



CENTRAL
GOLDFIELDS
SHIRE COUNCIL

DJA DJA WURRUNG
COUNTRY



**Domestic Animal
Management Plan
2026 – 2029**



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and extend our appreciation for the Dja Dja Wurrung People, the Traditional Owners of the land that we are on.

We pay our respects to leaders and Elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and the hopes of all Dja Dja Wurrung People.

We express our gratitude in the sharing of this land, our sorrow for the personal, spiritual and cultural costs of that sharing and our hope that we may walk forward together in harmony and in the spirit of healing.

Contents

1. Introduction and context	2	6. Nuisance cat and dogs	15
1.1 Purpose of Domestic Animal Management Plan	2	6.1 Nuisance cats	15
1.2 Process applied in developing the plan	2	6.2 Barking dogs	16
1.3 Demographic and profile of Council	3	6.3 Dogs off-leash and not under effective control	17
1.4 Context and current situation	5	6.4 Dogs wandering at large	18
1.5 Domestic animal statistics	6		
2. Training of authorised officers	7	7. Dog attacks	19
2.1 Context and current situation	7	7.1 Context and current situation	19
2.2 Our plan	7	7.2 Our plan	19
3. Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation	8	8. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs	20
3.1 Context and current situation	8	8.1 Context and current situation	20
3.2 Our orders, local laws, Council policies and procedures	8	8.2 Current compliance and education activities	20
Current orders	8	8.3 Our plan	21
Current policies and procedures	8		
Current local laws	8	9. Domestic animal businesses	22
		9.1 Context and current situation	22
4. Programs to address over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates	11	9.2 Our plan	22
4.1 Context and current situation	11		
4.2 Our plan	12	10. Other matters	24
		10.1 Emergency management	24
5. Registration and identification	13	10.2 Pound facilities	24
5.1 Context and current situation	13	10.3 After hours service	24
5.2 Our Council policies and procedures	14	10.4 Prevention of cruelty to animals act	24
Current policies and procedures	14		
Our current compliance activities	14	11. Annual review of plan and annual reporting	25
5.3 Our plan	14		

1. Introduction and context

1.1 Purpose of Domestic Animal Management Plan

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (The Act), all Victorian local governments are required to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP), every four years. The purpose of this plan is to evaluate the effectiveness of Council's animal management services, ensuring they are sufficient, compliant with the Act, and aligned with the *Domestic Animal Regulations 2025*.

The DAMP provides a strategic framework for Central Goldfields Shire Council (CGSC), setting out policy direction and actionable strategies for animal management over the four-year period from 2026–2029.

The plan outlines how Council will:

- Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership within the municipality
- Increase compliance and community awareness of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- Address issues with overpopulation of dogs and cats whilst reducing euthanasia rates as far as is practicable
- Minimise risks of dog attacks in the community on people and animals
- Minimise the impact on the community arising from nuisance dog and cat behaviour.
- Maximise the number of registered dogs and cats in the municipality
- Identify potential Council Orders that may be made under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- 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
- Protect the environment, local wildlife, and community amenity from the impacts of dogs and cats.
- Balance the interests of pet owners and non-pet owners across the municipality.
- Equip Authorised Officers with the training and resources required to effectively perform their roles.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of programs, services, and strategies outlined in the plan.

1.2 Process applied in developing the plan

The development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan involved a comprehensive review and consultation process, including:

- Reviewing existing animal management operations, including current procedures, local laws, and orders.
- Assessing other Council services, plans and strategies relevant to animal management.
- Engaging with the community through surveys and Q&A sessions.

Key concerns raised by residents included:

- Wandering dogs
- Roaming cats
- Dog attacks
- Dogs off leash
- Barking dogs
- Using social media to release videos promoting the plan review and inviting community feedback.

