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Baw Baw Shire Council

Domestic Animal Management Plan

2013 – 2017



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Legal Framework.....	8
68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans.....	8
Training of Authorised Officers.....	9
Registration and Identification.....	14
Nuisance.....	19
Dog Attacks.....	23
Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breeds.....	26
Over Population and High Euthanasia.....	28
Domestic Animal Businesses.....	33
Other Matters – Responsible Pet Ownership.....	35
Other Matters – Planning for the Future of the Pound Facility.....	37
Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting.....	38
Appendix A.....	39
<i>Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures</i>	39
Appendix B.....	41
<i>Our Current Education/Promotion Activities</i>	41
Appendix C.....	42
<i>Our Current Compliance Activities</i>	42

Executive Summary

Baw Baw Shire Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan sets the strategic direction for the Council's animal management activities until 2017. The Plan will be reviewed annually and has been developed in line with Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

The Bureau of Animal Welfare requires all councils to provide their Domestic Animal Management Plans in a format specifically outlined in their guidelines.

Under this format, items covered in this Plan include:

- Training of authorised officers;
- Registration and identification;
- Nuisance animals;
- Dog attacks;
- Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- Overpopulation and high euthanasia;
- Domestic animal businesses; and
- Other matters, of which Baw Baw has included responsible pet ownership and planning for the future of the pound facility.

Each section provides an outline of the current situation in Baw Baw, as well as future plans, actions and timelines to improve the level of service provided in these areas.

Some of the key activities planned to be undertaken as part of this Plan include:

- Further officer training.
- Targeted door knocking throughout the municipality each year to check for unregistered and un-microchipped dogs and cats.
- Communication and education campaigns to promote responsible pet ownership.
- Cross-referencing microchipping databases with Council's pet registration data.
- Introduce other methods of payment (including online and phone payments) for new animal registrations.
- An adopted Council position regarding dogs on leash or designated off leash areas.
- Review and update procedures for recording barking dog investigations.
- Assist residents with dealing with cat trespass / nuisance problems by purchasing additional cat cages.
- Review the expansion of Council's after hours service in relation to wandering animals.
- Develop a formalised dog attack enforcement and investigation policy in line with the requirements of the *Domestic Animals Act*.
- Develop a policy on when to declare a dog as dangerous or menacing.
- Investigate partnership with vets to run a discount desexing day or ongoing subsidised desexing program for pets of low income earners.
- Consideration of mandatory desexing of all cats as part of the local law review.

- Identify all businesses that should be registered domestic animal businesses in the municipality.
- In conjunction with local vets and businesses, run a bi-annual Pet Expo.
- Develop a proposal for Council's consideration for the construction of a new pound facility or extension of the current facility.

During the Plan's development, the Council engaged with key stakeholders including local veterinary clinics, Council-contracted animal agencies and the Council's Community Compliance Unit. Feedback and suggestions obtained have been integrated into the Plan's strategic directions.

The Community Compliance Unit also undertook a Best Value Review in 2013. The review included community consultation, involving 500 surveys being sent to identified service users. Of the 500 surveys sent 103 were returned. Benchmarking was also undertaken with nine other councils to gauge our service delivery in a number of fields, including animal management.

The findings from the review have been taken into consideration in this Plan.

Our progress in the implementation of this Plan will be reported annually via the Council's annual report.

Through the Plan, the Council has sought to balance the competing needs of pet owners, the broader community and the animals that share people's lives. Council recognises the benefits of pet ownership, and acknowledges the role we play in promoting responsible pet ownership and animal-related enforcement.

Introduction

Baw Baw Shire Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan sets the strategic direction for the Council's animal management activities until 2017. The Plan will be reviewed annually.

The Plan has been developed in line with Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

What are domestic animals and what are the benefits of being a pet owner?

Domestic animals are animals that live with Baw Baw residents, most commonly dogs and cats.

A wealth of research exists which highlights the benefits of pet ownership, including research undertaken for 'Australians and Their Pets: The Facts'. These include:

- People who own pets typically visit the doctor less often and use less medication;
- On average, pet owners have lower cholesterol and blood pressure levels and are less likely to report feeling lonely;
- Pet owners recover more quickly from illness and surgery and deal better with stressful situations;
- Pet owners show lower levels of risk factors associated with heart disease;
- Pets have been shown to greatly increase quality of life for the elderly; and
- Self esteem has shown to be higher in young people who have a pet.

Principles in Developing the Plan

The following provides an outline of the principles used when developing the Plan:

- Pets are an important part of the community and bring health, wellbeing and social benefits to pet owners;
- All animals will be treated humanely;
- Pet owners must take responsibility for their pets, including their health and safety;
- The needs of pet owners are to be balanced with the needs of other community members and the environment;
- We respect that not all community members want to have contact with pets or animals; and
- We will work to educate pet owners to be responsible, however we accept that penalties may be necessary on some occasions.

Baw Baw Population

Baw Baw Shire is made up of over 100 localities spread over 4,028 square kilometres, featuring both larger towns and rural areas.

The townships along the Princes Highway are experiencing rapid population growth with a number of new residential and industrial subdivisions being approved. As of 2013, Baw Baw Shire's estimated population was 45,205 across 16,489 households (ABS, 2013). The population is made up of a number of demographics, including balancing an ageing population with young families moving into the area.

With Baw Baw's growing population, it is expected that Baw Baw's pet population will also grow. As of April 2014, there were 2,519 cats and 9,111 dogs registered in Baw Baw Shire.

Baw Baw Shire is also home to eight registered domestic animal businesses which includes pet shops, boarding kennels, and breeding and rearing establishments.

Some of the existing animal management issues within the shire include:

- Failure to register pets by existing and new residents;
- Dogs at large or not under effective control;
- Barking dogs;
- Dog attacks on people and other pets;
- Dog excrement in public places;
- Overpopulation of cats, including feral cats;
- High cat euthanasia rates; and
- Excessive animal numbers without applicable permits.

Animal Management Services

The animal management services provided by the Community Compliance Unit are:

- Impounding of animals;
- Managing complaints relating to pets;
- Promoting responsible pet ownership;
- Investigating dog attacks;
- Ensuring compliance to legislation and code of practice's relevant to pets and livestock;
- Animal registration process;
- Investigating animal welfare issues;
- Management of domestic animal businesses;
- Providing advice to pet owners and the community; and
- After hours animal emergencies.

Resourcing

Baw Baw Shire Council's Community Compliance Unit undertakes animal management activities on behalf of the Council.

The Community Compliance Unit sits within the Building and Regulatory Services department, under the Growth and Economic Development directorate.

There are six full time Community Compliance Officers who report directly to the Manager Building and Regulatory Services. Of these six officers, 2.5 are wholly responsible for animal management, with support from other officers as required.

Consultation

Through the Plan, the Council has sought to balance the competing needs of pet owners, the broader community and the animals that share people's lives. Council recognises the benefits of pet ownership, and acknowledges the role we play in promoting responsible pet ownership and animal-related enforcement.

During the plan's development, the Council engaged with key stakeholders including local veterinary clinics, Council-contracted animal agencies and the Council's

Community Compliance Unit. Feedback and suggestions obtained have been integrated into the Plan's strategic directions. Four out of eight service providers responded, representing a 50 per cent response rate.

The Community Compliance Unit also undertook a Best Value Review in 2013. The review included community consultation, involving 500 surveys being sent to identified service users. Of the 500 surveys sent 103 were returned, representing a 20 per cent response rate.

