

# 2017-2021 Domestic Animal Management Plan



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# 1. Introduction

The primary focus of this Domestic Animal Management Plan is the management of companion animals, namely dogs and cats. Latrobe City Council acknowledges the role it plays in promoting responsible pet ownership and enforcing legislation. We are committed to balancing the needs of pet owners with those in our community who do not own pets. Consideration has been given to both parties in the development of our Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021.

This Plan has been developed in accordance with Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and sets out a formalised approach to increase the awareness of domestic animal management practices within Latrobe City.

Latrobe City Council recognises the value domestic pets contribute in making Latrobe City a vibrant and liveable City. Domestic pets are not only considered part of a family, but are an integral part of a wider community. Research demonstrates that pets contribute to building a strong sense of community and developing active social capital; vital to any vibrant, healthy community.

Pet ownership is positively associated with social interactions, community involvement and increased feelings of neighbourhood friendliness and sense of community.

With about 62 percent of Australians owning a dog or cat, these benefits, when aggregated across the whole community, are of significant interest to Council and others concerned with building healthier, happier neighbourhoods.

In addition, these benefits create a ripple effect that extends beyond pet owners into the broader community, with pets helping to smooth the way for social interaction and general recreation.

Both anecdote and research suggests that pets are well recognised ice-breakers. Dogs, for example, can stimulate conversation and contact between strangers and trigger positive social interaction.

Studies undertaken by the School of Population Health at the University of Western Australia showed that half of all dog owners surveyed indicated that they had come to know locals in their suburb as a result of their dog.

Residents' chatting to each other as a result of a pet is not just a social nicety. Such community-based interactions between people have the very real potential to break down the barriers and stereotypes that separate us from 'others' while playing an important role in building trust and a deep sense of community at the neighbourhood level.

Pets provide increased opportunities for families to be more active; companionship to those who may be feeling isolated or lonely and assist people with a disability or illness to maintain independence and participate more fully in community life.

## 2. Background

Local Government has long been the level of government primarily responsible for domestic animal management.

Section 68A of the Domestic Animal Act 1994 (the Act) requires all Victorian councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) at four yearly intervals. A copy of the plan and any subsequent amendments must be provided to the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. Council is required to then report on the plans implementation in its annual report.

## 3. Primary objective

The primary objective of the Plan is to provide a strategic map to support the community towards the goal of responsible pet ownership and to assist Council in achieving a professional, consistent and proactive approach to domestic animal management practices.

The Plan identifies current activities and future actions to address the following areas, as required by Section 68A of the Act:-

- Identify methods for evaluating animal control services;
- Promote responsible pet ownership;
- Ensure compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and Regulations;
- Minimise the risk of dog attacks;
- Address over population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats;
- Encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats;
- Minimise the potential for nuisance;
- Identify dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- Review all existing Council orders and local laws that relate to dogs and cats;
- Identify programs for training of authorised animal management officers;
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of programs and service strategies.

### 3.1 Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin the actions of this Plan with regard to domestic animals:

- The belief that pets contribute to quality of life.
- A requirement to balance the needs of those who own pets and those who do not.
- Valuing responsible pet ownership.
- Proactive animal management and education within the community.
- Protection of the environment from any negative impacts of dogs and cats.
- Working in partnership with others to achieve positive outcomes for the community.
- Local Government plays a leadership role in animal management.

## 4. Latrobe City Snapshot

Latrobe City, Victoria's only regional city situated in the eastern part of the state, encompasses an area of 1,422 square kilometers with a population of approximately 73,458. (ABS 2015)

Situated approximately 150km east of Melbourne, in the centre of Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley, Latrobe City is one of four Victorian regional cities.

Latrobe City includes the four major towns of Churchill, Moe/Newborough, Morwell and Traralgon as well as the seven outer lying townships of Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Traralgon South, Tyers, Yallourn North and Yinnar.

- During the 2015/2016 Registration period there were 10977 dogs and 3390 cats registered within the municipality. There were 10 registered domestic animal businesses, including 1 pet shop, 4 boarding establishments and 5 breeding and rearing establishments.

## 5. Current Programs and Service Levels

Latrobe City's Local Laws Team administers and provides a broad range of services to ensure that Council meets its legislative responsibilities relating to the management of domestic animals. They include but are not limited to:

- Educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership.
- Management of Council's domestic animal pound facility.
- Maintaining a domestic animal register.
- Providing advice on domestic animal matters.
- Dealing with and investigating animal complaints for the community.
- Impounding of wandering, unwanted/surrendered and/or feral dogs and cats.
- Undertaking registration door knocks.
- Administration and control of Dangerous and Restricted Breed dogs for compliance with legislation.
- Investigating dog attacks.
- Providing a 24 hour 7 day a week emergency service.
- Inspection and registration of domestic animal businesses.
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with organisations such as Save-a-dog scheme (SADS), Forever Friends Animal Rescue (FFAR) and veterinarians.

