



# **DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2016 - 2021**



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## Executive Summary

Companion animals have been part of our lives since recorded history. Dogs and cats are imbedded in day to day activity for many Greater Bendigo residents and are considered part of society. Therefore, it is vital that Council undertakes sensible planning to ensure that pets, pet owners and non-pet owners can coexist in a harmonious way.

City of Greater Bendigo has one of the highest levels of companion animal ownership in Victoria, with more than one third of households currently owning a cat or a dog. For every 100 people in the Bendigo community there are an average of approximately 18 dogs and 6 cats. With 5,400 requests for service per annum, 5 of every 100 people in the community are impacted by dogs and cats. This is the second largest cause of complaint to Council and accounts for approximately 17% of the total number of customer requests every year.

This will be Council's third Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP). Council first adopted a Domestic Animal Management Plan in 2008. The 2008 Plan was the first formal approach to service delivery and animal management initiatives and guided service delivery for the period 2008 – 2012. Council adopted a new DAMP in 2013 for the period 2013 – 2016.

The new Plan will build on the achievements and work from the first two Plans and establish a framework to guide future service programs and actions through to the year 2021, within allocated resources.

The primary aim of the Plan is to improve animal management within the City of Greater Bendigo. The Plan will meet or exceed Council's responsibilities under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (DAA).

The Plan recognises the need to address one of Council's key liveability indicators (reducing obesity) by providing open space for dogs to exercise, which in turn provides incentive for residents to exercise themselves.

The Plan will also make a valuable contribution towards the City's vision of Greater Bendigo being Australia's most liveable regional city through actions that assist in minimising the nuisance and potential danger created by some dogs and cats.

The Plan has been prepared by the City of Greater Bendigo Animal Services Team in response to Council's responsibilities under the Domestic Animals Act.

## **Key Initiatives from past Plans and Programs 2008 - 2015**

- Changed service delivery from a contract provider to in-house staff
- Outsourced the animal shelter function
- Provided a flexible 24/7 service delivery model
- Introduced noise recorders and software to assess noise nuisance
- Introduced a loan system for dog owners to try citronella collars to assist in reducing their dog's barking
- Introduced a designated Compliance Team
- Introduced policies to enable more dogs to be taken home instead of to the animal shelter
- Developed a dogs exercise area at Harcourt Park
- Introduced laws to require dogs to be leashed at popular recreation areas, shopping areas and around children's play areas
- Introduced laws to prevent dogs from exercising on the playing surface of the QEO
- Introduced laws to require dog walkers to carry a bag to pick up their dog waste
- Introduced laws to regulate the keeping of animals according to regulatory planning land use principles
- Introduced Responsible Pet Ownership Program
- Introduced Be Safe Around Dogs Program
- Introduced a Cat Curfew to prevent cats from wandering outside their owners' property between sunset and sunrise
- Developed a plan to deal with animals in emergencies
- Developed and implemented policies to assist victims of family violence in relation to managing their pet
- Developed and introduced various work processes to assist in dealing with dog attack and nuisance complaints
- Introduced subsidised program for desexing of cats and dogs
- Introduced discounted microchipping program
- Introduced a rewards program for owners displaying responsible pet ownership
- Promoted the need to register not only dogs but cats as well
- Raised awareness in the community in relation to being a responsible pet owner
- Improved community safety in public areas
- Promoted dog socialisation and obedience training
- Introduced mobile animal enquiry technology to enable officers to access registration data in the field
- Introduced GPS vehicle monitoring and duress alert process to assist with field officer safety and allocation of jobs to officers according to their location.

## **Council Profile**

The City of Greater Bendigo is situated in Central Victoria and its geographical position provides links between the Melbourne metropolitan area and the north of the State. Greater Bendigo is approximately 150 km or 90 minutes drive from Melbourne.

Greater Bendigo covers almost 3,000 square kilometres and includes the urban centre of Bendigo and smaller towns such as Heathcote, Axedale, Huntly, Marong, Elmore, Goornong and Redesdale.

Bendigo is the major regional centre for north central Victoria.

Bendigo is described as a city within a forest as it is surrounded by natural bushland and Box Ironbark forests. The area has a strong historical link to the mining of gold, since gold was discovered in the 1850s. The area has aboriginal cultural significance with the Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Ngurai-illam Wurrung language groups of the Central Kulin nation.

The City of Greater Bendigo has a population of over 110,000 residents. The population is expected to grow between 2015 and 2031 by 31.4%, which is 110,579 to 145,375 respectively.



## FORECASTS

Year	2015	2021	2026	2031
Population	110,579	123,975	134,695	145,375
Households	47,448	49,998	54,338	58,690
Registered Dogs	19,512	21,872	23,774	25,638
Registered Cats	6,434	7,212	7,840	8,454

Note: Forecasts increases of registered dogs and cats are based on the % increase of population between the forecast years. Source of population and households forecasts is CoGB Community Profile on CoGB web site (May 2015).

### ***Introduction - (Why develop a new Plan?)***

The purpose of the new DAMP is to build on the achievements of the previous 2 Plans and to provide the City of Greater Bendigo with a strategic framework that helps deliver policy direction, service programs, initiatives and action plans for animal management for the period 2016 - 2021.

The Plan ensures that Council will meet its obligations under the Domestic Animals Act and continues to use a mix of educational and regulatory approaches to promote the notion of responsible pet ownership.

An important component in the development of the Plan has been the process of providing the community and stakeholders with an opportunity to express their views on matters relating to animal management, which will guide the City of Greater Bendigo in its service to the community. It is not possible to state all the individual views that have been expressed, however, all views have been taken into consideration with a view to providing a balanced approach that recognises the needs of domestic animals, pet owners, and those that don't own or may be negatively impacted by pets.

Greater Bendigo City Council is committed to achieving better outcomes for everyone in the municipality, including both pet owners and non-pet owners.

### **Guiding Principles**

The following guiding principles will continue to underpin the delivery of domestic animal management services at Greater Bendigo:-

- A commitment to working towards achieving best practice in domestic animal management
- A commitment to achieving lasting improvements and rewarding responsible pet ownership
- A commitment to proactive animal management and education

- A commitment to balancing the needs of pet owners with the needs of other members of the community and the environment
- A commitment to recognising the benefits of pet ownership
- A commitment to reducing the number of unwanted animals in society
- Council to play a key leadership role in animal management
- Adopting a whole of community approach to animal management.

### **Vision for Animal Management**

Our vision for domestic animal management at City of Greater Bendigo is:

*A community where pets are recognised and embraced as an integral part of the family unit, where all pet owners are responsible pet owners and a community that is protected from dog attack and residential amenity concerns.*

### **Domestic Animal Management Plan Legislation**

Section 68A of the DAA requires Council at 4 year intervals to develop a DAMP that addresses the following:-

- 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
- 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
- Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district; and
- To promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
- To ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
- To minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
- To address any over population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
- To encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- To minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- 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
- 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 municipal district are desirable; and

- Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it deems necessary; and
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined in this Plan.

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.

### **Scope of the Plan**

The Plan applies to any land within the City of Greater Bendigo where domestic animals are kept or proposed to be kept.

The Plan is informed, owned and action orientated. It sets priorities that are achievable and measurable within allocated resources.

### ***What Animal Related Services are provided for the Community?***

There has been a steady increase in residents requesting assistance from the City with animal related issues and an increased interest in planning for the needs of pet owners. This is not surprising given that around a third of all households own one or more pets and there are now very well recognised health and social benefits arising from pet ownership.

The animal services team consistently reviews industry trends and animal management initiatives to keep abreast of new and improved ways of providing the service.

### **Compliance Team**

The City has a dedicated Animal Compliance Team which is responsible for functions including:

- Investigating dog attack
- Investigating problem barking and other nuisance issues
- Investigating animal welfare concerns
- Promoting responsible pet ownership
- Dealing with restricted breeds and dangerous dogs
- Auditing properties where dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept
- Registration and management of domestic animal businesses
- Management of various neighbourhood issues and complaints relating to animals
- Ensuring compliance to various legislation and codes of practice relevant to pets and livestock.

## **General Animal Services**

The Animal Services Team is responsible for functions including:

- Active patrols and pickups to reunite dogs with their owners and to discourage wandering at large
- Managing unwanted animals
- Patrolling popular walk areas for dog faeces management
- Impounding of livestock found or reported wandering
- Trespassing cats
- Animal registration and identification process
- Providing advice to pet owners and the community
- Providing an after-hours service
- Assisting victims of family violence in relation to managing their pets.

The Animal Services staff will also assist the Parking Team from time to time in managing large demand periods for parking services or filling in on a school crossing site to help with that program. Likewise the Parking Team will assist the Animal Services Team when called upon during busy periods.

The **Animal Services Management Team** is responsible for:

- Planning service delivery
- Managing income and expenditure
- Developing work plans, policy and work instructions
- Managing risk and workplace health and safety
- Mentoring, coaching, training and supervising staff
- Maintaining a process for the issuing of permits where there are more than the prescribed number of animals being kept
- Developing a new Domestic Animal Management Plan on 4 year cycles
- Reporting of statistical data to the Attorney Generals Department and the Office of Local Government
- Maintaining a data base of all customer interactions and requests for service
- Promotion of health, leisure and social capital associated with pet ownership
- Managing dog access to public places (parks, reserves and streets)
- Maintaining a process for dealing with animals in the event of an emergency
- Managing the impacts of cats, including compulsory confinement
- Assessing and reviewing open space planning for dogs and associated laws and orders.

