

Latrobe City Council Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-2017



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1. INTRODUCTION

The primary focus of this Plan is the management of companion animals, namely dogs and cats. Latrobe City Council acknowledges the role it plays in promoting responsible pet ownership and enforcing legislation. We are committed to balancing the needs of pet owners with those in our community who do not own pets. Consideration has been given to both parties in the development of our Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-2017.

This Plan has been developed in accordance with Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and sets out a formalised approach to increase the awareness of domestic animal management practices within Latrobe City.

Latrobe City Council recognises the value domestic pets contribute in making Latrobe City a vibrant and liveable City. Domestic pets are not only considered part of a family, but are an integral part of a wider community. Research demonstrates that pets contribute to building a strong sense of community and developing active social capital; vital to any vibrant, healthy community.

Pet ownership is positively associated with social interactions, community involvement and increased feelings of neighbourhood friendliness and sense of community.

With about 63 percent of Australians owning a dog or cat, these benefits, when aggregated across the whole community, are of significant interest to Council and others concerned with building healthier, happier neighbourhoods.

In addition, these benefits create a ripple effect that extends beyond pet owners into the broader community, with pets helping to smooth the way for social interaction and general 'out and about-ness'.

Both anecdote and research suggests that pets are well recognised ice-breakers. Dogs, for example, can stimulate conversation and contact between strangers and trigger positive social interaction.

Studies undertaken by the School of Population Health at the University of Western Australia showed that half of all dog owners surveyed indicated that they had come to know locals in their suburb as a result of their dog.

Residents' chatting to each other as a result of a pet is not just a social nicety. Such community-based interactions between people have the very real potential to break down the barriers and stereotypes that separate us from 'others' while playing an important role in building trust and a deep sense of community at the neighbourhood level.

Pets provide increased opportunities for families to be more active; companionship to those who may be feeling isolated or lonely and assist people with a disability or illness to maintain independence and participate more fully in community life.

2. BACKGROUND

Local Government has long been the level of government primarily responsible for domestic animal management.

Section 68A of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* (the Act) requires all Victorian councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) at four yearly intervals. A copy of the plan and any subsequent amendments must be provided to the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries. Council is required to then report on the plans implementation in its annual report.

2.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of the Plan is to provide a strategic map to support the community towards the goal of responsible pet ownership and to assist Council in achieving a professional, consistent and proactive approach to domestic animal management practices.

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

- ≠ Identify methods for evaluating animal control services;
- ≠ Promote responsible pet ownership;
- ≠ Ensure compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and Regulations;
- ≠ Minimise the risk of dog attacks;
- ≠ Address 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 Council 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.

3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Latrobe 2026: The Community Vision for Latrobe Valley

Strategic Objectives – Our Community

In 2026, Latrobe Valley is one of the most liveable regions in Victoria, known for its high quality health, education and community services, supporting communities that are safe, connected and proud.

Strategic Objectives – Recreation

In 2026, Latrobe Valley encourages a healthy and vibrant lifestyle, with diversity in passive and active recreational opportunities and facilities that connect people with their community.

Strategic Objectives – Regulation and Accountability

In 2026, Latrobe Valley demonstrates respect for the importance of rules and laws to protect people's rights, outline obligations and support community values and cohesion.

Latrobe City Council Plan 2012 – 2016

Strategic Direction – Our Community

- ≠ Provide support, assistance and quality services in partnership with relevant stakeholders to improve the health, wellbeing and safety of all within Latrobe City.
- ≠ Facilitate and support initiatives that strengthen the capacity of the community.
- ≠ Provide access to information, knowledge, technology and activities that strengthens and increases participation in community life.
- ≠ Promote community participation and volunteerism to support improved health and wellbeing through all stages of life.

Strategic Direction – Regulation and Accountability

- ≠ Ensure that Latrobe City Council meets all relevant legislative obligations and is positioned to respond to legislative change in a manner which inspires community confidence.
- ≠ Monitor, review and enforce local laws and animal management practices that reflect community conditions and aspirations and support community cohesion.

Service Provision – Local Laws

- ≠ Deliver customer focussed Local Law services across the municipality in accordance with Local Law No. 2 and other relevant legislation.

Shaping Our Future

An active connected and caring community supporting all.

3.1 Guiding Principles

The following principles underpin the actions of this Plan with regard to domestic animals:

- ≠ The belief that pets contribute to quality of life.
- ≠ A requirement to balance the needs of those who own pets and those who do not.
- ≠ Valuing responsible pet ownership.
- ≠ Proactive animal management and education within the community.
- ≠ Protection of the environment from any negative impacts of dogs and cats.
- ≠ Working in partnership with others to achieve positive outcomes for the community.
- ≠ Local Government plays a leadership role in animal management.

4. LATROBE CITY SNAPSHOT

Latrobe City, Victoria's only regional city situated in the eastern part of the state, encompasses an area of 1,422 square kilometres with a population of approximately 75,000.

Situated approximately 150kms east of Melbourne, in the centre of Gippsland and the Latrobe Valley, Latrobe City is one of four Victorian regional cities.

