

Domestic Animal Management Plan

2017 - 2021

Version 2.0



Northern Grampians Shire Council
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CONTEXT STATEMENT

This version of the Northern Grampians Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan has been endorsed as a plan to enable and inform organisational and agency planning. It is recognised that strategies and deliverables outlined in this plan will develop further over the life of the plan with incremental versions of the plan to be produced and endorsed on an as required basis.

All comments should be forwarded to:

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VERSION CONTROL TABLE

Version Number	Date of Issue	Author(s)	Brief Description of Change
Version 1.0	December 2012	Local Laws Coordinator	
Version 2.0	August 2017	Emergency Management Officer, Waste and Emergency Services Officer, Waste Officer	Review and update of plan using new template provided by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport & Resources.

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PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 LEGISLATION

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

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

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

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

1.2 PURPOSE

A four year Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is a statutory requirement for all Victorian councils, prescribed by the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. It is intended to provide Northern Grampians Shire Council (NGSC) with a management plan for dogs, cats and domestic animal businesses. Council's existing DAMP was adopted in 2012 and expired at the end of 2016.

The purpose of this plan is to:

- Document current processes under NGSC animal management responsibilities.
- Increase pet owners' knowledge of the principles of responsible pet ownership and enhance community safety and awareness.
- Strengthen relationships with animal rescue groups, vets and other relevant services to respond to crisis situations and assist in rehoming animals.
- Balance the needs of those who own pets and those who do not.
- Decrease the numbers of dogs and cats being euthanased.
- Maximise the numbers of dogs and cats that are registered in the NGSC municipality.
- Minimise the harmful effect of domestic pets on the population of native birds, mammals and reptiles.
- Take community views on animal management matters into account.
- Comply with the relevant provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

The Northern Grampians Shire has a population of 11,439 (Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS] 2016) with the majority of the population situated in the following town centres (see figure 1 for map of shire):

Town	Location	Population
Stawell	Western Highway 233 km or 3 hours drive from Melbourne	6,032 (ABS 2016)
St Arnaud	Sunraysia Highway 132 kms from Ballarat	2,193 (ABS 2016)
Halls Gap	29 km southwest of Stawell	430 (ABS 2016) (8,000-10,000 in peak periods)
Great Western	14 km Southeast of Stawell	400 (ABS 2016)
Navarre	Borders Pyrenees Shire to northeast	98 (ABS 2016)
Marnoo	52 km North of Stawell	122 (ABS 2016)
Glenorchy	16 km Northwest of Stawell	125 (ABS 2016)

A number of smaller communities are scattered throughout the shire, and the remaining population reside on farming properties and lifestyle blocks. The shire has a diverse and growing economic base, and contains a range of industries, activities, and interests including agriculture, landcare, tourism, and wine production. Commercial centres of Stawell and St Arnaud and tourism hub Halls Gap are vitally important to the region. The Grampians National Park is a major domestic and international tourist destination.