Targeted interviews were also held with identified stakeholders, including the Council-contracted animal facility and local vets. Informal discussions were held with internal stakeholders and a Community Compliance Unit workshop was undertaken.

Benchmarking was also undertaken with nine other councils to gauge our service delivery in a number of fields, including animal management.

The findings from the review have been taken into consideration in this plan.

Format of this Plan

The Bureau of Animal Welfare requires all councils to provide their Domestic Animal Management Plans in a format specifically outlined in their guidelines.

Items covered in this Plan include:

- Training of authorised officers;
- Registration and identification;
- Nuisance animals;
- Dog attacks;
- Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs;
- Overpopulation and high euthanasia;
- Domestic animal businesses; and
- Other matters, of which Baw Baw has included responsible pet ownership and planning for the future of the pound facility.

Council Framework

Council Plan

The Baw Baw Shire Council Plan 2013-2017 represents a four year road map for the Council and describes the key priorities that Council will focus until 2017.

The Community Compliance Unit is responsible for a number of areas within the Council Plan which has been taken into consideration during the development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Council Orders, Local Laws, Policies and Procedures

Baw Baw Shire Council has in place policies, procedures and local laws that are designed to encourage responsible pet ownership and respond to animal management issues experienced in Baw Baw Shire.

Some of these address more than one section of this Plan. To avoid repetition, details of Council's orders, local laws, policies and procedures can be found in Appendix A.

Legal Framework

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act*, 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 Primary Industries*), 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.

Training of Authorised Officers

Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the *Domestic Animals Act* states that councils must outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this *Act* in Baw Baw.

Objective

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

Context

Baw Baw Shire is made up of over 100 localities spread over 4,028 square kilometres, featuring both larger towns and rural areas.

As of 2013, Baw Baw Shire's estimated population was 45,205 across 16,489 households (ABS, 2013). The population is made up of a number of demographics, including balancing an ageing population with young families moving into the area.

With Baw Baw's growing population, it is expected that Baw Baw's pet population will also grow. As of April 2014, there were 2,519 cats and 9,111 dogs registered in Baw Baw Shire.

Baw Baw Shire is also home to eight registered domestic animal businesses which includes pet shops, boarding kennels, and breeding and rearing establishments.

Baw Baw Shire Council's Community Compliance Unit comprises six equivalent full time (EFT) Community Compliance Officers. Of these officers, 2.5 EFT are dedicated to animal management, with support from other authorised officers as required.

Baw Baw Key Statistics	2014	2012
Population	45,205	42,861
Households	16,489	16,489
Area	4,028 square kilometres	4,028 square kilometres
Number of authorised animal management officers (EFT)	4	4

Current and Planned Training

Baw Baw Shire Council asked eight service providers, including veterinary clinics and a Council-contracted animal agency to comment on Community Compliance Officers' knowledge of animal handling, assessing animal behaviour and assessing animal health.

Those who responded rated Council officers' knowledge of these areas as 'good' to 'excellent' and none made comment about further training required in these fields.

The Community Compliance Best Value Review also asked the wider community about training requirements for Community Compliance staff.

Through the community consultation, the most highly mentioned aspect of the service delivery and its quality related to customer service provided by the unit. Recommendations for improvements were made with regards to:

- Timeliness and responsiveness of the unit in relation to messages and complaints; and
- Communication and customer service skills of staff.

There is likely to be some overlap between respondents' understanding of customer service from the Community Compliance Unit and Council in general.

The staff workshop identified a number of issues with various aspects of the service affecting the level of customer service:

- Managing conflict and aggressive customers; and
- Contingencies to cover staff absences, such as illness and leave.

The above findings highlight the need for further training to support staff in dealing with difficult customers and setting the community's expectations around providing timely customer service.

These responses have been taken into account for our planned activities over the next four years.

Authorised Officer Training	Current (2013)	Planned
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 4 Officer 5	Completed Completed Completed In training Completed	- - - June 2015 -
Certificate IV in Animal Welfare (Regulation) Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 4 Officer 5 Officer 6	- - - - - -	By June 2017 - By June 2017 - - -
Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance) Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 4 Officer 5	Completed Completed Completed In training Completed	- - - June 2015 -
Microchip implantation training Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	- - -	December 2015 December 2015 December 2015

<p>Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution</p> <p>Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 4 Officer 5 Officer 6</p>	<p>Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed</p>	<p>All officers have completed on-the-job prosecution and statement-taking training. Officer 6 has also completed a formal prosecution training course.</p> <p>Officers 1, 2 and 3 have completed animal handling and assessment training either through formal courses or on-the-job training.</p>
<p>OH&S and Risk – Corporate Training</p> <p>Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 4 Officer 5 Officer 6</p>	<p>Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed</p>	<p>Ongoing as required.</p>
<p>Customer service training – conflict resolution, dealing with difficult or aggressive customers</p> <p>Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 4 Officer 5 Officer 6</p>	<p>Completed Completed Completed Completed - Completed</p>	<p>Refresher training as required.</p> <p>December 2015</p>
<p>Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days</p> <p>Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3</p>	<p>Completed - Completed</p>	<p>Training completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Regulations for Domestic Animal Businesses. • Domestic Animal Business audit training. • Restricted breed regulations training. <p>Other training will be completed as</p>

			required on a rotational basis.
Detecting Family Violence (specifically related to animal management)	Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 6	Completed Completed Completed Completed	- - - -
Induction program for new staff	Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3 Officer 4 Officer 5 Officer 6	Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed Completed	- - - - - -
Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre Induction	Officer 2 Officer 6	Completed Completed	- -
Diploma of Management	Officer 2 Officer 5	Completed In training	July 2015
Diploma of Government	Officer 2	Completed	

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 June 2015.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff	By June 2015	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an internal training policy by June 2015.
Identify additional training opportunities by consultation with management and staff.	Ongoing	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an internal training policy by June 2015.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain a training register for the Community Compliance Unit detailing completed and proposed training by December 2014.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a register listing each officer's name, completed training and proposed training.	By December 2014	Annual review of register to ensure its accuracy and to ensure proposed training goals have been incorporated into individual performance plans.

Objective 3: Ensure all Authorised Officers have completed their minimum training requirements within 12 months of appointment.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements for officers and record when officers have completed each course and the timelines for completing each course.	By June 2017	Monthly review of spreadsheet to ensure each officer has completed their minimum training requirements within 12 months of appointment

Objective 4: Formalise a specific Animal Management Officer induction program.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Document a formalised induction program for any new Animal Management Officers which includes relevant training (including but not limited to animal handling, OHS, PPE, Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation, dealing with difficult customers) to complete each time a new Animal Management Officer commences employment.	By June 2017	Reviewed following the induction of any new Animal Management Officers.

Objective 5: Provide each Authorised Officer with further investigation, statement taking and prosecution training to ensure skills are fresh and relevant.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Each Authorised Officer to undertake investigations and prosecution training.	By June 2017	Annual review of register to ensure its accuracy and to ensure proposed training goals have been incorporated into individual performance plans.

Registration and Identification

Objective

To increase and maintain high levels of pet registration and microchipping within Baw Baw Shire.

Current Situation

Registration and microchipping of dogs and cats is a priority in the success of Baw Baw Shire's animal management and is key to responsible pet ownership.

When pet owners register and microchip their dogs and cats, it enables Council to reunite lost pets with their owners efficiently. Registration also assists Council to plan its animal management activities, services and infrastructure.

