



Domestic Animal Management Plan

2026 - 2029

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Acknowledgement message

The Borough of Queenscliffe acknowledges the Traditional Owners of these lands, waters and skies, the Wadawurrung People. We acknowledge and respect their continuing connections to their lands, waters, skies, culture and the contribution they make to the life and spirit of our community. We pay respect to their past and present Elders and their emerging leaders and extend this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Purpose of our Domestic Animal Management Plan

At the Borough, we recognise the importance of our residents and visitors wellbeing, sense of community, and the coexistence between our animal companions, open spaces, and our flora and fauna.

Every Victorian Council is required to develop, implement and review a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years in accordance with Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to meet the needs of our community regarding management of dogs and cats.

This means reviewing and delivering an inclusive Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years is paramount to create a safe environment where both pet owners and non-pet owners can enjoy coastal life in a responsible manner. Other domestic animals are as important as dogs and cats and are exempt by legislation being included in Domestic Animal Management Plan.

The Plan must contain the following information:

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.

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.

Outline programs, services and strategies which the council intends to pursue in its municipal district:

- Residents and visitors comply with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and *General Local Law 2021*
- Promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- Enforce legislation regarding pet registration, renewal, and identification of dogs and cats
- Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
- Ensuring a high level of amenity and compliance by pet owners of dogs and cats
- Effectively identify and manage dangerous, menacing, or restricted breed dogs within the municipality to ensure those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and regulations
- Review The Plan annually and amend accordingly if necessary and provide a copy of any amendments to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, the Department
- Publish any reviewed or new Domestic Animal order and report statistics on Councils annual report.

Councils must also 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 any further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable.

Our Demographic and Profile

The Borough of Queenscliffe is Australia's last remaining Borough and the smallest local government area in the state of Victoria. Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale is a popular visitor destination particularly in the summer and has a mix of permanent residents and secondary dwellings.

Located at the eastern edge of the Bellarine Peninsula, it is bordered by Bass Strait, Port Phillip Bay and Swan Bay on three sides with its western boundary with the City of Greater Geelong at Fellows Road.

The Borough is home to Swan Bay, a Ramsar wetland of global significance. The area hosts an abundance of diverse birdlife, including resident and migratory shorebirds, and is vital habitat for the endangered, Orange-bellied Parrot. Our wetlands and woodlands surrounding the Borough provide habitat for a reach native flora and fauna.

Our foreshore between Queenscliff and Point Lonsdale provides habitat for many birds, including the threatened Hooded Plovers.

Responsible pet ownership

Dogs and cats bring great joy into people's lives, and they are part of the fur-family. Owning a dog or cat brings with it certain responsibilities beyond the necessities of providing a healthy home environment, registration and desexing.

Some non-negotiables include:

- All dogs and cats over three months old must be registered with the Council by legislation. Pet registration renewals are due every 10 April.
- A maximum of two dogs and two cats can be registered per property. Additional dogs or cats require a permit and are subject to an extra annual fee.
- Ensure your dog or cat does not cause harm to people, wildlife, or the environment, particularly when your dog is in a public place.
- Pick up your dog's waste and dispose of it in an appropriate Council bin or take it home with you. It's an offence under our Local Laws not to remove animal excrement in a public place and not to possess a device or bag. . Besides that, it's the right thing to do.
- You are responsible for your dog and cat behaviour at all times. Therefore, when you are in a public place with your dog, it must be on a leash, except within The Narrows Dog Beach.
- While the dog beach is a great area for exercising and socialising dogs all year-round, they must remain within their owner's sight, under effective control, able to respond to your commands, and not cause a nuisance to people or other dogs.

Share and play

A great majority of people enjoy the company of an animal companion in different shapes and forms, but not everybody like dogs or cats. Some people may even fear dogs based on a bad experience or are just not into dogs running around. The Plan is designed to create safe spaces for everyone to safely and respectfully enjoy outdoor spaces within the Borough. We ask our residents and visitors to be mindful when your dog is with you in public and at home as some behaviours may cause annoyance to others.

