

# Domestic Animal Management Plan

2021 - 2025



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# COLAC OTWAY SHIRE - About Us



The Colac Otway Shire is a richly diverse area located less than two hours west of Melbourne, linked by rail and a dual highway.

Colac Otway is one of the most picturesque municipalities in Victoria, from its volcanic lakes, craters and plains in the north, to the lush forests of the Otway Ranges to the iconic Great Ocean Road coastline.

A large proportion of the southern half of the shire is National Park, boasting waterfalls, bushwalking and some of the most significant environmental assets found in Australia.

The northern area of Colac Otway features equally significant environmental features including Lake Colac, Lake Corangamite and the surrounding Ramsar wetlands, overlooked by Red Rock Reserve.

Over 21,000 people currently live in the Colac Otway Shire, with about 13,000 people living in the shire's major industrial, commercial and service centre of Colac (Colac and Elliminyt).

The City of Colac population is forecast to reach 20,000 by 2050, and Colac Otway Shire has a strategic plan to guide sustainable residential growth and infrastructure development.

More than 15 small towns and rural communities are spread across Colac Otway and provide a lifestyle choice for those looking for a quieter life through either a sea change or tree change.

During the summer months and holiday periods, the coastal areas experience an influx of tourists and holiday makers. Many are accompanied by their beloved pets.

Diverse industries range from tourism and hospitality, to key agriculture ventures such as dairy, beef and boutique farming and food enterprises, to sustainable timber production.

Colac Otway Shire has a land area of 3,433 square kilometres with a population density of 0.6 people to 2.5 acres. In 2020 the number of registered dogs were 4,380 and registered cats were 1,476.

The Colac Otway Shire is a neighbour to Surf Coast Shire, Corangamite Shire and Golden Plains Shire.

# Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Colac Otway Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Gulidjan and Gadubanud peoples as the traditional owners of the Colac Otway region, the land on which the activities of the Colac Otway Shire Council is conducted upon.

We pay our respects to their ancestors and elders, past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their unique cultural heritage, beliefs and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.



# Our Current Situation

Being a smaller rural council, Colac Otway Shire animal management services continue to be under pressure due to resourcing issues. In addition to domestic animal management, responsibilities include Local Laws, parking control, litter enforcement, street furniture/footpath permits, infringement prosecutions, administration duties, pound operations and numerous other activities. This can significantly impact the ability to attend to all animal management related matters promptly.

## Our Services

### **Identification & Registration**

4380 dogs registered and 1476 cats registered in 2019/2020

### **Identification & Registration - doorknock campaigns**

Annually- Shire wide (Specific location- when needed)

### **Domestic animal complaints**

As soon as possible- generally same day follow up

### **Dog Attacks**

Immediately, including afterhours

### **Routine street patrols**

Random streets daily. Known problem areas weekly

### **Pound**

8.30am- 5.00pm daily by appointment only

### **After hours emergency service**

On call officer available after hours

# Domestic Animal Statistics

## YEAR - 2019/2020

|  |      |
|--|------|
| Registered Dogs                        | 4380 |
| De-sexed Dogs                          | 3666 |
| Dogs returned home without impoundment | 117  |
| Dogs Impounded                         | 163  |
| Dogs returned to owner                 | 142  |
| Dogs rehoused                          | 18   |
| Dogs euthanised                        | 3    |
| Dogs declared menacing                 | 12   |
| Dogs declared dangerous                | 1    |
| Restricted breed dogs                  | 0    |
| Registered Cats                        | 1476 |
| De-sexed Cats                          | 1342 |
| Cats impounded                         | 163  |
| Cats returned to owner                 | 15   |
| Cats rehoused                          | 75   |
| Cats euthanised                        | 73   |
| Registered Domestic Animal Businesses  | 3    |
| Number of dog related complaints       | 274  |
| Number of cat related complaints       | 144  |

# Why do we need a plan?

## 68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

(1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, prepare at four year intervals a domestic animal management plan.

(2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—

(a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and

(b) Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and

(c) Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—

(i) To promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and

(ii) To ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and

(iii) To minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and

(iv) To address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and

(v) To encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and

(vi) To minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and

(vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and

(d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and

(e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and

(f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

(3) Every Council must—

(a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and

(b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and

(c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

# DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS – DAMP

The purpose of this plan is to assist Council with setting future guidelines and implementing changes surrounding domestic animal management.

This includes educating the community to improve responsible pet ownership and also provide the community with a clear understanding of Council's expectations of pet owners. In doing so, Council hopes to achieve a higher rate of compliance in relation to animal registrations and a reduction in nuisance animals.

The Plan will also set out Council's current policies surrounding domestic animal ownership and documents any planned changes over the next four years to best address community needs.

This will include the training of the Local Laws Officers so that they can best administer the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and reduce the impact of nuisance animals of the community.

## OUR PLAN

This Domestic Animal Management Plan has been developed in accordance with the requirements set out under the Domestic Animals Act 1994. The information contained herein was compiled from a number of resources including discussions with Council's Local Laws Officers, consultation with stakeholders such as the RSPCA and local veterinary clinics and a review of the previous plan.

A draft Plan will be reviewed by Colac Otway Shire Councillors and a copy will also be released for public consultation prior to finalisation.

