

**DRAFT WELLINGTON SHIRE COUNCIL
DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013 -2016
FOR CONSULTATION PURPOSES**

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Australia has one of the highest incidences of pet ownership per household with more than two thirds of households owning pets. Although there are no comprehensive statistics about the number of dog attacks and bites in Victoria because many injuries are not treated or reported by doctors, in recent years the spotlight has been on attacks on people with reports that six people are attacked by dogs every day.

Council recognises that pet ownership has positive benefits for the community and responsible pet ownership makes a valuable contribution towards our community's wellbeing and adds to the social connectivity within society. This is more pronounced with children and the elderly where pets play a more prominent part in these people's lives.

The issue of balancing pet ownership and the rights of the individual to enjoy the environment is a challenge. The adequate control of animals can often be a source of conflict between neighbours, particularly in urban areas.

The State has recognised the impact on the health and safety of communities and the requirement to provide an environment that communities can enjoy. The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* controls domestic animal matters within the State and requires that every Council in Victoria has a Domestic Animal Management Plan.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Objective

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 effectiveness and awareness of the domestic animal management within the Wellington Shire.

2.2 Background

Local Government is primarily the level of government responsible for domestic animal management. The primary legislation is the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* (hereafter referred to as "the Act"). The Act was formally referred as the *Domestic Animals (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 (title change)*.

Section 68A of the Act requires all Councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan at three yearly intervals. The plan is reviewed annually and amended appropriately, with a copy submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries. The Wellington Shire is required to report on the implementation of the plan in its Annual Report.

2.3 Primary Objective

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

The plan identifies current activities and future actions to address the following issues as required by s68A of the Act:

1. Identify a method for evaluating whether the animal control services are effective.
2. Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership
3. Outline programs for the training of authorised officers

4. Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue
5. Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
6. Address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
7. Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
8. Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
9. Effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs
10. Review of existing orders and local laws that relate to cats and dogs
11. Provide periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

2.4 Wellington Shire Profile

The Wellington Shire is the third largest in Victoria in land area (10,924 square kilometres) and is a mix of urban and rural areas, with a population around 43,000. It is an unique environment with coastal areas, the Gippsland Lakes area, agricultural land, undeveloped land and urban areas, the largest being the towns of Sale and Maffra, Yarram, Stratford and Heyfield. The Shire has a high percentage of domestic animal businesses (30), reflecting the unique environment and the attraction of these businesses to this area. With comparison to fifteen (15) rural shires, it has the second highest number of dogs registered and third highest number of cats registered.

Wellington Shire Council recognises that pet ownership has positive benefits for the community and responsible pet ownership makes a valuable contribution towards our community's wellbeing and adds to the social connectivity within society. This is more pronounced with children and the elderly where pets play a more prominent part in these people's lives.

The issue of balancing pet ownership and the rights of the individual to enjoy the environment is a challenge. The adequate control of animals can often be a source of conflict between neighbours, particularly in urban areas.

2.5 Alignment to Wellington Shire 2030

The Plan outlines the services, programs and policies that will administer all requirements of the Act while simultaneously assisting the community and Council in achieving its Vision for Wellington 2030. The management of animals covers all areas of the 2030 themes; Natural Environment, Economy, Transport and Roads, Population, Development, Wellbeing and Safety, Culture, Liveability and Council.

The Plan directly relates to the Council Plan and the Development Division vision; *"To support sustainable growth and development in appropriate locations supported by levels of infrastructure in keeping with the needs of the community while retaining the amenity valued by the community."*

The Plan directly relates to Municipal Services vision; *"Wellington provides a range of services that are customer focused, cost effective, robust and responsive to the needs and expectations of our community."*

2.5 The legislative framework

The Wellington Shire is required to operate within a legislative framework as it relates to domestic animals and includes:

1. *The Domestic Animals Act 1994.* The intent of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* is to promote animal welfare, the responsible ownership of dogs and cats and the protection of the environment.
2. *The Domestic Animals Regulations 2005*
3. *Local Government Act 1989.* The *Local Government Act* provides for the good governance of local governments, powers of entry and the making of local laws.

4. Local Law No 4 Environment provides for a range of controls relating to animals.
5. Prevention of *Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*. The Prevention of *Cruelty to Animals Act's* purpose is to prevent cruelty to animals; to encourage the considerate treatment of animals; and to improve the level of community awareness about the prevention of cruelty to animals.

2.6 Process Applied in Developing Plan

The Wellington Shire Council Local Laws Team has developed this DRAFT Domestic Animal Management Plan. The following table details the process and timelines for developing and implementing the plan.

Outcome	Actioned By	Date
Release Document for Comment	Council	December 2012
Community engagement undertaken <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertise and issue press releases seeking submissions to draft document • Conduct community Round Table sessions • Send draft documents to Reserve Committees of Management and to Domestic Animal Businesses • Hold consultative meeting with Domestic Animal Businesses 	Manager Municipal Services	Feb/Mar 2013
Results of community engagement compiled	Manager Municipal Services	Mar 2013
Draft Domestic Animal Plan Updated to reflect feedback	Manager Municipal Services	Apr 2013
Final Document reviewed	GM/CMT	May 2013
Domestic Animal Management Plan presented to Council for adoption	Council	May 2013
Domestic Animal Management Plan forward to DPI and placed on the website	Manager Municipal Services	Jun 2013 KSA Delivered

