

GREATER SHEPPARTON  
GREATER FUTURE



# **Greater Shepparton City Council**

## **Local Laws/Animal Control**

### **Best Value Review**

**November 2005**



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## **Greater Shepparton City Council**

### **Local Laws/Animal Control – Best Value Review**

#### **1. CONTEXT STATEMENT**

The Greater Shepparton City Council experiences steady growth in residential, commercial and industrial development. The standard of this development and the many undertakings that individuals and organisations pursue in their everyday lives can create tensions between neighbours or lead to pursuits being undertaken that are not in keeping with the amenity of the local area. Due to this diversity the Council has adopted a number of local laws that assist in the 'good governance' of the municipality.

There are also certain Regulations and Acts of Parliament that require people to manage their affairs with the wider community in mind. Companion animal ownership is a very important example of where State Government Acts and Regulations require people to undertake certain responsibilities to protect and enhance the local community.

To assist residents in understanding what their responsibilities are and to enforce regulations where necessary, the Council has a Local Laws/Animal Control section. The section forms part of the Sustainability and Environment Department which is located within the Development & Infrastructure Directorate. The section operates from the Greater Shepparton City Council Welsford Street Office as well as the Wanganui Road Pound.

#### **2. CURRENT SERVICE PROFILE**

##### **2.1. Service Aims and Objectives**

The 2004/2005 Council Plan identifies a number of strategic objectives. One of these is Quality of Life – Making Greater Shepparton the place to live, work, play and visit. Guiding principles for Quality of Life include;

- Greater Shepparton should be an attractive, safe, exciting and diverse community, which stimulates and enhances innovative opportunities for its people to grow and develop.
- Quality lifestyle should enhance broad family values, a sense of belonging and connectedness, appreciate the importance of the environment, and generate investment and employment opportunities.

The objective will be achieved by, in part:

- Strengthening relationships with service providers, community support agencies and residents, and ensure responsiveness to the cultural, social, recreational and demographic needs of the community.
- Developing and implementing activities that encourage and support community participation, and provide a safe and secure environment for residents and visitors of all abilities.
- Monitoring community satisfaction ratings for enforcement of local laws.

The above covers the tasks that are undertaken within the Animal Control/Local Laws area, including the provision of appropriate animal management services and compliance with local laws administered by the unit.

Some local laws have been developed with other Council objectives in mind, eg: Local Law No. 7 – Asset Protection for Council Land, Public Places and Building Sites.

## **2.2. Service Activities & Responsibilities**

The Local Laws/Animal Control section has responsibility for the following activities:

- Ensuring compliance with and enforcement of the following Local Laws:
  - Local Law No. 1 – Environment Local Law
  - Local Law No. 2 – Consumption of Liquor in Public Places
  - Local Law No. 3 – Maude Street Mall
  - Local Law No. 6 – Livestock
  - Local Law No. 7 – Asset Protection for Council Land, Public Places and Building Sites.
- Ensuring compliance with and enforcement of the relevant sections of the following Acts, Regulations and Codes of Practice of the State Government:
  - Local Government Act 1989
  - Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994
  - Relevant sections of the Environment Protection Act 1970
  - Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds
  - Code of Practice for the Operation of Boarding Establishments
  - Code of Practice for the Operation of Dog Training Establishments

- Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Establishments
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet Shops
- Country Fire Authority Act 1958
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1994
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986

The major tasks that are associated with the above Local Laws and Acts, Regulations and Codes of Practice include:

- Registration of companion animals (dogs and cats) and animal establishments
- Responding to complaints about domestic animals
- Managing Council's pound facility including the rehousing of animals
- Ensuring appropriate permits are issued under the Council's Local Laws and compliance with the conditions placed upon those permits
- Responding to complaints from residents that fall within the jurisdiction of the Council's Local Laws and ensuring compliance with those Local Laws
- Responding to calls for livestock on roadways (24 hours service)
- Liaising with police and other agencies in the performance of the above duties
- Fire Prevention

### **2.3. Service Resources**

The resources of the section include the following:

- Personnel  
The unit has 6 full time positions. The structure of the unit is shown at Attachment 1.
- Vehicles & Equipment
  - 4 Utilities fitted with appropriate caging
  - Heavy duty livestock trailer
  - Animal handling equipment for each vehicle
- Buildings & Land
  - Animal Pound including:
    - 26 dog pens and 14 rehousing dog pens
    - 12 cat cages and 7 rehousing cat cages
    - lock up shed for storage of seized goods
    - stock yards for livestock holding
    - lock up yard for abandoned vehicle storage

The section is managed by the Manager Sustainability and Environment and falls within the Development and Infrastructure Directorate. The recurrent budget for the financial year 2005/06 is:

Expenditure	\$573,696
Income	\$369,000

A further breakdown of the recurrent expenditure budget is shown below:

Animal Control	\$476,796
Fire Prevention	\$5,000
Local Laws	\$25,000
Pound Operations	\$69,900

(salaries, oncost and plant are included only in animal control)

Income will be received from the following sources:

Cat Registrations	\$35,000
Dog Registrations	\$215,000
Local Laws – Fines & Fees	\$57,000
Pound Operations	\$57,000

### 3. SERVICE USERS

Direct service users vary greatly. Local laws staff have regular contact with those persons and businesses that require permits for activities that are covered by the Local Laws. An example of permits people regularly require includes:

- Vehicle access to Maude St Mall
- Goods on display
- Tables and chairs on footpath
- Signs on footpaths
- Temporary camping permits
- Fundraising and promotional displays

Other service users that the unit has contact with as a result of local laws includes those people dealt with in relation to complaints where they are in contravention of any of the local laws.

In regard to Animal Control contact is had with all known owners of dogs and cats through the registration process. This contact is generally only through an administrative function of sending out registration renewals which are completed by the clients and forwarded back to the Council. Dogs that are impounded or creating nuisances will need input from a Ranger to deal with in accordance with the Act and/or Regulations.

The pound operation can involve interaction with people for a number of reasons as shown below:

- People looking for impounded animals
- People looking for animals suitable for rehoming

- People looking for impounded goods (cars etc).

The pound also deals with a local veterinarian clinic for the provision of veterinarian services to animals including euthanasia of non-claimed animals. Initial contact for a number of complaints that we receive are raised through the local police station and as such the Rangers have regular contact with the local police. Rangers can also be called to incidences involving the RSPCA where cruelty to animals is suspected.

Fire Prevention is an important task that requires input from Rangers at given times of the year. In November each year Rangers identify vacant blocks of land within urban areas, that need to be cleared of material that is considered hazardous from a fire risk perspective. Administration officers issue fire permits for the window of opportunity in early summer or late summer/early autumn.

The unit has regular contact with officers of the CFA – during the fire danger period it is generally in relation to the issuing of fire permits and matters being addressed by the Council’s Municipal Fire Prevention Committee and during the winter period it is in regard to people burning off mainly in residential areas.

#### **4. RELEVANT SERVICE AREA STATISTICAL DATA**

Attachment 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the following key service area activities:

- Euthanised dogs
- Claimed dogs
- Re-housed dogs
- Euthanised cats
- Claimed cats
- Re-housed cats
- Pound enquiries/phone calls

Other relevant data includes:

Total dogs registered per year	12000
Total cats registered per year	8000
Total dogs desexed for year	105
Total cats desexed for year	172
Animal infringements issued	128
Local Laws Permits issued	192
Special Events Permits	126
Local Laws Infringements	29
Fire Prevention Permits Issued	504

## **5. SERVICE UNIT COSTS**

The tasks that are carried out by the section can be extremely diverse in their nature and it is therefore very difficult to assign precise unit costs to these tasks. They can also vary immensely with the time each one takes to follow through to a natural conclusion.

## **6. REVIEW TEAM**

The Local Laws/Animal Control Best Value Review Team is comprised of the following;

Greg McKenzie – Manager Sustainability and Environment  
Mark Eade – Supervisor Local Laws/Animal Control  
Brendan Gosstray – Manager Leisure Services  
Dannielle Thorne – Customer Service Officer  
Ron Heddle – Works Officer Infrastructure  
Gerard Leddin – Building Inspector  
Dennis Wapling – Best Value Review Coordinator

## **7. REVIEW PROGRAM**

The review program is shown at Attachment 3 – and includes responding to the Best Value principles of;

- Quality & cost
- Responsiveness to users needs
- Accessibility
- Continuous improvement
- Consultation
- Reporting

## **8. SERVICE SCOPING**

### **8.1. SWOT Analysis**

The review team undertook a detailed analysis of all related aspects as outlined in Attachment 4.

### **8.2. Stakeholder Consultation**

The review team agreed on the following consultation methods:

#### **8.2.1. Survey of Council Staff – See Attachment 5**

It is proposed that this survey is made available to all staff via the Councils intranet.

