



Yarra Ranges Domestic Animal Management Plan

2018-2021



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Term	Definition for the purpose of this document
AIAM	Australian Institute of Animal Management
AMOs	(Council) Animal Management Officers
Authorised Officer	Person authorised by council under section 224 of the Local Government Act to administer/enforce legislation
AVA	Australian Veterinary Association
DAA	Domestic Animals Act, 1994
LGA	Local Government Act
Local Laws/ Orders	Ordinances put in place by council under various Acts of state government
OEC	Outer Eastern Councils (Nillumbik, Knox, Yarra Ranges, Maroondah) that collected information as part of their DAMP research
Pet Survey	Yarra Ranges Pet Survey 2017
POCTA legislation	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals legislation
RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
YRC/Council	Yarra Ranges Shire Council





What We Want to Achieve

A community where pets are valued and treated humanely; and live in harmony with people, other animals, and the environment.

The principles that guide how we go about providing our service:

- we support and value the role of pets in the community
- we recognise that pets are considered 'members' of most families and include species of animals other than cats and dogs
- pet owners have a responsibility to care for and protect their pets and to ensure they do not adversely impact on other pets, people or the environment
- we aim to be proactive in addressing service issues and priorities, but recognise this will require community and council to work closely together
- we have a primary service responsibility to ensure residents comply with council policy and state government legislation relating to pets
- we need the community to work with us to address issues that might arise, particularly in relation to pets in crisis situations
- we recognise that some of the issues we need to address are complex and their solutions may stir opposing points of view
- we believe that the way we treat our animals is a reflection of us as a community.

1 Background information

1.1 What is the purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan?

The purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is to provide council with a framework for identifying and addressing matters associated with the management and wellbeing of cats and dogs over the next four years.

It identifies animal management compliance and education initiatives carried out by council and new initiatives identified to address emerging issues. It also identifies opportunities for community and council partnerships to tackle challenges associated with cats and dogs in the community.

State government legislation only requires council to address matters relating to cats and dogs. However, council recognises that residents have many other species of animals residing with them as companion animals, including small mammals, reptiles, horses and other animals such as ducks and chickens that have traditionally been considered only as 'livestock'.

Yarra Ranges is also home to a number of 'working' or 'assistance' dogs, such as farm dogs and dogs that provide support to people with disabilities.

1.2 The Victorian Domestic Animals Act

All councils in Victoria are required to prepare a DAMP in line with the Victorian Domestic Animals Act¹, which specifies a number of matters that council must address as part of the plan. The Act requires council to show how it will address requirements relating to:

- evaluating the effectiveness of their service
- the annual review and amendment of the DAMP where necessary
- the review of policies, local laws and orders
- the training of Authorised Officers
- the encouragement of responsible pet ownership
- minimising the risk of dog attacks

- minimising the incidence of nuisance caused by cats and dogs such as cats trespassing and dogs wandering
- ensuring cats and dogs are registered and identified
- animal welfare including the high euthanasia rates of pets, in particular cats
- the management of animals in times of disasters.

The Yarra Ranges DAMP recognises additional service priorities and opportunities in addition to those listed in state government legislation.²

1.3 Council planning

Council supports an integrated approach to the planning of services relating to pet owners and pets. The DAMP has highlighted a number of issues and opportunities that require a whole-of-council response if they are to be addressed effectively. Findings from the research carried out for the DAMP that are particularly relevant to other service areas relate to:

- domestic violence, and the need to ensure the safety of pets; increase community awareness of the correlation between pet abuse and domestic violence; advocate for resources; and pet friendly family accommodation (family, and aged and disability services)
- supporting pet ownership for elderly residents, including the promotion of support networks such as volunteer dog walking groups, and veterinary transportation assistance (aged and disability services, community development)
- promotion of community networking opportunities for pet owners, in particular for dog owners (community development)
- potential economic benefits that might accrue from pet related tourism (economic development)
- planning for dog owners and dogs in public spaces (open space and recreation services).

An integrated approach to the planning for pets in the community enables council to understand and address pet management and health and wellbeing matters, as well as wider opportunities associated

with pets. It also enables council to identify new and innovative ways to help achieve the vision and objectives in the Council Plan.³

Our Vision for Yarra Ranges

Whether you live here or visit, you will see how much we value our natural beauty, how connected our communities are, and how balanced growth makes this the best place in the world.

¹ Domestic Animals Act, Section 68A, Victorian State Government.

² Refer Section 7

³ Council Plan 2017-21

2 What did we achieve from the 2013-2017 Domestic Animal Management Plan?

The highlights from the 2013-2017 DAMP and service achievement from the last 4 years include:

- the establishment of 4 new off lead parks
- the relocation and fencing of the Kimberley Reserve off lead area
- the introduction of the 24-hour cat curfew in 2014
- new online pet registration facility was introduced, which resulted in a 12% increase in new pet registrations
- a more streamlined process for the reporting of barking dog complaints reduced complaints by 18% between in 2013 and 2017
- the introduction of the 'Return to Owner' practice which, where practical and appropriate, generally means wandering pets are reunited with their owner rather than taken to the pound
- 5 educational You Tube videos on pet related topics were created to inform and help educate the community on pet related issues.

3 What is the focus of the 2018-2021 Domestic Animal Management Plan?

The 2018-2021 DAMP will have a primary focus on ensuring the requirements of the Act and relevant council policies are adhered to, as with previous DAMPS.

The 2018-21 DAMP moves beyond the traditional scope of animal management services to investigate innovation and opportunities to recognise and embrace the real value of pets. This DAMP recognises that pets help us achieve both personal and community health and wellbeing outcomes.

The DAMP also recognises the need to ensure pets are treated humanely, and uniquely it recognises potential economic and tourism opportunities that may be associated with pets.

Actions that particularly highlight innovation in this DAMP relate to the focus on:

- partnership initiatives e.g. with Animal Aid and dog obedience clubs to minimise the incidence of barking dog complaints
- targeted programs and research-based initiatives to address specific animal welfare issues e.g. unowned and abandoned cats



4 Some key statistics and trends

4.1 What Yarra Ranges pet owners told us about their pets

The Pet Survey⁴ suggests that pet owners in Yarra Ranges are particularly captivated by their pets. This is reflected in resident's responses to questions relating to sentiment about pets, and the nearly 100% of survey respondents stating that their pets are an important part of their family.

Of the 79 non-pet owners responding to the survey 7 said they do not have a pet because they dislike animals; or they like animals but do not like to live with them. The lack of a suitable home or finances, and/or not having the time to spend with pets were key deterrents to pet ownership for the majority of non-pet owners (36). Fifteen respondents said they do not own a pet because they get too upset when their pet dies, or that they are concerned about the future of their pet should something happen to them.

4.2 Pet Ownership in Yarra Ranges

Registrations for 2016/17 tell us there are 29,805 dogs and 8,301 cats residing in 64,801 residences within the Yarra Ranges with the largest number of dogs and cats living in Mooroolbark

Table 3 shows that cat and dog registrations have increased by 60.5% and 76.9% respectively in the last 4 years, and compares with a 4.8% increase in the dog population and 5.1% increase in the cat population across the outer east councils in the same period.⁵ This significant increase in pet registrations Yarra Ranges occurred as a result of the introduction of the new online pet registration facility and promotional campaigns that increased the registration of existing pets, rather than new pets taking up residence in the municipality.

Table 1 – What pet owners say about their pets

Pet Survey responses	YR	OEC
Pets are an important part of my family	99%	91%
It is important for me to have a pet in my life	97%	89%
My pets give me great comfort in times of need	94%	83%
My pet is important because they give me unconditional affection	94%	84%
My pet is important because they give me peace of mind	78%	71%

Table 2 – Annual cat and dog registrations 2012-2017

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Dogs	16,851	19,567	23,049	23,379	29,805
Cats	5,172	6,115	7,382	7,654	8,301

4 Yarra Ranges Pet Survey, 2017

5 Data supplied by the Department of Primary Industries)

Table 3 – The type of pets living with respondents to the Pet Survey

Type of pet	No. of respondents
Cats	1,575
Dogs	3,311
Chickens	557
Birds	362
Horses	286
Small mammals – Rabbits (108) guinea pigs (90), rodents (29)	227
Sheep/goats	116
Reptiles - snakes, lizards	100
Ducks	56

Random household surveys undertaken in Yarra Ranges⁶ and other local government areas tells us that there are likely to be many more cats in Yarra

Ranges than are currently on the council registration data base.

Data released in 2016⁷ indicates there could be up to 20 dogs and 16 cats for every 100 people across Australia. For dogs this means it is estimated that there is likely to be approximately 30,449 dogs in Yarra Ranges, which correlates closely with the number of dogs on council's registration database (29,805). For cats, this suggests there could be an additional 16,000 cats in the municipality than are on council's registration database.

Consistent with expectations, Pet Survey respondents own more dogs and cats than any other species of animal. However, survey respondents across the region made it clear through written comments that they have other types of pets that are important to them and that they consider part of their family.

According to Pet Ownership in Australia 2016⁸ fish, birds, small mammals and reptiles are likely to be the most popular pets after cats and dogs. This source cites a 6.5% increase in cat ownership, a 2.8% increase in dog ownership, and a 10.8% increase in ownership of other pets including reptiles and rodents between 2013 and 2016.

The inclusion of horses, sheep, goats and ducks on the Yarra Ranges list of pets is likely as a result of the rural and semi-rural nature of the municipality.



6 Pet Survey, 2017
7 Pet Ownership in Australia in 2016
8 Pet Ownership in Australia 2016, p52

5 What does research say about the benefits of pet ownership?

Research by Animal Medicines Australia⁹ shows that Australians are revealing their close personal relationship with their pets more now than they have in the past.