3. PURPOSE, STRUCTURE AND SERVICE LEVELS

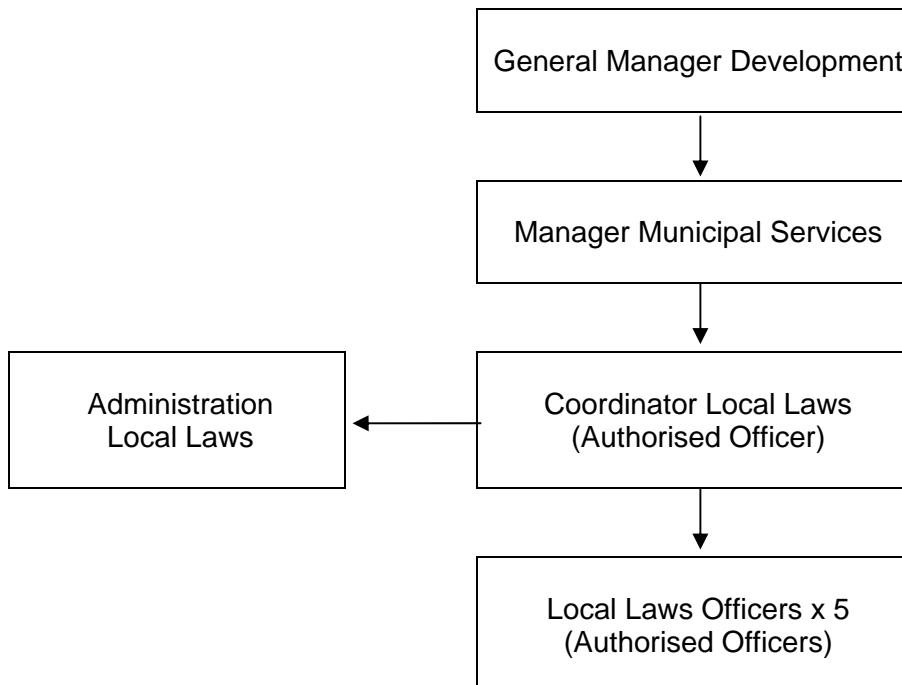
3.1 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Wellington Shire Council's animal management services are:

1. To implement the projects that support the Wellington Shire's Strategic Vision 2030 and themes therein.
2. To provide an environment that is safe and healthy for our communities.
3. To create an environment where people and animals can peacefully coexist within the community.
4. To inform and educate the community on the needs of animals and promote responsible animal ownership.
5. To enforce the animal management legislation.
6. To ensure the needs of the wider community are reflected through the Wellington Shire Council's domestic animal management policies.
7. To provide for the impounding of animals in a humane manner in a hygienic and safe environment.
8. To maximise the return of animals to their owners or rehousing in order to limit euthanasia.
9. Provide specialist animal management advice to the Wellington Shire Council.
10. To regulate and support registration of animals, domestic animal businesses and management of declared dogs.

3.2 Animal Management Staffing and Structure

In order to meet legislative requirements the Wellington Shire Council employs Local Laws Officers who are designated "Authorised Officers" under the relative legislation and are part of the Municipal Services Business Unit.



3.3 Training of Authorised Officers

The training of Authorised Officers is essential for the provision of the domestic animal management services to the community. The *Domestic Animals Act* s68 requires that there is a formal program of training for authorised officers and this program is detailed in section 4.2 of this Plan.

3.4 Current Programs and Service Levels

The Wellington Shire Council provides a broad range of services to ensure that it meets their legislative responsibilities relating to the management of animals. They include but are not limited to:

1. Providing advice on domestic animal matters
2. Dealing with and investigating customer requests
3. Educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership
4. Managing the provision of the Wellington Shire Pound facility
5. Maintaining the domestic animal, restricted breed and the declared dangerous dog registers
6. Impounding of wandering, unwanted/surrendered and /or feral dog and cats
7. Undertaking door knock registration checks
8. Investigation of dog attacks
9. Inspection and registration of domestic animal businesses
10. Inspection and check for compliance for restricted breeds and declared dangerous dogs
11. Develop and maintain relationships with partner organisations, RSPCA, DPI, Victoria Animal Aid, Veterinary Clinics and other stakeholders.
12. Provision of a 24/7 52 weeks a year after hours service.
13. Provision of suitably trained and qualified Authorised Officers.

Access to Animal Management Services

Wellington Shire Council has adopted a Customer Service Charter which documents required response timeframes to the community. The Local Laws team works within the context of the Wellington Shire Council Customer Service Charter and offers a seven day – twenty four hour response service for urgent domestic animal related matters, such as dog attacks, aggressive/dangerous dogs at large and serious animal welfare concerns.

The access to the Wellington Shire Council regarding animal management issues includes:

1. **Administration Centres at:**
 - a. Sale 70 Foster Street, Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm, and
 - b. Yarram, 156 Grant Street, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 10.00am - 2.00pm.
2. **Telephone:** 1300 366 244 (Including After Hours) or **Fax:** (03) 5142 3499
3. **Email:** enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au
4. **Customer Action Request:** cars@wellington.vic.gov.au
5. **Write to:** PO Box 506, Sale Victoria 3850
6. **Website:** www.wellington.vic.gov.au
7. **In summary:**
 - a. Answer telephone calls in an efficient and courteous manner,
 - b. Provide the ability to leave a message.
 - c. Return your calls within 1 working day.
 - d. Acknowledge written correspondence within 10 working days.
 - e. Acknowledge a general email enquiry within 10 working days,
 - f. If we can't provide the service required, we will endeavour to refer you to where the service may be available,

- g. Customer Action Request acknowledge within 10 working days or urgent (places the community at risk) tasked immediately,
- h. Any Safety Matter that places the community at risk as tasked immediately,
- 8. Missed visits, we will leave a “visit card” with contact details if we call to your residence and you are not home

A summary of the key services are outlined in the table below:

Current Programs	Service Levels
Animal Management Team	With a small team of five (5) full time Authorised Officers they are all deemed generalists and attend to parking, fire, local laws, animal management and provide the afterhours service for the organisation. Each Authorised Officer has a portfolio in which they are the lead officer for the team and it is estimated animal management is utilising three (3) equivalent fulltime positions.
Identification and Registration	All dogs and cats are required to be registered annually with the Shire by 10 April each year. Currently (30 June 2012) the number of animals registered in the Shire is 13,489: Dogs 11,729 Cats 1,760
Wellington Shire Pound	Consists of a facility that can accommodate 38 dogs, 36 cats, and up to 100 head of livestock. The facility is located at Fulham, approximately 5km west of Sale off the Princes Highway to Melbourne. It is managed under contract and provides the following services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Agents for registration of dogs and cats within the municipality of the Wellington Shire. o Receive dogs and cats, contact known owners, place photographs on the website, house animals until released, rehoused or euthanized, and disposal of animals due to health, welfare issues or where there is failure to rehouse. o Provide monthly statistics to the Shire.
Registration of Domestic Animal Businesses	Wellington Shire Council currently has thirty (30) registered domestic animal businesses and posts out registration renewal notices each year and conducts annual inspections in relation to compliance with the codes of practice.
Domestic Animal Complaints	<p>Authorised Officers respond within the customer service charter to animal complaints.</p> <p>Wellington Shire Council Authorised Officers will accept dogs and cats surrendered by their owners who can no longer care for them for whatever reason.</p> <p>Wellington Shire Council Authorised Officers will attend and attempt to contain or capture any dog or cat that is reported to be causing a serious nuisance or presenting as a danger to people or other animals including after normal operating hours.</p>
Restricted Breeds/Dangerous Dogs/Menacing Dogs	The Wellington Shire Council will manage Menacing Dogs in accordance with the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> . Any dog that causes a non serious bite injury to a person or animal or rushes at someone may be declared a menacing dog. The owners will be required to show that they can be a responsible owner with their

Current Programs	Service Levels
	<p>dog and ensure action is taken to prevent the dog from attacking again.</p> <p>The Wellington Shire Council will manage Restricted Breeds in accordance with the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i>.</p> <p>The Wellington Shire Council will manage Dangerous Dogs in accordance with the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i>. Any dog that is declared a menacing dog and is subject to two further infringements or involved in an attack that results in serious injury or death of an animal or human will be declared a dangerous dog. Unless there are extenuating circumstances the dog will be seized and the matter will proceed to the Magistrates' Court.</p>
Microchipping	<p>The microchipping of dogs is a requirement of the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i>. The identification of dogs and cats assists in the management thereof as it allows animal owners to be identified with their animals.</p> <p>The <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> s10 c requires that all dogs and cats are microchipped at three (3) months of age.</p>
Compulsory desexing	<p>With registered cats desexing rates of over 90% and dogs over 60% implementation of compulsory desexing is not considered appropriate at this time, particularly with the removal of compulsory microchipping with effect 11 April 2013 (through state legislation) will provide emphasis for higher desexing rates.</p>
Media/Public Relations	<p>The Wellington Shire uses media releases and standing articles in its publications "Wellington Whispers" to ensure maximum publicity of animal management matters.</p> <p>The automatic telephone call waiting service includes key animal management messages such as registration of cats and dogs.</p>
Euthanasia Rates	<p>The over population of pets can lead to excessive numbers of dogs and cats being left to fend for themselves, becoming feral or causing a nuisance, resulting in high rates of animals presented to pounds and shelters for re-homing or disposal. With the implementation of the Wellington Shire Pound and Victoria Animal Aid Shelter being collocated over the past two years the save rate for animals has been 82% (av 538/yr) for dogs and 71% (av 332/yr) for cats.</p>
Ranger Vehicle Fleet	<p>Wellington Shire Council maintains a fleet of six (6) code compliant vehicles for the purpose of transporting cats and dogs. The first of the new generation animal 'vehicle with animal pod, including hydraulic lifting was introduced in 2012 with a phased replacement being implemented for the remaining vehicles.</p>

3.5 Domestic Animals Statistic Data

The 1998 Bureau of Animal Welfare statistics estimated that:

- 40% of households owned one or more dogs at an average of 1.44 dogs/household;
- 26% of households owned one or more cats at an average of 1.47 cats/household.
- With 20,680 residential dwellings in the Wellington Shire Council the estimated population is 11,911 dogs and 7,903 cats. The number of cats registered is significantly less.

The following table provide the key statistics for Wellington Shire Council and compares it to a similar Rural Council (number of dogs) and the State Average. (Note: significant land area and population discrepancies)

Key Statistic	Wellington Shire Council (June 2012)	Similar Rural Council South Gippsland (2008)	8 Rural Shires Average (2008 AMP)
Population	43,000	25,737	25,000
Area	10,924 sq km	3,280 sq km	2,815 sq km
No of EFT Authorised Officers	3	4	3.1
Hours training per officer yearly	50	30	14
Estimated number of dogs	11,911	7,864	5,155
No registered dogs	11,729 (98%)	4,915 (63%)	64%
No of infringement notices issued	30	27	50
No of impounded dogs	538	268	483
No of dogs returned to owners	306 (56%)	161 (60%)	44%
No of saved dogs	82%	35%	13%
No of euthanized dogs	55 (10) %	93 (35%)	32%
Estimated number of cats	7,903	5,218	5,625
No of registered cats	1,760	1,163	1,595
No of impounded cats	332	220	240
No of cats returned to owners	32	9	27
No of cats saved	255 (71%)	24 (11%)	15%
No of cats euthanized	76 (14%)	187 (85%)	75%
No of restricted dogs	2	3	4.5
No of declared dogs	8	4	6
No of domestic animal businesses	30	6	17
No of animal complaints	1096	904	unknown

Note: Based on WSC Pound Statistics

4 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR THE DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

4.1 This section outlines the strategic direction for Wellington Shire Council animal management function. The table below reconciles the specific requirements of the Act with the plan's structure.

Section		4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.10	5
S68A(2)(a)	Method of monitoring performance and evaluating effectiveness of service										X
S68A(2)(b)	Training of Authorised Officers	X									
S68(2)(c)(i)	Promote and		X							X	

Section		4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.10	5
	Encourage Responsible Pet Ownership										
S68A(2)(c)(ii)	Ensure compliance with Act and Regulations	X	X	X	X	X				X	
S68A(2)(c)(iii)	Minimise risk of Dog Attacks	X	X	X		X					
S68A(2)(c)(iv)	Over-population and High Euthanasia Rates	X	X	X	X						
S68A(2)(c)(v)	Encourage Registration and Identification of Cats and Dogs	X	X	X	X						
S68A(2)(c)(vi)	Minimise Potential For Nuisance	X		X		X				X	
S68A(2)(c)(vii)	Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breeds		X	X	X	X					
S68A(2)(d)	Review of Orders and Local Laws				X						
S68A(2)(e)	Any other Matters	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
S68A(2)(f)	Periodic Evaluation of Programs, Services and Strategies	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
S68A(3)(a)	Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan										X
S26(2)	Dog on Lead							X			

4.2 Authorised Officer (AO) Training and Development: Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* s68(A)(2)(b) requires, "Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district."