All objectives of this current DAMP are reported annually to the State Government and published in Council's annual report as required by the Act.



# Our People

Colac Otway Shire Local Laws - Community Safety currently comprises of a Coordinator, four full time Officers and an administrator. Duties of all officers include a vast range of responsibilities and all officers operate under a large variety of legislation. Three of the full time officers commenced employment in late 2019. Due to COVID 19 restrictions throughout 2020 and the ongoing restrictions in 2021, the ability to undertake training has been restricted and this is an ongoing issue as many training courses are not currently running.

The following table sets out the current training and qualifications of the animal management officers:

| Authorised Officer   | Current               | Planned  |
|--|-----------------------|----------|
| Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation (RUV40104)<br><br>Officer 1, 2 & 3                                 | Qualified             |          |
| Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance) PSP 41404<br><br>Officer 1, 2 & 3                              | Qualified             |          |
| OH&S training - dealing with aggressive customers, working in remote areas & defensive driving<br><br>All Officers | Provided to all staff | Annually |

|  |          |                                     |
|--|----------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Industry Training - animal handling, animal assessment, prosecutions, statement taking &amp; evidence gathering</b> |          |                                     |
| Officers 1 & 2   | Provided | Ongoing and provided when available |
| Officers 3, 4 & 5  |          | By December 2022                    |

**Industry training - time management**

|                   |          |                                     |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|
| Officers 1 & 2    | Provided | Ongoing and provided when available |
| Officers 3, 4 & 5 |          | By December 2022                    |

|   |                       |                                     |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Customer Service Training - conflict resolution, telephone protocols</b> | Provided to all staff | Ongoing and provided when available |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|

|   |  |                |
|---|--|----------------|
| <b>Bureau of Animal Welfare - training and information days</b> | Training and Information days attended by selected staff | When available |
|---|--|----------------|

|  |                       |              |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| <b>Induction program for new staff</b> |                       |              |
| Officers 3, 4 & 5                      | Provided to all staff | When Offered |

**Canine Anatomy and Identification Training Day**

|                   |          |                |
|-------------------|----------|----------------|
| Officer 1 & 2     | Provided | Completed      |
| Officers 3, 4 & 5 |          | When Available |

|                          |                       |                           |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>First Aid and CPR</b> |                       | First Aid - every 3 years |
| All Officers             | Provided to all staff | CPR - Annually            |

## OUR PLAN

### Objective 1:

Develop a training plan that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by animal management officers.

| Activity  | When        | Evaluation  |
|---|-------------|---|
| Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff    | Bi-annually | Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training policy by December each year |
| Identify additional training requirements by consultation with management and staff | Bi-Annually | Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training policy by December each year |

### Objective 2:

Develop and maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training by December each year

|  |          |  |
|--|----------|--|
| Create a spreadsheet listing each officers name and their completed training, along with proposed training | Annually | HR to review and deliver any proposed training opportunities |
|--|----------|--|



# Registration and Identification of our Animals

This section outlines programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

Compliant with Section 68A(2)(c)(v) of the Domestic Animals Act (1994), - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

All cats and dogs over the age of three months must be registered with the Colac Otway Shire as per State legislation. Newly registered animals must also be microchipped before registration can be accepted. Registrations must be renewed annually by the 10th of April.

Under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, animal registration periods expire on the 10th of April each year.

Animal renewal notices are sent out every year, allowing pet owners to renew their pet's registration via the internet or in person.

Council audits the registration renewal process every year to ensure animal registration is renewed.

Animals found unsecured or at large from their property that are identifiable by means of an allocated Colac Otway Shire identification tag have a higher chance of being reunited with their owners and therefore not impounded.

When dogs and cats are outside of the owner's premises, Colac Otway Shire identification tags must be worn as outlined in Section 20 of the Domestic Animals Act (1994).

The registration of animals provides Colac Otway Shire with an understanding of the level of pet ownership in the community and in turn helps the Shire plan for services, information and programs associated with pets in particular areas of the community



## Our Fees

| Dogs  | Full Fee | Pensioner Reduced Fee  |
|---|----------|------------------------|
| Microchipped ONLY   | \$130    | \$65.00                |
| Microchipped and De-Sexed   | \$25     | \$12.50                |
| Over 10 years of age  | \$41     | \$20.50                |
| Dogs kept for breeding by the proprietor of a domestic animal business conducted on a registered premises   | \$41     | \$20.50                |
| Dogs registered with an applicable organisation, if their owners are members of the applicable organisation with which the dogs are registered (proof required) | \$41     | \$20.50                |
| Dogs that have undergone obedience training which complies with the regulations   | \$41     | \$20.50                |
| Dogs kept for working stock   | \$25     | \$12.50                |
| Declared dangerous & menacing dog   | \$140    | no reduction available |



## Our Fees

### Cats

|   | Full Fee | Pensioner Reduced Fee |
|---|----------|-----------------------|
| Microchipped ONLY   | \$115    | \$57.50               |
| Microchipped and De-Sexed   | \$20     | \$10                  |
| Over 10 years of age  | \$36     | \$18                  |
| Cats kept for breeding by the proprietor of a domestic animal business conducted on a registered premises   | \$36     | \$18                  |
| Cats registered with an applicable organisation, if their owners are members of the applicable organisation with which the dogs are registered (proof required) | \$36     | \$18                  |

All fees and charges are approved by Council as part of the annual budget adoption process.