Latrobe City includes the four major towns of Churchill, Moe/Newborough, Morwell and Traralgon as well as the seven outer lying townships of Boolarra, Glengarry, Toongabbie, Traralgon South, Tyers, Yallourn North and Yinnar.

During the 2011/12 registration period there were 11,667 dogs and 3,518 cats registered within the municipality. There are 12 registered domestic animal businesses, including two pet shops, four boarding establishments and six breeding and rearing establishments.

5. CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICE LEVELS

Latrobe City's Local Laws 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:

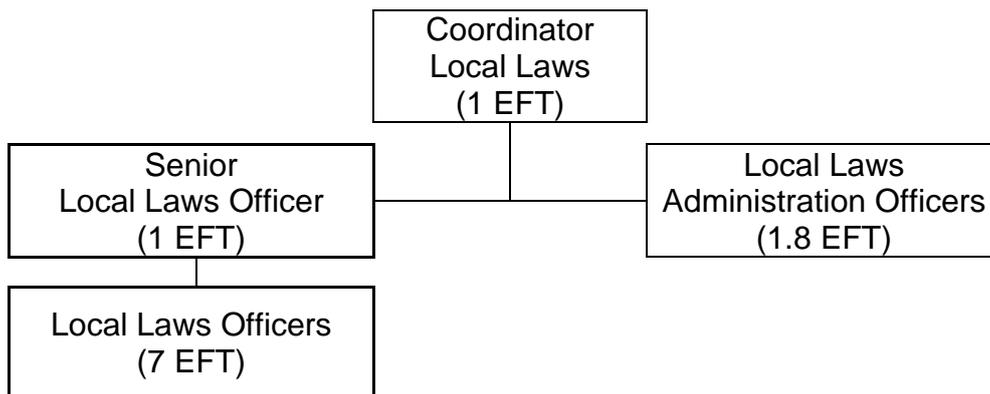
- ≠ Educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership.
- ≠ Management of Council's domestic animal pound facility.
- ≠ Maintaining a domestic animal register.
- ≠ Providing advice on domestic animal matters.
- ≠ Dealing with and investigating animal complaints for the community.
- ≠ Impounding 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.
- ≠ Investigating dog attacks.
- ≠ Providing a 24 hour 7 day a week emergency service.
- ≠ Inspection and registration of domestic animal businesses.
- ≠ Developing and maintaining partnerships with organisations such as Save-a-dog scheme (SADS), Forever Friends Animal Rescue (FFAR) and veterinarians.

5.1 Resourcing

The Local Laws team consists of five full-time and four part-time Local Laws Officers delivering general local laws, animal and parking management services.



5.2 2011/2012 Statistical Data

- ≠ 11,667 dogs and 3,518 cats registered.
- ≠ 5 Declared Dangerous Dogs registered.
- ≠ 12 Declared Menacing Dogs registered.
- ≠ 5,282 animal Pathway requests received.
- ≠ 13 dog attacks reported.
- ≠ 1,172 dogs impounded.
 - ~ 636 dogs returned to owner and 307 dogs re-housed.
- ≠ 859 cats impounded.
 - ~ 38 cats returned to owner and 68 cats re-housed.
- ≠ 1,191 animal infringements issued.

5.3 Council Requirements

Latrobe City Council has the following Orders, Local Laws and Procedures currently in place to assist in the effective management of dogs and cats. Council's Local Laws No. 2 is currently under review and may result in changes to the following.

Council Orders

- ≠ Compulsory desexing of 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.
- ≠ Compulsory microchipping of all dogs and cats registered effective from 10 April 2009.
- ≠ Cat curfew 9 pm to 6 am, seven days a week.

Local Law No. 2 - Part 11 Keeping of Animals

147. Dogs (Including Unleashed Dogs)

- 147.1 In regards to property within the Municipal District and zoned Residential, an owner or occupier of that property must not keep or allow to be kept more than two adult dogs (save and except for additional dogs allowed pursuant to a valid planning permit) on any one property without a written permit from the Council under this Part.
- 147.2 In regards to property within the Municipal District and zoned Rural an owner or occupier of property must not keep or allow to be kept more than three adult dogs (save and except for additional dogs allowed pursuant to a valid planning permit) on any one property without a written permit from the Council under this Part.
- 147.3 For the purpose of this part, Rural means any land zoned Rural Land in the Planning Scheme which is not within 50 metres of another zone.
- 147.4 The Council may from time to time designate areas on which dogs may be unleashed provided they remain under the effective control of the owner or person in charge of the dog.
- 147.5 Any person may make a submission under Section 223 of the Act in respect of any action of the Council under sub-clause (4).
- 147.6 A person who unleashes a dog in a designated area must keep the dog under effective control.
- 147.7 A person who unleashes a dog in a designated area bears responsibility for any action of that dog.
- 147.8 The Council must cause areas designated under sub-clause (4) to be signposted for the purpose.
- 147.9 The signposting may include the words "Dog Area - unleashing permitted – owner liability applies" or words to similar effect.
- 147.10 A person must not have a dog unleashed in any built-up area in the Municipal district unless it is in an area designated for that purpose.

147.11 Restricted breed, declared and menacing dogs must not be unleashed and must remain under the effective control of the owner or person in charge of the dog.