Objective:

To ensure that all staff involved in the management of Domestic Animals have the knowledge and skills required to consistently deliver best practice service to the Wellington Shire Community.

Task:

To actively encourage the participation of all staff in available training opportunities to maximise the skill level of officers.

Current Officer Training Standards:

Training Module	Current status Number of Officers Trained	Planned Training
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	One officer trained to this standard	Council will actively encourage and fund other participants for this course.
OH&S – Conflict Resolution	Four officers	Defensive Tactics Training every two years

Training Module	Current status Number of Officers Trained	Planned Training
Customer Service Training Difficult Telephone customers	Four officers	Ongoing in house training
Restricted Breed and Dangerous Breed Training	Three Officers	As available
Magistrates' Court Prosecutions	Three officers	Maintain minimum of one trained officer
Tribunal Advocacy		One officer every three years
Computer Training	All officers	Ongoing within organisation
Acting on Non Compliance Caution and Rights Notes and Notebooks Introduction to Evidence Statements of Evidence Ethics and Professional Practice Statement Taking Coroners Court awareness Preparing Correspondence Affidavits and Statements	All officers	Refresher training annually
Firearms Safety Training	Three officers	Annually
Induction Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in office environment annually • Working during inclement weather annually • Handling Deceased Animals • Transfer of Cats • Conduct after hours duties • Capture and restraint of domestic animals • Occupational violence annually • Possess and Use firearms annually 		

Action Plan and Initiatives: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Invest in personnel in order to maintain sufficiently trained Authorised Officers in the Municipal Services to provide a professional animal management service to our community.
- Maintain Local Laws Officers appointed as Authorised Officers under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986.

4.3 Encourage Responsible Pet Ownership – Community Education: The Wellington Shire Council actively promotes animal welfare, safety and healthy environments and undertakes the following activities:

1. Regular media releases are provided on domestic animal issues throughout the year.
2. Telephone messages are placed on the Wellington Shire Council telephone system for customers waiting.
3. Local Laws Officers are encouraged to follow a continuum of engagement, education and enforcement.

4. Where possible, residents are advised of requirements and explained the reason for compliance requirements and reliance on enforcement is usually the last tool used to ensure compliance.
5. Use of the Wellington Shire website as an education and informing medium.
6. Use of the suite of materials to support Local Laws Officers and public education provided by Commonwealth and State agencies.

Action Plan and Initiatives: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Implement a three stage approach to animal management:
 1. Education Stage 1: Provisions of letters and brochures; dog attack brochures distributed with every infringement notice issued, publication of articles regarding responsible dog ownership.
 2. Confirmation Stage 2: Annual inspections of restricted breeds and declared dangerous/menacing dogs. Any non compliance i.e. dogs at large, individuals will receive first verbal warning. (Excluding declared dogs - restricted breeds, declared dangerous dogs, menacing dogs)
 3. Enforcement Stage 3: Provisions of impounding dogs at large, issuing of notices to comply or infringement notices to owners and/or person responsible and seizure of declared dogs if found at large.
- Continue a strategy of engagement, education, confirmation and enforcement to ensure that a safe and healthy environment is maintained for our communities.

4.4 Identification and Registration: To ensure increased compliance with animal registration, Wellington Shire has adopted the following process:

1. Dogs and cats are initially registered or registration is renewed upon completion of approved application forms and the lodgement of the appropriate fee.
2. Wellington Shire Council does not accept applications for registering Restricted Breed Dogs.
3. Issuing annual dog/cat registration renewal notices.
4. Issuing of reminder notices for unpaid registrations.
5. Placement of advertising and editorial promoting registration and identification in local papers.
6. Annual inspections of Restricted Breeds and Dogs declared Dangerous Dogs.
7. Information on the Council's website dedicated to animal registration and identification.
8. Use of the telephone system 'on-hold messages' to promote registration and microchipping.
9. Registration applications and information brochures available at veterinary clinics.
10. Conduct random doorknocks.
11. Follow up for new pet owners.

Action Plan and Indicatives: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Investigate and report on the opportunities to implement a lifelong registration program.

- Maintain its commitment to increasing animal registrations and microchipping compliance in order to reduce the level of animal euthanasia.
- Work with the RSPCA and Animal Groups to promote microchipping events.

4.5 Compliance and Enforcement: The Wellington Shire Council has adopted a continuum of engagement, education, and enforcement strategy. The preference is that our communities are educated on matters relating to the management of domestic animals. In most cases, our Authorised Officers will provide education with regards to compliance in the first instance, so as to ensure a safe and healthy environment. Where there is non-compliance or repeated non-compliance, notices to comply or infringements are issued. Part of the strategy involves enforcement which the Wellington Council provides consistently and fairly to all residents and visitors accordingly.

1. Micro-chipping days run in conjunction with RSPCA and Victorian Animal Aid.
2. During the year specific all agency activities are arranged to address specific areas of the Shire. These include Authorised Officers who deal with a variety of local laws issues including door to door checking of registered animals.
3. Local Laws provide a 24/7 service which monitoring animals whenever on duty.
4. Notices to Comply and infringements are issued in order to positively enforce the educational approach.
7. Annual inspections are carried out on all domestic animal businesses.
8. A Customer Activity Request System (CARS) is available on the Wellington Shire Council website for the community to advise on issues with animals.
9. The Wellington Shire Council uses a document management system to monitor inwards correspondence including CARS and ensuring that the community is responded to within the Customer Charter timelines.
10. Wellington Shire Council Authorised Officers will accept dogs and cats seized by members of the public (including after normal operating hours) as below:
 - If a menacing, restricted breed or dangerous dog, the animal will be seized, taken to the pound and application of legislative process as required.
 - If animal is not registered or proof of registration cannot be ascertained, it will be taken directly to the pound.
11. If animal is registered and has no previous history of being at large, the animal will be returned to the owner where possible.
12. If the animal is registered and there is a history of being at large, the animal will be taken directly to the pound.
13. If the animal is registered and there is a history of previously being at large more than once, the animal will be taken directly to the pound and an infringement notice will be served.

