

**Knox City Council**

**Domestic Animal Management Plan**

**2013-2017**

<b>INDEX</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Executive Summary	3
2. Domestic Animal Management Plans	4
3. Introduction	5
4. Training of Authorised Officers	7
5. Registration and Identification	12
6. Nuisance	17
7. Dog Attacks	24
8. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs	28
9. Overpopulation and High Euthanasia	32
10. Domestic Animal Businesses	37
11. Other Matters	39
12. Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting	43
13. Attachments	44

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Knox City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAM Plan) has been developed in line with the legislative requirement that all Councils develop a DAM Plan. The DAM Plan provides in detail the strategies that will be used over the next four years to promote responsible animal management in the municipality.

Broadly the plan outlines eight areas that are the major focus of strategic planning for the team: training of authorised officers; registration and identification; nuisance; dog attacks; dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs; overpopulation and high euthanasia; domestic animal businesses; and, other matters including the Council Order.

The Plan outlines the training authorised officers have completed to date and outlines plans for continuing their training and development.

A key area of focus is nuisance, particularly barking dog concerns. This Plan outlines new strategies that will provide significant improvements in how a barking dog complaint is managed and investigated.

Each year numerous dogs and cats are collected and impounded and are not reclaimed by their owner. The plan identifies initiatives to minimise the euthanasia rate of dogs and cats by ensuring this is embedded in the Council pound contract, when next tendered.

Dog and cat registration remain a major priority in this plan and a number of initiatives are in place to ensure an increase in registration rates.

The plan also identifies the processes that are in place to ensure dog attacks and dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dog concerns are dealt with promptly and in line with community expectations.

While the plan outlines clear objectives, importantly the plan will be reviewed annually and evaluated against its target.

## 2. DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

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.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

The City of Knox is located approximately 25kms from the Melbourne GPO. Knox is one of the most populous municipalities in Victoria with over 154,000 residents living in eleven localities. Knox residents are proud of their city's leafy green image. They are protective of the nearby Foothills and other special places of biological significance. It is a community concerned for the welfare of others with residents from 130 different countries who speak 54 languages. Of the residents, in excess of 41,000 were born overseas and 20% of residents are from non-English speaking backgrounds.

Knox has an area spanning 114 square kilometres and includes the suburbs of Ferntree Gully, Upper Ferntree Gully, Boronia, The Basin, Rowville, Wantirna, Wantirna South, Lysterfield, Knoxfield, Scoresby and Bayswater. Over 15,500 families have children under the age of 15 years. There are 28,000 children aged less than 15 years and 25% of Knox residents are aged 55 years and older. There are 4.2% of the population in Knox requiring assistance in their day to day lives due to disability. It is forecast that the population will reach 177,050 by 2031.

For the 2012/2013 registration period Knox had 18,805 dogs registered and 5878 cats registered. For the same period Knox had a total of 22 Domestic Animal Businesses registered. They included:

- 10 Pet Shops
- 6 dog training businesses
- 3 Boarding Kennels
- 2 Vet clinic boarding facilities
- 1 Home boarding facility

Council's Local Laws department is managed within the City Development Directorate. The City Development Directorate's purpose relates directly to Council's purpose – to enhance the quality of life of the Knox community as described in Knox Vision 2025. City Development consists of three departments: City Safety and Health; City Futures and City Planning and Building.

City Safety and Health promotes and protects the safety, health and amenity of the community so the objectives of the Knox Vision can be realised. This will be achieved through integrated planning, community education and engagement, service provision, community capacity building, regulation and enforcement in the following key functions: Emergency Management; Health Services and Local Laws.

The Local Laws Department has many varied roles within Council, including the enforcement of state and local legislation. Roles include animal management, traffic enforcement, local laws and school crossing supervision. Education is an important part of the role the Local Laws/Animal Management Officer plays in the community and is a large factor in increasing compliance with legislation

The department consists of the following Authorised Animal Management Officers:

- 1 Coordinator
- 1 Team Leader for Local Laws and Animal Management
- 1 Team Leader for Parking Management
- 5 Local Laws/Animal Management Officers
- 1 Parking Officer
- 1 Project Officer

Administration team:

- 1 Team Leader for Administration
- 1 Full time Administration Officer
- 3 Part time Administration Officers

#### 4. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the Act requires Council to 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

#### CONTEXT

The core purposes of the Knox City Council's animal management services are:

- To create an environment where people and pets can peacefully coexist within the community.
- To inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible pet ownership.
- To increase the understanding of normal animal behaviour within the non pet owner population.
- To ensure that the needs of the wider community are reflected through Council's domestic animal management policies.
- To enforce animal management legislation.

#### CURRENT AND PLANNED TRAINING

Authorised Officer Training - Basic	Current (2013)	Planned
<b>Core Capabilities (required training or equivalent experience essential)</b>		
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	Three Officers have this certificate.  All other officers have more than five years experience.	Through the Performance Development Review Process (PDR – a formal council performance review process) skills gaps will be identified and training plans developed for each individual.
Certificate IV in Local Government	Two Officers have this certificate.  All other officers have more than five years experience.	Through the Performance Development Review Process (PDR – a formal council performance review process) skills gaps will be identified and training plans developed for each individual.

Certificate IV in Animal Welfare (Regulation)	Currently no officers have completed this training	This training will be implemented across the team over the life of the plan.
Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days	All officers have the opportunity to attend this training	Offered regularly by Department of Environment and Primary Industry.
Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government Professionals – training and information days	All officers have the opportunity to attend this training	Offered regularly by Department of Environment and Primary Industries.
OH&S training – dealing with aggressive customers	All officers have completed this training	Refresher training provided.
Customer service training – conflict resolution, telephone speak	All officers have completed this training	Refresher training, as identified in PDR process.
Induction program for new staff	All officers have completed this training	Scheduled for any new staff, as required.
Baton Training	All officers have completed this training	Refresher training is done on an annual basis.
Industry training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• animal handling</li> <li>• animal assessment</li> <li>• statement taking</li> <li>• prosecution</li> <li>• computer skills</li> </ul>		Through the Performance Development Review Process (PDR – a formal council performance review process) skills gaps will be identified and training plans developed for each individual.



