



Mansfield Shire

2026 - 2029

Domestic Animal Management Plan



Mansfield Shire Council **Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029**

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) every Council is required to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) every four years.

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Mansfield Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

1. Introduction & Context

1.1 Purpose of Domestic Animal Management Plan

The purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is to outline Council's strategic approach to the delivery of animal management services throughout the municipality for the 2026-2029 period.

The DAMP has been developed in accordance with Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and will be reviewed annually.

It outlines programs, services and strategies the Council will use to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership, utilising a combination of educational and regulatory approaches.

1.2 Legislative Framework

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), Council is required to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) every four years. The Plan addresses strategies and services that Council must provide in relation to domestic animals – ie. dogs and cats.

A Domestic Animal Management Plan prepared by Council must -:

- ▶ Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services it provides are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Act and the regulations.
- ▶ Outline programs for the training of Authorised Officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act.
- ▶ Outline programs, services, and strategies Council intends to pursue to:
 - Promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
 - Ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any associated legislation
 - Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
 - Address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
 - Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
 - Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
 - Effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs, and restricted breed dogs in the municipality and ensure that those dogs are housed in compliance with the Act and Regulations.
- ▶ Provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and the Local Law, with a view to determining whether further orders of Local Laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats are desirable or required.
- ▶ Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in its municipality that Council thinks necessary.
- ▶ Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the Plan.

Council is also required to review and where appropriate amend this Plan and publish an

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evaluation of the implementation of the Plan in Council's Annual Report.

1.3 Process Applied in Developing the Plan

A Community Engagement Program and associated communication program was initiated in October 2025 to give residents and other interested parties the opportunity to provide feedback on how Domestic Animals should be managed in the Shire.

The engagement program was made available through Council's "Engage Mansfield" platform on the website in the form of a structured survey based on several key areas of control, pet ownership requirements and sharing of information, and links were provided via social media and all of Council's communication channels - as well as a media release to print channels to engage with our communities.

Posters were provided to local Vets and were distributed in areas used frequently by pet owners, such as our off-leash parks.

The earlier Council Plan, results of this survey and Council's internal data have provided the foundation for this updated Plan.

There were 304 views of the consultation page and 8 responses. The submissions gave Council an opportunity to reflect on what our community considered important and to ensure the plan considered the views raised.

Feedback was specific and representative of issues that are often raised with Council, with practical suggestions for enforcement, education and infrastructure improvements.

Key Findings and Community Priorities were identified as follows:

- ▶ Off-leash areas were sufficient.
- ▶ Possible restricted times for use of off-leash areas
- ▶ More ranger patrols/enforcement
- ▶ Increased education and communication
- ▶ Cleaner public spaces (dog waste management)

The updated Plan concentrates on management of dogs and cats to meet State Government requirements. The draft Plan will undergo a further community consultation process and Council will review and consider further changes required before adoption and submission to the Minister.

1.4 Demographic and Profile of Council

Mansfield Shire is home to the dramatic landscapes of Victoria's High Country. Visitors and locals agree you can really sense the personality of the place – it's about lifestyle, farming, all things outdoors and a can-do attitude.

Less than two hours north-east of Melbourne, our municipality covers 3,843 square kilometres. Our Shire is the gateway to Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Alpine Resorts, the Alpine National Park, and Lake Eildon - Victoria's largest inland water storage. Five major river systems, the Delatite, Howqua, Jamieson, Big and Goulburn Rivers, have their headwaters in the Shire and all flow into Lake Eildon.

Our Shire's strong economy is underpinned by agriculture, tourism, construction, and property. It

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is supported by a diverse range of commercial and service sectors.

The Mansfield Shire Council Estimated Resident Population for 2024 is 10,782, with a population density of 2.81 persons per square km.

Mansfield Shire is bounded by the Strathbogie Shire, Benalla and Wangaratta in the north, Wellington in the east, Baw Baw Shire in the South and Yarra Ranges and Murrindindi Shire in the west.

Mansfield Shire Council Community Profile provides demographic analysis for the City and smaller areas within it based on results from the 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses of Population and Housing. The profile is updated with population estimates when the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) releases new figures.

Population

10,782

ABS ERP 2024

Land area

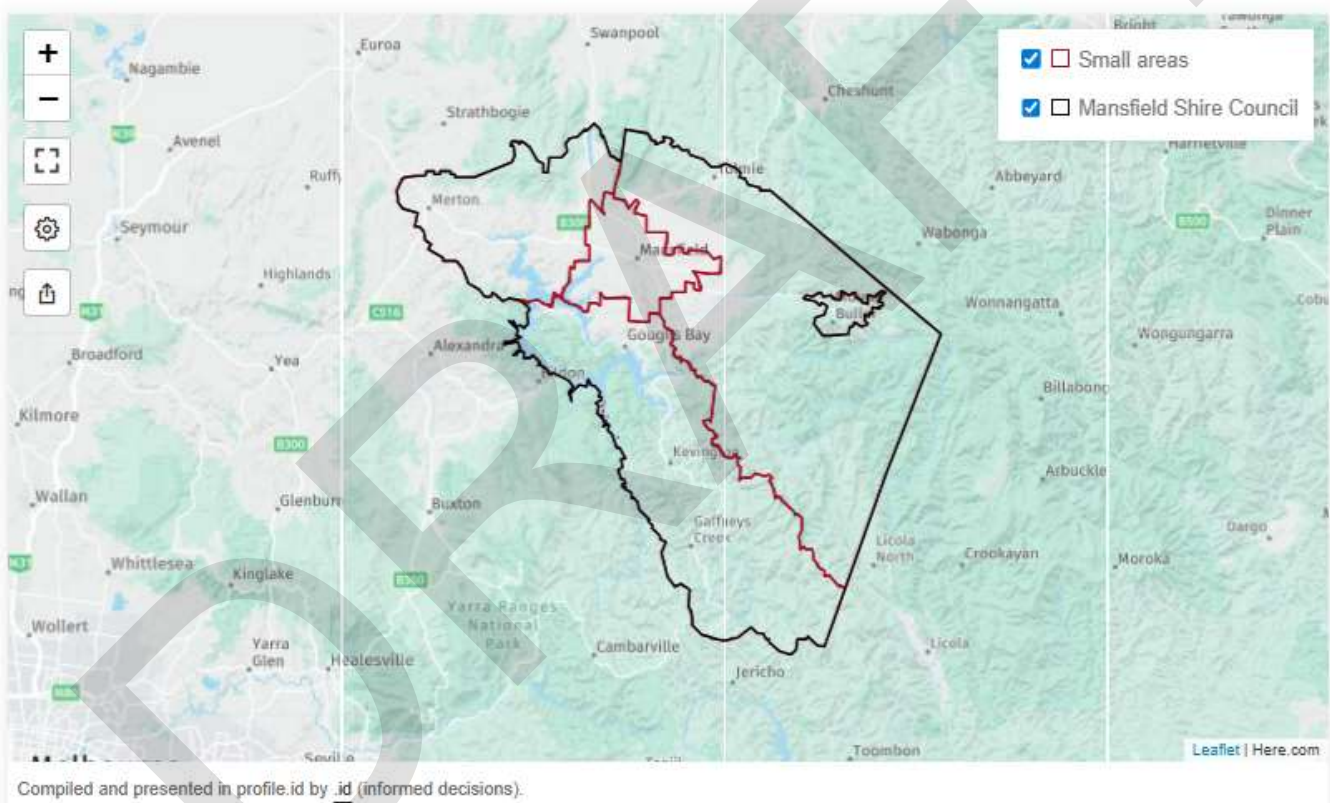
3,842

square km

Population density

2.81

persons per square km



1.5 Context and Current Situation

Council's animal management service includes the following broad range of activities, with some key data included in the tables below:

