

# DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

2026-2029

## Amendment Details

Plan no.	Page	Description	Date	Amendment details
2026.01	ALL	Adoption	17/12/2025	Domestic Animal Management Plan Adopted by Council

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## 1 Introduction and 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 (DAM Plan) every four years.

The DAM 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 DAM 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
- require the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- 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 orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district to assist in determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are required; and
- provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district as required; and
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Council is required to review and where appropriate amend the DAM Plan and publish an evaluation of the implementation of the DAM Plan in Council's Annual Report.

## 1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The DAM Plan was developed by Gannawarra Shire Council's Local Laws staff with information from the annual reviews of the 2022-2025 DAM Plan and observations of trends in complaints to Council and incidents involving domestic animals in the Gannawarra Shire. Local vet clinics were also consulted regarding issues that they believe are important to residents and animal owners. Through this review the Local Laws team have set realistic objectives which have measurable goals.

The DAM Plan was available for public consultation after the draft was approved at the Council meeting in October 2025. This consultation involved face to face meetings, newspaper content and social media posts.

## 1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFILE OF COUNCIL

Gannawarra Shire is a three-hour drive from Melbourne and has an area of 3,736 square kilometers, bordered by the Murray River to the north. Gannawarra is a diverse agricultural region within the Loddon Murray Region of northern Victoria and strategically located along the Murray River between Echuca and Swan Hill. It includes the main service centers of Kerang, Cohuna and Koondrook along with the villages of Murrabit, Quambatook, Lalbert, Macorna, Lake Charm, Leitchville and Mystic Park. Gannawarra Shire's population is approximately 10,700, including around 5,300 households with a median household income of \$1,071 per week. (Aust. bureau of statistics 2021 census)





#### 1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Program/Service	Service Level
Identification and registration - dogs	1971.25 dogs registered (average over past 4 years)
Identification and registration - cats	310.8 cats registered (average over past 4 years)
Identification and registration - door-knock campaigns	Property inspection of outstanding animal registration renewals was conducted in 2025 to update data and achieve compliance.
Domestic animal complaints	General non urgent complaints within 5 days Urgent issues within 2 days
Dangerous Dogs complaints	Response time - within 24 hours
Routine street patrols	Proactive, static patrols as time permits. Visual presence to deter breeches.
Pound	Operating 7 days per week. Not open to public. No adoptions.
Microchipping and/or desexing programs	As funding becomes available. Border Veterinarian Clinic facilitate microchipping of impounded animals if required before release to enable legislative compliance.
School information sessions	As requested
After hours emergency service	After hours phone in operation 24/7 for emergencies. Authorised officers are called out when required.

## 1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

The domestic animal statistics and charts summarised below are shown in the relevant section of the DAM Plan.

Content and data	Section and title
Registered dogs / cats	Section 5 Registration and identification
Declared dogs	Section 8 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs
Registered domestic animal businesses	Section 9 Domestic Animal Businesses
Animals seized or surrendered	Section 4 Overpopulation and high euthanasia
Cats and dogs reclaimed, rehomed or euthanised	Section 4 Overpopulation and high euthanasia
Complaints relating to cats and dogs	Section 6 Nuisance animals

## 2 Training of Authorised Officers

This section outlines current qualifications and future training programs for authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district. *Compliant with Section 68A(2)(b) of the Act.*

### 2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Gannawarra Shire Council currently employs the following animal management staff:

Current staff			
Officer	EFT	Position	Training and qualifications
Officer 1	1 EFT	Community Amenity Team Leader. (Authorised Officer)	Cert IV Local Government Regulatory Services LGA40504 Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-Escalation Risk Assessment Fundamentals First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention Firearm Safety Training, Humanely Destroy Animals AHCPMG304 Traffic Control
Commenced in position July 2025			
Officer 2	1 EFT	Local Laws Officer / Ranger (Authorised Officer)	Cert IV Local Government Regulatory Services LGA40504 Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-Escalation Risk Assessment Fundamentals First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention Firearm Safety Training, Humanely Destroy Animals AHCPMG304 Traffic Control
Commenced in position July 2025			
Officer 3	0.4 EFT	Local Laws Support Officer / Ranger (Authorised Officer)	Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-Escalation Risk Assessment Fundamentals First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention Firearm Safety Training, Humanely Destroy Animals AHCPMG304 Traffic Control
Commenced in position July 2025			
Admin Support	0.4 EFT	Customer Services Officers	All CS Staff: SynergySoft training LLCR, animals CS Supervisor & 2IC: How to issue permits, Monitoring of Permits, Create Requisitions / PO EPM CS Supervisor: Animal Renewal Process Training SynergySoft Infringements SynergySoft
Commenced in position in 2024			

## 2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Authorised Officers are required to be suitably qualified with a sound understanding and knowledge of a range of legislation including the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. Apart from being able to administer and enforce the legislation, officers need to be able to communicate with all members of the community, defuse difficult situations and safely handle animals.

Authorised Officer Training	Planned (2026-2029)
Cert IV Local Government Regulatory Services LGA40504 or Equivalent	Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 12 months
Online Induction Compliance Training <i>Occupational Health &amp; Safety</i> <i>Information Privacy</i> <i>Fraud and Corruption</i> <i>Workplace Bullying and Harassment</i> <i>Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities &amp; Child Safe Standards</i>	For any new Officers Comprehensive induction within their first week. Other required modules within their first three months.
Safe Dog Handling, Apprehension and Bite Prevention	Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 6 months
Victorian Firearms Training and Licensing Category A & B are required for all Authorised Officers to be delegated as "Municipal Employees"	Any new Local Law Authorised Officers to have successfully obtained Category A & B Firearm License prior to commencement with Council. External training Humanely Destroy Animals to be complete within their first 12 months (Noting that a firearm licence is not mandatory for a support officer, but is an advantage)
Traffic control - animals on roads	Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 12 months
Situational Awareness Conflict Resolution and De-Escalation	Any new Officers (if not already qualified) to commence within their first 12 months)
Industry Training - prosecutions	Optional / senior staff training
First Aid & Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation	As scheduled by Council's HR department



## 2.3 OUR PLAN

Local Laws Officers are to receive relevant training to ensure tasks are performed in a safe and effective manner and within relevant legislation.

<b>Objective 2.1</b> New and Relief Local Laws Officers to receive induction training		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
New and Relief Local Laws Officers undertake Councils induction programs for new staff	Upon commencement	Employee completes standard inductions
Staff to undertake and complete role specific induction programs for Local Laws Officers.	During their first 2 weeks of employment, then their annual reviews.	Inductions completed and records stored in Personnel files with Human Resources

<b>Objective 2.2</b> Ensure animal management officers have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Identify minimum required skills for Local Laws Officers	Prior to commencement of new staff, then annually to meet needs.	All role specific deficiencies and requirements are identified
Source specific training to increase Local Laws Officers skill levels	As required	At least 80 per cent of Local Laws Officers complete one accredited or targeted training program within 12 months, with training recorded in the staff register.
Officers to complete all required relevant training, including upskilling.	As required	Copy of completion certificates for training kept on file with HR

<b>Objective 2.3</b> Adopt a formal training register for local laws staff including staff with administration responsibilities		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Develop and implement a centralised training register template	By November 2027	Confirm the register is operational by ensuring 100 per cent of existing staff training records are entered and accessible within 3 months of adoption.
Assign responsibility for maintaining and updating the register	By November 2027	Conduct a quarterly check to verify that all new training undertaken by staff has been recorded in the register within 2 weeks of completion.
Integrate the register into staff development and compliance processes	By November 2027	At year-end, report on training completion rates for mandatory courses, aiming for at least 90 per cent staff compliance as demonstrated by the register data

### 3 Responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation

This section outlines 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.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(i) of the Act.*

#### 3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Local Laws Officers frequently provide one-on-one education and information to ensure that domestic animal owners are aware of their legislative requirements and subsequent repercussions should they or their animals commit any offences.

For domestic animal owners who do not comply with the requirements of the Act, Local Laws Officers may issue a verbal and/or written warning followed by Notices to Comply and Infringements. Council may then escalate to prosecution should the animal owner continue to breach conditions of the Act.

#### 3.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

##### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

###### Clause 21 - Keeping Animals

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property

###### Clause 22 – Animal Accommodation

Local Law requiring Private Land to provide accommodation for animals which is appropriate

###### Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing

Local Law requiring Private Land to be fenced in a way that will prevent animals from straying or escaping

###### Clause 24 - Animal Excrement

Local Law requiring dog or cat owners to carry a Litter Device and remove and dispose of any excrement deposited by dogs or cats in public places

###### Clause 25 - Animal and Bird Noise

Local Law regarding prevention of any Animal or Large and/or Noisy Birds on the Private Land from sounding noise at unreasonable times

##### Council Policy No. 068 / Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas

Policy to:

- prohibit dogs from certain areas;
- prohibit cats from certain areas; and
- permit dogs in certain areas, but only on a leash.

#### 3.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 3.1 Promote 'Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife' messaging among residents		
Activity	When	Evaluation
In partnership with the Gannawarra Library, establish/display information regarding the Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife program in the Library	2026	Program Established

Social media promotion via link on Council website to <a href="http://www.safecat.org.au">www.safecat.org.au</a>	Current	Reduction in number of cats impounded overall with focus on numbers in the month following the targeted Facebook posts
Publish a Facebook post and information on the Gannawarra News page	November, February, May and August	

<b>Objective 3.2</b> Education campaign on the importance of registering and microchipping dogs and cats		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Publish a Facebook post and information in Gannawarra News page	In March, June, September and December	Map trends on registered dogs and cats from data in Synergy database
Distribute a GSC brochure on the requirement to keep contact details up to date with the microchip registry to animal owners with registration renewal.	Current	Map trends of microchipping in animals impounded by Council

<b>Objective 3.3</b> A structured community education strategy (schools, social media, signage, community events)		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a tailored education plan with key messages and delivery methods for different audiences (schools, online platforms, and local events).	By June 2026	Strategy documents endorsed internally within 3 months, with at least 4 education streams (e.g., schools, social media, signage, events) clearly identified.
Roll out targeted campaigns across chosen channels (e.g., school presentations once per term, monthly social media posts, seasonal signage)	By December 2026 and ongoing	Track activity delivery by maintaining a schedule showing at least 80 per cent of planned campaigns completed within the year.
Collect and review community feedback from each education initiative (e.g., short surveys at school visits, event feedback forms, or monitoring comments/likes on social media)	By January 2028 and ongoing annually	Compile feedback reports after each initiative, with at least 70 per cent of activities showing positive responses or engagement trends.

## 4 Overpopulation and high euthanasia

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats as applicable.

### 4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council endeavours to reunite lost pets prior to impoundment.

Current registration and up to date contact details on the pet's microchip records are vital for this to be truly successful. Far too many owners of lost microchipped animals cannot be contacted due to phone numbers being disconnected, not up to date or the microchip remaining under the breeder's or last owner's name.

All domestic animals are impounded and advertised on Council's website and Facebook page for fourteen days. Animals that are claimed by owners are required to be registered and microchipped before they can be released from the pound. After 14 days, any unclaimed animals that are suitable to be rehomed are transferred to a rehoming organisation via a section 84Y agreement. Rehoming organisations sterilize and microchip all animals before adoption. All rehoming organisations are located outside of the Gannawarra Local Government.

Stray and feral cats continue to be an issue in the municipality. Issues experienced range from uncontrolled breeding to attacks on domestic cats and ongoing wildlife predation. Council provides residents with access to cat trap hire to facilitate the removal of feral, nuisance, unwanted and unowned cats. This process is strictly controlled by Council, with trapped cats removed only by Local Laws Officers.

It is important that community members are educated and take responsibility for their cats by registering, microchipping, de-sexing and securely confining them to their property. Council continues its public awareness and education campaigns to try and rectify many of these issues.

#### Our current data

Dogs & Cats Impounded & Euthanised	2021	2022	2023	2024
Dogs impounded *Does not include surrendered	39*	50*	76*	51*
Surrendered	28	13	39	42
Dogs Euthanised	1	0	6	4
Domestic Cats Impounded *Does not include surrendered	43*	74*	63*	87*
Surrendered	132	50	60	64
Domestic Cats Euthanised	2	5	10	7
<b>Wild-cats trapped &amp; Euthanised</b>				
Wild-cats trapped	96	79	99	71
Wild-cats Euthanised	96	79	99	71

## 4.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### **Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals**

#### **Clause 21 - Keeping Animals**

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property.

#### **Clause 22 – Animal Accommodation**

Local Law requires owners of Private Land to provide appropriate accommodation for animals.

#### **Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing**

Local Law requiring Private Land to be fenced in a way that will prevent animals from straying or escaping.

Under the *Act*, a reduced registration fee is applicable to sterilized dogs and cats.

