# Domestic Animal Management Plan

2017 - 21

October 2019



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
*The Heart of Gippsland*

# CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Training of Authorised Officers
3. Registration and Identification
4. Nuisance Pets
5. Dog Attacks
6. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs
7. Overpopulation and High Euthanasia Rates
8. Domestic Animal Businesses
9. Animals in Emergency
10. Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan

Appendix A – 2018 Review

Appendix B – 2019 Review

# 1 Introduction



## 1.1 Executive Summary

Australia has one of the highest rates of pet ownership per household. Approximately 38% of households in Victoria own cats or dogs[1]

Wellington Shire Council (Council) recognises that pet ownership has positive benefits for the community. Responsible pet ownership makes a valuable contribution towards our community's wellbeing and adds to social connectivity. This is more pronounced with children and the elderly where pets play a more prominent part in their lives. They provide opportunities for active pursuits, companionship to those who may feel lonely or isolated and independence for those with a disability or illness.

The issue of balancing pet ownership and the rights of the individual to enjoy the environment is a challenge. The adequate control of animals can often be a source of conflict between neighbours, particularly in urban areas.

*The Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) regulates domestic animal management within Victoria and requires every Council in the State to have in place a plan to manage domestic animals (Domestic Animal Management or DAM Plan)

## 1.2 Purpose and Primary Objective of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAM Plan).

Balancing pet ownership and the numerous benefits that it brings with the rights of the individual to enjoy the environment is a constant challenge. Consideration has been given to both pet owners and those who do not own pets when developing this plan.

The primary objective is to provide a strategic plan to guide the community towards the goal of responsible pet ownership and to assist Wellington Shire to achieve a professional, consistent and proactive approach to domestic animal management practices.

The plan identifies current activities and future actions to address the following issues as required by s68A of the Act:

- Identify a method for evaluating whether the animal control services are effective;
- Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership;
- Ensure compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and relevant regulations*;*
- Outline programs for the training of authorised officers;
- Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue;
- Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals;
- Address 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;
- Review of existing orders and local laws that relate to cats and dogs;
- Ensure compliance by all registered Domestic Animal Businesses;
- Provide periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

[1] Roy Morgan. January – December 2014

## 1.3 Process applied in Developing the DAM Plan

The Wellington Shire Council Local Laws team developed the DAM Plan. The following activities were undertaken in the development and implementation of the plan.

| Outcome | Actioned By | Date |
|---|---|---|
| Evaluate effectiveness of Plan using available data | Coordinator Local Laws | June 2017 |
| Release Document for Comment | Council | July 2017 |
| Community engagement undertaken<br>• Advertise and issue press releases seeking submissions to draft document;<br>• Publish draft DAM Plan on Council's website;<br>• Provide hard copies of the draft DAM Plan at Council's service centres;<br>• Conduct community round table sessions<br>Send draft documents to Community Committees, Dogs Victoria, RSPCA, Victorian Animal Aid Trust, DEDJTR and Domestic Animal Businesses | Coordinator Local Laws | July 2017 |
| Results of community engagement compiled | Coordinator Local Laws | August 2017 |
| Draft Domestic Animal Plan - Updated to reflect and incorporate feedback | Coordinator Local Laws | August 2017 |
| Final Document reviewed | General Manager Development /Corporate Management Team | September 2017 |
| Domestic Animal Management Plan presented to Council for adoption | Council | October 2017 |
| Domestic Animal Management Plan forward to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) for review and placed on the website | Coordinator Local Laws | November 2017<br><br>Key Strategic Action delivered |

## 1.4 Wellington Shire Council Demographic Snapshot

Wellington Shire is the third largest Shire in Victoria by land area (10,924 square kilometres). It has a mixture of urban and rural areas, with a population around 43,000.

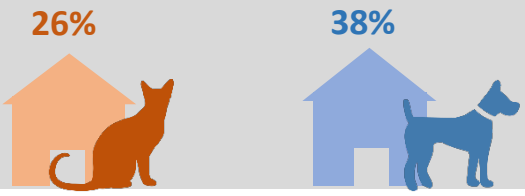
It is a unique environment which encompasses coastal areas, the Gippsland Lakes region, agricultural land, undeveloped land and urban areas. The largest towns in the region are Sale, Maffra, Yarram, Stratford and Heyfield.

With 22,110 households in the Shire[2] it is estimated that 38% of households own one or more dogs at an average of 1.44 dogs per household and 26% of households own one or more cats at an average of 1.47 cats per household[3].

With those figures in mind, it is estimated that there are 12,098 dogs and 8,064 cats in the Shire. The number of registered cats in the Shire is significantly less that the estimated population.

The Shire has a high number of domestic animal businesses (23), reflecting the unique environment and the attraction of these businesses to this area.

*Households with Pets*

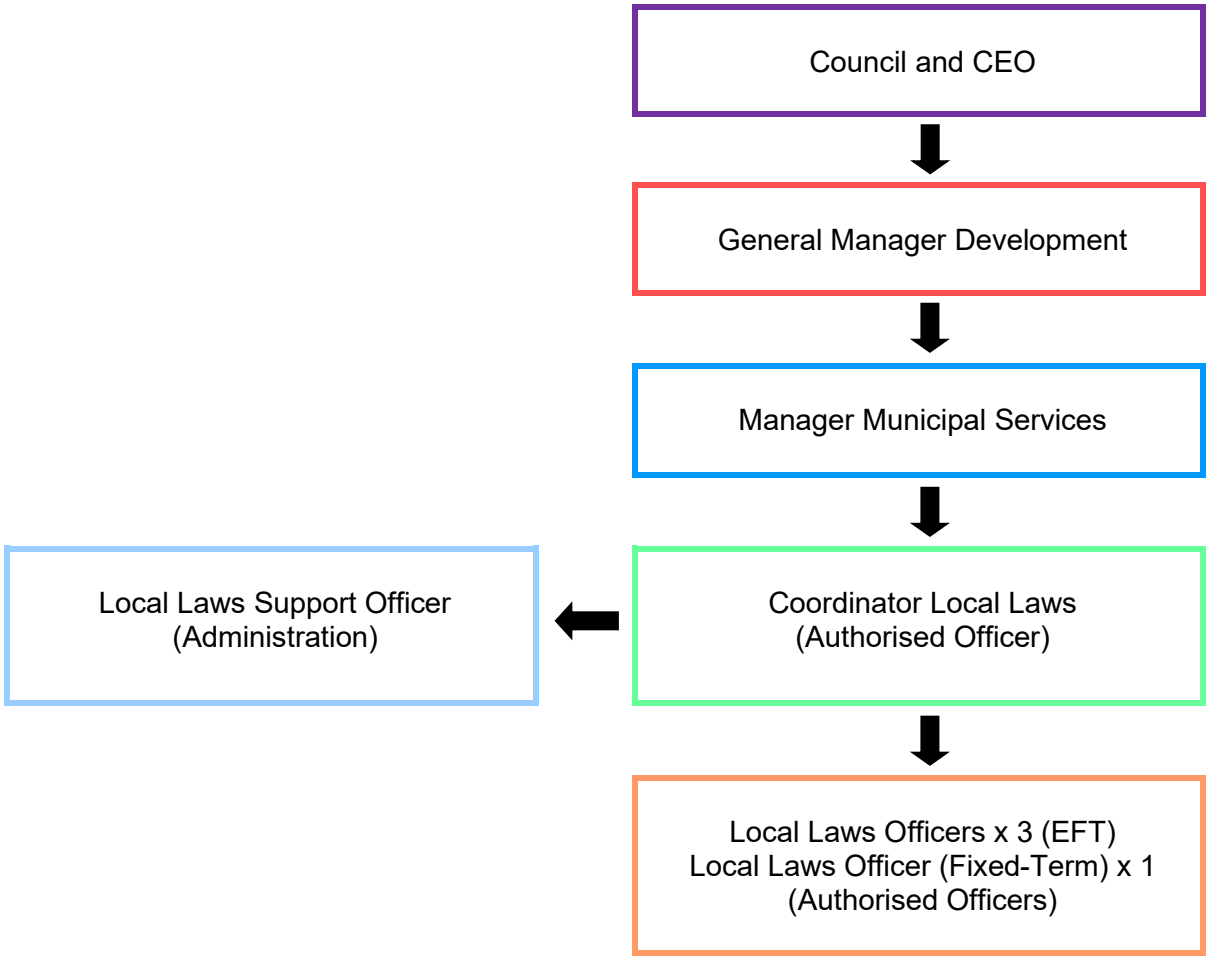



[2] Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016

[3] Roy Morgan, Jan – Dec 2014

## 1.5 Wellington Shire Council Animal Management Operational Structure and Staffing

In order to meet legislative requirements, the Council employs Local Laws Officers who are designated "Authorised Officers" under the relevant legislation and are part of the Municipal Services Business Unit