- ▶ Administering registration and renewal of registration processes and the issue of registration tags
- ▶ Responding to roaming dogs, including returning to the owner or impounding of animal
- ▶ Responding to reports relating to menacing and dangerous dogs and dog attacks against

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persons and stock

- ▶ Noise complaints about barking dogs
- ▶ Receiving surrendered dogs and cats and rehousing wherever possible
- ▶ Providing cat traps for capturing wandering, abandoned or feral cats

Supporting information relating to some of Council's key domestic animal management activities is provided in the table below.

Comparative performance of Mansfield Shire's animal management services in 2023-24

Performance Area	Mansfield Shire	Similar Councils	All Councils
Days taken to action animal management requests	1.2	1.8	2.2
Registrable animals reclaimed from Council's Pound	73.1	43	41.4
Registrable animals rehomed	78.6	43	54.1
Cost of animal management service per population	18.48	14.79	18.77

Source: knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au

1.6 Domestic Animal Management Activities – Overview

The range of domestic animal management services and activities undertaken by Council is outlined in the table below:

Program/Service:	Service Level Objective/Action:
Dog & Cat Registration - Promotion Media releases, distribution of renewal notices and placement of A-frame signs to promote registration requirements	Increase in number of dogs and cats registered per year.
Dog & Cat Registration – Monitoring Monitor registration renewals and follow up enquiries for previously registered animals.	Reminder Notices sent out in May, followed by desktop audit and follow up (phone or visit) soon after. Council undertakes regular door knock activities throughout the Shire.
Animal Re-homing Advertise lost and found animals on social media to aid reclaiming by owners.	All wandering pets collected by Local Laws Officers are posted on Council's social media pages to identify owner (if not registered or if owner unable to be identified through microchip). If unsuccessful, pets will be kept in Pound for 8 days and then offered for adoption to local residents or through an agency with a Section 84Y Agreement with Council.
Animal Re-homing	Pets surrendered to Council are advertised for

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Program/Service:	Service Level Objective/Action:
Advertise lost and found animals on social media to aid re-homing.	rehoming or sent to an appropriate Rescue Organisation with a Section 84 agreement with Council.
Unregistered Animals Enforcement activities for unregistered animals when located following complaint (or impounded strays).	All unregistered, impounded animals over the age of 3 months must be microchipped and registered prior to reclaim by owners as required by Part 2 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994
Requests for Action Domestic animal requests logged with Council for action or investigation.	Requests are allocated for action in accordance with Council's Customer Charter. 222 'Requests for Action' were logged in 2024-25.
Complaint Management Dangerous dog or dog attack complaints	Complaint Response time for dangerous dog or dog attack complaints objective is to respond within 30 minutes (or as soon as practical if distance is an issue).
Ranger Patrols/Attendance Routine street patrols to identify unregistered and wandering animals. Also includes after hours emergency service.	Patrols undertaken when required – usually after a complaint, but also whilst undertaking other duties. After hours emergencies are attended as required, based on Local Laws Officer assessment.
Pound Operation Officers attend to welfare needs and exercise impounded animals daily.	Pound is open during business hours by prior arrangement. Officers have access for after-hours impounds.
Registration Fees Fees are set annually through Council's Fees & Charges Schedule and incorporate State Government charges.	Council provides reduced registration fees to encourage desexing of dogs and cats. A reduced fee also applies to working dogs in accordance with the Fees & Charges Schedule. Under Section 69 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, Council is required to pay a fee for each registration to the Treasurer for the Government to promote responsible dog and cat ownership; or animal welfare; and research into domestic animal management and the administration of the Domestic Animals Act. State Government fees were increased in 2025-26 and are now 18%% of the standard Registration Fee.

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Program/Service:	Service Level Objective/Action:
Education and Promotion Community education and promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership.	Pamphlets and posters are distributed at Council Offices and by engagement with Vet practices. Social media and <i>Mansfield Matters</i> column in the Courier are also used to provide educational material on responsible pet ownership.
Wandering and Feral* Cats Cat traps are provided to help residents manage stray and nuisance cats in a safe and humane way.	When a cat is captured, Council officers collect it and scan for a microchip. If the cat is registered and identifiable, every effort is made to return it to its owner as quickly as possible. If the cat cannot be identified, it is carefully assessed to determine whether it is suitable for rehoming. In cases where a cat is found to be feral or exhibits behaviours that make rehoming unsafe or impractical, humane euthanasia may be considered as a last resort, in line with animal welfare standards.

*Feral Cat – a cat that lives wild, independent of humans and survives by hunting and scavenging for food. Generally unsociable to people and devastating for wildlife. Usually unsterilized and breeds regularly.

1.7 Domestic Animal Statistics

Category	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Number of registered dogs and cats	2990 2553 dogs 437 cats	2390 2011 dogs 379 cats	2406 2086 dogs 320 cats	2624 2255 dogs 372 cats
Declared dogs (dangerous & menacing)	4	4	2	3
Stray/wandering pets returned to owner	107	75	76	82
Surrendered dogs and cats	11 2 dogs 9 cats	7 4 dogs 3 cats	6 4 dogs 2 cats	3 1 dog 2 cats
Rehomed dogs and cats	15 3 dogs 12 cats	11 6 dogs 7 cats	22 10 dogs 12 cats	23 9 dogs 14 cats
Euthanised animals*	20 2 dogs (behavior) 18 cats (feral)	4 2 dogs (behavior) 2 cats (feral)	13 6 dogs 7 cats (feral)	16 cats (feral)

*Council has a feral cat eradication program to respond to community and environmental concerns about wandering cats and attacks on wildlife.

