



## FRANKSTON CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING OF THE FRANKSTON CITY COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, FRANKSTON  
ON MONDAY 4 JUNE, 2007 AT 7.02P.M.

PRESENT Cr Aitken (Mayor)  
Cr Hampton  
Cr McCluskey  
Cr Conroy  
Cr McClelland  
Cr Wachendorfer  
Cr Trehitt  
Cr Wardle

APOLOGIES: Cr Wilson

*Officers:* Steve Gawler, Chief Executive Officer  
George Modrich, General Manager Assets  
Mark Brady, General Manager Corporate  
Ossie Martinz, Acting General Manager Development  
Peter Harrison, Acting General Manager Communities  
Libby Anthony, Environment Manager  
Silvia Van Orsouw Marketing Communications Coordinator  
Steve Olesnicky, Finance & Administration Manager

### OPENING WITH PRAYER

At the request of the Mayor, Councillors, officers and members of the gallery stood while Cr Wachendorfer read the Opening Prayer

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Councillor Wardle acknowledged the Boonerwung peoples – the traditional custodians of the land on which we stand and recognised all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who have given to Australia's identity – from the past, into the present and for the future.

### CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council OM156 held on 7 May, 2007 and Extra Ordinary Meeting 156A held on 21 May, 2007 copies of which had previously been circulated to all Councillors, were confirmed, approved and adopted on the motion of Councillors Hampton and Wachendorfer.

Chairperson's initials.....

## Conclusion

The Frankston Waterfront signage strategy is a pedestrian focussed system which has been designed primarily for the Waterfront with connections to the CAD. The system within the waterfront is aimed at directing and guiding pedestrians along and through the waterfront. The sign design is simple, timeless and functional. The sign locations have been chosen based on an analysis of the pedestrian movement and main decision making points with the aim of reducing the number of signs required, ensuring they provide clear and unambiguous information to pedestrians.

## Recommendation (GMD)

That the Frankston Waterfront Signage Strategy be adopted and that funding be referred to future budgets.

**MOVED: CR HAMPTON SECONDED: CR WACHENDORFER**

**THAT THE RECOMMENDATION BE ADOPTED.**

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

## ***PRESERVING AND ENHANCING OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT***

### **1. Responsible Animal Management – De-sexing of Cats and Dogs**

(A392299) (GC:GMD)

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to respond to Notice of Motion Number 524 adopted at the Council Meeting of 21 February 2007,

“That Council Officers undertake an investigation into forming of a local law into compulsory cat de-sexing.

A report to come back to the June Council meeting outlining

- A. What the process for making the local law would be – including a process for community consultation.
- B. Examples of such laws that have been implemented by other Councils and their effectiveness in reducing stray cat populations/destructions.
- C. Environmental, Social and Economic Issues surrounding the compulsory de-sexing of cats.”

#### **Council Plan Objectives**

This proposal is supported by the Council Plan under ‘Preserving and Enhancing Our Natural Environment’, Objective – Education and use of the natural environment and Conservation of native habitat.

Chairperson's initials.....

## Background

The municipalities of Mornington Peninsula Shire and Cardinia have in the past two years implemented local laws to respond to the cat overpopulation issue. This situation was highlighted in advice from the Chief Executive Officer of the RSPCA in March of last year, pointing out that more than 48,000 unwanted cats find their way into shelters in Victoria each year. Of these, 30,000 have to be euthanased.

The need for effective management of cats in the community was first recognised in this State with the introduction of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act in 1996 which required the registering of cats. Council at that time also introduced a curfew on cats requiring them to be secured to the owner's property between the hours of sunset and sunrise. The number of registered cats has risen steadily over the years to some 9,000. This represents in our view perhaps only 50% of the owned cat population. There are probably as many stray cats present in the community.

In responding to the stray cat problem, Council makes available to residents cat traps to respond to the nuisance caused by wandering cats. Sometimes the cats caught are owned and on occasions they will be unowned/stray cats. The number of cats impounded in the municipality during 2006 was 549 and of these 412 were euthanased. In addition, officers have undertaken trapping programs in a number of natural reserves and foreshore areas and generally the experience has been that few have been apprehended, contrary to our perception that large numbers were at large in these locations. Any cats in these areas though present a threat to the local environments.

Recent amendments to the Act now provide that Council develop a Domestic Animal Plan that must address key issues. A desexing strategy must be included in the Plan. The legislation provides that Council may resolve that it will not, after a specified date, register or renew the registration of a cat, or dog, unless the cat or dog is desexed. Provision is available for an exemption to be granted, for example, breeding animals. This provision removes the need for the making of a local law. Furthermore, under the provisions of the Local Government Act relating to local laws, Councils are not permitted to make a local law in the circumstance where State legislation is already in place.