Newly released research indicates pets are an under-recognised channel for building social capital particularly in terms of building trust, and the exchange of help and support between neighbours and friends. This research also finds that pet owners are more likely than non-pet owners to be involved in civic affairs.¹⁰

Yarra Ranges pet owners confirmed the role pets play in breaking down social barriers, by reporting that they

talk to more people because they have a pet (YR 78% / OEC Av. 73%). They also reported that they, or their family are likely to exercise more because they have a pet (YR 78% / OEC Av. 68%).

The importance of pets is even further reflected by the 81% of Pet Survey respondents who stated that their pets give them a 'strong reason for living' (OEC Av. 74%).

Other research affirms^{11,12} that pets also benefit the economy, particularly in terms of savings to the health and community support sectors. Australians now spend 35% more on their cats and 33% more on their dogs than they did in 2013, a spend of \$12.2 billion in 2016.¹³

Health and wellbeing benefits of pets



- Around 40% of pet owners reported receiving one or more types of social support via people they met through their pet.
- Self-esteem has been shown to be higher in children or adolescents who have a pet.
- People who own pets typically visit the doctor less and on average have lower cholesterol and lower blood pressure.
- Having a companion animal is understood to decrease the likelihood of a heart attack by 3%.
- Companion animals reduces the sense of loneliness in some population groups.

9 Pet Ownership in Australia; 2016; p49
10 The pet connection: Pets as a conduit for social capital? Social Science & Medicine 61 (2005) 1159–1173
11 The Power of Pets: The benefits of companion animal ownership, Australian Companion Animal Council, 2009
12 <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0122085>
13 Pet Ownership in Australia; 2016; p31

6 About Animal Management Services in Yarra Ranges

Animal Management Services are delivered through the Community Safety team, which is part of Council's Social and Economic Development Directorate.

The equivalent of 11 Effective Full Time (EFT) positions are dedicated to delivering animal management services.

The primary focus of the service is on:

- providing support and advice
- enforcing state legislation and council policies relating to cats and dogs
- attending to cats and dogs that have escaped their property, with preference to returning pets to their rightful owner or if required transferring to the Animal Aid shelter in Coldstream.
- management of the cat and dog registration database and the collection of registration fees
- inspections of animal businesses and animals with special registration requirements
- attending to complaints; investigating of incidents; and attending to court proceedings
- responding to animal welfare reports and referral to relevant authorities
- community and promotional events
- overseeing the service partnership and contract with Animal Aid
- encouraging and promoting pet related opportunities and networks
- managing dog off lead areas.

6.1 'Local Laws', 'Orders' and planning scheme requirements

There are a number of laws that residents must comply with if they own or are responsible for the care of animals, or operate animal related businesses. All local laws will be reviewed in 2018.

The following provides a summary of local laws and ordinances relevant to the management of pets:

General Provisions Local Law 2012 – (No 1 of 2012)

- Section 15 Order in Council¹⁴ – The number of animals that can be kept at a property

This local law stipulates that residents, or other as may be applicable, need a permit to keep:

- any more than 2 cats or 2 dogs or a combination of both. Offspring of these animals can be kept on the property for up to 12 weeks (section 15.4)
- a rooster/s and/or wild birds e.g. rooster, goose, turkey, peafowl, cockatoo or galah unless the property is a pet shop (section 15.2)
- a farm animal in a residential area (section 15.3)
- other requirements of the local law:
- animals must be enclosed/sheltered appropriately (sections 15.5 and 15.6)
- feral and stray animals must not be fed
- training activities associated with animals on council land must not interfere with the use of the land (section 15.10).

Section 26 Order in Council (Ref: Council minutes 1/5/17)

This order identifies:

- 23 sites where dogs can be lead free
- 9 sites where dogs are not permitted either on or off lead
- areas where dogs are not permitted, including:
 - ovals/sports fields except with the agreement of a Committee of Management for the purposes of dog obedience training
 - within 20 metres of all fixed playground equipment
 - within 20 metres of all fixed fitness equipment
 - within 20 metres of permanent BBQ or picnic area; and
 - on designated beach areas

- requires dog owners, when in public places to:
 - have effective control over their dog and not let them, threaten, annoy or impact on other dogs and people
 - carry a dog lead
- obey or rules and regulations relevant to off lead areas
- requires cat owners to keep cats securely confined to the owner's property 24 hours.

7 The issues and opportunities we will address over the next four years?

This section provides an overview of the findings from consultation and research carried out for the DAMP, and incorporates findings from other council planning projects. It also provides a summary of new initiatives that will be addressed over the term of the DAMP (2018-2021).

The consolidated Action Plan in section 10 identifies the stakeholders and resources required to implement the action, and the criteria that will be used to evaluate the success of the recommendation.

Ongoing compliance and educational activities that are carried out as standard practice are outlined in Appendix 3.

7.1 Training of 'Authorised Officers' (Rangers) and Service Enhancement

Objectives:

- To ensure staff have the technical and interpersonal skills to manage a service that responds to community expectations and is at the forefront of best practice.
- To ensure council is aware of, and has the flexibility to respond to emerging research and service innovation opportunities.

7.1.1 What the research tells us

There are 11 council staff who are authorised¹⁵ under the Domestic Animals Act to respond to animal management issues. Council is committed to ensuring that staff have the appropriate qualifications and skills to respond service demands by establishing minimum qualification and training requirements.¹⁶

Appendix 3 lists the qualifications of staff and their ongoing training and education schedule.

Council will build on the solid reputation the animal management team has established by consolidating and expanding the skills and expertise.

Pet Survey responses indicate that council's commitment to pets, their care and management is well recognised by pet owners, with 79% of pet owners stating the council understands and recognises the importance and value of pets, and that rangers care about the welfare of pets (85%).

Survey respondents said that:

- Council rangers care about the welfare of pets (85%).
- Council understands and recognises the importance and value of pets (79%).
- Council animal management staff are helpful and courteous (87%).
- Staff at the Animal Aid shelter are polite and helpful (87%).

Ref: Pet Survey respondents who said the matter was relevant to them

¹⁴ A council ordinance that is made under Section 26 of the Victorian State Government DAA

¹⁵ Designated as 'Authorised Officers' in the Domestic Animals Act, sections 71/72

¹⁶ Refer Appendix 3 – Officer training schedule

Council recognises there are a number of pet related issues that are of concern for residents and that expectations can often outweigh council’s capacity to deal with these matters alone. Strategies to deal with these commonly raised issues and complaints are addressed in relevant sections of the DAMP.

“We can’t always achieve it due to circumstances ... but in order to minimise distress for pets and owners we attempt to return a wandering pet directly to its owner rather than take it to the pound.”

- 39% of pet owners were not aware that council tries to return stray pets directly to their owners.

Ref: Pet Survey, 2017

Pet Survey respondents indicated that social media is changing the way people are reuniting lost pets with their owners. Council is supportive of initiatives that reunite pets and owners with minimal distress, however this community based response raises a number of challenging issues for the sector including:

- the inability for council to educate owners and effectively respond when pets frequently stray and are not contained
- pets returned to someone who is not the rightful owner, which has implications for cases of domestic violence
- the risk to people faced with aggressive dogs, or dogs that react aggressively out of fear.

How pet owners try to find their lost pets:

- 44% would contact council.
- 36% would contact the pound.
- 34% would contact the local vet.
- 28% have used social media.

Ref: Pet Survey, 2017

These and similar scenarios can put the pet and well-meaning community members at risk. Thirty per cent of survey respondents agreed that there is the chance that pets may not be returned to their rightful owner if social media was used to reunite pets.

Discussions with peak associations identifies that many pet related problems faced by the local government sector recur because strategies in the past have been too generic and short term. Instead, strategies need to be geographically targeted, and practical so that outcomes can be easily measured. This particularly applies to issues associated with the containment of cats and dogs, the proliferation of stray or semi-owned cats, and neighbourhoods where incessant dog barking occurs.

Given these issues are common in the local government sector, council will consider opportunities to partner with other councils in the region to address common issues.

Multiple easy-to-navigate and appealing communication channels are needed in order to connect with different demographic groups, as traditional channels of communication are not necessarily the most effective.

To this point council’s Animal Management team have a presence on Facebook and are developing ‘how to’ video tutorials on typical animal management issues. Similarly, involvement in events such as the Animal Aid ‘Pets in the Park’ event and special programs, such as discount microchipping days help maintain awareness around pet owner responsibilities.

97% of survey respondents think that the Animal Aid ‘Pet Picnic at Lilydale Lake is a great event.

Ref: Pet Survey, 2017

As a result of these findings the DAMP will have a strong focus on building networks and relationships to address priority issues and opportunities.

7.1.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 4 – Actions – Issues and opportunities

		Year of Plan
1	Continue to review and modify staff training schedules in line with service requirements	Ongoing
2	Ensure all staff have completed CRAF (Common Risk Assessment Framework) or similar training and undertake update training as required	Ongoing
3	Prepare a Communication Plan to optimise the profile of the service and communication with residents, with a particular focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• engaging with residents through social media• ensuring online resources are easy for residents to find e.g. YouTube videos• opportunities to improve the appeal and presentation of pet related information on council web site; and opportunities to use the website to enhance	Yr 1
		Yrs 2-4

7.2 Registration and identification

Objective:

- To increase the number of pets that are registered and microchipped as a proportion of the population.

7.2.1 What the research tells us

In the 2016/17 financial year there were 29,805 dogs and 8,301 cats on council’s pet registration database, an increase of 12,954 dogs and 3,129 cats between 2012/13 and 2016/17.

This represents 20 dogs and 5 cats for every 100 people living in Yarra Ranges. According to Australia wide research actual number of cats is likely to be significantly higher at around 16 cats for every 100 residents.

