and registration.	Ongoing	Number of cats desexed from direct encounters with council officers.





# 5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

## 5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

### OUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES

New and innovative ways to achieve voluntary compliance with domestic animal registration renewals have been utilised with great success.

- 🐾 Electronic message boards on main streets
- 🐾 SMS messaging
- 🐾 Radio advertising
- 🐾 Social media platforms
- 🐾 Follow up phone calls
- 🐾 Door knocks
- 🐾 Enforcement of unregistered animals
- 🐾 Council website front page



(Approximate size)

*In 2013 microchips became compulsory in Victoria. All domestic cats and dogs 3 months of age and over must be micro-chipped and registered with council.*

## 5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT ORDERS

Section 10C of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires cats and dogs to be microchipped as a condition of registration. This is compulsory once the animal is three months of age. Microchipped animals can be promptly returned to their owners when they stray or become lost.

### CURRENT LOCAL LAWS

[Refer to 3.2](#)

The overpopulation of animals in Glenelg Shire is controlled by restricting the number of permitted animals per household. An annual permit is required for households with more than the permitted number of animals.




### CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Glenelg Shire Council participates in the provision of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) subsidised Desexing Scheme for Pensioners and Health Care card holders. Other compliance activities will be carried out as part of this Plan.



## 5.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 7:** Improve the promotion of pet registration and responsible pet ownership.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Increase publicity and education regarding animal registration and microchipping among residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Posting information on Council's website and social media profiles</li> <li>🐾 Placing temporary signage on council vehicles</li> <li>🐾 Placing temporary signs in reserves and parks</li> <li>🐾 Continue with radio announcements, electronic notice boards, on hold messaging for council phone calls and SMS reminders</li> <li>🐾 Flyers on community notice boards</li> <li>🐾 Publishing information for culturally and linguistically diverse communities</li> </ul>	<p>March (registration mail out)</p> <p>May (reminders are sent)</p> <p>June/July (door knocks begin)</p>	<p>Registration renewal and benefits are advertised and promoted widely.</p> <p>Increase in registration numbers and improvement in timeliness of renewals.</p> 
<p>Promote the take up of digital e-notices for registration renewals</p>	<p>March, annually</p>	<p>Increased e-notice membership and reduced hard copy notices.</p>

**Objective 8:** Improve compliance with pet registration requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Improve the accuracy of council's pet registration database by contacting microchip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped.</p>	<p>Once per year</p>	<p>Increase in registration and identification of unregistered animals.</p>
<p>Undertake an annual registration door knock program.</p>	<p>By 30/09 annually</p>	<p>Record of unregistered and unidentified animals detected during door knocks.</p> <p>Infringements issued for unregistered animals.</p>

## 6. NUISANCE



### 6.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### CATS

The main nuisance with cats in Glenelg Shire is caused by stray and wild cats. These cats are enticed to stay in the area by residents feeding them. These cats are the main cause of attacks on natural habitat, including native wildlife. Council provides cat traps to residents which are then collected by council officers. Demand has increased, hence the additional order of cat cages in 2021. Council officers also proactively set traps in areas where nuisance and wild cats are known to be of concern. The community has responded positively to the introduction of the cat curfew which was implemented during the previous DAMP.

#### BARKING DOGS

Council officers will investigate nuisance caused by barking dogs. This is a rigorous process which involves a dog barking diary or log and a thorough investigation by a council officer. Council officers will work closely with the dog owner to provide them with information on how the barking may be reduced and the owner is required to implement recommended strategies. Council officers will explore all alternatives, including the offer of a mediation session, prior to the matter being dealt with by the notice to comply or court summons process. Any decision involving the removal of a dog can only be determined through the court process, not by council. At any one time, the Local Laws team may have up to twenty (20) active dog barking investigations. In 2021, council began trialling a new noise detection device for barking dog complaints.

#### DOG FAECES

Existing controls require dog owners to carry bags with them when their dog is being exercised in public and to remove their dogs' faeces from public places as well as properly dispose of the waste. Owners failing to clean up after their pets remains a significant issue for council and users of public and recreational spaces. Most dog owners do the right thing. According to the DAMP survey results collected for this Plan, and the increasing number of complaints received, it is clear that dog owners not picking up after their dog/s is impacting on the community's enjoyment of some public places.

This Plan contains actions to reinforce the expectation from the community and from council that people must clean up after their dogs.