All cats trapped and surrendered to Council are checked for a microchip and assessed for their

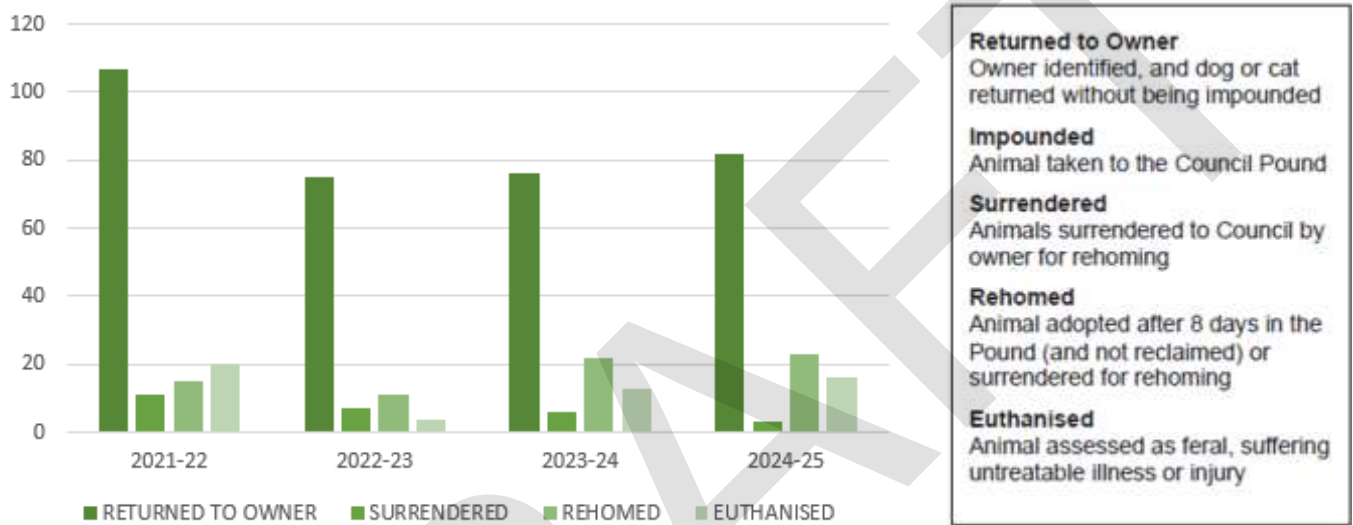
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behaviour by either a Local Laws Officer and/or Veterinary Surgeon before a decision is made regarding euthanasia.

Of the total of 10 euthanised dogs over the previous 4-year period, all were euthanised due to illness or aggressive behaviour (unsuitable for rehoming under the provisions of the Code of Practice for Pounds & Shelters). All other dogs were able to be returned to owners, rehomed or surrendered into other rehoming businesses.

The number of feral cats euthanised is on par with the previous period.

Registration figures for dogs and cats dipped slightly from 2022 to 2023 probably due to cost-of-living pressures in the aftermath of the global pandemic. However, they have increased in subsequent years.



2. Training of Authorised Officers

2.1 Context and Current Situation

Council's animal management services are carried out by members of the Community Safety team, which oversees Local Laws. There are three Local Laws Officers performing animal management duties:

- ▶ 1 Full-time Officer
- ▶ 1 Junior Officer
- ▶ 1 Part-time Officer (working three days a week)
- ▶ 1 Casual/Relief Officer who assists during periods of leave and weekends

All officers are authorised under legislation to respond to concerns, deliver education and enforce compliance across the municipality.

The Local Laws unit responds to out of office enquiries and operates Council's pound facility – Council manages these two services in-house, rather than contracting them out. In addition to these services, the unit responds to all animal related issues, including wandering pets and agricultural stock, injured wildlife on Council roads and investigating allegations of cruelty to animals under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTA).

Trained officers in the Community Safety team are authorised under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* and the *Impounding of Livestock Act 1994*, to undertake the following activities:

- ▶ Oversee domestic animal registration and identification process.
- ▶ Investigate dog attacks.
- ▶ Investigate barking dogs and other nuisance matters.
- ▶ Investigate animal welfare issues.
- ▶ Provide advice to pet owners and the community regarding the care of their animals.
- ▶ Provide a 24-hour emergency response.
- ▶ Implement Council's Local Laws relating to pet and animal management requirements.
- ▶ Collect and reunite wandering domestic animals with their owners.
- ▶ Seize and impound wandering domestic animals and livestock.
- ▶ Undertake enforcement activities in accordance with legislation and codes of practice relevant to domestic animals and livestock.
- ▶ Monitor compliance with Codes of Practice such as breeding, boarding and training.
- ▶ Make available cat traps to capture semi-owned, wandering, abandoned or feral cats.
- ▶ Maintain Council's Pound operations.
- ▶ Assist with wildlife complaints.
- ▶ Respond to after-hours animal emergencies – a Local Laws response is provided and this links into situations where animals are impacted by other emergencies. Examples include where a pet owner is incapacitated, involved in a car accident, fires in the landscape or whenever

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incidents and accidents result in pets being adversely impacted.

Local Laws Officers are responsible for investigation and enforcement in several other areas including Council's Community Local Laws (currently under review), Environmental Protection Act complaints including residential noise and dumping, litter enforcement, fire management, Impounding of Livestock Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (POCTA) and Regulations, Road Safety Act and Road Rules, Local Government Act, and any prosecutions arising from enforcement activities.

2.2 Training of Authorised Officers

The animal management service is provided by Local Laws Officers who are competent in animal care. Full-time staff complete a Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation. Additional training opportunities are offered to all officers undertaking Animal Management duties, and training requirements are reviewed annually to ensure relevance.

Training topics include:

- ▶ Animal handling and behaviour
- ▶ Animal Assessment
- ▶ Conflict management
- ▶ Investigation and statement taking
- ▶ Information technology
- ▶ Annual firearms training

Officers are eligible and encouraged to attend industry related seminars, conferences, and briefings from Animal Welfare Victoria (DJPR), Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM), RSPCA and other relevant Associations.

Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing staff training to ensure that the Local Laws team are equipped with the skills that they need.

2.3 Training Plan

Objective	When	Evaluation/Outcome
<p>Council records training undertaken by Officers through external and internal sources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All full-time Officers must complete a Cert IV in Animal Management Training. ▶ Annual Firearms Training ▶ Animal behavioural assessment ▶ Mental Health Training 	Ongoing	<p>Training plan updated and training completed.</p> <p>Local Laws staff will undertake training for continuous improvement in line with legislative changes. All staff participate in annual employee performance and development reviews.</p> <p>Mental Health Training to be undertaken by new staff within 12 months of employment and all staff to have refresher training every two years.</p>

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Objective	When	Evaluation/Outcome
Senior Local Laws Officer is a current member of the Australian Institute of Animal Management	Ongoing	Provides access to industry resources and webinars to expand knowledge in best practice animal management and welfare
New Officers receive field training from an experienced officer to ensure they are properly trained and equipped for their job. This on-the-job training ensures the accurate delivery of information and reinforces the skills needed to succeed in their role.	Ongoing	Review feedback from Officers regularly to ensure effective training and development.
Officers will follow up complaints and provide constructive feedback to improve their skills. This approach ensures that officers are not just reactive to complaints but also use the feedback to develop and enhance their abilities.	Ongoing	Review monthly at Team meetings.

3. Programs to Promote and Encourage Responsible Pet Ownership and Compliance with Legislation

By promoting and encouraging responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation, Council supports a more positive environment for all community members.

3.1 Context and Current Situation

Through community consultation, we know that there is strong support for initiatives that aim to address pet welfare issues in Mansfield Shire. Council's role includes providing timely and accurate information to the community, in addition to the animal management services outlined in this Plan. From community feedback and survey responses, strategies have been identified to better inform our community about the responsibilities that come with pet ownership and the work our Community Safety Compliance team is doing to promote responsible pet ownership in Mansfield Shire.