## 1.6 Current programs and services levels

Wellington Shire Council provides a broad range of services to ensure that it meets its legislative responsibilities relating to animal management. They include but are not limited to:

- Providing advice on domestic animal matters
- Responding to and investigating customer requests/complaints
- Educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership
- Managing the provision of the Wellington Shire Pound facility
- Maintaining the domestic animal, restricted breed and the declared dangerous dog registers
- Impounding of wandering, unwanted/surrendered dogs and cats
- Managing the feral cat population
- Undertaking door knock registration checks
- Investigation of dog attacks
- Registration and inspection of Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs)
- Inspection and compliance checks on restricted breeds and declared dangerous dogs
- Developing collaborative relationships with partner organisations, such as - RSPCA, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), Victoria Animal Aid, Veterinary Clinics and other stakeholders, with a view to maintaining a multi-agency approach to animal management
- Provision of a 52-week 24/7 emergency service
- Provision of suitably trained and qualified Authorised Officers

A summary of the key services is outlined in the table below:

| Current Programs | Service Levels |
|---|---|
| **Identification and Registration** | All dogs and cats are required to be registered annually by 10 April each year. Currently (2017) the number of animals registered in the Shire is: 9407.<br><br>Dogs 7655<br>Cats 1752 |
| **Wellington Shire Pound** | Consists of a facility that can accommodate 38 dogs, 36 cats, and up to 100 head of livestock. The facility is located at Fulham, approximately 5km west of Sale off the Princes Highway. It is managed under contract and provides the following services:<br><br>o Agents for registration of dogs and cats within the Shire.<br>o Receive dogs and cats, contact known owners, place photographs on the website, house animals until released, rehouse or euthanize, and disposal of animals due to ill health, welfare issues or where there is failure to rehouse.<br>o Provide respite care for animals whose owners are temporarily unable to care for them due to illness, relationship issues etc.<br>o Provide monthly statistics to the Shire.<br>o Provide secure housing of seized dogs, pending prosecution |
| **Registration of Domestic Animal Businesses** | Wellington Shire Council currently has twenty-three (23) registered domestic animal businesses (DABs). We manage the renewal process each year and undertake an inspection regime to ensure compliance with the codes of practice. |
| **Domestic Animal Complaints** | Authorised Officers respond within the customer service charter to animal complaints. They will also accept dogs and cats surrendered by their owners who can no longer care for them for whatever reason.<br><br>Authorised Officers will attend and attempt to contain or capture any dog or cat that is reported to be causing a serious nuisance or presenting as a danger to people or other animals during and after normal operating hours. |
| **Restricted Breeds/Dangerous Dogs/Menacing Dogs** | Wellington Shire Council will manage Menacing Dogs in accordance with the Act. Any dog that causes a non-serious bite injury to a person or animal or rushes at or chases a person may be declared a menacing dog. The owners will be required to show that they can be a responsible dog owner and ensure action is taken to prevent the dog from attacking again.<br><br>Restricted Breeds and Dangerous Dogs will be managed in accordance with the Act.<br><br>Any dog that is declared a menacing dog and is subject to two further infringements or involved in an attack which results in serious injury or death of an animal or person will be declared a dangerous dog. Unless there are extenuating circumstances the dog will be seized, and the matter will proceed to the Magistrates' Court. |
| **Education / Media** | Wellington Shire Council uses media releases and standing articles in its publications "Wellington Matters" and "Wellington News" in an effort to educate members of the public on responsible pet ownership and animal management matters.<br><br>The automatic telephone call waiting service includes key animal management messages such as registration of cats and dogs. |

## 1.7 Access to Animal Management Services

Wellington Shire Council has adopted a Customer Service Charter which documents required response timeframes to the community. The Local Laws team works within the context of the Customer Service Charter and offers a seven day, twenty-four-hour emergency response service for urgent domestic animal related matters, such as dog attacks, aggressive/dangerous dogs at large and serious animal welfare concerns.




## 1.8 Mandatory Requirements/Corresponding actions

This plan has been developed in accordance with section 68A of the Act and sets out a formalised approach to increasing the effectiveness and awareness of domestic animal management within Council.

This section outlines the strategic direction for Council's animal management function.

The table below identifies the specific requirements of the Act which Council are required to address against the contents of the plan.

| Specific Requirement | | 2.0 | 3.0 | 4.0 | 5.0 | 6.0 | 7.0 | 8.0 | 9.0 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S68A (2)(a) | Method on monitoring performance and evaluating effectiveness of services | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| S68A (2)(b) | Training of Authorised Officers | x | | | | x | | x | | |
| S68A (2)(c)(i) | Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership | | x | x | x | x | x | | | |
| S68A (2)(c)(ii) | Ensure compliance with Act & Regulations | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| S68A (2)(c)(iii) | Minimise risk of dog attacks | | | | x | x | | | | |
| S68A (2)(c)(iv) | Over population and high euthanasia rate | | | | | | x | | | |
| S68A (2)(c)(v) | Encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats | | x | | | | | | | |
| S68A (2)(c)(vi) | Minimise potential for nuisance | | | x | | | | | | |
| S68A (2)(c)(vii) | Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs | | | | x | x | | | | |
| S68A (2)(d) | Review of orders and local laws | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| S68A (2)(e) | Any other matters | | | | | | | x | x | x |
| S68A (2)(f) | Periodic evaluation of programs, services and strategies | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| S68A (3)(a) | Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x |

# 2 Training of Authorised Officers



## 2.1 Current Situation

Wellington Shire Council currently employs 5 full-time and 1 fixed-term Local Laws Officers, authorised under:

- section 72 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*;
- section 18 of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986;* and
- section 224 of the *Local Government Act 1989.*

For the purpose of this plan, three full-time equivalent positions are dedicated to domestic animal management, however additional staff are utilised for planned operations such as annual and unannounced DAB inspections, pet registration checks, animal welfare investigations and emergency situations.

Wellington Shire Council recognises the importance of skilled and qualified staff, and as such individual training plans are developed for each staff member as part of the performance appraisal and development process. A dedicated Staff Development Officer is employed by Council to ensure staff are provided with initial and ongoing training in addition to targeted professional development opportunities.

## 2.2 Current Training

| Subject | Frequency | Officer 1 | Officer 2 | Officer 3 | Officer 4 | Officer 5 | Officer 6 (Fixed-Term) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation** | As Required | Enrolled | 8 Yrs Experience | 27 Yrs Experience | 9 Yrs Experience | 5 Yrs Experience | 15 Yrs Experience |
| **Initial Induction** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **DPI AMO Seminar** | Annually | | X | X | X | X | |
| **DPI Canine Anatomy** | Annually | | X | X | | X | |
| **Restricted Breed Dogs Seminar** | Annually | | | X | X | X | |
| **Nuisance Dogs** | Annually | | X | X | X | | X |
| **Anatomy of Affidavits** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Presenting Evidence** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Preparing Correspondence** | As Required | | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Acting on Non-Compliance** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Cautions and Rights** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | |
| **First Aid Level II** | Bi annually | | | X | | | |
| **Prosecutions and Enforcement** | As Required | | X | X | | X | X |
| **Notes and Notebooks** | As Required | | X | X | X | X | |
| **Gathering Evidence** | As Required | | X | X | | X | X |
| **Preparing Briefs** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Ethics and Professional Conduct** | As Required | | X | X | X | X | X |
| **EEO, Anti Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination** | Annually | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Emergency Management** | Annually | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **4x4 Operation & Recovery** | As Required | | X | X | | X | X |
| **Domestic Violence and Local Laws** | Annually | | | X | X | X | X |
| **Statements of Evidence** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | |
| **Organisation Specific Training** | As Required | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| **Firearms Training** | As Required | X | X | | X | | |

## 2.3 Planned Training

Wellington Shire Council is committed to providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities for Local Laws staff. A staff development and training plan is developed annually, in consultation with individual staff, their supervisor, and the Organisation's Staff Development Officer.