#### **8.2.2 Focus Group Meetings – See Attachment 6**

It is proposed to meet with representatives of the following:

- Victoria Police – animal control and local laws
- CFA – fire prevention and local laws
- RSPCA – animal control
- Shepparton Chamber of Commerce – local laws
- Shepparton Veterinary Clinic – animal control
- Bureau of Animal Welfare – animal control
- Group of concerned animal owners – animal control

### **8.3. Key Performance Indicators**

#### **Current Performance Standards**

There are a number of performance requirements which are currently either formally or informally monitored in relation to services within this section:

- Number of calls reporting a nuisance for local laws or animal control
- Number of permits issued for local laws requirements
- Number of dogs and cats registered
- Monthly statistics from pound including:
  - Number of dogs and cats impounded
  - Number of dogs and cats euthanised
  - Number of dogs and cats claimed by owner
  - Number of dogs and cats rehoused
  - Number of visitors to the pound
  - Number of telephone calls to the pound

Other performance requirements include legislative compliance, eg: compliance with the requirements as contained within the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 and budgetary management.

### **8.4. Current Service Levels and Possible Future Demands**

The current service levels for the unit are under pressure continually. The number of phone calls received by the unit are easily the highest within the Council and this places great demand upon the staff both administratively and operationally. When staff are absent (either sick, annual leave or away at training/meetings) it creates a major concern on service response levels. This is also exacerbated at times of the year when other tasks are required to be undertaken eg: dog and cat registrations and permits required under Council's local laws.

The administrative tasks required to update databases to ensure accuracy are very time consuming and these coupled with the

telephone calls places great strain on the administrative position. Future demands include the adoption and need to enforce new local laws, eg: Local Law No. 7 – Asset Protection and the follow up procedure for collection of unpaid fines (until recently this task was not being followed through to ensure collection of the fines). A Local Law to manage the requirements of the Roadside Management Plan is also a possibility in the future. Legislation relating to companion animals is also continually changing and generally requires further regulation particularly in relation to dangerous dogs. At certain times of the year (late spring and late summer/early autumn) the unit is required to issue burning off permits to farmers. Depending on the season these permits can number more than 300. Pressure is building to have officers respond to local laws issues out of hours. Currently we only respond during hours but if required to undertake this work after hours this will place a greater strain on the workforce.

## **8.5. Service Provision**

### **Assessment of existing and potential alternative service provider options**

It is considered inappropriate to have enforcement duties undertaken by others as it can lead to misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the requirements of local laws and the relevant legislation that we operate under. Many pounds throughout the state are operated by other service providers (RSPCA), however, this Council's pound is one of the few within the state that are complying with the State Government Code of Practice for the Management of Dogs and Cats in Shelters and Pounds. It is believe that this is something that is required by the local community to continue. There is also no evidence to prove that the service being provided by the Council can be provided more cheaply by another provider.

## **8.6. Benchmarking**

Investigations into possible benchmarking opportunities revealed that comparable regional centres have different structures to that existing at Greater Shepparton. For example, there is no consistency with regard to the roles and responsibilities of animal control/local laws staff. It was considered that benchmarking, as such, would not provide meaningful comparisons or could even produce misleading outcomes. However, it was agreed to undertake a comparison of annual registration fees with comparable size and neighbouring municipalities for benchmarking purposes.

## 9. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As indicated in previous sections of this report, it was determined to undertake both a survey of internal organisational service users and conduct focus group meetings with key external service area/stakeholders.

### 9.1. Quality and Cost

#### 9.1.1. Best on Offer

Focus group meetings were held with key external service users including representatives from the following organisations:

- Country Fire Authority
- Shepparton Chamber of Commerce
- Shepparton Veterinary Clinic
- RSPCA
- Animal owners

While a number of specific issues were raised during the focus group meetings (refer Attachment 7) there was also very supportive feedback with regard to the overall performance of Local Laws/Animal Control staff. This conclusion is further reinforced by a very positive follow up letter on behalf of the Shepparton Veterinary Clinic (refer Attachment 8).

With regard to the internal organisational survey, all internal Council staff (approximately 260) were invited to complete a survey to assess Local Laws/Animal Control staff in terms of competency, accuracy, courteousness, efficiency, confidentiality and responsiveness. While there were only 21 responses these responses came from staff who had interacted with the Local Laws Animal Control staff on a daily (2), weekly (5), monthly (9) and irregular (5) basis. The main reasons for contact were: staff support on Local Laws/Animal Control issues (9), advice/interpretation of local laws and animal control matters (14), policy matters (3) and general (5). Accordingly, the internal survey responses captured a good cross-section of both frequency and type of contact.

In terms of overall service quality, the internal survey respondents indicated ratings of:

Excellent	38%
Good	55%
Average	5%
Fair-Poor	2%

While there was a fairly consistent “good” rating in all quality areas, the lowest “excellent” rating was for efficiency, which also attracted both “average” and “poor” responses.

Based on the above, it is contended that the quality of performance by the Local Laws/Animal Control staff is very well regarded by internal survey respondents. **It is recommended**, however, that further consideration be given to ways of improving efficiency in particular. In this regard, reference should be made to the “issues’ and “possible solutions” response sections from the internal survey (refer Attachment 6).

Additionally, it is strongly recommended that due consideration be given to the issues raised under Section 8.4 of this report, particularly those which may have potential exposure for Council.

### **9.1.2. Value for Money**

A comparison of annual registration fees with both comparable and neighbouring municipalities reveals that charges in Greater Shepparton are lower in all categories (refer Attachment 8).

**It is recommended** that this survey be conducted on a regular eg: annual basis and that the results be reviewed when assessing fee levels for Greater Shepparton animal owners as part of the annual budget process.

### **9.1.3. Key Performance Indicators**

**It is recommended** that an appropriate regime of Key Performance Indicators be developed from existing formal and informal performance measurements (refer section 8.3) and responses to the internal survey relating to this matter (refer Attachment 6).

All Key Performance Indicators should be readily measurable and relevant target levels should be determined through consultation with the Director of Infrastructure.

## **9.2. Responsiveness to User Needs**

Based on feedback from the external Key Stakeholder Focus Group meeting, it is considered that most areas of importance to external service users are being appropriately addressed. **It is recommended**, however, that further consideration be given to the issues raised during the focus group meeting (refer Attachment 7). Additionally, **it is recommended** that similar focus group meetings be held on a regular, eg: annual basis, to ensure ongoing service responsiveness.

With regard to internal service users, note is made of the intention by Council to provide a facility for all staff to identify issues and possible solutions for all Council service areas on an ongoing basis. Issues raised are then to be dealt with by the service area concerned, and/or the associated Best Value Review Team, as necessary. This mechanism should assist in ensuring ongoing quality service outcomes, relative to identified user needs.

### **9.3. Accessibility**

Particular reference is made to the new animal pound constructed by Council in September 2002 at a cost of \$375,000 which is open every day of the year from 8:00am to 4:30pm Monday to Saturday and Sundays from 9:00am to 4:30pm, with the exception of Christmas Day, New Years Day and Good Friday.

At present, the three Rangers and Supervisor take it in turns to respond to after hours calls. As a general rule, these responses are limited to emergency animal related calls and do not cover local laws issues, which are dealt with in normal office hours.

**It is recommended** that all service access issues be reviewed at least on an annual basis, taking into account matters raised by primary service users such as pet owners at large, property owners and representatives who participate in the focus group meetings.

### **9.4. Continuous Improvement**

Greater Shepparton has adopted a Best Value Sustainability Strategy which incorporates an annual assessment of performance against adopted KPIs, assessment of progress with regard to Best Value report recommendations and consideration of other factors which have impacted on the service area. This process is specifically aimed at underpinning continued service area improvements.

**It is also recommended** that a commitment to a culture of continuous improvement be reinforced by inclusion of related objectives in the annual performance requirements for Local Laws/Animal Control staff.