75% of respondents to our survey agreed that Council was communicating well regarding responsible pet ownership and that they would like information about responsible pet ownership to be made available on Council's website, in social media and sent out with dog and cat registration renewals.

The table below outlines the planned activity to enhance community awareness of responsible pet ownership.

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Activity	When	Evaluation/Outcome
<p>Develop an ongoing Communication Plan that is reviewed annually to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ increase community awareness of responsible pet ownership. ▶ promote engagement with Council's animal management services. ▶ promote adoption opportunities available to Mansfield Shire residents. ▶ promote programs stressing the importance of keeping domestic animals secured to keep them safe and to protect wildlife, including Safe Cat – Safe Wildlife education material. 	2026, then reviewed annually.	<p>Reduced number of compliance actions and complaints.</p> <p>Increase in dog and cat registrations.</p> <p>Decrease in barking dog complaints.</p> <p>Fewer wandering dogs and cats.</p>
<p>Continue to support residents and businesses in managing cat-related concerns by maintaining, promoting and offering humane cat trapping programs.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Fewer wandering and nuisance/feral cats. Since July 2021, Council has provided 146 residents with cat traps to capture nuisance cats. This number is 8% higher than the previous 3-year period.</p> <p>This data will continue to be reported annually.</p>
<p>Regularly monitor social media platforms for reports of found, missing, or wandering dogs to ensure officers are promptly informed of any unreported incidents.</p> <p>Update Operating Procedures to include response to social media reports.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Fewer wandering dogs and cats.</p> <p>Increase/maintain the % of animals re-homed. Data on the number of animals re-homed will continue to be reported annually.</p>
<p>Use social media to promote Council services on a regular basis.</p>	Ongoing	<p>Social media presence increased (increased posts) and raised community awareness of the service.</p> <p>Increase in dog and cat registrations.</p> <p>Reduced number of compliance actions and complaints.</p>
<p>Review provision of dog poo bags. Dispensers are located at five parks;</p>	2026, then ongoing.	<p>Monitor through community feedback and satisfaction with the appearance of public areas.</p>

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Activity	When	Evaluation/Outcome
consideration to be given to additional areas to receive dispensers. Bags are replaced on a regular schedule by Council and Community Groups (with bags provided by Council).		

3.2 Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Council does not have any Orders issued under the Domestic Animals Act.

Council's Community Local Laws provide guidance to residents regarding the number of animals, both pets and livestock, which may be kept without a permit.

No permit is required to keep, or allow to be kept, or remain on any land, the following number of animals:

Type of animal *	Land less than 1000m ² *	Between 1000 – 4000m ² *	Land greater than 4000m ² *
Dogs	2	2	4
Cats	2	2	4
Poultry	5	15	Not limited by this Community Local Law
Roosters, peacocks and donkeys	Not permitted	Not permitted	Not limited by this Community Local Law
Pigs	Not permitted	Not Permitted	Not limited by this Community Local Law
Other large birds (excluding peacocks, poultry and roosters)	5	15	Not limited by this Community Local Law
Livestock	Not permitted	Maximum density of one animal every 2000m ² of open land (excluding buildings)	Not limited by this Local Law
Maximum total number of animals of any kind	14	20	Not limited by this Community Local Law

In addition to provisions within the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and other relevant legislation, Council's Community Local Laws also provide the community with further guidance on animal ownership aimed at reducing the likelihood of amenity issues created by animals, including:

- ▶ Restrictions on the number of animals permitted to be housed on either residential or rural land.
- ▶ General housing requirements for domestic animals and livestock.
- ▶ Responsibility of owners of domestic animals and livestock for removal of excrement in a public place.

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- ▶ Requirements to contain animals.

Council recognises the important role that pets play in the life of our residents, with many pets being seen as a member of the family rather than just a companion.

Council's approach prioritises education before enforcement. All dogs and cats wandering for the first time will be returned directly to their owner free of charge if registered.

Repeat offenders for wandering dogs and cats will receive an infringement and will be required to pay impound release fees if they reach Council's pound.

An infringement will also be issued for unregistered dogs found wandering or if identified after Council has provided publicity of registration renewals, through 'door knocks' being undertaken. Throughout Victoria, all dog and cat registrations expire in April each year and an 'amnesty' would routinely be given where a registration is overdue by a couple of weeks.

Council Officers will seek to assist and work with pet owners to help them find a solution to ensure their pet cannot escape their home or yard.

Where an owner is unable to care for their pet and is unable to make their own rehoming arrangements, the owner can surrender the pet under s33A of the *Domestic Animals Act*. Council will then make every effort to rehouse the animal in a suitable home.

Council's Local Laws Officers are authorised under S18 and S24 of *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTA) which allows the investigation and prosecution of matters under that legislation. This provides Council with the ability to respond efficiently to support the RSPCA in cruelty matters.

Council actions relating to noise complaints include:

- ▶ Documented procedures regarding the lodgment and request for Council involvement in investigating noise nuisance complaints for dogs and/or cats, under s32 of the *Domestic Animals Act* (DAA). As part of a noise investigation, complainants are required to complete noise logs detailing times and duration of the disturbance. Information regarding this is available on Council's website and residents can download and commence a Noise Log to be submitted with their complaint.
- ▶ Complaint management in accordance with Council's Complaints Policy; and responses to customer requests for action in accordance with Council's 'Customer Charter', detailing our commitment to respond in a consistent and timely way.
- ▶ Procedure for the surrender of dogs and cats by owners, s33A of the DAA is followed where an owner is no longer able to care for their pet and is unable to make their own rehoming arrangements.

Ongoing Council Commitment

Council will continue to:

- ▶ Provide a timely 24/7 response relating to the following domestic animal nuisance issues:
 - dogs wandering at large where children play
 - dogs identified as menacing or dangerous dogs observed in non-compliance with any restrictive requirements responses to dog attack – involving other pets, stock and most importantly where a dog is alleged to have rushed at or bitten a person or their pet

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- ▶ Provide a working day response regarding the following:
 - General dog at large/lost dog or cat reports
 - Dog barking complaints
- ▶ Collect trapped cats from properties Monday – Friday (subject to Officer availability and other work commitments). We will encourage those using the traps not to set the trap when Council does not provide the collection service.
- ▶ Provide general surveillance activity relating to the following activities;
 - dog excrement not collected – when the dog/owner can be identified
 - dogs let off lead in non-permitted areas
 - investigate excessive numbers of dogs or cats on properties

3.3 Our Plan

Council will ensure compliance with Council's Local Laws and relevant legislation relating to dogs and cats by:

- ▶ Submitting renewal notices to animal owners to encourage compliance with registration.
- ▶ Sending timely reminders to owners who fail to renew registrations, including face to face follow up through a visit to their property.
- ▶ Sending letters to new owners who adopt pets through agencies to ensure registration.
- ▶ Ensuring that impounded animals are microchipped and registered prior to release.
- ▶ Issuing notices and/or infringements for animals found unregistered.
- ▶ Prosecuting owners of unregistered animals where infringements remain unpaid, and/or where animals remain unregistered.
- ▶ Monitoring Domestic Animal Business activities and annual audits of businesses.
- ▶ Monitoring our own compliance with self-audits of Council Pound and pound record management.
- ▶ Monitoring our performance by comparison with historic data and data available from other Councils.
- ▶ Providing an after-hours emergency animal service that aims to return pets to their owner as our priority. Where dogs and cats come into our possession and the owner is not readily identifiable via microchip record, collar, tag etc., we will provide notice via social media to identify the owner. We will provide a caring environment as temporary housing for the pet until it can be returned to the owner or where necessary we will always consider rehoming options.
- ▶ We will continue to implement a range of educational initiatives and explore proactive strategies to promote responsible pet ownership and ensure compliance with our Local Law and relevant legislation.
- ▶ Insights gathered from community surveys conducted during the development of the Plan clearly indicate a strong desire for Council to take a more proactive role in delivering community education programs. These programs will focus on raising awareness and improving the management of nuisance animals, preventing dog attacks, and reinforcing general pet

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ownership responsibilities.