Our current dogs on beach restriction map



Some tips and advice

Have good control of your dog when on-leash in public and do not assume everyone knows your dog as well as you do. They may be frightened, read their cues and allow them to navigate pass your dog safely.

Barking dogs can cause annoyance and affect people's well-being. If you have a dog who barks a lot and is very territorial of its home, please be considerate of your neighbours. Talk to our local laws staff who will be able to provide advice and resources to better understand and manage the needs of your dog or seek professional advice from a registered dog trainer

Pet registration requirements

Regulations

The sign of an effective Domestic Animal Management Plan is a balanced approach between enforcement and education and when pet owners know and follow the rules. It is the Council's responsibility to make sure our people and plan deliver effective domestic animal management in the Borough.

All dogs and cats over three months old must be registered with the Council by legislation. Pet registration renewals are due 10 April annually.

We take a graduated approach to enforcement when appropriate. If the offence fits, we aim to educate in the first instance. Serious offences like dog attacks are investigated and enforced according to regulations in an impartial manner considering all the circumstances. Your part as a pet owner or pet carer is to know and follow the rules so we can all enjoy living and working together in the Borough.

Dogs and Cats allowed per property within the Borough

A maximum of two dogs and two cats can be registered per property. Additional dogs or cats require a permit and are subject to an extra annual fee.

Application forms are available at Council office front desk and online. For seasonal residents visiting us for extended periods of time, a dual pet registration at a lower cost is available, if registered elsewhere.

Pick up after your dog!

It's an offence under our Local Laws not to remove animal excrement from a public place and not to have a device or bag.

Dog poo is a nasty surprise when enjoying a public place and as biological waste. Dog poo can be harmful for people, animals and our environment.

We have 35 dog bag dispensers throughout the municipality – Landfill Biodegradable waste bags



Responsible pet ownership

You are responsible for your dog or cat at all times:

- Keeping your dog on leash throughout the municipality, except within The Narrows Dog Beach
- Keeping your dog securely confined to your property
- Keeping your cat indoors from dusk to dawn as per Council cat curfew restrictions
- Prevent your dog or cat from becoming a nuisance to other people or animals
- Take reasonable steps to prevent your dog from rushing or attacking any person or other animals
- Ensuring your dog or cat are not able to cause any harm to wildlife and endangered species such as hooded plovers

Be respectful to others

Not everyone loves animals as much as you do. Be mindful of others:

- Some people fear dogs and are allergic to cats, so keep your pets under control
- Always ask permission before letting your dog approach another dog or person

- If your dog is a barker, seek advice to minimise its impact on your neighbours
- Cats must be contained indoors or in enclosures, during the nightly curfew from 8 pm to 6 am.

Barking Dogs

Excessive and persistent dog barking noise can be frustrating for neighbours, but owners may be unaware of the issue to effectively correct the barking behaviour. If you feel comfortable, talk to the owners of the dog in a friendly manner raising your concerns as a first step.

There are many reasons why a dog could start excessively barking. It could be something distressing the dog, view access to a busy road or footpath, wildlife causing the dog to bark excessively, separation anxiety or a health issue that the owner might not be aware of.

Before you approach the dog owner, consider the following points:

- The dog's owner may not realise that the barking is causing an annoyance to other people
- The dog may only bark excessively when the owner is not at home
- The owner may not hear the barking from certain parts of their property

Residents can lodge a nuisance noise complaint with Council or download a Barking Dog log diary from our Council website.