However, there are factors that may influence the number of cats and dogs that live in a specific locality. These include proximity to bushland and wildlife environments which may deter or restrict pet ownership; the number of solo households and higher housing densities both of which are associated with lower pet ownership rates; and the cost of owning a pet.



These factors aside, it is predicted that pet ownership will increase, even if marginally, over the next 5 years.¹⁷ If the rate of cat and dog registration in Yarra Ranges remains at its current level, by 2036 there could be 28,000 cats and 35,630 dogs residing in the municipality.

17 Pet Ownership in Australia in 2016, p7

Table 5 – Form of identification on cats and dogs on entering the pound

	Incoming	Microchipped	Est. No registered
Cat	497	159	
Kitten	241	7	
	738	166	285
Dog	813	664	
Puppy	24	15	
	837	679	420



- Some key pet registration/pound statistics for 2016/17:
- 72% of registered dogs are desexed compared to 68% in 2012/13
 - 72% of registered cats are desexed compared to 75% in 2012/13
 - desexed cats and dogs as a percentage of cats and dogs registered was at its highest in 2015/16 when 84% of registered dogs and 91% of registered cats were desexed
 - of the 738 cats and kittens admitted to the pound only 166 (23%) were microchipped and an estimated 285 (39%) registered on council's pet database¹⁸
 - of the 837 dogs and puppies admitted to the pound 679 (81%) were microchipped and an estimated 285 (50%) registered on council's pet database.¹⁹

Residents who pay pet registration fees provide council with a greater capacity to deal with these matters even if they, the pet owner does not directly benefit.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and the Victorian Veterinary Association recognises that low registration rates make it difficult for local government to resource programs to address issues and to take a more customer service based approach to the service. As a result, both organisations are looking at strategies to assist local government better promote the benefits of pet registration to the wider community.

Pet Survey respondents indicated their preference for a combined microchip registration and the pet registration process, and 15% of respondents stated that they do not understand the difference between the two.

Council Registration and Microchip registration

- 75% of pet owners told us that the council pet registration and microchip registration database should be combined.
- 15% of pet owners told us they do not understand the difference between the two registration databases.

Ref: Pet Survey, 2017

7.2.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 6 – Actions – Registration and identification

		Year of Plan
4	Advocate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a single industry microchip registration database and• an integrated pet registration and microchip database	Yrs 1-4
5	Investigate industry strategies that have been successful in increasing the level of cat and dog registrations, and identify initiatives that may help increase pet registrations in Yarra Ranges	Yr 1
6	Following relevant research and analysis, implement a new initiative aimed at increasing pet registrations	Yrs 2-3
7	Explore opportunities to streamline/improve the online pet registration process. Also consider opportunities for residents to update pet information online/ directly	Yrs 2-4
8	Ensure that specific locational and incident data is collected and plotted on council's GIS system when animals are taken into custody. This information should include but not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• street location• number of animals in the pick-up e.g. litter of 1 female and four kittens (not '1 litter')• type of identification on animal (micro-chip/registration tag)	Yrs 1-2

7.3 Dealing with nuisance issues

7.3.1 What the research tells us

Objectives:

- To minimise the number of complaints relating to pets, particularly in relation to owners who do not:
 - appropriately control their dogs when they are in public places
 - pick up their dog's droppings and dispose of them appropriately
 - let their dogs off lead in on-lead areas
 - address their dog's constant barking
 - confine their cats as required.
 - develop partnerships and initiatives that target problematic areas and pet owner behaviours.

Council recognises that most pet owners endeavour to manage their pets in line with regulations and polite consideration of other people and pets. However, there are pet owners who, for a variety of reasons, are less responsive to these requirements.

In 2016/17 council received the largest number of formal complaints in relation to dogs wandering at large (611) and cats causing a nuisance (576), an increase of 29%/137 and 143%/339 respectively between 2012/13 and 2016/17. The significant increase in cat complaints, including as a proportion of all complaints, is likely to be a result of the introduction of a 24-hour cat curfew in 2014.

Complaints relating to barking dogs, dog attacks or dogs rushing are the next most significant cause of formal complaint. However, there are fewer complaints relating to these matters in 2016/17 than in 2012/13, and they form smaller percentage of overall complaints than in 2012/13.

18 Based on information provided by Animal Aid, 17/11/17
19 Section 26 Order in Council (Ref: Council minutes 9/6/09)

7.3.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

		Year of Plan
9	Plot (GIS) the occurrence of each type of animal related complaint or incident and analyse data to identify location specific incidents as a basis for location specific remedies	Yr 1 Ongoing
10	<p>Develop a trial program that addresses location specific issues identified from the plotting of animal related complaints.</p> <p>At least 2 of the following should be addressed over the term of the DAMP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dog owners not picking up dog droppings • dogs not confined to their property • cats not confined to their property • dogs off lead in on lead areas • barking dogs 	<p>Yr 1</p> <p>Yrs 2-4</p>
11	Consider engaging animal behaviourists to work with council to target and address issues relating to barking dogs	Yr 2
12	<p>Enlist the support of the community and commercial dog sector and local government sector to help develop strategies that will address issues associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-compliance with on lead regulations • behaviour and control of dogs in public places • owners not picking up their dog's droppings 	Yrs 2-4
13	<p>Enlist the support of the community and commercial cat sector; and local government sector to help develop strategies that will address issues associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stray (including semi-owned, unowned) cats • cats not confined to properties 	Yrs 2-4
14	Review schedule of park patrols and consider opportunity for parks maintenance crews to provide relevant reports/observation	Yr 1
15	Develop an information package for cat owners whose cats are the subject of cat trespass complaints	Yr 3

^ In the past 12 months

Peak associations such as ‘Getting to Zero’ highlight the need to have accurate data on incidents and complaints so that well-informed strategies can be developed to target specific issues and/or locations where they are more prevalent.

21 Research carried out by LMH Consulting for Knox, Maroondah, Nillumbik councils

7.4 Dog attacks

Objectives:

- To reduce the incidence of dog bites (on human, pets and livestock) and rushes.
- To collect GIS data that allows council to develop more effective and targeted initiatives.



7.4.1 What the research tells us

The DAA²² requires council to develop programs and services it will put in place in order to minimise the likelihood of dog attacks. Dog attacks generally occur in the home or where the victim knows the dog. Dog attacks that occur in parkland are more likely to be observed and reported than those that occur in the home, and because they are very public they attract more media attention. As a result, most legislation targets this part of the problem and it is difficult to estimate the extent of the issue and therefore, where to target strategies.

Research shows that children are at least 3 times more likely than other age groups to need medical attention for a dog bite, and that bites to children in the home normally occur when there is no adult supervision.²³

There were 179 incidents of dog attacks reported in 2016/17 representing 10.7% of all complaints, compared to 211 in 2012/13 which represents 15.5% of complaints.

Four percent of respondents to the Pet Survey say that dog attacks are currently an issue for them and 12% say it was an issue for them in the last 12 months.

- In Australia, 73% to 81% of attacks occur in the domestic environment.
- In Baltimore USA dogs that were off lead in a public place were responsible for 13-25% of reported bites.

Ref: AVA, 'Dangerous Dogs – A Sensible Solution', p2

The Australian Veterinary Association (AVA) reports that a dog's tendency to bite is dependent on a number of key interacting factors:

- heredity (genes, breed)
- early experience
- socialising and training
- health (physical and psychological)
- the behaviour of the victim
- gender and age of the dog.²⁴

As with nuisance or risk issues associated with dogs, the plotting of location and other environmental factors may help to identify problem locations or neighbourhoods that can be specifically targeted for action.

Table 9 – Dog attacks and 'rushes' 2012/13 to 2016/17

	2012/13	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Dog attacks	211	189	184	179
Dog rushes	161	127	89	99

22 Victorian Domestic Animals Act, 1994; section 68A(2)(c)(iii)

23 Australian Veterinary Association; 'Dangerous Dogs – A Sensible Solution'

24 Australian Veterinary Association; 'Dangerous Dogs – A Sensible Solution', p2

7.4.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 10 – Actions – Dog attacks

		Year of Plan
16	Actively work with schools to increase the number of students exposed to relevant programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Living Safely with Dogs' program (kindergartens)• Pet Town (kindergartens and primary schools)• The Responsible Pet Ownership Primary School Program	Yrs 3-4
17	Plot the occurrence of reported dog attacks and rushes using a geographic information system (GIS) to capture location information to enable programs/ initiatives to be targeted at problematic locations. (Information should also be collected in relation to the 'context' of the attack or rush.	Yrs 3-4
18	Review opportunities to more effectively inform parents and families, and the general community about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• keeping children safe around pets• the appropriate selection of pets	Yr 3

7.5 Managing dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs

7.5.1 What the research tells us

The DAA makes specific requirements in relation to certain breeds of dog ('restricted breeds'), and dogs that are deemed 'dangerous' or 'menacing'.

Council also recognises that some people will choose to keep 'restricted breed' and 'dangerous dogs', however it is an offence to breed from these dogs. In line with the requirements of the DAA²⁵ Council monitors the housing and management of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.

Aggressive reactions in dogs can be triggered as a defence to a fearful event or activity occurring near them. This might include overcrowding by other dogs and people, nearby boisterous dog play, or storm events.

As a result, people not comfortable around dogs can interpret boisterous and fearful dog behaviour as 'aggressive' and report it as such. Therefore, it is important for dog owners to be vigilant of the environment they are exposing their dog to, their dog's behaviour in these environments, and ensure they have the appropriate control over their dog.



Some definitions:

'Menacing dog' – Is a dog that has received a violation relating to 'rushing' or biting that resulted in a non-serious injury.

