

DRAFT

# Domestic Animal Management Plan

2013 -2017

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## 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
  - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district
  - (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
    - (ii) to ensure people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation
    - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
    - (iv) to address any overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
    - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
    - (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 those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations
  - (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
  - (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
  - (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

## Executive summary

All Victorian Councils are required by the Domestic Animals Act 1994 to develop and publish a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years with an annual review throughout the life of the Plan. Matters to be included are described in the legislation and include a range of matters from the training of Animal Management Officers to the procedures for dangerous dogs. These requirements are met in this document.

This is the City of Yarra's Domestic Animal Management strategy. It presents Council's strategic position on matters associated with animal management and pets in open space as regulated by the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and associated Regulations. Policy directions identified in the plan will be implemented as resources allow. Directions will be revised on an annual basis, as implementation is tested and confirmed as best practice.

Council generally endorses a strategy of increasing awareness and understanding of the issues, developing responsible pet ownership before issuing penalties. This document was prepared following a process which included: a review of recent policies and plans, a series of workshops with authorised officers, a critical review of statistics and services concerning pet registrations, service requests, permits, impoundments and the effectiveness of enforcement action on compliance. Benchmarking with neighbouring Councils and other enforcement agencies including the Victoria Police was also completed to develop a common approach to animal management related issues and coordinate future investigations and interventions.

## Introduction

The Victorian State Government amended the Domestic Animals Act 1994, to improve animal management in Victoria, by requiring that all Councils have a Domestic Animal Management Plan (referred to hereafter in this document as the DAMP). The City of Yarra supports this strategic approach and has developed its DAMP using the guidelines provided by the Department of Primary Industry.

The DAMP is required to specifically inform both the State Government and interested parties how the City of Yarra has equipped and trained authorised officers, and provided processes for them to enforce the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and associated Regulations. The DAMP is not intended to regulate how the City of Yarra investigates or enforces its Local Laws or other Policies which relate to the management of animals. These Local Laws and Policies may be referred to where they compliment the DAMP, and will be enforced in conjunction with the DAMP where appropriate.

The City of Yarra encourages responsible animal ownership and recognises the positive benefits associated with pets. Animal ownership can provide community members with opportunities to connect with other people and encourages greater use of open space.

### Council's role in Animal Management

Council play a number of roles within the scope of animal management. In the City of Yarra responsible pet ownership will focus on:

**Responsible Pet ownership;** In order to facilitate the benefits of pet ownership, minimise conflict with others, and reduce the need for Council intervention, there is a need for one united voice across Council on pet issues and protocols. Good marketing, education, communication between stakeholders, and the development of incentives to do the right thing are also required. A key principle in Council's approach is to provide the necessary leadership information and encouragement to prevent conflict, minimise the number of pets that are unwanted, and enhance responsible pet ownership.

Council's key focus in the delivery of animal management services are:

- To promote responsible pet ownership in the City of Yarra;
- To respond to issues raised by the community about nuisance animals (e.g. barking dogs);
- To enforce the legislation relating to animals;
- To encourage the registration of companion animals;
- To educate the community on topics related to animal management and control; and
- Microchipping and compulsory desexing of cats.

This will be achieved through a range of initiatives including education and enforcement of legislative requirements, community consultation and education and interaction with key stakeholders.

## **Process applied in developing this plan**

The DAMP was prepared by the City of Yarra's Team Leader of Local Laws and Animal Management in conjunction with the Animal Management Team. Other relevant areas of Council and external stakeholders and agencies have also been consulted about the content of this plan.

## **Training of authorised officers**

Section 68A (2) (b) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, requires that Council's must outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district

## **Context**

The City of Yarra was created in June 1994 following the Victorian Government's restructure of local government. The City of Yarra is located close to Melbourne's Central Business District. Neighbouring Councils are Moreland and Darebin (to the north), Boroondara (to the east), Stonnington (to the south), and Melbourne (to the west). The City of Yarra includes the suburbs of Abbotsford, Alphington (part), Burnley, North Carlton, Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Cremorne, Fairfield (part), Fitzroy, North Fitzroy, Princes Hill and Richmond.

The traditional owners of the land are the Wurundjeri Aboriginal people who originally inhabited the area that is now known as Fitzroy, Richmond and Collingwood. Yarra continues to be an important meeting place for Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Today, Yarra boasts more than 230 hectares of open space. It is renowned for large historical gardens particularly Edinburgh Gardens in North Fitzroy and Darling Gardens in Clifton Hill. The Merri Creek and Yarra River, which form two of Yarra's boundaries, have adjoining linear open space reserves which are highly valued by residents of Yarra and wider metropolitan Melbourne for their recreational and nature conservation values.

The current estimated population for the municipality is more than 70,000.

There were 14024 dogs and 8010 cats registered within the City of Yarra in 2011 registration period. In the 2012 registration period there were 14861 dogs and 8366 cats registered. There has been a steady increase in the registration of dogs and cats as a result of registration incentives and improved operational methods.

There are 11 Domestic Animal Businesses registered in the City of Yarra.

The Animal Management Team has two full time Animal Management Officers.

### Current and planned training

The objective of training and development is to ensure all staff employed as Animal Management Officers have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work effectively.

All Animal Management staff are provided the opportunity to gain the Certificate IV Animal Control and Regulation and Certificate IV Government and Statutory Compliance. A Microchipping Implantation course is also available. These qualifications address the skills of communication, animal handling, report writing, investigation and time management and form the minimum standard training required by an Animal Management Officer.

<b>Authorised Officer Training - Basic</b>	<b>Current (2013)</b>	<b>Planned 2013-20014</b>
<b>Certificate IV in Government Statutory Compliance</b>  <b>Officer 1</b>  <b>Officer 2</b>	<b>Completed</b>  <b>Completed</b>	
<b>Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation</b>  <b>Officer 1</b>  <b>Officer 2</b>	<b>Completed</b>  <b>Completed</b>	
<b>Course in Microchip Implantation of Cats and Dogs</b>  <b>Officer 1</b>  <b>Officer 2</b>	<b>Completed</b>	<b>Will be undertaking</b>

<p><b>Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution, computer skills.</b></p> <p><b>Officer 1</b></p> <p><b>Officer 2</b></p>	<p><b>Completed</b></p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>	<p><b>Annual refresher, when available</b></p>
<p><b>OH&amp;S training- dealing with aggressive customers</b></p> <p><b>Officer 1</b></p> <p><b>Officer 2</b></p>	<p><b>Training available through corporate training internally</b></p>	<p><b>Training available through corporate training internally</b></p>
<p><b>Customer service training- conflict resolution, telephone speak</b></p> <p><b>Officer 1</b></p> <p><b>Officer 2</b></p>	<p><b>Training available through corporate training internally</b></p>	<p><b>Training available through corporate training internally</b></p>
<p><b>Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days</b></p> <p><b>Officer 1</b></p> <p><b>Officer 2</b></p>	<p><b>All officers to attend, when notified</b></p>	<p><b>All officers to attend, when notified</b></p>