## 2.4 Our Plans

**Objective 1:**

To maintain a trained and experienced workforce by developing and maintaining individual training, professional development and performance plans for all Local Laws Officers.

| Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Conduct individual performance and development plans, identifying any training or development requirements | Twelve monthly with six monthly reviews | Completion of individual performance and development plans, submitted to Manager Municipal Services |
| 2) Develop and maintain the annual Local Laws Staff training and development plan | Twelve monthly | Plan developed and submitted to Staff Development Officer |
| 3) Hold regular Local Laws team meetings in order to encourage a consistent and professional approach to animal management matters | Fortnightly | Minutes recorded and forwarded to Local Laws team |
| 4) Investigate further communication, conflict resolution and professional development training opportunities | Twelve monthly | Increased training activities as recorded in Council's training plan |



# 3 Registration and Identification



## 3.1 Current Situation

Domestic animal registrations and registration renewals are conducted by Council in accordance with Part 2 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994.*

Our data indicates an estimated compliance rate with dog registration of (63%) compared with the estimated number of dogs throughout the Shire. Of particular concern is the low number of cats registered (22%) against the estimated number throughout the Shire.

| | |
|---|---|
| Estimated number of cats: | 8,064 |
| Registered cats: | 1,752 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Estimated number of dogs: | 12,098 |
| Registered dogs: | 7,655 |

## 3.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Domestic Animals Act 1994, Part 2*<br>• *Domestic Animals Regulations 2005* |
| Local Law: | • Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.1: Keeping of Animals |
| Strategies: | • Council Plan 2013-2017 Part 7: Community Wellbeing |
| Procedures: | • Domestic Animal Registration/Re-registration Procedure<br>• Impounding of Unregistered Cats and Dogs Procedure<br>• Release of Impounded Animals to Identified Owners Procedure<br>• Wellington Shire Council Offence Management Guideline, section 3: Options for Council Local Laws Officers<br>• Wellington Shire Council Municipal Animal Emergency Plan |
| Other: | • Service delivery contract between Wellington Shire Council and Victoria Animal Aid Trust (requirement that all animals are registered before leaving pound)<br>• Maintenance of Council animal registration database |

## 3.3 Current Educational/Promotional Activities

- Microchipping and Registration information promoted on Council website
- Animal registration notices sent to registered pet owners early March each year
- Regular media releases regarding the importance of registration
- Good news stories about owners reunited with their pets due to registration
- Responsible pet ownership pamphlet drops in identified areas of concern
- Local Laws Officer presentations at schools and TAFEs



## 3.4 Current Compliance Activities

- Annual registration process
- Follow-up on pets not re-registered and registration documents returned to sender
- Follow-up on notifications of pets sold/rehoused
- Door knocks in areas identified via the customer complaint system
- Joint operations with Police, Sheriff's Office and Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) in areas known for non-compliance
- Impounding of unregistered and wandering cats and dogs
- No impounded animal leaves the pound unregistered
- Registration checkpoints in popular dog walking areas
- Seven day notices to comply (NTC) for minor breaches
- Infringement notices issued where NTC is ignored or for serious breaches (more than one pet unregistered)
- Prosecution in Magistrates Court for unpaid infringements
- Unannounced inspections of Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with registration and code of practice requirements.

## 3.5 Summary of Current Situation

**Council introduced lifetime registration tags.**




Lifetime tags simplify the registration and annual renewal processes.

Wellington Shire Council recognises the gap between estimated and registered domestic animals within the Shire, particularly cats and as such is committed to increasing educational and enforcement activities in an effort to close the gap.

Council will work with local media outlets to increase awareness of registration requirements and increase compliance activities such as door knocks, registration checks and follow ups on lapsed registrations and changes of ownership.

## 3.6 Our Plans

**Objective 2:**

To increase the number of pet registrations within Wellington Shire each year for the duration of this plan, with a particular emphasis on increasing compliance amongst cat owners.

| Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Continue to promote responsible pet ownership through the media, with an emphasis on microchipping/registering cats | Three monthly | At least one responsible pet ownership article released to media quarterly, as indicated in media plan |
| 2) Conduct targeted door knocks and letter drops in areas where high levels of non-compliance are noted | As required, commencing mid-April each year | Door knocks and letter drops completed and recorded |
| 3) Follow up on lapsed registrations | From mid-April, each year | Follow ups completed and recorded |
| 4) Follow up on change of ownership notifications | As required | Follow ups completed and recorded |
| 5) Discourage owners from not registering their animals by adopting a consistent enforcement program | As required | Number of notices to comply and infringements issued for unregistered animals |
| 6) Ensure no unregistered animal is released from the Pound | As required | All animals reunited with their owners are registered prior to release. |

# 4

# Nuisance Pets

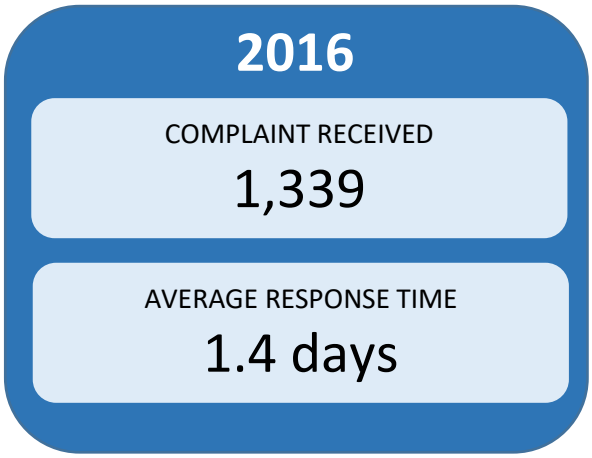


## 4.1 Current Situation

During 2016, Local Laws Officers responded to 1,339 domestic animal complaints, with an average initial response time of 1.4 days.

Complaints can be broadly categorised as follows:

- wandering/stray dogs/cats
- excess pets kept on premises
- barking dogs
- dogs walked without leads
- dog excrement
- abandoned dogs
- aggressive dogs
- unregistered cats/dogs




## 4.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Domestic Animals Act 1994, Part 3*<br>• *Domestic Animals Regulations 2005*<br>• *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* |
| Local Law: | • Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.1: Keeping of Animals<br>• Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.2: Litters of Animals<br>• Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.3: Animal Shelters<br>• Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.4: Animal Excrement<br>• Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.5: Control of Noise |
| Orders: | • Wellington Shire Council Dog on Lead Areas *(available on Council's website*) |
| Strategies: | • Council Plan 2013-2017 Part 7: Community Wellbeing |
| Procedures: | • Impounding of Stray Animals Procedure<br>• Nuisance (Barking) Dog Procedure<br>• Feral Cat Trap Hire Procedure<br>• Responding to After Hours Animal Complaints Procedure<br>• Wellington Shire Council Offence Management Guidelines, Section 3: Options for Council Local Laws Officers |
| Other: | • Service delivery contract between Wellington Shire Council and Victoria Animal Aid Trust (requirement to care for and release impounded and seized animals in accordance with legislation) |

## 4.3 Current Educational/Promotional Activities

- Dog on lead/doggy poo signage in popular dog walking areas/parks
- Dog poo bag dispensers in parks and popular areas
- "Doggy doo" and "Barking Dog" media releases
- Responsible pet ownership brochures sent with registration reminder notices
- Provision of advice/assistance to barking dog owners by Local Laws staff
- Use of the website as an education and information medium






## 4.4 Current Compliance Activities

- All nuisance complaints recorded and investigated
- Feral/trespassing cat trapping program available to residents
- Wandering cats/dogs collected by Local Laws staff and impounded if necessary
- Infringement notices issued to owners of repeatedly wandering pets
- Unannounced inspections of properties that have been identified as having numerous and ongoing barking complaints
- Follow-up visits with owners who have been identified as struggling to manage their pets

## 4.5 Summary of Current Situation

Wellington Shire Council recognises that nuisance dogs have the potential to cause friction between neighbours, particularly if not responded to in a timely and effective manner.

