



SHIRE of YARRA RANGES

Domestic Animal Management Plan

1.0 Executive Summary

“Against the complexities of modern life and human relationships, the relationship between owner and pet is refreshingly simple”

Anon

Local Government has long been the level of government primarily responsible for domestic animal management issues. In Victoria this responsibility has been formalised in the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animal Act 1994 where it is prescribed that Councils must prepare and regularly review a Domestic Animal Management Plan. A Domestic Animal Management Plan must cover a fixed three year period and once prepared the plan must be reviewed at least annually.

This plan meets the legislative requirements of the Act and extends beyond them. An opportunity has been taken to explore the emerging issues that relate to dog and cat ownership within the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

Most importantly the goal of this plan is to achieve a balance between meeting the needs of pet owners and the needs of others in the community.

1.1 Extract of Legislation

Below is an extract of Section 68A of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994:

68A. Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, prepare at 3 year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
- (2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
 - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
 - (c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
 - (i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 - (ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
 - (iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
 - (vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 - (vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
 - (d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
 - (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
 - (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
- (3) Every Council must—
 - (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
 - (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
 - (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report



1.2 About this Plan

This plan was developed by the Shire of Yarra Ranges Local Laws team. The Local Laws team is vested with the responsibility of providing animal control services to the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

Each year the Local Laws team receives approximately 3,000 requests for service related to animal control and management issues. The nature (and overall number) of these requests for service was analysed. The analysis evaluated requests for service recorded between the years 2003 and 2006.

The analysis identified a number of issues related to domestic animals and pet ownership specific to the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

In addition to the above a literature review was conducted with the view to identifying broader issues related to pet ownership and domestic animal management in the municipal context.

A draft plan was submitted to Council and after considering the plan a further draft was released to the public for comment. Public comment was received and evaluated by the Local Laws team prior to submitting a final draft for Councils consideration and subsequent adoption by Council.



1.3 Shire of Yarra Ranges Demographic Profile

The Shire of Yarra Ranges is located on metropolitan Melbourne's eastern fringe. The Shire's population is currently estimated at 140,216 people and it covers an area of almost 2,500 square kilometres. Yarra Ranges is the seventh largest local government area in Melbourne in terms of population size and the eighth largest in the state of Victoria.

The Shire balances a mixture of urban and rural communities. Around 70% of the Shire's population live in the 'urban' areas of the Shire that represents approximately 3% of its landmass. The remaining population is distributed throughout the remaining area. There are over 55 suburbs, townships, small communities and rural areas within the Shire, making it one of the most diverse of any municipality in the State.

Yarra Ranges can be characterised as a 'young' Shire with a higher than average proportion of our population aged between 5-17 years.

The dispersion of the Shire's communities significantly impacts on the cost of infrastructure and service provision, particularly to the more rural areas of the Shire. The diversity of needs within the Shire is significantly different to that experienced by other metropolitan councils.

There are approximately 6,750 businesses in the Yarra Ranges employing over 33,107 people. Economic activity in the Shire is based on tourism, manufacturing industries (in the metropolitan suburbs) and rural industries – particularly agriculture (including horticulture, floriculture and viticulture).

Approximately 80% of Shire of Yarra Ranges employees live in the Shire.

1.4 Domestic Animal Statistics & Data

| | Shire of Yarra Ranges | | Other outer metropolitan Councils † |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Population | 140216 | | * |
| Area | 2500 Square Klm | | * |
| No of EFT full time officers | 5.5 ^r | 0.125 <i>per 1000 households</i> | 0.125 <i>per 1000 households</i> |
| Hours training per officer annually | 12 | | 10 <i>hrs</i> |
| No of Registered Dogs | 23772 | 496 <i>per 1000 households</i> | 410 <i>per 1000 households</i> |
| Estimated (owned) Dog population | 27585 | | * |
| No of Registered Cats | 8404 | 175 <i>per 1000 households</i> | 150 <i>per 1000 households</i> |
| Estimated (owned) Cat population | 18303 | | * |
| No. of registered declared dogs | 7 | | * |
| No of Prosecutions Completed | 30 | | 30 |
| No of Successful Prosecutions | 100% | | 98% |

