



Domestic Animal Management Plan

2021-2025

Adopted 10 November 2021



Image: Municipal Animal Pound

1 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) requires council to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years.

The plan must set out a method for evaluating whether the animal management services provided by council are adequate to give effect to requirements of the Act and the Domestic Animal Regulations 2015.

The plan must also outline programs for the training of authorised officers along with programs, services and strategies to:

- ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
- minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
- address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
- encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- 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
- 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
- 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
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Council is also required to review and, where appropriate, amend the plan and publish an evaluation of the implementation of the plan in the council annual report.

1.2 WHAT DID WE ACHIEVE FROM THE 2017 – 2021 DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Highlights from the 2017 – 2021 DAM Plan and service achievements from the last 4 years include:

- the establishment of 3 new fully fenced Dog Parks and 4 Off Leash areas
- provided a replacement pound facility through retrofitting and repurposing the boarding and cattery facility in Longwarry North
- delivery of a dedicated cat adoption room
- a successful Pet Expo in 2018
- increased Council's after-hours service to collect contained dogs 24 hours a day 7 days a week
- new online pet registration facility was introduced
- a 31% overall increase in the registration of cats (which must be desexed prior to registration)
- improved processes and educational materials to resolve nuisance barking complaints
- a significant increase in the number of formal agreements with partner organisations and individuals to provide increased rehoming of animals



Municipal Animal Pound (MAP) – 61 Princes Way, Longwarry North

1.3 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

Research for the Domestic Animal Management Plan has taken into account strategic plans including the Council Plan and the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, as well as consultation with stakeholders and reports and materials from key industry groups including Getting to Zero (G2Z), the Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM), Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV), the RSPCA, the Australian Veterinary Association, and Animal Medicines Australia.

Information was also obtained through attendance at relevant forums and knowledge sharing opportunities including the Cat Containment Knowledge Exchange facilitated by AWV, and numerous webinars and forums facilitated by the Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM).

Initial stakeholder engagement including informal consultation with Animal Management Officers (AMOs), Municipal Animal Pound (MAP) staff, Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB's), Rescue Groups and Foster Carers, Vet Clinics and 84Y Agreement holders.

Consultation was also undertaken with internal stakeholders including the Manager Community Services, the Maternal Child and Family Health Coordinator, and the Team Leader Social and Community Planning.

Community engagement opportunities were conducted through a Have Your Say campaign, accessible on Council's website and promoted across online platforms and local newspapers. Direct contact was made with local veterinary clinics, domestic animal businesses, 84Y Agreement holders and local animal rescue groups. Consultation occurred between 9 September – 8 October 2021.

Surprisingly, only 16 submissions were received, and pleasingly, all issues and areas of importance, as well as suggestions on how to address these issues, had already been considered and included within the draft DAM Plan.

It should be noted that, whilst all Councils are legislatively required to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan, strive to achieve the objectives, and report annually on the progress in relation to the objectives, no funding is provided by the State Government (other than where specific grants have been applied for and granted), and therefore the cost of the animal management services are being funded by Council's ratepayers.

1.4 DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFILE OF COUNCIL

Baw Baw Shire is approximately 100 kilometres east of Melbourne in the heart of West Gippsland.

It has an area of 4,034 square kilometres and was formed in 1994 from the amalgamation of the former Buln Buln and Narracan Shires, the Rural City of Warragul (previously the Shire of Warragul), and some parts of the Shire of Upper Yarra. The northern half of the shire is heavily forested and lies in the Great Dividing Range and its foothills, including the Mt Baw Baw National Park, while the shire is bounded by the Strzelecki Range and its foothills to the south. The 'middle' part of the shire is more densely populated, particularly in areas close to the Princes Highway and the Gippsland railway line, but still retains its rural environment.

Baw Baw is bordered by South Gippsland, Cardinia, Yarra Ranges, Mansfield and Wellington Shires, with the City of Latrobe completing the cohort of neighbours.

Baw Baw Shire is named after the Baw Baw Ranges. "Baw Baw" is thought to be of Aboriginal origin meaning "echo". However, on an early map of Gippsland the name "Bo Bo" is used. This is said to be an Aboriginal word meaning "big".¹

The Traditional Custodians of Baw Baw Shire are peoples from the Kulin and Kurnai Aboriginal nations.

The Census usual resident population of Baw Baw Shire in 2016 was 48,479, living in 20,916 dwellings with an average household size of 2.48.

In 2016, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders made up 1% of Baw Baw Shire's population.

The population estimate for Baw Baw Shire as of the 30th June 2020 was 54,884. Since the previous year, the population had grown by 2.79%. Population growth in Regional VIC was 1.30%.

The Baw Baw Shire population forecast for 2021 is 55,278 with approximately 22,060 households and is forecast to grow to a population of 84,766 by 2041, with an estimated 33,893 households. This population forecast would result in an estimated increase of 6,153 dogs and 4,473 cats in our community by 2041.²

These forecasts do not consider potential impacts as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), a significant health crisis which has resulted in major social and economic disruption across the world, which has already contributed to increased population growth

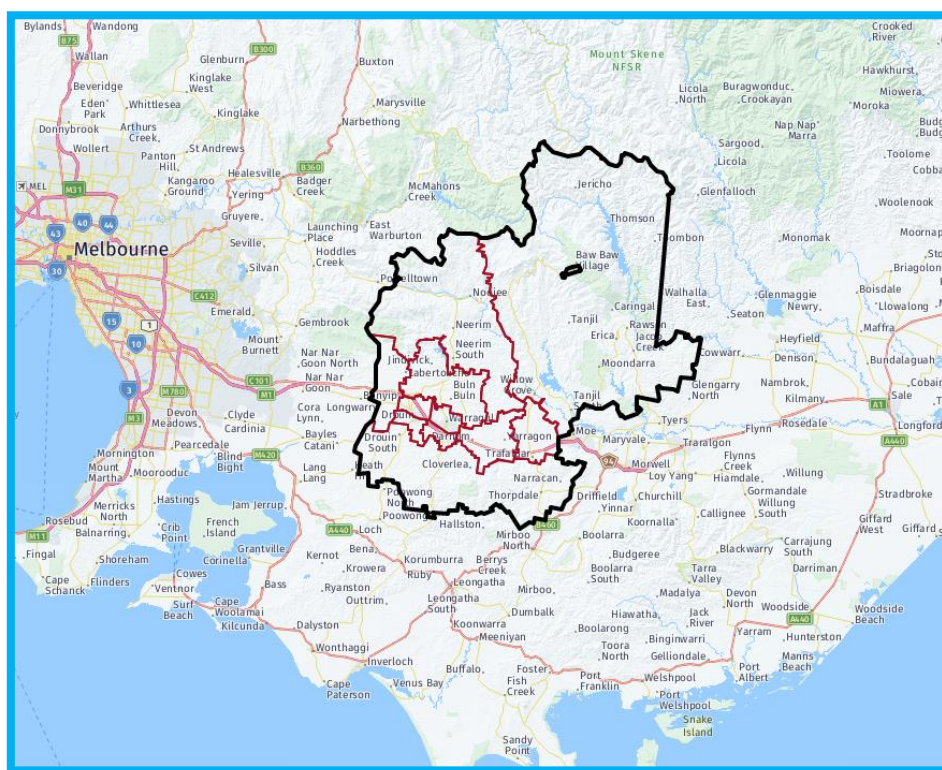
¹ Mt Baw Baw History <https://mountbawbaw.com.au/history>

² Pets in Australia: A national survey of pets and people https://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/ANIM001-Pet-Survey-Report19_v1.7_WEB_high-res.pdf

with numerous people moving from the more densely populated surrounding areas and metropolitan cities into Baw Baw Shire.

Most of the recent growth has been in Drouin and Warragul, which are key service centres for the agricultural hinterland.

In recent years, Melbourne’s South Eastern growth corridor has continued to develop outwards, ever closer to Baw Baw Shire. At the same time, property prices in Melbourne have been rising, and there have been some improvements to transport links to Melbourne. This has made towns such as Drouin more attractive to people with strong links to Melbourne, but who are looking for housing that is less crowded and more affordable than Melbourne.³



1.5 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Baw Baw Shire’s Current Programs and Services

Program/Service:	Service Level:
Identification & Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual pet registration renewal notices and reminder process • Educational information contained in renewal notices

³ .idcommunity demographic resources <https://profile.id.com.au/baw-baw>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online portal for new registration applications and payment of renewals • Educational materials provided with new registrations • Educational media campaigns and online promotions • Biennial Pet Expo – microchip scanning and updating details, education and promotion of responsible pet ownership • Biannual audit of information held with Central Animal Records against Council’s animal registration database with anomalies followed up
Identification & Registration- doorknock campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response within 10 business days • Doorknocks or mailouts conducted intermittently where complaints are received regarding wandering / unregistered animals
Communications campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask an Officer - Invited questions from the community on, and provided written and filmed responses and explanations which were shared on Council’s social media for public viewing • Information on keeping animals safe in emergencies
Dog Attack Complaints (dog wandering, dog attack, dog chase or rush)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate response to emergency / dangerous situations • As soon as practicable, and within 2 - 4 hours for contained dogs • As soon as practicable and within 1 - 2 hours for wandering dogs (during business hours) • Response within 1 - 24 hours for all other matters (during business hours)
Declared Dogs (Dangerous, Menacing or Restricted Breed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual inspection of properties and enclosures of declared dogs • Investigation of declared dogs where registration has not been renewed by 10 April
Wandering Cat Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer encouraged to hire a cat trap and to return trapped cats to Council’s pound or customer service centres • Response within 7 days to all other matters
Animal Nuisance Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response within 7 days • Customers encouraged to utilise Council’s educational materials in order to resolve barking issues directly with dog owner, supported by an officer where required

Off Leash Parks / Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has an on leash order in place across the municipality, except in designated off leash parks / areas • Proactive patrols of off leash parks and areas during daylight hours
Animal Cruelty Complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate referral to RSPCA • Animal cruelty reports are referred to the RSPCA with Council officers supporting investigations where required
Pet Expo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted biennially • Microchip scanning and updating details • Education and promotion of responsible pet ownership • Safe cat safe wildlife display and promotion • Demonstrations • Community engagement through pet parades, colouring competitions, prizes and promotions
Municipal Animal Pound (MAP) (Council owned and operated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impounding and holding facilities for dogs, cats, and livestock • By appointment only - Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm & Saturdays 9.00am 12.00pm • Identifiable animals are returned to their owners • Consultation and communication campaigns regarding the Pound Masterplan and site development
Animal adoptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoptions of unclaimed or surrendered dogs and cats • By appointment only - Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5.00pm & Saturdays 9.00am 12.00pm • Communications campaigns to promote adoptions and provide 'good news stories' following adoptions
Section 84Y agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively identify and engage partner organisations and individuals to increase rescue and foster opportunities, and reuniting animals with their owners
Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New DAB - Inspect and process application within 10 business days of receipt of application and payment • Existing DAB – Conduct annual audits and issue registration certificates • Conduct unscheduled inspections of DABs to ensure compliance • Respond to and investigate complaints of illegal DABs received from the public or identified through the State Government's Pet Exchange Register

TAFE information sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations to Animal studies classes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ TAFE Gippsland Leongatha 26.2.2020 ➢ TAFE Gippsland Warragul 2.3.2020
After hours emergency service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Response 24/7: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Dog attacks ➢ Contained dog pick ups ➢ Livestock wandering on roads ➢ Victoria Police requests requiring assistance with animals • Wandering dogs until 6pm Monday – Friday, and Saturdays 10am – 2pm

1.6 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

Key Statistics	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021
Population	52015	53396	54884	Not yet available
Number of households (approx.)		19,624		22,060
Geographic area of municipality	4,025km ²	4,025km ²	4,025km ²	4,025km ²
EFT – Authorised Animal Management Officers (AMO)	2	2	2	2
EFT – Authorised AMOs per 1,000 households		0.10		0.09
Number of requests / complaints received	1408	1759	1710	1740
Number of complaints or requests per officer	704	879	855	870
Number of registered dogs	6012	7721	8485	8035
Number of registered cats	1672	2118	2290	2196
Number of animals impounded	306	707	714	797
Returned directly or reclaimed by owner	331	321	287	375
Rehomed			324	275
Euthanised dogs	4	11	12	8
Euthanised cats	57	54	53	59

