



GLENELG SHIRE COUNCIL DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Traditional Owners

Glenelg Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Gunditjmara, Jardwadjali and Boandik Peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters across our Shire. We pay our respects to the Elders past and present, and recognise their deep and continuing connection to Country, community, and culture.

We acknowledge that animals have always held an important place in Aboriginal culture – from working alongside people in daily life to holding spiritual and cultural significance. In managing dogs, cats, and other animals today, we honour this long history of care, balance, and respect between people, animals, and the environment.

We also acknowledge and celebrate the ongoing contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to the prosperity, wellbeing, and cultural identity of Glenelg Shire.

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INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan - DAMP

The Domestic Animal Management Plan (The DAMP) aligns with Council's strategic objectives including safe and inclusive public spaces, community wellbeing and environmental sustainability. It recognizes the shared responsibility between Council, pet owners and the broader community.

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), every council in Victoria is required to produce a Domestic Animal Management Plan which will be renewed every four years.

The purpose of The DAMP is to provide a structured, strategic approach to the management of domestic animals—primarily cats and dogs—within the Glenelg Shire by addressing the following:

Development and Review

- Councils must develop The DAMP every four years in consultation with the Secretary.
- The DAMP must be reviewed annually and updated as needed.

Plan Requirements

- Evaluate the effectiveness of current animal control services.
- Include training programs for authorised officers.
- Outline strategies to:
 - Promote responsible pet ownership.
 - Ensure compliance with relevant laws.
 - Reduce dog attacks.
 - Address overpopulation and high euthanasia rates.
 - Increase pet registration and identification.
 - Reduce nuisance caused by pets.
 - Identify and manage dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs.
- Review existing local laws and orders and recommend changes if needed.
- Periodically review all strategies, programs, and services in the plan.

Reporting Obligations

- Provide The DAMP and any amendments to the Secretary (DEECA).
- Report on the plan's implementation in the Council's annual report.

It outlines Council's efforts in animal management, detailing both ongoing and new initiatives aimed at improving compliance and education. It also highlights opportunities for collaboration between Council and the community to address challenges related to cats and dogs.

State government legislation requires Council to address issues related only to cats and dogs. However, Council acknowledges that many residents keep a variety of other animals as companions, including small mammals, reptiles, horses, and traditionally livestock species such as ducks and chickens.

Our Purpose

To build a community where people and pets thrive together—through responsible pet ownership, and collaborative, sustainable practices that protect animal welfare and enhance community wellbeing.

Our Vision

Glenelg Shire Council is committed to delivering a service that aligns with industry best practices in pet care and management. By working closely with the community, the Council aims to achieve the best possible outcomes for pets, the environment, and the broader community.

Associated Legislation

How the DAMP aligns with other Strategic Plans

The DAMP is developed in accordance with the relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks that govern the management of domestic animals. These laws provide the legal basis for animal registration, identification, welfare, enforcement, and education strategies.

1. Primary Legislation

- Domestic Animals Act 1994
 - Governs the registration, control, breeding, desexing, microchipping, and welfare of domestic cats and dogs.
 - Empowers local councils or governing bodies to develop and enforce Domestic Animal Management Plans.

2. Supporting Legislation and Regulations

- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 – Sets minimum standards for the treatment and care of animals.
- Local Government Act 1989/2020 – Grants councils the authority to implement and enforce local laws related to animal control.
- Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 – Relates to disease prevention and health risks from stray or unmanaged animals.

- Planning and Environment Act 1987– May influence where animal facilities (e.g., shelters, dog parks) can be located.

3. Local Laws and By-laws

Glenelg Shire Council General Local Law 2018 Part 3 Animals - Relates to the keeping, control, and management of animals within the municipality, including provisions for registration, number of animals permitted, standards of care, and measures to protect community amenity and safety.

