



Domestic Animal Management Plan

2017 – 2021

(December 2019)

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Horsham Rural City Council recognises the five Traditional Owner groups of this land: the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people.

Horsham Rural City Council

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GLOSSARY

Council	Horsham Rural City Council
CSO	Community Safety Officer
Act	Domestic Animals Act 1994
DAMAG	Domestic Animal Management Advisory Group
DAMP	Domestic Animal Management Plan
DJPR	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
domestic animal	For the purposes of this Plan, a 'domestic animal' is a domestic cat and/or a domestic dog within the meaning of the Act
Plan	Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021
POCTA Act	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
Regulations	Domestic Animal Registrations 2015
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty in Animals
SO	Strategic Objective

1. INTRODUCTION

The Horsham Rural City Council (**Council**) is required by the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Act)* to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (**DAMP**) every four years. The DAMP sets out a program of actions which aim:

- to ensure compliance with statutory requirements and
- to implement the vision and strategic objectives identified for effective animal management control in the Horsham Rural City Council municipality.

The DAMP has been prepared by the Horsham Rural City Council in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Appendix A)*, and with reference to the Council Plan and Council Local Laws. It closely follows the template provided by the Department of Jobs Precincts and Regions which sets out relevant headings to be addressed.

Further, the DAMP was prepared in consultation with Council's Domestic Animal Management Advisory Group (the **Advisory Group**). The Advisory Group comprises a Councillor, a Council officer, a veterinarian, members of community rehoming associations Horsham PAWs and Phoenix Animal Rescue, and two members of the community. The Advisory Group meets monthly and they developed the Vision and Strategic Objectives set out in the DAMP.

The DAMP was exhibited for four weeks and community feedback was encouraged. This feedback was incorporated into this final version.

2. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

The following is a summary of key issues identified through the development of the Plan:

1. Improvements have been made in data collection over the past 10 months, however it is recommended a review of the methodology of current data capture, and the data Council collects regarding animal management be conducted. Leveraging new technology will improve data collection and service delivery.
2. Current data reveals there is a significantly high number of cats being euthanased. Extracting feral cat data from overall cat data is important to provide a better picture of how the Community Safety Unit is performing in this space
3. Turnover of staff in the Community Safety Unit has an impact on data capture and service delivery.

3. VISION & STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Vision

The Horsham Rural City Council encourages an environment of responsible domestic animal ownership, where people and animals can coexist in harmony. Animals are part of a safe and liveable community. Horsham Rural City Council strives to implement effective animal management practices that balance the needs of animal owners and non-animal owners, the agricultural sector and the environment.

Strategic Objectives

To further this vision, the strategic objectives (**SO**) of the Plan are to:

- SO1 Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws
- SO2 Promote and encourage responsible domestic animal ownership
- SO3 Maximise the welfare of domestic dogs and cats within the municipality
- SO4 Maximise the rehoming of suitable domestic dogs and cats
- SO5 Encourage effective partnering with community groups to deliver rehoming services
- SO6 Maximise domestic dog and cat registration and identification in the municipality
- SO7 Ensure dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs are identified and kept in compliance with the Act and the Regulations
- SO8 Minimise domestic animal attacks
- SO9 Minimise the harmful effect of domestic pets on native animal populations
- SO10 Minimise nuisance created by domestic dogs and cats
- SO11 Provide access to public and open spaces for dogs and their owners
- SO12 Provide dog free areas for non-animal owners
- SO13 Reduce domestic dog and cat euthanasia rates
- SO14 Reduce domestic dog and cat overpopulation
- SO15 Ensure best practice training for Council's Community Safety Officers
- SO16 Operate and maintain a pound facility in accordance with best practice
- SO17 Minimise Community Safety Officer turnover at Council
- SO18 Eradicate unauthorised breeding establishments
- SO19 Develop and maintain relationships both within and outside of municipal borders

4. OVERVIEW OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT IN HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL

Council Profile and Demographic

Horsham Rural City is a vibrant, diverse community situated approximately 300 kilometres north-west of Melbourne and north of the Grampians National Park, in the heart of the Wimmera region of Victoria. Horsham is approximately 3.5 hours by car west of Melbourne and 4.5 hours east of Adelaide.

Horsham Rural City Council has a total population of 19,931 and covers an area of 4,267 km². Over three quarters of residents live in the urban area of Horsham.

Horsham is the major provider of retail, community and government services in the Wimmera, with dryland and broad acre agriculture being the major industry. The Grains Innovation Park, a nationally acclaimed agricultural research centre, is based in Horsham. There are a range of quality educational and health care facilities including secondary colleges, a university and an agricultural college.

The municipal area of Horsham has a diverse array of natural assets including recreational lakes, wetlands, the Wimmera River, Mount Arapiles, the Wartook Valley and the nearby Grampians National Park.

Horsham Rural City Council includes the major centres of Horsham and Natimuk, and the following localities: Arapiles, Blackheath, Brimpaen, Bungalally, Clear Lake, Dadswells Bridge, Dooen, Douglas, Drung, Duchembegarra, Grass Flat, Green Lake, Greenland Dam, Haven, Jilpanger, Jung, Kalkee, Kanagulk, Kewell, Laharum, Longerenong, Lower Norton, McKenzie Creek, Mitre, Mockinya, Mount Talbot, Murra Warra, Noradjuha, Nurrabel, Pimpinio, Quantong, Riverside, St Helens Plains, Telangatuk East, Tooan, Toolondo, Vectis, Wail, Wartook and Wonwondah.

