



BRIMBANK
CITY COUNCIL

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership

This Domestic Animal Management Plan was adopted by Brimbank City Council on 27 November 2007.

The plan outlines strategies to effectively manage dogs and cats in the municipality for the next three year period.

The plan has been developed in accordance with section 68A of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994.



Plans

BRIMBANK

Executive Summary

The State Government has amended provisions of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 to improve animal management in municipalities.

Specifically three amendments are noted:

1. Section 68A of the Act requires Council to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan for a 3 year period.
2. Section 10A of the Act provides for Council if it so chooses, to make a resolution that after a specified date it would not register or renew the registration of a dog or cat unless the dog or cat has been desexed or is exempted under the Act from any requirement to be desexed.
3. Section 10D of the Act provides for Council if it so chooses, to exempt a class of dog or cat from any requirement to be implanted with a prescribed permanent identification device (microchip) for the purposes of the renewal of registration unless the dog or cat was exempted under the Act from any requirement to be implanted with a microchip.

Animal shelters across Victoria have had 48,000 cats and kittens surrendered or impounded in the past year, and of these 30,000 were euthanised (62.5%). Of the 21,740 dogs the RSPCA and the Lost Dogs' Home have handled in the past year, 7,379 have been euthanised (34%).

The development and implementation of a Domestic Animal Management Plan for the municipality and the state legislative amendments will:

- improve animal management in general;
- increase the likelihood of implanted animals being reunited with their owners;
- reduce the high numbers of cats and dogs being handed in or brought in to animal shelters; and
- reduce the high numbers of cats and dogs having to be euthanised annually.

Expectations

The successful development and implementation of this plan will:

1. Develop formalised processes
2. Include the community in consultation
3. Raise community awareness
4. Increase Council awareness
5. Increase Council support for animal management
6. Address training needs for Authorised Officers
7. Improve animal management
8. Address animal welfare issues



Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership



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...it's easier to reunite you with your dog or cat when it's microchipped...

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THIS PLAN

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (DAMP)

The State Government has amended provisions of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 to further improve animal management. Councils in Victoria are now required by legislation to prepare and implement a domestic animal management plan.

The purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to improve animal management in general. The plan also aims to increase the likelihood of animals being reunited with their owners and reduce the high numbers of cats and dogs being handed in or brought in to animal shelters and consequently reduce the high numbers of cats and dogs having to be euthanised annually.

The process of developing the Domestic Animal Management Plan also gives the community and stakeholders an opportunity to express their views on matters relating to animal management and on this occasion the community sentiment towards the compulsory micro-chipping and desexing of all dogs and cats.

Section 68A of the Act requires a Domestic Animal Management Plan to:

1. Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council are adequate and comply with the requirements of the Act.
2. Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act.
3. Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats.
4. Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.
5. Address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.
6. Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.
7. Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.
8. 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 the Act.

Section 10A of the Act provides for Council if it so chooses, to make a resolution that after a specified date it would not register or renew the registration of a dog or cat unless the dog or cat has been desexed or is exempted under the Act from any requirement to be desexed.

Numerous animal welfare organisations (11 in total) and the Human Society for Animal Welfare have formed the Cat Crisis Coalition Group to address the problem and have written and contacted Councils and key stakeholders to support the introduction of compulsory desexing of dogs and cats.

Section 10D of the Act provides for Council if it so chooses, to exempt a class of dog or cat from any requirement to be implanted with a prescribed permanent identification device (microchip) for the purposes of the renewal of registration unless the dog or cat was exempted under the Act from any requirement to be implanted with a microchip.

Exemptions are not to apply to a dangerous dog or restricted breed dogs. However, the following dogs and cats do not have to be desexed to be registered or to have their registration renewed:

- a dog or cat that is used for breeding purposes in connection with a business;
- an animal that is registered with an applicable organisation;
- a dangerous dog that is kept as a guard dog for non-residential premises;
- a dangerous dog that has undergone protection training in accordance with any relevant Code of Practice made under section 59;
- a dog or cat that is the subject of written veterinary advice that the health of the dog or cat is liable to be significantly prejudiced if it is desexed or microchipped.

Goals and Objectives

1. To involve the community and key stakeholders in a prescribed communication process that aims to gauge the community's expectations in relation to a proposed Domestic Animal Management Plan.
2. To involve the community and key stakeholders in a prescribed communication process that aims to measure the community attitude to the proposals of compulsory micro-chipping and desexing of dogs and cats.



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1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THIS PLAN

On 24 October 2006 Council passed a resolution to consult with the broader community and stakeholders to seek their views on compulsory micro-chipping and desexing of dogs and cats in general giving those consulted an opportunity to contribute to the development of a Domestic Animal Management Plan.

The consultation process occurred in early 2007 and included:

- Advertisements in local papers seeking submissions and input;
- Advertisements in Victorian Government Gazette;
- Advertisements in Council's Customer Services Centres and on the internet;
- Conducting a consultative workshop;
- Seek the views of dog and cat clubs, associations, other interested groups and Vets located in the municipality inviting their submissions and input;
- Surveying people at Dog Clubs, Dog Obedience Schools and a random selection of people;
- Conducting a phone survey of 150 residents;
- Setting up an On-Line poll voting on the internet home page (YES/NO);
- Seeking input from other Council Departments;
- Benchmarking with other Councils.