† data provided by Bureau of Animal Welfare 2001-2002

* No reliable data available

^r Percentage of officer time dedicated to Animal Management

Animal Management & Local Laws Officers - 70%

Public Amenity Local Laws Officer - 50%

Parking & Local Laws Officers - 5%

Domestic Animal Statistics & Data

| | Shire of Yarra Ranges | | Other outer metropolitan Councils † |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| No of Impoundments (dogs) | 1023 ** | 21.4 <i>per 1000 households ‡</i> | 17 <i>per 1000 households</i> |
| No of dogs returned to owner | 804 ** | | |
| No of dogs rehoused | 115 | | |
| No of dogs euthanased | 104 | | |
| No of Impoundments (cats) | 326 [∞] | 7 <i>per 1000 households</i> | 6 <i>per 1000 households</i> |
| No of cats returned to owner | 47 | | |
| No of cats rehoused | 83 | | |
| No of cats euthanased | 196 | | |

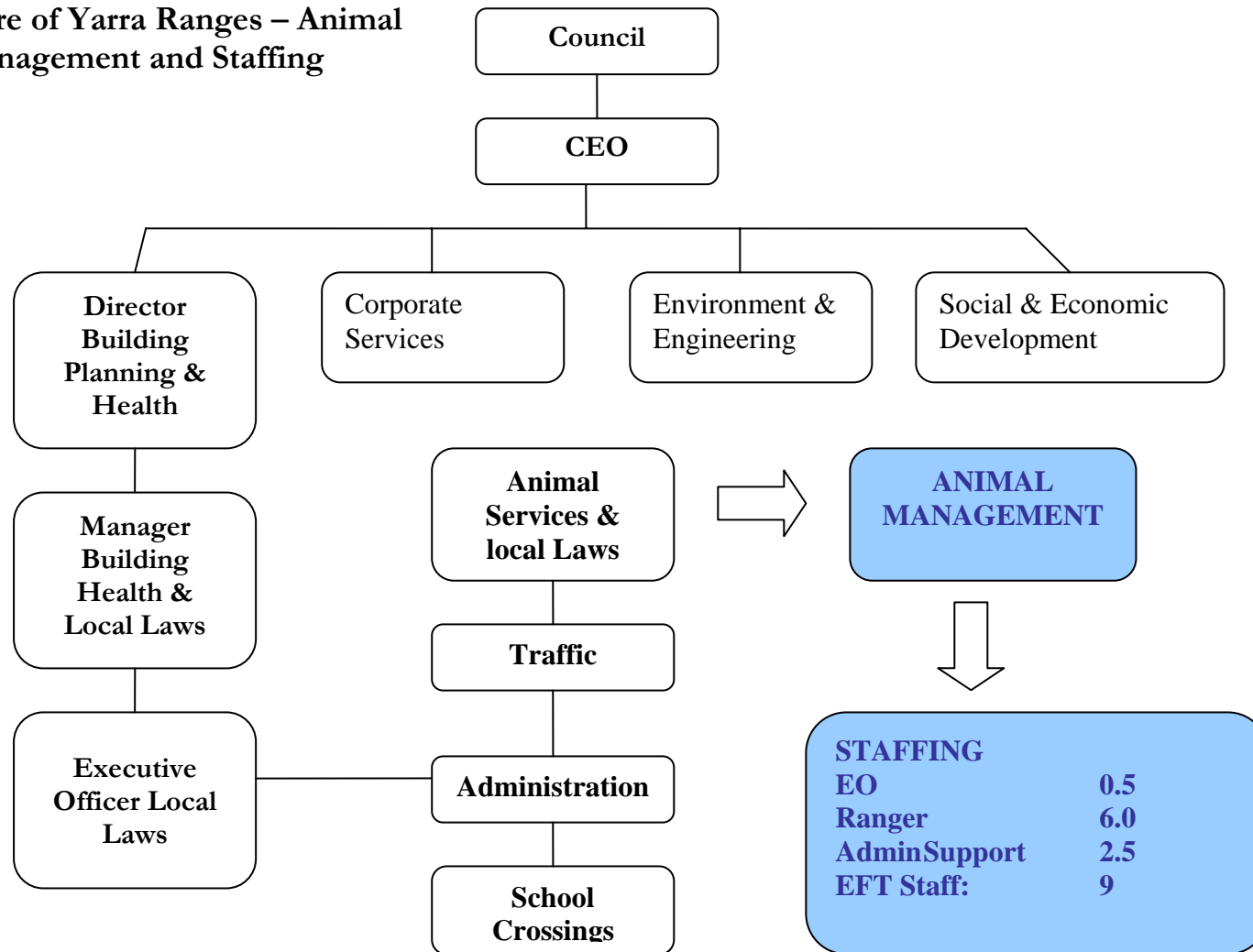
† data provided by Bureau of Animal Welfare 2001-2002