148. Permit Application

Any person wishing to keep more than the prescribed number or type of animals on any premises must make application, in writing, to the Council, supplying details of the land involved, the number and type of animals and the care and housing arrangement proposed.

149. Granting of a Permit

In determining whether to grant a Permit, the Council must have regard to any standards of this Local Law and any guidelines determined by Council from time to time.

155. Keeping of Animals

An owner or occupier of property requires a permit to keep or allow to be kept more than 4 different types of animals on any one property at any time and must not keep, without a permit or allow to be kept any more in number for each type of animal than as set out in the table reproduced on page 38 of this document.

156. Litters of Animals

For the purpose of calculating the maximum limit of the numbers of animals kept, the progeny of any dog or cat lawfully kept will be exempt for a period of 12 weeks after their birth.

157. Animal Litter/Dog Excrement

A person in charge of an animal must not allow any part of the animal's excrement to remain on any road, nature strip, reserve or public or Council land. A person in charge of a dog on a road or in a municipal place must:

- (a) not permit the excrement of the dog to remain on that road or in that municipal place;
- (b) carry a device suitable for the removal of any excrement that may be deposited by the dog; and
- (c) produce the device on demand by an authorised officer.

158. Maximum Number of Dogs and Cats

Except as provided in Clause 155, no other property may keep more than five dogs and three cats without a permit.

Council Procedures

- ≠ Animal Registration Renewal forms are reviewed annually and amended as required.
- ≠ Animal Registration Fees are considered and determined by Council during the annual budget process.
- ≠ Animal Deterrent Spray Procedure 2011
- ≠ Barking Dog Procedures 2011
- ≠ Cat Trap Loan Procedure 2010
- ≠ Dealing with Sick or Injured Animals procedure 2011
- ≠ Dealing with Sick or Injured Animals Procedure 2011
- ≠ Desexing of Dogs and Cats released from the Pound procedure 2011
- ≠ Dog and Cat Impounding Procedure 2012
- ≠ Dog and Cat Pound Release Procedure 2011
- ≠ Infringement Collection Procedure 2010
- ≠ Infringement Notice Internal Review Procedure 2010
- ≠ Infringement Notice Payment Plan Procedure 2010
- ≠ Issuing of identification tags with registration renewal notices.
- ≠ Keeping of Animals Permit Approvals Procedure 2011
- ≠ Notice of Seizure (Dogs and Cats) Procedure 2011
- ≠ Notice to Comply Procedure 2011
- ≠ Scanning of Impounded Dogs and Cats procedure 2011
- ≠ Removal and Identification of Dead Dogs and Cats Procedure 2010
- ≠ Voluntary Surrender of Unwanted Dogs and Cats Procedure 2011

5.4 Training of Authorised Officers

Latrobe City Council is committed to the training of our Local Laws Officers. An annual training program is developed for each officer to ensure they receive appropriate training. The objective of any training and development is to support all Local Laws staff in having the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work.

A training register detailing all qualifications and training courses completed by each Local Laws Officer is maintained and updated annually to reflect any training undertaken or required.

In addition to specialised training, all staff have access to a suite of personal and professional training opportunities delivered through Council's Learning and Development programs.

2008-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- ≠ Five Local Laws Officers completed Certificate IV Animal Control.
- ≠ Five Local Laws Officers attended regional training seminars sponsored by Bureau of Animal Welfare. Seminars included Identification of Dangerous Dogs, Legislation changes and general updates.
- ≠ In-house workshops conducted six monthly to update staff on legislation changes and other matters relevant to the team.
- ≠ Fortnightly team meetings held.
- ≠ Individual Local Laws Staff recognised as:
 - ~ AIAM Animal Management Officer of the Year 2009
 - ~ NAIDOC Achievement Award 2011

5.5 Registration and Identification

Latrobe City Council mails out registration renewal notices prior to 10 April each year.

Any renewal payments not received by the due date of 10 April 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 an opportunity to advertise legislative changes i.e. requirement to register dog/cat by age three months and compulsory microchipping and desexing of all new dogs and cats being registered.

When mailing these notices we often include inserts such as “Doggy Doo” and “Unleashed Areas” pamphlets to further inform and educate our community on domestic animal matters.

New registration applications are available at all Council service centres and libraries in Churchill, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon; via Council’s website; through Veterinary Clinics and at Council’s pound facility.

Latrobe City currently partners with local contracted veterinarians to run a microchipping week in March where microchipping is offered at the discounted rate.

2007 – 2012 Animal Registration Comparisons:

	11/12	10/11	09/10	08/09	07/08
Dogs	11,667	9,757	9,770*	13,039	11,098
Cats	3,518	3,102	3,160*	4,248	3,671

* indicates when compulsory desexing was introduced.

Educational and/or Promotional Activities

- ≠ Animal Registration forms available at Council service centres and libraries; on Council’s website and can be requested by telephoning Council.
- ≠ Advertising and administration of the discount microchipping week held in conjunction with Council’s contracted veterinarians.
- ≠ Doorknock “hot spot” areas or areas where complaints have been received in relation to registration requirements.
- ≠ Maintenance of computerised registration database.
- ≠ Advertisements in local newspapers and guest spot on local radio.