The results of the consultation with the community, discussions with animal management groups, together with investigations undertaken by Council staff form the basis for the development of the plan.

Giving regard to the process thus far a draft Domestic Animal Management Plan has been formulated and will be released in August or September for public scrutiny.

Interested members of the community will then be invited to make a written submission; those having made a submission will have a further opportunity to present their views to the General Purpose Advisory Committee for final consideration.

Council having considered the community views, reports from council officers and final submissions will adopt by resolution the final draft of the Domestic Animal Management Plan as a working document.

1.3 THE BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL – DEMOGRAPHIC AND COUNCIL PROFILE

The City of Brimbank has an area of 123 square kilometres. It is the second largest municipality in Melbourne and the largest in the Western Region.

Brimbank is a dynamic and rapidly growing city which encompasses 25 new and established suburbs including Albion, Cairnlea, Deer Park, Delahey, Hillside, Keilor, Kings Park, St Albans, Sunshine, Sydenham and Taylors Lakes.

In 2007, following more than a decade of rapid growth the population has grown to more than 175,000 and is estimated to increase to 200,766 by the year 2015.

Brimbank prides itself on its cultural diversity. Some 40 per cent of Brimbank residents were born overseas and about 54 per cent speak a language other than English. Brimbank has embraced the cultures of more than 96 nationalities from around the globe.

The employment status of the population is an important indicator of the socio-economic status of an area. The unemployment rate in the Brimbank municipality is considerably higher than the Melbourne statistical division. The reasons being that Brimbank includes a comparatively larger share of the population aged 18-24, who often have higher unemployment rates than older workers (25-59) and a smaller proportion of the population with educational qualifications.

The City has thriving residential developments, particularly in the north-west growth areas of Sydenham and Taylors Lakes. There is a range of high quality housing options, ranging from entry level right through to prime housing.

Brimbank also boasts strong industrial and commercial developments and offers a complete range of educational, recreational and community facilities.



1.4 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA

BIS Shrapnel estimated in 1998 / 1999 that:

(BIS Shrapnel provided a report to the Department of Primary Industries)

- 40% of households owned one or more dogs at a rate of 1.44 dogs/household; and
- 26% of households owned one or more cats at a rate of 1.47 cats/household.

Therefore, the calculation for the Brimbank municipality with approximately 65,000 residential dwellings is:

*Estimated Dog Population:
 $(40/100 \times 65,000) \times 1.44 \text{ dogs} = 37,440 \text{ dogs}$

**Estimated Cat Population:
 $(26/100 \times 65,000) \times 1.47 \text{ cats} = 24,843 \text{ cats}$

Brimbank City Council – Key Statistics	Brimbank City Council	Like Councils Average	State Average
Population	175,000	135,000- 228,000	n/a
Area	123 sq kilometres	n/a	n/a
No. of EFT Authorised Officers (Animal Control)	3.0	4.25	n/a
Hours training per officer annually	24 hours		n/a
No. of Registered Dogs (% registered)	17,898 (40%)	11,803 (69%)	(64%)
Estimated Dog (owned) Population*	37,440	n/a	n/a
No. of Registered Cats (% registered)	4592 (15%)	4,604(44%)	(41%)
Estimated Cat (owned) Population**	24,843	n/a	n/a
No. of Registered Declared Dogs	102	n/a	n/a
Infringements/number of dogs and cats registered	2.64%	1.91%	1.99%
No. of Successful Prosecutions	25	27	33
No. of complaints (dogs) per 1,000 households	27	54	34
No. of complaints (cats) per 1,000 households	11	36	6
Average number of dogs picked up daily	5.0	3.9	n/a
Average number of cats picked up daily	6.2	5.1	n/a
No. of impoundments (dogs) per 1,000 households	22.3	14.5	11.2
%. of dogs returned to owner	31%	54%	55%
%. of dogs rehoused	21%	10%	13%
%. of dogs euthanased	48%	36%	32%
No. of impoundments (cats) per 1,000 households	27.5	10.7	6.0
No. of cats returned to owner	4%	8%	10%
No. of cats rehoused	4%	10%	15%
No. of cats euthanased	92%	82%	75%
Dog attacks as % of registered dogs	0.39	0.65	1.28

...communicate with the broader community and stakeholders to seek their views...

