



Southern Grampians Shire Council

Domestic Animal Management
Plan 2026-2029



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We acknowledge the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the Gunditjmara, Tjap Wurrung and Bunganditj people, the traditional custodians of the land where we live and work.

We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.

Southern Grampians Shire is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's unique and cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

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Purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan

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 Energy, Environment and Climate Action), 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.

Purpose of this Plan

The purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (Plan) is to provide a guide for domestic animal management within the Southern Grampians Shire. 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.

Council is committed to providing a high standard of animal management in accordance with legislative requirements, as such, the plan broadly outlines the following areas of focus:

1. Training of authorised officers
2. Registration and identification
3. Nuisances
4. Dog attacks
5. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
6. Overpopulation and high euthanasia
7. Domestic animal businesses

There is considerable evidence to support the social and health benefits of pet ownership, and it is easy to take for granted the role of pets in our society. The use and need of pets has expanded substantially as they are utilised not only as companions but as workers in an increasing number of ways. It is in appreciation of these various reasons that the Southern Grampians Shire Council has developed this plan with a clear direction on the education, welfare, promotion and enforcement of responsible pet ownership.

The strategies within the 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.



Process Applied in Developing the Plan

This plan has been developed on the outcomes and learnings from the previous plan. This has included a review of existing data in areas of registrations, impoundment, attacks and complaints.

The community was given the opportunity to provide feedback and in September 2025 Southern Grampians Shire Council went to the community to gather feedback for the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029 via an online survey.

The community engagement opportunity was promoted through a range of channels that targeted both pet owners and non-pet owners.

Southern Grampians Shire Council received 84 contributions to this engagement, which was comparative to the 81 questionnaires submitted during the preparation of the previous plan in 2021. Of the 84 contributions, 100 per cent of people lived within Southern Grampians, 64 per cent were dog owners, 39 per cent were cat owners, 13 per cent had other animals and 11 per cent did not own an animal.

Respondents were asked a series of questions to help identify matters they thought should be top priorities for Southern Grampians Shire Council to focus on in this plan. They were asked to rate the importance of specific issues or initiatives from 'never' through to 'always'. Key information obtained from the survey is as follows:

37% of respondents stated that they very often or always observe dogs off-leash when they shouldn't be and dog waste not being picked up.

29% of respondents stated that dogs very often or always bark for a long period of time.

10% of respondents stated dogs annoy or intimidate people or other dogs.

60% of respondents stated that they have very often or always seen cats in the streets at night.

33% of respondents stated that they have very often or always seen stray or feral cats in their local area and cats fighting other cats.

49% of respondents strongly support a 24 hour cat curfew and 29 per cent stated cats are rarely or never kept inside their house during the day or night.

67% of respondents stated that it was very important for a cat desexing program with 8 per cent saying this was important.

36% of respondents stated that it was very important for Council to offer cat traps with 19 per cent saying this was important.

This and all the feedback received from the online survey was considered when preparing this plan.

Process Applied in Developing the Plan

Key topics arising from the qualitative feedback were:

- The management of dogs in public space is a critical priority. Specifically, the feedback highlights that Council focuses strongly on areas relating to:
 1. Ensuring dogs are on-leash in spaces where they should be and that owners are not far away or seem absent
 2. What effective control of a dog means
 3. The presence of dog excrement in public places
 4. Education around unowned and semi-owned cats within the community
- Community had queries on who would be able to look after your pet if you had to leave home suddenly
- Further information in regard to responsibilities of cat owners was information that the community would like

This and all the feedback received from the online survey was considered when preparing this plan.



Demographic Profile of Council

Southern Grampians Shire is a vibrant and connected community settled in a landscape dominated by the spectacular Grampians mountain range, ancient volcanoes, tranquil rivers and waterfalls and undulating pastoral land dotted with majestic redgums, the Southern Grampians Shire spans the heart of Victoria's renowned 'Western District'.

The Shire is located 290 kilometres west of Melbourne and 500 kilometres south east of Adelaide. Southern Grampians Shire covers an area of 6,655 square kilometres, with a population of almost 16,000. Hamilton is the main retail and service centre supported by the smaller towns of Balmoral, Branhholme, Byaduk, Cavendish, Coleraine, Dunkeld, Glenthompson, Peshurst and Tarrington.

Agriculture, with its associated industries, is the largest employment sector, with this intensive agricultural production contributing significantly to Victorian and Australian economies. Our rich fertile soils and reliable water availability provide great opportunities for diversification.