## 5.1 Resourcing

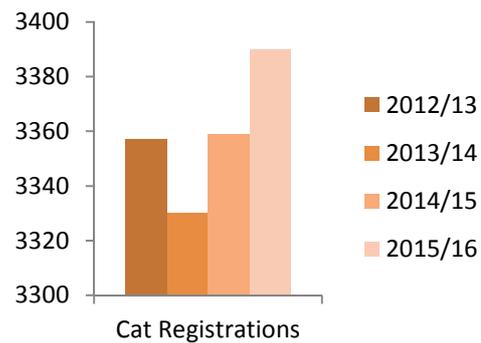
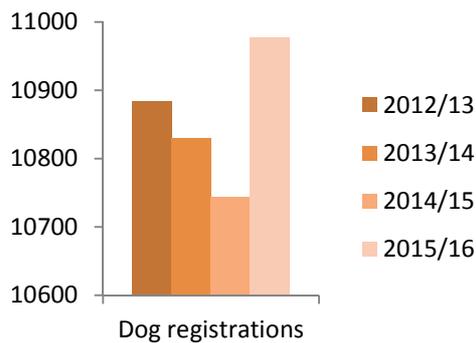
The Local Laws team consists of five full-time and four part-time Local Laws Officers delivering general local laws, animal and parking management services.

- Coordinator Local Laws (1 EFT)
- Prosecutions / Legal Proceedings Officer (1 EFT)
- Team Leader Local Laws (1 EFT)
- Local Laws Administration Officers (1.8 EFT)
- Local Laws Officers (7 EFT)

## 5.2 Statistical Data

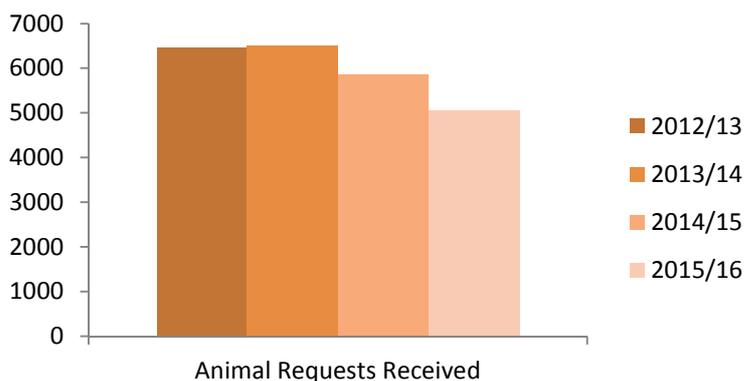
### Animal Registrations

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Dogs Registered	10884	10830	10744	10977
Cats Registered	3357	3330	3359	3390



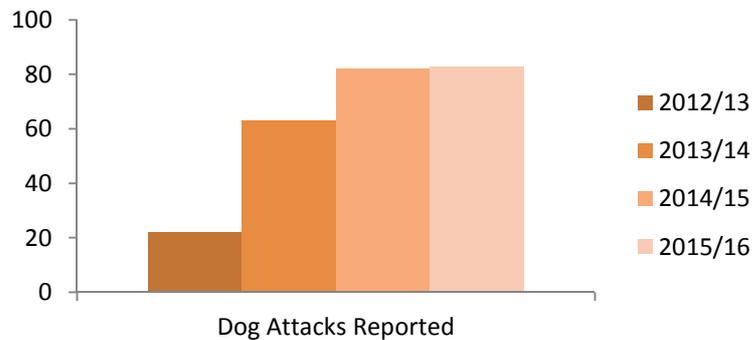
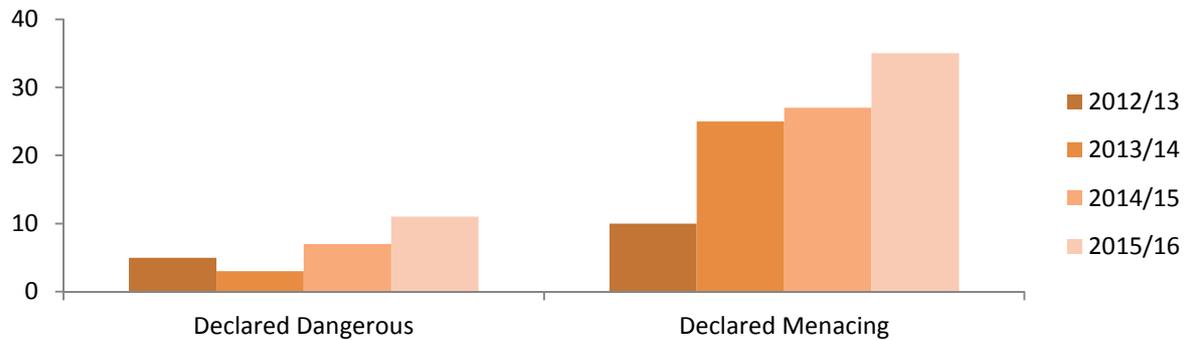
### Animal Requests

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Animal Pathway Request Received	6471	6514	5870	5057



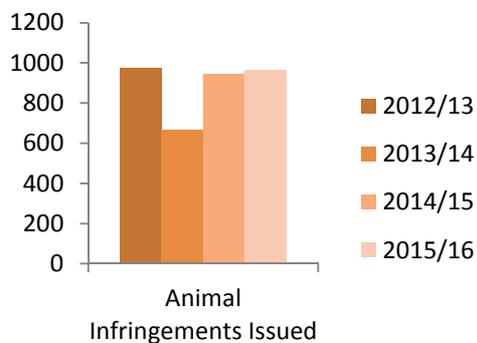
## Declared Dogs & Attacks

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Declared Dangerous Dogs	5	3	7	11
Declared Menacing Dogs	10	25	27	35
Dog Attacks Reported	22	63	82	83