Compliance Activities

- ≠ Issuing annual animal registration renewal notices, including animal tags.
- ≠ Follow up unpaid renewal notices with reminder notices.
- ≠ Issuing of infringement notices for failing to register where appropriate.
- ≠ Impounding of wandering dogs and cats.
- ≠ Ensure that all seized or impounded animals are registered prior to release to their owner.
- ≠ Review animal registration fees annually during the budget process.
- ≠ Serving of Notices to Comply for minor breaches of the law.
- ≠ Investigate all reports of unregistered animals in a timely manner.
- ≠ Attending properties unannounced to conduct on the spot inspections where there have been ongoing or serious complaints against a property or person.

2008-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- ≠ Over ten radio spots regarding responsible pet ownership, microchipping, desexing and registration requirements were conducted on local radio Gippsland FM 104.7.
- ≠ Information caravan visit to Yinnar and Boolarra in March 2010.
- ≠ Compulsory desexing introduced.
- ≠ Conducted a discounted microchipping week prior to the registration due date of 10 April each year.
- ≠ Implemented Council resolution in relation to compulsory microchipping from April 2009.

5.6 Animal Nuisance Complaints

All animal complaints received are investigated in a timely manner to minimise the potential for complaints escalating. Officers make every effort to resolve complaints to the satisfaction of both parties.

For the most part, nuisance complaints received by Latrobe City Council relate to either barking dogs or stray cats. We recognise barking dog complaints can at times be part of long term neighbourhood disputes which cause great frustration to both parties. Local Laws Officers work hard to balance the interest and rights of both the dog owner and the complainant.

Complainants are first advised to speak directly to their neighbour in an effort to resolve the matter quickly. Often dog owners become desensitised to the sound of their own dog barking and may be unaware it is a nuisance to neighbours.

Council Officers, if involved, will first work with the dog owner to support them in identifying the cause of the barking and suggest possible solutions. The majority of cases involve dogs that are bored or respond to visual stimulation. Both causes are often easily resolved with training, toys, blocking a view or exercising the dog more frequently.

Officers may require complainants to keep noise logs (records of dates, times, duration of barking etc) should the matter continue and further intervention be required.

In response to nuisance complaints received on stray cats; Latrobe City Council offers residents cat cages to assist in containing offending animals trespassing on their property or wandering during the curfew period. Local Laws Officers will then attend during normal business hours and impound any contained cats. These cages are available on payment of a fully refundable deposit.

Educational and/or Promotional Activities

- ≠ Make information available at Council service centres and libraries and on Council's website.
- ≠ Promote the various resources available to encourage the correct selection of a new pet such as 'Select a Pet' website.
- ≠ Provide a wide range of pamphlets.
- ≠ Distribute brochures to residents when requested and when investigating complaints.
- ≠ Signage to identify the areas designated for exercising dogs off lead.
- ≠ Advertisements in local newspapers and guest spot on local radio.

Compliance Activities

- ≠ Investigate all complaints received.
- ≠ Encourage complainants to speak directly to dog owners to alert them to their dog barking.
- ≠ Record all nuisance complaints in Council's record management systems.
- ≠ Provide cat cages to residents for containing trespassing cats as requested.
- ≠ Impound all unregistered dogs found at large.
- ≠ Issue infringements for dogs found at large.
- ≠ Impound or return wandering registered pets to owners.
- ≠ Attending properties unannounced to conduct on the spot inspections where there have been ongoing or serious complaints against a property or person.

2008-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- ≠ A procedure was developed in relation to barking dogs and implemented in 2009.
- ≠ The planned review of dogs and cat provisions in Council's Local Law No. 2 was postponed and will form part of the Local Law No. 2 review to be conducted 2012/2013.

5.7 Dog Attacks

Latrobe City Council considers any reported dog attacks as the highest priority and dispatches a Local Laws Officer immediately to investigate and action as appropriate.

Educational and/or Promotional Activities

- ≠ Promote responsible pet ownership to new and existing dog owners.
- ≠ Promote the benefits of dog training, socialisation and frequent exercise.
- ≠ Promote the various resources available to encourage the correct selection of a new pet such as 'Select a Pet' website.
- ≠ Provide a range of pamphlets that raise awareness of the risk of dog attacks in the home, on the street and in parks which include information on how to reduce risks.
- ≠ Distribute brochures to residents when requested and when investigating complaints.
- ≠ Promotion of the need for dogs to be under effective control, at all times, including the need to ensure dogs can be effectively contained and/or fenced on their own property to ensure they cannot escape.
- ≠ Promote desexing of dogs to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering at large.
- ≠ Promote the need for supervision of children when dogs are present.
- ≠ Promote Council's emergency 24 hour 7 day a week service for reporting a dog attack.

