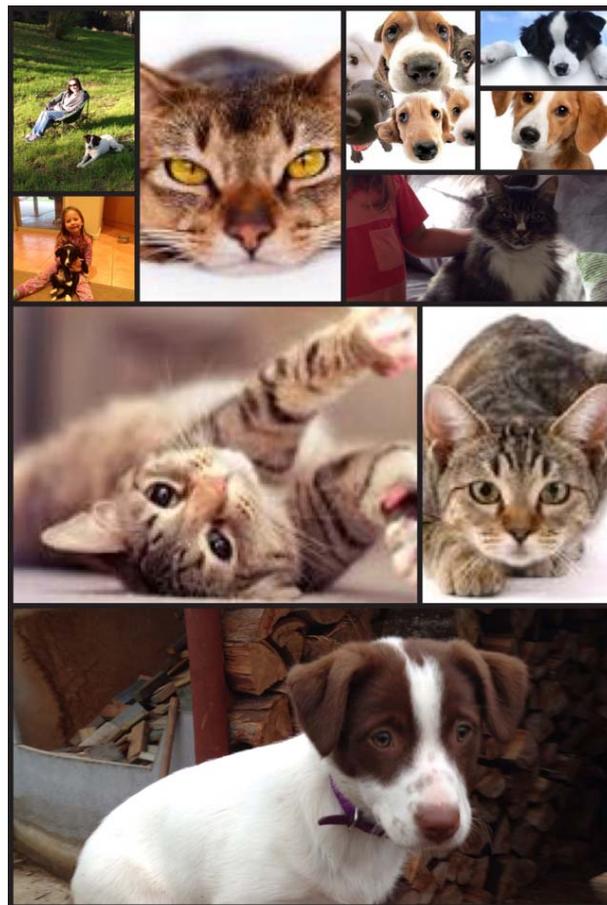




Alpine Shire

# ALPINE SHIRE COUNCIL DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017-2021



**Adopted by Council on 3 October 2017**

## **CONTENTS**

<b>CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THIS PLAN.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.3 ABS CENSUS 2016: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE AND MAPPING.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.1 ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STAFFING AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>3.2 CURRENT AND PLANNED TRAINING .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>3.3 OUR PLANS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>4. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.1 CURRENT SITUATION - DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4.2 SERVICE LEVELS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4.3 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>4.3.1 COUNCIL'S AMENITY LOCAL LAW NO 5 .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>EXTRACT OF LOCAL LAW 5 .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>KEEPING ANIMALS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>REMOVAL OF ANIMAL FAECES.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>OBJECTIONABLE NOISES .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>UNLEASHED DOGS .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>DECLARED MUNICIPAL RECREATION RESERVES .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.4 SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>4.5 OUR PLANS .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. NUISANCE.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5.1 CURRENT SITUATION .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5.2.1 COUNCIL LOCAL LAWS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5.2.2 BARKING DOGS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5.2.3 CATS AND DOGS AT LARGE.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5.3 CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>19</b>

<b>5.4</b>	<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>5.5</b>	<b>OUR PLANS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>DOG ATTACKS .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>6.1</b>	<b>CURRENT SITUATION .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>6.2</b>	<b>OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>6.3</b>	<b>CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>6.4</b>	<b>CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>6.5</b>	<b>OUR PLANS .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>7.1</b>	<b>CURRENT SITUATION .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>7.2</b>	<b>OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>7.3</b>	<b>CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>7.4</b>	<b>CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>7.5</b>	<b>OUR PLANS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>CURRENT SITUATION .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>8.3</b>	<b>CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>8.4</b>	<b>CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>8.5</b>	<b>OUR PLANS .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>9.1</b>	<b>CURRENT SITUATION .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>9.2</b>	<b>OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>9.3</b>	<b>OUR PLANS .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORTING .....</b>	<b>29</b>

## **1. DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS**

Under Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, every Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan, as follows:

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

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (*of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources*), prepare at 4 year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
- (2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
  - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
  - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
  - (c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
    - (i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
    - (ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
    - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
    - (iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
    - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
    - (vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
    - (vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
  - (d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the

management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and

- (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
- (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

