DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THIS PLAN

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 (The Act) now requires that each municipal council prepare an animal management plan. The City Of Greater Dandenong supports that strategic approach and has therefore developed this plan in strict accordance with the legislative guidelines.

In this plan, Council has sought to balance the competing needs of animal owners, the broader community and the animals that share people's lives. Council also recognises the positive health and wellbeing outcomes that arise from pet ownership. The programs and activities set out in the plan have therefore been developed with the aim to encourage more people to enjoy the pleasure derived from animal companionship, within a framework of responsible ownership. This plan fits within Council's Key Strategic Objective of creating a `Vibrant, Healthy, Supported Community. It will be incorporated into Council's 2008 -2012 Plan, as a support plan for that Objective.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to develop and implement a range of approaches that will:

- educate our community about responsible pet ownership;
- ensure that satisfactory levels of compliance with legislation and community standards are established and maintained;
- maximise the benefits to the community that may be gained by owning companion animals.

1.3 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THIS PLAN

This plan was developed by a working party comprising Councillors and Council Officers. During its development, the working party conducted focus groups with residents of the municipality and local vets, invited public submissions and sought comment from animal welfare groups. Appendix B contains ideas and suggestions provided by focus groups, individual residents, local vets and various industry and special interest groups.

The working party also researched international best practice in animal management, at the municipal level.

The plan was developed within the context of seeking to apply best practice, whilst recognising the socio-economic environment within this municipality.

1.4   THE CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG – DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROFILE

The number of people living in Greater Dandenong is estimated at 133,000 in 2006 and the City covers an area of approximately 130sq/km. With the construction of 18,000 dwellings by 2030, as currently predicted, the population is expected to exceed 170,000. Nearly half (45%) of the 43,000 occupied private dwellings are fully-owned by their occupants in Greater Dandenong, one-quarter are being purchased (24%), and most of the remainder rented. The extent of home ownership in Greater Dandenong is comparable to metropolitan Melbourne.

Meantime, the people who occupy the new houses and flats being constructed in Greater Dandenong are expected to include many adults of child-bearing age. As a result, the number of children and young people in Greater Dandenong, which has recently declined, will rise during the next ten or twenty years.

The City of Greater Dandenong is the most culturally diverse locality in Victoria and the second most diverse in Australia, with residents from 151 different birthplaces. Over half (54%) of its population were born overseas, and 48% in nations where English is not the main spoken language – compared with 23% across metro Melbourne. Nearly four out of five residents were either born overseas or have parents who were born overseas. Major birthplaces include Vietnam, Cambodia, China, Italy, Greece, India, Sri Lanka and Bosnia.

Each year, approximately 2,000 recently-arrived migrants settle in Greater Dandenong, contributing to the emergence of communities from Sudan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Iraq – several of which more than doubled in number during the past five years. In the five years to June 2006, the number of Sudanese residents have surged from 150 to more than 2,200 – a 14 fold increase.

1.5   DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA

Key Statistics

Estimated Dog Population:	**24,768**
Estimated Cat Population:	**16,435**

Other matters	*CGD*	*Like Councils (av.)*
No. of EFT Authorised Officers (Animal Control)	2.3	5.4
Hours training per officer annually	150	42
No. of Registered Dogs	9207	18060
No. of Registered Cats	3691	6880
No. of Registered Declared Dogs	27	Not known
No. of Prosecutions completed annually	80	28
No. of Successful Prosecutions	80	28
No. of impoundments (dogs)	511	774
% of impounded dogs returned to owner	66%	55%
% of dogs rehoused	6%	20%
% of dogs euthanized	28%	25%
No. of impoundments (cats)	417	301
% of cats returned to owner	1.7%	8%
% of cats rehoused	3.6%	12%
% of cats euthanized	94.7%	80%
No. animal complaints per year	1594	1333
No. animal complaints per officer	693	247

1.6 ANIMAL MANAGEMENT STAFFING AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE

Animal Management functions at CGD are conducted by the *Regulatory* Services Department, which has responsibility for most of Council's compliance functions. The organisational relationship is shown below.

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                        ┌──────────┐
                        │ Council  │
                        └────┬─────┘
                             │
                        ┌────┴─────┐
                        │   CEO    │
                        └────┬─────┘
                   ┌─────────┴──────────┐
                   │ Director Dev. Services │
                   └─────────┬──────────┘
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│ Manager,  │ │Manager, │ │Manager, │ │ Manager,    │
│Regulatory │ │Building │ │Planning&│ │ Property &  │
│ Services  │ │Services │ │ Design  │ │Leisure Svcs │
└─────┬─────┘ └─────────┘ └─────────┘ └─────────────┘
┌─────┴──────┐
│Coordinator,│        ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────────────┐
│  General   │────────│   Animal     │──────│ STAFFING         │
│Enforcement │        │ Management   │      │ Team Leader  0.3 │
└────────────┘        └──────────────┘      │ AMOs         2.0 │
                      ┌──────────────┐      │ EFT Staff    2.3 │
                      │ Local Laws   │      └──────────────────┘
                      └──────────────┘
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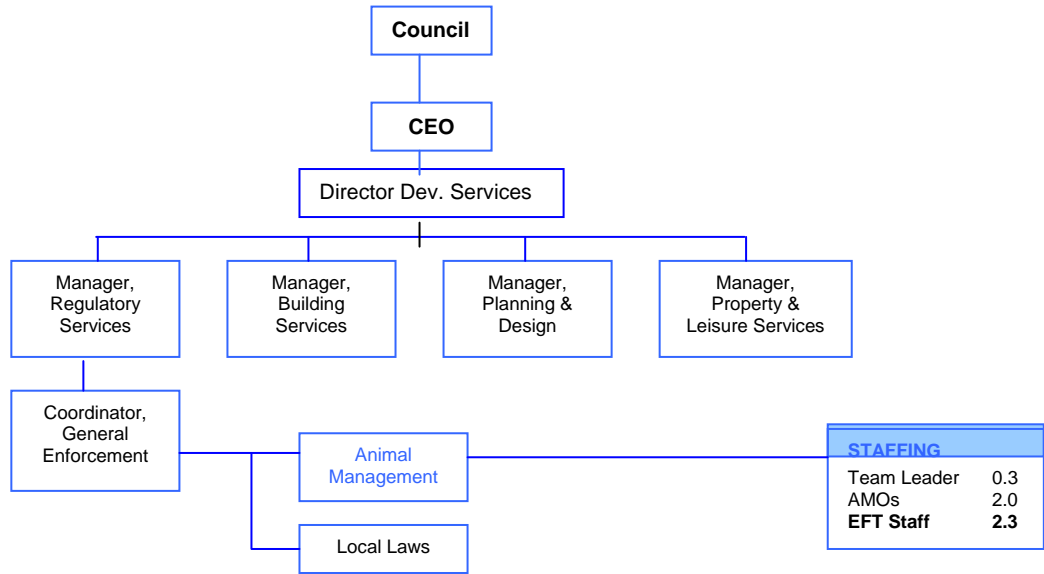
1.7   CURRENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES – SERVICE LEVELS