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4. Animal Identification, Overpopulation And Euthanasia

4.1 Context and Current Situation

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires that all dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be microchipped and registered with the Council in which they reside.

In addition to being a legal requirement, pet registration and identification significantly increases the likelihood of lost animals being promptly reunited with their owners.

Registration also enables Council to better understand pet ownership trends within the community, providing valuable data to inform the planning and delivery of effective animal management services. Furthermore, it serves as an important source of funding to support these initiatives.

Stray and Wandering Animals

Stray and wandering animals remain a concern across the community. To address this, Council will implement a targeted, community-wide education campaign throughout the life of this Plan. The campaign will inform pet owners about the importance of securely containing their animals within their property, keeping them on a lead when in public spaces, and ensuring they are under effective control in designated off-leash areas.

Pet animal care and attention

Where necessary, Council will impound wandering and stray animals. In accordance with the Act, if the rightful owner of a dog or cat cannot be identified within 8 days in the Pound, Council will continue to partner with 'no kill' welfare groups to provide shelter, care, and rehoming services for pets that cannot be reunited with their owners or rehomed locally.

Only animals that are diseased, severely injured, or exhibit dangerous behaviour are euthanised. Between 2021 and 2025, 72 feral cats were euthanised. During the same period, 1 dog was euthanised due to untreatable injuries, and 6 dogs were euthanised after being surrendered following attacks or due to behaviour that made them unsuitable for rehoming.

4.2 Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Council does not have any Orders issued under the Domestic Animals Act.

Council's Community Local Laws detail restrictions on the number of animals that may be kept on Residential Land. The owner or occupier of any land must not, unless they hold a local law permit, keep or allow to be kept, or remain on any land any more than 2 dogs and 2 cats on any small residential allotment:

- ▶ Note. this does not apply where a planning permit has been obtained for land used for the purpose of animal boarding or breeding.
- ▶ To calculating the maximum number of dogs or cats kept on any land, any progeny may be lawfully kept, without a permit, for 12 weeks after birth. (After 3 months of age, puppies and kittens are also required to be individually registered).
- ▶ An owner or occupier of land exceeding 4000m² (in a residential area) can keep up to 4 dogs and 4 cats without the Local Law permit.

Excess Animal Permits

A person who wants to keep more than the permitted number of animals on a property must apply

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for an excess animal permit under the Local Law. On lodgment of the application form and payment of the fee, the application will be assessed on its merits and on the ability of the owner to keep and care for the pets without causing any nuisance or amenity issue.

A permit remains valid for twelve months subject to compliance with conditions and can be renewed yearly.

Wandering or Feral Cats

Wandering and feral cats continue to cause concern for residents across Mansfield Shire. To help address this issue, Council offers cat traps—free of charge—for residents and property occupiers to safely capture cats trespassing on their property. In some cases, Council officers may conduct trapping programs on behalf of residents or businesses if a problem area is identified and cannot be resolved by the property owner.

All cats trapped or seized on private property and provided to Council are scanned for microchip and registration details. If the cat is registered and identifiable, it is returned to its owner, who is advised to keep the cat securely contained to prevent future trespassing.

Unregistered or unidentified cats are taken to Council's Pound. If a cat is found to be unwell or injured, it is taken to a veterinarian for assessment and care. Cats that appear to be feral undergo a formal behavioural assessment before any decision is made regarding euthanasia. This process is carefully documented and only considered when rehoming is not a safe or viable option.

For unidentified cats that are not considered feral, Council posts a photo—along with the location, date, and time of capture—on its social media pages to help reunite pets with their owners. This same approach is used for dogs.

Please note: unregistered cats must be microchipped and registered before they can be returned to their owner. Council encourages all pet owners to ensure their animals are registered and identifiable to support responsible pet ownership and community safety.

Semi-Owned Cats

The high euthanasia rates of feral cats are closely linked to the number of unsterilised, unregistered, and unidentifiable cats living in our community—many of which are feral or “semi-owned”.

These cats are not formally owned, are not microchipped or registered, and often rely on residents for food and survival. While well-intentioned, feeding these cats can contribute to population growth and reduce their chances of being socialised and rehomed.

When these cats are trapped, they are rarely claimed due to their unidentifiable status. Sadly, their limited socialisation and poor temperament often make rehoming difficult. In such cases, humane euthanasia may be considered, but only after a thorough and documented assessment.

Council is committed to compassionate and responsible animal management and encourages all residents to help by registering and desexing their pets and avoiding feeding unowned animals. Together, we can reduce the number of feral cats and improve outcomes for all animals in our community.

4.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: To provide readily accessible information to the public in relation to overpopulation and high euthanasia rates.

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Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote obligation of owners to confine animals to their premises as required by Council's Community Local Laws to prevent stray cats* and dogs.	Annually – Feb/March, then ongoing	Increase in number of pets registered. Reduction in number of wandering pets and dog attacks.

**Safe Cat Safe Wildlife is a campaign run by Zoos Victoria and RSPCA Victoria that provides cat owners with resources to help give their cat the safest and happiest life. The website safecat.org.au contains information, articles and short tips and tricks for an indoor lifestyle, as well as helping highlight the benefits to cats staying at home (welfare and safety for the cat and a safer neighborhood for local wildlife).*

Objective 2: Reduce the size of the semi-owned cat population.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create communications plan to raise awareness about semi-owned cat population and encourage the community not to feed stray cats.	2026, then review annually	Reduction in the number of feral cats breeding.

Objective 3: Reduce the number of cats and dogs euthanised.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and maintain section 84Y agreements with animal welfare, rehoming and adoption groups.	Ongoing	Continue to monitor and report figures for euthanasia and number of animals rehomed.

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5. Registration and Identification

5.1 Context and Current Situation

Council plays a central role in promoting responsible pet ownership.

While a significant part of this role relates to the enforcement of laws and regulations requiring animals to be properly managed, Council is also involved in promoting animal welfare and educating pet owners and other community members to encourage more positive and rewarding relationships with dogs and cats.

All dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be registered with Mansfield Shire Council as per Section 10(1) of the Act; newly registered animals must also be microchipped before registration can be accepted. Microchipping and registering pets also increase the chance of being re-united with their owners should they become lost.