#### OFF LEASH AND ON LEASH AREAS FOR DOGS

Exercising dogs outdoors can cause a nuisance and create conflict between other users of recreational places and vice-versa. There is ongoing community interest in the provision of dedicated areas for off-leash areas and increasing pressures to review the existing controls in spaces where dogs are reportedly not under effective control.

Council received a grant to install a dedicated off-leash dog park in Portland which opened in 2021. The park contains two fenced areas, one for small dogs and one for large dogs. At the opening of the park, council officers handed out zipped bags that attach to leashes with a roll of biodegradable dog waste bags.

It would be appropriate to undertake a review of all off and on-leash areas and determine if the existing controls are still appropriate or whether changes may need to be made.



## 6.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT ORDERS AND LOCAL LAWS

#### ***General Local Law No 3 – Animals***

Required animal owners to ensure their animal does not make noise that unreasonable interferes with or annoys another person, during the day or night.

Requires any person in control of a dog to ensure it does not enter a space where dogs are prohibited, ensure that the dog is under effective control at all times in an off-leash area and ensure the dog is under control by means of a chain, cord or leash whilst on the road, street or public place, including those areas designated by Council resolution to be on-leash areas.

Council, by resolution, may add to the designated areas where dogs are required to be on leash, or where dogs are prohibited.

#### ***Removal of dog excrement***

A person in control of a dog must be equipped to remove dog faeces at all times and must clean up after the dog.

### CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

This is an area that requires continued and ongoing focus from officers.

There are several activities outlined in this Plan.



## 6.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 9:** To reduce cat nuisance complaints by delivering ongoing education programs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote and continue council's cat trapping program.	Ongoing	Delivery of information mail-outs and social media messaging.  Reduction in the number of nuisance and stray cat complaints.
Deliver educational communications that promote the wellbeing of cats and the environmental benefits that arise from them being contained at night.	Ongoing and in summer months	Less reports of wandering or trespassing cats.  Delivery of information mail-outs and social media messaging.

**Objective 10:** To reduce and minimise dog complaints to council using education and enforcement.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Refine the barking dog complaint / investigation procedure and publish the information on Council's website.	Year two of plan (2023)	Procedure updated and information available on website.
Continue to roll out the provision of bag dispensers and disposal bins in areas with high dog activity subject to annual council budget process, with a sustainability focus.	Ongoing	New dispensers and bins installed over the life of the Plan. Replace existing bags with biodegradable bags.
Increase awareness of the requirements to pick up dog faeces by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Distributing brochures</li> <li>🐾 Using stencilled designs on footpaths</li> <li>🐾 Using social media</li> <li>🐾 Installing more signs where appropriate, as per sign audit (Objective 3).</li> <li>🐾 Issuing infringements for non-compliance</li> </ul>	Ongoing  June 2023	Decrease in complaints relating to dog faeces in public places.
Increase distribution of information on responsible pet ownership such as confinement of dogs, dogs at large and location of on-leash and off-leash areas.	Commencing 2022	Council's website is updated, and information is posted on social media.



# 7. DOG ATTACKS

## 7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Reported dog attacks receive the highest priority from authorised officers. All reports are treated seriously and investigated thoroughly, including attacks, rushing or chasing.

Attacks reported to council have primarily occurred due to dogs that are not contained to their property or by dogs that are not under effective control in a public space.

Depending on the severity of an incident there are a range of actions that council can consider. These can include, but are not limited to, the issuing of fines, prosecution, declaring dogs menacing or dangerous, which places obligations on the owner associated with the keeping of the animal. Officers will undertake inspections to ensure owners are complying with declared dog directions.



Where serious injury or death results from a dog attack, council may seize the offending dog where circumstances warrant such action, pending the outcome of any prosecution process.

To reduce the risk of dog attacks, officers respond promptly to calls of wandering or at-large dogs to identify owners that are not complying with animal management requirements. Responding to dog attacks is included in the after-hours call out service.

Community social media groups and DAMP survey comments indicate that numerous incidents with dogs such as dogs rushing or grabbing at people in public places go unreported. As part of this Plan, council will promote methods of reporting as Council has a commitment to ensuring community safety, and that the risk of dog attacks is minimised.