## Key Statistics at a Glance 2014/2015

<b>Dogs</b>	
Number of registered dogs	19,512
Number of impounded dogs: (by Rangers & public)	1,392
Number of impounded dogs returned to owner: (70%)	977
Number of dogs rehoused: (25%)	347
Number of dogs euthanased: (5%)	68
Number of active restricted breed dogs, menacing dogs and dangerous dogs: (Total)	20
<b>Cats</b>	
Number of registered cats	6,434
Number of impounded cats: (by Rangers & public)	1,131
Number of impounded cats returned to owner: (12%)	127
Number of cats rehoused: (56%)	637
Number of cats euthanased: (32%)	367
<b>Customer Service Requests and Complaints</b>	
Dogs at large	860
Dog rush (person or animal)	95
Dog attack (person)	44
Dog attack (livestock)	31
Dog attack (other animal)	81
Dog – barking	560
Request for collection dogs	1,690
Dog registration follow up	442
Livestock wandering	277
Management of Keeping of Animals Local Law enquiries	105
Cat management	961
Other, including, injured animals, restricted breed, loan of citronella collars, dog waste and business registration	197
<b>Total requests for service</b>	<b>5,343</b>

## Changes in Demand for Service Delivery over the Past 8 Years

	2007/2008	2009/2010	2011/2012	2013/2014	2014/2015
<b>Registered dogs</b>	16,780	17,237	18,401	19,379	19,512
<b>Registered cats</b>	5,850	5,317	5,797	6,284	6,434
<b>Customer requests actioned</b>	4,418	5,914	6,061	5,753	5,343
<b>Fines issued</b>	706	1,219	1,186	1,476	994
<b>Dog attacks investigated</b>	68	66	106	121	155
<b>Dog identified on the Declared Dog Register (subject to annual audit)</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	20
<b>Barking nuisance investigated</b>	340	425	488	567	560

### **Customer Service**

The Customer Service Charter is used as the guiding document for responding to requests for animal services. The average response time following a request for service, for first contact with the customer is approximately 1.3 days. The Local Government Performance Reporting Framework has a target of 2 days.

#### **What Customers can Expect:**

- We will listen carefully to them
- We will be friendly and professional, and treat them with courtesy, respect and understanding
- We will keep them informed
- We will provide accurate and consistent information delivered in a way that is easy to understand and in a timely manner
- We will respect and protect their personal information and adhere to privacy requirements
- We will provide a 24 hour emergency service
- We will provide a website which contains current, quality, easily accessible information.

Animal type requests account for approximately 17% of the total number of customer requests received by Council each year.

### **What We Expect:**

- Being courteous and respectful to our staff
- Respecting the rights of other customers
- Providing us with complete and accurate information
- Working with us to resolve problems
- Providing feedback on our services.

### ***Education Programs in Responsible Pet Ownership***

There is now widespread acceptance of the need to educate the community in responsible pet ownership, not just enforce the requirements.

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources operate statewide education programs and activities. Council has chosen to build on these programs and operate its own education programs to reflect local priorities.

Council provides information on animal behaviour and management in brochures and on its website. To encourage pet owners to desex their pets, Council currently provides a number of pet owners with discount vouchers on the cost of desexing each year. Council also provides subsidised microchipping each year.

Council has developed 2 specific educational programs which have been operating for a number of years now.

### **Responsible Pet ownership, You're in Control**

This program is a community education program that aims to educate dog owners about their responsibility for the welfare and behaviour of their dogs.

The program involves distributing information and educating the public in relation to dog and cat ownership with a focus on the importance of socialising, exercising and common behaviour problems such as barking.

It also covers the laws, registration and microchipping requirements.

Animal Management Officers regularly attend community group meetings. They also visit popular dog walking locations and reward responsible dog owners found doing the right thing with a show bag of goodies and information brochures.



Dog walkers not carrying a bag to pick up their dog's mess are given a polite warning and are issued with biodegradable dog waste bags and a holder to attach to their dog's leash.

### **Be Safe Around Dogs Program**

The City of Greater Bendigo is a child friendly city and the 'Be Safe Around Dogs' program aims to build on that and educate children on safe behaviours around dogs and to reduce the likelihood of dogs biting children. Even if children do not have a dog at home, it is still important for them to learn how to be safe around dogs.

The number one rule the program teaches is, "Do not go near a dog unsupervised". It also teaches the children how to approach a dog correctly and what to do if an angry or aggressive dog approaches them.

The program provides educational material including an interactive website to teach children the skills and behaviours they need to be safe around dogs.

There are also answers to a number of frequently asked questions.

These programs build on the structured programs that the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources runs through the primary schools.

### ***Role of Other Stakeholders***

External stakeholders play a vital role in animal management. Those relevant to the City of Greater Bendigo include:

- The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources undertake a range of responsibilities associated with the administration of the Act. It also undertakes or facilitates research and educational programs relating to dog and cat management. It manages the schools visitation program which is a curriculum based program designed to teach children about safety around dogs. It has also introduced the Who's for Cats campaign which is designed to educate the community about the adverse welfare impacts of people feeding stray cats and to encourage them to either adopt and take responsibility for them (including registering and microchipping them) or passing them on to a shelter.
- The RSPCA is contracted by Council to provide animal shelter services.
- Veterinarians are an important point of contact especially in a pet's early years. They have an important role to play in maintaining the health of pets and educating pet owners.
- Parks Victoria is responsible for dog and cat control on land under its control. This includes National Parks. The City's operational procedures require the City to liaise with Parks Victoria to develop consistency in policy and approach where appropriate.
- The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) is responsible for animal management for all public reserves and areas where Council is not the appointed Committee of Management. The City liaises with DELWP to develop consistent policies and procedures as appropriate.

- Registered shelters and adoption centres provide a valuable service that assists with the care and rehousing of unwanted animals.
- The local Police are an important back up in investigations, seizures and for assisting in critical situations.
- Microchips Australia, National Pet Register and Central Animal Records manage the microchips data base.
- Dog and cat clubs have an important role to play in training dogs and cats, socialising pups and kittens and educating pet owners.
- Domestic animal businesses including breeders, veterinary behaviourists, private dog trainers, dog walkers, kennels, catteries and pet shops are important stakeholders in providing services to dog and cat owners that may assist them to be responsible pet owners. Greater Bendigo has 17 Domestic Animal Businesses.
- Neighbouring Councils have many common interests and issues with the City of Greater Bendigo. City staff often work with neighbouring Councils with information sharing and are always looking at ways of extending the responsible pet ownership message more efficiently and effectively through increased dialogue and collaboration.
- The local media is a tool for publicising the responsible pet ownership message.
- Pet owners themselves have a role to play in choosing an appropriate pet to suit their lifestyle, training and socialising their dog and adhering to Council requirements. Responsible pet owners have an important education role to play by setting an appropriate example to other pet owners.

### ***Harnessing the Benefits of Pet Ownership***



There is increasing evidence that demonstrates the physical and mental health, companionship and social benefits of owning pets.

It is widely accepted that walking and physical activity is strongly linked to improved general health and lower risks of obesity, heart disease and blood pressure problems. However studies have found that there is also an association between pet ownership/attachment and psychological wellbeing.

The psychosocial benefits of pet ownership include facilitating normal child development, improving loneliness and depression, and facilitating social support and interaction with other people. It has been demonstrated that dogs are a social lubricant – having a dog with you stimulates conversation and in some cases friendships with other dog owners. This is generally seen as making a positive contribution to social capital.

The pet can play an important role in every stage of life. For the child, a pet animal can encourage a sense of responsibility, compassion and empathy. Having the love and companionship of a pet can provide a sense of security and can make the child feel important. Playing with animals can be a source of calmness and relaxation and most importantly, immense joy.



Some children with autism or other challenges are better able to interact with pets than people and a pet can often help children with a learning disorder stay alert and attentive during the day and better equipped to deal with the stress and frustration associated with the disability. The program at St Francis of the Fields Primary School is a great example of using a trained dog to assist children in their learning.

For adults, the benefits of pet ownership include providing companionship, especially for people living alone and pets will often provide the opportunity for social interaction amongst their owners. Dogs in particular are known ice breakers and can trigger conversation between strangers.

Pets are extremely important to elderly people as sometimes they are the reason for getting out of bed each day as they give the owner a purpose and structure for their day and are often the most important thing left in their life. Pet therapy or animal assisted therapies are the names given by researchers to the practice of using animals to offset emotional and physical problems to improve quality of life. Righteous Pups Australia provides a local program where they train therapy dogs that visit and interact with older persons and those socially isolated in the community.

There are many other examples in the Greater Bendigo community of pets trained to help their owners lead a normal life. Council is very aware of supporting the important works undertaken by assistance and therapy dog trainers and providers. In short, it is accepted that pets improve the physical and psychological wellbeing of their owners and can add real joy to life. They increase people's sense of safety, promote social interaction, a sense of community and encourage people to exercise.

Council will continue to promote Greater Bendigo as a pet friendly municipality and will provide the infrastructure for the Greater Bendigo community to enjoy the benefits of dog and cat ownership.

*References: Help Guide. Ord. (The Health Benefits of Dogs and Cats). Pet Education.com. (Physical & Health Benefits of Pets).*

## ***Access to Public Places for Exercising Dogs***



It is imperative that Council plans for the needs of pet owners given that around a third of all households own one or more pets. In addition to the documented social and health benefits from dog owners meeting other dog owners in public areas, dogs need exercise for their health and to help reduce unwanted behaviours at home.

Dog walking is very popular amongst dog owners. For many people, walking their dog is an inducement to engage in exercise. In providing exercise for their dogs, the owners are encouraged into physical activity themselves.

Increasing the opportunities for owners to provide their dogs with sufficient exercise, stimulation and socialisation for mental wellbeing can in turn reduce behaviours such as barking, wandering and aggression. Well exercised dogs are less likely to behave antisocially.