In early 2016, Local Laws staff developed a new process for dealing with barking dog complaints. The new process is designed to deliver a consistent approach to the issue by encouraging the complainant to assist Council by providing detailed information relating to the problem and issuing dog owners with advisory letters, notices and educational material.

A review of the process has indicated an approximate 75% resolution rate at the first point of contact with the dog owner. If the matter is not resolved after initial contact, WSC has monitoring and prosecution processes available if required.

In early 2017, WSC successfully prosecuted two dog owners for allowing their dogs to cause a nuisance over a prolonged period.

Local Laws staff have adopted a three-stage approach to wandering/at large cats/dogs, in an effort to engage, educate and if necessary enforce responsible pet ownership.

1. If the animal is registered and has no previous history of being at large, the animal will be returned to the owner where possible.

2. If the animal is registered and there is one previous incident of being at large, the animal will be returned to the owner where possible, and a verbal or written warning will be issued.

3. If the animal is registered and there is a history of being at large more than twice previously, the animal will be taken directly to the pound and an infringement notice will be served on the owner.

## 4.6 Our Plans

**Objective 3:**

To encourage responsible pet ownership compliance throughout the Shire by responding to, investigating and acting on animal nuisance and noise complaints in a timely ad effective matter.

| Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Continue to work closely with owners of nuisance/barking dogs to ensure a lasting solution to issues. | As required | Review on a case-by-case basis |
| 2) Publish quarterly media articles regarding responsible pet ownership | Three monthly | At least one responsible pet ownership article released to media quarterly as indicated in media plan |
| 3) Ensure 'doggy doo' bag dispensers are maintained and stocked | As required | Regular inspections to ensure dispensers are serviceable and stocked with plastic bags |
| 4) Explore the option of introducing a cat curfew in accordance with section 25 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* | Year 2 of Plan | Cat curfew proposal submitted to Council for consideration |
| 5) Responsible pet ownership brochures are readily available and provided when required | Twelve monthly | Ensure sufficient stock is ordered from DEDJTR annually |
| 6) Review and update dog on lead areas | Four yearly | Dog on lead areas are reviewed as scheduled and published on Council's website |

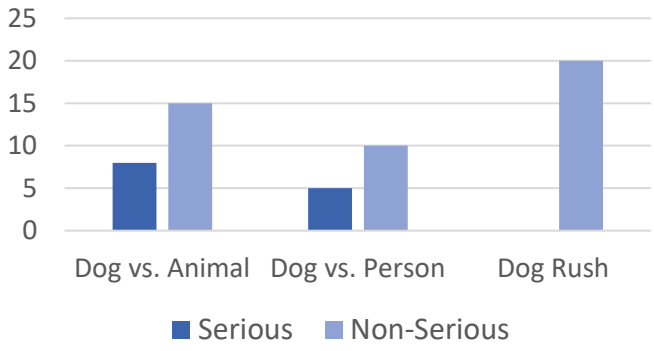
# 5 Dog Attacks



## 5.1 Current Situation

During 2016, there were 58 dog attack complaints received and investigated, as follows;

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dog vs. Animal | 8 serious | 15 non-serious |
| Dog vs. Person | 5 serious | 10 non-serious |
| Dog Rush | 0 serious | 20 non-serious |




## 5.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Domestic Animals Act 1994,* Division 2 |
| Local Law: | • Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.1: Keeping of Animals |
| Orders: | • Wellington Shire Council Dog on Lead Areas *(available on Council's website*) |
| Strategies: | • Council Plan 2013-2017 Part 7: Community Wellbeing |
| Procedures: | • Responding to After Hours Animal Complaints Procedure<br>• Wellington Shire Council Offence Management Guidelines, Section 3: Options for Council Local Laws Officers<br>• Dangerous/Menacing Dog Declaration Procedure<br>• Search Warrants and Seizure Procedure |
| Other: | . Service delivery contract between Wellington Shire Council and Victoria Animal Aid Trust (requirement to care for seized dogs) |

## 5.3 Current Educational/Promotional Activities

- Regular media articles relating to responsible pet ownership
- Media releases of successful prosecutions
- Responsible pet ownership booklets issued to new pet owners who adopt from the pound
- Reduced registration fees for dogs that have undergone approved obedience training
- Deliver presentations to TAFE students regarding safety around dogs
- Signage prominently displayed in dogs on leash areas
- DEDJTR pamphlets 'How to Prevent Dog Attacks in the Home' and 'Safety with Children' distributed via letter drops to high risk areas
- Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) program in schools



## 5.4 Current Compliance Activities

- Provision of a 24-hour response to dog attack complaints
- Dogs involved in serious attacks seized, if necessary with a search warrant
- All reported attacks thoroughly investigated and if necessary prosecuted
- Temperament testing of all impounded dogs prior to rehousing
- Regular patrols of areas identified as having a high incidence of wandering dogs

## 5.5 Summary of Current Situation

Wellington Shire Council responds to dog attack complaints as a matter of priority. Most complaints received, were responded to and investigations commenced within 1½ days.

The predominately rural nature of the Shire has contributed the number of serious attacks on animals, as most incidents involved livestock.

Most attacks involving people and/or their pets were caused by wandering dogs and occurred within 50 metres of the dog's property.

There were 14 matters that were successfully prosecuted. (10 serious attacks, 2 non-serious attacks, 2 rush incidents). The majority of non-serious matters were dealt with by way of infringement notices.

Most dogs involved in attacks were voluntary surrendered to Council Officers, or euthanised by a Vet at their owner's request[4].

## 5.6 Our Plans

**Objective 4:**

Reduce the number of serious and non-serious dog attack incidents on both people and other animals by encouraging responsible pet ownership, increasing safety awareness around dogs and enforcing legislation.

| Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Continue to thoroughly investigate and if necessary prosecute reports of dog attacks | As required | Outcomes of all investigations recorded on Council's information system |
| 2) Promote safety around dogs on the Council website | Ongoing | Safety around dogs and how to report dog attack information published on website |
| 3) Utilise DEDJTR Declared Dog Registry to identify menacing/dangerous/restricted breed dogs | As required | Details regularly audited and updated as required |
| 4) Media releases after successful dog attack prosecutions | Ongoing | Media articles published in local newspapers |
| 5) In partnership with Victorian Animal Aid Trust, continue to provide presentations regarding dog safety with TAFE students undertaking animal management studies | Twelve monthly | Staff member presents safety around dogs talk annually |
| 6) Work closely with other agencies such as VicPol and RSPCA to identify and respond to reports of neglected/aggressive dogs, which could lead to more serious incidents, such as attacks | As required | Combined operations with RSPCA and VicPol conducted |
| 7) Work closely with community interest groups, such as cycle groups, park users, neighbourhood watch groups and dog obedience clubs to promote safety around dogs | Ongoing | Regular meetings with community groups, supported by media articles promoting safety around dogs and responsible pet ownership. |
| 8) Promote 'Pet Town' learning tool for pre-school and primary school children on Council's website | Ongoing | Permission gained from DEDJTR to promote Pet Town on Council's website |

[4] Surrendering or euthanising dogs involved in attacks does not grant dog owners automatic immunity from prosecution

# 6 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs



## 6.1 Current Situation

Wellington Shire Council actively identifies and manages declared dogs, in accordance with Division 3, 3A and 3B of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994.*

A register of declared dogs is maintained on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry. Annual and unannounced visits are conducted by Authorised Officers to ensure compliance with legislated requirements for the keeping of declared dogs. Non-compliance is dealt with swiftly. If necessary, the dogs are seized and the appropriate legal action is taken.