<b>Desirable Training</b>		
Industry training – time management	Two officers have done this training.	Through the Performance Development Review Process (PDR – a formal council performance review process) skills gaps will be identified and training plans developed for each individual.
Australian Institute of Animal Management annual conference	All officers have the opportunity to attend this training	As per PDR plan.
OH&S training – defensive driver training	Currently no officers have done this training	To be considered as part of PDR process.
Customer service training – public speaking	Currently no officers have done this training	Not considered a requirement for officers
Restricted Breed Dog Identification	Two officers have done this training.	As identified in PDR process.
DNA collection to assist with the investigation of dog attacks	One officer has done this training.	As offered, as part of PDR process.
Microchip implantation training	Currently no officers have this qualification	Not considered a requirement for officers, as external agencies provide this service.
Emergency Management Animal Handling	Currently no officers have done this training	Shall be considered as part of the PDR process.

## **OUR PLANS – Training of Authorised Officers**

### **Objective:**

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work and to deliver service at best practice standards achieved through the application of continuous improvement techniques.

### **Current/Ongoing Activities:**

- Seek Certificate IV (Animal Control and Regulation) or Certificate IV (Statutory Compliance) level training for any new staff.
- Attendance of Animal Management Officers at Bureau of Animal Welfare training.
- Attendance of Animal Management Officers at Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government Professionals training and information days.
- Attendance of Animal Management Officers at the Australian Institute of Animal Management annual conference.

### **Planned Programs and Initiatives:**

- Provide all staff with access to Council's Learning and Development calendar.
- All staff to complete Council's on-line eLearning training opportunities.
- Provide the opportunity for Animal Management Officers to attend Bureau of Animal Welfare, Municipal Association of Victoria, Local Government Professionals, RSPCA and other relevant training sessions, workshops and seminars.
- Skill Animal Management Officers in animal behaviour – identifying risk behaviours and managing nuisance animals and barking dogs.
- Skill Animal Management Officers in mediation.
- Attendance by staff and involvement in industry committees.
- Conduct Customer Service training.
- Annual baton training

**Objective 1:** Ensure all Officers involved in animal management are appropriately qualified and skilled

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop training plans for each officer	Ongoing as part of PDR process	Through the Performance Development Review Process (PDR – a formal council performance review process) skills gaps will be identified and training plans developed for each individual.

**Objective 2:** Review multi skilling arrangements for all staff and associated impact on operations

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review of current working arrangements	2013/14	Planned service review for the 2013/14 financial year to be completed
Determine future operational arrangements for Officers	2013/14	Planned service review for the 2013/14 financial year to be completed
Determine the need for an animal behaviour officer	2013/14	Planned service review for the 2013/14 financial year to be completed

## 5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

Section 68A(2)(c)(v) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats  
 - also addresses Section 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

As of 5 March 2013, Knox City Council had 18,805 dogs registered and 5,878 cats registered. Table 1 illustrates the changes in registration data between 2007 and 2013.

**Table 1: Animal registration comparison from 2007 to 2012-2013 period**

Registrations	Period ending 31 December 2007	2012-2013 period	Overall change
Dogs	17,582	18,805	+1,223
Cats	5,721	5,878	+157
Menacing Dogs	1	3	+2
Restricted Breed Dogs	5	6	+1
Dangerous Dog on residential property	6	1	-5
Dangerous Dog on non residential property	9	5	-4
Dangerous Dog undergone protection training	0	0	0
Total Declared Dogs	21	15	-6

It is considered that registration rates for both cats and dogs are likely to be significantly lower than actual ownership levels. The level of under registration is perhaps best reflected in the following data, in Table 2.

**Table 2: Animal reclaims and registration rates**

Reclaims	Total reclaimed	% registered	% not registered
Cats	72	31%	69%
Dogs	605	46%	54%

As part of the 2009-2012 DAM Plan, in November 2009, Council introduced two incentive programs to encourage the registration of pets.

- A pet registration incentive. Any dog or cat, which is a newly acquired pet that is micro-chipped, will receive free registration when registered within one month from the date of acquisition of that animal. This program has been in place for three years and due to its success, will continue throughout the life of this plan.
- A one month pet registration amnesty. Any dog or cat that was micro-chipped and not registered for the 2009-2010 period was able to receive free registration for the remainder of the 2009-2010 registration period, if the application was received between 1 November 2009 and 31 December 2009. This amnesty was run once. There are no plans to run a similar amnesty, as the pet registration incentive continues to promote registration.

## **Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

### Orders:

Domestic Animals Act 1994 section 10A(1) – Appendix B

The order provides that Knox City Council will not, after 10 April 2011, accept the registration of a cat unless the cat is de-sexed or exempted under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* from any requirements to be de-sexed. Any cat that is not de-sexed cannot be registered. Failing to register can result in penalties under the Act.

### Local Laws:

Knox City Council General Provisions Local Law 2010 – Appendix A

- 20.3 - Without a permit a person must not keep on land more than:
  - 20.3.1 - 2 dogs;
  - 20.3.2 – 2 cats.
- 20.4 – Where a permit is issued for more than 2 dogs and/or 2 cats, any additional animals beyond the initial 2 are to be desexed unless otherwise permitted by Council.

## **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

Knox City Council has a number of education and promotional activities in place.

- Knox City Council Major Events - Responsible pet ownership is promoted at a number of annual Council public events. The Local Laws team run the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo and participate at both the Knox Festival and the Stringybark Festival.
- Other public events are attended on an invitation basis also, including dog club open days and Gardens for Wildlife open days.
- Responsible Pet Ownership Competition – responsible dog and cat owners are nominated by the community or by an Animal Management Officer. If they meet the

criteria set by Council they go into the draw to win a monthly prize of \$100 of vouchers which can be redeemed at a number of local supporting businesses. A yearly winner will receive \$250 of vouchers. This competition has been in place since 2006.

- Participation in information sessions about responsible animal ownership for both children and the community .
- Website – Council’s website contains a wide variety of information in relation to responsible pet ownership and animal registration. Registration forms can be downloaded from the website.
- Micro-chipping – discounted micro-chipping is available at the annual Pet Expo.
- New resident kits – information relating to the registration of pets and responsible pet ownership is provided in new resident kits.
- Domestic Animal Business notifications – Council is notified of new pet owners by Domestic Animal Businesses. A new owner kit is sent out providing them with a registration form, registration incentive scheme information along with general responsible pet ownership information.
- Domestic Animal Businesses and Veterinary Clinics are provided with a supply of Council’s registration forms to provide to their customers.
- Social Media – Council promotes a number of responsible pet ownership topics via social media, including Facebook and Twitter.
- Media Releases – print media releases are done during the registration renewal period, following Court prosecutions and at other times when required.