'Dangerous dog' – Is a dog that incurs 2 'menacing dog' violations, or has caused a serious injury or death of an animal or person.

'Declared dog' – Include a 'restricted breed' dog or a dog that has been declared 'menacing' or 'dangerous', any dog that has been trained as a guard dog or any dog residing at a commercial premises.

Restricted Breed Dog – These dogs include American Pit Bull Terriers, Presa Canario, Dogo Argentino, Japanese Tosa, Fila Brasileiro.

25 Domestic Animals Act, section 68A(2)

Table 11 – Dangerous, menacing, restricted breed dogs in Yarra Ranges 2012/13 to 2016/17

	2012/13	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
‘Menacing dog’	2	4	6	7
‘Dangerous dog’	5	8	11	12
‘Declared dog’ ‘Guard dog’	0	1	1	1
‘Restricted breed’ dog	3	3	3	4

Council makes every attempt to determine the nature and cause of all incidents, but encourages dog owners to train their dogs appropriately and to keep dogs on lead when there is uncertainty around a public environment.

This will minimise the risk of dogs behaving inappropriately and owners having the distress of having to respond to ‘menacing’ or ‘dangerous’ dog complaints.

It is also incumbent on dog owners to fully understand their dog’s temperament and ensure the relevant

level of control and restraint in different public environments.

Research undertaken by the AVA²⁶ reinforces the need to be vigilant around all breeds of dog, not just ‘restricted breed’ dogs, particularly when they are around children. Between 2001 and 2013, an average of 2,601 persons per annum required hospitalisation for dog bites in Australia representing an annual rate of 12.39 per 100,000 people. The highest incidence of hospitalisation was for 0–4 years and 5–9 year olds at a rate of 25.95 and 18.4 per 100,00 people respectively.²⁷



26 Australian Veterinary Association; ‘Dangerous Dogs – A Sensible Solution’
27 The incidence of public sector hospitalisations due to dog bites in Australia 2001–2013, July 2016

7.5.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 12 – Actions – Managing dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

		Year of Plan
19	Prepare a process for regular cross-reference microchip database information with current council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs	Yr 2 Ongoing
20	Review and enhance information for dog owners, particularly in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• criteria that determines if a dog owner has effective control of their dog• dog behaviour that will potentially lead to a pet dog being ‘declared’• obedience training opportunities. Consider, as part of a suit of media information (web site, Facebook, news media) that can be released on a cyclic schedule.	Yr 2

7.6 Overpopulation (including euthanasia) and abandonment of pets

Objective:

- To minimise the number of stray, abandoned and unwanted pets.

7.6.1 What the research tells us

In 2008 council introduced the requirement that in order for cats to be registered they must be desexed, unless owners are registered breeders and therefore have an exemption from desexing requirements.

Council recognises that the requirement for mandatory desexing of cats is unlikely, on its own, to have a significant impact on the number of unwanted cats and kittens. This requirement does however re-enforce the importance of desexing as part of the solution.

It cannot be concluded that a decrease in the number of cats impounded or euthanased via council pounds and shelters means the problem is diminishing as many councils are assuming.

There is a significant growth in the number of community based rehoming and rescue groups, and online pet adoption avenues such as PetRescue.



This makes it increasingly difficult to accurately assess the magnitude of pet abandonment and euthanasia.

Further, there is no legal requirement for pounds, shelters and rescue groups to collect and report the numbers of dogs and cats abandoned and euthanised in Australia. Only NSW Government pounds and RSPCA Australia collect and publish annual statistics.

Research quoted by the organisation G2Z²⁸ indicates that well in excess of 100,000 cats and 76,000 dogs were euthanised in 2010 and an estimated 90% or 138,523 of these were rehomingable.

It is estimated that only 300 (40%)²⁹ of the 738 cats and kittens impounded in 2016/17 were desexed.³⁰ This is partially explained by the prevalence of colonies of unowned or semi-owned cats, and may go part way to explain the number of complaints relating to cats wandering outside their property.

For strategies to be effective there is a need to fully understand the psychology of the cat-human relationship in urban areas; apply location specific strategies; base strategies on independent research; and minimise the polarising of attitudes and behaviours.

Some councils are partnering with commercial and not-for-profit organisations to provide mobile desexing services to low income households, and in areas where there is a high level of complaint relating to cats. Other councils have developed productive and co-operative relationships with some vets to target issues.

Council understands that there is an opportunity to develop a comprehensive strategy to compassionately address issues relating to the over population of cats; and recognises the conflicting industry challenges that might be associated with this.

Yarra Ranges has agreements in to explore initiatives with vets who are interested in partnering with council to address cat and dog welfare issues confronting the community.

7.6.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 13 – Actions – Overpopulation & abandonment of pets

		Year of Plan
21	Work closely with Animal Aid to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">collect and analyse statistics that better inform council of the circumstances relating to nature of animals surrendered or relinquished and better understand how to target strategies to address issuesput in place targeted (issue, locality) programs and services.	Yr 1
22	Investigate successful industry initiatives to address issues associated with the over-population of cats	Yr 1
23	Work with G2Z to trial programs that target issues associated with the over population of pets	Yr 2 Yr 4
24	Work with all shelters, rehoming groups, veterinary clinics etc. to investigate the opportunity to establish a voluntary reporting protocol/database for pets surrendered through these organisations. Information should include but not be limited to numbers; where animals come from; if they are desexed; and outcome (e.g. rehomed, euthanised etc.).	Yr 2
25	Advocate to the Victorian State Government for legislation that requires the reporting of all pets surrendered and euthanised to a central database	Yrs 2-3
26	Promote adoption of pets from shelters and associated benefits; and provide information that dispels the myths associated with pets in shelters (e.g. they are problem animals)	Yr 1 – Yr 4

28 G2Z (Getting to Zero). Estimated Number of dogs and cats abandoned and killed in Australia 2009/10
29 An estimation based on the assumption that 166 were microchipped and it is unlikely that many cats will be desexed but not microchipped
30 Assumes that it is unlikely that many cats will be microchipped but not desexed.

CASE STUDY –
Yarra Ranges 24-hour Cat Curfew

The Initiative

In 2014 Council introduced the requirement for cats to be confined to their property 24 hours. This does not mean cats have to be kept indoors, but they must be confined to their property.

The need for the local law was driven by a number of factors including the need to prevent cats from wandering into bushland areas and preying on wildlife; complaints from residents about cats wandering onto their property; and the need to better understand the extent and location of semi-owned and stray cat populations and where they are located.

Of the 738 cats and kittens admitted to the Animal Aid shelter in 2016/17 an estimated 285, only 39%, were on council’s pet registration database (ref. Table 6). This indicates that potentially 61% of the intake were either unowned or semi-owned but information was not collected as to the number of cats that were both microchipped and registered.

This means there are potentially a large number of cats that are not receiving appropriate care or being contained. Many of these cats suffer poor health, have to scavenge for food and impact on wildlife.



How council will continue to address the issue

- Encourage people who feed and care for stray cats to adopt them and take responsibility for their welfare.
- Introduce initiatives in areas with significant numbers of semi-owned and unowned cat populations and colonies. These may involve adoption programs (semi-owned cats), information, and humane cat catching programs.
- Support the humane catching of unowned and semi-owned cats using approved methods.
- Encourage cat owners to contain their cats to their property.

7.7 Domestic animal businesses and other business

Objectives:

- To provide the necessary advice and referrals to assist domestic animal businesses comply with their legislative requirements.
- To optimise opportunities to work with other domestic pet related businesses to address priorities in the Domestic Animal Management Plan.



7.7.1 What the research tells us

There are 24 businesses (Domestic Animal Businesses) in Yarra Ranges relating to domestic pets. These include animal shelters, training, boarding and breeding establishments.

The DAA requires for all Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) must be registered with council, which will inspect DABs each year to ensure they comply with mandatory codes of practice and to offer any support and advice as may be necessary.

Consultation for the project suggests there is a desire by some shelter, boarding and breeding establishments to work with council to help:

- dispel negative perceptions that may exist as a result of less reputable establishments
- address challenges associated with pets in the community.

Similar to adjoining LGAs³¹, survey respondents state that the following were ‘important’ or ‘very important issues of concern:

- unscrupulous breeders or puppy farms (approx. 67%/1,773 respondents)
- the sale of animals through pet shops (approx. 73%/2,674).

Sixty-four per cent of relevant survey respondents said they were interested in knowing what dog obedience and/or activity groups they could join.

Council recognises, while not classified as domestic animal businesses under the Act, there are other

- There are 24 domestic animal businesses in Yarra Ranges:
- 16 boarding businesses
 - 2 dog training
 - 3 breeding business
 - 1 Animal shelter
 - 1 combined breeding/ boarding business
 - 1 combined breeding/training business.

community-based and commercial organisations that council can also work with to address issues and opportunities. These may include dog obedience clubs, dog behaviourists and dog walking businesses.

In November 2017, the Victorian State Government passed legislation that prohibits the sale of cats and dogs via pet shops unless they have come from an ethical source such as an animal shelter or pound, or registered foster carer.

Any person selling or giving away a cat or dog must be enrolled on the Pet Exchange Register, show where the animal has come from and ensure the animal is microchipped. The legislation has been introduced to ensure pets come from ethical sources and so pet owners can trace the history of their pet.

31 Nillumbik, Yarra Ranges, and Knox LGAs

7.7.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 14 – Actions – Domestic & other animal businesses

		Year of Plan
27	Initiate discussions with DABs to identify opportunities for mutually beneficial opportunities to reinforce responsible pet ownership initiatives	Yr 3
28	Review information for and about DABs on council's website	Yr 1

7.8 Provision for dogs off lead

Objective:

- To effectively plan for the needs of dog owners and their dogs in public spaces in consideration of other open space needs.

