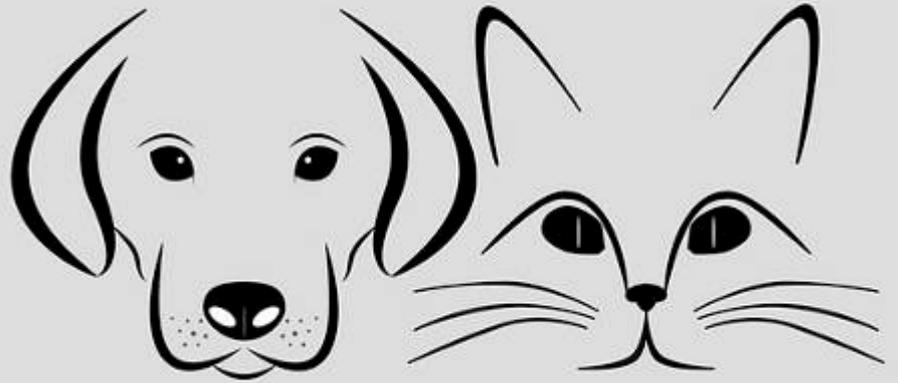




MANSFIELD SHIRE



Domestic Animal Management Plan

2017 - 2021

Adopted by Council 17 April 2018



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DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* every Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan, as follows:

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (*of the Department of Primary Industries*), prepare at 4 year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
- (2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must-
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
 - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
 - (c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district-
 - (i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 - (ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
 - (iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
 - (vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 - (vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
 - (d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and



- (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
 - (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
- (3) Every Council must-
- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
 - (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
 - (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.





1. INTRODUCTION

Our picturesque Shire is location in Victoria's High Country just 2 hours north east of Melbourne. The landscape is dominated by the Great Dividing Range and is home to Mt Buller and Mt Stirling (managed by Mt Buller and Mt Stirling Alpine Resort Management Board), the Alpine National Park, and the second largest in-land waterway in Australia - Lake Eildon.

Mansfield Shire has been recognised as one of Victoria's fastest growing municipalities for more than a decade. The combination of lifestyle and proximity to Melbourne has seen the permanent population grow at around 2% each year, from 6,631 in 2001 to 8,605 in 2016. Over the same period, some 1,200 additional rateable properties have contributed to strong growth in our Shire. Forecasts indicate that by 2031 our population will have grown to around 9,595 (*Victoria in Future 2016*).



Our residents live primarily within the townships scattered across the municipality. Each has its own history, distinct character and sense of identity. The development of our Shire owes much to the locations of Ancona, Barjarg, Bonnie Doon, Goughs Bay, Howqua, Jamieson, Kevington, Macs Cove, Maindample, Mansfield township, Merrijig, Merton, Sawmill Settlement/Alpine Ridge, Tolmie and Woods Point.

These settlements are intrinsically linked to key historic industries such as gold, timber harvesting and farming. The strong sense of community positions these communities as a vital component of the overall strength of our Shire.

Many of our towns grew in the mid-20th Century due to Melbournians wanting an escape from the city to a weekend retreat; a trend which continues today, as around 50% of our ratepayers do not live here permanently.

It is estimated that Mansfield Shire has an employment base of 3,816 and an industry output of over \$8 million. The major industry sectors within our Shire are:

- Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- Construction
- Accommodation and food services
- Rental, hiring and real estate services.

Mansfield Shire sits in Taungurung country. The lineage of the area's first inhabitants stretches back tens of thousands of years. We acknowledge the living culture and unique role of Taungurung people in our region.



2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Legislative requirement

S68(A)(2)(b) of the Act requires that the Domestic Animals Management Plan (DAMP):

Outline programs for the training of Authorised Officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district.

2.1 CONTEXT

The following table provides an overview of the number of domestic animals currently registered in our Shire, along with information about staff available to ensure compliance with the Act, our Local Law and permit requirements.

Table 1 - Overview of registrations and Authorised Officers

Number of registered dogs 2016-17	2736
Number of registered cats 2016-17	443
Number of registered domestic animal businesses	8
Number of Authorised Officers	1 equivalent full time person split between two part time Local Laws Officers and 3 casual staff

2.2 CURRENT SITUATION

Council's Local Laws Department consists of two part time Authorised Officers. During an emergency or crisis, three additional delegated Council officers are available from other Council departments to assist the Local Laws Unit.

