



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THIS PLAN

1.1 Objective and Background

This plan has been developed in accordance with section 68A of the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* and sets out a formalised approach to increase the effectiveness and awareness of domestic animal management within the Latrobe City.

Background

Local Government is primarily the level of government primarily responsible for domestic animal management. In the past this activity was controlled by the former *Dog Act 1970* and, is now under the control of the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* (hereafter referred to as “the Act”).

Section 68A, an amendment to the Act, requires all Victorian councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan at three yearly intervals. This plan must, be reviewed annually and amended as appropriate. A copy of the plan and any subsequent amendments must be provided to the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries. Latrobe City is required to report on the implementation of this plan in its annual report.

Primary Objective

The primary objective is to provide a strategic plan to guide the community towards the goal of responsible pet ownership and to assist Latrobe City to achieve a professional, consistent and proactive approach to domestic animal management practices.

The plan identifies current activities and future actions to address the following issues, as required by Section 68A of the Act:

- identify methods for evaluating animal control services;
- promote and encourage responsible pet ownership;
- ensure compliance with the Act and associated Regulations;
- minimise the risk of dog attacks;
- address the over population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats;
- encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats;
- minimise the potential for nuisance;
- identify dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- review all existing orders and local laws that relate to dogs and cats;
- identify programs for training of authorised animal management officers; and
- provide for the periodic evaluation of programs and service strategies.



1.2 LATROBE CITY - DEMOGRAPHIC AND CITY PROFILE

Latrobe City encompasses an area of 1,422 square kilometres; the City is currently the third largest municipality in regional Victoria with a population of over 70,000. This comprises approximately 70% of the Gippsland region's population.

Latrobe City is made up of four major urban centres: Churchill, Moe/Newborough, Morwell and Traralgon, with smaller townships of Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Tyers, Traralgon South, Yallourn North, and Yinnar.

1.3 ALIGNMENT TO LATROBE 2021 – THE VISION FOR LATROBE VALLEY

Latrobe 2021 is the long-term vision for development of the Latrobe Valley community. A series of strategic objectives and actions have been outlined to achieve the vision of a vibrant region, a caring and enterprising community, a harmonious community, and a sustainable, safe, secure region.

Latrobe 2021 identifies governance as a strategic objective with an associated legislative compliance community outcome:

‘By ensuring adherence to legislative requirements’

This outcome will be achieved through these strategic actions:

- Ensuring compliance with the *Local Government Act 1989*;
- Ensuring compliance with other relevant legislation;
- Continually monitoring and reviewing local laws to ensure they reflect the community's aspirations;
- Ensuring Council decision-making considers adopted Council policies;
- Ensuring Council staff are aware of and comply with the relevant policies and procedures.

This Domestic Animal Management Plan is consistent with this objective, community outcome and the strategic actions.

1.4 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THIS PLAN

Latrobe City's Local Laws Team has developed this Domestic Animal Management Plan. The following table details the process applied in developing and implementing this plan.

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Preparation	Consultation, Research and Data Analysis	Strategic Development <i>(achieved through an Animal Management staff planning session)</i>	Documentation and Communication Prepare plan	Ongoing Performance Monitoring and Evaluation
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Design and plan process 2. Identify information and data resources 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collate and analyse 2. Review of orders, local laws, policies etc 3. Identify local issues 4. Stakeholder - engagement consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contracted Veterinary services - Domestic Animal Businesses - Cross section of Pet owners - Dog and cat clubs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consider issues identified 2. Determine service directions/properties 3. Budget Consideration 4. Action plans 5. Performance indicators 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare draft Plan 2. Council endorsement to seek public comment 3. Invite public comment 4. Adoption by Council 5. Submit to DPI Secretary 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Annual performance review 2. Publish performance review in Council's Annual report 3. Budget consideration 4. Ownership and commitment from AMOs

The Department of Primary Industries' guide 'How to Prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan' recommends 'that councils place a draft Domestic Animal Management Plan [on display] for public comment after 'in-principle' adoption by Council'. Community consultation will be achieved in accordance with Latrobe City's Community Engagement Policy and Strategy. Pet owners and the general community will be engaged through the display of the plan on Council's website and the placement of a public notice seeking submissions on the draft plan. Local industry stakeholders will be engaged through targeted discussions.



