



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025

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1. Introduction

East Gippsland Shire Council recognises that pets are an integral part of people's health and wellbeing and actively seeks innovative ways to support pet owners. Council makes every attempt to ensure the needs of the wider community are reflected through Council's domestic animal management strategies. Council must consider both animal owners and non-animal owners and their rights to use open spaces. The issue of balancing pet ownership and the rights of individuals to enjoy the environment can be challenging.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25 (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 Animal 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 items were considered:

- Evaluate effectiveness of plan using available data
- recommendations made by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, Agriculture Victoria, and Animal Welfare Victoria
- statistics on service requests made by residents of East Gippsland Shire;
- submissions made by the East Gippsland community

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 Demographic Snapshot of East Gippsland

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:

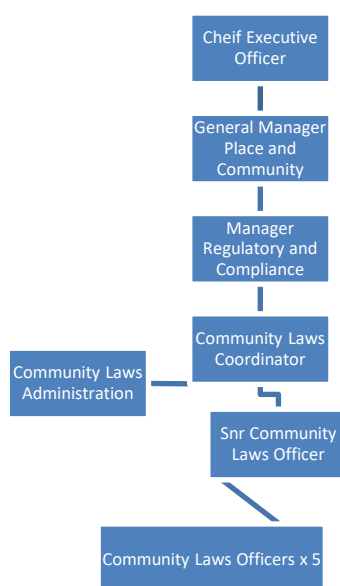
- a resident population estimation in 2020 of 47,725 persons in an area of 21,000 square kilometres;
- a substantial coastal frontage between Paynesville and Mallacoota including coastal reserves and marine parks of national significance;
- forty communities ranging from the major towns of Bairnsdale, 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 \$100 million.

1.4 Domestic Animals Statistics and Data

East Gippsland Shire Council Key Statistics – 2020/21	
Population	47,725
Number of animal control authorised officers	6
Hours training per officer annually	30
Number of EFT animal control officers	3
Number of registered dogs	8,247
Number of registered cats	2,433
Number of registered declared dogs	2
Number of impoundments (dogs)	191
Number of dogs returned to owners	102
Number of dogs re-housed	53
Number of impounded dogs euthanised	17
Number of impoundments (cats)	334
Number of cats returned to owners	20
Number of cats re-housed	150
Number of impounded cats euthanised	75
Number of excess animal permits (Local Laws)	142
Number of restricted breed premises	0

During the financial year (2020-2021) Council registered 8,247 dogs, 2,433 cats and impounded 191 dogs and 334 cats. In addition to this, Council investigated numerous animal control and noise complaints.

1.5 Council's Animal Management Staffing and Operational Structure



1.6 Current Programs and Service Levels

Council's Community Laws team 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;
- complaints educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership;
- investigating customer requests;
- 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;
- providing a 24-hour a day emergency callout 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.

Current Program 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 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. 2 day maximum response period. Council officers manage Dangerous and Menacing dogs in accordance with the Act.
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 11.00am to 3.00pm Monday to Friday. Weekends and Public Holidays 10.30am to 12.30pm
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

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	4.2
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

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. Council employs 5, full time, Community Laws Officers with 1 Senior Community Laws Officer and a Community Laws Coordinator.

Current and Planned Training

Council recognises the importance of skilled and qualified staff in delivering successful animal management programs. As part of its annual staff workplan process, a plan 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, including;

- Animal Welfare Victoria and RSPCA Training Days
- Mentoring from experienced senior staff
- Occupational Health and Safety training and basic first aid training

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Attendance at Animal Welfare Victoria 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	2021	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	Started October 2021	2021
Certificate IV in Animal Welfare (Regulation)	N/A	Not planned as officers not authorised under POCTA.
Microchip implantation training	N/A	No requirement
Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution, computer	Annual refresher when available	Annual refresher when available
OH&S training – dealing with difficult customers and situations	Completed	2022
Customer service training – conflict resolution, telephone manner, communication and de-escalation tactics	Corporate training available	Annually
Animal Welfare Victoria training days	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
Prosecutions training	Officer 1 Completed Officer2 Not started Officer 3 Not started Officer 4 Not started Officer 5 Not started	2020 2022 2022 2022 2022

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 a consistent approach by Authorised Officers	Annually	Annually – update procedures

3.2 Registration and Animal Identification

Current situation

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

Our current data:

- 2020/2021 period 8247 dogs and 2433 cats currently registered with Council
- 2020/2021 period 191 dogs and 334 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 containment order was adopted by Council on 23 October 2002.
- Two new off leash parks (Bosworth Road, Bairnsdale and Palmers Road, Lakes Entrance) Resolved under Section 26 of the Act, 2 October 2018
- Dogs in Public Places order for off leash areas within the Municipality

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
- Registration options for email reply
- 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 to enable owners to collect them or return them home.
- Free ride home incentive for registered pets

Our Current Compliance Activities

- Random door knocks in high complaint areas, new estates and known problem areas.
- All 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 reminder notice
- Penalty notices issued for failing to comply with legislation.
- Sale of animals notification received by Council is investigated for registration identification.
- Officers follow up on status to ensure unregistered dogs/cats are registered or change of status has been entered on animal database.