**1.5 BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL –
ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STAFFING AND ORGANISATION STRUCTURE**

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Council

Chief Executive Officer

General Manager City
Development & Statutory Services

Manager
Community Regulations

Animal Management

Staffing

Manager 0.24

Team Leader 0.25

Administration 1.0

Animal Management Officers 3.0

Total Employed Full Time Staff 4.5



1.6 CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES – SERVICE LEVELS

Animal Management Officers (AMO) deal with a broad range of issues associated with the management of domestic animals in our community. They include:

- providing advice to the community and other relevant departments on animal matters;
- dealing with customer complaints;
- educating residents and promoting responsible pet ownership;
- maintaining an animal refuge to the required standard;
- maintaining an animal register;
- providing a daily collection of strays, unwanted and feral dogs and cats;
- undertaking random door knocks;
- dogs access to public places;
- dog attacks;
- providing an after-hours emergency service;
- inspection of pet shops, kennels, dangerous and restricted breed dog premises for compliance with legislation;
- ensuring Council fulfils its legislative duty. Council recognises that pets are integral to many people's lives and is actively looking for ways to support pet owners and harness the recognised health and social benefits of pet ownership.

Program/Service	Service Level
Identification and Registration	17,898 dogs registered 4,592 cats registered
Identification and Registration- doorknock campaigns	1 yearly (6 week random program)
Domestic animal complaints	1,526 during business hours. 183 after-hours
Dangerous Dogs complaints	Response within 30 minutes
Routine Street patrols	Daily in course of normal duties
After-hours service	respond to wandering stock, injured animals and dog attacks
School information sessions on responsible pet ownership	6 p.a. (as requested)
Cat Cages	distributed to 260 locations per year
Microchipping day	6,839 dogs/cats are currently microchipped. Initially two microchipping sessions per week were held in July. Subsequently two sessions per month for the months of August, September and October.
Domestic Animal Management Implementation Committee	Manager has been appointed to the State Government committee dealing with animal legislation matters.

...help us to help you by registering your dog or cat...

1.7 RESULTS OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION AND RESEARCH

The purpose of the consultation was to seek information and gauge community expectations to assist Council to prepare this Domestic Animal Management Plan and to also measure the community attitude to compulsory microchipping and desexing of dogs and cats.

In early 2007 Council commenced the consultation process with numerous animal welfare organisations including the Human Society for Animal Welfare (Cat Crisis Coalition Group) the Lost Dogs' Home, dog and cat clubs or associations, individual dog and cat owners, animal businesses, dog and cat breeders and the community in general.

Additional research was also undertaken by reviewing current literature, discussing animal issues with other relevant departments, and benchmarking with other Councils.

It is estimated that Brimbank City Council has a high rate of pet ownership but a low rate of registration and Council Officers are finding it increasingly necessary to acknowledge and address a range of problems stemming from the number of dogs and cats in the community.

There is considerable concern about the extent of the problems caused by irresponsible pet owners and the amount of regulatory control that is required to manage these issues.

Research indicates that there is substantial concern with dogs being at large with 82% of respondents indicating that they were concerned with dog aggression in public places. The next major concern was the number of abandoned pets. The least concern was expressed for dogs being exercised in off-leash areas.

While most serious dog attacks occur in the home, the sheer frequency of dog aggression incidents in public places is enough to trigger community concern. A survey conducted by the Victorian Bureau of Animal Management found that 80% of dog attacks in public places were due to dogs not being adequately confined to the property, with most incidents occurring on the footpath or road bordering the attacking dog's property.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environment undertook a survey of complaints received by animal management departments of Victorian councils and found that of 1,846 cat complaints received over a period of one year 81% of these related to the issue of cats trespassing on private property, 14% related to cat faeces in gardens and playground areas, 4% cats breaching council orders and 2% cats attacking other animals. A total of 16,367 dog complaints were received by Councils with 62% relating to dogs at large, 27% barking dogs, 3% dog faeces, 3% dogs rushing or attacking, 3% dogs in breach of a Council Order and 2% relating to dog fighting.

The most common complaint received by Council's Community Regulations Department and which causes significant distress in the community is that of barking dogs. Although the investigation of these complaints is time consuming Council has developed a list of remedial actions that can be provided to overcome the problem in the majority of cases this may include mediation provided by the Dispute Settlement Centre.

On a positive note the survey shows that there are less cats and dogs roaming the streets now than there were five years ago.

Council also undertook a survey to gauge the community expectation and attitude to various issues. The survey was based on a survey conducted for the Department of Animal Welfare by Neva Van De Kuyt. This was done to make some base comparisons about attitudes of Brimbank residents with the broader Melbourne community. This formed the basis of a general survey, a phone survey and a web survey.

The comparison showed that attitudes of Brimbank residents are not that dissimilar to the attitudes of the broader Melbourne community. A summary of the survey results and comparisons is attached as Appendix B.

In these surveys four specific questions were asked. They were:

1. Do you think it should be a requirement that all other dogs in the community be permanently identified with microchips?
74% of respondents answered yes, 17% answered no, and 9% were undecided.
2. Do you think it should be a requirement that all other cats in the community are permanently identified with microchips?
74% of respondents answered yes, 16% answered no, and 10% were undecided.
3. Do you think it should be a requirement that all dogs in the community are desexed?
56% of respondents answered yes, 26% answered no, and 18% were undecided.
4. Do you think it should be a requirement that all cats in the community are desexed?
70% of respondents answered yes, 16% answered no, and 14% were undecided.