## 7.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT ORDERS AND LOCAL LAWS

[Refer to 3.2 and 6.2](#)

- ❖ The overpopulation of animals in Glenelg is controlled by restricting the number of permitted animals per household.
- ❖ The Local Law requires any person in control of a dog to ensure it does not enter a space where dogs are prohibited, ensure that the dog is under effective control at all times in an off-leash area and ensure the dog is under control by means of a chain, cord or

leash whilst in a designated on-leash area, including those areas designated by Council resolution to be on-leash areas.

### OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- ❖ Prompt response to complaints and attacks, during business hours and after-hours
- ❖ Undertake appropriate investigations using contemporary investigation protocols
- ❖ Enforce menacing or dangerous dog provisions





### 7.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 11:** To reduce and minimise the risk of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a proactive and regular patrol schedule for officers, including during weekends and major events.	Commencing June 2022	Hours allocated per month to patrols.  Dog owners spoken to and educated on effective dog control.  Improved pet behaviour in public spaces.
Promote key dog attack prevention messages and responsible pet ownership on website and social media, including dog containment to properties (residential and rural).	Ongoing	Delivery of brochures during patrols.  Information promoted.  Reduction in number of wandering dog complaints received.  Reduced number of attacks on people, other domestic animals and livestock.
Promote council's investigation process and serious approach to encourage members of the public to report attacks.	Ongoing	Process is promoted on the website and social media.

# 8.DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

## 8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Declared dangerous, menacing or restricted breeds are subject to various requirements. Including, compulsory desexing, purpose-built escape proof enclosures or escape proof yards. Declared menacing and dangerous dogs must always wear a muzzle and remain on a leash whilst in public.

Dog Classification	2020-2021
Menacing Dogs	8
Dangerous Dogs	3
Restricted Breed Dogs	0



*A declared dangerous or menacing dog is not a particular breed or type of dog. A declared dog can be any breed. It is the 'deed' and not the 'breed' that classifies a dog as dangerous or menacing.*

## 8.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

These categories of dogs are dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation and council's Enforcement Policy.

### OUR CURRENT EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- ❦ All declared dog owners are provided with information that outlines the responsibilities and requirements of owning a declared dog.
- ❦ Annual inspections of the dog, the enclosure, signage, fencing and general conditions.
- ❦ Patrolling
- ❦ Respond to reports of restricted breeds





## 8.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 12:** To identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Establish a process for cross-referencing state microchip database information and the Victorian Declared Dog Database with Council's registration database for potential restricted breed dogs or declared dogs that have relocated to our shire.	Year two of plan (2023) and annually	Process is established and operational.



**Objective 13:** To effectively inspect and audit declared dog premises to ensure they are following their requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Establish an inspection regime and conduct inspections.	By 30 June and annually	Process is established and operational.  Inspection reports are added to the database.
Continue to educate and inform declared dog and restricted breed owners of their responsibilities.	Ongoing	Compliance from declared dog owners.

# 9. DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

## 9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

### OUR CURRENT DATA

Three Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are registered in Glenelg:

- 🐾 One boarding facility (cats and dogs)
- 🐾 One dog breeding establishment
- 🐾 One Council pound facility

### 9.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Act and associated regulation specifically regulate DABs. Comprehensive codes of practice developed from those regulation require no additional policies or procedures from council.

#### **General Local Law No 3 – Animals**

Provisions are outlined for domestic animal shelter, maintenance, and food storage requirements. This section requires shelters to be maintained to a particular standard so that unsatisfactory nuisances such as smell, or noise are not caused to adjoining properties.

### OUR CURRENT EDUCATION AND COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Compliance inspections of DABs are conducted regularly by authorised officers. Any public complaint relating to DAB animal management practices is promptly investigated and responded to.

- 🐾 Annual audits and inspections of all known DABs
- 🐾 Investigation of suspected breeders
- 🐾 Audit of registration database for excess animals
- 🐾 Monitoring local media and social media for advertising of pets for sale



## 9.3 OUR PLAN

### Objective 14: Maintain Domestic Animal Business compliance

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct annual inspections and audits of registered DABs	By 30 June and annually	Process is established and operational.  Inspection reports are added to the database.
Continue to educate and inform declared dog and restricted breed owners of their responsibilities.	Ongoing	Compliance from declared dog owners.