5. DATA AND STATISTICS - HORSHAM RURAL CITY COUNCIL DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

		2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Population	In Town:	16462	16497	16,514
	Regional:	3443	3439	3,417
	Total:	19,905	19,936	19,931
Area:		4,267 km ²	4,267 km ²	4,267 km ²
Households	In Town:			6,454
	Region:			1,242
				7,696
FTE Authorised Officers ¹				4.8

¹ This includes all services offered by the Community Safety unit, not just Animal Control and Management

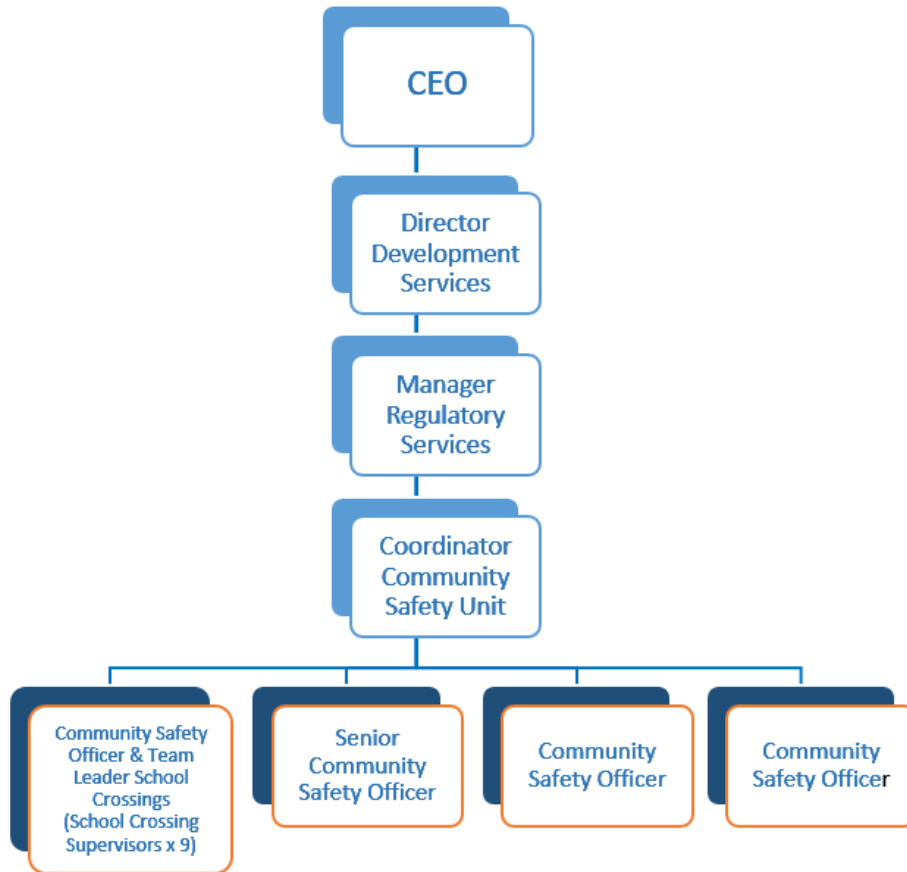
	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Estimated Domestic Dog Population			4700
Registered Dogs	3816	3701	3782
Estimated % of Dogs Registered			80%
Dog Impoundments (all)	31	447	424
Microchipped:	31	392	352
Registered:	31	388	312
Surrendered Total:	2	10	52
Registered:	2	6	21
Microchipped:	2	7	30
Dogs returned to owner	23	343	330
Dogs adopted	3	48	52
Dogs euthanased	7	56	42 (9%)
Registered Restricted Animal Breed Dogs	0	0	0
Registered Declared Dangerous Dogs	0	0	0
Registered Declared Menacing Dogs	0	0	0
Estimated Domestic Cat Population			
Estimated Domestic Cat Population			3538
Registered Cats	1714	1718	1769
Estimated % of Cats Registered			50%
Cat Impoundments (all)	16	331	295
Microchipped:	14	234	109
Registered:	15	210	124
Surrendered Total:	0	2	2
Registered:	0	1	0
Microchipped:	0	1	0
Cats returned to owner	3	52	37
Cats rehomed	2	81	39
Cats euthanased	11	198	219 (74%)
No. of feral ² cats			35

² A feral cat is an un-owned domestic cat (*Felis catus*) that lives outdoors and avoids human contact: it does not allow itself to be handled or touched, and usually remains hidden from humans. Feral cats may breed over dozens of generations and become an aggressive apex predator in urban, savannah and bushland environments. Some feral cats may become more comfortable with people who regularly feed them, but even with long-term attempts at socialization they usually remain aloof and are most active after dusk.

	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019
Registered Commercial and Domestic Animal Businesses:			
Breeding and Rearing:	0	0	0
Pet Shops:	1	1	1
Shelters and Pounds:	1	1	1
Boarding Establishments:	2	2	2
No. of inspections:	0	0	3
No. of dog attacks	-	-	4
No. of prosecutions:	0	0	4
No. of successful prosecutions:	0	0	1

6. ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STAFFING AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Council's Community Safety Unit (CSU) is responsible for domestic animal management and control within Council's municipal area.



As of 1 July 2019 Council's CSU comprises five full-time equivalent Community Safety Officer (CSO) positions: Coordinator Community Safety, Senior Community Safety Officer and Team Leader School Crossings, Senior Community Safety Officer Prosecutions and two Community Safety Officers. The latter four CSOs, on rotation, provide an after-hours service to the community, and are supported by a call centre. The CSU also hosts a trainee.

The CSOs are responsible not only for animal management and control in the municipality, but traffic management functions, school crossing administration, emergency assistance, special event support, fire prevention, and local laws. While the four CSOs have responsibility for specific areas within the unit, all CSOs complete all duties of the unit which ensures there is coverage for leave.

7. ANIMAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES PROVIDED TO THE COMMUNITY

The services the CSU provides to the community relating to managing the welfare of domestic animals and members of the community include:

- Ensuring compliance with the legislative framework, including codes of practice, in relation to domestic animals and livestock
- Investigation and prosecution of dog attacks
- Investigation of animal welfare issues
- Investigate complaints in relation to domestic animal issues
- Ensuring domestic animal businesses are compliant
- Collection of stray and lost animals
- Promoting responsible pet ownership and care
- Animal registration process
- Providing advice to pet owners and the community
- After hours animal emergencies

8. COUNCIL'S LOCAL LAWS AND ORDERS RELATING TO ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

As well as ensuring compliance with State legislation in relation to animal management, Council officers also administer a variety of local laws and orders that regulate domestic dog and cat owners:

Community Local Law No. 3 - 2011

- A person in charge of a dog that defecates in a public place must immediately remove the faeces and deposit them as litter in a lawful manner (clause 2.14), penalty \$75.
- A person in charge of a dog in a public place must have in his or her possession the means to collect and dispose of the dog's faeces (clause 2.15), penalty \$50.
- A person in charge of a dog on any road or in any municipal place must ensure that the dog is secured by a chain, cord or leash in any built-up area unless it is an off leash area declared and signposted for that purpose (clause 2.16), penalty \$75.
- A person may unleash a dog in an area designated by Council and signposted for the purpose except that: a person who unleashes a dog must keep the dog under effective control; and the provision of this clause does not apply to greyhounds (unless a GAP dog), dangerous dogs or restricted breed dogs in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (clause 2.17), penalty \$75.
- An owner or person in charge of a dog must ensure that the dog is muzzled when it is present in or immediately adjacent to the municipal livestock exchange (saleyards) (clause 2.18), penalty \$150.
- Without a permit an owner or occupier of land must not keep or allow to be kept more than 4 different types of animals in any residential or built up area (clause 4.1), penalty \$150.

- Without a permit an owner or occupier of land must not keep or allow to be kept any more in number for each type of animal as is set out in the following table (Part 4):

Type	Less than or equal to 0.4ha	Greater than 0.4ha but less than or equal to 2ha	Greater than 2ha
Dogs (over 3 months old)	2	2	4
Cats (over 3 months old)	3	3	4

- Any animal kept on any land or premises must be housed in a clean, sanitary and inoffensive condition; so not to cause any nuisance, including nuisance associated with noise or smell; in surroundings that are clear of any material that may harbour vermin; to the satisfaction of Council or an Authorised Officer (clause 4.8), \$150.
- An owner or occupier of land on which an animal is housed must ensure that it is adequately fenced so as to prevent any animal escaping the land (clause 4.9) \$150.

Orders of Council

- An Order of Council was passed at a Council Meeting on 12 December 1995, and revisited on 16 May 2006, restricting cats to the owner's premises between sunset and sunrise.
- On 4 April 2016 Council Meeting a resolution was passed "That Council retain the no dog status of the Botanic Gardens noting that guide dogs and assistance dogs are an exception to this, and are allowed in the Botanic Gardens"

Links to other Council Plans

This plan is linked to the Municipal Emergency Management Plan and the Animal Emergency Management Sub-Plan

Overview:

Council is required to provide training to ensure Council's CSOs are able to properly administer the legislative framework within which they operate. Appropriate training gives CSOs confidence and support they require to discharge their responsibilities.

Training approaches and courses will change over time as do best practices, however, the main areas of competency required by a CSO are:

- Understanding legislation and powers, the role of an authorised officer and statutory compliance
- Animal handling – both domestic animals and livestock
- Animal behavioural assessment
- Managing conflict and aggression through communication.
- First Aid, CPR, incident management, occupational health and safety
- Parking and traffic management and enforcement
- Firearms and bolt gun use and safety
- Defensive Driving skills
- Prosecution processes including investigations
- Report and Letter writing
- Maintenance of in-house record keeping databases
- Managing stress

Our Current Activities

The CSOs are responsible not only for animal management in the municipality, they are responsible for traffic management functions, school crossing administration, emergency assistance, special event support, fire prevention, and local laws. Prior to July 2018 CSU members had specific roles and a dedicated parking officer. This led to difficulties in covering leave and also impacted on ranger fatigue. The CSU is now managed so that the four CSOs, while having responsibility for specific areas within the unit, complete all duties of the unit.

The four CSOs are now further supported by a call centre after hours. The after hours service commenced in January 2018. While there were initial bedding in issues, this service is now working well. These two measures ensure there is coverage for leave and fatigue is reduced.

At Council a variety of in-house and externally provided training, both mandatory and as required, is offered to all CSOs. Industry related seminars and briefings from relevant State departments and associations are attended by CSOs. Due to the different stages of experience and training, training and skill development is approached on a case-by-case tailored basis with each CSO. Training opportunities are raised at team meetings and one-on-one with CSOs by the Coordinator of the Community Safety Unit. Training options are annually reviewed and added to performance review documentation for completion. A register of all CSO training is kept and maintained on a regular basis.

Actions and Evaluation Measures:

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed to provide for and ensure appropriate training and support to CSOs.