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2.0 THE BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL KEY ISSUES

The key issues that form the basis of this plan have been developed from:

1. Discussion with members of the Animal Management team and other relevant Council officers;
2. Comments noted at a public forum;
3. Consultation with animal business, animal clubs and the community in general;
4. Correspondence received from animal welfare organisations specifically the:
 - Department of Primary Industry (Bureau of Animal Welfare);
 - Lost Dogs' Home;
 - Cat Coalition Crisis Centre;
 - Veterinary Association Australia;
 - RSPCA Victoria.
5. Benchmarking with other Councils; and
6. Investigations and analysis of available existing data.



2.1 RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP (SPECIFICALLY PROSPECTIVE AND NEW PET OWNERS)

Education is now integral to animal management. However to be successful, education programs need to be carefully designed and targeted. Council considers that the focus of the education program should be targeted at prospective and new pet owners.

The Department of Animal Welfare operates education programs and activities on a state wide basis however it is proposed that Council build on these programs and develop its own education programs to reflect local priorities and to include local animal businesses, veterinarians and sales outlets.

The objectives of the responsible pet ownerships will be to ensure and encourage new and prospective pet owners to:

- consider the responsibilities of pet ownership before obtaining a pet;
- select a breed that is appropriate to their lifestyle and home environment;
- consider obtaining a pet from the Lost Dogs' Home or the RSPCA;
- identify and register their pets;
- vaccinate their pet;
- desex their pet;
- socialise their pet around other humans and animals;
- undertake appropriate obedience training;
- provide an appropriate home environment;
- confine their pet to their property; and
- exercise their dog.

*...our aim is to have all
dogs and cats in the
municipality registered...*

2.2 DESEXING DOGS AND CATS

All dogs and cats unless specifically exempt under the Act are not required to be desexed unless they are a restricted breed dog. The state government has introduced legislation that Councils may by Order require all dogs and cats in the municipality to be desexed other than those exempt.

Numerous animal welfare organisations (11 in total) and the Human Society for Animal Welfare have formed the Cat Crisis Coalition Group to address the problem and have written and contacted Councils and key stakeholders to support the introduction of compulsory desexing of dogs and cats.

Local survey results show that the majority of the community support the compulsory desexing of dogs and cats.

The State Government in recognition of these facts has amended the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 Section 10A to provide for Council if it so chooses, to make a resolution that after a specified date it would not register or renew the registration of a dog or cat unless the dog or cat has been desexed or is exempted under the Act from any requirement to be desexed.

There are specific exemptions for cats and dogs used as part of a registered domestic animal breeding establishment or if the owner is a current member and the animal is registered with an Applicable Organisation ie: Victorian Canine Association, Feline Control Council (Victoria), a working dog or a particular animal on medical grounds.

2.3 MICROCHIPPING CATS AND DOGS

All dogs and cats unless specifically exempt must be microchipped.

Local survey results show that the majority of the community support the compulsory retrospective microchipping of all dogs and cats. Legislation requires all new dogs and cats being registered for the first time to be microchipped.

Council has the ability by resolution to introduce an Order requiring all dogs and cats in the municipality to be retrospectively microchipped other than those registered after the 1 May 2007 who must be microchipped prior to registration.

The State Government has amended the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 Section 10D to provide for Council if it so chooses, to exempt a class of dog or cat from any requirement to be implanted with a prescribed permanent identification device (microchip) for the purposes of the renewal of registration unless the dog or cat was exempted under the Act from any requirement to be implanted with a microchip.

2.4 DOG ATTACKS

This is a critical Animal Management role. It is generally thought that dog attacks occur predominantly in and around the family home including the pavement in front of the home.

All dog owners should be encouraged to confine their dogs to their property unless they are under effective control and to take their dog to a recognised obedience training school. This introduces basic training which helps the owner to understand his or her responsibilities and importantly helps with socialisation of the dog and minimises aggressive tendencies.

Council adopted an Order that requires all dogs to be on a lead at all times when in the community other than in a designated off lead area. Animal Management Officers place a high importance on dogs being on leads and dogs being confined to their property to minimise risk exposure to the community.

Regular exercise including exercise in off leash areas is important for reducing the incidence of aggression in dogs and also helps to socialise dogs around other people and dogs.

Residents should be reminded that every dog has the capacity to bite. Children should be supervised around dogs at all times. Dog owners should be made aware of the potential implications for their dog if it bites.

All school children in the municipality can receive instruction in how to behave around dogs through the Bureau of Animal Welfare Responsible Pet Schools program or the schools contacting Council. This is particularly important for children who don't have any experience with dogs. Council staff presently visit schools on a regular basis in conjunction with the Responsible Pet School Program to provide instruction in dog behaviour.

Council procedures for dealing with dog attacks and menacing dog complaints have proven to be effective.

...owners are encouraged to confine their dogs to their property unless they are under effective control...

2.5 CONFINEMENT OF CATS AND THE PREVENTION OF DOGS WANDERING AT LARGE

Dogs that wander at large contribute to a significant proportion of dog management problems and essentially the majority of dog attacks are the result of inadequate confinement.

