

# **Southern Grampians Shire Council**

## **Domestic Animal Management Plan**

**2012-2016**



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## DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

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

### 68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

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

- (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
- (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

## **BACKGROUND**

Southern Grampians Shire Council developed its' first Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) for 2008 to 2012 in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994, (The Act). This Plan reviews the actions and planning for Southern Grampians Shire Council to set the direction for domestic animal management for the following four (4) years and to meet the requirements under The Act.

The plan details programs and actions to assist in implementing the mission statement of this plan. The plan has been developed with assistance from a broad range of stakeholders that seek to implement a balanced approach to domestic animal management in Southern Grampians shire.

The plan identifies a range of actions for animal management. The implementation of these Action's gives Council the opportunity to monitor the progress of actions and arrange further Improvement's to promote and facilitate responsible animal management programs on a regular basis.

Council is committed to providing a high standard of animal management in accordance with legislative requirements. The objectives of the plan are to:

- Ensure Animal Management Officers (AMOs) are appropriately trained in all aspects of responsible animal management;
- Encourage responsible dog and cat ownership
- Reduce public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats
- Promote the effective management of dogs and cats
- Effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in the Shire
- Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
- Address any over population and high euthanasia rates of dogs and cats
- Provide welfare for pets during periods of emergency

There is an increasing public view that punitive enforcement of laws alone will not result in lasting voluntary changes in behaviour. Therefore, enforcement of the Act and Local Laws should be balanced with media and public education material for responsible animal management.

There is now considerable evidence to support the benefits of owning pets. Accordingly, Southern Grampians Shire recognises that companion animals are part of the community, contributing to the quality of life for its residents. Working dogs offer an intrinsic value to the general farming community.

The strategies within this plan have been developed to provide Council with a sound foundation from which it can build, plan and co-ordinate sound animal management and ensure that future decisions meet the needs of the community.

In this progressively changing environment, it is essential that Council take a strategic approach to managing domestic pets.

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose of this Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP)**

This Domestic Animal Management Plan has been prepared by the Southern Grampians Shire Council in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, Impounding of Livestock Act 1994, and Southern Grampians Shire Council Community Local Law No.4 and Council policies.

The purpose of this document is to provide a guide for domestic animal management within the Southern Grampians Shire. The Plan identifies strategies and actions to implement the vision, aims and objectives for animal management. The Plan contains recommendations for a wide range of actions to be undertaken by the Council in a programmed approach. These actions will enable Council to maintain a balance between competing interests and to reposition animal management to accommodate new requirements.

### **1.2 Process Applied in developing this Plan**

The Plan was developed in conjunction and consultation with relative stakeholders such as members of the community, animal care professionals, domestic animal business operators and Council staff.

### **1.3 Southern Grampians Shire Council – Demographic and Shire profile**

Southern Grampians Shire Council was formed in September 1994 by the amalgamation of the former Shires of Dundas, Mt Rouse, Wannon and the City of Hamilton. We are located in the centre of the Western District of Victoria, 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south east of Adelaide.

The Shire has a population of 16,500 and covers an area of 6,652 square kilometres. Hamilton is the main retail and service centre supported by the nine smaller towns of Balmoral, Branxholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Peshurst and Tarrington.

The Southern Grampians Shire prospers from primary production. Agriculture, with associated industries, is the largest employment sector and the highly intensive agricultural production contributes significantly to the Victorian economy. Our fertile soils and abundant water are also allowing for diversification. The economy and the availability of jobs and business enterprises is being considerably enhanced by this greater diversification of agriculture, more intensive use of land where sustainable, enhanced land management and new enterprises like mineral sands processing, horticulture, viticulture and forestry. Processing, manufacturing, research and development,

engineering, retail, tourism, education, aged and health community services are also important employment sectors across the Shire.

The Shire is very well known both nationally and internationally for its wool production, which is approximately 14% of Australia's wool clip and 10% of the world's apparel wool. Considered to be the densest population of broad acre sheep farming per hectare in the world, the district is home to many fine sheep and cattle studs. Our biggest annual event, Sheepvention, held in August, is a sheep show of national significance that aptly demonstrates the Shire's vital role in the sheep and wool industry.

Tourism is one of our fastest growing sectors, with the Grampians mountain range attracting many visitors both nationally and internationally. Many of our magnificent homesteads and gardens also open their doors to visitors each year. Other natural attractions include unique waterfalls and extinct volcanoes that form part of the Volcanic Trail encompassing western Victoria and south east South Australia. The Shipwreck Coast to the south and Coonawarra wine region to the west are also within a short drive for visitors to this region.

