



Borough of Queenscliffe
Domestic Animal Management Plan
2017-2021



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1. INTRODUCTION

Councils in Victoria are now required by the Domestic Animals Act 1994 to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (The Plan) at 3 year intervals with the objective to outline Council's plans for animal management.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan sets the strategic direction in terms of animal management within the Borough of Queenscliffe for the next four years.

It will reflect what Council does in relation to animal management and will work out ways to improve or build upon current practices and set future directions and action plans.

I. Purpose and Primary Objective of the Domestic Management Plan

The primary objective is to develop a strategic plan assist Council in providing a professional, consistent and proactive approach to domestic animal management services.

In accordance with Section 68A of the Act, the plan explores and sets strategies to:

- identify methods for evaluating animal control services;
- promote and encourage responsible pet ownership;
- ensure compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*;
- minimise the risk of dog attacks;
- address over-population and euthanasia rates for dogs and cats;
- encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats;
- minimise the potential for nuisance animals;
- identify dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- identify programs for training of authorised animal management officers; and
- ensure regulatory compliance by all registered Domestic Animal Businesses.

II. Process Applied in Developing the Plan

In determining the key issues for this Plan, the following matters were considered:

- benchmarking statistics provided by State Government;
- recommendations made by the Department of Primary Industries (DPI);
- statistics on service requests made by residents of the Borough of Queenscliffe;
- national and international research on companion animals;

Key issues identified are:

- training of authorised officers;
- registration and identification of animals;
- nuisance;
- dog attacks;
- dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- domestic animal businesses;
- overpopulation and high euthanasia rates; and

- other matters.

III. The Borough of Queenscliffe – Demographic Snapshot

The Borough Queenscliffe is the smallest municipality in Victoria, comprising just over 13 square kilometres and comprises the townships of Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale.

It is located at the eastern tip of the Bellarine Peninsula and is surrounded by Bass Strait, Port Phillip Bay and Swan Bay on three sides. On its fourth side, it has a land boundary with the City of Greater Geelong.

The Borough of Queenscliffe is situated adjacent to Swan Bay, a Ramsar wetland of international significance. Swan Bay supports an abundance of birdlife including resident and migratory shorebirds and endangered Orange-bellied Parrots. Important wetlands adjacent to Point Lonsdale provide connecting wetland habitats and movement corridors for wetland fauna, including migratory shorebirds and Orange-bellied Parrots. The ocean beach abutting Point Lonsdale is habitat for many shorebirds, including Hooded Plovers, a threatened shorebird species. The foreshore woodlands surrounding the Borough provide habitat for native fauna.

In 2001 the Borough of Queenscliffe implemented an order under the Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994, that the owner of any dog must keep it under effective control by means of a leash or chain when they are in a public place. Additional information on restricted times for dogs to be on the beach and a cat curfew was also included.

As at the 20th June 2017 there are 613 dogs and 111 cats, being a total of 724 animals registered with Council.

IV. Domestic animal statistics and data

There are two recognised estimation guide currently being used.

BIS Shrapnel estimated in September 2006 that in Victoria:

- 40% of households owned one or more dogs at a rate of 1.44 dogs per household;
and
- 26% of households owned one or more cats at a rate of 1.47 cats per household.

Therefore, the calculation for the Borough of Queenscliffe Council with 2,853 residential dwellings is:

- Estimated Dog Population: $(40/100 \times 2800) \times 1.44$ dogs = 1643
- Estimated Cat Population: $(26/100 \times 2800) \times 1.47$ cats = 1090

The industry standard that is used to estimate the likely cat and dog population in any local government area was developed by BIS Shrapnel in 2006. This standard estimates that there are 18 dogs and 12 cats for every 100 people.

Applying these rates would yield 514 dogs and 342 cats in the Borough of Queenscliffe.

