



ANIMAL POLICY

Version	Date Approved	Effective from	Next Review
2.2	22 September 2023	22 September 2023	1 October 2025

1. Scope

This Animal Policy (the Policy) applies to all persons entering the resorts with an animal.

The Policy does not apply to commercial operators that have a current Commercial Operator Licence allowing permitted animals in the resorts.

The Policy does not apply to people transiting through the resorts with an animal in the vehicle that is not stopping.

The Policy does not apply to Assistance Animals, for which there is a separate policy.

2. Purpose

The purpose is to outline what animals may enter the resorts and relevant controls (excluding assistance animals).

In relation to dogs, the Policy outlines how the Board balances the desire of some residents to live with their dog and the Board's responsibility to manage the resorts. The Policy also:

- Outlines the Dog Permit eligibility criteria and how the process is administered fairly
- Establishes the Board's tolerance for non-compliance and enforcement standards
- Outlines the Board's expectations regarding the behavior of permit holders.

3. Policy

3.1. Board responsibility

The *Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997* requires the Board to sustainably manage the resorts, having regard to environmental and ecological considerations, for alpine recreation and tourism in all seasons by persons from varied cultural and economic groups.

The Board is responsible for administering the Alpine Resort (Management) Regulations 2020 ('Regulations'). The Regulations empower the Board to establish an Authority (permit) process to control animals within the resorts and create offences relating to bringing an animal into the resorts without an Authority.

3.2. Animal control

Dogs can only be brought into the Mt Buller Resort with a current Dog Permit.

Dogs are not allowed within the Mt Stirling Alpine Resort unless transiting through the Resort in a vehicle without stopping.

Cats are not permitted in either the Mt Buller or Mt Stirling Resort under any circumstance.

Pack animals (other than horses) and other animals are only permitted in the Resorts under a valid Commercial Operator Licence or written Authority issued by the Board.

Horses are permitted in the Mt Stirling Resort from 1 November and 30 April each year, without a permit. At all other times a Commercial Operator Licence or Authority is required.

Horses are only permitted in the Mt Buller Resort under a valid Commercial Operator Licence or Authority.

In exceptional circumstances, the Board may issue a temporary Authority allowing animal access to the Mt Buller or Mt Stirling resorts.

3.3. Dog Permit eligibility

Permit holders are expected to comply with permit conditions and demonstrate responsible dog ownership.

The eligibility criteria are:

- Payment of the annual application fee.
- The applicant must be a property owner or a resident with a rental agreement for a minimum of 13 consecutive weeks.
- Current written consent from the Body Corporate or Building/Lodge Management confirming that the dog is allowed on the premises.
- Evidence of the dog's Council registration confirming the dog's name, sex, breed and de-sexed status.
- Dogs less than 6 months old may be issued a conditional permit with evidence that Council registration is underway. An unconditional dog permit will be issued upon receipt of evidence that Council registration is complete.

3.4. Dog Permit administration

Dog Permit fees will be set annually based on the principal of full cost recovery.

There is no limit or cap on the number of Dog Permits issued annually.

Dog Permits must be applied for annually. Permits will not be automatically renewed. No preference or weight is placed on previously approved Dog Permits.

Applications are processed upon receipt of a complete application with all required information. The service standard is 10 business days.

Annual Dog Permits end on 31 May each year, regardless of when the permit is issued. The Board does not issue seasonal or short-term Dog Permits.

A permit will not be issued to a restricted breed pursuant to section 3(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* or a dog that has been declared as dangerous or menacing by the relevant registering Council.

3.5. Dog permit conditions

The Board reserves the right to set permit conditions as deemed necessary to manage the resorts in a safe and hygienic manner having regard to environmental and ecological considerations.

3.6. Enforcement

ARV Mt Buller has no tolerance for dog bites. Any dog that bites a person or another dog in the resort will have its permit suspended whilst an investigation is undertaken. If the investigation finds that the dog has bitten a person or another dog without reasonable cause the permit will be revoked and no new permit will be issued in the future. ARV Mt Buller has very little tolerance for breach of permit conditions and failing to collect and correctly dispose of animal faeces. ARV Mt Buller will revoke a dog permit if permit conditions or waste requirements are breached more than once in any 12-month period. A permit will not be issued to an applicant that has had a Dog Permit revoked in the last 2-years.