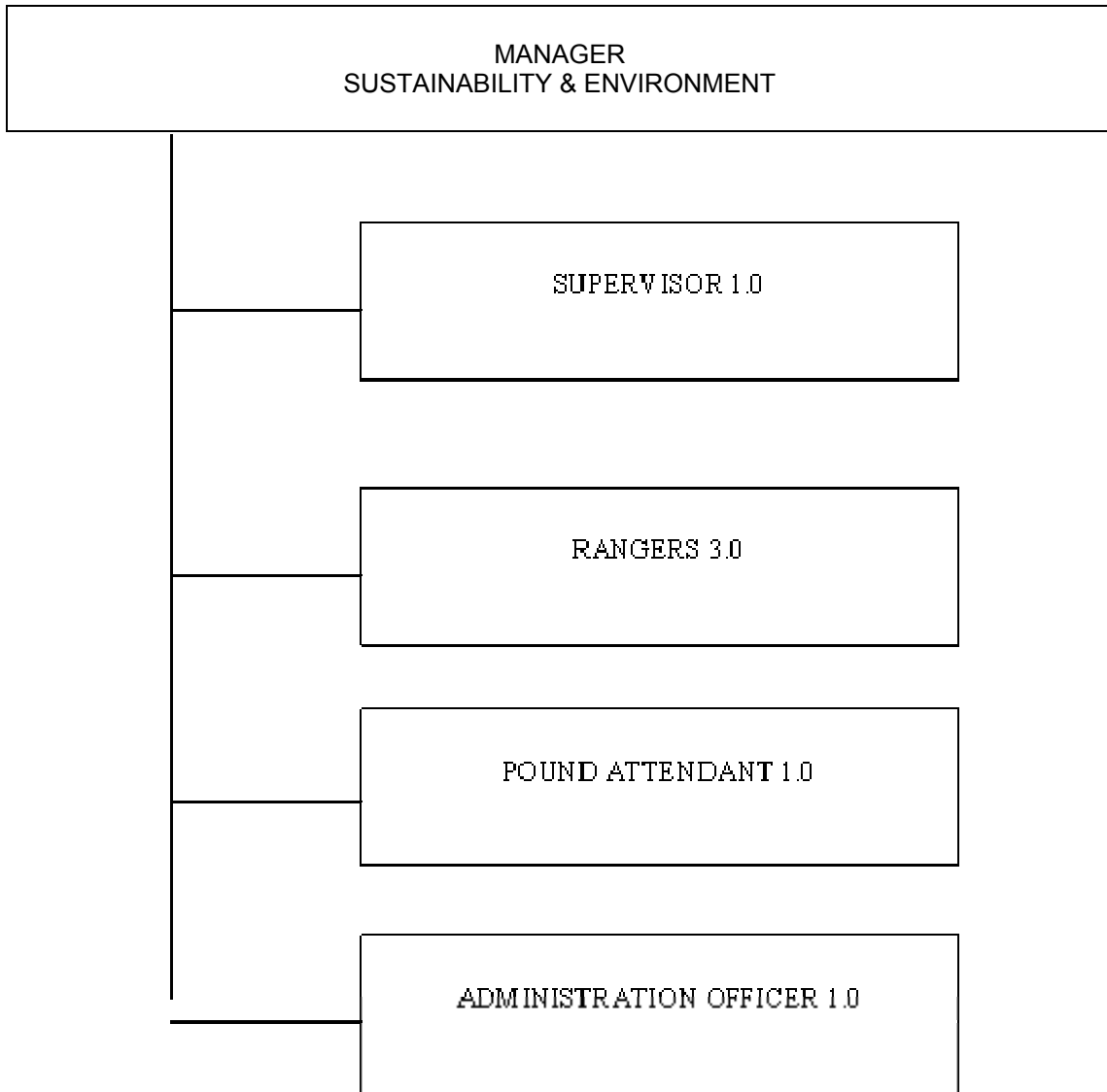
### **9.5. Consultation Reporting**

Ongoing consultation is considered to be an integral part of a sustainable Best Value culture for Greater Shepparton City Council. Such consultation will be used to inform the annual Best Value Assessment Program. Full details of the annual Best Value Assessment Program will be available as part of the Best Value Annual Report, which is available for public inspection and/or accessible via the Council website. All ratepayers will be alerted to the availability of this information through advice distributed with annual rate notices.

A copy of this review will be made available for public inspection and will be accessible via the Council web site.

**Attachment 1**

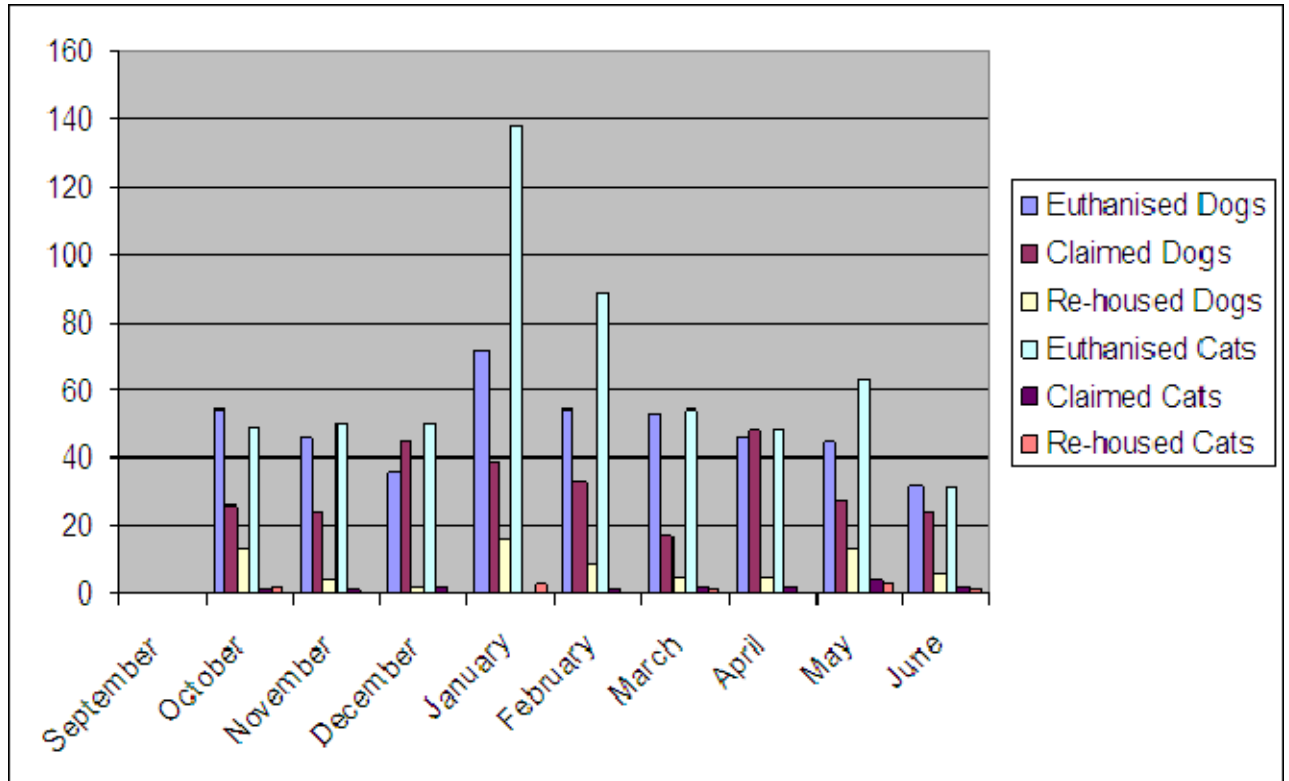
**Local Laws/Animal Control Unit Staff Structure**