(3) Every Council must—

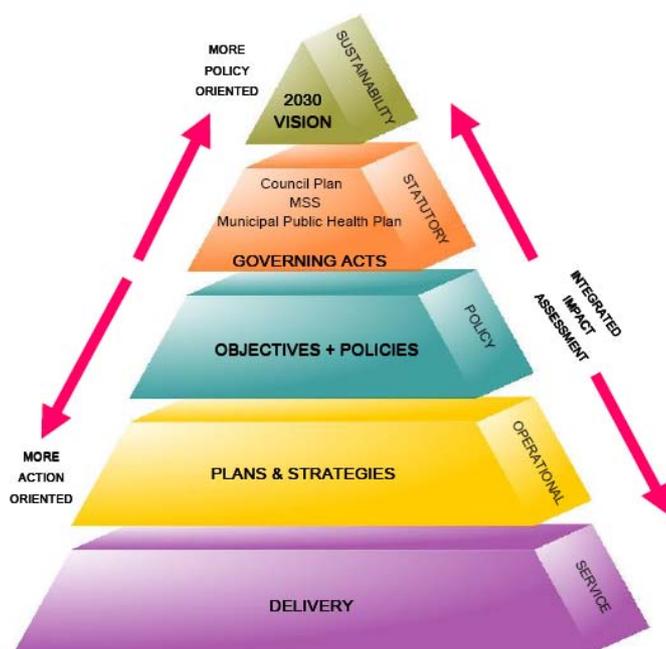
- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
- (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
- (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) has been developed by Alpine Shire Council in accordance with the requirements stipulated under Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, as well as Council’s Local Laws and relevant policies applicable to this plan. The Plan will be reviewed annually, with a major review every four years, in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.

Figure 1 diagram describes Council’s general model for managing policies, plans and strategies. Therefore, this plan is positioned in Council’s corporate planning structure by seeking to establish a bridge between the blue and yellow shaded areas. It is anticipated that the strategic direction the plan articulates will ultimately be reflected in the Council Plan.

**Figure 1 – Alpine Shire Council Policy Management Pyramid**



### 2.1 Purpose and objectives of the Plan

The purpose of this plan is to provide Alpine Shire Council and the Alpine community with a clear and concise statement as to how animal management is administered by Alpine Shire Council by:

- Documenting current processes and practices under the Alpine Shire animal management responsibilities
- Minimising non-compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Increasing pet owners’ knowledge of the principles of responsible pet ownership and enhancing community safety and awareness

- Supporting the Domestic Animal Unit to achieve its stated objectives of reducing the numbers of dogs and cats being euthanized
- Maximising the numbers of dogs and cats that are registered in the Alpine Shire
- Reducing the harmful effect of domestic pets on the population of native birds, mammals and reptiles
- Take into account the broader community views on animal management matters
- Comply with the relevant provisions of the Domestic Animals Act 1994

## **2.2 Process applied in developing this Plan**

The community and key stakeholders were invited to provide comments on the draft plan. A newspaper advertisement was put in the Alpine Observer and the Myrtleford Times to alert the community to the review of the DAMP. A Facebook post was also made to encourage the non-resident community to make a comment on the DAMP.

Local veterinary clinics, the RSPCA and the Ovens Valley Canine Club were emailed to alert them to the review of the DAMP.

The draft plan was also made available in hard copy at the three Council customer service outlets and also available on Council's Web site. Feedback has been incorporated.

## **2.3 ABS Census 2016: demographic profile and mapping**

The Shire is about 300 kilometres north-east of Melbourne and 70 kilometres south of Albury/Wodonga, situated within the Hume Region. About 92% of the Shire is public land, including areas of the Alpine National Park and all of the Mount Buffalo National Park. The major economic activities of the Alpine Shire are: agriculture, horticulture, viticulture, timber, tourism and service industries.

In 2016, Alpine Shire had approximately 12,450 residents. Most of the population lives in the suburbs of Bright, Dederang, Harrierville, Mount Beauty, Myrtleford, Porepunkah, Tawonga, Tawonga South and Wandiligong. Together, these towns account for 80% of the total Alpine population. The population is most highly concentrated around the areas of Myrtleford with a population of 3215, Bright with 2397 residents and Mount Beauty with a population of 1261 residents.

Alpine Shires key features include:

- Stunning natural beauty
- Diverse and exceptional life-style with an exciting mix of culture, history and experience
- Broad range of community services
- High level of professional and health services
- Accommodation and food services is the largest employer with agriculture and retail trade following respectively
- Unemployment rate of 3.8% compared to 5.5% Country Victoria

The 2016 ABS Census population shows that Alpine Shire has a high proportion of elderly persons those aged 65 to 85 years plus than regional Victoria. This being 36.1% compared to 27.2% in regional Victoria as a whole.

Other unique features of the shire are:

- 92% Crown Land, meaning that only 8% of the Shire is rateable;
- 30% absentee land owners, generally owners of holiday properties;
- High tourism [more than one million visitors annually] and high associated service costs;
- Alpine Shire is ranked 45 out of the 79 councils in Victoria in terms of disadvantaged according to the SEIFA index.
- Very prone to natural disasters such as bushfires and floods; and,
- The major mountain resorts of Falls Creek and Mount Hotham are not part of the Alpine Shire.