1.4 MUNICIPAL MAP

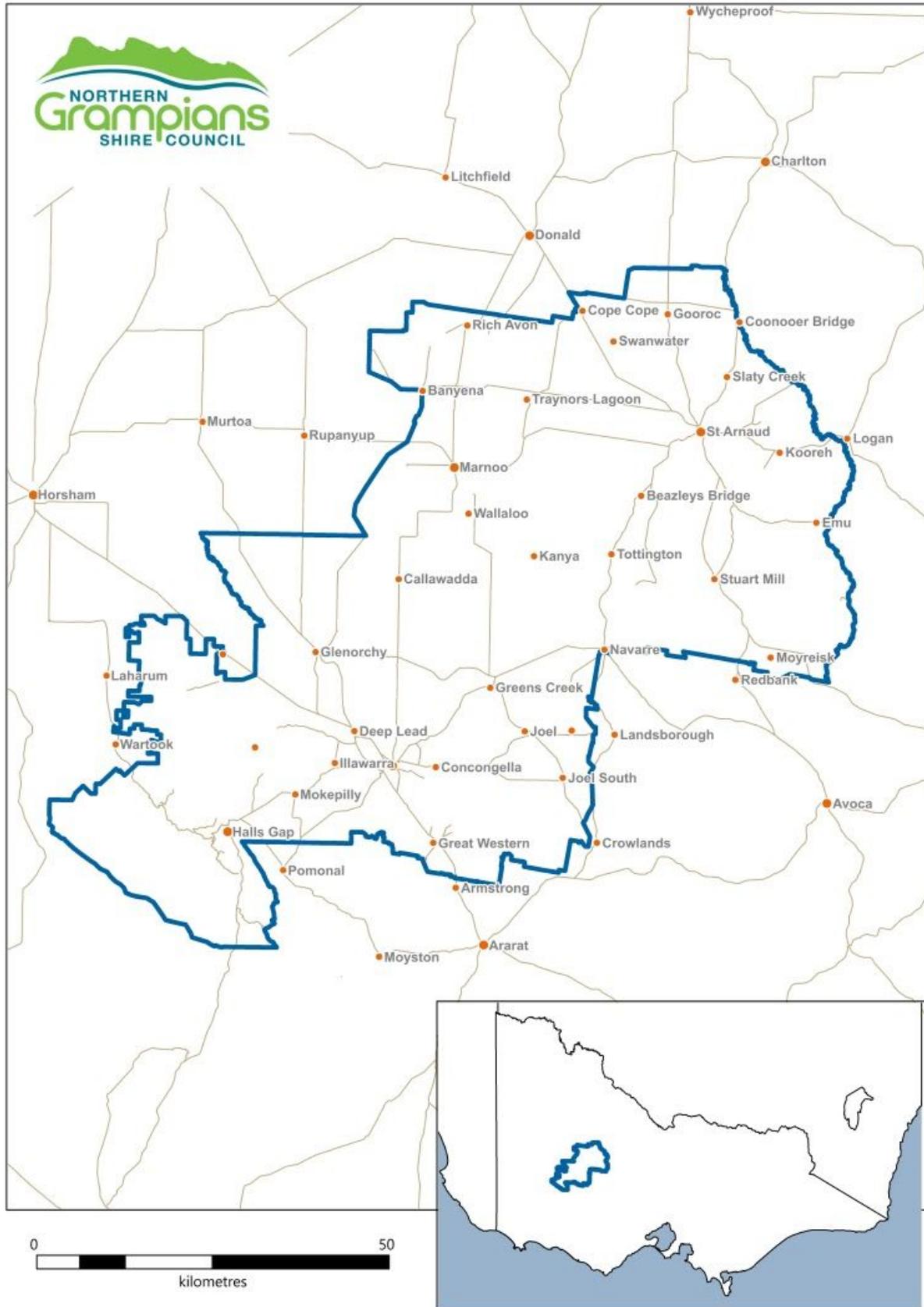


Figure 1 Map of Northern Grampians Shire.

NGSC Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021

1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

REGISTRATIONS	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Number of dogs	1542	1670	1851	2021
Number of cats	483	491	535	696

1.6 ANIMAL MANAGEMENT OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Council's Local Laws unit manages all domestic animal matters. The unit consists of the Emergency Management Officer and two Local Laws Officers. Casual Local Laws staff are also utilised as needed. The unit is situated in the Infrastructure and Environment department and is managed by the Manager Environment and Community Protection. Local Laws Officers report to the Emergency Management Officer, who reports to the Coordinator Environment and Community Safety (see organisational chart in figure 2). Duties of Local Laws Officers include a variety of legislative responsibilities, part of which are domestic animal management services. Other responsibilities include:

- Local Laws administration
- Livestock control
- Parking enforcement
- Preparation of Local Law permits, infringements, and offence prosecutions
- Litter control
- Response to noise complaints
- After hours on call availability (Officer response is available 24 hrs/day).

This heavily committed small unit has limited opportunity and few resources to undertake additional service activities. Maintenance of existing basic services is an ongoing challenge.

1.7 ORGANISATIONAL CHART



Figure 2 Organisational chart showing Local Laws structure.

1.8 SERVICES PROVIDED

Council's Local Laws unit provides domestic animal services to the Northern Grampians Shire community including but not limited to:

- Domestic dog and cat registration and identification processes
- Registration and identification of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
- Cat trap services
- Impounding of animals
- Management of domestic animal complaints
- Promoting responsible pet ownership
- Investigating dog attacks
- Investigating animal welfare issues
- Providing advice to pet owners and the wider community
- Ensuring compliance with legislation and codes of practice relevant to domestic animals
- Ensuring compliance with Council's *General Local Law 2012*
- Responding to nuisance complaints
- *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* authorisation and investigations
- Infringement notice system and prosecution services where required
- Education and information services, as resources and opportunities permit
- Operating an animal shelter at Stawell (public visiting hours are currently 1200-1300 hrs Monday to Friday, other hours by appointment), and an emergency pound at St Arnaud
- Annual inspection and registration of all domestic animal businesses in the municipality
- Scanning deceased animals in an attempt to notify owners
- Providing an after-hours "availability" call out system
- Facilitating animal re-homing
- Providing for the health and welfare of animals in Council's care.