The objective of training and development is to ensure all officers involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work in a safe, effective and professional manner. Knowledge of, and compliance with, legislation and various codes of practice is an important part of the Local Laws Officers' role and Council is committed to ensuring all officers involved in animal management are equipped for the demands of their role and are competent in their job.

Local Laws officers have received formal training in conflict resolution, dog and cat handling, bite prevention, stock handling and self-preservation. The table below outlines previous and proposed training.



2.3 CURRENT AND PLANNING TRAINING

This section outlines the qualifications and training undertaken by our Authorised Officers, along with the training proposed for the next 12 months.

Table 2 - Qualifications and Training Planned for Authorised Officers

Who	Current Qualifications	Planned Authorised Officer Training	When
Sonia Dioguardi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Certificate IV Animal Control & Regulation· Bite Prevention· Dog handling course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· First Aid – Level Two· Firearms	1/7/2018 1/7/2018
James Brown		<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Dog handling course	31/07/2018
Matt Comerford		<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Dog handling course	31/07/2018
David McKenzie		<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Dog handling course	31/07/2018





2.4 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Develop and maintain a training policy by 1 July 2018

Action	When	Measure
Develop and maintain register of Officer training	Annually	Corporate and Organisational Development Department to review and deliver any proposed training opportunities
Identify training requirements during Council's annual review system	Annually	All officers to attend relevant training
Officer attendance at industry training and networking sessions	Ongoing	Skills gained are utilised on the job by Local Laws Officers
Assess and redevelop induction program for any new Local Laws Officer	December 2018	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved Council training policy.

Objective 2: Ensure Authorised Officers maintain currency of skills and knowledge

Action	When	Measure
Ensure all Authorised Officers maintain minimum qualifications as required by legislation	Upon changes to qualifications or legislative requirements	Copies of certificates and completed training to be provided to Council.

Objective 3: Develop a job skills matrix

Action	When	Measure
Identify minimum skill requirements	December 2018	Skills matrix finalised by December 2018
Audit Authorised Officer skills and identify additional training required to meet the job skills matrix	December 2018	Opportunities identified and scheduled for inclusion into future budget allocation by December 2018



3. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(2)(c)(v) of the Act requires the DAMP to:

Outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

This section also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d) and (f) of the Act.

3.1 CURRENT SITUATION

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires that all dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be registered with Council. Registration is important to help identification and to aid the return of animals that are lost, wandering or causing a nuisance to their owners, thereby potentially avoiding the impounding of these animals.

In 2016 Council introduced lifelong tags as a means of simplifying the registration process.

The following table shows the trends in dog and cat registrations in recent years. We expect that the general trend of increasing registrations will continue as more residents move into the Shire.

Table 3 - Number of registered domestic animals

Year	Registered dogs	Registered cats
2012-13	2603	421
2013-14	2467	412
2014-15	2600	400
2015-16	2843	484
2016-17	2736	443

Council's registration numbers for cats and dogs remains relatively stable whereas the number of households has increased which indicates there may be a large number of unidentified pets within the Shire.

Council adopted a reduced fee of \$38 for desexed dogs, animals that are part of a domestic animals business and dogs that have undergone obedience training with an approved organisation in its 2017-18 budget. This fee is \$38 per dog or cat. The fee to register an entire dog or cat is \$147.

Dogs kept for working stock are also subject to reduced fees at \$23 per animal.



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

Our current Community Local Law No 1 contains provisions around responsible pet ownership including:

- Restriction on the number of animals to be kept on non rural land (cl 2.1)
- Restriction on the number of dangerous dogs/restricted breed dogs (cl 2.2)
- Restrictions on the keeping of dogs and cats on rural land (cl 2.3)
- Requirements around keeping dogs on leads (cl 2.4)
- Requirements around the removal of dog excrement from a public place (cl 2.6).

