



"Animal Welfare by the experts – those who keep, care for and breed animals."

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2nd January 2022
Macedon Ranges Shire Council

RE: Macedon Ranges Shire Council – Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025

Dear Councillors,

Animal Care Australia (ACA) would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on your Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2021-2025.

ACA is encouraged by the progress and intent of Macedon Ranges Shire Council's DAMP. Of particular note is the priority to return lost pets to owners as rapidly and seamlessly as possible, including as an incentive for registering animals. We are encouraged by the planned increase in off leash parks and further promotion of the sunset to sunrise curfew.

We applaud the education initiatives, both current and planned. ACA continually promotes education as the most effective and economical means to improve animal welfare and compliance. It is heartening to see education so prominent in a number of objectives.

Further to our previous correspondence, we remain concerned over the process and procedures for managing excess animal permits. Currently the responsibility for approval rests with individual officers with limited documented guidance. The renewal process is administratively flawed and ACA questions the need for any renewals. The aim of an excess animal permit system is to ensure neighbourhood amenity. Once approved then it remains in place until a neighbourhood amenity issue is proven that requires modification or revocation of the permit.

Excess animal permit issue must be addressed with urgency.

Section 5.1 and 5.2 lacks animal behaviour training in species encountered in the Shire. This should be included in ongoing training as a regularly updated skill. Animal behaviour training improves officer safety, as well as animal welfare outcomes

The limits on livestock numbers, Section 42 (5) are unrealistic and have no relationship to animal welfare. Livestock numbers should NOT be based on land size but rather on an individual basis in accordance with correct use of the land being utilised and to ensure neighbourhood amenity.

In relation to the Plans - Point 6.7, ACA recommends that should farm animals be "found at large outside the land of the owner or not securely confined to the owner's land" (as described in clause 44 of Local Law 10) then the priority should be to return the animals as soon as possible, as is afforded to lost pets, rather than prosecution.

ACA offers our expertise to Council moving forward and our individual species Representatives are more than happy to provide advice and education, in particular approval of excess animal permits. We strongly encourage Council to allow one or more of our representatives to provide more information at a Council meeting to ensure ALL Councillors are aware of the complexities and failures of Council's DAMP.

Please do not hesitate to make contact if we can assist further.

Regards,

Michael Donnelly
President, Animal Care Australia.
0400 323 843