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Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan

2022 to 2025

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1 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act) requires councils in Victoria to develop a domestic animal management plan (DAMP), every four years. The DAMP must outline council services, council programs and policies established to address the administration of the Act, and councils' management of cat and dog issues in their community. Councils must review their DAMPs annually and publish an evaluation of the implementation of the past year's actions in their Annual Report.

DAMPs should cover the following issues:

- Ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any related legislation
- Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.
- Address any overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for cats and dogs.
- Encourage the registration and identification of cats and dogs.
- Minimise the potential for cats and dogs to create a nuisance.
- Effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulation.
- Provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of cats and dogs in the municipal district are desirable.
- Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of cats and dogs in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

The benefits of pet ownership for people's health and wellbeing are well established. Whilst Domestic Animal Management Plans are concerned primarily with the management of cats and dogs within the community, it is important to note that pet ownership has a range of positive outcomes for the ongoing physical and mental health of community members, including:

- preventing loneliness
- motivating people to exercise regularly
- creating opportunities to meet people and make new friends
- teaching responsibility, as pets require ongoing care.

Pets are often viewed as extended members of the family and can provide great companionship, affection and joy.

The rights of assistant animal users are covered under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992

1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

City of Darebin’s DAMP was developed through a sector-leading approach in partnership with neighbouring Councils, Moreland and Whittlesea. An inter-organisational working group was developed to encourage partnerships and lead best practice. The development of the DAMP was driven by the working group and through four specific stages.

Stage 1: Background Research and Analysis

A detailed background report was developed which outlined: an overview of the local government area; relevant state and local policies; an analysis of Council’s current DAMP; emerging issues in domestic animal management; internal staff consultation and current animal management statistics.

Stage 2: Community Consultation

A detailed community engagement program was delivered to encourage the community to have their say on domestic animal management issues. Approximately 1,624 people who live, work or visit the Cities of Darebin, Moreland and Whittlesea provided feedback. Feedback was gathered through three methods: a detailed online survey which was available through a dedicated project webpage; community pop-ups held at key venues and locations across the local government areas; and telephone interviews conducted with key stakeholders.

Online Survey	12 Community Pop-ups	Key Stakeholder Interviews
1255 surveys completed	369 participants	
1763 unique comments received	1286 unique comments received	10 key stakeholders interviewed

The feedback received from community members has been used to inform the priorities and actions outlined in the DAMP. A full engagement report which outlines the community feedback is also available, the key themes found across the engagement program are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Key themes across the engagement program

DAMP Theme	Key sub-theme
Responsible pet ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving owner behaviours and control of animals Increasing community education and training
Dog attacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving safety at dog parks
Overpopulation of cats and dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing cat desexing Introducing cat trap, neuter, release program Reducing stray cats
Registration and identification of cats and dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reducing registration fees Providing free/reduced microchipping Reviewing the ease of registering a pet

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Allowing vets and Council to check pet's microchip before taking animal to the pound
Protection from nuisance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Addressing dog poo in public places ● Addressing cat poo in private properties ● Addressing excessive noise from dog barking and cats fighting ● Increasing the provision of dog poo bags and bins ● Addressing stray cats to protect wildlife ● Enforcing cat curfews
Dangerous and restricted dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving signage ● Addressing aggressive dogs in off-leash parks ● Addressing specific needs of greyhounds
Review of Council services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improving/increasing relevant signage ● Increasing park patrols and Officer visibility ● Increasing community education ● Increasing dog off/on-leash areas ● Improving safety of Council parks ● Improving and maintaining fencing at fenced in dog parks ● Increasing fines for people doing the wrong thing ● Undertake a mid-term contract review of Council's pound service provider
Training for authorised officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing training to encourage positive interactions with the community

Stage 3: Joint council planning

Relevant Council officers from Darebin, Moreland and Whittlesea participated in a joint Council planning session to analyse the community feedback, determine appropriate actions for the respective DAMPs and identify opportunities for partnership and cost-savings.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF COUNCIL

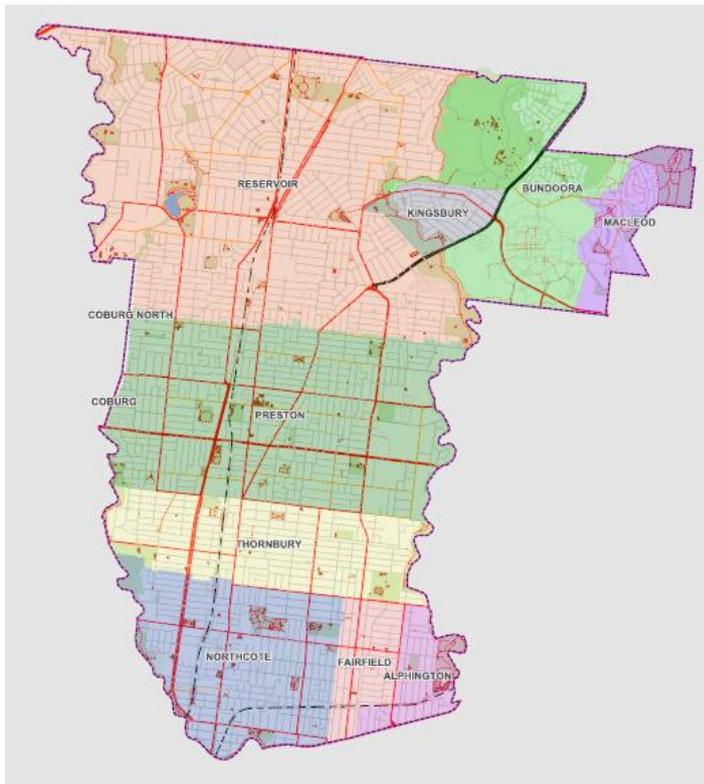
The City of Darebin is located in the northern suburbs of Melbourne, about 5km from the Central Business District (CBD). It covers about 54 square kilometres and is made up of the suburbs:

- Alphington (part)
- Bundoora (part)
- Coburg (part)
- Fairfield (part)
- Kingsbury
- Macleod (part)
- Northcote
- Preston
- Reservoir
- Thornbury

The estimated population for 2020 is 166,430. This is expected to grow to 230,118 by 2041. The community is slightly younger than average, with the largest age groups being 25-29 years and 20-34 years (9.7% each), compared to 8.1% and 8.2% respectively throughout Greater Melbourne.