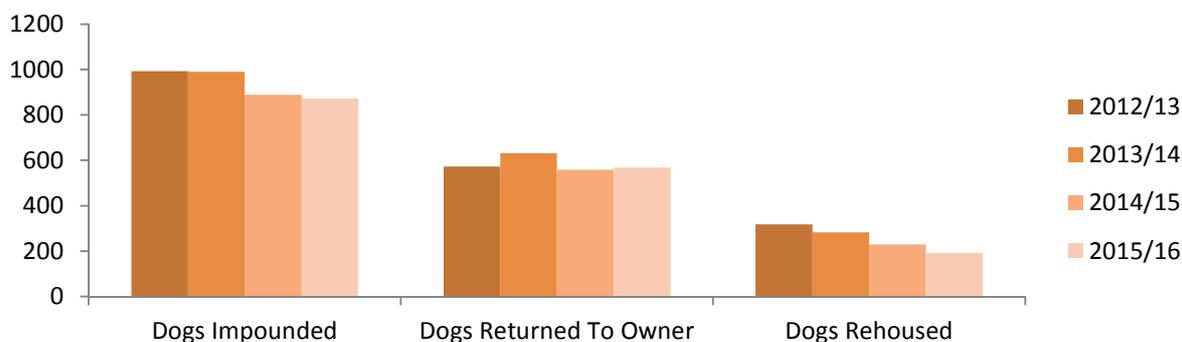
## Animal Infringements Issued

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Animal Infringements Issued	974	669	944	964

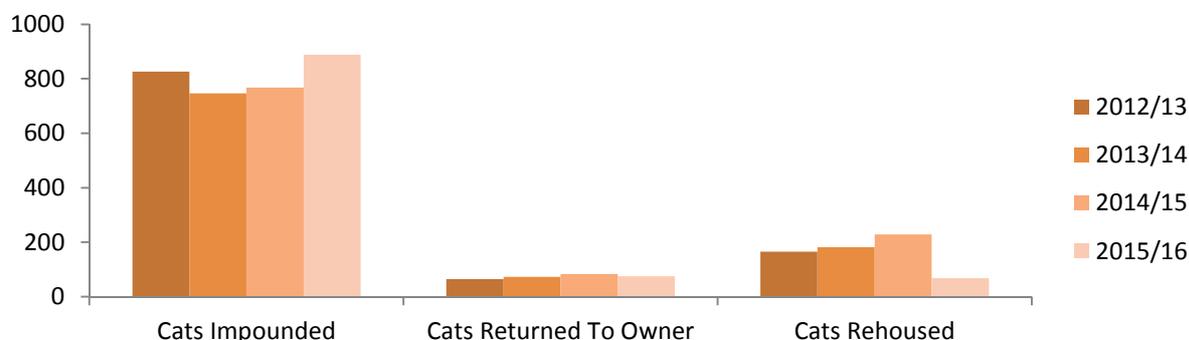


## Impounded Animals

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Dogs Impounded	992	990	888	872
Dogs Returned To Owner	573	632	558	568
Dogs Rehoused	318	283	230	192



	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Cats Impounded	826	747	768	888
Cats Returned To Owner	65	73	83	75
Cats Rehoused	165	182	229	68



## 5.3 Council Orders

Latrobe City Council has the following Orders, Local Laws and Procedures currently in place to assist in the effective management of dogs and cats.

- Compulsory de-sexing of all dogs and cats registered for the first time (unless member of applicable organisations or registered as Domestic Animal Business or upon veterinary advice) effective from 10 April 2008.
- Compulsory microchipping of all dogs and cats registered effective from 10 April 2009.
- Cat curfew between 9 pm to 6 am, seven days a week.

A number of amendments to our current standing orders are proposed in 2017 these include but are not limited to:-

1. Amending Desexing requirements for first time registrations for dogs.
2. Updating the requirements of the affective control of dogs.
3. 24 Hour Cat Curfew

## 5.4 Community Amenity Local Law No. 2 2016

### Division 21 Keeping of Animals

#### KEEPING OF ANIMALS

110.1 An owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept any more in number for each type of animal than as set out in the following table except for farming areas:

<i>Type of Animal</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Multi Unit Development</i>	<i>All Other Areas (Except Farming area)</i>
Dogs		2	2
Cats		2	2
Poultry -		Not permitted	5
<i>Poultry includes; fowls, bantams, pheasants, ducks and geese.</i>			
Free Flying Pigeons		0	0
Rooster		0	0
Domestic Mice		10	10
Guinea Pigs,			
Ferrets, Hamsters		2	4
Domestic Rabbits		2	4
Reptiles		2	2
Other animals*		Not permitted	0 (Residential) / 10 (Rural Living Zone)

*\*Other animals include; cattle, horse, goat, swine, pig, ostrich, sheep and any other agricultural animal.*

110.2 A permit issued for the keeping of dogs and /or cats under this Part will be granted for the life of the animal although if an offence or nuisance be proven the permit can be revoked.