Compliance Activities

- ≠ Declaring of all identified dangerous/menacing dogs inline with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.
- ≠ Respond to all reported dog attacks immediately as the top priority for Local Laws Officers.
- ≠ Record all reported dog attacks in Council's record management systems.
- ≠ Ensure all reported dog attacks are thoroughly investigated with findings and evidence accurately recorded and maintained.
- ≠ Ensure owners of declared dogs are fully informed of their requirements under the Act.
- ≠ Be proactive in declaring dogs dangerous or menacing.
- ≠ Ensure unclaimed dogs at the pound are temperament tested to determine whether they are suitable for re-housing.
- ≠ Seize dogs involved in serious attacks.
- ≠ Providing an emergency 24 hour 7 day a week service to report a dog attack.

- ≠ Conduct regular patrols at locations where there is a high incidence of wandering dogs.

2008-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- ≠ All investigations of dog attacks finalised.
- ≠ Increased community awareness as a result of the death of a child in Melbourne attacked by a dog and the ensuing media resulted in an increased public awareness of dog risks.

5.8 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Latrobe City Council Local Laws Officers investigate any reports or complaints regarding dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs, immediately.

Local Laws Officers currently use the Department of Primary Industry 'Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria' to identify restricted breeds.

Council Orders

Latrobe City Council currently utilises the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* in relation to dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.

Reports of suspected undeclared restricted breed dogs are rare in Latrobe City. Officers believe there is a high level of compliance regarding the ownership and management of declared dogs within the municipality.

Educational and/or Promotional Activities

- ≠ Media releases in local papers from Council and the Bureau of Animal Welfare.
- ≠ Radio spots on local radio.
- ≠ Information pamphlets at all Council service centres and libraries.
- ≠ Information available on council's website.
- ≠ Ensuring all owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Act regarding identification and the keeping of these dogs.
- ≠ Promotion of new regulations for restricted breed dogs.
- ≠ Promote the 'Dangerous Dogs Hotline' 1300 101 080 on Council's website.

Compliance Activities

- ≠ Ensure that all Declared Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs are registered accurately with the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.
- ≠ Inspect commercial and industrial areas to identify guard dogs guarding non-residential properties.
- ≠ Attending properties unannounced to conduct on the spot inspections and annual audits where there are registered declared dogs.
- ≠ Follow-up non-compliance issues found during inspections and audits.
- ≠ Review all dog attack cases to determine if it is appropriate to declare the dog dangerous or menacing.
- ≠ Maintain a register of all declared dogs registered and housed in Latrobe City Council.
- ≠ Seize unregistered, suspected Restricted Breed dogs.

- ≠ Complete investigations of complaints of these types of dog breed.

2008-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- ≠ Audited properties where there are registered declared dogs.
- ≠ Declared Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed dogs registered accurately with the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.

5.9 Over-Population and High Euthanasia

Latrobe City Council is aware of the high euthanasia rates for dogs and in particular cats and continues to promote the benefits of desexing. The introduction of compulsory desexing for all dogs and cats registered for the first time or released from the pound facility was implemented in 2008. Council continues to facilitate a discounted microchipping week prior to the registration date of 10 April each year.

Council has in place two Section 84Y Domestic Animal Act agreements to re-house dogs and cats that have ended up in the pound, and is currently negotiating with several other local organisations.

Educational and/or Promotional Activities

- ≠ Promote responsible pet ownership to new and existing dog owners.
- ≠ Promote the benefits of dog training, socialisation and frequent exercise.
- ≠ Promote the various resources available to encourage the correct selection of a new pet such as 'Select a Pet' website.
- ≠ Promote Council's cat curfew.
- ≠ Promote the benefits of desexing; such as no surprise litters, fewer unwanted animals in the community, fewer animals euthanised, reduced aggression and reduced wandering, via local radio spots, local newspaper articles and on Council's website.
- ≠ Select a "Pet of the week" and advertise in local newspaper, on Council's website and via social media.
- ≠ Offer dogs and cats for sale from the pound at an affordable price which includes desexing and microchipping costs.

Compliance Activities

- ≠ Investigating complaints and reports of numbers of dogs/cats on residential properties.
- ≠ Provide cat cages to residents for containing trespassing cats as requested.
- ≠ Investigate reports of animal hoarding and work with owners to reduce these to permitted numbers.
- ≠ Enter into Section 84Y Domestic Animal Act agreements with local organisations to re-house dogs and cats that have ended up in the pound.
- ≠ Investigate reports of unauthorised 'backyard breeders' to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business.
- ≠ Where identified facilitate cat trapping programs of industry/commercial businesses.

- ≠ Implementation of Council resolution for the desexing of all dogs and cats being registered for the first time from April 2008.

2008-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- ≠ Enter into two Section 84Y Domestic Animal Act agreements with local organisations to re-house dogs and cats that have ended up in the pound.
- ≠ Re-housed 100% of 'Pet of the week' animals.

5.10 Domestic Animal Businesses

Latrobe City Council currently has 12 registered Domestic Animal Businesses. These businesses are issued with registration renewal notices each year and Council conducts annual inspections in relation to their compliance with relevant codes of practices.

Council provides all registered Domestic Animal Businesses with any changes to the legislation or Code of Practice information relevant to the business and encourage business owners to be involved in any review of the mandatory Code of Practice.

Latrobe City Council sponsored a seminar for all registered Domestic Animal Businesses to network and remain relevant in relation to changes in legislation. In addition this seminar provided a forum for discussion and information sharing.

Any new registration applications are received and processed inline with the Code of Practice.

Educational and/or Promotional Activities

- ≠ Provide relevant mandatory Code of Practice to proprietors of existing and proposed domestic animal businesses.
- ≠ Ensure all relevant Domestic Animal Businesses are advised and involved in any review of the mandatory Code of Practice for their type of business.
- ≠ Sponsors an annual seminar for all registered Animal Businesses to network and remain relevant in relation to changes in legislation.
- ≠ Invite Domestic Animal Businesses to be involved in Council's animal related community events.

Compliance Activities

- ≠ Conduct web, 'Yellow Pages', newspaper, Dogsonline.com.au, etc, searches to ascertain whether there are unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality.
- ≠ Conduct annual (or more frequent) 'unscheduled' inspections/audits of each Domestic Animal Business premises to determine compliance with the Act, relevant mandatory Code of Practice, and any terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on that registration.
- ≠ Use audit documents on Bureau of Animal Welfare's Animal Management website.
- ≠ Follow-up Domestic Animal Business non-compliance issues with information on required actions and timeframe for resolution, further inspections, and prosecutions where necessary.
- ≠ In the case of serious non-compliance issues, suspend or cancel registration.

- ≠ Check local newspapers to ensure Domestic Animal Business registration numbers and name of Council that issued that number are included in cat and dog 'for sale' advertisements.
- ≠ Liaise with other units within Council to provide advice when planning applications for Domestic Animal Businesses are received, to ensure appropriate conditions are placed on construction, operation, etc.
- ≠ Offer a Domestic Animal Business kit to send to people making queries about setting up a Domestic Animal Business, to let them know of all the requirements involved, before they start making too many plans.

2008-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan Highlights:

- ≠ A successful Domestic Animal Business workshop for current and prospective proprietors was hosted by Local Laws staff at Latrobe City Corporate Headquarters in April 2010 which was attended by 37 people.

6. 2011-2012 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

Stakeholder consultation was undertaken in the form of a survey, which was distributed by mail, available from Council service centres and libraries; online through Council's website and by external agents walking Churchill, Moe, Morwell and Traralgon central business districts between 23 November 2011 and 31 January 2012.

A total of 354 completed surveys were received. Responses from this survey have been collated and samples of those responses are presented as follows:

- ≠ 75% of cat owners surveyed had registered their cats.
- ≠ 87.5% of cat owners surveyed had desexed their cats.
- ≠ 63.8% of surveyed respondents were aware of our 9 pm-6 am cat curfew.
- ≠ 86.4% of surveyed respondents agreed with the cat curfew.
- ≠ 54% of surveyed respondents believed there is no problem with stray cats in their area.
- ≠ 70% of surveyed respondents agreed with compulsory desexing of cats.
- ≠ 51.9% of surveyed respondents are aware we have cat cages for hire.
- ≠ 87.4% of dog owners surveyed had registered their dogs.
- ≠ 66.8 of dog owners surveyed had desexed their dogs.
- ≠ 52.2% of dog owners surveyed have taken their dogs to obedience training.
- ≠ 74.5% of surveyed respondents believe there is no problem with stray dogs in their area.
- ≠ 45.4% of surveyed respondents agreed with compulsory desexing of dogs.
- ≠ 90.1% of surveyed respondents were aware of the Local Law requiring owners to pick up dog droppings.
- ≠ 71.7% of surveyed respondents believed there is no problem with dog droppings in their area.
- ≠ 42% of surveyed respondents were aware we offered a discounted microchipping week.
- ≠ 80% of respondents who have visited our pound rate the assistance of staff good to excellent.
- ≠ 62.1% of surveyed respondents support the current pound operating times.

Latrobe City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-2017

7. FOUR YEAR ACTION PLAN

The following pages outline Latrobe City Council's four year action plan which has been designed to build on the successes of the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Actions have been developed with a focus on staff training; community awareness; the provision of accessible, relevant and timely information and a simplified process for the reporting of issues.

Feedback received during Council's Customer Satisfaction Survey has also been considered in the development of actions.

7.1 Training of Authorised Officers

To ensure all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work safely and effectively.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Review and finalise, in consultation with relevant staff, training required for all Authorised Officers undertaking animal management duties.	Consultation with relevant staff occurred; agreed list of skills required to undertake animal management duties developed.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff responding to customers; increased customer confidence that enquiry will be successfully dealt with.	Annually
Ensure all Local Laws Officers have completed relevant training requirements within 12 months of appointment.	Number of newly appointed Officers who are undertaking or have completed training in required skills.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff responding to customers; increased customer confidence that enquiry will be successfully dealt with.	Ongoing
Identify training providers, both internal and external.	Training providers identified and engaged for all required skills.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff responding to customers; increased customer confidence that enquiry will be successfully dealt with.	Annually
Ensure individual staff training plans are developed and recorded in Council's annual appraisal process.	Individual training plans established and agreed to.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff responding to customers; increased customer confidence that enquiry will be successfully dealt with.	Annually
Maintain a central training register which includes individual Local Laws Officers current level of training and agreed future training requirements.	Central training register developed and maintained.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff responding to customers; increased customer confidence that enquiry will be successfully dealt with.	Ongoing



ACTION		MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
	Ensure staff are kept informed of and trained in changes to relevant legislation, policies, processes and procedures in a timely manner.	Changes to legislation, policies, processes and procedures to be highlighted on the Local Laws Intranet; Agenda item during regular team meetings; distribution of a Quarterly staff bulletin and training.	Confident and informed staff responding to customers; increased customer confidence that enquiry will be successfully dealt with.	Ongoing
	Regularly assess Officers skills, compliance and knowledge of policies, processes and procedures.	Six monthly skills and knowledge assessments undertaken for each Officer.	Confident and informed staff responding to customers; increased customer confidence that enquiry will be successfully dealt with.	Biannually

7.2 Registration and Identification

Maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals residing within Latrobe City to aid compliance and facilitate reuniting lost pets with their owners in a timely manner.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Cross check microchip registries to identify microchipped animals within Latrobe City that are not registered.	Cross check undertaken and contact made with owners when irregularities are found.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Cross check all notifications of dogs and cats sold at pet shops or through animal welfare organisations and follow up those that are not registered.	Cross check undertaken and contact made with owners when irregularities are found.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Send out registration reminder notices to those pet owners who have failed to re-register their pets by 10 April each year.	Reminder notices sent for previously registered animals that have not been renewed.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	By 31 May each year.
Partner with local pet shops, Domestic Animal Business's and veterinarians to distribute animal registration information with each pet sale.	Number of pet shops, Domestic Animal Business's and veterinarians distributing information with pet sales.	Increased access to Council services and an enhanced level of customer service.	Ongoing
Facilitate discount microchipping sessions prior to April each year.	Annual discount microchipping sessions held.	Increased access to Council services and an enhanced level of customer service.	Annually
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered prior to release to their owner.	Cross check pound release forms with pet registration database.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing



ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
	Undertake annual random neighbourhood door knocks to check for unregistered dogs and cats.	Number of random neighbourhood door knocks undertaken across the municipality.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation. Annually

7.3 Animal Nuisance Complaints

Minimise the number of complaints received by Council while increasing community satisfaction with Council's response to investigating complaints.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Provide educational material to pet owners with annual registration renewals.	Distribution of educational material.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	Annually
Adhere to Council's standards in the Customer Service Plan 2012-2016 when processing complaints.	Audit response times against agreed standards in the Customer Service Plan 2012-2016.	Increased customer satisfaction and confidence in Council.	Ongoing
Maintain an appropriate supply of cat cages for hire to meet community demand.	Maintain a waiting period of no longer than a seven working days.	Reduction in feral cat population and complaints.	Ongoing
Maintain accurate and relevant information on Council's website about how to make a complaint.	Dedicated page on animal complaints to be developed and regularly checked for accuracy.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints; increased access to Council services; an enhanced level of customer service and greater adherence to legislation.	Monthly
Develop a user friendly complaint lodgement, investigation and response process to facilitate timely resolutions.	Process developed and implemented.	Increased access to Council services and an enhanced level of customer service.	2013/2014

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Develop barking dog information packs to provide to complainants and owners of alleged barking dogs to assist in the timely resolution of complaints.	Information packs developed and distributed.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	2013/2014
Develop guidelines for off-leash exercise areas which promote dog training and socialisation.	Guidelines developed	Established guidelines for the future planning of off-leash exercise areas.	2013/2014
Audit existing off-leash exercise areas against the developed guidelines.	Audit undertaken and report on findings presented to Manager Community Information Services.	Identified gaps between existing off-leash areas and established guidelines in which to plan future works.	2013/2014
Partner with animal groups to provide opportunities for owners to participate in dog training through 'Neighbourhood Pet Parties' with guest speakers.	Minimum of one event held biennially.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	2013/2014 2015/2016

7.4 Dog Attacks

Minimise the risk to the community of dog attacks while increasing community understanding of potential aggressive animal behaviour and the benefits of dog socialisation and obedience training.

ACTION		MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
	Develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Aust Post to report all dog attacks, rushes, wandering animals etc within one working day of observation.	MOU developed and signed by both parties.	Earlier detection of problem areas and increased community confidence.	2013/2014
	Develop dog attack investigation and enforcement procedure.	Procedure developed and implemented.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff responding to customers; consistency in response provided; increased customer confidence and enhanced level of customer service.	2013/2014
	Conduct an education campaign for farmers regarding their responsibilities when owning working dogs.	Biennial education program developed and delivered.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	2014/2015 2016/2017
	Maintain accurate and relevant information on Council's website about how to report a dog attack.	Dedicated page on dog attacks to be developed and regularly checked for accuracy.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints; increased access to Council services; an enhanced level of customer service and greater adherence to legislation.	Monthly

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Increase public understanding and awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report through media articles and brochures.	Number of media articles sent to local media; brochure developed and number of brochures distributed.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Promote the benefits of puppy school and dog obedience training through media articles and brochures.	Number of media articles sent to local media; brochure developed and number of brochures distributed.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Promote a greater awareness of the consequences for owners and their dogs should their dog rush at or attack a person or animal.	Number of media articles sent to local media; brochure developed and number of brochures distributed.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Investigate and implement a method of recording details of any animal reported, or found, to have attacked people, pets, wildlife and livestock.	Accurate and current details recorded.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	2014/2015

7.5 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Meeting legislative requirements relating to dangerous, menacing and Restricted Breed dogs while educating the community about such breeds.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Develop a user friendly complaint lodgement, investigation, declaration and response process to facilitate timely resolutions.	Process developed and implemented.	Increased access to Council services and an enhanced level of customer service.	2013/2014
Annually inspect industrial areas within the municipality for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes.	Number of inspections conducted.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Annually
Increase public understanding and awareness of dangerous, menacing and Restricted Breed dogs through media articles and brochures.	Number of media articles sent to local media; brochure developed and number of brochures distributed.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Cross check microchip registries to identify Restricted Breed dogs within Latrobe City that are not registered.	Cross check undertaken and contact made with owners when irregularities are found.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Ensure all declared menacing, dangerous and Restricted Breed dogs are entered into the Victorian Declared Dog Registry within seven days of declaration.	Number of declared menacing, dangerous and Restricted Breed dogs entered into the Victorian Declared Dog Registry within seven days of declaration.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing

7.6 Over-Population and High Euthanasia

Encourage responsible pet ownership by promoting desexing and confinement of dogs and cats to reduce the incidence of unwanted pet litters and feral domestic animals; while increasing the number of animals successfully re-housed.

ACTION		MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
	Promote the Bureau of Animal Welfare's Responsible Pet Ownership programs.	Number of media articles or events.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
	Record details of cats being surrendered or seized to monitor for potential problem areas.	Spreadsheet developed, maintained and analysed.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
	Develop a procedure for assessing the suitability of dogs or cats for re-housing.	Procedure developed and implemented.	Confident, skilled and knowledgeable staff responding to customers; consistency in response provided; increased customer confidence and enhanced level of customer service.	2013/2014
	Review existing and explore additional 84Y Agreements with shelters and animal welfare organisations to re-house unclaimed dogs and cats.	At least 85% of impounded animals returned to owner, sold or re-housed.	Reduction in number of animals euthanized.	Ongoing
	Use social media to promote animals available for adoption.	Number of social media posts.	Increased access to Council services and an enhanced level of customer service.	Ongoing

7.7 Domestic Animal Businesses

To support and regulate domestic animal businesses established within the municipality.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Develop a user friendly complaint lodgement, investigation and response process to facilitate timely resolutions.	Process developed and implemented.	Increased access to Council services and an enhanced level of customer service.	2013/2014
Audit all Domestic Animal Businesses annually to ensure compliance.	Number of audits undertaken.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Annually
Maintain accurate and relevant information on Council's website about how to register a Domestic Animal Business.	Dedicated page on Domestic Animal Businesses to be developed and regularly checked for accuracy.	Greater community awareness of responsible pet ownership; a reduction in complaints; increased access to Council services; an enhanced level of customer service and greater adherence to legislation.	Monthly
Cross check advertised dogs and cats for sale to determine if the seller is a registered Domestic Animal Business.	Cross check undertaken and contact made when irregularities are found.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Ongoing
Ensure details of all registered Domestic Animal Businesses are reported annually to the Bureau of Animal Welfare.	Number of registered Domestic Animal Businesses reported annually to the Bureau of Animal Welfare.	Improved accuracy of Council's pet registration database and greater adherence to legislation.	Annually

7.8 Municipal Pound

To operate a Municipal Pound in accordance with the Domestic Animal Act 1994.

ACTION	MEASURE	OUTCOME	WHEN
Implement receipting facilities at Council's Municipal Pound to allow greater flexibility to animal owners.	Successful implementation of receipting functions at Council's Domestic Animal Pound	Increased access to Council services and an enhanced level of customer service.	2013/2014
Investigate operational models for Council's Municipal Pound and provide a report to Management outlining options.	Investigation undertaken and report provided.	Best value for service provided.	2014/2015

8. ANNUAL REVIEW AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Actions identified in this Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-2017 will commence in the 2013/2014 financial year and conclude at the end of the 2016/2017 financial year.

Latrobe City Council will review the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013-2017 annually and, if appropriate, amend. Any amendment of the Plan will be provided to the Department of Primary Industries' Secretary. An evaluation of our implementation of the Plan will be published in Latrobe City Council's Annual Report.

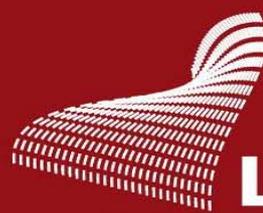
A full review of this Plan will be undertaken during the 2016/2017 financial year and will inform the development of any future Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Any questions relating to this Plan should be directed to the Coordinator Local Laws on 1300 367 700; or via email at latrobe@latrobe.vic.gov.au; or via post to Latrobe City Council, PO Box 264, Morwell Victoria 3840.

To obtain this information in languages other than English, or in other formats including audio, electronic, Braille or large print, please contact Latrobe City Council on 1300 367 700.

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