4. Enforcement Powers

Under the above legislation, council local laws officers are delegated and have the powers to:

- Issue fines or infringements
- Seize animals when necessary
- Investigate complaints and incidents
- Conduct routine inspections and patrols

5. Council Strategies, Policies and Guidelines

This DAMP aligns with internal council strategies or plans, including:

- Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029
- Gender Equality Plan 2021 - 2025
- Glenelg Shire Open Space Strategy 2019 – 2040
- Local Laws Suite of policies and procedures
- Emergency Management Plans (particularly for pets during disasters)

Demographic and Profile of Glenelg Shire Council

Glenelg Shire Council is in southwestern Victoria, approximately 360 kilometres from Melbourne. In 2024, the estimated resident population was 20,379, however projection estimate by 2036 could reach 21,646.

The Shire encompasses a total area of 6,212 square kilometres and includes a diverse range of localities such as Portland, Heywood, Casterton, Nelson and Dartmoor.

The community is served by 10,172 dwellings, with an average household size of 2.21 people. The median age of residents is 47 years, with 16.2% of the population aged 0 to 14 years and 22.2% aged 65 years and over.

The area is rich in Aboriginal heritage, with the Gunditjmara, Jardwadjali, and Boandik peoples recognised as the Traditional Owners of the land.

Domestic Animal Registration 2025 in the Glenelg Shire



Based on the above demographics we applied a national average pet ownership rate for the number of dogs and cats per household.

Pet Type	Estimated Average per Household	Estimated Total Across 10,172 Dwellings
Dogs	1.3	~13,224
Cats	1.6	~16,275

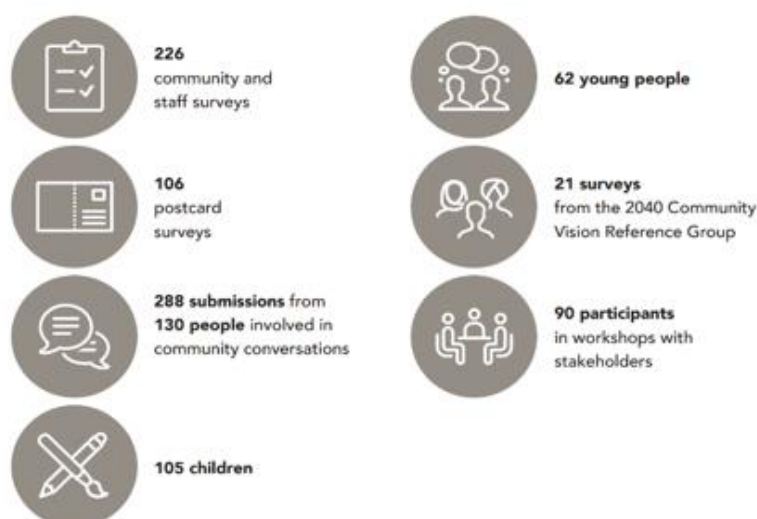
The data indicates that a significant number of animals within our Shire remain unregistered. This insight informs Council's strategies to improve compliance, protect community safety, State led education programs and strengthen animal management services.

Process of preparing the Plan

The development of The DAMP 2026–2029 was supported through its integration with the community consultation process for the Council and Wellbeing Plan. This approach included:

- A broad and inclusive community engagement program
- A review of local, regional, and state policies and planning frameworks
- Consideration of Council's legislative obligations
- Analysis of demographic, health, and economic trends

How we engaged and who was involved



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What we learnt



The investigations the Glenelg Shire Council undertook in preparing the plan are summarised in below table.

Area of interest	Investigation
Legislation, regulations, codes of practice	Council's animal management services are governed by the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> , which forms the foundation of our approach. The development of this plan provides an opportunity to review these services and identify ways to improve outcomes.
Local laws and orders	The Council's local laws and the animal-related orders are outlined in this plan. This plan includes provisions for their review.
Animal management data	Council's pet registration and customer request data were analysed to identify trends, issues, and potential priorities, which are referenced throughout this plan.
Existing services	Preparing this plan provides an opportunity to reflect on Council's current animal management services and consider potential improvements. References to the existing services are included throughout the plan.
Glenelg Shire Council profile	Understanding the community profile ensures the plan reflects the unique attributes of the municipality, as outlined.
Community and stakeholder feedback	Community and stakeholder input was central to developing this plan, with extensive feedback incorporated where appropriate. The engagement process and feedback are detailed below.

