

Wandering livestock a risk

Wandering livestock can create a serious public safety risk and Council's Local Laws team is on hand to assist residents in circumstances where wandering livestock are cause for concern.

In the last couple of months, Council has received and responded to reports of cattle, sheep, goats, horses, pigs and geese wandering on roads or on neighbouring properties. The main reason for wandering livestock is commonly due to feed availability and poor fencing, according to Coordinator Local Laws, Bruce Gardiner.

"The dry conditions over the past few months has seen the available feed in paddocks reduce significantly and therefore animals are trying to access feed from road reserves and adjoining properties," he explained.

"Don't be complacent if your fences are not up to scratch. If your animals go onto your neighbour's property and get out from there, that won't reduce your responsibility. If there is an accident on the road you may still be responsible for costs and damages."

Stock lean against fences while trying to access feed on road reserves and neighbouring paddocks, and this can cause fences to fall and animals to escape. People have been seriously injured or killed from collisions with livestock on roads. Wandering livestock may also injure themselves, other animals they encounter and cause damage to property.

The Impounding of Livestock Act 1994 makes it an offence for a person to allow livestock to wander at large or to fail to adequately confine livestock to a property.

Officers can serve confinement and infringement notices for property owners who fail to keep their livestock confined.

"On the Spot fines are currently \$607 if you allow your stock to wander," Mr Gardiner said. "You might also be required to pay transport and release fees if your stock has been impounded. This is a very serious public safety issue and road users may be seriously hurt as a result of wandering livestock."

For information on some of the issues regarding wandering livestock and other animal management issues contact Council's Local Laws team on 5662 9200. Information is also available on Council's website at www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries website at www.depi.vic.gov.au.

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