#### **Our current education/promotion activities**

- Provide education on responsible pet ownership and on confinement of cats
- Promote microchip identification and de-sexing of animals

#### **Our current compliance activities**

- Operation of a domestic animal pound for impounded animals
- Advice to the public regarding animals that are currently residing in the Council Pound on the Council website and Facebook page
- Council trapping program for wild cats
- Rehousing of suitable animals under a Section 84Y agreement
- Investigate reports of unregistered animals and breeders



#### 4.3 OUR PLAN

To increase levels of responsible pet ownership of cats, reduce unwanted and uncontrolled breeding in domestic animals and retain low euthanasia rates for impounded animals.

<b>Objective 4.1</b> Provide education on responsible pet ownership and on confinement of cats		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Owners of trapped cats to be made aware of responsibilities of cat ownership	Ongoing	Reduction of reoccurring offences of impounding of cats
Media releases - newspaper, Facebook  Website links to AWW information	Ongoing, but focus during times of increased cat breeding cycles	Information placed onto website

<b>Objective 4.2</b> To educate community regarding wild cat population / reduce wild cat population		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Investigate (and instigate if viable) Council Order to confine cats	July 2025	Council order in place
Investigate (and instigate if viable) cat de-sexing program	Ongoing	Council monitor and apply for suitable grants as available.

<b>Objective 4.3</b> To continue Section 84Y agreement/s with approved animal rescue organisation/s		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Maintain current Section 84Y agreements	Ongoing	Agreements renewed at least every four years
Investigate and instigate additional Section 84Y agreements	As required	Suitable agreements implemented as required for breed specific animals.

## 5 Registration and identification

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(v) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act*

### 5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

Animal registration	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of registered dogs	2158	1758	1751	1880
No. of registered cats	426	330	331	346
No. of registered declared dogs	1	1	0	0

Infringements issued	2021	2022	2023	2024
Failure to register dog or cat	1	0	0	0
Failure to renew registration of dog or cat	0	0	0	0

#### Fee Structure 2025/26

Full fee Unsterilised dog or cat \$154.65

Full fee Dangerous Menacing Dog \$154.65

#### Council's Registration Concessions.

Reduced fee – Sterilised \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Aged dog or cat (over 10 years) \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Applicable organisation \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Working dog \$50.65

Reduced Fee – Eligible pensioner \$27.65

### 5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

##### Clause 21 – Keeping Animals

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property

## Procedures

Animal registration timeline	
1-Mar	approximate date renewals for animal registration will be posted to animal owners
1-Mar	information on local radio regarding animal registration renewals due on 10 April
1-Apr	information in Gannawarra News page of the Gannawarra Times regarding animal registration renewals due on 10 April
10-Apr	Renewals for animal registration due
18-Apr	Reminder letters to be generated outstanding registrations
1-June	Property inspections conducted to confirm animals located at outstanding registrations
15-June	Data updated. Notice to Comply (NTC) issued to register outstanding animal registration renewals.
July	Infringements to be generated for 'Not renewing registration' under <i>Domestic Animals Act 81/1994 S.10(2) – 2747</i> , failure to comply with NTC.

### Our current education/promotion activities

- Education of pet owners to continually check and update contact details at microchip registries
- Provision of Council animal registration application and link to online registration form to owner by vet clinic when an animal is microchipped
- Education and information provided to animal owners on an ad hoc basis

### Our current compliance activities

- Registration and identification for domestic animals (dogs and cats)
- Registration renewal notices sent in March with follow up reminder notices sent during April
- Follow up with animal owners who fail to renew registration of their domestic animals
- Follow up on registration of animals adopted from Rehousing Organisations or purchased from domestic animal breeding businesses
- Follow up and correct all information in Council's animal registration register
- Registration and identification of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
- Mandatory registration and microchipping of animals prior to release from pound
- Permanent identification number registration tags
- Investigation and compliance service

### 5.3 OUR PLAN

To increase the number of registered dogs and cats in the Municipality by three to five per cent.

<b>Objective 5.1</b> Increase in the number of animal registrations each year		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Targeted inspections of both urban and rural areas	Periodically During property attendance relating to animal investigations.	Data analysed to show total number of animals identified as registered/unregistered and compliance after follow up.
Return to home incentives for registered and microchipped pets found wandering for the first time.	Ongoing	To be assessed from impound numbers / repeat offenders.