1.3 Demographic and profile of Council

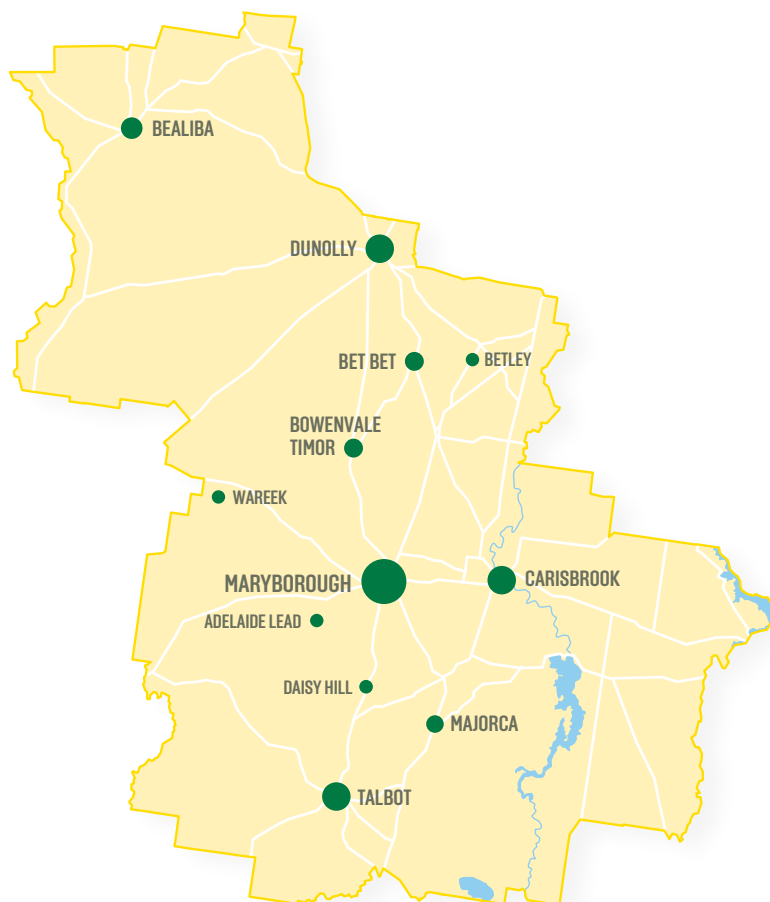
Located at the geographical centre of Victoria, Central Goldfields Shire Council is within one hour's drive of the regional centres of Ballarat and Bendigo and just two hours from Melbourne.

Our towns

61% of the population live in Maryborough with the remaining population living in the surrounding townships of Carisbrook, Dunolly, Talbot, Majorca and Bealiba as well as surrounding farming districts. Each township is characterised by a unique vision, culture and interests.

Home to just under 13,500 people, the rich history of this land began tens of thousands of years ago with the Dja Dja Wurrung People, who continue to care for and protect Country today. The region's cultural landscape has since been shaped by many, including those who arrived during Victoria's gold rush era.

All townships feature iconic heritage architecture, and agricultural industries are spread across the Shire and include grain, sheep grazing and broiler farming. The Shire is also home to several major agricultural, freight, printing and food production companies. Residents have access to affordable housing, a wide variety of health services, schools, recreational facilities and parks and gardens.



The principal towns and locations are:

- Maryborough
- Carisbrook
- Dunolly
- Talbot
- Bealiba

Other locations include:

- Adelaide Lead
- Betley
- Bowenvale/Timor
- Daisy Hill
- Majorca
- Wareek

Pictured (right): Broadway in Dunolly.





— Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2021.

The Central Goldfields
Shire is home to
13,483 people



Median age:
52 years

- 14.6% of the population are aged up to 14 years
- 30.7% of the population are aged 65 and over

61%
of the population live in Maryborough

An area of **1,532** square kilometres

Employment:
48.5%
employed full time
36.8%
employed part-time



89.7%
of our population
speak English at home

2%
speak Filipino, Nepali,
Mandarin, Tagalog or Greek



82.3%
of our community is born
in Australia



2.3%
of our population (304 people)
are **Aboriginal/Torres Strait
Islander** people

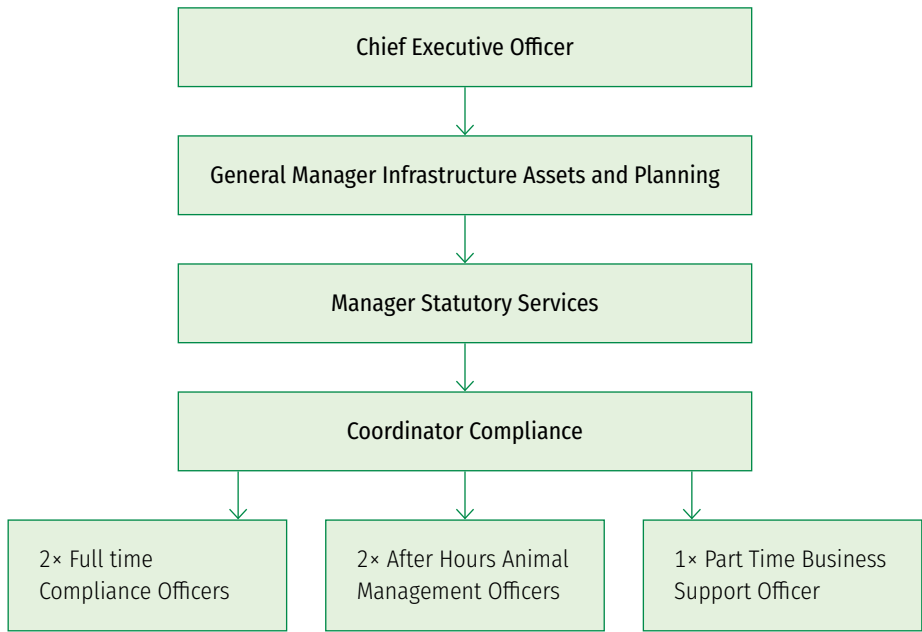
The main birthplaces
outside Australia were:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
|  | 3.4%
England |
|  | 0.8%
New Zealand |
|  | 0.6%
Netherlands |
|  | 0.6%
Philippines |
|  | 0.4%
Scotland |