7.8.1 What the research tells us

Dogs must be on lead in all public places other than 23 sites where dogs are allowed off lead. There are 9 sites, which due to their environmental sensitivity or conflict with other activities that dogs are not permitted on lead or off lead. One of the off lead areas (Kimberley Park) is partially fenced.

Many Pet Survey respondents registered their dissatisfaction with dog owners who do not exercise good judgement or control over their dogs.

Most concerns highlighted dog owners who do not actively supervise their dogs, or leave them unsupervised on off lead areas; or bring dogs with an inappropriate temperament or poorly trained dogs to off lead areas.

These issues can be exacerbated where large numbers of dogs congregate in off lead areas, and in particular in fenced off lead areas, particularly if they are small or poorly designed.

Twenty-seven per cent of dog owners said that never let their dogs off the lead in public places. Written comments indicate this is for the safety of their dog, and to avoid unexpected incidents that may arise when dogs and people come together. Thirty-two per cent of dog owners felt there were not enough dog off lead areas and 15% said off lead areas should not be fenced, primarily so dog owners would actively monitor their dogs and so dogs are not confined to a small area.



“Off lead areas are a concern for me. It is not necessarily the dogs, rather the owners who lack knowledge and are inconsiderate of other people and dogs.

People tend to stand back and let their dogs go and are not close enough to react if there is an altercation.”

Ref: Quote, Pet Survey respondent, 2017

Dog owners cited the opportunities afforded dogs that live in small back yards, dog to dog socialising opportunities; the freedom to exercise and play with their dogs as the primary benefits of off lead areas. Ninety per cent of dog owners said they make new friends through their dogs and that they are social areas.

Council provides Council’s Open Space and Recreation Strategy makes two recommendations that relate to dogs. The first recommends discussions between the Pony and Dog Obedience Clubs in Yarra Glen to increase access for both to local facilities, and the second recommended a dog off lead area at the Don Road Reserve in Healesville. Both of these recommendations have been implemented.

Council recognises that with the expected increase in dogs in line with the population increase that there will be a need to ensure dog owners fully understand their responsibilities. To this end council will work closely with relevant community and commercial organisations to develop and encourage participation in dog training and control initiatives.

7.8.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 15 – Actions – Provision for dogs off lead

		Year of Plan
29	Work with community-based and commercial dog training providers to develop initiatives and incentives that encourage dog owners to attend dog training and obedience classes	Yr 3
30	Review council’s policy and provision for ‘dog off-leash’ as required	Yr 1

7.9 People and pets tourism

Objective:

- To identify if there are pet-related tourism opportunities for Yarra Ranges that are worth further exploring.



7.9.1 What the research tells us

Yarra Ranges is in a prime position to capitalise on the increase in people who want to travel with the family dog. Research conducted in Scotland found that nearly half (48%) of visits to the country by adult residents were in the company of a dog, a trend that increased from 41% in 2004 to 48% in 2013/14.³² This same research found there were 95% more searches on the internet for pet-friendly holidays than for ‘holidays in Scotland’ or ‘romantic holidays’.

Just under half of all Pet Survey respondents (49.8%) said they make holiday choices based on there being pet-friendly accommodation available; and just over half (51%) said they choose their recreation activities based on being able to take their pet with them.

None of the known local tourism and marketing strategies identifies pet-related tourism as a potential market.³³ This is not unusual as the pet tourism market is a relatively recent market segment for which there is minimal data, however it would appear this is an untapped market.

Yarra Ranges has a diverse range of attractive open space, trail and bushland environments, some of these being areas where dogs can be taken either on lead or lead free. Anecdotal feedback and observation indicates that dogs are increasingly being included in resident visits to natural areas and cafes in Yarra Ranges, with 28% of dog owners said they regularly take their dogs to dog-friendly cafes.



The potential of the tourism market is also reflected in other municipalities where regular requests from travellers are received,³⁴ particularly people in caravans who want to legally access a dog off-lead area.

Charters Towers Regional Council provided anecdotal information that dog-owning travellers are a significant contributor to the local economy, and that there is potential to better cater for this market. Research would need to be conducted to understand if this is a viable market segment for the region.

7.9.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 16 – Action – People & pet tourism

		Year of Plan
31	Consider investigating pet-related tourism opportunities, and if relevant, the viability/ feasibility of the associated market segments	Yrs 2-3

32 Scottish National Heritage 2013/14
33 Yarra Ranges Tourism Marketing Strategy 2017/20; 2012-2022 Economic Development Strategy
34 Mildura Rural City Council – Currently does not have any dog off lead areas

7.10 Pet Welfare

Objective:

- To identify and help strengthen support and information networks that assist pets and pet owners in times of need.

7.10.1 What the research tells us

This section does not address general pet welfare issues such as those associated with the abandonment of pets as these are dealt with in other sections of the DAMP.

This section addresses people with pets who find themselves in challenging personal situations. These situations are often compounded because they cannot retain their pets or care for them as they need to be cared for.

The impact of these situations is not well reported in mainstream media and as a result the impact of these personal and family situations on families, relationship is not widely known or understood.

In the Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Plan, residents identify family violence as a top health related priority.³⁵ The plan proposes that the matter be addressed through ‘universal and targeted services for young families’(p47).

A study conducted by Eastern Domestic Violence Service showed that 53% of women in violent relationships reported pets being hurt or killed, and 46% reported their pets had been threatened.³⁶ Animal Aid, council’s pound and animal shelter provider reports that it costs the organisation approximately \$23,000 a year to provide around 1,100 days of shelter for animals involved in domestic violence or other hardship situations. This involves approximately 72,000 hours of volunteer support to the program.³⁷

The health and wellbeing benefits of pet ownership that apply to the general population can be even more significant for older age groups, particularly those benefits associated with exercise, social contact and companionship.³⁸ Research indicates that some older



Pet Welfare issues that concern residents:

- 93% – the number concerned about pets in domestic violence situation.
- 11%+ the number concerned about the treatment of an animal in their neighbourhood in the last 12 months.
- 6% the number concerned about the animals that have been a victim of domestic violence in the last 12 months.

Ref: Pet Survey, 2017

people want to own a pet but are concerned about the future of their pet should something happen to them, or as in the case of a pet dog they are not able to walk or socialise the dog adequately.

Fire events that have occurred in the region over the last decade have emphasised the need to make accommodation for large and small pets at emergency relief centres. Because the majority of pet owners regard pets as ‘part of the family’, it can be expected that they will bring pets with them to emergency relief centres in greater numbers than in the past.

Anecdotal feedback received through the Pet Survey as well as other surveys conducted in the region³⁹ indicates a frustration at the lack of action, or perceived lack of action, by relevant authorities



in relation to the abuse of pets and animals. All of council’s ‘Authorised Officers are trained in line with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.⁴⁰ This allows council officers to assess and report acts of cruelty and initiate action against perpetrators in line with the Act.

People who do not restrain pets in cars, and particularly on vehicle utility trays is a concern for 78% of survey respondents, and an issue that also prompted over 30 written comments.

Many of the issues raised in this section are common to other local government authorities, and have been raised? by these organisations in relevant service planning documents.⁴¹ There is an opportunity to work collaboratively with these organisations and relevant peak associations such as Outer Easter Domestic Violence, Animal Aid, and the RSPCA to strategically address opportunities.

7.10.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 17 – Actions – Pet Welfare

Year of Plan		
32	Work with relevant organisations to raise awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none">of the channels through which animal abuse can be reported e.g. council website, RSPCA, local media, schools etc.of the process for dealing with animal welfare issues	Yrs 3-4
33	Work with Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS) and other relevant agencies to identify opportunities to better inform the community about the impact of domestic violence on pets and how they can be protected	Yrs 3-4
34	Review Yarra Ranges Animal Emergency Management Plan	Yr 2
35	Review council’s internal information and referral processes relating to domestic violence to ensure consideration is given to the needs of pets/pet owners	Yr 1
36	Investigate strategies and community awareness initiatives to ensure animals are appropriately restrained in cars and on utility trays	Yr 2
37	Consider reduced registration fees for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">pets adopted from rehoming organisations recognised by council and/oradoption of older petsother initiatives that support relevant council objectives	Yr 2

35 Yarra Ranges Health and Wellbeing Plan, p67
36 Royal Commission into Family Violence Submission: The Link Between Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse, Judy Johnson OAM
37 Animal Aid 23/6/2017
38 Measuring the Benefits: Companion Animals and the Health of Older Persons Full Report

39 Surveys conducted for Knox, Yarra Ranges, Nillumbik, Maroondah councils
40 Victorian Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1986
41 e.g. Municipal Health and Wellbeing Strategy; Aged and Disability Strategy

7.11 Residential housing and pets

7.11.1 What the research tells us

Anecdotal feedback received as part of the DAMP identifies issues associated with pets and increasing housing densities, the lack of rental opportunities for people with pets; and unit and retirement accommodation that does not permit pet ownership as areas of concern.

Space limitations in apartments or on small allotments are not discouraging pet ownership. While pet ownership in apartments is lower than in other types of dwellings, there is still the expectation that public environments will have the capacity to accommodate the needs of dog owners.

Research indicates that prior to recent changes in tenancy law only 23.5% of property investors currently

allowed pets.⁴² The make-up of the rental market has significantly changed in recent years, and if trends follow that of Europe, more families are going to be renting in the future than are now.

Recent rulings in Australia reject blanket bans on pets in rental accommodation on the basis that it discriminates against pet owners.⁴³ This may lead to an increase in pet ownership and place additional demands on public open space, particularly in higher density areas.

As a result, effective community awareness programs to ensure pet owners are considerate of those who do not want to be impacted by other people’s pets will be required in the future.