The main towns in the Alpine Shire are Bright, Dederang, Harrietville, Mount Beauty, Myrtleford, Porepunkah, Tawonga, Tawonga South and Wandiligong.

### 3. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

68(A)(2)(b) of the *Animal Management Act 1994* outlines programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of Domestic Animals Act 1994 in the Council's municipal district

#### 3.1 Animal management staffing and operational structure

Domestic animal management is a function of the Local Laws section of the Alpine Shire Council. Local Laws is part of the Planning and Amenity Department which is responsible for the delivery of regulatory services for the Alpine Shire Council. The Planning and Amenity department comprises statutory planning, strategic planning, building services, environmental health services and local laws. There is 12 staff delivering these services with an operational budget of \$510,000.

Local Laws has an annual expenditure budget of approximately \$81,000 and employs the equivalent of one full time person. Line management for local laws service delivery is provided by the following structure:

**Figure 2 – Operation structure of local laws**



## 3.2 Current and planned training

Council has undergone some structural changes since the last Domestic Animal Management Plan. This is due to changes in government funding and a change to the charge and collection of rates which forms part of Council's overall operating budget. This has meant a change to staffing levels with Council now having the equivalent of one full time staff member. These staffing levels are provided by two part time staff one operating 4 day a week and one operating 1 day a week. For training purposes this means different levels of training are required for each staff member, much of it on the job.

The Local Laws Ranger has extensive experience in providing local laws function and in handling animals suitable to meet the requirements of the Animal Management Act 1994. The membership of the North East Authorised Council Officers Association where Officers meet up twice a year, have an on-line forum to provide assistance to each other and enable joint training to take place with other councils is a valuable resource especially for smaller councils within the North East.

Below is a table that shows the training the Local Laws Ranger has had and will participate in. The other Local Laws Ranger will be provided with a training program as per the objectives set out in this Domestic Animal Management Plan.

**Table 1 – Authorised officer training**

<b>Authorised Officer Training</b>	<b>Current(2017)</b>	<b>Planned (state when)</b>
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	X	
Cert IV in Local Government (regulatory services)		2018
ACMMIC401A Implant microchip in cats and dogs	X	
<i>Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources</i> – training and information days	X	2017 - 2021
Driving under emergency conditions	X	
First aid training	X	2019

Animal handling and assessment	X	
Statement taking and prosecutions	X	
Restricted dog breed training	X	
Fire arms training	X	Each year for certification
DEDJTR Seminar	X	2018/2019
NE Authorised Council Officers Association	X	2017 - 2021

### 3.3 Our plans

Objective 1: Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by Authorised Officers by November 2018.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements in consultation with management and staff	August to October 2018	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training policy by November 2018
Identify additional training opportunities in consultation with management and staff	October 2019	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training program by November 2019
Create a database/spread sheet to record all Officers completed and proposed training	December 2018	Staff annual performance review, to ensure training goals have been reached and then log them
Create a matrix of current and required skills of each officer	October 2019	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training policy by November 2019

Objective 2: To provide training to all authorised officers and review annually to monitor both relevancy and completion

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure participation in the induction program	When an Officer start	Staff annual performance review, to ensure training goals have

		been reached and then log them
Develop a training program for new officers		Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training program by November 2019

## 4. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

68A(2)(c)(v) of the Domestic Animal Management Act 1994 outlines programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats and also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### 4.1 Current situation - domestic animal statistics and data

Table 1 constitutes known animal management data. The table shows that a slight increase in dog registrations has taken place but registrations have declined for cats. It is difficult to attribute this data to an increase in population as the Shire has many holiday homes and therefore absentee rate payers so there may not be a correlation between increasing population and animal ownership.

**Table 2 – Animal Management Data, Alpine Shire**

	Alpine Shire Council Key Statistics	Alpine Shire Council Key Statistics
Population	11881	12450
No. of EFT Authorised Officers	1.1	1
Hours training per officer annually	42	40
No. of Registered Dogs	2139	2143
No. of Registered Cats	601	551
No. of Registered Declared Dogs	4	12
No. of Prosecutions Completed	2	na
No. of Successful Prosecutions	2	na
No. of animals reclaimed	91	84
No. of animals collected	4	12

No. of dogs euthanized	10	5
No. of cats euthanized	89 total includes 78 feral 11 domestic	77 total includes 68 feral and 9 domestic

Therefore, the estimated dog & cat population registered within the Alpine Shire (with 5550 occupied properties) is 2143 dogs and 551 cats.