Program/Service	Service Level
Identification and Registration	- Website - Press Releases - Prompt reactive enforcement - Pet News annual publication - Mandatory registration of animals prior to release from pound
Identification and Registration- doorknock campaigns	Annual Registration Renewal Doorknock
Domestic animal complaints (including dangerous dog complaints)	- Immediate threat to health – within 1 hour - All other matters - within 2 working days
Routine street patrols	Regularly undertaken however more accurate reporting systems are required
Pound Open	38 hours p/week
Micro-chipping	Annual Micro Chipping Day held
Domestic Animal Business Inspections	Conducted annually
Dangerous, Restricted Dog inspections	- Conducted annually - Industrial areas also patrolled annually to identify un registered Dangerous Dogs
De-sexing Voucher Program	In place, approximately 55 vouchers distributed per annum
Dogs On/Off Leash	- Order in place restricting dogs off leash to designated areas 9 x Dog off-leash areas established
Prohibited Areas*	Order in place allowing designation of Prohibited Areas, none yet established
Other Programs, services, strategies	- Range of educational material developed and available, including: - Barking Dog Booklet - Fact Sheets - Brochures - Website

* See Page 14, Section 3.5 for explanation of `prohibited area'

1.8 KEY ISSUES FOR THE CITY OF GREATER DANDENONG

In determining the key issues for this plan to address, Council has considered the following matters:

- benchmarking statistics provided by State government
- statistics on service requests made by residents and other CGD customers;
- national and international research on companion animals
- feedback from our community
- submissions made by animal welfare agencies eg the Cat Crisis Coalition
- submissions made by relevant industry groups eg Australian Veterinary Association.

The key issues identified are:

- low registration rates
- low rates of re-housing of unclaimed animals
- high rates of cat impoundment
- high rates of cat euthanasia
- excessive workloads for animal management officers
- management of dog off-leash areas eg patrol frequency, signage, facilities etc
- location, size, access of dog off-leash areas
- community education
- services/facilities for elderly or disabled pet owners
- cat confinement

Each of these matters is discussed in more detail below.

Low registration rates

The rate of registration in CGD is much lower than for like Councils across the State. In the case of dogs, CGD's rate is approximately 49% lower than the average, whilst for cats it's approximately 46% lower.

Experience throughout Victoria has shown that higher levels of registration generally lead to higher levels of overall compliance with animal management requirements. For example, as shown in the benchmarking statistics on page 4, councils with higher registration rates generally experience lower levels of complaint about animals.

Generally, registered animals are also able to be returned to their owners much more quickly and therefore more cost effectively. This is because AMOs can instantly identify the animal from its tag/microchip and then contact the owner to arrange immediate return, without the need for the animal to be taken to a pound. Being able to return animals in this way saves costs for both the council and the owner.

When state government created the Domestic Animals Act, they recognised that the cost to councils of providing animal management services would significantly increase. They therefore created registration fees as a means of ensuring that the costs could be recovered from the principal users of these services – pet owners. Allowing the current low rates of registration to continue therefore deprives the community of the funds reasonably required to provide the level of animal management services expected.

In both of the community forums conducted, attendees suggested that more should be done to ensure animals are registered, so that the cost of providing additional services can be offset.

Low rates of re-housing of unclaimed animals

66% of dogs impounded by CGD are returned to their owners. Of the remaining 34%, 6% are re-housed and the balance are euthanized. Across the State, the average number of animals returned to owners is 55%, with 20% being re-housed and 25% being euthanized. In analysing these figures, it can be seen that CGD is performing quite well in terms of re-uniting owners with their dogs, however slightly below the average in terms of re-housing abandoned dogs. It is therefore seen as necessary that Council further research the reasons for this, with a view to increasing re-homing rates if possible.

With cats, the situation is fare more dire. Only 1.7% of cats impounded in CGD are returned to owners, compared to the average of 8%. Only 3.65% are re-housed, compared to the average of 12%. 94% of impounded cats are euthanized, compared to 80% across other like councils. This is clearly an unacceptable outcome, which this plan will seek to redress.

High rates of cat impoundment/high rates of cat euthanasia

The number of cats impounded per year in CGD is approximately 38% higher than the average. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this could be linked to the lower than average rates of registration. Information provided by Council's AMOs and pound contractor indicates that approximately 20% (83) of cats impounded are feral and therefore have never been owned. Feral cats are also generally unsuitable for re-housing and must therefore be euthanized, so this is seen as a contributing factor to the higher than average rates of euthanasia.

Approximately 36% (148) of the cats impounded are kittens, which are generally collected in groups of 2-8 (litters). Anecdotal evidence from AMOs and pound staff indicates that most of these litters come from owned/semi owned parents.