### Objective 15: Identify unregistered dog and cat breeding establishments, private boarding facilities and other businesses that classify as DABs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue investigating specific complaints about breeding or boarding within the municipality.	As appropriate	DABs are identified.  More DABs are registered with council.
Continue monitoring the council registration database for multiple (non-desexed) animals registered to a single property.	Ongoing	DABs are identified.  More DABs are registered with council.

# 10. OTHER MATTERS

## 10.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Glenelg Shire Council maintains a Draft Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP). The purpose of this Plan is to assess, provide advice and help the community with animal welfare issues during and following an emergency.

The Draft EAWP has been developed to ensure that the welfare of animals has a high level of consideration during an emergency and focuses on:

- 🐾 Identification of affected animals
- 🐾 Safe transport of domestic animals
- 🐾 Management of evacuated animals at an Emergency Relief Centre
- 🐾 Management of stray or roaming animals
- 🐾 Animal welfare assessment
- 🐾 Veterinary treatment and triage
- 🐾 Humane euthanasia of animals
- 🐾 Animal carcass disposal
- 🐾 Provision of emergency pet food, livestock fodder and water
- 🐾 Coordination of donations and offers of assistance

### POUND SERVICES

Council reviewed the cost effectiveness of outsourcing pound services and explored the feasibility of alternative models such as shared services with nearby municipalities and bringing the service 'in-house' on a local or a regional basis. From January 2022, Council will be bringing the service in-house (Glenelg Shire Animal Welfare Centre), with a shared services arrangement with Warrnambool City Council and RSPCA Victoria relating to the transport, quarantining and re-homing of animals. Operating our pound and shelter service is a positive opportunity for council to connect with the community and further promote our programs and other animal services. Council is committed to ensuring animal welfare and enrichment is at the forefront of decision making, including reuniting lost animals with their owners as soon as possible.



## 10.2 OUR PLAN

**Objective 16:** Ensure Council's Draft Emergency Animal Welfare Plan is finalised, updated and reflects best practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the Draft EAWP	December 2023	Plan reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders such as animal welfare agencies.

**Objective 17:** Operate the Animal Welfare Centre in accordance with the Code of Practice and appropriate legislation for the management of a pound and shelter facility, ensuring the safety, enrichment, and wellbeing of all animals in our care.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a suite of policies and procedures to ensure best practice and compliance with the Code of Practice.	December 2022	Policies and Procedures are reviewed and approved by Animal Welfare Victoria.
Participate in Animal Welfare Victoria annual audit of the Centre.	By December 2022	Audit outcomes reflect compliance.  Audit recommendations are implemented.



## 11. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

A review of this DAMP will be conducted annually. The review will evaluate the activities listed under each objective in this plan to determine whether they have successfully been achieved, are in progress or otherwise.

The annual evaluation of the DAMP will be:

- ✿ Provided to Council annually
- ✿ Provided to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Secretary together with any amendments to the plan.



## 12. SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2021-2025

**Objective 1:** To identify training opportunities and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by authorised officers to ensure ongoing competency of officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Tailored training program for tactical and effective communication in the field	Year one of plan (2022)	Training delivered
Tailored training program for taking witness statements and leading investigations	Year two of plan (2023)	Training delivered
Animal husbandry skills, livestock, and domestic animals.	Year two of plan (2023)	Training delivered
Identify additional training opportunities	Annually	Performance conversations and individual officers' training plans

**Objective 2:** Maintain training for officers as part of performance planning, ensuring they have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete a development plan process with each staff member	Six monthly	Completion of all identified training activities in development plan
Authorised officers to receive training on prevention of family violence and responding to disclosures	Year two of plan (2023)	Training delivered



**Objective 3:** To reduce the number of compliance actions by educating the community about its legislative obligations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Development and distribution of animal ownership fact sheets and web content regarding legislative obligations.	Sent annually with renewals and with all new registrations	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners.
Develop a council Facebook site dedicated to domestic animal services.	Mid-2022	Facebook site created.
Educate and enforce the requirement for dogs to be under control by means of a chain, cord or leash in designated on-leash areas via various media platforms.	Ongoing	Reduction in reported incidents in public places with dogs not under effective control in off and on leash areas. Communications distributed.
Use of dog poo stencils on public places such as walking tracks, entries to parks and on footpaths.	Commencing mid-2022 and Ongoing	Decrease in complaints around dog poo being left by dog owners. Less excrement in public places.
Undertake an audit of all poo bag stations in the shire.	End-2022	Poo bag stations installed following audit.
Regular reserve and park patrols for educating the community across the shire.	Ongoing	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners. Consistent hours' spent patrolling.
Continue to use electronic notice board, social media and footpath stencils for pet registration renewals.	Annually	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners.
Schedule alerts and bulletins to be published in local newspapers and social media outlets that meets the needs of the community.	Ongoing	Articles published meet the relevant demands, needs and trends of the community.