<b>Induction program for new staff</b>  <b>Officer 1</b>  <b>Officer 2</b>	<b>Completed</b>  <b>Completed</b>	<b>Training available through corporate training internally</b>
<b>Other (Future training and up skilling)</b>  <b>Officer 1</b>  <b>Officer 2</b>	<b>Further training to be identified as part of annual work plan review and individual plan developed for each officer</b>	<b>Annual review of training requirements</b>

## Our plans

### Objective 1: Review and update current induction plan for new staff

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff	By June 2014	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved induction plan by June 2014
Identify additional training opportunities by consultation with management and staff	By June 2014	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into individual officer's training plan as part of organisational development plan process by June 2014

### Objective 2: Develop and maintain a training calendar for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training as part of annual performance planning process

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete development plan process annually with each staff member, identifying training needs	Annually	Completion of development plan process

**Objective 3: Ensure all Authorised Officers have completed their minimum training requirements with 12 months of appointment.**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements for officer (e.g. OH&S, animal handling), and create a document when officers have completed the course.	By July annually	Review in July annually the spreadsheet and ensure each officer has completed their minimum training requirements within 12 months of appointment.

**Objective 4: Offer additional training opportunities each year**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify additional training opportunities, prosecution training, conflict management, communication, education technique	Annually commencing 2013	Annually review how many officers undertook training that was in addition to their minimum requirements

## Registration and Identification

68A(2)(c)(v) states Council's must —Outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f).

Cats and dogs over three months old must be registered annually. The Council provides a unique registration tag to every pet registered. It is a requirement of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 for all registered pets to wear their identification tag at all times.

The registration fee helps Council to provide the infrastructure needed for animal management, including tags. Part of the fee is returned to the State government to fund pet education and support programs. The benefits of pet registration are:

- it provides Council with statistics to inform planning and management;
- it allows lost or found animals and their owners to be reunited;
- when responding to calls about wandering, aggressive, or nuisance pets, Council can contact the owner swiftly;
- owners who register and identify their pets are more likely to be responsible pet owners hence minimising stray animals, feral animals and over population; and
- If an animal is unregistered and / or not wearing its identification tag when off the owners premises, a fine may be issued to the owner.

Table 1: Comparison of City of Yarra Registration Data from 2010 - 2012

Registrations	2010	2011	2012
<b>Dogs</b>	12933	14024	14861
<b>Cats</b>	7591	8010	8366
<b>Dangerous Dogs</b>	0	0	0
<b>Restricted Breed Dogs</b>	2	2	1
<b>Declared Menacing Dogs</b>	2	2	2

The importance of animal registration and Microchipping is particularly relevant when considering the number of animals which are then able to be returned safely to their owners. It also means animal owners may be alerted to the fate of their animals if they are deceased, as all domestic animals collected on City of Yarra roads are scanned and held for a period so the owner may be contacted.

Table 2: Comparison of Cat and Dog Impound Data 2010-2012

Species	Impounds 2010	Impounds 2011	Impounds 2012
<b>Dogs</b>	173	223	221
<b>Cats</b>	59	59	42
<b>Total</b>	232	282	263

### Cats and Compulsory Desexing

On 1 March 2010, Council introduced compulsory cat desexing to reduce the number of stray and feral cats in the community. Cat owners in the City of Yarra must have their cat desexed before it may be registered for the first time at three months of age. Desexing not only reduces the population of stray, unwanted animals, but it also helps pets to live longer and healthier lives. Owners of cats already registered with Council which are not desexed must have their cat desexed prior to renewing their pet registration. Exceptions apply when a vet has advised against desexing for health reasons or where a cat is being kept for recognised breeding purposes. Owners will need to provide Council with a letter from their vet or a copy of their breeding certificate.

### Reduced Fees

Reduced registration fees are applicable for people who hold a State Concession (must be eligible within the meaning of State Concessions Act 1986) you must supply your current

Department of Social Security Pension Number, Department of Veterans Affairs Pension Number or Health Care Card Number.

In special cases where financial hardship may be proved, the Manager Compliance may waive all or part of a registration fee. Proof must be in writing and further information may be requested to substantiate eligibility if required.

### **Pro-Rata Fees**

A sliding scale of fees are available to allow discounted registration fees for pets dependant on which month in the annual registration year the pet is registered.

### **Registration / renewal of registration of dangerous and restricted breeds**

The City of Yarra will continue to register and renew the registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs conditional on the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Domestic Animal Regulations 2010.

### **Animal Census**

City of Yarra conducts advertising campaigns to advise owners of their obligations to ensure that their pets are registered. To ensure compliance Councils Animal Management Officers regularly conduct inspections in parks, activity and residential centres to check animal registrations. Animal Management Officers also attend identified properties where unregistered dogs and cats maybe kept.

### **Number of permitted animals**

Except as otherwise provided a person must not, without a permit, keep on any premises:

- any more in number of each type of animal or groups of animals than is set out in Table 1 (below), or
- any animal not referred to in Table 1 (other than fish).

Council may prescribe animals, other than those referred to in Table 1 that may be kept without a permit.

### **Table 3 – Maximum numbers and types of animals**

Unless permitted under a Planning Scheme applicable to the land, a person must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on any land, other than a flat or unit, any more of each species or group of animals and birds than is stated in the following table. These tables form part of Councils Environmental Local Law No. 3 of 2012, Section 39.1 and 40.1

Type of Animal	Maximum number allowed	
	Premises other than flats or units	Flats or units
Dogs	2	1
Cats	2	1
Chickens/Poultry	5	0
Domestic Birds	5	2
Reptiles	2	0
Ferrets, guinea pigs, rabbits or mice	2	0
Cold water and tropical fish	Unlimited	Unlimited

### **Pets other than Cats & Dogs**

#### **Keeping reptiles In Yarra**

The keeping of some reptiles may cause concern to neighbours, although small tortoises, frogs, lizards and other amphibians may not be problematic if well looked after. As these animals only need limited exercise and space, they may be ideal pets for residents of flats and units. Various snakes and reptiles are protected and as such, keeping of these animals must be in accordance with all relevant Acts and regulations. The Department of Primary Industries has a *Code of practice for the welfare of animals- Private keeping of reptiles (Victoria), 2003*, which residents wishing to keep reptiles must comply with. Most native animals are protected and require a permit from the Department of Sustainability and Environment to be kept as pets. Certain reptiles and amphibians are prohibited species and/or may require special permits and housing.

#### **Keeping ferrets, guinea pigs, rabbits and mice**

As these animals also only need limited exercise and space, they may be ideal pets for residents of flats and units. The breeding habits of rodents and rabbits can create excessive numbers and an increased likelihood of escape. While keeping up to two ferrets, guineapigs, rabbits or mice is permitted, residents are encouraged to own same-sex rodents. De-sexing of male rabbits and ferrets is often undertaken for the benefit of reducing aggression in the animal. De-sexing will also greatly reduce odour in male ferrets. Female ferrets not used for breeding should be de-sexed, to prevent anaemia.