### **Our current Compliance Activities**

- Reactive enforcement – addressing the issue of an unregistered dog or cat that is found as a result of a complaint.
- Issuing of annual registration renewal notices. Followed up with a reminder notice.
- Non payment of registration renewals is followed up by door knocks or phone calls.
- Doorknocks – random door knocks are conducted to locate and identify unregistered pets.
- Patrols – park patrols are done at random.
- The issue of infringement notices for unregistered dogs and cats or for failing to wear their registration tag.
- Animal registration database is continually updated as the status of animals change.
- Domestic Animal Business notifications – Following up on the registration of a dog or cat after the owner has been sent their new owner kit by Council.
- Ensure all impounded or seized dogs and cats are registered prior to being released to their owner.
- Review the registration fees annually.
- Ensure the correct State Government Levy is charged on the animal registrations.

## Summary

Since the implementation of the 2009-2012 Domestic Animal Management Plan there has been an increase in the number of animals registered within Knox. Data indicates there are still a significant number of dogs and cats within the community that are currently unregistered.

Increasing animal registration will be a major priority for the life of this plan.

## OUR PLANS – Registration and Identification

**Objective 1:** Increase the number of animal registrations within the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Registration Incentive – free initial registration for new animals, within 4 weeks of purchase/adoption	Current	Increased dog and cat registration rates by at least 5% by 2017
Advertise	Current	
Door knocks		
Community Events	Current – 3 per year	
Domestic Animal Purchase Letters	Current	

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate the provision of an Animal Registration Officer to assist in targeting registration improvements	2014/2015	Increased dog and cat registration rates by at least 5% by 2017

**Objective 2:** Improvement of the Council registration database, for accurate reporting and identification of unregistered animals.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Run Reports to identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Missing data</li><li>• Unpaid registrations</li></ul>	Ongoing	Improved data for registration renewal process and for follow up registration checks.
Attaching photos of impounded animals to their registration record	Ongoing	Improved animal identification processes

**Objective 3:** Clarify Local Law policies relating to animal registrations

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and review policies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unregistered animals</li> <li>• Registered animals not wearing a tag</li> <li>• Appointment of agents for registration</li> <li>• Application for registration and renewal of registration for dogs and cats</li> <li>• Seizing and impounding of unregistered and/or unidentified dogs and cats</li> <li>• Others as identified</li> </ul>	2013/14	Updated standard operating procedures and protocols and annual review planned.



## 6. NUISANCE

Section 68A(2)(c)(vi) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

The following table outlines the number of nuisance related complaints received over the last five years. Statistics are based on calendar years.

**Table 1: Nuisance related complaints**

Complaint	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Cats - Cage request	258	241	256	214	196
Cats - Cats Pickup	373	345	291	259	245
Cats - Nuisance	48	34	49	75	44
Dogs - Barking	402	446	478	498	597
Dogs - Pick Up	1088	1043	925	899	805
Dogs - Wandering at Large	420	452	321	446	454

The following table outlines the number of infringements issued over the last five years relating to nuisance. These statistics are based on calendar years.

**Table 2: Nuisance related infringements**

Nuisance	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Wandering at large/not securely confined to premises day time	543	543	530	515	565
Wandering at large/not securely confined to premises night time	72	66	65	68	66
Dog or cat on private property after notice served	1	0	0	0	0
Nuisance dog or cat	6	3	0	3	3
Dog or cat found on prohibited public place	0	1	4	1	0

#### Nuisance Barking

There has been a steady increase in the number of complaints relating to nuisance barking. The reason for the increase could be due to increased awareness of the ability to complain, increased residential densities and due to lower tolerance levels in general. The minimum time required to deal with one barking dog complaint can be as little as two hours, however in reality, many of the complaints take much longer and may extend over a period of many months.

Nuisance barking issues have been identified as a major priority and Council is committed to ensuring best practice approach is adopted in tackling these complaints. People affected by barking dogs feel a great deal of frustration which can be exacerbated by a Council process that asks them to document the barking in detail, in the form of a barking incident log.

Barking count collars are tamper proof collars that record the number of barks per hour. They do not provide information in relation to the volume or intensity of the bark or whether there may be particular triggers, such as another dog barking. They have been used as part of investigations but have only been useful in supporting a barking log.

The majority of barking dog complaints resolve relatively quickly, as in many cases the owner has not been aware that their dog was barking and then takes appropriate steps to address the issue. Barking issues that do not resolve quickly can require significant investigation and resources. While impact statements from the affected party can assist greatly, the use of a barking log to identify the nature of the barking causes concern. To assist in preparing matters for prosecution Council is investigating the use of state of the art sound recording equipment. The idea for this technology came from our technical specialist in the Health services team and will be a significant improvement in how barking dog complaints are investigated. This technology will greatly reduce the focus required by a complainant to actively listen for barking issues. Recording will provide clear and unambiguous evidence for presentation at Court.

### Dog Litter

The issue of dog litter is also a concern due to the harmful bacteria and excessive nutrient loads contained within it. Dog litter can introduce foreign and potentially harmful bacteria and diseases into the environment. Decaying pet waste can release ammonia into the soil and nearby waterways. The litter can also be washed through the stormwater system into natural waterways and can also contribute to excessive E.coli pollution readings in waterways following rainfall. Roundworm is found in the faeces of infected dogs and can be passed on to other animals and humans. The behaviour of some dogs owners who do pick up after their dog is also an issue when they choose to dispose of their bag of faeces in nearby bushes.

Council introduced a trial provision of dog poo bags in 2009. Dispensers were placed in two locations: Kings Park, Upper Ferntree Gully and Knox Park Reserve, Knoxfield. Four dispensers were placed at each location. Due to on-going vandalism of the bag holders, the majority of the dispensers will be removed. Two will remain in the dog play park at Knox Park Reserve.

It is a requirement under the Knox General Provisions Local Law 2010 to carry a plastic bag or similar to pick up after dogs and this is enforced during officer patrols.

### Dog Play Park

In December 2010 Council opened its first dedicated off lead dog park at Knox Park Reserve in Knoxfield. The dog park has been well received by the community, both two and four legged! Regular park users meet and socialise their dogs frequently, forming their own networks and encouraging socialisation amongst themselves. Feedback from the community and from officers indicates that the park is being well used, particularly during the daylight saving months.

Due to the success of the play park, it is proposed that an additional dog play park site be considered. The community have strongly supported the initiative of the first play park and creating a second play park will also serve to reduce some of the usage pressure on the current play park.

