



**Golden Plains Shire
Domestic Animal Management Plan
2013-2017**



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION.....	3
TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS	6
REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION.....	7
NUISANCE	10
DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS.....	12
DOG ATTACKS	14
OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA	16
DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES	18
ADMINISTRATION	20
ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORTING	21

INTRODUCTION

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act* (1994), every Council in Victoria must prepare a domestic animal management plan every four years in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Primary Industries.

1. 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
 - viii) 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
 - ix) 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
 - x) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
2. 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.

Introduction

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The purpose of this Domestic Animal Management Plan is to provide Council with clear direction as to how it will encourage more residents within Golden Plains Shire to be responsible pet owners.

The overarching objectives of this plan will be to:

1. Increase the enjoyment people receive from their pet
2. Reduce the incidence of problems within the community related to pets being a nuisance or causing injury to people or other animals and
3. Contribute to improving the health and wellbeing of pets

These objectives will be achieved through this plan by:

1. Providing the community with a clear understanding of Council's expectations of pet owners
2. Reinforcing to the community Council's commitment to improving standards associated with pet ownership and
3. Clearly describing to the community the role and actions Council will take to improve the level of responsible pet ownership throughout Golden Plains Shire.

Outcomes that will contribute to achieving the above objectives include:

1. Increasing the skills and resources available to Council officers
2. Increasing dog and cat registration levels
3. Decreasing the incidence of dogs at large and nuisance behaviour
4. Actively managing dangerous, restricted breed and menacing dogs
5. Decreasing the incidence of dog attacks.
6. Decreasing euthanasia rates and impacts associated with overpopulation in cats
7. Ensuring the operation of Domestic Animal Businesses is in accordance with the applicable laws and Codes of Practice

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE

As a growing rural municipality the impact of dogs in the community is more apparent than that of cats. However, while cat problems tend to be less obvious, there is evidence to suggest cats are having a negative impact on wildlife and residents.

Golden Plains Shire is a relatively small rural municipality with a correspondingly low rate base. Like all services provided throughout the municipality, animal management services need to be strategically planned and targeted so as to address the main concerns and minimise the use of resources on matters of relatively low concern or minor impact.

Golden Plains Shire comprises 2,705 square kilometres and is situated between tow of Victoria's largest regional cities, Geelong and Ballarat.

With 19,000 residents across some 52 communities including 16 townships, Golden Plains is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria, with an average annual population growth of rate of around 2%. Continued high levels of growth counter efforts to reduce complaints and domestic animal related offences.

New residents, including many young families, have taken advantage of the proximity to services and employment opportunities available in Ballarat and Geelong. Despite rapid growth in the north-west and south-east corners of Golden Plains, the Shire's rural base and natural environment dominate the landscape. The implication is that families bring pets that not only have the potential to impact on other township residents and their pets, but on native wildlife and livestock. With so many townships dispersed amongst large farms and rural lifestyle properties, there is increased opportunity for pet dogs to attack livestock.

Introduction

Council currently contracts its pound services through the RSPCA in Ballarat and the Geelong Animal Welfare Society (GAWS) in Geelong. This arrangement contributes towards providing a convenient service to residents by providing pound services at each of the major cities where residents access most of their services.

Due to the relatively low number of impoundments, it is also efficient to contract pound services to GAWS and the RSPCA in preference to Council operating a pound service.



Figure 1: Map Depicting the Municipality of Golden Plains Shire

DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS & DATA

TABLE 1:
SUMMARY OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT DATA FOR GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE 2011/2012

Attribute	Value
Population	19,000
Area	2705km ²
No. of EFT Authorised Officers (Animal Control)	2.5
Hours training per officer annually	7.6
No. of Registered Dogs	5240
No. of Registered Cats	1103
No. of Registered Declared Dogs	7
No. of impoundments (dogs)	220
Percentage. of dogs returned to owner	64%
Percentage. of dogs rehoused	23%
Percentage. of dogs euthanased	13%
Percentage. of cats returned to owner	2%
Percentage. of cats rehoused	34%
Percentage. of cats euthanased	64%

TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

CURRENT SITUATION

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Golden Plains Shire's current AMO Training and Development activities include:

1. Attendance at dog identification seminars
2. Participation in dog behaviour training workshops
3. Email and internet access to information on changes to legislative and operational environments related to animal management.

