



Pyrenees
Shire Council



Domestic Animal Management Plan

2022-2025

Acknowledgement of Country

Pyrenees Shire is part of the traditional lands of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar and Wotjobaluk tribes. We pay our respects to the customs, traditions and stewardship of the land by the Elders past and present and emerging leaders, and the people of these tribes.

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1 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT



1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (The Act), every Council must prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan.

The purpose of the plan is to provide Council with a strategic framework that delivers policy direction and action plans for animal management over the next four (4) years.

A domestic animal management plan prepared by 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 requirements of the *Act* and the Domestic Animal Regulations; and
- b. outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Councils 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 Councils 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 Councils municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
- f. provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Every Council must –

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

1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

This plan was developed by Council after reviewing its existing Domestic Animal Management Plan's objectives and achievements. Authorised Officers of the Community Safety & Amenities Team, guided by the Manager of Planning & Development used current data, statistics, research and reporting to help develop the plan.

A draft document was put forward for review and evaluation by Council. The plan was then re-evaluated, improved, and presented to Council for adoption.



1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFILE OF COUNCIL

The Pyrenees Shire is a rural municipality about 130km northwest of Melbourne, covering an area of approximately 3500 square kilometres. It sits across traditional ownership areas of the Wadawurrung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Eastern Maar and Wotjobaluk Aboriginal peoples. Spanning between the regional centres of Ballarat and Ararat. We are a Shire of 29 communities, each with their own heritage, character, and rural charm. Our towns and settlements are diverse and distinct, abundant with unique sense of place. Just over 50% of our population live within one of our 9 main towns or localities, with the remainder of the population living in rural locations. Our geographically dispersed population means that smaller townships and settlements are important hubs for community activities and social interaction.

The Shire has a population of 7472 residents (2016 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data). It is a predominantly rural area and includes the townships of Beaufort, Avoca, Lexton, Snake Valley, Waubra, Amphitheatre, Landsborough, Moonambel, Evansford, Raglan, Crowlands, and Redbank.

Our localities



1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

A broad range of programs and services are provided to ensure Council meets its responsibilities under the Act regarding the management of domestic animals within the shire.

Program/Service:	Service Level:
Identification & Registration - doorknock campaigns	Council officers visit residents all year round to check pets are microchipped and registered. A door knock campaign is undertaken annually in the months of May and June following-up on outstanding registration renewals and any new unregistered pets. Notice of registration renewals and the door knock is placed in the public notices section of the newspaper, Council website, and on social media
Domestic animal complaints/enquiries	Complaints and enquiries are captured electronically in Councils 'Customer Action Requests' database - Average response time – 1 to 2 business days
Dangerous Dogs complaints	Complaints and enquiries are all captured electronically in Councils 'Customer Action Requests' database - Average response time is 1 business day
Pound	<p>The Pyrenees Shire Council does not have a pound facility. An agreement is in place with the City of Ballarat to utilise the Ballarat Animal Shelter as needed</p> <p>Operating Hours: Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm Saturday – Sunday Closed</p>
Micro-chipping and / or desexing programs	<p>Council provides a reduced registration fee for desexed animals</p> <p>Participates with City of Ballarat shelter programs when available</p>
Barking dogs and nuisance cats	<p>Provide advice and education material to help with barking dog matters. Officers use a range of enforcement tools if the matter does not resolve</p> <p>Council owns 12 cat traps which are available to residents free of charge to help deal with nuisance and feral cats</p>
Wandering and lost dogs & cats	<p>Impounding of wandering, unwanted, or unowned cats and dogs. A dedicated animal management vehicle is used to transport cats and dogs. The vehicle is compliant with the Code of Practice for the Transportation of Dogs and Cats</p> <p>Lost dog and cat reports are maintained by officers via a register. This is used to help re-unite owners with their pets</p> <p>Current registered animals are returned to their owners instead of taken to the pound (unless there is a history of non-compliance)</p>

Education	<p>Animal Welfare Victoria website links and electronic fact sheets/brochures on various topics are made available on Council's website, and at customer service centres for hard copies.</p> <p>Provide information to animal owners which may assist with animal keeping</p> <p>Make available the various mandatory codes of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and Prevention of Cruelty of Animal Act 1986 relating to keeping of domestic animals, and boarding, breeding, and training establishments.</p>
After hours emergency service	Monday to Friday from 5:00pm to 8:30am and 24 hours over the weekend.
Dog attack complaints	Investigated as a priority. A comprehensive investigation is undertaken which is then reviewed to determine a suitable course of action
Routine street patrols	Officers conduct weekly proactive patrols of streets and properties to identify unregistered dogs and cats, or any other related issue

1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

A summary of statistics relevant to the management of domestic animals in the Pyrenees Shire is outlined in the below table.