### Nuisance Cats

Concerns have been raised by internal stakeholders about the impact of domestic pets on the environment. Feral and roaming pet cats are known to have a devastating effect on wildlife and have been the major cause of the decline in many species. Cats will hunt wildlife whether they are hungry or not and multiple bells on their collars will not necessarily prevent this from occurring.

The number of complaints relating to nuisance cats remains steady. Requests for cat cages have also remained steady and these requests are usually as a result of a resident experiencing a nuisance cat for which they cannot identify an owner.

As part of this plan further investigation will be conducted to establish whether a night time cat curfew may further assist in resolving cat nuisance issues. This will require considerable investigation and community consultation.

### **Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

#### Orders:

Domestic Animals Act 1994 section 10A(1) – Appendix B

The order provides that Knox City Council will not, after 10 April 2011, accept the registration of a cat unless the cat is de-sexed or exempted under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 from any requirements to be de-sexed.

Domestic Animals Act 1994 section 26 – Appendix C

The order provides that from 10 April 2006, dogs shall be kept on lead in public places.

#### Local Laws:

Knox City Council General Provisions Local Law 2010 – Appendix A

- 20.3 - Without a permit a person must not keep on land more than:
  - 20.3.1 - 2 dogs;
  - 20.3.2 – 2 cats.

- 20.4 – Where a permit is issued for more than 2 dogs and/or 2 cats, any additional animals beyond the initial 2 are to be desexed unless otherwise permitted by Council.

#### Knox City Council General Provisions Local Law 2010

- 21.1 – A person in charge of an animal in a public place must:
  - 21.1.1 - carry a facility for the effective removal of any excrement that may be deposited by that animal; and
  - 21.1.2 – collect from the public place and appropriately dispose of any excrement deposited by that animal.

#### Knox City Council General Provisions Local Law 2010

- 22.3 - If an authorised officer reasonably believes that barking by a dog constitutes a nuisance, the authorised officer may direct the owner of the dog to place or allow the placement of a barking count device on the dog for the period specified by the authorised officer.
- 22.4 – Any person to whom a direction is given under clause 22.3 must comply with that direction.

#### Policies and Procedures:

The procedure for investigating nuisance barking complaints is reviewed regularly to ensure best practice. This process is currently under review and will be updated by the end of 2013.

#### **Our Current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Knox City Council Major Events - Responsible pet ownership is promoted at a number of annual Council public events. The Local Laws team run the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo and participate at both the Knox Festival and the Stringybark Festival.
- Website – Council’s website has a wide variety of information on it in relation to responsible pet ownership. Information is also provided to assist with nuisance issues along with contact details for training organisations.
- New resident kits – information relating to responsible pet ownership is provided in new resident kits.
- Domestic Animal Business notifications – Council is notified of new pet owners by Domestic Animal Business’s. A new owner kit is sent out providing them with responsible pet ownership information.
- Dog poo bag dispensers and bags have been provided at two of Council’s popular parks. This will continue at the dog play park.

#### **Our Current Compliance Activities**

- Reactive enforcement – addressing the issue of a nuisance dog or cat when a complaint is lodged.

- Reports of dogs wandering at large or not securely contained are investigated immediately. Fines are issued to owners of offending dogs. If the animal is impounded the owner must also pay a reclaim fee.
- Issues of dog containment relating to inadequate fencing are investigated and the owner provided with relevant information when they are identified.
- Reports of dogs off lead are investigated and the owner is fined when they are able to be identified. The owner is also provided with information about responsible animal ownership.
- Reports of dog owners not removing dog litter are investigated and owner fined when they are able to be identified. The owner is also provided with information about responsible animal ownership.
- Bark count collars and recording device available for nuisance barking complaints.
- Cat traps are available to the community to assist with nuisance cat complaints.
- Issuing of a Notice to Comply if required.
- Following up on a Notice to Comply when issued.
- Infringements for non-compliance issues.
- Prosecution at the Magistrates' Court for those matters that remain unresolved.
- Link all complaints to the animal's registration.

## Summary

As highlighted previously, the management of barking dog complaints will be a major priority for Animal Management Officers over the life of this Plan. The use of new technology and a regular review of processes will assist in ensuring that nuisance matters are resolved in a timely matter.

Council remains committed to providing more opportunities for dog play areas, as these benefit dogs and their owners, providing socialising opportunities and strengthen community connectedness.

## OUR PLANS - Nuisance

**Objective 1:** Improved response to barking dog complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an assessment of barking dog complaint processes to ensure current best practice	2013/2014	Updated process that is best practice and is developed, implemented and monitored / reviewed over the four years of the Plan.
Community education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Via participation at Council's major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ The annual Eastern Regional</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.  Regular review of the web site/social media information.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>		Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.
Activity	When	Evaluation
Acquisition of recording technology to assist barking dog investigations subject to budget allocation	2013/2014	Equipment acquired and in use in the field
Development of a barking dog information kit	2013/14	Kit developed and available

**Objective 2:** Dog containment – wandering at large, not securely contained, inadequate fencing

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Community education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Via participation at Council’s major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ The annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.</p> <p>Regular review of the web site/social media information.</p> <p>Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.</p>
Impounding of dogs wandering at large or not securely confined and taking enforcement action against owners	Ongoing	Review the number of infringements issued and identify repeat offenders for further action.

**Objective 3:** Dogs off lead/use of open space for dogs

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Community education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Via participation at Council’s major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ The annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.</p> <p>Regular review of the web site/social media information.</p> <p>Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.</p>
Audit Knox Dog Play Park’s to identify opportunities for improvement or any management issues.	6 monthly	Audit of sites completed

Introduction of a second Dog Play Park.	2014/2015	Dog Play park delivered
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**Objective 4:** Cat nuisance eg: noise, trespass, fighting, scratching cars, poo in garden

Activity	When	Evaluation
Community education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Via participation at Council’s major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ The annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.  Regular review of the web site/social media information.  Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.
Availability of cat cages to trap nuisance cats	Ongoing	Review customer requests annually
Provide cat enclosure and cat proof fencing brochures and booklets	Ongoing	Cat brochures available and distributed at Council offices and events
Investigate whether any benefit would be achieved by the introduction of a night time cat curfew	2016	Investigation and research on viability and report presented to Council.