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measure	Target 2021
1	Review register of each officer's completed training, along with proposed additional training as aligned with the above required competencies	Annually in June	Register is current. Register is analysed against competencies. Proposed training is entered into register and performance plan for CSO	Register is current and has been reviewed and updated annually by no later than June of each year.
2	Secure funding for extraordinary training	Annually in December	Training opportunities and CSO skill gaps assessed annually in June. Budget bids submitted for any extraordinary training in December of each year.	CSOs have progressively reduced gaps in their skillsets and training.
3	Officer attendance at relevant industry seminars, training and briefings	As offered	CSOs attending a minimum of two industry seminars, training or briefings as offered by State departments and other related organisations.	Register current and has been reviewed and updated annually by no later than June of each year.
4	Allocate a variety of tasks for the CSO to complete during the development period	Ongoing	Tasks allocated Completion of tasks monitored by Coordinator CSU Performance Review Documentation capture tasks completed.	CSOs are multi-skilled to ensure coverage for leave and reduce fatigue
5	Establish and maintain an after hours services to triage animal management matters, thereby reducing CSO fatigue	January 2018, Ongoing	Complaints in relation to the after hours service. CSO days of absence CSO turnover Annual review of After Hours service	To have a well-functioning After Hours service, reviewed annually Complaints as to After Hours Service reduced. CSO days of absence are reduced. CSO turnover is minimised

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council provides training to ensure Council's CSOs are able to properly administer the legislative framework within which they operate, the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community:

- Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws (SO1)
- Ensure best practice training for Council's Community Safety Officers (SO15)
- Minimise Community Safety Officer turnover at Council (SO17)
- Develop and maintain relationships both within and across municipal borders (SO19)

10. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Overview

Animals are identified in the following three ways, they are registered with Council, they are wearing a Council issued tag and they are microchipped. Failing to do any of these three things attracts a fine.

Pet registration is a legal requirement under the Act. Every dog and cat three months of age and over must be registered with Council. Existing registrations must be renewed by 10 April each year.

A proportion of the registration fee goes to Animal Welfare Victoria, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR). The registration fee gives more than just a lost and found service for pets. It is also funds:

- Facilities such as dog parks, dog poo bins and pounds / shelters
- Animal management staff to attend to nuisance complaints, investigate dog attacks, patrol parks/beaches/streets, and collect and return stray animals to owners
- Events such as pet expos and discount microchipping days
- Information such as responsible pet ownership publications, websites, and online courses
- Domestic animal business audits (e.g. to check animal welfare standards in pet shops, breeding facilities, boarding kennels etc.)
- Management of dangerous and restricted breed dogs
- Dog bite prevention education programs for kindergarten and primary school children
- Emergency animal welfare preparedness
- Research into a range of dog and cat welfare issues

Domestic cats and dogs must be microchipped. A microchip is a tiny computer chip about the size of a grain of rice, which has an identification number programmed into it. The microchip is inert, has no battery and uses no energy, and will last for the life of the animal. The microchip is injected under the animal's skin between the shoulder blades and is a simple procedure, which causes no side effects. To identify the animal, a scanner that reads microchip numbers is passed over the animal's skin. The scanned number can then be checked against a register, which provides details of the animal's ownership.

A large amount of animals are still reaching the Horsham Rural City Council Pound unregistered and unmicrochipped, which suggests a high number of non-compliant pet owners. Education programs, media, enforcement of the legislation, ease of registering and paying for animals and setting of fees and charges for animal management can influence and encourage animal registration and identification.

Our Current Activities

Council currently undertakes the following activities to encourage registration and identification of animals in the municipality:

- Registration forms are available from customer service and the HRCC website
- Registrations are paid at the Council office, online or over the phone
- Pensioner discounts available on request (50%)
- A lifetime tag is issued for dogs and cats, and a replacement can be provided if lost
- Renewal notices are generated and mailed to all previously registered animals with payment by BPay an option
- Follow up on all non-renewals with reminder notices, emails, phone calls & door knocks
- Council charges an additional fees for Dangerous / Restricted Breed registration. It may be that this needs to be revisited and the charge removed to encourage registration so Council is aware of the presence of these types of dogs in the municipality and can inspect the housing requirements for these types of animals. Note Dangerous / Restricted dogs must be micro chipped, de-sexed and housed according to legislation prior to registration.
- Council currently releases media on Facebook, Wimmera Mail Times and the Advertiser regarding responsible pet ownership and the Community Safety Unit maintains the Council website with that information.
- Enforcement of the Act and Regulations:
 - Council requires impounded animals to be microchipped and registered prior to release
 - CSOs issue notices and/or infringements for animals found unregistered and/or unmicrochipped
 - CSOs conduct park and street patrols to maximise compliance

Actions and Evaluation Measures:

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed to ensure Council maximises the number of dogs and cat registrations within the municipality:

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	<p>CSOs investigate and enforce legislation including:</p> <p>Prosecution / infringement of owners where animal is not registered / registration remains unpaid</p> <p>Not releasing impounded animals unless microchipped and registered with Council and wearing an identification marker as prescribed by the Act</p>	Ongoing	<p>No. of infringements / prosecutions for unregistered pets</p> <p>No. of registered cats and dogs previous year and current year</p> <p>No. of animals impounded without identification previous year and current year.</p>	<p>Year on year percentage increase in registrations and percentage decrease in infringements / prosecution</p> <p>Year on year percentage decrease in no. of unidentified animals impounded</p>
2	Secure funding for programs encouraging registration and identification	Annually in December	<p>Education and other registration drive initiatives assessed annually in June.</p> <p>At least two budget bids are submitted for any initiatives in December of each year.</p> <p>No. of registered cats and dogs previous year and current year</p> <p>No. of animals impounded without identification previous year and current year</p>	<p>At least two programs encouraging registration and identification are delivered each year</p> <p>Year on year percentage increase in registrations and percentage decrease in infringements / prosecution</p> <p>Year on year percentage decrease in no. of unidentified animals impounded</p>
3	Develop a program of media releases that provide information to the community on responsible pet ownership, including the need to register and identify domestic cats and dogs	Ongoing	At least two media releases per year regarding animal the need to register and identify domestic cats and dogs	At least two media releases encouraging registration and identification are delivered each year.
4	Update Council's website with information regarding the need to register and identify domestic cats and dogs	Annually in June and as required	Website current	Website current
5	Review the domestic cat and dog registration and renewal process to streamline the customer experience	June 2021	Customer feedback survey	Survey Completed and learnings actioned.
6	Review and benchmark Council's fees and charges against other Councils and make recommendations for changes if deemed appropriate	December 2020	<p>Benchmarking exercise of fees and charges undertaken.</p> <p>Analysis of fees and charges with industry standard completed.</p>	In 2020 -2021 the fees and charges set to encourage registration and identification of animals within the municipality.