PART TWO - LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

68(A)(2)(b) Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district

2.1.1 Context

The following key points highlight the NGSC's provision of adequate training for authorised officers to ensure the proper administration and enforcement of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* in the Northern Grampians Shire.

- All training opportunities are directed to the Emergency Management Officer for assessment of needs of Officers, or Council. As the majority of training is based in Melbourne or regionally (requiring accommodation and travel for officers), a substantial commitment to training is made in the annual Local Laws budget.
- All Local Laws Officers receive ongoing on the job training. It is a minimum requirement for all full time Local Laws Officers to have completed basic training and participate in additional training opportunities throughout the year.
- Council's annual performance reviews include an evaluation of the training component attributed to the position, and also any training that Officers may identify to assist in their operational abilities.

- Legislative changes to the operational requirements of Officers should be addressed by the provision of relevant training.
- All Officers are members of the South West Authorised Officers Group which meets annually. Meetings are held over two days and are largely dedicated to training and lectures from specialists in given fields. A high percentage of this training is animal-based. The group also facilitates specialised animal training days. The networking opportunities at these meetings are used to enhance the skills and knowledge of Officers, and allow for review of operational practices within other Councils.

2.1.2 Current and planned training

The NGSC's minimum requirements for training of Local Laws Officers include the following skills:

- Contribute to the health and safety of self and others
- Manage conflict situations
- Comply with animal control and regulation requirements
- Apply regulatory powers
- Assess, investigate, and act on non-compliance
- Prepare a brief of evidence
- Assess and impound animals
- First Aid

Authorised Officer Training	Current (2017)	Planned (state when)
Dangerous Dogs	Officer 1 Officer 2	
Investigator Upgrades, Animal Legislation and Enforcement Training Course	Officer 1 Officer 2	
Situational Training	Officer 1 Officer 2	
Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance)	Officer 1	
First Aid	Officer 1 Officer 2	2017/18
Canine Anatomy and Identification Training	Officer 1 Officer 2	November 2017

2.1.3 Our plans

Objective 1: To ensure all Local Laws Officers have adequate training.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum and additional training requirements	June 2018	Minimum training requirements identified and embedded into the recruitment process by June 2018
Ensure authorised officers have completed minimum training requirements	Ongoing	Training gaps identified through annual training register reviews
Ensure authorised officers undertake additional training opportunities	Ongoing	Each officer to undertake two additional training opportunities annually
Ensure casual staff employed meet minimum training requirements	Ongoing	Through recruitment process

Objective 2: Develop and maintain a training register for Local Laws Officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Update register as training is completed	Annually 30 June	Training register is reviewed annually by 30 June
Create a spreadsheet detailing each Officer's training record	December 2017	Ensure spreadsheet has been created by December 2017

2.2 REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

68A(2)(c)(v) Outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats

- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

2.2.1 Current situation

Our current data

REGISTRATIONS	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Number of dogs	1542	1670	1851	2021
Number of cats	483	491	535	696

As at September 2017, Northern Grampians Shire contains three Domestic Animal Businesses along with Council's animal shelters in Stawell and St Arnaud.

Our current Local Laws, policies and procedures

Council currently has in place a Registration of Restricted Breed and Declared Dangerous Dogs Policy which supports the refusal to register dogs declared dangerous (other than guard dogs), including those deemed to be restricted breed dogs whose importation into Australia is prohibited.

Council procedures relevant to domestic animal registration and identification include:

- Notice to comply
- Impound of animal
- Restricted breed dog declaration
- Returned/deceased/departed animal registration
- Infringement entry

Council's existing and relevant Local Laws under Council's *General Local Law 2012* include:

- Excess animals in residential areas
- Excess animals in rural areas
- Cats in Halls Gap area

Our current education/promotion activities

NGSC sends shire residents animal registration renewal notices annually, and in their regular contact with the community Officers take opportunities to discuss registration requirements with pet owners. Council's website contains a section dedicated to "Cat & Dog Registration", which explains registration requirements, fees and restrictions in the Northern Grampians Shire.

Our current compliance activities

Officers issue Notices to Comply for lapsed or non-existent domestic animal registrations. Through Council's Local Laws after hours service, unregistered animals are often impounded. After hours animal service. Upon impoundment, animals are required to be registered on release.