**DECLARED DOGS IN WELLINGTON SHIRE:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dangerous (Guard Dog): | 2 |
| Declared Dangerous: | 1 |
| Declared Menacing: | 3 |
| Restricted Breed: (listed as missing) | 1 |

## 6.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Domestic Animals Act 1994,* Division 3, 3A, 3B<br>• *Domestic Animals Regulations 2005* |
| Local Law: | • Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.1: Keeping of Animals |
| Strategies: | • Council Plan 2013-2017 Part 7: Community Wellbeing |
| Procedures: | • Responding to After Hours Animal Complaints Procedure<br>• Wellington Shire Council Offence Management Guidelines, Section 3: Options for Council Local Laws Officers<br>• Dangerous/Menacing Dog Declaration Procedure<br>• Search Warrants and Seizure Procedure |
| Other: | • Service delivery contract between Wellington Shire Council and Victoria Animal Aid Trust (requirement to care for seized dogs)<br>• Maintenance of Council animal registration database<br>• DEDJTR Vic BARK mobile phone application<br>• Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria (as amended) |

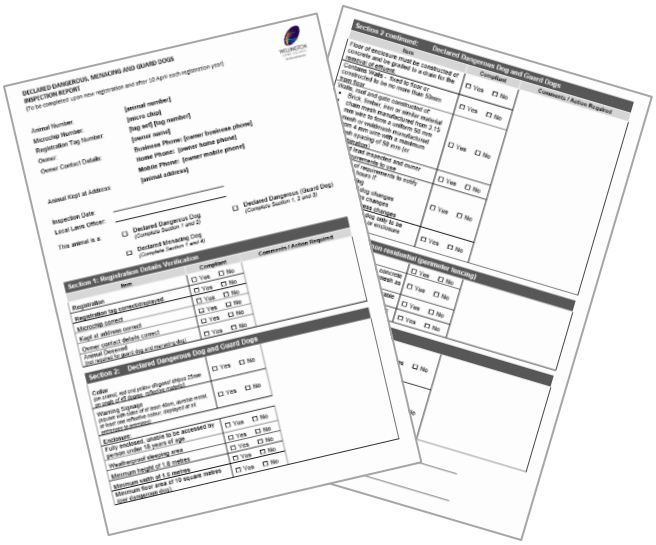
## 6.3 Current Educational/Promotional Activities

- All owners of declared menacing or dangerous dogs are provided information on their legislative obligations.
- Information on reporting or identifying dangerous dogs is available at Council service centres and on Council's website.
- Owners of guard dogs are identified and advised of their legislative responsibilities.



## 6.4 Current Compliance Activities

- Respond to complaints of dangerous/aggressive/attacking dogs, and if necessary initiate declaration process.
- Follow up inspections and advice to owners of dogs that have been declared dangerous in order to ensure legislative compliance.
- Ensure all declared dog's details are accurately recorded on the Victorian Dangerous Dog Register
- Ensure all declared dog details are accurately recorded on the Council's domestic animal database.



## 6.5 Summary of Current Situation

In each instance where Council considers declaring a dog either dangerous or menacing, consultation occurs between the owner of the dog, the Local Laws Officer involved and the Manager Municipal Services to ensure procedural fairness. A comprehensive report is compiled and reviewed prior to any decision being made. The report will include, but is not limited to:

- summarise the incident;
- calculates the nature and seriousness of the threat to public safety;
- summarises any previous history of offences by the dog (or owner);
- notes the outcome of a Vet assessment of the dog's temperament (aggression test);
- lists any other relevant information;

The relatively small number of declared dogs within the Shire ensures a high level of oversight by Local Laws staff. All declared dogs are inspected at least annually. In 2016, Council increased registration fees for declared dogs to (except for guard dogs) to $200 to cover Council's increased monitoring and enforcement costs. Unannounced inspections occur if there is any concern that legislative responsibilities are not being complied with

## 6.6 Our Plans

**Objective 5:**

Maintain continued compliance with legislation relating to declared and restricted breed dogs.

| | Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | Continue to inspect properties where declared dangerous/guard dogs are housed | Twelve monthly | Reported annually in DAM Plan |
| 2) | Continue to attend industry information sessions on restricted breed/dangerous dogs | As available | Recorded in individual staff training records |
| 3) | Maintain the Victorian Declared Dogs Registry by providing timely and accurate information | As required | Regular audits of information contained in the registry by Coordinator Local Laws. |

# 7

# Overpopulation and High Euthanasia Rates



## 7.1 Current Situation

On 1 July 2015, Council entered into an agreement with Victorian Animal Aid Trust (Animal Aid) for the provision of its pound and animal shelter services.

The agreement requires Animal Aid to comply with the Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds. Six monthly audits are conducted by Council staff to ensure compliance with the service specification audit and to ensure all animals are treated humanely, and health and welfare matters are suitably addressed.



## 7.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Domestic Animals Act 1994*<br>• *Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds* |
| Local Law: | • Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.1: Keeping of Animals<br>• Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.2: Litters of Animals |
| Strategies: | • Council Plan 2013-2017 Part 7: Community Wellbeing |
| Procedures: | • Impounding of Unregistered Cats and Dogs Procedure<br>• Pet Surrender Process<br>• Feral Cat Trap Hire Procedure<br>• Responding to After Hours Animal Complaints Procedure |
| Other: | • Service delivery contract between Wellington Shire Council and Victoria Animal Aid Trust dated 2 June 2015 (requirement to care for/rehouse impounded animals) |

## 7.3 Current Educational/Promotional Activities

- Weekly 'Pet of the Week' advertisement placed in local newspapers
- Responsible pet ownership material provided to new pet owners
- Feral cat trapping program
- Cats/dogs for adoption are placed on the WSC website and Animal Aid website.
- A rolling slideshow of impounded animals that are available for adoption is displayed at the front counter at the Sale Service Centre
- Victorian Animal Aid keep a register at the pound, where residents can report lost and found animals. The register is actively followed up by staff.
- All unclaimed/surrendered animals desexed before adoption.



## 7.4 Current Compliance Activities

- Respond to and investigate complaints of excessive animals on properties
- Investigate reports of unregistered cat/dog breeders
- Work closely with social agencies to assist cat 'hoarders'
- Facilitate feral cat trapping programs in identified areas
- Impound wandering cats/dogs with a view to rehousing if owners not located

## 7.5 Summary of Current Situation

Through Animal Aid's local presence and their Coldstream animal shelter, unclaimed impounded and surrendered pets have an increased opportunity of successful rehousing.

Of the 738 pets impounded in 2016, 70% were successfully returned to their owners. 85% of pets not reclaimed or were surrendered to Council were successfully rehoused. These figures indicate a successful partnership between Animal Aid and Wellington Shire Council, however, both parties recognise there is still work to do.

In 2016, Council officers met with local veterinarians and Animal Aid to discuss a request from the Threatened Species Commissioner to assist with the fight against extinction by feral cats.

It was decided a multi-party approach was required:

- Wellington Shire Council staff would identify feral cat colonies and implement a trapping program.
- Trapped cats were delivered and assessed by qualified veterinary staff to establish whether they were suitable for rehoming. Those deemed unsuitable would be euthanized.
- Animal Aid would accept any cat identified as suitable for rehoming and include then in the pet adoption program after sterilisation.

Over the past twelve months, 668 cats have been trapped as part of the program. 412 were deemed suitable for rehousing

## 7.6 Our Plans

**Objective 6:**

Reduce the feral cat population and euthanasia rates of unwanted cats and dogs by raising public awareness of the associated issues.

| | Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | Continue to actively promote Animal Aid pet adoption program through council website and local media | Weekly | Pet of the week published weekly in Wellington News |
| 2) | Promote responsible pet ownership, particularly the importance of desexing and keeping pets at home at night | Three monthly | At least one responsible pet ownership article released to media quarterly, as indicated in media plan |
| 3) | Continue to audit service specification requirement of contract between Animal Aid and Council | Six monthly | Audit completed and submitted to Manager Municipal Services |
| 4) | Continue with feral cat trap program in identified problem areas | As required | Reduced number of complaints in affected areas |
| 5) | Investigate introduction of cat curfew during night-time hours | Ongoing | Completed review of Local Law 4: Environment |
| 6) | Maintain feral/trespassing cat trap service to residents | Ongoing | Adequate stock of traps<br>Booking system maintained<br>Program advertised on website |

# 8 Domestic Animal Businesses



## 8.1 Current Situation

Wellington Shire Council currently has 23 Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB's) registered within the Shire.

All registered DABs are inspected annually for compliance with the relevant Code of Practice. Continued registration as a DAB is conditional on compliance with the relevant Code. Breaches of the Code are dealt with by way of notices to comply and work schedules. Continued major breaches are dealt with by way of prosecution and/or refusal by Council to re-register.

**DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES IN WELLINGTON SHIRE:**

| | |
|---|---|
| Boarding Establishment: | 9 |
| Pound/Shelter: | 1 |
| Breeding/Rearing: | 12 |
| Pet Shop: | 1 |

## 8.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Domestic Animals Act 1994*<br>• *Planning and Environment Act 1987*<br>• Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds<br>• Code of Practice for the Operation of Boarding Establishments<br>• Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet Shops<br>• Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Establishments<br>• Application Organisations |
| Local Law: | • Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.1: Keeping of Animals<br>• Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.2: Litters of Animals<br>• Local Law 4: 2011, Environment 7.3: Animal Shelters |
| Strategies: | • Council Plan 2013-2017 Part 7: Community Wellbeing |
| Procedures: | • Annual DAB Inspection Program<br>• Wellington Shire Council Offence Management Guideline, Section 3: Options for Council Local Laws Officers |

## 8.3 Current Educational/Promotional Activities

- Inclusion of all DAB proprietors in the consultation process for this plan
- Regular interaction and communication with DAB proprietors in order to obtain/maintain positive working relationships
- Promotion of DEDJTR and DAB publications and website resources
- Provision of advice relating to legislative requirements to DAB proprietors



## 8.4 Current Compliance Activities

- Initial and annual registration processes
- Annual and if necessary unannounced inspections of all DAB's, to determine compliance with the relevant Code of Practice
- Follow-up of identified instances of noncompliance, including notices to comply and if necessary suspension of registration and prosecution
- Regular monitoring of internet pet for sale sites (such as dogzonline and facebook) to identify any unregistered DAB's that may be operating within the Shire
- Combined operations with RSPCA, Dogs Victoria and Victoria Police where illegal activities are reported/suspected

## 8.5 Summary of Current Situation

A priority of Local Laws staff is to achieve compliance and ensure the welfare of the animals in their care. This is achieved through maintaining a positive relationship with DAB proprietors, in an effort to ensure open and transparent communications and interactions.

All complaints relating to DAB's are investigated, regardless of the source. Apart from anonymous complaints, all complainants are contacted and advised of any action taken in response to their concerns.

In 2015, in response to significant changes to the Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses, Council reviewed DAB (Breeder) registration fees, with a view to recovering costs associated with the increased monitoring and compliance activities the amended Code required.

In consultation with DAB proprietors, annual registration fees were raised from $250 annually to $2500 (plus $15 per fertile bitch) annually.

The increased fees allowed Council to employ an additional Local Laws Officer, to assist with DAB monitoring and compliance at no additional cost to the ratepayers.

## 8.6 Our Plans

**Objective 7:**

To ensure Domestic Animal Businesses within the Shire are identified and regulated in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and relevant Codes of Practice.

| | Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | Attend DEDJTR animal management seminars in order to remain conversant with updated legislation relating to DAB's | As required | Seminars attended by Local Laws staff and recorded in individual training records |
| 2) | Investigate all complaints of illegal pet breeding establishments | Ongoing | All complaints and responses recorded on Council's electronic record management system |
| 3) | Maintain an accurate register of all DAB's within the Shire | Ongoing | DAB Register (LL25) periodically audited to ensure accuracy |
| 4) | Maintain an inspection schedule to ensure all registered DAB's are inspected at least annually | Ongoing | Inspection schedules and subsequent audits recorded on Council's electronic record management system |
| 5) | Conduct unannounced inspections of premises in response to complaints/concerns from members of the public | As required | All complaints and responses recorded on Council's electronic record management system |
| 6) | Draft business case in increase Authorised Officer staffing by one EFT to assist with increased monitoring of the Code of Practice | Year one of Plan | Business case approved and additional staff member employed |

# 9 Animals In Emergency



## 9.1 Current Situation

Wellington Shire Council has historically been impacted by major floods and fires, which have had a devastating effect on the environment, property, the wellbeing of residents and their animals.

The welfare of animals can be a deciding factor for people in making decisions about their personal welfare, including evacuating a threatened property or seeking emergency shelter.

Animal owners and carers have the ultimate 'duty of care' to plan and provide for the needs of animals in their care. However as recently witnessed, several organisations and groups share animal welfare responsibility and together have an enormous capacity and willingness to assist affected people and attend to the needs of impacted animals.

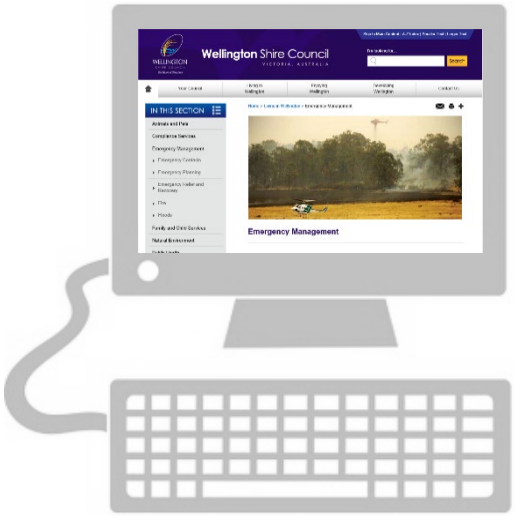
Wellington Shire Council is responsible for the coordination, provision, and operation of emergency relief centres and by doing so is also responsible for the coordination and provision of safe refuges for affected animals and the management of animal welfare at its relief centres.

## 9.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Emergency Management Act 1986* |
| Strategies: | • Council Plan 2013-2017 Part 7: Community Wellbeing |
| Procedures: | • Wellington Shire Council Municipal Emergency Management Plan<br>• Wellington Shire Council Emergency Animal Welfare Plan |
| Other | • Emergency Management Manual Victoria<br>• Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (DEDJTR)<br>• Guidelines for Managing Animals at Emergency Relief Centres, Assembly Area or Other Places of Emergency Shelter (DEDJTR) |

## 9.3 Current Educational/Promotional Activities

- Emergency information available on Council's website
- Copies of Emergency Animal Welfare Plan issued to DEDJTR and Animal Aid Gippsland
- Annual emergency management refresher training to Local Laws staff



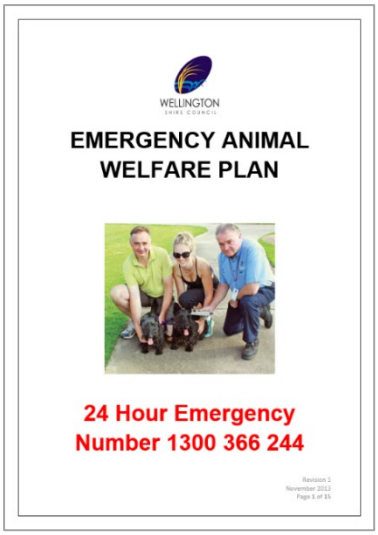

## 9.4 Current Compliance Activities

- Annual review of Wellington Shire Council Emergency Management Plan ensuring information and contact details are current
- Equipment for identified safe refuges available for deployment at short notice, such as cages, bedding, food, bowls, logs, identification tags etc.

## 9.5 Summary of Current Situation

In January 2013 Council experienced a devastating bush fire which affected a large number of pet, bird, horse and livestock owners.

Providing safe refuge for animals allowed the owners to cope with the incident, knowing their animals were safe and cared for. Although well managed at the time, the incident was the catalyst for the formal development of the Wellington Shire Council Emergency Animal Welfare Plan. The plan continues to be reviewed annually to ensure currency.







## 9.6 Our Plans

**Objective 8:**

To remain in a state of constant readiness in order to respond rapidly and appropriately to any emergency involving people, their pets and animals.

| | Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1) | Continue to conduct annual audits of the Emergency Animal Welfare Plan in order to ensure information and contact details are current | Twelve monthly | Wellington Shire Council Emergency Animal Welfare Plan is current and correct |
| 2) | Ensure sufficient emergency response equipment is available for short notice deployment | Six monthly | Stock take of equipment is conducted and recorded. |
| 3) | Conduct annual inspections of safe refuges to ensure they are suitable for temporary accommodation of pets/animals | Twelve monthly | Refuges are inspected and the results recorded |

# 10 Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan



## 10.1 Current Situation

Section 68A (1) of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* requires every Council to prepare a domestic animal management plan every four years.

The current plan was adopted by Council on 3 October 2017, prior to submission to DEDJTR.

