EAST GIPPSLAND SHIRE COUNCIL

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017 – 2021

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1 INTRODUCTION

The East Gippsland Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 *(The Act)*.

1.1 Purpose and Primary Objective of the Domestic Management Plan

The primary objective is to develop a strategic plan assist Council in providing a professional, consistent and proactive approach to domestic animal management services.

In accordance with Section 68A of the Act, the plan explores and sets strategies to:

- identify methods for evaluating animal control services;
- promote and encourage responsible pet ownership;
- ensure compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994;
- minimise the risk of dog attacks;
- address over-population and euthanasia rates for dogs and cats;
- encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats;
- minimise the potential for nuisance animals;
- identify dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- identify programs for training of authorised animal management officers; and
- ensure regulatory compliance by all registered Domestic Animal Businesses.
- deliver an education and enforcement campaign to promote:
    - effective control in off-leash areas;
    - compliance with leash and no dog requirements in other public places;
    - removal of dog faeces in public places.

1.2 Process Applied in Developing the Plan

In determining the key issues for this Plan, the following matters were considered:

- benchmarking statistics provided by State Government;
- recommendations made by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources' (DEDJTR)
- statistics on service requests made by residents of East Gippsland Shire;
- national and international research on companion animals;
- submissions made by animal welfare agencies, e.g. The Cat Crisis Coalition, Royal Society for the Protection of Animals (RSPCA), Victorian Animal Aid Trust (VAAT), Who's for Cats, Pet Care Information and Advisory Service, Dogs Victoria, Victorian Farmers Federation and
- submissions made by relevant industry groups, e.g. Australian Veterinary Association.

Key issues identified are:

- training of authorised officers;
- registration and identification of animals;
- nuisance;
- dog attacks;
- dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- domestic animal businesses;
- overpopulation and high euthanasia rates; and

- other matters.

1.3 East Gippsland Shire Demographic Snapshot

East Gippsland Shire's geography, community profile and organisational resources need to be considered in order to develop effective animal control strategies.

East Gippsland Shire was created in 1994 from five previous municipalities and features:

- a resident population of 44,680 persons in an area of 21,000 square kilometres;
- a substantial coastal frontage between Paynesville and Mallacoota including coastal reserves and marine parks of national significance;
- forty communities ranging from the major towns of Bairnsdale, Paynesville and Lakes Entrance to the hinterland towns of Omeo, Bruthen and Orbost and the coastal towns of Mallacoota, Lake Tyers Beach and Marlo;
- an age profile with over 60% of the East Gippsland's population is aged over 35 years, and 24% aged over 60. With an elderly population comes a huge dependency on animals for companionship;
- a large proportion of absentee landholders; and
- an annual Council budget of approximately $68 million.

1.4 Domestic Animal Statistics and Data

BIS Shrapnel estimated in September 2006 that in Victoria:

- 40% of households owned one or more dogs at a rate of 1.44 dogs per household; and
- 26% of households owned one or more cats at a rate of 1.47 cats per household.

Therefore, the calculation for East Gippsland Shire Council with 28,600 residential dwellings is:

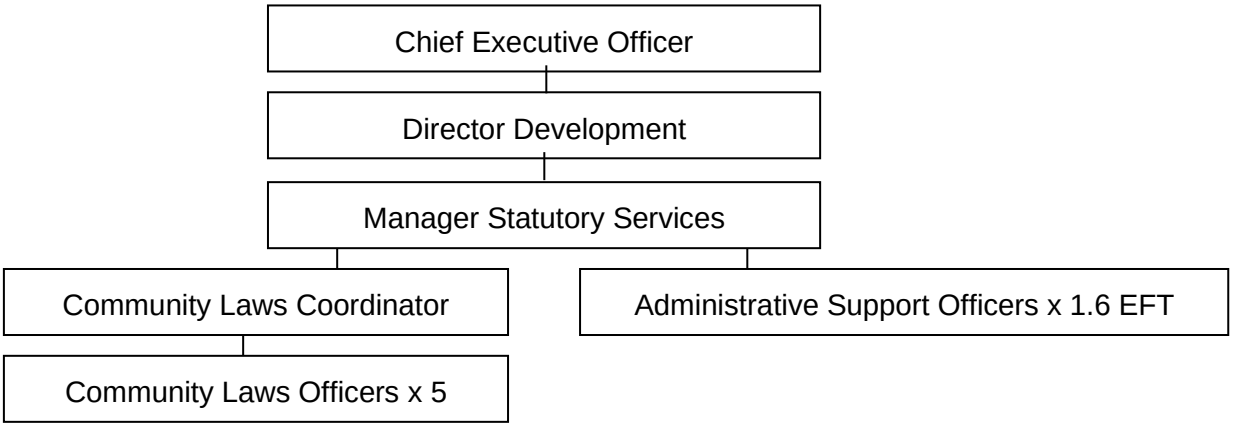
- Estimated Dog Population: (40/100 X 28,600) X 1.44 dogs = 16,400
- Estimated Cat Population: (26/100 X 28,600) X 1.47 cats = 10,930

East Gippsland Shire Council – Key Statistics – 2016-2017	East Gippsland Shire Council	Like Councils
Population	44,680	16,000
Number of animal control authorised officers	6	3.25
Hours training per officer annually	30	32
Number of EFT animal control officers	3	Unknown
Number of registered dogs	8,952	5,058
Estimated dogs owned (based on BIS Shrapnel data)	16,400	Unknown
Number of registered cats	2,339	1,373
Estimated cats owned (based on BIS Shrapnel data)	10,930	Unknown
Number of registered declared dogs	2	2
Number of impoundments (dogs)	480	243
Number of dogs returned to owners	375	138
Number of dogs re-housed	137	59
Number of impounded dogs euthanised	46	51
Number of impoundments (cats)	420	115
Number of cats returned to owners	26	9
Number of cats re-housed	263	14

Number of impounded cats euthanised	105	104
Number of excess animal permits (Local Laws)	144	15
Number of restricted breed premises	1	2

During the financial year (2016-2017) East Gippsland Shire Council registered 8,952 dogs, 2,339 cats and impounded 480 dogs and 420 cats. In addition to this, Council investigated numerous animal control and noise complaints

1.5 East Gippsland Shire Council's Animal Management Staffing and Operational Structure



1.6 Current Programs and Services – Service Levels

East Gippsland Shire Council's Community Laws Unit administers and provides a broad range of services to ensure Council meets its legislative responsibilities in the management of domestic animals.

These services include:

- providing advice on domestic animal matters;
- investigating customer complaints;
- educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership;
- management of Council's domestic animal pound service contract;
- maintaining a domestic animal register;
- impounding of wandering, unwanted/surrendered and /or feral dogs and cats;
- undertaking registration door knocks;
- administration and control of dangerous and restricted breed dogs;
- investigation of dog attacks;
- prosecution of offences under the Domestic Animals Act and other relevant regulations/Local Laws
- providing a 24-hour a day after-hours emergency service;
- inspection and registration of domestic animal businesses; and
- developing and maintaining partnerships with organisations such as veterinary clinics, animal welfare groups and other stakeholders.

Council recognises that pets are an integral part of many people's lives and is actively seeking new and innovative ways to support pet owners and to harness the recognised health and social benefits of responsible pet ownership.

Current Programs and Service	Service Level

Wandering Dogs Dog Attacks	Collected within 2 hours if restrained. Attendance within 2 hours if emergency still exists.
Council Pound Facility	East Gippsland Shire Council's domestic animal pound facility is located in Giles Street Bairnsdale. The pound is managed by Victorian Animal Aid Trust under contract to East Gippsland Shire Council.
Dangerous Dogs/Restricted Breeds Complaints	These complaints have a high priority and are investigated depending on nature or severity of complaint, usually resulting in immediate action. Three day maximum response period.
Domestic Animal Complaints	Dependent on the nature and urgency of the complaint. Response can range from immediate action to three days, in line with Council's customer service request notification system.
Identification and Registration	Council annually produces and mails out registration renewal notices. Any renewals not received by the due date 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 a tool to advertise current legislative changes, e.g. requirement to register dog/cat by age three months and compulsory micro-chipping for all new dog/cat registrations. The registration renewal notice is also utilised to incorporate inserts such as the Micro-chipping Day Flyer. New registration applications are available at Council's Customer Service Centres and on Council's website.
Pound Opening Hours	Council's Domestic Animal Pound is open to the public from 10.00am to 2.30pm Monday to Sunday (excluding public holidays) and at other times by appointment.
Community Information	Council publishes and distributes press releases on various animal topics including notification of animal registration, micro-chipping requirements, and advertises and targets other locally identified "hot topics" as the need arises.
Registration of Domestic Animal Businesses	East Gippsland Shire Council currently has twelve registered businesses, posts out registration renewal notices each year for these businesses and conducts annual inspections in relation to Codes of Practice. New registration applications are received and processed in line with the Code of Practice.
Routine Street Patrols	Street patrols are conducted and are dependent on advice in relation to wandering animals.
Responsible Dog Association/Obedience Club	The RDO conducts these sessions. Council staff attend the courses and advise dog owners of their obligation at law.

2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Vision Statement

The core purpose of the East Gippsland Shire Council animal management services is to:

- create an environment where people and pets can peacefully coexist within the community;
- minimise any adverse impacts of domestic pets on the farming sector and the natural environment;
- inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible pet ownership;
- ensure that the needs of the wider community are reflected through Council's domestic animal management policies;
- provide a response service to deal with wandering, aggressive or nuisance animals;
- ensure that impounded animals are cared for in a humane manner in a hygienic and safe environment;
- endeavour to reunite impounded pets with their owners;
- promote the re-housing of suitable pets with a suitable new owner;
- provide specialist advice to Council in animal management matters; and
- regulate and support domestic animal businesses.

3 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

The following table shows the mandatory requirements of the Council and its Local Laws Officers for the period of this Domestic Animal Management Plan as required under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and the corresponding actions in this plan.

Specific Act Requirements		**3.1**	**3.2**	**3.3**	**3.4**	**3.5**	**3.6**	**3.7**	**3.8**	**4.0**	**4.1**	**5**
S68A (2)(a)	Method of monitoring performance and evaluating the effectiveness of services									√		
S68A (2)(b)	Training of Authorised Officers	√										
S68A (2)(c)(i)	Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership		√	√	√	√	√	√	√			
S68A (2)(c)(ii)	Ensure compliance with Acts and Regulations	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			
S68A (2)(c)(iii)	Minimise risk of dog attacks	√	√	√	√		√	√	√			
S68A (2)(c)(iv)	Over-population and high euthanasia rates	√	√	√		√		√	√			
S68A (2)(c)(v)	Encourage registration and identification for dogs and cats	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			
S68A (2)(c)(vi)	Minimise potential for nuisance	√	√	√	√			√	√			
S68A (2)(c)(vii)	Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs	√	√	√		√						
S68A (2)(d)	Review of Orders and Local Laws	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			
S68A (2)(e)	Any other matters	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			
S68A (2)(f)	Periodic evaluation of programs, services and strategies	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		

S68A (3)(a)	Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan											√

3.1 Training of Authorised Officers

Context

Council's objective is to ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to pro-actively, consistently and professionally carry out their work.