**Objective 5:** Dog litter

Activity	When	Evaluation
Community education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Via participation at Council’s major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ The annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.  Regular review of the web site/social media information.  Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.
Provide pooch pouches to dog owners. Pooch pouches are small bags that hold plastic bags and can be clipped to the dog lead.	Ongoing	Bags provided with new registrations or on request

## 7. DOG ATTACKS

Section 68A(2)(c)(iii) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals

- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our Current Data

Dog attacks and dog aggression in public places represent the highest risk in animal management – both to the community and to the Animal Management Officers who must investigate and resolve these issues.

The following table outlines the number of complaints received over the last five years relating to dog attacks and rushes along with dogs wandering at large. Statistics are based on calendar years.

**Table 4: Dog attack related complaints**

Complaint	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Dogs Wandering at Large	420	452	321	446	454
Dogs Attack	139	121	141	64	122
Dog Rush	69	85	70	68	77

The following table outlines the number of infringements issued over the last five years relating to the above complaints.

**Table 5: Dog related enforcement action (infringements for all matters, except serious attack)**

Complaint	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Wandering at large/not securely confined to premises day time	543	543	530	515	565
Wandering at large/not securely confined to premises night time	72	66	65	68	66
Non serious injury caused by dog attack	0	0	9	2	11
Dog rush	0	0	7	1	2
Serious attack (Magistrates' Court)	8	9	13	11	8

The numbers of dogs declared menacing or dangerous over the last five years are:

**Table 6: Dogs declared Menacing or Dangerous over the last five years**

Declaration	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Menacing	4	1	0	0	3
Dangerous dog on residential property	0	2	3	0	3



## **Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

### Orders:

Domestic Animals Act 1994 section 26

The order provides that from 10 April 2006, dogs shall be kept on lead in public places.

### Local Laws:

Knox City Council General Provisions Local Law 2010

- 20.3 - Without a permit a person must not keep on land more than:  
20.3.1 - 2 dogs;  
20.3.2 – 2 cats.
- 20.4 – Where a permit is issued for more than 2 dogs and/or 2 cats, any additional animals beyond the initial 2 are to be de-sexed unless otherwise permitted by Council.

### Policies and Procedures:

#### **Domestic Animals Act Committee**

Knox Council has a Domestic Animals Act Committee. This committee considers any proposed declarations. The Investigating Officer will submit a report with their recommendation to the Committee. The Committee will hear from the investigating Officer, the victim(s), any witnesses and the owner of the offending dog or may take into account any written submissions provided. After taking into account all evidence, the Committee will then make a recommendation to the Coordinator Local Laws.

The committee consists of the following:

Chair Person – Manager City Safety and Health;

Two panel members who may be from any of the following staff – Director City Development, Manager City Futures or Manager City Planning and Building.

The Coordinator Local Laws will also be present to provide information to the committee.

#### **Our Current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Knox City Council Major Events - Responsible pet ownership is promoted at a number of annual Council public events. The Local Laws team run the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo and participate at both the Knox Festival and the Stringybark Festival.
- Website –Information is available relating to the containment of dogs, dog attack investigations and potential outcomes. There is also information about menacing and dangerous dog declarations.
- New resident kits – information relating to responsible pet ownership is provided in new resident kits.
- Domestic Animal Business notifications – Council is notified of new pet owners by Domestic Animal Businesses. A new owner kit is sent out providing them with responsible pet ownership information.

- Brochures/information sheets.
- Officers attend information sessions for children and the community to inform people about how to behave around their dogs and unknown dogs.

### **Our Current Compliance Activities**

- Reactive enforcement – owners of dogs involved in alleged rushes or attacks are provided with information relating to the process involved with the investigation, potential outcomes and information relating to the declaration of menacing or dangerous dogs.
- Provide an immediate response to reported dog attacks or rushes.
- Reports of dogs wandering at large are addressed immediately during business hours, in an attempt to reduce the number of potential attacks or rushes. An officer is on call for after hours issues.
- Impound dogs found wandering at large or not adequately confined to their premises.
- Seize dogs involved in an attack or a rush, pending further investigation and/or prosecution.
- Conduct random patrols in parks and reserves where there are reported incidents or concerns about dogs off lead.
- Commence enforcement action against owners of offending dogs involved in attacks and/or rushes.
- Where appropriate exercise the delegation of Council to destroy those offending dogs involved in a serious attack.
- Where appropriate declare offending dogs as menacing or dangerous dogs. Ensure the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and in house registry is kept up to date with records for all declared dogs in Knox.
- Communicate with other Councils in relation to declared dogs which have moved out of or into Knox.
- Conduct random, unannounced inspections of all properties where declared dogs are housed or where Court orders have been issued in relation to containment of offending dogs.
- Link all complaints to the animal's registration.

### **Summary**

Dog attacks are potentially one of the most serious matters facing the community and Animal Management Officers. As a result, Council's procedure for dealing with dog attacks is a priority and Officers respond immediately to ensure any risk or potential risk to the community is minimised. As with other key processes, the way dog attacks are investigated will be reviewed regularly to ensure matters are referred for appropriate action in a timely manner. Fortnightly team meetings are utilised to keep up to date on dog attack investigations.

## OUR PLANS – Dog attacks

**Objective 1:** Reduce the incidents of dogs wandering at large and dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Community education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ via participation at Council’s major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ at the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.  Regular review of the web site/social media information.  Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.
Review dog attack investigation process to ensure timely investigation of all dog attacks	2013-2017	Process updated and reviewed annually
Refer Court outcomes to media team to publicise results to the community.	2013-2017	Internal process developed to publicise Court outcomes
Enforcement – increased patrols and Provide 24 hour access to an animal management officer	ongoing	Regular proactive patrols at off leash and on leash parks will be scheduled as part of routine work.
Develop a Standard Operating Procedures to assist officers in managing these issues and implement a regular review process	2013/14	Procedure developed and reviewed annually

## 8. DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

Section 68A(2)(c)(vii) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies 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

- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

Of the 18,805 dogs registered for the 2012-2013 period 15 of these were declared menacing, dangerous or restricted breed dogs.

• Menacing Dog	3
• Dangerous Dog on residential property	1
• Dangerous Dog on non residential property	5
• Dangerous Dog undergone protection training	0
• Restricted Breed Dog	6
Total	15

Dangerous Dog can be three types of dogs:

- A dog declared dangerous by Council due to a serious attack;
- A dog kept as a guard dog for the purposes of guarding non residential premises;
- A dog trained to attack or bite any person

Council may also declare the dog to be a dangerous dog if the dog is a menacing dog and its owner is in breach of the associated regulations or if the dog has been declared a dangerous dog under a law of another State or Territory of the Commonwealth.