* No reliable data available

‡ Includes dogs impounded at both VAAT pound & Narre Warren pounds

[∞] VAAT pound only

1.5 Shire of Yarra Ranges – Animal Management and Staffing



1.6 Animal Management Programs & Services

| Programs: | <i>Per annum</i> | Customer Requests:: | <i>2006</i> | <i>2003 – 2006 Average</i> |
|---|------------------|----------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Animal Registrations & Renewals | 32176 | Dog Attack | 225 | 215 |
| Domestic Animal Business registrations & Renewals | 25 | Dog Barking | 244 | 147 |
| Emergency After Hours Service | 600 | Dog Rush | 201 | 200 |
| Microchipping Events | 1 | Dog Wandering | 589 | 561 |
| Excess Animal Permits | 26 | Dog pick-up | 1137 | 1150 |
| Domestic Animal Business Audits | 24 | Cat pick-up | 348 | 305 |
| Declared Dog Compliance Inspections | 1 | Cat trap | 181 | 157 |
| Cat Desexing Vouchers | 240 | Cat Wandering | 65 | 60 |
| | | Animal other | 221 | 240 |

2.0 Statement of Purpose

Vision 2020 is a shared vision of the Yarra Ranges community. It is based on the simple idea that if we, as a community, decide on where we are going, the chances are that we will get there. *Vision 2020* provides the Yarra Ranges community with a framework to guide decisions and actions of today to ensure a healthy and sustainable future.

The community's values, needs, aspirations and priorities have been captured in Vision 2020 and grouped under the seven themes.

- *Strong, Healthy & Connected Communities in 2020*
- *Environmental Stewardship in 2020*
- *Built Environment in 2020*
- *Local Economy & Tourism in 2020*
- *Arts, Culture & Heritage in 2020*
- *A Living & Learning Community in 2020*
- *A Safe & Accessible Shire in 2020*

This plan is part of achieving *Vision 2020*. There is a nexus between this plan and the vision of having a safe and accessible Shire and community that is strong, healthy and connected. The plan also demonstrates Council's commitment to environmental stewardship.

The primary purpose of this plan is to achieve a balance between meeting the needs of pet owners and the needs of others in the community.

The aims of the plan are:

- To encourage responsible dog and cat ownership through both educative and enforcement approaches;
- To support and facilitate the benefits of animal ownership and companionship;
- To increase public safety by the reduction of public and environmental nuisance caused by dogs and cats;
- To provide for the welfare of cats and dogs;
- To protect native fauna and flora from the impact of cats and dogs; and
- To provide responsive animal control services.

3.0 Strategic Directions for Domestic Animal Management

The purpose of the *Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act* is to promote animal welfare, the responsible ownership of dogs and cats and the protection of the environment. The Act specifically requires that Councils conduct a number of activities and deliver services that are designed to fulfill the purpose of the Act. The table below summarises the specific requirements of the Act and provides a reference to relevant plan actions that will achieve the requirement outcomes.

| Specific Requirements of the Act | Action Plan Number | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
| | 3.1 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 4 |
| S.68A(2)(a) Method of monitoring performance and evaluating the effectiveness of services | | | | | | | ✓ |
| S.68A(2)(b) Training of authorised officers | | ✓ | | | | | |
| S.68A(2)(c)(i) Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership | | | ✓ | | | | |
| S.68A(2)(c)(ii) Ensure compliance with Act and regulations | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| S.68A(2)(c)(iii) Minimise risk of dog attacks | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| S.68A(2)(c)(iv) Over-population and high euthanasia rates | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| S.68A(2)(c)(v) Registration and Identification of cats and Dogs | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| S.68A(2)(c)(vi) Minimise potential for nuisance | | ✓ | | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| S.68A(2)(c)(vii) Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| S.68A(2)(d) Review of Orders and Local Laws | | | | ✓ | | | |
| S.68A(2)(e) Any other matters | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| S.68A(2)(f) Periodic evaluation of programs, services and strategies | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| S.68A(3)(a) Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan | | | | | | | ✓ |