Council's Draft new Community Local Law No. 1 2017, which is expected to be adopted in April 2018, has a number of clauses which specifically relate to the principles of responsible pet ownership. They include:

- Restriction on the number of animals that may be kept on land within the Shire based on area of land (cl 38.1)
- Conditions under which animals are kept (cl 39)
- Noise and Smell (cl 40)
- Responsibility of owners of for the removal of excrement in a public place (cl 41)
- Requirement for dogs to be on leads in public places (cl 42)
- Requirement for animals to be kept on their own property (cl 43).

A policy and procedures manual is under development and should be completed by mid-2018. This manual will cover processes such as registrations and the seizure/impounding of roaming domestic animals.





3.3 OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Council is actively educating the community about responsible pet ownership through:

- Publicising the requirement to register pets over 3 months of age in the local paper, through social media and on Council's website
- Responsible Pet Ownership brochures are made available to the community at Customer Service or upon request.
- Providing information via the Shire's website and also social media posts throughout the year around responsible pet ownership
- Providing information to the community through the Shire's market stall four times per year.

3.4 OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Council ensures compliance with our local law and legislation through:

- Forwarding renewal notices to animal owners to encourage compliance with registration
- Sending 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 and unregistered 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 animals remain unregistered
- Monitoring Domestic Animal Business activities
- Providing an after-hours emergency animal service

We already implement a range of education and proactive initiatives to educate the community around responsible pet ownership and ensuring compliance with our Local Law and legislation. This work will be augmented by the following actions.



3.5 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Increase registration compliance within the Shire

Action	When	Measure
Media coverage to educate the community on the value of registration and timing for renewal.	Annually in February	Number of media posts Community response
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release	Prior to every release	Annual registration numbers trends Trends in the number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded that are not registered to their owner.
Proactive door-knocking in areas believed to have high number of unregistered animals.	Annually	Increase in registration numbers Trends in the number of dogs and cats being impounded that are not registered to owners. Record number of unregistered animals picked up during door knocks and compare with registrations.
Advertise all unidentified animals in Pound on Council's Facebook page	Ongoing	Monitor use of site and comments

Objective 2: Increase young animal registrations

Action	When	Measure
Examine methods of increasing young animal registration, such as upon the presentation of booked desexing operation or upon signing a statutory declaration, a discounted registration rate is applied*.	Ongoing	Increase in numbers of young animals being registered

* Many owners do not want to desex their pet at three months of age. By allowing them to present proof of booking for a desexing operation or upon signing a statutory declaration, a discounted registration rate could be offered.



Objective 3: Investigate options to improve responsible pet ownership

Action	When	Measure
Implement a community education program for cat owners about the importance of keeping their animals secured for the protection of native wildlife	June 2018 to May 2019	Information sessions delivered Attendance at the information sessions



Objective 4: Reduce the number of feral cats to protect wildlife

Action	When	Measure
Encourage the desexing of cats to reduce feral cat populations through agreements with local vets	June 2018 onwards	Increase in number of desexed cats
Provide cat traps to residents to trap wandering or feral cats	Ongoing	Trends in the number of feral cats removed from environment
Media concerning issues of stray and feral cats	Twice yearly	Number of media posts Community response



4. NUISANCE

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(2)(c)(vi) of the Act requires the DAMP to:

Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

This section also addresses clause 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d) and (f) of the Act.

4.1 CURRENT SITUATION

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires Council to manage domestic animal nuisance problems. In addition there are additional requirements in our Community Local Law No. 1 that assist with managing potential animal nuisance by requiring dogs to be on leash in public places (except for off leash areas) and requiring adequate fencing to be in place to contain animals on private land.

The following table highlights the nuisances reported to Council. It is noted there is a steady increase in the number of complaints, which we believe is largely due to an increase in population and animals :

Table 4 - Data relating to nuisance complaints

Type of Nuisance	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Barking dog complaints	4	7	14
Cat Trap requests	38	41	35
Dog attack	4	3	10
Total	46	51	59

Table 5 provides information around the number of dogs and cats that have been impounded, and the fate of these animals in terms of whether they were successfully returned to their owner, rehoused or euthanized.

Table 5 - Number of animals impounded and returned to owners

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
Dogs Impounded	107	157	212
Dogs returned to owner	94	141	169
Dogs rehoused	9	13	35
Dogs euthanised	4	3	8
Cats Impounded	89	122	60
Cats returned to owner	2	13	1
Cats rehoused	16	3	7
Cats euthanised*	71	106	52

*includes feral cats removed from environment by trapping by residents and Council



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

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* contains provisions for both dogs and cats relating to noise, trespassing, wandering and aggression.