The Council provides detailed information to residents about registration and microchipping requirements. This is conveyed through media releases, advertising, Council's website, social media and brochures available at Council's service centres.

Pet Registration Data

As of April 2014, there were 9,111 dogs and 2,519 cats registered in Baw Baw Shire. This is an increase of 568 dogs and 266 cats since 2012, a 7 per cent increase in registrations overall.

Based on BIS Shrapnel's formula for estimating the number of dogs and cats per municipality (based on the number of households) it is estimated that 96 per cent of dogs and 40 per cent of cats are registered within Baw Baw Shire. This has increased from 90 per cent and 36 per cent respectively since 2012, and can be attributed to Council's doorknocking program (see 'Pet Registration Activities' below for more details).

Pet Registration At A Glance

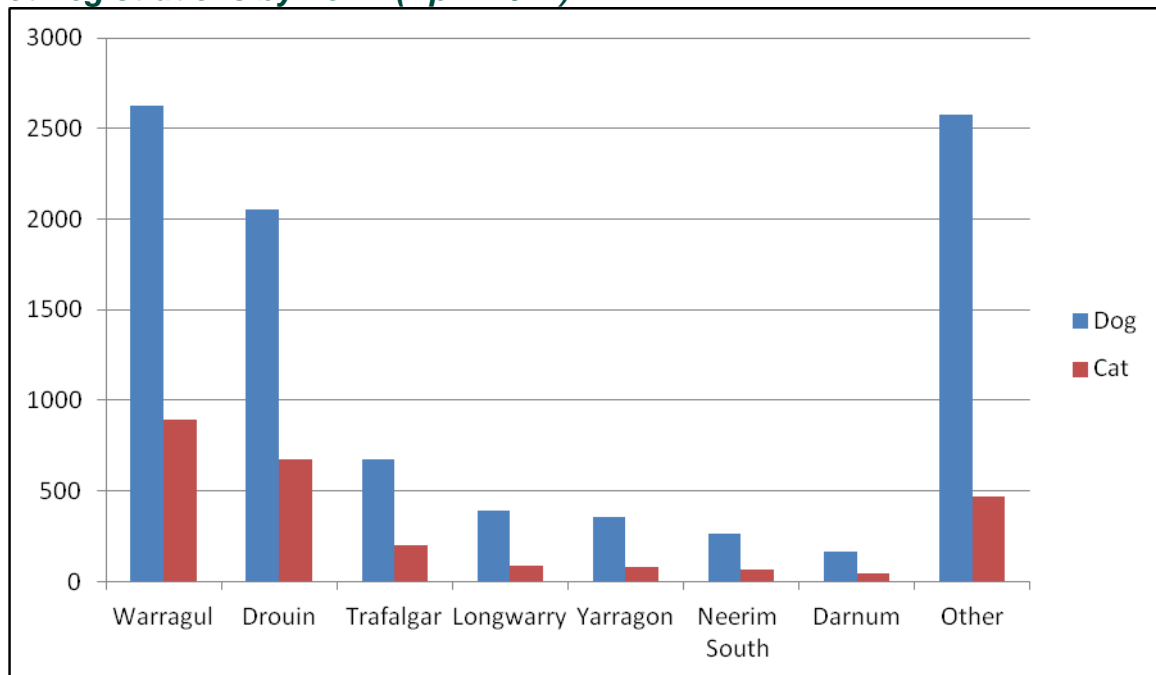
Key Statistics	2014	2012
Number of registered dogs	9,111	8,543
Estimated dog population*	9,497	9,497
Estimated dog registration rate	96%	90%
Number of registered cats	2,519	2,253
Estimated cat population*	6,302	6,302
Estimated cat registration rate	40%	36%

* Based on BIS Shrapnel formula.

It is no surprise that Baw Baw's two most heavily populated towns, Warragul and Drouin, led the way with cat and dog registrations. As of April 2014, Warragul was home to 2,629 registered dogs and 893 registered cats, followed by Drouin with 2,051 registered dogs and 672 registered cats.

To assist in keeping Council registration data up-to-date, the RSPCA send a monthly report to Council regarding pets adopted from them into Baw Baw. This enables Council to capture new registrations.

Pet Registrations by Town (April 2014)



As part of the Community Compliance Best Value review, staff identified that the Council’s data in relation to pet ownership details was not always accurate or up-to-date. This could be amended through cross-checking the Council’s data with microchipping databases.

Pet Registration Activities

Baw Baw Shire Council continues to undertake similar activities to those listed in the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan, however has escalated its efforts to achieve a higher rate of pet registrations.

Baw Baw Shire Council sends pet registration renewal notices to pet owners each year. An inaugural communications campaign was undertaken in 2013 to encourage pet owners to pay their registrations on time, which included using the media, advertising, social media, Council’s website and electronic signage.

The Community Compliance Unit also commenced an ongoing doorknocking program to detect unregistered pets. This has resulted in approximately 1,000 new pets being registered with Council. The doorknocking program will continue over the life of this plan.

As part of the consultation for this plan, local veterinary clinics were asked about their activities in relation to registration and microchipping. Each of the survey respondents said that they actively encourage pet registration and would be interested in holding registration forms at their clinics to encourage customers to register their pets. Some veterinary clinics in Baw Baw already hold registration forms to encourage pet registrations.

Baw Baw Shire Council offers financial incentives to encourage pet owners to microchip and desex their pets. Pets that are desexed or obedience trained are able to be registered at 1/3 of the cost of a non-desexed animal. No discounts exist if a cat or dog is only microchipped, in line with legislative changes introduced in 2013.

Eligible pensioners receive a 50 per cent discount on their pet registration fees. Of the 9,111 dogs registered in Baw Baw, 2,345 (25 per cent) belong to a pensioner. Similarly, of the 2,519 cats registered, 818 (32 per cent) belong to a pensioner.

The community identified a service delivery gap through the Best Value review consultation, which was lack of online payments and applications for animal registrations. Currently, only animal registration renewals are able to be paid online. New applications are only payable in person or via mail.

Microchipping Activities

Baw Baw Shire Council runs limited activities in relation to microchipping, however the introduction of legislation requiring animals to be microchipped prior to being registered has assisted to keep microchipping numbers elevated.

Council officers are currently not trained to implant microchips, however this could be a possibility in the future.

Council's Customer Service Unit does not transact new animal registrations unless proof of microchipping has been sighted. It is also mandatory to microchip and register any animals from the Baw Baw Shire pound before release or adoption.

Of the vets who responded to the Council survey, two out of four offer discounted microchipping to pensioners to encourage responsible pet ownership.

Discounted microchipping was also offered by a local veterinary clinic at the recent Baw Baw Shire Pop-Up Pet Expo (see 'Other Matters – Responsible Pet Ownership' for more details).

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

It is pleasing to note that registration figures have increased since 2012, which is attributable to the concerted efforts of the Community Compliance Unit. Doorknocking has proven to be successful and as such, has been transformed into an ongoing program.

However, both estimated population figures and on-the-ground experience suggests that there is an increasing issue regarding cat registrations. It is expected that there are many more cats living within Baw Baw Shire that are not registered. Although exact figures are not available, there is a high proportion of seized cats that are not microchipped or registered, resulting in difficulty in reuniting owners with their pets.

There is an opportunity for the Council to partner more closely with local veterinary clinics to encourage responsible pet ownership. Council has an existing rapport with local veterinary clinics, and agreements in place relating to animal management. Ongoing consultation to determine how we can strengthen the partnership, particularly in relation to registration and microchipping, would be beneficial.