**Attachment 2**

**POUND STATISTICS**

**Pound Statistics for 2002-03**

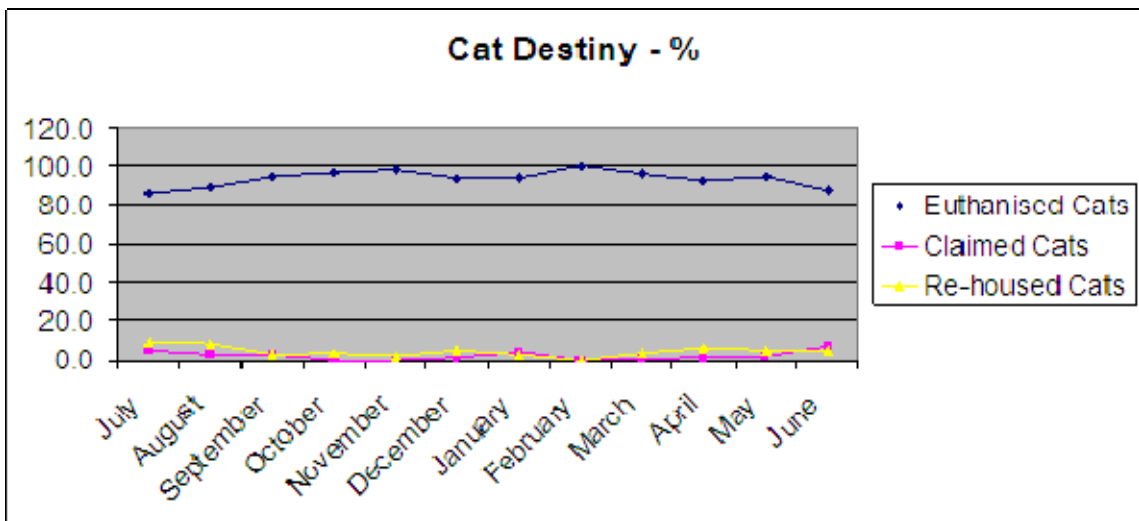
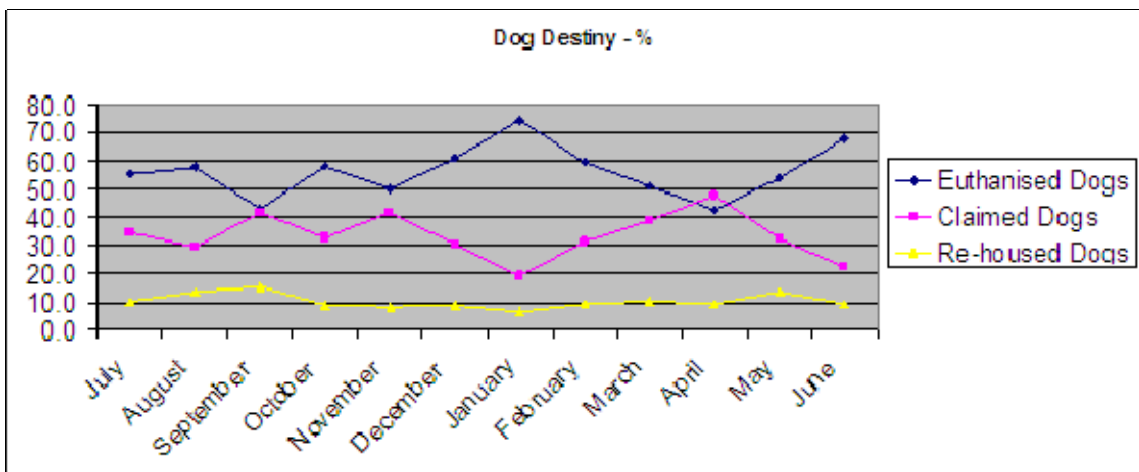
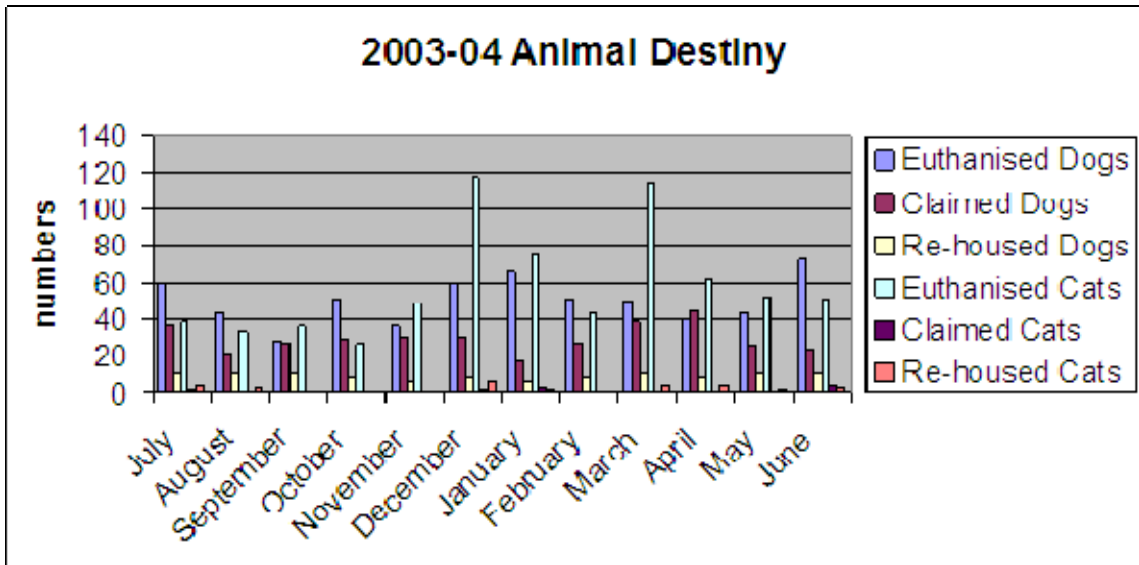


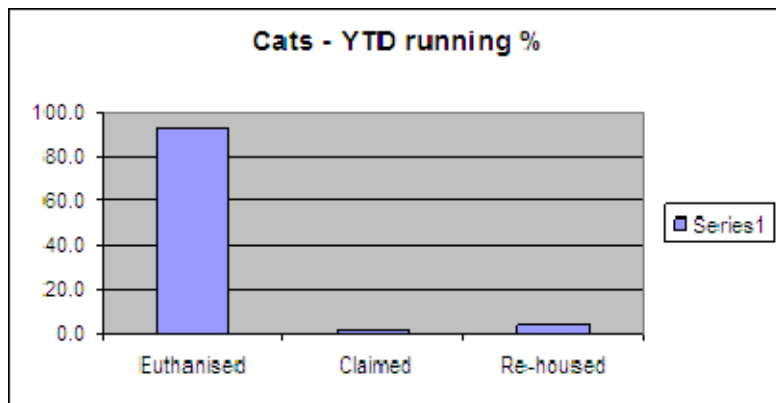
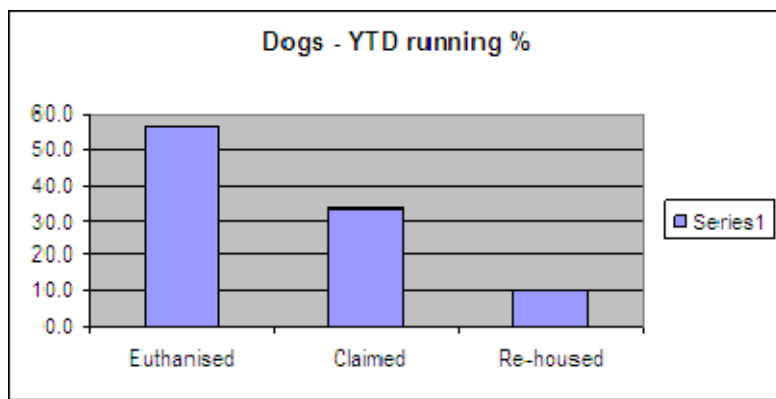
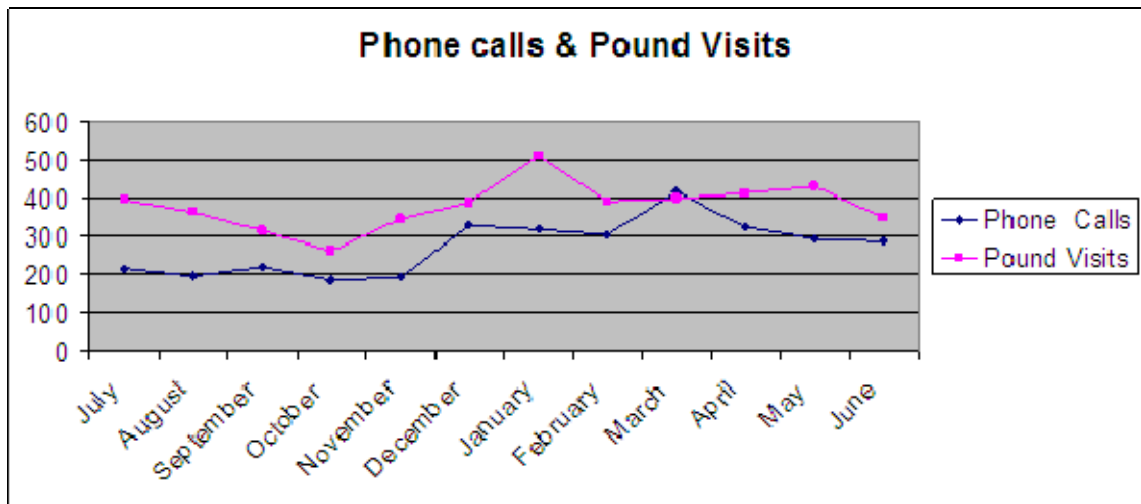
**Pound Statistics 2002-2003**

**Year to date**

Month	Euthanised Dogs	Claimed Dogs	Re-housed Dogs	Euthanised Cats	Claimed Cats	Re-housed Cats
July	0	0	0	0	0	0
August	0	0	0	0	0	0
September	0	0	0	0	0	0
October	54	26	13	49	1	2
November	46	24	4	50	1	0
December	36	45	2	50	2	0
January	72	39	16	138	0	3
February	54	33	9	89	1	0
March	53	17	5	54	2	1
April	46	48	5	48	2	0
May	45	27	13	63	4	3
June	32	24	6	31	2	1
<b>Totals</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>