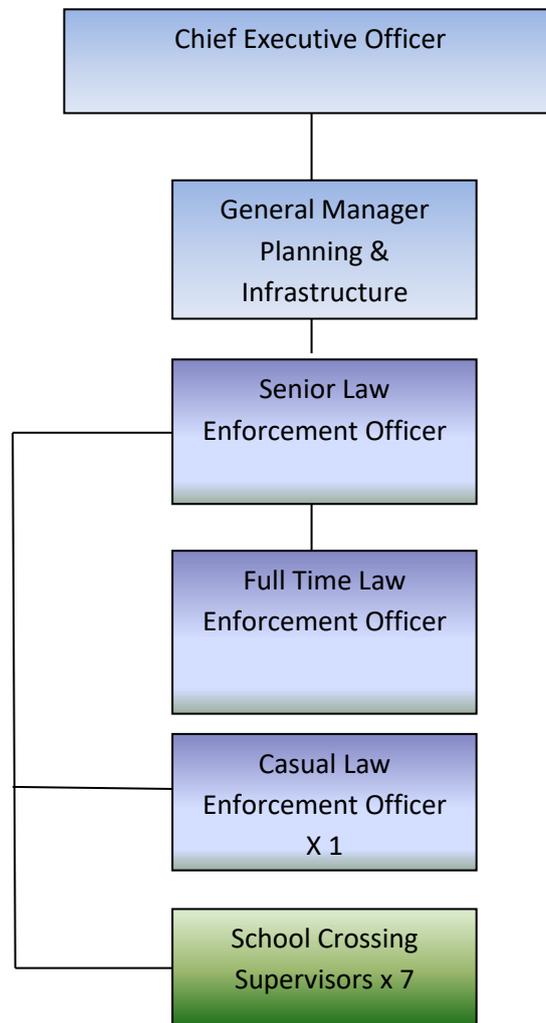
Borough of Queenscliff Council – Key Statistics – 2016-2017	Queenscliff	Like Councils
Population (Residential Premises)	2853	16,000
Number of Authorised Animal Control officers	3	3.25
Hours Training (per officer annually)	20	32
Number of EFT Animal Control Officers	1.5	unknown
Number of Registered Dogs	613	5,058
Estimated dogs owned (based on BIS Shrapnel data)	1643/514	Unknown
Number of Registered Cats	111	1,373
Estimated cats owned (based on BIS Shrapnel data)	1070/342	Unknown
Number of Registered Declared Dogs	0	2
Number of impounded dogs	11	243
Number of Dogs returned to owners	72	138
Number of Dogs rehoused	0	59
Number of impounded dogs euthanized	0	51
Number of impounded cats	13	115
Number of cats returned to owners	0	9
Number of cats rehoused	7	14
Number of impounded cats euthanized	6	104
Number of excess animal permits – Local Law	7	15
Number of Restricted Breed premises	0	2

The Borough of Queenscliffe falls more closely into the animals per population rather than animals per residential premises as a significant number of residential premises are used as holiday homes.

The slight increase in dogs may be as a result of the population demographic and their reasons for living in the Borough.

The significant shortfall in the number of cats may be as a result of the significant flora and fauna in the area and a heightened awareness of environmental concerns.

1.5 BOROUGH OF QUEENSLIFFE'S –STAFFING STRUCTURE FOR ANIMAL MANAGEMENT OFFICERS



Note:

Law Enforcement Officers are Animal Management Officers in the above structure..

VI. Current Programs and Services – Service Levels

The Borough of Queenscliffe Council's Law Enforcement Unit administers and provides a broad range of services to ensure Council meets its legislative responsibilities in the management of domestic animals.

These services include:

- providing advice on domestic animal matters;
- investigating customer complaints;
- educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership;
- maintaining a domestic animal register;
- impounding of wandering, unwanted/surrendered and /or feral dogs and cats;
- investigation of dog attacks;
- providing a 24-hour a day after-hours emergency service;
- inspection and registration of domestic animal businesses; and
- developing and maintaining partnerships with organisations such as veterinary clinics, animal welfare groups and other stakeholders.

