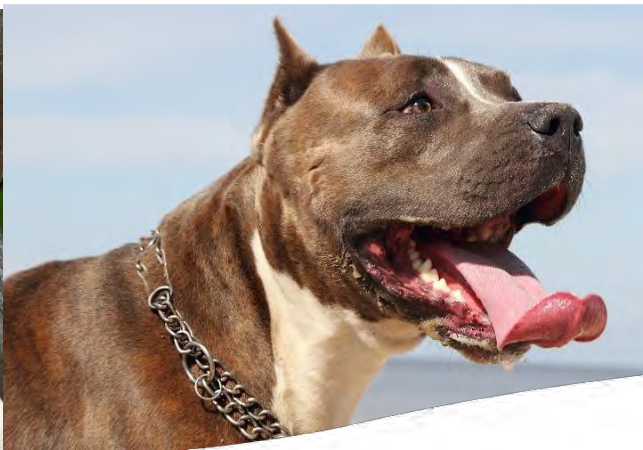




Domestic Animal Management Plan

2022-25



Contents

Contents.....	2
1.Introduction and context	3
1.5 Current programs and services.....	6
1.6 Domestic animal statistics.....	7
2.Training of Authorised Officers	9
3.Responsible Pet Ownership Programs	12
4. Over population and high euthanasia rates.....	15
5. Registration and identification.....	17
6. Nuisance	21
7. Dog attacks	24
8. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs	27
9. Domestic Animal Businesses.....	29
10. Other matters.....	31
11. Annual review of plan	32
Appendix 1 – Our Local Laws, Policies and Procedures.....	33
Appendix 2 – Training register.....	34

1. Introduction and context

1.1 Introduction

The aim of the Swan Hill Rural City Council 2022-2025 Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is to ensure the effective management of domestic animals. Council aims to provide a safe and harmonious environment for all whilst promoting responsible pet ownership across the municipality.

The plan identifies Council's responsibilities for education and compliance and provides a framework for Council on how it will effectively manage its statutory responsibilities associated with domestic animal management.

This plan will be reviewed annually and implemented over a four-year period.

1.2 Legislation

Under the provisions of the Domestic Animal Act 1994 all councils in Victoria are required to develop and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years.

The Act requires councils to show how they will address requirements relating to;

- evaluating the effectiveness of their animal management services;
- the promotion and encouragement of responsible pet ownership;
- the training of Authorised Officers;
- ensuring that people comply with the Act, the Domestic Animal Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) and any related legislation;
- minimising the risk of dog attacks;
- addressing any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats;
- ensuring the registration and identification of dogs and cats;
- minimising the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance;
- effectively identifying all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs within the municipality and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and the regulations;
- the annual review and amendment of the DAMP where necessary;
- the review of policies, Council local laws and orders made under the Act; and
- to have plans in place in the event of an emergency.

1.3 Purpose of our plan

The overall purpose of the 2022-2025 DAMP is to create an environment where people and pets can peacefully and safely co-exist within the community and where pet owner's activities and those of their pets do not adversely affect the rest of the community or environment. By implementing this plan Council will endeavour to provide a service that meets both community expectations and addresses our statutory obligations by;

- Documenting current processes and practices in relation to our animal management responsibilities.
- Minimising non-compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
- Increasing pet owner's knowledge of the principles of responsible pet ownership, enhancing community safety and improving awareness of the benefits of annual registration.
- Supporting the Regulatory Services team to achieve the stated objectives of reducing the numbers of dogs and cats being impounded and euthanased.
- Maximising the numbers of dogs and cats that are registered.
- Ensuring Authorised Officers are suitably trained to carry out their duties effectively.

- Communicating to the broader community about the education and enforcement actions Council undertakes.
- Reducing the harmful effects of domestic animals on the population of native birds, mammals and reptiles.
- Consulting with the broader community and taking their views on animal management matters into account.
- Complying with the relevant provisions of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

1.4 Development

This plan has been developed through consultation with the community and key stakeholders including veterinarians, animal businesses and other service providers. The objectives are also based on the outcomes and learnings from our two previous domestic animal management plans, as well as a review of our existing data in areas such as nuisance complaints, dog attacks, registrations and impounded animals.

Community consultation

Prior to the development of the draft plan, community consultation was undertaken in June and July 2021 over a five-week period via an online survey. In addition to the survey, Council held four community information sessions.

The survey was advertised on Council's website, social media and in local media. Hard copies of the survey were also made available at Council's service centres, local veterinary clinics and at the community information sessions.

Council received 196 survey responses. The key issues identified were:

- Additional dog parks and off-leash areas throughout the municipality.
- Reducing the number of stray and wandering cats and nuisance complaints.
- Promotion of the importance of desexing and availability of low cost desexing programs.
- Increased promotion about responsible pet ownership and availability of educational material and online resources.

This community feedback helped Council form the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan and our objectives for the next four years.

Community consultation for the draft plan was undertaken over a four-week period in September-October 2021. Residents were encouraged to provide feedback on the plan and the proposed objectives. Advertisements were placed on Council's website, social media and local media. Residents were encouraged to provide a written submission or feedback via Council's website. Hard copies of the draft plan were also available at Council's service centres and veterinary clinics.



1.4 Demographic profile of the Swan Hill municipality

Swan Hill is located 339 kilometres northwest of Melbourne, on the south bank of the Murray River in Victoria.

Swan Hill Rural City Council has a population of 20,584 people according to the 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data. It is principally an agricultural and horticultural region of 6,116 km², bordered by the Murray River which is the water source for irrigation, domestic, industry, and recreational pursuits. The municipality consists of two large service centres, being Swan Hill and Robinvale, and a number of smaller towns including Lake Boga, Manangatang, Beverford, Nyah, Nyah West, Piangil, Ultima, Woorinen and Woorinen South. The predominant employment sectors are agriculture, forestry and fishing and retail trade.

The local government area is culturally diverse with one quarter of residents born overseas. 24% of the population are from backgrounds where languages other than English are spoken. The most common languages other than English are Italian, Tongan and Vietnamese.



The municipality has experienced significant economic growth over the past decade, led by the expansion of horticultural and agricultural practices and supported by an innovative manufacturing sector. This success is depicted by the fact the region is Australia's largest producer of table grapes, pistachios and olives, responsible for one quarter of all carrots nationwide, a top contributor to the stone fruit industry and accounts for approximately 70 percent of Australia's almonds and olive oil production.