Menacing Dog is a dog declared menacing by Council because:

- The dog has rushed at or chased a person; or
- The dog bites any person or animal causing a non serious injury; or
- The dog has been declared a menacing dog under a law of another State or Territory of the Commonwealth.

Restricted Breed Dog: is a dog that is any one of the following breeds:

- Japanese Tosa;
- Fila Brasileiro;
- Dogo Argentino;
- Perra de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario);
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier).

**Table 7: Dogs declared over the last five years**

<b>Declaration</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Menacing	4	1	0	0	3
Dangerous dog on residential property	0	2	3	0	3
Dangerous dog on non residential property	2	2	2	0	0
Dangerous dog attack trained	2	0	0	0	0
Restricted Breed Dog	0	0	0	0	4

## **Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

### Policies and Procedures:

#### **Domestic Animals Act Committee**

Knox Council has a Domestic Animals Act Committee. This committee considers any proposed declarations. The investigating Officer will submit a report with their recommendation to the Committee. The Committee will hear from the Investigating Officer, the victim(s), any witnesses and the owner of the offending dog or may take into account any written submissions provided. After taking into account all evidence, the Committee will then make a recommendation to the Coordinator Local Laws.

#### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Knox City Council Major Events - Responsible pet ownership is promoted at a number of annual Council public events. The Local Laws team run the annual the Eastern Regional Pet Expo and participate at both the Knox Festival and the Stringybark Festival.
- Website –Information is available relating to menacing dogs, dangerous dogs restricted breed dogs.
- Brochures/information sheets.
- Officers will participate in information sessions for children and the community to inform them how to behave around their dogs and unknown dogs.
- Ensure the owners of a declared dog are aware of their legal obligations in owning and housing the dog. They are provided with extensive information in relation to their requirements as well as information advising them of the possible outcomes should they breach the requirements.

#### **Our current Compliance Activities**

- Reactive enforcement – owners of dogs involved in alleged rushes or attacks are provided with information relating to the process involved with the investigation, potential outcomes and information relating to the declaration of menacing or dangerous dogs.
- All declared dogs are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Register.

- All declared dogs are recorded on an in house register.
- Dogs are declared on an as needs basis: following an investigated dog attack, a newly acquired guard dog or as a result of identifying a restricted breed dog which may legally be kept.
- Inspections of declared dogs are done at random on an annual basis.
- Communication with other Councils in relation to declared dogs which have moved out of or into Knox.
- Random inspections of industrial areas looking out for guard dogs.
- Issuing of infringement notices or summons when in breach of the Domestic Animals Act or Regulations.

## Summary

Although Knox does not have a high number of declared dogs it is of high importance that they are inspected on a yearly basis, as a minimum. Non compliance by their owners is addressed by way of education or enforcement if required.

Restricted breed dog identification remains a contentious issue. Recent cases at VCAT, from other Councils, have not assisted in improving clarity. Officers will receive, as identified in their annual performance plans, any training that is needed to assist them in breed identification.

## OUR PLANS – Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

**Objective 1:** Identify and register all declared dogs within the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Restricted Breed dog identification training for all animal management officers	When available	Training completed
Use microchip registries to identify restricted breed dogs or potential restricted breed dogs within the municipality.	2013/14	Ongoing review of microchip databases
Community education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ via participation at Council’s major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ at the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.  Regular review of the web site/social media information.  Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.
Monitor all new registrations for potential restricted breed dogs	Ongoing	Inspections of any dogs identified as potential restricted breed dogs
Patrol industrial areas for guard dogs	Ongoing	Six monthly audit of industrial areas
Ensure all declared dogs are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry	Ongoing	Register is up to date and accurate.

**Objective 2:** Effectively inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are following the keeping requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct random, unannounced inspections of all declared dogs to ensure compliance with the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> and Regulations	Annually	Audit completed
Prosecute any breaches of the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> or Regulations when required	Ongoing	Prosecutions completed

## 9. OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA

Section 68A(2)(c)(iv) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)

### CURRENT SITUATION

#### Our current data

The General Provisions Local Law 2010 allows for two dogs and/or two cats on a property. Any more than that requires a permit.

#### Impounded animals

Below is a table summarising the total number of dogs and cats admitted to the RSPCA for the 2012 period (Jan – Dec)

**Table 8: Impounded animals for 2012**

Dogs	Number	Cats	Number
Brought in by Council	<b>675</b>	Brought in by Council	<b>221</b>
Brought in by public (stray & surrender)	<b>197</b>	Brought in by public (stray & surrender)	<b>210</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>872*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>431*</b>
Adopted	<b>133</b>	Adopted	<b>174</b>
Euthanised (health or temperament)	<b>121</b>	Euthanised (includes feral and sick)	<b>178</b>
Reclaimed	<b>624</b>	Reclaimed	<b>68</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>878*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>420*</b>

\*note that impounded animals must be held for 8 days, as per legislative requirements. The discrepancy in figures reflects that some animals are being held for 8 days from the previous year or from the current year.

#### De-sexing

In March 2008 Council introduced a discounted de-sexing voucher scheme in conjunction with the RSPCA. As of April 2013 a total of 171 vouchers had been issued to residents of Knox. Council also has de-sexing voucher schemes with the Victorian Animal Aid along with the Municipal Association of Victoria and Australian Veterinary Association..

Compulsory de-sexing of cats has been in place since April 2011.

Any person living in Knox is eligible for the RSPCA/Knox discounted de-sexing scheme. The MAV scheme is only available to concession card holders.



## Semi-owned cat population

The semi-owned cat is one that someone within the community will feed because they feel sorry for it however they are not willing to take full responsibility for that cat by way of taking on ownership of it or having it de-sexed or registered. Many people don't realise that by feeding the cat they are in fact contributing to the overpopulation of un-owned or semi owned cats in the community. Feeding un-owned cats keeps them healthy and strong enough to reproduce.

The 'Who's for cats?' program implemented by the Department of Primary Industries targets unwanted or unowned cats and is promoted at Council's public events and on the website. The Animal Management team will help anyone who needs assistance with a semi-owned or un-owned cat in their neighbourhood. Cat cages are currently available to the community to assist with the trapping of un-owned, semi-owned or nuisance cats.

## **Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures**

### Orders:

Domestic Animals Act 1994 section 10A(1)

The order provides that Knox City Council will not, after 10 April 2011, accept the registration of a cat unless the cat is de-sexed or exempted under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 from any requirements to be de-sexed.