Council recognises that pets are an integral part of many people's lives and is actively seeking new and innovative ways to support pet owners and to harness the recognised health and social benefits of responsible pet ownership.

Current Programs and Services	Service Level
Wandering dogs – held by 3 rd party	Collected at first available opportunity – generally within 1 hour.
Dog Attacks	Attend at first available opportunity – generally within 15 minutes during working hours or within 1 hour afterhours.
Dangerous Dogs/Restricted Breeds complaints	Complaints are dealt with as a matter of priority. Action is taken based upon the evidence gathered by the investigating officer.
Domestic Animal Complaints	Dependent upon the nature of complaint the matter is dealt with on an as required basis in relation to timeframes. Generally all matters are attended to within 1 hour during normal work hours.
Community Information	Council provides community information and distributes press releases on various animal topics including registration and micro-chipping requirements. Council provides advice to any persons requesting information.
Routine street patrols	Patrols are carried out on an on-going continual basis. Both Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale are patrolled daily.
Beach patrols	Beaches are patrolled during the summer months on a regular basis. Checks are on-going with regards to the Hooded Plover breeding program.

2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Vision Statement

The Borough of Queenscliffe is a unique and vibrant municipality that values fairness, equality and diversity. It promotes responsible pet ownership and an environment where respect, understanding and safety are combined so that animals can integrate peacefully within the community and in harmony with the Borough's natural environment.

3. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

The following table shows the mandatory requirements of the Council and its Animal Management Officers for the period of this Domestic Animal Management Plan as required under the Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994.

Specific Act requirements		3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.0	4.3
S68A(2)(a)	Method of monitoring performance and evaluating the effectiveness of services								*	
S68A(2)(b)	Training of Authorised Officers						*			
S68A(2)(c)(i)	Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership		*							
S68A(2)(c)(ii)	Ensure compliance with Act and Regulations	*	*	*	*	*		*	*	
S68A(2)(c)(iii)	Minimise risk of dog attacks	*	*	*	*	*				
S68A(2)(c)(iv)	Over-population and high euthanasia rates	*	*	*	*					
S68A(2)(c)(v)	Encourage registration and identification for dogs and cats	*	*	*	*			*		
S68A(2)(c)(vi)	Minimise potential for nuisance		*	*		*				
S68A(2)(c)(vii)	Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs	*	*	*	*					
S68A(2)(d)	Review of Orders and Local Laws			*						
S68A(2)(e)	Any other matters	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
S68A(2)(f)	Periodic evaluation of programs, services and strategies	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
S68A(3)(a)	Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan									*

i. Training of Authorised Officers

Context

Council's objective is to ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to pro-actively, consistently and professionally carry out their work.

Current and Planned Training

As part of Council's annual staff performance planning process an annual training program is developed with each staff member, to ensure they receive appropriate skills development throughout the year:

Regular in-house training sessions including investigations, animal control/welfare, use of animal equipment and vehicles are conducted, i.e.

- Bureau of Animal Welfare Training Days.
- Mentoring from experienced senior staff.
- Occupational Health and safety training and basic first aid training.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Attend Bureau of Animal Welfare regional training seminars.
- Closer liaison with surrounding municipalities to target regional domestic animal management needs and issues.