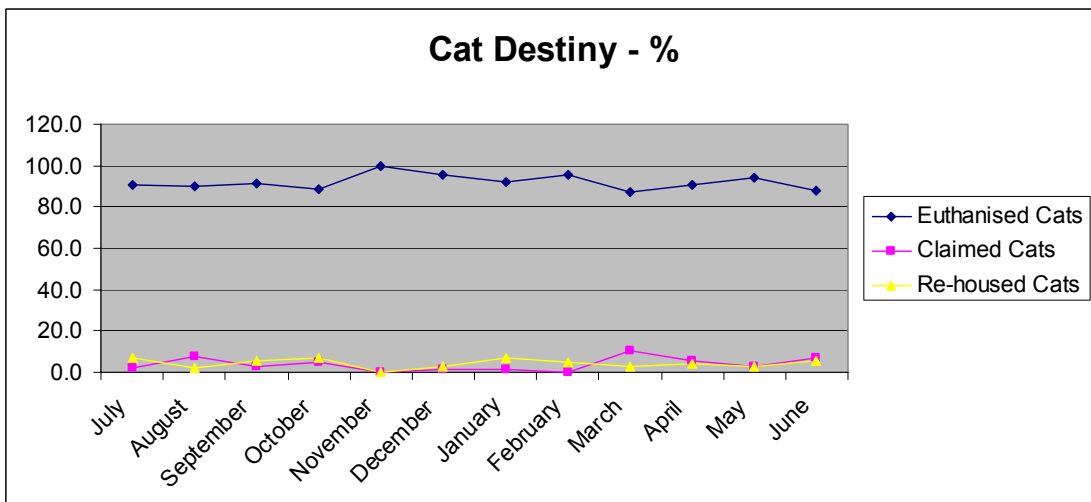
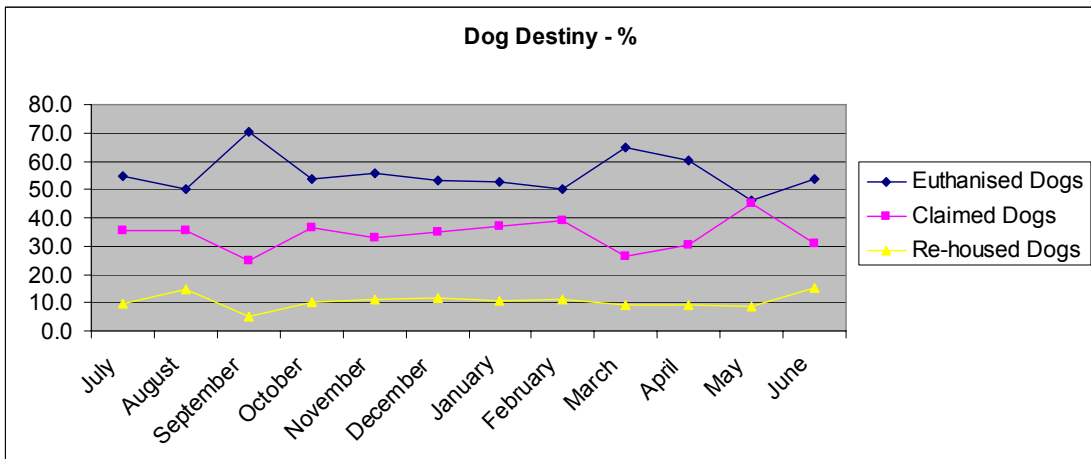
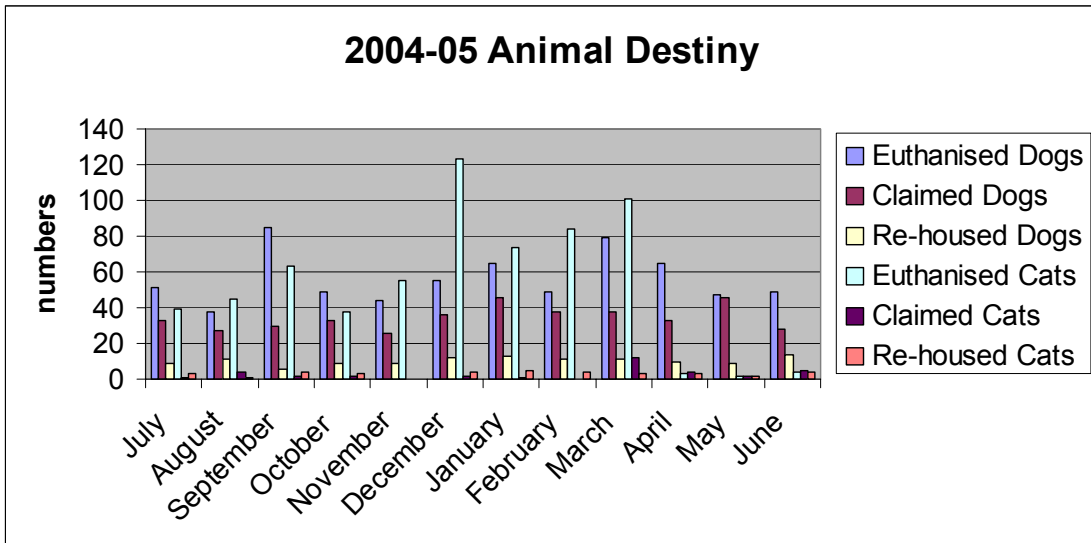
## Pound Statistics for 2003-04

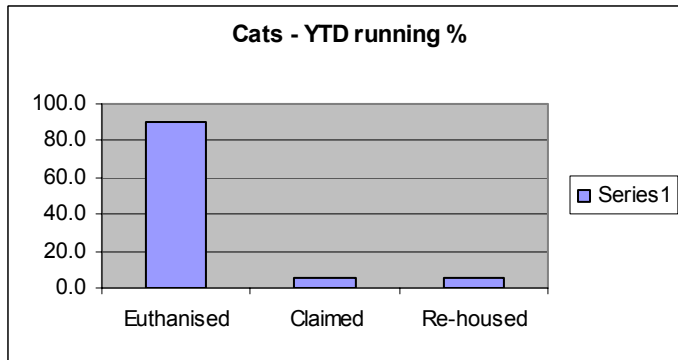
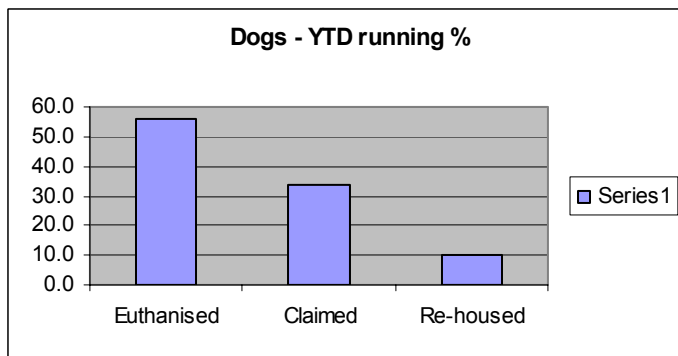
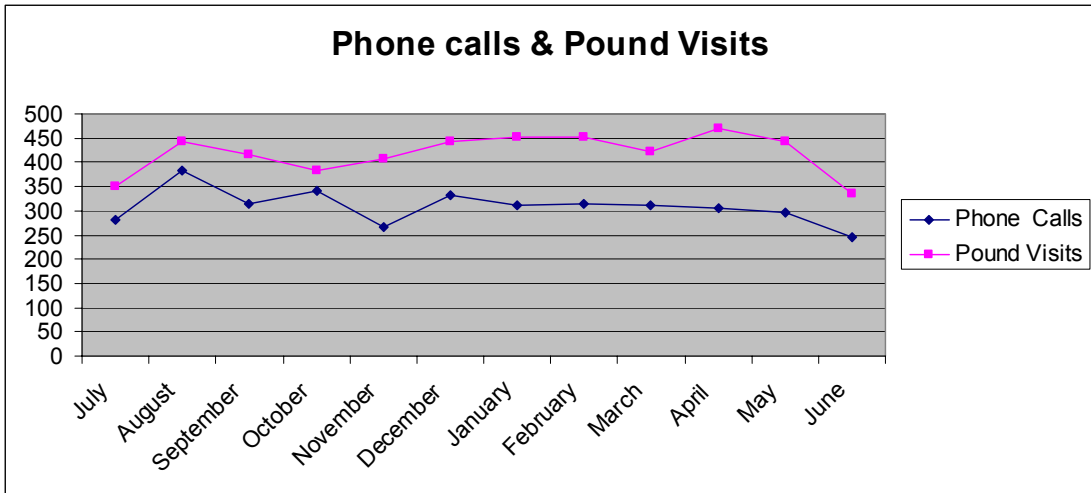




<b>Pound Statistics for 2003/2004</b>						
<b>Month</b>	<b>Euthanised</b>	<b>Claimed</b>	<b>Re-housed</b>	<b>Euthanised</b>	<b>Claimed</b>	<b>Re-housed</b>
	<b>Dogs</b>	<b>Dogs</b>	<b>Dogs</b>	<b>Cats</b>	<b>Cats</b>	<b>Cats</b>
<b>July</b>	59	37	11	38	2	4
<b>August</b>	43	22	10	33	1	3
<b>September</b>	28	27	10	36	1	1
<b>October</b>	51	29	8	27	0	1
<b>November</b>	36	30	6	49	0	1
<b>December</b>	60	30	9	117	2	6
<b>January</b>	66	17	6	74	3	2
<b>February</b>	51	27	8	43	0	0
<b>March</b>	50	38	10	114	1	4
<b>April</b>	40	45	9	62	1	4
<b>May</b>	43	26	11	52	1	2
<b>June</b>	72	24	10	51	4	3
	599	352	108	696	16	31