### Local Laws:

Knox City Council General Provisions Local Law 2010

- 20.3 - Without a permit a person must not keep on land more than:
  - 20.3.1 - 2 dogs;
  - 20.3.2 – 2 cats.
- 20.4 – Where a permit is issued for more than 2 dogs and/or 2 cats, any additional animals beyond the initial 2 are to be de-sexed unless otherwise permitted by Council.

## **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Knox City Council Major Events - Responsible pet ownership is promoted at a number of annual Council public events. The Local Laws team run the annual the Eastern Regional Pet Expo and participate at both the Knox Festival and the Stringybark Festival.
- Website – Excess animal permit forms can be downloaded from the website.
- Doorknocks – random door knocks are conducted to locate and identify unregistered pets.
- "Who's for cats?" program promoted at public events and on Council's website

- Promote unidentified and unclaimed impounded animals on Council’s website and Facebook page
- A Lost and found animal register is maintained on the Council request management system.

**Our current Compliance Activities**

- Reactive enforcement – owners of excess numbers of pets are advised of the requirement to apply for a permit during the investigation of a complaint.
- Cat traps available for residents to borrow.
- Investigate complaints relating to excess number of animals.
- Enforcement of Local Laws in relation to numbers of animals on a property.
- Enforcement of registration and requirement to wear registration tag.

**Summary**

The number of cat cages available to the community has steadily increased over the years with a total of 32 cages being available in 2013. The ‘Who’s for cats?’ program will continue to be promoted along with responsible pet ownership in general.

As of the 2013-2014 registration period, the reduced registration rate for a micro-chipped animal no longer applies for a newly registered dog or cat. This is due to legislative changes that commenced on 10 April 2013. Many pet owners will now face increased registration fees when registering their entire pet with Council. De-sexed animals will continue to receive a reduced registration fee. Currently, 84.86% of the dogs registered in Knox are de-sexed and 98.67% of cats registered are de-sexed.

Knox will continue to promote the de-sexing of domestic pets and encourage residents to utilise the de-sexing voucher schemes that are available.

**OUR PLANS – overpopulation and high euthanasia**

**Objective 1:** Promote and monitor de-sexing.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote the de-sexing voucher schemes	Ongoing	Audit use of vouchers
Investigate whether it is necessary or feasible to introduce compulsory de-sexing of dogs	2015/16	Evaluate current registration rates of de-sexed dogs and provide a report to Council with recommendations
Promote the benefits of de-sexing	Ongoing	Audit accuracy of website information annually.

**Objective 2:** Reduce euthanasia rate at Council's pound facility

Activity	When	Evaluation
As part of the Animal Pound Tender, include a requirement for the successful tender to demonstrate or identify strategies for reducing euthanasia rates	2013/2014	Successful tender has processes in place to minimise euthanasia rates.
Promote unidentified and unclaimed impounded animals on Council's website and Lost Animal in Knox facebook page	Ongoing	Web pages updated regularly

**Objective 3:** Promote the importance of up to date microchip information

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Community education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ via participation at Council's major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ at the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent..</p> <p>Regular review of the web site/social media information.</p> <p>Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.</p>
<p>Develop an information flyer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• post out with registration renewals</li> <li>• link to Council's website</li> <li>• available at community events</li> </ul>	2015/16	Flyer developed
Contracted pound facility to ensure microchip information is accurate and up to date upon the release of an impounded animal.	Ongoing	Regular review of contract services

**Objective 4:** Raise the awareness about the semi-owned cat population

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Implement “Who’s for cats?” education campaign in local area. Utilise the following resources (available from Bureau of Animal Welfare):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Are you feeding a bigger problem?" (Who's for Cats? campaign fact sheet) - distribution throughout the municipality, placement on website</li> <li>• Template media release - for publication in local newspapers</li> <li>• Print ads - for publication in local newspapers</li> <li>• Promotions to encourage people to take full ownership of cats eg discount desex/microchip/vaccinate offers, free products</li> </ul>	<p>Current</p>	<p>Annually review material available from Bureau of Animal Welfare.</p>

## **10. DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES**

Section 68A(2)(c)(ii) of the Act requires Council to outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation  
- also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d),(f)

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

#### **Our current data**

For 2012/2013 registration period Knox had a total of 22 Domestic Animal Businesses registered. They included:

- 10 Pet Shops
- 6 dog training businesses
- 3 Boarding Kennels
- 2 Vet clinic boarding facilities
- 1 Home boarding facility

#### **Our Orders, Local Laws and Council Policies and Procedures**

Standard operating procedures for officers.

#### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

All Domestic Animal Businesses in Knox are promoted via our responsible pet ownership brochure and our website.

All Domestic Animal Businesses provided with Council brochures/flyers and registration forms

#### **Our current Compliance Activities**

- All Domestic Animal Businesses must be registered with Council.
- Annual inspections are conducted at all Domestic Animal Businesses.
- Infringement notices or prosecution where required for non compliance.
- Complaints from the public relating to a Domestic Animal Business are investigated within 48hours. Recording of statistics relating to complaints for Domestic Animal Businesses commenced in 2013, therefore there are none available at this current time.

#### **Summary**

All Domestic Animal Businesses within Knox are inspected annually. Inspections are done at random. It is not often that non compliance is found to be occurring but on the occasion it is, Council will endeavour to work with the business to achieve compliance. Failure to comply will result in enforcement action.

There is good communication between the Local Laws and Planning Departments when a new Domestic Animal Business is proposed within the municipality. For new businesses that open within Knox both departments will communicate to ascertain if all legislative requirements are being met.

**OUR PLANS – domestic animal businesses**

**Objective 1:** Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, using yellow pages (or similar, including online sites) identify businesses selling pets / pet products / services in the municipality. Follow up to determine whether they are and should be registered with council.	Ongoing	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity

**Objective 2:** Annually inspect and audit all registered Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with relevant Codes of Practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Annually inspect and audit all registered DABs	Ongoing	audits completed and enforcement action taken for non-compliance

**Objective 3:** Inspect residential properties where excess animals are registered to determine if they should be a registered Domestic Animal Business.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify properties where more than two dogs or more than two cats are registered to determine if they are a breeder who needs to be registered as a DAB	Ongoing	Regular audits completed by officers

## **11. OTHER MATTERS**

Section 68A(2)(e) provides 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

### Benefits of Pet Ownership – Encouraging a Healthy Community

Many studies have been undertaken which provide a wealth of knowledge supporting the benefits of pet ownership and their use in therapy. A number of different studies have found a link between better health, both physical and mental, and pet ownership.