7.11.2 Actions to address emerging priorities

Table 18 – Actions – Housing and pets

Year of Plan		
38	Ensure council’s open space and urban planning processes consider the implications of pet ownership in medium and high density residential developments	Yr 1
39	Encourage residential developers to incorporate creative initiatives to accommodate pets	Yrs 3- 4

42 <https://www.realestate.com.au/advice/pet-friendly-rentals-still-coveted/>
43 Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT), <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-09-06/tenants-union-welcomes-vcat-body-corporate-pet-ban-ruling>

8 How we prepared the Domestic Animal Management Plan

Research for the Domestic Animal Management Plan has taken into account the research and consultation carried out for other strategic plans, including the Council Plan, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Recreation and Open Space Strategy. Consultation and community engagement carried out specifically for the Domestic Animal Management Plan involved:

- an online regional survey – 6,000 respondents overall including 4,366 from Yarra Ranges
- written comments and submission as part of the Pet Survey

- council staff workshops and interviews, including with staff from disability, community, tourism/economic development, infrastructure, environmental, and leisure services
- workshop with industry group representatives
- consultation with benchmarking councils
- consultation with key industry groups, including Getting to Zero (G2Z), Animal Aid and the Australian Veterinary Association.

9 How we will implement the Domestic Animal Management Plan

9.1 Setting priorities for the next four years

The action plan identifies the year in which council proposes to address the recommendation. However, priorities in the Domestic Animal Management Plan may change over the life of the plan depending on:

- changing Animal Management service demands and priorities
- other council service delivery priorities
- partnership opportunities
- external funding opportunities.



- partnership engagement
- innovation.

The consolidated Action Plan identifies the primary role that council will take when implementing the recommendation.

9.2 Council’s role in implementing the Domestic Animal Management Plan

Council will not necessarily perform the same function when implementing each of the recommendations in the Action Plan. The following outlines the various roles that council may undertake in order to optimise use of council resources:

- advocacy
- infrastructure provision
- service management
- advice and information

9.3 Monitoring and reviewing the plan

In line with the requirements of the Act:

- council will review the Domestic Animal Management Plan annually to ensure actions and priorities are still relevant and can be completed within available resources
- council will undertake a major review of the plan in year four.

10 The Consolidated Action Plan

Action	Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Training of 'Authorised Officers' (Rangers) and Service Enhancement			
1 10.1 Continue to review and modify staff training schedules in line with service requirements Council Role: Service Management	Ongoing	SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training program reviewed and modified in line with service demands
2 10.2 Ensure all staff have completed CRAF (Common Risk Assessment Framework) or similar training and undertake update training as required Council Role: Service Management	Yr 1 Ongoing	SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All relevant staff have completed CRAF training by year 2 All staff completed CRAF review course in line with training program requirements
3 Prepare a Communication Plan to optimise the profile of the service and communication with residents, with a particular focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engaging with residents through social media ensuring online resources are easy for residents to find e.g. YouTube videos opportunities to improve the appeal and presentation of pet related information on council web site; and opportunities to use the website to enhance Council Role: Service Management, Advice and Information 	Yr 1 Yrs 2-4	SC, DT, C, CASC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A four-year Information, communication (including social media) plan prepared, with priority given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> social medial plan review of Website 'pages' and content accessibility of information Implementation of Information/ Communication Plan according to adopted timelines
Registration and identification			
4 Advocate for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a single industry microchip registration database and an integrated pet registration and microchip database Council Role: Advocacy 	Yr 1 Yr 2 Yrs 2-4	SC, CL, SC Animal Aid, MAV, AVA, AIAM, other LGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison with key industry and regional stakeholders SYR Advocacy Plan prepared Continued advocacy as per plan

Action Plan Legend: AIAM=Australian Institute of Animal Management; AVA=Australian Veterinary Association; BA=Built & Active Spaces; CL=Council; C=Communication; CLF=Community & Leisure Facilities; CSS=Community Support Services; I=Information; DT=Digital Transformation; RR=Relief and Recovery; SED=Social and Economic Development; YCD=Youth & Community Development; I=Information Services; P=Planning; PE=Parks & Environment; SC=Safer Communities; GIS=GIS Systems Analysts* Lead Department

Action	Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Registration and identification (continued)			
5 Investigate industry strategies that have been successful in increasing the level of cat and dog registrations, and identify initiatives that may help increase pet registrations in Yarra Ranges Council Role: Service Management, Innovation	Yr 1	SC, SC , other LGAs, AIAM 10.3 MAV, AVA, Animal Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations and potential initiatives identified Consider community research to better understand likely community motivators Community and industry partnerships identified Project/initiative plan prepared and ready for implementation in Yr 2
6 Following relevant research and analysis, implement a new initiative aimed at increasing pet registrations	Yrs 2-3	SC , SC, other LGAs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of new initiative Review of new initiative
7 10.4 Explore opportunities to streamline/improve the online pet registration process. Also consider opportunities for residents to update pet information online/ directly Council Role: Service Management, Innovation	Yr 2 Yrs 2-4	I, DT , CC, SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities considered Website amended/ updated accordingly
8 Ensure that specific locational and incident data is collected and plotted on council's GIS system when animals are taken into custody. This information should include but not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> street location number of animals in the pick-up e.g. litter of 1 female and four kittens (not '1 litter') type of identification on animal (micro-chip/ registration tag) Council Role: Service Management, Innovation 	Yr 1 Yr 2	SC, DT (GIS), G2Z , other LGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the level and type of data to be collected and how data will be recorded/ managed by the relevant parties e.g. YRC, Animal Aid Collection and analysis of first 6 months of data, and review of the data collection and review process Modification of data collection process if required Annual reporting of data and problematic areas/ neighbourhoods

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Action	Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Dealing with nuisance issues			
9 Plot (GIS) the occurrence of each type of animal related complaint or incident and analyse data to identify location specific incidents as a basis for location specific remedies Council Role: Service Management, Innovation	Yr 1 Ongoing	SC, DT (GIS), G2Z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalise the level and type of data to be collected and how data will be recorded, managed and reported on Collection and analysis of first 6 months of data, and review of the data collection and review process Modification of data collection process if required Annual reporting of data and problematic areas / neighbourhoods
10 Develop a trial program that addresses location specific issues identified from the plotting of animal related complaints. At least 2 of the following should be addressed over the term of the DAMP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> dog owners not picking up dog droppings dogs not confined to their property cats not confined to their property dogs off lead in on lead areas barking dogs Council Role: Service Management, Innovation	Yr 1 Yrs 2-4	SC , other LGAs, peak associations, local community & commercial orgs etc. Animal Aid etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection of relevant data Analysis of data to identify neighbourhoods which have the highest incidence of complaint for any given issue Research of industry initiatives that have successfully addressed similar issues Implementation of an initiative (based on successful industry initiative) to target complaints in a specific area / neighbourhood Analysis of program / initiative success based on predetermined criteria
11 10.5 Consider engaging animal behaviourists to work with council to target and address issues relating to barking dogs Council Role: Service Management, Innovation, Partnership engagement	Yr 1	SC , local community & commercial orgs etc.; CA, I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a cost-benefit analysis* to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the actual cost of attending to these complaints based on current procedures and outcomes the cost of contracting an animal behaviourist to assist council address these matters Take relevant action based on outcome of the cost-benefit analysis <p>* Must include consideration of ongoing liaison / follow up (particularly if issue is not successfully resolved), public relations impact/benefits etc.</p>

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Action	Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Dealing with nuisance issues (continued)			
12 Enlist the support of the community and commercial dog sector and local government sector to help develop strategies that will address issues associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> non-compliance with on lead regulations behaviour and control of dogs in public places owners not picking up their dog's droppings Council Role: Service Management, Innovation, Partnership engagement	Yr 2 Yrs 3-4	SC , local community & commercial orgs etc.; CA, Other LGAs, Animal Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake industry research to identify successful initiatives Prepare a plan for a targeted initiative Identify and engage community stakeholders that may assist with the initiative
13 Enlist the support of the community and commercial cat sector; and local government sector to help develop strategies that will address issues associated with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stray (including semi-owned, unowned) cats cats not confined to properties Council Role: Service Management, Innovation, Partnership engagement	Yrs 2-4 Yrs 3-4	SC , local community & commercial orgs etc.; CA, Other LGAs, Animal Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake industry research to identify successful initiatives Prepare a plan for a targeted initiative Identify and engage community stakeholders that may assist with the initiative
14 10.6 Review schedule of park patrols and consider opportunity for parks maintenance crews to provide relevant reports / observation Council Role: Service Management	Yr 1	SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review schedule of parks patrols and random park patrols based on frequency of complaints Liaise with the parks maintenance team to identify opportunities for these crews to report on non-compliance related issues
15 10.7 Develop an information package for cat owners whose cats are the subject of cat trespass complaints Council Role: Advice and Information	Yr 3	I, SC, DT Animal Aid, other LGAs, local community & commercial orgs etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review current information with a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> opportunities to make information more relevant to Yarra Ranges information that will support local initiatives designed to reduce the incidence of 'wandering cats'