## 2.0 TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

### CONTEXT

There are three Current Local Laws Officers that deal with animal management issues as part of their daily work activity. In addition to animal management all officers also undertake Local Laws and Parking matters.

### 2.1 CURRENT AND PLANNED TRAINING

| <b>Authorised Officer Training -</b>  | <b>2012 / 2016</b>                  | <b>Planned</b>   |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation   | 2 current officers Qualified        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> officer to complete when available   |
| Arrange attendance at industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, Bureau of animal welfare updates. | Ongoing                             | Staff to attend Bureau of Animal welfare Training Sessions including, additional specific animal training programs.<br><br>Attend animal courses/seminars as required and made available |
| Firearms training (Destruction of injured animals under prevention of cruelty of animals (POCTA))               | 1 officer has current Qualification | Training to be ongoing<br><br>Licensing of 2 <sup>nd</sup> officer   |
| Certificate IV in Local Government  | 2 current officers Qualified        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> officer to complete when available   |
| Attend Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM's) Seminars and Conference's                             | 2014 & 2016                         | Attendance at National conferences   |

### **3.0 REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION**

Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats under S.68A(2)(c)(v) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

#### **3.1 CURRENT SITUATION**

##### **Our current data**

There are currently 3,620 dogs and 1,191 cats that are registered in the Southern Grampians Shire.

##### **Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

Information relating to Registration and Identification is available from the Council Offices or the Local Laws Offices.

##### **Our Current Procedures**

Handling aggressive dogs

Collection of dogs/cats

Manual Handling- Lifting and removing dogs from vehicles

Manual Handling- transferral of feral cats

Issue warnings / infringements for non-compliance.

##### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

Media Releases

##### **Our current Compliance Activities**

Annual mail out of dog & cat registration renewal forms, followed up with reminder and final notice.

Conduct doorknock of all known animal owners to follow up of non-renewal of registration

##### **Summary**

The Southern Grampians Shire Council encourages the community to register all dogs and cats to assist it in fast identification and safe return of their pets and to ensure compliance with legislation.



### 3.2 ACTION PLAN – REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

**Objective 1:** To ensure all cats and dogs which are over the age of three months and reside within the municipality are registered with the Southern Grampians Shire.

| Activity  | When      | Evaluation   |
|---|-----------|--|
| Conduct annual doorknock of all premises within the municipality and follow up on pet ownership and for non-renewal of registration | Annually  | Assists the public and helps encourage compliance                          |
| Media releases with Radio and News paper  | Annually  | Increase awareness of responsibility<br>Promotes compliance                |
| Mail out of registration renewal Forms  | Annually  | Provides opportunity for pet owners to register their pets before April 10 |
| Mail out final notices for registration renewals  | Annually  | Increase compliance  |
| Research and implement a reduced fee desexing program with local Vet's  | 2013/2014 | Reduction in registration costs to owners                                  |
| Distribution of animal literature pamphlets   | ongoing   | To ensure compliance with current legislative requirements                 |



## **4.0 NUISANCE**

Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance under S68A (2)(c)(vi) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

### **4.1 CURRENT SITUATION**

#### **Our current data**

For the year of 2012 there were 215 dogs and 159 cats impounded by the Southern Grampians Shire as a result of reports of dogs at large and the issuing of cat traps as well as patrols by LLO.

#### **Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

All cats and dogs must be secured to the premises of the owner (Domestic Animals Act 1994 S. 25(1)).

Requirement to carry faeces disposable bag in public and removal of dog excrement in all public areas of the municipality.

#### **Our Current Procedures**

Handling 'aggressive dogs'

Collection of dogs

Manual Handling- Lifting and removing dogs from vehicles

Manual Handling- transferral of feral cats

Clean and caring of animals at our domestic animal pound facility

Issue warnings / infringements for non-compliance.

#### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

Notification to residents of any fireworks displays, by letter drop and media

Provide information on Council's website to report nuisance animal complaints

Verbal communication and supply of relevant brochures

Information relating to Nuisance animals is available from the Council Offices or the Local Laws Offices.

#### **Our current Compliance Activities**

Actively deal with barking dog complaints and take enforcement action where applicable;

Issue 'Warning Notices' and 'Notices to Comply'

Issue Infringement Notices

Regular Patrolling of areas

Provided 24 hour emergency service

Annual inspection of excess animal permit holders

## Summary

The Southern Grampians Shire Council's current process relating to nuisance animals is received well by the community, through loaning cat traps and barking dog complaint booklets.

Effective control of dogs in public places, reduces the likelihood of dog attacks, enables residents to comfortably enjoy open spaces without fear of dog attack and helps ensure public safety.