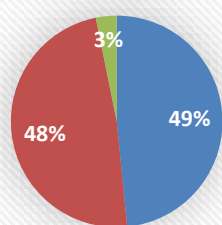
1.5 Current programs and services

Program/Service	Service Level
Identification and Registration	<p>Average of 2485 dogs and 447 cats registered per year.</p> <p>Annual registration renewal notices.</p> <p>Thorough follow up of unpaid registrations – average of 300 phone calls and 30 doorknocks per year.</p> <p>Annual free microchipping program in Swan Hill and Robinvale.</p> <p>Issue unregistered animal notifications as required.</p> <p>Mandatory microchipping and registration of all animals released from pound.</p> <p>Use of Council’s website and social media to reunite lost pets with owners.</p> <p>Half price animal registrations from October – December.</p>
Domestic animal complaints (i.e. wandering dogs and cats)	<p>Attend to wandering cats or dogs as soon as possible – preferably within the hour.</p> <p>Other non-urgent complaints within 48 hours.</p>
Animal nuisance complaints	<p>Respond to complainant within 48 hours.</p> <p>Issue barking dog information pack within 3 days.</p> <p>Deliver cat trap within 7 days.</p>
Dangerous dog complaints/dog attack	<p>Immediate response if determined to be an emergency.</p> <p>Respond next business day if non-emergency.</p>
Animal cruelty complaints	<p>Respond within 24 hours and refer to RSPCA if required.</p> <p>Investigate referrals from RSPCA as required.</p>
Routine street/park patrols	<p>50 patrols per month.</p>
Pound facilities	<p>Two Council pound facilities - Swan Hill and Robinvale.</p> <p>Visits by appointment 8:30am – 5:00pm Monday to Friday.</p>
Microchipping program/discounted desexing	<p>Annual microchipping program in Swan Hill and Robinvale.</p> <p>Free microchip and first year (pro-rata) registration.</p> <p>Discounted desexing, microchip, vaccination and free first year (pro rata) registration for animals adopted from the pound.</p>
Domestic Animal Business Inspections	<p>Inspect and process new DAB applications within 10 days.</p> <p>Conduct annual audits and issue registration certificates.</p> <p>Investigate complaints within 48 hours.</p>
Declared dogs	<p>Registration and identification of all menacing, dangerous and restricted breed dogs.</p> <p>Annual property inspections to ensure compliance.</p> <p>Respond to and investigate complaints within 24 hours.</p>
After hours emergency service	<p>External contractor for after-hours service for animal emergencies such as dog attacks and livestock on roads.</p>

1.6 Domestic animal statistics

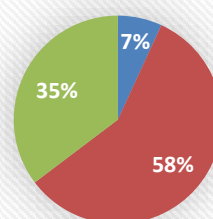
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
DOGS				
Registered dogs	2547	2421	2499	2476
Dogs impounded	191	176	176	126
Dogs returned to owner	80	80	70	61
Dogs rehomed	100	88	97	61
Dogs euthanased (unable to be rehomed)	11	8	9	4
Dogs surrendered to Council	20	25	42	16
Declared dogs – Dangerous	5	3	3	3
Declared dogs - Menacing	3	4	10	12
CATS				
Registered cats	434	464	454	438
Cats impounded	160	240	200	204
Cats returned to owner	11	11	8	14
Cats rehomed	76	121	133	118
Cats euthanased (sick or feral)	73	108	59	72
Cats surrendered	5	12	19	4
Domestic Animal Businesses				
	5	6	4	4

**Impounded dogs
2020/21**



■ Returned to owner
■ Rehomed
■ Euthanased (unable to be rehomed)

**Impounded cats
2020/21**



■ Returned to owner
■ Rehomed
■ Euthanased (sick or feral)

Animal management related requests

The table below demonstrates there has been a significant increase in animal related requests from 2017/18 to 2020/21. This is due to a number of factors such as;

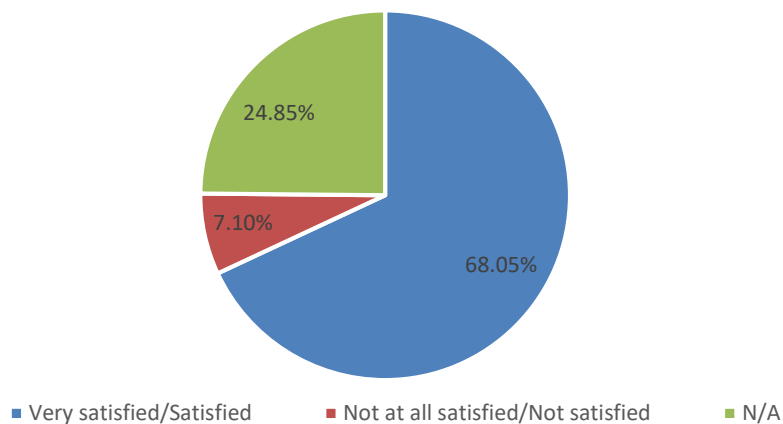
- improvements to our records management system;
- improved ability for the community to lodge requests via Snap, Send and Solve and Council's website;
- increased community education and awareness campaigns on the importance of reporting animal issues to Council; and
- increased complaints lodged in the Robinvale area due to staff changes.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1272	2135	2232	2162

Customer service

The Regulatory Services team prides itself on their customer service and response times. As stated above, all animal related requests are actioned within 1-2 business days. The community survey responses below confirm that most people are satisfied with the service they have received from Council's animal management staff.

Overall level of satisfaction



2. Training of Authorised Officers

Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires Councils to outline their programs for the training of Authorised Officers to ensure they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act.

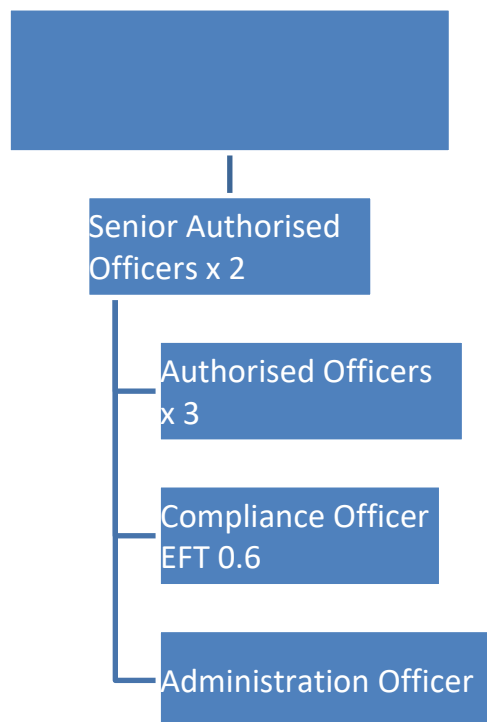
2.1 Context and current situation

Council's Animal Management Services sits under the responsibility of Regulatory Services which forms part of the Development and Planning Department.

There are currently five full time Authorised Officers in the Regulatory Services team that are skilled and trained to work in a multi-disciplinary role involving domestic animal management, Local Laws, parking enforcement, fire prevention and livestock control as part of their duties. The Authorised Officers are supported by the Public Health and Regulatory Services Coordinator, full time Administration Officer and part time Compliance Officer.

Animal management services are provided from 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. An emergency after-hours service is provided by an external contractor to respond to animal emergencies such as dog attacks and livestock on roads. All after-hours calls that are not deemed as an emergency are logged by an external call centre for Authorised Officers to follow up during normal hours of operation.