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council develop programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats, Council's current practice and the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community:

- Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws (SO1)
- Promote and encourage responsible domestic animal management (SO2)
- Maximise the welfare of domestic dogs and cats within the municipality (SO3)
- Maximise dog and cat registration and identification in the municipality (SO6)
- Ensure dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs are identified and kept in compliance with the Act and the regulations. (SO7)
- Reduce domestic dog and cat euthanasia rates (SO13)
- Reduce domestic animal overpopulation (SO14)

11. NUISANCE

Overview

With a registered domestic dog and cat population of 5,551 (2018-2019) in the municipality, it is understandable Council experiences a number of cat and dog nuisance complaints per year. Furthermore, pet numbers are likely to increase as population increases. Unless a range of measures are adopted and put into place, nuisance complaints will increase affecting the well-being of the community.

Nuisances in relation to domestic dogs and cats include but are not limited to:

- Dog and cat faeces not cleaned up
- Cats entering another person's yard without invitation
- Cats at large spraying and fighting
- Dogs and cats at large killing native wildlife
- Dogs barking constantly
- Dogs off-leash approaching people or animals, harassing stock or being a hazard on roads
- Noise and smell associated with too many animals being kept at a premise

It is an offence under the Act to allow your cat or dog to be a nuisance. Currently CSOs patrol for, enforce and investigate nuisance pursuant to the Act and the following local laws and Orders of Council:

Community Local Law No. 3 - 2011

- A person in charge of a dog that defecates in a public place must immediately remove the faeces and deposit them as litter in a lawful manner (clause 2.14), penalty \$75.
- A person in charge of a dog in a public place must have in his or her possession the means to collect and dispose of the dog's faeces (clause 2.15), penalty \$50.

- A person in charge of a dog on any road or in any municipal place must ensure that the dog is secured by a chain, cord or leash in any built-up area unless it is an off leash area declared and signposted for that purpose (clause 2.16), penalty \$75.
- A person may unleash a dog in an area designated by Council and signposted for the purpose except that: a person who unleashes a dog must keep the dog under effective control; and the provision of this clause does not apply to greyhounds, dangerous dogs or restricted breed dogs in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (clause 2.17), penalty \$75.
- An owner or person in charge of a dog must ensure that the dog is muzzled when it is present in or immediately adjacent to the municipal livestock exchange (saleyards) (clause 2.18), penalty \$150.
- Without a permit an owner or occupier of land must not keep or allow to be kept more than 4 different types of animals in any residential or built up area (clause 4.1), \$150.
- Without a permit an owner or occupier of land must not keep or allow to be kept any more in number for each type of animal as is set out in the following table (Part 4):

Type	Less than or equal to 0.4ha	Greater than 0.4ha but less than or equal to 2ha	Greater than 2ha
Dogs (over 3 months old)	2	2	4
Cats (over 3 months old)	3	3	4

- Any animal kept on any land or premises must be housed in a clean, sanitary and inoffensive condition; so not to cause any nuisance, including nuisance associated with noise or smell; in surroundings that are clear of any material that may harbour vermin; to the satisfaction of Council or an Authorised Officer (clause 4.8), \$150.
- An owner or occupier of land on which an animal is housed must ensure that it is adequately fenced so as to prevent any animal escaping the land (clause 4.9) \$150.

Orders of Council

- An Order of Council was passed at a Council Meeting on 12 December 1995, and revisited on 16 May 2006, restricting cats to the owner's premises between sunset and sunrise.
- On 4 April 2016 Council Meeting a resolution was passed "That Council retain the no dog status of the Botanic Gardens noting that guide dogs and assistance dogs are an exception to this, and are allowed in the Botanic Gardens"

Our Current Activities

The Horsham Rural City Council acknowledges the balance required to maintain public health and wellbeing of affected residents, protect the health and welfare of domestic animals and protecting the environment. Current activities in relation to nuisance include:

- Council enforces and monitors compliance with the legislation and local law relating to nuisance
- Council currently has 18 cat traps which are loaned to residents to reduce the number of feral and nuisance domestic cats. The number of cat trap requested has increased from 33 in 2017 – 2018 to 89 in 2018 – 2019
- Council loans ‘bark control houses’ and provides advice on reducing nuisance barking
- Council’s website is kept up to date with responsible pet ownership information
- Five off-leash dog parks have been established in Horsham to allow dogs to socialised and exercise off-leash
- A pamphlet has been developed for those travelling with dogs through Horsham advising of off-leash parks

Actions and Evaluation Measures

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed to ensure Council minimise the number of nuisance domestic dogs and cats within the municipality:

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	Develop a responsible pet ownership pamphlet to be sent out with annual registration renewal	April 2020, Ongoing	Pamphlet developed Pamphlet sent out in April of each year	Sending of pamphlet embedded in animal registration renewal process
2	Develop a program of media releases that provide information to the community on responsible pet ownership, including the need to ensure domestic cats and dogs are not a nuisance and the services the CSU provides	Ongoing	At least two media releases per year regarding animal the need ensure domestic cats and dogs are not a nuisance	At least two media releases providing tips on how reduce nuisance caused by domestic cats and dogs.
3	Update Council’s website with on information on responsible pet ownership, including the need to ensure domestic cats and dogs are not a nuisance and the services the CSU provides	Annually in June and as required	Website current	Website current
4	CSOs investigate and enforce nuisance laws including: Prosecution / infringement of owners where domestic cat or dog is a nuisance	Ongoing	Analysis of no. of infringements / prosecutions for nuisance domestic cats and dogs No. of complaints of nuisance previous year and current year No. of resolved nuisance complaints previous year and current year	Year on year percentage decrease in the no. of complaints Year on year percentage increase in the no. of resolved complaints

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council provides programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance, Council's current practice and the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community:

- Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws (SO1)
- Promote and encourage responsible domestic animal ownership (SO2)
- Minimise nuisance created by domestic animals (SO10)
- Provide dog free areas for non-animal owners (SO12)

12. DOG ATTACKS

Overview

The public health and well-being implications of dog attacks are significant and there needs to be increased awareness of the risks, particularly in relation to young children. Potential interventions to reduce the incidence of dog attacks vary from strict controls on high-risk breeds to mandatory local laws to keep your dog on-leash in public.