Cat Nuisances

Feral or roaming cats cause disputes and anxiety between neighbours by:

1. Trespassing on a neighbour's property;
2. Causing damage to garden beds by defecating;
3. Creating health concerns in children's sandpits;
4. Causing undue noise due to fighting with other cats;
5. Calling and crying when seeking a mate;

6. Spraying offensively on doors, mats and other areas and;
7. Causing dogs to bark.

Feral and roaming cats are also vulnerable to disease and attacks from other cats or dogs. Feline Aids, which is ultimately fatal for a cat, is transmitted from cat to cat through fighting. Roaming cats are also a hazard to traffic and vice versa.

Research shows that feral and roaming domestic animals have a devastating effect on native wildlife and have been the major cause of the decline in many species. Cats will hunt wildlife whether they are hungry or not.

To help manage the impact of cat nuisance on the community and Council resources, Council will work with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to encourage them to take responsibility for feral cats on their land, whilst increasing enforcement action on those who have more cats than are permitted.

Action Plan and Initiatives: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Monitor the development of “*barking counting collars*” and the research into barking nuisance.
- Continue to work with other agencies, community groups and communities where there is an identified cat issue.
- Continue to provide cat cages (subject to payment of rental and deposit for cages) and collect caught animals for disposal.
- Prioritise education and promotion of responsible pet ownership and individuals will receive warnings wherever applicable prior to enforcement action being commenced.
- Follow through on enforcement matters to ensure active reinforcement of legislative and local laws controls.
- Commence an investigation of complaints received concerning domestic animals within the customer service charter.
 - Work with the Department of Sustainability and Environment to encourage them to take responsibility for feral cats on their land.
- Increasing enforcement action on those that have more cats than are permitted

4.6 Domestic Animal Business: The Shire has thirty (30) domestic animal businesses as at 30 June 2012, comprising of:

Dog/Cat breeders	16
Breeding/Boarding	4
Boarding Kennels & Catteries	4
Pet Shops	3
Shelters	2
Pound	1
Total	30

Note; the number of breeders include only those defined under legislation. i.e. does not include people who breed show dogs

The process for management of these businesses includes:

1. In October of each year all domestic animal business are sent a reminder to make application for the renewal of their certificate of registration by 28th February the following year.
2. In mid March renewal certificate of registration effective 10 April, are posted to those businesses that have applied and reminder notices are sent to those that have not applied.

3. Annual inspections will be commenced at the end of April.
4. Any premises that have not made application for registration by 10 April will be served a notice to comply under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and if not paid within fourteen (14) the matter will be progressed to the Magistrates' Court for operating unregistered premises.
5. Premises which on inspection do not conform to the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* or applicable Code of Practice will be provided a schedule of works in order to comply. If work is not carried out in the prescribed time frame agreed in the schedule of works, a formal notice to comply under s76A will be served providing for the work to be completed within fourteen (14) days.
6. Failure to comply with a Notice to Comply the matter will be referred to the Magistrates' Court for non compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Action Plan and Initiatives: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Seek to develop a partnership with domestic animal businesses in the Shire to achieve legislative and community goals, holding one (1) business meeting per year.
- Maintain an annual inspection program for all domestic animal business and actively promote compliance with the various codes of practices. Non-compliances with legislative minimum standards will result in confirmatory action in the form of service of notices and referred to Magistrates' Court.

4.7 Declared Dogs: The data for the period 01/07/2011 to 30/06/2012 indicates that there were 68 reported dog attacks on either people or other animals. Wellington Shire Council data indicates:

1. Number of dogs declared Menacing Dogs three (3)
2. Number of Restricted Breed Dogs registered two (2)
3. Number of declared Dangerous Dogs eight (8)

4.7.1 Menacing Dogs: The Wellington Shire Council may declare a dog as "menacing" if the dog causes a non serious bite injury to a person or animal or if it rushes or chases a person. This category is still classified as a dog attack but can be used in less serious situations. It requires dogs once classified to be microchipped and identified as a menacing dog. The dog is restrained when outside the owners premises with a muzzle and under effective control by use of a chain, cord or leash, and notification to Council within 24 hours if the dog rushes or chases a person, goes missing, changes address or ownership changes.

The classification can be upgraded to dangerous dog, and the Wellington Shire Council policy is that the dog will be declared dangerous if two (2) infringements are issued relating to menacing actions or a serious injury attack occurs.

4.7.2 Restricted Breed: The Wellington Shire Council will declare a dog a "restricted breed" if it is an American Pit Bull Terrier, Fila Basiliro, Japanese Tosa, Argentino, Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario) or cross breeds of the above. Owners of restricted breeds are required to notify the Shire within 24 hours if the dog is missing, the owners address changes, the place the animal is kept changes, the dog is sold or given away and advise any new owner that the dog is a restricted breed. The dogs are required to have a specified collar worn, signs are placed at the premises, specific housing requirements, and the dog is muzzled and effectively restrained when off the premises.

4.7.3 Dangerous Dogs: The Wellington Shire Council may declare a dog a "dangerous dog" if it has attacked a person or animal and has caused a serious injury or death or is a dog that has been

declared as a menacing dog and has a continuing history of serious aggressive behaviour. Any guard dogs on non-residential premises or a dog has been trained to attack, is automatically classified as a dangerous dog. It requires dogs once classified to be microchipped and identified as a dangerous dog. The dog is desexed on re-registration, a specified collar is worn, signs are placed at the premises, there are specific housing requirements, the dog is muzzled and effectively restrained when off the premises and notification to Council within 24 hours if the dog rushes or chases a person, goes missing, changes address or ownership changes.