**Objective 4:** To undertake a comprehensive review of dog control areas in the shire to ensure an effective balance of existing on leash and off leash areas, inclusive of any newly developed areas /infrastructure over the four-year period.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review all signage at locations with dog control orders in place across the shire.	End-2022	Installation of new signage and improved compliance.
Conduct a review across the shire of areas that have no designated dog controls, with a focus on enhancing community safety. Areas such as Fawthrop Lagoon, Playgrounds, and the Portland Botanical Gardens.	Commencing 2022 and ongoing for newly developed infrastructure.	Renewed Local Law Schedule with updated dog control area clauses by way of Council resolution.

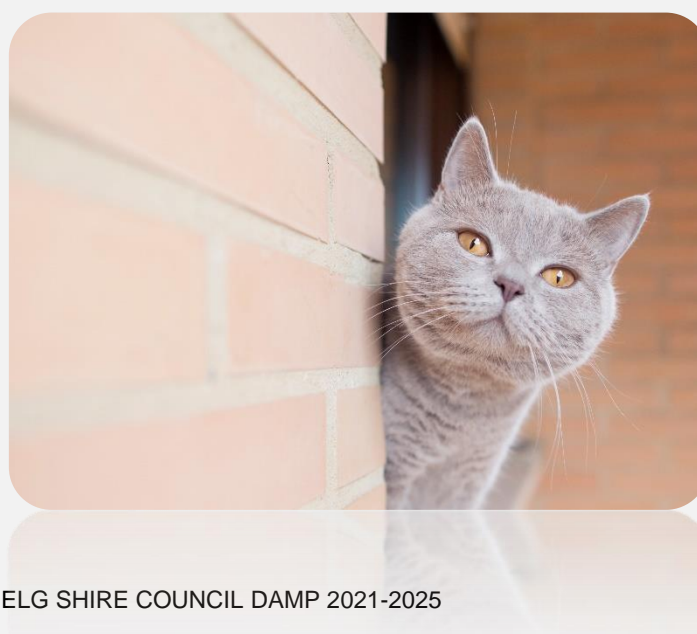


**Objective 5:** Promote animal welfare platforms and programs.


Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote cat curfew via social media, council's website, newspaper and other means.	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance cats to be monitored.  Number of digital posts and articles.
Promote Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife educational material via various media platforms and new cat registrations.	End 2022 and ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance cats to be monitored.

**Objective 6:** To reduce the number of unidentifiable cats and kittens in residential, rural and public places.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide information to the community about the causes leading to overpopulation and high euthanasia rates.	Ongoing	Increase in compliance activities such as excess animal permit applications and animal registrations.
Promote and continue with our cat trapping program and offering cat traps to the community at no cost.	Annually and in summer months	Less reports of wild and nuisance cats.  Program is promoted.
Continue to participate in government grant opportunities as they become available for low cost desexing programs.	As available	Successful grant applications.  Number of cats desexed by the end of the desexing program.
Build relationships with the public when kittens are surrendered, or stray cats are brought to the animal shelter to promote desexing and registration.	Ongoing	Number of cats desexed from direct encounters with council officers.



**Objective 7:** Improve the promotion of pet registration and responsible pet ownership.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Increase publicity and education regarding animal registration and microchipping among residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Posting information on Council’s website and social media profiles</li> <li>🐾 Placing temporary signage on council vehicles</li> <li>🐾 Placing temporary signs in reserves and parks</li> <li>🐾 Continue with radio announcements, electronic notice boards, on hold messaging for council phone calls and SMS reminders</li> <li>🐾 Flyers on community notice boards</li> <li>🐾 Publishing information for culturally and linguistically diverse communities</li> </ul>	<p>March (registration mail out)</p> <p>May (reminders are sent)</p> <p>June/July (door knocks begin)</p>	<p>Registration renewal and benefits are advertised and promoted widely.</p> <p>Increase in registration numbers and improvement in timeliness of renewals.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<p>Promote the take up of digital e-notices for registration renewals</p>	<p>March, annually</p>	<p>Increased e-notice membership and reduced hard copy notices.</p>