In 2017 – 2018 there were 14 reported and investigated dog attacks in 2018 – 2019 this figure jumped to 38, representing a significant increase. It is likely that this increase is due to a strengthened Community Safety Unit which is more confident to prosecute and the resultant willingness of the community to report dog attacks. However, unless Council is assisted by the community members in adopting a range of measures to prevent dog attacks, dog attacks will continue to impact on the liveability of Horsham.

Our Current Activities

Horsham Rural City Council takes dog attacks very seriously. The attacks are logged in our CRM system Merit then immediately phoned through to the CSO on duty. Responding to a dog attack is the CSU's most immediate priority and is done both during business hours and after hours. This quick action often results in CSOs arriving at the scene while the attack is in progress and/or all parties, witnesses and animals, are still present. As a result, evidence can be obtained contemporaneously, such as photographs, statements, and physical evidence. Importantly, the alleged offending animals is in most circumstances safely contained. Following an investigation a brief is prepared by an investigating officer and reviewed by Council's in-house prosecutor.

Depending on the severity of the attack, potential outcomes undertaking the above investigation include:

- Infringements
- Seizure/surrender notices
- Prosecution in a Magistrates Court
- Mediation between parties
- Work with offenders to better house and secure their animal

Further activities undertaken by Council include:

- Maintaining Council’s website with up to date information regarding responsible pet ownership
- Releasing media promoting responsible pet ownership. Such messaging includes:
 - encouraging the reporting of dog attacks whether on public or private property
 - encouraging desexing of dogs to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering at large
 - reporting of the outcomes of prosecutions involving dog attacks to promote community awareness and responsible pet ownership
 - encouraging the effective confinement and control of dogs
 - encouraging the use of off leash areas
 - promoting puppy pre-school and dog socialisation classes
- Five off-leash dog parks have been established in Horsham to allow dogs opportunities to socialise and exercise off-leash
- Council has increased random patrols by CSOs who enforce on-leash laws and communicate with dog owners about the need to keep dogs on lead
- Council ensures all dogs entering the rehoming program are temperament tested.

Actions and Evaluation Measures

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed to ensure Council minimise the number of dog attacks within the municipality:

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	Develop a program of media releases that provide information to the community on responsible pet ownership, including prevention of dog attacks	Ongoing	At least two media releases per year on responsible pet ownership, including prevention of dog attacks	At least two media releases released annually providing tips on responsible pet ownership and the prevention of dog attacks.
2	Update Council’s website with information regarding how responsible pet ownership can reduce dog attacks	Annually in June and as required	Website current	Website current
3	CSOs investigate and enforce dog attack offences including: Prosecution / infringement of owners	Ongoing, Review July 2020	Analysis of no. of infringements / prosecutions for dog attacks No. of prosecutions No. of successful prosecutions	Year on year increase in no. of successfully resolved complaints

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
4	Improve signage in off-lead dog parks to educate owners as to behavioural expectations and identification as to when a dog is stressed	June 2021	Signage erected inside each of Council's four fenced off-leash areas	Four signs erected in each of Council's off-leash areas by June 2021
5	Collaboration with Horsham Dog Obedience Club to promote obedience training of dogs.	Ongoing	Promote Horsham Dog Obedience Club CSOs attend at least one education session per year with Horsham Dog Obedience Club.	Website updated to promote Horsham Dog Obedience Club One session attended per year

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council develop programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats, Council's current practice and the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community:

- Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws (SO1)
- Promote and encourage responsible domestic animal ownership (SO2)
- Maximise the rehoming of suitable domestic animals (SO4)
- Ensure dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs are identified and kept in compliance with the Act and regulations (SO7)
- Minimise domestic animal attacks (SO8)
- Minimise the harmful effect of domestic pets on native animal populations (SO9)
- Provide access to public and open spaces for dogs and their owners (SO11)
- Provide dog free areas for non-animal owners (SO12)

13. DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

Overview

The public health and well-being implications of interactions with dangerous, menacing and restricted dog breeds has resulted in specific legislation addressing the identification and control of these particular dogs. Delcarations that a dog is dangerous and menacing generally arises from investigations following a dog attack, however the Council welcomes intelligence from the community as to the location of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs. A Dangerous Dogs Hotline is available 136 186 for residents.

The Act defines restricted breed dogs as any of the following breeds:

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

Our Current Activities

Training for CSOs includes dog breed recognition and dog behavioural training. CSOs are able to provide advice to residents as to the requirements for keeping dangerous, menacing or restricted dog breeds.

All complaints regarding a declared dog or a dog that potentially should be declared, will be thoroughly investigated in accordance with the Act.

Horsham Rural City Council, in accordance with the Act, keeps a register of dangerous, menacing and restricted dog breeds, and provides this information to the Victorian Declared Dog Register (VDDR), a database that records declared dogs for all relevant parties to see. Any dog entered on the VDDR is declared for the life of the animal and cannot be revoked by Council.

As part of day to day operations, CSOs inspect and ensure compliance as to how dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are kept.