OBJECTIVES

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

ACTIONS

Activity	When	Target
Liaise with neighbouring Councils to identify opportunities to access training sessions facilitated by larger Councils.	Ongoing	Liaise with 4 Councils
Encourage Officers to undertake refresher training in compliance procedures	Annually	At Annual Review
Encourage Officers to attend regional enforcement officer peer group meetings and workshops.	Ongoing	At Annual Review
Develop a training policy that identifies minimum training requirements and training opportunities that should be undertaken by Animal Management Officers.	June 2014	To be undertaken
Develop and maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training.	September 2013	To be undertaken
Train officers in the safe, efficient and humane use of firearms	Triennially	To Undertake
Ensure all Animal Management Officers have completed minimum training requirements.	Within 6 months of appointment.	100%
Equip officers with the necessary equipment to safely and effectively carry out their work.	Ongoing	Audit Vehicles Annually

REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

CURRENT SITUATION

Data

An audit of properties in township locations throughout Golden Plains Shire in September 2012 identified 187 properties containing a total of 252 unregistered dogs. Estimates suggest between 20-40% of dogs in Golden Plains Shire are not registered and in the order of 60-80% of cats are not registered.

Cat registration rates are well below that of dog registrations and feral cats are frequently seized and destroyed. There are currently 1103 cats registered with Golden Plains Shire with estimates suggesting there are an additional 1500 owned cats that are not registered.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Golden Plains Shire's current identification and registration activities include:

1. Publishing regular articles in Council's community newsletter promoting the need for residents to register their pet and keep it contained to their property.
2. Increased application of Penalty Infringement Notices to owners of unregistered dogs and cats.
3. Providing a 'free ride home' for registered dogs found wandering and not causing a nuisance provided it is not a repeat offence or ongoing concern.
4. Displaying 'register your pets now' signs throughout the municipality
5. Conducting inspection audits to identify where unregistered pets are located
6. Issue 'Pet registration warning notices' to residents identified as owning unregistered pets as a result of routine operations.

Summary

Registration and identification of pets are fundamental elements of responsible pet ownership and central to Council services. The ability to accurately identify a pet contributes to the prompt return of lost or wandering pets and ensures owners are held accountable for damage or offences involving their pets.

Registration remains a priority and Council will continue to reward owners of registered pets while applying various strategies to encourage the registration of unregistered pets.

Registration & Identification

OBJECTIVES

1. Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 5% each year.
2. Show a 5% decrease in the number of dogs identified as being unregistered during the annual audit.

ACTIONS

Education & Promotion Activities	When	Target
Use local newspapers, community newsletters and the Golden Plains Gazette to promote and advertise registration requirements prior to the renewal period.	March/April each year	1 Article
Continue to publish regular articles in Golden Plains Gazette "promoting the need for residents to register their pet and ensure it wears its identification tag.	April and June each year	2 Articles
Include registration, identification and renewal information on Council's 'on-hold' messages.	Ongoing	Review
Use Council's website to provide information to residents on where and how to register their pet, registration requirements, renewal dates, registration fees, microchipping, desexing certificates, notifying Council on changes to ownership or reporting the passing of a pet.,	June 2013	Review
Include pet registration forms, and registration fact sheets in 'new resident's' kits	June 2013	To be undertaken
Enable owners to transfer existing registrations from other municipalities to Golden Plains Shire without charge.	Ongoing	Implement
Provide registration forms and pet ownership fact sheets on Council's website.	Ongoing	Review
Promote the benefits of registration and identification including safe return of lost pets and 'free ride home' on website, in Gazette, in factsheets and new resident's kits.	June 2013	1 Article Review
Displaying 'register your pets now' signs throughout the municipality.	Ongoing	17 Townships 40 weeks
Continue to provide a 'Free ride home' for registered dogs found wandering and not causing a nuisance.	Ongoing	Implement
Alert residents of registration date on twitter.	April each year	To be undertaken
Ensure Council's fact sheets and other information material explains the difference between registration and microchipping.	June 2013	To be undertaken
Conduct cat specific registration and identification promotions in media and on Council's website.	May each year	1 Article To Undertake
Issue 'register your pet' notices when unregistered pets are detected.	Ongoing	Implement
Provide for a range of registration payment methods including in person, by cheque, money order or credit card.	Ongoing	Implement