110.3 Sub clause 110.1 does not apply where animals are kept in accordance with a planning permit or where a Wildlife Licence has been obtained in accordance with the Wildlife Regulations 2013.

110.4 A person keeping animals in accordance with clause 110.1 must ensure that the animals do not create a nuisance or danger to neighbours or other persons.

#### **111. DOGS AND CATS ON FARMING PROPERTIES**

Except where a planning permit is issued an owner or occupier of a working farm within a farming area must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept more than four adult dogs and/or four adult cats on that land except where allowed by the planning scheme.

#### **112. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF DOGS AND CATS ON ANY LAND**

Except where a planning permit is issued a person must not keep more than five dogs or five cats on any land except where allowed by the planning scheme.

#### **113. LITTERS OF ANIMALS**

For the purpose of calculating the maximum limit of the numbers of animals kept, the progeny of any animal lawfully kept will be exempt for a period of 3 months after their birth.

#### **117. ANIMAL EXCREMENT**

A person in charge of an animal on a road or other Municipal Place must:

- (a) carry a device suitable for the removal of any excrement that may be deposited by the animal; and
- (b) not allow any part of the animal's excrement to remain on a road or other Municipal Place; and
- (c) produce the device on demand by an authorised officer.

## **5.5 Council Procedures**

- Animal Registration Renewal forms are reviewed annually and amended as required.
- Animal Registration Fees are considered and determined by Council during the annual budget process.
- Animal Deterrent Spray Procedure 2017
- Barking Dog Procedures 2017
- Cat Trap Loan Procedure 2017
- Dealing with Sick or Injured Animals procedure 2017
- De-sexing of Dogs and Cats released from the Pound procedure 2017
- Dog and Cat Impounding Procedure 2017

- Dog and Cat Pound Release Procedure 2017
- Infringement Management System 2017
- Keeping of Animals Permit Approvals Guidelines 2017
- Keeping of Animals Permit Approvals Guidelines 2017
- Notice of Seizure (Dogs and Cats) Procedure 2017
- Notice to Comply Procedure 2017
- Scanning of Impounded Dogs and Cats procedure 2017
- Removal and Identification of Dead Dogs and Cats Procedure 2017
- Voluntary Surrender of Dogs and Cats Procedure 2017
- Dog Handling and Seizure Procedure 2017
- Pound Pest and Parasite Inspection Procedure 2017

## 5.6 Training of Authorised Officers

Latrobe City Council is committed to the training of our Local Laws Officers. An annual training program is developed for each officer to ensure they receive appropriate training. The objective of any training and development is to support all Local Laws staff in having the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work.

A training register detailing all qualifications and training courses completed by each Local Laws Officer is maintained and updated annually to reflect any training undertaken or required.

In addition to specialised training, all staff have access to a suite of personal and professional training opportunities delivered through Council's Learning and Development programs

### 2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- Seven Local Laws Officers completed Certificate IV Animal Control and Regulation.
- Five Local Laws Officers attended regional training seminars sponsored by Bureau of Animal Welfare. Seminars included Identification of Dangerous Dogs, Legislation changes and general updates.
- All Local Laws officers enrolled and have commenced a Prosecutions and Legal Proceedings Course.
- Appointment of a Prosecutions/Legal Proceedings Officer to progress high level legal proceedings with in the judicial hierarchy and perform an oversight of Council's statutory compliance obligations.
- Monthly team meetings held encompassing an update on Animal Legislation and an update of all current animal issues.

### Individual Local Laws Staff recognised as:

- GOTAFE Animal Management Officer of the Year 2014 (Runner up).
- GOTAFE Animal Management Officer of the Year 2015 (Winner).
- Arthur Vickers Animal Sciences & Veterinary Award for Excellence 2015 (Runner up).

## 5.7 Registration and Identification

Latrobe City Council mails out registration renewal notices prior to 10 April each year.

Any renewal payments not received by the due date of 10 April are followed up with a reminder notice advising of penalties for failing to register a dog or cat.

Registration renewal forms are also used as an opportunity to advertise legislative changes i.e. requirement to register dog/cat by age three months and compulsory microchipping and desexing of all new dogs and cats being registered.

When mailing these notices we often include inserts such as “Doggy Doo” and “Unleashed Areas” pamphlets to further inform and educate our community on domestic animal matters.

New registration applications are available at all Council service centres and libraries in Churchill, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon; via Council’s website; through Veterinary Clinics and at Council’s pound facility.

Latrobe City currently partners with local contracted veterinarians to run a microchipping week in March where microchipping is offered at the discounted rate.

### 2012-2016 Animal Registration Comparisons:

Financial Year	Cats	Dogs
2012-13	3357	10884
2013-14	3330	10830
2014-15	3359	10744
2015-16	3390	10977

### Educational and/or Promotional Activities

- Animal Registration forms available at Council service centres and libraries; on Council’s website and can be requested by telephoning Council.
- Advertising and administration of the discount microchipping week held in conjunction with Council’s contracted veterinarians.
- Door knock “hot spot” areas or areas where complaints have been received in relation to registration requirements.
- Maintenance of computerised registration database.
- Advertisements in local newspapers and guest spot on local radio.

### Compliance Activities

- Investigate all complaints received.
- Encourage complainants to speak directly to dog owners to alert them to their dog barking.
- Record all nuisance complaints in Council’s record management systems.
- Provide cat cages to residents for containing trespassing cats as requested.
- Impound all unregistered dogs found at large.
- Issue infringements for dogs found at large.
- Impound or return wandering registered pets to owners.

- Attending properties unannounced to conduct on the spot inspections where there have been ongoing or serious complaints against a property or person.

#### **2014-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:**

- Conducted an annual Pet Expo event for the community. This is an annual event organized by the Local Laws Team in conjunction with our contracted vets and local dog obedience clubs, the event features a number of specialist obedience dog demonstrations, competitions and prizes. Members of our community can bring their own dogs to the event to participate, speak to expert dog obedience trainers and veterinary practitioners and take advantage of a discounted microchipping offer.
- The focus of the day is community members having fun with their pets with an emphasis on responsible pet ownership and free advice from experts in the field.
- Conducted an annual Pet in the Pound program with Lavalla College, designed to promote responsible pet ownership/ado to school children.
- Conducted a discounted microchipping week prior to the registration due date of 10 April each year.
- Participated in Latrobe Cities Children's Expo, with an emphasis on fun and responsible pet ownership for young children.

## **5.8 Animal Nuisance Complaints**

All animal complaints received are investigated in a timely manner to minimise the potential for complaints escalating. Officers will make every effort to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of both parties.

For the most part, nuisance complaints received by Latrobe City Council relate to either barking dogs or stray cats. It is recognised that barking dog complaints can at times cause great frustration for both parties. Local Laws Officers work hard to balance the interests and rights of both the dog owner and the complainant.

Dog owners can become desensitised to the sound of their own dog barking and may be unaware it is a nuisance to neighbours. An effective resolution is often achieved by alerting the dog owner to the fact their dog's barking is becoming a nuisance. Neighbours who are unable, or find it difficult, to speak to their neighbours regarding this matter should make contact with Latrobe City Council for assistance.

Council Officers will first work with the dog owner to support them in identifying the cause of the barking and discuss possible solutions. The majority of cases involve dogs that are bored or responding to visual stimulation. Both causes are often easily resolved with training, toys, blocking a view or exercising the dog more frequently.

Complainants may be asked to keep noise logs (records of dates, times and duration of barking) should the matter continue and further intervention be required. Noise logs form part of the Barking Dog Complaint Form and are available from the Latrobe City web page or from Service Centres and Libraries, and Local Laws Officers can assist with explaining how these are to be filled out.

In response to nuisance complaints received on stray cats Latrobe City offers residents' cat cages to assist in safely containing offending animals trespassing on their property or wandering during the curfew period. Local Laws Officers will then attend during normal business hours and impound any contained cats. These cages are available to members of our community free of charge.

### **Educational and/or Promotional Activities**

- Make information available at Council service centres and libraries and on Council's website.
- Promote the various resources available to encourage the correct selection of a new pet such as 'Select a Pet' website.
- Provide a wide range of pamphlets.
- Distribute brochures to residents when requested and when investigating complaints.
- Signage to identify the areas designated for exercising dogs off lead.
- Advertisements in local newspapers and guest spot on local radio.

### **Compliance Activities**

- Investigate all complaints received.
- Encourage complainants to speak directly to dog owners to alert them to their dog barking.
- Record all nuisance complaints in Council's record management systems.
- Provide cat cages to residents for containing trespassing cats as requested.
- Impound all unregistered dogs found at large.
- Issue infringements for dogs found at large.
- Impound or return wandering registered pets to owners.
- Attend properties unannounced to conduct on the spot inspections where there have been ongoing or serious complaints against a property or person.

### **2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:**

- The procedure for barking dog complaints was revised and improved in March 2017.
- The provision for deposits on the usage of cat cages was removed in 2016 to encourage greater usage and availability to the community.

## **5.9 Dog Attacks**

Latrobe City Council considers any reported dog attacks as the highest priority and dispatches a Local Laws Officer immediately to investigate and action as appropriate.

### **Educational and/or Promotional Activities**

- Promote responsible pet ownership to new and existing dog owners.
- Promote the benefits of dog training, socialisation and frequent exercise.
- Provide a range of pamphlets that raise awareness of the risk of dog attacks in the home, on the street and in parks which include information on how to reduce risks.

- Distribute brochures to residents when requested and when investigating complaints.
- Promotion of the need for dogs to be under effective control, at all times, including the need to ensure dogs can be effectively contained and/or fenced on their own property to ensure they cannot escape.
- Promote de-sexing of dogs to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering at large.
- Promote the need for supervision of children when dogs are present.
- Promote Council's emergency 24 hour 7 day a week service for reporting a dog attack.

### **Compliance Activities**

- Declaration of all identified dangerous/menacing dogs in line with the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
- Respond to all reported dog attacks immediately as the top priority for Local Laws Officers.
- Record all reported dog attacks in Council's record management systems.
- Ensure all reported dog attacks are thoroughly investigated with findings and evidence accurately recorded and maintained.
- Ensure owners of declared dogs are fully informed of their requirements under the Act.
- Proactively declaring dogs dangerous or menacing.
- Ensure unclaimed dogs at the pound are temperament tested to determine whether they are suitable for re-housing.
- Seize dogs involved in serious attacks.
- Provision of a 24 hour 7 days a week emergency service to report a dog attack.
- Conduct regular patrols at locations where there is a high incidence of wandering dogs.