Darebin is a multicultural municipality, in 2016, nearly 37% of residents spoke a language other than English at home. The most common languages, other than English are Italian, Greek, Mandarin and Arabic. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population is around 1,165 people or (0.7%), higher than the Greater Melbourne population of 0.5%.

Figure 1: Map of City of Darebin Municipality



1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Animal management services at Darebin are conducted by the City Safety and Compliance Department.

Darebin's animal management services are managed in-house with the provision of an animal pound being managed by an external service provider. After-hours collection services are managed by Council's animal management team. Council has a holding facility located in Reservoir which is used to hold animals before being transported to the Epping Animal Welfare Facility where they are then housed.

The purpose of Darebin City Council's animal management service is to:

- Implement Council's responsibilities under the Act and the General Local Laws.
- Promote the welfare of cats and dogs.
- Inform and educate the community about the benefits associated with pets, responsible pet ownership and the needs of companion animals.

- respond to issues raised by the community about nuisance animals, e.g. barking dogs.
- provide programs and services to support the community to be responsible pet owners, such as free desexing programs, education campaigns and park patrols.
- Provide animal welfare services through the Epping Animal Welfare Facility in partnership with City of Moreland and City of Whittlesea.

Council provides a wide range of educational, promotional and compliance activities. These include:

- Providing animal management information
- Engaging with owners and their pets
- Providing discounted desexing opportunities
- Developing collaborative partnerships with animal rescue organisations
- Providing appropriate signage
- Investigating complaints
- Patrolling dog parks

1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

A high level summary of the current population and service numbers for domestic animals in Darebin is outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Current population and service numbers for domestic animals

Program/Service:	Service Level/ Numbers:
Identification & Registration	10,980 dogs 5,272 cats
Identification & Registration- doorknock campaigns	Restricted activity over 2020/2021 due to COVID-19 lockdowns
Domestic animal complaints	Within 2-4 hours
Dangerous dogs complaints	Immediate response within 0-30 mins
Routine park patrols	120 patrols per month or 4-6 parks per day
Epping Animal Welfare Facility	Monday, Wednesday, Friday 11am - 7pm Tuesday and Thursday 7am -3pm Saturday and Sunday 9am - 4pm
Animals reclaimed	213
Animals rehomed	288
Animals euthanased	157
Declared dogs	15
Registered domestic animal businesses	Ten in total. Four pet shops, five dog training establishments and one boarding establishment
Microchipping and/or desexing programs	Restricted activity over 2020/2021 due to COVID-19 lockdowns

RPO School information sessions	Restricted activity over 2020/2021 due to COVID-19 lockdowns
After hours emergency service	7pm - 7am

2 TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

In order to deliver animal services that meet the requirements of the Act, to the level that the community expects, it is crucial to ensure that all authorised officers are appropriately trained and can participate in a robust training program.

The community engagement program illustrated a growing community expectation that Council officers should be fostering partnerships, supporting community education initiatives and facilitating positive interactions with the community.

2.1 Context and Current Situation

Darebin's Animal Management / Local Laws Team is made up of authorised officers. It is a requirement that all authorised officers have, at minimum, Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation (or worked within the industry more than 4 years) and undertake all Council required training programs, outlined in Table 3.

Each officer has an individual annual performance plan, which includes a section related to training and development. Plans are reviewed regularly, with training requirements and suggestions being updated at those times. Responsibility for ensuring that nominated training is completed is a shared responsibility for the individual officer and their supervisor.

Table 3: Planned training of Authorised Officers for the 2021-2025 period

Planned Training (2021-2025)	Expected Timeframe
OH&S <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with aggressive customers Working alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly Yearly
Industry Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal handling Animal assessment Prosecutions Statement taking Evidence gathering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly 2 yearly (DEDJTR) As required 2 yearly 2 yearly
Restricted Breed Dog Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 yearly (DEDJTR)
Council e-learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yearly
Cert IV in Animal Control and Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
Cert IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
Cert IV in Companion Animal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
Certificate IV in Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
Investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 yearly

Training on handling pets in emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 yearly
Australian Institute of Animal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As required
Management seminars/conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As required
Animal Welfare Victoria seminars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As required

3 PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

Responsible pet ownership was a key theme that emerged from community consultation. There was a strong desire from the community to address: the attitude or behaviour of owners, welfare concerns for cats and dogs, veterinarian and pound practices and developing partnerships with community groups and advocacy groups.

3.1 Context and Current Situation

Council works to educate the community about responsible pet ownership and has several initiatives that are working to reduce the number of dog attacks, increase the proportion of pet registered and microchipped and reduce euthanasia rates. Council’s initiatives include:

- A lost and found Facebook page that is helping to reunite owners with their pets - Darebin Lost Animals.
- Partnering with rescue organisations to assist with animal rehabilitation and rehoming
- Educating the community about responsible pet ownership, including the benefits of desexing, registration and microchipping.
- Temporary accommodation of residents’ pets to support family violence victims or survivors in an emergency or crisis at the Epping Animal Welfare Facility

COVID-19 Impacts

COVID-19 has had significant impacts on the community, including animals. There was an unprecedented demand to foster and adopt pets during stay at home orders, reported by many animal rehoming agencies, including by Council’s own pound provider. With many community members adopting and acquiring puppies during these periods, many dogs and their owners have missed opportunities to attend training/obedience classes and socialisation opportunities in a controlled environment. Council saw an increase in reports relating to dog incidents during this time where many people and their dogs had increased opportunities to exercise.

Animal rescue partnerships

Council has developed partnerships with a number of community animal rescue organisations to support the most vulnerable animals. After identifying a need for specialist care for young kittens, Council implemented a Neonate Program in partnership with local cat rescues for orphaned kittens weighing 500 grams or less. Once old enough, the kittens receive all the required veterinary treatments, then made available for adoption via the rescue organisation.

Residents that surrender their pets to Council as they can no longer care for them are offered to our community rescue group partners where appropriate for a safe and smooth transition into a new home.

Pets in the park

Council provides information about which parks have allocated dog exercise spaces with 39 off-lead and 70 on-lead parks available throughout the municipality.

Cat curfew

Council introduced a night-time cat curfew (7pm -7 am) on 1 January 2021, meaning residents must keep their cats confined within their property boundary during this time. The curfew was introduced to protect cats' own health and safety, to limit the impacts of cats on wildlife and the environment and to address complaints of cats trespassing and nuisance experienced on private properties.