An issue was identified by Community Compliance staff in relation to the accuracy of the Council’s data regarding pet owners. This could be rectified by cross-checking the Council’s data with microchipping databases.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 1% each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
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.
Targeted door knocking of 10% of the municipality each year to check for unregistered and un-microchipped dogs and cats.	Rolling program of doorknocks throughout the year to pick up missed registrations.	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner. Records of number of unregistered and un-microchipped animals picked up during door knocks.
Proactive patrols in parks and other popular dog walking areas to randomly microchip-scan animals out with their owners and check registration.	Ongoing	Record the number of additional animals who are registered and microchipped as a result of the patrols. Review annually.

Objective 2: Develop and maintain register of seized and impounded animals to enable trending data regarding registration and microchipping.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a register of each animal that is seized or impounded, listing the animal type, whether it was microchipped, registered or unidentifiable.	By July 2014	Annual review of register to track trends in relation to animal registration and microchipping. Review as required for specific enquiries.

Objective 3: Continue to educate the community about the importance of pet registration and microchipping.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an annual communications campaign in the lead up to pet registration fees being due.	Annually in March	Annually review the number of animal registrations paid (generally and on time). Annually monitor the number of animals registered with Baw Baw Shire.

Objective 4: Improve the accuracy of Council's registration database by cross-referencing with microchip registry data by June 2017.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve accuracy of Council's pet registration database by contacting microchip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped. Check all animals are also listed on the Council's pet registration database and follow up those that are not registered.	June 2017	Demonstrate an increase in numbers of pets registered with Council following the microchip registry cross referencing exercise.

Objective 5: Improve customer service and ease with which to pay animal registration fees.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Introduce other methods of payment (including online and phone payments) for new animal registrations.	June 2017	Alternative payment methods to be introduced by June 2017.

Nuisance

Objective

To reduce the number of animal-related complaints.

Current Situation

Baw Baw Shire Council regularly handles nuisance animal complaints, ranging from wandering cats and dogs to barking complaints.

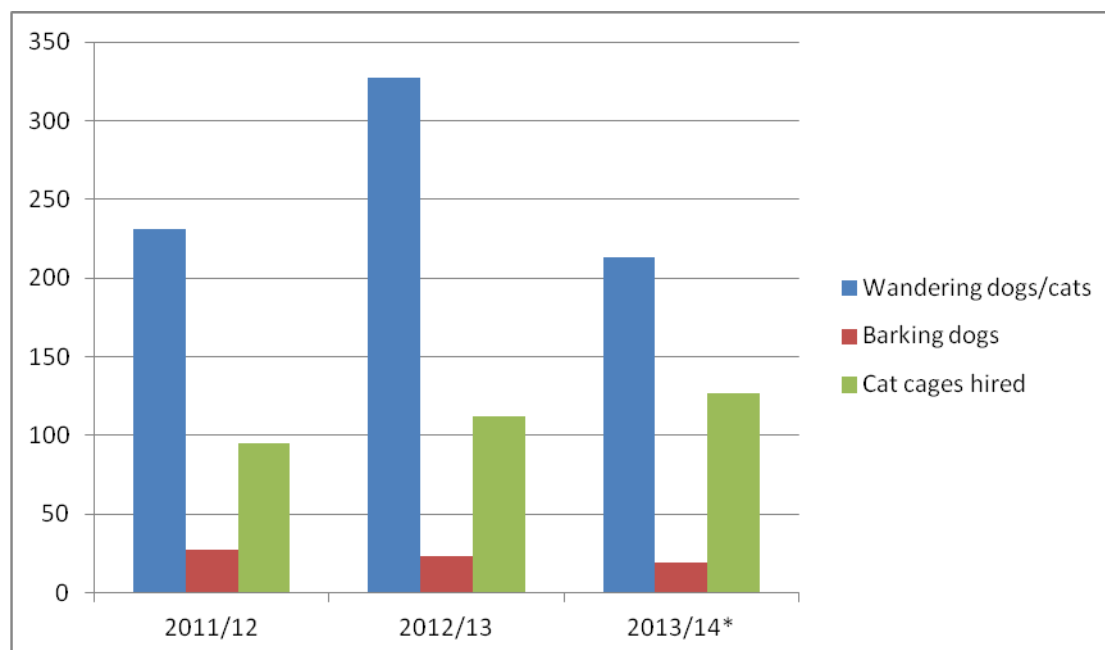
Baw Baw Shire's activities in relation to these areas include hiring cat cages, collecting and impounding wandering animals and associated enforcement and investigating barking dog complaints.

Cat Cages

The Council has noticed a steady increase in the number of cat cages being hired by community members. In 2011/12, 95 cat cages were hired, in comparison to 127 in 2013/14 year to date as at May 2014.

The cat cage system is delivered in partnership with the Customer Service Unit. Cat cages are hired out with a bond from the hirer, and returned to Council when the cat has been captured or within seven days.

When cats are able to be identified, they are returned to their owners with either a warning (first offence) or infringement (subsequent offences) and owners are provided with information about responsible pet ownership, including containing cats to their property.



*Year to date figures as at May 2014.

Barking Dogs

In an opposite trend to cat cage hire, barking dog complaints have reduced steadily since 2011/12. There were 27 barking dog complaints investigated in 2011/12, in comparison to 19 barking dog complaints in 2013/14 year to date as at May 2014.

Although there has been a drop in the number of new barking dog complaints received, barking dog investigations often take substantial time to resolve. Complainants are asked to keep a noise diary and officers patrol the area to undertake investigations.

If the complaint is founded, Community Compliance Officers contact the offending dog's owner to request that they resolve the barking issue. If this does not resolve the issue, a notice to comply is issued directing the owner to resolve the barking. Enforcement is used as a final resort where ongoing, founded complaints have not been resolved.

At this point in time, Baw Baw Shire does not offer barking dog collars for hire. Information is provided to dog owners about where collars are available and how they work.

Of the survey respondents, only one veterinary clinic offered barking dog collars for hire. This could be an opportunity for Council or local veterinary clinics to offer a barking dog collar hire service to reduce the rate of ongoing barking dog instances.

Wandering Animals

Despite a spike in 2012/13 where there were 327 wandering animals, other recent years have remained consistent. As at May 2014, there have been 213 wandering animals for the 2013/14 year.

Wandering animals are detected both proactively through routine patrols, and reactively when the Council receives complaints.

When animals are found, they are scanned for a microchip and checked for a Council registration tag. If animals are able to be identified, contact is made with the owner to reunite them with their pet. Similarly to cats seized in cages, a warning is issued for a first offence, followed by infringements for subsequent offences.

If wandering animals are unidentifiable, they are taken to the Council's pound, where they are held for the statutory period of eight days before being available for adoption.

The Council also has an agreement with an animal adoption agency, who often take animals to re-house them after the statutory period. This is done as the Council's pound facility offers limited capacity and can become full quickly (see 'Other Matters – Planning for the Future of the Pound Facility' for further information).

Feedback from the Community Compliance Best Value review suggested that wandering animals are an issue after Council's normal business hours, as well as

during business hours. While the Community Compliance Unit does offer an after-hours service, it is limited to emergencies such as dog attacks and livestock on roads. Any animals found wandering are not handled until the next working day. The overwhelming feedback from community consultation was to review the after hours service provided and expand it to collect wandering animals after hours.