Council has procedures for dealing with complaints about dogs wandering at large. Dog owners are encouraged to maintain fencing. Design guidelines for pet-friendly housing and fencing are available and promoted by Council to promote confinement.

Cats that wander are potential nuisance to others and potentially contribute to the pool of unwanted litters.

Council has established procedures for dealing with complaints about cats. The existing cat trap procedures are based on current best practice principals. However, it is proposed to review these procedures to improve the turn around time for cages and make more effective use of the cat traps.

2.6 CAT MANAGEMENT – FERAL AND SEMI OWNED CATS

Cats that are wandering at large annoy neighbours and may be harmed by cars and other cats. If they are not desexed, cats can also contribute to the population of stray and feral cats.

Cat owners need to be encouraged to be responsible pet owners rather than semi owners who feed their cats but take no further responsibility for the cat. This practice escalates overpopulation of cats and cats becoming feral.

A strong education focus of the DAMP will be to encourage people to desex, identify and confine their cats. The education program will provide a foundation for the possible future introduction of cat controls.

The Department of Animal Welfare will introduce education programs and activities on a state wide basis to deal with feral and semi owned cats during the next twelve months. It is Council's intention to build on these programs and develop local education programs and target local situations.

2.7 THE WELFARE OF DOGS AND CATS

The number of animals impounded every year remains high. Many are returned or re-homed but many also need to be put down. The number of animals impounded is a function of:

- unwanted litters;
- lost animals (unidentified and/or unregistered animals that cannot be returned to their owners);
- relinquished and/or unclaimed animals; and
- the ability to confine pets to their property.

The number of animals put down each year is extremely

high as a result of a very low reclaimed or rehoused rate for cats in particular. The reasons for this are:

- pets being unable to be returned to their owners;
- pets being unable to be re-homed with new owners (this in turn is a function of the number of people willing to adopt an animal from a shelter and the temperament and ability of the animal to be re-homed);
- Overpopulation.

Council believes responsible pet ownership is fundamental to animal welfare as a dog or cat is a pet for life.

2.8 COMMUNITY SAFETY

There needs to be a balance between the rights of animal owners and the rights and safety of others. Many incidents of attacking, rushing, barking and menacing are not reported. Some adults and children are afraid of dogs; others are not sure if a dog is friendly or not, while others wish to be free of interference from other people's dogs.

Community safety is a paramount consideration in the operation of this plan. A specific education program will be undertaken to inform residents of Council's Order which requires all dogs to be on a leash in public places other than designated off leash areas followed by an enforcement program.

2.9 BARKING DOGS

Barking dog complaints have increased in recent years with the rising incidence of pets being left alone during the day, increases in housing density and declining levels of tolerance generally.

Excessive barking is caused by but not limited to:

- Separation anxiety
- Boredom
- External stimuli (e.g. passers by, other dogs barking, cats)
- Territorialism (visitors to the property)
- Communication

Often the owner is not at home to hear or stop excessive barking.

Council has procedures for dealing with barking dog complaints including a checklist and flow chart of procedures to follow and forms officers use to complete the investigations. It is considered that the procedures are effective in dealing with this issue. New procedures and equipment will be investigated and introduced when available.

2.10 PROMOTE SOCIALISATION AND DOG TRAINING

As part of being a responsible pet owner puppy socialisation and dog obedience training should be encouraged and promoted through local obedience training schools.

2.11 PROMOTION OF DOGS OFF LEASH AREAS

The existing requirement for all dogs to be on a leash at all times in public places is still being accepted by some residents, highlighting the need to continually promote and advertise the designated off leash areas and encourage responsible pet ownership in the off leash areas.

2.12 REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

All dogs and cats over the age of three months are required to be registered with Council. Comparisons with the Shrapnel Report 1998/99 indicate that Council's registration rate is approximately 60% lower than the estimated rate for the number of households in the municipality. Council is constantly seeking ways to increase the ratio of dogs and cats that are registered to the number that are not registered and comply with State Government legislation.

To increase registrations and identification of animals Council proposes to:

- undertake a multilingual advertising campaign to promote the benefits of animal registration;
- establish procedures for domestic animal businesses to notify Council of any animals sold or given away as required by Section 13 of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994;
- undertake an animal audit by door knocking all premises in the municipality;
- examine the introduction of an annual Pet Expo in the municipality; and
- review the current animal registration fees to encourage registrations.

3.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

3.1 THE BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL VISION

We want Brimbank to be a vibrant, culturally diverse City, caring for all and building for a sustainable future.

3.2 THE BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Council Plan 2006-2010 details how we will work together with our community to realise that vision of a culturally diverse and an economically and environmentally sustainable City through achievements against our strategic objectives. Council has set the following six Strategic Objectives for the next four years and it is committed to working with the community:

- 1. Governing Responsibly:** We will demonstrate leadership, good governance and transparency in decision-making.