Information received from the three major animal welfare agencies in Victoria also indicates that across the State, more cats are being produced annually, than could reasonably be expected to be housed. This analysis and advice therefore suggests that a major problem in CGD is with owned or semi owned animals producing unwanted litters. These unwanted litters, coupled with low registration rates, are seen as the major contributor to cat over-population in the municipality. This appears to be consistent with the experience being reported by most other urban municipal councils across Australia.

Improving registration rates and increasing Desexing rates are seen as key issues in decreasing the number of cats being produced, only to face near certain euthanasia. Community feedback, supported by local vets, also indicates that more work needs to be done in educating the people about responsible cat ownership.

Excessive workloads for animal management officers (AMOs)

There are 2.3 full time AMOs in this municipality, each dealing with an average of 693 complaints per annum. The average for like councils across the State is 5.4 AMOs, each dealing with 247 complaints per annum. In simple terms, this suggests that CGD staff have a reactive workload that is approximately **2.8 times** that of like councils. The nature and type of

complaint is fairly consistent across most councils.

Whilst CGD AMOs are generally able to cope with the reactive workload generated by customer complaint, the sheer volume means that they have almost no time to devote to pro-active work such as street/park patrols, inspection of domestic animal businesses, community education, feral cat trapping etc. Experience both at CGD and other councils has shown that increases in effective pro-active work generally leads to decreases in customer complaint and therefore, reactive work.

In the community forums conducted, there were several suggestions made that officer numbers should be increased, to focus on matters currently perceived to be receiving less than desirable levels of attention. Typical comments from forum attendees included `*consider increasing resources offset by income from a more dedicated door knock approach'; `Should there be an increase in the number of rangers (AMOs)? – this could help them to be more accommodating – each drop off (cat) traps etc".*

Community feedback also indicated a strong desire for more education to be undertaken in relation to responsible pet ownership. AMOs are seen as the staff most able to develop and deliver community education programs, given their detailed knowledge of the subject matter.

Later in this plan, there are a number of additional matters proposed to be undertaken, in terms of pro-active work. It will however be difficult to deliver these proposals without additional human resources. Funding of these resources could be achieved through increasing revenue. There are a number of ways in which revenue could be increased, including doorknock programs to identify unregistered animals and increases in registration fees. Those options are further discussed later in this plan.

Management of dog off-leash areas eg patrol frequency, signage, facilities etc

Community feed back was very strong in requesting more and clearer signage in parks, to delineate on/off leash areas. This matter has also been raised by councillors on several occasions, based on feedback they've received directly from the community.

There was also clear feedback that residents would like to see AMOs more often in the parks and off-leash areas. The feedback also indicated that residents would like to see equipment in parks that dispense bags/devices for picking up dog droppings.

Establishing more off-leash areas, with a particular emphasis on parks that can be easily accessed by older residents or those with disabilities, was also strongly supported.

Experience all across Victoria has shown that off-leash areas are generally well supported by residents and that they do not lead to increases in the incidence of attack/rush or animal escape.

Community Education

In the community forums, the issue of education was raised on a number of occasions. Community members suggested that education needs to happen at a range of levels, including at schools, face-to-face and via other mediums such as mail outs, news paper articles etc.

In general, community feed back supported the additional education activities proposed in Section 3.3 of this plan however it was stressed that these activities need to occur on a very regular basis, through a range of media.

Services/Facilities for Elderly Or Disabled Pet Owners

Council's current range of animal management services does not provide any specific benefits for elderly or disabled members of our community. During the forums, attendees suggested a number of matters that Council should consider. These included:

- establishment of some dog off-leash areas in parks, that better cater for people with disabilities;
- establishing a volunteer service to assist elderly/disabled people with the care of their animals eg exercise, visits to the vet etc.;
- establishing a Pets as Therapy program – pets are taken to elderly citizens centres, aged care homes etc, to interact with people who can no longer care for animals full-time.

All of these suggestions are considered as worthwhile. Some of them are already available in other locations. It is proposed that an action item for this plan will be to further research these concepts with a view to implementing them, wherever practicable.

Cat Confinement

The Domestic Animals Act makes provision for councils to issue orders confining cats to their owners' properties at all times. The provision is flexible enough to also allow confinement to be time limited eg `*cats must be confined to their owner's property between the hours of sunset and sun rise each day.'*

Since the provision became available, a number of councils have implemented such orders. So far as is known, there has not been any formal research undertaken to determine the impact of these orders. Anecdotal advice from councils contacted indicates that there has been some improvement in owner responsibility, in the small number of cases where unconfined cats have been able to be matched with owners. This advice also indicates however that most councils believe these orders are very difficult to enforce. This is because it's very difficult to capture wandering cats, particularly since most reported wandering occurs at night.

Given the lack of evidence to indicate that cat confinement leads to improved outcomes and the practical difficulties associated with its enforcement, it is not proposed to further consider this matter, at this time.

2.0 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Through engaging with our community, Council seeks to improve the working, living and recreational environments of our municipality by providing a range of services and facilities that meet or exceed community expectations. Council will provide a range of programs in relation to animal management which:

- create an environment where people and pets can peacefully co-exist within the community;

- inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible pet ownership; and
- ensure that the needs of the wider community are reflected through Council's domestic animal management policies and procedures.

3.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

This section sets out Council's strategic response to each of the matters detailed in the Act as mandatory elements. The relevant section/s of The Act are shown beside each sub heading.

New programs and initiatives set out in this section will be funded from increased registration revenue. That revenue will be raised in the first instance by a doorknock program to be conducted in September 2008, covering the entire municipality. On the basis of success achieved by other councils who have taken this approach, it is estimated that in the first year, this exercise will generate additional income in the order of $170,000. Funding is discussed in some detail at Section 3.8 below.

3.1 PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS *(S.68A(2)(a) & S.68A(2)(f)*)

The annual targets for this plan will be set out in the business unit plan for Regulatory Services and other relevant Council departments. They will be reported against at fixed intervals, as set out in each Key Performance Indicator (KPI) shown below. The key outcomes for each year will then be summarised and reported in Council's Annual report. The vehicle for regular reporting will be Council's monthly report.

