

Moirashire

ENRICHING LIFE ON THE MURRAY

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN



Adopted 20 April 2009



CONTENTS

1.	<u>BACKGROUND</u>	
1.1	Introduction – Purpose of Domestic Animal management Plan	3
1.2	Legal Requirements	
1.3	Process Plan Development	4
1.4	Shire Demographics	
1.5	Domestic Animal Statistics	5
1.6	Operational Structure	6
1.7	Current programs and services	7
2.	<u>STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</u>	7
3.	<u>PROGRAMS</u>	8
3.1	Training and development of officers	8
3.2	Responsible Pet Ownership	9
3.3	Identification and Registration	10
3.4	Compliance and Enforcement	11
3.5	Domestic Animal Businesses	12
3.6	Declared Dogs	12
4.	<u>PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION</u>	13
4.1	Method of Evaluation	13
4.1.1	Conquest System	13
4.1.2	Lynx System	13
4.1.3	Pound Register	13
4.1.4	Domestic Animal Business Register	13
4.1.5	Restricted Breed Register	14
4.1.6	Declared Dogs Register	14
4.2	Key Performance Indicators	14
4.3	Management Plan Review	14

1. **BACKGROUND**

1.1 **Introduction Purpose of Domestic Animal Management Plan**

Local Government has long been the level of government primarily responsible for the domestic animal management issues. In years past, this was through the former Dog Act and in later years, through the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 and from 11/12/07 is now known as The Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Animal management service levels, standards and methods of dealing with domestic animals throughout Victoria remain diverse. The Victorian Government considers that, through a formalised approach to domestic animal management planning, services and methods of dealing with pets will improve across the whole local government sector.

The objective of this new legislative requirement on local Governments to prepare a domestic animal management plan is to increase the relative profile and importance of the domestic animal management function in the local government sector.

1.2 **Legal Requirements**

Section 68 A of the Act requires all Councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan at 3 yearly intervals which must include the following:

- set out a method for evaluating whether for evaluating whether animal control services provided by the council are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Act and regulations
- outline training programs for authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the relevant acts and regulations
- to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership of dogs and cats
- to ensure people comply with the Act, Regulations and Local Laws
- to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
- to address any over population and high euthanasia rates of dogs and cats
- to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
- to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
- to effectively identify all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs and to ensure that said dogs are kept in compliance with the Acts and regulations
- review all existing orders made under this Act and local laws with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats are desirable
- provide for review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats within Council's Municipal district that may be necessary
- provide for periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under this plan

MOIRA DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

- review it's domestic animal management plan (at least annually) and if appropriate amend the plan
- provide the Secretary of the department of primary Industries with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan and
- publish an evaluation of it's implementation of the plan in the annual report

1.3 PROCESS PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The plan has been developed in consultation with all members of the Moira Shire Local Law Enforcement Team. Other council's draft plans have been reviewed and relevant issues included in Moira Shire Council's draft plan. (for example plans from Wellington Shire, Alpine Shire, Campaspe, Mitchell, and Camperdown).

1.4 SHIRE DEMOGRAPHICS

The Municipality of the Moira Shire is situated in the Northern Country of Victoria. The Murray River forms the northern border of the Municipality, the Goulburn River the western border and the Ovens River the eastern border.

The Moira Shire has an area of 4,058 sq. km, and a population of approximately 27,000 people. The Municipality consists of 26 distinct communities and has five major urban areas being Cobram, Nathalia, Numurkah, Tungamah and Yarrawonga.

The land use is predominately agricultural with cropping and grazing on the flatter plains to the east, and dairying and orchards in the central area with mixed farming and grazing in the western area. There is extensive irrigation along the Murray River and Broken Creek.

Vegetation types depend on location and include irrigated grasslands, dry land grasslands and native forests.

The economy of the region revolves around food processing and manufacturing, tourism, mixed farming, grazing and light industry.

The Municipality generally enjoys a temperate climate with an average mean summer maximum temperature of 32 degrees and average minimum of 13 degrees and an average mean winter maximum temperature of 13 degrees and an average minimum of 3 degrees.

1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

BIS Shrapnel reported in September 2006 (Contribution of the pet Care industry to the Australian Economy) that a Council could estimate its dog and cat populations by using a simple equation, for dogs it was estimated that there was 18 dogs per 100 residents and for cats it was 12 per 100 residents, the results are an estimated 4860 dogs and 3240 cats, respectively. BIS Shrapnel came up with these equations by gauging the amount of pet food being sold in an area.