Regulatory Services team structure



2.2 Current and planned training for Authorised Officers

Due to the varied roles and activities undertaken by the Regulatory Services team, it is vital that all staff involved in animal management have the necessary skills, knowledge and equipment to perform their duties safely and effectively and have the required legislative authorisations and delegations.

Swan Hill Rural City Council is committed to the ongoing training and development of all animal management staff. Authorised Officers are required to obtain a Certificate IV Animal Control and Compliance and/or Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance). Three officers have obtained these qualifications and two are currently undertaking studies.

Each officer completes training in customer service, occupational health and safety, first aid, and prosecutions, including the collection of evidence for court proceedings. Staff are also encouraged to attend industry related information sessions and seminars for networking opportunities and to keep up with latest trends and innovations.

A training register is maintained which details qualifications and training courses completed by each Authorised Officer and identifies areas for future training. Training requirements are identified through annual performance reviews. New staff are required to undertake a detailed departmental induction program with Senior Officers.

Council's Authorised Officer training and development activities are designed to ensure that all officers have the necessary skills and knowledge to undertake their duties. Training activities include:

- Formalised training through accredited registered training organisations.
- Short course refresher training.
- Industry forums and training sessions.
- On-the-job training and ongoing coaching.

Appendix 2 outlines the qualifications of staff and their ongoing training and education schedule.

2.3 Our plans for training

Objective 1

Maintain training register that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training that should be completed by Authorised Officers

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify training requirements during annual staff performance reviews.	Annually – June and as required.	Add training to training register.
Maintain training register.	As required.	Update training register when new training has been identified and when Officers complete training.

Objective 2

Review of internal processes with staff to ensure consistent application of investigation, compliance and enforcement processes

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and implement new Animal Enforcement Procedure manual.	2024	New procedure manual developed.
Review investigation, compliance and enforcement policies and procedures to accommodate legal and other changes to ensure operational and service consistency and legislative requirements are met.	Annually – July and as required.	Policies, procedures and processes updated and approved training undertaken and officers competent.

Objective 3

Ensure new Authorised Officers have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all new Authorised Officers undertake a detailed induction program with Senior Authorised Officers.	Upon appointment of new staff.	Complete induction documents and evaluate at 3-month induction review .
Identify minimum training requirements for new officers and ensure completion within 12 months of appointment.	Within 12 months of appointment.	Evaluate at 3/6 month induction reviews and annual performance review.

3. Responsible Pet Ownership Programs

This section outlines Council's programs, services and strategies to promote responsible pet ownership to comply with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

3.1 Context and current situation

Council undertakes a number of activities that promotes and encourages responsible pet ownership which reduces the need for enforcement.

Education material is available on our website and information brochures are displayed at service centres. Responsible pet ownership is promoted via social media and there are dedicated campaigns to encourage the community to register and microchip their animals.

The municipality is culturally diverse with one quarter of the population from backgrounds where languages other than English are spoken. The most common languages other than English are Italian, Tongan and Vietnamese. Multi lingual education materials will be made available.

During community consultation 36% of survey respondents said they weren't aware of the 24-hour cat confinement requirement. An education campaign will be implemented to address this gap.

In the online survey the community also told us they would like to see more information online about:

- Responsibilities of dog owners when walking/exercising their dogs.
- The importance of desexing.
- Dog on leash/off leash areas and the rules.
- Cat curfews.

As shown on the table below the majority of Penalty Infringement Notices issued over the last four years relate to failing to renew registration (44%) and failing to register (27%). Many of the penalties for failure to renew are repeat offenders.

Clear key messaging around the benefits of pet registration and what the fee covers is important to improve registration rates and reduce the need for enforcement action.

Penalty Infringement Notices issued

Offence	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	TOTAL
Failure to register	25	36	42	32	135
Failure to renew registration	43	50	46	82	221
Dog at large – daytime	10	18	30	26	84
Dog at large – night time	0	1	0	4	5
Cat at large in a restricted district	0	0	0	6	6
Non serious injury caused by dog attack	2	4	6	8	20
Rushing dog	2	8	6	2	18
Nuisance dog/cat	0	0	0	1	1
Not muzzling or controlling menacing dog	0	2	0	0	2
Dog/cat not wearing ID marker	0	0	0	4	4
TOTAL	82	73	176	165	496

3.2 Our current education and promotion activities

- Use of local media, website and social media to promote responsible pet ownership and the benefits of microchipping and desexing.
- Availability of a range of information brochures and education material for the community – displayed at Council’s service centres and issued to the community as required.
- Education campaign via social media, Council newsletter, on-hold phone messages and paid advertising in the lead up to when renewals are due on 10 April each year.
- Annual registration renewal notices, reminder notices, SMS notifications, follow up phone calls and doorknocking for unpaid registrations.
- Providing dog waste bag dispensers and signage in 12 parks and reserves to encourage people to clean up after their pets. Locations are advertised in brochures and Council’s website.
- Dog on leash signage in parks and public areas to remind residents about keeping their dogs on a lead at all times.
- Community education campaigns about the importance of reporting dog attacks and owner’s responsibilities relating to aggressive, menacing and attacking animals.
- Links on website to other organisations that encourage responsible pet ownership such as The Department of Economics Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, Domestic Animals Branch (DEDJTR) and RSPCA Victoria.
- Issuing of Unregistered Animal Notifications for unregistered animals to educate and ensure compliance.
- Placement of all unclaimed animals on Council’s Lost and Found webpage and local community Facebook pages.

3.3 Our plans to promote responsible pet ownership

Objective 1

Promote ‘Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife’ messaging among residents

Activity	When	Evaluation
Circulate ‘Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife’ education material throughout the municipality and promote via social media.	March 2022 and then annually.	Decrease in reports of wandering/nuisance cats.

Objective 2

Increase education about cat confinement rules

Activity	When	Evaluation
Increase education about 24-hour cat confinement requirement through media releases, social media, brochures, Council community newsletters.	March 2022 then annually.	Decrease in amount of complaints about cats being at large and reduction in cats trapped.

Objective 3

Provide education materials in languages other than English

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop multi-lingual education materials including registration requirements and the difference between registration and microchipping.	February 2022 then annually as required.	Increase in animal registrations, decrease in nuisance complaints.

Objective 4

Increase number of new animal registrations and renewals through education and promotion campaigns

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop engaging fact sheets on responsible pet ownership and registration requirements.	2022 and ongoing.	Increase in new registrations and renewals.
Create new registration packs and make available at vet clinics to be distributed when pets are microchipped.	June 2022 and ongoing.	Number of new animal registrations received via vet clinic.
Advertise animal registration renewals – website, radio, community newsletters, newspaper ads, social media and media releases. Follow up unpaid animal registration renewals.	Ongoing.	Record number of media releases, social media posts, ads and articles. Reduction in number of phone calls, doorknocks and infringement notices issued.

Objective 5

Increase online materials and promotion

Activity	When	Evaluation
Increase online education material and promotion in the community about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities of dog owners when walking/exercising their dogs. • Dog on leash/off leash areas at the rules. • Cat curfews. • The importance of desexing. 	2022 and ongoing.	Material made available online and throughout the community.