Targets and KPIs will also be reflected in the individual performance plans of relevant staff.

3.1.1 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

The following key performance indicators have been developed based on research undertaken at the local, state and national levels. Although some targets may seem low they will, if achieved, meet industry best practice standards by the third year of the plan. It is not seen as practical to set targets higher than current best practice, given the socio-economic circumstances existing in CGD.

KPIs:	Targets				
	Current	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	Reporting intervals
1. Dog Registration rate: (% Dogs registered/estimated dog population)	37.2%	65%	70%	73%	Quarterly
2. Cat Registration rate: (% cats registered/estimated cat population)	22.5%	30%	35%	43%	Quarterly
3. Enforcement Success Rate: (% successful prosecutions/total prosecutions)	100%	100%	100%	100%	Monthly
4. Dog Complaints: (Number of dog complaints per 1,000 population)	7.6	6.6	6.0	5.0	Monthly
5. Cat Complaints: (Number of cat complaints per 1,000 population)	2.94	2.5	2.3	2.0	Monthly
6. Dog Attacks: (Number of dog attacks causing injury per 1,000 population)	0.32	0.30	0.28	0.25	Monthly
7. Dog Rehousing Rate: (% total dogs rehoused/total dogs impounded)	6%	10%	15%	20%	Annually
8. Cat Rehousing Rate: (% total cats rehoused/ total cats impounded)	3.6%	7%	10%	12%	Annually
9. Cat Reclaim Rate: (% total cats reclaimed/ total cats impounded)	1.7%	3%	6%	8%	Annually
10. Cat Euthanasia Rate: (% total cats euthanased/ total cats impounded)	94.7%	90%	80%	75%	Quarterly

KPIs:	Targets				
	Current	**2008-2009**	**2009-2010**	**2010-2011**	**Reporting intervals**
11. Declared dog Compliance Rates: (% properties housing Dangerous dogs audited each year)	100%	100%	100%	100%	Annually
12. Domestic Animal Business Compliance Rates: (% registered businesses inspected per annum)	100%	100%	100%	100%	Annually

3.2 AMO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (*S.68A(2)(b)*)

Objective:

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

- All staff required to hold minimum Certificate IV in Municipal Enforcement
- Staff encouraged and supported to attain higher level qualifications eg Diploma in Animal Management
- Staff encouraged and facilitated to attend all in-service days provided by relevant industry bodies
- Staff representative on all relevant industry committees

Additional Planned Initiatives:

3.2.1 All staff qualified to minimum Certificate IV in Animal Management.
3.2.2 All staff required to be qualified to insert Microchips.

3.3 ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP – (S.68A(2)(c)(i) & S.68A(2)(c)(iv), S.68A(2)(c)(iii), S.68A(2)(c)(vi), S.68A(2)(c)(vii))

Objective:

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

Current/Ongoing Activities:

The current education activities and programs the CGD offers, aimed at promoting responsible pet ownership include:

- Barking Dog Booklet;
- Fact Sheets;
- Brochures eg off leash areas;
- Annual publication of Pet News magazine;
- Activities at local festivals, events;
- Micro-chipping Day; and
- Website.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

3.3.1 Review and upgrade Council website, to provide more interactive educational experiences for site visitors

3.3.2 Include a full range of printed educational materials in customer service centre displays

3.3.3 Provide regular audio visual messages for customers via various mediums including display monitors in Customer Service Centres and `Caller On Hold' messages.

3.3.4 Conduct regular displays in public areas eg shopping centres/strips, community festivals.

3.3.5 Expand activities at Micro-chipping days, to provide more responsible ownership education.

3.3.6 Investigate and where practicable, implement programs that assist elderly/disabled residents to maintain pet ownership, or access to 'Pets as Therapy'.

3.3.7 Increase the number of Animal Management Officers by 1.0 EFT in 2008-2009.

3.4 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION (*S.68A(2)(c)(v), S.68A(2)(c)(vii)*)

Objective:

To maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

- Website;
- Press Releases;
- Prompt reactive enforcement;
- Pet News annual publication;
- Mandatory registration of animals prior to release from pound;
- Annual Registration Renewal Doorknock;
- Free registration offered to animals less than 3 mths of age (1st year only*);* and
- Participate in the State Government's Pet Registration Incentive Scheme.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

3.4.1 Introduce mandatory micro-chipping of all registered animals, via a subsidised scheme, over a two year period commencing 1 July 2008.

3.4.2 Conduct tri-ennial doorknocks of municipality, to identify all unregistered animals, commencing in September 2008.

3.4.3 Seek agreements with local vets, pet stores and animal shelters for such facilities to act as Council registration agents.

3.4.4 Include regular registration reminders into Regulatory Services' annual media plan.

3.5 COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION AND ORDERS (*S.68A(2)(c)(ii), S.68A(2)(d), S.68A(2)(c)(iii), S.68A(2)(c)(vi), S.68A(2)(c)(vii)*)

Objective:

To maximise compliance with domestic animal laws, orders and regulations (State and Local).

Current/Ongoing Activities:

CGD has the following Orders currently in place:

- Prohibiting exercising of dogs off leash, other than in designated places; and
- Enabling Council to declare certain areas to be prohibited to dogs/cats.

The following local laws are also in place:

- Keep/allow to be kept animal/bird on land in offensive manner
- Keep/allow to be kept animal/bird on land in dangerous manner
- Keep/allow to be kept on land animal/bird in manner as to be injurious to health
- Keep/allow to be kept on land animal/bird in manner as to cause nuisance
- Fail to keep animal/bird in confined area and maintained in clean/sanitary condition
- Erect non complaint shelter to house animals
- Land owner allow animal/bird noise to adversely affect comfort
- Land owner allow animal/bird noise to adversely affect convenience
- Land owner allow animal/bird noise to adversely affect privacy
- Land owner allow animal/bird noise to adversely affect health
- Land occupier allow animal/bird noise to adversely affect comfort
- Land occupier allow animal/bird noise to adversely affect convenience
- Land occupier allow animal/bird noise to adversely affect privacy
- Land occupier allow animal or bird noise to adversely affect health
- Without permit, keep any livestock on land half hectare or less
- Without permit, keep roosters on land half hectare or less
- Without permit, keep any animals/birds in excess of permitted numbers
- Without permit, allow to be kept animals/birds exceeding permitted numbers
- Fail to carry means of collection and disposal of animal's excrement
- Fail to immediately collect and dispose of animal excrement
- Fail to produce to Authorised Officer any means of collection and disposal

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

3.5.1 Review Local laws and current orders, to ensure plan objectives are met.
3.5.2 Review Dog on Leash areas and Orders, with a view to increasing the number of off-leash areas and improving access for elderly/disabled residents.