**Objective 8:** Improve compliance with pet registration requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Improve the accuracy of council’s pet registration database by contacting microchip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped.</p>	<p>Once per year</p>	<p>Increase in registration and identification of unregistered animals.</p>
<p>Undertake an annual registration door knock program.</p>	<p>By 30/09 annually</p>	<p>Record of unregistered and unidentified animals detected during door knocks.</p> <p>Infringements issued for unregistered animals.</p>



**Objective 9:** To reduce cat nuisance complaints by delivering ongoing education programs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote and continue council's cat trapping program.	Ongoing	Delivery of information mail-outs and social media messaging.  Reduction in the number of nuisance and stray cat complaints.
Deliver educational communications that promote the wellbeing of cats and the environmental benefits that arise from them being contained at night.	Ongoing and in summer months	Less reports of wandering or trespassing cats.  Delivery of information mail-outs and social media messaging.

**Objective 10:** To reduce and minimise dog complaints to council using education and enforcement.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve the barking dog complaint / investigation procedure and publish the information on Council's website.	Year two of plan (2023)	Procedure updated and information available on website.
Continue to roll out the provision of bag dispensers and disposal bins in areas with high dog activity subject to annual council budget process, with a sustainability focus.	Ongoing	New dispensers and bins installed over the life of the Plan. Replace existing bags with biodegradable bags.
Increase awareness of the requirements to pick up dog faeces by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🐾 Distributing brochures</li> <li>🐾 Using stencilled designs on footpaths</li> <li>🐾 Using social media</li> <li>🐾 Installing more signs where appropriate, as per sign audit (Objective 3).</li> <li>🐾 Issuing infringements for non-compliance</li> </ul>	Ongoing  June 2023	Decrease in complaints relating to dog faeces in public places.
Increase distribution of information on responsible pet ownership such as confinement of dogs, dogs at large and location of on-leash and off-leash areas.	Commencing 2022	Council's website is updated, and information is posted on social media.



**Objective 11:** To reduce and minimise the risk of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a proactive and regular patrol schedule for officers, including during weekends and major events.	Commencing June 2022	Hours allocated per month to patrols.  Dog owners spoken to and educated on effective dog control.  Improved pet behaviour in public spaces.
Promote key dog attack prevention messages and responsible pet ownership on website and social media, including dog containment to properties (residential and rural).	Ongoing	Delivery of brochures during patrols.  Information promoted.  Reduction in number of wandering dog complaints received.  Reduced number of attacks on people, other domestic animals and livestock.
Promote council's investigation process to encourage members of the public to report attacks.	Ongoing	Process is promoted on the website and social media.

**Objective 12:** To identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Establish a process for cross-referencing state microchip database information and the Victorian Declared Dog Database with Council's registration database for potential restricted breed dogs or declared dogs that have relocated to our shire.	Year two of plan (2023) and annually	Process is established and operational.

**Objective 13:** To effectively inspect and audit declared dog premises to ensure they are following their requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Establish an inspection regime and conduct inspections.	By 30 June and annually	Process is established and operational.  Inspection reports are added to the database.
Continue to educate and inform declared dog and restricted breed owners of their responsibilities.	Ongoing	Compliance from declared dog owners.

**Objective 14:** Maintain Domestic Animal Business compliance

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct annual inspections and audits of registered DABs	By 30 June and annually	Process is established and operational.  Inspection reports are added to the database.
Continue to educate and inform declared dog and restricted breed owners of their responsibilities.	Ongoing	Compliance from declared dog owners.

**Objective 15:** Identify unregistered dog and cat breeding establishments, private boarding facilities and other businesses that classify as DABs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue investigating specific complaints about breeding or boarding within the municipality.	As appropriate	DABs are identified.  More DABs are registered with council.
Continue monitoring the council registration database for multiple (non-desexed) animals registered to a single property.	Ongoing	DABs are identified.  More DABs are registered with council.

**Objective 16:** Ensure Council’s Draft Emergency Animal Welfare Plan is finalised, updated and reflects best practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
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**Objective 17:** Operate the Animal Welfare Centre in accordance with the Code of Practice and appropriate legislation for the management of a pound and shelter facility, ensuring the safety, enrichment, and wellbeing of all animals in our care.

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