1.4 Context and current situation

Central Goldfields Shire Council provide a range of services to ensure the Council meets its legislative responsibilities in relation to animal management across the Shire. These officers deliver services, policies, and functions that promote responsible pet ownership, support animal welfare, and contribute to positive health, safety, and environmental outcomes for the community.

Figure 1: Organisational structure



Animal management services provided to the community:

- Collection and impounding of dogs and cats found at large
- Rehoming of unclaimed and surrendered animals
- Transferring animals to suitable rescue organisations
- Promoting responsible pet ownership and animal welfare
- Managing complaints about nuisance dogs and cats
- Investigating reported dog attacks
- Provision of low-cost desexing vouchers
- After hours emergency service

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.5 Domestic animal statistics

Table 1: Dog statistics between 2021 and 2025

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Registered dogs	2416	2069	1923	2291
Dogs Impounded (stray)	224	225	228	216
Dogs surrendered	38	33	43	58
Dogs seized	2	11	7	12
Dogs reclaimed	126	203	172	142
Dogs adopted out	12	18	31	38
Dog transferred/rescued via another organisation (84Y)	10	18	20	29
Dog euthanised (behavioural)	8	5	8	9
Dog euthanised (illness/welfare)	0	1	0	2

Table 2: Cat statistics between 2021 and 2025

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Registered cats	325	559	544	849
Cats impounded (stray)	173	277	216	196
Cats surrendered	90	134	68	61
Cats reclaimed	21	42	6	8
Cats adopted out	66	100	63	57
Cat transferred/rescued via another organisation (84Y)	121	129	102	71
Cat euthanised (behavioural or feral/wild)	0	9	53	23
Cat euthanised (illness/welfare)	2	29	7	4

2. Training of authorised officers

2.1 Context and current situation

Central Goldfields Shire Council's Animal Management Team is made up of two Compliance Officers, who divide their time between animal management, local law and municipal fire prevention duties. Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to ensuring all team members are well-trained, competent in their duties, and able to deliver an effective, professional service to the community.

Current training options provided to Compliance Officers:

- Tertiary courses such as Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation, and Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance)
- Advanced government investigations training
- First aid training and certification
- Venomous snake and spider safety training
- Bureau of Animal Welfare information workshops and training
- Inhouse training opportunities
- Barking dog seminars

2.2 Our plan

Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to ensuring our animal management services officers remain trained and competent in their duties. This involves assessing the training needs and requirements of each officer during their initial 6-month probationary period, as well as a yearly review during their professional development plan.

New training opportunities, in addition to those outlined below, will be provided as offered.

Planned training:

- Further in house training including:
 - Safe animal handling
 - Evidence gathering, taking of statements and preparation of briefs
- Australian Institute of Animal Management annual conference – via webinar or in person
- Animal Welfare Victoria seminars





3. Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation

3.1 Context and current situation

Central Goldfields Shire Council adopts an education-first approach to encourage responsible pet ownership, with enforcement actions reserved as a last resort. The current Community and Compliance and Enforcement Policy, endorsed in June December 2024, underpins this strategy.

Council's primary objective is to promote community safety, animal welfare and community satisfaction. Enforcement is used in cases of risks to community safety, such as dog attacks. Repeated non-compliance from pet owners may also lead to enforcement when education is not effective.

Key initiatives include:

- **Community education:** Providing clear and practical information on the benefits of de-sexing, registration, and micro-chipping. These measures help reduce unwanted litters, prevent stray animals, and facilitate the prompt return of lost pets, contributing to safer and healthier communities.
- **Registration compliance:** Actively following up on unpaid animal registration renewals to ensure all pets are registered in accordance with legislative requirements.
- **De-sexing programs:** Offering discounted de-sexing services to residents of Central Goldfields Shire to support responsible pet ownership.
- **Investigations into alleged non-compliance:** Complaints or concerns regarding irresponsible pet ownership are investigated, leading to education as well as enforcement when required.