Council's existing Community Local Law No 1 mitigates nuisance through:

- Restricting the number of dogs and cats that can be kept on a premises (cl 2.1)
- Restricting the keeping of dogs and cats on rural land (cl 2.3).



Council's Draft new Community Local Law No. 1 2017, which is expected to be adopted in April 2018, has a number of clauses which specifically relate to nuisance, including:

- Restricting the number of dogs and cats that can be kept on a premises (cl 38)
- Outlining standards for the conditions under which animals are to be kept (cl 39)
- Provisions around ensuring a premises does not emit noise and smell that interferes with the comfort of neighbours (cl 40)
- Provisions on wandering animals (cl 43).

A policy and procedures manual is under development and should be completed by mid-2018. This manual will cover processes such as responding to barking dog complaints and the surrender of a dog or cat.



4.3 OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Council is actively engaging with the community to promote responsible pet ownership as a means of minimising nuisance through:

- Community education on responsible pet ownership, in particular ensuring cats and dogs remain secure on their own property.
- Community education on the causes of animal nuisance and resolution of complaints.



4.4 OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Council ensures compliance with our local law and legislation through:

- Returning wandering animals to owners for first time occurrences providing they are compliant with the Act (ie. animal is registered, etc.), with face to face education provided to the owner
- Council has Section 84Y Agreements with a number of no-kill rescue organisations to rehome unidentified animals from Council's Pound or to rehome surrendered animals.
- Delivery of a trapping program to reduce number of feral cats in high risk areas including provision of cat cages for trapping nuisance cats.
- Annual inspection of Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with the Act.



4.5 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Manage dog nuisance complaints

Action	When	Measure
Encourage responsible dog ownership by providing information on issues such as socialisation, effective confinement and the appropriate use of anti-bark collars through media and officer contact.	Ongoing	Decrease in the number of nuisance complaints
Review and update Council's Barking Dog procedure to include utilisation of dispute resolution / mediation services	June 2018	Decrease in the number of ongoing complaints received

Objective 2: Reduce Dogs / Cats at large complaints

Action	When	Measure
Provide education on responsible pet ownership to ensure animals are securely contained utilising media and website	Ongoing	Decrease in the number of animals at large to assess effectiveness of the campaign
Stray animals to be returned to owner for first time occurrences – providing they are compliant with the Act (ie. animal is registered, etc.)	Ongoing	Increase in the number of animals returned to owners

Objective 3: Provide leash free parks/public places

Action	When	Measure
Advertise existence of "leash free" areas within the Shire via media	Ongoing	Number of media posts Community response



5. DOG ATTACKS

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(2)(c)(iii) of the Act requires the DAMP to:

Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

This section also addresses section 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d) and (f).

5.1 CURRENT SITUATION

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* provides Council with the power to minimise, respond to and manage issues related to dog attacks.

Most dog attacks in Mansfield Shire occur from dogs at large or dogs not being effectively controlled in public. With a large non-resident ratepayer population, many of these attacks occur when people are visiting their holiday homes in the municipality with their pets.

Table 6 - Number of reported dog attacks

Year	Number of attacks
2014-15	4
2015-16	7
2016-17	14

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

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* contains provisions relating to controlling aggressive dogs, dangerous dogs and restricted breeds.

Mansfield's current Community Local Law Number 1 contains a number of clauses designed to minimise dog attacks, namely:

- Restricting the numbers of dogs that can be kept on non-rural and rural land (cl 2.1 and 2.3)
- Limiting the keeping of restricted breed or dangerous dogs to two per premises
- Requiring dogs to be on leads unless in a designated unleashed area, although restricted breeds and dangerous dogs must always be on a leash.



Council's Draft new Community Local Law No. 1 2017, which is expected to be adopted in April 2018, has a number of clauses which specifically relate to minimising dog attacks, including:

- Restriction on the number of animals that may be kept on land within the Shire based on area of land (cl 38.1)
- Requirement for dogs to be on leads in public places (cl 42)
- Requirement for animals to be kept on their own property (cl 43).