Section 68A (3) of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* requires every Council to:

(a) Review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate amend the plan;
(b) Provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan;
(c) Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

The annual review of the plan is due to be submitted to the DEDJTR by 3 November 2017.

## 10.2 Policies/Procedures

| | |
|---|---|
| Legislative: | • *Domestic Animals Act 1994, Section 68A* |

## 10.3 Our Plans

**Objective 9:**

To maintain compliance with the requirements of section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* by conducting annual and four yearly reviews of Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan.

| Activity | Frequency | Evaluation |
|---|---|---|
| 1) Prepare a domestic animal management plan every four years | Four yearly | Compliance with section 68A (1) of the DAA 1994. Plan submitted to Secretary DEDJTR |
| 2) Conduct annual reviews of the domestic animal management plan | Twelve monthly | Compliance with section 68A (3) of the DAA 1994. Review submitted to Secretary DEDJTR |
| 3) Publish an evaluation of the implementation of the plan in Council's annual report | Twelve monthly | Compliance with section 68A (3) of the DAA 1994. Evaluation published in annual report. |



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
*The Heart of Gippsland*

**Sale Service Centre**
18 Desailly Street (PO Box 506), Sale Victoria 3850
**Tel** 1300 366 244
**Fax** 03 5142 3501

**Yarram Service Centre**
156 Grant Street, Yarram Victoria 3971
**Tel** 03 5182 5100

**Web** www.wellington.vic.gov.au
**Email** enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au

# Wellington Shire Council
# Domestic Animal Management Plan
# 2018 Review
## October

| Objective 1 | To maintain a trained and experienced workforce by developing and maintaining individual training, professional development and performance plans for all Local Laws Officers. |
|---|---|

- Individual performance and development plans completed July 2018 and uploaded to the Wellington Shire Council Learning and Development System
- Staff training plan developed and uploaded to the Wellington Shire Council Learning and Development System
- Team meetings held fortnightly, minutes recorded and distributed to all team members
- Occupational Health and Safety, Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Harassment, Record Keeping and Privacy, Fraud and Corruption Awareness, Community Engagement Awareness, Manual Handling, Mental Health First Aid and Situational Awareness training provided to staff
- One staff member completed certificate IV in Government Compliance and Animal Management

| Objective 2 | To increase the number of pet registrations within Wellington Shire each year for the duration of this plan, with a particular emphasis on increasing compliance amongst cat owners. |
|---|---|

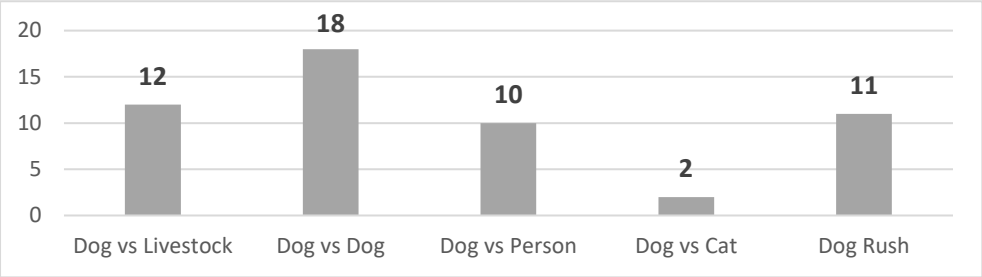
- Number of registered cats = 1887 (an increase of 138 or 7.7% from October 2017)
- Number of registered dogs = 8325 (an increase of 670 or 8.75% from October 2017)
- Cat registration article published November 2017
- Pet registrations reminder published February and April 2018
- ‘Dogs, their Owners and Public Places’ article published July 2018
- Door knocks conducted in Manns Beach, Robinsons Beach, Yarram and Sale
- Lapsed registration article published October 2018
- Door knocks following up on lapsed registrations throughout the shire commenced October 2018
- Follow-ups on change of ownership conducted and recorded
- 37 Notices to Comply, 30 Infringements and 4 Prosecutions for unregistered pets completed last year

| Objective 3 | To encourage responsible pet ownership compliance throughout the Shire by responding to, investigating and acting on animal nuisance and noise complaints in a timely and effective matter. |
|---|---|

- 1151 Domestic animal complaints received in the past twelve months, with an initial response time of 1.36 days.
- 110 Barking/Nuisance dog complaints received, with an initial resolution rate of 78%.
- Successful introduction of electronic dog silencers, which are available on short-term loans to owners of dogs that bark excessively.
- 24 infringements issued to owners of wandering/nuisance dogs and cats
- prosecutions for dogs at large (day and night)
- Dog bag dispensers continue to be serviced regularly
- Cat registration article published November 2017
- Pet registrations reminder published February, April and October 2018
- 'Dogs, their Owners and Public Places' article published July 2018

| Objective 4 | Reduce the number of serious and non-serious dog attack incidents on both people and other animals by encouraging responsible pet ownership, increasing safety awareness around dogs and enforcing legislation. |
|---|---|

- 53 Dog attacks (serious and non-serious) reported to Council during reporting period, as follows:




- All thoroughly investigated and recorded on Council's information system
- Three infringements issued for non-serious dog attacks during reporting year
- Seven successful serious dog attack prosecutions during the reporting year
- Victorian Declared Dog Registry regularly updated
- Combined operations with RSPCA and Vic Police conducted and recorded
- Coordinator Local Laws attended meetings with neighbourhood watch groups (Maffra and Stratford) and Wellington Access and Inclusion Advisory Group

| Objective 5 | Maintain continued compliance with legislation relating to declared and restricted breed dogs. |
|---|---|

- All properties housing declared dogs inspected and results recorded
- No industry information sessions on restricted breed/dangerous dogs offered during reporting period
- Victorian Declared Dog Registry maintained and updated as required

| Objective 6 | Reduce the feral cat population and euthanasia rates of unwanted cats and dogs by raising public awareness of the associated issues. |
|---|---|

- Pet of The Week published weekly in the Gippsland Times
- Internet link to Victorian Animal Aid adoption website page on Council's website
- Cat registration article published November 2017
- Pet registrations reminder published February, April and October 2018
- Six-Monthly Pound contract specification audits conducted and recorded
- Wellington Shire Councillors inspected Pound and Shelter 18 October 2018
- 400 feral cats removed from the environment during the reporting period
- Feral/trespassing cat trap service to residents maintained

| Objective 7 | To ensure Domestic Animal Businesses within the Shire are identified and regulated in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and relevant Codes of Practice. |
|---|---|

- Two staff attended DEDJTR Animal Management Seminar in April this year
- Two staff attended DEDJTR Commercial Dog Breeder/Auditor Training in October 2018
- All complaints relating to illegal pet breeding operations investigated and recorded
- 39 Dogs and Puppies seized from an alleged illegal breeding operation in July 2018. Matter is currently before the Magistrates' Court
- Register of all Domestic Animal Businesses maintained and updated when required
- All Domestic Animal Businesses inspected and audited in April-May 2018
- Unannounced inspections conducted of all breeding establishments where non-compliance with relevant Code of Practice suspected.
- Business case for additional staffing submitted and approved. An additional 0.8 EFT Local Laws Officer appointed to assist monitoring of Domestic Animal Businesses.

| Objective 8 | To remain in a state of constant readiness in order to respond rapidly and appropriately to any emergency involving people, their pets and animals. |
|---|---|

- Annual review of Emergency Animal Welfare Plan conducted April 2018 and posted on Council's website
- Six-monthly stocktakes of emergency response equipment conducted
- Inspections of safe refuges conducted in April 2018

| Objective 9 | To maintain compliance with the requirements of section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* by conducting annual and four yearly reviews of Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan. |
|---|---|

- 2017 – 2021 Domestic Animal Management Plan prepared and submitted to DEDJTR on 5 October 2017
- Annual Review conducted October 2018 and submitted
- Evaluation of the implementation of the Plan published in Council's 2017/18 annual report

# Wellington Shire Council
# Domestic Animal Management Plan
# 2019 Review
## October

| Objective 1 | To maintain a trained and experienced workforce by developing and maintaining individual training, professional development and performance plans for all Local Laws Officers. |
|---|---|