Current and Planned Training

As part of Council's annual staff performance planning process an annual training program is developed with each staff member, to ensure they receive appropriate skills development throughout the year.

Regular in-house training sessions including investigations, animal control/welfare, use of animal equipment and vehicles are conducted, i.e.

- Bureau of Animal Welfare Training Days.
- Mentoring from experienced senior staff.
- Occupational Health and Safety training and basic first aid training.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Attend Bureau of Animal Welfare regional training seminar.
- Closer liaison with surrounding municipalities to target regional domestic animal management needs and issues.
- All officers provided with latest handheld computer/other devices that can provide owner details from Council's database by entering microchip number or tag number.

Authorised Officer Training	**2016**	**Planned**
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation		
Officer 1	Completed	2008
Officer 2	Completed	2008
Officer 3	Completed	2015
Officer 4	Completed	2016
Officer 5	N/A	Experienced
Certificate IV in Animal Welfare (Regulation)		
Officer 1		Not planned
Officer 2	N/A	
Officer 3		
Microchip implantation training	N/A	No requirement
Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution, computer		
Officer 1,2,3,4,5	Annual refresher when available	Annual refresher when available
OH&S training – dealing with aggressive customers		
Officer 1,2,3,4,5	Corporate training available	Per individual work plan
Customer service training – conflict resolution, telephone manner		
Officer 1,2,3,4,5	Corporate training available	Per individual work plan

Authorised Officer Training – Basic	2012	Planned
Bureau of Animal Welfare – training & information days Officer 1,2,3,4,5	All officers to attend when notified and available	All officers to attend when notified and available
Induction program for new staff	As per Corporate policy	As per Corporate policy
Other	Further training to be identified and an individual plan developed	Annual review of training requirements
Authorised Officer Training – Additional	**2012**	**Planned**
Diploma in Justice Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	N/A	No plans
Certificate IV in Local Government Officer 3 Officer 4	Completed Completed	2015 2016

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Develop and maintain a training calendar for individual Authorised Officers detailing completed and proposed training as part of annual performance planning process.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete individual development plan annually, identifying training needs	Annually	Completion of staff development plan

Objective 2: Annual review of internal processes with staff, to ensure consistent application of investigation processes.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review processes in line with legal updates/changes. Ensure an consistent approach by Authorised Officers	Annually	Annually – update procedures

3.2 Registration and animal Identification

Current situation

Our current data:

- 2016/2017 period 8,952 dogs and 2,339 cats currently registered with Council.
- 2016/2017 period 480 dogs and 420 cats were impounded.
- 1 dog was seized.

Council's objective is to maximise the number of registered and identifiable dogs and cats. Council's current identification and registration activities include:

- issuing of identification tags and registration renewal notices;
- door knock problem areas or areas where complaints have been received in relation to registration matters; and
- animal control information in local newspapers and on radio.

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws

- Restriction on the number of animals to be kept at any property.

Current Orders

- Requiring dogs and cats to be micro chipped at the time of registration.
- Micro chipping exemption for working dogs implemented 10 April 2012.
- Requiring dogs and cats over 3 months of age to be registered.
- Reduced animal registration fee for members of an applicable organisation 2013.
- A 24 hour per day, cat curfew was adopted by Council on 23 October 2002.

Policy and Procedures

- Procedure for refusal of registration/renewal of registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs.
- Procedure in dealing with a suspected restricted breed dog.

- Policy and procedure with seizure and impounding of unregistered and/or unidentifiable dogs and cats.
- Application process for registration and renewal of registration of dogs and cats.
- Procedure for appointment of agents for registration.
- Enforcement protocols for issuing notices to comply and infringements.
- Notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding breaches of the Act.
- Process regarding seizure of documents.
- Process regarding attendance at Victorian Civil Administrative Tribunal to hear appeals from dog and/or cat owners.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Community events and stalls held throughout the Shire.
- Council website providing information on responsible pet ownership.
- Council animal lost and found page on website.
- Ability to pay animal registration online with a range of payment methods.
- Council's new registration forms include a restricted breed declaration.
- Annual renewal notices sent out prior to renewal date of 10 April with registration tags attached.
- Lifetime animal registration tags 2017.
- Advice and pamphlets provided at responsible dog ownership days.
- Weekly pound information in local newspapers.
- Promote the benefits of registration and identification; being able to reunite a lost animal with its owner.
- Installation of signage, media and Council's website to provide information to residents on registration renewal period.
- Keep records of animals found injured or dead and notify owners of identifiable animals to enable them to seek veterinary treatment for injured animals and help provide closure to owners of animals that have died. Retain dead animals for a period of time to enable owners to collect them.

Our Current Compliance Activities

- Random door knocks in high complaint areas, new estates and known problem areas.
- All seized/impounded animals are identified as required by law and are registered and micro chipped before returning to owner or adopted.
- Identified unregistered dog/cats receive a notice to comply to register.
- Penalty notices issued for failing to comply with legislation.
- Sale of animals notification received by Council is investigated for registration identification.
- Unregistered dog/cat reports are run after the renewal period ends.
- Officers follow up on status to ensure unregistered dogs/cats are registered or change of status has been entered on animal database.

Registration Offences

2015/16	280
2016/17	387

SUMMARY

- Council's objectives are to maximise the number of registered and identifiable dogs and cats.
- Council actively promotes and enforces this legislation.

- Council understands that the community must have access to the animal register for the purpose of returning/reuniting lost animals with their owners. A 24-hour website has been established for this purpose.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Increase dog and cat registration numbers each year

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure responsible pet ownership brochures are distributed within the community and promotion of registration requirements are increased in local media	Ongoing	Review annual increase in registration numbers
Follow up on current registrations after the issue of identification tags with renewal notices	May 2017 onwards	Review of statistics monthly
Conduct random door knocking within the Shire to ensure compliance with animal registration	Ongoing	Review of statistics monthly
Display signage in public places to advertise registration renewal date	Annually in April	Review annual increase in registration numbers
Promote registration and identification to new tenants/property owners via real estate agents	Ongoing	Assess the response
Provide resources to puppy school/dog obedience trainers to promote registration and identification	Ongoing	Review of statistics quarterly
Ensure that information of sold/rehoused animals from Domestic Animal Businesses is followed up for registration	Ongoing	Review annual increase
Online registration form implemented that allows the owner to make payment at the time of application	Ongoing	Review the amount of customers utilising this service
Online notification form of deceased/ left area animal implemented	Ongoing	Review the amount of customers utilising this service
Implemented online payment options, Bpay, options to implement new advances in payment technology	Ongoing	Review the amount of customers utilising this service

Objective 2: Identify animal owners who consistently refuse to register animals

Activity	When	Evaluation
Use of Council records to identify the offenders and take enforcement action.	September 2017	Review Records annually
Ensure all animals that leave the pound are micro chipped and registered	Ongoing	Review of records monthly
Ensure that all animals identified from a complaint are registered	Ongoing	Review of records monthly
Access microchips database and cross reference with Council's database to determine unregistered animals then ensure these animals are registered	Ongoing	Review statistics annually

3.3 Nuisance

Current Situation

Our current data

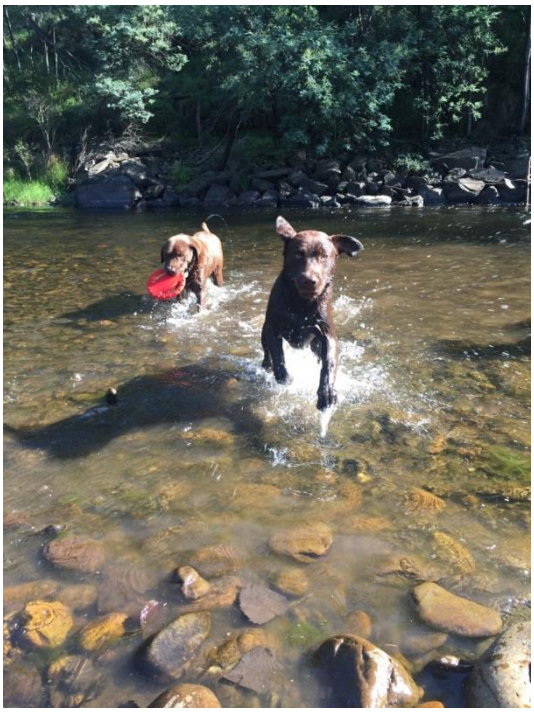
Between 1 July 2015 and 30June 2016 the following number of complaints were lodged with Council:

Complaint Type	Total
Barking dogs	228
General dog inquiries	627
Dogs to collect	331
Dogs wandering	280
Stray cats to collect	112
General cat inquiries	197
Cat trap requests	249

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders

- A 24 hour per day, cat curfew was adopted by Council on 23 October 2002
- There are no leash free areas in East Gippsland Shire for dogs. (Currently before Council for approval.)
- Dogs not permitted to remain in a public reserve area or bathe or swim in the water adjoining a public reserve area as defined in Schedule 6 of the Local Law between 1 November and 30 April in each year.



Local Laws Provisions

- Restrictions on the number of animals to be kept at any property.
- Restrictions on dogs being on prescribed beaches from November to April each year.
- Requirement on dog owners to remove and dispose of faeces deposited by their dog in a public place.

Policies and Procedures

- Reduced registration fees for de sexed animals.
- Shire website register for lost and found animals, complete with photos of impounded animals.
- Policy and procedure for impounding dogs and cats found at large.
- Policy for surrender of dogs/cats by owners.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Council officers provide an information pack to dog owners to assist in reducing the dog barking on every barking dog complaint received.
- Barking dog nuisance courtesy letter available on Council's website to deliver to neighbour.
- Dog faeces bag dispensers are provided by Council and are located in high population dog walking areas.
- "Who's for Cats?" booklet is supplied to new cat owners by Council and animal shelter staff upon registration.
- Website link provided on Council's website for responsible pet ownership.
- Responsible dog ownership courses provided to the residents and community groups.
- Information provided to cat owners about responsibilities of pet owners and cat enclosures.
- Encouragement of de-sexing of animals to reduce roaming by providing reduced registration fees.
- Periodical media releases to public promoting responsible pet ownership.

- Provide information to vets, pet shops, breeders, shelters, etc. to display and/or hand out about nuisance issues.

Our Current Compliance Activities

- Regular patrols in high complaint areas by Authorised Officers.
- Cat-trap service provided by Council for nuisance/trespass complaints.
- Signage erected throughout the Shire advising dog owners of their responsibilities.
- Enforcement activities conducted for breaches of Council signage.
- Compliance door knocks conducted.
- "Notice to Comply" issued to offenders.
- Infringements issued for non-compliance with legislation.
- Nuisance complaints are actioned within Council response policy guidelines.
- Enforcement of cat curfew legislation.
- Impoundment of all cats and dogs found at large.

SUMMARY

Council's Authorised Officers deal with a wide range of nuisance complaints ranging from barking dog issues to wandering animals by:

- Provide information packs to animal owners to assist in reducing further nuisance complaints.
- Conduct follow up visits by authorised officers to check compliance.
- Make available relevant information material for the community to access.
- Authorised officers patrol relevant areas on a daily basis to assist in reducing nuisance complaints.
- Authorised officers aim to educate offenders before enforcement action takes place.
- Officers are given regular training in relation to animal behaviour, complaint investigation and resolution, dispute settlement and customer service

- Registered, microchipped cats and dogs found at large by Council officers are returned home where possible

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Ensure data stored on East Gippsland Shire's website is relevant and up to date.

Activity	When	Evaluation
All officers' review stored content for	Monthly	Reviewed monthly

validity and accuracy. Officers are then required to report to the Coordinator with any findings.		

Objective 2: Actively reduce the number of nuisance complaint and evaluate the processes for managing nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide responsible pet ownership literature and relevant information packs on nuisance	Ongoing	Review annually
Seek customer feedback and work in consultation with the public to address any nuisance matters that arise	Ongoing	Review annually
Access viability of providing/identifying off leash areas	Ongoing	Proactive investigation by officers
Actively thank those in the community that are complying with requirements i.e. walking dog on lead, collecting dog litter, registering animal etc.	Ongoing	Increase in compliance
Review enforcement policies and procedures	July 2017	Review undertaken
Report outcomes of all prosecutions to raise awareness in the community of the benefits of preventing dog and cat nuisance	Ongoing	Increase in number of outcomes reported
Use of Bureau of Animal Welfare Maddocks Investigation Manual to assist in investigations of complaints	As required	Increase compliance
Identify properties that exceed the limit of animals allowed and ensure appropriate permit is obtained	Ongoing	Increase compliance
Regular patrols of Council's reserves etc. to ensure dog owners are compliant with legislation	Ongoing	Increase compliance
Attempt to trap feral cats in response to complaints. Implement a cat trapping program (in specific areas where there is an identified problem)	Ongoing	Increase in number of trapped cats
Investigate advances in technology to assist in reducing barking dog complaints	Ongoing	Identification of any new product
84Y agreements with local vets to accept stray animals	Ongoing	Review annually

3.4 Dog Attacks

Current situation

Our current data

- Seventy-eight dog attacks were reported to Council 2015/2016 financial year resulting in one successful prosecution.
- Increase of reported dog attacks since new Restricted Dog Breed (RBD) legislation came into force.

- New estates being developed which cause significant increase in population and pet owners.
- A reporting process is in place with local vets advising Council of any dog attacks.

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

State Legislation

- Domestic Animals Act 1994 Part 3 Control of Dogs and Cats
- Summary Offences Act 1966 Section 8 (e)

Local Laws

- Restriction on number of animals to be kept at any property.

Policy and Procedures

- Procedure relating to seizing dogs found at large/not confined to owners property.
- Procedure associated in destruction of unclaimed dogs guilty of attack.
- Enforcement strategy in issuance of notice to comply and infringements for non-compliance.
- Procedure for prosecution action relating to dog attacks.
- Procedure for authorised officers to assist Victoria Police in investigation involving a dog attack to a person resulting in death (Sec319 (b) *Crimes Act*).
- Authorised Officers utilise the (DEDJTR) DPI's website for guidance.
- Compliance and Law Enforcement policy

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Responsible pet ownership days.
- Public presentations at various community events, field days, school visits.
- Council website to assist dog owners on reporting, complaints and owners obligations.
- Advisory signs located in high dog walking areas advising of owners responsibilities.
- Reduced registration fees for de-sexed dog/cats to assist in reducing the numbers of aggressive/straying animals.
- Promote the 'Dangerous Dogs Hotline' 1300101080.
- Responsible pet ownership information on hand at local pound for new owners of adopted animals.
- DPI booklet provided to dog owners "Are you a dog owner?"
- Promote Court results.
- Promote Crimes Act provisions and relevant legislation
- Provide information to assist in selecting an appropriate breed of dog
- Promote regular exercise of dogs

Our current Compliance Activities

- Regular patrols of the municipality by authorised officers. High risk/complaint areas receive extra patrols.
- A 24-hour emergency response provided by Authorised Officers.
- Immediate response to any reported dog attacks.
- Dogs involved in attacks of a serious nature are declared dangerous dogs pursuant to the Act.

- All dogs prior to adoption through the animal shelter must pass relevant temperament testing.
- Prosecute owners for breaches of legislation.
- Publicise outcomes of prosecutions in order to increase compliance.

SUMMARY

East Gippsland Shire Council is committed to reducing the number of dog attacks within the municipality by:

- Providing Authorised Officers with the appropriate training to assist with education and enforcement activities.
- Authorised Officers working actively with community, community groups and all other relevant stakeholders with education programs to assist in reducing dog attacks.
- Seventy-eight dog attacks were reported during the 2016/17 year. Two of the attacks were of a serious nature which resulted in referrals to the Magistrates Court, with the remainder deemed to be of a non-serious nature. Council is committed to further reduce this amount.
- Council believes that not all dog attacks are reported. This identified issue will be addressed by appropriate community education in reporting attacks.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: To reduce the amount of dog attacks within the Shire

Activity	When	Evaluation
Council to run education awareness days in all major townships highlighting responsible dog ownership	May 2017	Compare statistics prior to activity
Council's Authorised Officers to vigorously enforce offence of dogs at large within the municipality	Ongoing	Evaluate by comparing dog attacks reported with dogs at large impounded or penalised
Prosecute dog attacks in accordance with legislation	Ongoing	Successful prosecutions

Objective 2: To advise the public and dog owners of their responsibilities to aim in reducing dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote responsible dog ownership	Dec 2017	Reports reviewed six monthly
Provide education in preventing dog attacks in the community	Ongoing	Increased compliance
Provide information on preventing dog attacks in the home	Ongoing	Increased compliance
Promote the importance of appropriate breed selection	Ongoing	Increased compliance
Promote dog training through website and local media	Ongoing	Increased compliance

3.5 Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

Current situation

Declared Dogs in the East Gippsland Shire

Classification

Restricted breed	0
Dangerous dogs	2
Menacing dogs	3

The following dog breeds are restricted:-

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

Only the American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier) and Dogo Argentino are known to be in Victoria.

Japanese Toso

Fila Brasileiro

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

- Local Law permit required for the keeping of more than two dogs.
- All provisions of the Act are enforced where appropriate.
- Enforcement protocol associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.

- Compliance and law enforcement policy

Our current education/promotion activities

- Auditing properties identified as housing these animals and education of owners of their obligations under the legislation
- Checking industrial areas for presence of guard dogs
- Community education on reporting of dog rushes and minor issues
- Promotion of the dangerous dog hotline

Perro De Presa Canario

Our current compliance activities

- Enforcement protocols
- Inspections/audit of compliance
- Microchip register – breed of dog check
- Check of industrial areas
- Use of the Victorian Dangerous Dog Register updates

American Pitbull Terrier

Dogo Argentino

SUMMARY

Restricted breed, menacing and declared dangerous dogs are not a significant problem within the East Gippsland Shire. Low numbers of these animals mean inspections for compliance can be done routinely.

OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Enforce compliance with the legislation

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify properties currently housing or using guard dogs	Annually	Audited by inspecting Officer
Inspect properties housing declared dogs for compliance	Annually	Audited by inspecting Officer
Educate the community on Declared Dogs	Update information on website	Revised annually
Prosecute where necessary any breaches of legislation	Ongoing	Successful prosecutions

3.6 Domestic animal businesses (DAB)

Current situation

Council Pound Management

Animal Aid East Gippsland is responsible for the appropriate care and maintenance of dogs and cats under the current "Provision Animal Pound and Shelter Service Contract" (806/078).

The Contract requires that best practice standards are implemented and that dogs and cats under their care are treated humanely with the health and welfare of the animal considered as the utmost importance.

The overriding guidelines for the management of pound facilities are the Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds.

Animal Aid is subject to annual audits by Council and/or the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR).

Our current data

There are currently 12 registered Domestic Animal Businesses including:

- One breeding establishment
- One pound/shelter
- Two pet shops
- Five boarding kennels
- Two catteries
- One trainer

No prosecutions have been conducted and only minor breaches have been identified.

Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

State Legislation

- Domestic Animals Act 1994 Part 4

Local Laws

- Limits the number of animals to be kept, i.e.
  - residential two dogs and two cats
  - rural six dogs and six cats
- A permit is required by Council to exceed this amount.

Policies and Procedures

- All DAB's are required to be registered with Council.
- All DAB's to be audited annually.
- Process for completing audit.
- Process for managing major and minor non-compliance.
- Each registration to be individually considered on the need for specific conditions.
- Process for serious and continuous failure to comply and consideration of refusal to issue permit.
- Enforcement protocol for issuing notices to comply, infringements or prosecuting.
- Standard record/audit sheets on database of registered DABs.
- Compliance and law enforcement policy

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Specialist advice provided for compliance with the Code of Practice to businesses.
- Information on Council's website to assist businesses and new applicants.
- Council's Authorised Officers work in partnership with establishments to ensure compliance.
- Promotion of the DEDJTR website for guidance for businesses.

Our Current Compliance Activities

- Annual audits of DABs, both scheduled and non-scheduled to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice.
- Act on complaints and investigate non-compliance issues.
- Follow up on non-compliance issues.

- “Notice to Comply” issued to any business in breach of the code of practice.
- Authorised Officers assist businesses for non-compliance items to ensure compliance.
- Investigate reports of unregistered or previously unknown DABs.

