



Strathbogie Shire Council
Domestic Animal Management Plan
2012-2016



Adopted by Council: 03 October 2013

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DEFINITIONS

Definitions in this plan seek to accord with the meaning provided under the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*.

INTRODUCTION

The State Government has recently made amendments to the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* which requires the Shire of Strathbogie to develop a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAM) for the period 2012 to 2016. The purpose of the Act is “*to promote animal welfare, the responsible ownership of cats and dogs and the protection of the environment.*” This plan will provide residents with guidelines for the keeping and management of domestic dogs and cats within the Shire of Strathbogie.

Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act, (the Act) states:

- “(1) *Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Primary Industries), prepare at 4 year intervals a domestic animal management plan.*
- (2) *A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—*
 - (a) *set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and*
 - (b) *outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and*
 - (c) *outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—*
 - (i) *to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and*
 - (ii) *to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and*
 - (iii) *to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and*
 - (iv) *to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and*
 - (v) *to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and*
 - (vi) *to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and*
 - (vii) *to 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; and*
 - (d) *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; and*
 - (e) *provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and*
 - (f) *provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.*
- (3) *Every Council must—*
 - (a) *review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and*
 - (b) *provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and*
 - (c) *publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.”*

BACKGROUND

Council developed the DAM 2008 which was adopted at the Council meeting on 21 October 2008. The core purposes of the 2008 plan were to:

- Recognise that pets are integral to the lives of many people and recognise the health and social benefits associated with pet ownership
- Inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible pet ownership
- Ensure that the sentiment of the wider community was reflected in Council's DAM
- Secure the safety and wellbeing of members of the community including animals.

The objectives of the 2008 plan were to improve animal management in general by promoting responsible pet ownership throughout the shire through the following initiatives:

- Responsible pet ownership requiring microchipping and registration of all domestic pets
- De-sexing dogs and cats
- Microchipping dogs and cats
- Dog attacks (including livestock & mauling) seeking a reduction in the number of attacks
- Prevention of dogs and cats wandering at large requiring owners to confine animals to their property
- The welfare of dogs and cats
- Community Safety provided for by sections 31 and 32 of Local Law No 6 regarding dogs on leads and in public places.
- Barking dogs - education
- Promote socialisation and dog training by encouraging owners to train their pets in dog obedience.
- Registration and identification
- Conduct Animal Management Training requiring officers to hold Certificate IV Animal Management
- Monitor performance and evaluate the effectiveness of services

SHIRE OF STRATHBOGIE – DEMOGRAPHIC AND COUNCIL PROFILE

Strathbogie Shire is a vibrant and progressive rural municipality located approximately two hours north of the Melbourne CBD along the Hume Freeway. Strathbogie Shire has diverse and picturesque communities served by townships such as Euroa, Nagambie, Violet Town, Avenel, Longwood, Ruffy and Strathbogie with a population of approximately 10,000.

Strathbogie Shire has a rural economic base of wool, grain and cattle production, extensive vineyards, intensive agriculture and a range of intensive cool climate horticultural enterprises. The region is also known as Victoria's Thoroughbred Homeland due to its ever expanding horse industry.

Pet ownership is a part of everyday Australian life, with 64% of Australia's 6.6 million households having a pet. In terms of dog ownership, Australia leads developed nations with 40% of households owning one or more dogs. Strathbogie's profile reflects this trend with 2011/12 statistics showing 41% dog ownership.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

In looking to actions over the life of this plan it is important to acknowledge the intent of the DAM 2008 in promoting responsible pet ownership and respond to both community and legislative expectations. An important addition to this plan is the inclusion of activity relating to domestic animal businesses.

The objective of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2012-2016 is to facilitate actions within the community that promote the values of responsible pet ownership and high standards of animal welfare. This objective is underwritten by Council's vision and mission as articulated in the Council Plan 2013-2017 as:

"A shire that drives and supports investment for population growth, shared wealth and wellbeing"

"To actively consult with community, investors and industry through advocacy and collaboration; delivering quality infrastructure, lifestyle and sustainable economic and community development."

Goal 1 of the Council Plan is for:

A community that has equitable access to a range of quality services which respond to its diverse needs and supports the wellbeing of our communities.

The objective of this goal being to:

Plan, support and / or deliver a broad range of responsive and accessible services to our diverse community.