## 4.2 Service levels

The following data provides an outline of current animal management service levels provided by Alpine Shire Council.

**Table 3 – Service levels for animal management**

Program Service	Service Level
Identification and registration of dogs and cats	95% of registrations received by 1 June each year
Domestic animal complaint	Respond within 24 hours and follow up within immediate action according to urgency
Dangerous dogs complaint	Response within 2 hours or less
Pound open	38 hours per week
After hours emergency response	24 hours a day 365 days a year
Domestic animal business	Inspected and registered every year

Council's current identification and registration activities include:

- Issuing of identification tags and registration renewal notices;
- Enforcement of compulsory registration at 3 months of age;
- Compulsory micro-chipping of animals with first registration;
- Follow up of animal non-renewal registration from previous year record;
- Advertising in local papers about requirements for pet ownership and registration; and,
- Cat trap program for feral and wandering cats.

## 4.3 Our orders, local laws, Council policies and procedures

### 4.3.1 Council's Amenity Local Law No 5

Council's Amenity Local Law No. 5 (part 4) provides the guidance on animal keeping and expected behaviour of animal and owner. Council is due to

review all of its local laws in 2017/2018 to ensure currency and relevancy with the community's expectations.

The following is an extract of Part 4 of the Alpine Shire Council Local Law No. 5. A full version is available on Council's website, [www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au](http://www.alpineshire.vic.gov.au).

## Extract of Local Law 5

### Keeping Animals

An owner or occupier of property within a residential area must not without a permit keep or allow to be kept any more in number for each kind of animal than as set out in the following table:

Type of animal	Maximum number allowed in residential areas without a permit
Cats	2
cattle	0
cockatoos	2
dogs	2
domestic birds	50
domestic rabbits	10
ferrets	3
goats	0
guinea pigs	10
horses/donkeys	0
other agricultural animals	0
peacocks	2
pigeons	50
pigs	0
poultry (not including rooster)	10
reptiles	0
roosters	0
sheep	0

## **Animal housing**

The owner or occupier of any land on which animals are kept must provide housing which is adequate and appropriate in the circumstances, taking into consideration:

- a. the type of animals to be kept; and
- b. the height of the shelter; and
- c. the number of animals to be kept; and
- d. the capacity to maintain it in a sanitary and inoffensive condition; and
- e. the capacity to protect neighbours from noise from animals on the land; and
- f. any other matters considered to be relevant.

All animal housing must be maintained so that:

- g. all manure and other waste is removed and/or treated as often as necessary so that it does not cause a nuisance or offensive condition;
- h. all manure and other waste is stored in a fly and vermin proof receptacle until removed from the premises or otherwise disposed of to the satisfaction of an environmental health officer or authorised officer;
- i. the ground surrounding the housing is drained to the satisfaction of an environmental health officer or authorised officer;
- j. the area of land within 3 metres of the area or structure in which the animal is kept must be kept free from dry grass, weeds, refuse, rubbish or other material capable of harbouring vermin;
- k. all food, grain or chaff is kept in vermin proof receptacles;
- l. the area where animals are kept must be thoroughly cleaned and maintained at all times in a clean and sanitary manner to the satisfaction of an environmental health officer or authorised officer.

Penalty: Maximum 10 Penalty Units

## **Removal of animal faeces**

A person in charge of an animal must:

- a. remove any of that animals faeces that is deposited on any road or council land or land occupied by another person;
- b. dispose of the animals faeces in a manner which does not cause any nuisance or health hazard to any person or detriment to the environment.

## **Objectionable noises**

No owner or occupier of land within the municipal district shall keep or allow to be kept any animal or bird which:

- a. habitually makes an objectionable noise at unreasonable times;

- b. habitually makes on any road within the municipal district an amount of noise which is unreasonable and excessive having regard to the locality and the time;
- c. causes a nuisance by the emission of sounds.

### **Unleashed dogs**

No person shall:

- Cause, suffer or permit any dog belonging to him or in his charge or control to be brought into or remain in or upon a municipal recreation reserve, shopping centre or any part thereof unless such dog continues to be at all times under proper control and on a chain, cord or leash

### **Declared municipal recreation reserves**

Jubilee Park	Myrtle Street	Myrtleford
S.K. Pearce Gardens	Kiewa Crescent	Mount Beauty
Swimming Pool Gardens & Fountain	Lakeside Avenue/Service Street	Mount Beauty
Bicentennial Park	Lakeside Avenue	Mount Beauty
Riverside Reserve	On Ovens River	Porepunkah
Centenary Park	Morses Creek/Ovens River	Bright
Howitt Park	Ovens River/Howitt Lane	Bright

## **4.4 Summary**

Council has policies for the registration of domestic animals and for animals that are taken to Council's pounds. This enables Officers to trace owners or re-home animals. The information is also used for Government reporting purposes. Most administration for the registration of animals is undertaken by main reception customer service staff.