<b>Objective 5.2</b> Education regarding awareness of requirement for Council registration		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Media releases - newspaper Facebook	Quarterly	Record number of media releases Record number of Facebook posts
Issue legislative correspondence promoting compliance before issuing Infringements.	Permanent ongoing practice	Observe registration numbers and reduction in wandering animals.

<b>Objective 5.3</b> Improve incentives, proactive campaigns, digital renewal tools.		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Introduce incentive programs for timely pet registration and renewal (e.g., discounted early-bird renewals, prize draws, or small rewards).	March 2026	Compare renewal timing year-on-year and achieve at least a 10 per cent increase in registrations completed before the due date.
Run targeted proactive campaigns (e.g., social media reminders, mail-outs, community pop-up stalls) focusing on the benefits of pet registration and identification.	ongoing	Track campaign reach and participation, aiming for engagement with at least 50 per cent of registered pet owners through one or more campaign channels within 12 months.
Implement or enhance digital renewal tools (e.g., online payment portal, SMS/email reminders, mobile-friendly renewal forms).	ongoing	Monitor uptake of digital services, with at least 30 per cent of renewals completed online within the first 12 months of rollout.

## 6 Nuisance Animals

This section outlines 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

The most common complaints received by Council's Local Laws Department relate to roaming and/or stray dogs and cats, with noise a significant second.

Nuisance categories (complaints)	2021	2022	2023	2024
Dog at large	61	112	160	91
Cat at large (cats impounded plus wild cats)	139	153	162	158
Animal noise/nuisance (dogs & cats)	64	66	111	68
Dog excrement	2	0	4	0

#### Our current education/promotion activities

- Use of Council's website to educate pet owners
- Education and information services provided as requested.
- Education and information provided to increase community awareness of Council's on-leash policy
- Media and promotion regarding responsible pet ownership

#### Our current compliance activities

Current programs in place to minimise the incidence of nuisance animals include:

- Routine vehicle patrols across the municipality on a daily basis
- Operation of a domestic animal pound for impounded animals (capacity of eight dogs / twelve cats)
- Community education regarding responsible pet ownership
- Provision of cat cages for trapping nuisance cats (currently 16 traps are owned by Council)
- Council trapping program for wild and nuisance.
- Barking dog noise log record sheets provided to complainants
- Respond to all nuisance complaints and follow up on compliance within 48 hours

### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

**Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing** requiring private land to be fenced in a way to prevent animals from straying or escaping.

## 6.2 OUR PLAN

<b>Objective 6.1</b> Reduce the number of cats at large		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Provision of cat traps to residents as required	Ongoing	Data from cat trap use collected in Shelter Manager program. Data to inform where community education programs are to be targeted.
Access grants to allow Council to provide financial assistance to residents for de-sexing of dogs and cats	As available	Successful grant application

<b>Objective 6.2</b> Educate community regarding wildcat population / reduce wildcat population		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Link on Council website to AWW information regarding wildcats / feral cats	Current	Information available on website
Media releases on the following topics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cat traps availability</li> <li>• Rules for cat trap use</li> <li>• Legislation that regulates cats at large</li> <li>• Unowned cats</li> </ul>	Quarterly	Quantity and details of media releases are available from Council's Communications and Media Officer

<b>Objective 6.3</b> Increase community awareness and understanding regarding on-leash and restricted areas for domestic animals.		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Media awareness	Twice yearly	Observed reduction in offences
Information listing off leash areas	Current	Council website updated to show locations

<b>Objective 6.4</b> To reduce domestic animal excrement in public places and educate animal owners of the requirement to carry a litter device		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
One on one education	Ongoing	Reduction in excrement complaints
Receptacles installed for excrement litter bags located throughout LGA	Current	Ongoing installation as identified by incidents



Objective 6.5    More systematic nuisance reduction measures (barking education packs, cat containment enforcement).		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and distribute nuisance education materials (e.g., barking dog education packs, cat containment brochures) to pet owners at registration and in response to complaints.	ongoing	Track distribution numbers, aiming for at least 80 per cent of complainants or new pet registrations to receive an education pack within 12 months
Host community information sessions or online campaigns on responsible pet ownership (with a focus on nuisance behaviours such as barking and roaming).	June 2026	Achieve attendance or online engagement of at least 100 community members across sessions or campaigns within the first year.