A policy and procedures manual is under development and should be completed by mid-2018. This manual will cover processes such as responding to dog attacks, the seizure of dogs and impounding of dogs after an attack and the surrender of a dog following a dog attack.

5.3 OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Council is actively engaging with the community to promote responsible pet ownership as a means of minimising dog attacks through:

- Community education on responsible pet ownership, in particular ensuring dogs remain secure on their own property.
- Encourage desexing of animals at time of registration to lower the likelihood of wandering animals.





5.4 OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Council ensures compliance with our local law and legislation through:

- Immediate response if situation is deemed dangerous.
- Providing after hours service for reporting dog attacks.

5.5 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Promote responsible pet ownership programs (RPAs) in schools, kindergartens and at maternal health care centre.

Action	When	Measure
Actively promote the Responsible Pet Ownership program conducted by Department Economic Development, Jobs, Training & Resources (DEDJTR) to kindergartens and primary schools within Mansfield	June 2018	Number of sessions held in Mansfield Shire

Objective 2: Educate the community to minimise dog attacks on stock

Action	When	Measure
Educate landowners as to the DEDJTR guidelines regarding trespassing dog attacks on stock	Twice yearly (<i>Spring & Autumn</i>)	Assess number of dog attacks on stock annually
Provide education on responsible pet ownership to ensure owners are aware of risks associated with wandering pets and stock via media	Ongoing	Reduction in number of dog attacks and animals at large
Increase routine patrols of outlying towns to check for dogs at large	Immediate and ongoing	Increased visibility of Ranger vehicle and reduction of number of dogs at large

Objective 3: Effective policies to prevent and respond to dog attacks

Action	When	Measure
Update dog attack investigation and enforcement policy and procedures	June 2018	Update completed



6. DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(2)(c)(vii) of the Act requires the DAMP to:

Outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations.

This section also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d) and (f) of the Act.

6.1 CURRENT SITUATION

Mansfield Shire currently has the following declared dogs registered within the municipality:

Table 7 - Number of restricted and declared dogs December 2017

Type	Number
Registered restricted breed dogs	0
Registered declared dangerous dogs	4
Registered declared menacing dogs	4

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

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* contains provision relating to restricted breeds, dangerous dogs and menacing dogs.

Clause 2.2 of Mansfield's current Community Local Law Number 1 restricts the number of restricted breed and dangerous dogs that can be kept on a premises to two such animals.

Clause 38.6 of the draft new Community Local Law No. 1 2017, which is expected to be adopted in April 2018 restricts the number of declared dogs on any one property to two.

A policy and procedures manual is under development and should be completed by mid-2018. This manual will cover processes such as declaring a dog to be dangerous or menacing and providing details of dangerous dogs for the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.



6.3 OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Council is actively engaging with the community to promote responsible pet ownership as a means of managing the number of dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs by:

- Providing information through Council's website regarding the types of declared dogs and how they are to be identified and kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations.
- Ensuring that all owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Act regarding identification and the keeping of these dogs by providing them with relevant information.
- Ensuring all declared dogs are accurately registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and that any changes to details are updated as soon as possible.

6.4 OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Council ensures compliance with our local law and legislation through:

- Undertaking annual audits of all properties housing declared dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.
- Monitoring registrations and complaints to identify potential restricted breed dogs.
- Thoroughly assess suspected restricted breed dogs.
- Inspection of premises housing declared dogs to ensure compliance.
- Seizure of dogs suspected of being restricted breed dogs.
- Ensuring all declared dogs are registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Database
- Prosecute any breaches of the Act or Regulations.

6.5 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Develop clear policy and procedures for Declared Dogs

Action	When	Measure
Review Council's declaration policies and procedures	June 2018	Completion of review and implementation of the revised policies and procedures
Ensure Council has specific declaration procedures for each type of declaration (ie. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs)	June 2018	Completion of review and implementation of the revised policies and procedures



Objective 2: Promote community awareness of dangerous / menacing dogs

Action	When	Measure
Educate the community about what constitutes a declared dog via the website and other media	Ongoing	Number of media posts Community response
Develop information kit for owners of declared dogs with relevant documentation to be aware of their obligations under the Act regarding keeping these dogs – should include relevant sections of the Act, brochures and fact sheets	June 2018	Reduction in breaches



Objective 3: Inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are compliant

Action	When	Measure
Inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure compliance	Annually	Completion of all inspections



7. OVER POPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(2)(c)(iv) of the Act requires the DAMP to:

Outline programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats

This section also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d) and (f).