While Alpine Shire does not have a high SEIFA index it does have areas that are low socio-economic and therefore payment plans are offered for pound release, pet registration and microchipping. This makes good economic sense as staff are paid to feed animals kept in the pound over the weekend.

Council has a strong customer service ethic and where possible tries to ensure that the community are made aware of their obligations. Reminders for annual animal registrations are sent each year and followed up if Council has not been notified of an animal's demise or other change in circumstance.

The use of 'Tradify' a database system for logging customer service calls enables the Local Laws Ranger to be able to retrieve call information and make contact with the complaint quickly. This has an 'app' mode so can be used out in the field and saves the Officer coming back to the office to collect information. This therefore enables quicker action to be taken particularly in the case of dangerous dogs and potential or actual attacks or nuisance.

'Tradify' is also used by 'on-call' staff over the weekend and again provides quick access to inform and enables the Local Laws Ranger to see what has been done in his absence to enable follow ups to be made to customers or deal with animals in the Council pound.

Council does hand out a number of cat traps and many of these cats are feral cats as expected in a rural area. These traps are available for hire from local libraries ensuring that access around the Shire is provided. Feral cats cannot be rehomed and are therefore euthanized.

Council is working on renewing its 84Y Agreement with the RSPCA (in Wangaratta) for re-homing cats and dogs. This has been a good working relationship in particular as the Alpine Shire Ranger provides a shared service for inspecting animal cruelty cases with the RSPCA Inspector. This enables resources to be shared for the best outcome especially in a shire that has a large geographic area including the Alpine Resorts.

Council also uses its website to re-home animals. It places a description and photo of the animal to alert an owner of a missing animal. Council also uses its Facebook page and will look at utilising other community 'electronic notice boards' to locate owners or re-home domestic animals.

Council's other obligation is that of ensuring that dogs taken to Dinner Plain are given a permit to protect the sensitive sub-alpine environment in that area. This service is used heavily during the winter ski season. While it does not impact on Council's own domestic animal responsibilities to its community Council does want to ensure that dogs taken to this area by visitors can be found by their owners if lost.

Council is aware that dogs and cats that are not de-sexed have an inclination to wander. In this respect Council is going to try to team up with the local vets to offer a reduction in de-sexing when coupled with registration and microchipping. Many vets in the area offer monetary discounts at certain times of the year. This probably is a key area that has not been tackled in a joint manner before and it is hoped that it will encourage people to register and microchip their animals as well having them de-sexed.

## 4.5 Our Plans

Objective 1: To maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals

Activity	When	Evaluation
Follow up of animal non-renewal registration from previous year's record	June every year	Record number of animals found unregistered but still with owner.
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Prior to every release	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner.
Increase the number of registrations by 30%	Up to 2021	Review annual increase in registration numbers
Run an education campaign on the importance of registering and microchipping	Every 2 years of the Plan	Review increases in registration numbers and microchipping numbers
Consider or run a microchipping days	Selected days during one month of every year of the plan	Review increases in registration numbers and microchipping numbers.

## 5. NUISANCE

68A(2)(c)(vi) of the *Domestic Animal Management Act 1994* outlines programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance and also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### 5.1 Current situation

Current activities relating to nuisance animals are:

- Investigating nuisance complaints in a timely manner to ensure minimal timeframes;
- Sending out barking dog formal complaint statements and barking dog log sheets with Statutory Declarations attached;
- The issuing of infringement notices for non-registration of animals;

- Report outcomes of prosecutions when appropriate regarding each area of nuisance to local media to raise awareness in the community of the benefits of preventing dog and cat nuisance;
- Issuing notices to comply, notices of objection, infringements where necessary and taking the matter to the Magistrates' Court;
- Providing cat traps to residents; and,
- Provide animal excrement bags around designated parks and streets to ensure dog owners clean up after their dogs.

## **5.2 Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

### 5.2.1 Council local laws

Part 4 of the Alpine Shire Council Local Law No. 5 deals with the control of animals within the municipality. To minimise nuisance from domestic animals it is a Local Law that:

- No more than two dogs/cats are to be kept on a residential property without a permit; and,
- Dogs must be on leash within a municipal reserve or within a shopping district.