Registration & Identification

Compliance Activities	When	Target
Issue registration renewal notices annually.	March each year	To be undertaken
Follow-up non-renewals with a reminder letter.	May/June each year	To be undertaken
Conduct annual inspection of township areas to identify properties with unregistered dogs and issue 'register your pet' notices as required.	July-Sept each year	To be undertaken
Ensure registration is checked as part of any pet related complaint or compliance process.	Ongoing	Implement
Ensure all authorised officers have a microchip scanner.	Ongoing	2 Scanners
Ensure all authorised officers have a laptop computer enabling them to access the register at all times.	Ongoing	2 Computers
Issue 'Pet registration warning notices' to residents identified as owning unregistered pets as a result of routine operations.	Ongoing	Implement
Continue to increase the application of Penalty Infringement Notices to owners of unregistered dogs and cats found to be committing offences.	Ongoing	Increase by 10% annually
Attempt to identify dead or injured animals by means of registration tag or microchip in order to inform owner.	Ongoing	Implement
Follow up registration of animals sold from the pound with a letter to new owner.	Ongoing	Implement
Conduct audits of newspaper and internet advertisements to ensure dog and cat advertisements contain the microchip number or DAB registration number for the animal being sold.	Annually	4 times each year
Ensure all impounded animals are registered prior to their release.	Ongoing	Implement
Report outcomes of prosecutions as well as updates on infringements in local media and in the Golden Plains Gazette.	February and August each year	Twice each year
Ensure the correct charges are applied to registration fees to ensure \$2 for each cat and \$3.50 for each dog goes to the state government and avoid errors in calculating the reduced fee.	February each year	Implement
Pursue unpaid infringements through the Magistrates' Court.	Ongoing	95% of prosecutions are successful

NUISANCE

CURRENT SITUATION

Data

Nuisance complaints received by Council are generally related to barking, dogs at large, dog attacks and feral cats.

95% of cats registered in Golden Plains Shire are desexed and 97% of impounded cats are not collected by an owner. This data suggests registered cats do not tend to cause a nuisance. Problem cats tend to be either feral or semi-owned and consequently, no-one is accountable for their impact on the environment or the community.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Council's response to barking complaints is to encourage the complainant to discuss the problem with their neighbour. If this course of action fails, Council will inform the dog owner of the problem and provide them an opportunity to rectify it. Council employs investigation, negotiation, communication and education strategies to resolve most nuisance issues. If legal action is identified as being required, it is necessary for the complainant to become involved and provide much of the evidence.

Council provides a dog seizure and impoundment service to help prevent dogs found at large from being harmed or becoming a nuisance. Registered dogs found at large are returned to their owners and informed of their obligation to keep their dog contained. Unregistered dogs at large are delivered to the pound and penalties applied.

Council has for many years made up to ten cat traps available for hire by residents. These traps are continually out for hire with on-going demand reflected in a waiting list of residents seeking to access the cat trapping program in order to alleviate their cat related problem.

Summary

The need to expand the cat trap program has been identified by Council. The number of traps available to the public will be doubled to 20 and hire of the traps will be free. Education and information programs will be expanded to encourage residents to become more responsible pet owners. Penalty infringement notices will continue to be utilised where appropriate to discourage irresponsible pet ownership.

Nuisance

OBJECTIVES

1. Reduce documented cat nuisance complaints by 5% per year
2. Reduce documented dog nuisance complaints by 5% each year.

ACTIONS

Education & Promotion Activities	When	Target
Promote and distribute the 'who's for cats' promotional material.	Ongoing	Webpage developed
Encourage desexing of pets to reduce wandering through posting of fact sheets on Council's website.	June 2013	To Undertake
Provide information to assist residents using cat traps to do so humanely and to look after the cat's welfare.	January 2013	To Undertake
Provide a factsheet to assist owners to respond to excessive barking by their dog.	December 2013	Review
Provide a factsheet to support residents experiencing a nuisance and explain the process for responding to barking complaints.	December 2013	Review
Provide a process for responding to barking noise, at large and trespassing related nuisance complaints.	June 2014	Review