2.0 PURPOSE, STRUCTURE AND SERVICE LEVELS

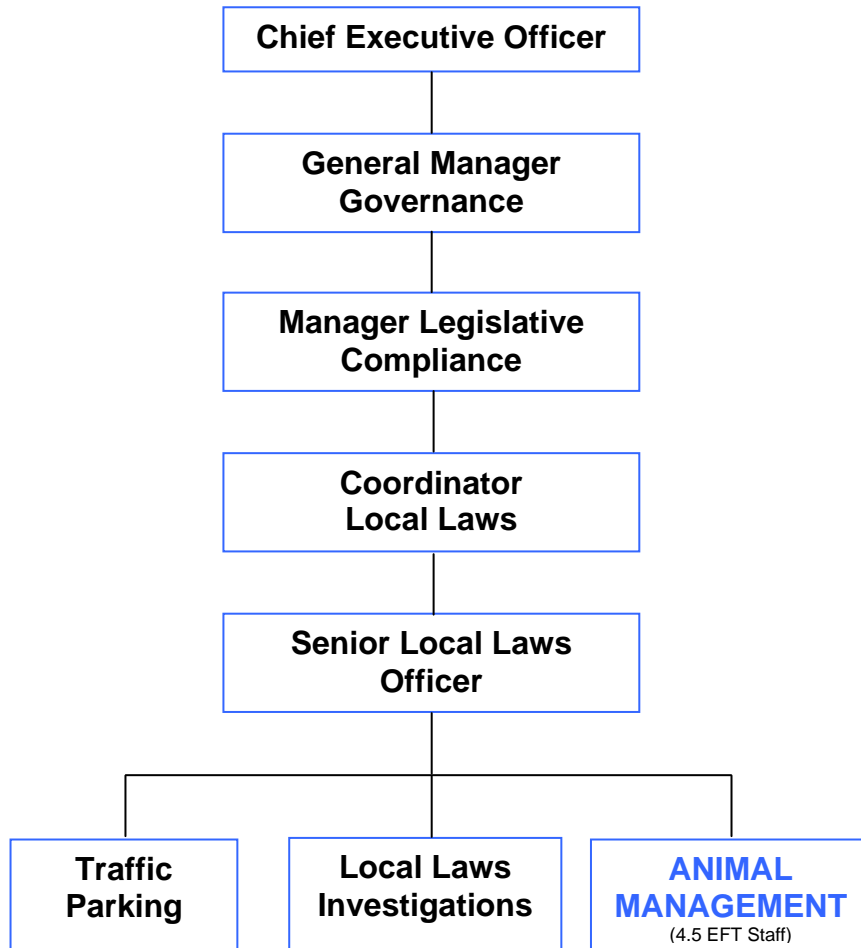
2.1 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The core purposes of the Latrobe City's animal management services are to:

- create an environment where people and pets can peacefully coexist within the community;
- inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible pet ownership;
- ensure that the needs of the wider community are reflected through Latrobe City's domestic animal management policies;
- provide a specialised response service to deal with wandering, aggressive or nuisance animals;
- care for impounded animals in a humane manner in a hygienic and safe environment;
- attempt to reunite impounded pets with their owners or to rehouse with a suitable new owner;
- provide specialist advice to Latrobe City in animal management matters; and
- regulate and support domestic animal businesses.

2.2 LATROBE CITY - ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STAFFING AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

The following chart identifies Latrobe City's Animal Management Service within the organisational structure.





2.3 CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES - SERVICE LEVELS

Latrobe City's Animal Management team administers and provides a broad range of services to ensure that Latrobe City meets its legislative responsibilities relating to the management of domestic animals. They include but are not limited to:

- providing advice on domestic animal matters;
- dealing with and investigating customer requests;
- educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership;
- management of Latrobe City's domestic animal pound facility;
- maintaining a domestic animal register;
- impounding of wandering, unwanted/surrendered and/or feral dogs and cats;
- undertaking registration door knocks;
- administration and control of dangerous and restricted breed dogs for compliance with legislation;
- investigate dog attacks;
- providing a 24hour 7 day a week service, incorporating an after-hours emergency service;
- inspection and registration of domestic animal businesses; and
- develop and maintain partnerships with organisations such as Save-a-dog scheme(SADS), veterinary clinics and other stakeholders.