- ▶ Reduced Registration Fees apply to the following animals:
 - desexed
 - over 10 years
 - kept for breeding at a Registered Domestic Animal Business
 - dog that has undergone obedience training with an approved organisation
 - microchipped hunting dog registered with Game Management Authority
 - working dogs
- ▶ Assistance Dogs are exempt from Council registration following an Order made in December 2023 (eligibility criteria apply)

5.2 Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

There are no additional Council Local Laws for pet registration in Mansfield Shire. Part 2, Section 10 of the *Domestic Animals Act* requires that all dogs and cats over the age of 3 months be microchipped and registered with Council within which they reside.

The current Local Law is under review and currently restricts the number of animals and birds that may be kept or remain on any land without a permit.

Column 1 – Type of animal *	Column 2 – Land less than 1000m ² *	Column 3 – between 1000 – 4000m ² *	Column 4 – Land greater than 4000m ² *
Dogs	2	2	4
Cats	2	2	4

**Actual list contains other animals and birds but has been edited to improve clarity*

Council currently issues registration renewals for all registered dogs and cats by email or where no e-mail address is recorded, by mail.

A media campaign is used alongside the renewal notices to alert owners that registrations are due, and this is followed up by posts on social media and random door knocks throughout the

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municipality. Signage is also displayed as this time approaches (at the same time each year for all municipalities in Victoria). This advertising is also supplemented at other times of the year – particularly when property visits are to be undertaken.

5.3 Our Plan to Increase Registration and Reduce Overpopulation

Objective	When	Evaluation/Outcome
Distribute and advertise annual registration notices	Annually	Registration Notices issued and communications/media developed
Ensure reminder notices are issued within specified time and follow up properties where animal registration has lapsed	Annually	Reminder Notices issued and communications/media developed
Ensure each property is audited and issued with infringements where animals are found to be unregistered	July-August annually	Infringements issued
Promote half price (pro rata) animal registration for new animals from 1 January each year to encourage registration	Ongoing	Number of new registrations and communications/media developed
Raise awareness about semi-owned cat population	Annually	Communications/media campaign to educate the community on the semi-owned cat population
Monitor local media for animal sale advertisements	Ongoing	Action non-compliant advertisements
Ensure that all impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Ongoing	Increase in animal registrations as a direct result of the campaign
Random door knocking properties in the municipality each year to check for unregistered and unidentified dogs and cats	Annually	Flyer to be prepared to help facilitate payment.

6. Nuisances

6.1 Context and Current Situation

Council's current procedures regarding nuisance animals encourage a community-based resolution before involving enforcement. Council offers a 24/7 call out service for the collection of

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lost and wandering dogs and Council will return registered dogs and cats to their owners without penalty on the first occasion, to encourage prompt and ongoing registration and renewal.

6.2 Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Council recognises the many physical, mental, and social benefits that pets bring to individuals and families. Pets can improve wellbeing, reduce loneliness, and strengthen community connections.

It is equally important to find the right balance when addressing nuisance issues such as excessive barking, roaming animals, or property damage. Council is committed to resolving these matters fairly and consistently supporting responsible pet ownership while maintaining community harmony.

Education remains a high priority to encourage responsible pet ownership and help community members solve nuisance issues early without the need for Council intervention.

Current Local Laws:

Council's Draft Community Local Laws provide the following guidance:

Keeping of animals on private property

Minimum Care Standards

The owner or occupier of any land on which any animal is kept must ensure that:

1. The place where the animal is kept is:
 - a) Maintained so as not to cause any nuisance to any other person or create a condition which is offensive or injurious to health from noise or smell or any other nuisance which interferes with neighbours comfort or enjoyment of their property.
 - b) Adequately fenced or has other adequate confinement or restraint system to prevent the animal from being at large or escaping.
2. The animal is provided with adequate clean drinking water at all times
3. The animal is provided with adequate sustenance

Animal Waste in public places

Outside the land on which it is normally kept, a person who has care or control of an animal must:

1. Immediately remove the animal's excrement and lawfully dispose of it as litter.
2. Carry a litter device suitable for cleaning up and removing animal excrement and must produce that device upon request by an Authorised Officer.
3. Remove any livestock excrement from any surface designed for, and used by, pedestrians.
4. Not sweep, wash, or place animal excrement onto a public place.

Animals and Dogs in Public Places

Requirements

A person who owns, or is in apparent control of, a dog or other animal must:

1. In a public place within a township, keep the animal under control by a leash, chain or cord, not

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greater than 3 metres in length, connecting that person to the animal.

2. In a public place within a Rural Zone, as defined by the Planning Scheme, have the animal under effective control at all times.
3. In a public place, keep any dog that has been declared a dangerous or menacing dog or is of a restricted breed:
 - a) Muzzled.
 - b) Kept on a lead, chain or cord at all times.
 - c) Under the control of a person aged over 17 years of age in all areas within the municipal district.
4. Ensure that the land in which the animal is normally kept is adequately fenced or has other adequate confinement or restraint system to prevent the animal or bird from being at large or escaping.

Exemptions

A person who owns, or is in apparent control of, a dog or other animal in a public place does not have to keep the animal under control by a leash, chain or cord connecting that person to the animal in a designated “off leash” area if the following conditions are met:

1. The person must carry a leash, chain or cord sufficient to bring the dog under effective control if the dog behaves in a manner which may worry, threaten or harass any person or animal.
2. The person must remain in effective control of the dog by voice and/or hand command and promptly bring the dog under control by chain, cord, or leash if it becomes necessary.
3. The person must not allow the dog to worry, threaten or harass any person or animal.

Barking Complaints

Council has a standard operating Procedure in place to ensure all complaints regarding barking dogs are managed consistently and fairly. This procedure outlines the steps taken to investigate complaints, which may include:

- Neighbourhood mediation
- Completion of noise logs
- Collection of witness statements

The aim is to encourage voluntary compliance from dog owners at the earliest possible stage.

If the nuisance persists despite initial efforts, Council may escalate the matter through enforcement actions. These can include:

- Negotiation and education
- Formal warnings
- Issuing infringements
- Notices to comply
- Prosecution as a last resort

Mansfield Shire Council **Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029****6.3 Our Plan****Objective 1: Reduce cat nuisance complaints**

Activity	When	Evaluation/Outcome
Raise public awareness about the significant benefits of containing cats for their own welfare and the protection of wildlife and the environment	Ongoing	Reduction in number of impounded cats
Provide education material about cat enclosures on website	Ongoing	Reduction in number of impounded cats
Circulate Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife education material throughout the municipality (safecat.org.au)	Ongoing	Reduction in number of impounded cats
Under Council's Local Laws, dog owners are required to keep their dogs on a leash in built up public places unless in designated off-leash areas.	Ongoing	Reduction in number of dog attacks/complaints

Objective 2: Improve Community awareness of Council services

Activity	When	Evaluation/Outcome
Develop a communication plan for responsible pet ownership to raise the profile and awareness of the scope of Council's animal management service.	2026, then review annually	Communications/media developed and awareness demonstrated through community feedback and satisfaction with Council services.