- 2. Community Wellbeing:** We will encourage the health, wellbeing and safety of our community.
- 3. Responsible Financial Management:** We will prudently manage financial resources to meet the current needs of our community and those of future generations.
- 4. Organisational Effectiveness:** We will deliver services efficiently and effectively representing value for money.
- 5. Long Term Sustainability:** We will protect and enhance the natural and built environment for future generations.
- 6. Manage Innovatively and Progressively:** We will strive for excellence by reviewing services, improving processes, measuring results and enhancing technology.

There are many challenges ahead for the Council. It will have to make some hard decisions to ensure that the organisation remains financially viable, balancing the community's expectation for improved services with the need to invest in its assets for future generations. Demonstrating leadership and good governance.

3.3 THE CORE PURPOSE OF THE BRIMBANK CITY COUNCIL'S ANIMAL MANAGEMENT SERVICES ARE:

Firstly, to recognise that pets are integral to the lives of many people and recognise the health and social benefits associated with pet ownership.

Secondly, to inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible pet ownership;

Thirdly, to ensure that the sentiment of the wider community is reflected through Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan; and

Finally, to secure the safety and well being of members of our community including the animals.

On a day to day basis Council is required to provide an animal management service to ensure that animals do not denigrate the amenity and community safety of the municipality. Council is required to respond to public queries, provide advice to residents and provide enforcement of relevant Acts, Regulations and Local Laws. This service includes:

Animal Registration – Council is responsible for identifying and registering all dogs, cats and domestic animal businesses within the municipality.

Provision of Animal Pound Facilities - Council is responsible for providing animal pound facilities for impounded dogs, cats and livestock.

Investigate Domestic Animal Complaints – Council is responsible for responding to complaints about domestic animals.

Enforcement – Council is responsible for issuing and duly recording infringement notices in instances where complaints are not addressed or resolved in accordance with the relevant legislation, to ensure all relevant legislation and local laws are complied with.

Infringement Notice Appeals Process – Council is responsible for providing an infringement notice appeals process to enable assessment of applications for the withdrawal of notices resulting in the withdrawal of non-valid notices.

Statutory Obligation – Council must comply with the following Acts and Regulations:

- Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994;
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1994;
- Magistrates Court Civil Procedures Rules 1989;
- Pound Act 1958;
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1994; and
- Infringements Act 2005.

Guidelines and Standards applicable to the required service:

- Code of Practice for the Management of Animals in Shelters and Pounds;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet Shops;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Establishments;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Boarding Establishments;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Dog training Establishments; and
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Greyhound Establishments.



4.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

Council has undertaken the development of its Domestic Animal Management Plan in accordance with the template provide by the Bureau of Animal Welfare.

4.1 ANIMAL MANAGEMENT OFFICER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Council's objective is to ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work.

Council's current AMO Training and Development activities include:

- Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation;
- Animal handling training; and
- Dealing with Aggressive Customers and personal safety training.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Encourage officers to undertake and complete Certificate IV training;
- Animal management and handling training;
- Conduct training in animal shelter management;
- Ongoing training in dealing with the community; and
- Authorisation to implant microchips.

4.2 ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP – COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The objective is to encourage people to manage pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

Council's current and ongoing education activities and programs aimed at promoting responsible pet ownership include:

- Education - media and pamphlets;
- Microchipping days;
- Attending at schools and pre-schools in conjunction with the Responsible Schools Pet Ownership Program or as requested by schools / pre schools;
- Responsible pet ownership art work on animal rescue vehicles.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Ongoing media campaigns including Council's publication 'Around Brimbank';
- Brochures supplied by the Bureau of Animal Welfare made available at Customer Service Centres and from officers;

- Develop publication in other languages;
- Ongoing microchipping program;
- Promote responsible pet ownership program not only to schools and preschools but also to the community;
- Promote responsible pet ownership program through local animal businesses, veterinarians and sales outlets; and
- Ongoing artwork on animal rescue vehicles.

4.3 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Council's objective is to maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals. Current identification and registration activities include:

- Annual door knock.
- Random door knocking through out the year.
- Media campaign focusing on registrations.
- Participate in state government pet registration incentive scheme.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Undertake a multilingual advertising campaign to promote the benefits of animal registration;
- Establish procedures for domestic animal businesses to notify Council of any animals sold or given away as required by Section 13 of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994;
- Undertake an animal audit by door knocking all premises in the municipality;
- Examine the introduction of an annual Pet Expo in the municipality; and
- Review the current animal registration fees to encourage registrations.

4.4 COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT – LOCAL LAWS AND ORDERS

Council's objective is to achieve its core purpose in animal management by implementing and enforcing domestic animal laws, orders and regulations.

Council's current enforcement activities include:

- Current Council Order for Off Leash Areas made on the 24 May 2005;
- Number of animals permitted per household without a permit;
- Fencing requirements in Council's local law;
- Requirement for dogs to be on a leash except in designated off leash areas.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Review dog off leash areas for compliance and community needs.

- Monitor compliance of dogs on leash in public areas.
- Review local law requirements.

4.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

Council's objective is to work in partnership with domestic animal businesses to achieve its core purpose in animal management.

Council currently has 11 registered Domestic Animal Businesses.