## Issues

The following issues are relevant in considering the opportunities available under the legislation:-

- Should desexing of cats be implemented;
- Should this also apply to dogs; and
- If agreed to, determining an appropriate commencement date.

## Discussion

Having regard to the advice from RSPCA and given the local experience relating to the large number of cats being euthenased, there is benefits to proceed with a desexing strategy. This decision would have environmental and social benefits as referred to later in the report. From an economic perspective, there will be a reduction in the number of complaints received by Council due to less stray animals present in the community. The need to conduct trapping programs will be reduced. Ultimately this will reflect in savings on registration fees.

Chairperson's initials.....

There is also evidence to support the view that the long term health of animals is improved by sterilisation and so animal owners will incur less cost in veterinary fees. Expenses to pound and animal welfare services will also be reduced.

The opportunity to include the sterilising of dogs as a requirement of registration is considered to have merit from a responsible animal management point of view. Sterilised dogs are less aggressive and the nuisance caused by barking and wandering also diminishes with desexing. While more dogs are impounded, the majority are claimed. The experience in 2006 was that 1,444 were impounded and 262 unclaimed. Surprisingly 76% of dogs impounded were not desexed. Introducing the requirement for desexing as a prerequisite to registering will help with this management issue.

If Council was supportive of introducing desexing at the time new applications for registration is undertaken by animal owners, then it is suggested that this be effective from 1 May 2008. This would allow for the development of support services required to respond to the change. This would include the availability of veterinary support services delivered by Council's Animal Pound service provider, the Lost Dogs' Home, at the pound situated at Thompsons Road, in Lyndhurst.

Also, from 1 May this year animal owners registering for the first time were required to have the animal microchipped. This has involved an expense of the order of \$40 to owners to comply with this requirement under the Act. The purpose of microchipping is to assist with identification. To require animal owners to incur another substantial cost at this time may be burden on some owners. Twelve months notice would allow ample opportunity for owners to be prepared to meet this requirement.

**Options Available**

Not to proceed with desexing of cats or dogs

**Financial Implications**

There will be long term benefits to Council in reducing the number of complaints and the destruction of unwanted animals. Council participates in a desexing voucher scheme that operates across the State. This provides for a reduced cost to pet owners who are low income earners and acts as an incentive to have their pets desexed. Through the Desexing voucher scheme the owner pays two thirds of the costs to have their pet desexed and council pays the balance. Since April 2006 to date Council has contributed to the costs for approximately 100 pet owners under the scheme.

**Environmental Implications**

Numbers of cats wandering in natural reserves will be reduced thereby reducing the destruction of flora and fauna.

**Social Implications**

Residents will experience improved amenity with fewer animals causing noise and safety concerns with less aggressive dogs and fewer wandering cats.

Chairperson's initials.....

**Consultation**

Animal welfare agencies, Council’s Animal Management Team and Bureau of Animal Welfare.

**Conclusion**

The opportunity to utilise the provisions of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1996 to require animal owners to de-sex their cats and dogs when completing new applications to register, would provide amenity, safety, environmental and social benefits to the community. Commencement from 1 May 2008 would provide the opportunity for owners, Council and service providers to prepare for the new requirements.

**Recommendation (GMD)**

- A. That in accordance with the provisions of Section 10A of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1996, all new applications to register a cat/dog will require the cat/dog to be desexed, effective 1 May 2008.
- B. That a Communications Plan be developed prior to 1 May 2008 aimed at assisting in the education of pet owners, to the benefits of desexing, including a reduction in fees.

**MOVED: CR WARDLE SECONDED: CR MCCLUSKEY  
THAT THE MATTER BE DEFERRED FOR A BRIEFING AND REVIEW.**

*The meeting was adjourned at 7.43pm.*

*The meeting resumed at 7.58pm.*

*Present: Councillors McClelland, Hampton, McCluskey, Conroy, Aitken, Wachendorfer, Trehitt, Wardle*

**THE DEFERRAL MOTION WAS THEN PUT AND CARRIED**

<i>For the Motion:</i>	<i>Crs Hampton, Aitken, McCluskey, Conroy, Wardle, Wachendorfer</i>
<i>Against the Motion:</i>	<i>Crs McClelland, Trehitt</i>

**2. Commitment to become a Waste Wise Council**

(A400323) (EA:GMD)

**Purpose**

This report outlines the benefits and requirements for becoming a Waste Wise Council and recommends that Council commit to undertaking this certification.

Chairperson’s initials.....