Registration Offences

2018/19	311
2020/21	126
2021/22	96

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	February/ March each year	Review annual increase in registration numbers
Follow up on current registrations after the issue of identification tags with renewal notices	May 2021 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	Twice yearly	Review of statistics quarterly
Ensure that information of sold/rehoused animals from Domestic Animal Businesses is followed up for registration	Annually	Review annual increase
Online registration form is maintained and allows the owner to make payment at the time of application	Ongoing	Review the number of customers utilising this service

Objective 2: Identify animal owners who are at high risk of non-compliance of registering their animals

Activity	When	Evaluation
Use of Council records to identify the offenders and take enforcement action.	Quarterly	Review Records Quarterly
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 2020 and 30 June 2021, the following number of complaints were lodged with Council:

Complaint Type	Total
Barking dogs	169
General dog inquiries	275
Dogs to collect	208
Dogs wandering	216
Stray cats to collect	148
General cat inquiries	132
Cat trap requests	38

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders

- A 24 hour per day, cat containment requirement was adopted by Council on 23 October 2002
- 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
- Dogs in Public Places order for off leash areas within the Municipality

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 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" and Infringements issued for noncompliance
- Nuisance complaints are actioned within Council response policy guidelines.
- Enforcement of cat restriction legislation.
- Impoundment of all cats and dogs found at large.

SUMMARY

Council's Authorised Officers attend to 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 the community 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 on Council's website is relevant and up to date.

Activity	When	Evaluation
All officers' review stored content for validity and accuracy. Officers are then required to report to the Coordinator with any findings.	Monthly	Reviewed monthly

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 as complaints arise	Review annually
Seek customer feedback and work in consultation with the public to address any nuisance matters that arise	Ongoing	Review annually
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	2022	Review date supplied
Report outcomes of all prosecutions to raise awareness in the community of the benefits of preventing dog and cat nuisance	Yearly as part of the LGPRF reporting	Increase in number of outcomes reported
Use Animal Welfare Victoria/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	As Identified	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	Ongoing as priority areas are identified	Increase in number of trapped cats
Work collaboratively with other public land managers to identify and implement strategies to address feral cat over population	Quarterly	Review annually
Investigate advances in technology to assist in reducing barking dog complaints	6 Monthly	Identification of any new product
84Y agreements with local vets to accept stray animals	Existing 84Y agreements reviewed in July each year. New agreements entered into as needed	Review annually
Increasing the availability of cat traps for the public to reduce the number of stray and unwanted cats.	Initial review undertaken by June 2022	Review annually

In conjunction with the Community Facilities and Open Space unit review the provision of dog poo bag dispensers across the Municipality	Ongoing review based on demand	Review Annually
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3.4 Dog Attacks

Current situation

Our current data

- 103 dog attacks were reported to Council 2020/2021 financial year
- 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 owner's 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 Animal Welfare Victoria website for guidance.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Responsible pet ownership days.
- Public presentations at various community events, field days, school visits, and dog obedience clubs.
- Council website to assist dog owners on reporting, complaints and owner's obligations.

- Advisory signs located in high dog walking areas advising of owner's responsibilities.
- Reduced registration fees for de-sexed dog/cats to assist in reducing the numbers of aggressive/straying animals.
- Promote the 'Dangerous Dogs Hotline' 1300 101 080.
- Responsible pet ownership information on hand at local pound for new owners of adopted animals.
- Animal Welfare booklet provided to dog owners "Are you a dog owner?"
- 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.

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.
- Continuing to prosecute serious dog attacks at the Magistrates Court.
- 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	Annually, aligned to key events within each township	Compare statistics prior to activity
Council's Authorised Officers to 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	As required	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	Ongoing	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	Annually	Increased compliance

3.5 Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

Current situation

Declared Dogs in the East Gippsland Shire 2020-2021

Classification

Restricted breed	0
Dangerous dogs	1
Menacing dogs	2

The following dog breeds are restricted within the State of Victoria:



Japanese Toso



Fila Brasileiro



Perro De Presa Canario



American Pitbull Terrier



Dogo Argentino

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

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

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

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 breaches of legislation when necessary	As required	Successful prosecutions

3.6 Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB)

Current situation

Council Pound Management

Animal Aid 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 Animal Welfare Victoria

Our current data 2020/2021

There are currently 13 registered Domestic Animal Businesses in East Gippsland including:

- 3 breeding establishment
- 1 pound/shelter
- 2 pet shops
- 5 boarding kennels
- 2 catteries

No prosecutions have been conducted and only minor breaches have been identified and compliance with the code has been met.

