

13th November 2025

Gannawarra Shire Council,
Email: council@gsc.vic.gov.au

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to lobby for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

Animal Care Australia is currently recognised by Animal Welfare Victoria as a key stakeholder in the review of Victoria’s Animal Welfare Act and its associated regulations. Animal Care Australia is directly consulting and advising during that review, including the future revision of Codes of Practice for the keeping of all pets.

Animal Care Australia encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale, and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species, including pets, companion animals, animals used for educational or entertainment purposes or kept for conservation.

Animal Care Australia is engaged with state governments to develop more appropriate model Local Laws and model Subordinate Local Laws governing the keeping of animals in each state. Nationally, Animal Care Australia is finding Local Councils placing restrictions and permit requirements on their residents which do nothing to improve animal welfare and tend to lead to greater non-compliance.

Animal Care Australia commends Council on accepting written submissions and not utilising the single use of surveys as a means of claiming consultation. Surveys on their own are misleading and provide for irresponsible statistical analysis.

It is vital that Councils support the keeping of all pets within their shires/municipalities and that Councils consult with the appropriate stakeholders when looking to address the many myths or phobias that are expressed by uneducated members of the public, in relation to the keeping of some animals.

Some notable statistics:

- Population – 10700
- Registered dogs – 1880 (increase since 2023 stats)
- Registered cats – 346 (increase since 2023 stats)

A notable concern is the fact Council’s Pound is not open to the public nor conducts adoptions of animals. This must change. It is insufficient to simply have 84Y agreements with private rehoming organisations and place sole responsibility on them to rehome the Shire’s unwanted pets.

Key Commendations and Great Initiatives:

Animal Care Australia commends Council on:

- ✓ All areas off-leash except designated on-leash
- ✓ Endeavouring to return lost pets to owners before impoundment

- ✓ Actively posting images of impounded pets on a Facebook page

Training of Authorised Officers:

DAMP notes that there are 4 staff allocated to animal management tasks – 2 EFT (1 Team Leader, 1 Local Laws Officer/Ranger), 1 PT Local Laws Officer/Ranger, and one Admin Support officer. This is a responsible level of staffing given the size of the Shire. Animal Care Australia commends Council on completed qualifications for all officers, especially as 3 of them only commenced their positions in July 2025

Responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation:

Actions planned look comprehensive and measurable.

Overpopulation and high euthanasia:

The returning of lost pets to owners before impoundment could be improved by instigating a “free ride home” program whereby microchipped and registered pets are returned without penalty the first time they are found straying,

While Animal Care Australia supports Council actively posting images of impounded pets on a Facebook page, this is overshadowed by the fact that animals cannot be adopted straight from the pound. Shunting animals from one ‘frightening’ situation to another is simply not good animal welfare.

Council has listed “wild cats” as opposed to “domestic” cats in the pound statistics. This is inconsistent with Victoria’s Cat Management Strategy.¹ Unfortunately, Council has over-simplified this issue. Cats cannot simply be designated as “domestic pets” or “wild-cats” – they also comprise “unowned/colony” cats. To designate only the two options of “domestic” or “wild” ostensibly dooms all trapped un-microchipped cats to euthanasia.

Animal Care Australia strongly recommends Council re-evaluate this section considering the identified classifications of cats and their management within the Victorian Cat Management Strategy 2025. Animal Care Australia strongly recommends Council amends its view and recognises that not all unowned/unchipped cats are “wild” or “feral,” and that any that may be amenable to human interaction must be offered to 84Y holders for rehab/rehoming rather than euthanasia.

Council should look into seeking funding to enable the provision of free or low-cost microchipping and desexing for financially compromised residents.

Registration and identification:

Animal Care Australia commends Council on relatively low registration fees, however there is room to reduce them further to encourage more owners to register their pets.

Animal number caps and excess animal permits should only be used to enable compliance after an amenity issue. Animal Care Australia does not support mandatory excess animal permits – these caps and permits are a deterrent to registering pets if the owner may have more than listed in Local Laws.

Nuisance animals:

The actions listed appear comprehensive and measurable.