Dogs On Leash/Off Leash

Baw Baw Shire Council has been considering an amendment to its local law to allow dogs to be off leash or to make it mandatory to be on leash at all times.

A second round of community consultation was undertaken in 2013, with over 50 people making a formal submission to Council. Of these, 30 wanted designated areas for dogs to be off leash, 11 wanted no restrictions of dogs being off leash and eight wanted dogs to be on leash at all times. The remaining submissions did not express a preference for dogs being on or off leash.

A list of Baw Baw Shire's parks was collated and an audit undertaken of which parks may be appropriate for off leash areas. This list of potentially appropriate parks will be presented back to Councillors with an engagement plan to seek the community's feedback now that further investigations have been completed.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

Wandering animals has remained steady except for a spike in 2012/13. Our information does not explain why the spike occurred. However, although steady, Council's objective is to decrease the number of wandering animals. Informing owners of their responsibilities may assist to address this problem.

Both veterinary clinics and the general community have requested a review of the Council's after hours services to include the collection of wandering animals. This item was also flagged as a priority in the best value review.

Whilst barking dog issues are slowly declining, the number of cat cages being hired out is increasing significantly, indicating an issue with cat owners not getting their cats desexed, kittens and cats being dumped and owners not containing their cats to their property.

The community is also calling for a Council decision regarding dogs off leash or on leash. From prior community consultation, most are in favour of introducing designated off leash areas, either at certain times of day or in certain areas of parks.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Reduce nuisance animal complaints by 2% per year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
An adopted Council position regarding dogs on leash or designated off leash areas.	By December 2014	An adopted Council decision to be made public by December 2014.
Establish a local law regarding the collection and disposal of dog faeces as part of the Council's Community Local Law review.	By June 2015	Date local law introduced. Enforcement data – compliance rates. Number of complaints regarding dog faeces.
Review and update procedures for recording barking dog investigations.	By December 2015	All barking dog complaints are logged within 48 hours of receipt. All barking dog complaints are treated consistently in accordance with the procedure.
Assist residents with dealing with cat trespass / nuisance problems by purchasing an additional three cat cages and provide them to local residents for trapping nuisance cats.	By December 2015	Number of cages purchased. Numbers hired out. Number of cats impounded.
Investigate introducing a cat curfew between 9pm and 6am as part of the Council's Community Local Law review.	By June 2015	Date curfew introduced. Enforcement data – compliance rates. Compare number of cat nuisance complaints before and after curfew introduced.

Objective 2: To meet the community's expectations in relation to service regarding wandering animals.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the expansion of Council's after hours service in relation to wandering animals.	By December 2016	Number of animals collected after hours. Community satisfaction survey results.
Review procedures related to nuisance animals to ensure that community needs are being met.	By June 2016	Community satisfaction survey results.

Dog Attacks

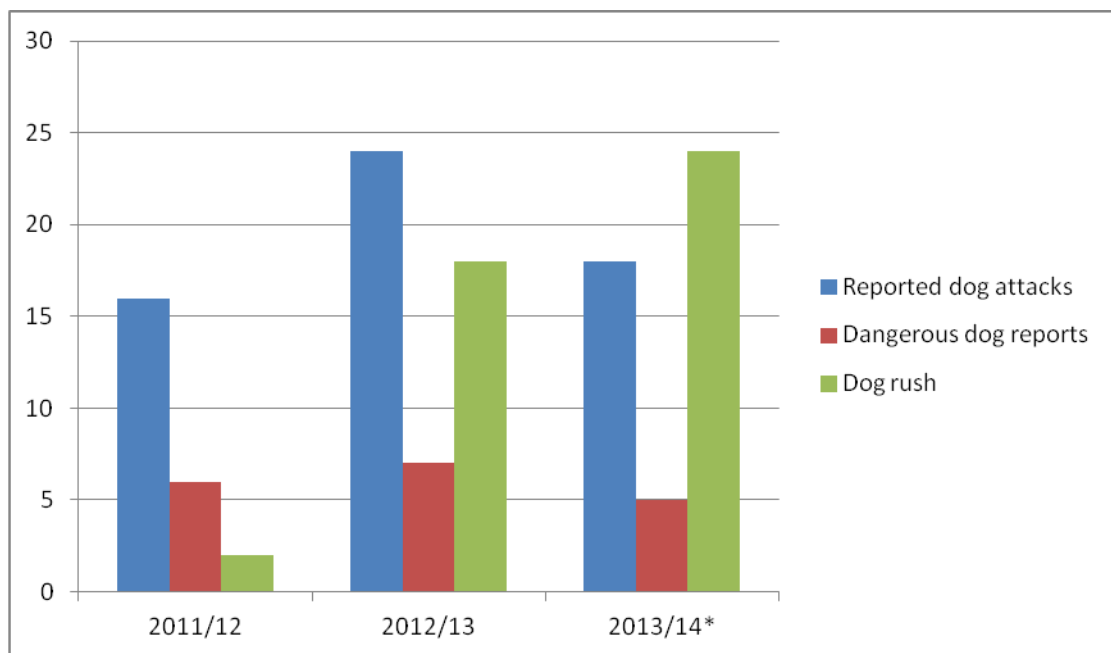
Objective

To reduce the number of reported dog attacks across the municipality.

Current Situation

Baw Baw Shire has experienced an increase in the number of reported dog attacks since 2011/12, however the number of reported dog attacks has dropped in 2013/14 (year to date).

A spike in the number of dog attacks was noticed in 2012/13, which correlates with the spike in the number of wandering animals in the same year.



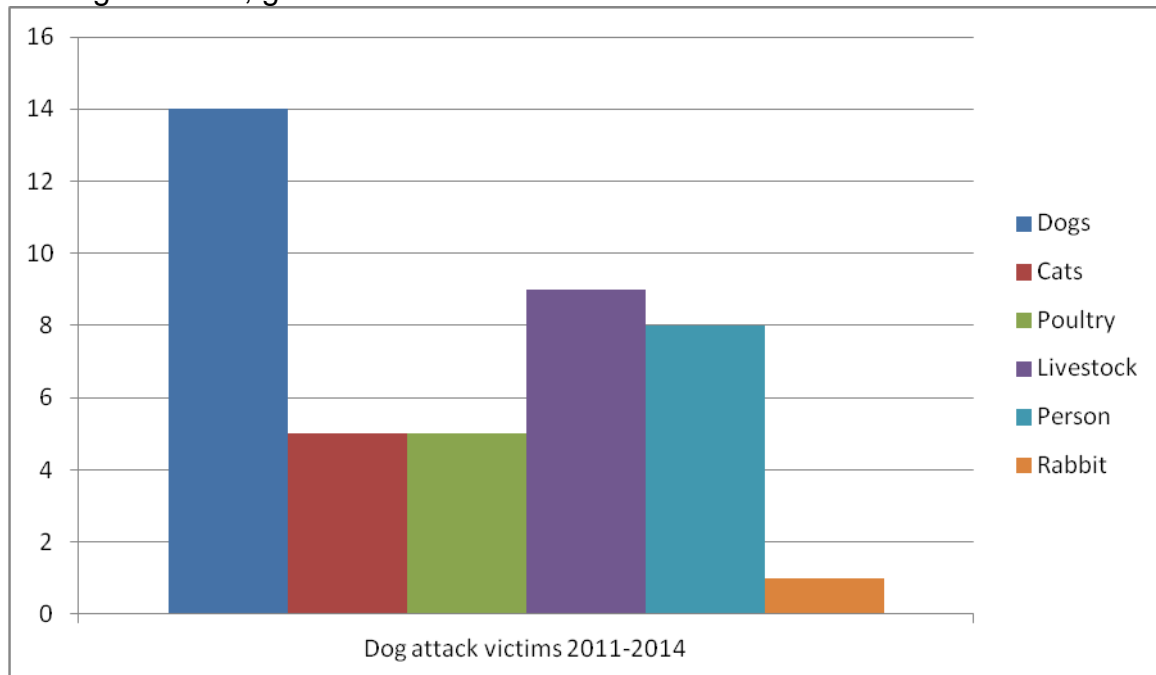
Dog attacks are given priority by Community Compliance Officers and are responded to within 15 minutes. It is preferable to be on site within 15 minutes of the report being received, however on occasions when substantial travel is required, phone contact is made on route to the scene.