#### **Keeping cold water and tropical fish**

There are few issues in relation to keeping cold water and tropical fish. Outdoor fishponds however, need to comply with relevant pool safety requirements. A person must not release fish into any public waterways or water bodies.

### **Keeping poultry in Yarra**

Owning up to five poultry birds is permitted (subject to proper siting of enclosures), unless residents live in a flat or unit in which case, the keeping of poultry is prohibited. Residents wishing to keep poultry must comply with the regulations set out in the *Victorian Code of Accepted Farming Practice for the Welfare of Poultry, 2003*. This Code is intended as a set of guidelines to provide detailed minimum standards of care required to meet owner obligations under Victorian laws. Requests have been registered with Council regarding noisy roosters. In accordance with Clause 42 of Local Law No 3, Council may direct the owner to permanently remove the rooster (or any other animal) if, in the opinion of Council or the authorised officer, it is detrimental to the general amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.

### **Keeping bees in Yarra**

Provided that requirements of the *Apiary Code of Practice 2011* and the *Livestock Disease Control Act 1994* are met, bee keeping is permitted by Yarra residents. The *Apiary Code of Practice 2011* addresses types of apiculture, definitions of practices, management requirements and statutory requirements. Of note is the limitation on the number of hives allowed to be kept, depending on the size of the property. The *Livestock Disease Control Act 1994* requires beekeepers with one or more hives to be registered with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) as a beekeeper. Registration enables DPI to conduct disease prevention and control programs for the benefit of beekeepers. This includes the mailing of useful information.

### **Keeping birds in Yarra**

The Department of Primary Industries has a *Code of practice for the housing of caged birds 2001*, with which residents keeping birds must comply. Some protected species require their owners to be licensed.

### **Our registration and identification Orders**

#### **Local Laws**

Council currently addresses complaints through education including providing set procedures to follow (such as the barking dog procedure), enforcement process and patrols. Animal Management Officers conduct regular patrols throughout the municipality. During the months of daylight savings, patrols are conducted outside normal business hours, including weekends and concentrate on problem areas, high use open space areas and shopping strips. Council has a strong enforcement focus towards such non-compliance as dog's off-lead in on-lead areas, failure to carry a device to clean up after a dog, and failure to clean up after a dog. Council has a process in place for dealing with barking dog complaints. Systematic investigation procedures are applied to all animal management complaints.

City of Yarra Enforcement Protocols - Education and enforcement strategy associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding management of dogs and cats. Operational procedures including OHS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are available to guide officers in the performance of their duties. These are listed on Council's document management system.

Council introduced the following Order under Domestic Animals Act 1994: As of 1 March 2010 Council will not register or renew the registration of a cat unless it is de-sexed. Exceptions will only be made for cats used for breeding purpose or due to veterinary advice.

### **Council policies and procedures**

- procedure for appointment of agents for registration (s.12)
- application for registration and renewal of registration of dogs and cats (form approved by Council) (s.14)
- procedure for the registration/refusal of registration/renewal of registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs (s.17)
- procedure associated with seizure and impounding of unregistered and/or unidentified dogs and cats
- enforcement protocols associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding breaches of the DAA
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog and/or cat owners

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

- Place information in local papers using media releases to advise of registration period and requirements;
  - registration/renewal of registration information listed on Council's website including advising when the date that registration is due, how to register, registration fee structure, what documents are required to be produced supplied;
  - registration form available for download on Council's website;
  - registration period and information listed in the Yarra News Letter.
- Provide Responsible Pet Ownership information to vets and other domestic animal businesses;
  - ensure that information is provided on Council's website to clearly identify the difference between registration and micro-chipping;
  - include registration, identification and renewal information in Council displays at the Town Halls.
- Promote the requirement for owners to "pick up" after their dogs, and dispose of waste appropriately in the general waste bin (where provided) or take it home.
- Provide a supply of plastic bags to registered owners, from the town halls and other Council buildings, to encourage owners to take responsibility for carrying dog waste bags and pick up after their dog.
- Ensure general waste bins are placed in all off-lead parks.
- Where possible, provide taps for owners to wash their hands.
- Hold joint registration and micro-chipping events with neighbouring Councils.

- Distribute registration and identification brochures, factsheets and other material developed by the Bureau of Animal Welfare and/or Council by mail to residents, inserting in local papers; and providing to pet shops and domestic animal businesses for display and distribution.
- Conduct animal registration audits in specific localities to determine the numbers of registered cats and dogs in that area.

### **Our Current Compliance Activities**

- Issue annual animal registration renewal notices
- Follow up renewal notices with reminder notices
- Targeted door knock audit to properties that did not register after receiving Renewal notices
- Undertake random door knock audits throughout year when unregistered animals are detected;
  - patrol public parks, activity centres and public places to check that cats and dogs are both registered and identified;
  - conduct animal registration audits annually in specified localities identified as areas of low registration to check for compliance; and
  - issue infringement notices for failing to re-register/register.
- Check registration details of all dogs encountered on the streets, parks and properties
- Conduct enforcement patrols in all parks and shopping precincts
- Check that registered dogs are wearing current and correct registration tags
- When dealing with animal complaints always check registration details
- Authorised Officers to be equipped with micro-chip scanners
- Provide Council's rapid response team with an electronic micro-chip scanner so deceased/injured animals can be scanned and able to inform animal owner
- Update animal registration database when notified of deceased, moved or sold animals
- Ensure that all seized or impounded animals are registered prior to release to the owner
- Review animal registration fees annually during budget process
- Ensure that correct State Government levy is charged on animal registrations
- Provide domestic animal business's with animal registration forms and information relating to animal owners responsibilities under the Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Annual audit of all Domestic Animal Business's to ensure compliance of the Code of practice is met.
- Fine dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs



## Summary

Over the next four years Council will be seeking to increase the number of cats and dogs registered in the municipality. This will be done through community education, random registration checks during patrols, undertaken by Authorised Officers and checking registration details of all animals sighted during visits to residential/commercial properties.

## Our current compliance activities

Activity	Time
Annual door knock audits	Annually
Patrols	All year
Rehoused notification follow up	All year

Table 4: Infringements Numbers

Infringement type	2011	2012
Registration Offences Dog/ Cat (including warning notices)	161	72
Dog at large (including warning notices)	125	142
Dog Attack (minor) (including warning notices)	18	14

## Summary

As a result of the use of a mixture of education and enforcement tools, registration has been increasing within the municipality. Registration remains a priority as part of all investigations and patrols. It is acknowledged that there are difficulties in contacting residents of high-density dwellings and specific programs are needed to address this. It is also acknowledged that proactive enforcement initiatives such as doorknocking and patrols are required to significantly increase rates of compliance. Over the next four years the City of Yarra will consider new initiatives and continue existing programs to ensure pet owners register their pets as required.