Latrobe City Council recognises that pets are an integral part of many people's lives and is actively seeking new and innovative ways to support pet owners and to harness the recognised health and social benefits of responsible pet ownership.

Current Programs and Service

Service Level

Animal Management Team

Consists of 4.5 dedicated (EFTs) Animal Management officers. Due to the inclusion of several new service initiatives (i.e. Pound website, Save a Dog Scheme (SADS), and centralised pound) it was identified that there was a need for a more specific and specialised approach to animal management within Latrobe City. The formation of this team allowed for progression and evolution of animal management practices and continuous service improvements from dedicated staff members suited to these roles.



Identification and Registration

Latrobe City annually produces and mails out registration renewal notices prior to 10 April each year. Any renewals not received by the due date are followed up with a reminder notice advising of penalties for failing to register a dog or cat. Registration renewal forms are also used as a tool to advertise current legislative changes i.e. requirement to register dog/cat by age 3 months instead of 6 months and compulsory micro chipping for all new dog/cat registrations. The registration renewal notice is also utilised to incorporate inserts such as “Doggy Doo” flyer. New registrations applications are available at Latrobe City service centres at Moe, Morwell and Traralgon and via Latrobe City’s website and through Veterinary Clinics and the pound facility.

Latrobe City Managed Pound Facility

Until recently, Latrobe City’s pound facilities were located in Moe, Morwell and Traralgon. As Moe and Traralgon no longer complied with the Code of Practice, the Moe facility was closed in 2005 and Traralgon 2006 and Latrobe City now operates a centralised and code compliant facility in Morwell. Adoptions are available from this facility.

Pound Open Times

Latrobe City’s Domestic Animal Pound is open to the public from 9am to 9.30am and 4.30pm to 5pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) and at other times by appointment.

Registration Domestic Animal businesses

Latrobe City currently has 15 registered domestic animal businesses and produces and posts out registration renewal notices each year for these businesses and conducts annual inspections in relation to compliance with codes of practice. New registration applications are received and processed in line with the code of practice.

Identification and Registration- doorknock campaigns

Reactive doorknocks occur at present and streets are targeted based on complaints received and/or as staffing levels allow.



Domestic animal complaints	Dependent on the nature of the complaint, response can range from immediate action to three days in line with Latrobe City's customer service request notification system. Complaints are prioritised according to nature of complaint and urgency of the matter.
Dangerous Dogs complaints/Restricted Breeds	These complaints have a high priority and are investigated depending on nature and severity of incident, usually resulting in immediate action but certainly within three days.
Routine street patrols	Street patrols are conducted and are targeted based on complaints in relation to animals.
Micro-chipping	In the past Latrobe City has run a micro chipping week in association with its contracted veterinary services. The micro chipping week has been so successful that the program is now run twice a year. During this period Microchips are offered at the discounted cost of \$30 per implant.
Compulsory Desexing	Latrobe City Council resolved under Section 10 of the <i>Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animal Act 1994</i> that all dogs and cats being registered for the first time after 10 April 2008 must be desexed.
School information sessions on responsible pet ownership	Animal Management Officers attend schools when invited and provide advice on responsible pet ownership.



Media/Public Relations

Latrobe City has a regular weekly forum timeslot with Gippsland FM and animal related topics are discussed at least 3 times per year. Latrobe City also publishes a quarterly “LINK” magazine distributed within Latrobe City which normally features a responsible pet ownership message. Latrobe City issues press releases on varying animal topics including notification of animal registration and micro chipping requirements, advertises micro chipping week and targets other locally identified “hot topics” as the need arises. Animal Management Officers participate in local community information events and local Veterinary open days.

Impound Register/Website

Latrobe City has operated for approximately 18 months an online impound register where the community and dog/cat owners can view impounded animals via our webpage. This webpage serves as a dual function that incorporates a public access point for the recovery and rehousing of impounded animals and also serves as a secure electronic impound register controlled by animal management staff. This impound register provides the public with photos and basic information and the secure impound register incorporates detailed information solely for the use of animal management staff. The impound website register continues to be one of the highest viewed pages on Latrobe City Council’s website.