3.6 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

CGD currently has 16 registered Domestic Animal Businesses(DABs).

Objective:

To work in partnership with domestic animal businesses, to achieve Council's domestic animal management goals.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

• Annual Inspection program.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

3.6.1 Seek agreements with DABs to act as Council registration agents.
3.6.2 Establish `information kiosks' in relevant DABs, to provide information on responsible pet ownership.
3.6.3 Conduct annual Council/DAB Workshop in relation to responsible pet ownership and compliance with relevant Codes of Practice.
3.6.4 Lobby state government for the introduction of a legislative requirement that all animals sold by DABs must be desexed prior to sale, unless exempted by S.10A or 10B of The Act.

3.7 DECLARED DOGS (*S.68A(2)(c)(vii), S.68A(2)(c)(iii)*)

Objective:

To minimise the risks of dog attack to the community from menacing, dangerous or restricted breed dogs.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

CGD currently has 28 declared dangerous dogs, 8 menacing and 3 restricted breeds.

27 of the declared dangerous dogs are kept on industrial/premises as guard dogs. Such animals automatically qualify for dangerous declaration, even though they may never have attacked or injured another animal or a person.

Programs/activities aimed at minimising the risk to the broader community from declared dangerous, restricted breed and menacing dogs include:

• Established policy and guidelines for staff to follow;
• Ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry
• Annual inspections of all premises housing declared dogs; and
• Regular pro-active patrols of industrial areas, to identify new sites housing dangerous (guard) dogs.

The level of compliance with Declared dog legislation within CGD is seen as very high. On that basis, it not seen as necessary at this time to introduce any new activities in relation to them. Declared dog requirements will however continue to be featured in educational material developed or circulated by Council.

3.8 PROGRAM FUNDING

As indicated earlier, registration rates in CGD are between 46-49% lower than for like municipalities. Raising registration rates is therefore a key focus for this plan, with a target being to increase these rates to at least industry averages, over the plan's three year cycle.

Tri-ennial doorknocking of the whole municipality, coupled with increased community education and annual doorknocking to check registration renewal is expected to result in significant increases in the number of registered animals. It follows that there will also be a significant increase in revenue from registration fees. Income will also be increased through having an additional AMO resource available. The AMO impact on income will arise out fines and penalties issued.

The chart below shows budgeted income and expenditure for 2007/2008 without the plan being in place, as well as estimations for the following three years, when the plan will be in the implementation phase. The estimated increases are based on current registration fees and population estimates, coupled with the increased numbers of registrations arising out of tri-ennial doorknocking and education/awareness campaigns. Across the life of the plan it is estimated that a nett revenue surplus of approximately $448,000 will be achieved.

Year	Total Income	Total expenditure	Nett Surplus (Deficit)	$ improvement over previous year
2007-2008	$394,770	$345,676	$49,094	N/A
2008-2009	$587,134	$536,503	$50,631	$1,537
2009-2010	$692,227	$484,883	$207,344	$156,713
2010-2011	$803,977	$457,838	$346,138	$138,794

On the basis of these estimates, it is not seen as necessary at this time, to consider any other avenues for funding of the new initiatives. This approach is also seen as the most equitable for our community because the additional revenue will come from existing pet owners who are simply failing to comply with legislation, without placing any further burden on those registered owners who are currently 'doing the right thing'.

3.9 REVIEW CYCLE/DATE FOR THIS PLAN *(S.68A(3)(a))*

CGD has a comprehensive business planning and monitoring system in place. Any new initiatives or ongoing programs identified in this plan will be recorded in that system and reported against in accordance with the KPIs shown in Section 3.1. This system will also feed outcomes into Council's annual report, as required by Section 68A (3) (c) of the Act.

At the end of each business planning cycle (currently financial year) the Manager Regulatory Services will also provide a summary report to Council outlining progress in achievement of the plan's targets and objectives. That report will be provided by 31 August each year and where necessary, will also include any recommendations for amendment of the plan, as required by Section 68A (3) (a) of the Act.

A full review of the plan will be conducted every three years.

3.10 ACTION PLANS

The activities and initiatives set out above will be delivered through action plans implemented each year, as set out in Appendix A. In some cases, activities and initiatives will become

ongoing across the life of the plan whilst in others, they will have finite lives, aimed at achieving specific objectives.

Action plans will be reviewed each year, as part of Council's business planning activity. As indicated previously, they will also be incorporated into the business plans of the relevant council departments, to ensure that they are acted upon and reported against as required.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: ACTION PLANS

OBJECTIVE 3.2 AMO TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective:

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work.