No. of excess animal permits / keeping of animals permits issued each year totals:	21	22	21	7
Urban	20	20	18	6
Rural	1	2	3	1
Number of declared dogs (dangerous, menacing, restricted)	Declared Dangerous			8
	Declared Menacing			9
	Restricted Breed			0
Number of domestic animal businesses				
Breeding or Rearing	4	3	4	4
Boarding	2	1	1	1
Dog Training	1	2	3	2
Pet Shops	2	3	3	4
Shelters and Pounds	1	1	1	1
Number of successful prosecutions	3	14	10	13

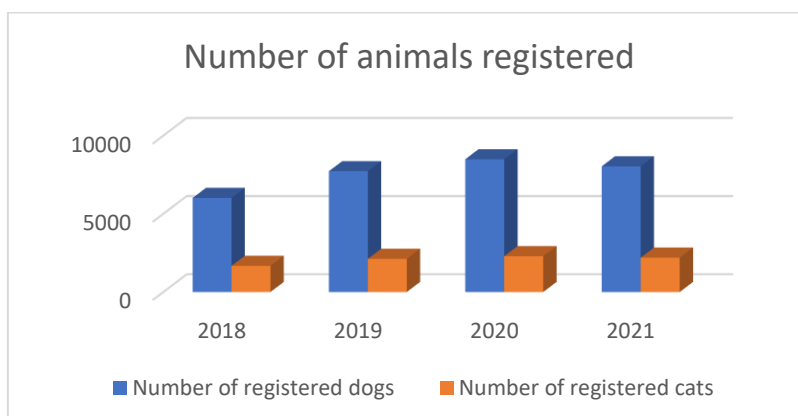
Data released in 2020 indicates that around 40% of Australian households include at least one dog, with an average of 1.3 dogs per household, making them the most popular type of pets, followed by cats (27%), with an average 1.4 cats per household.⁴

Therefore, the calculations for Baw Baw with approximately 22,060 households would be:

Estimated dog population: $(40/100 \times 22,060) \times 1.3 \text{ dogs} = 11,471 \text{ dogs}$

Estimated cat population: $(27/100 \times 22,060) \times 1.4 \text{ cats} = 8,338 \text{ cats}$

If we apply these figures to the number of households in Baw Baw, there are currently an estimated 11,471 dogs within the municipality, with a registration rate of 70% based on the number of dogs registered on Council's database (8,035). For cats, the estimated population is 8,338, with a significantly lower registration rate of only 26% based on the number of cats registered on Council's database (2,196).



⁴ Pets in Australia: A national survey of pets and people https://animalmedicinesaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/ANIM001-Pet-Survey-Report19_v1.7_WEB_high-res.pdf

2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

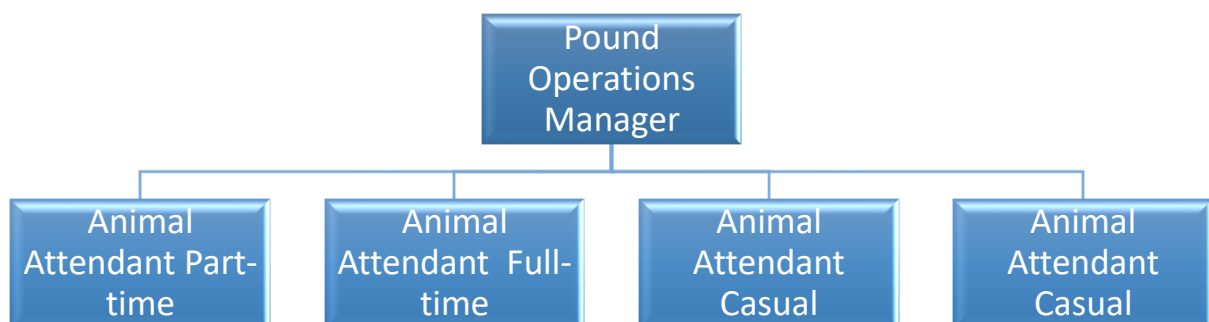
Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states that Councils must outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act in the Council's municipal district

2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Animal Management Services are delivered through the Community Compliance team and the Municipal Animal Pound (MAP) team, which sit within the Community Safety team and are part of Council's Planning and Development Directorate.

The MAP team consists of the Pound Operations Manager, one Full-time Animal Attendant, one Part-time Animal Attendant, and two Casual Animal Attendants, the equivalent of 2.7 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions are dedicated to delivering pound services, including an adoption program for unclaimed or surrendered animals. All MAP employees must hold minimum qualifications in accordance with the *Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds (Revision 1)*⁵

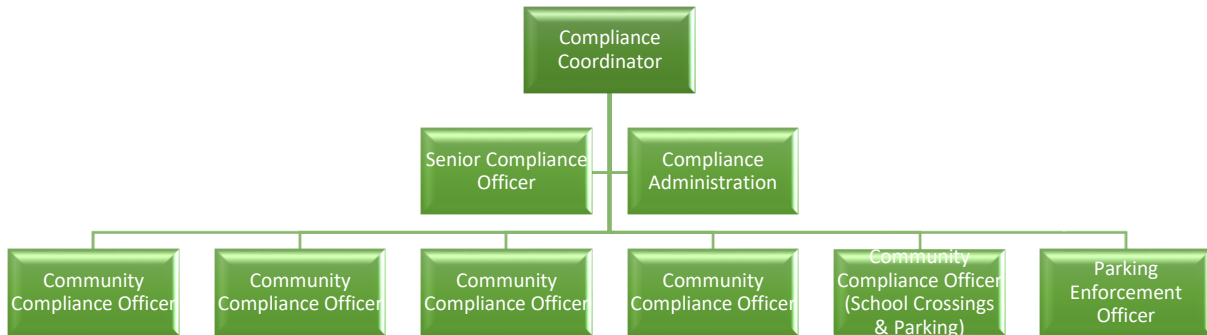
MUNICIPAL ANIMAL POUND TEAM STRUCTURE



The Community Compliance team consists of the Compliance Coordinator, one Senior Compliance Officer, one Compliance Administration Officer, four multiskilled Community Compliance Officers, one Community Compliance Officer (School Crossings and Parking), and one Parking Enforcement Officer. The equivalent of 2 FTE positions are dedicated to delivering animal management services, with Community Compliance Officers working in designated areas, and dedicating approximately 50% of their time to animal management duties.

⁵ Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds (Revision 1) <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/domestic-animals-act/codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-the-management-of-dogs-and-cats-in-shelters-and-pounds>

COMMUNITY COMPLIANCE TEAM STRUCTURE



It is preferable that Community Compliance Officers hold a minimum Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation, or equivalent relevant experience. Appropriate training and qualifications are provided to Officers as soon as possible following employment if they do not hold this experience, with ongoing training and refresher training being delivered to all Officers.

A training matrix is maintained which sets out minimum and mandatory training requirements, identifies the training status of individual Officers, and identifies opportunities for future training. Officers are provided with on-the-job training, support and ongoing coaching. Following annual team business planning, an individual Performance Review and Development Plan (PRD) is established for each Officer, which sets out their key objectives for the year as well as their development and training goals. Council’s Domestic Animal Management Plan is consulted during the planning, preparation and review of each Officer’s PRD Plan.

Status of Officer Training and Qualifications

Training or Qualification	Current Status # of Officers	Training or Qualification	Current Status # of Officers
"Induction program for new staff • Corporate Induction • online HR package • systems training"	All Officers inducted	Cert IV in Animal Control and Regulation (ACMI0)	4
Certificate III in Local Government (Animal Management)	2	Industry training 1) animal handling 2) animal assessment Animal Wise Training (Basic)	8

Management Systems Auditing (Internal Auditing)	2	Child Safe Training	6
First Aid Training & CPR (3 years)	8	CPR Annual Refresher	8
Customer service training conflict resolution	7	OH&S training - dealing with aggressive customers	8
Detecting Family Violence (specifically related to animal management)	4	Certificate III in Animal Studies Course Code ACM30117	1
Investigation & Case Management (ATC)	1	The Exceptional Investigator (Maddocks Lawyers)	1
Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance)	4	Certificate IV in Justice	3
Restricted Breed Dog Identification	2	DNA collection to assist with the investigation of dog attacks	1
Emergency Management Animal Handling	1	Diploma of Justice (Legal Services)	2
OH&S training – defensive driver training	5	Diploma of Management	2
Diploma of Government	1	Court Procedure & Prosecutor (ATC) \$2,739	1
Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre Induction	2	Mediator Training Course (DSCV)	1
Psychological First Aid Training	5		

NB. The Compliance Coordinator and Senior Compliance Officer are Authorised Officers and are included in the staff numbers contained in this chart. Total Authorised Officers = 8

2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Training of Authorised Officers	Approx. cost per person enrolled, unless otherwise stated <small>(prices as of 31 July 2021 inclusive of GST where applicable)</small>	Year of Plan
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	\$6,500 (may be subsidised)	Commence within 12 months of employment
Certificate III in Animal Studies Course Code ACM30117	Holmesglen / TAFE Gippsland \$6,967 (\$2,067 subsidised)	

Animal handling training provided by an accredited trainer - INTRODUCTORY AMO	\$704	Within 12 months of initial employment
Animal handling training provided by an accredited trainer -REINFORCER AMO	\$550	Within 3 – 4 months of Intro AMO
Animal handling training provided by an accredited trainer - REFRESHER AMO	\$759	Annual refresher – All AMOs June / July
OH&S training - conflict resolution, dealing with difficult or aggressive customers	\$245	Annually
Cert IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services)	\$1,950	
OHS – First Aid / CPR (Refresher)	\$110 Full first aid incl. CPR \$55 CPR (Refresher)	As required Annually in May
Investigation & Case Management	\$2,739	
Interview & Statement Taking	\$682	
Animal Welfare Victoria Seminars and Training		Intermittently as available. Target - minimum of 2 Officers to attend each session
Australian Institute of Animal Management (AIAM) seminars and conferences	Corporate membership \$500 p.a.	
Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution		Annually
Council e-learning opportunities	Conducted internally	When relevant courses are made available
Child Safe Training	Conducted internally	Within 3 months of commencement with Baw Baw Shire
Restricted Breed Dog Identification		Further training opportunities are being investigated

		and will be undertaken by all Officers, particularly with the legislation now allowing for the registration of Restricted Breed Dogs
<p>Auditing of Domestic Animal Businesses – training provided by an accredited trainer</p> <p><i>Management Systems Auditing (Internal Auditing)</i></p> <p>Nationally recognised competencies are: BSBAUD402 Participate in a Quality Audit & BSBAUD504 Report on a Quality Audit</p>	<p>\$5,950 for up to 15 people \$397 per person</p> <p>(seek to conduct in association with neighbouring Council's or other relevant departments)</p>	<p>Year 1 & Year 2 (50/50 Officers)</p> <p>February</p>
<p>Emergency Management Animal Handling / Animal Welfare in Emergencies</p>	<p>Conducted internally</p> <p>In partnership with Emergency Management team and utilising online resources⁶</p>	<p>Year 1</p> <p>October</p> <p>Reviewed / updated annually</p>
<p>DNA collection to assist with the investigation of dog attacks</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Investigating training opportunities for AMO's to be trained and authorised in the collection of DNA samples pursuant to s. 74B & 74C of the Act</p>
<p>Detecting Family Violence (specifically related to animal management)</p> <p>MARAM</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>Further training opportunities are being investigated and training will be rolled out across 2018/19</p>
<p>Prosecutors Training Course</p>	<p>\$2,739</p>	<p>Training and development goals will be identified through Individual</p>

⁶ Pets and Emergencies <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/pets-and-emergencies/planning-for-pets-in-emergencies>