More intensive use of land (where sustainable), enhanced land management and new enterprises like mining, horticulture, viticulture and plantation timber have the potential to boost the Shire's economy and the availability of jobs. Education, health and aged care services, tourism, retail, manufacturing, research and development, meat and food processing, and engineering are also important employment sectors across the Shire.

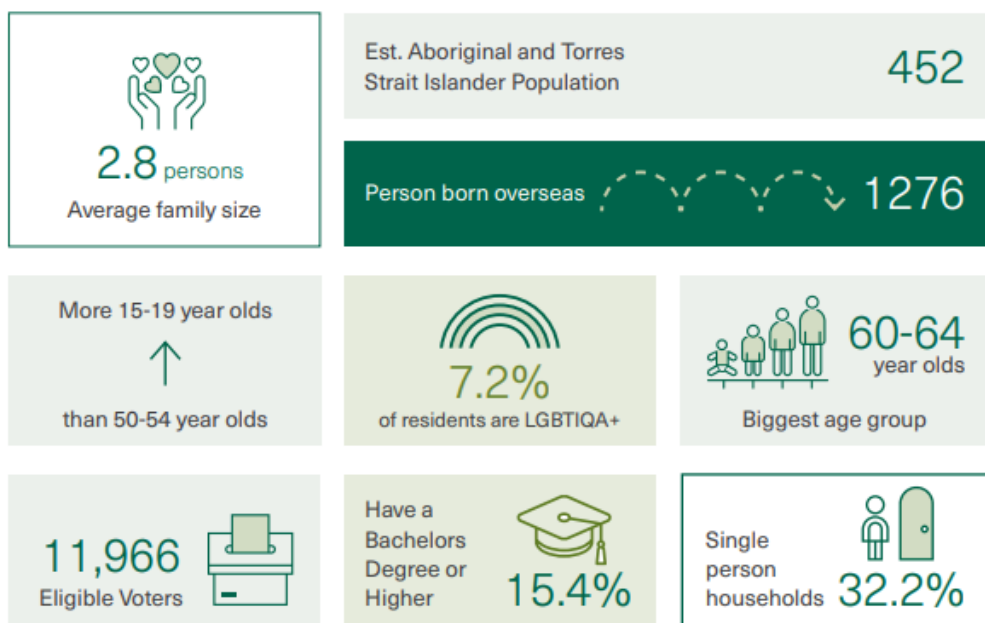
The Southern Grampians Shire has a strong sense of community with people working together to achieve common goals and outcomes.

This sense of community benefits the entire municipality, and Council will continue to encourage and acknowledge the community interest in the development of the Shire



Population

16,525



Domestic animal statistics and data

The table below provides a snapshot of the domestic animal management services provided by Council in 2024-2025, and as previously reported in prior Domestic Animal Management Plans.

Southern Grampians Shire Council currently has Memorandum of Understanding's with other Council's for the use of Council's pound facilities for the impounding and rehoming of animals from their Shire. These animals are also reflected in the table below.

| | 2020-2021 | 2022-2023 | 2024-2025 |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Population | > 16,134 | >16,100 | < 16,000 |
| No. of authorised animal management officers | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Number of Domestic Animal Businesses | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| | | | |
| Dogs in Southern Grampians | | | |
| No. of registered dogs (total) | 1975 | 1954 | 1871 |
| No. of registered restricted breed dogs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No. of registered declared menacing dogs | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| No. of registered declared dangerous dogs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dogs impounded at the pound | 173 | 183 | 166 |
| Dogs reclaimed from the pound | 123 | 130 | 71 |
| Dogs adopted | 17 | 18 | 53 |
| Dogs reclaimed by owner or adopted % | 81% | 80% | 75% |
| Dogs euthanised | 33 | 35 | 42 |
| Dogs euthanised % | 19% | 20% | 25% |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Customer requests responded to: | | | |
| · Dogs – Barking | N/A | N/A | 46 |
| · Dogs – Surrendered | N/A | N/A | 29 |
| · Dogs – Wandering at large | N/A | N/A | 120 |
| · Dog – Attacks | N/A | N/A | 3 |
| · Dog – Rush | N/A | N/A | 15 |



| | 2020-2021 | 2022-2023 | 2024-2025 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Cats in Southern Grampians | | | |
| No. of registered cats (total) | 586 | 537 | 510 |
| Cats impounded at the pound | 103 | 125 | 240 |
| Cats reclaimed from the pound | 11 | 13 | 19 |
| Cats adopted | 13 | 16 | 34 |
| Cats reclaimed by owner or adopted % | 23% | 23% | 22% |
| Cats euthanised: | | | |
| · All | 79 | | |
| · Feral / Stray | | 73 | 159 |
| · Health Issues | | 23 | 28 |
| Cats euthanised %: | | | |
| · All | 77% | | |
| · Feral / Stray | | 58% | 66% |
| · Health Issues | | 19% | 12% |
| Customer requests responded to: | | | |
| · Cat cage requests | N/A | N/A | 37 |
| · Cats trapped | N/A | N/A | 59 |
| · Cats surrendered | N/A | N/A | 17 |

Training of Authorised Officers

Current and planned training

Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the Act requires Council to 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.

All authorised animal management staff within the Community Safety and Natural Resources Team (the team) are multi-skilled, and in addition to animal management matters, administer and enforce a range of other legislative requirements, including parking and local laws enforcement.

The team is coordinated by the Community Safety and Natural Resources Coordinator who is supported by three full time rangers and one part time administration officer.

Southern Grampians Shire Council requires all authorised officers to meet the requirements of their position description, and ensure officers undergo appropriate training / re-training relevant to their role. The table below highlights authorised officer training requirements for Southern Grampians Authorised Officers.

| Approved Officer Training – Basic | Current Status (2025) | Planned |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| Certificate IV in Animal Regulation and Management | One Officers | One officer to commence training |
| Certificate IV in Government Investigations | One Officers | One officer to commence training |
| Canine Anatomy and Identification Training | One Officer | Desirable all other officers to attend |
| Ensure all officers attend industry training and seminars | As required | Training assigned as required and determined through Performance |
| Implant Microchips for Dogs and Cats Skill Set | | One officer to commence training in 2025 |
| Firearms Training | Ongoing | Refresher training done annually |
| First Aid Training | Ongoing | Refresher training done yearly |
| Occupational Health and Safety | As required | Training assigned as required and determined through Performance |
| Customer Service | As required | Training assigned as required and determined through Performance |

Our Plans – Authorised Officer Training

Objective 1 : Ensure all Officers involved in animal management are appropriately trained.

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|----------|---|
| Identify minimum training requirements of officers in | Annually | Review annually as part of the officer's annual performance |
| Ensure authorised officers undertake additional training | Ongoing | Each officer to undertake additional training annually |

Objective 2 : Ensure competent animal handling skills and evaluation.

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|---------|---|
| Review current skills amongst officers and identify training | Ongoing | Discuss on a regular basis to ensure effective development of |
| Review current work procedures to ensure effectiveness | Ongoing | Discuss as a team on a regular basis and engage with |
| Animal Management / Handling | Ongoing | Organise training that is suitable and will add value to the team |



Registrations and Identifications

Section 68A(2)(c)(v) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats. – also addresses Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

Current Situation

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires all dogs and cats to be registered with Council at three (3) months of age, with renewals due annually on the 10 April. When a pet is registered with Council they are required to be microchipped and are provided with a Council identification tag. Southern Grampians makes every effort to reunite lost cats and dogs with their owners whether they are registered, microchipped, wearing their Council tag or have no identification.

Animal registration fees go toward the ongoing operational costs associated with the running of Southern Grampian's animal management services which includes:

- Animal management staff to support the collection and return of stray animals to owners
- The costs of running both an animal pound service, and an after-hours animal collection service
- Enforcement of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Prevention to Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
- Address nuisance complaints such as barking complaints, cat and dog trespassing complaints, wandering and stray animals
- Attend to and investigate dog attack / bite / rushing incidents
- Registration and inspection of domestic animal businesses (including pet shops, animal boarding, dog trainers and animal breeders)
- Individualised registration tags for each registered dog and cat within Southern Grampians

Council data shows that registration trends vary from year to year. The reasons for this are unknown but could mean that animals have passed away, moved to other shires, or remain unregistered.

| Registrations | 2020-2021 | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Dogs | 2,096 | 2,058 | 1,975 | 1,954 | 1,871 |
| Cats | 628 | 617 | 586 | 547 | 534 |
| Total | 2,724 | 2,675 | 2,561 | 2,501 | 2,405 |

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Southern Grampians Shire Council Community Local Law No 1 of 2022 - Limits the number of animals kept under Clause 28 – Keeping of Excess Animals

A person must not, without a permit, keep more animals, or types of animals, than that prescribed in the following provisions where the land is less than 0.2 hectares and located in the township area and where:

(c) the number of each category of animal exceeds the following or where there are more than four (4) types of animals in total:

- (i) 2 dogs;
- (ii) 2 cats;
- (iii) 12 poultry:
 - (iv) 100 domestic birds
 - (v) 2 goats;
 - (vi) 3 sheep;
 - (vii) 2 cockatoos;
 - (viii) 6 guinea pigs;
 - (ix) 4 domestic rabbits; and
 - (x) 4 ferrets

Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

The Southern Grampians Shire promotes animal related events and animal registration renewals where possible. Council utilises web pages and social media to educate and address specific issues as they arise.