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
Staff encouraged and supported to attain higher level qualifications eg Diploma in Animal Management	▪ Identify appropriate courses/programs ▪ Discuss options with team members ▪ Provide support though Council Study Assistance Program	Coordinator, Residential Amenity (CRA)	▪ June each year ▪ During performance review, June /December each year	Nil ▪ Funding via Study Assistance program
Staff encouraged and facilitated to attend all in-service days provided by relevant industry bodies	▪ Attend Bureau of Animal Welfare Regional Training Seminar ▪ AMO to attend training in dealing with difficult customers ▪ Identify potential training providers for manual handling of animals (get quotes) ▪ All AMOs and general enforcement officers to attend manual handling of animals training	CRA/AMO CRA CRA CRA/AMO/GLE	As available Annually Dec 08 June 09	Nil ▪ Course to be sourced via Org Dev staff ▪ External provider, training budget
Staff representative on all relevant industry committees	▪ Seek to have CGD rep on Domestic Animal Management Committee (DAMIC) ▪ Appoint AMO rep to METCAM	Manager Regulatory Services (MRS) CRA/AMO	Bi-enially Annually by end of July	Nil
3.2.1(new initiative) All staff required to hold minimum Certificate IV in Animal Management	▪ Conduct skills audit of existing staff ▪ Seek provider to deliver `top-up' training for staff ▪ Modify existing role statement to reflect requirement ▪ Seek scholarship/s to cover cost of training ▪ Schedule training	CRA/MRS CRA MRS CRA CRA/AMO	March 08 June 08 March 08 June 08 September 08	Nil ▪ External provider, training budget Nil ▪ External provider, training budget, scholarship funding
3.2.2 (new initiative) All staff required to be qualified to insert Microchips	▪ Seek provider to deliver training for staff ▪ Modify existing role statement to reflect	CRA MRS	March 08 March 08	▪ External provider, training budget Nil

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PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
	requirement ▪ Schedule training	CRA/AMO	June 08	▪ External provider, training budget,

3.3 ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP – (S.68A(2)(c)(i) & S.68A(2)(c)(iv), S.68A(2)(c)(iii), S.68A(2)(c)(vi), S.68A(2)(c)(vii))

Note: Dates shown in red were amended during review conducted in September 2008.

Objective:

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

New Programs and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.3.1 Review and upgrade Council website, to provide more interactive educational experiences for site visitors	▪ Identify key messages ▪ Develop content brief ▪ Engage designer ▪ Develop new pages ▪ Test content format with a focus group ▪ Review/modify if required ▪ Launch new format and content	AM Team	▪ March 09 ▪ May 09 ▪ June 09 ▪ August 09 ▪ September 09 ▪ October 09 ▪ November 09	▪ Project management by CRA and Marketing & Comms rep. ▪ Designer costs ($10,000 estimated)
3.3.2 Include a full range of printed educational materials in customer service centre displays	▪ Source range of brochures from existing suppliers eg Bureau of Animal Welfare, Council materials ▪ Negotiate size and location of displays with Mgr Customer Service ▪ Source appropriate display units ▪ Install displays ▪ Monitor displays to ensure adequate stock and relevance of material, re-stock/replace as required.	CRA/AMO CRA CRA/AMO CRA/AMO AMO	January 09 May 09 April 09 June 09 Monthly	Existing materials to be sourced (at no cost) Nil ▪ Display unit costs (estimated at $1,000) ▪ Recurrent costs for stock estimated at $2,000 PA.

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.3.3 Provide regular audio visual messages for customers via various mediums including display monitors in Customer Service Centres and `Caller On Hold' messages.	▪ Identify key messages ▪ Develop content brief ▪ Source existing materials from relevant bodies eg Bureau of Animal Welfare, other welfare agencies etc. ▪ Develop CGD specific messages as required ▪ Establish annual program, targeting key times of year eg registration renewal, cat breeding season etc ▪ Implement program	AM Team AM Team, Marketing & Communications (M&C) Rep	▪ December 08 ▪ March 09 ▪ June 09 ▪ August 09 ▪ September 09 ▪ October 09	Nil ▪ Estimated cost of purchasing/developing resources $10,000. ▪ Recurrent costs for stock estimated at $1,000 PA.
3.3.4 Conduct regular displays in public areas eg shopping centres/strips, community festivals.	▪ Identify key messages ▪ Source materials from relevant bodies eg Bureau of Animal Welfare, other welfare agencies etc. ▪ Develop CGD specific messages as required ▪ Establish annual program, targeting key locations and times of year eg registration renewal, cat breeding season etc ▪ Implement program ▪ Review key messages and resources	AM Team CRA/AMO CRA/M&C Rep CRA/AMO AM Team	September 08 January 09 January 09 March 09 Quarterly	Nil ▪ Estimated cost of purchasing/developing resources and display equipment $2,000 Nil ▪ Increase in overtime budget estimated at $2,100 per annum. Nil
3.3.5 Expand activities at Micro-chipping days, to provide more responsible ownership education.	▪ Seek involvement /sponsorship from Animal Welfare organisations, industry associations provider to deliver training for staff ▪ Obtain approval for participation of oganisations ▪ Implement expanded program of activities ▪ Schedule training	CRA/AMO MRS	February 09 March 09 April 09	Nil

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.3.6 Increase the number of Animal Management Officers by 1.0 EFT in 2008-2009.	▪ Obtain budget approval for position	MRS	March 08	▪ 1st year costs estimated at $70,000, recurrent costs there-after estimated at $60,000 PA
	▪ Advertise vacancy	MRS/CRA	June 08	▪ Advertising cost $1,300 approximately
	▪ Conduct recruitment	CRA/OD Rep	July-August 08	Nil
	▪ Appointee selected and commenced	CRA/AMO	September 08	Nil

3.4 IDENTIFICATION AND REGISTRATION

Note: Dates shown in red were amended during review conducted in September 2008.