### **Existing Situation**

Dogs are **not required** to be leashed in public places within the City of Greater Bendigo except for the 10 designated on leash parks. They must also be on leash within 10m of any public barbeque or outdoor eating area, public children's play area or business premises.

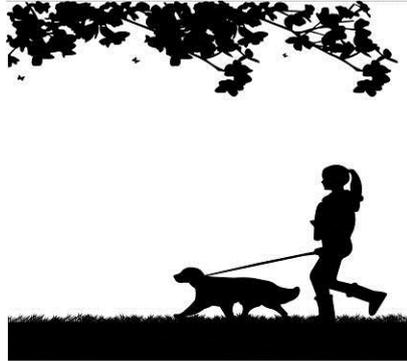
Dogs are prohibited from entering the Hargreaves Mall, QEO and Crusoe Reserve.

Council allows shared use of Rodda Field and has created a fenced dog exercise area at Harcourt Park. This area has been very well received and is heavily utilised.

### **Where to from here?**

The increasing population of the City of Greater Bendigo has increased pressure on Council to provide off leash dog facilities. The growing level of pet ownership amongst smaller house lots and elderly members of our community is creating a stronger need for people to be able to access local areas to exercise and socialise their dogs freely and responsibly.

A dog park is often viewed as a community asset and was rated as important in the recent survey. 67% of respondents wished for Council to require dogs to be on leash at all times except at designated areas. There are also some disadvantages of dog parks which need to be considered and 20% of the survey respondents did not support additional dog exercise areas with the reasons listed below.



## **Dog Park**

### Advantages

- Provides an opportunity for dog to dog and dog to people social interaction
- Provides opportunity for people to people social interaction for likeminded people who enjoy dogs
- Dogs and their owners can be separated from other people who don't want to interact with dogs
- Dog parks reduce the chance of owners letting their dogs off-leash in other on-leash parks and environmentally sensitive areas
- They can help avoid potential conflict between dogs and other activities on sporting fields and in other parks
- Allow dogs to get physical and mental exercise and stimulation, thereby reducing destructive and annoying behaviours which can cause residential amenity issues
- They provide a meeting place for people and community groups and can provide a location for community dog events
- They provide opportunity for people to exercise with their dogs by walking to the location
- They allow people living in small apartments or property without a yard to own a dog
- They provide elderly and dog owners with disabilities with an accessible and safe place to exercise their dogs
- They can provide an environment for owners to learn about dogs through observation of more experienced owners

- They provide a safe place where dog owners can exercise their dogs off leash and not encounter cars, bikes and other obstacles
- They provide an environment where responsible dog ownership is encouraged and advice is exchanged on dog management
- They provide a safe resting and dog exercise place for owners travelling with their pets.

### Disadvantages

- Some owners will not pick up after their dogs
- Potential for dog attack or rush to occur
- Potential for dog fights
- Potential for parasites and disease transfer
- Not always appropriate for small and large dogs to use the area at the same time (separation areas are needed)
- Residents living nearby may be concerned about the potential for noise issues. (Although there is no evidence to suggest that this has been an issue with Harcourt Park)
- Dog owners allowing their dog to engage in inappropriate behaviours - lack of impulse control and over-excitement
- Not always possible to provide adequate parking to cater for dog owners transporting their dog(s) by vehicle to the area.

The Greater Bendigo City Council recognises the strong human and canine benefits of planning public spaces for dogs and is committed to providing good spaces for people to exercise their dogs. It is well recognised that dog parks provide a fun opportunity for members of the community to connect in an informal way.

Establishment of additional dog parks and shared use arrangements will provide for suitable dog exercise areas, should the City in the future move towards a default on-leash requirement in all public areas within City of Greater Bendigo or restrict the use of sporting fields as dog exercise areas.

### ***Why it is Important to have Areas Where Dogs can Socialise***



Dogs that are well socialised are likely to be more confident, predictable and less anxious when out in the community. Socialised dogs are generally less prone to inappropriate behaviours including excessive barking and canine aggression.

Dog parks provide an environment where dogs can socialise with other dogs and their owners in a safe, controlled and closely supervised space.

A dog park is an ideal setting where like-minded people will often assist each other with training and management of the family pet.



## ***Review of Orders, Local Laws and Established Programs***

All relevant Local Laws and Orders have been reviewed as part of the process in developing the new Domestic Animal Management Plan. Comparisons and evaluation have also been undertaken with neighbouring municipalities.

### **Cat Curfew**

The City has an existing curfew which requires cats to be confined between sunset and sunrise. This curfew has been reviewed to consider the merits of extending the curfew to require cats to be confined at all times, similar to dogs. The review found:

#### **Disadvantages:**

- There would be significant resourcing costs to enforce cats wandering at large during the day time. Additional staff would be required to educate about the change, respond to complaints and implement effectively to meet the community expectations
- It is much more difficult and costly to confine a cat to the owner's property than a dog. Many residents would find this a cost burden beyond their resources. This may prove particularly difficult for pensioners who rely on a pet cat for company
- It is very difficult to catch a cat which does not wish to be caught
- Additional controls may provide a disincentive to register and or microchip
- Majority of the community (55%) do not support further controls
- There are welfare considerations with 24/7 confinement as many residents would need to lock their cat indoors
- Difficult and expensive to introduce and enforce at the local level.

### Advantages:

- It would reduce some nuisance issues between neighbours
- Reduction in impact on native fauna
- Positive welfare consideration in relation to reduction in fighting and disease transfer
- Would be less spraying and faecal matter left in public areas and neighbouring properties
- Cats kept in a safe house often live longer
- Cats who roam are at risk of injury from cars, human cruelty, poison baits, attacks from other animals and unwanted pregnancies.

The majority of residents who completed the survey were aware of the existing controls and the majority also did not support introducing a 24/7 curfew or any further controls.

Council will formally consider the cat curfew with the adoption of the DAMP.



### **Keeping of Animals Local Law**

The City has a Keeping of Animals Local Law which restricts the number and types of animals that a resident can keep on a property, which varies depending on the property zoning. It also applies controls to prevent animals causing a nuisance and requirements to contain animals.

The Local Law provides a permit system for residents to obtain permission to keep more than the prescribed number of animals or a prohibited animal subject to approval from the authorised officer who will consider: the zoning of the land, impact on neighbouring properties, measures to control nuisance, the impact on the amenity of the area and the welfare of the animals.

The Animal Keeping Local Law has been reviewed as part of the development of the new DAMP. The Local Law has also been considered in the context of the National Competition Policy, Victorian Charter of Human Rights and City of Greater Bendigo Human Rights Charter.

The review has found the Local Law is still relevant, appropriate for purpose and consistent with the ideals of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities and the Disability Discrimination Act.

Some of the land zoning definitions will be amended to be consistent with the requirements of the Greater Bendigo Planning Scheme. Council will also consider introducing a provision to require people keeping animals to keep them in accordance with the relevant Codes of Practice and will consider amending the permit review panel requirements.

The existing Keeping of Animals Local Law will be revoked and the new Keeping of Animals Local Law will be finalised with the statutory processes to take place within the first year of the Plan.

### **Orders Requiring Dogs to be Leashed**

Dogs are not required to be leashed in public places within the City of Greater Bendigo except for the 10 designated on-leash parks. They must also be on-leash within 10m of any public barbeque or outdoor eating area, public children's play area or business premises.

Dogs are also prohibited from entering the Hargreaves Mall, playing surface of the Queen Elizabeth Oval and Crusoe Reserve. (Except for assistance dogs and Police dogs involved in crime detection).

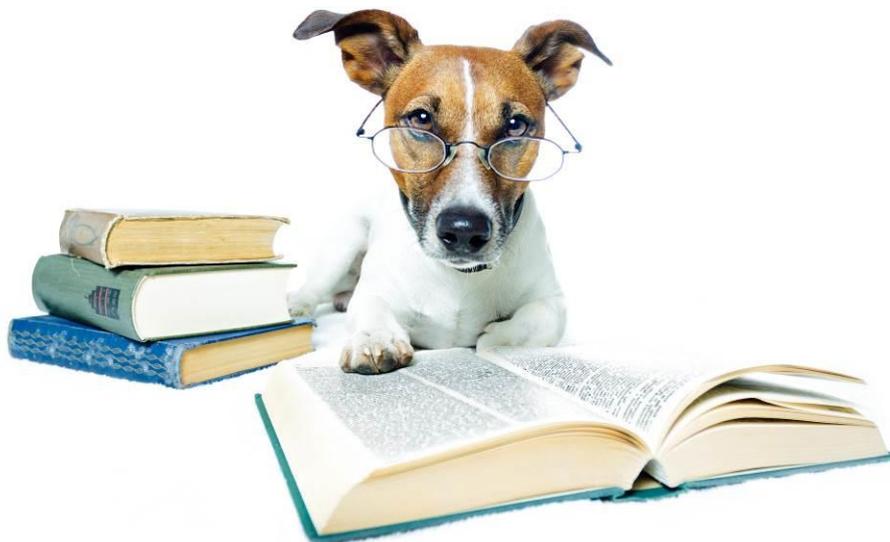
The City allows shared use of Rodda Field and has created a fenced dog exercise area at Harcourt Park. This area has been very well received and is heavily utilised.

It is not proposed to introduce additional on-leash controls at this time. Should Council provide further options for dog exercise in the future, these Orders will be reviewed again.

### **Action Plans**

The Action Plans that follow list the actions that the City will implement over the next 4 years to achieve its vision and goals. The actions will be evaluated annually for the life of the Plan.

## ***Training of Authorised Officers***



The objective of training and development is to ensure all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work in a safe and professional manner. The City of Greater Bendigo is committed to ensuring all staff involved in animal management are equipped for the demands of their role and are competent in their job.