		Performance Development Plans and undertaken as required
Cultural Awareness / Indigenous Relations Training	TBC	Training opportunities are being investigated and will be delivered to all Officers
OHS - Working in remote areas	TBC	
OHS - Defensive driving	TBC	

2.3 OUR PLAN

Our aim is to ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the required level of knowledge, training, technical and interpersonal skills to undertake their duties with a focus on:

- Officer safety
- Community safety
- Animal welfare
- Industry best practice
- Organisational expectations
- Community expectations

Objectives and activities in this section address section 68(A)(2)(b) of the Act, by outlining programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act

Objective 1: Ensure that the training policy and training matrix clearly identify minimum training requirements, and that any additional training needs that should be undertaken by animal management officers are identified in a timely manner

#	Activity	Year of Plan	Evaluation
2.3.1.1	Review and modify the staff training policy and training matrix, to ensure that the policy and training requirements remain current and relevant	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3	Policy and matrix to be reviewed annually November to allow for additional Budget submissions for the following year if required

		Year 4	
2.3.1.2	Review and modify individual Officer PDR Plans in consultation with staff to ensure minimum training requirements are being met, and that additional training needs are identified	Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4	New PDR Plans to be developed in consultation with staff in September each year Six-month review conducted in February annually

Objective 2: Ensure that animal management officers have the skills required to undertake their roles competently and effectively, with Officer safety, community safety, and animal welfare as paramount

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
2.3.2.1	Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation or equivalent	Commence within 12 months of employment	Officers have commenced studies within 12 months of employment
2.3.2.2	Animal handling training provided by an accredited trainer - INTRODUCTORY AMO	Within 12 months of initial employment	Officers have completed training within 12 months of employment
2.3.2.3	Animal handling training provided by an accredited trainer -REINFORCER AMO	Within 3 – 4 months of Introductory AMO	Officers have completed training within 3 – 4 months of Introductory AMO
2.3.2.4	Animal handling training provided by an accredited trainer - REFRESHER AMO	Annual refresher – All AMOs June / July	Officers have completed training annually
2.3.2.5	Attendance at industry training, forums, and networking sessions	Intermittently as available. All AMOs to attend where practicable. Minimum of	Officers attend at training, forums and networking sessions which is documented in their Performance

		2 Officers to attend each session	Review and Development Plans
2.3.2.6	Attendance at Australian Institute of Animal Management webinars, information and training sessions, and conferences	Intermittently as available. All AMOs to attend where practicable. Minimum of 2 Officers to attend each session	Officers engage in webinars and attend at sessions and conferences where possible, which is documented in their Performance Review and Development Plans

Objective 3: Provide Officers with ongoing investigation, statement taking and prosecution training to ensure continuous improvement, and to remain current with any legislative changes

#	Activity	Year of Plan	Evaluation
2.3.3.1	Develop and implement internal training package focussing on investigation and case management, brief preparation, and prosecution	Year 1 Annual update	Training package developed and delivered to all Officers, updated annually
2.3.3.2	Officers to attend industry training and review all communications from Animal Welfare Victoria to remain informed of legislative changes	Ongoing	Training attended and communications reviewed

Objective 4: Ensure that animal management officers engaged pursuant to s.72A of the Act (a person who is not an employee of the Council) hold the relevant qualifications or experience prescribed by the Secretary

#	Activity	Year of Plan	Evaluation
2.3.4.1	Develop a policy regarding the engagement of agency / contract staff to ensure that staff are qualified or	Year 1	Policy delivered

	<p>experienced to the standards prescribed by the Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successful completion of the Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation or Certificate III in Local Government (Animal Management) or equivalent, or • A minimum of five years' experience as an animal control or animal welfare officer 		<p>Prior to the appointment of any person as an authorised officer, where the person is not an employee of the Council, documentation and / or evidence must be provided to demonstrate that the person has the qualifications or experience prescribed by the Secretary, which will be stored on Council's database.</p>
2.3.4.2	<p>Develop processes to support the policy for authorisation of an officer pursuant to s.72A, to provide guidance around the extent of the officer's powers and responsibilities that they are authorised to perform</p>	Year 1	Processes complete

3. PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

Section 68(A)(2)(c)(i) &(ii) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* state that Councils must outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation

3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council currently undertakes numerous programs and offers services to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislative and/or regulatory requirements, as set out earlier in section 1.5

Some of our programs from the past 4 years include:

Dog Parks and Off Leash Areas

In June 2016, Council made an Order pursuant to s.26 of the Act, requiring that dogs be kept under effective control by means of chain, leash or cord at all times within any public place, except within designated Off Leash Parks or Areas.⁷

Following extensive consultation and consideration of locations, Council designated 7 areas within the municipality where dogs can be exercised off leash, as long as certain requirements are adhered to, including:

Do

- Clean up after your dog
- Obedience train and socialise your dog before coming to the park
- Keep your dog under effective control
- Supervise your dog at all times
- Remove your dog if they become aggressive
- Keep running to a minimum to prevent over exciting other dogs
- Ensure your dog is vaccinated
- Ensure the gate is closed behind you when you enter and leave
- Ensure all dog handlers are over 16 years of age



⁷ Baw Baw Shire Council website <https://www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/Resident-Information/Animals/Dog-Parks>

Don't

- Bring dogs if they are aggressive, unvaccinated or are on heat
- Bring puppies until all vaccinations are completed
- Bring food or glass into fenced area
- Allow your dog to dig holes
- Bring more than two dogs with you
- Allow children under 8 years of age to enter the fenced area

With the introduction of these parks during 2019/2020, there have been intermittent complaints received regarding other users failing to observe the requirements and allowing their dogs to become a nuisance or concern to other park users, with a small number of dog attacks and rushes being reported. Officers patrol these parks intermittently, and further patrols and education will be increased in these areas as identified within Objective 3.3.3.

[Home](#) / [Resident Information](#) / [Animals](#) / [Dog Parks](#)

Dog Parks

There are seven designated dog off leash areas within Baw Baw Shire. By law, dogs must be restrained by a leash in all other areas at all times.

See below for a list of dog park locations, features and regulations.



Fenced Dog Park Rules



Bellbird Park, Drouin – Fenced Dog Park



Brooker Park, Warragul – Fenced Dog Park



Hollydell Park, Traralgon – Fenced Dog Park



Downton Park, Yarragon – Designated Off Leash Area



St Phillack Reserve, Rawson – Designated Off Leash Area



Dunstan Oval, Rawson – Designated Off Leash Area



Darnum Recreation Reserve, Darnum – Designated Off Leash Area





Excess Animals

Council's Community Local Law 2016 places restrictions on the number of animals that may be kept on land within a Residential Area or Urban Growth Zone. Whilst the number of applications for excess animal permits remained consistent between 2017 and 2021, we have seen a significant reduction in applications in the past 12 months. A small number of animal owners proactively apply for excess animal permits when they are required to do so, however, most permit applications are the result of a complaint regarding a person keeping excess animals which are impacting on the amenity of the area, such as barking dogs or wandering cats.

	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021
No. of excess animal permits / keeping of animals permits issued each year (Total)	21	22	21	7
Urban	20	20	18	6
Rural	1	2	3	1
No. of infringements for excess animals	2	2	0	0

Pet Expo – Saturday 7 April 2018

The 2018 Pet Expo was a huge success with hundreds of people and their pets in attendance. Council’s Community Compliance team promoted new and renewed animal registrations, which could be completed on the day, as well as offering a microchipping update service, scanning pets and checking details for their owners.

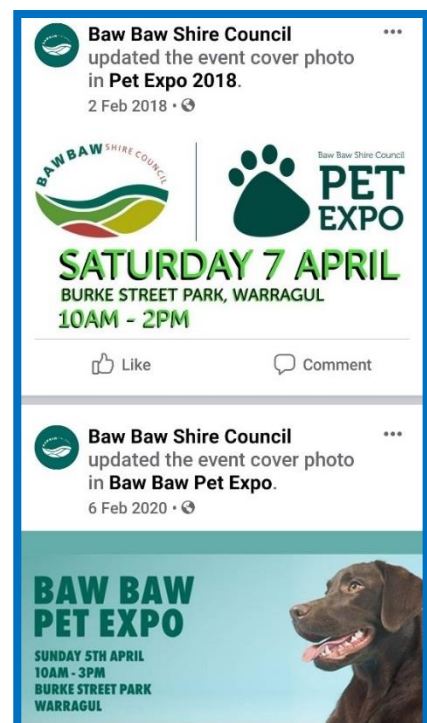
There were parades, prizes, petting zoos, and too many stallholders to mention, including Safe cats Safe wildlife, local vet clinics, rescue groups, pet products and a variety of weird and wonderful other things!

Unfortunately, our 2020 scheduled Pet Expo was cancelled due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we look forward to rescheduling within the next 12 months.

*‘Great day with great feedback from people attending’ –
Mr Barista*



*‘Congratulations, we thought it was one of the best expos we’d been to in regards to friendliness and atmosphere’ –
Aus Hair of the Dog Rescue Inc*




CAMPAIGNS

Baw Baw Shire Council's Communications team provide ongoing opportunities for communicating with and educating our community in all things animals! As can be seen from some of the Facebook posts below, we have a creative and passionate team working in Communications to help inform and educate our community about responsible pet ownership, animal welfare, current issues, rehoming opportunities, and much much more.

Baw Baw Shire Council
7 Aug 2017 • 🌐

🐱🐶 Our amazing Animal Management team care about Baw Baw's fur babies. In fact, the rate of animals reunited with their owners is 16.15% higher in Baw Baw than the average across all Victorian Councils! #BawBaw100
<http://www.bawbawshire.vic.gov.au/Resident-Information/Animals>



Council was successful in reuniting 286 pets with their owners and re-homing 101 animals into new homes.

100
100 SERVICES
IN 100 DAYS

Baw Baw Shire Council
14 Dec 2020 • 🌐

✅ Baw Baw Shire Council has performed well in the annual Know Your Council results, released last week.

Know Your Council compares Councils across a range of core service delivery areas including:

- 🗳️ Governance
- 🏊 Aquatic Facilities
- 🐾 Animal Management
- 🍷 Food Safety... See More



Know Your Council results are in, check how we compare.

BAWBAWSHIRE.VIC.GOV.AU
Know Your Council benchmarks Baw Baw in key areas

Baw Baw Shire Council
22 Oct 2018 • 🌐

😊👉 Just over a week ago we put out a call for you to ask our compliance team anything you've always wanted to know about Baw Baw Shire's local laws. The question that generated by far the most conversation was about our 24-hr cat curfew: Why we have it, and how we came to the decision to adopt it 😊 So, to answer you questions in detail, we visited Emma the Compliance Officer at the Municipal Animal Pound to take us through the whole thing (and introduce us to sweet and cuddly Olive the cat 🐱). Click to get the whole story now 🙌



Baw Baw Shire Council
5 Feb 2019 • 🌐

🔥 Community Bushfire Update #1 🔥
Please click for important community information about ROAD CLOSURES, TANK WATER, ANIMAL SAFETY, BUSHFIRE SMOKE and more.



Community Bushfire Update #1
5 Feb 2019

BAWBAWSHIRE.VIC.GOV.AU
Community Update – Thomson Jordan Divide & Stoney Creek/Walhalla Fires

STATISTICS

In addition to education, Officers utilise deterrents and enforcement action to increase compliance with legislation and to promote a safer community for pet owners and non-pet owners alike.

	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021
Total number of animal infringements issued	257	346	216	210
Fail to register s.10(1)	110	171	93	82
Fail to renew reg s.10(2)	23	31	16	17
Wandering at large s.24(1) & s.24(2)	95	107	72	92
Rush / chase s.29	4	5	5	1
Attack – non serious s.29	10	10	8	4
No. of formal cautions issued	142	183	105	123

3.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS⁸:

APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

- Dogs must be under effective control
- Designated off-leash areas
- Mandatory desexing of cats

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS⁹:

APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

- Permitted Quantity of Animals

⁸ APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

⁹ APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

- Animal Excrement
- Keeping of Animals
- Animal Noise

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES¹⁰:

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

3.3 OUR PLAN

In order to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats, and to ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any related legislation, Council will engage with the community through various methods of communication to educate and support pet owners.