Compliance Activities	When	Target
Maintain a register of all nuisance complaints	June 2013	Implement
Review Council policies and procedures relating to nuisance complaints	December 2014	Review
Report the outcomes of prosecutions and infringements relating to dog and cat nuisance issues.	February and August each year	Twice each year
Investigate the appropriateness of implementing a cat curfew.	September 2013	To Undertake
Provide cat cages to residents free of charge subject to a fully refundable security bond.	Ongoing	Implement
Provide a free trapped cat collection service.	Ongoing	Implement
Purchase additional cat traps to double Council's capacity to meet demand for traps.	January 2013	To Undertake
Ensure Council Local Laws retain the requirement for owners of more than two dogs or cats to obtain permit unless exempt.	Ongoing	To Undertake
Impound all unregistered dogs and cats seized while at large.	Ongoing	Implement

DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

CURRENT SITUATION

Data

Golden Plains Shire currently has one restricted breed dog, two menacing dogs and four dangerous dogs on the register.

Very few dogs are declared in Golden Plains Shire as owners of dogs that are involved in serious attacks are encouraged to surrender their dog to Council for destruction. Since legislation prohibiting the registering of Restricted Breed Dogs became effective in September 2011, Council has destroyed nine Pitbull Terriers.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Council's approach will continue to involve removing dangerous or restricted breed dogs from within the community. In situations where an owner refuses to surrender their dog, Council will investigate the matter with a view to prosecuting.

Council will continue to respond to reports of Restricted Breed Dogs and ensure those that are not currently registered are destroyed in accordance with legislation.

Summary

Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs cause minimal problems in Golden Plains Shire. This is due in part to Council's approach to serious dog attack incidents and the preference to have dogs that attack destroyed rather than declared dangerous.

Council's strategy in this regard will continue to limit the declaration of dangerous dogs by pursuing the destruction of dogs involved in serious attacks or prosecution in the event the dog is not surrendered for destruction.

Dangerous, Menacing & Restricted Breed Dogs

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and register all declared dogs in the municipality by December 2014.
2. Inspect and audit all declared dog premises biennially to ensure they are adhering to legislated keeping requirements.

ACTIONS

Education & Promotion Activities	When	Target
Ensure the owners of Dangerous Dogs are aware of their legal obligations by providing them with brochures or factsheets.	March 2014	100% of owners

Compliance Activities	When	Target
Continue to declare dogs as Restricted Breed, Dangerous or Menacing in accordance with legislation.	Ongoing	100% identified dogs
Ensure all declared Dangerous Dogs are accurately registered on the Victorian Dangerous Dog Registry.	As required	100%
Biennially audit premises where Dangerous Dogs are kept to ensure compliance with requirements for keeping Dangerous Dogs.	August every 2 nd year	100%
Respond to complaints about Menacing, Dangerous Dogs or Restricted Breed Dogs.	Within 2 working days	100%
Maintain Council policy for responding to Restricted Breed Dogs.	Ongoing	Review
Ensure all Dangerous Dogs are implanted with a microchip.	Ongoing	100%
Report the outcomes of prosecutions and provide updates on infringements issued in relation to Menacing, Dangerous or Restricted Breed Dogs.	February & August each year	Twice each year

DOG ATTACKS

CURRENT SITUATION

Data

Table 2 below details the number and nature of dog attacks investigated by Golden Plains Shire between January 2006 and June 2012. Over this five and half year period 73 attacks were investigated resulting in an average of one attack every month. 186 animal deaths and 43 injuries have resulted from 73 recorded dog attack incidents

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF DOG ATTACK DATA FOR GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE 2006-2012

Number Of Attack Events	Attack Victim	Number Injuries	Number Deaths
3	Cats	1	2
2	Rabbits	0	4
6	Chickens	0	29
8	Humans	8	0
15	Dogs	13	2
39	Livestock (97% Sheep)	21 (Including 2 Alpacas and 1 Goat)	149 (including 2 Alpacas and 1 Goat)
TOTALS	73	43	186

The majority of dog attacks involve livestock, with 80% of all reported attacks resulting in the death of an animal. Sheep (78%) alpacas and goats (2%) account for 80% of fatalities with poultry accounting for a further 15% of deaths.

The high incidence of fatal dog attacks on livestock may, in part, be attributed to the nature of Golden Plains Shire which consists of 52 discreet communities including 16 sizable townships, all of which are interspersed among farming properties. This places a large number of dogs within close proximity to livestock. This inherently exposes livestock to attack if dog owners do not take action to ensure their dogs cannot escape.