Information booklets on responsible pet ownership and fact sheets as supplied by the Animal Welfare Victoria are used where possible and are available from a variety of sources throughout the Shire.

Community groups and schools are engaged from time to time with the intent to educate when the opportunity presents itself.



Our Current Compliance Activities

Council will investigate and conduct enforcement action when identifying unregistered dogs or cats.

Issuing of annual registration renewal notices and follow-up overdue notices.

All non-renewals are followed up and reviewed by the annual registration audit.

Change of animal details form can be found on Council's website.

Animal registration database is continually updated as the status of animal's change.

Ensure all impounded or seized dogs and cats are registered prior to being released to their owner.

All authorised officers are provided with mobile technology enabling access to animal owner details in the field.

Act on referrals from State Government relating to Pet Exchange Register and source number breaches in relation to the breeding and selling of cats and dogs.

Review the registration fees annually.

Council provides significantly discounted registration fees for animals that are both microchipped and desexed.

Ensure the correct State Government Levy is charged on the animal registrations.



Our Plans – Registration and Identification

Objective 3 : Increase the number of animal registrations within the municipality

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|----------|--|
| <p>Review the annual registration process to improve the timeliness and compliance of registration.</p> <p>This would incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Issuing of annual registration renewal notices and follow-up overdue notices · Promoting online notification of a change of details (i.e. pet has died, lost or left Southern Grampians) or address change · Undertake an annual registration audit of non-renewed registrations | Annually | Increase number of dog and cat registrations registered by 10 April |
| <p>Promote animal audit process through social media platforms and develop short “do you know” documentation for Council’s website</p> | Ongoing | Number of unregistered and unidentifiable animals found during animal audits |
| <p>Promote a microchipping and registration day in Southern Grampians</p> | Annually | Number of animals processed |

Nuisance

Section 68A(2)(c)(vi) of the Act requires Council to 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)

Current Situation

The table below gives a snapshot of the nuisance reports received over the past two (2) years.

| Complaint | 2023-2024 | 2024-2025 |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Cats - Cage requests | 43 | 37 |
| Cats – Picked up | 46 | 59 |
| Dogs – Barking | 31 | 46 |
| Dogs – Wandering at large | 72 | 120 |

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Southern Grampians Shire Council Community Local Law No 1 of 2022 - Limits the number of animals kept

Clause 28 – Keeping of Excess Animals

A person must not, without a permit, keep more animals, or types of animals, than that prescribed in the following provisions where the land is less than 0.2 hectares and located in the township area and where:

(c) the number of each category of animal exceeds the following or where there are more than four (4) types of animals in total:

- (i) 2 dogs;
- (ii) 2 cats;
- (iii) 12 poultry;
- (iv) 100 domestic birds
- (v) 2 goats;
- (vi) 3 sheep;
- (vii) 2 cockatoos;
- (viii) 6 guinea pigs;
- (ix) 4 domestic rabbits; and
- (x) 4 ferrets

Clause 31 – Control of Cats

The owner of any cat must confine the cat to the owner's property either within the dwelling or within another escape-proof structure between the hours of sunset and sunrise.

Clause 33 – Nuisance Caused by Feeding Animals

- (1) If the feeding of an uncaged bird and/or any animal by a person is causing a nuisance, damage to property, or contributing to health issues an Authorised Officer may direct the person to cease feeding the bird and/or animal.
- (2) Any person who is given a direction under this clause must comply with that direction.

Clause 34 – Adequate Fencing for Animals

- (1) The owner or occupier of a property on which any livestock, small bird, large bird, rodent or reptile or any other animal is kept must ensure that the property is adequately secured to prevent the animal from escaping that property.
- (2) If the fencing on the land where an animal is kept or is grazing is not adequate for the type of animal, or the fences are in condition that would not prevent the animal from escaping onto a road or adjoining property, an Authorised Officer may serve a Notice to Comply on the owner or occupier of the land requiring an appropriate fence to be erected or a fence to be repaired or modified.