## Pound Statistics for 2004-05





**Pound Statistics for  
2004-2005**

Year to date - numbers

Month	Euthanised	Claimed	Re-	Euthanised	Claimed	Re-
	Dogs	Dogs	housed	Cats	Cats	housed
	Dogs	Dogs	Dogs	Cats	Cats	Cats
July	51	33	9	39	1	3
August	38	27	11	45	4	1
September	85	30	6	63	2	4
October	49	33	9	38	2	3
November	44	26	9	55	0	0
December	55	36	12	123	2	4
January	65	46	13	74	1	5
February	49	38	11	84	0	4
March	79	38	11	101	12	3
April	65	33	10	3	4	3
May	47	46	9	2	2	2
June	49	28	14	4	5	4
	676	414	124	631	35	36

**Other Service Statistics**

<b>Total Dogs registered per year</b>	<b>12000</b>
<b>Total cats Registered per year</b>	<b>8000</b>
<b>Total Dogs Desexed for year</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>Total Cats Desexed for year</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>Animal Infringements Issued</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>Local Laws Permits Issued</b>	
<b>Signs</b>	<b>133</b>
<b>Goods on Display</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Tables and Chairs</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Special Events Permits</b>	
<b>Demonstrations/Promotional Displays</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Badge, Poppies, Ribbons, Tokens</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Street Stalls</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Festivals, Marches, Processions</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Special Events Permits (cont)</b>	
<b>Shake a Can</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Commercial Activities</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Camping</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Local Laws Infringements</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Fire Prevention</b>	
<b>Permits to Burn Issued</b>	<b>570 app.</b>
<b>Blocks Inspected</b>	<b>840</b>

<b>Block Notifications</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>Block Infringements</b>	<b>16</b>

## **Attachment 3**

### **Overview of Review Program**

#### **OBJECTIVES**

- To assess the strengths and weaknesses of the existing Local Laws/Animal Control activities with a view to introducing improvements for both internal and external users.
- To develop associated performance measures and reporting mechanisms in support of ongoing service assessment and improvement.
- To respond to the requirements of the Local Government Act.

#### **ACTIONS AND TIMELINES**

##### **2.1 Establish Best Value Review Team**

##### **2.2 Develop Context Statement and Current Service Profile**

- 2.2.1** Aims and objectives of existing service
- 2.2.2** General description of activities/locations/staffing levels/budget etc.
- 2.2.3** Identify users of the service, both internal and external
- 2.2.4** Details of available statistical data relevant to service area
- 2.2.5** Cost analysis, where possible and meaningful

##### **2.3 Scope Service**

- 2.3.1** Undertake SWOT analysis of current service
- 2.3.2** Consider options for stakeholder consultation
- 2.3.3** Identify possible Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
- 2.3.4** Assess current service levels and possible future demands
- 2.3.5** Assess existing and potential alternative service provider options
- 2.3.6** Consider possible relevant benchmarking opportunities

##### **2.4 Prepare an Action Plan detailing:**

- 2.4.1** Objectives of review
- 2.4.2** Actions
- 2.4.3** Timelines
- 2.4.4** Key Milestones
- 2.4.5** Consultation Process
- 2.4.6** Resources Requirements

- 2.5 Seek EMT approval for Action Plan**
- 2.6 Undertake Review – to respond to Review Objectives including Local Government Act requirements as detailed hereunder:**
- Quality and Cost
    - Best on Offer – includes benchmarking and development of quality standards
    - Value for Money – includes development of cost standards
    - Community Expectations and Values – includes consultation
    - Affordability and Accessibility – the balance of affordability with accessibility
    - Local Employment – opportunities for growth or retention
    - Partnerships (optional) – other agencies or departments
    - Environmental Impact (optional) – potential benefits of approach
    - Key performance Indicators – can be built around quality and cost standards
  - Responsiveness to User Needs – demonstrate service is responsive to user needs
  - Accessibility – demonstrate access exists for those for where the service is intended
  - Continuous Improvement – demonstrate how Continuous Improvement will be supported
  - Consultation – must demonstrate regular community consultation
  - Reporting – must demonstrate regular reporting to community
- 2.7 Prepare Best Value Report, incorporating relevant recommendations, covering key aspects of this review including:**
- Service Improvements
  - Adoption of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)
  - Responsiveness to User Needs
  - Service Accessibility
  - Continuous Improvement
  - Consultation and reporting in achievement against KPI's
- 2.8 Submit draft report to Best Value Review team for consideration/comment**
- 2.9 Final report to be endorsed by Best Value Review team as having met review objectives**
- 2.10 Report to be presented to Executive Management Team and Council and subsequently made available for public inspection**

## **Attachment 4**

### **Local Laws/Animal Control**

#### **SWOT Analysis**

The following SWOT analysis was prepared by the following at a meeting held on Friday 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2003 – Brendan Gosstray, Dannielle Thorn, Mark Eade & Greg McKenzie. The analysis was further reviewed by Mark Eade and Greg McKenzie in December 2004.

#### **Strengths:**

- The new pound with its facilities and the quality of the pound (it is very presentable)
- Local Laws – concise in some areas
- Relationships with other agencies/organisations eg police, CFA & vets
- Authorisations – range enabling officers to deal with many issues
- Staff Resources – numbers, experience and skills
- Early registration program & desexing program

#### **Weaknesses:**

- Lack of computer technology at pound to enable access to data base
- Local Laws – some areas are grey and therefore are confusing for staff to interpret
- Lack of registered animals
- Payment to State Govt of part of registration fee
- Information Technology knowledge and resources.
- Legal processes frustrate staff
- Insufficient training for staff
- Financial dependency
- Firearm use/registration
- Lack of recognition of department in corporate plan
- Lack of written procedures
- Resources not sufficient to cover all requirements of the section
- Last resort referrals – demarcation issues

#### **Opportunities:**

- Increase incidence of rehousing and reclaiming of animals that are impounded
- Increase registrations of animals
- Increase training for staff – lead to better processes
- Review desexing program
- Review unit program – timing
- Review registration input processing

- Review administration support – payment options
- Friends of the pound may be a good resource for pound related matters
- More information on the website about animal control and local laws issues
- Dog leash areas – determine areas in urban environment
- B-Pay option for registrations
- Improve image and identity of the unit
- Changing legislation may lead to new opportunities for the section

**Threats:**

- Changing legislation may require further requirements with no increase in resources
- Ethical issues with friends of the pound
- Political influence on regulatory matters

**Attachment 5**

**LOCAL LAWS/ANIMAL CONTROL BEST VALUE REVIEW – INTERNAL SURVEY**

**PLANNING, HEALTH, CUSTOMER SERVICE & ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENT**

Following is a brief confidential internal survey relating to the activities of the Local Laws/Animal Control Unit. **Completion of this survey should take only 2-3 minutes.**

The overall objective of the Best Value Review is to identify immediate service improvements and to develop associated performance measures (KPI's) and reporting mechanisms in support of ongoing service assessment and improvement. An essential part of this process is to seek constructive feedback from all staff.

This survey is considered to be a vital component of the current Best Value Review.

Please print out this form, complete as requested, and place it in the locked "survey" box located in the tea room. This box will only be cleared by the Review Coordinator who will ensure confidentiality of responses.

***Your response by ..... will be greatly appreciated.***

**Q 1. FREQUENCY**

How often do you have contact with Local Laws/Animal Control staff (please select one only)

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Other (please state)\_\_\_\_\_

**Q 2. TYPE**

What is the nature of your contact (can be more than one category)

- Staff support to Local Laws/Animal Control issues
- Advice/interpretation of Local Laws/Animal Control matters
- Policy matters
- Other – Please specify

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**Q 3. SERVICE STANDARD**

Please rate the quality of service provided to you based on the following:

**Exc    Good   Av    Fair    Poor**

- Competency (informed & knowledgeable)
  
- Accuracy (information can be relied upon)
  
- Courteousness (polite, respectful, considerate, friendly)
  
- Efficiency (services provided in a timely manner)
  
- Confidentiality (security of personal information)
  
- Responsiveness (willingness to assist, help, answer questions)

**Q 4. ISSUES**

Please indicate any specific issues that relate to your dealings with the Local Laws/Animal Control Unit.

- Nil
- Specific Issues (brief description)\_\_\_\_\_

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**Q 5. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS**

Please indicate possible solutions relating to identified issues or any suggested improvements.