## Our plans

### Objective 1: Review and consider education programs to increase Animal Registrations

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertaking annual animal registration Door Knock Program - targeted door knocking of the municipality each year to check for unregistered dogs and cats	Conducted annually	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Record of number of unregistered and unidentified animals detected during door knocks. Infringements issued for unregistered animals

### Objective two - Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 5% each year

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct community pet events to promote animal registrations and opportunities to register pets outside normal business hours	Throughout the Year	Number of programs provided Number of registrations processed at pet events Number of animals micro-chipped
Increased promotion of registration requirements in the local media	Prior to April each year	Review local media to ensure registration is advertised/promoted annually
Issue animal infringement notices	Available all year	Number of infringement notices issued and the registration of these animals

## Nuisance

68A(2)(c)(vi) states Councils must— 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).

## Dog Waste

The presence of dog waste in public places is one of the primary causes of complaints to Council. Dog (and cat) waste is a serious environmental and health issue, it is a concern for sports ground and park users and it is a major source of contamination.

Droppings may contain harmful bacteria that can transmit diseases to humans. To overcome waste management issues, all dog owners should carry more than one plastic bag when off private property, to clean up after their dog. Fines can be issued for not having a bag. Bag dispensers are provided in selected parks and reserves in Yarra. Council currently spends in the order of \$30,000 annually on bag provision.

In the annual mail out of animal registration, Council has included an information sheet informing the owners of the availability of bags at the three town halls on presentation of the leaflet. Education, incentives and communication can establish local ownership and policing of pick-up requirements at off-lead reserves, at relatively small cost. Due to the high transient population of Yarra, it will be important to maintain patrols and education programs. Some Councils provide specific dog waste bins in conjunction with dispensers.

The fundamental issue of people not picking up after their dogs can be linked to registration. The experience of patrolling indicates that people with registered dogs are more likely to carry appropriate bags to pick up after their pet. This is a major reason that registration remains a key priority.

## **Noise**

Noise nuisances are also a major concern. The City of Yarra provides information to people regarding noise nuisances and how to combat them. This generally resolves most enquiries; however for the more serious noise issues there is an escalated process to deal with these cases.

Dogs bark for a reason and the problems are easier to rectify if addressed as soon as they eventuate. Common reasons for barking are:

- lack of exercise
- boredom, loneliness and frustration
- feeling under threat / fear (e.g. of thunder, fireworks)
- poor living conditions (e.g. no shelter or impinging flood lights)
- ill-health

Dogs that bark usually benefit from more exercise, socialisation or a more interesting environment. Dogs barking at passers-by may need to have their access to views obstructed (e.g. solid fencing or a hedge). If the problem persists, dogs may benefit from attending obedience clubs.

## **Recommended barking dog procedure**

If there are concerns about a barking dog, often the easiest way to resolve the matter is to talk to neighbours, as the majority of times they are unaware of the issue. If your own dog barks significantly you can speak to an animal management officer for advice or speak to your local vet or trainer who can provide assistance. The majority of cases involve dogs that are bored or can see visual stimulation.

On receipt of a barking dog complaint, Council will contact the dog owner to advise that a complaint has been made, and offer advice on how to rectify the problem. The complainant will be provided with a noise log to complete when the dog barks. After seven days, Council will

contact the complainant to determine if the problem has been rectified. If the problem persists, the dog owner will be advised of the further complaint and enforcement action that may be taken. If excessive barking continues after the dog has been declared a nuisance, the owner may be prosecuted.

The noise log is required as the minimum standard of evidence to substantiate that a nuisance is occurring and upon which any intervention or formal action will be based.

### **Cat nuisance -Wandering and feral cats**

Section 23 of the Act makes it an offence for a cat to wander on private property without permission of the owner or occupier. Cats can be impounded if they are off their owner's premises and if they return to another person's private property.

Cats are known to be a major threat to wildlife in the bush however less recognised is that the same applies to cats in towns and cities. There are many reasons why cats should not be left outside over night:

- Cats can roam a long way, making them vulnerable to attack by other animals and exposing other wildlife to attack from them
- Cats are most active at night, and especially at dusk and dawn. This coincides with the activity periods of much of our Australian wildlife, placing native animals at risk
- Even well fed and apparently contented pets will instinctively hunt and kill living creatures.
- Domestic cats mixing with feral or stray cats at night makes them susceptible to feline AIDS, and the blood protozoan disease Toxoplasmosis (both carried by cats). These can affect wildlife, sheep and humans

Council conducts a trapping program and any registered cat that is trapped will be identified through its registration tag and returned to its owner, who may be issued with a Trespass Notice under the Act and subject to prosecution should the cat be trapped again.

Council may make an Order under the Act requiring the mandatory confinement of cats at night. This requirement may also be included in an Animal Management Agreement if appropriate.

### **Dogs Wandering at large**

Dogs that wander at large contribute to a significant proportion of dog management problems. Most injuries to dogs can be prevented if they are kept confined within their owner's property. Common injuries include being hit by a car or from fights with other animals or incidents involving rush's or attacks on people.

City of Yarra Council encourages dog owners to maintain adequate fencing to prevent animals wandering from their premises. Council provides services to collect wandering animals and may impound dogs, issue Infringements and prosecute pet owners when an offence is found.

City of Yarra's has bushland reserves that's contain indigenous flora and fauna that may be sensitive to activities of dogs if they are not controlled. Pet owners are encouraged to comply with any access restrictions to minimise the nuisance caused by dogs to the flora and fauna.

Council will continue to actively promote responsible pet ownership and work in cooperation with pet owners and other members of the community to monitor and control dog behaviour.

Table 5: Customer requests received by category (2010 -2012)

<b>Complaint type</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Dog collections	173	223	221
Barking dogs	166	154	146
Dog off leash/not under effective control	11	40	21
Cat collections	59	59	42
Trespassing cats	33	11	7
Dogs wandering at large	11	40	21

## **Nuisance Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures**

### **Orders**

- Council Order - Order requiring dogs and/or cats to be restrained in a specific manner when in public places (s.26)
- Council Order - Order prohibiting dogs and/or cats from being present in specific areas of the municipal district (s.26)

### **Local Laws**

- Environment Local Law Local Law No. 3 of 2012 –s.39 - Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property.
- Roads and Council Land Local Law No. 2 of 2012 – s.19 - Local Law requiring dog owners remove and dispose of faeces deposited by their dogs in public places.