4. Over population and high euthanasia rates

This section outlines Council's compliance and education programs to address over-population and high euthanasia rates in dogs and cats.

4.1 Context and current situation

Council makes every effort to reunite lost pets with their owners before taking animals to the pound. Current registration and up to date contact details on the pet's microchip records makes it much easier and contributes to a reduction in the numbers of animals that are impounded at Council's pound facilities in Swan Hill and Robinvale.

A promotion campaign is required to remind pet owners to update their pets microchip details. Unfortunately, owners of some lost microchipped animals cannot be contacted because phone numbers have been disconnected or the microchip is still under the breeder's or last owner's name.

Unidentified animals are impounded and advertised on Council's website for eight days. Animals that are claimed by owners are required to be registered and microchipped before they can be released from the pound. If animals are not claimed after eight days and are suitable to be rehomed they are either adopted locally or transferred to a rehoming organisation via a section 84Y agreement. Effective June 2021, Council has 58 agreements in place with approved animal rescue organisations.

Stray and feral cats continue to be an issue in the municipality. These cats create a serious problem of uncontrolled breeding as well as attacks on wildlife and damage to fauna. Council assists property owners with cat trapping to remove unwanted and unowned cats. Over 90% of cats impounded in 2020/21 were caught in a Council cat trap.

The overwhelming feedback from the online survey indicated our priorities for this plan should be aimed at addressing cat nuisance issues such as confinement and overpopulation, and the promotion of desexing and low cost desexing programs.

It is important that community members are educated and take responsibility for their cats by registering, microchipping, desexing and securely confining them to their property. 96% of cats impounded in 2020/21 were not desexed. Council will conduct community consultation through an online survey to gain feedback on the introduction of mandatory desexing of cats within the municipality.

In 2021 Council was successful in receiving grant funding from the State Government to commence a low cost cat desexing program, this will help address the high population rates of cats in the municipality. Council will continue to educate the community on the importance of desexing.

Impounded animals

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
DOGS				
Dogs impounded	191	176	176	126
Dogs returned to owner	80	80	70	61
Dogs rehomed	100	88	97	61
Dogs euthanased (unable to be rehomed)	11	8	9	4
CATS				
Cats impounded	160	240	200	204
Cats returned to owner	11	11	8	14
Cats rehomed	76	121	133	118
Cats euthanased (sick or feral)	73	108	59	72

In 2020/21 126 dogs were impounded. 48% of those dogs were released to their owners, 48% were rehomed and 4% were euthanased.

In 2020/21 204 cats were impounded. 7% of those cats were released to their owners, 58% were rehomed and 35% were euthanased.

Euthanasia is only used on incurably diseased, feral or uncontrollable cats and on dogs surrendered or seized because of a serious dog attack or suffering from incurable disease.

The euthanasia rates for cats is a lot higher than dogs because the majority of cats impounded are trapped and unable to be rehomed due to being feral or diseased.

4.2 Our plans to address over population and euthanasia

Objective 1

Reduce the euthansia rates of cats by 5%

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to encourage desexing of animals and promote new low cost desexing program.	Ongoing.	Reduction in feral cats trapped and euthanased. Number of desexing vouchers redeemed.
Continuance of Section 84Y agreements with approved animal rescue organisations.	Ongoing.	Reduction in cats euthanased.
Develop and distribute education material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners.	July 2022 and ongoing.	Reduction in cats euthanased.
Circulate 'Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife' education material throughout the municipality and promote via social media.	March 2022 and then annually.	Decrease in reports of wandering/nuisance cats.
Investigate funding opportunities to improve cat adoption rates within the municipality i.e. funding to contribute to desexing, bedding costs.	2022	Increase in animals adopted within the municipality.
Conduct community consultation through an online survey to gain feedback on the introduction of mandatory desexing of cats in the municipality.	2023	Community feedback received, report to Council.

Objective 2

Educate pet owners to keep microchip and registration details up to date

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promotion campaign to remind pet owners to keep contact details up to date and change of ownership for microchips.	2022 and ongoing.	Increase in animals being reunited with owners before being impounded.
Include information on how to update animal owner details on the website, renewal notices, SMS notifications.	2022 and ongoing.	Increase in animals being reunited with owners before being impounded.

5. Registration and identification

This section outlines Council's programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats. It addresses the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

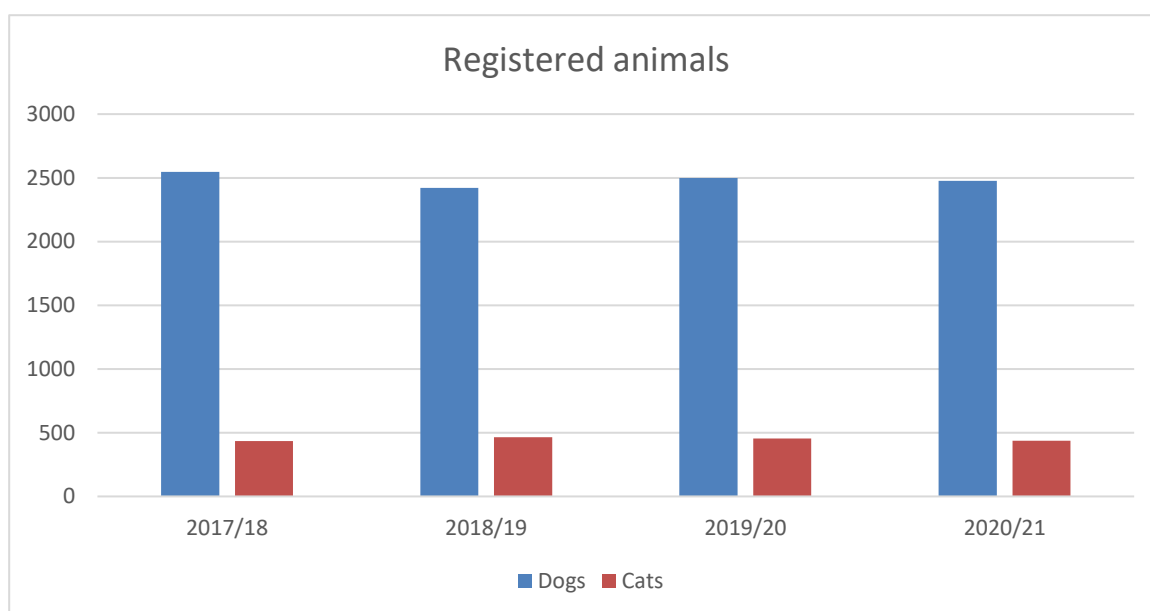
5.1 Context and current situation

Registration and identification of dogs and cats is the foundation of responsible pet ownership as it enables lost and found animals to be reunited with their owners as quickly as possible, reducing the stress on both owners and pets.

Animal registration fees help fund animal management services provided by Council, as well as State Government projects such as the Responsible Pet Ownership Program.