Clause 36 – Requirement to remove animal excrement

- (1) A person who owns or is in charge of an animal must not allow any part of the animal's excrement to remain on any:
 - a. Road or Council land in a built-up area
 - b. Or in any park, garden reserve or other place of public recreation or resort
- (2) A person who owns or is in charge of an animal must carry a bag, container or device to remove the animal's excrement and properly dispose of it.

Nuisance Barking

Dogs bark for many reasons, some examples are boredom, loneliness, lack of company or exercise. They bark to seek attention even though it may result in being scolded; negative attention is better than no attention at all.

Before you contact Council to make a complaint about a barking dog, you are encouraged to try talking with the animal owner first. Should you decide to contact Council, you will be asked to complete a Barking Dog Diary for a few weeks to record how often the dog is barking. If other neighbours are affected by the barking, ask them to complete a diary in support of the complaint also.

Barking dog investigations can be quite resource intensive taking significant time to resolve. If Council determine the complaint is substantiated, Council Officers may then issue a warning to the dog's owner, or a formal Notice to Comply to deal with the barking. If this is not complied with, Council Officers may issue an infringement notice or present the matter at Court.

The majority of barking dog complaints resolve simply, as in many cases the owner has not been aware that their dog was barking and then takes appropriate steps to address the issue.

Dog Litter

The issue of dog litter and decaying pet waste can potentially pose both health and environmental risks to the community. It is a requirement under Council's Local Law to carry a plastic bag or similar to pick up after dogs.

Dog Litter bags are located throughout the Shire in areas frequented by community and these include Lake Hamilton, Cavendish Recreation Reserve, Memorial Park Dunkeld, Peshurst Botanic Gardens and Bryan Creek Walking Track.

Nuisance cats

Council regularly receives complaints from residents regarding nuisance cat issues. In response to this Council offers a cat trap service to residents to assist them in the management of feral and nuisance cats.

Council promotes the use of cat enclosures and cat proof fencing as effective cat containment measures.

Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

Council seeks to educate the community on nuisance animal issues and processes via the website, which contains a copy of Council's Community Local Law No 1 of 2022, information on barking dogs, cat trap requests and cat curfews.

Council has also obtained state government brochures and fact sheets which are available to the community.

Our Current Compliance Activities

Coordinate barking dog complaints and take enforcement action, where applicable.

Issue Warning Notices and Notices to Comply, 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 Rangers to trap feral cats in known problem areas.

Our Plans – Nuisance

Objective 4 : Reduce Nuisance Complaints

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|---------|--|
| Continue to provide cat cages and/or traps free of charge to residents to control feral cat | Ongoing | Reduction in the number of nuisance cat complaints |
| Review and update information to assist owners and complainants of barking dogs | Ongoing | Review and update current material |
| Investigate and implement a 24 hour cat curfew | 2028 | Curfew updated in the Community Local Law |

Objective 5 : To Reduce Dog Waste Litter Problems in Public Spaces

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Promote responsible pet ownership through increased education, awareness and enforcement of the requirement to carry waste bags and pick up after their dog/s through increased education and awareness campaigns | Ongoing | Reduction of dog waste complaints |



Dog Attacks

Section 68A(2)(c)(iii) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals. - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d),(f)

Current Situation

Dog attacks and dog aggression in public places represent the highest risk in animal management – both to the community, other animals and to the Rangers who must investigate and resolve these issues. Council investigates all reported dog attacks and may seize and impound any dog suspected of being involved in a dog attack or dog rush.

Key initiatives to reduce the risk of dog attacks include in no particular order; desexing of dogs, early socialisation and training of dogs, ensuring animals are not permitted to wander at large, educating the community (particularly children) about bite avoidance and how to behave around dogs, educating the community and enforcing the requirements with respect to dogs accessing public places with their owner.

Many veterinarians provide puppy pre-school classes for owners of puppies. These classes help to socialise puppies around other humans and dogs.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Clause 84 – Using Lake Hamilton Reserve

(1)(b) – bring any animals, except for a domestic pet on a leash or an assistance animal

(2)(c) – bring any domestic pet onto the beach, except for an assistance animal

There are other areas within the Shire where animals are not allowed either on or off leash, some of these areas are Melville Oval, Pedrina Park Ovals, Hamilton Botanic Gardens and Sylvester Oval.

Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

Promote desexing of dogs to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering at large.

Promote dog obedience training and the importance of early socialisation of dogs.

Provide information on dog attacks and promote responsible pet ownership.

Brochures / Information sheets

Our Current Compliance Activities

Provide an immediate response to reported dog attacks or rushes.

Provide owners of dogs involved in alleged rushes or attacks with information relating to the investigation process, potential outcomes and information relating to the declaration of menacing or dangerous dogs.