Attacks on people and other dogs account for 30% of incidents. However, incidents of this nature tend to involve a single victim and resulted in the death of two dogs and single bite injuries to people. By contrast, on average, a single incident on livestock, particularly sheep and chickens, tends to result in the death of 4 animals.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Council currently investigates reported dog attacks and where a serious attack has been substantiated, endeavours to have the dog(s) responsible destroyed. If an owner refuses to surrender a dog for destruction, Council will investigate the matter with intention of prosecuting provided there is adequate evidence to support a successful prosecution. Infringements are issued for minor attacks and articles are routinely published in local media alerting residents to the potential consequences of allowing their dog to wander at large.

Dog Attacks

Summary

Dog attacks on livestock and pets occur frequently in Golden Plains Shire. Attacks on animals dominate Council dog attack statistics and consequently, preventing attacks on livestock and pets is the primary focus of Council's dog attack prevention program. Core to preventing dog attacks in Golden Plains Shire is the necessity for residents to keep their dogs securely confined to their premises. Subsequently, Council's dog attack prevention program will involve education about the need to confine dogs, issuing infringements for 'dogs at large', and minor attack, destroying dogs found to have committed a serious attack and publicising the frequency of attacks, the number of dogs destroyed and reporting successful prosecutions.

OBJECTIVES

Decrease the number of reported dog attacks in the community by 5% each year.

ACTIONS

Education & Promotion Activities	When	Target
Raise awareness of the risk of dog attacks in the neighbourhood on other pets, livestock and people.	Ongoing	1 Article Annually
Distribute factsheets on dog attack prevention in 'new resident's kit' and via Council's website.	December 2013	Implement
Distribute 'We are family' DVD pack through Maternal and Childcare Nursing services.	Ongoing	Implement
Report incidents of dog attack on Twitter and develop standard media response template reinforcing Council's approach to dog attack.	August 2013	Implement
Promote effective confinement of dogs through media, factsheets and on Council's website.	Ongoing	1 Article Review Website
Provide residents with information on implications for their dog and themselves if their dog attacks a person or animal.	Ongoing	1 Article Annually
Promote desexing of dogs to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering at large in local media, in fact sheets and on Council's website.	Ongoing	Review Website 1 Article Annually

Compliance Activities	When	Target
Develop dog attack investigation and enforcement policies.	August 2014	To be undertaken
Respond to dog attack reports in line with existing 'out of hours' response policy.	Ongoing	Implement
Maintain a register of dog attacks including breed of dog, details of victim, nature of injuries, date, and outcome of Council action.	Ongoing	Implement
Seize dogs that have seriously attacked a person and prosecute owners where there is adequate evidence to support a case.	Ongoing	Implement
Investigate appropriateness of introducing a Council Order to designate certain areas of the municipality as 'Dogs on Leash Only' areas.	October 2014	Implement
Report outcomes of prosecutions in local media.	Ongoing	Twice each year

OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

CURRENT SITUATION

Data

2011 data indicates there are problems related to overpopulation of cats in Golden Plains Shire with 80% of cats delivered to the pound being put to sleep. By contrast, euthanasia rates amongst dogs delivered to the pound is 10%. While there is still room for improvement in dog euthanasia rates, the most significant issue remains unacceptably high cat euthanasia rates.

95% of registered cats currently in Golden Plains Shire are desexed. Between 2009 and 2011 only six of the 177 (0.5%) cats impounded from Golden Plains Shire were reclaimed by their owner. This data indicates that

1. Cats that are registered are rarely impounded
2. 99% of cats impounded are not registered
3. There is a significant number of cats that are either:
 - i. feral or;
 - ii. semi domesticated and not being collected by those who feed the local stray cat.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Council continues to make cat traps available to the community in an effort to alleviate problems associated with stray and feral cats.

Summary

There is no data to indicate cats that are owned and registered with Council are causing nuisance problems, nor are they contributing significantly to the cat overpopulation problem as nearly all registered cats are desexed. The data also indicates there is no discernible dog overpopulation problem in Golden Plains Shire. Overpopulation problems lie squarely with an abundance of stray/semi owned cats and feral cats.