Objective 1: Improve the community’s knowledge and understanding of their legislative obligations, and increase voluntary compliance

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
3.3.1.1	Conduct Pet Expos biennially to educate the community and to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership	Year 1 Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet Expos delivered • Statistics collected in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ registrations on the day ➢ animals scanned to check microchip details • Customer feedback
3.3.1.2	Prepare a Communications Plan to highlight and promote responsible Pet Ownership and the animal management services delivered by Council, with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engaging with our community through social media, local newspapers, public notices in parks, website updates, direct mail etc. • providing opportunities for 2-way communication 	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of communications plan • Achievement of specific objectives set for each action • Feedback from the community

¹⁰ APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

	<p>through surveys and other mediums</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensuring Council's website is visually appealing and that online resources are current, easy to locate and use 		
3.3.1.3	<p>Develop engaging fact sheets and web content regarding legislative obligations, with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> animal containment and control (including specific events such as during fireworks displays) animal noise excess animals animal excrement 	Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fact sheets produced and circulated Web content updated
3.3.1.4	<p>Develop a welcome pack to be distributed with new animal registrations and transfers from other municipalities, containing educational information specific to the animal (cat or dog)</p>	Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome pack developed and distribution commenced

Objective 2: Promote human health and wellbeing through responsible pet ownership

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
3.3.2.1	Recognise and promote the health and wellbeing benefits associated with responsible pet ownership	Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of educational campaign
3.3.2.2	Raise public awareness about threats to animal health and welfare (eg. Erlichiosis, parvovirus, etc)	In response to current issues & ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of educational campaign

3.3.2.3	Raise public awareness about how to reduce risk of infection from cats (eg. Zoonoses)	In response to current issues & ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of educational campaign
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Objective 3: Promote and enforce the safe and responsible use of Council's dog parks and off leash areas

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
3.3.3.1	Conduct proactive patrols (mobile and on foot) on a regular basis and educate dog owners about their requirement to control their dogs in parks	Commence Year 1 Ongoing	Number of park patrols and number of non-compliances identified New request category to be created to capture patrols and outcomes
3.3.3.2	Undertake communications campaign to promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requirement for dogs to be on leash other than in designated areas ➤ the responsible use of dog parks ➤ the benefits of socialisation and training of dogs 	Commence Year 1 Conduct further campaigns as deemed appropriate / required	Communications campaign delivered Community feedback sought

Objective 4: Promote 'Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife'¹¹ messaging amongst the community

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
3.3.4.1	Circulate Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife educational material through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ social media 	Commence Year 1 Ongoing	Materials circulated with dates and mediums documented

¹¹ Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife <http://www.safecat.org.au/>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Council's website ➤ New animal registrations and renewals 'welcome pack' ➤ Pet Expos 	<p>Anticipated increase in cat trap hire initially</p> <p>Reduction in wandering cat complaints</p>
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Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife

Love your cat? Get free expert advice, exclusive discounts and the latest information to give your cat the best life.



Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife is a campaign run by Zoos Victoria and RSPCA Victoria that provides cat owners with resources, to assist cat owners with transitioning their cat to a stay-at-home lifestyle, helping them give their cat the safest and happiest life. The website www.safecat.org.au contains information articles and short tips and tricks for an indoor lifestyle, as well as helping highlight the benefits to cats staying at home (welfare and safety for the cat and a safer neighbourhood for local wildlife). Individuals can join a Safe Cat community, with quarterly emails that contain new engaging content and offers/discounts for cat enrichment items, supporting cat owners and helping to build a social norm of pet cats staying at home rather than being left to roam the streets.

“

The fact is, the more time a pet cat spends safe at home, the less risk of injury or death from road accidents, fighting, and disease. A pet cat kept safe at home can live up to four times longer than a cat left to roam.

”

Australian Veterinary Association
2016

4. PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVER-POPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

Section 68(A)(2)(c)(iv) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states that Councils must outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Euthanasia is used in developed countries as a method of population control for dogs and cats entering shelters and council pounds. A study published in June 2018 analysed all available dog and cat populations, registration, intake, reclaim, rehome and euthanasia data which was obtained from the Domestic Animal Management Plan of each Council. Of the 79 Victorian Councils, 74% achieved $\leq 10\%$ euthanasia of impounded dogs, which is widely quoted as zero euthanasia of adoptable and treatable animals. The mean euthanasia rates for cats by the Councils was 48%, with only one Council achieving a euthanasia rate of $\leq 10\%$ for cats. Mean reclaim rates for dogs were higher (73%) than for cats (13%), as was the mean proportion of unclaimed dogs rehomed (71%), compared to cats (45%).¹²

Baw Baw Shire Council owns and operates the Municipal Animal Pound (MAP), located in Longwarry North. The majority of dogs impounded are reclaimed by their owners, and almost all unclaimed dogs are successfully rehomed. A small number of dogs are euthanised each year, and this predominantly due to them being surrendered following a dog attack, or because they are unsuitable for rehoming. However, the data compiled in relation to the number of cats impounded, collected by their owner, rehomed or euthanised demonstrates a concerning trend in low owner reclamation rates.

Baw Baw Shire has seen a decline in the number of animals reclaimed by their owners in recent years, with a lower percentage of animals reclaimed in comparison to similar Councils between 2018 and 2020.



¹² MDPI - Strategies to Reduce the Euthanasia of Impounded Dogs and Cats Used by Councils in Victoria, Australia
https://www.mdpi.com/2076-2615/8/7/100?type=check_update&version=1

Animals reclaimed from council

Percentage of all collected cats and dogs which have been reclaimed

BAW BAW SHIRE
(2019-2020)
40.20%

SIMILAR COUNCILS
(2019-2020)
44.10%

ALL COUNCILS
(2019-2020)
47.26%

Performance Trend

Reporting Period	Baw Baw Shire	Similar Councils	All Councils
2016-2017	54.99%	50.75%	51.24%
2017-2018	57.47%	51.69%	50.34%
2018-2019	45.40%	51.41%	50.95%
2019-2020	40.20%	44.10%	47.26%

Baw Baw Shire Council Says...

There has been a decrease in the number of domestic animals reclaimed by their owners. For 2019/20 year, 714 animals were collected, of which 287 were reclaimed by their owners. The majority of remaining animals were placed in other homes, see 'Animals rehomed' measurement. In total, 86% of animals collected by Council were reclaimed by their owner or adopted to a new home.

Animals rehomed

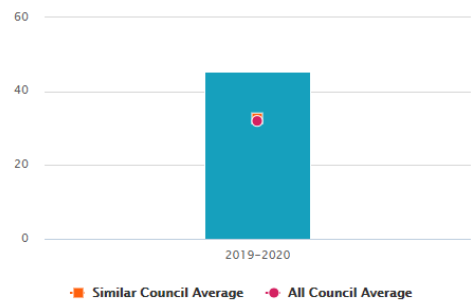
Percentage of all collected cats and dogs which have been rehomed. New indicator from July 2019.

BAW BAW SHIRE
(2019-2020)
45.38%

SIMILAR COUNCILS
(2019-2020)
32.67%

ALL COUNCILS
(2019-2020)
31.96%

Performance Trend



Baw Baw Shire Council Says...

Of the 714 animals collected by Council, 45% (324) were rehomed.

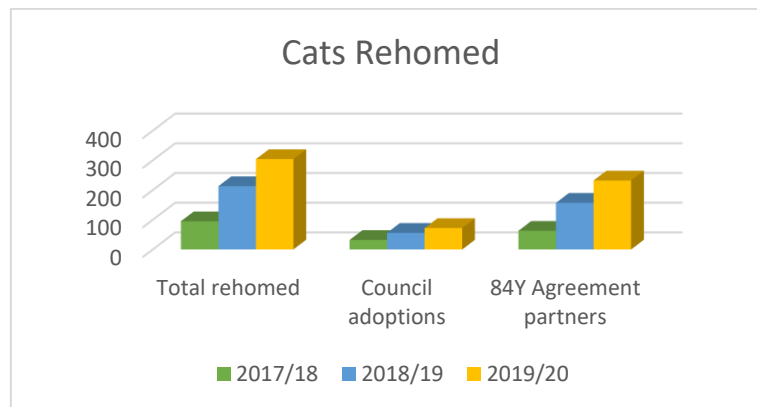
¹³ Know Your Council

Council runs an adoption program through the MAP, with ongoing promotion of animals available through its social media pages and pet adoption website Pet Rescue, as well as sharing good news stories of animals who have been adopted. A dedicated cat adoption room was completed in 2018 which provides potential owners the opportunity to spend

¹³ Know Your Council <https://knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au/councils/baw-baw/reports/animal-management>

some time interacting with cats and kittens in a more relaxed and homely environment to determine whether they are the 'right fit' for each other.

Increased promotion of Council's adoption program and an increase in the number of partner agencies for rescue and rehoming has resulted in a larger number of cat adoptions in the past 12 – 24 months:



Animal Totals	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of animals impounded	306	707	714	797
Reclaimed by owner	331	321	287	375
Rehomed			324	275
Dogs	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Euthanised (following dog attack)	2	5	3	2
Euthanised (unsuitable for rehoming)	1	2	6	4
Euthanised (illness / injury)	1	0	2	0
Euthanised (unable to rehome)	0	4	1	2
Cats	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Euthanised (unsuitable for rehoming)	8	1	4	17
Euthanised (illness / injury)	22	12	16	10
Euthanised (unable to rehome)	11	9	11	4
Euthanised (feral)	16	32	22	28

Baw Baw Shire Council
10 Mar 2017

It's adoption week at Baw Baw Shire and adoption fees for these 5 cats have been reduced to \$100 until Thursday 16 March.

Meet the lovely kitties available for adoption NOW:

Cat 1: Windsor is a 3 year old, Domestic Short Hair, black and white cat. Windsor doesn't have a care in the world and would happily follow you around seeking pats. He would... [See More](#)

ADOPTION WEEK
\$100 adoption fee for these cats until Thursday 16 March 2017



Baw Baw Shire Council
22 Feb 2019

🐾🐾🐾 From all 240+ furry friends to each and every one of you who helped them find homes last year, THANK YOU! Without your support and generosity none of this would have been possible. Our Community Compliance Officers and Municipal Animal Pound staff would especially like to send a whole heap of love to:
Everyone who adopted an animal in need,... [See More](#)



Baw Baw Shire Council
29 Jul 2020

💖🐱 Awwwww. So nice to be able share some heart-warming news in these strange times. Our Municipal Animal Pound staff received this lovely message from a very happy recent adopter:

"Hello staff of the Municipal Pound, I adopted (Oreo) now Maggie a month ago. Thought I would send you an email telling you what a beautiful friendly cat she is. She l... [See More](#)

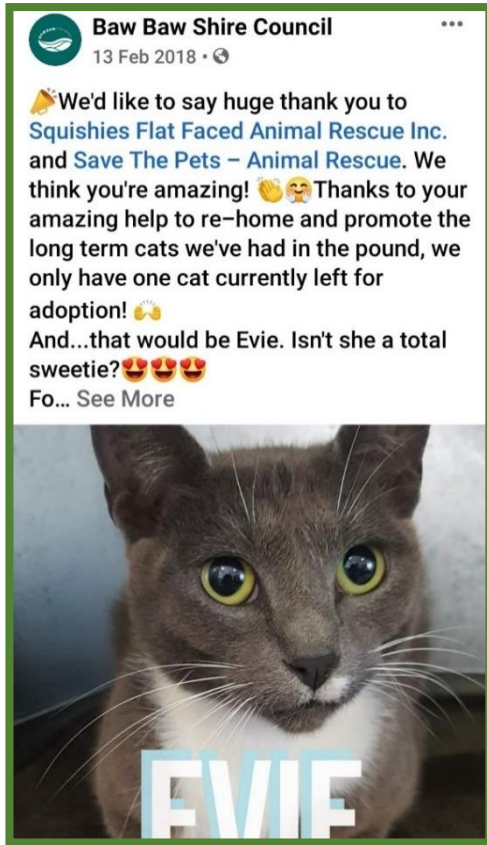


Baw Baw Shire Council
29 Dec 2020

💖🐶 What a lovely adoption story for the holiday period! Dolly's new owners got in touch to let us know that she's loving life with her new forever family:

"Just wanted to let you all know that Dolly has settled into our family beautifully! She is extremely loved and gives so much back and just loves life with us. The adoption process was very sm... [See More](#)





In addition to Council's adoption program, Community Compliance Officers and Animal Pound staff have sought out and developed partnerships with rescue groups, foster carers, and local veterinary clinics, to provide the best chance of rehoming for all animals that come into Council's care and are unclaimed. By entering into agreements pursuant to s.84Y of the Act, these partner organisations provide opportunities for rehabilitation and rehoming of animals that have not been successful in finding homes through Council's adoption program.