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**Q 6. DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION IN YOUR AREA OF RESPONSIBILITIES BY LOCAL LAWS/ANIMAL CONTROL STAFF**

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**Q 7. DO YOU HAVE ANY VIEWS ON HOW THE PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL LAWS/ANIMAL CONTROL STAFF SHOULD BE ASSESSED. SOME SUGGESTIONS FOLLOW, PLEASE TICK THE APPROPRIATE BOX (may be more than one)**

- response time dealing with emergencies
- number and type of complaints
- pound operations
- service user satisfaction levels
- number of inspections
- number of enquiries answered
- number of enforcement actions successfully concluded or resolved
- time spent providing advice and assistance
- Other [please list]

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**Q 8. DEPARTMENT IDENTIFICATION – OPTIONAL**

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**THANK YOU**

**Your input will be assessed in determining recommendations for service improvements.**

## **Attachment 6**

### **Results from Internal Survey**

#### **Question 1 Frequency**

- Irregular
- When required ½ yearly
- 4-5 times a year
- Occasionally
- Whenever I require help or information

#### **Question 2 Type**

- Discussion regarding overlap of issues within local laws and Health Act – nuisance.
- Various.
- Union matters.
- Referral of complaints and events that require local laws permits.
- Finance Staff.
- Reporting issues for them to investigate

#### **Question 4 Specific Issues**

- No local laws response after-hours
- Lack of personnel in office to take phone calls
- Main issue is overlap between local laws and Health Act, no clear direction about responsibility.
- Noise related complaints.
- Smoke/chimney related issues.
- Toilets on building sites.
- Daily issues.
- Spring Car Nationals/ Animal registration
- This is more of an observation than an “issue”. Through my dealings and working relationship with the Local Laws officers, it’s apparent, to me that, they may not feel they are a respected part of the D&I Directorate. This may be due to the different nature of their core business as compared to the other Departments within that Directorate.
- No feedback on complaints

#### **Question 5 Possible Solutions**

- Need more staff
- Better communication between departments, and policies surrounding how complaints will be managed and who will be responsible for follow for non-compliance –Support by senior management for non-compliance enforcement

- Require additional administration support, this would allow for authorised officers to perform duties out and about and not get tied down to administration staff duties.
- I think they have improved over time by having separate geographical areas whereas previously it was difficult to allocate work. It is easier as if there is a problem in a particular area it is clear who must deal with it.
- This is a good team of people who I believe would benefit from an improved relationship and/or more open communication with the upper management.
- Call complaint back and advise on problem process
- Are they hamstrung in issuing warnings/fines? It appears they are reluctant to pursue issues for fear of embarrassing Council.

**Question 6 Do you have any suggestions for improving access to information in your area of responsibilities by Local Laws/Animal Control staff should be assessed?**

- No but I think the new initiatives on the web site regarding impounded animals is great.
- Mostly approachable.
- Excellent Uniforms.
- Need more staff.
- No one there to answer phones.
- I think the organisation overall needs to better inform all departments of the other departments roles and responsibilities. In some cases items are referred to eg Health Dept for chimney smoke complaint when there is a clear local law issue regarding this.
- Possibly include in Cogspack a section each week e.g no of dogs impounded, no of complaints dealt with. Include a different department each week.

**Question 7 Do you have any views on how the performance of Local Laws/Animal Control staff should be assessed?**

- Due to the nature of their enforcement role it is obvious that customers will be generally not be satisfied with their service as it is widely involves “bad news” so service users satisfaction would be an unfair performance assessment.
- Have always been willing to assist me and have always taken responsibility for anything that I have passed on to them.
- Timely response to enquires.
- Attitude/politeness when dealing with customers.

Fines would at least prove they are getting into offenders; no one likes a toothless tiger.

## Attachment 7

### **Notes of Animal Control/Local Laws/Fire Prevention Focus Group meeting held in the Goulburn Room – Greater Shepparton City Council – Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August 2005 commencing at 2pm.**

**Present:** Andrew Arnold (CFA), Darren Viney (CFA), Dawn Taylor (President – Shepparton Chamber of Commerce), Dr. Collette Sheridan (concerned animal owner), Dr. Geoff Withers (Shepparton Veterinarian Clinic), Guy Gorman (RSPCA), Mark Eade and Greg McKenzie. Dr's Sheridan and Withers arrived at 3pm for discussions on animal control only. Dawn Taylor, Andrew Arnold and Darren Viney left the meeting at 3.10pm on conclusion of local laws & fire prevention.

#### **LOCAL LAWS**

ME & GM explained the current situation in regard to the local laws that are administered by the Local Laws unit. It was pointed out that animal control took up about 60-70% of the total time of all the rangers. The resources that are available to the unit were explained.

Local Laws that are managed by the unit include;

- Local Law No. 1 – Environment
- Local Law No. 7 – Asset Protection for Council Land, Public Places and Building Sites
- Local Law No. 3 – Maude St Mall
- Local Law No. 6 – Livestock
- Local Law No. 5 – Drainage of Land
- Local Law No. 2 – Consumption of Liquor in Public Places

DT indicated that she believed that most shop-owners understood the requirements of the local laws that impacted upon them. She also believed that trouble in the Mall seems to have decreased. GM explained that impending changes to Local Law No. 7 would improve the situation even further as the police will have power to deal with offensive behaviour. DT advised that use of skateboards within the Mall during the recent winter market was a problem for elderly people. A pamphlet explaining the Local Laws that impact on businesses may be an appropriate undertaking by the Council. DT advised that Mark Francis (Council) was to have a meeting with the mall traders in the near future. DT thought it would be good for there to be more of a presence in the mall of Local Laws officers.

ME raised the issue of freight deliveries within the mall however DT didn't think there were any problems caused by these.

DV raised the issue of event permits and the requirement of contacting the CFA for emergency management issues – they indicated that there was an occasion where a business was left without access to fire fighting infrastructure due to event occurring in the mall. GM advised that Local Laws

needed to ensure that all Council areas were aware of the need to obtain permits for public events and the need to ensure adequate fire prevention and emergency management.

Open air burning off is a problem for CFA officers being called on numerous occasions. Council has responsibility for this under its Local Law 1. ME explained that Council only respond to emergency animal control matters after hours and that local laws issues are deferred until normal office hours. Generally with open air fires evidence is available for the Council to take action if thought appropriate although our general practice is to issue warnings prior to issue of infringement notices. It was accepted that the unit needs to make the community more aware about appropriate burning off practices and that this could be tied into a green waste program. GM advised that green waste bins were soon to be implemented within GSCC.

DV raised the issue of identification of fire plugs within the mall. To be passed onto the relevant Manager.

### **FIRE PREVENTION**

Fire Hydrant maintenance – concerns expressed about communication between the Council and the CFA. CFA officers suggested that GSCC could utilize sheet similar to Moira that we could send to Brigades for use in identification of fire hydrants that need maintenance. Council forwards work requirements onto GVW for their attention. They carry out maintenance and bill the Council. – Ron Heddle handles this process.

Comment about the current review of the CFA Act was made – need to consider what eventuates from the review and determine position of Municipal Fire Prevention Officer & Committee.

DV raised the matter of inspections of caravan parks – advised that this was a health issue.

DV raised matter of urban block inspections to be carried out in conjunction with local Brigade Captains where possible.

Gm asked if there were any changes to the Vicfire processes implemented the previous year. AA – not any changes as far as he was aware.

### **ANIMAL CONTROL**

GM & ME gave a brief overview of the unit;

- 5 Officers including one at the pound
- 1 Admin Officer (used by other areas also)
- Administer the Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act, the Impoundment of Livestock Act and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act
- Deal with restricted breeds
- Dogs on Leads
- Council has a cat curfew in place
- Re-housing of cats & dogs is a large part of our business

GW raised the issue of micro-chipping and thought a compulsory requirement for this may lead to a greater opportunity to return animals to owners.

A discussion on dangerous dogs was had with GW believing that individual dogs can be dangerous not necessarily the breed of dog.

CS raised the matter of a 'friends of the pound' group being formed which she believed that could assist the Council with education of people about their responsibility as companion animal owners. GW advised that the Shepparton Vet Clinic undertook a responsible pet ownership program within local schools (the Council supports this program).

GG suggested that the Council have a moratorium on unwanted pets and then commence with micro-chipping. He believed that this may lead to a decrease in the amount of cruelty cases that the RSPCA would deal with. The cost and administration of this type of program would be prohibitive.

### **Positive aspects and areas of improvement**

GG advised that he had a great working relationship with Council Officers. He also thought the information contained on the Council's internet site was very good and informative for the general public. He suggested that the name of the pound be considered to be changed as he believed that the name 'pound' conjured up negative images in peoples minds. He suggested that the facility be renamed 'animal shelter' or something similar.