The purposes of Council's DAM will support this goal by:

- Setting out policy, processes and practices in regard to Council's animal management responsibilities
- Improving compliance with the Act
- Increasing and improving pet owners knowledge of the principles of responsible pet ownership whilst at the same time enhancing community safety and awareness
- Using a mix of educational and regulatory approaches which facilitate responsible pet ownership
- Achieving a balance between meeting the needs of pet owners and others in the community
- Assisting the Bureau of Animal Welfare (BAW) to achieve its stated objectives of reducing the number of dogs and cats euthanized
- Ensuring that all cats and dogs in the municipality are appropriately registered and identifiable
- Minimising the harmful effects of domestic pets on the population of native birds, mammals, reptiles and livestock
- Taking into account community views on animal management matters
- Complying with the provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act)
- Ensuring Domestic Animal Business (DAB) identification, registration and compliance
- Establishing the extent of DAB's operating in the shire outside Council's jurisdiction to allow reporting to responsible organisations.

STRATHBOGIE SHIRE COUNCIL DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

	2005/06	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
*Population	9629		9647	9642	9622	9622
*Area	3302 km2	3302 km2	3302 km2	3302 km2	3302 km2	3302 km2
*No. of households	4835				5048	
No. of EFT Authorised Officers (Animal Control)	2	3	3	1	1	0
No contracted Animal Control Officers/Rangers	0	0	0	2	2	2.5
Does Council operate its own pound?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Training for staff in animal management	Certificate IV Animal Control & Regulation	Certificate IV Animal Control & Regulation	Certificate IV Animal Control & Regulation	Provided under contract	Provided under contract	Provided under contract
No. of Registered Dogs	1992	N/A	2218	2325	2072	2199
Estimated Dog (owned) per Population	21%	N/A	23%	24%	21.5%	23%
No dogs registered as desexed	639	N/A	971	903	835	884
% of registered dogs that are desexed	32%	N/A	44%	39%	40%	40%
No. of Registered Cats	558	N/A	534	536	431	449
Estimated Cat (owned) per Population**	6%		5.5%	5.5%	5%	5%
% of registered cats that are desexed	89%	N/A	79%	78.5%	98%	76%
No. of Registered Restricted Animal Breed Dogs	0		0	0	1	1
No. of registered guard dogs	0		0	0	0	0
No. of Registered Declared Dangerous Dogs (due to attack)	N/A	N/A	2	2	2	1
No. of Registered Declared Menacing Dogs	0	N/A	1	1	1	0
No. of impoundments (dogs), including dogs surrendered by public	N/A	N/A	81	100	98	41
Number of dogs registered when seized			11	26	33	22**
No. of dogs returned to owner	N/A	N/A	56	74	50	31
No. of dogs rehoused	N/A	N/A	6	16 (incl. 6 stolen from pound)	10	3
No. of dogs euthanased	N/A	N/A	19	10	38	7
No. of impoundments (cats) including cats surrendered by public	30	N/A	26	11	54	40
No of cats registered when seized			0	1	1	5
No. of cats returned to owner	N/A	N/A	4	3	7	1
No. of cats rehoused	N/A	N/A	0	1	1	16
No. of cats euthanased	N/A	N/A	22	6	46	23
No. of registered Domestic Animal Businesses Breeding & rearing Pet shops	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2

*Based on ABS Statistics

**More effective identification of animals has led to a number of animals being directly returned home and not impounded

From the statistical table above, it is noted that there has been an increase in the numbers of permanently identified animals, through micro-chipping initiatives. The ability for rangers to quickly and efficiently identify animals over the last two years has led to the percentage of registered dogs at large being returned to their owners without the need for impounding increasing from 51% to 75%.

AUTHORISED OFFICERS

With the aim to achieve effective service delivery, in line with Council Plan objectives, Council undertook a review of the ranger and local law services in 2010. This review resulted in the contract for the provision of ranger and local law services which commenced in December 2010. Under this contract arrangement Council has access to seven Authorised Officers all of whom have a minimum of six years' experience with animal control and enforcement issues. The senior ranger has a Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation with other officers currently undertaking study in this qualification. Further training provided to these officers includes traffic management, Workcover, OHS Induction Training (white card) and induction by 4SITE and Council in regard to specific tasks and risks of animal control.

Our Plans

Objective 1:

Contractor to ensure Authorised Officers maintain currency of skills and knowledge.

Activity	When	Evaluation
The Provision of Ranger and Local Law Services contract requires and will continue to require all authorised officers to maintain minimum qualifications.	Annually	Copies of certificates and completed training to be provided to Council.

REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

New registrations

All dogs and cats over 3 months of age must be registered with Council and must be micro-chipped prior to a new registration. Council will accept registration of animals under 3 months of age.

New animal registrations for cats and dogs can be made in person at the Shire Offices, 109A Binney Street, Euroa between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday or contact the customer service team on 1800 065 993.

Changes to the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* provides for the removal of the reduced fee category for micro-chipped dogs and cats for new registrations.

A new fee schedule for pet registration (under the Act) was introduced on 11 April 2013 whereby dogs and cats registered after this date can no longer attract a reduced registration fee for microchipping alone. However there are other options that will attract a reduced fee such as if the animal is:

- desexed,
- over 10 years of age, or
- part of a domestic animal business or applicable organisation, or
- a dog that has undergone training, or
- a working dog.

This change does not affect pets with current registrations prior to 11 April 2013.

Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

The provisions of the Act and Regulations are seen as very comprehensive and effective tools for managing animal registrations. Because of the effectiveness of the tools described above, Council does not have any orders in place in relation to registration and identification. However Community Local Law No 6 has provisions which include:

- Enabling Council to place restrictions or prohibit animals, or a class of animal, from any public place during events or any other appropriate time
- Controlling the number of domestic pets on any property
- Keeping of animals/birds
- Requirement to immediately collect and dispose of animal excrement

Policy Statement

Refunds for animal registrations where animals have become deceased between the registration renewal period and June 30 of that year will be considered if requests are provided in writing to Council and received prior to July 1.

Education/Promotion Activities

Registration

- Use media releases and/or paid advertising to advise residents of registration requirements, including renewal date and animals to which a reduced fee applies, in local paper, Council newsletters, on local radio, prior to start of renewal period (e.g. in March and April)
- Use Council's website to provide information to residents on when registration is due, how and where to register, fee structure, registration form, what information they need to provide (e.g. microchipping, de-sexing certificates, pension card, applicable organisation membership), letting Council know they are no longer the owner, have changed address or the pet is deceased. Highlight renewal period on website in March and April
- Include registration, identification and renewal information in rates notices, Council newsletters, in Council displays, as part of Council telephone 'on-hold' message
- Include registration forms, registration and identification requirements, brochures and factsheets and list of vets and registration agents in kits for new residents
- Promote the benefits of registration and identification
 - in local paper articles
 - in Council newsletters
 - on Council website
 - in kits for new residents
 - on web-based Council lost animal register
 - in Council's emergency management plan

Incentives

- Where an animal is rehomed through Council's service, the Lost Dogs Home, RSPCA or other service provider the new owner will not be charged for that year of registration.

Promotions/Media/Education

- Promote the difference between registration and microchipping, to avoid owners thinking that by microchipping alone they have complied with Council registration requirements
- Distribute registration and identification brochures, factsheets and other material developed by the Bureau of Animal Welfare (BAW) and/or Council:
 - Copies available at counter
 - Electronic copies available on website
 - Distribution through current mail-outs to residents
 - Inserts in local paper
 - Available to vets, pet shops, breeders, shelters, etc, to display and/or hand out.
- Display signage in public places to advertise registration renewal date
- Seek to provide for online registration/renewal
- Officers able to provide on the spot training to owners as required.

Our Compliance Activities

- Issue registration renewal notices annually
- Follow-up non-renewals – additional letter, call owner, visit property (targeted door knocking)
- Conduct random door knocking of the municipality each year and/or target ‘hotspots’ (areas of low registrations) to check for unregistered and unidentified cats and dogs – e.g. annual door knocks for the months of May and June each year
- Leave ‘Sorry we missed you’ type cards detailing nature of call and contact name and number
- Patrol problem/known issues areas
- Ensure that animal complaints are checked for registration and identification compliance as part of the process of dealing with the complaint.
- Ensure all authorised officers have microchip scanners
- Ensure all authorised officers have handheld computer/other device that can provide owner details from Council’s database by entering microchip number.
- Keep records of animals found deceased and notify owners of identifiable animals to enable them to help achieve ‘closure’.
- Automatic registration for animals notified as rehomed by a shelter to ensure these animals are included in following year’s notifications for re-registration.
- Check that all microchipped animals in the municipality are registered by cross-referencing registration database with information from microchip registries.
- Ensure registration database triggers a report (e.g. email report to officer) when there is a failure to renew the registration of an animal
- Regularly update/audit registration database to ensure information is current (e.g. amend data to reflect notifications of deceased animals, change of address, change of owner)
- Monitor that advertisements of dogs and cats for sale (e.g. local paper) contain the microchip number of the animal being sold.

- Ensure all seized and impounded animals are identified as required by Council and registered to their owner prior to their release.
- Return lost/wandering registered pets to owners free of charge on the first occasion during each registration year. This “get out of jail free” initiative seeks to encourage and increase pet registrations.
- Encourage owners to microchip currently registered dogs/cats at time of renewal of registration.

Summary, major issues

Over the previous two years there has been a 30% reduction in the number of registered animals being impounded. This leads to an assumption that Council’s responsible pet ownership initiatives in promoting permanent identification through microchipping are gaining ground through an increase in the number of identifiable animals which can be returned home without the need to impound. Despite these encouraging trends the goal remains to strive to continue to keep the number of animals needing to be impounded to a minimum.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Strive to increase the number of identifiable animals.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Prior to every release.	Ensure that all seized dogs and cats are registered and/or identifiable at the point of return or rehousing.
Targeted door knocking in areas believed to have a high number of unregistered animals to check for unregistered and unidentified dogs and cats. Audit to be widely advertised prior to commencement.	Annual door knocks for the months of May and June each year to pick up missed registrations	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner. Records of number of unregistered and unidentified animals picked up during door knocks.

NUISANCE

Current Situation

Our data

	2010	2011	2012
No of barking dog complaints received	7	10	7
No of dogs at large complaints received	19	135	54
No of cats at large or not securely confined complaints		16	14
Breakdown of dogs at large for 2011/12			
• Large dogs e.g. Rottweiler/Labrador			25
• Medium dogs e.g. Staffordshire			21
• Medium dogs e.g. Working Kelpie/Border Collie			27
• Small dogs e.g. Jack Russell			24

Animal related complaints in general constitute a major component of the total complaints received by Council. Due to legislative requirements regards evidential proof, barking dog complaints remain the most resource intensive exercise.

Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Community Local Law No 6:

- Prohibiting exercising of dogs off leash, other than in designated places
- Requirement to ensure adequate fencing for animals

Our Education/Promotion Activities

All Nuisance

- Provide information about cat enclosures and cat nuisance issues to cat owners via Council's website
- Provide information about dog confinement, barking, dogs at large, etc, to dog owners via Council's website
- Provide information on Council website, in Council newsletter, in Council phone 'on-hold' message, local paper and radio about types of nuisance, relevant Local Laws and Orders, how to report nuisance and how to record ongoing nuisance (e.g. barking dog diary, cat trespass) to support complaint
- Distribute relevant brochures, factsheets and other material developed by the Bureau of Animal Welfare and/or Council via website or Council outlets.

At large and trespass (see 'All nuisance' and the following)

- Promote effective confinement of dogs and cats to properties, etc, via Council website, and available BAW publications
- Investigate access to clearly identifiable specific off-leash areas to meet the 'free-running' and playing needs of dogs
- Identify clearly those public places that are off-leash areas, areas in which dogs are required to be effectively controlled/on-leash, and areas in which dogs are prohibited at all times/certain times – by signage, in brochures, pocket maps

Barking dogs (see 'All nuisance' and the following)

- Make available Dog Barking factsheet and other BAW information.
- Encourage owners of barking dogs to seek control methods to reduce their dog's barking such as socialisation, effective confinement and dog collars.

Our Compliance Activities

All nuisance

- Record all nuisance complaints on a database to track resolutions, repeat offenders
- Investigate nuisance complaints within 24 hours for:
 - dogs and cats at large/not securely confined to premises
 - animals at large
 - in public areas where they are prohibited by Council Order
 - noise nuisance (barking, caterwauling, etc.)
- Ensure nuisance investigation timeframes provide timely resolution of issues

At large and trespass (see ‘All nuisance’ and the following)

- Provide Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals (POCTA) compliant cat cages to local residents for trapping cats trespassing on their property (deposit required which is refunded on return of cage)
- Investigate designated off-leash dog exercise areas
- Encourage non-compliant owners to undertake a responsible dog ownership course and/or owner and dog to undertake basic dog training course
- Impound all cats and dogs at large that are unidentifiable
- Return wandering registered pets to owners free of charge on the first occasion during each registration year, then impound/enforce for repeat offences

Barking dogs (see ‘All nuisance’ and the following)

- Use BAW barking dog kit to assist in investigations of complaints
- Encourage complainant to contact owner of barking dog and advise them of their concerns as first step to resolving issue
- If not resolved, call at house of owner of barking dog to attempt rapid resolution/contact owner of barking dog and provide them with information and ideas to reduce barking
- Provide barking dog log sheet to complainant
- Encourage parties to seek mediation where possible
- Carry out investigation via protocol to establish nuisance or otherwise
- Encourage the use of anti-bark collars and direct owners to appropriate information regarding their use under POCTA Regulation 19.

Summary, major issues

Whilst statistical analysis indicates a decline in animal related complaints these continue to be a major component of the complaints received by Council. The number of stray and unidentifiable cats continues to remain an issue. In order to continue to reduce animal nuisance problems in the community, Council will promote compliance via education provided by our Authorised Officers.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Manage the incidents of wandering or feral cats.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide POCTA compliant cat cages to local residents for trapping cats trespassing on their property	Ongoing	Commitment by Council to only purchase POCTA compliant cages for loan to residents.

Policy Statement

In supporting the above activity it is Council’s policy to provide a refundable deposit system for the use of the cages with ongoing costs borne by Council.

Objective 2: Manage dog nuisance complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Encourage responsible pet ownership including socialisation, effective confinement and the appropriate use of anti-bark collars	Ongoing	Manage the number of complaints recorded by Council.

Objective 3: Dogs at large complaint resolution

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education on responsible pet ownership to ensure animals are securely contained.	Ongoing	Assess trends in animals at large data to evaluate effectiveness of controls

Policy Statements

Council will return wandering registered pets to owners free of charge on the first occasion during each registration year however if found wandering again the animal will be impounded and penalties will apply.

If the dog is not considered a risk and cannot be contained Council will ascertain risk potential, if no perceived risk Council will not respond. Where the dog can be contained Council will respond.

Objective 3: Provision of dog friendly open space

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate access to specific off-leash areas, that are clearly identifiable to all of the community, to meet the 'free-running' and playing needs of dogs that are	Promotion through development of this plan	Seek public comment and assess submissions as to perceived need and support in locations across shire

DANGEROUS AND MENACING DOGS

Current Situation

Authorised officers investigate all dog attacks and reports of threatening behaviour. Evidence is collated to form a brief and includes statements from all parties involved.

Council currently has one declared dangerous dog that was involved in an attack.

Council must register all dangerous/menacing dogs with the Victorian Declared Dog Register (VDDR).

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Dangerous and menacing dogs are strictly regulated under the provisions of the Act and Regulations. Because of the effectiveness of this legislation Council does not have any Orders or Local Laws in place in relation these animals.

Our Education/Promotion Activities

- Provide BAW information to residents on:
 - the types of declared dogs and how they are to be identified and kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations, including prescribed collars, signage at premises, housing requirements, muzzling, etc.

- how to report menacing dogs and dog bites

(see Registration and Identification Education/Promotion Activities section for methods of providing information to residents – Council website, mailouts, media articles, signage at parks, etc.)

- Ensure all owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Act regarding identification and keeping these dogs by providing them with relevant information
- Patrol industrial sites or building sites to check regulated use of guard dogs

Our Compliance Activities

- Ensure all declared dogs are accurately registered on the VDDR
- Conduct annual inspections of declared dogs to ensure they are identified and being kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations
- Investigate the collection and registration of DNA samples for all declared dogs
- Monitor registrations on Council database to identify and follow-up on suspected (non-declared) restricted breed dogs

Our Plans

Objective 1: Community awareness of dangerous and menacing dogs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Educate the community about what constitutes a declared dog	Ongoing	Monitor website activity

Objective 2: Effectively inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are compliant.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are compliant.	Ongoing	Review and monitor number of breaches annually

Objective 3: Guard dog audits.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Inspect industrial areas in the municipality for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes	Ongoing	Monitor compliance

RESTRICTED BREEDS

The Act currently defines restricted breeds as any of the following:

- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileiro
- Dogo Argentino
- Perro de Prasa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)

Domestic Animals Act 1994 - SECT 41EA (extract)

(1) A person must not keep a restricted breed dog.

(2) Subsection (1) does not apply to a person who keeps a restricted breed dog-

(a) that was in Victoria immediately before the commencement of the Domestic Animals Amendment (Dangerous Dogs) Act 2010; and

(b) that was registered as a restricted breed dog or another breed of dog in Victoria immediately before the commencement of the Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breeds) Act 2011.

Domestic Animals Act 1994 - SECT 17 (extract)

17. Registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs

(1AA) Subject to subsection (1A), a Council must not register a restricted breed dog.

(1A) A Council may register a dog as a restricted breed dog if-

(a) the dog was in Victoria immediately before the commencement of Domestic Animals Amendment (Dangerous Dogs) Act 2010; and

(b) the dog was registered in Victoria immediately before the commencement of the Domestic Animals Amendment (Restricted Breeds) Act 2011. Note Under sections 10A(4) and 10C(6), a Council cannot register a restricted breed dog unless the dog is desexed (subject to the exception under section 10B(1)(e)) and the dog has been implanted with a prescribed permanent identification device.

Subject to the Act, Council must register all restricted breed dogs with the Victorian Declared Dog Register (VDDR). Restricted breeds registered into the VDDR are declared for the life of the animal and cannot be revoked by Council.

Policy Statement

Council aligns with legislation that considers restricted breed dogs to present an unacceptable risk to the community. Council will not accept the registration of a restricted breed dog within its municipality.

Our Compliance Activities

- Monitor all animal complaints for potential restricted breed dogs.
- Seize dogs suspected of being restricted breeds.

DOG ATTACKS

Current Situation

Our data

Recent events demonstrate that dog attacks are generally a consequence of dogs being at large in the community and / or not effectively controlled by their owners in public places.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

The Act and Regulations provide Council with the power to manage and control dog attacks and as such Council does not have separate orders or local laws for this provision.

Our Education/Promotion Activities

- Raise awareness of the risk of dog attacks in the home, in the street and in public places and on farms by actively promoting the BAW Responsible Pet Ownership Programs which address living with dogs and minimising risk of dog attacks
- Promote BAW Responsible Pet Ownership Programs 'We Are Family', particularly in maternal health centres, pre-schools and primary schools.
- Provide residents with information on how to report dog attacks – if bitten or witness to an attack on a person or animal. Promote and encourage the reporting of dog attacks whether on public or private property
- Promote responsible pet ownership including effective confinement and control of dogs
- Registration discount initiatives currently include de-sexing of dogs which tends to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering

Our Compliance Activities

- Respond to/attend dog attack reports as the top priority for animal management officers
- Provide an after-hours number to report dog attacks
- Patrol/provide surveillance in problem areas
- Conduct annual audits of declared, dangerous and menacing dogs to ensure compliance with orders
- Ensure unclaimed dogs at the pound are temperament tested to determine whether they are suitable for rehoming

Our Plans

Objective 1: Raise community awareness of the implications of dog attacks.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Assist in the promotion of awareness of BAW programs via Council's website.	Ongoing	Monitor and compare number of reported dog attack incidents.

Objective 2: Education of dog attacks on stock

Activity	When	Evaluation
Educate landowners as to DPI guidelines on trespassing dog attacks on stock.	Ongoing	Assess number of reported dog attack on stock incidents annually.
Make available BAW booklet "Responsible ownership of working dogs" and as needs education in line with DPI guidelines.	Ongoing	Assess number of reported dog attack on stock incidents annually.

OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

Current Situation

Despite the fact that the number of animals euthanised annually has decreased, the activity remains a method of last resort from an animal welfare perspective and presents an unnecessary cost burden on Council.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

The Act and Regulations provide Council with the power to manage and control over population and euthanasia therefore Council does not have separate orders or local laws for this provision.

Our Education/Promotion Activities

- Raise awareness about the detrimental contribution of well-meaning residents to the semi-owned cat population through BAW promotions.
- Make available de-sexing, overpopulation and high euthanasia rate brochures, factsheets and other material developed by the BAW and/or Council
- Develop a lost animal register on Council's website
- Advertise found animals on Council's website
- Proactively seek to enter S84Y agreements with not-for-profit agencies/shelters rehoming programs to increase options for rehousing of animals and reduce need to euthanize.
- Provide and promote first registration free of charge (i.e. registration fee refunded) if animal adopted from pound or shelter.
- Promote mutual benefits of adopting animals from the pound or shelter
- Encourage owners to have all animals de-sexed prior to reclaim from Council's pound

Our Compliance Activities

- Investigate reports of unauthorised breeding establishments to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business or regulated through other controls
- Monitor Council's registration data for unauthorised breeding establishments to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business or regulated through other controls

Summary, major issues

There are concerns over the number of stray cats many of which have been unidentifiable and therefore euthanised.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Promote the reduction of the number of unwanted animals.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Encourage de-sexing for pets	Ongoing	Changes in the longer term in regard to the proportion of de-sexed animals on pet registration database, proportion of impounded pets that are de-sexed etc
Proactively seek to enter S84Y agreements.	Ongoing	Review of data recording number of animals rehoused.

Objective 2: Encourage the reduction of the number of unwanted litters of cats

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide a link to promotions such as “Who’s for cats?” educational program on Council’s website and make educational materials available in Council outlets.	Ongoing	Monitor website activity Record number of semi owned cats handed in to the pound

DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES (DAB) AND THE KEEPING OF EXCESS ANIMALS

Current Situation

Strathbogie Shire Council currently has two domestic animal businesses registered in the municipality however there is sufficient evidence to suggest there may be a number of enterprises that would meet the criteria for a DAB.

Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB) are defined under the Act as:

- (a) an animal shelter, Council pound or pet shop; or*
- (b) an enterprise which carries out the breeding of dogs or cats to sell, where—*
 - (i) in the case of an enterprise whose proprietor is a member of an applicable organisation, the enterprise has 10 or more fertile female dogs or 10 or more fertile female cats; or*
 - (ii) in the case of an enterprise whose proprietor is not a member of an applicable organisation, the enterprise has 3 or more fertile female dogs or 3 or more fertile female cats; or*
- (c) an enterprise that is run for profit which carries out the rearing, training or boarding of dogs or cats;*

Whether it is the intent of the Act or not, the above definition places the burden of proof on Council to monitor the activity of the enterprise as to selling or running for profit before it can determine whether the enterprise is a domestic animal business.

Policy Statement

Approvals

The keeping of excess animals in Strathbogie Shire, will require owners to comply with one or more of the following as applicable:

- (1) The Strathbogie Shire Planning Scheme regarding land use, *Animal Keeping*, for the purposes of breeding or boarding domestic pets, or keeping, breeding or boarding racing dogs.
- (2) Community Local Law No 6 in regard to the keeping of animals, and/or;
- (3) *Domestic Animals Act 1994* in regard to domestic animal businesses.

Regardless of permissions granted under a Planning Permit, Local Laws Permit or a Domestic Animal Business all will be subject to annual inspections to ensure compliance.

Local Laws Permits will require annual renewal and the payment of an annual fee.

Registration of Domestic Animal Businesses

- (1) If a person has applied to have a premises registered with the Council as a premises on which a domestic animal business may be conducted, the Council may register that premises for that purpose.
- (2) Before a Council registers premises under subsection (1), an authorised officer appointed by Council will enter and inspect the premises to determine whether the premises complies with a relevant Code of Practice made under section 59 of the Act.
- (3) The Council may impose any terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on that registration.
- (4) If a premises has been registered for the purposes of a domestic animal business, the person who conducts the business must comply with the terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions, if any, on that registration.

Term and renewal of registration of DAB

- (1) Registration will be reviewed annually and continues in force until 10 April in the year following the registration or renewal or until a change in ownership of the business.
- (2) Prior to re-registration of the premises an authorised officer appointed by Council will arrange to enter and inspect the premises to determine whether it complies with the relevant Code of Practice made under section 59 of the Act.
- (3) The proprietor of a domestic animal business must renew the registration of the premises on which that business is conducted by applying to the Council in writing in the form approved by the Council no less than 30 days before the registration is due to expire.

Proprietors of such establishments must operate in accordance with the mandatory Code of Practice established by the State Government for the purpose of providing minimum standards of accommodation, management and care which are considered appropriate to the welfare, physical and behavioural needs of the animals housed at these establishments. In the case of a breeding establishment the mandatory Code is known as the 'Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Establishments'.

A person who is a member of an applicable organisation (including Dogs Victoria, Cat Authority of Victoria, Feline Control Council, Governing Council of the Cat Fancy and

Waratah National Cat Alliance) who registers their puppies and/or kittens with that organisation and has less than 10 fertile females of either species is not required to be registered as a breeding establishment with their Council. These businesses under the auspices of an applicable organisation are required to operate in accord with a Code of Ethics established by that organisation as approved by the Minister.

Because these arrangements can provide for the operation of DAB's within the municipality but outside Council's jurisdiction, Council would like to establish an understanding with applicable organisations that their members are both current in their registration and compliant with the relevant code of ethics. To that effect Council will seek to gain a statement from the applicable organisation that substantiates their members operation.

Our Orders and Council Policies and Procedures

DAB's are strictly regulated under the provisions of the Domestic Animals Act and Regulations, as well as specific Codes of Practice created by that legislation. The relevant Codes of Practice are enforceable under the legislation and are seen as very comprehensive and effective tools for managing such businesses.

Because of the effectiveness of the tools described above, Council does not have any Orders or Local Laws in place in relation to DABs.

During the life of this plan Council will be identifying, seeking registration/recording, and annually auditing every excess animal premises in the municipality to ensure compliance with the relevant codes and regulations. Council will also undertake steps to identify and manage businesses conducted outside the jurisdiction of applicable organisations.

Our Education/Promotion Activities

- Make available the Code of Practice to proprietors/staff of existing and proposed domestic animal businesses
- Make available the relevant Code of Practice to owners of existing and proposed domestic animal businesses
- Make available the Code of Practice for The Private Keeping of Dogs, and/or the Code of Practice for The Private Keeping of Cats.