3.1 Animal Management Officer Training and Development

Objective

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

Current/Ongoing Activities

The Shire of Yarra Ranges current AMO training and development activities include:

- Secondments
- Domestic Animal Handling Training (Victorian Animal Aid Trust)
- Handling of Livestock Training
- Computer/Software Application Training
- Specialist Equipment Training
- OH&S Training
- Driver Education Training

Planned Programs & Initiatives

- 3.1.1 Conduct a skills audit to determine training gaps.
- 3.1.2 Apply for DPI Scholarships for AMO's (Cert IV Animal Control & regulation)
- 3.1.3 AMO's to attend conflict resolution training.
- 3.1.4 Conduct training re Domestic Animal Business audits.
- 3.1.5 Customer Service Training.

3.2 Encouraging Responsible Pet Ownership – Community Education

Objective

To encourage people to manage pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

Current/Ongoing Activities

The Shire of Yarra Ranges current education activities and programs aimed at promoting responsible pet ownership include:

- Annual Microchipping Day
- Media Releases
- Articles in Shirewide and Ranging Times
- Production of Literature and Pamphlets
- Investigation and resolution of nuisance animal complaints
- Cat desexing voucher program

Planned Programs & Initiatives

- 3.2.1 Actively promote State Government's Responsible Pet Ownership Program to local Pre and Primary Schools.
- 3.2.2 Review Local Laws webpage content and create a Domestic Animals Information page.
- 3.2.3 Upon adoption by Council introduce the compulsory desexing of cats.

3.3 Identification and Registration

Objective

To maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals.

Current/Ongoing Activities

The Shire of Yarra Ranges current identification and registration activities include:

- Animal Registration and Renewal Program
- Participate in the State Government Pet Registration Incentive Scheme
- Lost Animal Register
- Annual Microchipping Day

Planned Programs & Initiatives

- 3.3.1 Conduct Bi-annual micro-chippings days.
- 3.3.2 Trial microchipping days in rural areas.
- 3.3.3 Conduct random inquiries where AMO's suspect that an animal may not be registered.
- 3.3.4 Redevelop information on Website.
- 3.3.5 Develop and deliver a Pet registration Awareness Program to Primary Schools.

3.4 Compliance & Enforcement

Objective

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

Current/Ongoing Activities

The Shire of Yarra Ranges current enforcement activities include

- The investigation and prosecution of dog attacks, animal cruelty, dog rushes, barking dogs and other serious breaches of the relevant Acts
- The issuing of infringements for animals being impounded for being at large.
- The issuing of infringements where unregistered animals are impounded.
- Process excess animal permit application and issue permits where appropriate
- Dangerous/Menacing dog declarations
- Site visits to ensure compliance with declared animal requirements

The Shire of Yarra Ranges has the following Orders in place:

- S26 Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animal Act– 16 designated dog off lead areas
- S26 Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animal Act– 6 designated ‘No dogs & cat allowed’ areas
- S26 Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animal Act – dog must be under effective control in a public place
- Animal Control Local Law 2007 – Pet owners to remove faeces from public places and a carry a means to collect faeces
- No more than two dogs or cats to be kept on a residential property

Planned Programs & Initiatives

- 3.4.1 Review dog on/off leash areas for Yarra Glen and Yarra Junction with a particular focus on environmentally sensitive areas.

3.5 Domestic Animal Businesses

Objective

To work in partnership with domestic animal businesses to achieve Council's domestic animal management goals.

Current/Ongoing Activities

The Shire of Yarra Ranges currently has 31 registered Domestic Animal Businesses. The Shires programs/activities working with these businesses include:

- Domestic Animal Business Registration and Renewal Program
- Domestic Animal Business Audits
- Supply and distribution of information related to domestic animal business and the relevant codes of practice

Planned Programs & Initiatives

- 3.5.1 Develop an audit program to ensure that each business complies with the relevant codes of practice
- 3.5.2 Conduct training re Domestic Animal Business audits
- 3.5.3 Review the Local Laws webpage content and create a Domestic Animal Business Information page.