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Authorised Officers (EFT)	1	2	2
Registered dogs	2244	2217	2177
Dogs impounded	37	35	26
Dogs returned to owner	No Data	24	25
Dogs rehomed	No Data	7	0
Dogs euthanised	No Data	4	1
Dogs surrendered to council	No Data	0	1
Registered cats	575	548	518
Cats impounded	52	94	58
Cats returned to owner	No Data	9	8
Cats rehomed	No Data	12	8
Cats euthanised (feral)	No Data	73	42
Reported dog attacks on dogs	4	1	1
Reported dog attacks on person	4	3	3
Reported dog attacks on livestock	12	8	12
Domestic animal complaints & requests	444	305	335
Domestic Animal Businesses	1	1	1
Prosecutions	2	7	3
Infringements Issued	69	71	12

2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS



This section outlines the current and planned training programs for authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the *Domestic Animals Act* within Council's municipal district.

2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council's animal management services are managed by the Community Safety and Amenity team, which is part of the planning and development regulatory services unit.

Council currently employs two full-time Community Safety and Amenity officers with a combined 18 years of experience in the field across multiple Councils. The officers are multi-skilled, and in addition to domestic animal management, their roles include:

- Livestock management under the Impounding of Livestock Act
- Litter control under the Environment Protection Act
- Fire prevention under the Country Fire Authority Act
- Animal welfare under the Prevention to Cruelty of Animals Act
- School Crossings
- Local Laws
- Parking enforcement
- Council Prosecutions

It is a requirement that all authorised officers have, at a minimum, a Certificate IV in Government Statutory Compliance, Animal Control and Regulation, or equivalent experience, and undertake all Council required training programs.

A list of further completed training includes:

- Animal Welfare Victoria training and information days
- First Aid
- Working alone and/or in remote areas
- Identifying Family Violence training
- Conflict management – Dealing with difficult and aggressive customers
- Animal handling and behaviour training
- Occupational Health & Safety training
- In-house Council software training

2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

A variety of training and Council adopted policies and procedures are available to all authorised officers to assist them in undertaking their role. Training options are reviewed annually to ensure relevant and up to date material is provided so that they can carry out their roles safely and effectively. Our planned training for the 2021-2025 period is listed below.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Officers to attend training conducted by Animal Welfare Victoria	As offered	Annual Review to include review of attendance with training register
New officers will be trained in Certificate IV in Government	ASAP after commencement unless have equivalent experience	Annual Review of successful completion of course
New officers will be trained in Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	ASAP after commencement unless have equivalent experience	Annual Review of successful completion of course
First Aid	Every 2 years	As arises
Working alone and/or in remote areas	Every 2 years	As arises
Conflict management – Dealing with aggressive customers	Every 2 years	As arises
Animal handling and behaviour training	Every 2-3 years	As arises
Investigations, enforcement, and prosecutions training	As arises	As arises
Council e-learning opportunities	As per Council requirements	As arises
Attend training and seminars offered by the Australian Institute of Animal Management	As offered	As arises
OHS Training	As offered	As arises

2.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by animal management officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff• Continue with current training listed in section 2.1	<p>Year 2 & 3</p> <p>See section 2.1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into a Council OHS training policy• See section 2.1

Objective 2: Develop and maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop a spreadsheet listing each officer showing their completed and proposed training	<p>Year 2 & 3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update and maintain training spreadsheet as needed



3. RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP



3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council currently promotes responsible pet ownership through various programs and strategies. These include but are not limited to:

- Providing educational material to the public via our website, use of social media, visitor information centres, and face to face contact when dealing with the community.
- Educating the community about responsible pet ownership, including the benefits of desexing, registration and microchipping.
- Running a cat trapping program across the shire focusing on reducing feral cat numbers and nuisance complaints. Council currently has 12 traps which are in use throughout the year.
- Providing doggie doo bags and dispensers in key locations along with pictogram signs advising of regulations in the area.
- Providing a 24-hour after-hours emergency animal control service to the public.
- Conducting blitzes in targeted areas to capture unregistered dogs and cats, and to also ensure excess numbers of animals are not kept on properties without a local law permit (12 excess animal permits were issued in 2021).
- Annual audits of domestic animal businesses and any declared menacing, dangerous, or restricted breed dogs.

- Annual doorknock across the shire to identify unregistered animals.
- Customer Action Request electronic database that captures complaints lodged by the public regarding nuisances and other domestic animal related matters.
- Enforcement tools are used discretionally depending on the nature of the issue, type of offence and any history. These tools comprise of letters with educational material, a notice to comply issued under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, the issuing of an infringement/s or prosecution in the magistrate's court.

3.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS:

In 2008 Council resolved to make the following Orders under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

1. An Order that requires the mandatory desexing of first-time registered cats, except for those cats exempt under section 10(b) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
2. An Order for a night curfew for cats within the township zones of Avoca, Amphitheatre Beaufort, Landsborough, Lexton, Moonambel, Snake Valley and Waubra.
3. An order requiring dogs to remain on-leash within the business precincts of the townships of Avoca, Amphitheatre, Beaufort, Moonambel, Landsborough, Lexton, Snake Valley and Waubra. The dog on-leash Order will also apply to sign-posted areas around schools and kindergartens.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Council has a number of local laws relating to the keeping of domestic animals. A snapshot of these is listed below and detailed further in Appendix 2.

- **Local Law No. 4.1 Animal Keeping**

- (1) The owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep or allowed to be kept on that land any more domestic pets than is set out in the following table.

Area	Dogs	Cats
Residential Area	2	2
Rural Area (less than 2 ha)	2	2
Rural Area (more than 2 ha)	4	4

- **Local Law 4.2 Animal Litter**

- (1) The owner or person in charge of an animal in a public place must:
 - (a) carry a litter device suitable for the collection of any excrement from that animal.
 - (b) produce the device on request of an authorised officer; and
 - (c) immediately collect and dispose of any excrement from that animal into a waste receptacle.

3.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Review and update Councils Orders under the Act.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Conduct a community consultation program to determine the feasibility of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">the implementation of a new updated off-leash Order that is in-line with other rural Councils and community expectationsThe introduction of a 24-hour cat curfew (currently only dusk to dawn)Identify possible dog off lead park areas and create fenced and unfenced dog parks once the new and updated Order is passed	Year 2, 3 and 4	<p>Determine support and appetite for change by the community and update Orders accordingly</p> <p>Have at least two off-lead parks in the shire (fenced or not fenced)</p>

Objective 2: Develop a discounted pet desexing program for concession card holders.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Apply for grants for pet desexing offered by the state government & MAV	As they arise	Obtain grant

Objective 3: Develop Standard Operating Procedures and Policies for the domestic animal management unit.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Create procedures/policies for dealing with the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nuisance complaints i.e., barking dogsDog attacksExcess animal permits	Year 2 & 3	<p>Review the use of procedures by Officers during their annual review or as arises</p>

4. OVER-POPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Over population and high euthanasia rates of cats continues to be a problem in the Pyrenees Shire. Officers spend valuable time and resources collecting and dealing with trapped cats. Whilst the introduction of compulsory desexing and the cat curfew in 2008 has had an impact, the stray and feral cat population in the Shire continues to be a significant problem.

In the 24 months from 2019 -2021 Council impounded 152 cats. Of these, only 11% were returned to their owners. The majority of these cats were unidentifiable and presented as feral, resulting in them being humanely euthanised by a vet.

In comparison, in the 24 months from 2019 – 2021, officers impounded 61 dogs. Of these 80% were re-united with their owners and a further 12% were rehomed through the adoption process.