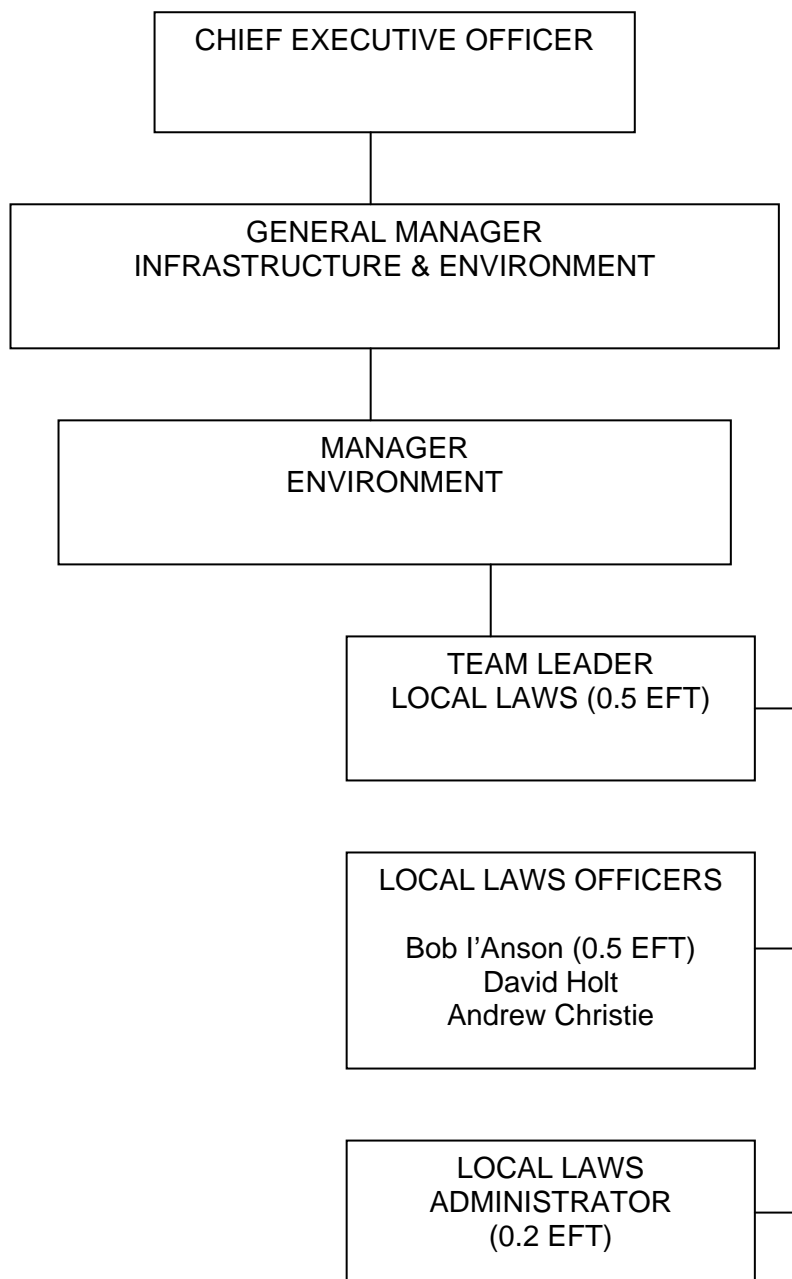
The comparisons with the Moira Shire Council dog registration records indicates that Moira Shire (5472 in 2007) has significantly more dogs than the estimated average (4860) for its population.

Shire/Council – Key Statistics	Moira Shire 2007	Like Councils Average	State Average
Population	27,000	16,000	25,000
No. of EFT Authorised Officers	3	3	3
No. of Registered Dogs	5,472	2261	5155
Estimated Dog (not registered) Population	4,518	3225	4,500
No. of Registered Cats	1,472	531	1,706
Estimated Cat (not registered) Population	3240	2140	3,000
No. of Registered Declared Dogs	10	2	n/a
No. of Prosecutions Completed	5	1	3
No. of Successful Prosecutions	4 (1 pending)	1	n/a
No. of impoundments (dogs)	210	116	n/a
No. of dogs returned to owners	98	50	44
No. of dogs euthanized	110	37	33.5%
No. of impoundments (cats)	111	22	n/a
No. of cats returned to owner	16	1	10.5%
No. of cats euthanized	95	9	74%
No of Dogs stolen from pound	2	n/a	n/a

Moira Shire Council's registration records indicates the following compared to the State Average:

- Less cats registered
- More declared dogs registered
- More prosecutions;
- Greater percentage of dogs returned to owners;
- Less percentage of dogs euthanized; and
- Greater percentage of cats returned to owners.