Dog rushes have increased substantially since 2011. Dog rushes are treated similarly to a dog attack. A full investigation is undertaken and infringements are issued as necessary. When a dog rush occurs, dog owners are educated about confining their dog to their property.

Dog attacks are attended by Community Compliance Officers after hours and are treated as an emergency regardless of whether the attack occurs during business hours or after hours.

Of the dog attacks that have occurred in Baw Baw Shire since 1 July 2011, 33 per cent of victims have been other dogs, 21 per cent were livestock including sheep and

cows, 19 per cent were people, 12 per cent were cats and 12 per cent were poultry including chickens, geese and ducks.



Dog attacks mostly occurred in and around the home, including the pavement in front of the home and on neighbouring properties. Public areas where people and dogs congregate, such as parks, also create risk.

In recent years, Council has been able to resolve dog attacks through infringements and declarations. Since 1 July 2011, no dog attacks have proceeded to the Magistrates Court.

Council continues to increase awareness of the impacts of dog attacks, and the benefits of confining a dog to their property as the key to preventing dog attacks. Increased education and raised awareness is an objective over the life of this plan, including raising awareness about the need to check fencing and gates for potential escape routes for dogs.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

Both dog rushes and dog attacks have increased in Baw Baw Shire since 2011. This is concerning and points to an opportunity for further community education about keeping their animals confined to their property.

Most dog attacks were on other dogs, which suggests that both dogs were at large or could access each other's property. The fact that statistics show a spike in wandering animals which correlates with a spike in dog attacks further strengthens the link between these issues.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Ensure dog attacks and dog rushes are handled consistently.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a formalised dog attack enforcement and investigation policy in line with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act.	By August 2014	Review each dog attack investigation to ensure each Community Compliance Officer is managing investigations consistently.

Objective 2: Educate the community about the difference between a dog attack, dog rush, the importance of keeping animals confined to their property and the importance of reporting dog attacks.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report it using media articles, advertising, Council's website, social media and brochures available at customer service centres.	By December 2014	Compare the number of dog attacks reported to Council pre and post campaign. Measure the number of dog rushes reported accurately (as opposed to being reported as a dog attack). Measure the number of overall dog attacks and dog rushes.

Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breeds

Objective

To effectively manage dogs that are classified as dangerous, menacing or of a restricted breed.

Current Situation

If a dog exhibits certain behaviours and/or there is an incident then Council has the power to declare that dog either a menacing dog or a dangerous dog. Dogs must be declared by Council and do not just become menacing or dangerous just because they may be aggressive.

A dog can be declared as menacing if it has rushed at or chased a person or it bites any person or animal causing injury that is not in the nature of a serious injury.

A dog can be declared as dangerous if it has caused the death of or serious injury to a person or animal by biting or attacking that person or animal; or if the dog is a menacing dog and its owner has received at least two infringement notices in respect of the offence in Section 41E (restraint of menacing dog).

The number of registered declared dangerous dogs and registered menacing dogs living in Baw Baw Shire has doubled from 2012 to 2014. There are two declared dangerous dogs and four menacing dogs.

Key Statistics	2014	2012
Number of registered declared dogs	2	1
Number of registered menacing dogs	4	2
Number of registered restricted breed dogs	1	1

Community Compliance Officers maintain a register of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs living in Baw Baw Shire on behalf of the state government.

Officers also inspect premises where dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs are housed a minimum of once per annum, and conduct inspections when a dog has been newly declared as dangerous to ensure housing requirements are being met.

Restricted breed dogs are different to dangerous or menacing dogs.

A restricted breed dog is any one of the following:

- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier);
- Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario);
- Dogo Argentino;
- Japanese Tosa; or
- Fila Brasileiro.

Restricted breed dogs have controls placed on them due to the increased potential of an aggressive nature of the breed in general. There is one restricted breed dog living in Baw Baw Shire.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

The number of dangerous and menacing dogs in the shire has risen since 2012, however the number of restricted breed dogs has remained the same. Annual inspections are conducted on premises where dangerous dogs are housed to ensure compliance with regulations.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Identify and register all declared dogs in the municipality by June 2017.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a policy on when to declare a dog as dangerous or menacing.	June 2015	Policy is adopted and Community Compliance Officers are aware of its existence.
Cross-reference microchip database information with current Council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs by June 2017.	June 2017	Annual review of the number of restricted breed dogs in Baw Baw.

Over Population and High Euthanasia

Objective

To minimise the number of animals surrendered, pets without homes and animals euthanised.

Current Situation

Over Population

Community Compliance Officers have noted a significant increase in the number of cats being surrendered or seized, mostly from a large population of feral cats.

There remains a continuous problem with residents harbouring stray and feral cats by providing feed for them, yet not accepting the responsibility of ownership by way of registration and desexing. This subsequently leads to further breeding and a larger feral cat population.

Feral cats that are seized or surrendered often present with cat flu, other health issues or a temperament that is unsuitable for rehousing, which leads to higher euthanasia rates.

However, Council's statistics show that 96 per cent of registered cats are desexed, indicating a level of responsible pet ownership within the community, and confirming that there are still a number of cats in our community who are unregistered and/or feral.

	Desexed	Non-desexed	Total registrations	% of animal population desexed
Dogs	6,552	2,559	9,111	72%
Cats	2,420	99	2,519	96%

As mentioned under 'Nuisance Animals' the Council has noticed a steady increase in the number of cat cages being hired by community members. In 2011/12, 95 cat cages were hired, in comparison to 127 in 2013/14 year to date as at May 2014.

A large proportion of cats seized through the cat cage program are feral, unregistered or not microchipped.

When impounding animals, it is mandatory for owners or adopters to have the animals desexed and registered before leaving the pound to help address overpopulation.

As part of the local law review currently being undertaken, consideration will be given to the mandatory desexing of cats and a cat curfew.