The City of Darebin offers services surrounding the following educational and promotional activities:

- Promoting information on responsible pet ownership via brochures, website, social media
- Developing collaborative partnerships with animal rescue organisations
- Providing signage related to control of dogs and removal of dog faeces in parks

Dog off-leash Policy

There was strong support from Darebin residents, 81% for Council to develop a dog off-leash policy which describes how new off-leash areas could be declared and managed.

Darebin Domestic Animal Management Reference Group (DDAMRG)

The DDAMRG was originally formed to oversee Council's goals regarding implementing previous DAMPs.

The group's purpose is to provide advice to Council to address local animal management issues and inform future activities. The group has worked on topics such as various models for desexing programs, open space planning and dog parks, cat curfew, euthanasia of cats and rescue options, affordability challenges for pet owners and the DAMP.

In 2019/2020, a review was undertaken of all Council advisory committees and a standard Terms of Reference (ToR) was created, and in February 2021 the group was updated on the progress of the review and provided their feedback. The ToR was endorsed by Council on June 28, 2021. Moving forward, new members will be recruited to ensure that broad representation of animal management interests are represented.

3.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders:

- Section 23 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 - it an offence for a cat to remain on private property without permission, and landowners or occupiers may trap cats (both owned and unowned) found trespassing on their property.
- Section 25 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 – Darebin Council requires cats to be confined to their owners' premises and not be at large outside of those premises between 7pm and 7am effective from 1 January 2021.
- Section 26 Domestic Animals Act 1994 - all dogs must be on a leash in public places throughout the municipality unless in a designated off-leash area.

Local Laws:

- General Local Law Animal Management in Public Places – Darebin Council requires persons with the care and control of animals to collect and properly dispose of animal excrement in a bin; and persons must not leave food for animals in a public place.
- General Local Law Animal Management on Private Land – Darebin Council requires permits where the number of animals exceeds the allowed amounts; and defines nuisance and neighbourhood amenity (regarding animals).

- General Local Law Responsible Breeding of Animals – Darebin Council has requirements for sale or donation of animals.

Compliance Activities:

- Enforcement using infringement notices and, where required, court prosecution
- Officer visits to properties of non-renewed pet registrations
- Follow up of notifications from pet welfare agencies of claimed or rehoused pets which are sold within the municipality
- Provision of cat traps to complainants in cases where education and advice has failed to prevent cat trespass
- Where unregistered and unidentified dogs or cats are found wandering, collect and send to Council’s pound
- Complaint investigation
- Patrols of dog parks, including off-leash parks, fenced dog parks and nearby streets to remind owners of their responsibilities, and where required, issue infringement notices, maintenance of the holding facility at Council’s Operations Centre in Reservoir

4 PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

The presence of dogs and cats in the community can lead to issues such as impacting wildlife populations as well as people and their pets. The welfare of dogs and cats is also compromised if they find themselves stray, semi-owned or unowned. In particular, the overpopulation of cats within the community leads to challenges with high rates of euthanasia due to a large volume of cats and unmatched rehoming rates.

During the community engagement program, the community and key stakeholders wanted euthanasia to be a very last resort in untreatable cases, as well as a desire to explore mandatory desexing to address overpopulation issues. The population and euthanasia rates are demonstrated in Table 4.

There has been a 35% decrease in the number of dogs impounded from 2019/20 to 2020/21. During the same period a 3% increase in the number of dogs reclaimed from the shelter can be seen, as well as 7% increase in the number rehomed and a slight decrease in dogs euthanised (3%)

4.1 Context and Current Situation

Table 4: Numbers of cats and dogs impounded and subsequent outcomes

	2017/2018 **	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Dogs				
Impounded	311	458	346	223
Reclaimed from shelter	215	328	227	153
Euthanasia	10	29	24	12

Rehomed	62	77	60	40
Cats				
Impounded	687	747	748	532
Reclaimed from shelter	38	56	61	60
Euthanasia	108	222	208	145
Rehomed	157	429	499	244

** Data from October 2017- June 2018

There has been a 28% decrease in the number of cats impounded between 2019/20 and 2020/21, and a 21% decrease in the number of cats rehomed. A total of 27% of impounded cats were euthanased in 2020/21.

Animals that are not reclaimed are offered for rehoming if they meet temperament and health requirements. Animals may be euthanased if they have an untreatable condition. City of Darebin's current educational and promotional activities include:

- Offering free initial registration for animals rehomed from animal rescue organisations in the Municipality.
- Providing a 33% discount desexing voucher for pet owners with a concession or pension card
- Deploying a mobile desexing van and engaging with local vet clinics to provide low cost desexing for cats
- Distributing relevant information to residents in areas where issues are identified
- Charging owners of animals that are not desexed a full registration fee. This is intended to provide a further incentive for owners to desex their pets.

4.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws:

- General Local Law Animal Management in Public Places - Darebin Council requires persons with the care and control of animals to collect and properly dispose of animal excrement in a bin; and persons must not leave food for animals in a public place.
- General Local Law Animal Management on Private Land - Darebin Council requires permits where the number of animals exceeds the allowed amounts; and defines nuisance and neighbourhood amenity (regarding animals).
- General Local Law Responsible Breeding of Animals - Darebin Council has requirements for sale or donation of animals.

Compliance Activities

- Investigation of reports of animal hoarding
- Enforcement of registration, microchipping and tag-wearing requirements
- Issuing infringement notices for cats and dogs found at large

5 REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Registration and the requirement to be microchipped is a legislative requirement which provides Council with an understanding of the level of pet ownership and allows for the development of relevant services and programs. It also assists in the safe and quick return of any lost cats and dogs to their owners.

Key suggestions were provided on registration and identification through the community engagement program; around ensuring the registration process is easy and there is help available, increasing education on the benefits of registration and providing cost incentives.

5.1 Context and Current Situation

There are currently 10,980 registered dogs and 5,272 registered cats in Darebin. It is difficult to capture data on the actual ownership population of animals, as we know that not all cats and dogs are registered. There has been a slight decrease in the number of dogs (2%) and cats (5%) registered in the City of Darebin 2020/21.

Darebin implemented software to enable residents to apply to register their animals online in 2016 as well as residents being able to receive their renewals by email and renew online.