All Animal Management Officers receive extensive, on the job training. In addition they receive formal training in conflict resolution, traffic control, driver safety, dog & cat handling, bite prevention, stock handling, captive bolt use, self-preservation and harm reduction and first aid.

Staff will continue to receive training in customer service, health and safety, workplace behaviours and the delivery of community education information and will be encouraged to attend industry related information sessions and seminars for networking opportunities and to keep up with latest trends and innovations.

An annual skills audit is undertaken to identify any gaps in the skills available within the Animal Management Team. A professional development plan is prepared each year arising out of this audit.

The annual performance reviews includes a review of the staff member's skills and training undertaken in the previous year.

All new staff are taken through an induction program and receive regular updates offering opportunity to undertake training using the City's Learning Opportunities Program.

## Summary

It is important that the City recruits and retains enthusiastic staff members who are able to achieve job satisfaction. Appropriate training and development allows for staff to take a proactive approach to their role and achieve increased satisfaction with their often challenging work.

## OUR PLANS

In light of above, the activities and objectives for the next 4 years are listed below:

Objective 1: Maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Maintain a database listing each officer's name and their completed training, along with proposed additional training.	Ongoing	Annual review of database, to ensure its accuracy and to determine whether proposed training goals have been met for each officer.

Objective 2: Ensure all new Authorised Officers have completed their minimum training requirements within 12 months of appointment.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements for Authorised Officers and record when officers have completed each course.	Ongoing	Annually review spreadsheet and ensure each officer has completed their minimum training requirements.

Objective 3: Provide opportunities for additional training each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify additional training opportunities e.g. prosecutions training, advanced conflict management and mediation.	Ongoing	Annually review how many officers have undertaken training that was in addition to their minimum requirements.

Objective 4: Provide and maintain performance training / planning process for individual officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete annual development plan and review process for each staff member identifying training needs to deal with skill gaps and emerging issues or legislative changes.	Ongoing	Completion of annual development plan and review process.

## **Registration and Identification**

All dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be microchipped and registered with the Council where it resides.

The registration fees help fund the animal management services provided by Council and the responsible pet ownership campaign and other education programs run by the State Government.

An animal found with a registration or microchip marker has a much higher chance of being reunited with its owner and not being taken to the animal shelter.



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

City of Greater Bendigo, Keeping of Animals, Local Law 2 regulates the number of animals that can be kept at a property.

Council has delegated the DAA provisions to register or refuse to register a dog or cat to the Manager Parking & Animal Services.

Council has a documented process for annual registration of dogs and cats and for following up registration defaulters.

Council has a Compliance and Enforcement Policy which guides enforcement action for registration defaulters.

Australia Post and Bendigo Bank have been appointed by Council as agents for receipting of registration fees.

Council provides for online registration renewal and provide a variety of payment methods including Post Billpay, BPay and BPoint.

The option of electronic mailbox for receipting of animal registration renewals will be investigated in the first year of the Plan.

Council undertakes registration renewal annually and issues a lifetime registration tag.

The Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) are the State Government body charged with the responsibility to ensure the administration of the Domestic Animals Act, including the Domestic Animal Management Plan. For each animal registration the City of Greater Bendigo processes a \$2.00 levy for cats and a \$3.50 levy for dogs that is required to be paid to the DEDJTR. The levy contributes to the development of programs and materials used for:

- Promotion of responsible dog and cat ownership and animal welfare
- Community education in Primary Schools
- Research into domestic animal management
- Administration of the Act.

## **Our Current Education/Promotion Activities**

The main approaches to boosting and promoting registrations are:

- Regular media coverage leading into the registration renewal period;
  - Web page information;
  - Distribution of brochures promoting the benefits of registration;
  - Magnetic vehicle signage to advertise registration period and other education/promotion activities;
  - Portable signage is displayed at public places to advertise registration renewal date, microchipping days and advise door knocks for registration checks are being undertaken;
  - Discounted public microchipping days;
  - Reduced fees for concession card holders;
  - Reduced fees for desexed and or microchipped dogs and cats;
  - Mail outs to households that have not re-registered their pet; and
  - Annual door knocks where approximately 1000 random properties are checked each year for unregistered and unidentified dogs and cats.
- 

## **Our Current Compliance Activities**

Follow ups include a caution letter to first time registration defaulters or an infringement notice to persons who have received a caution in the past for not registering their pet.

Owners of unregistered dogs or cats where infringements remain unpaid are lodged with the Infringements Court.

Officers regularly scan advertisements of dogs and cats for sale and domestic animal business notifications for follow up registration of sold animals.

All animals impounded must be implanted with a microchip and registered to their owner prior to their release from the City's animal shelter.

All registered animals found wandering, where possible, are returned to owners free of charge on the first occasion. Owners of animals found wandering, which are not registered, are issued with an infringement notice.

All officers carry microchip scanners and public areas are patrolled regularly to undertake spot checks for unregistered animals. The introduction of mobile animal enquiry technology has enabled officers to access registration data in the field and be more efficient in returning registered animals to their owners.

Checks are undertaken at properties where it is suspected that an unregistered animal may reside and all animal related complaints (both sides) are checked for registration compliance as part of the investigation process.



## Summary

As a result of the education, promotion and enforcement activities since Council first developed a Domestic Animal Management Plan; the number of registered dogs has increased from 16,780 to 19,512 and the number of cats from 5,850 to 6,434. The City appears to have a good balance of education/promotion and compliance activities.

The annual door knocks generally help to maintain current registration numbers. The cost of door knocking the whole community is very high and does not provide good value for money. It is proposed to continue to carry out targeted door knocks in conjunction with following up households that have not re-registered their pet.

The City will provide the resourcing required to door knock approximately 1,000 random properties each year to check for unregistered and unidentified dogs and cats. The City will also continue to take registered dogs home, where possible on the first occasion that the dog is picked up wandering. The reduced fee for concession card holders will be continued to assist those on low incomes to be able to afford to register their dog and / or cat.

The City will continue to give registration high priority over the next 4 years. It is imperative that the City continues to implement new strategies to increase registration numbers as once dogs and cats are on the City's registration database they provide an annual source of income for 8 - 12 years which assists in offsetting the costs involved in undertaking animal services.

The subsidised desexing initiative will be continued, as this initiative is well received and believed to encourage and increase dog registrations.

The City will be attempting to increase the number of registered dogs and cats in the municipality. This will be done by education, random patrols and checks of properties.

## OUR PLANS

In light of above, the activities and objectives for the next 4 years are listed below:

Objective 1: Improve the accuracy of the City's registration database by cross-referencing with microchip registry data.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve accuracy of the City's pet registration database by contacting microchip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped. Check all animals are also listed on the City's pet registration database, and follow up those that are not registered.	2017	Demonstrate the City's pet registration database can be accurately cross referenced with microchip registries.  Demonstrate increase in numbers of pets registered with the City following microchip registry cross referencing exercise.

Objective 2: Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 2% each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Mail out registration reminder notices.	In January each year for life of the Plan	Number of animals re-registered after receiving the notice.
Investigate digital mailbox receipting as an additional option for payment of animal registration renewal fees.	2017	Analysis of receipting option considered.
Investigate the possibility for payment of animal related fines online as an additional payment option.	2017	Analysis of receipting option considered.
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Ongoing for life of the Plan	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner.
Targeted door knocking of approximately 1,000 random properties in the municipality each year to check for unregistered and unidentified dogs and cats.	Annual door knocks for the months of June and July each year	Increase in registration numbers.
Continue to offer subsidised microchipping events.	Annual for life of Plan	Number of new registrations resulting from the events.
Promote the benefits of registration and the services provided from registration fees.	Ongoing for life of Plan	Demonstrated increase in number of registered dogs and cats.

Objective 3: Increase the awareness of registration and identification responsibilities

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all pet shops, breeders, and shelters are provided with information on registration and identification responsibilities.	2018	All Domestic Animal Businesses provided with current information.
Undertake a community pet event with a focus on promoting animal registration.	2019	Number of people attending the event and accessing information.
Promote the importance of animal registration at the Great Stupa Vegecarian Festival and other community events.	2017 & 2018	Number of people attending the events and accessing information.
Issue infringement notices to owners of detected unregistered animals.	Ongoing for life of Plan	Number of infringement notices issued and the subsequent registration of those animals.

## **Nuisance**

The regulations for managing dog and cat nuisance, relating to noise, trespassing and wandering at large are contained within the Domestic Animals Act.

The City of Greater Bendigo Keeping of Animals Local Law regulates nuisance relating to dust, smell and other conditions including the laws requiring dog owners to pick up their dog litter and the requirement to carry a bag to pick up their dog's litter in public areas.

When something is annoying we often think of it as a nuisance. However, there is a difference between what is annoying and what is legally classed as a 'nuisance'.

The 3 main types of nuisance complaints that Animal Management Services deal with are dust, odour and the most common, noise from barking dogs. Often a nuisance complaint can be a dispute between 2 neighbours.

### **Excessive Barking**



Barking dog complaints can be a source of great irritation within the community and are extremely time consuming and difficult for Officers to resolve.

Investigating such complaints can be a long process as Officers have to gather sufficient evidence to prove the nuisance exists. This is often subjective and the problem can stop and then start again sometime later.

City Officers can issue notices to the dog owner to abate the nuisance, issue infringement notices or have the matter heard in the Magistrates Court to seek an order from the Court to abate the nuisance.

Excessive barking can have several causes including:

- Lack of exercise; Inadequate yard space
- Boredom or lack of stimulation
- Not enough human companionship
- Inadequate shelter from weather conditions
- Hunger or thirst
- A medical condition such as illness or injury
- Provocation or disturbance - movement outside the dog's property (eg passers-by, other dogs barking, possums, cats)
- Changes to the family structure, routine or territory
- Learned behavior – dogs often bark more if they learn that their owner makes a fuss over them when they bark
- Contact seeking - dogs are social animals, barking and howling are ways that dogs can communicate with each other over distance
- Territorialism (visitors to the property) and communication.

## Prevention

The prevention of barking dog problems is the starting point for managing excessive barking, because once excessive barking is entrenched, it is often hard to resolve.

Some breeds are genetically predisposed towards excessive barking. However excessive barking is often an acquired behaviour that can occur in any breed or sex of dog.

Habitual barking often develops at an early age. New dog owners are encouraged to manage their puppy's barking tendencies by utilising dog training schools or behavioural trainers.

Regular exercise, including exercise in off leash areas assists to socialise dogs around other people and their animals and can result in a reduction of barking. The City will continue to provide accessible opportunities for off leash exercise. Harcourt Park has proven to be very popular with dog owners.

Providing dogs with an enriching home environment helps to minimise problem barking (toys, view of the outside world, shade, shelter and comfort). The City provides dog owners and prospective dog owners with tips on environmental enrichment through information on the website.

Not all barking dog complaints can be prevented. The objective is to resolve complaints as quickly and smoothly as possible. Sometimes the behaviour is so ingrained that professional advice is required. In these cases, advice from a veterinarian or referral to a qualified behaviourist is recommended. The City has established a list of behaviourists to whom owners of dogs with a barking problem can be referred.

The process for dealing with barking dogs tries to balance the interests and rights of both the dog owner and the resident affected by the noise. Often cases are resolved reasonably quickly after the initial complaint but some require an investigation to be undertaken which may take some time to determine if a problem exists.

## **Dog Faeces**

The pollution of footpaths, parks and reserves by dog faeces is a concern raised by residents in recent surveys.

It is generally accepted that dog faeces left in parks and streets is smelly, unsightly and unpleasant to step in. However, it can also host disease and or parasites which can infect other dogs that come into contact with it, or worse, be transmitted to people.

Toxocara Canis is the roundworm that can be found in the faeces of infected dogs and can be passed onto humans.

Dog faeces is not a fertiliser and breaks down slowly. Leaving it lying around encourages other dogs to mark their spot. Dog faeces litter can lead to bacteria and algae in our water ways which can harm birds, fish, frogs and insects.

The City presently has a Local Law which requires dog owners to pick up their dog's faeces from public places. There is also a requirement that dog owners take a bag with them for picking up their dog faeces when they are walking their dog. It is not proposed to modify these requirements. 77% of survey respondents indicated that they are aware of these requirements.

The City will undertake a program to continue to educate the community on these requirements as an action within the Plan.

## **Our Current Data**

For the period 2014/2015:

- There were 560 barking dog complaints investigated
- 273 cat cages loaned
- 45 barking dog collars loaned
- Animal Management Services dealt with a total of 5,343 customer requests
- 600 show bags distributed to residents found doing the right thing.

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

In addition to the statewide laws contained in the DAA, Council has adopted the following Local Laws and Orders that are specific to the City of Greater Bendigo.

Council's **Local Law No 2** relates to the keeping of animals and poultry. It requires that an owner or person in charge of an animal must:

- Ensure animals do not cause a nuisance to anyone by noise, dust, smell or other condition, cause damage to any flora or fauna or pollute any drain, gutter, watercourse or water catchment
- Keep the land occupied by any animal clear and clean of waste, food scraps and excrement
- Obtain a permit to keep more than 2 dogs and 2 cats in a residential area
- Have fencing sufficient to contain their animals
- Immediately collect and remove all excrement left by the animal on any public place
- Carry a bag or similar device to pick up faeces whilst walking their dog.

The Local Law is valid for a ten year period and is currently under review.

**Local Law No 3** prohibits dogs from Crusoe Reservoir.

**Local Law No 5** prohibits dogs from the Hargreaves Mall (except for assistance dogs and police dogs involved in crime detection).

### **Cat Curfew (s25 DAA Order)**

Council has invoked an order under the DAA imposing a cat curfew, which applies to the whole municipality, making it an offence for a cat to be outside the owner's premises between sunset and sunrise.

The City has developed Operation Guidelines for dealing with cat controls.

The majority of residents who completed the recent survey (92%) were aware of the existing controls and the majority (55%) also did not support introducing a 24/7 curfew or any further controls. However, the majority (56%) believe that there is an issue with cats breaking the curfew in their area.

Council will formally consider the cat curfew with the adoption of the DAMP.

### **Dogs on Leash Areas (s26 DAA Order)**

Dogs are permitted to be exercised off leash throughout the City of Greater Bendigo's managed land, except within the following designated on leash areas where Council has invoked an Order under the DAA:

- Rosalind Park
- Lake Weeroona
- Strathdale Park & Kennington Reserve
- White Hills Botanic Gardens
- Rotary Park Strathdale
- Botanical Gardens Kangaroo Flat
- Barrack Reserve Heathcote
- Canterbury Gardens Eaglehawk
- Cooinda Park Golden Square
- Lake Neangar & Lake Tom Thumb Eaglehawk
- Council allows for shared use of Rodda Field.

Dog must also be on leash:

- Within 10m of any public barbeque or outdoor eating area, children's public play area or business premises
- And under effective control in public places at all times.

Dogs are also prohibited from entering the playing surface of the Queen Elizabeth Oval (except for assistance dogs and police dogs involved in crime detection).

### **Covenant on Title (s25 Transfer of Land Act) & (s173 Planning and Environment Act)**

Council has required, as part of planning approval, a covenant placed on title of all properties within the Mclvor Forest Estate which prohibits the keeping of greyhounds and cats and requires that dogs must be on a leash when outside the property.

Council has also required, as part of planning approval, a covenant placed on title of all properties within the Quarry Hill - City Edge Estate which prohibits the keeping of cats.

All the above mentioned Local Laws and Orders have been reviewed as part of the process in the development of this Plan.

### **Policies and Processes**

The City has several documented processes for dealing with nuisance issues including:

- Investigation Manual for Nuisance
- Nuisance Animals Policy
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- Operational Guidelines - Cat Controls
- Trespassing Livestock Procedure
- After Hours Response Procedure
- Issuing of Infringement and Caution Notices Procedure
- Internal Review Procedure
- Guidelines for Dealing with Animal Matters.

### **Our Current Education/Promotion Activities**

Given the difficulties which generally arise in ascertaining the level of noise caused by the barking of dogs and whether that constitutes an offence under the Act, the City takes the view that, at least in the first instance, education and prevention are more effective ways of dealing with these matters than enforcement.

The City of Greater Bendigo website is the primary vehicle for storage of information kits, tips and forms used for dissemination of information to assist with nuisance issues. The City also assists dog owners with suggestions to help with problem barking and assists dog owners with free loan of special anti-bark citronella collars.

Dog and cat owners are encouraged by way of reduced registration fees to desex their animals to reduce wandering. The reduced fee is approximately one third of the full fee. As a further incentive to desex, the City provides a number of pet owners with discount vouchers for the cost of desexing each year.

The website is also used to make available information in relation to providing an enriching home environment and promotion of where off leash areas are located. The City has implemented an online nuisance barking process which allows residents to report their concerns.

The City loans out humane, trigger-plate cat traps to residents having problems with feral or trespassing cats. The City also provides biodegradable bags and bag holders to dog walkers and show bags containing promotional goodies to owners observed doing the right thing at popular walk locations.

City Officers regularly attend community meetings, primary schools and forums to speak on responsible pet ownership and preventing nuisance.

**Our Current Compliance Activities**

Prevention is the starting point for dealing with animal nuisance issues, however as this does not always work, the City has a comprehensive manual for dealing with nuisance issues.

The City has 2 designated Animal Compliance Officers who deal with Dog Attack, Education Programs, Auditing of Domestic Animal Businesses and properties where dangerous dogs are kept. A large component of their role involves dealing with nuisance.

The Animal Management Team works with the Dispute Resolution Centre and at times uses trained mediators in an attempt to resolve nuisance complaints.

All nuisance complaints are recorded on the City’s Customer Request System to track progress and to ensure that Officers follow set processes.

**Summary**

The City has implemented a dedicated software program and tracking system to record and monitor complaints and actions undertaken. The City has also recently introduced a software program and electronic listening equipment for monitoring barking dog complaints. The City has a comprehensive manual with detailed processes for dealing with barking dogs and other nuisance complaints and legal forms for use to complete the investigations. The City also has information kits which provide advice and the process and expectations to both the dog owner and resident affected.

All processes and forms have been reviewed and some minor administrative changes have been undertaken.

Staff will continue to receive training in strategies to deal with education and enforcement and the City will also ensure its Animal Management Officers’ skills continue to be updated in relation to the understanding and diagnosis of excessive barking and solutions available.

**OUR PLANS**

In light of above, the activities and objectives for the next 4 years are listed below:

Objective 1: Manage cat nuisance complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education material about cat enclosures.	2017	Number of residents accessing the information.
Review education material about managing cat nuisance issues on the website.	Ongoing	Material to be reviewed and updated annually.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Assist residents in dealing with cat trespass / nuisance problems by purchasing additional cat cages and provide them to local residents for trapping nuisance cats.	2017	Number of traps purchased. Number loaned out. Number of cats impounded.
Provide 150 vouchers per year for subsidised desexing.	Ongoing	Number of vouchers redeemed.
Undertake a subsidised microchipping day each year.	Ongoing	Number of cats microchipped.

objective 2: Manage dog and other nuisance complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Consider the creation of additional dog parks and shared use arrangement for exercising dogs off leash with view to making application for future budget bids.	2018	Considered by Council.
Purchase additional noise recorders for assessing nuisance.	2017	Equipment purchased.
Undertake a dog litter campaign which will include increasing patrols at popular walk locations to enforce the Local Law regarding the carrying of dog waste bags, the collection and disposal of dog faeces and dogs under effective control.	2018	Number of patrols undertaken. Number of warnings/fines issued. Visible reduction in the amount of dog faeces left in public places.
Continue to use barking dog complaint/investigation policy/manual.	Ongoing	Manual reviewed annually.
Review education material about managing dog nuisance issues on the website.	Ongoing	Material to be reviewed and updated annually.
Continue to provide good behaviour awards to people observed doing the right thing.	Ongoing	Number of awards distributed (target is 250 P/A).
Provide a min of 150 vouchers per year for subsidised desexing.	Ongoing for life of the Plan	Number of vouchers redeemed.
Undertake a microchipping day each year.	Ongoing for life of the Plan	Number of dogs microchipped.
Explore the use of rooster collars as an option for dealing with poultry noise complaints.	2017	Collars implemented if found to be effective.