Authorised Officer Training	2017-21	Planned
Cert IV in Animal Control and Regulation Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	N/A N/A N/A	Experienced Experienced Experienced
Cert IV in Animal welfare (Regulation) Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	N/A N/A N/A	Experienced Experienced Experienced
Microchip implantation training	Certified	If available
Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution, computer skills Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	Annual refreshers if available and time permits	Annual refreshers if available and time permits
OH&S training – dealing with aggressive customers	If available	
Customer Service training – Conflict resolution	If available	
Induction program for new staff	As per corporate policy	As per corporate policy
Other	Further training to be identified and individual officer plan developed	Annual review to identify.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Develop and maintain a training calendar for individual Authorised Officers, detailing completed and proposed training as part of annual performance planning processes.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete individual development plan annually, identifying training needs	Annually	Completion of staff development plan

Objective 2: Annual review of internal processes with staff, to ensure consistent application of investigation processes

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review processes in line with legal updates/changes. Ensure a consistent approach by Authorised officers	Annually	Annually – update procedures

ii. Identification and Registration

Objective:

Maximise the number of registered and identified domestic animals (pets).

- issuing of identification tags and registration renewal notices;
- door knock problem areas or areas where complaints have been received in relation to registration matters; and
- animal control information in local newspapers and on radio.

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws

- Animals on Council Land and Public Places
- Keeping of Animals on Residential Properties (numbers)

Current Orders

- Requiring dogs and cats to be microchipped at the time of registration.
- Dogs on Leads Order.
- Requiring dogs and cats over 3 months of age to be registered.
- Cat Control Order (Curfew)

Policy and Procedures

Polices exist for all matters relating to Local Laws in the 'Policies and Procedures' Manual
Further policies will need to be developed on an on-going basis

Our current Education/Promotion Activities

- Community events held within the Borough.
- Council website providing information on responsible pet ownership.
- Ability to pay animal registration with a range of payment methods.
- Annual renewal notices sent out prior to renewal date of 10 April
- Advice and pamphlets provided at Council offices and responsible dog ownership days.

Our current compliance activities

- Complaints based registration checks
- All seized/impounded animals are identified as required by law and are registered and microchipped before returning to owner or adopted.
- Identified unregistered dog/cats receive a notice to comply to register.
- Penalty notices issued for failing to comply with legislation.
- Sale of animals notification received by Council is investigated for registration identification.
- Unregistered dog/cat reports are run after the renewal period ends.
- Officers follow up on status to ensure unregistered dogs/cats are registered or
- change of status has been entered on animal database.

SUMMARY

- Council's objectives are to maximise the number of registered and identifiable cats and dogs.
- Council actively promotes and enforces this legislation
- Council is aware that the community must have access to the animal register for the purpose of returning/reuniting lost or injured animals with their owners.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Maintain dog and cat re-registration numbers each year

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure responsible pet ownership brochures are distributed within the community and promotion of registration requirements are increased in local media	Ongoing	Review annual fluctuations in registration numbers
Follow up on current registrations with regards to up-to-date information.	May each year	Review of statistics monthly
Conduct random door knocking within the Shire to ensure compliance with animal registration	Ongoing	Review of statistics monthly

Objective 2: Identify animal owners who consistently refuse to register animals

Activity	When	Evaluation
Use Council records to identify any persons who have failed to renew animal registration	July each year	Review records monthly

iii. Nuisance

Current Situation

Council, on average, receives approximately 5 barking dog complaints per annum.

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders

A cat curfew between the hours of 8.00pm (EST) and 6.00am (EST) was adopted by Council on 13 September 2001.

There is one leash free area in The Borough of Queenscliffe for dogs.

Local Laws Provisions

- Restrictions on the number of animals to be kept at any property.
- Restrictions on dogs being on prescribed beaches from December to February each year.
- Requirement on dog owners to remove and dispose of faeces deposited by their dog in a public place.

Policies and Procedures

- Reduced registration fees for de sexed animals.
- Policy and procedure for impounding dogs and cats found at large.
- Policy for surrender of dogs/cats by owners.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Council officers provide an information pack to dog owners to assist in reducing the dog barking on every barking dog complaint received.
- Dog faeces bag dispensers are provided by Council and are located in high population dog walking areas.
- Information provided to cat owners about responsibilities of pet owners and cat enclosures.
- Encouragement of de-sexing of animals to reduce roaming by providing reduced registration fees.
- Periodical media releases to public promoting responsible pet ownership.