Table 5: Registration and microchipping numbers of cats and dogs

	Dogs	Cats
Registration Numbers	10,980	5,272
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New ● Renewal 	1,848 9,132	970 4,302
Offenses/prosecutions for unregistered animals Not pursued during 2020/2021 due to COVID-19 lockdowns and hardships faced by community	1 (first notice only)	N/A

Darebin provides the following educational and community awareness activities:

- Providing half price registrations for new applicants from 10 October each year until 9 April.
- Following up registrations for cats and dogs purchased from pet shops and shelters
- Utilising microchip scanners on patrols
- Providing first year free registrations for animals rehomed from animal rescue organisations
- Providing promotional material and reminders via: postal mail; text messaging; officers on patrol; corporate communications such as the Darebin Community News, local newspapers and 'Messages on Hold'; website; Customer Service Centres
- Requiring all domestic animal businesses to carry registration application forms

5.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws:

- General Local Law Responsible Breeding of Animals - Darebin Council has requirements for sale or donation of animals.

Policies and Procedures:

- Application for registration and renewal of registration of cats and dogs.
- Procedure for seizing and impounding unregistered and/or unidentified cats and dogs.
- Process for issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution.

- Process for yearly follow-ups on unpaid renewals.

Compliance Activities:

- Regular park patrols, including random checks of registration and tag details
- Use of microchip scanners on patrols
- Issuing a registration renewal notice in advance of the due date each year
- A reminder text followed by a reminder notice for unpaid registrations after this date
- A final notice. If the final notice is not paid within the allotted time and the pet owner still resides at the address, infringement notices may be issued

6 NUISANCE

Community feedback demonstrated key nuisance themes, particularly relating to barking dogs, cat and dog waste, cat and dog impacts on wildlife, issues with dogs in open space and cats out at night. Council has a role in protecting the community from unnecessary nuisance from cats and dogs through their services and community education.

6.1 Context and Current situation

The data in Table 6 illustrates the number of contacts received by Council from customers in relation to nuisance caused by cats and dogs. While complaints to Council about barking dogs, cat and dog collection, dog roaming have all declined in 2020/21, dog attacks on person and animal have increased in that time. It could be surmised that the increase in residents working from home has had a positive impact on cats and dogs while owners are at home during the day. The increase in dog attacks could be explained by the fact more residents are walking their dogs in the parks and encountering other dogs, contributing to an increase in incidents in the past year.

Table 6: Cat and dog complaints to Council from 2018/19 to 2020/21

Nature of Complaint	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Barking dogs	100	88	56
Cat collection and afterhours (AH)	435 (+40 AH)	371 (+49 AH)	299 (+49 AH)
Dog collection and afterhours (AH)	315 (+181 AH)	265 (+173 AH)	160 (+137 AH)
Roaming dog report and afterhours (AH)	179 (+43 AH)	146 (+49 AH)	105 (+41 AH)
Other animal collection	48	47	33
Cat nuisance requests	255	238	232
Dog attacks on person	62	40	49
Dog attack on animal	70	61	97
Aggressive dog (scare/rush/chase)	70	78	72
Other animal complaints (includes unregistered dog/cat, defecating, off-leash in park/reserve, roosters/birds, other animal)	306	317	458

scares and excessive animals)			
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City of Darebin’s current educational and promotional activities include:

- Providing information and advice on methods for resolving nuisance in the community
- Encouraging complainants to speak to the owner of the animal causing the nuisance directly and as early as possible
- Providing a barking dog diary and noise nuisance complaint form
- Providing cat cages where cat nuisance issued cannot be solved by other methods

At the 17 August 2020 Council Meeting Darebin Council made the decision to formally adopt a night-time cat curfew (7pm - 7am), which came into effect from 1 January 2021. During community consultation for the 2022-2025 Domestic Animal Management Plan, residents were asked to provide feedback regarding any observed impact of the cat curfew responding to the open question ‘Have you noticed any changes in your neighbourhood since the night-time curfew was introduced in January this year?’

Just over half of the respondents said they had not noticed any changes (56 respondents, 55%). There was mixed feedback about the observed changes with 22% reporting that the cat curfew was not effective as cats were still roaming at night, and 16% reporting that there had been positive changes with fewer cats out at night. A small number of survey respondents said that they didn’t know the curfew existed, or that there were negative impacts of the curfew.

6.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders:

The Act requires all domestic animal businesses to notify Council within seven days of selling an animal. This information could be used to follow up animal registration and to refer new pet owners to Council’s information and services.

Local Laws:

- General Local Law Animal Management in Public Places - Darebin Council requires persons with the care and control of animals to collect and properly dispose of animal excrement in a bin; and persons must not leave food for animals in a public place.
- General Local Law Animal Management on Private Land - Darebin Council requires permits where the number of animals exceeds the allowed amounts; and defines nuisance and neighbourhood amenity (regarding animals).

Compliance Activities

The Animal Management team currently responds to complaints by undertaking investigation, community education, infringement and, when necessary, prosecution services.

Council’s Local Law Officers patrol on and off-leash areas in parks and nearby streets daily, including weekends and evenings during daylight savings. They provide education and enforcement of local laws to reduce the incidence of animal nuisance and dog attacks.

7 DOG ATTACKS

Dog attacks against people and other animals, unfortunately, do occur in the local area. Community feedback indicated public dog parks are an area of concern and owner behaviours and understanding of responsibilities needs to be addressed.

7.1 Context and Current Situation

During 2020/2021 Council received 310 dog attack complaints, with 97 of these attacks on animals, 49 attacks on people and 146 not specified. Two of these complaints led to prosecutions. There are currently 15 declared menacing dogs in the City of Darebin. During 2020/21 there has been a 37% increase in complaints and incidents regarding dog attacks in Darebin, particularly in the dog attack on animal category. This increase can be associated with Covid-19 lockdowns, leading to increased physical activity of people and their dogs. Council published a series of social media posts regarding dog owner responsibilities, having effective control over dogs in public places and dog attacks in the second half of 2020 as a result of this increase, however there is more to be done in this space regarding community education, awareness and training.

Table 7: Dog attacks in City of Darebin

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Dog attacks on animal	73	70	61	97
Dog attacks on person	52	62	40	49

Current activities undertaken by Council to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals include:

- Providing community education about dangerous/restricted breed dogs and containment of dogs (fact sheets, online)
- Conducting proactive park and street patrols
- Contacting dog owners to provide information or follow-up
- Inspecting properties where dangerous and restricted breed dogs reside
- Responding promptly to complaints about dog attacks
- Visiting schools to educate children about responsible pet ownership
- Investigating dog attack reports and taking an appropriate course of action

7.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws:

- General Local Law Animal Management in Public Places - Darebin Council requires persons with the care and control of animals to collect and properly dispose of animal excrement in a bin; and persons must not leave food for animals in a public place.
- General Local Law Animal Management on Private Land - Darebin Council requires permits where the number of animals exceeds the allowed amounts; and defines nuisance and neighbourhood amenity (regarding animals).
- General Local Law Responsible Breeding of Animals - Darebin Council has requirements for sale or donation of animals.