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 area 2 dogs and 2 cats
 - Rural area 6 dogs and 6 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 Animal Welfare Victoria 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 13 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	As required	Regular meetings to discuss
Ensure Authorised Officers are able to access and understand Animal Welfare Victoria 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	As required	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 only rehouse animals that are suitably fit, in terms of temperament and health.

Our current data

- 191 dog impounds/surrenders for 2020/21 financial year with 17 dogs euthanised.
- 334 cat impounds/surrenders for 2020/21 financial year with 75 cats 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 days and events conducted.
- Council promotes the “Who’s for Cats?” initiative.

- Compulsory micro chipping of animal prior to registration.
- Community information is available on Council and Animal Welfare Victoria 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 restriction rules.

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 Animal Aid commenced operating the pound facility there has been a significant drop in euthanasia, mainly due to their wide network and alternatives offered by the 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	Annually	Monitor cats surrender to pound
Educate public in benefits of de-sexing and identifying ownership of an animal	Ongoing	Review reports annually
Actively pursue external funding to support the implementation of an animal desexing initiative	2022	Review after six months.
Promote the adoption of desexed animals from the pound	Ongoing	Increased percentage of animals rehomed

Objective 2: Reduce cat overpopulation within East Gippsland

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
Work collaboratively with other public land managers to implement feral cat control programs on public land	Twice yearly	Programs reviewed annually
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

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.
- Completed 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 2017 provisions relating to domestic animals are:

KEEPING OF ANIMALS

An owner or occupier of a Property must not, without a Permit, keep or allow to be kept more than: -

- two dogs.
- two cats

90 EXCREMENT

(1) A person in charge of an Animal must not allow any part of the Animal's excrement to remain on any Road, nature strip, or Council Land or any Property on which he or she does not normally reside.

(2) The owner or person in charge of an Animal must carry a receptacle, dispenser, bag or other similar device in which to place the excrement of the Animal when the Animal is on any Road, nature strip or Council Land or any Property on which he or she does not normally reside.

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 restriction 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	Annual Basis	Review annually
Educate parents to minimise the risk of dog attack in the home and wider community	Ongoing	Review statistics annually
Council Officer to attend dog obedience clubs and educate participants in responsible pet ownership	As required depending on program schedule	Review statistics annually
New registrations will receive a responsible pet ownership documentation.	Implemented during 2022	Review statistics annually

4. Performance Monitoring, Evaluation and Annual Reporting

4.1 Key Performance Indicators and the Local Government Reporting Framework

The strategic development of the Community Laws Unit is evaluated through a process of continuous improvement and benchmarking with comparisons against similar organisations.

Our performance in the following criteria relating to animal management is reported on annually as part of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework:

- Time taken to action animal management requests
- Animals reclaimed from council
- Animals rehome or adopted from council
- Cost of animal management service delivery per population
- Successful animal management prosecutions

The public is able to view our performance in these areas by visiting www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au

In addition to the performance measured as part of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework, the following Key Performance Indicators will also be utilised to measure the overall success of Council's animal management activities.

KPI	Target	Current
Dog Registration rate: (% Dogs registered of estimated dog population)	65%	50%
Cat Registration rate: (% Cats registered of estimated dog population)	35%	20%
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%
Cat Euthanasia Rate: (%total cats euthanized/total cats impounded)	20%	22%
Dog Euthanasia Rate (%total dogs euthanized/total dogs impounded)	5%	9%

4.2 Annual Review of the Plan and Annual Reporting

In accordance with section 68A (3) of the Domestic Animals Act, Council will ensure that on an annual basis:

- The Domestic Animal Management Plan is reviewed, and if required, updated or amended;
- Provide the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions with a copy of the Plan, including any amendments; and
- Information is included in the Annual Report evaluating the implementation of the Plan.

This annual review and reporting process will ensure that the implementation of each objective and activity is monitored throughout the life of the Plan.

Contact us

Telephone

Residents' Information Line: 1300 555 886 (business hours)

Citizen Service Centre: (03) 5153 9500 (business hours)

National Relay Service: 133 677

Post

East Gippsland Shire Council, PO Box 1618

Bairnsdale 3875 Australia

Fax (03) 5153 9576

Web www.eastgippsland.vic.gov.au

Email feedback@egipps.vic.gov.au

In person

Bairnsdale: 273 Main Street

Lakes Entrance: 18 Mechanics Street

Mallacoota: 70 Maurice Avenue

Omeo: 179 Day Avenue

Orbost: 1 Ruskin Street

Paynesville: 55 The Esplanade

Outreach Centres

Bendoc Outreach Centre -

18 Dowling Street

Buchan Resource Centre -

6 Centre Road

Cann River Community Centre -

Princes Highway