ARV Mt Buller may issue on-the-spot fines under the *Conservation, Forests and Lands (Infringement Notice) Regulations 2020* (CFL Regulations) or penalty notices under the *Alpine Resort (Management) Regulations 2020*. ARV Mt Buller has the power to enforce or revoke an issued Authority or Commercial Operator Licence.

ARV Mt Buller may seize an animal and remove it from the resort if the animal does not have a permit or an exemption or is likely to damage, destroy or cause harm to people, flora or fauna (Reg 35).

Animals seized or removed from the resort will be handed to Mansfield Shire Council. Owners will be liable for all costs associated with the capture, removal, impoundment and release of their animal.

4. Expected behavior

ARV Mt Buller staff are required to:

- Comply with this Policy and relevant legislation and regulation
- Be polite and efficient when assessing applications within the service standard
- Set clear enforcement standards and apply them fairly without bias
- Investigate, monitor and report on compliance and make decisions based on the best available evidence
- Work collaboratively with the community to periodically review the Policy and its administration including compliance and enforcement efforts
- Avoid conflicts of interest, particularly in relation to the assessment of applications and enforcement decisions.

Persons in control of an animal are required to:

- Comply with permit conditions
- Demonstrate responsible dog ownership
- Support efforts to build community awareness and understanding of permit conditions
- Report non-compliances so the Board can act to build community awareness and compliance
- Respect the obligations of the Board and staff to implement the Policy, comply with relevant legislation and regulation and take enforcement action where necessary
- Act with integrity and openness and respond to reasonable requests for information.

5. Complaints and appeals

Feedback and complaints will be handled fairly and promptly in a respectful manner in accordance with the Complaints Handling Policy.

Enforcement appeals will be handled in accordance with the Board’s internal infringement review procedures.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approve the Policy - Review the Policy every two years - Monitor compliance with Policy annually - Set Dog Permit fees annually through the Corporate Plan
COO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish the enforcement framework - Communicate enforcement standards to all staff - Have sufficient Authorised Officers available - Report compliance outcomes to the Board - Review complaints and appeals
Property Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review the animal Policy every two years and recommend changes to the Board, as needed - Administer the permit application and approval system - Maintaining a permit database

Manager, Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administer the enforcement framework - Provide expert advice and guidance on enforcement procedures - Provide advice on required compliance and enforcement staff - Monitor and reporting on compliance
Environmental Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide advice on the enforcement framework - Monitor the environmental and ecological impacts of animals - Provide advice on and advocate for the environment in accordance with the Act.
Authorised officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Patrol resorts to identify non-compliance - Make appropriate enforcement decisions considering all relevant factors
Mansfield Shire Council	Mansfield Shire Council is responsible for accepting seized animals and impounding them
All staff	All ARV Mt Buller staff are encouraged to talk to dog owners if they observe non-compliance behavior and it is safe to do so

7. Legislation and Standards

ARV Mt Buller is committed complying with relevant legislation and industry standards including:

- Alpine Resorts (Management) Act 1997 and Regulations 2020
- Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 and relevant Codes of Practice

8. Other References and Related Documents:

- Instrument of delegations
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Internal infringement review procedures
- Resorts' Environmental Management Plan
- Recovery Plan for the Mountain Pygmy-possum
- Management Framework for the vulnerable Broad Toothed-rat
- Predator (wild dog, feral cat, fox) monitoring and control program

9. Definitions

Term	Definition
Authority	Means an Authority issued under the Alpine Resorts (Management) Regulations by the Board (ref Reg 11)
Board	Means the Alpine Resorts Victoria Board
Commercial Operator	Means a commercial operator that has been issued with an Authority in the form of a Commercial Operator Licence by the Board
Dog Permit	Means an Authority issued by ARV Mt Buller allowing the permitted dog in the resort subject to permit conditions and relevant laws