Policies and Procedures:

- Destruction of Dangerous Dogs Policy 2014.

Compliance Activities:

Council is responsible for the investigation of dog attack and incident reports. If the investigation provides evidence of an attack, possible courses of action Council may take include:

- Infringements (where non-serious injuries sustained)
- Menacing/Dangerous Dog Declaration
- Prosecution in Magistrates' Court
- Seek destruction/compensation orders by Magistrate

- Seek mediation between parties for resolution of medical and/or veterinary costs
- No action

These actions are dependent on identification of an owner of the offending dog. Owners cannot always be identified and located depending on where an incident has occurred and whether they have provided their information for follow-up.

8 DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

The community's understanding of what constitutes a dangerous or restricted dog may not broadly align with the classifications as per the Act, however it was clear from the community engagement program that there was some community concern about dangerous dogs in the community (particularly at off-leash dog parks) and poor management by owners.

8.1 Context and Current Situation

The City of Darebin currently has 23 declared dogs as shown in Table 8. This is an increase since 2016/17 where there were seven dogs registered as either dangerous, restricted breed or menacing.

Table 8: Declared dogs in the City of Darebin

Information	Number
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dogs declared dangerous ● Dogs declared menacing ● Restricted breed dogs ● Guard dogs ● Total 	<p>0 15 0 8 23</p>
Complaints received re: dangerous dogs	310
Courts cases re: dangerous dogs	0
Prosecutions re: dangerous dogs	0
Audits conducted re: dangerous dogs	10

City of Darebin's current education/promotion activities include:

- Providing fact sheets and Animal Welfare Victoria brochures on dangerous/restricted breed dogs;
- Implementing educational activities at local events; and
- Providing information via the Council website, social media and traditional media.

8.2 Our Current Policies and Procedures

City of Darebin's registration application and renewal forms require all owners to declare if their dog is a restricted breed, has been declared menacing or is a dangerous dog as required by the Act.

Compliance Activities:

- Annual and unscheduled inspections of properties housing declared dangerous, restricted-breed and menacing dogs
- Patrols by Officers of all areas and parks to monitor dog behaviour
- Maintenance of data on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry

- Investigation of reports of restricted breed dogs.

9 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

All Domestic Animal Businesses must register with their local council. Under current legislation (Domestic Animals Act 1994), local council has the authority to:

- refuse registration of a business if they fail to comply with the legislation and relevant code of practice
- set special conditions on the registration of any Domestic Animal Business.

9.1 Context and Current situation

There are ten registered Domestic Animal Businesses within the City of Darebin, comprising: four pet shops; five dog training establishments; and one boarding establishment. Table 9 provides additional information about the Domestic Animal Businesses.

Table 9: Domestic Animal Businesses in Darebin

Domestic Animal Business Statistics	Number
Registered Domestic Animal Businesses	10
Identified non-registered Domestic Animal Businesses	0
Complaints regarding Domestic Animal Businesses	0
Prosecutions related to Domestic Animal Businesses	0
Notices to comply related to Domestic Animal Businesses	0

Current educational, promotional and compliance activities include:

- Providing all Domestic Animal Businesses with the relevant Code of Practice;
- Providing Animal Welfare Victoria fact sheets on Domestic Animal Businesses to registered businesses.
- Registering all Domestic Animal Businesses;
- Conducting annual audits of each Domestic Animal Business
- Follow up any non-compliance as required;
- Regular patrols for new/non-registered Domestic Animal Businesses.

9.2 Our Current Policies and Procedures

- Darebin's new Council Plan 2021-2025 (incorporating Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan) was endorsed 28th June 2021 (final document not yet available).

10 EPPING ANIMAL WELFARE FACILITY

10.1 Context and Current Situation

The Epping Animal Welfare Facility (EAWF) was funded by Whittlesea, Darebin and Moreland Councils and opened in October 2017. The operation of the EAWF is currently managed by RSPCA Victoria.

Impounded cats and dogs are housed at the EAWF and kept for the statutory period, during which time the RSPCA is required to make every effort to reunite the animal with its owner. RSPCA is contracted to provide pound management services on behalf of Council at the EAWF.

During the key stakeholder interviews there were concerns raised regarding the current practices at the EAWF in terms of re-homing animals and euthanasia. There were suggestions to improve partnerships with community rescue organisations to improve outcomes for animals.

10.2 Our Current Policies and Procedures

The EAWF is operated by an external service provider who is bound by Council policies and procedures with respect to the management of animals impounded to the EAWF inclusive of Darebin's position to rehome all treatable animals.

11 BIODIVERSITY

Council has set strong strategic direction in a range of strategies including its Council Plan and Open Space Strategy to protect and enhance local biodiversity, including local flora and fauna.

To achieve this direction the Domestic Animal Management Plan includes an objective to *“contribute to protect local biodiversity including wildlife through Council's animal management functions”*

11.1 Context and Current Situation

There are three main ways that Animal Management can impact local biodiversity which are hunting by cats, dog poo or plastic poo bags polluting creeks, or damage of sensitive creek or bush areas by dogs.

Domestic, uncontrolled and feral cats can all have a significant impact on fauna and have been shown to kill many birds and reptiles, whether hungry or not. Cats are particularly active at dawn, dusk and night. Currently there is not locally specific data about the impact of cats on local biodiversity. There is research at a wider level including a recent CSIRO study into the [Impact of Cats on Australian Wildlife](#) and a book published in 2019 titled [Cats in Australia: Companion and Killer](#), which provides comprehensive documentation of the impacts of cats on Australia's biodiversity.

Dogs poo in public places, when incorrectly disposed of, contributes to pollution of local creeks and Port Philip bay with detrimental impacts on local wildlife as well creating risk to human health at sometimes of the year. Specific local data is not available about this, however Melbourne water reports e-coli levels in waterways which indicates to some degree the contribution of dog faeces. Dog poo is not the only source of e-coli in waterways.

There is also a risk that dogs can damage sensitive creek fauna or flora by swimming or playing in these areas.

11.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

In the last Council Term, council made a significant change to improve biodiversity protection by introducing a cat curfew from 7pm to 7am. Several core animal management functions also play important roles in protecting biodiversity including:

- Registration of animals
- Education on responsible pet ownership
- Defined off-leash areas and park patrols by animal management officers
- Provision of bins in parks
- Stray cat trapping functions

Current Orders

- Council has established a cat curfew from 7pm at night to 7am in the morning that requires cats to be contained inside.
- Designated off-leash areas have been established.