The relationships built with our 84Y agreement partners have been mutually beneficial, with Council's Community Compliance and MAP teams taking any opportunity to support and promote the work of these invaluable partners through donations, social media and trivia nights!

Council currently has 84Y Agreements in place with 31 organisations, businesses and individuals including 2 local veterinary clinics

Responsible cat ownership remains an issue in Baw Baw Shire, with low registration rates and low reclamation rates. Council introduced mandatory cat desexing in 2016 by way of an Order under the Act, which has likely influenced low registration rates. The requirement to desex cats prior to registration poses a significant cost to the cat's owner. Currently, the total average cost of microchipping (\$49), desexing (approx. \$115 males / \$300 females) and Council registration (\$41.60) will cost cat owners in the vicinity of \$205.60 - \$390.60, in order to register them for the first time. If a cat is impounded and it is not microchipped, desexed and registered, then the owner is also liable for a pound release fee as well as any day fees if the cat is held for more than one day, which becomes cost prohibitive for many owners, and they do not collect their cat.

In 2016, Council also introduced an Order that cats be contained to the owner's property at all times throughout the municipality. This Order was introduced: because of ongoing complaints regarding cats wandering on to other people's properties and causing a nuisance; to protect wildlife including birds and small marsupials; to reduce cat reproduction which contributes to our feral cat population and increased euthanasia rates; to prevent cat fights and cats being attacked by dogs due to trespass; and for the safety and wellbeing of our owned cat population. Council offers a cat trap hire program, where humane cat traps can be hired by the public upon payment of a refundable deposit, to enable them to trap cats that are wandering on to their property and creating a nuisance.

In addition to the Orders introduced, Council's Community Local Law sets number limits on how many dogs and cats can be kept on land in Residential or Urban Growth areas without a permit. This assists in reducing the numbers of animals able to reproduce within the home environment.

4.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS¹⁴:

APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

- Mandatory desexing of cats

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS¹⁵:

APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

- Permitted Quantity of Animals
- Keeping of Animals

¹⁴ APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

¹⁵ APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Adoption program
- Cat Cages Hire & Handling

4.3 OUR PLAN

To address over population and the high number of unwanted animals that are euthanised, cats in particular, Council aims to educate the community about responsible cat ownership, reducing our feral and semi-feral cat population, protecting wildlife from cat predation, and reduce nuisance caused by wandering cats to other residents and their pets.

In 2016, Council introduced an Order which requires that cats be desexed prior to being registered with Council. This requirement has resulted in an increased number of cats being desexed, however, further education and support to cat owners is required to assist them in complying with the Order and further reduce overpopulation. Cats and their offspring can reproduce at alarming rates, as is demonstrated below:

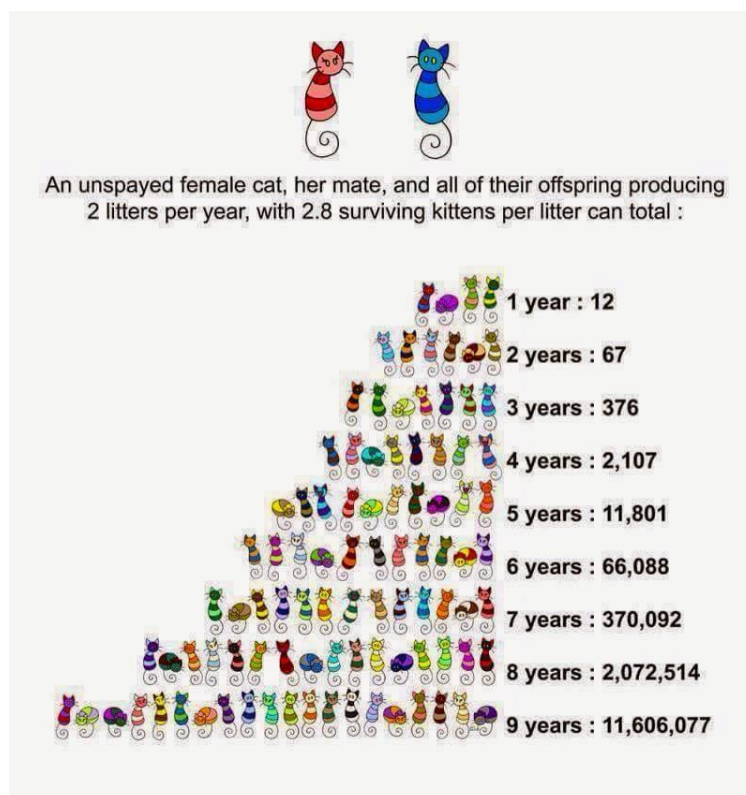


Figure 1 – Potential cat reproduction rates¹⁷

It is understood that the cost of desexing, microchipping and registering a cat can be quite cost prohibitive for some owners. Council have partnered with the State Government to provide discounted and free desexing to qualifying cat owners until 30 June 2022. A

¹⁶ APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

¹⁷ Harrison Humane <http://www.harrisonhumane.org/hchs-blog/>

successful submission was made for grant funding from the State Government, with \$30,000 being allocated to Baw Baw Shire to contribute to the program. Council has committed a further \$7,000 towards the program.

The program and it's outcomes will be assessed throughout the first year to determine its impacts and effectiveness, with the intention of continuing the program longer term and seeking further funding if it proves to be successful.

Objective 1: Raise public awareness of the impact of roaming cats on wildlife, on other residents, and in relation to overpopulation and high euthanasia rates

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.3.1.1	Provide information to the community to increase awareness about the environmental and welfare implications of abandonment and feeding wandering cats	Commence Year 1 Ongoing	Materials circulated with dates and mediums documented
4.3.1.2	Promote 24-hour cat curfew with registration applications, online campaigns and at Pet Expo	Commence Year 1 Ongoing	Anticipated increase in cat trap hires initially Reduction in wandering cat complaints
Related Activities			
3.3.4.1	Circulate Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife educational material through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ social media ➤ Council's website ➤ New animal registrations and renewals 'welcome pack' ➤ Pet Expos 	Commence Year 1 Ongoing	Materials circulated with dates and mediums documented Anticipated increase in cat trap hires initially Reduction in wandering cat complaints

Objective 2: Improve cat desexing rates within the community by increasing access to affordable desexing

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.3.2.1	Develop a policy regarding qualification criteria to receive discount or free desexing vouchers and a rollout program	Year 1	Policy developed and vouchers allocated
4.3.2.2	Provide vouchers for discount or free desexing to qualifying cat owners, in conjunction with the National Desexing Network (NDN) ¹⁸ , the Victorian State Government ¹⁹ , rescue groups, and local veterinarians	Year 1	Number of cats desexed by the end of the program Increase in the number of cat registrations
4.3.2.3	Based on the outcome of the Year 1 discounted desexing program, apply for government grant funding to support further delivery of a low-cost (or free) cat desexing program	Year 2	Number of cats desexed by the end of the program Increase in the number of cat registrations
4.3.2.4	Investigate the impacts of offering discount or free desexing to all cat owners within the municipality	Year 3	Report to be prepared based on the results of the discounted desexing program, and the costs incurred in association with the number of cats that are not reclaimed from the MAP

¹⁸ National Desexing Network <https://ndn.org.au/>

¹⁹ The Victorian Government allocated a further \$7.5 million boost to animal welfare grants in the 2020–21 State Budget. This targeted funding commitment includes \$1.5 million over three years to enable delivery of free or low-cost desexing programs for cats and dogs owned by vulnerable and disadvantaged Victorians, delivered through Councils. For more information, visit: <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/community-and-education/animal-welfare-fund-grants-program>

Objective 3: Reduce the amount of euthanasia rates at Council Pound

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.3.3.1	Continue to deliver an internal adoption program at Council's MAP	Ongoing	Number of animals adopted
4.3.3.2	Continue to identify opportunities to enter in to section 84Y agreements with animal welfare, re-housing and adoption groups	Ongoing	Increased numbers of 84Y agreements in place Reduction in the number of animals euthanised
4.3.3.3	Actively seek to identify illegal breeding establishments within Baw Baw and take enforcement action, including prosecution where appropriate	Ongoing	Potential illegal breeders identified on the Pet Register (PER) are investigated and outcomes documented
4.3.3.4	Investigate successful industry initiatives in relation to the over population of cats, and collaborate with G2Z to develop a localised initiative to trial within Baw Baw	Year 2 - 4	Investigation of successful industry initiatives Implementation of new initiative with identified measurements for evaluation Evaluation of outcomes of the initiative

Objective 4: Promote animal containment, including engaging rural landowners in improved cat management

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
4.3.4.1	Promote secure containment of animals to owner's premises to prevent stray cats and dogs, outlining possible outcomes including injury, accidents, attacks and potential euthanasia if the animal is not microchipped and registered	Year 1	Promotional campaigns delivered and documented Reduction in the number of wandering animal complaints
4.3.4.2	Encourage voluntary cat containment by providing information, education and awareness raising on benefits to cats, benefits to wildlife, and how to contain a cat.	Year 1	Promotional campaigns delivered and documented Reduction in the number of wandering cat complaints Reduction in the number of cat traps hired Reduction in the number of cats impounded
4.3.4.3	Undertake awareness raising of rural landholders regarding cat management on rural properties, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • responsible cat ownership • impacts of cats on agriculture and methods for limiting transmission of parasites and disease to livestock 	Year 4	Promotional campaigns delivered and documented Increased number of cat registrations in rural areas
4.3.4.4	Investigate opportunities to work with rural landholders to reduce the impact of feral cats on the environment	Year 4	Investigation of successful industry initiatives Consultation with rural landholders

5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Section 68(A)(2)(c)(v) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states that Councils must outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council's current programs to promote and increase animal registration and identification include:

- Annual pet registration renewal notices and reminder process
- Educational information contained in renewal notices
- Online portal for new registration applications and payment of renewals
- Educational materials provided with new registrations
- Educational media campaigns and online promotions
- Biennial Pet Expo – microchip scanning and updating details, education, and promotion of responsible pet ownership
- Doorknocks or mailouts conducted intermittently where complaints are received regarding wandering / unregistered animals
- Biannual audit of information held with Central Animal Records against Council's animal registration database

Data released in 2020 indicates that around 40% of Australian households include at least one dog, with an average of 1.3 dogs per household, making them the most popular type of pets, followed by cats (27%), with an average 1.4 cats per household.

Therefore, the calculations for Baw Baw with approximately 22,060 households would be:

Estimated dog population: $(40/100 \times 22,060) \times 1.3$ dogs = 11,471 dogs

Estimated cat population: $(27/100 \times 22,060) \times 1.4$ cats = 8,338 cats

If we apply these figures to the number of households in Baw Baw, there are currently an estimated 11,471 dogs within the municipality, with a registration rate of 70% based on the number of dogs registered on Council's database (8,035). For cats, the estimated population is 8,338, with a significantly lower registration rate of only 26% based on the number of cats registered on Council's database (2,196).

The estimated registration rates of dogs have increased by 11% over the past 4 years, with approximately 70% of the estimated dog population being registered. Despite Council's educational programs and services, we have not seen a significant increase in cat registration numbers.