Our Education, Promotion and Compliance Activities include:

- Encouraging responsible pet ownership by promoting the desexing of cats (mandatory) and dogs (optional). Council offers a reduced registration rate for desexed cats and dogs.
- Providing a free cat trapping program (12 traps available).
- Discuss the option of surrender and rehoming to residents with excess animals.
- Investigate reports of excess animals on properties.
- Limit animal numbers on properties by enforcing Councils local laws and capping numbers on permits.
- Issue official warnings, infringement notices or prosecute if necessary.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of local law notices issued property owners to reduce numbers on properties	10	4	6
Number of excess animal permits issued	10	4	12

4.2 OUR ORDERS AND LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS:

- Domestic Animals Act Order that requires the mandatory desexing of first-time registered cats, except for those cats exempt under section 10(b) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.
- Domestic Animals Act Order for a night curfew for cats within the township zones of Avoca, Amphitheatre Beaufort, Landsborough, Lexton, Moonambel, Snake Valley and Waubra.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

- Local Law No. 4.1 Animal Keeping

- (2) The owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep or allowed to be kept on that land any more domestic pets than is set out in the following table.

Area	Dogs	Cats
Residential Area	2	2
Rural Area (less than 2 ha)	2	2
Rural Area (more than 2 ha)	4	4

4.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Reduce the number of impounded and unregistered cats in the Shire.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Run education campaigns regarding feral and semi-owned cats	Ongoing	Public feedback
Circulate safe Cat, Safe Wildlife education material throughout municipality (www.safecat.org.au)	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance cats
Purchase more cat traps and proactively offer to residents in or close to high bio-diversity areas	Ongoing	Track impound statistics and monitor results in these areas

Objective 2: Encourage desexing of animals and assist with low cost desexing for concession card holders.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Apply for animal desexing grants through Animal Welfare Victoria and the Municipal Association of Victoria when they arise	As arise	Successfully obtain grant and record number of animals desexed via the program
Continue to promote desexing of pets	Ongoing	Responsible pet ownership
Look at further registration discount options i.e., Free first-time registration for cats and dogs under the age of six months that are desexed and microchipped	Year 4	Compare registration statistics
Participate with neighbouring Council campaigns and promotional days around microchipping and desexing if and when available.	As arise	Record number of participants and outcomes.



5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION



5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

All dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be registered with Council as per the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. Registration fees are collected by Council annually as they are due by the 10th of April. Durable lifetime identification tags are issued to every dog and cat registered.

Registration and microchipping assists authorised officers in identifying and reuniting animals with their owners should they be found unsecured or wandering outside of their property. All pet owners are encouraged to ensure that their pet is wearing their registration tag to assist in the identification process.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Dog and Cats Registered	2819	2765	2695
Notice to Comply to Register	64	41	88
Fail to Register Infringements	44	26	7

Pet registration and identification is fundamentally important to the Pyrenees Shire. It enables Council to understand the level of pet ownership in the community, which in turn helps Council to plan for services and programs, relating to pets and their management.

Programs and tools Council utilised to educate pet owners on pet registration include:

- Use of local media and website to promote registration requirements.
- Regular media releases / articles in local newspapers regarding responsible pet ownership issues.
- Provide a range of education material / brochures for the community.
- Use of Council website as a promotional tool including links to other agencies and useful websites.

- Annual registration renewal notices sent out in March each year, followed by an overdue notice in April, text messages two weeks after the overdue notice, and then finally phone calls and doorknocks to the remaining outstanding renewals.
- Promotion of responsible pet ownership and requirements on Councils Facebook page.
- Any dog or cat seized by an authorised officer is not returned to its owner unless it is microchipped, registered, and the relevant reclaim fee paid.
- Any animal, currently registered, found unsecured or at large, with no prior compliance issues, is returned to its registered owner.
- Due to Council not having a pound facility and needing to utilise the Ballarat animal shelter (located over 50 kilometres away), every effort possible is made to re-unite stray or wandering dogs with their registered owners.
- Regular updating of Councils animal registration database.
- Ensuring properties keeping additional animals have the required local law or planning permit.
- Council offers a reduced registration fee for cats and dogs that are desexed, over ten years old, working dogs, have a breeding status as part of a domestic animal business or associated with an applicable organisation.

5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS:

Refer to Appendix 1.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Refer to Appendix 2.

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

- Investigate all complaints and ensure they are captured on Councils relevant databases.
- Patrols conducted upon request and proactively on a regular basis.
- Regular cat trapping program (12 traps are available with no fee applied).
- Issue Notices for detected offences and Infringement Notices if compliance is not achieved.
- Prosecution in the Magistrates court for breaches of the Domestic Animals Act when appropriate.