Registration statistics

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Dogs registered	2547	2421	2499	2476
Cats registered	434	464	454	438



Registration figures for dogs and cats in the municipality have remained fairly consistent over the last four years. Currently there are 438 cats and 2476 dogs registered within the municipality. 63% of registered dogs and 95% of registered cats are desexed. Council does recognise that cat registration rates are low in comparison to dogs. This is an issue that will be addressed via a new education and awareness campaign.

Dog and cat registration fees

The current fee set by Council to register a dog or cat is **\$132*** per animal per year. If the animal meets one or more of the following criteria, the owner is eligible for a reduced fee:

If the animal is	The fee is reduced to
Desexed	\$44*
Over 10 years of age*	\$44*
Part of a domestic animal business or applicable organisation	\$44*
A dog that has undergone training	\$44*
A working dog	\$22
*Pensioner card holders receive a 50% discount	

Offences for unregistered animals

Penalty Infringement Notices issued				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Failure to register	25	36	42	32
Failure to renew	43	50	46	82

Prosecutions for unregistered animals				
	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
	51	26	23	26

5.2 Our current activities for registration and identification

- Issuing animal registration renewal notices via mail or email each year to currently registered animals.
- Thorough follow up of owners who fail to renew animal registrations including reminder notices, SMS reminders, phone calls, doorknocking and enforcement action.
- Mandatory microchipping and registration for all animals released from the pound.
- Use of Council's website and social media to reunite lost pets with their owners.
- Registration and identification of menacing, dangerous and restricted breed dogs.
- Annual free microchipping program in Swan Hill and Robinvale.
- Availability of microchipping at the Swan Hill Pound by Council's Authorised Officer whom is also an authorised microchip implanter.
- Half price animal registrations from 10 October to 31 December each year.
- Up to three months' free registration for new animal registrations received between 1 January and 10 April each year.
- Use of Council's website and social media to promote responsible pet ownership.
- Ensuring registration is checked as part of the process of dealing with animal complaints.
- Issuing of Unregistered Animal Notifications for unregistered animals to ensure compliance and enforcement action, if required.

- Regular audits of Council's animal registration database to ensure data is accurate i.e. dogs no longer living in the municipality are made departed.
- Monitoring advertisements in local newspapers and community Facebook groups relating to animals for sale and ensuring compliance with the Act i.e. microchip and source numbers are listed.
- Monitoring 84Y agreements ensuring all animals adopted from the pound are desexed and microchipped.
- Notifying the new Council to follow up registration of animals directly adopted from our pound.
- Ensuring animals adopted through other agencies such as the RSPCA and Lost Dogs Home into our municipality have been registered.
- Regular patrols of public places, such as streets, reserves and parks.
- Issuing official warnings and infringement notices for non-compliance with the Act.

Summary

Our main priority is to increase the number of animal registrations across the municipality by promoting the benefits of registering animals with Council and educating the community about the difference between microchipping and registration. Multi lingual fact sheets will be developed and distributed in areas that are culturally diverse. Registration packs will be made available at local vet clinics and distributed when animal animals are microchipped.

To further increase registration and renewals Council will continue to research ways to simplify, automate and improve access to animal registration and renewals. We will also improve the accuracy of our pet registration database by ensuring all animals listed on the Central Animal Records microchip database are also correctly registered with Council.

Council will introduce a 'free ride home' approach for registered animals that are found at large for the first time. We will also explore other incentives for first time registrations and ways to reward those who have invested in their pets, such as having their animal desexed, to receive a lower registration fee.

5.3 Our plans for registration and identification

Objective 1

Increase the amount of dog and cat registrations in the municipality by 5%

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Improve the accuracy of Council's pet registration database by contacting Central Animal Records on a quarterly basis and obtaining details of all pets microchipped in the municipality.</p> <p>Check that all animals are listed on Council's pet registration database and follow up non-compliance.</p>	January 2022 and ongoing	Record number of Unregistered Animal Notifications issued and increase in new animal registrations received.
<p>Implement incentive program 'A free ride home'.</p> <p>Rangers to adopt a free ride home approach to registered and microchipped animals found wandering for the first time that have not caused a nuisance.</p>	March 2022 and ongoing	<p>Promotion included in radio advertising, Council website and social media.</p> <p>Feedback received.</p> <p>Increase in new registrations.</p>
<p>Develop online animal registration payments capability through Council's website and link to animal registration database.</p>	January 2022 and ongoing	<p>Increase in new registrations.</p> <p>Community feedback received</p>

Advertise animal registration renewals – website, radio, community newsletters, newspaper ads, social media and media releases. Follow up unpaid animal registration renewals.	Ongoing	Record number of media releases, social media posts, ads and articles. Reduction in number of phone calls, doorknocks and infringement notices issued.
Ensure all impounded animals are microchipped and registered prior to release	Ongoing	Number of animals registered.
Issuing of Unregistered Animal Notifications for unregistered animals and enforcement action for non-compliance	Ongoing	Number of animals registered, infringements issued, prosecutions.
Annual free microchipping program	Ongoing	Number of new animal registrations.
Half price registrations 10 October-31 December	Ongoing	Number of new animal registrations.
Ensure animals adopted through other agencies such as the RSPCA and Lost Dogs Home into our municipality have been registered.	Ongoing	Number of new animal registrations.
Publicise the Swan Hill Neighbourhood House ‘No Interest loans scheme’ for animal registrations	2022 and ongoing	Number of vouchers redeemed and new animal registrations.
Research opportunities to increase registration and renewal levels and implement appropriate initiatives	2023	Number of new registrations.
Research ways to simplify, automate and improve access to animal registration and renewal.	2022 and ongoing	Number of new registrations and renewals.
Conduct feasibility study on the benefits of rewarding those who have invested in their pets (desexing, obedience training etc.) to receive an even lower registration fee.	2023	Number of new registrations and renewals.

Objective 2

Educate the community about the importance of animal registration

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop multi lingual fact sheets explaining the importance of registration and the difference between registration and microchipping.	February 2022 and ongoing.	Increase in new registrations, in particular in the Robinvale area.
Increase the distribution of information on Responsible Pet Ownership through media releases, website, social media, brochures, Council community newsletters.	2022 and ongoing.	Record number of media releases, visits to webpage, social media posts and articles in local media.
Create new registration packs and make available at vet clinics to be given out when pets are microchipped.	June 2022 and ongoing.	Number of new animal registrations received via vet clinic.

6. Nuisance

This section outlines Council's programs, services and strategies 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 Regulatory Services Department relate to roaming and/or stray dogs and cats.

Stray and feral cats continue to be an issue in the municipality. Council assists property owners with cat trapping to remove unwanted and unowned cats. Over 90% of cats impounded in 2020/21 were caught in a Council cat trap.

During our community consultation 36% of survey respondents said they weren't aware of the 24-hour cat confinement requirement. An education campaign will be implemented.