Council will endeavour to apply a three pronged strategy aimed at alleviating this problem.

1. An education program utilising the 'Who's for Cats' program to encourage residents to actively take ownership and responsibility for a stray cat.
2. Introduce a trial desexing scheme to assist residents to take responsibility for their cat.
3. Enhanced cat trapping program to assist residents to remove stray and feral cats from the breeding pool.

Overpopulation & Euthanasia

OBJECTIVES

1. Achieve a 5% annual reduction in the number of cats euthanased as a proportion of all cats impounded.
2. Increase reclaim and rehoming rates for cats by 5% per year.
3. Reduce euthanasia rates for dogs to less than 10% per year

ACTIONS

Education & Promotion Activities	When	Target
Promote the benefits of desexing in local media, in fact sheets and on Council's website.	June 2014	Review website 1 Article Annually
Investigate the provision of a subsidised desexing program for cats.	June 2014	Complete Review
Encourage residents to take full responsibility for stray cats using the 'Who's for cats' publications.	Ongoing	Implement
Create a link from Council's website to the Ballarat RSPCA and Geelong Animal Welfare Society websites to advertise animals available for adoption.	September 2013	To be undertaken

Compliance Activities	When	Target
Work with both of Council's pound service providers to generate more accurate impound data.	December 2014	Required data provided
Generate more accurate data detailing the reason(s) for euthanasia of impounded animals.	December 2014	To be undertaken
Investigate reports of unauthorised 'backyard' breeders to ascertain whether they should be registered as a Domestic Animal Business.	As required	Implement
Clearly identify owned, unowned and feral cats that are seized and impounded.	June 2014	Implement
Institute a formal program of assessment for euthanasia or suitability for rehoming of dogs and cats.	June 2014	Implement
Provide cat traps to residents free of charge, subject to a refundable security bond.	Ongoing	Implement
Provide a free trapped cat collection service.	Ongoing	Implement
Purchase additional cat traps to double Council's capacity to meet demand for traps.	July 2013	To be undertaken
Provide information as part of the cat trap borrowing agreement to ensure the welfare of trapped cats is maintained.	December 2013	Implement
Investigate the benefits of introducing a cat curfew to reduce the number of unwanted litters in the community.	June 2014	Complete Review

DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

CURRENT SITUATION

Data

Golden Plains Shire currently has seven Domestic Animal Businesses registered with Council five of which are involved in boarding, one in training and one breeding. There are no breeding establishments registered as a Domestic Animal Business in Golden Plains Shire. There are several small scale breeding establishments where the proprietor is a member of an applicable organisation. These premises are administered under the Golden Plains Planning Scheme and Council's Public Amenity, Roads & Streets Local Law (2007).

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Council currently maintains a register of Domestic Animal Businesses operating within the shire and investigates properties where significant numbers of dogs are kept to determine if the Domestic Animal Business provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act* (1994) apply.

Council has acted in situations where unacceptable numbers of dogs are being kept. There are currently 304 properties with more than 2 dogs registered to the property of which there are 11 properties with more than nine dogs registered. Of the 304 properties only 22 are known to have three or more fertile females of the same breed and not provided evidence of being a member of an applicable organisation.

Council has a local law in place requiring residents to obtain a permit to keep more than 22 dogs or cats unless the dogs are working dogs kept in a rural area. There are currently 157 valid permits for keeping more than two dogs or cats in Golden Plains Shire and Council is actively seeking to increase the level of compliance.

Summary

Golden Plains Shire is susceptible to being utilised by unscrupulous dog and cat breeders as it contains many isolated properties within close proximity to pet markets in Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat.

Council seldom receives information on illicit cat breeders, but will continue to reactively respond to information on cat breeding operations and proactively endeavour to address potential illicit dog breeders.

OBJECTIVES

1. Identify and register all known Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality.
2. Ensure 100% compliance with registration and mandatory codes of practice for all domestic animal businesses.
3. Identify potentially illegal 'puppy farms' and ensure compliance with applicable legislation and codes of practice.