3.2 Our orders, local laws, Council policies and procedures

Current orders:

- Central Goldfields Shire Council does not currently have any orders relating to a cat curfew or dogs on leash under Section 25 and Section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, respectively.

Current policies and procedures:

Policies and procedures

- Central Goldfields Shire Council Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- Processes for issuing Notices to Comply and infringement notices, including appeals
- Standard Operating Procedures

Current local laws:

The recently endorsed *Central Goldfields Shire Council General Local Law 2025* (General Purpose Law, Part 4) outlines regulations for animal keeping, including limits on the number of dogs and cats per household without a permit, requirements for animal housing and confinement, and penalties for failing to remove animal excrement (see next page).

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS SHIRE COUNCIL below excerpt ANIMALS

Central Goldfields Shire Council General Local Laws 2025 Part 4 – Animals

PART 4 – ANIMALS

4.1 Animal Keeping

- (1) An owner or occupier of land must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept, either permanently or temporarily, anymore in number for each type of animal than as set out in the table below:
- (2) The requirement to obtain a permit under sub-clause (1) does not apply:
 - (a) to dogs and cats under 3 months of age;
 - (b) to land that is lawfully used for the purposes of a pet shop, veterinarian business, Council pound, animal breeding or boarding establishment or any other use permitted under the Planning Scheme;
 - (c) if the number of animals kept on land is because of a commercial undertaking on the land and the use is authorised under the Planning Scheme or a permit has been obtained under the Planning Scheme;
 - (d) if the dogs are kept for working stock on farmland which is greater than 40 hectares; or
 - (e) if farm animals are on the land for not more than 1 month and are being used for fire prevention or weed management purposes.

4.2 Keeping Excess Animals

- (1) Unless permitted under the Planning Scheme, an owner or occupier of land must obtain a permit to keep or allow to be kept on land, any more of each species or group of animals than is specified in the table under clause 4.1.
- (2) A permit issued under clause 4.1 is valid for the animals named in the permit at the address stated in the permit. A new permit is required if:
 - (a) any additional animals are acquired; or
 - (b) the animals are moved to a new address within the municipal district.
- (3) In addition to any other permit conditions required by Council, the standard conditions for a permit allowing an excess number of animals to be kept must require:
 - (a) the permit holder to comply with any applicable condition or standard imposed by the Planning Scheme now or in the future;
 - (b) that poultry or animal housing is located on the property so that the amenity of the area or other premises is not affected by nuisance, noise or odour experienced because of proximity of the poultry or animal housing;
 - (c) the permit holder to only construct or use poultry or animal housing that, in the opinion of an Authorised Officer, has adequate roofing, drainage, is rat proof and has a floor paved with impervious material; and
 - (d) all poultry and animal housing to be maintained so that it does not cause a nuisance or offensive conditions or harbour vermin.
- (4) A permit for the keeping of excess numbers of animals is valid for the life of those animals originally permitted.

4.3 Animal Housing

- (1) A person providing housing for animals kept on land must ensure that a nuisance or offensive condition is not caused to adjoining land owners or occupiers and that the animal housing is:
 - (a) constructed and maintained to the satisfaction of the Authorised Officer;
 - (b) kept clean and sanitary at all times;
 - (c) located at a distance from dwellings on other land to the satisfaction of the Authorised Officer; and
 - (d) located at a distance from property boundary to the satisfaction of the Authorised Officer.
- (2) An owner or occupier of land where animals are kept must ensure that food provided for animals is kept in fly and vermin proof buildings or containers other than baled, rolled sheaf hay or silage.
- (3) An owner or occupier of land where animals are kept must ensure that the land is kept free of materials, refuse and vegetation that may harbour or attract rats, mice or other vermin.
- (4) A person must not feed or encourage the presence of feral, stray or pest animals or allow such animals access to food on the land on which the animals are kept.

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.4 Adequate Fencing

An owner or occupier of any land on which an animal is kept must ensure that the land is adequately fenced so as to prevent the animal's escape from the land.

4.5 Animal Excrement

A person in charge of an animal other than livestock must:

- (a) not permit the excrement of the animal to remain in a public place;
- (b) carry a device suitable for the immediate removal of any excrement that may be deposited by the animal;
- (c) produce the suitable device when requested to do so by an Authorised Officer; and
- (d) comply with a verbal direction given by an Authorised Officer to collect and dispose of the excrement in a proper and sanitary manner.

4. Programs to address over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates

4.1 Context and current situation

Overpopulation of dogs and cats within the municipality has many implications, including impacting animal welfare, local wildlife populations and community amenity.