In closing:

It is necessary to call your attention to the Keeping of Animals Policy on Council’s website. It states:

¹ [Victorian Car Management Strategy](#)

“Depending on what animals you want to keep and where you live, you may need a Local Laws animal permit and/or a planning permit.

You do not need a keeping of animals permit to keep the following type/quantity of animal”:

Animal Care Australia acknowledges the intent of Council, and we highly commend Council on being pet-friendly in their approach here, however, Animal Care Australia does not support mandatory excess animal permits.

The full restriction (without a permit) on the keeping of Large or Noisy Birds on ANY property is extremely questionable and confusing. Especially when one can keep some numbers of domestic birds (caged)?

- 1) Aren't all birds kept in cafes or aviaries?
- 2) What defines a domestic bird as different to any other 'type' of bird when the table already includes poultry and pigeon restrictions?
- 3) What is a 'large' bird? A rosella, a macaw, or a galah?
- 4) What defines a 'noisy' bird? Some will argue the constant trilling of a canary is noisy, while others will not deem a galah noisy.

Why is it exactly that a person cannot keep an aviary of rosellas (if indeed they are 'large' birds on a property the size of 1 hectare or greater? Why exactly does Council need to approve this?

This why Animal Care Australia does not support mandatory excess animal permits.

Birds:

The proposed numbers relating to the keeping of domestic birds (caged) is ill-founded. The restrictions on large/noisy are simply mind boggling.

Clearly no one has been consulted on bird numbers and most importantly bird welfare.

Restrictions based on numbers of birds are archaic and reflective of animal rights ideologies. Birds come in a range of sizes and temperaments, many are flock species, there is a broad range of alternative and legitimate management and housing systems and numerous other factors. For birds, where hundreds of different species are being regulated, numbers are simple for legislators but inappropriate for ensuring sound animal welfare standards.

Animal Care Australia strongly recommends Council excludes the restriction of birds when the resident is keeping their birds in compliance with the Agriculture Victoria's Code of Practice—Housing of Caged Birds.²

If numbers are to be restricted, then doing so according to this code has legitimacy and should be based on the housing needs of the particular species in question, for example keeping of requirements for canaries is vastly different to those of galahs. It must be breed and husbandry need specific.

Councils' confusing bird restrictions are not supported as your residents would be hobbyists and current nuisance laws with regard to noise, odour, vermin, etc. are sufficient to ensure neighbour amenity is maintained should any problems occur.

In the hope that while Council is reviewing the Domestic Animal Management Plan you will consider approving amendments to Local Laws taking into consideration our feedback and provide the opportunity for residents to keep their birds without the need for permits.

Animal welfare is NOT about numbers – it is about the conditions, behaviour, cleanliness, housing, and husbandry that each animal is kept under by the owners – your residents.

² [Code of Practice—Housing of Caged Birds](#)

Policies that restrict the keeping of animals on the basis of preventing noise, odour or other issues for neighbours are strongly discouraged. Restrictions including permit requirements inflict an unnecessary compliance burden on residents and staff which only discourages animal keeping needlessly. Laws are already in place to deal with neighbourhood nuisance issues including matters due to poor animal keeping practices.

It is excruciatingly clear these restrictions have been authored by ill-informed, and potentially species biased persons. Any excuse that these restrictions have previously existed simply highlights the level of laziness in ensuring the most up to date animal welfare needs and community expectations are being met.

Animal Care Australia would like to request a meeting to discuss further collaboration to ensure a policy that aligns with the needs of your pet keeping residents.

Animal Care Australia's primary objective is 'education over regulation' and always commend Councils wherever they seek to further the education of their residents. We recommend viewing our online document: [Council Animal Management Plans](#)

Should you require further details please do not hesitate to reach out as we would be happy to meet with you and further discuss this matter.

Kind regards,



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About Animal Care Australia

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation, Animal Care Australia encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale, and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species, including pets, animals used for educational or entertainment purposes or kept for conservation, and in particular native birds, reptiles, and mammals.

Animal Care Australia was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers to lobby for real animal welfare. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation, and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare.

By educating our members and the public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of lobbying and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- advocating for stronger welfare outcomes
- advocating to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educate the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educate the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights