



Bass Coast Shire Council

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2008 - 2010

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviation	Term	Description
AMO	Animal Management Officer	Community Safety Ranger
BAM	Bureau of Animal Management	Department of Primary Industry
DPI	Department of Primary Industry	Department of Primary Industry
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals	
AVA	Australian Veterinary Association	Governing Body
CSRTL	Community Safety Rangers Team Leader	
CSRAO	Community Safety Rangers Administration Officer	

I. Introduction and Context of Plan

The State Government has amended provisions of the Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 (“the Act”) to further improve animal management in Victoria. Councils in Victoria are now required by legislation to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan. The Bass Coast Shire Council supports this strategic approach and has developed this plan in accordance with the legislative guidelines.

The Bass Coast Shire’s Plan has sought to balance the competing needs of animal owners, the broader community and the animals that share people’s lives. Council also recognises the positive health and wellbeing outcomes that arise from pet ownership. The programs and activities set out in this Plan have been developed with the aim to encourage more people to enjoy the pleasure derived from animal companionship, within a framework of responsible ownership.

Strategic Basis

Council’s key strategic document is The Council Plan 2008 -2012 which sets out Council’s corporate objectives for the future. The Plan is set out in a cascading style that links each key Strategic Objective to the Key Strategies and to the Key Activities and Tasks to reach the desired outcome.

The Key Strategic Objective 3 for Lifestyle states:

‘The Council will enhance the extraordinary lifestyle opportunities in the Shire whilst maintaining individual choice and a sense of community.’

The Key Strategies are:

3.1 Maximise opportunities for the community to participate in a diverse range of lifestyle and learning activities

3.2 Facilitate balanced and integrated support services essential to the health, safety and well-being of the community

3.3 Empower the community to articulate and realise a positive vision for the future

One of our Key Strategic Documents for reaching this goal is the completion of the Domestic Animal Management Plan. Specifically one of the actions towards this activity for 2007-2008 requires council to ‘Identify and implement “Off Leash” areas for dogs across the Shire’ an area covered in this plan.

The Key Strategic Objective 2 for Environment and Heritage states:

“The Council will sustainably manage the valuable environmental and heritage assets of the Shire through this period of growth and increased use in the best interest of current and future generations”.

The Key Strategies are:

- 2.1 Plan for the sustainable future of the natural environment.
- 2.2 Provide support and incentives to the agricultural community to encourage responsible farming practices.
- 2.3 Provide information and education to foster a sense of enjoyment, awareness and stewardship to conserve and improve the natural environment
- 2.4 Provide facilities and management services to protect and enhance the natural systems in a sustainable manner.

To help reach this goal the Domestic Animal Management Plan will provide information on Councils, specifically Community Safety Rangers, role in encouraging responsible pet ownership in the community.

Purpose and Primary Objective of This Domestic Animal Management Plan (“Plan”)

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

In order to achieve this, this plan explores and sets strategies 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 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.
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of programs and service strategies.

Process Applied In Developing This Plan

This Plan was developed by a working party comprising Council Officers, welfare groups and members of the public, local vets and the Phillip Island Nature Park.

The Bass Coast Shire – Demographics

Bass Coast Shire is a 90 minute drive from Melbourne's CBD and encompasses 865 square kilometres of land. Its unique coastline is complemented by a beautiful hinterland. The major centres of the Shire are Wonthaggi, Cowes, Inverloch, San Remo and Grantville. Bass Coast is one of the few Victorian municipalities whose two major industries are tourism and agriculture.

- **Visitors**

The Shire boasts many beautiful beaches and unique nature reserves and attracts 3.4 million visitors, including 35% of Melbourne's international visitors, each year. During peak holiday periods, Bass Coast's population exceeds 90,000. Phillip Island attracts many visitors with its world famous nightly Penguin Parade. The annual Motorcycle Grand Prix is also a highlight of our annual events calendar.

- **Events**

Bass Coast plays host to a huge number of events throughout the year. This includes events at the Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit such as the Motorcycle Grand Prix and the V8 Supercars. A variety of arts, local produce and family entertainment events take place across the Shire, including the Farmers' Markets on Churchill Island, Cowes Night Markets, Phillip Island Jazz Festival, Island Craft Markets, Garden Lovers' Festival and Working Horse Festival on Churchill Island, Wonthaggi Human Powered Grand Prix, Inverloch Water Festival and Inverloch Billy Cart Derby.

- **Agriculture and the Environment**

The Bass Coast Shire is predominantly a coastal municipality with a unique coastline complimented by a highly productive agriculture hinterland. It has some of the most diverse, well known and well visited coastline in Victoria with major natural assets including Western Port (a Ramsar listed wetland site), Anderson Inlet, Bass River, Powlett River, Tarwin River, two Marine Parks, the Phillip Island Nature Park and other heath and bushland reserves. Bass Coast is also part of the internationally recognised Mornington Peninsula and Western Port Biosphere Reserve.

Many studies and reports have found that Bass Coast residents, businesses and visitors identify the natural local environment as a major lifestyle component and of paramount importance for living, working or visiting Bass Coast

- **The origin of the Shire**

The traditional owners of the Shire are the Bunurong people. The area takes its name from George Bass who sighted the area during an expedition to prove the existence of Bass Strait in 1796.

Bass Coast has a rich history that is central to the establishment of the State of Victoria. In 1826, Corinella was established as a permanent settlement, the second in the State. Victoria's third permanent settlement was established on the Bass River shortly after the founding of Melbourne in 1835.

In the early 1800s timber was the primary industry of the area. Timber was shipped to Melbourne and beyond from several ports along the coastline. Once the land was cleared, it was used for agriculture including dairying, beef farming and raising crops.

The first coal discovered in Victoria was at Cape Paterson. Coalmines were later established in Wonthaggi and Kilcunda, but ceased operation in the mid to late 1900s.

Bass Coast was adopted as the official name of the Shire when local governments were amalgamated in 1994.

- Population

In 2007, the Estimated Resident Population for the Bass Coast Shire was 28,081 (Australian Bureau of Statistics Cat 3218.0). The sea change phenomenon continues to have a considerable impact on population growth. Bass Coast's population has increased by more than 16% over the last five years. The Shire has a higher than average proportion of older residents with 23% of the population aged over 65. That figure is expected to increase to 45% by 2021.

Home owners and occupiers make up 49.8% of the Bass Coast population compared with a national average of 42.9%. The total number of dwellings is 21,479.

A recent study into the Economic Impact of Tourism on the area revealed that 47% of people who own holiday homes in Bass Coast intend to live permanently in their holiday homes in the future. 85% of these said they planned to retire to Bass Coast.

- Sea change

A rapid increase in population has seen many changes to the area in the past decade. There has been a strong increase in property prices and development, as a result of the high demand for residential properties. Bass Coast's proximity to Melbourne has made it a destination of choice for many people wanting to escape the city for a holiday or on a permanent basis. Many residents are passionate about the local environment and local volunteer groups make a significant contribution to maintaining and caring for the natural environment. A thriving arts community has emerged, with artists and musicians drawn to the area both for the beauty of its natural environment and accessibility to major centres.

The major industries in the Bass Coast Shire are retail, tourism, construction, health and community services, agriculture, manufacturing and hospitality.

Domestic Animal Statistics and Data

BIS Shrapnel estimated in 1998 that in Victoria:

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

Therefore, the calculation for Bass Coast Shire Council with 21,179 residential dwellings, is:

- Estimated Dog Population: $(40/100 \times 21,179) \times 1.44 \text{ dogs} = 8,471.6$
- Estimated Cat Population: $(26/100 \times 21,179) \times 1.47 \text{ cats} = 5,506.5$

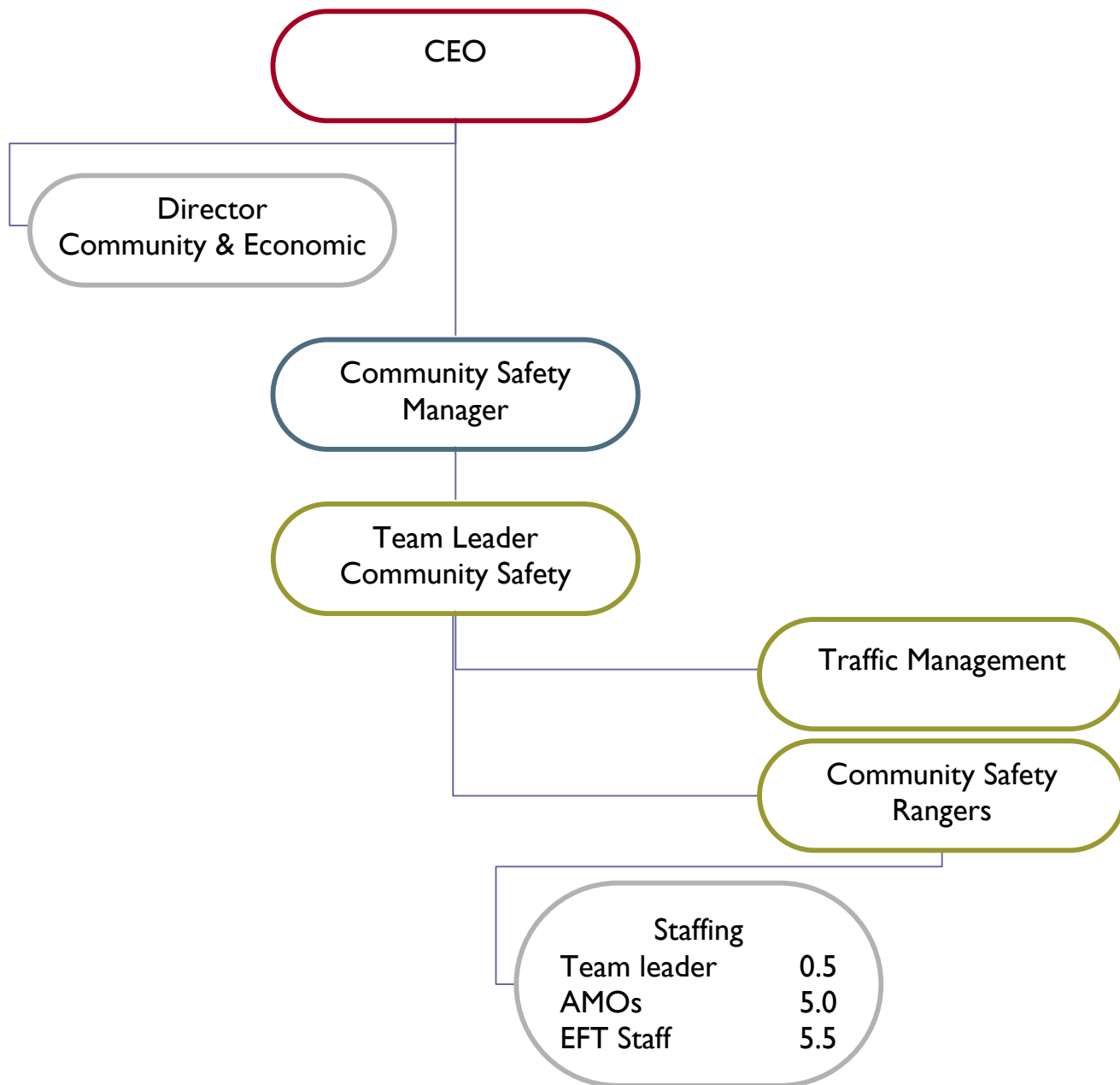
Bass Coast Shire Council – Key Statistics - 2007/08	Bass Coast Shire*	Like Councils (Super 11) Average	State Average
Population	26,548	16,000	25,000
No. of Authorised Officers (Animal Control)	5	3.25	2
Hours training per officer annually	30	32	14
No. of EFT Animal Control Officer	4.5	Unknown	Unknown
No. of Registered Dogs	5,317	5058	5155
Estimated No. of Dogs (owned)	7,530	Unknown	Unknown
No. of Registered Cats	1,191	1373	1706
Estimated No. of Cats (owned)	1,585	Unknown	Unknown
No. of Registered Declared Dogs	0	2	Unknown
No. of impoundments (dogs)	763	243	Unknown
No. of dogs returned to owners	675	138	44%
No. of dogs re-housed	3	59	12.5%
No. of dogs euthanized	85	51	33.5%
No. of impoundments (cats)	84	115	55,000
No. of cats returned to owner	46	9	10.5%
No. of cats re-housed	0	14	15.5%
No. of cats euthanized	38	104	35,000
No. of Excess Animal Permits (Local Law 1)	11	15	Unknown
No. of Restricted Breed Premises	0	2	Unknown
No. of Infringements Issued	41	86	Unknown
No. of infringements paid	18	14	Unknown
Prosecutions	8	Unknown	Unknown

Sources:

*Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Census of Population and Housing

Bass Coast Shire Council – Animal Management Staffing & Operational Structure

Staff Structure



Reference: Team Leader Community Safety Rangers and Community Safety Rangers are AMOs (Animal Management Officers) in the above table.

Current Programs and Services – Service Levels

Bass Coast Shire's Community Safety Rangers Team administers and provides a broad range of services to ensure that Council meets its legislative responsibilities relating to the management of domestic animals. They include, but are not limited to:

- Educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership.
- Providing advice on domestic animal matters.
- Dealing with, and investigating, customer complaints.
- Management of Council's domestic animal shelter.
- 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 24 hour 7 day a week after-hours emergency service.
- Inspection and registration of domestic animal businesses.
- Developing and maintaining partnerships with organisations such as veterinary clinics and other stakeholders.

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
After Hours – Emergencies on 1300 226 278 ➤ Wandering Dogs ➤ Dog Attacks	Collected if restrained at private property Collected within 2 hours if restrained in public place Attendance within 2 hours if emergency still exists
Council's Animal Shelter Facility	Bass Coast Shire's domestic animal shelter facility is located at the Transfer Station in Cameron Street Wonthaggi.
Dangerous Dog Complaints/Restricted Breeds	These complaints have a high priority and are investigated depending on nature or severity of complaint, usually resulting in immediate action but certainly within 3 days.
Domestic animal complaints	Dependent on the nature of the complaint which can range from immediate action to 3 days in line with Council's customer service charter. Complaints are prioritised according to nature of complaint or urgency of the matter.
Identification and Registration	Council annually produces, and mails out, registration renewal notices prior to the due date of 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 microchipping for all new dog/cat registrations. The registration renewal notice is also utilised to incorporate inserts such as the Microchipping Day flyer. New registration applications are available at Council's Customer Service Centres at Wonthaggi, Cowes, Inverloch and Grantville. They are also available via Council's website. If an animal is picked up wearing council tags and is correctly registered it may be returned once free of charge (at the officer's discretion).
Identification and Registration - doorknock campaign	Council has introduced a doorknock campaign that is conducted after the 10 April registration date.
Micro-chipping	Council currently runs a microchipping day in conjunction with Central Animal Records. On this day microchips are implanted at a discounted rate of \$20.
Animal Shelter Opening Times	Council's Domestic Animal Shelter is open to the public from 9.30am to 12.30pm Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) and at other times by appointment.
Public Relations	Council publishes and distributes press releases on varying animal topics including notification of animal registration and microchipping requirements, advertises microchipping day and targets other locally identified "hot topics" as the need arises. Council also distributes a consumers' guide to the law about owning a dog or cat produced by the Victoria Law Foundation. A Responsible Pet Ownership campaign is also run annually in local schools.
Registration Domestic Animal Businesses	Bass Coast Shire currently has 6 registered animal businesses, Council conducts annual audits and issues annual compliance notices. New registration applications are received and processed in line with the code of practice.
Routine street patrols	Street patrols are conducted and are dependant on advice in relation to wandering animals.
School information sessions (Responsible Pet Ownership)	The Bureau of Animal Welfare (BAW) conducts these sessions. Council staff are available to assist if requested.

2. Statement of Purpose

Vision Statement

The core purposes of the Bass Coast Shire's animal management services are:

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

3 Strategic Directions for Domestic Animal Management

The following table shows the mandatory requirements of the Council and its Community Safety Rangers for the period of this Plan as required under the Act and the corresponding actions in this Plan.

Specific Act requirements		3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.0
S68A(2)(a)	Method of monitoring performance and evaluating the effectiveness of services								✓
S68A(2)(b)	Training of Authorised Officers	✓							
S68A(2)(c)(i)	Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S68A(2)(c)(ii)	Ensure compliance with Act and Regulations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S68A(2)(c)(iii)	Minimise risk of dog attacks	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
S68A(2)(c)(iv)	Over-population and high euthanasia rates	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	
S68A(2)(c)(v)	Encourage registration and identification for dogs and cats	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
S68A(2)(c)(vi)	Minimise potential for nuisance	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
S68A(2)(c)(vii)	Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs	✓	✓	✓		✓			
S68A(2)(d)	Review of Orders and Local Laws				✓				
S68A(2)(e)	Any other matters	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S68A(2)(f)	Periodic evaluation of programs, services and strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
S68A(3)(a)	Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan								✓

Animal Management Officer (AMO) Training and Development

Council's objective is to ensure that all staff involved in animal management has the knowledge and skills necessary to pro-actively, consistently and professionally carry out their work.

Council'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 (BAW) Training Days.
- Mentoring from experienced senior staff.
- Personal safety training and basic first aid.
- Certificate 4 in Animal Management.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Attend BAW AMO Regional Training Seminar.
- Closer liaison with surrounding municipalities to target regional domestic animal management needs and issues.
- All current staff to complete the Certificate 4 Animal Control and Regulation during 2008/2009.

Encouraging Responsible Pet Ownership – Community Education

Council's objective is 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.

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

- Responsible pet ownership education in specific press releases and advertisements.
- Letter drops in hot spot areas to assist in the reduction of complaints.
- Insert responsible pet ownership brochures with annual rate notices.
- Attendance at schools to discuss responsible pet ownership as requested by BAW.
- Organise and promote annual microchipping day.
- Promote responsible pet ownership at the annual Wonthaggi Agricultural Show.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Council continue to plan, promote and conduct an annual microchipping day.
- Community Safety Rangers to participate in the annual Wonthaggi Agricultural Show this includes a 'one stop' shop for registration, and Responsible Pet Ownership advice.

- Ensure Responsible Pet Ownership brochures are distributed to the community through rate notices, registration renewals and ‘new’ registrations and letter drops.

Identification and Registration

Council’s objective is to maximise the number of registered and identifiable dogs and cats.

Council’s current identification and registration activities include:

- Issuing of identification tags and registration renewal notices.
- Advertises and administers discount microchipping day held in conjunction with Central Animal Records.
- Doorknock ‘hot spot’ areas or areas where complaints have been received in relation to registration requirements.
- Advertising in local newspapers and radio.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Conduct a comprehensive registration doorknock campaign covering two specific communities each year.
- Conduct a discount microchipping day once a year.
- The Community Safety Rangers to conduct an annual Pet Expo which includes a ‘one stop’ shop for registration, microchipping and Responsible Pet Ownership advice.
- Council consider implementing compulsory microchipping of all dogs and cats, prior to registration, effective from 10 April 2010.
- Council consider amending the current registration fee structure to encourage/reward animal owners for desexing and microchipping their animals (must be both for concession).
- Council consider updating and expanding the animal shelter’s cat area to include an isolation area.
- Council consider increasing the animal shelter so we can rehouse impounded animals and reduce the euthanasia rates.
- Council consider a “friends of the animal shelter” initiative so as to minimise the cost of rehousing impounded animals.

Compliance and Enforcement – Local Laws And Orders

Objective is to maximise compliance with domestic animal laws and regulations (State and Local).

Council’s current enforcement activities include:

- The issuing of infringement notices for all offences where considered necessary.
- The impounding of wandering dogs and cats.
- To serve notices to comply for minor breaches of the law.

- To investigate all complaints in a timely manner.
- To investigate and attend to any concerns relating to dogs/cats creating a nuisance.

Council currently has 'Orders' in place: designating dogs on leads at all times with exception to certain areas across the Shire.

Council's General Local Law of 2005, No 1 of 2005 ("General Local Law") provisions relating to domestic animals are:

- Section 71 - owners must remove animal faeces in a public place.
- Section 69 (1) - no more than two dogs/two cats to be kept on residential type properties.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Annually review all dog and cat provisions in Council's General Local Law.
- Council consider introduction of an 'order' to the compulsory microchipping of all dogs and cats prior to registration effective from 10 April 2010.

Domestic Animal Businesses

Council's objective is to work in partnership with domestic animal businesses to ensure that compliance is achieved.

Council currently has 6 registered Domestic Animal Businesses. Current programs include:

- Yearly audits of registered businesses and new businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant Codes of Practice.
- Ad-hoc inspections and visits.
- Provide information and advice.
- Investigate unregistered/backyard breeders.

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

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Conduct a Domestic Animal Business workshop primarily for current and prospective premises.
- Audit primarily for current and prospective proprietors in the planning process.

Declared Dogs

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

As at 10 April 2008, Bass Coast Shire had no 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 breed.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Patrol commercial/industrial areas to identify guard dogs on premises.
- Ensure that any dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.

Specific Issues

During the development of this Plan the following issues were identified as requiring specific mention.

- **Barking Dogs**

Objective:

- Encourage owners of barking dogs to seek assistance or advice from professionals to stop their dogs barking and take ownership of the problem.
- Encourage complainants in the first instance to contact the owners of noisy dogs to advise them of their concerns as this is seen as a neighbourhood issue and the noise may be affecting other neighbours as well.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

- Diary kept by complainant for a fortnight of all barking caused by dog prior to formal Council response.
- A door knock of nearby neighbours be conducted where the barking is a persistent ongoing problem to determine whether prosecution is warranted.
- Advice, counselling and warnings as required.
- Routine patrols

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Produce procedure in relation to barking dogs and put on Council's website.

- **Cat Management**

Objective:

- Encourage owners of cats to keep their cats on their property and take responsibility for the protection of the environment from issues associated with stray and roaming cats.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Cat management is focused on public education combined with trapping of feral and un-owned cats within the Councils area.

Goals to be achieved in cat management include: -

- Protect the welfare of cats.
- Recognise the value of the cat to society.
- Reduce the predation by owned and un-owned cats on native wildlife.
- Reduce the incidence of public nuisance by uncontrolled cats.

Council will promote responsible cat ownership in the community by -

- Conducting regular education through:
 - Provision of pamphlets and advice on cat ownership; and
 - Undertaking school education programs to highlight responsible cat management, this is carried out by BAW;
- Offering advice and assistance with respect to complaints or enquiries related to cat keeping;
- Micro-chipping and registration of cats within the district for identification purposes;
- Encouraging owners to ensure that their cat is de-sexed, immunized and prevented from roaming from the property resided at, at all times;
- Encouraging owners to be responsible for their cats' behaviour and take positive timely action to avoid nuisance to neighbours, impacts on wildlife and damage to property;
- Coordinating door knocks and cat audits; and
- Making traps available through the Community Safety Rangers and Customer Service Centres to the community to trap feral and un-owned cats that are causing a nuisance.

'Who's for Cats' - A State Government Initiative

A number of organisations have come together to implement this campaign, including representatives from the Animal Welfare Science Centre, Australian Veterinary Association, Cat Protection Society, DPI, Lort Smith Animal Hospital, Lost Dogs' Home, Monash University, Municipal Association of Victoria, RSPCA and Victorian Animal Aid.

This campaign will involve TV, radio and print advertisements, which will be aired as Community Service Announcements. The campaign is aimed at reducing the 50,000 cats that are impounded throughout Victoria and the 35,000 that are euthanized each year (at a cost of around \$5 million per annum).

The campaign's aims are as follows:

- Educate the community about the consequences of feeding un-owned cats, and the impact it is having on the cat overpopulation problem.
- Ask people to make a decision – to either be a responsible owner or take the cat in, or to call the Council to arrange to have the cat impounded.
- Short term – increase cat ownership in Victoria, and increase the number of stray cats being handed to Council pounds or shelters thus removing them from the streets.
- Long term – increase cat ownership in Victoria, reduce the number of un-owned cats in Victoria, and reduce the number of cats having to be euthanized in pounds and shelters.
- **Desexing**

Council has received many requests from animal welfare organisations regarding the issue of desexing cats. The argument put forward is that by desexing all cats there will be an impact on the overall cat population.

Council very rarely receives correspondence or an argument that does not support compulsory desexing. However, the Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) has supplied a report that does not support compulsory desexing.

The following facts were put forward by AVA:

- Fact 1: Owned cats are not the problem. The vast majority of owned cats (93%) are desexed and are a valued part of a household. Voluntary desexing of owned cats is occurring at levels that create zero population growth within this group of animals.
- Fact 2: 95% of owned cats never enter the animal welfare system.
- Fact 3: A recent study by BAW in Victoria established that 79% of the cats that entered the State's 3 largest animal shelters were un-owned. It is these animals that are the problem, not the owned population.
- Fact 4: The un-owned cat population is self-sustaining. That is, there are enough un-owned cats living and breeding in our cities and country areas to maintain the un-owned cat population at its current level.
- Fact 5: In 2001 the ACT Government made it compulsory for owned cats and dogs to be desexed by six months of age. Statistics have been collated for the 5 years prior to 2001 and the six years since and they show that there has been no positive impact from the introduction of compulsory desexing. In fact, significantly more cats were euthanized in 2006 than in 2001 when compulsory desexing was introduced.
- Fact 6: Statistics gathered in states in the USA where mandatory desexing has been introduced show declines in compliance with pet licensing requirements of up to 50% and increases in animal management costs of 56.8%, against a revenue increase of 43.2%. As a result, some states have repealed their mandatory

desexing legislation.

Bass Coast Shire's own registration records (as of April 2008) indicate that only 56 of 1191 registered cats are not desexed and Pound statistics indicate that 63% of cats that enter the pound are un-owned. These statistics fully support the 'facts' as presented by the AVA.

During the development of this Plan, concerns were expressed by AMOs that restrictive legislation may cause adverse impacts on animal registration compliance rates. This concern is supported by AVA data.

Where to from here?

There is no argument that there is a need to reduce the number of stray, feral and unwanted cats.

The solution is multi-faceted and must include:

- Targeting the stray and feral cat population with new programs that are acceptable to the Community and effective in reducing overall numbers.
- Continuing existing trapping programs with stray and feral cats.
- Continuing education of cat owners to ensure that animals are desexed and, for the very small proportion that are entire¹, that they are properly managed so that unwanted breeding does not occur.
- Continuing to educate cat owners on appropriate pet selection, training and management.
- Continuing to encourage the identification of cats through microchipping.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- 3.7.3.1 Council fully support the 'Who's for cats' program.
- 3.7.3.2 Conduct cat specific education programs through local media, promoting identification, registration and desexing.
- 3.7.3.3 Conduct annual 'cat audits' within the community to ascertain the level of owned cats.
- 3.7.3.4 Closely monitor pound and registration statistics to enable assessment of any future programs.
- 3.7.3.5 Council to introduce compulsory desexing of cats for any new registrations commencing April 2010

Shelter Management:

The Bass Coast Shire Council is responsible for the appropriate care and maintenance of dogs and cats that are impounded or surrendered. Regular cleaning and maintenance is undertaken to ensure best practice standards are implemented and dogs and cats under our care are treated humanely with the health and welfare of the animal considered as the utmost importance.

¹ Entire in this context means – "an animal that is not desexed"

The overriding guidelines for the management of pound facilities are the Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds.

The Bass Coast Animal Shelter facility is subjected to annual audits by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). The Shire does not have a defined rehousing program.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

- If an animal that is picked up by the pound is registered and micro-chipped (and well looked after) it will be returned with no fine imposed. In this way, owners are rewarded for participating in the registration scheme and avoid the inconvenience and cost of having their animal impounded. This also reduces the demand on the Pound, which improves re-homing rates.
- It is envisaged that a free return service for registered lost animals will encourage a greater rate of registration and micro chipping (at Council Officer's discretion).

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- The Shire is to establish an adoption procedure for unclaimed and surrendered animals that will be operated from its own pound facilities.
- The pound is to be increased in size within 1 year, having at least 3 extra kennel areas for the housing of dogs, to be used primarily for unclaimed or surrendered dogs that will be offered to the public for adoption.
- After 8-10 days at the Pound, suitable unclaimed or surrendered animals are made available for adoption at a cost of approx \$200 to cover vaccination, de-sexing and micro-chipping as required by law.
- When adopted, animals are to be taken by the Shire to a contracted Vet for any of the necessary procedures at a negotiated welfare rate. A formal written agreement with selected Veterinarian needs to be adopted. The Pound is to be open at certain advertised times for people to visit. All impounded animals are photographed and put on the Council's website. Any unclaimed or relinquished animal is viewed as "Available for Adoption" on website, and also advertised in local paper (at no cost).
- Any animals unable to be re-homed within a prescribed time frame are to be taken to, where possible, Animal Shelters with a "no-kill" policy. For dogs, Shelters such as 'Save-a-Dog', Glen Iris and the 'Australian Animal Protection Society' Keysborough. For cats, our own local cat Shelter (South Gippsland Animal Shelter). Also breed clubs of particular pedigree animals are a source for re-homing. There would be no cost (e.g. Vet procedures) to the Council for animals taken to other Welfare Shelters. This would be borne by the relevant agency.
- A group of interested persons to be formed ("Friends of the Pound") that is prepared to help with animals available for adoption at the Pound. These people could operate the Pound on days Rangers are not available. They could also take adopted animals to the Vet for their vaccinations etc, or take animals that are not re-homed to other Animal Shelters. They could be involved in setting up a register of people who are interested in adopting animals, and liaising with Vets who often have lists of people interested in adopting.

Electronic Animal Impound Register:

Objective:

- Aim is to reduce time spent in the pound by animals by providing another way for owners to identify their animals in the pound;
- Council shall provide a detailed list including a photo, of each animal currently held by Council, on its website, as a quick and easy method for pet owners to ascertain if their pet has been located by Council.
- Animals that have been relinquished or not claimed can be listed as “available for adoption”.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

- Development of web based process for displaying animals currently housed in our pound facility;
- Comprehensive information (database) to be collated on each animal taken to pound (similar to Latrobe Shire on website) and put on Council’s website as ‘Impounded Animals’.

Off Leash Areas

Objective:

- Encourage owners of dogs to exercise them in designated off leash areas.
- Review areas suitable for off leash areas and increase the number of designated areas around the Shire.
- Council will still protect the environment from damage caused by dogs and ensure the safety of all in public places.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

- Review and discussion surrounding location of off leash areas based on suggested locations in Council’s Open Space Plan (draft);
- Advertising off leash areas in joint publication with Phillip Island Nature Parks.
- Routine patrols.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- More off-leash & on-leash areas to be assessed regularly and extended where possible.

4 Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1 Our Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Process

Council's AMOs are appraised each year by the Community Safety Rangers Team Leader on performance over the past year together with changes in legislation and training over the following year.

4.2 Key Performance Indicators – Annual Targets 2008-09

The strategic development of the Community Safety Rangers Team is evaluated through a process of continuous improvement and benchmarking with comparisons against similar organisations. The Council is assessed annually by using the following criteria:

KPIs: (indicative)	Target 2008-09*	Current
Dog Registration rate: (% Dogs registered/estimated dog population)	65%	62%
Cat Registration rate: (% cats registered/estimated cat population)	25%	22%
Enforcement Success Rate: (% successful prosecutions/total prosecutions)	100%	100%
Dog Complaints (Number of dog complaints per 1000 population)	38	38
Cat Complaints: (Number of cats per population 1,000)	6.5	6.5
Dog attacks: (Number of dog attacks causing injury per 1,000)	0.57	0.57
Cat Reclaim Rate: (% total cats reclaimed/total cats impounded)	6%	5%
Cat Euthanasia Rate: (% total cats euthanized/total cats impounded)	<80%	85%
Dog Euthanasia Rate: (% total dogs euthanized/total dogs impounded)	<30%	35%
Declared dog Compliance Rates: (Number declared/number compliant/number of audits)	100%	100%
Domestic Animal Business Compliance Rates: (Number registered/number compliant/number of audits)	100%	100%

*This Plan is reviewed annually, which will give opportunity to nominate annual targets

4.3 Review

- An annual review at June 30 will be conducted into this Plan to ensure that the plan remains current and addresses legislation and community expectations.
- The outcomes from the review process will be reported in Council's Annual Report.
- The Plan is required to undergo a complete review, including public consultation period, after three years.

Appendix A Three Year Action Plan

This Action Plan is linked to planned actions/initiatives in Section 3 of this document and applies to the three year life cycle of this plan. Annual reviews may add/delete or amend action contained herein.

Program/Service Objective	Actions	Who	Action Date
AMO Training and Development	Attend BAW Regional Training Seminars	AMOs	Annual
	Closer liaison with surrounding municipalities to target regional domestic animal management needs and issues	CSRTL	Quarterly
	All AMOs enrolled to undertake course in Certificate IV Animal Control & Regulation 2009/10	CSRTL	2009
Encouraging Responsible Pet Ownership – Community	Council continue to plan, promote and conduct an annual microchipping day	CSRTL	Annual
	Community Safety Rangers Team to conduct annual visits to two specific communities to offer “one stop” shop for registration, microchipping and Responsible Pet Ownership advice	CSRTL	Annual
	Ensure Responsible Pet Ownership brochures are distributed to the community through rate notices, registration renewals, “new” registrations and Council’s Website	CSRAO	Ongoing
Identification and Registration	Conduct a comprehensive registration doorknock campaign covering four specific communities each year	AMOs	Annual
	Conduct a discount microchipping day once a year	CSRTL	Annual
	Community Safety Rangers Team to conduct annual visits to four specific communities to offer “one stop” shop for registration, microchipping and Responsible Pet Ownership advice	CSRTL	Annual
	Council consider implementing compulsory microchipping of all dogs and cats prior to registration effective from 10 April 2010	CSRTL	Council Report Feb 2009
	Council consider amending the current registration fee structure to encourage/reward animal owners for desexing & micro chipping their animals. (Must be both for concession).	CSRTL	Council Report Feb 2009

Program/Service Objective	Actions	Who	Action Date
Compliance and Enforcement – Local Laws and Orders	Annual review of all dog and cat provisions in Council’s General Local Law	CSRTL	Annual
	Council consider introduction of “order” to compulsory microchip all dogs and cats prior to registration effective from 10 April 2010.	CSRTL	Council Report Feb 2009
Domestic Animal Businesses	Conduct a Domestic Animal Business workshop primarily for current and prospective proprietors	CSRTL	2010
Declared Dogs	Patrol commercial/industrial areas to identify guard dogs on premises	AMOs	Ongoing
	Ensure that all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry	CSRAO	Ongoing
Barking Dogs	Produce procedure in relation to barking dogs	CSRTL	2009
Cat Management	Council fully support the “Who’s for cats” program	AMOs	Ongoing
	Conduct cat specific education programs through local media, promoting identification, registration and desexing	CSRTL	2009
	Conduct annual “cat audits” within the community to ascertain the level of owned cats	AMOs	Ongoing
	Closely monitor pound and registration statistics to enable assessment of any future programs	CSRTL	Annual
Shelter Management	The Shire is to establish an adoption procedure for unclaimed and surrendered animals that will be operated from its own pound facilities.	CSRTL	Ongoing
	The pound is to be increased in size within 1 year, having at least 3 extra kennel areas for the housing of dogs, to be used primarily for unclaimed or surrendered dogs that will be offered to the public for adoption.	CSRTL	Ongoing
	After 8-10 days at the Pound, suitable unclaimed or surrendered animals are made available for adoption at a cost of approx \$200 to cover vaccination, desexing and micro-chipping as required by law.	CSRTL	Ongoing

Program/Service Objective	Actions	Who	Action Date
	<p>All impounded animals are photographed and put on the Council's website. Any unclaimed or relinquished animal is viewed as "Available for Adoption" on website, and also advertised in local paper (at no cost).</p> <p>Any animals unable to be re-homed within a prescribed time frame are to be taken to, where possible, Animal Shelters with a "no-kill" policy.</p> <p>There would be no cost (e.g. Vet procedures) to the Council for animals taken to other Welfare Shelters. This would be borne by the relevant agency.</p> <p>A group of interested persons to be formed ("Friends of the Pound") that is prepared to help with animals available for adoption at the Pound.</p>	<p>CSRTL</p> <p>CSRTL</p> <p>CSRTL</p> <p>CSRTL</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Abbreviations: CSRTL = Community Safety Rangers Team Leader. AMO = Animal Management Officer, CSRAO = Community Safety Rangers Administration Officer