It is important that community members are educated and take responsibility for their cats by registering, microchipping, desexing and securely confining them to their property. 96% of cats impounded in 2020/21 were not desexed. In addition to promoting our low cost desexing program Council will conduct community consultation through another online survey to gain feedback on the introduction of mandatory desexing of cats in the municipality.

Wandering dogs and dogs off leash are also a nuisance to the community and hazard to motorists and people exercising. In August 2021 Council opened a new off leash dog park in Swan Hill. The fully fenced park provides the opportunity for owners to exercise and socialise their dogs and practice training techniques. Council will investigate options of establishing off leash dog parks in other areas of the municipality to address nuisance behaviours.

63% of survey respondents also said they would also support the introduction of timed off-leash sessions in some of the current on leash areas. Council will seek further feedback from the community on preferred times and locations.

In the online survey the community also expressed they would like to see more information online about:

- Responsibilities of dog owners when walking/exercising their dog.
- The importance of desexing.
- Dog on-leash/off leash areas and the rules.
- Cat curfews.

Animal nuisance complaints

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Stray/roaming animals	365	413	408	347
Barking dogs	30	32	30	29
Dog poo	3	3	5	4
Cat trap request/cat caught in trap	196	282	272	196
Excess animal complaints	4	12	8	3
Other dog/cat nuisance complaints	5	2	5	5

6.2 Our current compliance and education activities

- Free cat trap hire service.
- Barking dog information booklets for owners and complainants.
- Impounding stray dogs and cats and mandatory microchip and registration prior to release.
- Providing dog waste bag dispensers and relevant signage in 12 parks and reserves. Locations are advertised in brochures and Council’s website.
- Issuing Local Law notices to comply, infringement notices and prosecutions, where applicable.
- Signage in dog on-leash areas.
- Availability of brochures and educational material.
- Timely and thorough follow up of nuisance complaints.
- Random patrols of parks and other public areas.
- 24-hour cat confinement requirement.

6.3 Our plans for nuisance animals

Objective 1

Reduce cat nuisance complaints by 5%

Activity	When	Evaluation
Increase education about 24-hour cat confinement requirement through media releases, social media, brochures, Council community newsletters.	March 2022 then annually	Decrease in amount of complaints about cats being at large and reduction in cats trapped.
Develop a cat trap hire procedure and promote the availability of cat traps.	February 2022 Ongoing	Procedure developed, requests for cat traps.
Conduct community consultation through online survey to gain feedback on the introduction of mandatory desexing of cats in the municipality.	2023	Community feedback received, report to Council.
Develop and distribute education material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners	July 2022 and ongoing	Decrease in cat nuisance complaints.
Continue to encourage desexing of animals and promote low cost desexing program through website, local media and social media	Ongoing	Number of vouchers redeemed.
Purchase additional cat traps and cat carriers	2022	Traps purchased.

Objective 2

Reduce dog nuisance complaints by 5%

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a procedure for barking dog complaints.	2022	Procedure developed. Decrease in need for enforcement action.
Continually look for opportunities to improve signage in areas where dogs must be on leash and in areas where dogs are prohibited (such as playgrounds) throughout the municipality and update as required.	Ongoing	Number of inspections, signage updated as required.
Monitor compliance at the off leash dog park in Swan Hill.	Ongoing	Compliance with dog park rules, reduction in complaints.
Investigate options and seek community feedback of establishing off leash dog parks in other areas of the municipality.	2022	Community consultation, report completed.
Investigate options and seek community feedback on establishing timed off leash sessions in areas throughout the municipality.	2022	Community consultation, report completed.
Educate the community through social media, website and local media about the requirement for owners to clean up after their dogs and availability of dog waste bags.	Ongoing	Decrease in amounts of complaints regarding dog faeces.
Inspect nature reserves throughout the municipality to determine if dogs should be banned in those areas.	2023	Community consultation. Report completed .
Educate the community through social media, website and local media about responsible dog ownership and ways to minimise dogs barking.	Ongoing	Decrease in amount of complaints regarding barking dogs.
Educate the community through social media, website and local media about required to keep dogs confined to their properties.	Ongoing	Decrease in amount of wandering dog complaints.
Increase information on the website about Local Law requirement - all dogs must be on a leash unless in a designated off-leash area and responsibilities of dog owners when walking /exercising their dogs.	2022	Decrease in complaints about dogs off-leash.
Purchase an additional dog waste bag dispensers for rural towns.	2022	Dispensers installed and reduction in complaints.
Purchase an additional dog trap for Robinvale.	2022	Trap purchased and nuisance dogs trapped.
Provide advice to owners of pets with behavioural issues.	Ongoing	Disputes/issued resolved.

7. Dog attacks

This section outlines Council’s programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

7.1 Context and current situation

Swan Hill Rural City Council is committed to reducing the number of dog attacks in our community. Council provides a 24-hour service to immediately respond to dog attacks and our first priority is to protect the community by taking steps to prevent future attacks by the same dog. In most circumstances Authorised Officers seize and impound the alleged attacking dog until an investigation is complete.

Education is required to encourage the community to report all dog attacks regardless of the nature of the attack and level of injuries sustained. When investigating dog attacks Authorised Officers often find that the alleged attacking dog had attacked previously but it wasn’t reported to Council, this is most likely due to the minor nature of some attacks or because the victim is known to the animal owner. Had the initial attack(s) been reported to Council, the subsequent, often more serious, attack could have been avoided.

There have also been incidents in the last 12 months where farmers have destroyed dogs found in their paddocks with livestock. As per the Domestic Animals Act an owner of livestock is able to destroy dogs or cats found at large near their livestock. Community education and awareness is required to inform pet owners about the consequences if their pets are found near livestock.

The following table details the number of dog attacks and rushing dog reports received by Council over the past four years. It is important to note that most rushing dog complaints reported relate to a person being scared of the dog or the dog only barking at them. The majority of reported dog attacks were also of a minor nature with only five attacks resulting in infringement notices for non-serious injuries and four prosecutions for serious attacks against livestock. Authorised Officers still conduct a thorough investigation of all reported dog attacks and rushing dog complaints.

Number of dog attacks

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Attacks on people	11	8	9	7
Attacks on livestock	11	12	11	6
Attacks on other animals	15	25	23	27
Rushing/Aggressive dog complaints	18	27	45	28

Owners of dogs that have attacked and caused death or serious injury are usually prosecuted. The Domestic Animals Act is very specific in what constitutes a serious injury –
an injury requiring medical or veterinary attention in the nature of:

- *a broken bone*
- *a laceration*
- *the total or partial loss of sensation or function in a part of the body*
- *an injury requiring cosmetic surgery.*

The Act also provides Councils with a number of enforcement options relating to dog attacks. These include declaring the dog either dangerous or menacing, issuing infringement notices, applying restrictions such as the confinement of the dog and requirement for it to be leashed and muzzled whilst in public.