### **Council policies and procedures**

- process regarding trespass of dogs and/or cats on premises without permission (s.23)
- process regarding dogs found in control zone or conservation zone (s.31)
- policy and procedure regarding noise nuisance complaints for dogs and/or cats (s.32)
- process associated with seeking orders from a Magistrate for owners to abate noise nuisance or for an order to confine (s.32)
- process associated with the surrender of dogs and/or cats by owners (s.33A)
- process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs and cats causing a nuisance

- enforcement process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dogs and cats causing a nuisance
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog and/or cat owners (Part 7D)

### **Our current education/promotion activities**

Current activities to curb nuisance issues include:

- Dog bags provided at all major parks
- Free dog bag receptacles available to registered dog owners at Town Hall
- provision of information about animal nuisances at all Council offices
- provision of cat traps for trapping trespassing or nuisance cats
- provision of information about barking dog causes and solutions
- provision of information about cat enclosures and cat nuisance issues to cat owners in registration information packs each year
- provision of information about dog confinement, barking, dogs at large and related issues to dog owners in registration information packs each year
- liaise with and seek support from other areas of Council regarding issues such as animal hoarding
- authorised officers to attend and speak to animal clubs, obedience groups and public forums regarding responsible pet ownership and animal nuisance issues as required.
- an escalated process for responding to dog barking complaints, allowing time for rectification or training resolutions
- continued education regarding noise issues
- patrolling

### **Our current compliance activities**

- patrols of Council parks and reserves, activity centres and residential areas
- investigations of both reported and proactively detected complaints and breaches
- enforcement activity associated with patrols and investigations where a breach has been confirmed
- review Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures relating to nuisance on an annual basis to assess effectiveness, or as required when an opportunity for continuous improvement is identified
- ensure that notices to comply, notices of objection, infringements, warnings and prosecutions are in line with Council Policy and Procedures
- actively work with other agencies on the broader nuisance issues, including the Bureau of Animal Welfare, RSPCA and Victoria Police as relevant
- in cases not warranting prosecution or in special circumstances as decided by the Team Leader Local Laws and Animal Management, owners of nuisance animals may be

required to enter into an Animal Management Agreement for a specified time period. If the Agreement is breached the original nuisance offence may be prosecuted.

- Take appropriate enforcement action in a timely manner, including the issue of notices to comply and warning notices, infringements, animal management agreements or prosecutions.

## Summary

Noise nuisance complaints continue to be a major issue, often as a result of increased animal ownership in high density areas. Living in apartments or small properties with dogs is challenging and a priority will be to educate dog owners about proper pet selection, training and responsible animal ownership. It is expected that noise nuisance complaints will continue to stay at high levels, due to the nature of the municipality.

Dog excrement is difficult to address through compliance measures alone and therefore relies heavily on dog owners doing the right thing in return. Dog litter is an issue in both dog on leash and off leash areas but is more prevalent in off leash areas. Authorised officers must actually witness the event to take enforcement action.

## Our plans

### Objective 1: Improve and update information regarding nuisance issues

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education material about nuisance issues on the Council website.	Ongoing	Completed and material to be reviewed and updated every 12 months.
Review the procedures for dealing with barking dog complaints.	Ongoing	Increase the number of barking dog complaints that are successfully resolved prior to enforcement.
Provide education to pet owners about cat enclosures and nuisance issues.	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of complaints relating to trespassing cats.

### Objective 2: Evaluate and improve process for managing barking dog complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve letters/information provided as part of the barking investigation process	June 2014	Completed and material to be reviewed annually as part of process review

### Objective 3: Improve dog litter compliance

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue supplying dogs bags in Yarra's parks	Ongoing	Inspections conducted during park patrols to see if there is a reduction of dog excrement
Animal Management Officers continue handing out ' <i>Bags on Board</i> ' to residents during patrols	Ongoing	Educating animal owners about responsible pet ownership
Encouraging residents to report to Council people who fail to clean up after their dog	Ongoing	Increased patrols in high complaint areas. Letter drops to houses in areas where complaints are made

### Dog Attacks

68A(2)(c)(iii) states Councils must— Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals<sup>2</sup> - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f).

The reported occurrence of dog attacks within Yarra has remained steady over recent years, however it remains a cause of concern, particularly as many are likely to be unreported (because of penalties to owners).

Children are the most common victims of serious dog attacks, with most attacks occurring in the home. Most injuries are to the face or head, often caused by children putting their face close to a dog's mouth or hugging the dog tightly around its neck.

The Australian Companion Animal Council suggests dog bites are often a human problem associated with the inappropriate selection of dogs, ignorance of dog care and management and inappropriate behaviour around dogs. An education campaign by Council, about these issues may be more effective than punitive measures targeting dangerous dogs.

Teaching children about how to approach an unfamiliar dog interact safely with pets, and importantly, how to read the body language of dogs and cats, in conjunction with training and socialising and supervision of children around dogs, may reduce incidents and severity of injuries. The Safe Pets Out There (SPOT) program in New South Wales, and the Blue Dog project in the UK are examples of projects working across private not for profit and government sectors, addressing this issue through child education. The Victorian State Government has a Responsible Pet Ownership Program for Schools.

The City of Yarra has developed a presentation for primary aged children on pet ownership and safety matters, and is designed to compliment to school program currently delivered by the Department of Primary Industries.



## Current situation

Table 6: Customer requests received, by category

Complaint type	2011	2012
Dog attack / Rush	40	73

Table 7: Enforcement under the DAA 1 January to 31 December

Dog attack information	2010	2011	2012
Dog attacks resulting in prosecution	2	2	4
Total cases referred for prosecution	11	54	19
Dogs destroyed after court cases	0	0	0
Seized dogs, as a result of attack	0	0	0

## Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures on dog attacks

### Orders

- Council Order - Order requiring dogs and/or cats to be restrained in a specific manner when in public places (s.26)
- Council Order - Order prohibiting dogs and/or cats from being present in specific areas of the municipal district (s.26)

### Local Laws

Environment Local Law, No. 3 of 2012 - Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (s39 & s40).

Roads and Council Local Law No. 2 of 2012 – Law regulating the operation and control of dogs being walked or exercised in public space by commercial dog walkers (s23).

### Council policies and procedures

- process relating to seizure of dogs found at large or not secured to owner's premises (s.24)
- process relating to attacks or bites by dogs (s.29)
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- procedure for serving notices of seizure relating to seizing of identified dogs (s.84H)

- procedure for owners when recovering dogs that have been seized by Council (s.84M)
- process associated with disposal of seized dogs (s.84O)  
process associated with destruction of dogs after Court order or exercising Council power to destroy a dog (s.84P)
- procedure to identify how and when to exercise power of immediate destruction of dogs (s.84TA, TB and TC)
- process associated with seeking orders from Magistrates in relation to dogs found outside owner's premises and owners of dogs found guilty of attacking (s.84W)
- process associated with registration of dogs and the fee structure for registration (Schedule to the Act)
- process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs after a dog attack
- enforcement process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dog attacks

### **Our current education/promotion activities**

- patrolling of Council parks and reserves, activity and residential centres
- use of educational signage in off leash areas – promoting —off leash rules
- raising awareness of the risk of dog attacks at home, in the street and in public space and how to reduce these risks through the distribution of factsheets, information in new and renewal registration packs, inserts and/or articles in local media, providing information for distribution to domestic animal businesses and vets and via social media
- providing information to residents on how to report dog attacks and rushes, whether or private property or within public space
- identify clearly those public spaces that are off-leash areas, areas in which dogs are required to be effectively controlled or on-leash, and areas where dogs are prohibited; and provide that information to animal owners and residents
- promote Desexing of dogs to reduce aggressive and wandering tendencies
- promote the early socialisation of dogs with other animals and humans, after all required immunisation programs have been completed
- promote the regular exercise of dogs
- use Council's social media to encourage and promote responsible pet ownership.
- promote Responsible Pet Ownership generally
- inform residents of prosecution outcomes initiated by Council and which relate to this issue.