Council Dog Barking investigation process:

- Authorised officer conducts a site inspection to inform the pet owner of the report received (complainant identity is protected by legislation) and determine possible causes of the alleged excessive barking
- Send an acknowledgement letter and a Barking Dog Log Diary to the complainant
- Send a letter formally notifying the dog owner of the received report regarding the alleged excessive Barking Nuisance and request steps to minimise the impact of the alleged excessive dog barking
- Monitor the alleged excessive barking for the next two to three weeks
- If the excessive barking nuisance is confirmed, the authorised Officer may issue a written warning or a Notice to Comply to abate the barking nuisance

Should the dog owner fail to comply with the Notice to Comply to abate the nuisance, a Council authorised Officer may issue an Infringement Notice to the dog owner. If the noise complaint persists after an Infringement Notice has been issued, Council may proceed with legal action against the dog owner in the Magistrates Court and seek a Court Order.

The Animal Welfare Victoria website has useful information and the strategies you can consider as both an owner and affected neighbour.

Our current Dog order

In May 2023, the Borough of Queenscliffe amended a dog order made under Section 26 of the *Domestic 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, except where signs designate an area as being available for unleashed dogs. Additional information on restricting the times for dogs allowed to be on the beach and a cat curfew was also included.



Domestic Animals Act 1994

The Council in the exercise of its powers under section 26 of the **Domestic Animals Act 1994** resolved that from the date of the publication of this Order that:

1. General Matters
 - a. The owner of any dog must keep the dog under effective control by means of a leash or chain when they are in a public place in the municipal district, except where signs designate an area as being available for unleashed dogs.
 - b. Dogs are not permitted on any beach in the municipal district between the hours of 9.00 am and 8.00 pm each day from the period from the first day of December until the last day of February in any year.
2. Exceptions and obligations

Despite Clause 1 (b), dogs may be exercised off leash at the Narrows Beach provided that an owner has the dog under the effective control at all times and provided –

 - a. the dog remains under effective control by either voice or hand commands and the dog remains within sight of the owner so that it can be immediately brought back under control by placing it on a leash or chain if it becomes necessary to prevent the dog wandering out of effective control or to avoid any intimidating behaviour or threatening attack; and
 - b. the owner does not allow the dog to worry or threaten any person or animal and does not allow the dog to attack any person or animal.
3. Interpretation for the purposes of this Order:
 - a. 'Public Place' has the same meaning as the **Summary Offences Act 1966**.
 - b. 'Owner' has the same meaning as in the **Domestic Animals Act 1994**.
 - c. Narrows Beach is the beach that is adjacent to the area described as Dog Beach carpark (also known as Narrows Beach carpark) in the Narrows, between Point Lonsdale and Queenscliff. The Narrows Beach extends from the end of the rock sea wall eastwards to a boundary which is approximately level with the west end of Fraser Street, Queenscliff to the low water mark.

Any previous Orders made under section 26 of the **Domestic Animals Act 1994** are repealed.

KELVIN SPILLER
Acting Chief Executive Officer

Our current Cat Curfew

Keeping your cat safe at night

To protect your cat, our native wildlife and to minimise public nuisance, all cats must be confined from 8pm or 9.00pm daylight saving time to 6.00am daily.

The more time your feline family member is kept happy at home the safer they are from roads, fighting and disease, and the more likely native wildlife are to visit our area.

We encourage all cat owners to place bells on your cat's collar to deter them from hunting wildlife. If you have a cat wandering on your premises, you can hire a cat trap from the Council. A security deposit fee of \$50 applies, which is refunded when the trap is returned.

BOROUGH OF QUEENSLIFFE
Domestic (Feral & Nuisance)
Animals Act 1994

At its meeting on 4 September 2001, Council adopted a Cat Control Order pursuant to Section 25 (1) of the **Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994**, which:–

- a) Requires cats to be securely confined to the owners premises, between 8.00 p.m. (eastern standard time) or 9.00 p.m. (daylight saving time) and 6.00 a.m. daily; and
- b) Prohibits the presence of cats, other than restrained domestic cats, in any public area within the municipal district.

The penalties for offences in relation to such an Order are prescribed in the abovementioned Act and are the same as those currently applying to dogs.

GARY PRICE
Chief Executive Officer

Victoria Government Gazette

G 37 13 September 2001 2309

How can I train my cat to stay indoors?