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Action		Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Dog attacks				
16	Actively work with schools to increase the number of students exposed to relevant programs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘Living Safely with Dogs’ program (kindergartens)• Pet Town (kindergartens and primary schools)• The Responsible Pet Ownership Primary School Program Council Role: Advocacy, Advice and Information, Partnership engagement	Yr 3	SC Dept Ag; Schools/ preschools; other LGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify schools that run/don’t run programs and canvass to identify the nature of the programs and if programs target issues specific to Yarra Ranges• Identify opportunities for Local Laws staff to be involved in developing and delivering programs
		Yr 4		
17	10.8 Plot the occurrence of reported dog attacks and rushes using a geographic information system (GIS) to capture location information to enable programs/ initiatives to be targeted at problematic locations. (Information should also be collected in relation to the ‘context’ of the attack or rush Council Role: Service Management, Innovation	Yr 3	SC, P (GIS??), GIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collection of relevant data• Analysis of data to identify neighbourhoods/ which have the highest level of incidents• Research of industry initiatives that have successfully addressed similar issues
		Yr 4		
18	Review opportunities to more effectively inform parents and families, and the general community about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• keeping children safe around pets• the appropriate selection of pets Council Role: Advice and Information	Yr 3	SC, I, CC Local media, social media, schools/ pre-schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review current information, how it is disseminated and its effectiveness• Implementation of a cyclic information messaging e.g. via online and hard copy mediums, special events etc.
Managing dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs				
19	10.9 Prepare a process for regular cross-reference microchip database information with current council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs Council Role: Service Management	Yr 2 Ongoing	SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negotiating/securing of access to all relevant microchip databases relating to dogs registered in Yarra Ranges• Implementation of a process for cross referencing of microchip data bases and taking of relevant action

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Action		Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Managing dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs (continued)				
20	Review and enhance information for dog owners, particularly in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• criteria that determines if a dog owner has effective control of their dog• dog behaviour that will potentially lead to a pet dog being ‘declared’• obedience training opportunities 10.10 Consider, as part of a suite of media information (web site, Facebook, news media) that can be released on a cyclic schedule Council Role: Information and Advice	Yr 2	SC, I, C Local media, social media, schools/ pre-schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review current information, how it is disseminated and its effectiveness• Implementation of a cyclic information messaging e.g. via online and hard copy mediums, special events etc.
Overpopulation (including euthanasia) and abandonment of pets				
21	Work closely with Animal Aid (pound provider) to collect and analyse statistics that better inform: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• about the circumstances relating to the nature and context of animals surrendered or relinquished• remedial strategies Council Role: Partnership engagement, Service Management	Yrs 1-2 Yrs 3-4	SC, SC Animal Aid, G2Z, Dept Agr. MAV, AVA, AIAM	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identification of data to be collected and formalising of the process for accurately recording and reporting of data• 6-monthly review of data• Targeted strategies to address problematic areas/ neighbourhoods
22	10.11 Investigate successful industry initiatives relating to the over population of cats, particularly as they relate to cat colonies and unowned/ semi-owned cats Council Role: Service Management, Partnership engagement, Innovation	Yr 1	SC, SC Animal Aid, G2Z, Dept Agr. MAV, AVA, AIAM, other LGAs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigation of successful industry strategies• Identification/ consideration of strategies that have application to Yarra Ranges
23	10.12 Work with G2Z to trial at least two localised initiatives that are aimed at addressing the over population of cats Council Role: Partnership engagement, Innovation	Yrs 2-4 Yr 4	SC, SC, Animal Aid, G2Z, other LGAs, vets, local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation of 2 trial initiatives• Evaluation of initiatives in line with agreed criteria

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Action	Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Overpopulation (including euthanasia) and abandonment of pets (continued)			
24 Work with all shelters, rehoming groups, veterinary clinics etc. to investigate the opportunity to establish a voluntary reporting protocol/database for pets surrendered through these organisations. 10.13 Information should include but not be limited to numbers; where animals come from; if they are desexed; and outcome (e.g. rehomed, euthanised etc.) Council Role: Service Management, Partnership engagement, Innovation	Yr 2 10.14 Yr 4	SC, Animal Aid, G2Z, SC other LGAs, vets, local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of Reference for a working group established Working group to discuss/identify opportunities for voluntary reporting/tracking of relinquished pets through all relevant groups established Reporting protocols and systems established Implementation of data reporting program
25 10.15 Advocate to the Victorian State Government for legislation that requires the reporting of all pets surrendered and euthanised to a central database Council Role: Advocacy	Yrs 2-3 Yr 4	SC, CL, SC Animal Aid, G2Z , other LGAs, vets, MAV, AIAM, AVA, local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regional working group established Relevant research undertaken e.g. interstate models Advocacy plan and relevant resources prepared Implementation of advocacy strategy (commenced)
26 10.16 Promote adoption of pets from shelters and associated benefits; and provide information that dispels the myths associated with pets in shelters (e.g. they are problem animals) Council Role: Advice and Information	Yr 2 Yr 3	SC, I, DT, SC Animal Aid , adoption groups, other LGAs, vets, pet supply outlets, local community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project working group established Media/promotional plan and information developed Implementation of promotional plan (commenced)
Domestic animal businesses and other business			
27 10.17 Initiate discussions with DABs to identify opportunities for mutually beneficial opportunities to reinforce responsible pet ownership initiatives Council Role: Service Management, Partnership engagement	Yr 3	SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up with DABs attending DAMP workshop to investigate opportunities that address priorities in the DAMP Develop initiatives as relevant
28 10.18 Review information for and about DABs on council's website Council Role: Advice and Information	Yr 1	SC, DT, I, SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information reviewed Information updated/refined as required

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Action	Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Provision for dogs off leash			
29 10.19 Work with community-based and commercial dog training providers to develop initiatives and incentives that encourage dog owners to attend dog training and obedience classes Council Role: Partnership engagement, Advice and Information	Yr 3	SC, SC local business and community groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A working group established to investigate initiatives that may encourage dog owners to better manage/control their dogs in public places
30 10.20 Review council's policy and provision for 'dog off-leash' as required Council Role: Service Management	Yr 1 Ongoing	SC, SC BA, PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review as required Consider opportunities associated with Lilydale Lake off leash area
People and pets tourism			
31 Consider investigating the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the pet-related tourism opportunities, and if relevant the viability/feasibility of the associated market segments. Council Role: Innovation, Partnership engagement	Yr 3 Yr 4	SED, YCD SC, I, SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigation of the level of interest from the tourism sector for preliminary viability investigation Preliminary research undertaken (if interest expressed) Data reviewed
Pet welfare			
32 Work with relevant organisations to raise awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> of the channels through which animal abuse can be reported e.g. council website, RSPCA, local media, schools etc. of the process for dealing with animal welfare issues Council Role: Information and Advice	Yr 3 Yr 4	SC, I, DT, SC RSPCA, other animal welfare grps, EDVOS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avenues through which information will be distributed is determined Promotion/educational information prepared Information disseminated Campaign evaluation measures established Campaign reviewed and amended as required

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Action		Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Pet welfare (continued)				
33	10.21 Work with Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS) and other relevant agencies to identify opportunities to better inform the community about the impact of domestic violence on pets and how they can be protected Council Role: Information and Advice	Yr 3 Yr 4	SC SED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion with relevant stakeholders to determine information needs and opportunities• Avenues through which information will be distributed is determined• Promotion / educational information prepared• Information disseminated• Campaign evaluation measures established• Campaign reviewed and amended as required
34	10.22 Review Yarra Ranges Animal Emergency Management Plan Council Role: Service Management	Yr 2	SC, RR, SC, community, Animal Aid, support agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of plan undertaken• Relevant recommendations implemented
35	Review council's internal information and referral processes relating to domestic violence to ensure consideration is given to the needs of pets / pet owners Council Role: Service Management	Yr 1 Ongoing	SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Internal referral and reporting processes reviewed and amended as required
36	10.23 Investigate strategies and community awareness initiatives to ensure animals are appropriately restrained in cars and on utility trays Council Role: Advice and Information	Yr 2	SC, I, ,SC, C, animal welfare grps, township grps, Dept Agr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media and public aware campaign prepared/outlined• Campaign material prepared• Campaign evaluation measures established• Campaign reviewed and amended as required
37	Consider reduced registration fees for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• pets adopted from rehoming organisations recognised by council and/or• adoption of older pets• other initiatives that support relevant council objectives Council Role: Service Management	Yr 2 Ongoing	SC, CL, SC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relevant policy introduced• Procedures / checklists etc. established• Concessions applied

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Action		Year of Plan	Stakeholders	Measures
Residential Housing and pets				
38	10.24 Ensure council's open space and urban planning processes consider the implications of pet ownership in medium and high density residential developments Council Role: Service Management	Yr 1 Ongoing	P, I, BA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processes and policy recognise/ acknowledge the benefits associated with pets• Research undertaken to determine issues and opportunities to better incorporate pets into residential environments• Checklists developed to ensure consideration given to the needs of pet owners in:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Private environments e.g. cat runs– Public environments e.g. inclusion of open space subdivision allocation for dog off-leash activities. This in addition to allocation for sporting and unstructured activities
39	10.25 Encourage residential developers to incorporate creative initiatives to accommodate pets Council Role: Innovation, Advice and Information	Yr 3 Yr 4	P, I, BA	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporation of information about suggestions for pet friendly features in information for developers / builders• Consider requirements for developers to include dog off leash area allocation that is separate to open space used for other purposes e.g. sports fields

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11 Appendices

Appendix 1 – The Domestic Animals Act requirement of council

Under Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act, every Council must prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan, as follows:

68A Councils to prepare Domestic Animal Management Plans

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Primary Industries), prepare at 4 year intervals a Domestic Animal Management Plan.
- (2) A Domestic Animal Management Plan prepared by a Council must—
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
 - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
 - (c) outline programs, services and strategies, which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
 - (i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 - (ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
 - (iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
 - (vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 - (vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
 - (d) 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 dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
 - (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
 - (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
- (3) Every Council must—
 - (a) review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
 - (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
 - (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Appendix 2 – Key statistics