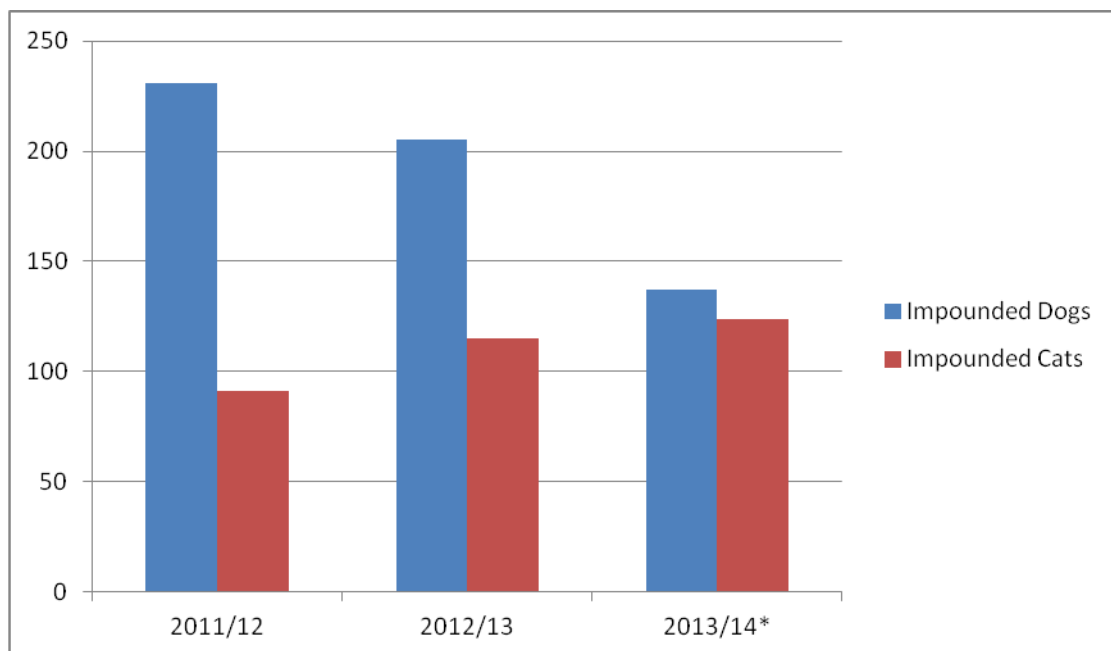
Of the survey respondents, 75 per cent supported mandatory desexing of both cats and dogs prior to registration, and 75 per cent also expressed an interest in providing

a discounted desexing service for eligible pensioners if the cost was shared with the Council.

Euthanasia

Since 2011/12, Baw Baw has experienced a steady decline in the number of impounded dogs, from 231 in 2011/12 to 137 year to date in 2013/14.

On the other hand, Baw Baw has also experienced a steady increase in the number of impounded cats during this period, from 91 in 2011/12 to 124 year to date in 2013/14.



As part of the Community Compliance Best Value review, Baw Baw Shire benchmarked against other councils in regards to the amount of impounded animals returned home, rehoused or euthanised.

In 2012/13, Baw Baw was able to return most dogs to their home (70 per cent), re-housed 26 per cent and euthanised 4 per cent. Cat euthanasia figures are significantly higher due to the number of feral and diseased cats that are impounded.

Baw Baw's euthanasia figures to date for 2013/14 have dropped due to utilising an adoption agency to re-house most dogs and cats. To date, there have been six dogs and 33 cats euthanised in 2013/14. Some of these were euthanised due to illness.

Of the four benchmarking councils, Baw Baw had the second highest percentage of impounded dogs being returned home and the highest percentage of dogs being re-housed, which contributed to having the lowest percentage of dogs euthanised.

In regards to impounded cats, Baw Baw's percentages were comparable with other councils. The high euthanasia rate suggests an issue with a population of feral cats.

2012/13	Returned Home (%)		Rehoused (%)		Euthanised (%)		Rescue Groups (%)	
	Dog	Cat	Dog	Cat	Dog	Cat	Dog	Cat
Baw Baw	70	15	26	12	4	73		
Council B	58	8	11	6	9	84	22	2
Council C	49	19	25	46	26	35		
Council D	68	12	16	18	16	70		
Council E	77	20	11	24	12	56		

The Council also has six Section 84Y agreements in place under the Domestic Animals Act with local veterinary clinics to perform medical duties or assist with re-housing if necessary. This also contributes to managing high euthanasia rates.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

Baw Baw's figures suggest that the dog population is not causing an issue with over population or high euthanasia rates. Of the estimated dog population of 9,497, 9,111 are registered, equating to 96 per cent. Of those registered 72 per cent are desexed, which helps to control an overpopulation of dogs.

There are also low euthanasia rates for dogs being experienced in Baw Baw. Reasons for dogs being euthanised vary from dogs being declared dangerous, owners being unable to provide for declared dog requirements or illness. Compared to other councils, Baw Baw's dog euthanasia rate is low.

Council's statistics also reflect the feral cat problem being experienced in Baw Baw. Of the estimated 6,302 cats that live in the shire, only 2,519 are registered. However of those registered, 96 per cent are desexed, which confirms that the over population issue is being caused by feral cats.

Cat cage hire figures as well as figures for the number of cats impounded increasing also supports this.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Increase the number of desexed registered cats by 2 per cent each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate partnership with vets to run a discount desexing day or ongoing subsidised desexing program for pets of low income earners.	December 2015	Number of vets participating in the program
Consideration of mandatory desexing of all cats as part of the local law review.	June 2015	Number of cats desexed after the local law is implemented. Any changes in the longer term regarding desexed animals on pet registration database.

Objective 2: Raise awareness about semi-owned cat population .

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Implement "Who's for cats?" education campaign in local area. Utilise the following resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Are you feeding a bigger problem?" (Who's for Cats? campaign fact sheet) - distribution throughout the municipality, placement on website • Radio ad - can be used for council 'on hold' phone messages, and also airing on local community radio stations • Template media release - for publication in local newspapers • Print ads - for publication in local newspapers • TV commercial file - can be used on website • Promotions to encourage people to take full ownership of cats eg discount desex/microchip/vaccinate offers, free products 	By December 2014	<p>Measure number and type of education materials distributed.</p> <p>Record number of campaign queries received by Council.</p> <p>Record number of semi owned cats handed into local pound / shelter.</p> <p>Measure number of cats registered after the campaign has run.</p>

Objective 3: Institute a formal procedure for assessment for euthanasia or suitability for rehoming of dogs and cats by June 2015.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Document a formalised procedure for assessing animals in regards to suitability for rehoming.	September 2014	Number of animals rehomed or released in comparison with euthanasia data.

Domestic Animal Businesses

Objective

To provide education to domestic animal businesses to assist them to comply with legislative requirements.

Current Situation

Baw Baw Shire Council is currently home to eight domestic animal businesses comprising of:

- Three breeding and rearing establishments;
- Three pet shops;
- One boarding kennel; and
- One pound facility.

Overall, the Council has a low level of domestic animal businesses and few compliance issues.

All domestic animal businesses are audited annually to ensure compliance with relevant standards. Inspections are also undertaken prior to any new domestic animal businesses operating in the shire.

The Council also collects an annual levy on behalf of the state government for all domestic animal businesses.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

Overall, Baw Baw Shire does not have many domestic animal businesses and annual audits performed to date have not uncovered any significant issues.

The Council is considering increasing its presence in domestic animal businesses by conducting random inspections throughout the year to ensure compliance.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Identify and register all domestic animal businesses in the municipality by June 2017.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all businesses that should be registered domestic animal businesses in the municipality. Identify businesses selling pets / pet products / services in the municipality and follow up to determine whether they should be registered with the Council.	June 2017	Compare number of registered domestic animal businesses before and after activity.

Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to annually audit all domestic animal businesses within Baw Baw Shire.	Annually by 9 April.	Monitor compliance of domestic animal businesses annually.
Conduct random inspections of registered domestic animal businesses.	Minimum once per annum.	Number of visits per domestic animal businesses annually. Compliance with relevant codes and standards.