CS requested that more animals be re-housed if possible.

GG advised that if there were any concerns about animal welfare of animals that were being reclaimed by owners then he was available to check the animal and the owners.

GG raised three issues – 1. cat de-sexing – thought the focus group could look at this issue and involve the industry and perhaps environmental groups. The Council may also look at designating cat free areas where new green field subdivisions adjacent to environmentally sensitive areas. 2. Council considers the implementation of an agistment kit for horses. 3. That the Council considers making a local law that requires the micro-chipping of horses in urban and semi-urban areas.

GW raised the following;

- Failures to re-unite pets with owners – the pound needs to implement and monitor a system of inquiries by the public for lost animals.
- Injured animals – after discussion about the current shortfalls in these type cases it was agreed that a Memorandum of Understanding would be developed to between the Shepparton Vet Clinic, the RSPCA and the Council to ensure that each party understood its responsibilities.
- There needs to be a consistency in approach by officers of the pound in dealing with the vet clinic.

- Vaccination – believed that the Council should consider immunizing for kennel cough. GW to provide costing of such immunization.

GG thanked Council Officers for their assistance – he gets much better assistance from GSCC Officers than from other Councils in his area.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm.

### **FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS**

- overview of service, including an understanding of roles of personnel within the service
- Communication
- Positive aspects of the service
- Areas for improvement

## Attachment 8

### Shepparton Veterinary Clinic

Corner Numurkah Road & Wanganui Road Shepparton 3630.  
PO. Box 1076 Shepparton 3632 Telephone (03) 5821 3188  
Facsimile (03) 5821 2532 Email [svc@mcmedia.com.au](mailto:svc@mcmedia.com.au)

Dr. G.N. Withers B.V.Sc.                      Dr. R.E.B. Cameron B.V.Sc., M.S., M.R.C.V.S.  
Dr. P.D. Grant B.V.Sc. (Hons.)              Dr. R.A. Bonanno, B.V.Sc. (Hons.)  
and Associates.



5<sup>th</sup> September 2005

Mr. Greg McKenzie,  
Greater Shepparton City Council,  
Locked Bag 1000,  
SHEPPARTON. Vic. 3632

Dear Greg,

RE: Local Laws/Animal Control Focus Group

Thank you for the opportunity to attend the inaugural meeting of this group. The meeting was timely and well worthwhile. As discussed, I would like to further address some of the issues raised on Tuesday.

#### Kennel Cough Vaccination of Rehoused Dogs

Kennel cough is a highly contagious disease of dogs but is not potentially fatal like Distemper, Hepatitis and Parvovirus. It leaves them with a nasty croupy cough for up to 3 weeks but not with severe illness and because of its contagious nature it can spread very rapidly in places where large numbers of dogs come and go and are kept in close contact with each other. Such places include boarding kennels, dog shows and animal shelters and pounds. We do not see it often, but when we do it is usually a number of cases in outbreak form with a chain of contact from the one source.

The disease has an incubation period of 9 to 10 days. That means from the time a dog is exposed to infection to the time it comes down with clinical disease. During this time they can act as a source of infection for other in contact dogs. At the council's shelter, most dogs stay for 8 days or a bit longer. This means that many dogs that do become infected will be destroyed before they come down with clinical disease. This explains why very little kennel cough has been seen in the pound. However rehoused dogs obviously survive for somewhat longer and are at risk, if they become infected in the pound, of developing clinical kennel cough soon after arriving at their new home. This is obviously not appreciated by new owners and could be perceived as reflecting poorly on the council's shelter and on us as your attending veterinary practice. We have seen a handful of such cases over the past 6 months.

A single shot vaccination of all rehoused dogs would eliminate that risk. Unfortunately it would substantially increase the cost of vaccinating rehoused dogs by \$11.50 from the present \$21.00 to \$32.50. We don't want to force your hand, but as your consulting veterinarians, we believe it is our job to present you with the facts so that council can assess the risks and benefits and come to an informed decision. I was interested in Guy Gorman's comments that RSPCA shelters are not vaccinating for kennel cough. This somewhat surprised me.

I will leave it to council to make its decision and I am mindful of the fact that your budgets currently may not cater for such an increase. However it may be an option for consideration in the future. If you require further advice please do not hesitate to contact us.

#### Microchipping

I would strongly urge council to give serious consideration to compulsory microchipping as an integral part of dog and cat registration throughout the City of Greater Shepparton. Mark Eade discussed some of the negative aspects for council administration emerging with such a system on a statewide basis as happens in NSW. I would point out however, that their system still requires annual registration with councils, even though the pet is microchipped for life. This should ensure that registration fees continue to provide a substantial source of funding for animal control, with the obvious proviso that it will cost people more to get their animals registered initially and hence its attendant disincentive from a cost point of view.

However, an animal once microchipped will carry with it some form of identification for life, even if it is not subsequently reregistered. As such, the potential to reunite more pets with their owners and the greater risk of being

GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL

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Refer to	G. MCKENZIE
Copies to	

caught out with an unregistered animal (and the associated penalties providing potential extra income to administer the scheme!) should help with the overall animal control problem. The power would exist to identify unchipped animals as not owned far more quickly and provide the means to reunite more identified pets with their owners and collect more fines from irresponsible pet owners who let their pets wander whilst carrying a microchip. This should at least act as an incentive for people who have microchipped their pet to be aware that they would be taking something of a risk if they chose to not reregister in subsequent years. Hopefully it would encourage them as part of this risk threat to be more responsible managing them despite not registering them!!

I know this sounds mercenary but I think it would be a progressive step with far more benefits for animal control in the long term than disadvantages. I would urge council to give it serious consideration.

#### Injured Stray Animals

I was delighted that we resolved to establish a 3 way memorandum of understanding on this difficult matter. Guy's presence to provide RSPCA support for this in the future will no doubt be welcomed by both council and certainly by us. I took it from the meeting that you would attend to drawing up this understanding. No doubt you will need to liaise further with Guy on this and when you do would you please establish clearly whether it applies to injured/sick stray animals brought to us by anyone (the public or council staff or police). I would like to have in place definite guidelines with RSPCA on procedures to adopt with respect to ongoing management of cases before and after the time owners are found, including their recommendations on who is responsible for payment of our expenses after an owner is found (i.e. whether the RSPCA pays for the lot and recovers our costs from the owner).

It may be more appropriate for us to discuss some of these matters directly with Guy and I can await your advice on this after the basic principles have been put in place. Because we have so many vets doing after hours work when a lot of these come in, it is important that everyone in our practice has a clear idea of the correct protocol to follow at the time of admission. Please contact me if you need further input into drawing this up.

#### Recording Enquiries from the Public About Lost Animals

You will remember that this was one issue I spoke strongly about! Our staff receives frequent complaints from the public about animals they have found in the pound after making initial unproductive enquiries about. It is not good enough to say that they will keep an eye out for something unusual but it is too difficult with your standard black moggy! That standard black moggy is someone's loved pet who means just as much to its owner as an exotic breed of animal is to its owner.

It is no doubt far better for owners to go to the pound and search for themselves. You need to remember that sometimes an owner's verbal description of a lost animal bears no resemblance to the perception of someone else, particularly with respect to breed types.

#### The Pound's Image

The more I think about it I think the following suggestion would be worthwhile. In connection with animal control we are all inclined to use terms with a distinctly negative image. 'Pound' implies a place where animals are locked up and put down and things are controlled. I believe, along the lines of most animal welfare facilities, council could improve the image of the whole business by referring to the pound facility as the "Greater Shepparton City Council Animal Shelter".

My 2 to 5 cents worth for your consideration!

Yours sincerely,



GN Withers  
Director

## Attachment 9

### Comparison of pet owner fees with comparable/neighbouring Councils for 2005/2006 financial year

<b>Council</b>	<b>Dog</b>	<b>Dog Pensioner</b>	<b>Dog Reduced</b>	<b>Dog Pensioner Reduced</b>	<b>Cat</b>	<b>Cat Pensioner</b>	<b>Cat Reduced</b>	<b>Cat Pensioner Reduced</b>
Shepparton	\$54.00	\$27.00	\$18.00	\$9.00	\$33.00	\$16.50	\$11.00	\$5.50
Wodonga	\$84.00	\$42.00	\$28.00	\$14.00	\$72.00	\$36.00	\$24.00	\$12.00
Bendigo	\$90.00	\$45.00	\$28.00	\$14.00	\$66.00	\$33.00	\$20.00	\$10.00
Moira	\$62.50	\$32.50	\$22.50	\$12.50	\$61.00	\$31.00	\$21.00	\$11.00
Strathbogie	\$60.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$10.00	\$60.00	\$30.00	\$20.00	\$10.00
Campaspe	\$72.00	\$36.00	\$24.00	\$12.00	\$72.00	\$36.00	\$24.00	\$12.00