5.3 OUR PLAN

Council will endeavour to maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals to aid compliance activities and to help reunite lost pets with their owners. It will continue to deliver existing programs and utilise the tools listed previously in this section (see section 5.1 Context and Current Situation).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate the feasibility of Authorised Officers implanting microchips	Year 4	Training complete
Use local newspapers, community newsletters, social media, and Councils website to promote and advertise registration requirements prior to the 10th April renewal date	Feb/Mar/Apr each year	At least one article to be submitted before renewal date
Council's website to provide information to residents on when and how to register their pets	Ongoing	Review annually before the registration renewal period begins

Investigate the use of a social media platform to list seized cats or dogs as a way of reuniting pets with their owners	Year 4	Prepare a report proposing the initiative to management.
Investigate the use of Variable Message Signs in strategic areas across the municipality during the registration renewal period	Year 1, 2, 3 and 4.	Evaluate registration uptake and statistics from database to see if registration trends have increased
Try and identify all deceased cats and dogs by scanning them for a microchip	Over the next 4 years	Create a policy that outlines Council's process in managing deceased cats and dogs found in the shire
Review information regarding cats and dogs in Councils 'new resident' kit	Ongoing	Review kit and information annually
Council Events & Promotional Activities. Set up a marquee/stand at local events to educate the community	Ongoing	Capture and review data from the community i.e., how many attendees, material handed out, questions asked, registration forms handed out etc.



6 NUISANCE

Actions in this section address sections 68A(2)(c)(vi) and 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), (f) by outlining programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

6.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

We strive to encourage people to manage their pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animals, maximises the companion benefits of their pets, and most importantly, minimise the potential for nuisance or harm to others.

CATS

The number one complaint Council receives regarding nuisances is to request the collection of a cat trespassing on a property. In most cases the cat is feral, semi feral, not microchipped so therefore not identifiable. Consequently, no one is accountable for their impact on the environment and community.

Data from the 1/1/2018 to 31/12/2021

	Cats
Total Customer Enquiries and Complaints for Cats	269
Request for traps and/or collection of a trapped cat	166

- Council provides a free cat trapping program and enforces mandatory desexing of cats within the municipality.
- Encourages cat owners to consider purchasing or building their own cat enclosure. Information brochures are available for cat owners regarding cat enclosures.
- Local Law regulation to maximum the numbers of cats kept on a property.
- Cat curfew introduced 2008. Cats to be contained between sunset and sunrise in all townships.



BARKING DOGS

Dogs that bark excessively can be a source of great irritation for residents. Programs and tools Council utilised to educate pet owners include:

Data from the 1/1/2018 to 31/12/2021

	Dogs
Total Customer Enquiries and Complaints for Dogs	617
Barking Dogs	55
Dogs at large, wandering or needing to be picked up	218

- Owners of barking dogs are advised verbally and in writing of strategies to minimise excessive barking.
- Complainants are provided with a noise log to capture nuisance barking and submit back to Council for evaluation and action.
- Animal Management Officers offer advice to pet owners as to suitable breeds or types specific to their needs.
- Range of pet ownership educational brochures available to the community.

AT LARGE, WANDERING DOGS & DOGS IN PUBLIC PLACES

- A person in charge of a dog must remove and dispose of excrement deposited in public places. A person must also carry poo scoop / bag or similar for effective removal of poo.
- Poo bag dispensers were introduced to Pyrenees Shire Council townships in 2011.
- Dogs must remain on leash within business precincts and signed areas around schools and kindergartens – See Current Domestic Animals Act Order.
- Legislative requirement under the Act for registration of dogs and cats at age of three months.



6.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS:

Refer to Appendix 1.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Refer to Appendix 2.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES:

- Providing educational material to animal owners, along with noise logs for barking complaints.
- Issuing of notices, infringements, and prosecution in the Magistrates court.
- Intensive cat trapping program all year round (12 traps).
- All complaints investigated and acted upon.
- Objection notices issued to owners whose cats or dogs trespass on private property.
- Notices issued to ensure dogs are securely confined to the property.