Resources to assist in transitioning your cat to an indoor lifestyle or outdoor enclosure can be found at www.safecat.org.au.

Some effective methods include:

- Feeding your cat indoors
- Instead of letting your cat back outside as soon as they're finished eating, keep them inside for increasing periods of time
- If you're retraining your cat during the winter, a warm, dry bed to snuggle in may encourage them to stay inside
- Installing a cat run, cat enclosure or cat-proof fencing so your cat can roam safely on your property.

Our Law Enforcement team

Authorised Law Enforcement Officers

Our team of two full time authorised Officers and a casual authorised Officer cover all aspects of enforcement, including animal management. All Officers completed a comprehensive REINFORCER AMO Safe Animal Handling training and First Aid training in May 2024. Officers deliver education and enforcement services when patrolling whilst maintaining a high level of safety.

We are a small community and when it comes to our beloved pets, we work closely with our residents to ensure pets are safely confined to their properties. Collecting animals at large are some of the requests attended to during working hours when necessary. Officers endeavour to collect and return pets to their owners, however, when officers are unable to locate the owner, pets are safely transported and impounded at Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS) in Moolap.

The Borough is committed to ensuring officers are up to date with training and competent in their duties to deliver effective and professional service to our residents and visitors.

Some of their training includes:

- Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation or equivalent
- Conflict resolution training
- Customer Service and Emotional intelligence training

Forecast Authorised Officer Training	Current	2025-29
Cert IV in Animal Control and Regulation	Senior Law Enforcement Officer	Law Enforcement Officer & Casual Law Enforcement Officer
Emotional Intelligence training	Senior Law Enforcement Officer	Law Enforcement Officer & Casual Law Enforcement Officer
Animal Handling	Officer's training current and satisfactory	Refreshers training every 2 years or as per business needs
First Aid and OH&S	Officer's training current and satisfactory	Refreshers training every 2 years or as per business needs
Dealing with Difficult Customers & Conflict Resolution Training	Officer's training current and satisfactory	Refreshers training every 2 years or as per business needs
Other relevant training and upskilling development	Officer's training current and satisfactory	As identified during annual performance review

Our Law Enforcement services in a nutshell

Current Programs and Services	Service Level
Dog at large and wandering dogs –	<p>Wandering dogs reported to Council are generally collected within 1-hour or at the first available opportunity during business hours.</p> <p>Animals are collected at the first available opportunity outside business hours.</p>
Dog Attacks and dangerous dog reports	Law Enforcement Officers attend to dog attack reports within 30 minutes during business hours and at the first available opportunity outside business hours.
Restricted Breeds reports	Restricted dog breed reports are investigated and addressed as a priority and actions are assessed by senior management based on evidence gathered by the investigating officer.
Domestic Animal report	Law Enforcement Officers attend to domestic animal reports within a day during business hours and at the first available opportunity outside business hours.
Community Information	Law Enforcement Officers provide information and assistance to residents and visitors during patrols and whilst performing everyday duties.
Law Enforcement patrols	Everyday patrols are carried out throughout the municipality including scheduled weekend patrols during the summer from November to Easter weekend. Officers are also scheduled to patrol during special activities and major events focused on compliance of dog restrictions and public safety.
Beach patrols	Beach patrols are conducted along the promenade to enforce dog restrictions, as well as working with the Friends of the Hooded Plover during the breeding season.

Animal Management 4-years of data

The following tables report the infringement notices, registrations and permits issued under Local Law and *Domestic Animals Act 1994* over the past four years.

In 2024, Council improved the Law Enforcement team’s visibility by introducing push bike patrols along the share path between The Narrows Dog Beach to Point Lonsdale waterfront and throughout the municipality. These patrols focused on enforcing regulations such as dogs on leash in public places, picking up after dogs, addressing any dog nuisances, and compliance regarding dogs on beach Council orders.