7.1 CURRENT SITUATION

Where animals are identifiable by a microchip or tag, Council endeavours to return lost animals to owners whenever possible. Unidentified animals remain in Council's Pound for the statutory 8 days and if not claimed within that time, every effort is made to rehome the animal through one of the many no-kill shelters with whom Council have Section 84Y agreements. Euthanasia is a last resort.

Cats that are impounded and determined by Authorised Officers to be feral are immediately euthanised. Cats and kittens that are not considered wild, uncontrollable or diseased are transferred to a local vet for rehoming under a current Section 84Y agreement.

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) have active wild dog programs in the municipality and information relating to Pest Animal Baiting is available on Council's website.



Table 8 - Number animals rehomed

Year	Number of animals
2014-15	25
2015-16	16
2016-17	42

Council adopted a reduced fee of \$38 for desexed dogs and cats in an attempt to promote desexing. The fee to register an entire dog or cat is \$147.



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

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* contains provision relating to the desexing of domestic animals. Section 84Y of the Act also provides for agreements between Council and animal shelters or community foster care networks to provide for rehoming and pound services.

Mansfield's current Community Local Law Number 1 contains a number of clauses designed to minimise dog attacks, namely:

- Restricting the numbers of dogs that can be kept on non-rural and rural land (cl 2.1 and cl 2.3)

Council's Draft new Community Local Law No. 1 2017, which is expected to be adopted in April 2018, has a number of clauses which specifically relate to addressing overpopulation and euthanasia, including restricting the number of dogs and cats that can be kept on a premises (cl 38).

A policy and procedures manual is under development and should be completed by mid-2018. This manual will cover processes such as the seizure and impounding of dogs and cats and conditions of release of animals to owners.

7.3 OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Council is actively educating the community about the benefits of desexing their animals through:

- Promotion of desexing at time of registration to reduce the number of unwanted kittens and puppies
- Community education on responsible pet ownership on how to keep cats and dogs secure on their property
- Ensuring the microchipping and desexing of all unregistered impounded animals prior to their release to the owner
- Making cat traps available for hire at no charge for community members to trap feral or unwanted cats
- Using our social media page to facilitate the rehoming and return of animals.





7.4 OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Council ensures compliance with our local law and legislation through:

- Investigation of unregistered breeding facilities.
- Audits of registered domestic animals businesses.
- Not releasing animals unless they are registered and desexed.

7.5 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Promote the desexing of dogs and cats

Action	When	Measure
Discount registration fees for desexed dogs and cats	Ongoing	Number of new animals registered in category annually
Use media to encourage desexing of pets	Ongoing	Number of new animals registered in category annually
Actively promote National Desexing Month in July each year through the National Desexing Network and local vets	July – annually	Monitor uptake through local vets

Objective 2: Identify and close down illegal breeding establishments

Action	When	Measure
Monitor media activity for people advertising pets for sale. Follow up to investigate if they are a Domestic Animal Business (DAB) and require registration	Ongoing	Increase in number of DABs registered with Council
Shut down and, if appropriate, prosecute illegal breeding businesses	When located	Reduction in number of illegal breeding facilities

Objective 3: Encourage the reduction of the number of unwanted litters of cats

Action	When	Measure
Provide a link to “Who’s for Cats?” website and promote other educational programs on Council’s website and offices http://www.whosforcats.com.au/	Ongoing	Record number of unidentified cats being fed by neighbours handed to pound
Continue to provide cat traps to residents to trap feral or problem cats	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of entire cats trapped



8. DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(2)(c)(ii) of the Act requires the DAMP to:

Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation.

This section also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d) and (f).

8.1 CURRENT SITUATION

The table below identifies the number and type of Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) registered in the municipality as at December 2017.

Table 9 - Number and type of domestic animal businesses

Type of Domestic Animal Business	Number
Breeding / Training facility	3
Boarding facility	3
Pet Shop	1
Pound	1

Registered DABs are inspected annually to ensure compliance with the relevant codes of practice and legislation. Any complaints are investigated upon receipt.