In the southern part of the shire, Halls Gap has been designated as a cat free zone due to its close proximity to native wildlife in the Grampians National Park. Halls Gap became a cat free zone on 21 October 1993. No occupier of property in the Halls Gap area may keep a cat in their possession, unless the cat was living before this date. Council enforce this by issuing Notices to Comply and infringements as required to residents of Halls Gap caught housing cat/s in the cat free zone.

Summary

A high number of unregistered impounded animals indicates a high rate of unregistered animals within the shire. This highlights the requirement for ongoing community education and compliance for registrations.

2.2.2 Our plans

Objective 1: Increase domestic animal registration rates in the Shire.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Microchip and Registration Day	April 2018 April 2020	Record number of animals registered on the day to determine effectiveness of this initiative
Ensure all impounded animals are registered prior to release	Ongoing	Review impoundment records on a regular basis
Issue Notices to Comply for non-registration	Annually	Increased compliance with animal registration
Provide responsible pet ownership literature	Ongoing	Compare total number of animals registered in NGS with previous year's registration data

2.3 NUISANCE

*68A(2)(c)(vi) Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)*

2.3.1 Current situation

Our current data

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS	2015/16	2016/17
Barking dogs	44	45
Wandering at large (dogs & cats)	240	195
Cat trap requests	25	24

Our current Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Council has in place a Registration of Restricted Breed and Declared Dangerous Dogs Policy which supports the refusal to register dogs declared dangerous (other than guard dogs) including those deemed to be restricted breed dogs whose importation into Australia is prohibited.

Council procedures relevant to domestic animal nuisance include:

- Notice to comply
- Impound of animal
- Barking dog complaint
- Infringement entry

Council's existing and relevant Local Laws under Council's *General Local Law 2012* include:

- Excess animals in residential areas
- Excess animals in rural areas
- Cats in Halls Gap area
- Dogs on leash in all municipal places
- Clean up animal excrement

Additionally, Council has an internal Customer Request Management system which ensures that incoming enquiries and complaints are documented and resolved in a timely manner. Council targets the shire's feral cat population through Officers setting cat traps in known problematic areas, as well as lending traps to shire residents for use on their own properties.

Our current education/promotion activities

Council seeks to educate the public on nuisance animal issues and processes via the website, which contains a copy of Council's *General Local Law 2012*, information on cat traps, barking dogs advice and complaints process, and requirements and restrictions for excess/prohibited animal ownership. Council has also obtained state government brochures "*Are you a cat owner?*" and "*Are you a dog owner?*" with the intent to deliver further responsible pet ownership information to the community (figure 3).



Figure 3 Responsible pet ownership brochures.

Our current compliance activities

Council's current compliance activities relating to domestic animal nuisance include:

- Cat ban in Halls Gap area (as per Council's *General Local Law 2012*)
- Issuing of Notices to Comply and infringements where necessary
- Investigation of all nuisance complaints, including barking dogs and animals wandering at large
- Provision of cat traps on request
- Use of cat traps by Local Laws Officers to trap feral cats in known problem areas

Summary

Council has already seen a reduction in 'wandering at large' complaints in recent years. In order to further reduce nuisance complaints within the shire, Local Laws Officers will continue to

deliver education and compliance programs, improve existing processes and investigate new initiatives.

2.3.2 Our plans

Objective 1: Reduce nuisance complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote responsible pet ownership in multiple mediums i.e. social media, print etc.	Ongoing	Reduced impoundments including repeat offenders, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Cat traps used by Council and available to the public for capturing feral cats	Ongoing	Reduced number of wild/feral cats captured via trapping program, identified through annual review of data by 30 June

Objective 2: Improve efficiency of response to 'Wandering at Large' complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Map process to identify inefficiencies and make improvements	June 2018	Evaluate resolution timeframes in Council's internal customer request program, identified in Council's Annual Report

2.4 DOG ATTACKS

68A(2)(c)(iii) Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals

- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

2.4.1 Current situation

Our current data

Number of dog attacks (type)	2015/16	2016/17
Livestock	7	2
Dogs / cats	6	6
Human	7*	5*
Other	2	0
TOTAL	22	13

*Note that regarding dog attacks on humans, only two in 2015/16 and three in 2016/17 involved contact, i.e. biting. The other attacks involved rushing, chasing, etc.

DOGS	2015/16	2016/17
Number of menacing declarations	5	4
Number of dangerous declarations	0	0

Number of dogs	Current (2017)
Registered restricted breed dogs	0
Registered declared menacing dogs	5
Registered declared dangerous (guard) dogs	0

Our current Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Council has in place the following policies related to the management of dog attacks within Northern Grampians Shire.