### Our current compliance activities

- patrolling of high risk areas including high attendance dog parks, events, public markets and activity centres
- ensure that any Court Order to confine dogs is being complied with by unannounced inspections
- reporting the outcomes of all dog attack prosecutions to local media to raise awareness in the community of the need to report dog attacks and rushes, and of Council’s actions in relation to dog attacks and rushes
- strictly enforce on-leash requirements. If not a designated public space by Council Resolution, all areas within the City of Yarra which are not private property are on-leash areas
- be proactive in declaring dogs dangerous or menacing using the provisions of sections 34 and 41A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 respectively
- the development of a dog attack investigation and enforcement procedure
- the continuation of the mutual working relationship with the Victoria Police in regard to dog attacks reported to that agency and related crimes Act and Domestic Animals Act enforcement and investigations
- constant internal revision and assessment by the Team Leader Local Laws and Animal Management of enforcement protocols and procedures related to infringements, warnings, prosecutions and destruction orders to ensure continuous improvement is maintained
- rostered animal management focussed weekend patrols of high use and risk areas during peak periods of activity in those areas

### Summary

Serious dog attacks remain a major risk, despite the fact that they do not occur regularly.

The City of Yarra recognises that the community expects all dog attacks to be investigated and action taken in accordance with the Act. Serious dog attacks are always investigated as a matter of urgency and where appropriate, are prosecuted in the Magistrates’ Court.

### Our plans

#### Objective 1: Improve reporting of dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve information on the website for attack investigations	July 2014	Website updated and reviewed every six months
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report using media articles, public notices in parks etc.	July 2014	Evaluate this activity (and overall objective) by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council pre and post campaign. Meet objective of increasing reports

## Objective 2: Improve awareness of safety around dogs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Consider ways to promote the benefits of socialisation and training of dogs to reduce the incidence of dog attacks.	July 2014	Prepare and promote information for residents (especially new parents) about: breed selection, restricted breeds, the need for training and socialising dogs, supervision around children, how to read the behaviour of cats and dogs and how to approach an unfamiliar dog, in order to reduce attacks and the severity of injuries
Proactive patrolling regarding effective control	Ongoing	Documented patrols throughout year
Promote positive media stories regarding animal management practices to improve education	Ongoing	Count the number of media stories generated by the animal management team

### Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

68A(2)(c)(vii) states Councils must —Outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f).

The Act requires that the plan outline programs services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and relevant regulations.

Our community expects that Council will ensure all reported, suspected Restricted Breed Dogs are inspected and reports investigated. Residents have a high expectation that Council will utilise all available legislation to control restricted breeds and manage dangerous dogs within our municipality.

Dangerous and menacing dogs may be “declared” under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* as such after an incident of rushing, biting or attack. Council’s front-line approach is to educate owners so that incidents of attack do not occur.

A declared dangerous or menacing dog means that this particular dog has already demonstrated a risk to the community. That is an incident has already occurred.

Dog attacks are the most seriously treated animal management issue because of the community safety impact. Any dog attack is promptly investigated and, if in Council's opinion, legal action is warranted the matter will be taken to court.

If a dog owner has been found guilty in court of a dog attack where serious injury has occurred, Council has the power to declare that dog a "dangerous dog". In such cases Council has the power to destroy the animal. The owner has the right to have the decision to destroy a dog reviewed. In the interests of community safety Council has taken this step in the past and will continue to do so where appropriate. In any event if a dog is suspected of having attacked, it may be seized upon commencement of the investigation and held until the outcome of any prosecution in court is known.

Restricted breed dogs also pose a potential risk. Restricted breed dogs have controls placed on them due to the aggressive tendencies of the breed in general. The restricted breeds are identified through the *Act*.

There are many dogs that have been registered as a cross breed, or registered as another breed of dog which may be of a similar breed but not prohibited. It is an offence to have falsely signed a restricted breed dog declaration under the *Act* when registering a dog.

The *Act* allows an authorised officer to declare a dog as a restricted breed if in the opinion of the authorised officer the dog is of a restricted breed. The *Act* also gives Council the power to seize a dog if the authorised officer reasonably suspects that the owner has committed an offence under that part of the *Act* regarding restricted breed dogs.

The Bureau of Animal Welfare has published a guideline on restricted breed dogs and gives examples of criteria that if met will assist the authorised officer in making a declaration with respect to that dog as being a restricted breed.

The owner of a declared dog has the ability to apply to VCAT to review this declaration.

This part also addresses the requirements to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the animal control services provided by the council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the *Act*;
- promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats;
- ensure that people comply with the *Act*, regulations and any related legislation;
- provide for the review of existing orders made under this *Act* and Local laws dealing with the management of cats and dogs in the municipal district are desirable; and
- provide for the periodic Evaluation of any programs, service strategy or review outlined under the plan.

## Current situation

Table 8: Declared dogs in the City of Yarra

Classification	2010	2011	2012
Restricted breed	2	2	1
Dangerous dogs	0	0	0
Menacing dogs	2	2	2

## Our Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

### Council policies and procedures:

- process for the registration/refusal of registration/renewal of registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs (s.17)
- process associated with when a dog is declared dangerous (s.34)
- process associated with when a dog is declared menacing (s.41A)
- process associated with when a dog is declared to be of a restricted breed (s.98A)
- policy associated with issuing permits to keep more than two restricted breed dogs on a premises (s.41J)
- procedure to provide details of dangerous dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) (s.44AE)
- procedure to provide details on VDDR of dogs destroyed in relation to s.84TA, TB and TC (s.44AEA)
- policy and procedure associated with seizure and impounding of dangerous and restricted breed dogs
- enforcement protocol associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog owners (Part 7D)
- policy regarding how and when to exercise the power of immediate destruction of a dangerous dog found at large

### Our current education/promotion activities:

- provide residents with information on the types of declared dogs and how they are to be identified and kept in compliance with the Domestic Animals Act and Regulations, including prescribed collars, signage on premises, housing and general control
- auditing properties with these animals and advising owners of their legal obligations
- inspection of all animal addresses where registration details indicate that the dog is or may be a restricted breed

- educating residents on reporting attacks, rushes and minor issues
- continued monitoring and investigation of matters reported via the dangerous dog hotline

**Our current compliance activities**

- enforcement protocols inspections and audit to assess compliance microchip register – breed of dog check
- VDDR updates
- Ensure that Council has effective declaration policies to avoid declarations being overturned at VCAT and ensure that the declaration policies are specific for each type, namely Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breeds
- Conduct unannounced inspections of known declared dogs periodically to ensure they are identified correctly and being kept and controlled in accordance with the Act and Regulations
- Establish policies and procedures for investigation and prosecution for non-compliance
- Examine registrations recorded in the Council’s electronic database to identify and investigate suspected non-declared restricted breed dogs

**Summary**

Restricted breed, menacing and declared dangerous dogs are not a significant problem within the City of Yarra. Low numbers mean inspections for compliance can be done routinely.