Officers aim to give an educational approach to allow pet owners the opportunity to understand and adhere to the current regulations, maintain a high level of safety and amenity throughout the municipality.

Authorised Officers apply reasonable discretion when enforcing these regulations, issuing on-the-spot Notice to Comply and Infringement Notices to repeat offenders and addressing immediate safety concerns.

During the summer of 2024-25, Law Enforcement Officers scheduled weekend patrols throughout the municipality and implemented staggered Law Enforcement shifts focused on patrolling the foreshore between The Narrows dog beach to Point Lonsdale lighthouse between 7am and 7pm.

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Animal Infringement Notices	2	2	16	5
Dogs registered	704	682	735	628
Cats registered	123	127	137	109
Impounded animals	15	8	8	2
Reclaimed / returned to owner	15	1	4	8
Surrender Dog/Cat	0	0	0	0
Dogs/Cats euthanised	0	0	0	0
Dog attacks	0	1	1	3
Declared Dangerous Dogs	0	0	0	0
Domestic Animal Business	0	0	0	1
Animal Complaints received	72	76	77	71
Prosecutions	0	0	0	0

Statistics comparison

Borough of Queenscliff and Shire of West Wimmera data comparison

As of February 2025, there are 654 dogs, and 114 cats registered within the Borough of Queenscliffe.

Data comparison with a similar Council as per January 2025	Borough of Queenscliffe	Shire of West Wimmera
Population (Residential Premises)	2911	4006
<i>Authorised</i> officers (Law Enforcement officers including Animal Control)	2	1
Hours Training (per officer annually)	20	60-70
Number of Registered Dogs	650	712
Number of Registered Cats	114	146
Number of Registered Declared Dogs	0	0
Number of impounded dogs	1	10
Number of Dogs collected and returned to owners	8	4
Number of Dogs rehoused	0	1
Number of impounded dogs euthanized	0	5
Number of impounded cats	1	20
Number of cats collected and returned to owner	1	5
Number of cats rehoused	0	7
Number of impounded cats euthanized	0	8
Number of excess animal permits – Local Law	4	10
Number of Restricted Breed premises	0	0

Dog attacks, menacing, and restricted breed dogs

Council benchmarks policies and procedures against neighbouring Councils to ensure that Animal Management related fees and charges are reasonably priced and remain up to date.

In 2024, Council introduced discounted pet registration for dogs and cats over 10 years old, as well as adjusted the fees for non-desexed dogs, menacing and dangerous dogs.

Council received a low number of dog attacks, dog rushes, and menacing dog complaints.

From October 2023 to October 2024, we investigated and confirmed three dog attacks causing injuries - two incidents involving attacks on people and one involving an attack on another animal.

Dogs are a great family member and amazing companions, but under certain circumstances they can be unpredictable.

Authorised Officers promptly and thoroughly investigate dog attacks and dog rush reports to ensure immediate public safety while maintaining a high level of amenity throughout the municipality.

During busy summer periods, we experience a high influx of visitors. To minimise the likelihood of dog related incidents, we have increased our foreshore patrols and overall Law Enforcement presence throughout the municipality.

Law Enforcement Officers focus on educating residents and visitors about Council orders and regulations, enforcing dogs on leash in public places all year-round, and dogs on beaches restrictions from 1 December to the last day of February.

At the Borough, there are no Declared Dangerous Dogs or Restricted Breed Dogs registered.

Domestic Animal Business

In 2024, Council identified a single Domestic Animal Business operating within our municipality as a Dog Training Services.

The permit application process was undertaken to ensure the business complies with the Code of Practice and requirements of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Priorities for the next four years

- Continue improving service delivery and increasing the visibility of the Law Enforcement team, with a focus on public safety.
- Investigating grant funding opportunities for additional pet friendly open spaces.
- Conduct ongoing review of Domestic Animal Policies and Procedures to ensure the Borough's Domestic Animal Management Plan is contemporary and is aligned with Council plans and priorities.
- Focus efforts on public education and reasonable enforcement of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*.