- Dog attack policy
- Registration of restricted breed and declared dangerous dogs policy

Council procedures relevant to dog attacks include:

- Dog attack response
- Impound of animal
- Infringement entry
- Evidence gathering - points of proof

Council's existing and relevant Local Laws under Council's *General Local Law 2012* include:

- Dogs on leash

Our current education/promotion activities

Council's stance on dangerous and restricted breed dogs within Northern Grampians Shire is detailed on the website. Council promotes responsible pet ownership through regular Local Laws Officer contact with pet owners residing in the shire. Council also delivers responsible pet ownership information through the brochure "*Are you a dog owner?*" (figure 3), which includes advice on property confinement, training and socialisation, and dog attacks.

Our current compliance activities

Council's current compliance activities relating to dog attacks include:

- Issuing of Notices to Comply and infringements where necessary
- Investigation of all dog attacks reported to Council
- Animal impoundment
- Procedure to declare Menacing and/or Dangerous Dogs

Summary

The reduced number of dog attacks recorded by Council in 2016/17 compared to 2015/16 may indicate that the current Local Laws processes are effective. Local Laws Officers will continue to deliver compliance activities and improve existing processes to further reduce the occurrence of dog attacks within the Northern Grampians Shire.

2.4.2 Our plans

Objective 1: Reduce the number of dog attacks.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote responsible pet ownership in multiple mediums (i.e. social media, print etc.)	Ongoing	Reduced number of dog attacks reported annually, identified through annual review of data by 30 June

2.5 DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

68A(2)(c)(vii) Outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations
- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

2.5.1 Current situation

Our current data

DOGS	2015/16	2016/17
Number of menacing declarations	5	4
Number of dangerous declarations	0	0

Number of dogs	Current (2017)
Registered restricted breed dogs	0
Registered declared menacing dogs	5
Registered declared dangerous (guard) dogs	0

Our current Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Council's existing and relevant Local Laws under Council's *General Local Law 2012* include:

- Dogs on leash
- Excess animals in residential area
- Excess animals in rural area

Council has in place a 'Registration of Restricted Breed and Declared Dangerous Dogs Policy', which provides for the safety and wellbeing of residents and visitors through the refusal to register restricted breed dogs and dangerous dogs. in the Northern Grampians Shire. The policy is a discretionary directive available to Council under the *Domestic Animal ACT 1994*, enabling Council to instruct Council Officers not to register or renew the registration of restricted breed

dogs or declared dangerous dogs in this municipality. This will have the effect of banning these dogs within this municipality, as all dogs must be registered with Council (*Domestic Animal Act 1994*).

Pursuant to Section 3 (1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* a restricted breed dog is defined as any one of the following breeds:

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

Dogs may be declared dangerous by Council if the dog;

- Causes a serious injury to or kills a person or another animal
- Is a declared menacing dog and its owner has received at least two infringement notices for offences of being outside the owner's premises not muzzled or controlled on a lead
- Declared dangerous in another state or territory

Council procedures relevant to the management of dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs include:

- Impound of animal
- Infringement entry
- Evidence gathering - points of proof
- Restricted breed dog declaration
- Menacing/dangerous dog declaration

Our current education/promotion activities

Information can be found on Council's website regarding the registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs within Northern Grampians Shire.

Our current compliance activities

To increase compliance relating to dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs, Council Officers undertake the following actions.

- Provide an after hours service to respond to dogs attacks and aggressive dogs
- Thoroughly investigate dog attacks
- Issue Menacing/Dangerous Dog Declarations
- Hold attacking dogs during investigations

Summary

In July 2005 Council supported the move to refuse to register dogs declared dangerous (other than guard dogs) including those deemed to be a restricted breed dog. Declared dangerous dogs and restricted breed dogs (including Pit Bull Terriers) cannot be registered with NGSC.