The number of stray and surrendered animals coming into Council's care is primarily attributed to the following factors:

- Unwanted or accidental litters of dogs and cats
- Inability to reunite animals due to lack of identification via microchipping
- Financial pressures associated with cost-of-living increases
- Changes in household or living arrangements

Table 3: Overpopulation and euthanasia – current situation

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Dogs impounded (stray)	148	192	185	158
Dogs surrendered	38	33	43	58
Dogs reclaimed	126	203	172	142
Dogs adopted out	12	18	31	38
Dog transferred/rescued via another organisation (84Y)	10	18	20	29
Dog euthanised (behavioural)	8	5	8	9
Dog euthanised (illness/welfare)	0	1	0	2
Cats impounded (stray)	83	143	148	135
Cats surrendered	90	134	68	61
Cats reclaimed	21	42	6	8
Cats adopted out	66	100	63	57
Cat transferred/rescued via another organisation (84Y)	121	129	102	71
Cat euthanised (behavioural or feral/wild)	0	9	53	23
Cat euthanised (illness/welfare)	2	29	7	4

Central Goldfields Shire Council operates a small rural pound facility with a capacity of just 7 dogs and 10 cats. The facility takes in a large amount of stray and surrendered animals, averaging 213 dogs and 215 cats annually.

Central Goldfields Shire is proud to maintain a low euthanasia rate when compared to other rural Councils. Average rates of euthanasia over the previous four years are 4% for dogs and 15% for cats. Euthanasia is only considered when an animal's welfare is compromised or there is a concern for community safety.

Current initiatives to address overpopulation and euthanasia rates:

- Promotion of desexing programs such as the Victorian Government Targeted Cat Desexing Program
- Advertising of unidentifiable animals through social media channels
- Adoption of suitable dogs and cats
- Engagement in Section 84Y agreements with accredited rescue organisations for animals requiring specialised care
- Implementation of targeted cat trapping programs
- Education to pet owners about the benefits of microchipping and registration
- Promotion of animal registration and microchipping

4.2 Our plan

Over the next four years, Central Goldfields Shire Council intends maintain low euthanasia rates within its pound facility. A continued focus on community education and target enforcement action aims to address overpopulation rates of animals within the municipality.

Table 4: Proposed actions to address high euthanasia rates and overpopulation

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Investigate advertisements of pets for sale and reports of non-compliant/backyard breeders	As required	- Quantity of advertisements investigated - Compliance rates of animal breeders before and after investigation (such as registration, microchipping, source numbers, excess animal permits)



5. Registration and identification

5.1 Context and current situation

What registration does for you and your pet

All dogs and cats over the age of three months must be registered with Central Goldfields Shire Council as per state legislation, Section 10, *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. Registrations cannot be accepted without a microchip identification chip implanted.

Up to date registration and microchip details allows for stray or lost animals to be returned to their owners as quickly as possible.

The fees paid each year by pet owners also fund the Council animal management services such as:

- Investigations of reported dog attacks
- Assistance with animal nuisance concerns
- Returning of lost and stray animals to their owners
- Rehoming of dogs and cats from the pound, including associated husbandry and medical costs

Table 5: Registration of dogs and cats

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Registered dogs	2416	2069	1923	2291
Registered cats	325	559	544	849

As displayed in **Table 5**, the number of dog registrations has fallen slightly whilst the number of cat registrations has increased. Some of the discrepancies between years may be due to the recent focus on cleaning up of data, such as duplicate records and deceased animals.

The rise in cat registrations may be attributed to an increased number of audits of non-renewed animals, community education programs, adoptions of cats within the municipality, and a targeted cat desexing program.

Registration requirements outlined in the Domestic Animal Act 1994:

- Every dog and cat three (3) months of age and over must be registered with your local council
- Registrations must be renewed by 10th of April each year
- Registered dogs and cats must wear an identification marker when outside their premises
- All dogs and cats being registered in Victoria for the first time must be micro-chipped before they are registered
- The current fee schedule outlined in the Act allows for reduced registration fees for pensioners, registered foster carers, and for animals who meet certain requirements (de-sexed, over 10 years of age, obedience certified, and working farm dogs)

5.2 Our Council policies and procedures

Current policies and procedures:

- Central Goldfields Shire Council's current **Compliance and Enforcement Policy** guides decision making in the education and enforcement of pet registration.

Our current compliance activities:

Council officers undertake a proactive role within the community to address animal registration.

- Issuing registration renewal notices in March each year, as well as reminder notices when required
- Undertaking annual phone follow-ups for non-compliance
- Conducting an annual door-knock program focusing on educating residents on the requirements for registrations.
- Improving the accuracy of Council's registration database by cross-referencing updated customer details
- Promoting registration requirements through a range of media outlets
- Providing free registration for animals adopted through the Council's pound
- Offering discounted registration for pension card holders, de-sexed animals, and animals over 10 years of age
- Ensuring all cats and dogs released from Council's pound are micro-chipped and registered
- Contacting new owners of adopted or purchased animals to ensure registration is obtained
- Investigating complaints relating to unregistered animals
- Issuing notices for non-registered animals, as well as enforcement notices when necessary.