3.6 Declared Dogs

Objective

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

Current/Ongoing Activities

The Shire of Yarra ranges currently has 6 declared dogs. Programs/activities aimed at minimising the risk to the broader community from declared dangerous, restricted breed and menacing dogs include.

- Dangerous and menacing Dog declarations
- Sites visits to residential properties where dangerous dogs are house to determine compliance with relevant regulations.
- Maintenance of Dangerous Dog register
- Supply and distribution of literature and pamphlets in relation to keeping dangerous dogs

Planned Programs & Initiatives

- 3.6.1 Develop an audit program to measure compliance with security and housing for declared dogs.
- 3.6.2 Review dangerous dog declaration procedure and ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.
- 3.6.3 Actively Patrol all commercial and industrial areas to identify dogs on premises.

Appendices

Summary of Planned Programs & Initiatives Identified in this Plan

- 3.1.1 Conduct a skills audit to determine training gaps.
- 3.1.2 Apply for DPI Scholarships for AMO's (Cert IV Animal Control & regulation).
- 3.1.3 AMO's to attend conflict resolution training.
- 3.1.4 Conduct training re Domestic Animal Business audits.
- 3.1.5 Customer Service Training.
- 3.2.1 Actively promote State Government's Responsible Pet Ownership Program to local Pre and Primary Schools.
- 3.2.2 Review Local Laws webpage content and create a Domestic Animals Information page.
- 3.2.3 Upon adoption by Council introduce the compulsory desexing of cats.
- 3.3.1 Conduct Bi-annual micro-chippings days.
- 3.3.2 Trial microchipping days in rural areas.
- 3.3.3 Conduct random inquiries where AMO's suspect that an animal may not be registered.
- 3.3.4 Redevelop information on Website.
- 3.3.5 Develop and deliver a Pet registration Awareness Program to Primary Schools.
- 3.4.1 Review dog off leash areas for Yarra Glen and Yarra Junction.
- 3.5.1 Develop an audit program to ensure that each business complies with the relevant codes of practice.
- 3.5.2 Conduct training re Domestic Animal Business audits.
- 3.5.3 Review the Local Laws webpage content and create a Domestic Animal Business Information page.
- 3.6.1 Develop an audit program to measure compliance with security and housing for declared dogs.
- 3.6.2 Review Dangerous dog declaration procedure and ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.
- 3.6.3 Actively Patrol all commercial and industrial areas to identify dogs on premises.

Appendix A

Action Plan: Animal Management Officer Training and Development

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

| Program/Service Objective | Actions | Officer Responsible | Due Date |
|--|---|-----------------------------|---------------|
| 3.1.1 Conduct a skills audit to determine training gaps | Consult with Human Resources Team and Interview Staff | Executive Officer | July 2008 |
| | Document Training Gap Analysis | Executive Officer | July 2008 |
| | Complete Performance Management Plans | Executive Officer & AMO | Annual |
| 3.1.2 Apply for DPI Scholarships for AMO's (Cert IV Animal Control & regulation) | Determine application process and apply | AMO | February 2008 |
| 3.1.3 AMO's to attend conflict resolution training | Determine availability | Corporate Services & AMO | July 2008 |
| | Attend training | AMO's | June 2009 |
| 3.1.4 Conduct training re Domestic Animal Business audits | Develop training package | Executive officer and AMO | June 2008 |
| | Deliver training | Executive officer and AMO's | December 2008 |
| | Review training | Executive officer and AMO's | January 2009 |
| 3.1.5 Customer Service Training | Deliver training | Executive Officer | March 2008 |