SUMMARY

- East Gippsland Shire Council currently has 12 registered domestic animal businesses.
- Council conducts both scheduled and non-scheduled audits to ensure compliance with the code of practice.
- New applications are processed and officers inspect before a permit is granted to ensure requirements’ under the code of practice have been met.
- Apart from minor findings in audits, no enforcement action has taken place.
- Authorised officers are always on the lookout for any illegal businesses and treat any complaint seriously and investigate and action accordingly.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Ensure all domestic animal businesses are audited annually to meet the requirements set out in the code of practice

Activity	When	Evaluation
Annual Domestic Animal Businesses audit.	Annually	All DAB’s audited

Objective 2: Authorised Officers to be trained and fully aware of any changes in legislation and code of practice

Activity	When	Evaluation
All Authorised Officers to receive any changes in legislation/Codes of Practice that have been identified	Ongoing	Regular meetings to discuss
Ensure Authorised Officers are able to access and understand DEDJTR. website for reference	Ongoing	Individual training with officers

Objective 3: Actively search for unregistered/illegal domestic animal businesses within the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Act on customer complaints/tip offs regarding illegal enterprises	Ongoing	Reports by investigating officer
Authorised officers to incorporate identifying illegal enterprises during normal patrols	Ongoing	Reports by investigating officer

3.7 Overpopulation and High Euthanasia Rates

Current situation

The contract for the pound facility was awarded to Victorian Animal Aid Trust in 2007. Animal Aid East Gippsland only rehouse animals that are suitably fit, in terms of temperament and health.

Our current data

- 420 cat impounds/surrenders for 2016/17 financial year with 105 cats euthanised.
  480 dog impounds/surrenders for 2016/17 financial year with 46 dogs euthanised.

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders

- New registered animals must be de-sexed when rehoused from the pound facility.
- Reduced registration fees for de-sexed dogs/cats.

Local Laws

- Restriction on number of animals to be kept at any property.

Policies and Procedures

- Policy associated with the seizure and impoundment of any dogs and cats found at large.
- All processes are compliant with the Act.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Cat traps supplied to customers free of charge.
- Public awareness day conducted.
- Council promotes the “Who’s for Cats?” initiative.
- Compulsory micro chipping of animal prior to registration.
- Community information is available on Council and DPI website.
- Distribution of de sexing, overpopulation and high euthanasia rate brochures, fact sheets and other material as required
- Promote appropriate pet selection to avoid animals being surrendered
- Provide information on locating a lost pet on Council’s website

Our Current Compliance Activities

- Random door knocking inspections to check numbers and registration status of animals.
- Investigation of complaints lodged with Council.
- Regular inspections of known hoarding properties for excessive animals.
- Enforcement of the cat curfew.

SUMMARY

- Council encourages owners of dogs/cats to keep their animals on their property.
- Owners are encouraged to make contact with Council if their pet goes missing to enable officers to locate and return their animal home.

- Council's website advertises all animals currently in the pound facility in the hope that the animals will be either claimed or re-homed to avoid unnecessary euthanasia.
- Since Victorian Animal Aid Trust commenced operating the pound facility there has been a significant drop in euthanasia, mainly due to the Trust's wide network and alternatives offered by this organisation.
- All animals re-homed from the pound are de-sexed prior to release.
- This policy appears to have had a significant impact as excess animal population is not an issue at present.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Raise community awareness of animal population issues

Activity	When	Evaluation
Actively promote "Who's for Cats?" education program	Ongoing	Monitor cats surrender to pound
Educate public in benefits of de-sexing and identifying ownership of an animal	Ongoing	Review reports annually

3.8 Other matters

Current situation

Encouraging Responsible Pet Ownership – Community Education

Council's education activities and programs promoting responsible pet ownership include:

- Responsible pet ownership education in press releases and advertisements.
- In conjunction with the Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust, conduct responsible pet ownership education to Indigenous communities
- Provision of sponsorship and endorsements for dog obedience clubs to promote the responsible pet ownership message.

- Complete investigations into dog off leash areas

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- All processes/procedures required under the Act are complied with.
- Council's General Local Law 2011 provisions relating to domestic animals are:

  - Clause 92
    "Without "a permit an owner or occupier of land in a residential area must not keep more than: -
    (a) two cats;
    (b) two dogs"

  - Clause 94
    "A person in charge of an animal on Council land must: -
    (a) not permit the excrement of the animal to remain on Council land;
    (b) carry a device suitable for the picking up and cleaning up of any excrement that may be deposited by the animal"

Our Current Compliance Activities

Objective is to maximise compliance with both state and local domestic animal laws.

Council's current enforcement activities include:

- Enforcement of the cat curfew provisions.
- Issuing Penalty Infringement Notices for all offences where considered necessary.
- Impoundment of wandering dogs and cats.
- Serving a notice of compliance for minor breaches of the law.
- Investigating all complaints in a timely manner.
- Investigation of any concerns relating to dogs/cats creating a nuisance.

SUMMARY

Council's objective is to encourage dog and cat owners to manage their pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximizes the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others and to comply with legislative requirements.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Encouraging responsible pet ownership

Activity	When	Evaluation
Actively promote responsible pet ownership in schools	Ongoing	Review annually
Educate parents to minimise the risk of dog attack in the home and wider community	Ongoing	Review statistics annually

Current situation

Current/Ongoing Activities

Cat management is focused on public education combined with trapping of un-owned and at large cats within the Shire which aims to:

- Reduce the predation by owned and un-owned cats on native wildlife.
- Reduce the incidence of public nuisance by uncontrolled cats.
- Protect the welfare of cats.

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- All processes/procedures comply with the Act.
- A cat curfew introduced in 2002.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

Council will promote responsible cat ownership in the community by: -

- Conducting regular education through:
  (a) Provision of pamphlets and advice on cat ownership.
  (b) Undertaking school education programs to highlight responsible cat management. This is carried out by the Bureau of Animal Welfare;
- Offering advice and assistance with respect to complaints or enquiries related to cat keeping.
- Micro-chipping and registration of cats within the Shire for identification purposes.
- Encouraging owners to ensure that their cat is de-sexed, immunised and prevented from roaming from the property resided at all times.
- Encouraging owners to be responsible for their cat's behaviour and take positive timely action to avoid nuisance to neighbours, impacts on wildlife and damage to property.
- Making traps available to the community to trap feral and un-owned cats that are causing a nuisance.
- Supporting the "Who's for Cats?" program.
- Conduct cat specific education programs through local media, promoting identification, registration and de-sexing.
- Conduct annual 'cat audits' and door knocking campaigns within the community to ascertain the level of owned cats.
- Use pound and registration statistics to asset in the development of future programs.