Save a Dog Scheme (Section 81 Agreement)

In October, 2006 Latrobe City entered into an agreement with SADS for the purpose of rehousing suitable unwanted/unclaimed dogs from the pound. This has resulted in over 300 dogs being rehoused between October 2006 and June 2008, which would have otherwise been euthanised.



Rehousing of Cats incentive	Latrobe City's fee for rehousing a cat from the pound was reduced in July 2007 from \$200 to \$100 and includes all rehousing requirements in accordance with the Code of Practice. The cost of rehousing a cat is significantly higher than \$100 however Latrobe City has set this charge in an effort to reduce the number of euthanised cats.
Cat Curfew	Latrobe City has by resolution implemented a Cat Curfew period of 9.00pm to 6.00am.
Vehicle fleet	Latrobe City has code compliant vehicles for the purpose of transporting dogs and cats. These vehicles are purpose built and are highly visible with Latrobe City's logo and contact information displayed.

2.4 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA

The 1998 Bureau of Animal Welfare statistics (the most recent available at present) estimated that:

- 40% of households owned one or more dogs at an average of 1.44 dogs/household; and
- 26% of households owned one or more cats at an average of 1.47 cats/household.

With 33,000 residential dwellings in Latrobe City the estimate populations are:

- estimated Dog Population: $(40/100 \times 33,000) \times 1.44$ dogs = ~19,000
- estimated Cat Population: $(26/100 \times 33,000) \times 1.47$ cats = ~12,600

The following chart provides key statistics for Latrobe City compared with another Victorian Council and the state average.
























KEY STATISTICS	LATROBE CITY (June 2008)	LIKE COUNCIL BALLARAT (June 2008)	STATE AVERAGE (2006)
Population	71,703	88,473	
Area	1,422 sq km	740sq km	
No. EFT Authorised Animal Management Control Officers	4	3.5	
Hours training per officer annually	30	As required	
Estimated dog population	~19,000	21,500	
No. Registered dogs	13560	15,500	64%
Estimated cat population	~12,600	13,500	
No. Registered cats	4,454	6,500	41%
No. of Infringement notices issued	366	Confidential	
No. of impounded dogs	1,137	1,397	
No. of dogs returned to owner	710 (62%)	871 (62%)	55%
No. of dogs rehoused/Save-a-Dog Scheme	291 (25%)	96 (7%)	13%
No. of dogs euthanised	136 (12%)	430 (31%)	32%
No. of impounded cats	569	1,218	
No. of cats returned to owner	40	74	

KEY STATISTICS	LATROBE CITY (June 2008)	LIKE COUNCIL BALLARAT (June 2008)	STATE AVERAGE (2006)
No. of cats rehoused	41 (7%)	Not known	15%
No. of cats euthanised	488 (86%)	Not known	75%
No. Restricted/Declared Dogs	0 Dangerous 1 Guard Dog 19 Restricted 8 Menacing	1 Dangerous 12 Guard Dogs 3 Restricted 1 Menacing	N/A





















NOTE: The Act requires that a comparison be made with a similar council and the regional City of Ballarat was selected due to the comparative population.

3.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

This section sets out the strategic directions for Latrobe City’s animal management function. The table below reconciles the specific requirements of the Act with the plan’s structure.

Specific Act Requirements	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.0
S.68A(2)(a) Method of monitoring performance and evaluating the effectiveness of services							
S.68A(2)(b) Training of authorised officers							
S.68A(2)(c)(i) Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership							
S.68A(2)(c)(ii) Ensure compliance with Act and regulations							
S.68A(2)(c)(iii) Minimise risk of dog attacks							
S.68A(2)(c)(iv) Over-population and high euthanasia rates							
S.68A(2)(c)(v) Encourage Registration and Identification of cats and Dogs							
S.68A(2)(c)(vi) Minimise potential for nuisance							



Specific Act Requirements (cont'd)	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	4.0
S.68A(2)(c)(vii) Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs							
S.68A(2)(d) Review of Orders and Local Laws							
S.68A(2)(e) Any other matters							
S.68A(2)(f) Periodic Evaluation of programs, services and Strategies							
S.68A(3)(a) Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan							

3.1 ANIMAL MANAGEMENT OFFICER (AMO) TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to proactively, consistently and professionally carry out their work.

Latrobe City’s current AMO Training and Development activities include:

- regular in-house training sessions including investigations, animal control/welfare, use of animal equipment and vehicles;
- Bureau of Animal Welfare training days;
- mentoring from experienced senior staff;
- traineeships;
- workshops provided by Latrobe City’s veterinary contractors and other qualified persons in relation to animal handling and microchip scanning technique;
- attendance at Australian Animal Management Conference in October, 2007; and
- personal safety training and basic first aid.

Action Plans and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	WHEN
Animal Management Officer (AMO) Training			
3.1 Initiative 1:	3.1.1 Attend Bureau of Animal Welfare Regional Training Seminar	Local Laws Coordinator	ongoing
	3.1.2 AMOs to attend workshop with Latrobe City’s contracted veterinarians	Local Laws Coordinator	yearly
	3.1.3 Development of closer liaison with surrounding municipality AMOs	AMO	ongoing
	3.1.4 AMOs to complete Certificate 4 Animal Control	Local Laws Coordinator	June 2009



3.2 ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP – COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Objective:

To encourage dog and cat owners to manage their pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others and to comply with legislative requirements.

Latrobe City's current education activities and programs aimed at promoting responsible pet ownership include:

- responsible pet ownership education in specific press releases and advertisements;
- Latrobe City publishes a three times a year magazine "LINK" which regularly addresses domestic animal issues and is distributed throughout the municipality;
- attending a Saturday morning community radio session with Gippsland FM approximately three times per year;
- inserting responsible pet ownership brochures, such as "doggy doo" in registration renewal notices;
- attending schools to discuss responsible pet ownership when invited;
- active involvement in community forums and community events promoting responsible pet ownership; and
- attending veterinary clinics' open days and micro chipping weeks to advise pet owners on responsible pet ownership.

Action Plans and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	WHEN
Encourage responsible pet Ownership – Community education			
3.2 Initiative 2:	3.2.1 Latrobe City to run pet event (Tentatively named 'Pets on the Green')	Local Laws/Events AMOs	2009/2010
	3.2.2 Specific radio slot regarding micro chipping, desexing and registration requirements	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs	Commenced March 2008
	3.2.3 Information caravan visits to smaller rural towns within municipality	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs/Local Laws	2008/2009
	3.2.4 Implement Council resolution for the desexing of all dogs/cats registered for the first time.	Coordinator Local Laws Local Laws/AMOs	Commenced April 2008
	3.2.5 Write to all schools in Latrobe City offering presentations on responsible pet ownership.	Coordinator Local Laws	31 November 2008

3.3 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Objective:

To maximise the number of registered and identifiable dogs and cats.

Latrobe City's current identification and registration activities include:

- issuing identification tags and registration renewal notices;
- advertising and administers discount micro chipping week(s) held in conjunction with Latrobe City's contracted veterinarians;
- doorknocking "hot spot" areas or areas where complaints have been received in relation to registration requirements;
- advertising in local newspapers and radio; and
- requiring compulsory micro chipping of all dogs and cats within the municipality (by Council resolution on 4 December 2006).

Action Plans and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	WHEN
Identification and Registration			
3.3 Initiative 3	3.3.1 Conduct comprehensive doorknock registration campaign in Moe Morwell, Traralgon and Churchill.	Coordinator Local Laws	May 2009 to June 2010
	3.3.2 Conduct discount micro chipping week	AMOs/Vets	Each year in March and November
	3.3.3 Specific radio slot with Gippsland FM focusing on registration and micro chipping.	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs	as required
	3.3.4 Implement and review Council's compulsory micro resolution relation chipping and desexing.	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs	Commenced in to April 2008 Review by 30 June 2009



3.4 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT - LOCAL LAWS AND ORDERS

Objective:

To maximise compliance with domestic animal laws, orders and regulations (State and Local).

Latrobe City's current enforcement activities include:

- issuing of infringement notices for all offences where possible;
- impounding wandering dogs and cats;
- serving notices to comply for minor breaches of the law;
- investigating all complaints in a timely manner; and
- investigating and attending to any concerns relating to dogs/cats creating a nuisance.