## 7 Dog attacks

This section outlines 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.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(iii) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act.*

### 7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

Reported attacks	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of reported dog on animal attacks	8	11	11	13
No. of reported dog on people attacks	6	3	2	5
No. of reported dog on livestock attacks	4	2	12	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>

Infringements issued	2021	2022	2023	2045
Non-serious injury caused by dog attack	0	0	0	0

The confinement of dogs to the owner's property is a priority because wandering dogs increase risk to other pets, humans, livestock and consumes considerable time and resources of Local Laws officers.

Often when a dog attack is reported, officers find that it is a recurrence of an offence that was unreported. Had initial attacks been reported, subsequent attacks may have been averted.

Education is required to encourage community members to report dogs at large, dogs rushing and dog attacks of all types (minor or serious).

### 7.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals

##### Clause 23 - Adequate Fencing

Local Law requiring Private Land to be fenced in a way that will prevent animals from straying or escaping

#### Council Policy No. 068 / Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas

It is Policy to:

- prohibit dogs from certain areas;
- prohibit cats from certain areas; and
- permit dogs in certain areas, but only on a leash.

#### Our current education/promotion activities

- Provision of education and information to community about responsible pet ownership
- Encourage dog de-sexing to assist in reducing the incidence of wandering animals

#### Our current compliance activities

Current programs in place to minimise the incidence of dog attacks include:

- Respond to notification of dog attack in progress immediately
- Investigate all reported attacks and complete relative enforcement as per the Act.

### 7.3 OUR PLAN

<b>Objective 7.1</b>	Awareness campaign for both property/stock owner and animal owner re: potential destruction of dog found in paddock with stock	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Media release (newspaper, Facebook and website)	February and August (ongoing)	Record of the number of media releases.

<b>Objective 7.2</b>	Education regarding responsible pet ownership with focus on dogs at large	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Media releases	ongoing	Record the number of media releases. Information to be placed onto the Council website.
Educate owners of liabilities from dogs wandering.	ongoing	Record the number of media releases. Information to be placed onto the Council website.

<b>Objective 7.3</b>	Community awareness for reporting dog attacks	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Public awareness to inform owners of process to report attacks.	Ongoing	Increased information and reports received by Council.

## 8 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs

This section outlines 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.  
*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(vii) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act.*

### 8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

Declared and Restricted Dogs	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of declared dangerous dogs	1	1	0	0
No. of declared menacing dogs	0	0	0	0
No. of restricted breed dogs	0	0	0	0

Animal registration	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of registered dogs	2158	1758	1751	1880
No. of registered declared dogs	1	1	0	0

### 8.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are controlled by the Act.

#### Our current education/promotion activities

- Education and information services provided, as resources and opportunity allow

#### Our current compliance activities

- Registration and identification of declared dangerous dogs, declared menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs, including renewal.
- Ensure compliance with the requirements for keeping dangerous dogs.
- Investigation and compliance
- All declared dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs are to be listed on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR).

### 8.3 OUR PLAN

To minimise the risks of dog attack to the community from declared and restricted breed dogs and to ensure that those dogs that are declared dangerous, menacing and those of restricted breed are kept in accordance with the legislation.

Objective 8.1 Increase Officer awareness of the location of declared dangerous, declared menacing dogs or restricted breed dogs to improve safety when attending premises		
Activity	When	Evaluation
All locations where declared dangerous, declared menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept, will be identified on Council's mapping system	Ongoing. Council's Data Analyst to update mapping system as required	Council's mapping system identifies properties where declared dangerous, declared menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept

<b>Objective 8.2</b>	Ensure that declared dangerous dogs, declared menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs kept in Gannawarra Shire are kept in compliance with the Act and relevant Regulations	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Regular inspections of properties where declared dangerous, declared menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept.	Quarterly in February, April, July and October	Inspections entered to SSCR as a task and copy of inspection report saved as an attachment to this SSCR record.

<b>Objective 8.3</b>	Annual audits and owner education program	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Conduct annual property audits of declared dog owners, combined with tailored education sessions on safety, containment, and legal responsibilities.	June 2026 and annually	Complete 100 per cent of required annual audits and achieve at least 80 per cent attendance or acknowledgement of the education program by owners within 12 months.