Further proactive activities undertaken by Council include:

- Council's website is kept up to date with responsible pet ownership information
- Media releases promote responsible pet ownership.
- All dogs being put through the rehoming program are temperament tested and suitable for public safety

Actions and Evaluation Measures

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed to ensure Council minimise the number of dangerous, menacing and restricted dog breeds within the municipality:

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	CSOs investigate and enforce dog attack offences to consider dangerous or menacing dog declaration following prosecution / infringement of owners	Ongoing	Analysis of no. of infringements / prosecutions for dog attacks No. of prosecutions No. of successful prosecutions No. of dangerous / menacing dog declarations.	Increase in no. of successful complaints

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
2	Develop a program of media releases that provide information to the community on responsible pet ownership, including prevention of dog attacks, and notification of what are restricted breed dogs	Ongoing	At least two media releases per year regarding discouraging restricted breed animals and the need for responsible pet ownership	At least two media releases released annually providing tips on responsible pet ownership and consequences of keeping restricted, dangerous or menacing dogs
3	Update Council's website with information regarding how responsible pet ownership can reduce dog attacks and notification of what are restricted breed dogs	Annually in June and as required	Website current	Website current

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council develop programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs, Council's current practice and the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community:

- Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws (SO1)
- Promote and encourage responsible domestic animal ownership (SO2)
- Ensure dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs are identified and kept in compliance with the Act and regulations (SO7)
- Minimise domestic animal attacks (SO8)
- Minimise the harmful effect of domestic pets on native animal populations (SO9)

14. OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

Overview

Data collection in 2016-2017 was disrupted due to a number of factors referred to at the outset of the Plan. However the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 data presents a more stable and reliable data set. Of dogs impounded, 10 – 12% are euthanased and 60 – 74% of impounded cats are euthanased, see raw data set out in the table below.

At present Council cannot capture data as to the number of feral cats euthanased compared with domestic cats, however anecdotally a significant percentage of cats impounded and euthanased could be classified as feral. A cat-trapping program of cats in public places known to have a feral cat problem in 2018-2019 is the likely reason for the jump from 2017-2018. De-sexing domestic cats and semi-owned cats is a priority for Council in terms of cat control.

DOGS	2016 / 17	2017 / 18	2018 / 19
Impounded by Council	31	447	424
Returned to Owner	23	343	330
Adopted	3	48	52
Euthanased	7	56	42
CATS	2016 / 17	2017 / 18	2018 / 19
Impounded by Council	16	331	295
Returned to Owner	3	52	37
Adopted	2	81	39
Euthanased	11	198	219

Our Current Activities

- Microchipping, registration and an identifying marker is actively promoted by Council not only so owners are compliant with the Act, but so pets can be returned to owners
- Desexing of dogs and cats is promoted with a registration fee differential
- Council's website is kept up to date with responsible pet ownership information
- Media releases promote responsible pet ownership.
- All dogs and cats being put through the rehoming program are temperament tested before being considered suitable for public safety
- Cat cages are provided to local residents for trapping cats trespassing and at large after sunset and before sunrise
- Enforcement of the Act, local laws and Council Orders including:
 - Microchipping and registration of all impounded animals prior to release to the owner
 - Microchipping, immunisation, registration and desexing of all impounded animals prior to being released for adoption
 - Enforcement of cat curfew between sunset and sunrise
 - Assessing excess animal applications case by case to ensure the best outcome for the entire community

Actions and Evaluation Measures

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed by Council to minimise euthanasia of domestic animals and minimise overpopulation of domestic animals.

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	Conduct a review of the data Council collects regarding euthanasias and re-homing and modify Council's data collection system to capture feral cat impoundment and euthanasias.	June 2021	Relevant data captured Analysis conducted and potential actions generated.	Completed and incorporated in the 2021-2025 Plan
2	Develop a program of media releases that provide information to the community on responsible pet ownership, including de-sexing of domestic cats and dogs, benefits of a re-homed pet	Ongoing	At least two media releases per year regarding de-sexing of domestic cats and dogs and benefits of a re-homed pet	At least two media releases released annually providing tips on responsible pet ownership, benefits to de-sexing of domestic cats and dogs and benefits of a re-homed pet
3	Update Council's website with information regarding how responsible pet ownership, including de-sexing	Annually in June and as required	Website current	Website current
4	Work with existing and emerging re-homing organisations to reduce euthanasias of animals suitable for re-homing	Ongoing	Frequent engagement with re-homing organisations within and outside of the municipality Euthanasia statistics of domestic cats and dogs previous year compared with current year	Percentage euthanasia rates of domestic cats and dogs reduce year on year
5	Work with State Government as to feral cat management and education opportunities in the Horsham Rural City Council area.	Ongoing	Attendance in relevant forums where feral cat management is discussed, in particular solutions to semi-owned cats. Management options for Council developed	Completed
6	Secure funding for best practice programs to reduce euthanasia and overpopulation, particular in relation to cats	Annually in December	Budget bids submitted for programs in December of each year.	One program a year aimed to reduce euthanasia rates of domestic cats and dogs and reduce overpopulation of domestic cats and dogs

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council develop programs, services and strategies to reduce overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats, Council's current practice and the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community:

- Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws (SO1)
- Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership (SO2)
- Maximise the welfare of domestic dogs and cats (SO3)
- Maximise the rehoming of suitable domestic dogs and cats (SO4)
- Encourage effective partnering with community groups to delivery rehoming services (SO5)
- Maximise dog and cat registration and identification within the municipality (SO6)
- Reduce domestic dog and cat euthanasia rates (SO13)
- Reduce domestic dog and cat overpopulation (SO14)

15. DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

Overview

From 1 July 2019, any person or business who is advertising to sell or give away a dog, cat, puppy or kitten will need to be enrolled on the Pet Exchange Register. Significant changes to the Act have occurred in response to the illegal practice of operating 'puppy farms' where the welfare of animals is often compromised.