**Our plans**

**Objective 1: Ensure accuracy of registration database for restricted breed dogs**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct unannounced audit inspections of declared Dangerous and Restricted Breed dogs annually to ensure they are identified and being kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations;	Annual Check	Audit form completed by officer on file
Cross reference microchip database information with current council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs	Annual Check	Audit form completed by officer on file

Ensure declared dog registration information on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and Council's registration database matches	Annual Check	Audit form completed by officer on file
Educate the community about what is a declared dog	Update information on website by July 2014	Ensure information updated and revised annually with scheduled checking

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

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review procedures for dealing with dangerous dogs and restricted breeds.	Annually	Audit form completed and signed off by officer

**Overpopulation and high euthanasia**

68A(2)(c)(iv) states Councils must —Outline programs, services and strategies to address any overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats. - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f).

The Act requires that the plan outline programs services and strategies to address over-populations and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats. This part also addresses the requirements to:

- set out a method to evaluate whether the animal control services provided by the council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act; and
- promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
- ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and any related legislation; and
- provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and Local laws dealing with the management of cats and dogs in the municipal district are desirable; and
- provide for the periodic Evaluation of any programs, service strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Consultation with Council staff and pet services in the City of Yarra indicated that there is an over-population of domestic animals, (in particular cats) in Yarra, and the number is beyond the capacity of the community to provide good homes. Controlling populations of unwanted cats (strays and feral) is central to controlling the over-population problem. If more pets were prevented from getting lost, impounded, and fewer were unwanted and abandoned, there



would be less unintentional breeding, unwanted litters, feral animals or euthanasia, and a greater potential to control disease amongst pets.

Unfortunately there is no accurate source of statistics on pet population numbers, and of those available, details are limited.

The most effective way to reunite lost pets with their owners is through micro chipping and registration. Micro chipping is now a legal requirement for new cat and dog registrations, for animals over 3 months of age. The best way to overcome abandonment, or people giving up their pets, is to provide prospective pet owners with good information to help them choose the right pet, and then assisting with information about responsible pet ownership and training tools to overcome potential obedience issues.

### Current situation

Table 9: Registered desexed and not desexed animals for 2012

Registered Animal	Number
<b>Cats - total</b>	8366
Desexed	8119
Not desexed	247
<b>Dogs - total</b>	14861
Desexed	10159
Not desexed	4702

Table 10: Customer requests received, by category

Complaint type	2010	2011	2012
Dog collections	173	223	221
Cat collections	59	59	42
Trespassing cats	33	11	11
Dogs wandering at large	11	40	21

Table 11: Impound statistics – July 2009 – July 2012

Species	July 2009 - 2010		
	Impounded	Euthanized	Adopted
<b>Dog</b>	165	26	20
<b>Puppy</b>	4	1	1
<b>Cat</b>	161	133	10
<b>Kitten</b>	74	71	6
<b>Total</b>	404	231	37

Species	July 2010 - 2011		
	Impounded	Euthanized	Adopted
<b>Dog</b>	154	15	24
<b>Puppy</b>	4	4	3
<b>Cat</b>	153	125	17
<b>Kitten</b>	76	74	8
<b>Total</b>	387	218	52

Species	July 2011 - 2012		
	Impounded	Euthanized	Adopted
<b>Dog</b>	164	18	27
<b>Puppy</b>	5	1	1
<b>Cat</b>	115	84	21
<b>Kitten</b>	77	94	11
<b>Total</b>	361	197	60

Council's Animal Management Officers collect and impound stray cats and dogs during business hours. After-hours collection and 24 hour 7 day week animal pound services are provided by the Lost Dogs Home in North Melbourne, who provides a monthly report detailing the number of animals impounded, euthanized, reclaimed and sold.

The Lost Dog's Home only rehouse animals that are suitably fit, in terms of both temperament and health.

### **Our overpopulation and high euthanasia Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures**

#### **Local Laws**

Environment Local Law, No. 3 of 2012 - Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (s39 & s40).

#### **Council policies and procedures**

- process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs and cats in the community
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process associated with entering into written agreements with animal shelters or community foster care networks to provide impounding or re-homing services (s.84Y)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog and/or cat owners (Part 7D)

### **Our current education/promotion activities**

- trap loan system in response to complaints regarding high populations of feral or nuisance cats. Residents using this service are required to enter into a loan agreement for the equipment and will be required to pay for any equipment lost, damaged or stolen
- run a subsidised desexing voucher program with registrations for eligible pet owners
- promote the confinement to owners premises of cats to prevent straying and possible euthanasia if unregistered
- website information

### **Our current compliance activities**

Authorised officers conduct routine trapping of feral cats to ensure a decline in the feral cat population, resulting in a better environment for domestic cats.

- Investigation of reports of animal hoarding
- Limiting the numbers of permitted animals
- Ensure that impounded animals are de-sexed prior to release from the pound facility
- Develop a policy and procedure for dealing with feral or stray cat colonies with a view to reducing unwanted cat populations
- Conduct compliance patrols to pick up feral and stray cats and dogs to reduce unplanned breeding
- The support of voluntary surrender of unwanted cats and dogs to reduce the number that are simply abandoned when no longer wanted or able to be kept

### **Summary**

On 1 March 2010, The City of Yarra introduced compulsory cat desexing to reduce the number of stray and feral cats in the community. Cat owners in Yarra must have their cat desexed before it may be registered for the first time at three months of age. Owners of cats already registered with Council that are not desexed must have their cat desexed prior to renewing their pet registration. Exceptions apply when a registered vet practitioner has advised against desexing for health reasons or where a cat is being kept for recognised breeding purposes. Owners must provide Council with a formal letter from their registered vet on an approved letterhead or a copy of their breeding certificate. Further information may be required to substantiate applications and Council may investigate all applications. Applicants who have submitted applications which are proved to be false or intentionally misleading may be prosecuted in the Magistrates' Court.

## Our plans

### Objective 1: Raise awareness about the semi owned cat population

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to support and provide AVA/MAV subsidised de-sexing for pets of low income earners	Ongoing	Number of animals de-sexed as part of the scheme. Cost to run scheme Any changes in the longer term re proportion of impounded pets that are de-sexed
Identify any cat colonies in Yarra, try to identify “feeder” and coordinate a trapping program.	Ongoing	Number of cats trapped in public places

## Domestic Animal Businesses

68A(2)(c)(ii) states Councils must —Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d),(f).