## Registered Animals

| Colac Otway Shire | 2010/2011 | 2016/2017 | 2019/2020 |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Dogs Registered   | 4821      | 4196      | 4380      |
| Cats Registered   | 1485      | 1412      | 1476      |



# Our Policies and Procedures

Council has no Orders or Local Laws relevant to the registration of cats and dogs. Council's current controls are under the Domestic Animals Act (1994), Council currently provides:

- Registration and identification for dogs and cats, including renewal follow ups
- Registration and identification of menacing and restricted breed dogs including renewal and random inspections

**Council currently provides education and information services in the following manner**

- Advertisements in the local print media and local radio
- Animal information pamphlets made available at local events/shows/fairs
- Information pamphlets including maps available at Council Offices
- Direct communication and interaction by Authorised Officers with the Community
- Colac Otway Shire Web Page can raise/discuss relevant issues
- Provision of online registration and a range of registration payment methods

## **Council's Current Compliance Activities**

- Renewal follow-ups for registration and identification for domestic dogs and cats
- Vehicle patrols re dogs at large
- Nuisance complaint response and investigation
- Domestic animal pound facility
- Cat trap hire services
- Infringement notice system
- Prosecution service for infringement offences

# Our Plan

## Objective 1:

Increase the number of dog and cat registrations within the municipality by 5%

| Activity  | When                   | Evaluation   |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Increase registration by conducting annual random door knocks throughout the municipality to ensure dogs and cats are registered. | June – August annually | Document new registrations after inspection period |
| Cat Registration Promotion – Offer 1st year free with every newly desexed cat (until end of 1st year registration period).        | Immediately            | Data after promotion period                        |
| Increase awareness among culturally and linguistically diverse communities of pet registration requirements                       | July – August annually | Document new registrations after inspection period |

## Objective 2:

Improve the Community Education on registration

|  |         |   |
|--|---------|---|
| Ensure community understands the difference between registration and microchipping | Ongoing | Council’s website to contain information clarifying the difference between microchipping and registration |
|--|---------|---|

# Nuisance Animals

The majority of complaints received by Council relate to dogs at large and barking dogs. In 2019/2020, Council received 274 dog related complaints which have been documented and monitored through Council's Merit system.

In previous years, dog excrement in public areas was also a common complaint. Since the installation of bag dispensers in many popular dog areas, these have largely been reduced.

While nuisance cats are also a large problem within the Shire, those number of complaints totalled 144. These mainly relate to cats wandering from their own properties causing issues with other cats and leaving excrement in yards, and feral cats which pose a threat to our natural environment.

Council has an order made under Section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act (1994), requiring dogs to be under effective control by means of a chain, cord or leash in a specified area. The areas are listed in the notice in the Government Gazette G 49 dated 8 December 2005 (page 2851).



Local Law number 2. (General) addresses animals at section 78 (Part 5) and this section requires person not to allow dog excrement to remain on a road or Council land and further requires persons to carry a suitable device to collect same when in charge of a dog on a road or Council land. Section 128 to 130 (Part 7) deals with the keeping of animals and section 128 specifically deals with the smell or noise that is created by animals that may be a nuisance.

The introduction of a cat curfew has previously been raised by members of the public. Section 25(1) of the Domestic Animals Act (1994) states:

*“(1) If a cat is found at large outside the premises of the owner or not securely confined to the owner's premises, in a municipal district or a specified part of a municipal district in respect of which an order under this section has been made, during the hours specified in the order, the owner is guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty of not more than 1 penalty unit for a first offence and 3 penalty units for a second or subsequent offence”*

This legislative requirement mandating that cats must be confined to their property is considered sufficient by Council. While many Councils have introduced a cat curfew, these are predominantly Councils located within the metropolitan areas and a cat curfew would be extremely hard to enforce and monitor in a rural setting.

Council acknowledges the impact that cats can have on our natural environment and wildlife and will continue to work with cat owners and the public to ensure compliance with Section 25(1) of the Act.

Our current local law now controls the maximum numbers of domestic animals on certain size allotments and excess animal permits for those requesting addition animals. The Local Law is as follows:

*An owner or occupier of land must not without a permit; keep or allow to be kept any more in number for each type of animal as is set out in the following table:*

| <b>Animal</b> | <b>Property Size -<br/>(Up to 0.25 ha)</b> | <b>Property Size -<br/>(0.25 - 1 ha)</b> | <b>Property Size -<br/>(1 ha and above)</b>                      |
|---------------|--|--|--|
| <b>Dogs</b>   | <b>3</b>                                   | <b>4</b>                                 | 5 (other than dogs kept for working stock or primary production) |
| <b>Cats</b>   | <b>3</b>                                   | <b>4</b>                                 | <b>5</b>   |

## Our Plan

To reduce the number of dogs and cats at large and deal with barking dog complaints in a timely manner.

The issue of dogs at large presents problems of dog attacks on other animals, livestock and persons. They can also cause a serious incident when wandering on roads. Considerable time and resources are deployed by Council addressing this problem. Many people have an absolute fear of dogs and the mere sight of a dog at large can cause fear and panic to many people whether warranted or not.