Action Plan and Initiatives: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Continue its commitment to reducing the threat to public safety from dog attacks.
- Respond to dangerous dog complaints within the customer charter framework and declare dogs dangerous and initiate enforcement action when required in accordance with legislation.
- Undertake annual inspections of restricted breeds and declared dangerous dogs.

4.8 Wellington Shire Pound: The Wellington Shire Pound is co-located with Victoria Animal Aid Shelter which is open:

7.30 am to 3.30 pm Mon/Wed/Fri

9.00 am to 3.00 pm Tue/Thur

8.30 to 3-00 pm Weekends

Staff will also attend by arrangement if required/possible. The facility is usually closed Christmas Day and open 9am to 10am Boxing Day.

A summary of performance expectations of the Wellington Shire Pound are:

1. Complies with the legislative requirements, including Codes of Practice.
2. Hold unclaimed animals eight (8) days
3. All animals scanned for identification
4. Notify owners as soon as practical
5. All impounded animals are photographed and pictures uploaded on their website for public access.
6. Provision of a Veterinary service to the pound
7. Disposal of all impounded animals not collected
8. Collection of release fee as defined by Council
9. Maintenance of records and provisions of accounts
10. Euthanasia rates are kept low as the contractor also provides the animal shelter. The save rate over the past two years for animals have been 82% (538 av/yr) for dogs and 71% (av 332/yr) for cats which is high and indicates the effectiveness of collocating the Wellington Shire Council Pound with an Animal Shelter contractor.
11. Maintain good customer relationships.

Action Plan and Initiatives: The Wellington Shire Council will:

- Enforce the performance specification of the Wellington Shire Pound contract.

- Work in partnership with our contractor to ensure the percentage of saved animals is maintained high.

4.9 Dogs on Lead: The control of dogs is focused towards providing an environment that is acceptable to our communities, to ensure public safety and the public's expectations to use public open spaces including road reserves without the risk of interference from dogs at large and to protect flora and fauna. Conversely, there is consideration of dog owners and their expectations of owning dogs and freedom to enjoy them including exercising them as required.

To allow dog owners the freedom to enjoy our environment, those areas not specifically designated as requiring dogs to be on a lead are accessible for dog owners and their dogs to be off lead. It is still the responsibility of owners to be in effective control of their dog whilst off lead.

Action Plan and Initiative: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Continue to actively promote and reinforce the legislative requirements of effective control and on-lead lead areas, to ensure management of dogs in public places. This will include a program of regular surveillance, education and enforcement throughout the Shire.
- Having consulted on the current and proposed dog on lead areas, have Council resolved to nominate a new schedule of "dog on lead" areas. (See Attachment 1).

4.10 Doggy Bags: The Wellington Shire Council has six (6) dispensers located in the Lake Guthridge/Lake Guyatt park environs, two (2) located at Yarram (Tara Bulga walkway) and one (1) located at Wharf Road, Port Albert. Although the management of these facilities has proved difficult in recent years due to the vandalism and rolls of bags being removed immediately after replenishment, it is proposed to continue to provide these facilities whilst implementing strategies to improve the service.

It is also recommended that Council investigate options for the expansion of the service that won't have a significant impact on Council's resources

Action Plan and Initiatives: The Wellington Shire Council will:

- Promote the use of doggy bags for the collection/disposal of dog faeces through the provision of biodegradable bags at the locations outlined above.
- Develop a business case that considers the options for increasing the coverage of the "doggy bag" facilities throughout the shire.

5 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 The Wellington Shire Council will monitor the animal management services detailed in this plan by:

	Activity	Required
1	Domestic Animal Management Plan review	30 June every three years
2	Annual review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan	10 April annually
3	Advice to the Secretary of declared dangerous dogs	10 April annually
4	Advice to the Secretary of declared restricted breeds	10 April annually
5	Advice to the Secretary of declared menacing dogs	10 April annually

	Activity	Required
6	Annual registration funds paid	1 June annually
7	Advice to the Ombudsman	On Request
8	Performance outcomes will be reported in the Councils Annual report.	30 June Annually
9	Annual performance meeting for Wellington Shire Pound Contract	30 June Annually
10	Business reporting within the Corporate reporting program, Interplan	Monthly
11	Inspection of all Domestic Animal Businesses, Restricted Dogs and Declared Dangerous Dogs	10 April Annually
12	The Department of Primary Industries are welcome at any stage to visit the Wellington Shire Council and audit the plan as is deemed necessary.	On Request

Action Plan and Initiatives: Wellington Shire Council will:

- Improve the data collection of complaints and records on animals.
- Continue to meet legislative reporting requirements.

5.2 Key Performance Indicators: The key performance indicators relate to the key areas of the plan:

	Key Performance Area	Measure
1	4.2 Maintenance of sufficient trained Authorised Officers	3
2	4.2 Maintenance of two (2) Authorised Officers appointed under the POCTA Act	2
3	4.3 Media release on animal matters released annually.	2
4	4.4 Maintain its commitment to increasing animal registrations and microchipping compliance in order to reduce the level of animal euthanasia.	Registration process carried out
5	4.4 Work with the RSPCA and Animal Groups to promote microchipping events.	1 event
6	4.5 Monitor barking dog collars and research into barking nuisance.	Training provided to officers
7	4.4 Provide cat cages for rental	3 available
8	4.5 Community receive initial warnings before infringement action commenced	Less than 20% necessitate direct infringement action
9	4.5 Follow through on enforcement matters to	Less than 20% infringement