### 5.2.2 Barking dogs

Council has a standard operating procedure for barking dog complaints to ensure all complaints received are handled in the same consistent matter by all authorised Officers. The procedure steps out the required processes involved to investigate the complaint, liaise with the dog owner and surrounding neighbours.

Where nuisances are found to be proven pursuant to Section 32 of the Act, Council can issue notices to the dog owner to abate the nuisance, issue infringements and/or have the matter heard in the Magistrate's Court to seek an order from the Court for the owner to abate the nuisance.

### 5.2.3 Cats and dogs at large

The Local Laws Section has developed a procedure for dealing with domestic animals found at large.

Repeat offenders for roaming or trespassing cats or dogs are issued with an infringement and must pay the relevant pound release fees. In circumstances where infringements have been issued to an owner and continued breaches occur Council may pursue the matter through the Magistrates' Court to seek an order from the Court to require the owner to carry out works to ensure the animal is not able to escape from the owner's premises.

### **5.3 Current education/promotion activities**

The following activities are regularly undertaken by Council officers to minimise animal nuisance and to educate the community:

- Providing barking dog information;
- Providing information relating to building cat enclosures;
- Information provided on Council's website;
- Providing information brochures from the relevant state government department to the public;
- Regular media releases including Facebook posts on Council website;
- Encouraging the de-sexing of cats and dogs to reduce wandering and creating a nuisance;
- Encouraging dog owners to seek advice from professional dog trainers and trial barking dog citronella collars; and,
- Promote cat trapping.

### **5.4 Summary**

Education and compliance activities are centred around dealing with complaints that have been received via 'Tradify' and ensure they are dealt with quickly. Education leaflets are handed out to owners to ensure they know their animals are being a nuisance and to assist them in overcoming the issue.

## 5.5 Our plans

Objective 1: Reduce nuisance complaints by 5% per year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners in registration information packs each year.	Life of plan	Number of booklets distributed and when
Assist residents with dealing with cat trespass / nuisance problems by purchasing an cat cages and provide them to local residents for trapping nuisance cats	2017-2021	Number of traps purchased Numbers hired out
Improve reduce incidents to barking dog complaints	Each year	Number of incidents and response time entered into Tradify

Objective 2: To maximise compliance with domestic animal laws, orders and regulations to reduce animal nuisance complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review existing Council Local Laws relating to dog and cat provisions, including Councils on leash areas	2017/18	Assess public feedback and comments using Tradify
Community education – via expos, brochures, handouts, social media, website	Each year	Increase in registrations and reduction in nuisance complaints
Investigate through the local laws review cat curfews across the Shire	2017/18	Inclusion of a cat curfew clause when local law no 5 is reviewed

## **6. DOG ATTACKS**

68A(2)(c)(iii) of the *Domestic Animal Management Act 1994* outlines programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals and also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### **6.1 Current situation**

Authorised Council Officers investigate dog attack reports thoroughly.

Evidence pertaining to the incident is collated to formulate a prosecution brief. This includes taking statements from all parties involved, vet/medical reports, photographs and providing a summary with recommendations.

The brief is then reviewed by the Local Laws Officer who makes further recommendations to the Manager of Planning and Amenity in order for Council to decide on an appropriate course of action.

Possible courses of action Council can choose include:

- Infringements;
- Surrendering dog to Council for destruction;
- Menacing/Dangerous dog declaration as per the Domestic Animal Act;
- Prosecution in Magistrates' Court;
- Seek destruction/compensation orders by Magistrates;
- Seek mediation between parties; and,
- No further action.

### **6.2 Our orders, local laws, Council policies and procedures**

Council's procedure for dealing with dog attacks whether on other animals or people is clear. Following an investigation a prosecution brief is prepared and a recommendation on an appropriate course of action is decided.

### **6.3 Current education/promotion activities**

Council currently undertakes the following education activities to minimise the number of dog attacks within the municipality:

- Reporting outcomes of all dog attack prosecutions to local media to raise awareness in the community of the need to report dog attacks and Council's action in relation to attacks to promote responsible pet ownership;
- Media releases relating to livestock attacks;
- Providing new residents with animal registration information;
- Promoting the effective confinement and control of dogs; and,
- Promoting puppy socialisation and obedience training.

## 6.4 Current compliance activities

Dog attacks are a serious matter that is dealt with as a priority by Council staff. In dealing with dog attacks Council currently undertakes the following:

- Investigates dog attacks thoroughly;
- Seizing and holding attacking dogs pending investigation/prosecution outcome;
- Providing an afterhours service to respond to reports of aggressive or attacking dogs;
- Prosecuting matters pursuant to the Domestic Animal Act;
- Issuing infringements;
- Proactive declarations for Menacing or Dangerous Dogs;
- Seeking destruction Orders from Magistrates' Court where necessary;
- Seeking confinement Orders from Magistrates' Court for dogs continually found wandering or not confined to property; and,
- Recording data of reported dog attacks in the municipality.

## 6.5 Our plans

Objective 1: Increase reporting of dog attacks in the community

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report using media articles, public notices , website updates, etc.	Annually	Evaluate this activity (and overall objective) by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council pre and post campaign. Meet objective of increasing reports.

Objective 2: Decrease the number of dog attacks across the Alpine Shire.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (e.g. confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc.) through media articles, mail outs, website info, social media.	Ongoing	Compare number of reported dog attack incidents pre and post campaign.

Objective 3: Decrease the number of dog attacks on livestock.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Run an education campaign directed at farmers regarding responsibilities of owning dogs: -Distribute booklet "Responsible ownership of working dogs"	Ongoing	Number of booklets distributed. Number of complaints received.

## 7. DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

68A(2)(c)(vii) of the *Domestic Animal Management Act 1994* outlines programs, services and strategies 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 also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### 7.1 Current situation

Alpine Shire Council has the following declared dogs currently registered within the municipality.

**Table 4: Registered dogs**

Registered restricted breed dogs	0
Registered declared dangerous dogs	3
Registered declared menacing dogs	9

The Act defines restricted breed dogs as any one of the following breeds:

- Japanese Tosa;
- Fila Brasileiro;
- dogo Argentino;
- Perro de Prasa Canario (or Presa Canario); and,
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier).

Owners of restricted breed dogs are required to abide by specific regulations, in particular; secure enclosures, warning signs on premises, having the dog

muzzled in public and on a lead at all times, as defined by the Act and the Domestic Animals Regulations 2005 (the Regulations).

Section 34A(a) of the Act states:

*A dog is a dangerous dog if—*

*The dog is kept as a guard dog for the purpose of guarding non-residential premises.*

Owners of declared dangerous dogs must abide by the same regulations as owners of guard dogs other than the perimeter fencing requirements.

Section 41A (1) of the Act states:

(1) *A Council may declare a dog to be a menacing dog if—*

(a) *the dog has rushed at or chased a person; or*

(ab) *the dog bites any person or animal causing injury to that person or animal that is not in the nature of a serious injury.*

Alpine Shire Council currently has nine declared menacing dogs within the municipality. Owners of menacing dogs must abide by conditions specified by Council namely; when the dog is outside the premises of its owner it must be leashed at all times.

## **7.2 Our orders, local laws, Council policies and procedures**

Council must register all dangerous/menacing/restricted breed dogs with the Victorian Dangerous Dog Register (VDDR). This is a database that records all declared dogs for all relevant parties to see. Any dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dog entered into the VDDR is declared for the life of the animal and cannot be revoked by Council. Microchip registries are also updated.

## **7.3 Current education/promotion activities**

These are the current activities undertaken:

- Promoting the 'Dangerous Dog Hotline' (1300-101-080);
- Media releases relating to legislation/changes/updates; and,
- Providing information relating to declared dogs.

## **7.4 Current compliance activities**

In dealing with restricted dog breeds and menacing and dangerous dogs Council currently undertakes the following:

- Ensuring all declared dogs are registered on the VDDR;

- Conducting inspections on premises housing declared dogs to ensure compliance;
- Seizing dogs suspected of being Restricted Breed Dogs;
- Dog declarations made where applicable;
- Prosecution/Infringements issued for any determined breach;
- Assessing suspected restricted breed dogs via the gazetted standard;
- Flagging certain breeds from registration database for assessment.

## 7.5 Our plans

Objective 1: Ensure restricted and declared dogs within the Alpine Shire are compliant and in accordance with the relevant legislation and regulations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance	Annually	Review checklists as occurs
Prosecute repeat offenders or serious breaches detected	As occurs	Number of prosecutions
Educate the community about what is a declared dog	Ongoing	Review complaints received
Inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are following the keeping requirements	Ongoing	Number of premises inspections carried out

Objective 2: Ensure certain breeds on registration database for restricted breed assessment.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Assess certain breeds with the gazetted standard for potential restricted breed dogs	On-going	Number of Restricted Breeds Declared from registration database
Cross reference microchip database information for potential restricted breed dogs requiring assessment	Annually	Number of declarations compared to number of assessments

## 8. OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

68A(2)(c)(iv) of the *Domestic Animal Management Act 1994* outlines programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats and also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### 8.1 Current situation

Table 2.4 below provides details on the number of animals impounded, euthanized and rehomed across two financial years within the Alpine Shire.

**Table 5 - Number of Animals Euthanized, Impounded and Rehomed**

Category	2011/12	2016/17
<b>Dogs impounded</b>	101	88
Returned to owner	87	75
Rehomed	4	8
Euthanized	10	5
<b>Cats impounded</b>	94 (78 feral and 26 domestic)	22
Returned to owner	4	9
Rehomed	1	4
Euthanized	89 (78 feral)	9 (68 feral)

The Alpine Shire Council is currently in a good position in relation to euthanasia rates of animals especially dogs. The percentage of cats euthanized will continue to be relatively high due to the amount of stray feral cats which breed out of human control.

Dog euthanasia rates are particularly low due to high rates of dogs being returned to owners. Over the last 3 years there has been a significant rise in the rate of dogs being returned to owners due to more identifiable dogs being impounded such as being micro-chipped and/or wearing Council identification. The increased rate of micro-chipped dogs is mainly due to the requirement of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, which requires all newly registered cats and dogs to be micro-chipped and the ability of the Ranger to administer microchipping.

Reduced animal euthanasia rates can also be attributed to Council's agreement with the RSPCA for any seized dogs and cats to be handed over to them as per Section 84Y of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, after the mandatory 8 days of impoundment.

## 8.2 Our orders, local laws, Council policies and procedures

Councils Local Law number 5 sets out how many and the type of animal that can be kept on a property and how animals should be housed. Therefore an owner or occupier of property within a residential area must not without a permit keep or allow to be kept any more in number for each kind of animal as set out in Local Law 5.

## 8.3 Current education/promotion activities

The following education activities are undertaken by Council to minimise the number of animals impounded:

- Promoting benefits of de-sexing to decrease wandering animals;
- Promoting 'Who's for cats?' campaign;
- Promoting appropriate pet selection for the owner and accommodation; and,
- Promoting cat enclosures and build your own cat enclosures.

## 8.4 Current compliance activities

The following compliance activities are undertaken by Council staff:

- Cat trapping program enforcement of current legislation in relation to cats found at large;
- Investigating unregistered breeding establishments;
- Micro-chipping all unregistered impounded animals prior to release to the owner; and,
- Enforcing the local laws relating to prescribed number of animals on the property.

## 8.5 Our plans

Objective 1: Encourage de-sexing by 10% annually.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Discount de-sexing days or ongoing subsidised de-sexing for pets of low income earners via agreements with the local vet clinic.	Annually	Number of animals de-sexed as part of the scheme  Cost to run scheme  Any changes in the longer term

		re proportion of de-sexed animals on pet registration database, proportion of impounded pets that are de-sexed etc.
Promote the benefits of de-sexing, via media, social media, website	Yearly (with additional educational and promotional material)	Increased in de-sexed animals known via registrations discount
Discount registration fees for cats and dogs that are de-sexed to encourage registration of animals over 3 months of age.	Ongoing	Number of new animals registered in category yearly

Objective 2: Develop programs to assist with compliance and management of domestic animals

Activity	When	Evaluation
Increase microchipping of animals with free microchipping and registration in conjunction with de-sexing education program	Few days over one month of the year	Increase in animals microchipped and registered
Work with the RSPCA to renew Section 84Y agreement	November 2017	Agreement in place

## 9. DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

68A(2)(c)(ii) of the *Animal Management Act 1994* outlines programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation and also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d),(f)

### 9.1 Current situation

Council has relatively few Domestic Animal Businesses. The total in the Shire is three. One is a breeding business and the other two are boarding kennels. All these business are registered and inspected annually.

## 9.2 Our orders, local laws, Council policies and procedures

Council regularly inspects authorised businesses to ensure they comply as well as inspecting new businesses to ensure registration.

## 9.3 Our plans

Objective 1: Annually inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Audit DAB randomly to ensure compliance	Ongoing	Number of audits compared to number of follow ups required

## 10. ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORTING

68A(3) of the Animal Management Act 1994 states that:

*Every Council must—*

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

Therefore this Domestic Animal Management Plan will be evaluated annually against the activities and in line with the objectives as stated to assess whether any amendments are necessary in order to ensure the plan is relevant and addresses legislative requirements and meets community expectations. It will describe any changes that will be made to the stated activities to ensure they meet the objectives. Moreover, it will identify what has not been done and if it planned for action in the future. An evaluation of the activities success or otherwise will also be captured.