2.5.2 Our plans

Objective 1: Ensure menacing dogs are compliant with relevant legislation and regulations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
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Conduct random property inspections of declared menacing dogs to ensure compliance	Ongoing	Supporting documentation No repeat incidents with declared dogs
Repeat offenders are escalated to declared dangerous dogs	Ongoing	Supporting documentation
Complete review of menacing dog compliance	Annual	Review property inspection data and impound register

2.6 OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

68A(2)(c)(iv) *Outline programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats*
- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

2.6.1 Current situation

Our current data

ANIMALS IMPOUNDED	CATS		DOGS	
	2015/16	2016/17	2015/16	2016/17
Adopted	3	1	7	10
84Y	19	36	22	25
Reclaimed	6	15	99	153
Euthanasia	157	145	22	32
Deceased	1	2	2	0
TOTAL	195	199	152	220

An ongoing feral cat problem, low reclaim rates and low adoption rates of cats in the Northern Grampians Shire continues to contribute to a high rate of euthanasia in cats impounded by Council.

Our current Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Council's existing and relevant Local Laws under Council's *General Local Law 2012* include:

- Excess Animals in residential area
- Excess Animals in rural area
- Cats in Halls Gap area
- 84Y Agreements

Council procedures relevant to overpopulation and high euthanasia include:

- Impound of animal
- Animal attendant procedure
- Health Management Plan for pounds
- Animal impound information sheet

As part of a strong commitment to rehoming animals, Council has 84Y agreements in place with 21 animal rescue groups. This extensive network of rescue groups enables Council to rehome many of its impounded animals.

Our current education/promotion activities

Council Officers facilitate adoption directly from the Council Pound and support 84Y Agreement participants to assist with rehoming animals. Officers promote animals available for adoption through Council’s website and social media channels. Council initiatives including animal rehoming are also promoted in all staff’s outgoing emails as a footer advertisement (see example in figure 4 below).



Figure 4 NGSC staff email footer promoting adoption of impounded animals.

Our current compliance activities

Current Council activities delivered by Local Laws Officers to reduce overpopulation and euthanasia include:

- Excess animal application assessments and enforcement
- Investigating reports of illegal and unregistered puppy farms
- Issuing of Notices to Comply for animal registrations
- Desexing all domestic animals prior to release from the pound*
- Cat traps available for the public
- Vehicle patrols and response to nuisance complaints

**Not including animals released under 84Y Agreements.*

Summary

Council’s pound and euthanasia policies are guided by the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*. Council operates under its own pound and policies and procedures in accordance with the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* and the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Shelters and Pounds*.

2.6.2 Our plans

Objective 1: Identify reasons for euthanasia.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and improve Council’s internal database to identify reasons for euthanasia	Ongoing	Compare euthanasia statistics annually, identified through annual review of data by 30 June

Objective 2: Reduce number of feral cats within the Shire.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Work with animal rescue groups to identify and address problem areas	Ongoing	Reduction in complaints relating to feral cats Reduction in requests for cat traps Identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Continue cat trapping program as needed, providing traps to the public as well as Officers trapping in identified problem areas	Ongoing	Reduced number of wild/feral cats captured via trapping program, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Encourage desexing by providing a reduced fee for desexed animals	Ongoing	Increase in desexed animals within the Shire, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Increased community education on the issue of feral cats	Ongoing	Reduction in complaints relating to feral cats Reduction in requests for cat traps Identified through annual review of data by 30 June

Objective 3: Increase desexed dogs and cats within the Shire.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Encourage desexing of animals by providing a reduced fee for desexed animals	Ongoing	Increase in desexed animals within the Shire, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Increased community education on the importance of desexing animals	Ongoing	Increase in desexed animals within the Shire, identified through annual review of data by 30 June

Objective 4: Identify all illegal breeding establishments* within the Shire.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate known breeding establishments	Ongoing	Increased number of registered breeding establishments, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Monitor social media	Ongoing	Increased number of registered breeding establishments, identified through annual review of data by 30 June

Encourage the public to provide information to Council regarding known breeding establishments and investigate	Ongoing	Increased number of registered breeding establishments, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
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***Registration requirements for breeding/rearing businesses**

As specified in the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Businesses*:

- Any dog or cat breeding business with 3 or more fertile female dogs, or 3 or more fertile female cats, must register as a Domestic Animal Business with the local council in the municipality that it resides.
- Where the breeder is a member of an Applicable Organisation**, the proprietor must only register as a Domestic Animal Business with their local council when they have more than 9 fertile female dogs or cats, or more than 2 are NOT registered with the Applicable Organisation.
- Applicable Organisation members with 10 or more fertile females or 3-9 fertile females where 2 or more are NOT registered with the applicable organisation, must register as a Domestic Animal Business with their local council.
- A rearer is an enterprise that is run for profit and carries out the rearing of dogs and cats, and must register as a Domestic Animal Business with their local council.