Local Laws:

- General Local Law Responsible Breeding of Animals - Darebin Council has requirements for sale or donation of animals.

Policies and Procedures:

- Procedure for seizing and impounding unregistered and/or unidentified cats and dogs.
- Process for issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution.

Compliance Activities:

- Cat trapping service
- Proactive park patrols in open spaces including enforcement of unregistered animals and dogs off leashes in leashed areas.

Infrastructure and management activities

- Rubbish bins provided in Council's open space network to make disposal of dog poo easier for residents.
- Dog waste collection bags provided in some parks to make disposal of dog poo easier for residents.

11.3 - Exclusions

Council has been asked to consider whether to pilot or advocate for Trap Neuter and Release programs for cat management. This plan does not include these types of programs and this is after this was specifically considered. The main reason that these are not planned by Council is because of detrimental impact on both biodiversity and the welfare of cats in these programs themselves. State and Federal governments have reviewed the evidence about whether their programs work and found that they don't improve biodiversity outcomes.

12 COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Council has set strong strategic direction in a range of strategies including its Council Plan which is also its Health and Wellbeing Plan to support community wellbeing.

To achieve this direction the Domestic Animal Management Plan includes an objective to *“Support community wellbeing by enabling people to access companion animals and the benefits for physical wellbeing, social connection and companionship”*

12.1 Context and Current Situation

There are three main ways that Animal Management can support community wellbeing by enabling people to access companion animals.

Dogs can help people stay physically active which can improve both physical and mental health outcomes. They can also help build social connections through dog walking and improve inclusion and reduce risk of isolation.

Many types of animals can provide companionship and improve mental health and reduce risk of isolation.

Many people in our community also contribute to animal welfare as volunteers with rescue groups or welfare agencies such as the Lost Dog's Home or RSPCA and contributing as a volunteer is also known to bring community health and wellbeing benefits.

12.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

In the last Council Term, registration of animals increased significantly, suggesting more residents have companion animals. Registration was also made easier through increase animals coming from rescue networks where animals are not released until registered. Several core animal management functions also play important roles in enabling wellbeing outcomes:

- Defined off-leash areas that enable dogs to interact and owners to socially interact.
- Education on responsible pet ownership, which helps support friendly interactions
- Programs to help those in hardship care for animals including:
 - Desexing vouchers
 - Reduced fee registration
 - Emergency boarding in crisis scenarios
 - Reduced microchipping and vaccinations
 - Linking residents with animal support agencies
- Operation of foster and volunteer networks as part of rehoming lost or stray animals

Current Orders

- Designated off-leash areas have been established that allow for social engagement of animals and people.

Compliance Activities:

- Proactive park patrols to ensure responsible dog behaviour
- Notices and Infringements for dogs off leash in leashed areas.

Infrastructure and management activities

- Council has been undertaking a mid-term review of its pound management contract to ensure that that rehoming of animals is maximised that aids with people receiving companion animals for wellbeing.
- Council has established relationships with several community rescue groups to support rehoming of animals.

13 INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING SERVICE FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITY

Council has set strong strategic direction in a range of strategies including Council Plan and Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

To achieve this direction the Domestic Animal Management Plan includes an objective to *“Ensure that this community function of Council is run in an inclusive and accessible way”*

13.1 Context and Current Situation

There are three main ways that the Animal Management function can contribute to community inclusion and support our diverse community.

Communicating in a friendly and welcoming way with community members can help community inclusion. Council's animal management team currently has a range of speakers of other languages in the team which cover the following community languages: Arabic, Punjabi, Mandarin and Afrikaans. Council officers also use translators if needed in communicating with staff. Responsible pet ownership information on council's website is also offered translated online.

A key consideration for staff that undertake patrols and onsite community education and enforcement is contributing to community safety in public spaces. Patrols in and of themselves contribute to safety by improving responsible dog ownership. Enforcement staff are trained specifically in how to deal with difficult circumstances and to deescalate if needed.

13.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

In the last Council Term, there has been a significant improvement to enable translation of all Council's web based information into community languages. Many of council's core functions play a key role in creating an inclusive service:

- Park patrols can help community feel safe and welcome in public spaces
- Customer service via the phone and in person on registration and other matters can help community feel connected
- Providing translation services, speaking in community's preferred languages and providing materials in multiple community languages can also help community feel welcome and include

Local Laws:

- General Local Law Responsible Breeding of Animals - Darebin Council has requirements for sale or donation of animals.
- The rights of assistant animal users are covered under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992

14 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

In line with the Domestic Animals Act, Council must review its DAMP annually and amend the plan, as needed. The following activities outline how the Council will meet these requirements.

14.1 Our Plan

Table 10 shows the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 11 Objective 1.

Table 10: Activities under Section 11 Objective 1

Objective 1: Comply with Section 68A(3)		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan.	Commencement and as required if amendments	Copy provided to Secretary
Review the Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.	Annually	Plan reviewed annually
Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in Council's Annual Report.	Annually	Evaluation report published
Council will undertake a major review of the plan after four years.	2025	Major review undertaken

15 ACTIVITIES & ACTIONS

15.1 ANNUAL ACTIONS – 2022-2025

ANNUALLY – 2022-2025	
TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS	
Objective 1: Ensure animal management officers have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role	
Activity	Evaluation
Maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training.	Review of training register
Review induction process for new staff	Reviewed induction process
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to develop and deliver an annual Animal Management Team Development Day.	Number of Animal Management Team Development Days delivered
PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION	
Objective 1: Increase education, knowledge and support of the cat curfew.	
Activity	Evaluation
Audit the amount of cat cages available to residents and see if supply is sufficient to meet need	Total volume of open service requests
Objective 2: Promote responsible cat and dog ownership	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with local dog training businesses to encourage puppy/dog training and behaviour correction.	Number of participants
Include Information with registration renewals including responsible pet ownership information.	Reach of information provided
Host two meet your local law officer time slots in various dog parks around the Municipality.	Number of participants
PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA	