6.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Reduce cat nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to enforce cat curfew	Ongoing	Keep a register of nuisance complaints – should result in less cat nuisance complaints
Continue to promote and enforce desexing of cats	Ongoing	Continual promotion.
Provide education material about cat enclosures and nuisance	Ongoing	Annual Review of website content and brochures available at Shire Office and Information Centres
Use social media as a tool to promote responsible cat ownership	Mar/Apr each year	Posts on social media platforms promoting responsible cat ownership – especially around renewal time

Objective 2: Reduce dog nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Make available information about how to address barking dogs for both owners and neighbours and how to go about solving nuisance issues	ASAP	Increased advice and information should result in less complaints. Keep a register of nuisance complaints
Utilise Council's on hold message facility, website and social media as a promotional tool	Ongoing	Annual review of content

Continue to promote desexing of animals via website and social media	Ongoing	Annual review of content
Review signage and placement of dog faeces bag dispensers in municipality. Increase numbers in areas that require them	Ongoing	Increased availability of bag dispenser should result in less complaints about dog faeces in public places
Create a standard operating procedure for managing barking dog complaints	Year 2	Adopt procedure.



7 DOG ATTACKS

Actions in this section address sections 68A(2)(c)(iii) and 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), (f) by outlining programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The Pyrenees Shire Council make every effort to prevent dog attacks in the shire. Being a rural Council most dog attacks in our municipality occur on livestock. All reports of an attack are captured and lodged in Councils 'Customer Action Request' database and investigated.

Below is a list of all dog attack reports in the shire over the last four years.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Attack on Livestock	5	12	8	12
Dog on Dog	1	4	1	1
Dog on Person	0	4	3	3
Dog Rushing Person	0	1	2	2

7.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS

CURRENT ORDERS:

Refer to Appendix 1.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Refer to Appendix 2.

CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES:

All dog attacks are thoroughly investigated by authorised officers. Evidence is captured, witness and victim statements taken, interviews conducted if necessary, offending dogs seized and impounded if possible/or when practical. A brief of evidence is then compiled and reviewed to determine the best possible outcome for all parties and the broader community. Depending on the seriousness of the attack and strength of brief of evidence compiled, Council may take the following actions:

- Issue notices and infringements
- Proceed with charges in the Magistrates court
- Seek a destruction order of the offending dog/s
- Declare the dog/s either menacing, dangerous or a restricted breed.



7.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Reduce attacks by dogs and cats on people, livestock, pets, and wildlife.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create and adopt a comprehensive policy and procedure around how the shire deal with and investigate dog attacks in the municipality	Year 2	Adopted policy
Court results of successful prosecutions to be released to the media as a way of raising awareness and responsible dog ownership	As they occur	As arise
Encourage the community to report dog attacks to Council by improving public awareness through media campaigns, educational material, website, and social media	Ongoing	Reviewed annually
Patrol areas of reported dog attacks on livestock where the dogs were not identified. Conduct educational letter drops or speak to all surrounding dog owners advising them of the recent attack and what their responsibilities are	ongoing	As arise

8 DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

Actions in this section address sections 68A(2)(c)(vi) and 68A(2)(a), (c)(i)(c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), (f) by outlining programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in the district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations.

8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The Pyrenees Shire Council currently has no restricted breed dogs, one menacing dog and no declared dangerous dogs (including guard dogs) in the municipality.

Council officers ensure that owners of any declared dog/s adhere to the requirements of the Act by conducting the following activities:

- Ensure any declared dog is entered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry. This is a database that enables the centralised recording of information from all Councils in Victoria concerning dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs.
- Conduct annual inspections of properties where a declared dog is kept ensuring strict housing requirements are met under the Act.
- Conduct regular patrols of industrial estates and commercial properties to identify potential guard dogs.
- Update any declared dog owners of the current legislation and their requirements.
- Investigate any complaints referred to Council from the Dangerous Dog Hotline. This is an additional way of reporting introduced by the Victorian Government.
- Declaration of dogs where applicable.

8.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT PROCEDURES:

- Councils' animal registration form has a category to identify declared and restricted breed dogs. The fees associated with these categories is significantly higher to enable cost recovery for the additional work officers conduct in auditing and managing declared dogs. The higher fee does not have a concession rate like the other categories. It also acts as a deterrent for people wishing to keep declared or restricted breed dogs.
- As per the Act and Regulations, declared dogs are entered into the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.

CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES:

Refer to 8.1 Context and Current Situation

8.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Develop a policy to assist in the decision-making process of declaring a dog, ensuring the policy is fair, reasonable, and consistent.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review all investigations / briefs of evidence relating to dog attacks to determine if a declaration should be sought	As occurs	Outcomes of declaration proposals
Draft and adopt a standard operating procedure / policy for declarations which standardises the process to ensure consistency and fairness	Year 3	Number of proposed declarations, appeals and successful declarations

Objective 2: Ensure declared dogs are compliant with the act and regulations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Refer to the measures outlined in section 8.1 Context and Current Situation	As occurs, ongoing and annually	Successful outcomes and the recording of data to show trends Review actions and offences detected



9 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES



Actions in this section address sections 68A(2)(c)(ii) and 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (d), (f) by outlining programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation.

9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

There are five types of domestic animal businesses:

- Breeding and rearing establishments
- Pet Shops
- Boarding establishments
- Dog training establishments
- Shelters and pounds for dogs and cats

There is currently only one (1) registered Domestic Animal Business in the Pyrenees Shire. This business is a boarding establishment located on the outskirts of Avoca. An audit of the property is conducted annually prior to its registration being renewed.

Whilst we do have several breeding establishments that operate across the municipality, these are exempt from a business registration with Council, as they are members of an applicable organisation, as approved by the Minister for Agriculture under the Act.

Unlike many other Councils the Pyrenees Shire does not own or operate a pound or shelter. We have a service agreement with the City of Ballarat which is utilised as needed.

The Pyrenees Shire Council work with businesses owners to achieve best practice standards of animal welfare. Domestic Animal Businesses are audited annually. All complaints are investigated, and the relevant enforcement action taken for issues of non-compliance.

9.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Domestic Animals Act provides a prescriptive framework for the management of domestic animal businesses. The Pyrenees Shire Council enforce all legislative requirements under the Act.

- Council requires an application form to be completed and the relevant fee paid.
- All applications are referred to Council planning department for comment prior to proceeding.
- Businesses are comprehensively audited annually to ensure compliance with the act and relevant code of practice.

9.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses operate in accordance with statutory requirements and community expectations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify non-registered Domestic Animal Businesses by monitoring social media, local advertising boards and newspapers in the municipality (or similar, including online sites) identify businesses selling pets / products and services. Cross reference results with the Pet Exchange Register	Ongoing	Achieve compliance. Compare number of DAB's before and after activity
Audit all current domestic animal businesses within the municipality	Annually	Keep register and review annually that all domestic animal businesses and breeders have been audited
Utilise Councils database to conduct proactive inspections of properties identified as having more than 3 fertile females	Ongoing	Achieve compliance.

Objective 2: Develop a standard operating procedure and guidelines for assessing applications and dealing with issues of non-compliance.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Outline the process for assessing new applications. Ensure the planning and building department are consulted and included.	Year 2	Documented process and procedure.
Outline enforcement actions for persons found operating an unregistered domestic animal business.	Year 3	Documented process and procedure.

10 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Under section 68A(3) of the Act, every Council must review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually, and, if appropriate, amend the plan. Council must provide the Department Secretary with a copy of the plan, including any amendments, and publish an evaluation of the plan's implementation in its annual report.

Pyrenees Shire Council will continue to review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually as required under the Domestic Animals Act (DAA).

10.1 EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Complete for each activity	
Was each activity completed?	Yes/No
Describe any changes you will make if you do that activity again.	
Was an activity not done or is now not planned to be done?	If so, why?
If an activity was unsuccessful and you don't plan to do it again, outline insights you have into why it didn't work.	
Complete for each objective	
Did you meet your objective by carrying out the planned activities?	Yes/No
Describe your level of success/progress in meeting the objective.	



APPENDIX 1

PYRENEES SHIRE COUNCIL DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT ORDER 2008

2640 G 46 13 November 2008

Victoria Government Gazette



Order for Mandatory desexing of cats –
section 10 **Domestic (Feral and Nuisance)**
Animals Act 1994

Pyrenees Shire Council resolved at its meeting on 19 August 2008 to exercise its power to make an Order under section 10 of the **Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994**. The Order requires mandatory desexing of first time registered cats, except for those cats exempt under 10B of **Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994**.