- Individual performance and development plans completed August 2019 and uploaded to the Wellington Shire Council Learning and Development System.
- Staff training plan developed and uploaded to the Wellington Shire Council Learning and Development System.
- Team meetings held fortnightly, minutes recorded and distributed to all team members.
- Local Laws officer fixed-term position altered to permanent to provide ongoing support to the team.
- Local Laws administrative support staffing increased by 0.5 full-time equivalent.
- All team members underwent training in Fraud and Corruption Awareness, Child Safe Standards, Community Engagement Awareness, Human Rights, Manual Handling Training, Prevention of Alcohol and Drug Use in the Workplace, Prevention of Workplace Bullying and Harassment and Situational Awareness.
- New staff completed a comprehensive induction training package.
- Five staff attended Animal Management Information Sessions provided by Animal Welfare Victoria.

| Objective 2 | To increase the number of pet registrations within Wellington Shire each year for the duration of this plan, with a particular emphasis on increasing compliance amongst cat owners. |
|---|---|

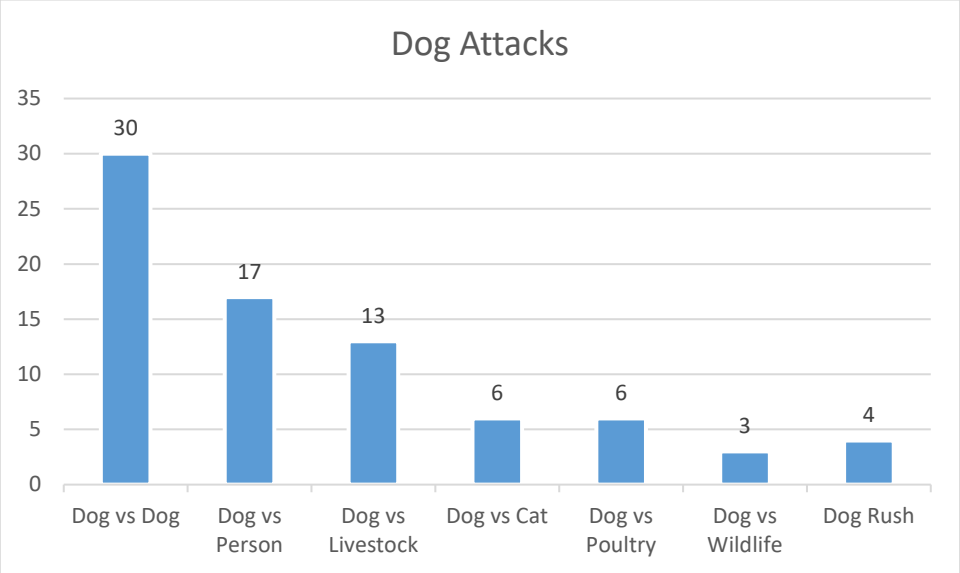
- In July 2019, the Local Laws team embarked on a program to increase pet registrations throughout the Shire, which included media articles on the importance to register pets, lapsed registration follow-ups, and door knocks to identify unregistered pets. As of 1 October 2019, an additional **841** dogs and **185** cats have been registered.
- In addition to the program above, Local Laws staff issued **44** Notices to Comply, **118** infringements and conducted **46** prosecutions for failure to register/renew registration during the reporting period.
- Follow-ups on change of ownership conducted and recorded.

| Objective 3 | To encourage responsible pet ownership compliance throughout the Shire by responding to, investigating and acting on animal nuisance and noise complaints in a timely and effective matter. |
|---|---|

- **1258** Domestic animal complaints received in the past twelve months, with an initial response time of **1.21** days.
- **216** Barking/Nuisance dog complaints received, with an initial resolution rate of 72%.
- **43** infringements issued to owners of wandering/nuisance dogs and cats.
- **7** Prosecutions for dogs at large (day and night).
- Dog bag dispensers continue to be serviced regularly.
- The importance of pet registration article published January 2019.
- Pet registrations reminder published April and July 2019.
- 'Dealing with Barking Dogs' publication drafted for inclusion in Council's website.
- Dogs, their Owners and Public Places' article published November 2018.
- Local Laws Coordinator attended local Neighbourhood Watch meetings to discuss responsible pet ownership.
- Letter drops (including responsible pet ownership and barking dog brochures) conducted in areas identified as having a high number of animal complaints.

| Objective 4 | Reduce the number of serious and non-serious dog attack incidents on both people and other animals by encouraging responsible pet ownership, increasing safety awareness around dogs and enforcing legislation. |
|---|---|

- **79** dog attacks (serious and non-serious) reported to Council during the reporting period, as follows




- It is disappointing to note an increase in the number of dog attack incidents compared to last year, despite a public awareness campaign via the media regarding dogs and public places, and an increase of dog attacks.
- All dog attack reports thoroughly investigated and recorded on Council's information system.
- Four infringements issued for non-serious dog attacks.
- Twenty-two successful dog attack prosecutions (9 Serious, 6 Non-Serious, 7 Dog Rush) during the reporting period. Penalties ranged from a 12-month good behaviour bond to a $2,400 fine.
- Victorian Declared Dog Registry regularly reviewed and updated.

- Local Laws staff continued to work closely with other agencies such as VicPol and RSPCA to identify and respond to reports of neglected/aggressive dogs, which could lead to more serious incidents, such as attacks.

| **Objective 5** | Maintain continued compliance with legislation relating to declared and restricted breed dogs. |
|---|---|

- All properties housing declared dogs inspected and results recorded.
- Victorian Declared Dog Registry maintained and updated as required.

| **Objective 6** | Reduce the feral cat population and euthanasia rates of unwanted cats and dogs by raising public awareness of the associated issues. |
|---|---|

- Pet of The Week published weekly in the Gippsland Times.
- Internet link to Victorian Animal Aid adoption website page on Council's website.
- The importance of pet registration article published January 2019.
- Pet registrations reminder published April and July 2019.
- Six-Monthly Pound contract specification audits conducted and recorded.
- **167** feral cats removed from the environment during the reporting period.
- Feral/trespassing cat trap service to residents maintained.
- 'Adopt a Pawsome Cat' article published in the Wellington News, July 2019.
- New adoption cattery currently under construction at the Council's Pound and Shelter. Due for completion November 2019.
- **118** cats, **84** kittens, **49** dogs and **15** pups successfully rehomed during the reporting period.

| **Objective 7** | To ensure Domestic Animal Businesses within the Shire are identified and regulated in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and relevant Codes of Practice. |
|---|---|

- All complaints relating to illegal pet breeding operations investigated and recorded.
- Three unregistered breeding businesses successfully prosecuted during the reporting period. Penalties ranged from a 12-month Good Behaviour Bond plus $4000 donation to the RSPCA, to a 12-month Community Corrections Order plus 10 year Banning Order from owning dogs, and $12,987 costs associated with the seizure of thirty-nine dogs and prosecution.
- One unregistered breeding business prosecution still before the Courts.
- Register of all Domestic Animal Businesses maintained and updated as required.
- All Domestic Animal Businesses inspected and audited during reporting period.
- Unannounced inspections conducted of all breeding establishments where non-compliance with relevant Code of Practice suspected.
- Successful provision of data for the newly implemented Pet Exchange Register completed.
- Council continues to respond to information requests from Animal Welfare Victoria in relation to Commercial Breeder applications.
- Wellington Shire breeding establishment first in Victoria to obtain commercial breeder approval.
- An additional administration role (0.5 EFT) approved to support staff in the administration of Domestic Animal Businesses.

| Objective 8 | To remain in a state of constant readiness in order to respond rapidly and appropriately to any emergency involving people, their pets and animals. |
|---|---|

- In January 2019, Wellington Shire was significantly impacted by a bushfire in the Rosedale area. Local Laws staff enacted the Emergency Animal Welfare Plan and by doing so, were able to provide support to animal owners affected by the fire. The incident was an ideal opportunity to review the Emergency Animal Welfare Plan. No significant issues were identified.
- Six-monthly stocktakes of emergency response equipment conducted.
- Inspections of safe refuges conducted in January 2019.

| Objective 9 | To maintain compliance with the requirements of section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* by conducting annual and four yearly reviews of Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan. |
|---|---|

- 2017 – 2021 Domestic Animal Management Plan prepared and submitted to DEDJTR on 5 October 2017.
- Annual Review conducted October 2019 and submitted.
- Evaluation of the implementation of the Plan published in Council's 2017/18 annual report.