	Key Performance Area	Measure
	ensure active reinforcement.	and withdrawn
10	4.5 Carry out investigation of complaints received concerning domestic animals	Within customer service charter
11	4.5 Inspection of all domestic animal businesses	Annually
12	4.6 Hold one sector meeting for domestic animal businesses.	Annually
13	4.7 Inspection carried out on all restricted breeds and declared dangerous dogs.	Annually
14	4.7 Respond to dog attacks within customer charter	98% compliance
15	4.8 Enforce the performance specification of the Wellington Shire Pound are complied with.	Contract compliance
16	4.8 Work in partnership with our contractor to maintain the percentage of saved animals is high.	Save rate maintained over 70% for dogs and cats
17	4.9 Maintain surveillance of dog on lead areas and respond to complaints.	Complaints responded to within customer charter
18	4.9 Consult on dog on lead areas and make a resolution in accordance with legislation.	Consultation completed and resolution made
19	4.10 Promote doggy bags through provision of them at the Lake Guthridge and Lake Guyatt.	Less than ten (10) complaints received
20	4.10 Promote partnerships with local businesses and community groups, to use the bags as a marketing material.	Information material provided
21	5.1 Improve the data collection of complaints and records on animals.	Information databases error less than 10%
22	5.1 Continue to meet legislative reporting requirements.	All reports submitted

6 ADOPTION OF PLAN

The Wellington Shire Council adopted the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2013 – 2017 at the Council meeting of ___ May 2013.

DOGS ON LEAD

CURRENT PUBLICISED LIST

(Reference: Wellington Shire Website 29 November 2011)

Map	Area	Maintain	New	Remove
	Sale			
1.	Sale Pedestrian Mall	√		
2.	Raymond Street (between Stawell & Foster Streets)	√		
3.	Cunninghame Street (between Reeve & York Streets)	√		
4.	Macarthur Street (between Reeve & York Streets)	√		
5.	Macalister Street (between Reeve & York Streets)	√		
6.	York Street (between Foster & Stawell Streets)	√		
7.	Adventure Playground/Fauna Park Area (Guthridge Parade)	√		
8.	Little Athletics Ground/Playground Area, McLachlan Street	√		
9.	Market Areas A & B, Port of Sale (During Market operational times only)	√		
10.	Lake Guthridge & Guyatt Walking Tracks (Flora & fauna risk)	√		
	Maffra			
11.	Johnson Street (between Foster & McMillan Streets)	√		
12.	Fred Drury Park (Carpenter Street)	√		
13.	Lions Park Playground Area (Johnson Street road reserve)	√		
14.	Macalister Swamp Reserve Area (Flora & fauna risk)	√		
	Stratford			
15.	Apex Park (Princes Highway)	√		
16.	Memorial Park (Princes Highway)	√		
	Heyfield			
17.	George Street	√		
18.	Temple Street	√		
19.	Apex Park (George Street)	√		
20.	Lions Park	√		
21.	Rotary Park	√		
	Cowwarr			
22.	Lions Park (Cricket Street)	√		
	Yarram			
23.	Commercial Road (between James & Devon Streets)	√		
24.	Yarram North Recreation Reserve (during market operational times)	√		
25.	Devon North Recreation Reserve (*during market operational times)	√		
26.	Yarram Memorial Playground	√		
27.	Playground Area (James Street)	√		
28.	Playground Area (Walpole Court)	√		
	Port Albert			
29.	Rutter Park	√		
	Woodside Beach			
30.	Playground Area	√		

Map	Area	Maintain	New	Remove
	Seaspray			
31.	Seaspray Foreshore Playground (Northwest below the Surf Life Saving Club)	√		
38.	Children's Playground (area between Buckley, Bearup, Lyons & Buchan Streets)		√	
	Rosedale			
32.	Prince Street	√		
33.	Lyons Street Playground Area (deleted)			√
39.	Prince Street Reserve, Rosedale		√	
40	Edward Crooke Reserve, Rosedale (west of Neighbourhood House)		√	
	Loch Sport			
34.	Foreshore Lions Park and Playground Area	√		
	Golden Beach			
35.	Golden Beach/Paradise Beach Community Centre Playground Area	√		
	Briagolong			
36.	Recreational Reserve (during market operational times)	√		
	Yarram			
37.	Wet Lands Reserve		√	

Map 1-6: Sale CBD Streets



Map 7: Adventure Playground Fauna Park Guthridge Parade Sale



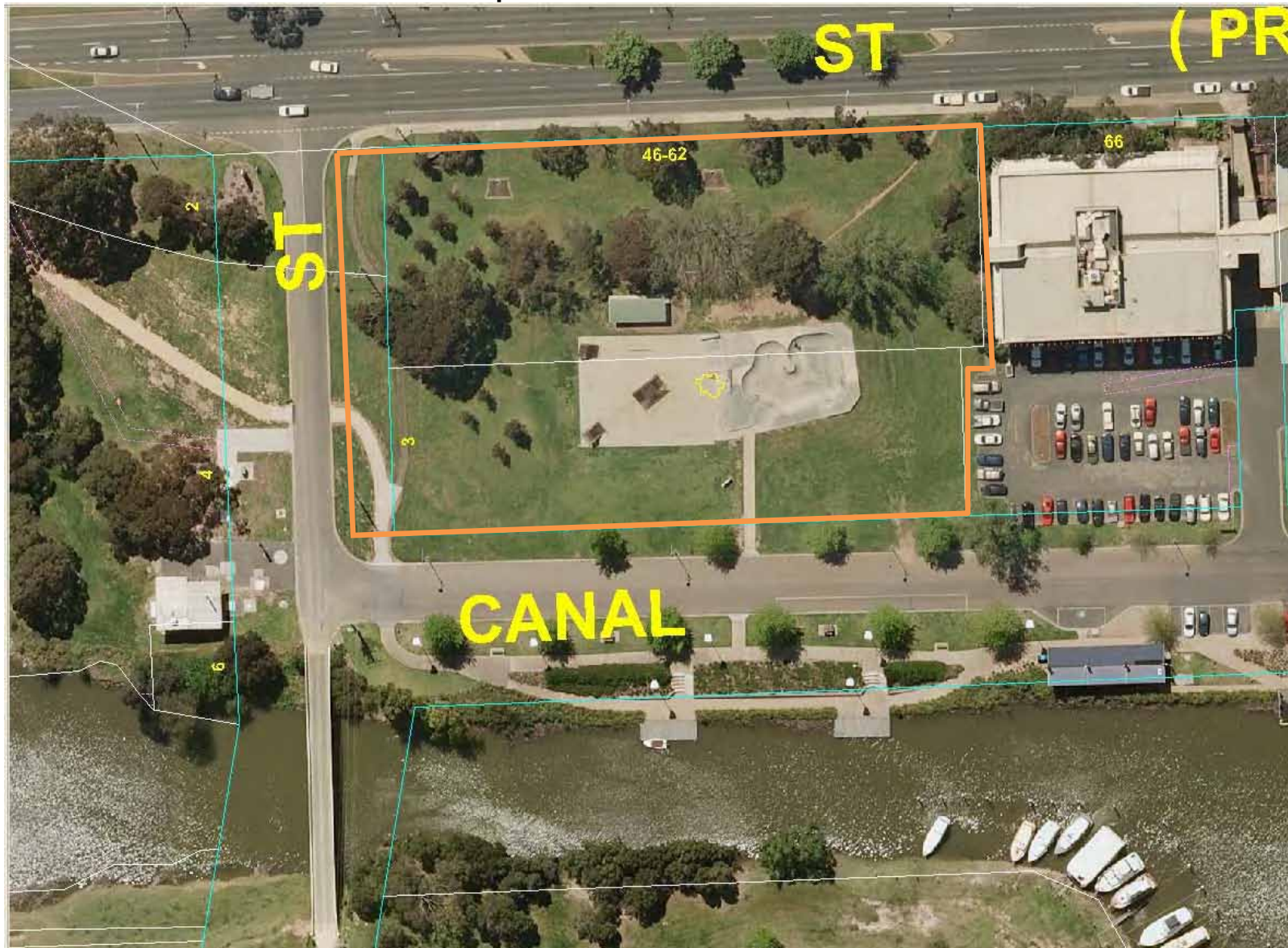
**Map 8. Little Athletics Ground/Playground Area
McLachlan Street, Sale**