Our Compliance Activities

- Council will investigate and act upon complaints about domestic animal businesses and or the keeping of excess animals
- Liaise within Council to ensure appropriate controls are placed on development and on-going operation of premises with excess animals
- In accordance with the Act, identify and audit all unregistered domestic animal businesses within the municipality
- Reserve the right to conduct, as required, 'unscheduled' inspections/audits of each domestic animal business premises in relation to conditions of registration to determine compliance with the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*, relevant mandatory Code of Practice, and any terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on that registration
- Investigate reports of excess animals/unauthorised breeding establishments to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business or regulated through other controls

- Monitor Council's registration data relating to excess animals/unauthorised breeding establishments to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business or regulated through other controls
- Forward welfare complaints received about members operations to the relevant applicable organisation with a copy to the BAW and RSPCA.
- Establish procedures for domestic animal businesses to notify Council of any animals sold or given away, as required under S13 of the Act- which states:

Notification of sale by domestic animal business

13. Notification of sale by domestic animal business

If the proprietor of a domestic animal business sells, or gives away, a dog or cat which is not registered, he or she must notify the Council with which the animal should be registered, within 7 days after the sale or the giving away of the animal, of-

- (a) the sale, or the giving away of the animal; and*
- (b) description of the animal; and*
- (c) the name and address of the new owner of the animal; and*
- (d) the unique number of the microchip contained in the prescribed permanent identification device implanted in the animal.*

- Investigate an effective method of monitoring compliance with the Act

Summary, major issues

Strathbogie Shire Council currently has two domestic animal businesses registered in the municipality however there is sufficient evidence to suggest there may be a number of other enterprises in operation that may meet the criteria for a DAB.

Council needs to coordinate and apply the appropriate controls to the keeping of excess animals, including DAB's.

The majority of complaints received relate to animal welfare issues at premises where owners are members and / or have registered animals with applicable organisations. These premises are not required by legislation to be registered as a DAB or to comply with the relevant code of practice.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Identify and manage all potential excess animal/DAB's in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Proactively identify excess animals/unregistered DAB's using animal register and door knocking	Ongoing	Compare number of registered DAB's before and after each activity.
Council to investigate the ability for applicable organisations to provide Council with Statement of Compliance for their members who are operating within the municipality	Ongoing	Annual requirement

Objective 2: Annual audit of registered domestic animal businesses.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Council will undertake annually to conduct inspections, set fees and audit DAB's.	Annually	Relevant action taken.
Ensure compliance with all relevant sections of the Act.	Annually or as required	Relevant action taken.

Objective 3: Effectively resource door knocking activity

Activity	When	Evaluation
Resource post animal registration process to include annual door knocking to audit potential owners of excess animals	Annually	Compliance with local laws and relevant legislation.

Objective 4: Effectively ensure compliance of applicable organisation members operating within municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Forward welfare complaints received about members operations to the relevant applicable organisation	As required	Monitor currency of membership at animal registration renewal and follow up if required

OTHER MATTERS

Support the development and implementation of an Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan, in line with National and State plans, to compliment the Municipal Emergency Response Plan.

The *Australian Animal Welfare Strategy* (revised edition June 2008) states that; *State/Territory and Australian Governments have a responsibility to;*

- *Develop and enhance a nationally coordinated approach to emergency animal welfare planning, preparedness and response.*

The *Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan, Part 7.8*, outlines the role and responsibility Local Government in the following areas;

- *Prevention/ Mitigation/Risk Reduction*
- *Response*
- *Relief*

The plan further outlines the responsibilities of government departments and other agencies, with the custodians of the plan being the Department of Environment and Primary Industries.

The plan states that; *emergencies are likely to pose risks to animal welfare. The primary responsibility and duty of care remains with the person in charge of an animal.*

Council Policies and Procedures

- Municipal Emergency Response Plan

Education/Promotion Activities

- Promote Council's inclusion of domestic animals consideration in the Municipal Emergency Response Plan

- Promote available information for owners on what to consider for pets to be prepared for an emergency – include their needs as part of your emergency planning, e.g. food, water, bowls, bedding, cage, medication
- Promote available information for owners on what to consider for pets in being prepared for an emergency in the case of evacuation.
- Promote the importance of registration and microchipping to help reunite pets with their owners after emergencies.

Compliance Activities

- Seek cooperative assistance from DEPI, RSPCA and other authorised POCTA Act officers in operations implementing and enforcing the POCTA Act, Regulations and Codes of Practice during times of emergency.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Inclusion of Animal & Stock Emergency Welfare Plan in Municipal Emergency Response Planning

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote Council's inclusion of Animal & Stock Emergency Welfare Plan in the Municipal Emergency Response Plan	Ongoing	Included in plan

ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Under Section 68A(3) of the Act;

Every Council must—

- review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan*
- provide the Department of Primary Industries' Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan*
- publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.*

As per Section 68A(3) of the Act, Council will review its DAM Plan annually to assess whether any amendments are necessary in order to ensure the plan is relevant and can be completed within the required timeframes.

In the final year of the plan, Council will undertake a major review and commence drafting the next DAM for 2016 to 2020.