1.6 OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE



1.7 CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PROGRAM SERVICE	SERVICE LEVEL
Identification and registration of animals	Ongoing
Door knock campaigns	Annually & if need arises re complaints
Domestic Animal Complaints	Response within 4 hours
Dog attacks	Immediate Response
Dangerous dog complaints	Immediate Response
Routine street patrols	Daily (as part of re-active duties)
Pound Management	Open office hours & by appointment
Community Group Seminars: Responsible Pet Ownership	4 per year

Council has recently clarified the timing of all of its responsibilities and drafted up a calendar, to envisage how any additional works as a result of this plan would fit in to the current program.

2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The core purpose of the Moira Shire's Animal Management Services are:

- (i) to create an environment where people and pets can peacefully coexist within the community
- (ii) to inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible pet ownership
- (iii) to ensure that the needs of the wider community are reflected through Domestic Animal Code & Practice.

3 **PROGRAMS**

3.1 **ANIMAL MANAGEMENT OFFICER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Objective

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work.

Current Activities:

- The Department of Primary Industries training sessions held twice per year at Benalla, Wangaratta, Shepparton or Melbourne depending on availability of offices; and
- Various other seminars throughout the year which will benefit officers i.e. dog attack, DNA sampling courses, dealing with aggressive people etc.

Planned Programs

- It is intended that each Animal management Officer attends relevant courses as required by their performance management appraisals. Officers will share the contents of these courses/seminars in a group meeting and disseminate documentation which will continue to keep all officers abreast of the latest changes and techniques pertaining to their roles.

3.2 ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP – COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Objective

To encourage people to manage pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

Current Activities:

- Four Pet Ownership Talks to various Community Groups and Primary Schools within the Shire have been conducted during the last twelve months;
- Various media releases throughout the year designed to continually keep public informed of not only responsible pet ownership but also of their requirements as set down by Government Legislation;
- Annual door knocks which effectively promotes responsible pet ownership on a personal level; and
- Daily patrols of the shire resulting in detection of stray animals. The resultant follow up is intended to eliminate repetition of animals straying from properties.

Planned Programs

- Endeavour to conduct a minimum of four responsible Pet Ownership Seminars with interested Community groups/schools within the shire per year;
- Media releases throughout the year designed to keep the public informed of not only responsible pet ownership but also their requirements set down by government legislation and local laws;
- Conduct annual door knocks over a 3 month period rotating between townships and rural areas which effectively promotes responsible pet ownership on a personal level whilst ensuring compliance with registration requirements;
- Daily attendance by members to complaints received from the public;
- Conduct patrols of the Shire resulting in detection of stray animals. The resultant follow up is intended to eliminate repetition of animals straying from properties. Note that these patrols are of lower risk than other programs and will be undertaken if resources are not taken up in higher risk programs.
- Annual review of premises with animal permits allowing the keeping of animals that exceed the permitted number. This enables officers to keep abreast of over population of animals on premises designed to educate the public of their legal requirements; and

3.3 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Objective

To maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals

Current Activities:

- Programmed annual door knocks – attend households personally within both rural and urban townships on a rotation basis, of the Shire annually from August to November
- Daily patrols – resources permitting, when officers are not attending complaints or other duties involving Local Laws, they will pro-actively conduct patrols throughout the Shire locating any stray animals
- Attendance of complaints
- Media releases
- Pet ownership seminars

Planned Programs

- Annual door knocks – attend households personally within both rural and urban townships on a rotation basis, of the Shire annually from August to November
- Daily patrols , when officers are not attending complaints or other duties involving Local Laws, they will pro-actively conduct patrol throughout the Shire locating stray animals
- Attendance of complaints;
- Media releases;
- Pet ownership seminars; and
- Annual review of animal permits re over population of animals on premises.

3.4 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT

Objective

To maximise compliance with domestic animal laws, orders and regulations (State and Local)

Current Activities:

- The offer to conduct responsible pet ownership seminars;
- Media releases;
- Programmed annual door knocks;
- Daily attendance of complaints from public; and
- If resources permit daily patrols of the shire ensuring compliance of all relevant state and local legislation.

Planned Programs

- Annual door knocks – attend households personally within both rural and urban townships on a rotation basis, of the Shire annually from August to November
- Daily patrols , when officers are not attending complaints or other duties involving Local Laws, they will pro-actively conduct patrol throughout the Shire locating stray animals
- Attendance at complaints;
- Media releases;
- Conduct two responsible pet ownership seminars per year;
- Annual review of animal permits re over population of animals on premises;
- Annual review of domestic animal businesses;
- Officers to attend training modules/seminars/courses
- Review and evaluate any existing orders made under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and local laws and regulations;
- Review and evaluate any matters, service or strategy relating to this management plan biannually for the first 12 months of implementation and annually thereafter; and
- Review and evaluate any other matters that arise relevant to the management of dogs and cats with Moira Shire's Municipality that may be necessary.