The issue of cats wandering and feral cats is the subject of many complaints due to the fouling of gardens/yards, attack on their own cat by the offending cat, destruction of wildlife and spread of disease.

Council will ensure the community is educated on the importance of animal confinement and information packages/pamphlets will be made available from Council offices and other relevant locations.

Council's Animal Management Officers will also continue to provide a trapping service in areas where stray and feral cat numbers are noticed and will also continue to offer a cat cage hire program where individual cats are causing a nuisance.

Council treats the issue of animal nuisance seriously. Council currently undertakes the following compliance activities in support of nuisance offences:



## Our current compliance activities

- vehicle patrols and nuisance complaint response
- dog attack (immediate response, 24 hour on call Ranger service)
- registration and identification of menacing and dangerous dogs
- restricted breed dog
- annual property inspection
- annual door knocks
- cat trap hire service
- notice to comply, verbal and written warnings, infringement notices
- Council pound operation for the impounding of animals



## Objective 1:

### Reduce dog nuisance complaints

| Activity   | When                         | Evaluation                                       |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| Review further options for reducing barking dog complaints   | Annually                     | Number of reduced barking dog complaints         |
| Increase education and information on website and other social media channels on responsible dog ownership and minimising barking - with an emphasis on coastal areas during holiday periods | Annually and holiday periods | Number of reduced barking dog/welfare complaints |
| Update/ review barking dog complaint packs   | Annually                     | Council will provide information to all parties  |
| Direct interaction with complainants and offending parties regarding compliance  | Annually                     | Measure and report results                       |
| Enforcement of official warnings, infringements and prosecutions   | Annually                     | Measure and report results                       |
| Investigate opportunities to support community groups and to install and manage dog poo dispensers in problem areas  | Ongoing                      | Community Feedback                               |

## Objective 2:

### Reduce cat nuisance complaints

| Activity  | When     | Evaluation  |
|---|----------|---|
| Make education material available about cat nuisance issues to cat owners with information packs available at reception           | Ongoing  | Number of reduced barking dog complaints  |
| Assist residents and community groups to deal with cat trespass/nuisance problems by advising that Council has cat traps for hire | Ongoing  | Keep records on number of traps hired out<br><br>Keep records of number of cats impounded |
| Provide information to assist residents in the use of cat traps and the humane use of looking after the cats welfare              | Ongoing  | Information on Council website and on the provision of traps                              |
| Educate community to contain cats securely to their property  | Annually | Website information and social media campaigns  |
| Enforcement of official warnings, infringements and prosecutions  | Annually | Measure and report results  |



## Objective 3:

Reduce number of dogs and cats at large

| Activity  | When                 | Evaluation  |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Documentation to be given to owners on the return of dogs or cats found at large and not impounded  | Annually             | Measure annual results  |
| Provide information to pet ownership clubs/groups and relevant information to new pet owners  | Annually             | Evaluate and work with identified groups. Measure and report results  |
| Public promotion via media articles, website, mail out with Council rates in quarterly newsletter, website, on hold messages, flyers and pamphlets for distribution in local veterinaries and pet shops | Annually and Ongoing | Measure and report on results   |
| Official warnings, regular patrols for offences, official warnings, infringements and prosecution where required  | Annually             | Compare number of offences from previous years - warnings, infringements and prosecutions. Measure and report results |

## Objective 4:

Ensure domestic animals are considered during emergencies

| Activity   | When           | Evaluation          |
|--|----------------|---------------------|
| Update Emergency Animal Management Plan and include impounded animals                        | December, 2022 | Plan updated        |
| Ensure Council Relief Centres have procedures and the capacity to cater for domestic animals | December, 2022 | Procedures in place |

# Dog Attacks

During 2019/ 2020 there were six reported dog attacks resulting in five infringements being issued and one prosecution. It is believed that the number of reported dog attacks is significantly lower than the actual number which could be attributed to a number of things including the victim knowing the animal owner or attacks on livestock where the property owner cannot find the source of the attack.

The number of dog attacks within Colac Otway Shire has remained relatively low due in part to Council's ongoing enforcement of wandering dogs and education of the public in relation to confining of dogs to their property. A de-sexed animal is statistically less likely to wander and Council will therefore continue to encourage and educate in relation to de-sexing.

Council currently enforces the provisions of the Domestic Animals Act (1994) in regard to dog attacks. All reported dog attacks are investigated as a matter of priority including after hours by the on call officer. Appropriate action is taken in accordance with legislation. Council has developed guidelines for Authorised Officers in regard to the seizure of offending dogs after an attack.

As referred to in Nuisance Animals on page 17, Council also has an order relating to dogs being under effective control by means of chain, cord or leash whereby preventing an animals ability to rush and potentially attack.