This will take effect on 10 April 2009.

Order for Cat curfew between the hours of
sunset and sunrise – section 25 **Domestic**
(Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994

At its meeting 19 August 2008, Pyrenees Shire Council has by resolution made an Order requiring a night curfew for cats within township zones of Avoca, Amphitheatre, Beaufort, Landsborough, Lexton, Moonambel, Snake Valley and Waubra. The hours of sunset and sunrise, to be defined by the Bureau of Meteorology.

Order requiring dogs to remain on leash –
section 26 of **Domestic (Feral and Nuisance)**
Animals Act 1994

Pyrenees Shire Council has by resolution, at its meeting 19 August 2008, made an Order requiring dogs to remain on leash within the business precincts of the townships of Avoca, Amphitheatre, Beaufort, Moonambel, Landsborough, Lexton, Snake Valley and Waubra. The dog on leash order will also apply to sign-posted areas around schools and kindergartens.

Local Law requiring a person in charge of a
dog to remove excrement – section 111 **Local Government**
Act 1989

At its meeting 19 August 2008, Pyrenees Shire Council has by resolution introduced a Local Law requiring an owner or person in charge of a dog to remove and dispose of excrement deposited in public places such as foot paths streets nature strips and reserves. A person in

charge of a dog must also carry a facility for the effective removal of dog excrement.

This will take effect upon publication in the Government Gazette and municipal newspapers.

STEPHEN CORNISH
Chief Executive Officer

APPENDIX 2

EXCERPT FROM PYRENEES SHIRE COUNCIL GENERAL LOCAL LAW 2019

PART 4 – ANIMALS

4.1 ANIMAL KEEPING

- (1) The owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on that land any more Domestic Pets than is set out in the following table.

*Table 1: Number of animals per property/assessment**

Area	Dogs	Cats	Poultry (Excluding Roosters)	Pigeons or other small birds	Other small animals**	Livestock kept as Domestic Pets
Residential Area	2	2	10	10	5	Permit required.
Rural Area (less than 2 ha)	2	2	10	10	10	Permit required if property under 0.4 hectares or 1 acre
Rural Area (more than 2 ha)	4	4	50	20	10	

* Planning Scheme controls may also apply in some Zones in addition to the Local Law requirements.

** Including but not limited to, rabbits, guinea pigs, birds, ferrets, mice or similar, but excluding Livestock.

- (2) For the purpose of calculating the maximum limit of the number of animals kept, the progeny of any animal which is lawfully kept will be exempt for 12 weeks after their birth.
- (3) Where a person is the owner or occupier of adjoining allotments, all of the allotments shall be regarded as one assessment of land for the purposes of subclause (1).
- (4) The owner or occupier of land on which animals are kept must ensure that the animals are housed and fenced in accordance with the relevant Code of Practice.
- (5) The owner or occupier of land on which any animal is kept must not allow any animal to be kept in any way which is detrimental to the amenity of the surrounding area.
- (6) Permit requirements for animal keeping do not apply to agricultural land uses operating in compliance with the *Pyrenees Planning Scheme*.
- (7) Dogs kept in a Farming Zone for the purpose of working stock are exempt from the requirement for an excess animal permit if the number of working dogs is 10 or less.
- (8) Domestic pets are not permitted to be kept on land zoned Commercial or Industrial under the *Pyrenees Planning Scheme*.

In determining whether to issue a permit, Council may consider:

- (a) the location of the land;

- (b) the number, type and purpose of keeping the animals;
- (c) the land-use of the applicant's land and that of adjoining allotments;
- (d) the suitability of the land for housing and fencing the animals;
- (e) any likely impact on neighbourhood amenity; or
- (f) any other matter the Authorised Officer or delegated officer reasonably believes is relevant to the application.

Infringement Notice: 3 penalty units

Court penalty: 10 penalty units

4.2 ANIMAL LITTER

(1) The owner or person in charge of an animal in a Public Place must:

- (a) carry a litter device suitable for the collection of any excrement from that animal;
- (b) produce the device on request by an Authorised Officer; and
- (c) immediately collect and dispose of any excrement from that animal into a waste receptacle.

Infringement Notice: 2 penalty units

Court penalty: 10 penalty units