Measure	2012/13	2016/17	Difference
Resident population [1]	149,026	152,246	3,220
DOGS			
Number of registered dogs	16,851	29,805	12,954
Per 100 people	11	16	+4
Estimated total dog population (registered & unregistered)	35,046	30,449	NR
Number of desexed registered dogs	11,466	21,586	10,120
As a % of registered dogs	68%	72.42%	+34.0%
Number of registered 'declared' dogs	4	21	+17
Number of impounded dogs	1121	837	-284
As a % of registered dogs	3.8%	2.81%	-1.0%
Number of impounded dogs returned to owner	838	793	-45.00
As a % of impounded dogs	74.8%	94.7%	+20.0%
Number of dogs rehoused	123	102	-21.00
As a % of impounded dogs	11.0%	12.2%	+1.21%
Number of dogs euthanased	127	43	-84
As a % of impounded dogs	11.3%	5.1%	-6.2%
Number dogs not registered when impound	NA	420	NR
As a % of impounded dogs	NA	50.2%	NR
CATS			
Number of registered cats	5,172	8,301	3,129
Per 100 people	3	5	+2
Estimated total cat population (registered and unregistered)	10,672	24,359	+13,687
Number of desexed registered cats	3,867	5,997	2,130
As a % of registered cats	74.8%	72.24%	-2.5%
Number of impounded cats	440	738	+298
As a % of registered cats	8.5%	8.9%	+0.4%

Measure	2012/13	2016/17	Difference
Number of impounded cats returned to owner	66	196	130
As a % of impounded cats	1%	2%	+1.0%
Number of cats rehoused	142	260	+118
As a % of impounded cats	32.3%	35.2%	+3.0%
Number of cats euthanased	232	273	41.00
As a % of impounded cats	52.7%	37.0%	-15.7%
Number cats registered when impound	NA	285	NR
As a % of impounded cats	NA	38.6%	NR
CUSTOMER SERVICE REQUESTS/COMPLAINTS			
Dog attack	211	179	-32
% of total requests	15.5%	10.7%	-4.8%
Dog rush	161	99	-62
As a % of all complaints	11.8%	5.9%	-5.9%
Dog – barking	276	210	-66
% of total requests	20.3%	12.5%	-7.8%
Dog – wandering	474	611	+137
% of total requests	34.9%	36.5%	1.60%
Cat nuisance	237	576	+339
% of total requests	17.44%	34.4%	16.95%
Customer service requests/ complaints – TOTAL	1359	1675	+316
Customer service requests/ complaints per 1,000 residents	9.1	11.0	+2
INFRINGEMENT NOTICES			
Dog – wandering at large	787	715	-72
Dog and cat – failure to register	623	526	-97
Dog – nuisance	2	0	-2
Infringement notices – TOTAL	1,412	1,241	-167
Infringement notices per 1,000 residents	2.02	2.35	+0.33

Appendix 3 – Operational Information

1. Authorised Officers and Civic Compliance Officer training requirements

Qualification / Training	Frequency
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation(or relevant industry experience)	Years 1 and 2
Customer service training	Bi-Annual
Conflict management training/ bite stick training	Annual
DEDJTR training/information seminars	When available
Australian Institute of Animal Management Annual Conference	Annual
Breed identification	As offered by DEDJTR
Industry Training <ul style="list-style-type: none">animal handling,animal assessmentprosecutionsstatement takingEvidence gathering	Ongoing

2. Current procedures

Current Procedures	
Actions	Frequency Damp
Training of Authorised Officers and Service Management	
Continue to review Animal Management staff training requirements in line with operational requirements	Annual
Review Authorised Officer’ training programs and ensure the following training is undertaken in line with service requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none">customer service trainingconflict resolution/mediation trainingbaton handling traininganimal handling both domestic and livestock?	Annual
Maintain accurate training register	Ongoing
Ensure council representation at the annual Australian Institute of Animal Management Conference	Annual
Continue to review the service in line with council’s continuous improvement policy	Annual
Review council’s Emergency Animal Management Plan	Annual

Current Procedures	
Actions	Frequency Damp
Registration and Identification	
Collection and processing of state government pet registration levy	
Targeted ‘doorknock’ program to identify unregistered cats and dogs	Annual – target – minimum of ...?... households annual (number of households will depend on staffing levels and daily business requirements)
Registration notifications <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renewal notices sent out• Advertising in local media• Advertising in council’s newsletter• Advertising on council’s website• Renewal notices• Registration reminder notices• Text messaging e.g. registration renewal reminders	Annual 1st week in April Quarterly Ongoing Early March Mid/late May
Micro chipping days and promotion at ‘Pets in the Park’ event	Annual
Discount microchipping for pension card holders	
Issuing of infringement notices	Ongoing
Discounted registration rates for desexed cats and dogs	
Dealing with nuisance issues	
Provision of cat traps	As required
Investigation of complaints relating to excess number of animals	As reported
Liaison with commercial providers that can work with residents to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• dog obedience control issues• barking dog issues	Annual consultation Promotion ongoing via council website
Monitor the effectiveness of ‘Barking Dog’ complaint process	Ongoing
Dog Attacks	
Work with pre-schools to ensure parents and children have access to dog behaviour awareness programs and information.	Annual
Review information on council’s website relating to safe/appropriate behaviour of children round pets, and parental monitoring responsibilities, particularly in relation to dogs.	Ongoing

Current Procedures	
Actions	Frequency Damp
Dog Attacks (continued)	
Patrols of public places such as reserves, retail precincts, trails etc., particularly during high use times such as community events	Ongoing
Information provided at Pet Expo	Annual
Information available at council offices and council website	Ongoing
Media releases - Information about owner responsibilities relating to the control of dogs in public places	Annual
Managing Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Dog Breeds	
Assessment of all restricted breed, menacing and dangerous dogs and associated properties to ensure compliance with requirements	Annual
Review of registration and microchip databases to identify possible/ suspect ‘restricted breed dogs	Annual
Consultation with owners of dogs declared as ‘dangerous’, ‘menacing’ and/or are a ‘restricted breed’ dog	Ongoing
Information provided at Pet Expo about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the implications of owning a restricted breed, dangerous or menacing dog• preventative measures	Annual
Information provided on council website as to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the appropriate housing of ‘dangerous’, ‘menacing’ and/or a ‘restricted breed’ dog• appropriate selection of dogs for the family and community environment	Ongoing
Overpopulation (including Euthanasia) and Abandonment of Pets	
Information in council Newsletter	Annual
Information handed out at Pet Expo	Annual
Information to encourage pet owners to desex cats and dogs	Ongoing – council website
Domestic Animal Businesses	
Annual inspection of DABs	Annual
Inspection of reported backyard breeders	As required
Subsidised desexing scheme (AVA vouchers)	Ongoing
Provision for Dogs Off Lead	
Monitoring of dog off lead areas for compliance	Annual-targeted monitoring
Monitoring of community events and high use areas	As required

3. Current education and promotional activities

Current Education /Promotion Activities	
Actions	Frequency Damp
Training of Authorised Officers and Service Management	
	Annual
Registration and Identification	
Registration information on council's website	Ongoing
New resident Pet Ownership Pack delivered to new residents	As required
Information brochure for pet owners on rural properties distributed	Annual
Dealing with Nuisance Issues	
Barking dogs – Information provided to relevant dog owners	Brochures – ongoing Online – ongoing
Cat confinement – Information provided to relevant cat owners	Brochures – ongoing Online – ongoing
Pet's Picnic – Information and 'expert' presenters	Annual
Information on council's web site on: <ul style="list-style-type: none">desexing/benefits of desexing of petsmanaging barking dogsoff lead requirements	Ongoing
Dog Attacks	
Programs with pre-schools to ensure parents and children have access to dog behaviour awareness programs and information.	Annual
Review of information on council's website relating to safe/ appropriate behaviour of children round pets, and parental monitoring responsibilities, particularly in relation to dogs.	Ongoing
Patrols of public places such as reserves, retail precincts, trails etc., particularly during high use times such as community events	Ongoing
Information provided at 'Pets in the Park' annual event	Annual
Information available at council offices and council website	Ongoing
Media releases – Information about owner responsibilities relating to the control of dogs in public places	Annual

Current Education /Promotion Activities	
Actions	Frequency Damp
Managing Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Dog Breeds	
Assessment of all restricted breed, menacing and dangerous dogs and associated properties to ensure compliance with requirements	Annual
Review of registration and microchip databases to identify possible / suspect 'restricted breed dogs	Annual
Consultation with owners of dogs declared as 'dangerous', 'menacing' and/or are a 'restricted breed' dog	Ongoing
Information provided at 'Pets in the Park' annual event about: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the implications of owning a restricted breed, dangerous or menacing dogpreventative measures	Annual
Information provided on council website as to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">the appropriate housing of 'dangerous', 'menacing' and/or a 'restricted breed' dogappropriate selection of dogs for the family and community environment	Ongoing
Overpopulation (including euthanasia) and Abandonment of Pets	
Information in council Newsletter	Annual
Information handed out at Pet Expo	Annual
Information to encourage pet owners to desex cats and dogs	Ongoing – council website
Domestic Animal Businesses	
Provision of written material provided by state government at council offices	Annual
Information on council's website to support DABs comply with relevant legislation and best practice	Ongoing
Provision for Dogs Off Lead	
Monitoring of dog off lead areas for compliance	Annual-targeted monitoring
Monitoring of community events and high use areas	As required

4. Procedures

Documented procedures relating to the following are in place:

- impounding of Animals
- wandering animals
- stock wandering/pick up
- dog attack/rush
- pound operations
- impounding of seized dogs
- animal registration and renewal
- barking dogs
- seizing of dogs
- dog attack prosecution investigation
- issuing of Infringements notices
- permit application – excess animals
- working in isolation – rangers.

5. Service Plans

- Emergency Management Animal Welfare Plan.