## 4.2 ACTION PLAN - NUISANCE

**Objective 1:** To provide readily available information to the public relating to animal nuisance. (Education material and barking dogs).

| Activity  | When                                     | Evaluation  |
|---|--|---|
| Provide brochures regarding to nuisance animals   | Ongoing                                  | Informs and educates public   |
| Educate the community to keep dogs and cats securely confined to their properties   | Ongoing                                  | Doorknocks by LLO<br>Media releases                                       |
| Provide information on Council's website  | Ongoing                                  | Easily accessible   |
| Notification of fireworks displays  | Ongoing                                  | Assists residents with being able to secure their pets prior to the event |
| Advise residents of their responsibility after trapping cats  | Ongoing                                  | Information explained on delivery by LLO, and notices affixed to cages    |
| Provide information on the causes of excessive barking<br><br>Encourage owners of Barking dogs to seek advice from professional dog trainers & behaviourist | When a barking dog complaint is received | Provides dog owner information to prevent barking                         |

## **5.0 DOG ATTACKS**

### **5.1 CURRENT SITUATION**

#### **Our current data**

The Southern Grampians Shire Council has not taken any cases to court for dog attack in the last three years. All complaints are treated seriously and investigated thoroughly. Council on occasion exercises its discretionary power to destroy dogs in certain circumstances.

#### **Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

Dogs must be on leash at all times within the Lake Hamilton Reserve and the Melville Oval Reserve.

Issue warnings/infringements for non-compliance.

#### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

Media releases

Signage

Information relating to Dog Attack is available from the Council Offices or the Local Laws Offices.

#### **Our current Compliance Activities**

Fully investigate all complaints of attack/rush/chase.

Enforcement action- issue infringements.

Proactive patrolling to ensure compliance with Legislation and Local Laws.

Seize any animal involved in an attack until completion of investigation.

#### **Summary**

The Southern Grampians Shire has a strong focus on public safety and responsible pet ownership. The Council is constantly advocating the public report all attacks, rushes or chases when they take place. All complaints are treated very seriously and are thoroughly investigated.

## 5.2 ACTION PLAN – DOG ATTACKS

**Objective 1:** To provide readily accessible information to the public to help prevent any occurrence of dog attacks

| Activity   | When    | Evaluation  |
|--|---------|---|
| <p>Raise awareness of risk of dog attacks in the home, street or parks and how to reduce the risks through</p> <p>Brochures<br/>Promotion of Responsible pet ownership<br/>Providing information to Vets/Pet Shops/ Breeders to display/hand out</p> | Ongoing | <p>Reduction in the number of dog attacks</p> <p>Less dogs and cats at large</p> <p>Less complaints of nuisance animals</p> |
| <p>Promote and encourage the reporting of dog attacks whether on private or public land</p>  | Ongoing | <p>Media releases<br/>Council website</p>   |
| <p>Promote effective confinement and control of dogs</p>   | Ongoing | <p>Media releases<br/>Council website<br/>LLO contact</p>   |

## **6.0 DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS**

The purpose of this section is to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in the municipality and to ensure that they are kept in compliance under Section 68A(2)(c)(viii) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

### **6.1 CURRENT SITUATION**

The Southern Grampians Shire currently has no declared dangerous dogs, menacing dogs or restricted breed dogs.

#### **Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

Daily patrolling to monitor dog behaviours and possible breaches of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 or any Local Law.

Investigation when the public reports possible restricted breed dogs.

Random inspections of the premises of any declared dog to ensure compliance with the Act.

Information relating to Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs is available from the Council Offices or the Local Laws Offices.

Issue warnings/infringements for non-compliance.

#### **Summary**

The Southern Grampians Shire Council is very committed to maintaining public safety and responsible pet ownership. All complaints are thoroughly investigated along with on the spot check and formal inspection to ensure compliance and public safety.



## 6.2 ACTION PLAN – DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

**Objective 1:** To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs. (Educational / Promotion Activities).

| Activity  | When    | Evaluation                        |
|---|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Provide information to residents on;<br><br>Types of Declared dogs and the responsibility of their owners | Ongoing | Council website<br>Media releases |
| Promote the Dangerous Dog Hotline   | Ongoing | Council website<br>Media releases |

**Objective 2:** To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs. (Compliance Activities)

| Activity  | When    | Evaluation  |
|---|---------|---|
| Ensure that Council's declaration policies and procedures are followed correctly                        | Ongoing | Ensures consistency                               |
| Ensure all declared dogs are accurately registered and all responsibilities of the owner are adhered to | Ongoing | Ensures consistency<br>Accurate record keeping    |
| Respond to complaints regarding Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs as a matter of priority   | Ongoing | Clear message to community<br>Promotes compliance |
| Follow up all non-compliance until owner complies   | Ongoing | Clear message to community<br>Promotes compliance |
| Media promotion of the DEPI Restricted Breed and Dangerous dog Hotline                                  | Ongoing | Phone 1300 101080                                 |