Council currently has the following Orders in place:

- cat curfew 9.00pm to 6.00am

Latrobe City's Local Law No. 2 provisions relating to domestic animals are as follows:

- Section 146 (1) no more than two dogs/two cats to be kept on residential properties;
- Section 146(2) no more than three dogs/two cats to be kept on rural/farmland properties;
- Section 146 (10) dogs must be leashed in a built up area;
- Section 146 (10) dogs must be leashed unless within a designated dog unleashing area; and
- Section 155 owners must remove animal faeces in a public place.

Council Resolutions:

- compulsory micro chipping requirement for all dogs and cats within this municipality by 10 April, 2009
- compulsory desexing for all dogs and cats registered for the first time (unless member of applicable organisation or registered as Domestic Animal Business or upon veterinary advice) effective from 10 April 2008.

Action Plans and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	WHEN
Compliance and Enforcement – Local Laws and Orders			
3.4 Initiative 4	3.4.1 Review all dog and cat provisions in Council's Local Law No. 2	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs	2008/2009
	3.4.2 Review Cat Curfew Order	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs	2008/2009
	3.4.3 Draft a procedure in relation to barking dogs	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs	2008/2009

3.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

Objective:

To work in partnership with the 15 registered domestic animal businesses to ensure that compliance is achieved.

This objective will be achieved by:

- yearly audits of registered businesses and new businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant Codes of Practice;
- ad-hoc inspections and visits; and
- providing information and advice;

In addition, reports of any unregistered/backyard breeders will be investigated in a timely manner.

These programs are directed at providing support to these businesses and to ensure compliance with relevant Codes of Practice.

Action Plans and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	WHEN
Domestic Animal Business			
3.5 Initiative 5	3.5.1 Run a Domestic Animal Business workshop for current and prospective proprietors.	Coordinator Local Laws AMOs	2009



3.6 DECLARED DOGS

Objective:

To minimise the risks of dog attack to the community from dangerous dogs.

On 30 June 2008, Latrobe City had 9 declared dogs and 19 restricted breed dogs. Current activities aimed at minimising the risk to the broader community from declared dangerous, restricted breed and menacing dogs include:

- declaring all identified dangerous/menacing dogs in line with the Act;
- investigating individual complaints regarding restricted breeds; and
- ensuring owners of declared or restricted breed dogs are fully informed of their requirements under the Act.

Action Plans and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS:	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	WHEN
Declared Dogs			
3.6 Initiative 6	3.6.1 Patrol commercial/industrial areas to identify guard dogs on premises	AMOs	from March 2008
	3.6.2 Ensure that all dogs declared are recorded on Victorian Declared Dog Registry	AMOs	ongoing



4.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 OUR PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATIONS PROCESS

Latrobe City will monitor the performance of the animal management services detailed in this plan by:

- performance reporting will be achieved through Latrobe City's business plan reporting system; and
- performance outcomes will be published in Latrobe City's Annual Report as required by the Act.

4.2 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPIs: (indicative)	Target 2008/2009	Current
1. Number of Dogs Registered per annum	+10% p/a	13567
2. Number of Cats Registered per annum	+10% p/a	4454
3. Number of registered Dogs Micro chipped	+10% p/a	5243
4. Number of registered Cats Micro chipped	+10% p/a	914
5. Number of registered Dogs Desexed	+10% p/a	6085
6. Number of registered Cats Desexed	+10% p/a	3424
7. Dog Rehousing Rate: (per month)	19	18
8. Cat Rehousing Rate: (per month)	3	2

4.3 REVIEW CYCLE/DATE FOR THIS PLAN

This plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Coordinator Local Laws. In addition the Animal Management team will evaluate the action plans quarterly to monitor progress and issues arising. Any concerns or issues identified requiring amendment to the plan as a result of these reviews shall be referred to the Manager Legislative Compliance.

5.0 OTHER REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- Council resolution for compulsory Desexing and Micro chipping (Council meeting 4 December 2006)
- Council resolution for dog off leash areas (Council meeting 7 August 2006)
- Council resolution for cat curfew (Council meeting 19 June 1996)
- Local Law No. 2/2007