Registered Domestic Animal Businesses are required to meet conditions as set out in the Act. In the Horsham municipal area there are four registered Domestic Animal Businesses :

- 1) a local pet shop
- 2) two boarding establishments, and
- 3) a Council owned pound

Council supports and works with registered Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure animal welfare and health is maintained in accordance with the Act. The Council pound must also comply with the Act.

Our Current Activities

- Provide advice and relevant Codes of Practice to registered Domestic Animal Businesses
- Assist new Domestic Animal Businesses with registration to commence trading
- Educate the community about the Pet Exchange Register and the requirement to provide a source number when selling or giving away a domestic animals
- Enforcement of the Act:
 - Inspect Domestic Animal Businesses, including compliance auditing of the Council owned pound, for compliance with the Act and related legislation, regulations and Codes of Practice
 - Conduct searches for unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses via internet, social media, word of mouth, observations during patrol

The Community Safety Unit continues to work with Animal Welfare Victoria to ensure State government expectations are met in relation to Domestic Animal Business audits and compliance with changes to the Act.

Actions and Evaluation Measures

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed by Council to ensure compliance with the Act in relation to domestic animal businesses.

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	Develop a program of media releases that provide information to the community on Domestic Animal Businesses and identifying illegal Domestic Animal Businesses	Ongoing	At least two media releases per year regarding Domestic Animal Businesses and identifying illegal Domestic Animal Businesses	At least two media releases released annually providing tips on responsible pet ownership, Domestic Animal Businesses and identifying illegal Domestic Animal Businesses
2	Update Council's website with information regarding Domestic Animal Businesses	Annually in June and as required	Website current	Website current
3	Work towards compliance with the Act with existing and emerging Domestic Animal Businesses	Ongoing	Frequent engagement with existing and emerging Domestic Animal Businesses Reduction in illegal advertising of domestic animals Reduction in domestic animals which are not microchipped, registered and identifiable Reduction in euthanasia of domestic cats and dogs	Eradication of illegal domestic animal businesses Local Domestic Animal Buinessess are compliant
4	Bring annual audits into line with State Government expectations	June 2020	All identified issues documented and actioned	Embedded June 2021

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council develop programs, services and strategies to managed compliance with the Domestic Animal Business provisions set out in the Act, Council's current practice, and the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community below:

- Ensure compliance with the Act, related State legislation and regulations, and local laws (SO1)
- Promote and encourage responsible domestic animal ownership (SO2)

- Maximise the welfare of domestic dogs and cats (SO3)
- Reduce domestic dog and cat euthanasia rates (SO13)
- Reduce domestic dog and cat overpopulation (SO14)
- Operate a pound facility in accordance with best practice (SO16)
- Eradicate unauthorised breeding establishments (SO18)

16. OTHER MATTERS

Overview

The legislation allows Council's to identify other matters affecting domestic animal management in control in their municipality. The feasibility of a regional pound facility has been discussed with other representatives from our neighbouring councils. These discussions have emerged from the common issue of councils not being able to rehome all suitable animals. It is proposed that a regional pound facility is investigated.

Actions and Evaluation Measures

The following action and evaluation measures have been developed to address this:

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	In collaboration with our neighbouring councils the feasibility of a regional pound facility is investigated	August 2020	Investigation complete. Findings reported	Feasibility of a regional pound facility is determined

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

As well as being a legislative requirement that Council develop programs, services and strategies to manage any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary, Council's current practice, and the actions set out above will meet the following strategic objectives as identified by the community below:

- Maximise the welfare of domestic dogs and cats within the municipality (SO3)
- Maximise the rehoming of suitable domestic dogs and cats (SO4)
- Encourage effective partnering with community groups to deliver rehoming services (SO5)
- Reduce domestic dog and cat euthanasia rates (SO13)
- Reduce domestic dog and cat overpopulation (SO14)
- Operate and maintain a pound facility in accordance with best practice (SO16)

17. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Overview

Every Council must review its Plan annually and if appropriate, amend the Plan and consult with and provide documentation Animal Welfare. Further Council must publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan in Council's annual report. The most significant issue in reporting for animal management is the integrity and relevance of data collected and resourcing of the Community Safety Unit to understand and undertake improvements. Data collection and reporting needs to be reviewed, analysed and improved to effectively demonstrate where Council needs to focus its attention in relation to animal management.

Our Current Activities

The CSU is transitioning online. While some data can be interrogated electronically, manual counting of records is still required to be done. The CSU provides data to the Local Government Reporting Framework, and an evaluation of the implementation of the Plan in Council's annual report.

Actions and Evaluation Measures

The following actions and evaluation measures have been developed to:

- maximise robustness of data collected for animal management purposes
- ensure an annual review of the Plan and annual reporting and
- prepare the Community Safety Unit so it is adequately resourced to draft the 2022 – 2026 Domestic Animal Management Plan by October 2021

	Action	Timeline	Evaluation Measures	Target 2021
1	Prepare an annual report template for the Plan	April 2020	Template completed and annexed to the Plan	Template Complete
2	Conduct a review of the data Council collects regarding animal management	June 2021	Relevant data captured Analysis conducted and potential actions generated.	Completed and incorporated in the 2022-2026 Plan
2	Secure funding for development and consultation for the 2022 – 2026 DAMP	December 2020 as part of the Budget Planning Process	Budget bid submitted for 2021	Budget obtained

Alignment with Strategic Objectives:

Further to the requirements required by the Act as to reporting and review of the Plan, Council's current practice, and the actions set out above will assist the Community Safety Unit meet in a robustly documented way all of the strategic objectives identified by the community.

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.