### **2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:**

- All investigations of dog attacks finalised within required timeframes.
- Appointment of Prosecutions and Legal Proceedings Office to the Local Laws team to prosecute a broad range of matters on behalf of Council, inclusive of Dog Attacks. Initial results extremely encouraging.
- Court and Prosecutions training for all Local Laws Officers that will result in an increased number of prosecutions for dog attacks

## **5.10 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs**

Latrobe City Council Local Laws Officers investigate all reports or complaints regarding dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs, immediately.

Local Laws Officers currently use the Department of Primary Industry 'Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria' to identify restricted breeds.

### **Council Orders**

Latrobe City Council currently utilises the Domestic Animals Act 1994 in relation to dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.

Reports of suspected undeclared restricted breed dogs are rare in Latrobe City. Officers believe there is a high level of compliance regarding the ownership and management of declared dogs within the municipality.

### **Educational and/or Promotional Activities**

- Media releases in local papers from Council and the Bureau of Animal Welfare.
- Radio spots on local radio.
- Information pamphlets at all Council service centres and libraries.
- Information available on council's website.
- Ensuring all owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Act regarding identification and the keeping of these dogs.
- Promotion of regulations for restricted breed dogs.
- Promote the 'Dangerous Dogs Hotline' 1300 101 080 on Council's website.

### **Compliance Activities**

- Ensure that all Declared Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs are registered accurately with the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.
- Inspect commercial and industrial areas to identify guard dogs guarding non-residential properties.
- Attending properties unannounced to conduct on the spot inspections and annual audits where there are registered declared dogs.
- Follow-up non-compliance issues found during inspections and audits.
- Review all dog attack cases to determine if it is appropriate to declare the dog dangerous or menacing.
- Maintain a register of all declared dogs registered and housed in Latrobe City Council.
- Seize un-registered, suspected Restricted Breed dogs.
- Completion of investigations of complaints of these types of dog breed.

### **2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:**

- Audited all properties where there are registered declared dogs.
- Declared Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs registered accurately with the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.

## **5.11 Over-Population and High Euthanasia**

Latrobe City Council is aware of the high euthanasia rates for dogs and in particular cats and continues to promote the benefits of de-sexing. The introduction of compulsory de-sexing for all dogs and cats registered for the first time or released from the pound facility was implemented in 2008. Council continues to facilitate a discounted microchipping week prior to the registration date of 10 April each year.

Council has in place eleven Section 84Y Domestic Animal Act agreements to re-house dogs and cats that have ended up in the pound, and is currently negotiating with several other local organisations.

What are s84Y agreements?

In Victoria, dogs and cats may be impounded due to a large number of reasons. When an owner is unidentifiable, unable or unwilling to collect that animal it may require extra care or be assessed as suitable for rehoming.

Under the provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), section 84Y allows for Councils to enter into a written agreement for the seizure, holding and disposal of dogs and cats. These agreements may be made between the Council and a pound, shelter, vet clinic, community foster care network or foster carer depending on the needs of the animals.

The provisions of the Act, allow for a person or body (that has an 84Y (a)(b) &/or (c) with a Council ie a pound, shelter or vet clinic) to have an 84Y(ca) agreement with a community foster care network on the condition that the dog or cat is desexed and microchipped prior to leaving the ownership of the person or body.

Animals moving to a Community Foster Care Network under an 84Y(c) agreement are not required to have been desexed or microchipped prior to leaving the pound. Under an 84Y(c) agreement it is the responsibility of the person or group that take possession of the animal directly from the pound to desex and microchip the animal before it leaves their ownership. Carers are limited to caring for the number of animals permitted by their municipal (local) council.

### **Educational and/or Promotional Activities**

- Promote responsible pet ownership to new and existing dog owners.
- Promote the benefits of dog training, socialisation and frequent exercise at the annual Pet Expo and ongoing.
- Promote Council's cat curfew.
- Promote the benefits of de-sexing; such as no surprise litters, fewer unwanted animals in the community, fewer animals euthanised, reduced aggression and reduced wandering, via local radio spots, local newspaper articles and on Council's website.
- Offer dogs and cats for sale from the pound at an affordable price which includes de-sexing and microchipping costs.

### **Compliance Activities**

- Investigating complaints and reports of numbers of dogs/cats on residential properties.
- Provide cat cages to residents for containing trespassing cats as requested, subject to availability.
- Investigate reports of animal hoarding and work with owners to reduce these to permitted numbers.
- Enter into Section 84Y Domestic Animal Act agreements with local organisations and vets to re-house dogs and cats that have ended up in the pound.

- Investigate reports of unauthorised 'backyard breeders' to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business.
- Implementation of Council resolution for the de-sexing of all dogs and cats being registered for the first time from April 2008.
- 2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:
- Renegotiation of 84Y Domestic Animal Act agreements with local organisations and vets to re-house dogs and cats that have ended up in the pound.

## 5.12 Domestic Animal Businesses

Latrobe City Council currently has 10 Registered Domestic Animal Businesses. These businesses are issued with registration renewal notices each year and Council conducts annual inspections in relation to their compliance with relevant codes of practices.