The Knox Community Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2013-2017 will include an aim of increasing physical activity within Knox. Together with the Domestic Animal Management Plan it is envisaged that the Knox community will embrace the importance of pet ownership in providing a healthier and fitter community.

Community consultation has found that there is an increased need for assistance with pet management within the elderly community. For example people may need help with transporting of pets, assistance with exercising and grooming pets and in some cases assistance with maintaining the general welfare of pets. Although Council will not necessarily need to run an assistance service, it could facilitate and promote one or develop a working relationship with existing services within the community and assist in promoting those services already available.

### Animal Welfare Issues

Council's Animal Management Officers are authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to deal with any cruelty or welfare issues. Officers work with the RSPCA for more complex matters. There are occasions where Council is called upon to assist with the collection of injured animals that are then required to be transported to seek veterinary attention. Council has a good relationship with local veterinary clinics for those injured animals requiring urgent assistance.

### Council Order

The Council Order stipulates the areas in which dogs can be exercised off lead. It is also a requirement for any dog to be under effective control.

Restrictions applicable to off leash dog access results where some dogs are known to harass, chase and injure or kill wildlife when allowed to exercise off lead through areas where wildlife is known to inhabit. Dogs exercised on lead and contained to their property will be a lesser threat to the environment.

Exercising a dog in an off leash area should only be done if the owner can maintain effective voice control of the dog at all times. The dog should not be allowed to bother, worry or annoy another person or a dog. Off leash areas are shared space and it is important that dog owners are respectful of other people using that space.

The Council Order will be reviewed to ensure that it is clear and easy to understand.

## **CURRENT SITUATION**

### **Our current data**

- Local Laws Animal Management Arrangements (Emergency Sub Plan)

### **Our current Council Policies and Procedures**

- Council Order made under s26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1986 (dog and cat access to a certain place and related conditions).
- Local Laws Animal Management Arrangements (Emergency Sub Plan) – this plan defines the roles and responsibilities of Animal Management Officers and support staff during an emergency. The plan is reviewed annually to be aligned with the Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan to ensure Local Government responsibilities are addressed.

### **Our current Education/Promotion Activities**

- Knox City Council Major Events - Responsible pet ownership is promoted at a number of annual Council public events. The Local Laws team run the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo and participate at both the Knox Festival and the Stringybark Festival.
- Council website and social media

### **Our current Compliance Activities**

- All animal complaints are investigated. Serious issues such as dog attacks, rushes and injured animals are dealt with as a high priority.
- All Animal Management Officers are authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA)
- Animal Management Officers will investigate any reports of alleged cruelty and will enforce provisions of the Act. On occasions where advice may need to be sought the Animal Management Officer will liaise with the RSPCA Inspectorate for guidance or assistance.

## **Summary**

While animal ownership is a benefit to the community, it is important that responsible animal owners ensure their dogs are under effective control when exercised in any open space.

Over recent years, emergency planning has been highlighted as an important role for Council animal management service areas. Annual training exercises are held in which a number of Councils and other government and welfare agencies participate. Animal Management staff participate in these exercises setting up mock holding areas for pets of all sizes. These sessions have proven to be a valuable learning tool.



Feedback from the community tells us that there is an increased need within the community for assistance to the elderly with pet care and management. The animal management team will research available services and assist with the promotion of these services.

**OUR PLANS - Other**

**Objective 1:** Ensure educational material is up to date and available

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review Council Order and provide up to date brochure advising of off leash areas	2016	Order updated and off leash area map available.
Use available brochures from DPI to promote/inform with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pet registration</li> <li>• Nuisance cats</li> <li>• Containment of dogs</li> <li>• and more as required</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Brochures available at Council offices and at events
Investigate the feasibility of using text messaging as an educational/information tool in the lead up to scheduled firework displays.	2015	Report to Council on whether this technology could be used for this purpose.

**Objective 2:** Continue community education in relation to responsible pet ownership and animal welfare

Activity	When	Evaluation
Community education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ via participation at Council’s major public events – Knox Festival and Stringy Bark Festival</li> <li>▪ at the annual Eastern Regional Pet Expo</li> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Participation by the Local Laws team at each event, with an information tent.  Regular review of the web site/social media information.  Ensuring availability of brochures at Council offices and at events.

**Objective 3:** To have an emergency management plan in place in the event of an emergency in or neighbouring the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Local Laws Animal Management Arrangements (Emergency Sub Plan) – the LLAMA	Ongoing	Plan up to date
Annual emergency management training is conducted which includes Knox and neighbouring Councils as well as other government and community support agencies	Annually	Training completed

**Objective 4:** Promote emergency planning within the community to ensure the welfare of animals in the event of an emergency

Activity	When	Evaluation
Community education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Council website and social media</li> <li>▪ Brochures/handouts</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Audit of website to ensure up to date information on a six monthly basis.

**Objective 5:** Pet ownership within the elderly community

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote community services which could assist the elderly in animal management.	Ongoing	Information available on web pages

## 12. ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

Section 68A(3) Every Council must—

- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan
- (b) provide the Department of Primary Industries' Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan
- (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Council will review this plan annually with a full review being done in year four. Action items within the plan will have time lines which will be reviewed on a regular basis throughout the life of the plan.

The Secretary of the Department of Environment and Primary Industries will also be advised and provided a copy of any other amendments to the Plan which may arise during the review process.

**Table 9: Evaluation of implementation of Domestic Animal Management Plan (July annually – for inclusion in annual report)**

	Comments
For each activity, was it completed?	Yes/No
If no, provide an explanation for each activity not completed	
Did you complete each objective successfully?	Yes/No
If no, provide an explanation	
If yes, describe level of success	
Are any amendments required for the DAM Plan? If so, please describe	
If DAM Plan has been amended, has a copy been provided to the Secretary?	

**Objective 1:** Comply with Section 68A(3) of the Act

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the Plan annually and if required amend the Plan	Annually	Plan amended as required.
Provide the Department of Primary Industries' Secretary with a copy of the Plan and any amendments of the Plan	July 2013	Plan submitted to DPI.
Publish an evaluation of the implementation of the plan in the annual report	Annually	Evaluation published within the annual report

### **13. ATTACHMENTS**

**Attachment A: General Provisions Local Law 2010**

**Attachment B: Section 10 order – compulsory de-sexing of cats**

**Attachment C: Section 26 order – dogs in public places**