## ***Dog Attacks / Wandering Dogs***

There are several reasons why dogs will roam including:

- Searching for food or for a partner (bitch in season)
- To find other dogs
- Adventure

Roaming dogs can be a problem as they can cause traffic hazards, act aggressively towards people and other animals, deposit faeces, be destructive, spread disease, can develop instinctive behaviours and act independently (disobedience). Dogs that are used to roaming and having freedom can develop behavioural problems and are likely to protest when confined, which in turn can lead to residential amenity issues.

### **Dog Attack**

Most 'public place' dog attacks occur on the footpath or road in front of where the dog lives. This is a vital reason why dogs should be contained at all times. There are risk factors associated with dog bite injury that are common to most countries. These include:

- Children under 10 years of age are over represented
- 73% of dog bites occur at, or near the dog owner's home
- Children are most at risk of being bitten by a dog belonging to family, friends or neighbours
- Male children are bitten more frequently than females
- Terrier breeds have a higher representation than other breeds in reported dog attacks within the City of Greater Bendigo
- Male dogs are 6.2 times more likely to bite than females
- Entire (not desexed) dogs are 2.6 times more likely to bite than those that are spayed or neutered (desexed)
- Dogs are more likely to bite the older they are when they are obtained
- Dogs are more dangerous when acting as a pack.

*Dog attack statistic Reference: Hazard (Edition 69) 2009 Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit - Unintentional dog bite injury in Victoria 2005-2007. CoGB dog attack records 2014/15 financial year. Dangerous Dogs- a sensible solution Australian Veterinary Association Ltd 2012*

A critical role for the City is the prevention of dog attacks on humans, livestock and other pets. The City treats all dog attacks as a matter of priority and is a vital component of the Animal Management Officer's role.

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

Council has delegated the DAA provisions to the Manager of Parking & Animal Services to euthanase a dog found guilty of serious attack.

Council has also delegated the DAA provisions to declare a dog 'Dangerous' or 'Menacing' to the Manager Parking & Animal Services.

Council's Keeping of Animals, Local Law 2 regulates the number of animals that can be kept at a property.

### **Dogs on Leash Areas (s26 DAA Order)**

Dogs are permitted to be exercised off leash throughout the City of Greater Bendigo's managed land, except within the following designated on leash areas where Council has invoked an order under the DAA:-

- Rosalind Park
- Lake Weeroona
- Strathdale Park & Kennington Reserve
- White Hills Botanic Gardens
- Rotary Park Strathdale
- Botanical Gardens Kangaroo Flat
- Barrack Reserve Heathcote
- Canterbury Gardens Eaglehawk
- Coinda Park Golden Square
- Lake Neangar & Lake Tom Thumb Eaglehawk
- Council allows for shared use of Rodda Field.



Dog must also be on leash:-

- Within 10m of any public barbeque or outdoor eating area, public children's play area or business premises

Council has also introduced an 'under effective control' requirement which requires dogs remain within voice or hand control distance at all times in public places.

**Local Law No 3** prohibits dogs from Crusoe Reservoir.

**Local Law No 5** prohibits dogs from the Hargreaves Mall (except for assistance dogs and police dogs involved in crime detection).

Dogs are also prohibited from entering the playing surface of the Queen Elizabeth Oval (except for assistance dogs and police dogs involved in crime detection).

## **Policies and Processes**

The City has several documented processes which guide enforcement action for dealing with dog attack and rushing matters including:

- Dog Attack Procedure
- Destruction Procedure
- Dangerous Dog Declaration Procedure
- Menacing Dog Declaration Procedure
- Procedure for Prosecuting Dog Attack
- Dog Seizure Procedure
- After Hours Response Procedure
- Issuing of Infringements Procedure
- Nuisance Animals Policy
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- Dealing with Difficult People Procedure.

There must be 2 Officers present when seizing a dog which has attacked. Police are also involved when visiting a property where the occupants are known to be difficult.

## **Our Current Education / Promotion Activities**

Responsible pet ownership is the critical message when it comes to reducing dog attack incidents. The City's education programs are designed to ensure that dog owners are aware of the need for regular socialisation with other animals and people, securely confined to the owner's property and kept under effective control whilst being walked. These measures significantly reduce the likelihood of the dog being involved in an incident.

The State Government provides children with training in bite avoidance through its school visitation program. The City will continue to promote the availability of these programs to local schools.

The City also provides its own 'Be Safe around Dogs' and 'Responsible Pet Ownership' programs with regular visits to schools and community groups.

The City will also continue to educate the community that all dogs can attack; ensuring dogs are confined to their property and leashed where required outside their property.

Other messages include breed choice that is appropriate to the dog owner's lifestyle, desexing to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering at large, early socialisation and training of dogs, regular exercise and environmental enrichment at home to relieve pent up energy.

The City will continue to encourage owners of puppies to enrol in obedience, etiquette and puppy preschool and socialisation programs.

The City uses the media to report prosecution results.

Use of the City's website as a promotional tool will be continued, including links to other agencies and useful websites.

The City undertakes an annual subsidised desexing scheme.

It is important to Council that the whole community not just dog owners understand the principles of bite avoidance.

### **Our Current Compliance Activities**

To reduce the risk of dog attacks, City Officers treat complaints about dogs wandering at large as incidents for priority attention. The City also conducts regular patrols to check for dogs that are wandering at large or not complying with the City's requirements in relation to effective control of dogs in public areas.

Proactive targeted patrols are regularly undertaken at popular walk locations.

All incidents are recorded on a database and investigated by trained staff.

The City has employed 2 full time designated Compliance Officers to deal with dog attack, nuisance complaints and education.

Dogs involved in serious attacks are seized, held at the animal shelter until the matter is investigated and enforcement action determined.

Enforcement actions include cautions and fines for minor offences and prosecution before a Magistrate, destruction and declaration of dangerous or menacing dog for serious offences.

All dogs that are declared dangerous, menacing, restricted breed or are euthanased following attack are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.

### **Summary**

Dog attacks on people and other animals continue to be a high priority for the City of Greater Bendigo and are responded to immediately. Serious dog attacks remain a significant risk to the community and are managed accordingly.

With animal services returning from an outsourced service to an in-house program the City now has designated, suitably trained staff assigned the responsibility for the investigation of dog attack. The City has adopted a low tolerance to dog attack and has developed a works program which enables officers to respond to all dog attacks as a matter of urgency.

Dogs that have attacked may be declared dangerous with restrictions placed on their containment, housing and movement outside the owner's property. A dog that has seriously attacked either a person or other animal may be required to be euthanased.

Council has introduced laws to assist in preventing dog attack at public areas. The laws require effective control of dogs in public places and on-leash control at popular walk locations. State laws require dogs to be contained to their owner's property.

The RSPCA have been contracted to provide animal shelter functions on behalf of the City. Part of this role involves unclaimed dogs being temperament tested prior to being rehoused from the shelter. It is important that the City continues to provide resources to undertake proactive patrols to ensure that dogs are contained to their property, given that most dog attacks occur on the property or in direct vicinity.

## OUR PLANS

In light of above, the activities and objectives for the next 4 years are listed below:

Objective 1: Increase awareness of safety around dogs and reduce number of attacks.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue the CoGB Be Safe Around Dogs Program (BSADP).	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Number of children accessing the BSADP program online.
Create a designated dog attack consequence web page which explains the implications for dog and owner if the dog attacks. Also provide information on how to avoid dog bites.	2018	Page created and number of hits recorded.
Continue the City's Responsible Pet Ownership Program.	2017 and ongoing for life of Plan	Number of safety kits distributed to children and number of visits to schools, community groups and children's events.
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (eg: confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc.) through media articles, mail outs, website info, A-frame signage and vehicle signage.	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Reduction in number of dog attacks.
Undertake letter box drops in areas where a dog has attacked.	2017 and for life of the Plan	Increase awareness of dog attack.
Ensure annual audits of properties where dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs are housed and properties where a Magistrate has imposed an order to contain.	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Number of audits/inspections completed.
Review the procedures and associated delegations for destroying a dog, declaring a dog dangerous and declaring a dog menacing.	2017	Procedures Reviewed. Delegation register updated.
Report outcomes of major dog attack prosecutions to local media to raise awareness in the community of the need to report dog attacks and the City's actions in relation to attacks.	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Number of media articles published.

Objective 2: Reduce harassment and wandering by dogs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Consider the creation of additional dog parks and shared use arrangement for exercising dogs off leash with view to making application for future budget bids.	2018	Budget bid and business case considered by Council.
Review the off leash laws ( <i>providing Council introduces additional dog exercise areas</i> ).	2020	Considered by Council.
Promote the importance of desexing at an early age.	2017	Increase in number of desexed dogs on database.
Identify and patrol properties where containment is not sufficient and other high risk areas.	2017 and Ongoing	Increased compliance.
Benchmark data of dog attack against previous years to identify trends or useful information.	2017	Reduction in number of attacks from previous year.
Educate the community about dog confinement and penalties for owners not keeping their dog confined.	2017	Quantity of materials distributed.
Use media to educate the community on the importance of preventing their dog from wandering.	2018	Reduction in wandering dog complaints.