5.3 Our plan

Table 6: Proposed actions related to pet registration

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Obtain data from microchip registries to ensure new animals microchipped within the municipality are registered	Yearly	- Yearly assessment of registration rates in microchip registry data - Evaluate officer hours spent on investigation versus registration rates after intervention
Implementation of online registration for new registrations	Years 1-4	Yearly assessment of number of new registrations which have been completed online
- Review current registration classes and fees to ensure they are fair and incentivise responsible pet ownership, such as: - Removal of discounted fee categories for dog and cat breeders - Update category for puppy pending desexing from 6 months of age to 12 months of age to align with current veterinary guidelines	Years 1-2	Number of animals in these categories before and after implementing changes
Establish standard procedures for a pro-rata period for new registrations	Years 1-2	Year on year change of the number of new registrations which fall within the pro rata period

6. Nuisance cat and dogs

Council, in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, promotes compliance with legislation to address dog and cat nuisances. The main sources of nuisance within the community include:

- Nuisance cats
- Excessive dog barking
- Dogs wandering at large
- Off-leash dogs in public places

When investigate nuisance animal complaints, Compliance Officers focus on education first to encourage responsible pet ownership. Where education is ineffective, Notices to Comply (NTCs) and infringements may be applied as per Council’s Compliance and Enforcement Policy.

Data Snapshot:
Council records the following annual statistics:

- Barking dog complaints: 60 per year
- Reports of dogs wandering at large: 80 per year
- Cat cage requests: 150 per year

6.1 Nuisance cats

Cats allowed to roam pose risks to native wildlife and the natural environment. They may also create nuisance for residents through defecation in gardens and spraying. Cats which are not desexed also may breed with other roaming or stray cats, leading to overpopulation and increases in feral/wild cat colonies.

At present, Central Goldfields Shire Council does not have a Section 25 Order under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requiring cats to be contained to their property at certain times (i.e. “Cat Curfew”).

Current initiatives relating to nuisance cats:

- Documenting and responding to all cat nuisance reports
- Providing no-cost traps to residents experiencing cat nuisance issues
- Educating cat owners on issues with wandering cats, as well as providing information about cat containment and enclosures
- Low-cost desexing for cats under a State Government grant program

Future plans:

Table 7: Proposed actions to decrease number of nuisance cats and subsequent complaints within the community

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Introduction of a 24 hour or “dusk till dawn” Section 25 Order (Cat Curfew), requiring cats to be contained to their property during these times.	Years 1-2	Yearly trends in complaints regarding nuisance cats
Continue to apply for grants for low-cost desexing, and explore ways in which these can best target high cat population areas	As required	Number of cats desexed per grant, cost effectiveness per cat desexed

6.2 Barking dogs

Barking dogs continue to be a persistent issue across the Shire, with over 60 complaints reported annually. Barking dog investigations can take over 6 months to resolve, due to the individual nature of each case. The following variables are taken into consideration when deciding the outcome of an investigation:

- Actions taken by owner
- History of dog/s
- Welfare of dog/s
- Cooperation with Authorised Officers

Where a nuisance is determined under Section 32 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Council may:

- Issue a notice to the dog owner to abate the noise
- Issue infringements for the dog causing a nuisance

Future Plans

Table 8: Proposed actions to streamline barking dog investigations to resolve matters as quickly as possible and reduce repeat non-compliance

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Explore potential existing and upcoming technologies that may assist with the evidence gathering process (e.g. electronic recording devices, recording apps)	As required	Comparison of officer time spent investigating barking dog complaints before and after the use of this technology

6.3 Dogs off-leash and not under effective control

Concerns from the public regarding off-leash dogs remain an ongoing issue within Central Goldfields Shire, and Officers respond promptly to complaints and concerns.

With the support of a state government grant, Council is developing a new fenced off-leash dog park. The park will be regularly patrolled, and Council will engage with the public to ensure compliance while providing a safe and enjoyable environment.

Council supports responsible pet ownership by providing designated off-leash areas where dogs can be safely exercised and socialised. With funding from a State Government grant, Council has commenced work on a new fully fenced dog park at **1 Gartley Court, Maryborough**. This facility will provide a secure environment for both dogs and their owners to enjoy. In addition, an existing unfenced off-leash area is available at the end of Cadle Street.