Council currently undertake the following compliance activities to raise awareness and hopefully decrease the number of dog attacks/ dog rushes:-

- Vehicle patrols and nuisance complaint response
- Immediate response (including after-hours emergency call out) for dog attacks and aggressive dogs at large
- Registration and identification of menacing and dangerous dogs including monitoring of declared dogs and spot checks
- Issuing of infringements and potential prosecution of dog attack
- Operation of a domestic animal pound for impounded animals

## Objective 1:

### Improve awareness and education of safety around dogs

| Activity   | When     | Evaluation   |
|--|----------|--|
| Improve awareness and education in relation to dog attacks and the need to report all incidents. Discuss with local vets, doctors and hospitals to ensure they are making Council aware.   | Ongoing  | Measure and report on results in annual review of Plan to determine whether third parties are reporting any attacks. Compare numbers of reports and source they are coming from  |
| Educate pet owners in relation to responsible pet ownership including de-sexing to prevent dogs wandering and the need to keep dogs confined to their property   | Ongoing  | Record the type and number of educational materials distributed<br>Evaluate by comparing previously reported dog attack numbers  |
| Undertake education and promotion activities through the following outlets; media articles on-hold messages, mail-outs with Council rates website updates issue specific flyers and brochures  | Ongoing  | Record numbers of media articles<br>Annual mail-out with Council rates<br>Monthly website updates.<br>New owner information kit developed<br>Monitor the relationship between Council and relevant agencies to ensure reporting of dog attacks   |
| Use Vet Clinics to encourage dog-on-dog attack reporting   |          | Measure and report on results in the annual review of this Plan  |
| Ensure owners of Menacing and Dangerous dogs are aware of their legal obligations  | Annually | Measure and report results   |
| Enforcement, doorknocking and random domestic animal registration inspections, reminder notices<br>Maintenance of official warning register.<br>Conduct investigations and regular patrols<br>Seek compliance of this legislation by official warnings, infringement notices and prosecution | Annually | Reduce number of dog attacks on previous year; Random domestic animal registration inspections established;<br>Official warning register set up.<br>Continue to support prosecution unit ;<br>Periodic report to Executive ; Measure and report on results in the annual review of this Plan |

## Objective 2:

### Improve reporting of dog attacks

| Activity   | When    | Evaluation  |
|--|---------|---|
| Improve information on Council's website relating to dog attack investigations and reporting   | Ongoing | Continuous updating of website  |
| Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report using media articles, discuss with local vets importance of reporting, social media, public notices in parks, mail out with rates notices | Ongoing | Comparatively report number of reported dog attacks from previous years |





# Dangerous Menacing and Restricted Dog Breeds

Under the Domestic Animals Act (1994), all restricted breed, dangerous and menacing dogs must be reported on the Victorian Declared Dog Register and all owners of such dogs have a number of legal obligations they must comply with. Within the Colac Otway Shire there are currently no restricted breed dog registered but records indicate there is one dangerous and 12 menacing dogs registered.

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are controlled by the Domestic Animals Act (1994). Council ensures that all declared dogs are kept in compliance with the Act.

Council currently undertakes the following educational and promotional activities, including providing information of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

- Use of Media to inform the community of their responsibilities and the consequences of non-compliance
- Distribution of pamphlets and flyers with relevant information
- Use of on-hold messages and Council's website to inform pet owners
- Education and information services provided, as resources and opportunity allow

Council treats all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs very seriously. Council currently undertakes the following compliance activities in support of such offences:

- Vehicle patrols and complaint response
- Dog attack (immediate - including 24 hour emergency service)
- Dog at large (as soon as possible during business hours, including weekends and public holidays)
- Registration and identification of menacing and restricted breed dogs including monitoring of declared dogs to ensure compliance; and Infringement notice system
- Prosecution services where required.

Council currently reviews the Victorian Declared Dog Register and monitors the animals recorded on same and ensures compliance is being adhered to. Council's promotional, educational, community and enforcement activities are all targeted at achieving compliance in line with the relevant State legislation involving these matters

## Objective 1:

Identify and register all declared dogs in the municipality

| Activity   | When    | Evaluation   |
|--|---------|--|
| Ensure all declared dogs are recorded correctly on Victorian Declared Dog Registry and that owners of such dogs are aware of their legal obligations | Ongoing | Audit database annually and compare to Council records |
| Monitor Animal Registration Forms for potential registration of a restricted breed dog   | Ongoing | Monitor number of restricted breed dogs in database    |

## Objective 2:

Ensure declared dogs are compliant with relevant legislation and regulations.

| Activity  | When               | Evaluation  |
|---|--------------------|---|
| Inspect and audit declared dog premises quarterly to ensure compliance with legislation | Annually / Ongoing | Create checklist to record, measure and report results. |



| Colac Otway Shire     | 2010/2011 | 2016/2017 | 2019/2020 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Restricted breed dogs | 1         | 0         | 0         |
| Declared dangerous    | 5         | 4         | 1         |
| Declared menacing     | 14        | 15        | 12        |



# Overpopulation and Euthanasia

Statistics from 2019/ 2020 indicate that from a total of **326** impounded animals **3** dogs and **73** cats were euthanised highlighting the ongoing issue of cat over population. While the euthanasia rates for cats are significantly higher than those for dogs, the majority of cat's euthanised are deemed feral and unsuitable for rehoming.

The large number of cat euthanasia's could be attributed to cat trapping program that Council has been undertaking in known problem areas.

In 2019/2020 only **15** of the **163** cats impounded by Colac Otway Shire were collected by their owners in comparison to **142** dogs collected by their owners out of the **163** impounded. Council would like to increase the registration of cats in the hope of being able to return more home to their owners and reduce the number of euthanasia's.