In 2020 Council established an online application process which enabled customers to complete their application and make payment online, without having to attend at a customer service centre. In the first 12 months, 1,460 applications were received online.

The number of registered dogs and cats was significantly lower than expected in the 2017/18 year, but increased the following year following the year as a result of the increased promotion of our Pet Expo and responsible pet ownership. Registration rates remained relatively consistent over the following years, with the numbers of cats registered to be considerably lower than the estimated animal population.

REGISTRATION STATISTICS

Key Statistics	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of households	19,624	19,624	22,060	22,060
Number of registered dogs	6012	7721	8485	8035
Number of registered dogs that are desexed	4745	4904	4435	5506
Estimated dog population	10,204	10,204	11,471	11,471
Estimated dog registration rate	59%	75%	74%	70%
Number of registered cats	1672	2118	2290	2196
Estimated cat population	7418	7418	8338	8338
Estimated cat registration rate	22%	29%	27%	26%

OFFENCE STATISTICS – INFRINGEMENTS & CAUTIONS ISSUED

Offence	2017 – 2018	2018 – 2019	2019 – 2020	2020 – 2021
Fail to register s.10(1)	110	171	93	82
Fail to renew reg s.10(2)	23	31	16	17
Wandering at large s.24(1)&(2)	95	107	72	92
No. of formal cautions issued	142	183	105	123

5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS²⁰:

APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

- Mandatory desexing of cats

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS²¹:

APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

- Permitted Quantity of Animals
- Keeping of Animals

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES²²:



- Annual registration renewals and reminders sent out
- Doorknocks and mailouts conducted
- Cat Cages Hire & Handling
- Pet Expo

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- Doorknocks or mailouts conducted in areas where complaints are received
- All seized and impounded animals are registered and microchipped prior to their release
- Patrols of off leash parks and areas during daylight hours

5.3 OUR PLAN

Council aims to reunite pets with their owners as quickly as possible, and for this to occur, animals must be identifiable through their microchip and registration details. It is important that the owners details are kept up to date on the microchip database as well on Council's records, and wearing the required Council issued identification tag can often result in reunification without the animal having to be collected or impounded by an Officer.

²⁰ APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

²¹ APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

²² APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Through continual promotion of pet registration and the benefits associated with registration and identification, we should see an increase in the number of animals reunited directly with their owners without the need to impound.

Objective 1: Increase the number of dog and cat registrations by educating residents in relation to their legislative obligations and the benefits of microchipping and registration

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
5.3.1.1	Increase registration by conducting annual door knocks throughout the municipality to ensure dogs and cats are registered	Annually	Increase in numbers of pets registered with council following annual door knocks
5.3.1.2	Cross-reference animal registration database with the Central Animals Records registry to identify unregistered dogs and cats to be followed up	Biannually	Increase in numbers of pets registered with council following database cross-referencing
5.3.1.3	Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered prior to release	Prior to every release	All animals are registered prior to being returned / released to their owner
5.3.1.4	Conduct an annual communications campaign in the lead up to pet registration renewals	Annually in Feb - March	Review the percentage of animal registration renewals paid on or before the due date
5.3.1.5	Continue to send out animal registration renewals annually	Annually in March	Review the percentage of animal registrations renewals paid on or before the due date
5.3.1.6	Conduct a Pet Expo biennially and promote the requirements and benefits of pet registration, with facilities set up to accept registration applications and renewals on the day	Biennially Year 1 Year 3	Review the number of new registrations on the day, and in the period just prior to and just after the pet expo

Objective 2: Increase the accuracy of information contained on microchip databases and Council's registration database, and ensure animals are displaying identification tags

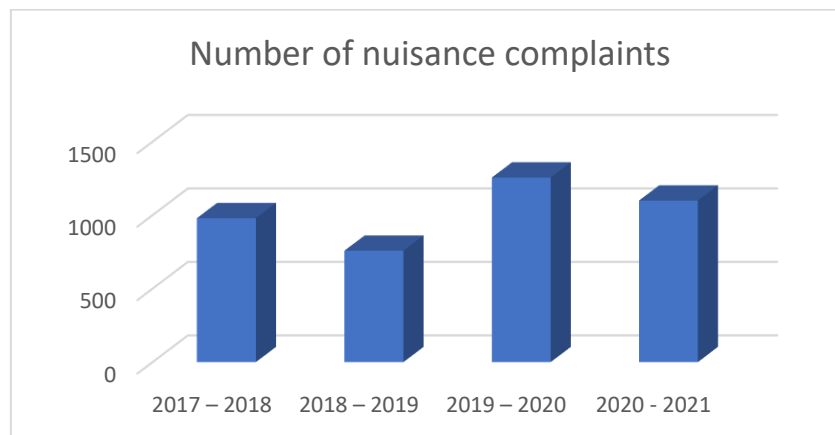
#	Activity	When	Evaluation
5.3.2.1	Prior to the release of seized or impounded animals to their owner, check animal details contained on microchip database and provide owner with details to contact microchip database to update	Upon release of every animal	Show an increase in the number of seized dogs and cats that are identifiable at the point of subsequent seizure
5.3.2.2	Upon application of new animal registrations, check animal details contained on microchip database and provide owner with details to contact microchip database to update	Upon application for registration	Show an increase in the number of dogs and cats that are identifiable at the point of seizure
5.3.2.3	Where animals are impounded and are not wearing the Council issued registration tag, provide a new tag if required, and issue a formal written warning. Further offences may result in an infringement	Upon release of any animal not wearing required identification tag	Review the number of formal warnings and infringements issued Show an increase in the number of dogs and cats that are identifiable at the point of seizure

6 NUISANCE

Section 68(A)(2)(c)(v) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* state that Councils must outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance

6.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council recognises that most pet owners make a conscious effort to manage their pets in a responsible manner, in accordance with legal responsibilities and with consideration for other people and their pets. However, there are pet owners who are, for whatever reason, less responsive to these requirements. As a result, Council regularly receives complaints regarding nuisance animals that range from barking dogs, to wandering dogs and cats, dogs being exercised off leash in non-designated areas, and animal excrement.



6.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS²³:

APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

- Dogs must be under effective control
- Designated off-leash areas
- Mandatory desexing of cats

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS²⁴:

APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

- Permitted Quantity of Animals
- Animal Excrement
- Keeping of Animals
- Animal Noise

²³ APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

²⁴ APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Barking Dogs procedure
- Cat Cages Hire & Handling procedure

6.3 OUR PLAN

Council aims to reduce the number of nuisance complaints received, particularly in relation to pet owners who do not:

- address issues of their dog barking excessively
- adequately control their dogs in public places, including in designated off leash areas
- pick up their dogs droppings and dispose of them appropriately
- confine their cats as required

Objective 1: Encourage residents to become proactive in resolving barking dog complaints

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.3.1.1	Review and update the barking dog kit to ensure that information is current and reflects best practice actions and recommendations to increase the chances of issue resolution. Promote use of dispute resolution / mediation options	Biennially Year 2 Year 4	Review and complete any required amendments Reduction in complaints requiring Officer involvement Increase in number of complaints resolved

Objective 2: Promote the responsible use of Dog Parks and Off Leash Areas

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.3.2.1	Develop and install effective signage with key messaging regarding responsible pet ownership, to be installed in Dog Parks and other recreational areas	Year 2 Ongoing	Signage installed Reduction in the number of complaints received

²⁵ APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Related Activities			
3.3.3.1	Conduct proactive patrols (mobile and on foot) on a regular basis and educate dog owners about their requirement to control their dogs in parks	Commence Year 1 Ongoing	Number of park patrols and number of non-compliances identified New request category to be created to capture patrols and outcomes
3.3.3.2	Undertake communications campaign to promote: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Requirement for dogs to be on leash other than in designated areas ➤ the responsible use of dog parks ➤ the benefits of socialisation and training of dogs 	Commence Year 1 Conduct further campaigns as deemed appropriate / required	Communications campaign delivered Community feedback sought

Objective 3: Reduce cat nuisance complaints by 5% per year

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.3.3.1	Provide educational material about cat enclosures and provide details of any DIY cat enclosure workshops being conducted. Advocate to local hardware stores (Bunnings) to provide DIY workshops and DIY kits for cat enclosures Promote through social media, Council's website, Pet Expo and cat 'welcome packs'	Year 2	Educational materials developed DIY workshops offered – participation rates Document campaigns
Related Activities			
3.3.1.4	Develop a welcome pack to be distributed with new animal registrations and transfers from other municipalities, containing educational information specific to the animal (cat or dog)	Year 1	Welcome pack developed and distribution commenced

3.3.4.1	<p>Circulate Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife educational material through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ social media ➤ Council's website ➤ New animal registrations and renewals 'welcome pack' <p>Pet Expos</p>	<p>Commence Year 1</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Materials circulated with dates and mediums documented</p> <p>Anticipated increase in cat trap hire initially</p> <p>Reduction in wandering cat complaints</p>
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Objective 4: Consider the appropriateness of government grant funding²⁶ to support cat containment equipment or initiatives (e.g., cat containment runs) in areas of biodiversity value

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
6.3.4.1	<p>Council, either directly or in partnership with an eligible organisation (e.g., Landcare, conservation, education organisations), may be able to apply for grant funding to support cat containment initiatives within their municipality</p> <p>Regularly check the Department of Land, Water and Planning's biodiversity funding page to determine if suitable streams of funding become available</p>	<p>First week of each month, check website for funding opportunities</p>	<p>Identify when suitable Grant opportunities become available</p>
6.3.4.2	<p>Establish a partnership with an eligible organisation as per the relevant grant guidelines (if required).</p>	<p>TBC if / when funding becomes available</p>	<p>Partnership secured</p>
6.3.4.3	<p>Develop a project plan and grant application for cat containment initiative/s in areas of biodiversity value.</p>	<p>TBC if / when funding becomes available</p>	<p>Identified projects completed</p>

²⁶ DELWP Environmental Grants <https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/grants>

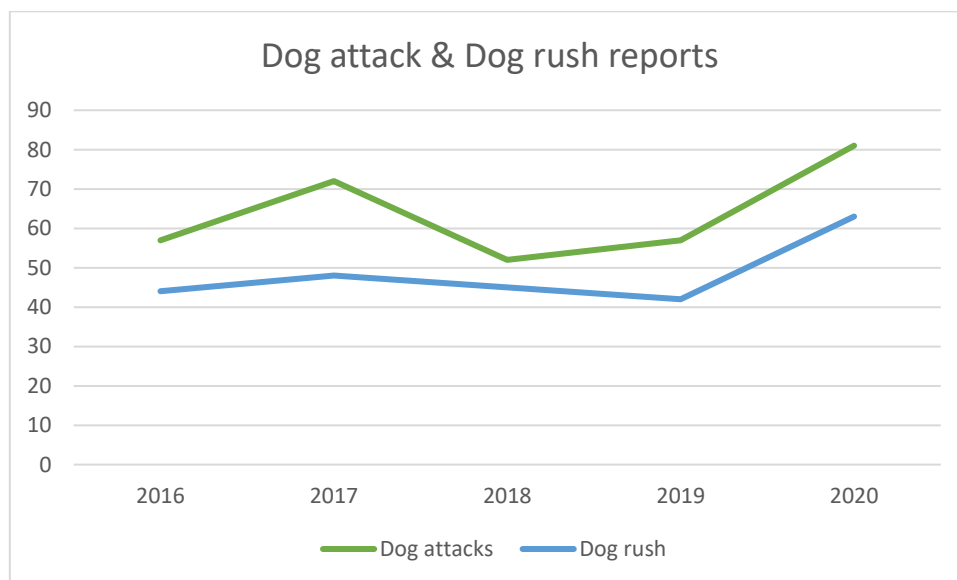
7 DOG ATTACKS

Section 68(A)(2)(c)(iii) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states that Councils must outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Dog attacks are treated very seriously by the Community Compliance team and are prioritised over other work types. Dog attacks reported outside of business hours are responded to by the on-call Officer, with Police assistance being sought where required.