## 9 Domestic Animal Businesses

This section outlines 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.  
*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(ii) and Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act*

### 9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### **Our current data**

Types of Domestic Animal Business (DAB) include a Council pound, a dog and/or cat breeding business, a dog training establishment, a pet shop, an animal shelter, an establishment boarding dogs or cats or an establishment that is rearing dogs or cats.

Other than the Council Pound, Council currently has no registered DABs.

### 9.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### **Community Amenity Local Law 2023 / Division 2 – Your Animals**

##### **Clause 21 - Keeping Animals**

Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property

#### **Our current education/promotion activities**

- Supply and distribution of information related to DABs and the relevant codes of practice

#### **Our current compliance activities**

Council's programs/activities working with domestic animal breeding businesses include:

- Annual registration and renewal of Councils DAB permits
- Conduct regular audits of the Council pound facility to ensure compliance with regulations



## OUR PLAN

To work in partnership with DABs to meet the requirements under the *Act* and approved Codes of Practice.

<b>Objective 9.1</b> Identify unregistered DABs in the Gannawarra Shire		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Follow up on registration of possible DABs identified	Ongoing	Identified DABs to be registered with Council

<b>Objective 9.2</b> Ensure registered DABs are compliant with legislation		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Planning information to be provided to all applicants or interested parties to ensure that compliance with the Act and relevant codes are met when DABs are being established	As required	Quantity of Planning permits issued for Keeping of animals  Annual permit renewals are sent to existing DABs in March each year for the issue of permits by 10 April.

<b>Objective 9.3</b> Stronger compliance program against illegal breeders		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Undertake targeted investigations and inspections of suspected illegal breeding operations, supported by community reporting channels and cross-agency collaboration.	As required	Record and report on enforcement actions, with at least one confirmed illegal operation investigated and compliance outcomes documented within 12 months.

## 10 Other matters

This section provides 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.

*Compliant with Section 68A(2)(e) of the Act.*

### 10.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Relevant programs, strategies and services implemented or proposed by Council have been already detailed in previous sections of this Plan.

### 10.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### Current policies and procedures

**Council's Policy No. 068 Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas** is an Order made under Section 26 of the *Act*. It requires dogs to be under effective control by means of a leash in a reserve or public place except where it is a Designated Area or a Prohibited Area. The Schedule to the Order lists the reserves and public places that are Designated or Prohibited Areas. The Policy is due for review in 2026.

#### Current compliance activities

An infringement for Dog/Cat Found in Prohibited Public Place can be issued for offences under section 26(1) of the *Act* relating to Council's Policy No. 068 Dogs & Cats – Designated Areas.

Offences under the Council Local Laws can result in the following infringements:

- Keeping Animals contrary to Local Law
- Keeping Animals without required accommodation
- Failure to provide adequate fencing
- Animal excrement remaining on Council land
- Failure to carry a suitable animal litter device

### 10.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 10.1	Information regarding emergency planning for domestic animals available to residents	
Activity	When	Evaluation
Council website to contain information about emergency planning for domestic animals	By December 2026	Website updated to contain relevant information.

## 11 Annual review of Plan and annual reporting

This section provides for the annual review of the Plan and annual reporting to provide assurance that the targets in the DAMP are being met.

*Compliant with Section 68A (3)(a)(b)(c) of the Act*

### 68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

(3) Every Council must—

- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan
- (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan
- (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

As required by DJPR, this DAM Plan will be reviewed annually and submitted to Council with any necessary amendments made. The amended version will then be forwarded to the Secretary of the DJPR as required under legislation.

A review of performance under the DAM Plan is required to be included in Council's Annual Report.

Measurements should relate to activities and evaluations in this Plan and should include educational programs, increased registration of domestic animals, reduction of animals at large, decreased numbers of dog attacks and increases in compliance and levels of community satisfaction as a measure of success.

It should be noted that if performance under the DAM Plan is not satisfactory, further revision of the Action Plan and its methods may be required and should be recommended.

Objective 11.1 Annual Evaluation of the DAM Plan		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Collect and analyse data from key animal management activities (registrations, nuisance complaints, compliance actions, community education).	June 2026	Complete and present an annual performance report to Council by 30 June each year, covering all key metrics.
Undertake stakeholder and community consultation (e.g., surveys, focus groups, feedback from vets, shelters, animal businesses).	August 2026 and annually	Achieve responses from at least 30 stakeholders/community members annually, with results summarised in the evaluation report.