## ***Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs***

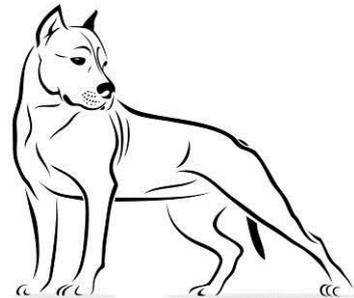
The Domestic Animals Act provides that Council must outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs in the district and to ensure that these dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations.

**Restricted Breed Dogs (RBD's)** are five specific breeds of dogs that are considered a higher risk to community safety than other breeds of dogs.

In 2003 the Government introduced Restricted Breed Dog Legislation into Victoria to regulate the ownership and keeping of dogs whose importation is prohibited under the Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956 of the Commonwealth.

The following dog breeds are restricted:-

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



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

The State Government has developed a Standard for identifying Restricted Breed Dogs and all dogs fitting the Standard including **part breeds**, except where exemptions are given by the Standard, are considered a Restricted Breed Dog. RBDs not registered prior to 30 September 2011 are not allowed to be kept in Victoria.

At June 2015 the City had a total of 17 Dangerous and Menacing Dogs and 3 Restricted Breed Dogs. (Pit Bulls)

The State Government is currently holding a Parliamentary Inquiry into Restricted Breed Legislation and has imposed a moratorium on the destruction of Restricted Breed Dogs until the Inquiry and the consideration of its recommendations is completed.

The Government will be considering evidence from dog attack victims, dog owners, breed experts and organisations including RSPCA and Australian Veterinary Association to try and determine the best ways of stopping dog attacks.

## Prescribed Requirements for Keeping RBDs

- Desexing
- Microchip identification
- Warning signs on property
- Muzzled and on leash outside property
- Must wear a prescribed collar at all times
- Registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Register (VDDR)
- Housed in an enclosure or secured yard
- Annual inspection by a City Officer
- Requirement to notify the City of change of address, ownership or if the dog dies or goes missing
- Higher rate of registration with no pension concession
- Harsh penalties (Crimes Act) for attacking a person, including 10 years jail if the dog kills a person or 5 years jail if the dog endangers someone's life.

A dog is considered a **Dangerous Dog** regardless of its breed or actions if:

- It is left to guard non-residential premises, or
- It has been trained to attack or bite a person or clothing attached to or worn by a person.

Any dog, regardless of its breed or size, can be declared Dangerous if the dog has:-

- Attacked and bitten a person or other animal and caused serious injury, or
- Has menaced people more than once.

## Prescribed Requirements for Keeping a Dangerous Dog

These are similar to RBD requirements, except different colour signs and they also must be in an enclosure on a residential property (not secured yard) or within prescribed perimeter fencing when guarding non residential property.

A dog can be declared **Menacing** if the dog causes a non-serious bite injury to a person or animal, or the dog rushes at, or chases a person in an aggressive manner.

The City may require a declared Menacing Dog to be muzzled when outside the owner's premises to prevent the dog from being able to bite. The City may also require the dog to be under effective control of a person by means of a chain, cord or leash whenever it is outside the owner's premises.

A Menacing Dog Declaration can be upgraded to a Dangerous Dog Declaration if the owner of the Menacing Dog has been issued with two infringement notices for failing to comply with requirements such as leashing or muzzling their dog while in public places.

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

Council has delegated the provisions to destroy a Dangerous or Restricted Breed Dog under certain circumstances to the Manager Parking & Animal Services.

Council has also delegated the DAA provisions to declare a dog Dangerous or Menacing to the Manager Parking & Animal Services.

Council has also delegated the s17 DAA provisions to register/refuse to register a Restricted Breed Dog to Manager Parking & Animal Services.

The City has several documented processes in relation to dealing with Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs including:-

- Dog Attack Procedure
- Dangerous and Restricted Breed Dogs Inspection Procedure
- Dog Seizure and Return Procedure
- Destruction Procedure
- Dangerous Dog Declaration Procedure
- Menacing Dog Declaration Procedure
- Procedure for Prosecuting Dog Attack
- Dog Seizure Procedure
- Issuing of Infringements Procedure
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- Dealing with Difficult People Procedure.

There must be a minimum of two Officers present when visiting properties where Dangerous Dogs are kept or when visiting remote properties.

## **Our Current Education / Promotion Activities**

Our main approaches to education are:

- Website information (brochures & fact sheets)
- Use of State Government Dangerous Dog Hotline - 1300 101 080
- Checking of industrial areas for guard dogs
- Updating of the Victorian Declared Dog Register (VDDR) in relation to Declared and Restricted Breed Dogs
- All owners of Dangerous and Restricted Breed Dogs are made aware of their obligations under the Act.

## **Our Current Compliance Activities**

The City has implemented a formal registration and annual audit program for all properties where Dangerous or Restricted Breed Dogs reside. In addition, unscheduled checks are undertaken.

The City's Compliance Officers are trained in identifying Restricted Breed Dogs.

City Officers regularly inspect industrial areas for dogs that are kept for guarding purposes.

All Dangerous and Restricted Breed Dogs are placed on the Victorian Declared Dog Register. Any serious breaches of audit requirements are dealt with by enforcement actions. The City is quite strict with these requirements. Dogs that are not Declared Dangerous or Menacing but have been involved in a serious incident and have been euthanased on request of the owner are also placed on the register.

Registration for Dangerous and Restricted Breed Dogs attract a higher annual registration fee.

## Summary

Restricted Breed, Menacing and Declared Dangerous Dogs are not a significant problem within the City of Greater Bendigo. City staff regularly review and update the Declared Dog Registry and monitor the recorded dogs to ensure the Domestic Animals Act requirements are being adhered to.

Annual audits will be undertaken routinely and any issues of non-compliance will be addressed accordingly, throughout the life of the Plan.

## OUR PLANS

In light of above, the activities and objectives for the next 4 years are listed below:

Objective - To reduce the risk of dog attack by ensuring that all Declared Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs are kept in compliance with the Domestic Animals Act requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Respond to complaints regarding Menacing, Dangerous and Restricted Breed dogs as a matter of priority.	Ongoing for life of the Plan	All complaints actioned in accordance with Customer Service Charter.
Ensure all Declared Dogs are accurately registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.	Ongoing for life of the Plan	Accuracy of data.
Ensure that all properties where Declared and Restricted Breed Dogs are kept are audited annually.	Ongoing for life of the Plan	All relevant properties audited annually.
Review policies and delegations in relation to declaring a dog Dangerous or Menacing.	2017	Review completed. Policies and delegation register updated.
Inspect industrial properties where guard dogs may be kept.	Ongoing for life of the Plan	The number of properties inspected annually.
Provide information on the web about what is a Declared Dog.	2017	Web site updated.
Benchmark data of dog attack against previous years to identify trends or useful information.	2018	Results analysed.

## ***Overpopulation and High Euthanasia***

Registration is seen as a solution to reduce high euthanasia rates as registered dogs and cats are almost always reunited with their owners, if picked up by City staff. However, registration and identification of ownership is essential to enable the successful return of these animals.

The City's promotion of registration requirements has a strong emphasis on the return of lost pets as a key reason to register.

The City also believes that encouraging the purchase of desexed and microchipped animals from pet shops, pounds and shelters will have a positive impact on reducing the number of dogs and cats euthanased each year.

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

### Lost and Unwanted Animals



The City has recently renewed the contract for pound services. All lost and unwanted animals are taken to the City's Pound/RSPCA Shelter in Pipers Lane, East Bendigo. Dogs and cats caught whilst wandering or lost are held for 8 days to be claimed by the owner and a release fee is payable. Any dog or cat which is impounded and is not claimed within the 8 day time period becomes the property of RSPCA and may be sold or destroyed.

Only dogs and cats that pass the temperament tests and veterinarian check are rehoused.

All animals impounded must be implanted with a microchip and registered to their owner prior to their release. All animals sold from the shelter must also be vaccinated and desexed.

The RSPCA takes responsibility for the care, maintenance and all costs and profits from sales associated with dogs and cats taken to the shelter by City staff or members of the public.

Council's, Keeping of Animals, Local Law 2 regulates the number of animals that can be kept at a property.

### **General Policies**

- All cats & dogs over 3 months of age must be registered
- All cats & dogs being registered for the first time must be microchipped
- Seized Animals Guidelines (RSPCA)
- Deceased Dog and Cat Removal Procedure
- After Hours Response Procedure
- Destruction Procedure
- Dog Seizure and Return Procedure
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

## **Our Current Education / Promotion Activities**

Media releases promoting responsible pet ownership, benefits of early age desexing and issues relating to breeding are placed in local newspapers, on the City's website and in Greater Bendigo News.



- The City currently provides a number of pet owners with discount vouchers on the cost of desexing each year. The City also provides subsidised microchipping events each year
- Reduced registration fee for desexed animals (approximately 1/3 of full cost)
- Animals listed on the RSPCA adoption page
- All dogs and cats taken to the shelter are listed on a lost and found database
- Readily accessible information through brochures and fact sheets from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources relating to animal keeping
- Presentations at community group meetings and primary schools.