Reports of dog attacks and rushes have increased over the past 5 years, which has likely resulted due to numerous factors including population growth, heightened community awareness, increased knowledge and understanding of the process of reporting dog attacks and rushes, and greater community expectations of responsible pet ownership and community safety.



Prosecutions Conducted	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
Total number of prosecutions	3	14	10	13	40
Breakdown of offence types					
Fail to register a dog or cat s.10(1)	5	14	16	4	39
Fail to renew registration of a dog or cat s.10(2)	2	3	5	1	11

Dogs found at large (daytime) s.24(1)	8	14	13	23	58
Dogs and cats found in places specified by the Council s.26(1)		3		1	4
Dog attack causing serious injury or death to a person or animal (person in apparent control) s.29(3)		1		3	4
Dog attack causing serious injury or death to a person or animal (owner) s.29(4)	14	22	5	11	52
Dog attack causing non-serious injury to a person or animal (person in apparent control) s.29(5)				1	1
Dog attack causing non-serious injury to a person or animal (owner) s.29(6)		1	1	3	5
Dog rush at or chase a person (owner) s.29(8)	2	3	12	3	20
Restraint of menacing dog (not muzzled, or not under control by chain, cord or leash) s.41E(2)			10	2	12
Keeping animals in excess of permitted numbers on residential land. BBSC CLL 2.1(3)		1	2		3
Keeping cats in excess of permitted numbers on rural land. BBSC CLL 2.2(2)			14		14
Failure to adequately fence and maintain fences on land used for animal keeping so that any animal or bird cannot escape from the land. BBSC CLL 2.6(1)(c)			1		1
Failure to comply with the direction of an Authorised Officer. BBSC CLL 6.2(2)			1		1

7.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS²⁷:

APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

- Dogs must be under effective control
- Designated off-leash areas

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS²⁸:

APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

- Keeping of Animals

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES²⁹:

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Dog Attacks Policy
- Dog Control Decisions Policy
- Process for preparation, assessment, approval and prosecution
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy

7.3 OUR PLAN

Council's aim is to reduce the incidence of dog bites, dog attacks (on people, pets and livestock) and rushes. We will do this through ongoing education, increased patrols, and informing the community of Court outcomes following prosecutions.

Objective 1: Increase community awareness on the importance of dog containment and control, and how to report a dog attack or dog rush

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
7.3.1.1	Communications campaign to improve public awareness of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Importance of dog containment / control➤ what a dog attack is and how to report	Year 1 and 3 Pet Expo	Initial increase in the number of reports regarding dog attacks and dog rushes as a result of community awareness Reduction in the number of

²⁷ APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

²⁸ APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

²⁹ APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the importance of training, socialising and de sexing dogs at an early age ➤ the possible implications for dogs and their owners if their dog attacks a person or animal 		substantiated dog attacks and dog rushes
7.3.1.2	Report outcomes of dog attack prosecutions to local media to raise awareness of dog attacks and Council's actions and ongoing media releases on enforcement activities	Ongoing following prosecutions	Articles published in local media Community feedback Increased number of dog attack reports

Objective 2: Ensure that dog attacks are responded to and resolved as a priority and that processes are in place to provide consistency and procedural fairness in investigations and outcomes

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
7.3.2.1	Review Dog Attack Investigations Policy and ensure consistency with the requirements of the Act and all other relevant legislation	Year 1 and 3 Ongoing	Review Policy and document any amendments Review dog attack investigations to confirm the policy's appropriateness and ensure that Officers are applying the policy consistently
7.3.2.2	Review Dog Control Decision Policy which is utilised in relation to reports of dog attacks, and instances of dog rush / chase a person	Year 1 and 3 Ongoing	Review Policy and document any amendments Review dog control decisions and processes to confirm consistency with the requirements of the Act and all other relevant legislation

7.3.2.3	Create an information handout for victims of dog attacks/ chase / rush, and for owners of dogs under investigation, outlining the investigation process, their options, and potential outcomes	Year 1	Information handouts developed and provided to victims and dog owners
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Objective 3: Promote responsible pet ownership to the younger generation

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
7.3.3.1	Actively promote the Responsible Pet Ownership Program and 'We Are Family' Program conducted by Animal Welfare Victoria ³⁰ to kindergartens and primary schools within Baw Baw Shire	Year 1	All primary schools and kindergartens contacted and made aware of the program
7.3.3.2	Investigate opportunities to support Maternal and Child Health nurses to educate new parents in responsible pet ownership Midwifery info / Child Safety Officer / disseminate info to new parents	Year 2	Consult with Maternal Child and Family Health Coordinator regarding opportunities
7.3.3.3	Investigate opportunities to work with midwives at the local hospital to educate expectant parents in responsible pet ownership and introducing a baby into a home with pets	Year 4	Consult with midwifery at Warragul Hospital regarding opportunities
7.3.3.4	Participate in TAFE information sessions and Job Skills / Career Days opportunities, including presentations to Animal studies classes	As requested	Participation in events and any feedback received

³⁰ Responsible pet ownership for children <https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/community-and-education/responsible-pet-ownership-for-children>

8 DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

Section 68(A)(2)(c)(vii) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states that Councils must outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district 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.

8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* gives Local Governments various discretions in respect of dogs that are found to have attacked people and animals, or otherwise require specific controls. This includes the power to investigate and prosecute following dog attacks, and various discretions in respect of dogs that have been involved in attacks, rushed or chased a person, or otherwise present a risk to public safety.

What are Declared dogs?



Dangerous Dog means a dog which has been declared to be dangerous by a Council, is kept as a guard dog on a non-residential property, or has been trained to attack or bite a person (Section 34 of the Act)

Menacing Dog means a dog which has been declared to be a menacing dog by a Council (Part 3 of the Act)

Restricted Breed Dog means a dog that is any one of the following breeds—

- (a) Japanese Tosa;
- (b) fila Brasileiro;
- (c) dogo Argentino;
- (d) Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario);
- (e) American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier);



Baw Baw Shire Council is currently home to 8 declared Dangerous Dogs and 9 declared Menacing Dogs. There are no Restricted Breed Dogs or Dangerous Dogs (Guard Dogs) registered with Council.

Additional control measures placed on declared dogs may include specific housing requirements, warning signage on properties, specific collars to make the dog easily identifiable, and the requirement to be on leash and muzzled when outside the owner's

property or outside of a regulated enclosure. These measures assist to ensure community safety and adequate control and containment of these dogs. It is an offence to breach any of these requirements, which Council takes quite seriously, with offences prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court.

Prosecutions Conducted	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	Total
Total number of prosecutions	3	14	10	13	40
Breakdown of offence types					
Restraint of menacing dog (not muzzled, or not under control by chain, cord or leash) s.41E(2)			10	2	12

8.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES³¹:

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Dog attacks Policy
- Dog Control Decisions Policy

CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES:

- Annual audits of properties where declared dogs are kept
- Database cross checking

8.3 OUR PLAN

To ensure that declared dogs are identified and managed effectively, Council will introduce additional checks at the time of registration of all dogs, increase inspections on the properties of declared dogs, and undertake further educational activities within the community. We will continue to ensure that policies and procedures are applied consistently in relation to reported dog attacks and rushes, and that relevant controls and declarations are determined and applied where required.

³¹ APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Objective 1: Ensure that the decision-making process to declare a dog to be a dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dog is fair and nonbiased

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
Related Activities			
7.3.2.1	Review Dog Attack Investigations Policy and ensure consistency with the requirements of the Act and all other relevant legislation	Year 1 and 3 Ongoing	Review Policy and document any amendments Review dog attack investigations to confirm the policy's appropriateness and ensure that Officers are applying the policy consistently
7.3.2.2	Review Dog Control Decision Policy which is utilised in relation to reports of dog attacks, and instances of dog rush / chase a person	Year 1 and 3 Ongoing	Review Policy and document any amendments Review dog control decisions and processes to confirm consistency with the requirements of the Act and all other relevant legislation
7.3.2.3	Create an information handout for victims of dog attacks/ chase / rush, and for owners of dogs under investigation, outlining the investigation process, their options, and potential outcomes	Year 1	Information handouts developed and provided to victims and dog owners

Objective 2: Ensure declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
8.3.2.1	Conduct scheduled and random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance	Biannually Scheduled inspection prior to registration renewal (Feb – March) Unscheduled inspection at least once per year	Properties of declared dogs inspected at least twice a year
8.3.2.2	Upon application for new dog registrations, check animal details contained on microchip database to identify any declared dogs	Upon application for registration	Show an increase in the number of dogs and cats that are identifiable at the point of seizure

9 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

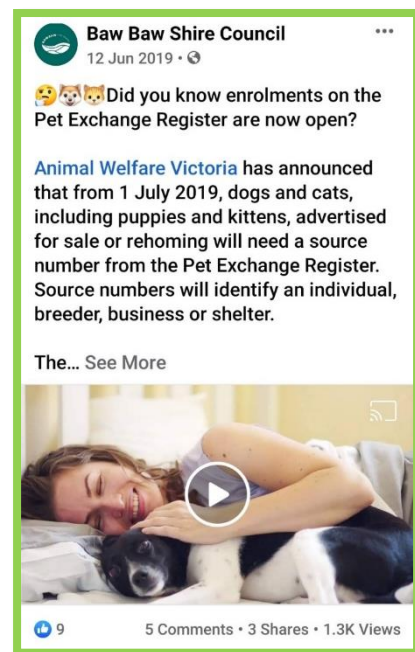
Section 68(A)(2)(c)(ii) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states that Councils must outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation. This includes ensuring that domestic animal businesses (DABs) comply with the Act, regulations and any related legislation.

9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Baw Baw Shire Council currently has 12 registered Domestic Animal Business (DABs). These businesses are audited annually prior to renewal of their registration, and unscheduled inspections occur intermittently throughout the year to ensure ongoing compliance with all legislation and regulations. Almost all businesses display high levels of compliance, with only one business having been issued with notices to comply to improve their practices and meet required standards in the past year.

The Community Compliance team work closely with Council's Planning Department to ensure that animal related permit applications in relation to animal keeping, breeding and boarding are identified and assessed to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation.

Type of Business	Number of Businesses
Breeding and/or rearing establishments	4
Dog training establishments	2
Pet shops	4
Shelters and pounds	1 (Council owned & operated)
Boarding establishments	1



9.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS³²:

APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

- Mandatory desexing of cats

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS³³:

APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

- Permitted Quantity of Animals

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES³⁴:

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- DAB Audit process

9.3 OUR PLAN

It is likely that there are additional DABs operating within the municipality that have not yet applied for registration, either knowingly or because they are unaware that they are required to be registered. Council will continue to conduct activities to proactively identify these businesses and undertake educational activities and campaigns to educate the community which should increase the number of reports of unregistered businesses. We will also increase our presence in domestic animal businesses by conducting increased random inspections throughout the year to assess and ensure that compliance obligations are being met.

Objective 1: Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
9.3.1.1	Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, including businesses selling pets / pet products / services in the municipality Follow up to determine whether they are and should be registered with Council	Ongoing	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity

³² APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT

³³ APPENDIX C – COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016

³⁴ APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

9.3.1.2	Monitor Council's registration database for owners with more than 3 fertile females	Biannually	Identify owners with more than 3 fertile females and investigate accordingly
9.3.1.3	Inspect properties with excess animal permits to ensure they are not a breeding business	Annually prior to registration renewal	Properties inspected and enforcement action taken where required
9.3.1.4	Cross-reference animal registration database with the Central Animals Records registry to identify unregistered dogs and cats to be followed up	Biannually	Increase in numbers of pets registered with Council following database cross-referencing
9.3.1.5	Pet Exchange register audits for persons keeping more than three entire females (without Applicable Organisation membership)	When identified on the PER	Properties inspected and enforcement action taken where required
9.3.1.6	Work closely with Council's planning department regarding DAB requirements	As required	Process in place where Community Compliance team are consulted regarding planning permit applications involving dogs or cats
9.3.1.7	Media campaigns to raise awareness of the DAB definition and the code of practices that must be adhered to.	Year 2	Media campaign delivered Community feedback / reports of alleged illegal DAB's

Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DAB's

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
9.3.2.1	Conduct scheduled and random property inspections of DAB's to ensure compliance	Biannually Scheduled inspection prior to registration renewal (Feb – March) Unscheduled spot inspection of all DAB's at least once per year	DAB's inspected at least twice a year

10 OTHER MATTERS

Section 68(A)(2)(e)(iii) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states that Councils must 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.