Objective:

To maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.4.1 Pet News annual publication	▪ Identify key messages ▪ Develop content brief ▪ Send to designer ▪ Review and approve design ▪ Send to printers ▪ Distribute with registration renewal notices. ▪ Add copies to displays in customer service centres and place on website	AM Team CRA MRS/CRA CRA Printers CRA/AMO	November annually December annually January annually Feb annually Feb annually March annually March annually March annually	▪ Included in current budget annually, no additional costs identified.
3.4.2 Annual Registration Renewal Doorknock	▪ Identify registrations not renewed by 24 April each year ▪ Send renewal reminder to owners ▪ Update unpaid list ▪ Schedule doorknock, allocate staff ▪ Conduct doorknock ▪ Submit report on doorknock outcomes.	Systems Admin Officer (SAO) SAO SAO CRA CRA/MRS	24 April annually 1st May annually 14 May annually 14 May annually May-June annually July annually	▪ Included in current budget annually, no additional costs identified.
3.4.3 Free registration offered to animals less than 3 mths of age (1st year only*)*	▪ Program is currently in place however it will be more strongly promoted to DABS and vets engaged as registration agents for Council.	Customer Service Staff and AM Team	▪ Ongoing	Nil

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.4.4 Introduce mandatory micro-chipping of all registered animals, via a subsidised scheme, over a two year period commencing 1 July 2008.	▪ Identify number of registered animals in CGD not currently microchipped ▪ Establish a subsidy program, based on numbers and costs. ▪ Contact owners of registered animals and advise of requirement to Microchip and date required. ▪ Plan, organise and deliver Microchipping days at least quarterly, commencing July 2009. ▪ Commence follow up program with owners	MRS/CRA MRS CRA/SAO/M&C Rep CRA/AMO CRA/AMO	July 09 October 09 November 09 Ongoing from July 2009 July 09	Nil Nil • Cost of mail out and community education estimated at $5,000 • Officer overtime costs approx.$1600 per annum Nil
3.4.5 Conduct tri-ennial doorknocks of municipality, to identify all unregistered animals, commencing in April 2008.	▪ Develop specification for doorknock service ▪ Develop community education package – advertise amnesty ▪ Advertise tender ▪ Select tenderer ▪ Implement doorknock program ▪ Report outcomes	MRS/Contracts Unit CRA/M&C Rep Contracts Unit MRS/Contracts Unit Contractor MRS/CRA	October 08 Jan 09 Nov 08 Dec 08 March 09 July 09	• Cost of contract for doorknock estimated at $85,000. • Cost of education program estimated at $1,000.
3.4.6 Seek agreements with local vets, pet stores and animal shelters for such facilities to act as Council registration agents.	▪ Establish a standard agreement format ▪ Contact relevant businesses and agencies to initiate agreements ▪ Implement agreements ▪ Monitor and review ▪ Report outcomes	MRS MRS/CRA CRA/AMO CRA/AMO CRA/MRS	March 09 June 09 June-December 09 Ongoing Ongoing	Legal advice on form of agreements estimated at $2,000.
3.4.7 Include regular registration reminders into Regulatory Services' annual media plan.	▪ Add as regular item to plan	MRS	July 09	Nil

3.5 COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION AND ORDERS (*S.68A(2)(c)(ii), S.68A(2)(d), S.68A(2)(c)(iii), S.68A(2)(c)(vi), S.68A(2)(c)(vii)*)

Note: Dates shown in red were amended during review conducted in September 2008.

Objective:

To maximise compliance with domestic animal laws, orders and regulations (State and Local).

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.5.1 Review Local laws and current orders, to ensure plan objectives are met.	• Draft resolution for Council to implement compulsory micro-chipping in accordance with legislation, effective 1 July 2009. • Draft resolution for Council to implement compulsory de-sexing, in accordance with legislation, commencing 1 July 2010. • Conduct community consultation on resolutions • Seek legal opinion on proposed resolutions • Submit proposals to Council for adoption • Advertise resolutions in Govt Gazette • Implement resolutions in accordance with plan • Conduct review of local laws against plan activities, report outcomes • If required, draft local law amendments • Conduct community consultation on proposed changes • Seek legal opinion on proposed changes • Submit proposal to Council for adoption • Advertise amendments in Govt Gazette • Introduce amendments.	MRS/Manager Governance & Corporate Planning (MGCP)	October 09 October 09 November 09 November 09 February 2010 March 2010 July 2010 – ongoing May 09 October 09 November 09 October 09 November 09 November 09 January 2010	• Budget for legal advice, advertising and implementation estimated at $6,000.
3.5.2 Review Dog on Leash areas and Orders, with a view to increasing the number of off-leash areas.	• Review open space within CGD, to identify additional; sites suitable for dog off-leash areas, with a focus in sites that will be suitable for disabled users • Provide a report for Council on suitable sites and establishment costs • Seek community feedback on proposed sites • Introduce new sites through community awareness campaign.	Team Leader Urban & Open Space(TLUOS)/ MRS	Jan-June 09 July 09 August 09 Sept-Nov 09	▪ Budget for community consultation, infrastructure in new areas and community education campaign, estimated at $20,000.

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3.6 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

Note: Dates shown in red were amended during review conducted in September 2008.

CGD currently has 16 registered Domestic Animal Businesses(DABs).

Objective:

To work in partnership with domestic animal businesses, to achieve Council's domestic animal management goals.

Planned Programs and Initiatives:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.6.1 Annual Inspection program	• Schedule program in annual business plans	CRA	February annually	Nil
3.6.2 Establish `information kiosks' in relevant DABs, to provide information on responsible pet ownership.	▪ Source range of brochures from existing suppliers eg Bureau of Animal Welfare, Council materials	CRA/AMO	June 09	Existing materials to be sourced (at no cost)
	▪ Negotiate size and location of displays with DAB proprietors	CRA/AMOs	May 09	Nil
	▪ Source appropriate display units	CRA/AMO	Jun 09	▪ Display unit costs (estimated at $3,500)
	▪ Install displays	CRA/AMO/DAB operators	August 09	
	▪ Monitor displays to ensure adequate stock and relevance of material, re-stock/replace as required.	AMO/DAB operators	Monthly	▪ Re-stocking estimated at $1,000 PA.
3.6.3 Conduct annual Council/DAB Workshop in relation to responsible pet ownership and compliance with relevant Codes of Practice.	▪ Include into annual business plan.	MRS/CRA	February annually	Nil
	▪ Conduct forum annually	CRA/AMO	Between August – October each year, commencing 2008	

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.6.4 Lobby state government for the introduction of a legislative requirement that all animals sold by DABs must be desexed prior to sale, unless exempted by S.10A or 10B of The Act.	▪ Ensure CGD representation on relevant industry bodies ▪ Lobby through existing agencies eg MAV, LGPRO ▪ Support other LGs and agencies in lobbying	MRS/CRA/ AMO	Ongoing	Nil