7. Dog Attacks

7.1 Context and Current Situation

Although relatively uncommon, dog attacks do occur from time to time throughout the municipality. When they do, they can be highly traumatising for all involved. Many attacks occur in the home and may often involve children, and many of these incidents go unreported.

Attacks on livestock and wildlife in rural areas are much more prevalent than attacks on people. Having a large non-resident population, it is not uncommon for property owners to bring their pets with them when visiting their homes in the Shire. It may be the first time some of these dogs have seen wildlife and/or stock and can result in unfortunate situations occurring.

There is a clear link between dog attacks and dogs that are not adequately secured to the owner's property. Many attacks occur when a dog is outside its property and, in most cases, owners report that their dog had never previously shown signs of aggression.

7.2 Current Policies and Procedures

Mansfield Shire Council does not have any current orders in place under the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 and relies on Part 3 Division 1 of the Act for containment of dogs and cats (including stray animals) and Part 3 Division 2 of the Act for control of dogs and cats (including dog attacks).

Reports of a dog attacks are treated as a priority and receive an immediate response. An officer attends the scene to assess the situation, record details and seize the attacking dog if warranted. Dog attacks are recorded in Council's system by the attending officer.

Upon arrival, officers collect details of all persons involved, including dog owners, victims, and witnesses, including best contact numbers. Where possible, a basic statement is taken from the victim or witnesses at the time, or at least a brief description of the incident, including where and when it took place. Photographs are taken of the scene, any injuries and the dogs involved.

When deciding if the offending dog should be seized, an officer considers the following:

- ▶ The seriousness of the attack. Were there serious injuries (as defined in the Act) or evidence of intentional or reckless behaviour.
- ▶ Is the dog still at the scene and acting aggressively or not under control?
- ▶ Is the dog registered or does it have a history of attacks or aggressive behaviour?
- ▶ Is the dog able to be securely contained at the owner's residence and is the owner responsible to keep the dog securely contained?
- ▶ Any other details relevant to public safety or community expectations.

Serious Injury means –

1. An injury requiring medical or veterinary attention in the nature of –
 - 1.1. A broken bone, or
 - 1.2. A laceration; or
 - 1.3. A partial or total loss of sensation or function in a part of the body; or
2. An injury requiring cosmetic surgery

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Laceration means a wound caused by –

1. The tearing of body tissue
2. Multiple punctures caused by more than one bite from a dog.

Rush at, in relation to a dog, means to approach a person to a distance of less than three metres in a menacing manner, displaying aggressive tendencies that may include snarling, growling and raised hackles.

After an attack, if the dog is to be seized, the officer will impound the animal, and a Notice of Seizure will be issued to the dog owner within 4 days of the seizure.

The officer will offer the owner, or person in charge of the offending dog, the opportunity to participate in a recorded formal interview. The officer may decide to proceed with prosecution or take no further action. Non-serious attack or rush offences may be dealt with by way of infringement or prosecution, depending on the circumstances as per Section 85 of the DAA.

If an attack involving serious injury or death is to be prosecuted, it must be heard and determined by a Magistrate and cannot be dealt with by infringement.

7.3 Current Compliance Activities

- ▶ Investigating dog attacks promptly upon report
- ▶ Seizing and holding dogs responsible for serious injury attack
- ▶ Providing an after-hours service to respond to reports of aggressive or attacking dogs
- ▶ Issuing infringements for wandering dogs (waived for first offense only and when dog is registered)
- ▶ Issuing infringements for rush and attacks where non-serious injury sustained
- ▶ Declarations for Menacing or Dangerous Dogs
- ▶ Seeking destruction orders from the Magistrates' Court where necessary
- ▶ Seeking confinement Orders from Magistrates' Court for dogs continually found wandering or not confined to property
- ▶ Proactive patrols of parks and streets for wandering dogs
- ▶ Recording data of reported dog attacks in the municipality

7.4 Our Plan

More than 50% of community members responding to the survey highlighted the need for additional enforcement and penalties regarding dogs not under effective control in public places.

While education is key to reducing the incidence of dog attacks, it is also important for Council to thoroughly investigate all reports of dog attacks and to take appropriate enforcement action. Council plans to implement the following actions to minimise the risk of dog attacks.

Mansfield Shire Council **Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029****Objective 1: Raise Community Awareness of Dog Attacks**

Action	Measure	Timeframe
Undertake regular planned patrols at Dog Parks to engage with dog owners and provide education about appropriate behaviour in off-leash areas.	Reduce incidents of aggression or nuisance behaviour	Ongoing
Use the outcomes of dog attack investigations as a tool for raising public awareness to prevent future incidents.	Communications Plan to include flyer to be sent out with Rates	Annual
Timely and thorough investigation of all dog attacks and dog rushes and enforcement action undertaken in accordance with relevant legislation.	Number of investigations/numbers of successful outcomes	Ongoing

Objective 2: Minimise the incidence of dog attacks in the community

Activity	When	Action
Continue to educate and promote the importance of responsible pet ownership	Annually	Increase in the number of registered pets. Number of dog attacks decreased
Collate and record data for dog attacks reported including location, type of attack	Ongoing	Evaluate data annually to assist with education regarding dog attacks

8. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

8.1 Context and Current Situation

Council currently has 2 declared dangerous dogs registered. Council currently has 1 menacing dog registered. There are no restricted breed dogs registered.

Dogs declared menacing are those that have been declared by Council due to inflicting a non-serious bite to a person or animal or having rushed up to a person or chased a person in an aggressive manner.

Declared dangerous dogs are those that have been declared by Council due to biting or attacking and causing serious injury to an animal or person, or a dog that was declared menacing and its owner did not comply with the imposed requirements on two or more occasions. A dog that is kept for guarding non-residential premises is also defined as a dangerous dog. Registration fees for dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs are considerably higher than non-declared dogs.

Owners of dogs that are proposed to be declared menacing or dangerous are afforded the opportunity to make both written and oral submissions to Council. In accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. Council will consider any material submitted to it before making a declaration.

Current Education and Promotion Activities

- ▶ Information provided on Council website
- ▶ Liaise with dog owners relating to legislation requirements and any changes or updates.

Current Compliance Activities

- ▶ Investigate and respond promptly to complaints about menacing or dangerous dogs
- ▶ Ensure all declared dogs are registered on the Victorian Dangerous Dog Registry
- ▶ Conduct annual inspection of premises housing declared dogs to ensure compliance
- ▶ Dog declarations are made where applicable
- ▶ Infringements/Prosecution for any determined breach

What the Community has told us

Feedback is regularly received by Council regarding owners not being in control of their dogs, allowing them to wander and annoy other dogs or stock.

Action	Timeframe	Outcome
Review, update and enhance education material for dog owners to ensure there is a clear understanding of dog behaviour that may lead to a dog being declared as dangerous or menacing.	2026, then review annually.	Information reviewed and promoted widely throughout the Shire via a Communications Plan.
Complete annual audit of all premises where dangerous or menacing dogs are kept ensuring compliance with the Regulations.	Annually	Compliance with the Regulations regarding the keeping of dangerous or menacing dogs.