**Information on Applicable Organisations can be found at the Agriculture Victoria website www.agriculture.vic.gov.au.

2.7 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

68A(2)(c)(ii) Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation

- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d),(f)

2.7.1 Current situation

Our current data

Domestic Animal Businesses are defined by the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* as:

- a) *An animal Shelter, Council pound or pet shop, or*
- b) *An enterprise which carries out the breeding of dogs or cats to seek, where*
 - I. In the case of an enterprise whose proprietor is a member of an applicable organisation, the enterprise has 10 or more fertile female dogs or 10 or more fertile female cats, or*
 - II. In the case of an enterprise whose proprietor is not a member of an applicable organisation, the enterprise has 3 or more fertile female dogs or 3 or more fertile female cats, or*
- c) *An enterprise that is run for profit which carries out the rearing, training or boarding of dogs or cats*

DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESS	2015/16	2016/17
Shelter/Pounds	2	2

Boarding Facilities	1	1
Pet Shops	2	2

Our current Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Domestic Animal Business registration is controlled by the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*. Council will continue to investigate all reports on Domestic Animal Breeding Businesses and seek compliance for any non-registered Domestic Animal Business by conducting property inspections.

Our current education/promotion activities

Council provides information and guidance to Domestic Animal Businesses on the necessity of registration, and the procedure and requirements to be fulfilled under the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*.

Our current compliance activities

Council currently undertakes the following activities to ensure compliance with businesses registered and the identification of unregistered businesses:

- Annual audits of registered businesses
- Follow up on properties identified through complaints regarding suspected Domestic Animal Businesses

Summary

There are a low number of Domestic Animal Businesses located within the Northern Grampians Shire. Council is obliged to ensure that each establishment complies with the relevant mandatory codes of practice for the operation of breeding and rearing establishments, boarding establishments, shelters and pounds, such as the *Code of Practice for the Operation of Shelters and Pounds*.

2.7.2 Our plans

Objective 1: Increase Domestic Animal Business Registration within the shire

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify through social and print media all Domestic Animal Businesses and determine whether registration is required	Annually	Increase in Domestic Animal Business registration, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Community education on definition of Domestic Animal Business	Annually	Increase in Domestic Animal Business registration, identified through annual review of data by 30 June

Objective 2: Ensure all registered Domestic Animal Businesses are compliant with legislation

Activity	When	Evaluation
Annually inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses	Annually	All registered Domestic Animal Businesses are audited by 31 August

2.8 OTHER COUNCIL INITIATIVES

68A(2)(e) Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary

2.8.1 Industry leaders

NGSC is committed to facilitating continuous improvement with all departments, by identifying long term goals and working towards being industry leaders our individual fields.

The industry leader goal identified for Council's Local Laws unit is to improve accessibility to the pound and process to adopt animals, and covers the following tasks:

- Identify the internal process to list animals for adoption
- Update animal shelter page on Council's website
- Advertise good news stories
- Identify pound site requirements including safe access
- Create site plan for the pound and identify improvements

Objective 1: Improve accessibility to pound and process to adopt animals

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a customer friendly and accessible electronic medium	January 2018	Increase in animal adoptions and reduced time spent at pound, identified through annual review of data by 30 June
Identify and implement improvements to pound site	June 2019	Completion of identified improvements by June 2019

2.8.2 Animals in emergencies

Council prioritise urgent animal welfare needs in emergencies, and have identified the following animal welfare service recovery activities in the Northern Grampians Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan.

- Assist/destroy injured stock/wildlife
- Coordinate disposal of dead stock
- Coordinate emergency feed/fodder supplies
- Identify holding areas for stock/pets
- Provide cages/leads etc. for animals and relief/recovery centres
- Round up escaped stock

Objective 1: Ensure DAMP links with relevant Council emergency plans

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) links to relevant Council emergency plans including the Municipal Emergency	September 2018	Update DAMP, MEMP and EAWP to reflect relevant animal management considerations in emergencies by 30 September 2018

Management Plan (MEMP) and the Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP)		
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2.8.3 Northern Grampians Shire Council *General Local Law 2012*

Clauses impacting on domestic animals

38. EXCESS ANIMALS IN RESIDENTIAL AREA

1. Without a Permit, an owner or occupier of premises in a residential area must not keep, or allow to be kept, any animals in excess of the number specified below:
 - a. 2 cats;
 - b. 2 dogs;
2. Without a Permit, an owner or occupier of premises in a residential area must not keep, or allow to be kept, more than four different types of animals at the premises.
3. Progeny of animals kept will not be considered for the purposes subclause (1) or subclause (2) until they are 12 weeks of age.