An incentive which Council proposes to adopt is the free first year of registration of all newly de-sexed cats. Council currently offers free registration for the first year to all rehomed cats. This ensures the data is captured in the registration database and ongoing registrations can be monitored.

Council partners with a local vet who has established a cat adoption program through which many of the impounded cats are rehomed. Each cat is de-sexed, vaccinated and microchipped at a reduced fee and receive free registration for the first year.

Council's pound and euthanasia policies are guided by the Domestic Animals Act (1994). Council policy is, wherever possible, to return any lost or seized at-large animal to its owner or to rehome suitable animals where their owner is not found. Prior to any animal returning to its owner, all animals must be microchipped and registered.

Council's current local law controls the maximum numbers of domestic animals on certain size allotments and excess animal permits. A copy of the control is as follows, (Section 129 of Colac Otway Shire Local Law No. 2)

An owner or occupier of land must not without a permit keep or allow to be kept any more in number for each type of animal as is set out in the table set out in page 18.

## Council will

- Continue to educate the public through social media, print publications, pamphlets and telephone on-hold messages to promote responsible pet ownership in the hopes of reducing euthanasia rates.
- Continue making cat traps available to public to alleviate problems associated with feral cats
- Offer free registration for the first year to newly de-sexed cats
- Continue working with local vet in rehoming cats through adoption program
- Utilise multiple social media platforms for education and rehoming purposes.

## Objective 1:

To increase the number of cats registered

| Activity  | When           | Evaluation  |
|---|----------------|---|
| Offer free registration for newly de-sexed cats | December, 2021 | Compare number of cat registrations over previous years to see whether numbers have increased |

## Objective 2:

To reduce the number of cats euthanised

| Activity   | When    | Evaluation  |
|--|---------|---|
| Promote rehoming of suitable cats in conjunction with local vet                            | Ongoing | Compare number of euthanised cats over four years and continue to reduce numbers                        |
| Use of multiple social media platforms to assist with locating owners of impounded animals | Ongoing | Where an impounded cat is unregistered and not microchipped, posting on social media to locate owner    |
| Educate public on de-sexing and responsible pet ownership                                  | Ongoing | Reduce number of wandering cats and reduction of kittens needing rehoming. Compare data over four years |

## Objective 3:

Raise awareness in relation to the unregistered cat population

| Activity   | When    | Evaluation  |
|--|---------|---|
| Reinforce the need to register all cats, emphasising the discounted registration for de-sexed cats | Ongoing | Increase in the number of registered cats<br>Compare data |
| Feral cat trapping program   | Ongoing | Cat trap hire service is maintained for the community     |