Current Orders and Local Laws relating to off-leash dogs

Central Goldfields Shire Council does not currently have a Section 26 Order under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* relating to dogs off lead. This means that there is currently no requirement to keep dogs on-leash and under effective control in public

The recently superseded *General Local Laws 2015* prohibited dogs on High Street, Maryborough during business hours. Following community feedback, the recently updated *General Local Law 2025* removed this requirement. Dogs are now permitted on High Street, but dog owners are encouraged to keep their dog on-leash and under control in this area.

Future Plans

Table 9: Proposed actions to reduce the number of dogs causing a nuisance in public spaces due to lack of effective control.

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Introduction a Section 26 Order requiring dogs to on leash in public spaces	Years 1-2	Yearly trends in number of complaints regarding dogs off lead, number of dog attacks involving off lead dogs
Explore options for existing open spaces in which off lead dogs are permitted	Years 1-2	Number of sites identified, and review of consultation with community members and relevant internal departments



6.4 Dogs wandering at large

Dogs at large remain a significant challenge and a resource-intensive aspect of domestic animal management. Responding to wandering dogs and completing impoundment processes, particularly where dogs are not micro-chipped or registered, can be both time consuming, costly, and traumatic for pets. While the number of dogs found wandering has decreased through community education, enforcement, and engagement, the issue persists.

As per Council's Compliance and Enforcement Policy, an education first approach is taken regarding dogs found at large. Where education is not effective and repeat offences occur, owners may receive a Notice to Comply to secure their dog, or infringements may be issued.

Future Plans

Table 10: Proposed actions relating to dogs at large

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Explore process and system improvements that increase the ability for officers to return registered dogs without impoundment	Years 1-4	Number of registered dogs re-turned without impoundment in comparison to previous years

7. Dog attacks

Central Goldfields Shire Council responds promptly to all reported dog attacks and reports of aggressive dogs in the community.

7.1 Context and current situation

Dog attacks have a significant impact on victims—whether people or animals—as well as on the dog owner and any witnesses. The consequences of an attack can include medical costs, legal implications, and personal trauma

Investigations follow a systematic approach to ensure fairness and thoroughness. The process can involve:

- Taking statements from all involved parties
- If required, seizing the accused dog while the investigation takes place
- Collecting evidence such as CCTV footage and medical reports from veterinary clinics or hospitals
- Interviewing the accused dog owner
- Assessing the evidence collected to determine the appropriate course of action

Potential Outcomes for a dog attack investigation:

- Infringements (where non-serious injuries sustained).
- Notices to contain your pet to its property
- Menacing/Dangerous Dog Proposal and Declaration.
- Prosecution in Magistrates' Court.
- Seek destruction/compensation orders by the Magistrate
- Banning orders under Section 84xa of the DAA



7.2 Our plan

Table 11: Proposed actions to minimise the number of dog attacks within the community

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Increase Council's ability to prosecute serious dog attacks in the Magistrate's County via officer training	Years 2-3	Number of cases prosecuted and review of outcomes

8. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

8.1 Context and current situation

In accordance with State Government legislation, Council regards the control of dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs as a matter of utmost importance. When owners do not comply with the requirements of a declaration, their dogs pose a significant risk to public safety.

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Central Goldfields Shire Council may declare a dog as menacing or dangerous as specified in the criteria listed below. All menacing, dangerous and restricted breed dogs must be registered with the Victorian Dangerous Dog Registry (VDDR).

Definitions:

Menacing dog

Section 41A (1) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 states:

41A Declaration that a dog is a menacing dog

- (1) A Council may declare a dog to be a menacing dog if
- (a) the dog has rushed at or chased a person; or
 - (ab) the dog bites any person or animal causing injury to that person or animal that is not in the nature of a serious injury; or
 - (b) the dog has been declared a menacing dog under a law of another State or a Territory of the Commonwealth that corresponds with this Division.

Dangerous dog:

Section 34(1) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 states:

A Council may declare a dog to be a dangerous dog –

- (a) If the dog has caused the death of or serious injury to a person or animal by biting or attacking that person or animal; or
- (b) if the dog is a menacing dog and its owner has received at least 2 infringement notices in respect of the offence in section 41E

Restricted breed dog:

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* defines restricted breed dogs as any one of the following breeds:

- Japanese Tosa (not in Australia)
- Fila Brasileiro (not in Australia)
- Dogo Argentino (not in Australia)
- Perro de Prasa Canario (or Presa Canario) (not in Australia)
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)



Table 12: Declared dogs registered within the municipality

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Registered declared menacing dogs	0	1	4	4
Registered declared dangerous dogs	0	1	0	3
Registered declared restricted breed dogs	0	0	0	0