Council has an internal procedure in relation to dog attacks. For serious dog attacks the investigating officer prepares a prosecution brief. The brief is reviewed by the Public Health and Regulatory Services Coordinator who then makes further recommendations to the Director/CEO who then determines the appropriate course of action. Infringements are usually given for minor attacks and in some circumstances, Council will, if considered appropriate, negotiate with the owner to surrender the dog in return for a reduction in penalties.

Prosecutions for dog attacks

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Serious dog attack	2	0	2	0
Non-serious dog attack (failure to pay PIN)	0	2	1	2

Number of dogs on Victorian Declared Dog Registry

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Dangerous dogs	5	3	3	3
Menacing dogs	3	4	10	12

7.2 Our current policies and procedures

- Dog attack response and investigation procedure
- Domestic animal collection and surrender procedure
- Euthanasia and disposal procedure
- Firearms procedure
- Preliminary Dog Attack Report
- Statement of No-Complaint Form
- Animal Surrender Form
- Seizure Notice
- Proceed to Prosecution Form

7.3 Our current compliance and education activities

- Immediate 24-hour response for reported dog attacks.
- Seizing and impounding alleged attacking dogs until an investigation is complete.
- Timely and thorough investigations of all reported dog attacks.
- Issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and official warnings where relevant.
- Declaring dogs determined to be dangerous, menacing or of a restricted breed, updating the VDDR and random property checks to ensure compliance with regulations.
- Prosecuting matters pursuant to the Act.
- Encourage local vet clinics to report dog attacks to Council.
- Community education about the importance of reporting dog attacks and responsible pet ownership.
- Promote and encourage the desexing of dogs to reduce incidents of wandering dogs.
- Timely response to all reports of dogs at large, uncontained dogs, aggressive and rushing dogs.
- Regular patrols of the municipality to collect dogs at large to reduce the potential for dog attacks.

Summary

Dog attacks remain an issue for Council, in particular in rural areas where dogs attack sheep. Dog attacks are taken very seriously and officers will continue to respond to all dog attack reports promptly and take the necessary actions to protect the community. Council will continue to educate the community on ways to reduce the risk of dogs attacks and the importance of reporting all dog attacks.

7.4 Our plans to minimise dog attacks

Objective 1

Conduct awareness campaign for both livestock owners and dog owners about the consequences for dogs found in livestock paddocks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Use media releases and social media to educate dog owners on the importance of confining dogs to their rural properties. Inform dog owners that dogs can be destroyed if found near stock and owners can be prosecuted and potential claims for compensation of lost stock can apply .	March-May annually	Decrease in reports of dogs found in paddocks with livestock.

Objective 2

Improve reporting of dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve community awareness through media releases, social media and website of what a dog attack is and how to report it to Council.	2022 and ongoing	Number of dog attacks reported.
Investigate and recommend alternatives for the community to report dog attacks i.e. The Dangerous Dog Hotline.	2022 and ongoing	Number of notifications from external agencies.
Improve information on Council website relating to dog attack investigations and reporting, and develop an online reporting platform.	2022 and ongoing	Online reporting tool developed and number of dog attacks reported.

Objective 3

Reduce number of dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages such as laws regarding registration, confinement of dogs to property, on leash in public areas through website, social media and community newsletter.	Ongoing	Decrease in number of dog attacks.
Improve community awareness of dog attacks and the consequences for owners if their dog attacks another animal or person.	Ongoing	Decrease in number of dog attacks.
Education campaign via social media and website regarding dog behaviour and what powers Council has to enforce.	Ongoing	Decrease in number of dog attacks.
Increase patrols of high risk locations.	2022 and ongoing	Number of patrols.
Publicise dog attack prosecutions through media releases, social media and website articles.	Ongoing	Decrease in number of dog attacks.

8. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

This section outlines Councils programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in the municipality and ensure that those dogs are kept in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act and regulations

8.1 Context and current situation

Council has a number of declared dogs which have been determined to be either 'dangerous', 'menacing' or a restricted breed dog. Owners of declared dogs must comply with a range of requirements for their dogs relating to housing, microchipping, desexing, identification and Council registration. Where non-compliance is determined Council undertakes enforcement action as per the provisions of the Act.

Number of dogs on Victorian Declared Dog Registry

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Dangerous dogs (Attack)	5	3	3	3
Dangerous dogs (Guard Dog)	0	0	0	0
Dangerous dogs (Attack trained)	0	0	0	0
Menacing dogs	3	4	10	12
Restricted breed dogs	0	0	0	0

Restricted breed dogs

Restricted breed dogs are considered a higher risk to community safety than other breeds of dogs. The Domestic Animals Act defines restricted breed dogs as any one of the following breeds (pure or cross breed):

- American Pit Bull Terriers (or Pit Bull Terriers)
- Perro de Presa Canarios (or Presa Canario)
- Dogo Argentinos
- Japanese Tosas
- Fila Brasileiros

Council's Authorised Officers are trained to identify and declare restricted breed dogs. Effective June 2021, there are no known restricted breed dogs in the municipality.

Menacing dogs

Under the Act, Council may declare a dog to be a menacing dog if the dog causes a non-serious bite injury to a person or animal, or if it rushes at or chases a person.

'Rush at' means that the dog has approached a person within 3 metres, displaying aggressive behaviour such as snarling, growling, barking or raising the hackles.

The owner of a declared menacing dog must comply with requirements to prevent the dog from attacking (or causing serious injury) in future. A menacing dog declaration can be upgraded to a dangerous dog declaration if the owner has been issued with two infringement notices for failing to comply with requirements such as leashing or muzzling their dog in public.

Effective June 2021, there are 12 dogs that have been declared menacing in the municipality. Six of these dogs have bitten other dogs, one has bitten a person, four rushed at a person and one rushed at another dog while it was being walked by the owner.

Dangerous dogs

A dangerous dog is one that Council has declared to be dangerous because it has bitten or attacked a person or animal, causing serious injury or death.

The Act empowers councils to declare a dog to be 'dangerous' if:

- the dog has caused serious injury or death to a person or animal; or
- the dog is a menacing dog and its owner has received at least two infringement notices for failing to comply with restraint requirements; or
- the dog has been declared dangerous under corresponding legislation in another state or territory; or
- for any other reason prescribed.

Owners of dangerous dogs have a series of obligations imposed on them to make sure that members of the public are not attacked by their dog.

Effective June 2021, there are three declared dangerous dogs in the municipality. One of these dogs attacked and bit a person causing serious injury, one attacked and killed livestock and one attacked and killed a cat.

8.2 Our current education and compliance activities

- Declaration of dogs where appropriate.
- Prompt response to complaints about suspected declared dogs.
- Annual and random audits of properties housing declared dogs.
- Ensure compliance with requirements of keeping dangerous dogs.
- Seizure of dogs suspected of being a restricted breed.
- Educating owners of dogs in relation to the laws about keeping declared dogs.
- Ensure all declared dogs are listed on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.
- Information regarding restricted breed dogs and declared dogs on Council website.
- Brochures displayed at Council service centres.