Collect / secure dogs found wandering at large or not adequately confined to their premises.

Seize dogs involved in a serious dog attack or has a history of being involved in an attack or a rush, pending further investigation.

Communicate with other Councils in relation to declared dogs which have moved out of or into Southern Grampians.

Declare offending dogs as menacing or dangerous dogs, where appropriate.

Ensure the Victoria Declared Dog Registry and in house registry is kept up to date with records for all declared dogs in Southern Grampians.

Our Plans – Dog Attacks

Objective 6 : Reduce the incidents of dogs wandering at large and dog attacks

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|---------|---|
| Promote, encourage and provide solutions to owners of ways to contain wandering dogs | Ongoing | Reduced number of dog attacks, dogs at large and complaints of nuisance animals |
| Promote and encourage the reporting of dog attacks whether on private or public land | Ongoing | Timely provision of reporting dog attacks by community |
| Undertake property inspections to ensure adequate containment of problem dogs and aggressive dogs | Ongoing | Reduction of repeat offending |



Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Section 68A(2)(c)(vii) of the Act requires Council to 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)

Current Situation

Council is committed to maintaining public safety and responsible pet ownership. All reports of dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs are followed up promptly to reduce risk to the community.

Dangerous dogs is a dog declared to be dangerous by Council because:

The dog has caused serious injury or death to a person or animal

The dog is kept for the purpose of guarding non-residential premises

The dog has been trained to attack or bite any person or anything when attached to or worn by a person

The dog is a menacing dog, and its owner is in breach of the associated regulations

The dog has been declared dangerous under a law of another State or Territory of the Community

Menacing dog is a dog declared menacing by Council because:

The dog has rushed at or chased a person

The dog causes a non-serious bite injury to a person or animal

The dog has been declared a menacing dog under a law of another State or Territory of the Commonwealth

Restricted breed dog is a dog that is any one of the following breeds:

American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terriers)

Perro de Presa Canarios (or Presa Canario)

Dogo Argentinos

Japanese Tosas

Fila Brasileiros

The table below provides details on the number of declared, menacing and dangerous dogs within Southern Grampians.

| Registered Declared Dogs | 2020-2021 | 2022-2023 | 2024-2025 |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Restricted breed dogs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Menacing dogs | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Dangerous dogs | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

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

Investigating reports of possible restricted breed dogs by the community.

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.

Issue warnings / infringements for non-compliance of the Act.

Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

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

Owners of declared dogs are aware of their legal obligations in owning and housing the dog. They are provided with information in relation to their requirements as well as information advising them of the possible outcomes should they breach the requirements.

Brochures / Information sheets.

Our Current Compliance Activities

Owners of dogs involved in alleged rushes or attacks are provided with information relating to the process involved with the investigation, potential outcomes and information relating to the declaration of menacing or dangerous dogs.

Ensure all declared dogs are recorded on the Victoria Declared Dog Register, including any changes to details.

All declared dogs are recorded on an in house register.

Communication with other Councils in relation to declared dogs which have moved out of or into Southern Grampians.

Our Plans – Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Objective 7 : Ensure declared dogs are compliant with relevant legislation and regulations

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|---------|---|
| Restricted breed dog identification training for rangers | Ongoing | Training completed as required |
| Monitor all new registrations for potential restricted breed dogs | Ongoing | Inspections of any dogs identified as potential restricted breed dogs |
| Ensure all declared dogs are recorded on the Victoria Declared Dog Registry | Ongoing | Register is up to date and accurate |
| Information relating to declared dogs provided to owners to ensure compliance | Ongoing | Information provided |
| Investigate complaints about menacing, dangerous and restricted breed dogs | Ongoing | Investigations completed |
| Repeat menacing dog offenders are escalated to declared dangerous dogs in line with legislation | Ongoing | Supporting documentation |



Overpopulation and High Euthanasia

Section 68A(2)(c)(iv) of the Act requires Council to 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)(iii), (d),(f)

Current Situation

For the 2024-2025 financial year Council had a total of 1871 dogs and 510 cats registered and within the year had 166 dogs and 240 cats impounded, of which 71 dogs and 19 cats were reclaimed.

Whilst Council's pound attempts to re-home all animals that are not reclaimed it is not always possible as the Code for Shelters and Pounds prevents animals with health and temperament issues from being rehomed.