## **7.0 OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA**

Address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats under S.68A(2)(c)(iv) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

### **7.1 CURRENT SITUATION**

#### **Our current data**

- Of the 215 dogs impounded, 66 % were returned to their owner, 14 % were rehoused and 20 % were deemed unsuitable for rehousing and were euthanized
- Of the 159 cats impounded, 10 % were returned to their owner, 10 % were rehoused and 80 % were euthanized. Whilst the number of cats humanely destroyed appears to be disproportionately high, this is due to the majority of these being feral animals.

#### **Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

All cats must be secured to the premises of the owner in accordance with S25 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Issue warnings / infringements for non-compliance.

#### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

Make available accessible information through brochures and fact sheets from the DPI relating to the keeping of animals. Local Laws Officers are available for advice at all times. Media releases promoting responsible pet ownership and responsibilities of breeders. Information relating to Overpopulation and High Euthanasia is available from the Council Offices or the Local Laws Offices

#### **Our current Compliance Activities**

Cat traps available from the LLO.

All cats and dogs must be secured to the owners premises.

Infringements for dogs and cats found at large.

#### **Summary**

The Southern Grampians Shire Council currently has a total of 4,811 dogs and cats registered. In keeping with changes to fees applicable to registering dogs and cats, Council encourages all animal owners to de-sex their animals to reduce their fees and help reduce the overpopulation and high euthanasia rate.



## 7.2 ACTION PLAN – OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

**Objective 1:** To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Overpopulation and High Euthanasia. (Education/Promotion Activities).

| Activity  | When    | Evaluation   |
|---|---------|--|
| Promote the responsibility of pet owner to confine their pets to their premises | Ongoing | Promotes compliance<br>Assist public                     |
| Promote adoption from the pound   | Ongoing | Council website<br>Media releases<br>Promotes compliance |

**Objective 2:** To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Overpopulation and High Euthanasia. (Compliance Activities).

| Activity  | When      | Evaluation   |
|---|-----------|--|
| Promote the responsibility of pet owner to confine their pets to their premises | Ongoing   | Promotes compliance<br>Assist public                     |
| Promote adoption from the pound   | Ongoing   | Council website<br>Media releases<br>Promotes compliance |
| Supply cat traps  | Ongoing   | Promotes compliance<br>Assist public                     |
| Research and implement a reduced fee desexing program with local Vet's          | 2013/2014 | Reduce occurrence of unwanted litters of animals         |

## **8.0 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES**

Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses are managed appropriately and comply with S.68A(2)(c)(ii) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

### **8.1 CURRENT SITUATION**

#### **Our current data**

There are currently seven Domestic Animal Businesses registered with the Southern Grampians Shire Council

#### **Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

Southern Grampians Shire currently has no orders in place relating to Domestic Animal Businesses. Council acts in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

All Domestic Animal Businesses must be registered with Council as per the Act.

All Domestic Animal Businesses are audited annually.

All Domestic Animal Businesses are subject to random audits.

Any new Domestic Animal Businesses must hold a Planning Permit.

Issue warnings/infringements for non-compliance

#### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

Information relating to Domestic Animal Businesses is available from the Council Offices or the Local Laws Offices.

#### **Our current Compliance Activities**

Registration and renewal of all Domestic Animal Businesses located within the municipality.  
Conduct annual audits of all Domestic Animal Businesses.

#### **Summary**

Council has a strong focus on ensuring that all Domestic Animal Businesses are operating in accordance with any and all requirements set.

**8.2 ACTION PLAN – DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES**

**Objective 1:** Annually inspect and audit all registered Domestic Animal Businesses.

| Activity  | When     | Evaluation  |
|---|----------|---|
| Conduct annual inspections of Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality. | Annually | Ensure that all Domestic Animal Businesses comply with the Code of Practice |
| Follow up complaints of non-compliance and assist with a resolution               | Ongoing  | To ensure compliance  |



## 9.0 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.

## 9.1 ACTION PLAN – ANNUAL REVIEW OF DAMP AND ANNUAL REPORTING

**Objective 1:** To achieve compliance with the Domestic Animals Act S68A(3)

| Activity  | When     | Evaluation   |
|---|----------|--|
| Conduct annual reviews of the Domestic Animal Management Plan | December | To ensure the content of the DAMP meets the current needs of the community and any legislative changes |
| Update DAMP as required                                       | December | Provide the DPI a copy of the DAMP including any amendments.   |
| Ensure compliance with current Act and regulations            | December | As Required  |