Our Current Compliance Activities

- Regular patrols in all areas by Authorised Officers.
- Cat-trap service provided by Council for nuisance/trespass complaints.
- Signage erected throughout the Shire advising dog owners of their responsibilities.
- Enforcement activities conducted for breaches of Council signage.
- Compliance door knocks conducted.
- “Notice to Comply” issued to offenders.
- Infringements issued for non compliance with legislation.
- Nuisance complaints are actioned within Council response policy guidelines
- Enforcement of cat curfew legislation.
- ‘First Ride Home’ free policy is utilised when an animal can be identified.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Ensure all Dog Bag Bins are refilled on a regular basis.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Refill bag bins	Ongoing	Patrol checking daily
Change Restriction Signs	Prior to 15 th Dec Each year	Number of signs changed

iv. Dog Attacks

Current situation

Very few reports of dog attacks are received by Council. Those that are reported are investigated and dealt with at the first available opportunity, generally this is immediately.

Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders

- Order requiring dogs to be restrained at all times when in public places.

Local Laws

- Restriction on number of animals to be kept at any property.

Policy and Procedures

- Policy relating to seizing dogs found at large/ not confined to owners property.
- Enforcement strategy in issuance of notice to comply and infringements for non compliance.
- Procedure for prosecution action relating to dog attacks.
- Procedure for authorised officers to assist Victoria Police in investigation involving a dog attack to a person resulting in death (Sec319 (b) *Crimes Act*).
- Authorised Officers utilise the DEDJTR’s website for guidance.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

- Responsible pet ownership days.
- Public presentations at various community events, field days, school visits.
- Advisory signs located in high dog walking areas advising of owners responsibilities.
- Reduced registration fees for de-sexed dog/cats to assist in reducing the numbers of aggressive/straying animals.
- Promote the ' Dangerous Dogs Hotline' 1300101080.
- Responsible pet ownership information on hand at local pound for new owners of adopted animals.
- DPI (now DEDJTR) booklet provided to dog owners "Are you a dog owner?"

Our current Compliance Activities

- Regular patrols of the municipality by authorised officers. High risk/complaint areas
- Receive extra patrols.
- A 24-hour emergency response provided by Authorised Officers.
- Immediate response to any reported dog attacks.
- Dogs involved in attacks of a serious nature would be declared dangerous dogs pursuant to the Act.
- All dogs prior to adoption through the animal shelter must pass relevant temperament testing.

v. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs.

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

Current Situation

Our Data

Currently, the Borough of Queenscliffe has no dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs registered within the municipality.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

- Provide details of dangerous dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry
- Council is following the DAA procedures to comply with recent changes to the Act.

Our Education/Promotion Activities

- Supply and distribution of literature and pamphlets regarding keeping dangerous dogs

Our Compliance Activities

- Annual inspections of dangerous/restricted dogs for compliance
- Prosecute non-compliant owners
- Investigation of complaints
- Ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry

Summary

All efforts are aimed at reducing the potential risk from dog attacks to the community, both persons and animals, from dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs.

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

4.1 Our performance monitoring and evaluation process

Authorised officers are appraised each year by the annual review process. This covers performance over the past year together with any legislative changes that have occurred and any training that may be required in the following year.

5. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

68A(3) – Every Council must –

- a) Review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate amend the plan.
- b) Provide the Department of Primary Industries' Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan.
- c) Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

OUR PLANS

Objective 1: Review Domestic Animal Management Plan annually

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure each activity has been addressed	Annually	Review Statistics Quarterly
Ensure any amendments are included into the plan and provided to the Department of Primary Industries	Annually	Review Annually

Objective 2: Evaluate the implementation of the Plan

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure each objective was completed	Annually	Review records/Statistics annually

6. DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994

Part 5A—Domestic Animal Management Plans

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, 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)
 - (c) 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.