8.3 Plans for Dangerous, Menacing & Restricted Breed Dogs

Objective 1

Ensure declared dogs are compliant with relevant legislation and regulations

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance.	Bi-Annually	Record number of inspections. Compliance with requirements.
Enforcement of non-compliance of declared dogs.	As required	Prosecutions undertaken as required.
Continue to declare dogs as Restricted Breed, Dangerous or Menacing in accordance with legislation.	Ongoing	Number of dogs declared.
Investigate complaints about Menacing, Dangerous or Restricted Breed Dogs	Ongoing	Number of complaints investigated.

Objective 2

Ensure Authorised Officers work consistently and fairly when deciding whether or not to declare a dog dangerous, menacing or restricted breed,

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a procedure relating to dealing with dangerous and declared dogs.	2022	Procedure developed.
Authorised Officers to undertake training to identify Restricted Breed dogs.	When available	Training completed.

9. Domestic Animal Businesses

This section outlines programs, services and strategies which Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) comply with the Act, regulations and any related legislation.

9.1 Context and current situation

There are currently six Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) registered with Swan Hill Rural Council. These consist of three boarding establishments, one pet shop and two Council pound facilities. There is one pound located in Swan Hill and the other one is in Robinvale. There are no breeding or dog training establishments currently registered.

Domestic Animal Business	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Council pound	2	2	2	2
Boarding establishment	3	3	3	3
Pet Shop	2	2	1	1
Dog training establishment	0	0	0	0
Breeding establishment	0	0	0	0

9.2 Current activities for Domestic Animal Businesses

- Annual registration and renewal of Domestic Animals Businesses.
- Regular audits of Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with regulations and relevant Codes of Practice.
- Provide information and guidance to registered Domestic Animal Businesses.
- Investigations of complaints lodged regarding the operation of a Domestic Animal Businesses and/or properties identified with excess animals.
- Liaison with Council's Planning Department over suspected illegal Domestic Animal Businesses.



9.3 Our plans for Domestic Animal Businesses

Objective 1

Identify unregistered Domestic Animal Business operators

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a Domestic Animal Business is via social media and website.	2022 and annually	Number of social media posts and website updates.
Follow up possible Domestic Animal Businesses identified during property inspections and/or notifications from public.	Ongoing	Investigations completed.
Investigate all businesses that should be registered as a Domestic Animal Business – check media sources/social media for advertisements.	Ongoing	Investigation completed and business registered, if applicable.
Liaise with Planning Department to ensure all new planning enquires for animal related businesses are flagged with Regulatory Services.	Ongoing	Number of businesses referred.
Inspect properties with excess animal permits to ensure they don't have more than 3 fertile female dogs.	Ongoing	Number of inspections.

Objective 2

Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses are registered and compliant with legislation

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct annual audits of Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with legislation and relevant Code of Practice.	Annually	Audits completed and compliance achieved.
Ensure Council pound processes reflect best practice standards.	Annually	Review pound policy and procedures.
Review Health Management Plan for Swan Hill and Robinvale animal pounds.	Annually	Review plan and update as required.

10. Other matters

This section provides for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in our municipal district.

10.1 Emergency Management

Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) includes a section on response and relief of animal management in an emergency. The MEMP was endorsed by Council in October 2017 and reviewed in 2020.

Over the years the municipality has experienced a relatively low number of emergencies of consequence. Those with the most widespread impact have been either wind/hail storms or flood. That impact has primarily involved property damage. Stock and crop losses were experienced, but there have been minimal threats to residences and domestic animals.

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) is the lead agency in relation to animal welfare during an emergency. The Council pound facilities in Swan Hill and Robinvale are available to house displaced, lost or stray dogs and cats, if required.

10.2 Our plans for Emergency Management

Objective 1

Ensure consideration is given to the management of domestic animals in an emergency

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review animal management functions in the MEMP, including contact lists.	Annually	Review and submit report to Emergency Management Planning Committee.
Provide information via website and social media to assist pet owners in an emergency.	As required	Website updated and social media posts.
Ensure Authorised Officers are trained to manage domestic animals in an emergency.	When available	Training completed.

11. Annual review of plan

Under section 68A(3) of the Domestic Animals Act, every Council will review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.

Council will review our Domestic Animal Management Plan annually. Any changes to our plan will be provided to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources Secretary. Council will publish an evaluation of the plan in the annual report.

11.1 Evaluation of implementation of the Domestic Animal Management Plan

The monitoring of the performance of the plan will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Act. In addition, Council will continue to conduct its monthly monitoring of the performance of the animal management team.

The key performance measures within this plan are to be monitored on a monthly basis by the Public Health and Regulatory Services Coordinator, in conjunction with the Regulatory Services team.

The results of this monthly monitoring will enable Council to adjust the plan ahead of the annual review. The results are also reported to Council's Executive Leadership Team meetings, which are conducted on a weekly basis.

A review of performance under the plan is required to be included in Council's annual report. 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, and increases in compliance and levels of community satisfaction as a measure of success.

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



Appendix 1 – Our Local Laws, Policies and Procedures

Local Laws

Community Local Law No. 2 – Part 7 Animals

- Section 71 – Keeping animals in the municipal district sets out the number of animals that may be kept without a permit.
- Section 72 – requires owners to ensure they have adequate fencing to prevent animals escaping.
- Section 74 – requires owners to ensure their animals do not create a nuisance and all animal litter must be disposed of.
- Section 75 – requires a person to remove and dispose of their dog's excrement.
- Section 76 – requires all dogs and cats to be on a leash unless in a designated off leash area.

Prescribed off-leash area
Swan Hill Off-Leash Dog Park

Policies and Procedures

- Domestic animal collection and surrender procedure
- Animal registration forms and annual renewal notices including fixed fees
- Dog attack response and investigation procedure
- Euthanasia and disposal procedure
- Firearms procedure
- Preliminary Dog Attack Report
- Statement of No-Complaint Form
- Animal Surrender Form
- Seizure Notice
- Proceed to Prosecution Form

Appendix 2 – Training Register

Authorised Officer Training	Completed	Planned
Certificate IV Animal Control and Regulation	√ 3 officers, 2 in progress	
Certificate IV in Statutory Compliance	√ 3 officers, 2 in progress	
Advanced safe dog handling, apprehension and bite prevention workshop	√	As offered
Firearms training	√	Every two years
Understanding and working safely with dogs		2022
Animal Welfare Victoria – Animal management information webinar	√	As offered
Prosecutions training	√	Refresher training when available
First Aid Level II	√	Refresher training when available
CPR Update	√	Refresher training when available
Freedom of information	√	As required by Council
Occupational Health and Safety	√	As required by Council
Personal Protective Equipment	√	As required by Council
Manual handling	√	As required by Council
Dealing with aggressive customers	√	As required by Council
Conflict resolution	√	As required by Council
Council policies and procedures	√	As required by Council
Other Animal Welfare Victoria training and information seminars		As offered
Municipal Association of Victoria and local government professionals		As offered
Australian Institute of Animal Management seminars/conferences		As offered