Objective 3: Ensure 100 per cent compliance with registration and mandatory codes of practice for all domestic animal businesses each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Formalise a policy to deal with audit outcomes within three months of inspection.	June 2017	Compliance rates of domestic animal businesses. Time taken to rectify issues raised at domestic animal business audits.

Other Matters – Responsible Pet Ownership

Objective

To educate the community about responsible pet ownership to assist them to meet their responsibilities and decrease the number of animal-related incidents in Baw Baw Shire.

Current Situation

In 2012/13, the Community Compliance Unit undertook a responsible pet ownership campaign to educate pet owners about their responsibilities.

The campaign included media releases, paid advertising, a registration drive, website and social media communication over a number of months.

This work culminated in the Council hosting the Baw Baw Shire Pop-Up Pet Expo in April 2014. The event included a live radio broadcast, 11 exhibitors, a pet parade, involvement by a local TAFE's veterinary studies students and Council disseminating information about responsible pet ownership.

On-site pet registration was available, as was discounted microchipping by a qualified vet, with the assistance of veterinary studies students.

Over 1,000 people attended the event and planning is underway to hold this event on an ongoing basis.

Of the vets surveyed, all said they offered information about responsible pet ownership, and three out of four were interested in being involved in any future pet expos.

Before the education campaign commenced, there were 8,543 dogs registered and 2,253 cats. There are now 9,111 dogs registered and 2,519 cats registered, an increase of 6 per cent of dog registrations and 10 per cent of cat registrations.

The Council has also conducted a study in relation to the introduction of a 'Dogs Off Leash Area' policy. If adopted, the policy would encompass areas within the shire for the community to allow their dogs to be exercised off the leash but be under adequate control. These areas will be accessed by the public and patrolled by Council to ensure that the rules, regulations and responsible pet ownership is followed.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

The work of the Community Compliance Unit to date has resulted in a significant number of additional pet registrations, from 10,796 in 2012 to 11,630 in 2014.

Ongoing community education campaigns using a range of communications tools has been a successful way of encouraging pet owners to meet their responsibilities.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Educate the community about their responsibilities as pet owners to reduce the number of animal-related issues in Baw Baw Shire.

Activity	When	Evaluation
In conjunction with local vets and businesses, run a bi-annual Pet Expo to promote responsible pet ownership and encourage microchipping and registration.	Every second year	Number of people attending the Pet Expo. Number of animal related infringements issued. Number of animals impounded and found wandering.
Run a minimum of two community education campaigns per annum relating to various animal matters.	Twice a year	Media coverage. Queries received from the public.

Other Matters – Planning for the Future of the Pound Facility

Objective

To provide a pound facility that meets the needs of our growing community.

Current Situation

The Baw Baw Shire Council pound currently has the capacity to hold up to eight dogs and nine cats.

With a growing human and animal population, the pound is often at full capacity and no longer meets the needs of the community.

The Community Compliance Unit have in place a set of robust procedures for running the pound, however a proposal will be submitted for construction of a new pound facility or extension of the existing pound facility to cater to the growing community's needs.

Any newly constructed or extended facility would be built in line with the code of practice for animal pounds.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

See Appendix A.

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

See Appendix B.

Our Current Compliance Activities

See Appendix C.

Summary

The Council's pound facility is often at capacity and does not cater for a growing community.

A proposal will be developed with options to construct a new pound or extend the existing pound so that the Council can meet the community's needs well into the future.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Provide a pound facility that is run in accordance with relevant standards and meets the needs of our growing community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a proposal for Council's consideration for the construction of a new pound facility or extension of the current facility.	By August 2014	Outcome of Council's decision.
Review of all pound procedures	By	Adopted procedures and

and processes.	December 2014	processes that are undertaken consistently.
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Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting

As per Section 68A(3) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, the Council will review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually to assess whether any amendments are necessary in order to ensure the plan is relevant and can be completed within the required timeframe.

The Council will expand its evaluation reporting to include more detailed statistics to ensure clarity and transparency relating to Council's animal management services.

The Council will publish the evaluation of its Domestic Animal Management Plan as part of its Annual Report.

In the final year of the plan, Council will undertake a major review and prepare drafting the next Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Appendix A

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws

PART 2 – ANIMALS

2.1 Keeping of animals

Without a permit an owner or occupier of land, except for Rural Zoned land must not keep or allow to be kept on that land –

- (a) more than 4 different types of animals;
- (b) more than the following number of animals over the age of 3 months -
 - (i) 2 dogs;
 - (ii) 4 cats;
 - (iii) 10 rabbits;
 - (iv) 10 guinea pigs;
 - (v) 2 ferrets;
- (c) any sheep, goats, horses or cattle except on land larger than 4000 m² (0.4 Hectares), in which case the number that may be kept without a permit is 2;
- (d) any pigs, roosters, emus or ostriches; or
- (e) any large caged birds or poultry except if the land is 4000 m² (0.4 Hectares) or greater in which case the number that may be kept without a permit is 10.

2.2 Keeping of dogs and cats on Rural Zoned land

Without a permit an owner or occupier of Rural Zoned land must not keep or allow to be kept on that land more than –

- (a) 5 dogs; and
- (b) 5 cats

2.3 Dog excrement

A person in charge of a dog must –

- (a) carry a facility for the effective removal of excrement that may be deposited by the dog when accompanied by the dog in a public place.; and
- (b) not allow any part of the dog's excrement to remain in any public place.

2.4 Fencing

An owner or occupier of land on which livestock is kept must ensure that the land is adequately fenced so as to prevent the livestock's escape from the land to a public place.

2.5 Droving

Without a permit the owner of livestock or a person in charge of livestock must not drive the livestock in a public place.

Council Policies

- Number of animals in a residential area.

Procedures

- Impounding domestic animals
- Releasing impounded domestic animals
- Assisting police
- Domestic animal complaints
- Declaration dangerous/menacing dog
- Search warrants
- Restricted dog breeds
- After hours emergency service
- Excess animal permits

- Registration of a domestic animal business
- Equipment.

Appendix B

Our Current Education/Promotion Activities

Baw Baw Shire Council aims to promote responsible pet ownership through educational programs and promotion activities. These include:

- Media releases
- Paid print advertising
- Radio advertising
- Media interviews
- Brochures available at Baw Baw Shire Customer Service Centres
- Council website
- Social media, including Facebook and Twitter.

Baw Baw Shire Council also held its first Baw Baw Shire Pop-Up Pet Expo in 2013. This event was very popular with pets and pet owners alike and will be held on an ongoing basis to provide education to our community.

Following the success of recent education campaigns, the Council will aim to run a minimum of two community education campaigns per annum to educate pet owners about various responsibilities.

Appendix C

Our Current Compliance Activities

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires the Council to administer and enforce the provisions of the Act.

The approach used by the Council in the first, preferred instance is to educate the community and encourage pet owners to take responsibility for the pet voluntarily. The more successful this approach is, the less enforcement is required.

Emphasis is always placed on maintaining community safety.

The Council's compliance activities include:

- Regular street patrols to detect wandering animals.
- For non-serious or non-safety related offences, taking an 'ask, tell, enforce' approach, including verbal and written warnings, provision of information, notices to comply and then enforcement as a last resort.
- Prosecutions as required.
- Annual inspections of dangerous dog enclosures and domestic animal businesses.
- Respond to community complaints regarding non-compliance with provisions of the Act.
- Provision of an after hours emergency service in the instance of dog attacks.