The planning context	Glenelg Shire Council reviewed relevant plans and strategies, along with their implications for this plan.
Research and best practice	Glenelg Shire Council reviewed the latest research and best practice in animal management.
Funding	This Plan has been prepared on the basis that actions will be funded within existing budgets, however any infrastructure actions will be subject to securing external funding.
Partnerships	In preparing the plan, Council explored opportunities to partner with others to improve outcomes and make better use of resources. Current and potential partners include but not limited to the State Government, neighbouring councils, animal welfare organisations, veterinarians, domestic animal businesses, obedience clubs, and animal trainers.

Our Team

The Animal Management & Welfare (including rangers) primarily focuses on:

- Enforcing state legislation and Council policies related to cats and dogs
- Responding to escaped pets, with a priority on reuniting them with their owners
- Transferring unclaimed animals to rescue and rehoming organisations
- Maintaining the cat and dog registration database and collecting registration fees
- Conducting inspections of Domestic Animal Businesses and animals requiring special registration
- Investigating complaints and incidents, and managing associated legal proceedings
- Responding to animal welfare concerns and referring cases to the appropriate authorities
- Participating in community events and promotional activities
- Support the delivery in State-led educational programs
- Managing partnerships with the community, including collaborations with rehoming groups
- Promoting pet-related opportunities and community networks
- Overseeing the management of designated dog off-lead areas

THE PLAN

This action plan outlines 12 key focus areas, highlighting what we're working towards, the actions we'll take, and how we plan to get there.

While we've identified target timeframes for each action, priorities may shift over time in response to changing community needs, evolving demands on Animal Management services, other Council commitments, new partnership opportunities, or the availability of external funding.

Council's Role in implementing the Domestic Animal Management Plan

To make the most of Council resources and deliver the best outcomes for the community, Council may take on different roles when implementing the recommendations in this Action Plan. These roles include:

- Providing infrastructure
- Managing services
- Offering advice and information
- Engaging in partnerships
- Advocating on behalf of the community
- Driving innovation

The Action Plan clearly identifies the primary role Council will take for each recommendation, ensuring a flexible and effective approach to meeting community needs.

Monitoring and Reviewing the Plan

In line with the requirements of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic)*, Council is committed to keeping the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) responsive and effective. To ensure the Plan remains relevant and achievable within available resources:

- Council will conduct an annual review of the DAMP to assess progress, adjust priorities, and confirm that actions continue to align with community needs.
- A comprehensive review of the Plan will be undertaken in the fourth year, as required by the Act, to guide the development of the next four-year strategy.

OWNERSHIP & REGISTRATION

FOCUS: Responsible Pet Ownership

What we're working towards: A community that understands and practices responsible pet ownership.

Key things we will do:

- Promote responsible ownership of dogs and cats.
- Encourage compliance with laws and regulations.
- Deliver educational programs relating to pet care, registration, and control.

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Share simple tips and real pet stories through social media and the Council website.	Annual	Increase in the number of social media posts or other media content.
Place easy-to-read posters and flyers in vet clinics, pet shops, libraries, and community spaces.	2026	Communication material created and displayed in locations.
Run free pet care talks at schools and community events.	2028	Number of sessions implemented

FOCUS: Animal Registration and Identification

What we're working towards: All pet owners register their pets to ensure compliance and community safety.

Key things we will do:

- Improving registration systems and public awareness.
- Using microchip data to identify unregistered pets.
- Conduct home / property inspections

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Use microchip registry data to identify and follow up with pet owners whose animals are not registered in the Shire.	2026 - 2028	Increase in the number of pets registered in Glenelg Shire.
		Number of pet registration renewals paid on time
Review the process and systems used to deliver the annual pet registration renewal process and implement improvements.	2027	Reduced number of enquiries from pet owners requiring assistance with their renewal.
		Time taken to complete annual registration renewal process.
Partner with vets and shelters to promote registration, desexing, and adoption.	2026	Vet Agreement
Run focused campaigns and registration drives in areas where pet registrations are low.	Annually	Number of new registrations received.

COMMUNITY, WELFARE & SAFETY

FOCUS - Diversity, Inclusion and Vulnerable Populations

What we're working towards: Pets in vulnerable households are safe and supported.