Council's programs/activities working with these businesses include annual checks for compliance with the relevant Codes of Practice.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Establish procedures for domestic animal businesses to notify Council of any animals sold or given away as required by Section 13 of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994.
- Training in animal shelter management.
- Look at the possibility of workshops with domestic animal business owner/ operators to improve compliance and promote responsible pet ownership.

4.6 DECLARED DOGS

Objective is to minimise the risks of dog attacks to the community from dangerous dogs.

Brimbank City Council currently has 62 declared dangerous dogs and 46 restricted breed dogs. Programs/activities aimed at minimising the risk to the broader community from declared dangerous, restricted breed and menacing dogs. This includes undertaking inspections of non residential areas to identify dogs on premises and follow up inspections of current known dangerous/restricted breed dogs for continued compliance with legislative requirements.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

- Actively patrol all commercial and industrial areas to identify dogs on premises;
- Ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry;
- Ensure all declared dangerous/restricted breed dogs premises are audited once a year for compliance with legislative requirements.

...minimising the risk to the broader community from declared dangerous, restricted breed...

5.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION

5.1 OUR PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATIONS PROCESS

Council will monitor the performance of the animal management services that is detailed in this plan by reporting monthly through Council's established reporting and quality systems.

Specific outcomes will also be reported in Council's Annual Report



5.2 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

KPIs: (indicative)	Target	Current
1. Dog Registration rate: (% Dogs registered/estimated dog population*)	+5%	15,248
2. Cat Registration rate: (% cats registered/estimated cat population**)	+5%	4,220
3. Enforcement Success Rate: (% successful prosecutions/total prosecutions)	100%	100%
4. Dog Complaints: (Number of dog complaints per 1,000 population)	15.0	17.71
5. Cat Complaints: (Number of cat complaints per 1,000 population)	10.0	11.26
6. Dog Attacks: (Number of dog attacks causing injury per 1,000 population)	0.0	0.5
7. Dog Rehousing Rate: (% total dogs rehoused/total dogs impounded)	50%	21%
8. Cat Rehousing Rate: (% total cats rehoused/total cats impounded)	15%	3%
9. Cat Reclaim Rate: (% total cats reclaimed/total cats impounded)	15%	!%
10. Cat Euthanasia Rate: (% total cats euthanased / total cats impounded)	50%	94%
11. Declared dog Compliance Rates: (Number declared/number complaint/number of audits)	0.0003189	
12. Domestic Animal Business Compliance Rates: (Number registered/Number compliant/Number of audits)	100%	100%

5.3 REVIEW CYCLE/DATE FOR THIS PLAN

The DAMP will be reviewed on a quarterly basis by the animal management team. Should there be any issues that fall out of those reviews they will be reported to the General Manager of the division.

As stated previously the reporting is undertaken in Council's performance monitoring program on a monthly basis.



Appendix A: ACTION PLAN

NEW INITIATIVES/PROGRAM/ SERVICE or OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE	WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Initiative 1 - Responsible pet ownership (Specifically prospective and new pet owners)	Ongoing media campaigns including Council's publication Around Brimbank; Brochures supplied by the Bureau of Animal Welfare made available at Customer service Centres and from officers; Develop publication in other languages; Ongoing microchipping program; Promote responsible pet ownership program not only to schools and preschools but also to the community; Ongoing artwork on animal rescue vehicles.	Manager	2007-2010	\$7,000
Initiative 2 - Desexing cats and dogs	Resolution by Council	Council	November 2007	Nil
Initiative 3 - Microchipping cats and dogs	Resolution by Council	Council	November 2007	Nil
Initiative 4 - Dog attacks	Continued promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership Program. Ongoing prosecution. Utilise the local media to report the outcomes of prosecutions to the broader community.	Manager	2007-2010	Existing procedures and associated costs
Initiative 5 - Confinement of cats and the prevention of dogs wandering at large.	Continued promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership Program. Encourage dog and cat owner confine their animals to their property. Review cat cage procedures	Manager	2008	\$3,000
Initiative 6 - Cat management – feral and semi owned cats	Continued promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership Program. To encourage those persons who feed /look after cats to take full responsibility and become responsible pet owners.	Manager	2008	\$3,000
Initiative 7 - The welfare of dogs and cats	To promote the health and wellbeing of cats and dogs throughout the municipality	Manager	2007-2010	Nil
Initiative 8 - Community safety	Making sure that the community become responsible pet owners thereby enhancing the safety of streets and parks by dogs being on leash and effective control in off leash areas.	Manager	2008	\$8,000
Initiative 9 - Barking dogs	Education of the community on the issue of barking dogs which generally results from dogs becoming bored in its environment. Existing quality procedure is in place to deal with these issues. This may include involving the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria.		2008	\$1,250
Initiative 10 - Promote socialisation and dog training	As part of being a responsible pet owner puppy socialisation and dog obedience training will be encouraged. Training brochures for these activities are available from Council.	Manager	2007-2010	Nil