9. Domestic Animal Business

9.1 Context and current situation

In addition to Council's Pound, there are six other Domestic Animal Businesses registered in Mansfield Shire – two dog breeding businesses, two boarding establishments and two pet shops (cats only). The boarding businesses and pet shops are operated by local veterinary practices. Council's pound located on Lakins Road is also a registered Domestic Animal Business.

Council has a responsibility to audit these businesses annually to ensure compliance with the domestic Animals Act 1994 (DAA), associated regulations and other relevant legislation.

Council is committed to maintaining high standards of animal welfare and ensuring that all domestic animal businesses comply with applicable standards and Code of Practice. Council also actively works to identify any unregistered businesses operating within the Shire and takes appropriate action to achieve compliance.

The introduction of the Victorian Pet Exchange Register (PER) has provided greater transparency for breeders operating within the Shire. Council regulates breeding activities to ensure they are operating lawfully and reports annually to the Victorian Government on Domestic Animal Businesses.

9.2 Our Policies and Procedures

Current Policies and Procedures

In accordance with the provisions under Part 4 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (DAA), domestic animal business must be registered with Council. Currently there are five types of domestic animal businesses that must be registered, which are:

- ▶ Pet shops
- ▶ Boarding establishment
- ▶ Breeding and rearing establishments
- ▶ Dog training establishments
- ▶ Dog and cat shelters and pounds

Council must refuse to register, renew or revoke a Domestic Animal Business registration if any of the conditions under Part 4, Division 3 of the Act are not met. Domestic Animal Businesses are subject to Council inspection prior to registration, and at least annually thereafter, to ensure they are complying with the Code of Practice applicable to that Business. Current Codes of Practice are available on the Agriculture Victoria website or via Animal Welfare Victoria, along with audit checklists and factsheets to assist DAB operators to remain compliant.

Codes of Practice for the operation of various Domestic Animal Businesses are made under the provisions of Section 59 of Division 4 of the Act. The purpose of the Codes is to specify the minimum standards of accommodation, management, breeding and care that are appropriate to the physical and behavioral needs of dogs and cats affected by businesses operating as domestic animal businesses. Council is responsible for inspection, audit and ensuring compliance with the Code.

Where an inspection reveals non-compliance with the Code of Practice, the officer must notify the proprietor of the breaches and issue a Notice to Comply directing corrective action within a

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specified timeframe.

In the event the proprietor does not comply with the Notice to Comply, the Compliance Officer shall prepare a report for consideration by the Compliance Coordinator who determines whether Council should pursue legal or further enforcement action.

Planning requirements may also apply to animal businesses. These are in addition to the requirements of the Act and the Planning Scheme. Applications should be referred to the Planning Department for comment prior to proceeding.

9.3 Our Plan

Objective 1: Ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are compliant with relevant legislation and codes of practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Council will identify businesses within the municipality that may be operating as Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB). Each business will be assessed to determine whether it is required to be registered with Council and appropriate follow-up will be undertaken to ensure compliance.	Ongoing	Compliance with legislation
Monitor Council's registration database for owners with more than 3 fertile females as possible breeding businesses requiring registration as a DAB.	Annually	Investigate and undertake compliance action as required.
Monitor unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses via social media, newspapers and internet.	Ongoing	Monitor and investigate as required.
Audit Domestic Animal Businesses randomly to ensure compliance.	Annually	Annual audits undertaken and documented Compliance with all relevant codes
Investigate advertisements for pets for sale.	Ongoing	Compliance and number of complaints received

Mansfield Shire Council **Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029****10. Animal Health and Welfare**

Council's Local Laws Officers are authorised under S18 and S24 of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA), allowing the investigation and prosecution of matters under such legislation enabling them to support the RSPCA in matters where animal cruelty is a concern.

Mansfield Shire Council has a relatively low rate of neglected animal reports, but any reports are investigated and dealt with promptly.

Across Victoria the RSPCA advised it received 9,961 animal cruelty reports during the 2023-2024 financial year (RSPCA Australian National Statistics 2023-2024). Further education for the community of minimum standards of care and housing for all animals is necessary to ensure this figure reduces over the coming years.

Action	Timeframe	Evaluation
Review Mansfield Shire Council Emergency Animal Welfare Plan	Ongoing	Completed review of Mansfield Shire Council Emergency Animal Welfare Plan
Respond to RSPCA requests to assist in resolving animal welfare matters	Ongoing	POCTA authorisation is current for Council Officers

11. Other Matters – Supporting the Community in Emergencies

11.1 Context and Current Situation

Council recognises the physical, mental, and social benefits that pets bring and the link between enabling pet owners to keep their pets close to them or knowing that they are safe when confronted with a crisis. These situations include emergency incidents such as a house fire or bushfire, family violence or health issues.

Council is committed to supporting community members through these situations by thorough emergency management planning, partnering with relevant agencies to prevent family violence and working with established networks to enable community members to remain living independently in their homes.

Council can support community members in times of crisis by working with our partners to coordinate the transport of animals, temporary boarding of animals and veterinary care if required. We know that by doing this, residents can focus on other important issues knowing that their pet is safe.

11.2 Our Policies and Procedures

Council has an Emergency Animal Welfare Plan that is enacted during larger-scale emergencies to assist residents and emergency personnel managing pets and livestock.

Council can temporarily accommodate pets at Emergency Relief Centres, and Local Laws Officers are trained to assist residents and their animals at these centres. In addition, Council has programs in place to assist vulnerable members of the community with their pets when experiencing family violence or other personal crises.

The Plan outlines local arrangements for domestic animals, stock and wildlife welfare emergency management and addresses the following risk areas:

- ▶ Bushfire
- ▶ Animal disease
- ▶ Wind/Storm damage
- ▶ Flood events
- ▶ Transport accidents involving livestock (e.g., livestock truck rollover)
- ▶ Any event requiring emergency evacuation of residents with their animals

The Victorian Bushfire's Royal Commission (VBRC) noted that the bonds people had with their pets and stock directly impacted upon their decision making and as a direct result their safety during emergencies.

Animal owners, animal welfare agencies and Council have a "duty of care" to plan and provide for the needs of animals, particularly in an emergency. The Plan looks at the roles, responsibilities, and arrangements between the various stakeholders within Mansfield Shire for the delivery of all emergency response, relief and recovery activities in relation to animal welfare.

Mansfield Shire Council **Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029****12. Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting**

Under section 68A (3) of the Act, Council must review its DAMP annually and, if appropriate, amend the Plan. Council must provide the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions Secretary with a copy of the Plan, including any amendments, and publish an evaluation of the Plan's implementation in its Annual Report.

12.1 Evaluation of Implementation of the Domestic Animals Management Plan

Complete for each activity	
Was each activity completed?	Yes/No
Describe any changes you will make if you do that activity again.	
Was an activity not done or is now not planned to be done?	If so, why?
If an activity was unsuccessful and you don't plan to do it again, outline insights you have into why it didn't work.	
Complete for each objective	
Did you meet your objective by carrying out the planned activities?	Yes/No
Describe your level of success/progress in meeting the objective.	