Appendix B

Action Plan: Encouraging Responsible Pet Ownership – Community Education

Objective: To encourage people to manage pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

| Program/Service Objective | Actions | Officer Responsible | Due Date |
|--|---|---|-------------------|
| 3.2.1 Actively promote State Government's Responsible Pet Ownership Program to local Pre and Primary Schools | Liaise with Department of Primary Industries | Executive Officer | January 2009 |
| | Deliver Programs to schools | DPI | June 2009 onwards |
| 3.2.2 Review Local Laws webpage content and create a Domestic Animals Information page | Review current content and identify new needs and available information | AMO & Local Laws Admin | October 2007 |
| | Prepare new Webpage's | Local Laws Admin | December 2007 |
| | Post Webpage's | Community Relations Services & Local Laws Admin | January 2008 |
| 3.2.3 Upon adoption by Council introduce the compulsory desexing of cats | Prepare report for Strategic Leadership Team | Executive Officer | January 2008 |
| | Prepare report to Council | Executive Officer | February 2008 |

Appendix C

Action Plan: Identification and Registration

Objective: To maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals.

| Program/Service Objective | Actions | Officer Responsible | Due Date |
|---|--|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 3.3.1 Conduct Bi-annual micro-chippings days | Identify service provider and schedule events | Local Laws Admin | December 2007 |
| | Advertise event through community newspapers, community radio & posters in Shire buildings | Local Laws Admin | First and last quarter 2008 & 2009 |
| | Microchipping Day – set up and assist service provider | AMO's | First and last quarter 2008 & 2009 |
| 3.3.2 Trail microchipping days in rural areas | As above however, first review current registration statistics | Local Laws Admin | June 2009 |
| 3.3.3 Conduct random inquiries where AMO's suspect that an animal may not be registered | Develop Operating Procedure and implement | Executive Officer | January 2009 |
| 3.3.4 Redevelop information on Website | Review current content and identify new needs and available information | AMO & Local Laws Admin | January 2008 |
| 3.3.5 Develop and deliver a Pet Registration Awareness Program to Primary Schools | Develop learning outcomes in consultation with Education Department & local schools | Executive Officer | December 2008 |
| | Develop & deliver programs | AMO & Local Laws Admin | October 2009 |

Appendix D

Action Plan: Compliance & Enforcement

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

| Program/Service Objective | Actions | Officer Responsible | Due Date |
|---|--|---|--------------|
| 3.4.1 Review dog off leash areas in Yarra Glen and Yarra Junction | Through consultation with the community identify current needs for dog off leash areas | Executive Officer Corporate Services & Local Laws Admin | January 2008 |
| | Prepare report for Strategic Leadership Team | Executive Officer | March 2008 |
| | Prepare report to Council | Executive Officer & Corporate Services | April 2008 |

Appendix E

Action Plan: Domestic Animal Businesses

Objective: To work in partnership with domestic animal businesses to achieve Council's domestic animal management goals.

| Program/Service Objective | Actions | Officer Responsible | Due Date |
|--|--|--|---------------|
| 3.5.1 Develop an audit program to ensure that each business complies with the relevant codes of practice | Identify Domestic Animal Business's by type and relevant Code of practice | Local Laws Admin | February 2008 |
| | Schedule Audits to coincide with annual registration renewal date | Local Laws Admin | February 2008 |
| 3.5.2 Conduct training re Domestic Animal Business audits | Using information and audit reports available from the Bureau of Animal Welfare develop training for AMO's | Executive Officer Local Laws | June 2008 |
| 3.5.3 Review the Local Laws webpage content and create a Domestic Animal Business Information page | Review current content and identify new needs and available information | AMO & Local Laws Admin | October 2007 |
| | Prepare new Webpage's | Local Laws Admin | December 2007 |
| | Post Webpage's | Community Relations & Local Laws Admin | January 2008 |

Appendix F

Action Plan: Declared Dogs

| Program/Service Objective | Actions | Officer Responsible | Due Date |
|--|--|---------------------------|---------------|
| 3.6.1 Develop an audit program to measure compliance with security and housing for declared dogs | Identify all declared dogs and schedule inspections with AMO | AMO's & Executive Officer | December 2007 |
| 3.6.2 Review Dangerous Dog Declaration procedure and ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry | Review operating procedure | AMO & Executive Officer | October 2007 |
| | Identify all declared dogs and report to the Victorian Declared Dog Registry | Local Laws Admin | December 2007 |
| 3.6.3 Actively Patrol all commercial and industrial areas to identify dogs on premises | Identify all commercial and industrial areas | Local Laws Admin | December 2007 |
| | Create customer request and allocate task to AMO | Local Laws Admin | Bi Monthly |