40. EXCESS ANIMALS IN RURAL AREA

1. Without a Permit, an occupier of rural land must not keep, or allow to be kept, more than:
 - a. 4 cats; and
 - b. 4 dogs.

41. CATS IN HALLS GAP AREA

1. A person in the Halls Gap area (Maps 35, 36 and 37 of the Northern Grampians Planning Scheme as identified in Schedule 3) must not keep a cat which was not in their possession and being kept in the Halls Gap area before 21 October 1993.
Penalty: 2 penalty units
2. The owner of a cat which is exempt under section 41(1) must ensure:
 - a. that the cat is confined totally indoors or in an escape proof enclosure on the owner's premises; and
 - b. when outside the owner's premises the cat must be confined to an enclosed vehicle.

43. DOGS ON LEASH

1. The owner or person in charge of a dog in a municipal place must at all times keep the dog under control by a leash, chain or cord connecting the dog to the owner or person in charge of it.
Penalty: 2 penalty units
2. The owner of the dog must ensure that the person in control of the dog in a municipal place has the physical capabilities of controlling the dog in all circumstances.
Penalty: 2 penalty units
3. Sub clause (1) does not apply to a person in charge of a dog that is under their effective control while working with livestock.
4. For the purposes of Sub clause (1) and (2) if the owner of the dog is under 17 years of age, the parent or guardian of that person is deemed to be the owner.
5. Subclause (1) does not apply in a municipal place which is designated by Council signs to be an area where dogs are permitted off-leash

44. ANIMAL EXCREMENT

1. A person in charge of an animal in a municipal place must:
 - a. Carry a device suitable for the collection of any excrement from that animal, and produce the device on demand by an Authorised Officer.
Penalty: 2 penalty units
 - b. Immediately collect and dispose of any excrement from that animal into a waste receptacle.
Penalty: 2 penalty units
2. An Authorised Officer may direct the person in charge of an animal to collect and dispose of any excrement from the animal deposited contrary to subclause (1) (b) in an approved manner and that person must do so.
Penalty: 2 penalty units

2.9 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 Primary Industries' Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan*
- (c) *publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.*

2.9.1 Current situation

An annual review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is included in Council's Council Annual Report, and includes statistics of animal impounds and resultant actions. These statistics drive the assessment of current orders and Local Laws for adequacy and are a basis for identifying the urgency of any changes required.

Annual reviews include:

- A collation of information from like and neighbouring councils to identify trends in animal control as well as assessment of current methods used.
- The number and frequency of animal-based complaints recorded on Council's complaint system, or received directly by Councillors.
- Investigation of inexplicable substantial gaps in animal control statistics. Statistics that fall below or rise above the average are the first indicator of Council's animal control efficiencies and deficiencies.
- Information sharing with like councils to identify trends and methods that are effective or ineffective.

Council's 2015-2016 Annual Report identified key actions implemented during the period of the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan (version 1.0, 2012-2016), including:

- Introduction of a new cat registration structure to encourage cat owners to register their pets. The new structure was complemented by a local rescue group's subsidised cat desexing program. Council were able to support the rescue group in applying for a State Government grant to fund the subsidised desexing program.
- Reduction in rates of the euthanasia of impounded dogs (-14%).
- Maintenance of the high percentage of dogs returned to owners (69%).
- Development of six new 84Y agreements with dog rescue groups to maintain the adoption rate of impounded dogs (15%) which equates to 72% of available dogs.

This version (2.0) of the NGSC Domestic Animal Management Plan has been reviewed by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources. Community feedback was also invited during the development of this plan through Council's animal rescue network.

2.9.2 Our plans

Objective 1: Engage and consult with the community in development of the NGSC DAMP.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Consult with industry stakeholders in the draft stages of an updated DAMP	2020	Stakeholders consulted, feedback considered and incorporated into plan where appropriate

Objective 2: Develop internal processes to ensure annual review of DAMP is triggered.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate internal trigger for review of plan by appropriate officer/s	2017/18	DAMP is reviewed annually by 30 June

Objective 3: Create system to easily access data required for use in future versions of the DAMP.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Work with Council's Information Communications Technology team to develop electronic storage system	Dec 2017	Data easily available for next major DAMP review in 2021

Objective 4: Provide transparency regarding the effectiveness of the NGSC DAMP.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Publish an evaluation of the DAMP's implementation in Council's Annual Report	Annually	DAMP evaluation appears in each of Council's Annual Reports