NEW INITIATIVES/PROGRAM/ SERVICE or OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE	WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Initiative 11 - Promotion of dogs off leash areas	Review dog off leash areas for compliance and community needs. Monitor compliance of dogs on leash in public areas. Review local law requirements.	Manager	2007-2010	Nil
Initiative 12 - Registration and identification	Undertake a multilingual advertising campaign to promote the benefits of animal registration. Establish procedures for domestic animal businesses to notify Council of any animals sold or given away. Undertake an animal audit by door knocking all premises in the municipality. Examine the introduction of an annual Pet Expo in the municipality. Review the current animal registration fees to encourage registrations.	Manager	2008	1.0 EFT to undertake audit or backfill while AMO are undertaking this work. Plus 0.25 eft for admin. Income \$150,000 less \$75,000 cost.
Initiative 13 - Conduct Animal Management Officer Training	Encourage officers to undertake and complete Certificate IV training. Animal management and handling training; Conduct training in animal shelter management; Ongoing training in dealing with the community and Authorisation to implant microchips.	Manager	2008	\$12,000
Initiative 14 - Monitor performance and evaluate the effectiveness of services.	Council existing reporting systems and the Council Annual Business Plan.	Manager	Nil	Nil

...our Animal Management Officers work to ensure healthy pets, happy owners and a safe, secure community...

Appendix B: SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Summary of Community Survey and Expectations

Questions	Attitude of Brimbank Residents	Attitude of Melbourne Residents in General
How concerned are you about the following issues relating to dogs and cats?		
Number of abandoned pets	91% strongly	73% strongly
Dogs aggression in public places	82% strongly	82% strongly
Dogs exercised within off leash areas	52% strongly	27% strongly
Cat trespass on private property	48% strongly	50% strongly
During the last 3 months, how often have you seen a dog wandering in public with no owner?	26% once or twice	42% once or twice
During the last 3 months, how often have you been personally inconvenienced by roaming dog/s?	38% never	57% never
During the last 3 months, how often have you been personally inconvenienced by roaming cat/s on your property?	18% once or twice	20% once or twice
Do you see fewer dogs wandering loose in the streets nowadays compared to five years ago?	36% definitely	46% definitely
What do you think of the following statement: "Dog owners do not control their pets properly"?	21% agreed	23% agreed
What do you think of the following statement: "Cat owners do not control their pets properly"?	22% agreed	26% agreed
Have you used Council's animal management service in the last 12 months?	52% never	n/a
What do you think of your local Council's animal management services?	24% good	36% good
How often have you seen Rangers or Council Animal Management Officers patrolling the streets in your area?	62% never	68% never
What do you think about designated 'leash free areas', in parks or reserves, where dogs can be exercised off leash?	43% very good	35% very good
Do you think it should be a requirement that all other dogs in the community be permanently identified with microchips?	74% yes 17% no 9% undecided	77% yes 13% no 10% undecided
Do you think it should be a requirement that all other cats in the community are permanently identified with microchips?	74% yes 16% no 10% undecided	77% yes 12% no 11% undecided
Do you think it should be a requirement that all dogs in the community are desexed?	56% yes 26% no 18% undecided	n/a n/a n/a
Do you think it should be a requirement that all cats in the community are desexed?	70% yes 16% no 14% undecided	n/a n/a n/a

...registration, microchipping, desexing... being a responsible pet owner...

Comments

Concerned about dogs wandering, barking at night & day, cats roaming causing dogs to bark, dogs left outside, out of control, no lead.

Inconvenienced by dogs barking & yelping, going on garden, on driveway, running in front of car, dogs charging at people.

Inconvenienced by cats digging up lawn, using yard and screaming at night, cats fighting at night, using lawn as toilet, cats annoying dogs.

Didn't know Council had an animal management service, did try to contact Council.

Haven't seen this occur.

Not enough effort or force being used for animal management, should fine more people.

Dogs owners should have leash free areas where they can exercise their dogs. Existing area clashes with non dog owner facilities and dogs cannot be exercise freely. We utilise the local leash free area to exercise our three dogs.

Dogs should be desexed except for licensed breeders.

Dog owners need to look after dogs, keep them on own property.

Education for dog and cat owner should be improved. Council should provide quarterly newsletters specific to pet owners.



Appendix C: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to:

Dr Graeme Smith from Lost Dogs' Home

Ms Carol Webb from Cat Protection Society

Department of Primary Industries (Bureau of Animal Welfare)

Neva Van De Kuyt and her detailed research into the attitudes of Melbourne residents towards the management of dogs and cats in the community.

*...do you care for a cat?
take ownership...*



**Promoting
Responsible
Pet
Ownership**



NOTES



BRIMBANK
CITY COUNCIL

Language Link

9209 0131	Arabic	عربي
9209 0132	Croatian	Hrvatski
9209 0133	Greek	Ελληνικά
9209 0134	Italian	Italiano
9209 0135	Macedonian	Македонски
9209 0136	Serbian	Српски
9209 0137	Spanish	Español
9209 0138	Turkish	Türkçe
9209 0139	Vietnamese	Việt-ngữ
9209 0140	All Other Languages	
9209 0141	English	

FREE SERVICE
(local call costs apply)



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Plans

BRIMBANK