The number of unwanted and unowned animals is a result of:

- overpopulation of dogs and cats
- animals being relinquished or abandoned
- animals unable to be reunited with their owner because of inadequate identification, including inaccurate microchip details
- the presence of feral cat colonies within Southern Grampians

Semi-owned cat population

The semi-owned cat is one that someone within the community will feed, provide water or shelter to it, however they are not willing to take full responsibility for that cat by way of taking on ownership of it or having it desexed and registered. Many people don't realise that by feeding the cat they are in fact contributing to the overpopulation of un-owned or semi-owned cats in the community. Feeding un-owned cats keeps them healthy and strong enough to reproduce. Council's Rangers will help anyone who needs assistance with a semi-owned or un-owned cat in their neighbourhood. Cat traps are available to the community to assist with the trapping of feral, un-owned, semi-owned or nuisance cats.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Clause 28 – Keeping of Excess Animals

A person must not, without a permit, keep more animals, or types of animals, than that prescribed in the following provisions where the land is less than 0.2 hectares and located in the township area and where:

(c) the number of each category of animal exceeds the following or where there are more than four (4) types of animals in total:

- 2 dogs;
- 2 cats;
- 12 poultry;
- 100 domestic birds
- 2 goats;
- 3 sheep;
- 2 cockatoos;
- 6 guinea pigs;
- 4 domestic rabbits; and
- 4 ferrets

Clause 31 – Control of Cats

The owner of any cat must confine the cat to the owner's property either within the dwelling or within another escape-proof structure between the hours of sunset and sunrise.

Clause 33 – Nuisance Caused by Feeding Animals

(1) If the feeding of an uncaged bird and / or any animal by a person is causing a nuisance, damage to property, or contributing to health issues an Authorised Officer may direct the person to cease feeding the bird and / or animal.

(2) Any person who is given direction under this clause must comply with that direction.

Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

Southern Grampians website provides information on locating lost animals and what community should be if they have found a lost animal.

Council's website and social media channels advertise animals for re-homing.

Promoting registration and microchipping to increase the number of lost animals that are reunited with their owner.

Promoting the benefits of desexing of animals to reduce pet overpopulation.

Promoting containment of animals to reduce the number of animals that are lost.

Our Current Compliance Activities

Prompt response to reports of dogs wandering at large, cats trespassing on private property and cats appearing to be unowned.

Proactive cat trapping programs of identified unowned or semi-owned cats.

Significantly higher registration fees for entire animals to encourage desexing.

Investigate complaints relating to excess number of animals.

Desexing, microchipping and registration of all domestic animals adopted from the pound.

Reclaimed animals are required to be microchipped and registered on release back to their owner, if not currently registered.

Cat traps available from Council for community members with nuisance / feral cat problems.

Our Plans – Overpopulation and High Euthanasia

Objective 8 : Ensure declared dogs are compliant with relevant legislation and regulations

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|---------|---|
| Continue to return registered animals to their owner if collected as stray or lost | Ongoing | Increase in the number of animals returned to their owner without having to go to the pound |
| Increase social media activity relating to animals in the pound and the benefits of pet adoption | Ongoing | Number of social media posts Engagement in posts Numbers of animals adopted from shelters |
| Ensuring microchipping and registration information is accurate and up to date upon the release of an impounded animal | Ongoing | Checking details on release of animal |

Objective 9 : Increase the desexing rates of dogs and cats

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|---------|--|
| Investigate and apply for funding to offer a discounted desexing program | Ongoing | Increase in the number of desexed animals registered |
| Review and update all education material on the benefits of registering, microchipping and desexing pets | Ongoing | Information update |

Objective 10 : Manage and promote the awareness of semi-owned cat populations

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|---------|--|
| Develop an annual communication plan to support animal management objectives, incorporating messaging on: · Semi-owned cat populations (i.e. feeding semi-owned or nuisance cats) | Ongoing | Annual communication plan implemented |
| Provide community with loan cat traps to assist in the trapping of feral, un-owned, semi-owned and nuisance cats. As well as Officers trapping in identified problem areas | Ongoing | Reduction in request for cat traps Reduction in complaints relating to feral cats |

Domestic Animal Business

Section 68A(2)(c)(ii) of the Act requires Council to 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)

Current Situation

Southern Grampians Shire Council is responsible for the registration of a premises as a domestic animal business. These include:

- pet shops
- animal shelters and pounds
- dog training establishments
- breeding and rearing businesses where three or more fertile females and animals are sold and the breeder is not a member of an applicable organisation
- boarding facility including day boarding, overnight boarding or both

All domestic animal businesses must be registered annually with their local council and comply with the appropriate mandatory code of practice. Business premises must also comply with other requirements including building, health, planning and local laws.