3.7 DECLARED DOGS (*S.68A(2)(c)(vii), S.68A(2)(c)(ii*))

Objective:

To minimise the risks of dog attack to the community from menacing, dangerous or restricted breed dogs.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

PROGRAM/ SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	ACTIONS	BY WHOM	BY WHEN	RESOURCES REQUIRED
3.7.1 Annual inspections of all premises housing declared dogs	▪ Include into annual business plan. ▪ Report outcomes	MRS/CRA CRA/MRS	February annually June annually	Nil
3.7.2 Patrol industrial areas, to identify new dangerous dogs.	▪ Include into annual business plan. ▪ Report outcomes	MRS/CRA CRA/AMO	February annually Quarterly	Nil

APPENDIX B: COMMENTS FROM COMMMUNITY FORUMS AND PUBLIC SUBMISSIONS

Domestic Animal Management Plan
Community Forum – Tuesday 10 July 2007

o   Consider subsidising de-sexing for everyone – also microchipping
o   Is it possible to make it mandatory for pet shops to microchip
o   What assistance could be given to aged/disabled people who don't have ability go get a vet – to help them with getting them de-sexed or microchipped
o   Consider the need for more advertising on the existing requirement to microchip pets
o   Find ways to educate people with cats that they should be treated in the same responsible ways that dogs are treated
o   Promote access to the cat trap that's available for "hire"
o   Rate notices include the minimum requirements for keeping a dog or cat – not so bad that RSPCA can be called in but not acceptable as a responsible owner
o   Pet Shops to work closer with Council Rangers where the Pet Shops receive kittens (etc) from people who are just trying to sell them off so Rangers can visit the people to check if they are being managed properly.
o   How can we tackle the transient population where as cats don't go with them
o   Is it possible to increase ways to educate people with limited English or from other countries where animal management would not have been as advanced as our approaches – Animal Shelter has a program for schools
o   Consider increasing resources offset by income from a more dedicated door knock approach
o   Customer Service need to provide advice/understand the traps are available for hire and advise on cleaning up after pets
o   Consider a curfew on cats
o   Should there be an increase in the number of Rangers
     - This could help them to be more accommodating – each drop traps off etc
     - Shouldn't have highly qualified staff on school crossings
o   Need to extend the length of time the traps are available for hire
o   Encourage Real Estate Agents into the catchment for educational information
o   Need to have larger off-leash areas to help allow more people to use these areas/increased numbers and also to train dogs off leash
o   How do we educate people to clean up after their dogs?
o   Need to put a sign in Burden Park stating dogs should be on a lead
o   Restricted Breeds – need more community training to identify restricted breeds. Pictures and types of breeds
o   Promote going to Obedience Clubs – Say where they are
o   Promote therapy dogs – people volunteer to visit homes with their pets
o   Promote "adoption of dogs" programs website eg: greyhounds & other agencies
o   Can we microchip the registration of animals to replace the tag
o   Consider compulsory requirement for cats to wear a warning bell to help protect wildlife
o   Can traps be available at more places than just Council. eg: cattery on other side of Corrigan Rd has traps and they take the cats.
o

Domestic Animal Management Plan
Community Forum – Thursday 12 July 2007

o   Is it possible to have the microchip day before rates are due – voucher system
o   Is there any consideration to fence some dog off leash areas
o   Should penalties be increased for irresponsible dog owners
o   Some off leash areas are inaccessible to people with disabilities
o   Need to increase signage – particularly where only part of Reserve is set aside
o   Is there scope to do more with schools – Grade 5 & 6 and other community groups – Local focus better
o   Need to have education for dogs off leash to put dogs back on leads if wildlife or other people's dogs are nearby
o   Moratorium on registration
o   How can we tackle the backyard breeders
o   Require animals to be microchipped at the point of sale
    - Can the law be changed to have animals de-sexed at point of sale – Pet Shop
o   Can we provide the doggy bags in the dog off leash areas
o   Publicise the penalties if you are an irresponsible pet owner and penalties are enforced
o   Is it worth allowing part time off leash parks – school hours, evenings, early morning – include some guidelines if others come and use the park
o   Can Ross Reserve be included as a Dog off leash reserve
o   Is there a curfew for dogs
o   Provide education on how people can keep their cats on their property – give them options
o   Can we get more enforcers out in the streets – increase compliance and strengthen the laws
o   Is it possible to use the community (perhaps panel) to get involved in the education programs eg: hand out information sheets – also ask community groups and neighbourhood watch to provide education with fact sheets and information to include in newsletters
o   How do we deal with the "feral" owners
o   Can we send out the cards with the details to everyone here so that they can pass them onto people they know are irresponsible
o   Educate people how to select the right animal for the situation
o   Need tether points at shopping centres and in parks
o   Flat/Unit owners may not register as scared to admit they own them – let them – focus on the transient population through The City
o   List of penalties to be circulated and put in The City – also advertise that cat traps are available
o   Amnesty to register then major enforcement
o   Multilingual information
o   Pet Shop registration – give them a financial reward to do this
o   Need to follow up the inspections/contact at tea times/after hours

Domestic Animal Management Plan
Vets Forum – Thursday 16 August 2007

- No free to good home
- Get people into System
- Can't do whole lot in one bite, needs to be in stages
- Increase Dollar value for non-compliance
- Staged Registration more benefit for desexing
- Dandenong Show Promotions
- Councils to use same Form for Rego
- Increase enforcement
- Develop Posters – Free Rego under 3 Months/Press Release
- Show value in Rego
- Amnesty – Rego
- Doorknock
- Owned Cat Population
- Stray Cat Population Rego - (Semi-Owned)
- Identify source of semi-owned
- Help people formally adopt Semi-Owned
- "Cat in the Street is an un-owned Cat"
- No chip – No owner
- Show benefits to semi-owned cat owners to cat