3.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

Objective

To work in partnership with domestic animal businesses to achieve Council's domestic animal management goals.

There are six registered domestic animal businesses within the Moira Shire. These include five Boarding Kennel establishments and one Pet Shop.

Planned programs

- To inspect two domestic animal businesses per year to ensure compliance with State Legislation and Local Laws; and
- Review annually, domestic animal businesses permits.

3.6 DECLARED DOGS

Objective

To minimise the risks of dog attacks within the community.

The Moira Shire has 12 declared dangerous dogs and 26 dogs declared Menacing dogs.

Current Activities:

- Identifying restricted breeds not known to council Officers during programmed annual door knocks;
- Inspections of premises of declared dogs for compliance with legislation; and
- Declaration of dogs involved in dog attacks where Courts do not issue an order for dog to be euthanized.

Planned Programs

- Review annually, domestic animal businesses permits;
- Annual door knocks;
- Media releases;
- Ensure all declared dogs premises are audited annually for compliance as per legislation;
- Ensure all declared dogs are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry; and
- Promote visible presence to public as a proactive role.

4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 Method of Evaluating Animal Control services

4.1.1 Conquest Complaint System.

By utilising the Conquest Complaint Recording System it is possible to categorise complaints received, jobs attended, or offences detected whilst patrolling the shire.

This system enables us to evaluate where resources are being utilised. It is also possible to identify any problem areas by examining these statistics to best strategise and direct where resources could be better utilised. This also enables the establishment of a concerted effort if the need demands into a particular area.

Quarterly assessment of requests lodged will be undertaken including but not limited to number of requests and response times.

4.1.2 Lynx Management System

All animals registered are recorded on the Lynx system. Animals are registered against both the property and client. The animal remains on file indefinitely and the registration for it is renewed each year unless the owner declares it deceased, left premises or otherwise.

The client does not have to be a ratepayer for the property; they could be a tenant or other resident of the property.

The animal register display shows the main details on the animal being the type of animal (cat or dog) breed, name, sterilised, sex, age, notes, colour, rate, status, and tag number of animal.

The registration data will be reviewed annually. Changes in registrations will be assessed against previous years.

4.1.3 Pound Register

The pound register gives us accurate records of animals impounded by Animal Management Officers. It also identifies animals that repeatedly are impounded. The register is contained within an Excel Spreadsheet.

Data includes breed of animal, colour, sex, de sexed, age, location found or picked up, name of person handing animal over, reason for impounding (stray etc) behavioural problems, permanent identification details, status of disposal and notes.

An annual assessment of the pound register will be undertaken and reported to council as required by Government Legislation.

4.1.4 Domestic Animal Business Register

The Domestic Animal Businesses Register contains accurate records of all such businesses within the Shire.

MOIRA DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.1.5 Restricted Breed Register

The restricted Breed register contains records of restricted breed animals known to be housed within the Shire, from 2004.

4.1.6 Declared Dogs Register.

The Declared Dog Register is divided into two categories:

- Dangerous Dogs
- Menacing Dogs

The declared dogs records register contains accurate records from 2004 onwards.

4.2 Key performance Indicators (KPI's)

Item	KPI's	Target	Current Target	Comment
1	Endeavour to Increase Animal Registration Compliance – from 1 st August to 10 th March annually	4%	5%	Refer to note 1 below
3	Inspect two Animal Businesses per year	100%	Nil	
4	Endeavour to Conduct four Community Education programs re responsible Pet Ownership	100%	100%	Refer to note 2 below
5	Quarterly media releases re Community Education	4	n/a	
6	Review Domestic Animal Plan	Annual	n/a	Biannual (1 st year)
7	Successful prosecutions	100%	100%	

Note 1 Animal Registrations have reached a plateau within the shire over the last 3 years due to continual animal door knock program. The target of 5% increase is getting harder to achieve with significant more resources required each year to obtain it.

Note 2 Despite a concerted effort, little interest from schools and community groups in 2007/08 has resulted in the current target being difficult to sustain.

4.3 Review Cycle/Date for this Management Plan

The Domestic Animal Management Plan will be reviewed and evaluated on a bi annual basis for the first twelve months of implementation. The plan will then be reviewed annually for the remaining two years of implementation.