There are currently three registered domestic animal businesses in Southern Grampians Shire Council, these are a breeding/rearing business, a boarding facility and an animal shelter/pound.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Inspections of all new domestic animal businesses.

Annual audits of domestic animal business premises.

Utilisation of reporting tools provided by Stated Government for inspections.

Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

Annual scheduled audits of existing domestic animal businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant code of practice.

Response to complaints from the community.

Information relating to domestic animal businesses is available from the Council Offices.

Rangers will work with current and prospective domestic animal businesses to provide education regarding their legislative responsibilities and work with those that require assistance to bring their operations within the regulations and codes of practice.

Our Current Compliance Activities

All domestic animal businesses must be registered with Council.

Inspections are conducted at all domestic animal businesses.

Complaints from the public relating to a domestic animal business are investigated.

Our Current Compliance Activities

Objective 9 : Annually inspect and audit all registered Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with relevant Codes of Practice

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|---------|--|
| Annually inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses | Ongoing | Audits completed and enforcement action taken for non-compliance |

Objective 10 : Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|---------|--|
| Follow up complaints of non-compliance and assist with a resolution | Ongoing | Enforcement / education action taken where appropriate |



Other Matters

Section 68A(2)(e) provides for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipality that it thinks necessary.

Benefits of pet ownership – encouraging a healthy community

Many studies have been undertaken which provide knowledge supporting the benefits of pet ownership and their use in therapy. A number of different studies have found a link between better health, both physical and mental, and pet ownership.

Together with the Domestic Animal Management Plan it is envisaged that Southern Grampians will embrace the importance of pet ownership in providing a healthier and fitter community.

Animal Welfare Issues

Council's Rangers are authorised under the Prevention to Cruelty to Animals Act to deal with any animal cruelty or welfare issues. Rangers work with the RSPCA for more complex issues. There are occasions where Council is called upon to assist with the collection of injured or mistreated animals that are then required to be transported to seek veterinary attention. Council has a contract with a local veterinary clinic for those injured animals requiring urgent assistance.

Animal Welfare - domestic violence and emergency situations

Council acknowledges the impact of domestic violence and emergency situations in regard to pets, where emergency accommodation is required for both the owner and/or the pet/s. Council aims to increase the community's awareness and promote services that are available for community members exposed to domestic violence or are displaced due to emergency situations.

Emergency Management

Planning for emergencies includes focusing on both the relief and recovery needs of the community.

Municipal Councils are the lead for housing displaced companion animals and lost/stray domestic animals, and this includes supporting domestic animals and their owners within an Emergency Relief Centre. The Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan defines animal welfare support services in relief. This includes livestock, companion animals and wildlife.

Further information relating to domestic animals in emergencies is available at Southern Grampians Shire Council offices.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Southern Grampians Shire Council's Emergency Animal Welfare Plan – this plan defines the roles and responsibilities of Council Officer's and support staff during an emergency. The plan is reviewed every three years to be aligned with the Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan to ensure Local Government responsibilities are addressed.

Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

The message of responsible pet ownership is actively promoted on Council's website and social media.

Our Current Compliance Activities

All Council's Rangers are authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA).

Authorised officers will investigate any reports of alleged animal cruelty and will enforce provisions of the Act.

Our Plans – Other Matters

Objective 10 : Ensure the welfare of animals in the event of an emergency

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|---------|--|
| Southern Grampians Shire Council Emergency Animal Welfare Plan | Ongoing | Plan is up to date |
| Emergency management training is conducted | Ongoing | Training undertaken as required |
| Community education – Council's website, social media and brochures/handouts | Ongoing | Audit of website to ensure information is up to date on an annual basis and social |



Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting

Section 68A(3) every Council must:

1. Review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.
2. Provide the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action's Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan.
3. Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Council will review this Plan annually with a full review being done in year four. Action items within the plan have time lines which will be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the life of the plan.

The relevant State Government Secretary will also be advised and provided a copy of any other amendments to the Plan which may arise during the review process.

Our Plans – Overpopulation and High Euthanasia

Objective 11 : Evaluation of implementation of Domestic Animal Management Annually

| | Comments |
|---|----------|
| For each activity, was it completed? | Yes / No |
| If no, provide an explanation for each activity not completed. | |
| Did you complete each objective successfully? | Yes / No |
| If no, provide an explanation. | |
| If yes, describe level of success. | |
| Are any amendments required for the Domestic Animal Management Plan? If so, please describe. | |
| If the Domestic Animal Management Plan has been amended, has a copy been provided to the Secretary? | |



Southern Grampians
SHIRE COUNCIL