Objective 1: To decrease the number of strays, abandoned and unwanted cats.	
Activity	Evaluation
Operate a desexing voucher or booking system through Epping Animal Welfare Facility and local vet clinics in partnership with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea.	Number of animals desexed Number of clinics
Identify and report illegally operating breeding establishments in the municipality, assisting with Victoria Police, RSPCA, Microchip database and Animal Welfare Victoria.	Number of investigations Number of establishments closed as a result of reporting
Objective 2: To minimise the number of animals euthanised.	
Activity	Evaluation
Establish partnerships between EAWF and rescue groups through 84Y agreements.	Increase in number partnerships Increase in number of animals transferred to rescue groups Monitoring to data on the outcomes for animals managed via EAWF and via rescue groups in relation to Council's goal that all treatable animals are rehomed
REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION	
Objective 1: Ensure all eligible cat and dogs are registered	
Activity	Evaluation
Conduct phone, email or social media engagement with pet owners who have not re-registered their pets.	Number of owners contacted Number of pets registered through contacts
Partner with vets and key stakeholders to provide information to the community on the benefits of registration and microchipping.	Number of stakeholders engaged
Promote registration discounts and concessions available for desexing and microchipping animals.	Number of discounted registrations
NUISANCE	
Objective 1: Reduce the number of instances of dog faeces being deposited in public space	
Activity	Evaluation
When parks are created or renewed, provision of bins will be considered to make responsible dog poo management easier for residents. Refer also to Promotions objective 2, which supports this objective.	Number of bins available in parks
DOG ATTACKS	
Objective 1: Decrease the number of reported dog attacks in the community	
Activity	Evaluation

Provide proactive and visible patrols at dog off-led parks and along Council borders	Number of patrols at off-lead parks Number of official warnings/infringements issued
Sharing enforcement briefs/animal management plans for best practice with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea.	Resources shared
Encourage community to choose the right type of dog for their lifestyle and to minimise risk of aggression	Reach of promotions
Objective 2: Increase community awareness of how to report dog attacks	
Activity	Evaluation
Council to provide dog attack information to vets to pass on to clients whose pets are dog attack victims	Material developed and provided to all local vet clinics
DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS	
Objective 1: Identify and register all declared dogs in Darebin	
Activity	Evaluation
Cross-reference microchip database, Central Animal Records (CAR) information with current Council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs.	Number of dogs identified
Ensure all declared dogs are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) and the VDDR is kept up to date	Number of dogs recorded v Number of dogs declared
Objective 2: Ensure all declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations	
Activity	Evaluation
Conduct random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance	Number of random property checks
DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES	
Objective 1: Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality	
Activity	Evaluation
Review all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality and determine their registration status.	Number of DABS registered (100%)
Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DAB's	
Activity	Evaluation
Conduct annual audits of all Domestic Animal Businesses within Darebin.	Number of audits conducted (100%)
Where required, act promptly to address matters of noncompliance.	Number of reports investigated (100%)
Investigate and act upon public complaints about Domestic Animal Businesses.	Number of reports investigated (100%)
EPPING ANIMAL WELFARE FACILITY	
Objective 1: Review the operation of the EAWF to ensure it is achieving best practice	
Activity	Evaluation

Undertake mid-term review of the 10-year contract with RSPCA for the Epping Animal Welfare Facility	Review completed
BIODIVERSITY	
Objective 1: Reduce Domestic Animal Impact to Native Flora and Fauna	
Activity	Evaluation
Continue to deliver councils core animal management functions that protect biodiversity including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration of animals Managing off-leash areas and park patrols by animal management officers Provision of bins in parks Stray cat trapping functions Improvements in sensitive creek areas to minimise impact of dogs 	Stray cat reports from community (as an indicator of the number of strays) Stray cats trapped Number of bins available in parks Number of park patrols completed For any park improvement projects in sensitive creek land areas completed in the financial year, improvements reduce risk of dogs damaging area.
Responsible pet ownership education activities will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping cats in at curfew Responsibilities regarding dog poo Requirement to register cats 	Number of people reached through education program Number of reports of animals out after curfew
When parks are created or renewed, provision of bins will be considered to make responsible dog poo management easier for residents.	Number of bins available in parks
COMMUNITY WELLBEING	
Objective 1: Support Residents to Engage and Maintain Pet Ownership	
Activity	Evaluation
Increase the involvement of volunteers in animal fostering as part of the rehoming of animals in Darebin.	Number of animals fostered by volunteers Number of 84Y agreements with volunteer agencies
Supporting people in hardship to reduce barriers to companion animals including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desexing vouchers Reduced fee registration Emergency boarding in crisis scenarios Reduced cost of microchipping and vaccinations Linking residents with animal support agencies 	Number of vouchers Number of reduced fee registrations Number of emergency boarding
INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING SERVICE FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITY	
Objective 1: Increase access to information in community's preferred language	
Activity	Evaluation
Continue to seek officers with languages other than English during recruitment for customer facing animal management roles	Languages spoken by team
ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING	

Objective 1: Comply with Section 68A(3) of Domestic Animals Act 1994	
Activity	Evaluation
Provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan.	Copy provided to Secretary
Review the Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan.	Plan reviewed annually
Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in Council's Annual Report.	Evaluation report published

15.2 YEAR ONE – 2022

YEAR ONE - 2022	
PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION	
Objective 2: Promote responsible cat and dog ownership	
Activity	Evaluation
<p>Undertake a review of available data to gain a greater understanding of areas within in the municipality that have higher levels of reports of anti-social behaviour from animals and owners and dog attacks.</p> <p>Utilise this data to create targeted promotions and education campaign to assist with responsible pet ownership including consideration of CALD groups.</p> <p>Messaging should cover: The need for dogs to be socialised and receive training Requirement for cats to remain in owner property boundaries The importance of picking up after dogs</p>	<p>Reach of targeted promotions campaigns including: Social media reach Direct communications reach</p> <p>Reduction in reports of anti-social behaviour from dogs (per 100 registered dogs)</p> <p>Reduction in complains</p>
Conduct a social media campaign to highlight the need for dogs to be socialised and receive training	<p>Number of posts</p> <p>Social media reach</p>
Develop a dog off-leash process/procedure	Process completion
PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA	
Objective 1: To decrease the number of strays, abandoned and unwanted cats.	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to seek partnership/funding to conduct a mobile desexing program.	Number of animals desexed
REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION	
Objective 1: Ensure all eligible cat and dogs are registered	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to provide information on registration and microchipping in multiple languages.	Number of translated resources provided

Partner with vets and key stakeholders to provide information to the community on the benefits of registration and microchipping. Consider microchipping discount scheme.	Number of stakeholders engaged Consideration of microchip discount
DOG ATTACKS	
Objective 1: Decrease the number of reported dog attacks in the community	
Activity	Evaluation
Provide education to the community regarding choosing the right type of dog for them	Number of education materials developed Reach of promotion
Review Destruction of Dangerous Dogs Policy 2014	Completion of review
Objective 2: Ensure all declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to develop a consistent approach to declarations using the same point scoring matrix – in conjunction with review of Destruction of Dangerous Dogs Policy	Approach developed
EPPING ANIMAL WELFARE FACILITY	
Objective 1: Review the operation of the EAWF to ensure it is achieving best practice	
Activity	Evaluation
Undertake mid-term milestone review of the 10-year contract with RSPCA for the Epping Animal Welfare Facility	Review completed Number of recommendations developed and implemented
INCLUSIVE AND WELCOMING SERVICE FOR DIVERSE COMMUNITY	
Objective 1: Increase access to information in community's preferred language	
Activity	Evaluation
Translate responsible pet ownership brochure into 12 community languages and make it available online.	Translations completed and online
Audit animal management forms to check that they are inclusive regarding any information required related to gender or culture, and make any adjustments needed	Forms updated

15.3 YEAR TWO – 2023

YEAR TWO - 2023	
PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION	
Objective 1: Increase education, knowledge and support of the cat curfew.	
Activity	Evaluation
Run a campaign promoting the benefits and requirements of	

the cat curfew including: - Information with registration renewals - Website review - Social media posts	Number of promotions
Objective 2: Promote responsible cat and dog ownership	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore the potential for webinars/educational videos to share information on responsible pet ownership topics through partnerships with Moreland and Whittlesea as well as vets, Wildlife Victoria, Rescues and Shelters.	Development of videos Distribution of videos
Conduct a campaign on social media about picking up after your dog, in parks and footpaths	Number of posts Social media reach Complaint numbers
Promote the requirement for cats to remain within owner property boundary: - Website review - Social media posts	Number of promotions Social media reach
PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA	
Objective 1: To decrease the number of strays, abandoned and unwanted cats.	
Activity	Evaluation
Establish partnerships between EAWF and rescue groups through 84Y agreements.	Increase in number partnerships Increase in number of animals transferred to rescue groups
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to advocate to the State government for grants and State-wide desexing programs.	Number of advocacy actions/grants received
Promote the benefits of obtaining a pet from an animal shelter or rescue group	Number of materials developed and disseminated Number of promotions
Objective 2: To minimise the number of animals euthanised	
Partner with Moreland City Council, City of Whittlesea, EAWF and animal rescue groups to provide a neonatal program.	Number of kittens referred to program
NUISANCE	
Objective 1: Reduce the number of nuisance complaints that arise in the Municipality	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore running Council-run dog training through a procurement process	Number of dog complaints/incidents Number of participants
Provide information about nuisance cats and dogs in animal registration including exercising to reduce barking complaints	Information included in registration renewals
DOG ATTACKS	

Objective 1: Decrease the number of reported dog attacks in the community	
Activity	Evaluation
Educate the community on dog behaviour to help them read dog body language via educational videos, social media	Number of educational materials developed and disseminated
Objective 2: Increase community awareness of how to report dog attacks	
Activity	Evaluation
Conduct an education campaign of what a dog attack is and how to report and potential penalty.	Education campaign developed Number of reports pre and post awareness campaign
EPPING ANIMAL WELFARE FACILITY	
Objective 1: Review the operation of the EAWF to ensure it is achieving best practice	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea in consideration to install bird housing at the EAWF	Installation of bird housing

15.4 YEAR THREE – 2024

YEAR THREE - 2024	
PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION	
Objective 2: Promote responsible cat and dog ownership	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with local dog training businesses to encourage puppy/dog training and behaviour correction.	Number of participants
Conduct a campaign on social media about picking up after your dog, in parks and footpaths	Number of posts Social media reach Complaint numbers
PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA	
Objective 1: To decrease the number of stray, abandoned and unwanted cats.	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to develop a strategy to manage cat hoarding	Strategy developed
REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION	
Objective 1: Ensure all eligible cat and dogs are registered	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore incentive of free registration on adoptions for the first year.	Number of registrations
NUISANCE	
Objective 1: Reduce the number of instances of dog faeces being deposited in public space	
Activity	Evaluation

Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to develop a responsible pet ownership resource regarding dog waste in the community.	Decrease in number of complaints
Objective 3: Make it easier to report animal management issues to Council	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore using external services to manage barking complaints.	Completion of research and conclusion reached
DOG ATTACKS	
Objective 1: Decrease the number of reported dog attacks in the community	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore a procurement panel between Councils for fixed cost prosecutions, sharing outcomes from court and VCAT.	Procurement panel considered and/or developed
DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS	
Objective 2: Ensure all declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to develop a standard operating procedure for checking property compliance and what to do if non-compliant	Procedure developed
DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES	
Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DAB's	
Activity	Evaluation
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to review current audit templates. Consideration of using same template across all Councils.	Templates reviewed Template updated
EPPING ANIMAL WELFARE FACILITY	
Objective 1: Review the operation of the EAWF to ensure it is achieving best practice	
Activity	Evaluation
Review rescue program	Review completed Number of recommendations developed and implemented
Review the foster and volunteer programs provided	Track number registered foster carers and volunteers Number animals rehomed or fostered

15.5 YEAR FOUR – 2025

YEAR FOUR - 2025	
PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION	
Objective 1: Increase education, knowledge and support of the cat curfew.	
Activity	Evaluation
Run a further social media campaign to educate the community about the cat curfew.	Campaign reach Reduction in number cats collected from cages Number of nuisance cat reports
PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA	
Objective 1: To decrease the number of stray, abandoned and unwanted cats.	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore benefit of introducing mandatory desexing for cats and present findings to Council	Number of recommendations
NUISANCE	
Objective 3: Make it easier to report animal management issues to Council	
Activity	Evaluation
Explore using external services to manage barking complaints.	Completion of research and conclusion reached
Partner with Moreland City Council and City of Whittlesea to consider the purchase of recording devices to provide independent proof of dog barking	Purchase of device Number of times device used
EPPING ANIMAL WELFARE FACILITY	
Objective 1: Review the operation of the EAWF to ensure it is achieving best practice	
Activity	Evaluation
Review standards for animal housing of poultry and pocket pets	Review of animal housing standards Number recommendations developed and implemented
ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING	
Objective 1: Comply with Section 68A(3)	
Activity	Evaluation
Council will undertake a review of the plan after four years with drafting of 2026-2029	Review undertaken inclusive of community consultation and submission to secretary