Map 9A: Market Area A Port of Sale



Map 8B: Market Area B Port of Sale



Map 10: Lake Guthridge and Lake Guyatt & Environs Sale



Map 11: Johnson Street Maffra



Map 12: Fred Drury Park – Carpenter St Maffra



Map 13: Lions Park Maffra



Map 15: Apex Park (Tyers St/Princes Highway) Stratford



Map 16: Memorial Park Stratford



Map 17: George Street Heyfield



Map 18: Temple Street Heyfield



Maps 19, 20, 21: Apex Park, Lions Park & Rotary Park Heyfield



Map 22: Lions Park Cowarr



Map 23: Commercial Road Yarram



Map 24: Yarram North Recreation Reserve



Map 25: Devon North Recreation Reserve



Map 26: Memorial Park Yarram



Map 27: James Street Yarram



Map 28: Playground Area (Walpole Court) Yarram



Map 29: Rutter Park Port Albert



Map 30: Playground Area (Woodside Beach)



Map 31: Seaspray Children's Playground



Map 32: Prince Street Rosedale



Map 33: Lyons Street Playground Area – Rosedale



Map 34: Foreshore Lions Park and Playground area Loch Sport



Map 35: Golden Beach Paradise Beach Community Centre Playground Area



Map 36: Briagolong Recreation Reserve



Map 37: Yarram Wetlands Reserve



Map 38: Seaspray Children's Playground



Map 39: Prince Street Reserve Rosedale



Map 40: Edward Crook Reserve Rosedale



References and Relative Information

Legislation

The Domestic Animals Act 1994
The Domestic Animals Regulations 2005,
Local Government Act 1989
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986
Crimes and Domestic Animals Act Amendment (Offenses and Penalties) Act 2011
Wellington Shire Council Local Law No4 Environment

Orders

Exemption Order for dingoes (wildlife) exemption from registration with Council of individual dingoes and from domestic animal business registration for dingo breeders - Dingo Wildlife Order

Exemption Order for owners of racing greyhounds exempting these dogs from the requirement to register racing Greyhounds with Council - Greyhound - Exemption Order

Exemption Order for Greyhound Adoption Dogs exempting these dogs from the requirement to wear muzzles in public places - Greyhound - GAP Exemption Order

Exemption Order for 'Lost Dogs Home' from the operation of Section 63A of Domestic Animals Act exempting the Lost Dogs home from the operation of Section 63A of Domestic Animals Act in relation to compliance with the provision under clause 2.3.6 of the Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds - Lost Dogs Home -Exemption Order 01-02-02

Exemption Order for Imported Schutzhund trained dogs exempting imported schutzhund trained German Shepherds from section 10A(4)(a), section 40, and section 41(1) of the Domestic Animals Act - Imported Schutzhund trained German Shepherds Order 31-3-09

Notice of approval of Guide Dog Training Organisations - Notice of approval of Guide Dog Training Organisations 14-03-96

Notice of Declaration of Applicable Organisations - Notice of Declaration of Applicable Organisations

Exemption Order for the Scientific Establishments from registering dogs and cats - Exemption Order

Exemption Order from the Victorian Animal Aid Trust from Specific operation of 63A - Exemption Order

Notice of prescribed qualifications for non-Council employees to be Authorised Officers - Prescribed Qualifications for Non-Council Employees to be authorised

Approved qualifications for people to become Authorised Implanters to implant microchips into dogs and cats - Microchip Authorised Implanter Approved Qualifications

Department of Primary Industries

Code of Practice for the Private Keeping of Dogs (Victoria)
Code of Practice for the private keeping of cats
Code of practice for the debarking of dogs
Code of practice for the operation of dog training establishments
Code of practice for the Operation of Greyhound Establishments
Code of practice for the private keeping of dogs
Code of practice for the operation of boarding establishments
Code of practice for the operation of breeding and rearing establishments
Code of practice for the management of dogs and cats in shelters and pounds
Code of practice for the operation of pet shops
Code of practice for the tethering of animals
Code of practice for the welfare of animals during transportation
Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria

Dogs “n” Kids