Domestic Animal Businesses

ACTIONS

Education & Promotion Activities	When	Target
Provide a copy of the relevant Code of Practice to each registered Domestic Animal Business in Golden Plains Shire.	Every 2 nd year with audit	100%
Ensure all relevant Domestic Animal Businesses in Golden Plains Shire are advised and involved in any review of their respective Code of Practice.	As required	100%

Compliance Activities	When	Target
Register all Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality.	April each year	100%
Conduct biennial 'unscheduled' inspections/audits of each Domestic Animal Business within Golden Plains Shire to determine compliance with planning permit provisions and the applicable Code of Practice.	August every 2 nd year	100%
Improve Local Law permit application form and process to incorporate requirement to provide evidence of membership of applicable organisation where there are more than 2 fertile females on a property.	December 2013	To be undertaken
Audit the 11 properties with more than nine dogs registered to the property to ensure compliance with applicable legislation and codes.	2014	To be undertaken
Audit the 22 properties with more than 2 fertile females of the same breed where there is no evidence of the owner being a member of an applicable organisation.	2014	To be undertaken

ADMINISTRATION

OBJECTIVES

1. To provide the necessary administrative arrangements to implement actions identified in this plan.

ACTIONS

Education & Promotion Activities	When	Target
Make provision within the MEMP for domestic animals during an emergency.	2015	Complete Amendment
Develop information sheets for residents so they know what to do with their animals in event of emergency.	2014	To be undertaken
Provide web link to RSPCA website.	2013	To be undertaken
Provide web link to Bureau of Animal Welfare website.	2013	To be undertaken

Compliance Activities	When	Target
Facilitate the authorisation of officers under the POCTA Act, regulations and Codes of Practice.	As required	To be undertaken
Seek assistance from RSPCA and other authorised officers to implement and enforce POCTA Act, regulations and Codes of Practice.	As required	As Required

ANNUAL REVIEW AND REPORTING

CURRENT SITUATION

Performance against the objectives and targets specified in this plan will be monitored and evaluated by keeping records to measure the success of the plan.

The outcomes of this plan will be measured and evaluated annually in order to be reported in the Golden Plains Shire Annual Report to the Auditor General. The plan itself is scheduled to be reviewed every four years in accordance with the provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act (1994)*

Data

Current data capture and reporting processes need improvement. While a significant amount of animal management related work is being undertaken in Golden Plains Shire, there are problems capturing data relevant to these activities. Both pound service providers have implemented the 'Sheltermate' pound management system which will enable both providers to generate meaningful pound management data.

Summary

Improved data management is an integral component of this Domestic Animal Management Plan and one measurable will be to demonstrate an improvement in the amount of data collected, how it is captured and where it is reported.

OBJECTIVES

1. To capture and manage data to better support reporting of outcomes resulting from the implementation of this plan
2. To capture data that will improve the capacity for Council to plan for domestic animal management in the future.

Annual Review & Reporting

EVALUATION KEY RESULT INDICATORS

Indicators	Current	Target
1. To ensure that staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and effectively carry out their work.	No Training Plan	Training Plan
2. Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 5% each year.	3% p.a	5% p.a
3. Show a 5% decrease in the number of dogs identified as being unregistered during the annual audit.	-6% p.a	5% p.a
4. Reduce documented cat nuisance complaints by 5% per year	No Data	5% p.a
5. Reduce documented dog nuisance complaints by 5% each year.	No Data	5% p.a
6. Identify and register all declared dogs in the municipality by December 2014.	100%	100%
7. Inspect and audit all declared dog premises biennially to ensure they are adhering to legislated keeping requirements.	25%	100%
8. Decrease the number of reported dog attacks in the community by 5% each year.	11%	5%
9. Achieve a 5% annual reduction in the number of cats euthanased as a proportion of all cats impounded.	25%	5%
10. Increase reclaim and rehoming rates for cats by 5% per year.	12%	5%
11. Reduce euthanasia rates for dogs to less than 10% per year.	15%	10%
12. Identify and register all known Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality.	100%	100%
13. Ensure 100% compliance with registration and mandatory codes of practice for all domestic animal businesses.	No Data	100%
14. Identify potentially illegal 'puppy farms' and ensure compliance with applicable legislation and codes of practice.	100%	100%
15. To provide the necessary administrative arrangements to implement actions identified in this plan.		
16. To capture and manage data to better support reporting of outcomes resulting from the implementation of this plan	No Data Capture Plan	Data Capture Plan
17. To capture data that will improve the capacity for Council to plan for domestic animal management in the future.	Limited information	Adequate Information