8.2 OUR CURRENT ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* contains provision relating to the registration and operation of domestic animals businesses.

Mansfield's current Community Local Law Number 1 contains provisions to restrict the number of animals to be kept on a premises (cl 2.1 and cl 2.3).

Council's Draft new Community Local Law No. 1 2017, which is expected to be adopted in April 2018, includes clauses restricting the number of animals that can be kept on a premises (cl 38), while also allowing for exemption from these limits for registered Domestic Animals Businesses (cl 38.4).

8.3 OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Council is actively educating the community about restrictions on breeding animals and requirements around the registration of domestic animals businesses by:

- providing information and forms to register a business on our website.
- Educating animal owners about restrictions around breeding of animals.



8.4 OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Council ensures compliance with our local law and legislation through:

- Registration and renewal of all Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality
- Annual audits of registered Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant codes of practice and legislation
- Provision of an annual report to DEDJTR listing all Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality
- Investigation and inspection of suspected unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses.

8.5 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Audit registered Domestic Animal Businesses

Action	When	Measure
Annual audit of all Domestic Animal Breeding facilities within the municipality to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice	Annually	100% of registered DABs inspected All outstanding actions addressed by operators to the satisfaction of Authorised Officers
Investigate reports of illegal breeding facilities within the municipality	Ongoing	Number of undertaken Increase in the registration of illegal businesses
Develop a policy to deal with audit outcomes	December 2018	Policy developed and implemented Number of non-compliances recorded and actioned

Objective 2: Identify households with excess animals and potential Domestic Animal Business activity

Action	When	Measure
Use of the current animal register, information from the community and door knocking to identify properties with excess animals and potential unregistered DABs	Ongoing	Number of unregistered businesses identified Number of additional DABs registered Number of prosecutions, where appropriate



Objective 3: Promote the requirements for breeders to register a Domestic Animal Businesses

Action	When	Measure
Update Council's website to include a Domestic Animal Business section with links to relevant codes of practice	June 2018	Website updated



Objective 4: Ensure that all Authorised Officers are knowledgeable on the legislation and code of practice in relation to Domestic Animal Businesses

Action	When	Measure
All Officers are to review fact sheets, documents and changes to the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> prior to conducting audits	Annually prior to inspections	Attend training for new legislation
Develop and implement a policy and procedures around the investigation of potential DABs	December 2018	Completion and application of policy



9. OTHER MATTERS

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(2)(e) of the Act requires the DAMP to:

Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.

9.1 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE

This section includes Council's actions in relating to the inclusion of domestic animals in relation to emergency management planning.

9.2 CURRENT SITUATION

- Domestic animals have been considered during the preparation of the Municipal Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan
- Community meetings have been held to educate residents about what they need to do for their pets in an emergency
- Promotion of registration and microchipping of domestic dogs and cats over 3 months of age to increase the likelihood of return to owners in case of an emergency
- During emergency events, Council will work with other relevant welfare agencies to manage domestic animal issues.

9.3 WHAT WE WILL DO

Objective 1: Include Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan in the Municipal Emergency Response Plan

Action	When	Measure
Include the Animal and Stock Emergency Welfare Plan in the Municipal Emergency Response Plan (MERP)	Ongoing	Plan included in the MERP
Utilise media to educate pet owners about what they should prepare for their pets in times of emergency – food, bedding, water, bowls, cage, medication, registration and vaccination certificates, collar and id tag	Annually	Number of media posts Community response



10. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Legislative requirement

Section 68A(3) of the Act states that every Council must-

- (a) *review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan*
- (b) *provide the Department of Primary Industries' 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.*

Council will review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually to assess whether any amendments are necessary in order to ensure the Plan is relevant and can be completed within the required timeframes.

The annual assessment will focus on:

- Activities – the extent to which the Activities were completed and successful
- Objectives – the extent to which the Objectives were met by carrying out the Activities.

In the final year of the Plan, Council will undertake a major review and commence drafting of the Domestic Animal Management Plan for 2022-2024.

11. CONTACTING MANSFIELD SHIRE COUNCIL

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MANSFIELD SHIRE

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021