## **Our Current Compliance Activities**

- Loaning of humane trigger plate traps under strict guidelines for residents to trap feral and trespassing domestic cats (free service)
- Active patrols to impound wandering dogs
- Investigate all reports of animal hoarding
- Investigate all reports of backyard breeders
- Enforcement of the sunset to sunrise cat curfew
- All animals impounded are implanted with a microchip and registered to their owner prior to their release
- All dogs and cats rehoused from the shelter are also desexed prior to release
- Issuing of caution and infringement notices for dogs and cats found at large and follow up of registration and identification requirements.

## Summary

The City of Greater Bendigo traditionally has low rates of animal euthanasia for impounded dogs with most of the animals able to be returned to their owner or being rehoused. The euthanasia rates for cats are higher due to it not being possible to rehouse a lot of the feral and diseased cats which have been humanely trapped. Less than 10% of the 1,100 cats that came into the pound over the past 12 months were registered.

For the 2014/2015 period, 5% of impounded dogs and 32% of cats were euthanased. This is an improvement from 2012 where 5% of dogs and 41% of cats were euthanased.

The reduction is evidence that the desexing and microchipping programs are working and the removal of the State Government 28 day rule has also increased shelter adoptions as it provides them a longer time frame to rehouse the animals.

The cat traps available for loan, subsidised desexing and microchipping initiatives have all been well received by the community.

The City will continue to encourage residents to surrender unwanted pets to the animal shelter rather than abandoning them and will continually strive to improve euthanasia and over population rates throughout the life of this Plan. This will involve working with the community to try and decrease the number of entire dogs and cats in the municipality.

The City will also attempt to identify animal hoarders to work with them to reduce the number of animals being kept and subsequent unwanted numbers being bred.

## OUR PLANS

In light of above, the activities and objectives for the next 4 years are listed below:

Objective - Work with the community to further reduce euthanasia rates for impounded cats and dogs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate the possibility of implementing Section 84Y Agreements with local Vets to enable them to contact owners of animals.	2019	Number of agreements implemented.
Promote the RSPCA Animal Shelter Adoption Program.	2018	Number of animals adopted.
Benchmark our euthanasia data against previous years to identify trends or useful information.	2018	Results analysed.
Actively promote desexing of dogs and cats.	2017 and for the life of the Plan	The number of animals desexed as part of the promotions.
Continue to support the AVA and MAV subsidised desexing for pets of low income earners.	Ongoing	The number of animals desexed as part of the scheme.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to provide cheaper registration for desexed cats and dogs.	Ongoing	An increase in the number of desexed animals registered.
Continue to offer subsidised microchipping events.	Ongoing	Number of new registrations resulting from the event.
Increase the number of animals registered with the City so that they can be returned to their owner.	Ongoing	An increase of a minimum of 2% in total number of dogs and cats registered each year.

## ***Domestic Animal Businesses***

The City of Greater Bendigo has a number of registered Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs). These businesses operate under approved Codes of Practice and are subject to regular audit.

Under the provisions of the Domestic Animal Act 1994 a Domestic Animal Business is:

- An animal shelter (welfare organisations such as the RSPCA and The Lost Dogs' Home);
- A Council pound (operated by the Council or a contractor on behalf of Council);
- A pet shop;
- A dog and/or cat breeding establishment where there are three or more fertile females and the proprietor is not a member of an applicable organisation. If the proprietor is a member of an applicable organisation they are allowed up to nine fertile females;
- A dog training establishment (where the business is run for profit); or
- An establishment that is rearing dogs or cats (where the business is run for profit); or
- A dog and/or cat boarding establishment (where the business is run for profit to provide overnight, day-care or homecare boarding).

### **Our Current Data**

At June 2015 the City had a total of 17 registered Domestic Animal Businesses including:

- 2 breeding & rearing establishments
- 3 shelters & pounds
- 6 boarding establishments
- 6 pet shops

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

- Local Law 2 limits the number of animals that can be kept at a property without a permit – 2 dogs, 2 cats
- All Domestic Animal Businesses are audited annually
- Forms for registration and information are provided on the City's website and at City offices.
- The Compliance and Enforcement Policy guides enforcement action
- All cats and dogs over 3 months of age must be registered
- All cats and dogs being registered for the first time must be microchipped

- There must be two officers present when visiting remote (or previously difficult) businesses
- Council has delegated to the Manager Parking and Animal Services the DAA provisions relating to DAB's including:
  - To refuse to register or renew the registration of a premises; or
  - Refuse to transfer the registration to a new premises; or
  - Suspend the registration of a premises; or
  - Impose terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on the registration of a premises; or
  - Revoke the registration of a premise.

### **Our Current Education / Promotion Activities**

The main approaches to education are through the local newspapers.

All DABs are provided with the relevant Codes of Practice and fact sheets.

Fact sheets are also available on the web.

Promotion of responsible pet purchase by encouraging purchasing through a registered business.

### **Our Current Compliance Activities**

The City has implemented a registration and annual audit program for all registered DABs.

City Officers follow up any non-compliance issues and conduct patrols for new non-registered DABs.

There are regular online and local paper checks undertaken to search for non-registered DABs.

Local papers are also monitored to ensure that they display the message that it is illegal to advertise a dog or cat without a microchip number.

City Officers also follow up all s13 notifications of animals sold or given away by DABs.

Compliance staff investigate all reports of animal hoarding and backyard breeders.

### **Summary**

The City of Greater Bendigo has a variety of Domestic Animal Businesses, however fortunately the City continues to have low non-compliance issues which allows the annual registration and audit programs to continue with low impact on regular animal management activities.

There are approved Codes of Practice for the operation of breeding and rearing establishments, boarding establishments, shelters and pounds. Pet shops are also included. City staff undertake regular audits against these codes.

Greyhound Racing Victorian administers the codes in relation to greyhound keeping.

The Animal Services staff will continue to work with the Planning staff to ensure all new planning permit applications for animal related businesses are flagged with Animal Services for registration where required and assessed for compliance with the relevant codes.

## OUR PLANS

In light of above, the activities and objectives for the next 4 years are listed below:

Objective - Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality and ensure that they are in compliance with the Domestic Animals Act.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses annually.	2017 and ongoing for the life of the Plan	100% of registered DABs inspected annually.
Investigate any reports/complaints of unregistered DAB within 48 hours.	Ongoing	Number of reports actions.
Provide relevant Code of Practice to proprietors of existing and proposed DABs.	Ongoing	Relevant information distributed.
Distribute fact sheets in relation to DAB's and information on website.	2017	Website updated.
Provide a list of all registered DABs on website.	2017	Website updated.
Monitor newspapers and online advertisements to identify unregistered businesses.	Ongoing	Number of new businesses identified and registered.
Work with Planning staff to ensure all new planning permit applications for animal related businesses are flagged with animal services for registration where required.	2017	Number of new businesses identified and registered.
Distribute fact sheets in relation to DABs to all properties with an excess animals permit.	2018	Number of fact sheets distributed.

## ***Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting***

The City of Greater Bendigo has a comprehensive business planning and monitoring system in place with designated industry software to assist in undertaking reporting and monitoring of strategic plans. The City produces an Annual Report each year which is distributed to the community.

The actions within the Plan will be aligned with the Council Plan and Parking and Animals Services Business Plan to ensure a strategic approach to animal management is undertaken.

There is no additional budget for the initial implementation of the Plan. However the following aspects of the Plan would require funding through the budget process in future years if adopted:

- Provision of additional dog parks (new budget allocation to create park)
- Undertaking a pet expo (new budget allocation)
- Ongoing training and development of staff (operational budget)
- Continuing with Be Safe Around Dogs and Responsible Pet Ownership Programs (operational budget)
- Continuing with dog and cat desexing vouchers and subsidised microchipping. (operational budget)

### **Our Current Council Policies and Procedures**

Under the provisions of the DAA s68A (3) every Council must:

- (a) Review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the Plan;
- (b) Provide the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources' Secretary with a copy of the Plan and any amendments to the Plan;
- (c) Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan in its annual report.

This will be Council's third Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP). Council first adopted a Domestic Animal Management Plan in 2008. The 2008 Plan was the first formal approach to service delivery and animal management initiatives and guided service delivery for the period 2008 – 2012. Council adopted a new DAMP in 2013 for the period 2013 – 2016.

### **Performance Indicators**

City of Greater Bendigo domestic animal management will continue to be reviewed against the following key performance indicators. A number of these indicators are reported in the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework. Infringement activity is reported to the Attorney Generals Department and general service activity is reported in the City of Greater Bendigo Annual Report each year:-

- Number of dog and cat registrations
- Number of animals desexed

- Number of dogs and cats entering pound
- Number of dogs and cats reclaimed from pound: (% reclaimed/total impounded)
- Number of dogs and cats rehoused from pound: (% rehoused/total impounded)
- Number of dogs and cats euthanased in pound: (% euthanased/total impounded)
- Number of dog complaints (requests for service), per 1,000 population
- Number of cat complaints (requests for service), per 1,000 population
- Number of dog attacks causing injury per 1,000 population
- Enforcement success rate: (% successful prosecutions/total prosecutions)
- Number of infringement notices: (by type)
- Declared dog compliance rates: (Number declared/number compliant/number of audits)
- Response times for service delivery.

## OUR PLANS

Every year, a Service Plan will be developed by the Manager Parking & Animal Services that provides a detailed timeline, list of actions and budget for actions and initiatives identified in the DAMP for that year.

Objective - To evaluate the implementation of the Plan annually to ensure compliance with the Domestic Animals Act, s68A (3).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct annual review of Domestic Animal Management Plan.	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Ensure the content of the Plan is current and meets the current needs of the community and legislative requirements.
Update Plan as required.	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Provide the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources with a copy of the Plan, including any amendments.
Align the Plan with the Parking and Animals Services Business Plan and Council Plan.	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Alignment undertaken.
Report on implementation of the Plan in the Annual Report.	2017 and ongoing for life of the Plan	Report completed.