8.2 Current compliance and education activities

- Declare dogs as dangerous, menacing, or restricted breed where applicable
- Ensure all declared dogs are registered on the VDDR
- Ensure any dogs leaving the municipality are reported to the VDDR
- Conduct scheduled inspections and random audits
- Investigate all reports of non-compliance and suspected dangerous, menacing, or restricted breed dogs
- Provide information to the community relating to declared dogs
- Provide guidance on the requirements of owning a menacing or dangerous dog



8.3 Our plan

Table 13: Proposed actions to ensure declared dogs are compliant with the relevant legislation

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Develop an internal procedure to assist with decision making when declaring a dog menacing or dangerous. This would focus on ensuring procedural fairness and risk-based decision making.	Years 1-2	Number of new declarations made each year

9. Domestic animal businesses

9.1 Context and current situation

In accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, all Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are required to register with their local council and comply with the relevant code of practice. Council actively monitors and investigates animal businesses to ensure adherence to legislation and relevant codes of practice.

Domestic Animal Businesses are defined by the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* as:

- (a) an animal shelter, Council pound or pet shop; or
- (b) an enterprise which carries out the breeding of dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) to sell, if the enterprise has 3 or more fertile female dogs and the proprietor is not a recreational breeder; and is not a member of an applicable organisation, or
- (c) an enterprise which carries out the breeding of cats to sell, if the enterprise has 3 or more fertile female cats and the proprietor is not a recreational breeder; and is not a member of an applicable organisation, or
- (d) an enterprise which trains or boards dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) or cats for the purpose of profit; or
- (e) an enterprise which rears or keeps dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) or cats-
 - (i) for the purpose of profit or sale; or
 - (ii) for a fee or for exchange of services.

Table 14: Registered domestic animal businesses

	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Shelters and Pounds	1	1	1	1
Breeding and rearing businesses	1	0	0	0
Boarding establishments	0	0	0	0
Pet shops	0	0	0	0
Dog training establishments	0	0	0	0

9.2 Our plan

Table 15: Proposed actions relating to Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs)

Proposed Actions	When	Evaluation
Monitor Council, microchip and Pet Exchange Registry (PER) databases for non-compliance breeding operations	Ongoing	Rates of identified non-compliance, number of applicable DABs identified



10. Other matters

10.1 Emergency management

Central Goldfields Shire Council maintains a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) which guides responses to natural disasters and emergency situations. The municipality is located in a moderate-risk zone where events such as storms, floods, bushfires, major transport incidents and chemical spills may occur and require a prompt and coordinated response.

The Animal Management team plays a key role in supporting the community with the care and safety of their pets during emergency events. Recently, Council hosted an Emergency Management Expo, where staff engaged with residents on pet safety and preparedness during emergencies.

10.2 Pound facilities

Council operates a small pound facility at Burns Street, Maryborough, providing animals with a safe transition from their previous homes to new placements. A dedicated Facebook rehoming page, followed by more than 6,500 community members, continues to generate strong engagement and support for adoption initiatives.

The Pound is maintained by Council's dedicated Compliance Officers, who balance this responsibility alongside their other duties. Their work includes:

- Reuniting lost cats and dogs with their owners
- Rehoming unwanted cats and dogs
- Facilitating adoptions into new homes
- Arranging foster care for animals when required
- Operating a cat trapping program
- Receiving and caring for unidentifiable stray animals
- Collecting dogs found wandering at large
- Assisting with the registration of cats and dogs
- Promoting adoption opportunities through print and social media
- Providing community advice on responsible pet ownership
- Making use of food donations from registered charities (e.g. ARC)

Council continues to monitor grant opportunities to upgrade the facility and remains committed to delivering a reliable and supportive service to the community.

10.3 After hours service

Central Goldfields Shire Council provides an after-hours emergency service to respond to urgent animal-related matters within the Shire. This includes attending dog attacks, confined dogs, and addressing incidents involving stock wandering on Council roads.

Currently, four staff members are rostered to cover after-hours duties between **5pm** and **7:30am**, seven days a week.

A recent improvement to the service is the introduction of after-hours dog accommodation, allowing community members to safely leave dogs in a secure kennel after hours, to be processed the following morning.

10.4 Prevention of cruelty to animals act

Central Goldfields Shire Council Authorised Officers are not authorised under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986* (POCTA). All POCTA-related offences within the Shire are referred to, and investigated by, the RSPCA and Victoria Police.

11. Annual review of plan and annual reporting

The Domestic Animal Management Plan undergoes an annual audit to evaluate its effectiveness, ensure adherence to timelines, and track progress. All actions are documented to support the ongoing management and oversight of the plan.

The annual evaluation of the DAM Plan will include:

- Publication of the plan in Council's Annual Report
- Provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan
- Review the Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and if appropriate amend the plan