The Act requires that the plan outline programs, services and strategies the City of Yarra intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with the Act, relevant regulations and any related legislation. This part also addresses the requirements to:

- to set out a method to evaluate whether the animal control services provided by the council are adequate to bring effect to the requirements of the Act;
- to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats;
- provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and Local laws dealing with the management of cats and dogs in the municipal district are desirable; and
- provide for the periodic Evaluation of any programs, service strategy or review outlined under the plan.

### Current situation

There are 11 registered domestic animal businesses (DABs) consisting of:

- one pet shop
- zero breeding establishments
- zero dog training establishments
- zero shelters
- ten boarding establishments

All DABs are audited annually as stated in the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan and no noncompliance issues have been detected to date.

## **Our current Orders, Local Laws and Council policies and procedures**

### **Local Law**

Environment Local Law, No. 3 of 2012 - Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (s39 & s40).

### **Council policies and procedures**

- all DABs must be registered
- forms for registration and information on Council website and at Council offices
- all DABs to be audited annually
- process for completing audit
- process for managing minor noncompliance
- process for managing major noncompliance
- each registration to be individually considered on the need for specific conditions
- process for serious and continuous failure to comply and consideration of refusal to issue permit
- enforcement protocol for issuing notices to comply, infringements or prosecuting
- standard record/audit sheets on database of registered DABs
- process to attend VCAT
- process for registering new businesses
- process to refuse to register
- Section 13 DAA' forms – required of DABs for notification (to the Council in which the animal should be registered) of any animal sold or given away

### **Our current education/promotion activities**

- annual DAB audit and inspections for compliance with the relevant Code of Practice
- provide all DABs with relevant Code of Practice
- fact sheets supplied by the Bureau of Animal Welfare relating to DABs available in Council offices and sent to registered DABs
- provide a list of all registered and compliant domestic animal businesses on the Council web site

### **Our current compliance activities**

- register all domestic animal businesses within the municipality
- annual audit of all domestic animal businesses for compliance with the Code of Practice, and conduct random audits and inspections if complaints are received or breaches are suspected

- follow up any noncompliance with the provision of correct documentation and information, education of both management and staff and prosecution where warranted
- regular unannounced patrols and inspections for new and/or nonregistered domestic animal businesses
- unannounced inspections of registered domestic animal businesses
- patrols and investigations to search for possible unregistered or underground domestic animal businesses
- follow up registration after receiving 'Section 13 DAA' forms (required of DABs for notification of any animal sold or given away)
- check that local vets are sending notices under s13 of DAA regarding the sale of kittens
- liaise with the Planning Department of Council to provide advice when planning applications for domestic animal businesses are received, to ensure that appropriate conditions are placed on both construction and operation in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Code of Practice which may apply
- ensure that non-compliant domestic animal businesses are not registered until compliant. This will also require suspension of trading and operation for any non-compliant period in accordance with the Act
- domestic animal businesses which have a prior history of non-compliance with the Code of Practice may have their registration revoked rendering them unable to trade or operate.

## Summary

The City of Yarra will continue with auditing of existing businesses and addressing any non-compliance issues identified. Programs will be developed to identify unregistered businesses and application processes reviewed to ensure businesses comply with relevant code of practice and any other requirements.

## Our plans

### Objective 1: Ensure that all animal management officers are updated on the legislation in relation to DABs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all businesses that should be registered as DABs in the municipality.	Ongoing	Identify unregistered DAB's by searching Yellow Pages, News Papers, Internet

**Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DABs and investigate any suspected unregistered DABs**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Audit all DABs at least annually	Ongoing, at registration period	All DABs audited

**Objective 3: Promote the new legislative requirements for breeding DABs to all community, using tools provided by DPI to promote to possible breeders**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Send to anyone with an excess animal permit	Annually	Number of excess permits Number of new DABs

**Objective 4: Identify and close down all illegally operating domestic animal breeding establishments in the municipality**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, using yellow pages, local newspapers (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
Educate the public on the legislative compliance requirements pertaining to DABs and the registration process	Ongoing	Information available on website



## Other matters

68A(2)(e) states Councils must —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.

## How we will implement the Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Setting priorities for the next four years

Priorities in the Action Plan will be determined according to how well they address the following criteria. These criteria have been determined by the findings from the project research.

Priority services and facilities will be those that:

- Address changing pet and animal management trends and priorities in the community
- Have the greatest potential to achieve council's objectives relating to pets and responsible pet selection and ownership
- Achieve the greatest benefit for the cost outlay both by Council and animal owners
- Address any identified gap in the services provided or policies and procedures
- Create efficiencies in procedures and operations
- Address risk management issues.
- Address any change to the Domestic Animals Act and Regulations during the life of the DAM Plan.
- Ensure that continuous improvement is maintained

### Monitoring and reviewing the plan

Council will review the Domestic Animal Management Plan in years 1 to 3 to ensure actions and priorities are still relevant and can be completed within available resources. In year four, Council will undertake a major review of the plan.

### Current Situation

- AMOs are all authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA Act) and actively investigate all reported animal cruelty matters. Assistance is also provided to the RSPCA in their investigations of alleged cruelty
- AMOs provides assistance to our community during emergencies and periods of community need. AMOs provide assistance to the State, Local Police when required during emergencies such as recovery or domestic issues
- Liaise with key stakeholders regarding animal management issues including access to public open spaces, control of domestic animals, canvassing on proposed Councils Orders
- Promote Responsible Pet Ownership through the community

- Plan to have In-house Prosecutor dedicated to ensuring statutory obligations met, quality investigation briefs and cases managed efficiently and actively prosecuted in the relevant courts

### **Council Policies and Procedures**

- Education and enforcement strategy associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding management of dogs and cats
- Operational procedures including OHS Work Instructions are available to guide Officers in the performance of their duties

### **Our current Compliance Activities**

- Long established relationship with RSPCA
- Develop a contact list for regarding animal emergency planning – Council contacts, shelters, animal welfare organisations, DPI. And work out your arrangements with those contacts in the event of emergencies.
- Annual inspection of excess animal permit properties, particularly those with permit for large number of animals
- Establish an Animal Management Liaison Group with neighbouring Councils and other enforcement agencies such as the RSPCA and Victoria Police for sharing of ideas, policies and procedures.
- Seek assistance from RSPCA and other authorised POCTA Act officers in implementing and enforcing the POCTA Act, Regulations and Codes of Practice (COPs)

### **Summary**

The City of Yarra is a municipality with great lifestyle and strengths that balances pet ownership with the needs of the community and the environment. The following principles underpin actions with regard to dogs and cats:

- The belief that pets contribute to our quality of life
- A requirement to balance the needs of those who own pets and those who do not
- To value and promote responsible pet ownership
- Proactive animal management including both education and compliance
- Ensuring the environment is protected from the negative impacts of dogs and cats
- To work in partnership with others
- Take the prime leadership role in animal management for the City of Yarra

## Annual review of plan and annual reporting

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.*

The DAM Plan must be reviewed and evaluated each year and the evaluation of the implementation must be included in the Council annual report.

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