Key things we will do:

- Recognising the presence of pets in homelessness / family and domestic violence

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Identify the needs and available services for pet owners experiencing homelessness or family violence.	2027	Review undertaken.
Provide officers with training to respond appropriately to cases involving vulnerability.	2026	Process developed. All officers trained to deal with and manage matters relating to family and domestic violence.
Create and share an information pack to support pet owners facing homelessness or family violence.	2026	Information pack produced, given to support agencies and disseminated to pet owners experiencing homelessness.

FOCUS: Managing Pet-related Issues

What we're working towards: A community with fewer nuisance pets, responsible pet containment, and improved supporting infrastructure.

Key things we will do:

- Address barking, roaming, and trespassing animals.
- Promote cat curfews and containment rules.
- Enhancing infrastructure such as pathways, signage and waste bins.

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Review and update information on preventing excessive barking and managing barking dog complaints.	2026	Review the barking dog guidelines and improvements implemented where applicable.
Explore new technology to help manage barking dog issues more effectively	2027	Investigate appropriate technology options to improve evidence and make it easier for customer.
Deliver an education program to support responsible pet ownership in high-density living areas.	2027 - 2028	Program developed and implemented.
Review dog on / off-leash areas, rules for dogs in public places, and update where needed.	2028	Review completed and presented to Council. Update Schedule 29.
Develop guidelines and update infrastructure for dog-friendly spaces, including signage in parks.	2027	New guidelines approved and being embedded into practice for new infrastructure.
Review the management of dog waste facilities in public areas.	2027	Review completed.
Investigate and implement programs to manage unowned and semi-owned cats in the community.	2026-2028	Investigation completed and program implemented.

Research options for mandatory desexing of cats.	2028	Present a report to Council about mandatory desexing of cats.
Run campaigns to improve awareness and compliance with cat containment laws.	2027	Information and material published on the website and communicated through social media and other mechanisms.

FOCUS: Dangerous and Restricted Breeds

What we're working towards: Owners of declared dangerous and/or restricted breeds are compliant, ensure public safety, and responsibly manage their dogs

Declared dogs are managed safely and in compliance with legislation.

Key things we will do:

- Monitoring and managing declared dogs.
- Enforcement of mandatory compliance for owning a declared dog.

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Review and strengthen the system for identifying and auditing declared dogs within the municipality.	Annual	Review undertaken and improvements implemented Any declared dogs identified are registered in accordance with requirements of the Act.
Work with neighbouring councils to share information about declared dogs near municipal boundaries.	2028	Engagement with neighbouring councils.

FOCUS: Dog Attacks and Public Safety

What we're working towards: Dog owners act responsibly and support community safety. Reduced dog attacks and improved public safety.

Key things we will do:

- Reducing dog attacks through education, patrols, and enforcement.
- Supporting victims and managing aggressive dogs.

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Enhance patrols in Portland's public spaces to ensure dogs are under proper control.	2026 - 2028	Program reviewed and evaluation implemented Number of hours patrolled Number of non-compliances observed.
Analyse dog attack data to understand causes and take steps to prevent future incidents.	2027	Review and report on data concerning dog attacks.
Promote dog safety education programs, including those run by Animal Welfare Victoria.	Ongoing	Programs promoted and delivered to community groups.
Create easy-to-understand information packs for both owners of attacking dogs and victims of incidents.	2027	Information pack produced and distributed to stakeholders and used where required.
Review and improve the information provided to customers reporting dog attacks to support better service and data collection.	2026 - 2027	Review completed (2026). Implemented improvements (2027).

FOCUS: Overpopulation and Euthanasia Reduction

What we're working towards: A community to practice responsible pet ownership, manage unowned cats, and reduce overpopulation.

Reduce stray/unowned animals and lower euthanasia rates.