In Victoria, the Domestic Animals Act 1994 defines Domestic Animal Businesses as any of the following:

- A Council pound (operated by the Council or a contractor on behalf of Council)
- A dog and/or cat breeding business - where there are three or more fertile females and animals are sold (whether a profit is made or not), and the proprietor is not a member of an Applicable Organisation. If the proprietor is a member of an Applicable Organisation, they are exempt from registering as a breeding Domestic Animal Business if they have less than 10 fertile female animals AND no more than 2 are not registered with an Applicable Organisation.
- A dog training establishment (where the business is run for profit)
- A pet shop (operated in a permanent location that must be open at least 5 days per week)
- An animal shelter (e.g. welfare organisations such as the RSPCA and The Lost Dogs' Home)
- An establishment boarding dogs or cats (where the business is run for profit to provide overnight, daycare or homecare boarding)
- An establishment that is rearing dogs or cats (where the business is run for profit).

All domestic animal businesses must be registered annually with their local council and comply with the appropriate mandatory Code of Practice. Local council will often require an inspection of the facilities prior to registration each year. Councils are required to report the number of domestic animal businesses registered with them to DEDJTR on an annual basis.

Council provides all registered Domestic Animal Businesses with any changes to the legislation or Code of Practice information relevant to the business and encourages business owners to be involved in any review of the mandatory Code of Practice.

Any new registration applications are received and processed in line with the Code of Practice.

## **Educational and/or Promotional Activities**

- Provide relevant mandatory Code of Practice to proprietors of existing and proposed domestic animal businesses.
- Ensure all relevant Domestic Animal Businesses are advised and involved in any review of the mandatory Code of Practice for their type of business.
- Invite Domestic Animal Businesses to be involved in Council's animal related community events.

## **Compliance Activities**

- Conduct annual 'unscheduled' inspections/audits of each Domestic Animal Business premises to determine compliance with the Act, relevant mandatory Code of Practice, and any terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on that registration.
- Use the audit documents on the Bureau of Animal Welfare's Animal Management website.
- Follow-up Domestic Animal Business non-compliance issues with information on required actions and timeframe for resolution, further inspections, and prosecutions where necessary.
- In the case of serious non-compliance issues, suspend or cancel registration.
- Liaise with other units within Council to provide advice when planning applications for Domestic Animal Businesses are received, to ensure appropriate conditions are placed on construction, operation, etc.

## **2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:**

- All registered Domestic Animal Businesses have been inspected annually for compliance in the four year period.



# Latrobe City Council

## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### 2017-2021

## 6. Four year action plan

The following pages outline Latrobe City Council's four year action plan which has been designed to build on the successes of the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Actions have been developed with a focus on staff training; community awareness; the provision of accessible, relevant and timely information and a simplified process for the reporting of issues.

Feedback received during Council's Community Consultation period has also been considered in the development of actions.

## 6.1 Training of Authorised Officers

To ensure all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work safely and effectively.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Review and finalise, in consultation with relevant team members, training required for all Authorised Officers undertaking animal management duties.	Consultation with relevant team members, agreed list of skills required to undertake animal management duties developed.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable team members responding to customers; increased customer confidence that their enquiry will be professionally dealt with.	Annually
Ensure all Authorized Officers have commenced or are enrolled to commence relevant training programs within 24 months of appointment.	The number of newly appointed officers who are undertaking or have completed training in required skills	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable team members responding to customers; increased customer confidence that their enquiry will be professionally dealt with.	Ongoing
Maintain a central training register which includes individual Authorized Officers current level of training and agreed future training requirements	Central training register reviewed and maintained on a regular basis.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable team members responding to customers; increased customer confidence that their enquiry will be professionally dealt with.	Annually
Ensure that all team members are kept informed of and trained in changes to relevant legislation, policies, procedure and compliance codes within reasonable timeframes.	Changes to legislation, policy, procedure and compliance codes to be distributed to all team members via e-mail. All changes to be highlighted as agenda items during team meetings. Ongoing training as required.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable team members responding to customers; increased customer confidence that their enquiry will be professionally dealt with.	Ongoing

## 6.2 Registration and Identification

Maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals residing within Latrobe City to aid compliance and facilitate reuniting lost pets with their owners in a timely manner.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Registration reminder notices to be sent out to all animal owners that have failed to re-register their pets by the 10th of April each year.	Reminder notices mailed out to owners of previously registered animals that have not been renewed.	Improved accuracy of Councils pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation	Mail out completed by May 31st each year
Partner with local veterinarians and 84 Y agreement holders to distribute animal registration information to new animal owners.	The number of veterinarians and 84 Y agreement holders actively distributing registration information.	Increased registration of new animals and greater adherence to legislation	Ongoing
Facilitate a discount microchipping period with our contracted vets prior to the registration re-newel in April each year.	Annual discount microchipping period to be conducted each year.	Increased registration of new animals and greater adherence to legislation. Enhanced customer service.	Annually
Ensure that all seized and impounded animals are registered in accordance with legislation prior to release to their owner.	Cross check pound release forms with Councils animal registration database	Improved accuracy of Councils pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Undertake targeted annual doorknocks of the municipality to check for unregistered dogs and cats.	Completion of targeted doorknocks undertaken in the municipality.	Improved accuracy of Councils pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Annually