Our current Compliance Activities

- Random door knocking cat audit activities.
- Investigate and act on complaints lodged with Council.
- Cat curfew enacted on 2002.

De-Sexing

Council has received many requests from animal welfare organisations regarding the issue of de-sexing cats. The argument put forward is that by de-sexing all cats there will be an impact on the overall cat population.

Council very rarely receives correspondence or arguments that do not support compulsory de-sexing. However, the Australian Veterinary Association has supplied a report that does not support compulsory de-sexing.

The following facts were put forward by the Australian Veterinary Association: -

Fact 1: Owned cats are not the problem. The vast majority of owned cats (93%) are de-sexed and are a valued part of a household. Voluntary de-sexing of owned cats[1] is occurring at levels that create zero population growth within this group of animals.

Fact 2: 95% of owned cats never enter the animal welfare system.

Fact 3: A recent study by the (DEDJTR) Department of Primary Industries' Bureau of Animal Welfare in Victoria established that 79% of the cats that entered the states three largest animal shelters were un-owned. It is these animals that are the problem, not the owned population.

Fact 4: The un-owned cat population is self-sustaining. That is there are enough un-owned cats living and breeding in our cities and country areas to maintain the un-owned cat population at its current level.

Fact 5: In 2001 the ACT Government made it compulsory for owned cats and dogs to be de-sexed by six months of age. Statistics have been collated for the five years prior to 2001 and the six years since which show that there has been no positive impact from the introduction of compulsory de-sexing. In fact, significantly more cats were euthanised in 2006 than in 2001 when compulsory de-sexing was introduced.

Fact 6: Some states in America, where mandatory de-sexing has been introduced, show declines in compliance with pet licensing requirements of up to 50% and increases in animal management costs of 56.8%, against a revenue increase of 43.2%. As a result, some states have repealed their mandatory de-sexing legislation.

During the development of this Plan, animal management officers recognised that restrictive legislation may cause adverse impacts on animal registration compliance rates and expressed their concerns. This concern is supported by Australian Veterinary Association data.

[1] Entire in this context means "an animal that is not de-sexed".

SUMMARY

- Encourage owners of cats to keep their cats on their property and take responsibility for the protection of the environment from issues associated with stray and roaming cats.
- Increase responsible cat ownership in the Shire leading to a reduction in the number of stray cats having to be euthanised at the pound.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Educate the community about the consequences of feeding feral cats, and the impact it is having on the cat overpopulation problem

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continuing to educate cat owners on appropriate pet selection, training and management.	Ongoing	Review annually
Education of cat owners to ensure that animals are de-sexed	Ongoing	Review annually

Objective 2: Educate the community to either be a responsible owner or take the cat in, or to call the Council to arrange to have the cat impounded

Activity	When	Evaluation
Targeting the stray and feral cat population with new programs that are acceptable to the community and effective in reducing overall numbers	Ongoing	Review pound reports quarterly
Continuing existing trapping programs with stray and feral cats	Ongoing	Review pound reports quarterly
Continuing to encourage the identification of cats through micro chipping.	Ongoing	Annual review

4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 Our performance monitoring and evaluation process

Authorised officers are appraised each year by the Community Laws Coordinator on performance over the past year together with changes in legislation and training over the following year.

4.2 Key Performance Indicators – Annual Targets

The strategic development of the Community Laws Unit is evaluated through a process of continuous improvement and benchmarking with comparisons against similar organisations. The Council is assessed annually by using the following criteria: -

KPIs: (indicative)	Target 2017-2018	Current
Dog Registration rate: (% Dogs registered/estimated dog population)	65%	50%
Cat Registration rate: (% Cats registered/estimated cat population)	35%	20%
Enforcement Success Rate: (% successful prosecutions/total prosecutions)	100%	100%
Dog Reclaim Rate: (% total dogs reclaimed/total dogs impounded)	90%	78%
Dog Re-housing Rate: (%total dogs re-housed/total dogs impounded)	35%	29%
Cat Re-housing Rate: (% total cats re-housed/total cats impounded)	55%	48%
Cat Reclaim Rate (%total cats reclaimed/total cats impounded)	20%	7%
Cat Euthanasia Rate: (%total cats euthanized/total cats impounded)	20%	25%
Dog Euthanasia Rate (%total dogs euthanized/total dogs impounded)	5%	9%
Declared dog Compliance Rates: (Number declared/number compliant/number of audits)	100%	100%
Domestic Animal Business Compliance Rated: (Number registered/number compliant/number of audits)	100%	100%

5 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

68A(3) – Every Council must –

(a) Review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.
(b) Provide the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources' (DEDJTR) 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.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Review Domestic Animal Management Plan Annually

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure each activity has been addressed	Annually	Review statistics quarterly
Ensure any amendments are included into the plan and provided	Annually	Review annually

to the DEDJTR		

Objective 2: Evaluate the Implementation of the Plan

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure each objective was completed or addressed successfully	Annually	Review records/statistics annually