Key things we will do:

- Promoting desexing and responsible pet acquisition.
- Managing semi-owned and unowned cat colonies.
- Strengthen rehoming and rescue partnerships to reduce euthanasia rates

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Return stray or lost registered animals directly to their owners whenever possible.	Ongoing	Increase in the number of animals returned to their owner without having to go to the pound.
Partner with local vets to transfer unclaimed animals to the Animal Welfare Centre for rehoming.	Ongoing	Number of animals referred and / or collected from local veterinary clinics (stray / lost).
Provide education that highlights the lifelong commitment of pet ownership to reduce preventable surrenders.	2027 - 2028	Review numbers to hopefully see a downward trend in number of animals surrendered.
Update education materials on the impacts of cat overpopulation and promote adoption from approved shelters.	2026	Review completed and information updated.
Collaborate with shelters, pounds, and rescue groups to encourage adoption and make it more accessible to the community.	2027	Programs implemented.

ACCOUNTABILITY & REPORTING

FOCUS: Domestic Animal Businesses

What we're working towards: All domestic animal businesses operate responsibly and are compliant.

Key things we will do:

- Ensuring compliance with registration and codes of practice.
- Conducting audits and responding to complaints.
- Promoting registered businesses.

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Use established guidelines to identify and follow up on unregistered domestic animal businesses.	Annual	Compare number of registered domestic animal businesses before and after the search.
Publish and regularly update a list of compliant animal businesses on the Council website.	Annual	List maintained and updated where required.
Register all newly identified domestic animal businesses and ensure compliance with codes of practice	As required	New domestic animal businesses are registered, or action is taken for failing to register a business.
Investigate and respond to community reports of non-compliance.	Ongoing	All reports are promptly investigated.
Carry out regular audits of registered animal businesses.	Annual	Audits undertaken as required.
Review and improve application and renewal processes to make them simpler and easier to use.	2027	Review undertaken.

FOCUS: A Skilled and Resourced Team

What we're working towards: A capable and adequately resourced team delivering effective animal management services.

Key things we will do:

- Ensure the team is suitably resourced and skilled.
- Review resourcing levels.

How we'll get there

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Provide regular training to staff to strengthen skills and improve service to the community.	Annually	Completion of annual goals and performance appraisals All staff undergo required training in accordance with the Local Laws Training Plan.
Support officers to attend industry training and seminars to keep their knowledge up to date.	Ongoing	Completion of State Government provided training Attendance at industry-related events
Regularly review staffing and resources to ensure the team can deliver services effectively.	2026 - 2028	Team capacity consistently meets service delivery needs.

FOCUS - Legal Requirements

What we're working towards: **Animal management aligned with legislation and best practice.**

Key things we will do:

- Align local laws practises with state legislation and community needs.

How we'll get there:

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Keep staff abreast of legislative changes.	Ongoing	Staff attendance at state conference. Memberships and subscriptions to peak bodies / organisations

FOCUS: Emergency Management

What we're working towards: A Prepared and Resilient Community.

A community prepared for emergencies involving animals.

Key things we will do:

- Review Emergency Management Plans including animals
- Providing resources and communication to support our community to be prepared in the case of an emergency.
- Collaborating with other councils and agencies.

How we'll get there:

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Gather and share clear information to help the community plan and care for pets during emergencies.	2026	Information collated and made available as appropriate.
Support animals in emergency situations.	Ongoing	Gaps identified, reviewed, and appropriate actions implemented.
Review and keep Emergency Management Plans up to date to include animal needs.	Annual	Review to be undertaken

FOCUS: Annual Review and Reporting

What we're working towards: A transparent, accountable, and continually improving approach to domestic animal management.

Key things we will do:

- Commitment to annual evaluation and updates.
- Transparent reporting to the community and government.
- Continuous improvement based on performance and feedback.

How we'll get there:

Activity	When	Evaluation – How we will achieve
Set an annual timeline and program to review and evaluate the plan.	2025	The annual timeline and program for reviewing and where necessary updating the plan is appropriate and will ensure reporting requirements are met.
Promote and publish the plan to the community.	2025	Plan designed and produced Plan promoted via various platforms.
Review all programs and activities each year to assess their relevance, performance, and outcomes.	Annual	The annual reviews are completed and are effective.
Record and address any activities not completed or not meeting expectations.	Annual	The annual reviews are completed and are effective.
Complete a formal evaluation, update the plan as needed, and submit for Council approval.	Annual	Evaluation completed.
Report on implementation in the Council's annual report and provide amended plans to the Secretary where required.	Annual	Evaluation published in the Council's annual report. Amended plan submitted where required.