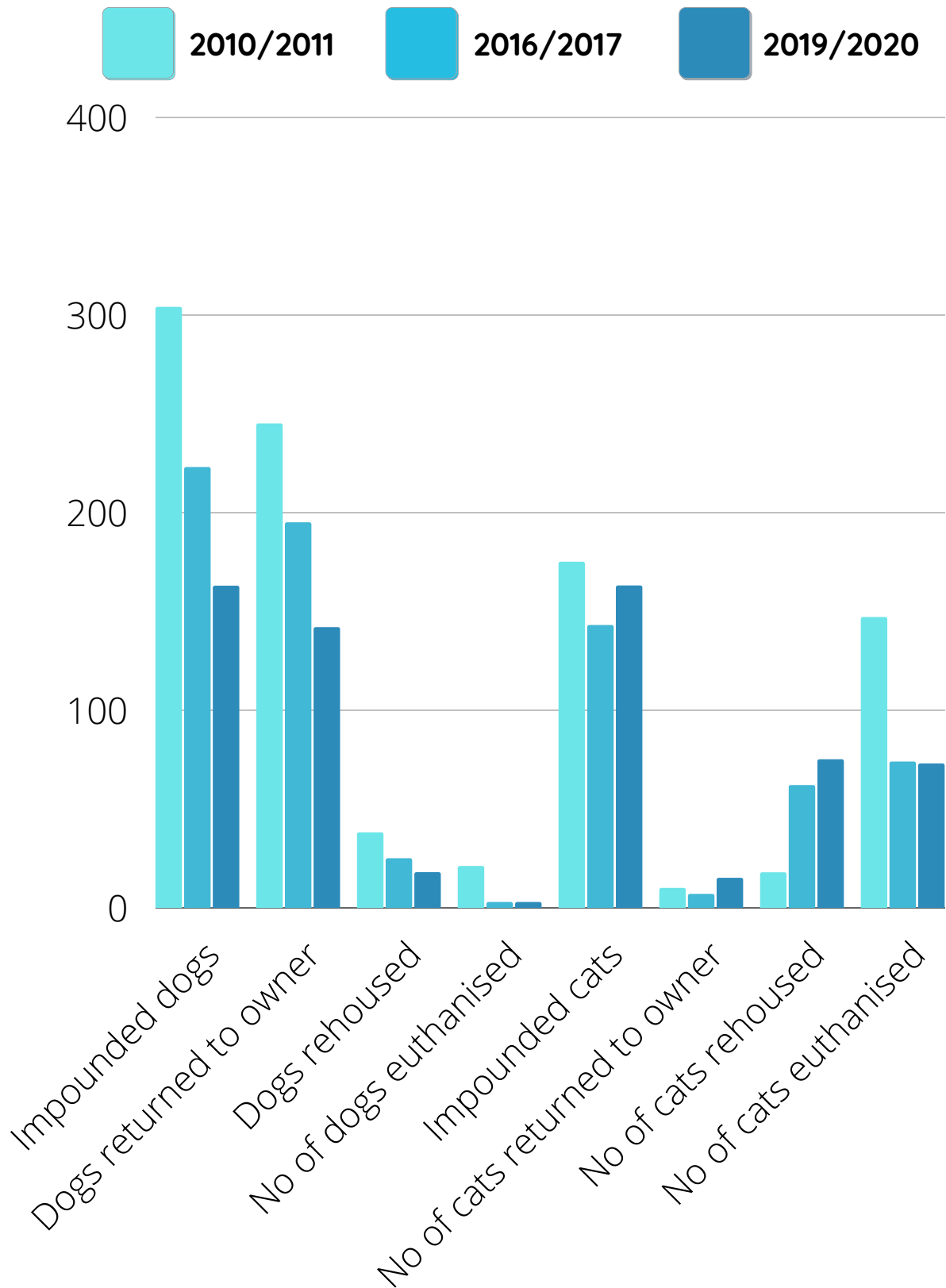
# Our Impounded Animal Data

| Colac Otway Shire                | 2010/2011 | 2016/2017 | 2019/2020 |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Number of impoundments (dogs)    | 304       | 223       | 163       |
| Number of dogs returned to owner | 245       | 195       | 142       |
| Number of dogs rehoused          | 38        | 25        | 18        |
| No of dogs euthanised            | 21        | 3         | 3         |
| Number of impoundments (cats)    | 175       | 143       | 163       |
| Number of cats returned to owner | 10        | 7         | 15        |
| Number of cats rehoused          | 18        | 62        | 75        |
| Number of cats euthanised        | 147       | 74        | 73        |





# Our Impounded Animal Data Chart





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# Domestic Animal Business

Colac Otway Shire currently has registered one cat boarding facility, one pet shop and the Council pound facility all of which are audited annually to ensure that they comply with all regulations and legislation.

Council also monitors websites, community notice boards, flyers and the local newspaper to ensure that all advertised animals are microchipped and a source number is provided.

This also enables Council to monitor whether there may be a non- registered domestic animal business operating.

Domestic Animal Business registration is controlled by the Domestic Animals Act (1994). Colac Otway Shire has a variety of domestic animal businesses. There are approved Codes of Practice for the operation of breeding and rearing establishments, boarding establishments, and shelters and pounds.

Pet shops are also included. Council is obliged to ensure each establishment complies with the relevant Code of Practice with regular audits. This is an area of intense public scrutiny.

Domestic animal business registration is controlled by the Domestic Animal Act 1994.

Council has a zero-tolerance of non-compliance in domestic animal businesses, and will continue to investigate all reports on domestic animal breeding businesses and seek compliance for any non-registered domestic animal business by conducting door knocks and property inspections.



## Objective 1:

Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality

| Activity  | When    | Evaluation   |
|---|---------|--|
| Identify all businesses that should be registered DAB's in the municipality, including businesses selling pets in the municipality.                     | Ongoing | Compare number of registered DAB's before and after activity |
| Monitor Councils registration database to ensure owners comply with the requirements to be a Micro Breeder, Recreational Breeder and Commercial Breeder | Ongoing | Compare data over previous years                             |

## Objective 2:

Annually inspect and audit all registered DAB's

| Activity  | When                   | Evaluation                         |
|---|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Conduct annual inspection of all registered DAB's | March/ April each year | Prepare checklist and compare data |



# Other Matters

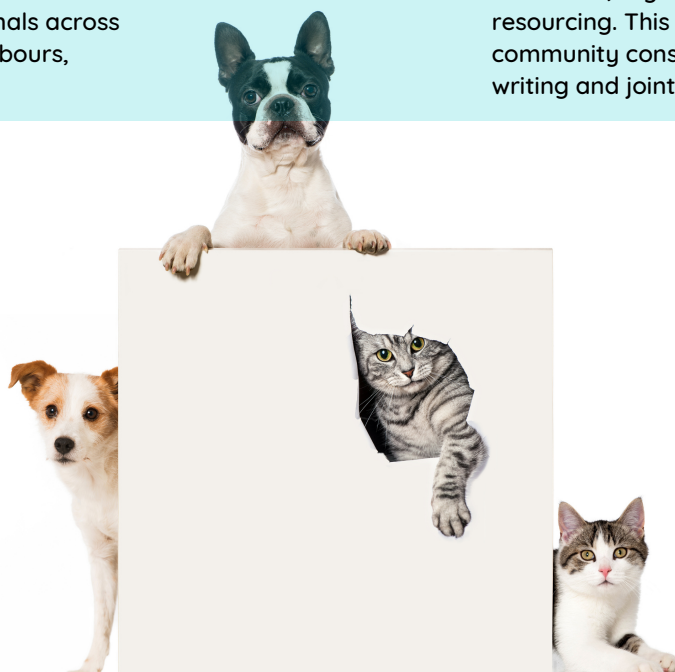
Colac Otway Shire's current General Local Laws were adopted in September 2013 and are due for revision in 2023. A number of Local Laws relate to domestic animal management and these will be evaluated and updated to best meet the changing needs of the community.

Council's current local laws relating to domestic animal management are as follows:-  
Colac Otway Shire Local Law No 2 (General)- Part 5- Section 78 and Part 7- Sections 127 to 129.

## Objective 1:

### Collaboration with Great Ocean Road Authority (GORA)

| Activity   | When               | Evaluation  |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Council will adopt a collaborative approach with the Great Ocean Road Authority (GORA) to discuss a shared service approach relating to animal management issues on the foreshore area. All foreshore areas within the Colac Otway Shire are currently managed and controlled by GORA. | December 2021      | Discussion with GORA senior management and other stakeholders undertaken, with a view to developing a Memorandum of Understanding and communications plan.  |
| Collaborate with Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority with a view to preparing an integrated plan for the management of domestic animals across coastal, towns, foreshores, harbours, campgrounds and beaches  | 30th November 2022 | Council and the Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority have agreed on service standards, regulation, enforcement and resourcing. This work has been subject to community consultation and is agreed in writing and jointly resourced. |



# Annual Review of Plan and Reporting

This section provides for the annual review of the Plan and Annual Reporting.

Compliant with Section 68A(3)(a)(b)(c) of the Domestic Animal Act (1994) as below:

68A(3) Every Council must—

- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan*
- (b) provide the Department of Primary Industries' 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.*

Performance in domestic animal management should be a regular management focus. Appropriate performance statistics should be completed and reported. A review of performance under the DAM Plan is required to be included in Council's Annual Report (see Section 68A (3) (c) of the Domestic Animal Act (1994); page 7 of this Plan).

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

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



## Objective 1:

To review progress on this Plan in a report to Council, including a summary report in the Annual Plan.

| Activity  | When     | Evaluation  |
|---|----------|---|
| Monitor Merit system regarding complaints by the Community  | Annually | Evaluate complaints and action taken<br>Measure and report on results   |
| Community<br>Focus on customer service, community education and encouragement of responsible pet ownership              | Annually | Continue to improve customer relations and education.   |
| Promotion / Publicity<br>Undertake media/Newsletter/Internet publicity for key messages about responsible pet ownership | Annually | Record published media articles<br>Annual mail-out with Council rates<br>Monthly website updates<br>New owner information kit developed<br>Measure and report on results in the annual review of this Plan. |
| Other<br>Review and revise activities in Plan as required   | Annually | Revise Action Plan if required<br>Report to Council quarterly   |

### Enforcement

Review and revise activities as required

Annually

Measure and report on results in the annual review of this Plan



# Appendix 1: Designated Leash Area Maps

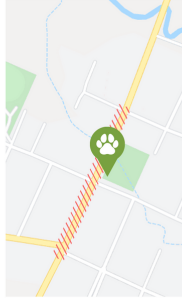
## DESIGNATED LEASH AREAS

### BEEAC



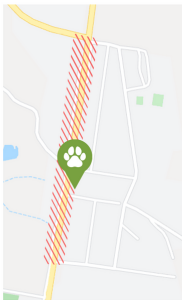
Main Street between Lang and Buchanan St.

### BIREGURRA



Main Street between Beal and Austin St.

### FORREST



Forrest-Apollo Bay Rd between Colac-Forrest Rd & Frizon Street.

### GELLIBRAND



Colac-Lavers Hill Road 200m North and South of the General Store

### APOLLO BAY



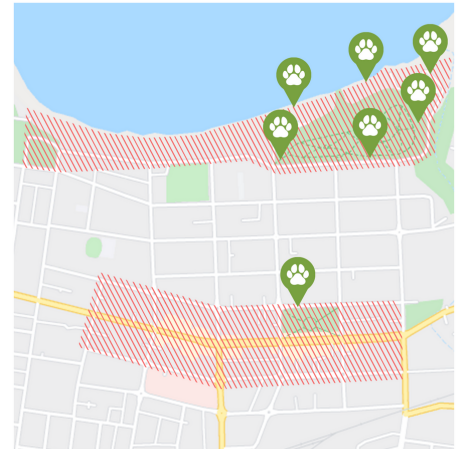
Apollo Bay port area. Great Ocean Road between Nelson and Joyce st. Additional dog bag dispensers located at Apollo Bay Foreshore.

### LAVERS HILL



Great Ocean Road between Lavers Hill-Cobden Road & Lavers Hill P-12 School Precinct.

### COLAC





Colac CBD bounded by Armstrong & Queen St, Dennis & Skene St, Rae & Miller St, Memorial Square, Botanical Gardens, Lake Colac Foreshore walking track between Stoddart & Bruce st.

Additional dog bag dispensers:

- Corner of Queen and Airey street on the North West Corner.
- Central Reserve at the Entrance off Turner Street.
- Eastern Reserve at the Entrance off Wilson Street.
- Western Reserve on the side of the Netball Shed.
- Pirate Park South Colac Football Ground.

### KEY

 Pet must be on Leash at all times.

 Free dog bag dispensers

Note: Pets off Leash in other areas of the Shire must be under effective control by their owner.