10.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Baw Baw Shire Council is in the unique and fortunate position to own and operate its own pound facility. The pound and it's visitors, people and animals alike, have enjoyed ongoing developments and improvements over the past few years, with the move from our Galloway Street location, which had outlived its purpose, to newer facilities in Longwarry North. With the move to larger and more contemporary facilities, we have been able to improve and increase our adoption opportunities including the delivery of a cat viewing / adoption room. Impounded dogs have benefitted from increased opportunities for exercise and interaction within large, secure exercise yards located onsite.

There will be ongoing opportunities for further improvements and expansion of the pound facility and services which will be identified through ongoing Masterplan review and consultation and will be incorporated into this Plan during annual reviews.

10.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES³⁵:

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Animal Emergency Management Plan
- Health Management Plan
- Adoption processes

10.3 OUR PLAN

Council's Community Compliance team and animal management team respond to various types of requests and complaints, with some of these interactions resulting in identification of potential domestic violence concerns. It is not uncommon for pets to be involved in situations where domestic violence is occurring, and response to these situations requires a level of skill and understanding, as well as a network of established referral services and supports in place.

Investigation has commenced into bringing together key stakeholders to develop policies and processes to support persons experiencing domestic violence, particularly where pets

³⁵ APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

are involved. Community Compliance Officers have commenced training within the MARAM framework and will continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and ability to identify and respond to domestic violence concerns in the conduct of their duties.



Evacuation of the Municipal Animal Pound during the bushfires - 2 March 2019

Objective 1: Investigate options to support people in crisis situations such as a death, accident, house fire, homelessness, or family violence, which is affecting the owner's ability to care for their animal

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
10.3.1.1	Identify and strengthen internal and external referral support networks and protocols in relation to supporting people with pets in family violence situations	Year 2	Policies and / or procedures developed and implemented
10.3.1.2	Develop internal information and referral processes relating to domestic violence to ensure that consideration is given to the needs of pets / pet owners	Year 2	Policies and / or procedures developed and implemented
10.3.1.3	Investigate the merits of providing short term relief accommodation for pets to support people in crisis situations	Year 2	Policies and / or procedures developed and implemented

10.3.1.4	Establish a foster care network to provide temporary care for pets of victims in family violence situations	Year 2	Foster care network and associated procedures established
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Objective 2: Advocate to the State Government regarding legislative matters

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
10.3.2.1	Advocate to the State Government regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nuisance barking – increase penalty and amend wording to increase ability to enforce ➤ Cats at large – increase penalty ➤ Expand ability to impose declarations and controls in certain circumstances. For example, the ability to declare a dog to be ‘menacing’ following a serious attack (as per the definition of the Act) ➤ Requirement for registration of Dingoes within the municipality ➤ Create offence and penalty for failing to comply with a Notice to Comply 	Ongoing	Submission to State Government Amendments to legislation

Objective 3: Improve the welfare of pets within Baw Baw Shire

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
10.3.3.1	Review Council’s Animal Emergency Management Plan	Year 2	
10.3.3.2	Campaign to raise community awareness around proper restraint of animals in cars	Year 2	

	and on utilities, and animals left in cars on hot days		
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Objective 4: Review existing Orders and Local Laws

#	Activity	When	Evaluation
10.3.4.1	Review Council's Local Laws in relation to animal management	Year 4	Review of Local Laws and any recommendations implemented or documented for full Local Law review prior to 2026
10.3.4.2	Review Orders in place under the Act: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ mandatory cat desexing ➤ 24-hour cat curfew ➤ dogs on leash in all areas except designated off leash areas 	Year 3	Review of current Orders and any amendments or revocations complete based on outcome, including Gazettal of any changes

APPENDIX A – ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994

Dogs must be under effective control

- (1) Pursuant to Section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, the owner of any dog must keep the dog in effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash held by the owner and attached to the dog while the dog is in any public place, other than designated off-leash areas.

Designated off-leash areas

- (1) A dog may be exercised off leash in designated off-leash areas, providing the owner:
- carries a chain, cord or leash sufficient to bring the dog under effective control if the dog behaves in a manner which threatens any person or animal;
 - remains in effective voice or hand control of the dog so as to be able to promptly bring the dog under effective control by placing the dog on a chain, cord or leash if that becomes necessary; and
 - does not allow the dog to worry, attack, rush at or threaten any person or animal.

Mandatory Desexing of Cats

- (1) As of 1 July 2016 all cats being registered for the first time (new registrations) must be desexed from the age of six months. Exemptions include any cat registered with Baw Baw Shire Council before 30 June 2016 and animals exempt under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Exemptions include the following:

- A cat that is owned by a person or body that conducts a domestic animal business registered with Council where the cat is used for breeding purposes in connection with that business.
- A cat that is the subject of written veterinary advice that the health of the cat is liable to be significantly prejudiced if it is desexed.
- A cat that is owned by a person who is a current member of an *applicable organisation and the animal is registered with that organisation (proof must be provided of both owners and cat membership at the time of registration).

Applicable Organisations³⁶

1. Australian National Cats Inc.
2. Dogs Victoria
3. Feline Control Council (Victoria) Inc.
4. The Governing Council of the Cat Fancy Australia and Victoria Inc.
5. Master Dog Breeders & Associates (MDBA)

³⁶ Agriculture Victoria – Applicable Organisations
<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/search?query=applicable+organisations>

APPENDIX B – GAZETTAL OF ORDERS MADE UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994

Victoria Government Gazette



NOTICE OF THE MAKING OF ORDERS UNDER THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994

Notice is hereby given of Orders made by resolution of the Baw Baw Shire Council (the Council) at its meeting on 22 June 2016 in accordance with the provisions of section 10A, section 25 and section 26 of the **Domestic Animals Act 1994** (the Act).

The Order made by resolution of the Council in accordance with the provisions of section 10A of the Act states that after 1 July 2016, the Council will not accept any new registrations of a cat unless the cat is desexed or is exempted under the Act from any requirement to be desexed.

The Order made by resolution of the Council in accordance with the provisions of section 25 of the Act states that all owners of a cat are required to keep that cat securely confined to the owner's property at all times, and not allow that cat to wander at large outside the owner's premises. The Order covers all areas of the municipality.

The Order made by resolution of the Council in accordance with the provisions of section 26 of the Act states that the owner of any dog must keep the dog in effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash held by the owner and attached to the dog while the dog is in any public place, other than designated off-leash areas.

Designated off-leash areas

A dog may be exercised off leash in designated off-leash areas, providing the owner:

- carries a chain, cord or leash sufficient to bring the dog under effective control if the dog behaves in a manner which threatens any person or animal;
- remains in effective voice or hand control of the dog so as to be able to promptly bring the dog under effective control by placing the dog on a chain, cord or leash if that becomes necessary; and
- does not allow the dog to worry, attack, rush at or threaten any person or animal.

HELEN ANSTIS
Chief Executive Officer

³⁷ Victoria Government Gazette – 30 June 2016

³⁷ Victoria Government Gazette – 30 June 2016
<http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au/gazette/Gazettes2016/GG2016G026.pdf#page=21>

APPENDIX C – COUNCIL’S COMMUNITY LOCAL LAW 2016 (AS AMENDED ON 22 JULY 2021)

PART 2 – ANIMALS

2.1 Permitted Quantity of Animals

- (1) The limitations and restrictions in this Part do not prohibit the keeping of any animals or birds regulated by the *Baw Baw Planning Scheme*.
- (2) An owner or occupier of any land in a Residential Area or Urban Growth Zone¹ must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that land any more than four different species of animals stated in the following table.
- (3) An owner or occupier of any land in a Residential Area or Urban Growth Zone must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that land in excess of the number of animals stated in the following table:

Animal Type	Land up to 999 square metres	Land which is 1,000 to 3,999 square metres	Land which is 4,000 square metres and greater
Dogs	2	3	4
Cats	2	2	2
Horses, Ponies	0	0	2
Sheep, Goats, Alpacas or similar	0	2	4
Pig	0	0	0
Rooster	0	0	0
Poultry	6	6	No limit
Cattle	0	0	1

2.2 Animal Excrement

- (1) A person in charge of an animal must not allow any part of the animal’s excrement to remain on any road or public land and must immediately collect and properly dispose of the excrement upon it being deposited there.
- (2) A person in charge of an animal on any road or public land must carry sufficient litter devices to collect and properly dispose of excrement from that animal and must produce them on the request of an Authorised Officer.

2.5 Keeping of Animals

- (1) An owner or occupier of land must ensure that any part of the land used for keeping an animal is:
 - (a) maintained in a clean, inoffensive and sanitary condition and does not cause a nuisance to any other person;
 - (b) kept to the satisfaction of Council or an Authorised Officer; and
 - (c) adequately fenced and keep the fence maintained in a satisfactory condition, so that any animal or bird kept on the land cannot escape from the land.
- (2) An owner or occupier of any land on which an animal is kept must ensure that:
 - (a) any structure on the land which houses an animal is sited so as not to cause a nuisance to any person;
 - (b) the part of the land surrounding the place where the animal is kept is free from rubbish or vegetation that could attract or harbour rats or vermin;
 - (c) all animal food for consumption kept or stored on the land is kept or stored in a vermin and fly proof receptacle; and
 - (d) all animal waste is removed from the land so as not to be offensive or a nuisance to any other person.

2.6 Animal Noise

- (1) An owner or occupier of any land must take all reasonable steps:
 - (a) to prevent any animal making unreasonable noise on the land; or
 - (b) to prevent any noise caused by an animal being emitted from the land which in the opinion of an Authorised Officer is:
 - (i) unreasonable or objectionable to a person on other land or premises; or
 - (ii) adversely affects the amenity of any person on other land or premises.
- (2) For the purposes of sub-clause (1), in determining whether noise is unreasonable, objectionable or adversely affecting the amenity, regard must be had to:
 - (a) its volume, intensity and duration; and
 - (b) the time, place and other circumstances in which it is emitted.

APPENDIX D – POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

(in effect, under review, or being drafted)

Policy Area	Related Procedures
Officer Recruitment, Induction & Training	• Recruitment – incl. agency staff
	• New officer – JSAs on induction
	• Officer training requirements
Local Law requests	• Standard operating procedures
Prosecutions	• Process for preparation, assessment, approval and prosecution
	• Prosecutions Register
	• Unpaid Local Law Infringements
	• S.40 Hearing Notices
After Hours Service / Working in Isolation	• Service delivery after hours including vehicle use
	• OHS & Escalation Processes
Animal Management	• Dog Control Decisions
	• Dog Attacks
	• Animal Emergency Management Plan
	• DAMP – Review process
	• DAB Audit process
	• Picking up dogs' procedure
	• Cat Cages Hire & Handling
	• Impounding of animals (MAP)
	• Animal Releases – Incl. Determining ownership
	• Barking Dogs
	• Responsible cat ownership & welfare
	• Euthanasia & Compassion Fatigue
• Hardship Policy	
Infringement Reviews	• Internal Infringement Reviews – in accordance with DOJ procedures & precedent cases for improper review
Livestock Management	• Impounding of livestock
	• Sale of impounded livestock
	• Livestock on VicRoads land

Policy Area	Related Procedures
Homelessness Policy (Incorporating FV)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAMP objective • To provide support to people who are experiencing homelessness, and / or FV, particularly in relation to animal ownership and displacement
Compliance and Enforcement Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matrix for assessment when undertaking enforcement