## 6.3 Animal Nuisance Complaints

Minimise the number of complaints received by Council while increasing community satisfaction with Council's response to investigating complaints.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Provide / make available the most current educational material to animal owners in the municipality	Preparation, sourcing and distribution of educational material to residents of the municipality	Greater community awareness and education to residents with an emphasis on responsible animal ownership. A reduction in animal complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Maintain a supply of cat cages for the community to utilize to control problem or feral cats.	Ensure a register of community members interested in utilizing cat cages is current and that they are contacted as soon as cages become available	Grater community awareness in regards to responsible cat ownership, a reduction in complaints and unwanted/feral cats. An enhanced level of customer service and greater adherence to legislation	Ongoing
Maintain accurate and relevant information on Councils website advising how customers can make a complaint about nuisance animals.	A dedicated page has been set up this needs to be maintained and updated on a regular basis	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; increased access to council services; faster resolution of complaints, enhanced customer service and greater adherence to legislation	Bi-monthly

<p>Audit existing off leash areas against developed guidelines</p>	<p>Audit undertaken and report on findings presented to Manager of Municipal Services. Potential establishment of fenced off leash dog walking parks, pending feasibility study.</p>	<p>Identify gaps between existing off-leash areas and established guidelines in which to plan future works</p>	<p>2017/2018</p>
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## 6.4 Dog Attacks

Minimise the risk to the community of dog attacks while increasing community understanding of potential aggressive animal behaviour and the benefits of dog socialisation and obedience training.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Increased public awareness of what constitutes a dog attack and how to report them.	Update Councils web site with a dedicated section on dog attacks. Use Councils Social Media page to inform the community of dog attack information. Utilize local press to highlight successful prosecutions, when appropriate.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership ; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation	2017/2018

## 6.5 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Meeting legislative requirements relating to dangerous, menacing and Restricted Breed dogs while educating the community about such breeds.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance.	Review internal register of declared dogs and determine checks to be conducted, undertake an inspection of each property.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership ; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation	Annually
Prosecute repeat offenders or serious breaches detected.	Amount of successful outcomes from prosecutions conducted.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership ; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation	As occurs
After hours patrols for unregistered guard dogs	Amount of patrols conducted and the number of unregistered guard dogs detected.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership ; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation	As occurs
Educate the community about what is a declared dog.	Half year updates on council social media site.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership ; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation	Half yearly.

## 6.6 Over-Population and High Euthanasia

Encourage responsible pet ownership by promoting de-sexing and confinement of dogs and cats to reduce the incidence of unwanted pet litters and feral domestic animals; while increasing the number of animals successfully re-housed.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Promote the Bureau of Animal Welfares responsible pet ownership program	Regular utilization of Councils Social Media site to promote responsible pet ownership.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership ; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation	Ongoing
Review existing 84Y Agreements and seek out other potential 84Y providers to enhance the re-homing of unclaimed dogs and cats.	Minimum 85% of impounded animals returned to owner, adopted or re-housed.	Reduction in the number of animals euthanized.	Ongoing
Maximum utilization of Social Media to promote animals available for adoption.	Regular utilization of Councils Social Media site to promote animals for adoption	Reduction in the number of animals euthanized.	Ongoing

## 6.7 Domestic Animal Businesses

To support and regulate domestic animal businesses established within the municipality.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Audit all Domestic Animal Businesses annually to ensure compliance to legislation	Number of Audits conducted	Improved accuracy of Councils pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation	Annually
Maintain accurate and relevant information on Councils website advising how to register a Domestic Animal Business	Dedicated page on Domestic Animal Businesses to be developed and regularly checked for accuracy. Number of hits the webpage receives.	Greater community awareness and education with an emphasis on responsible animal ownership. A reduction in animal complaints and greater adherence to legislation. Increased access to Council services	Bi-monthly
Ensure that details of all registered Domestic animal Businesses are reported to the Bureau of Animal Welfare annually.	Number of Domestic Animal Businesses reported annually to the Bureau of Animal Welfare	Improved accuracy of Councils pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Annually

## 6.8 Municipal Pound

To operate a Municipal Pound in accordance with the Domestic Animal Act 1994.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Finalise proposal to implement receipting facilities at the pound, providing improved service to animal owners	Successful implementation of receipting functions at Council's domestic pound.	Increased access to Council services and enhanced customer service levels.	2018/2019

## 7. Annual review and annual reporting

Actions identified in this Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 will commence in the 2017/2018 financial year and conclude at the end of the 2020/2021 financial year.

Latrobe City Council will review the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 annually and, if appropriate, amend. Any amendment of the Plan will be provided to the Department of Primary Industries' Secretary. An evaluation of our implementation of the Plan will be published in Latrobe City Council's Annual Report.

A full review of this Plan will be undertaken during the 2020/2021 financial year and will inform the development of any future Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Any questions relating to this Plan should be directed to the Coordinator Local Laws on 1300 367 700; or via email at [latrobe@latrobe.vic.gov.au](mailto:latrobe@latrobe.vic.gov.au); or via post to Latrobe City Council, PO Box 264, Morwell Victoria 3840.

To obtain this information in languages other than English, or in other formats including audio, electronic, Braille or large print, please contact Latrobe City Council on 1300 367 700.