

**Monash City Council**

**Domestic Animal Management Plan**

**2021/25**

## 1 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

This Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAM Plan) has been prepared to provide a strategic framework for the City of Monash for policy direction and action plans related to animal management during the four-year period between 2021/25.

Council has a responsibility to enforce State legislation and its own Local Laws together with educating our community on issues associated with animal management and the role of the pet owner.

This plan aims to integrate best practice in domestic animal management and describes actions to be undertaken during the period 2021/25.

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act) requires council to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan at four year intervals.

The plan must set out a method for evaluating whether the animal management services provided by council are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Act and Regulations.

The plan must also outline programs for the training of authorised officers along with programs, services and strategies to:

- ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
- minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
- address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
- encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
- provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
- 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
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Council is also required to review and where appropriate amend the plan and publish an evaluation of the implementation of the plan in the council annual report.

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Benefit</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	The DAMP must set out a method council uses for evaluating whether the animal control services provided are effective and achieve requirements under the Act and Regulations.	Provides evidence that council programs are effective, efficient and deliver on Government's expectations.
<b>Training of Authorised Officers</b>	The DAMP must set out training programs for the training of authorised officers.	Provides assurance that Authorised Officers are suitably trained to carry out their duties effectively.
<b>Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation</b>	The DAMP must set out programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with relevant legislation and associated codes of practice	Provides assurance that responsible pet ownership and residents understand their obligations.
<b>Programs to address over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates</b>	The DAMP must set out programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.	Provides assurance that council is providing programs and education to reduce the population of unregistered animals and the euthanasia rates within their municipality.
<b>Registration and identification</b>	The DAMP must set out programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.	Provides assurance that residents are aware of their obligations and as a result register and identify their cats and dogs.
<b>Nuisance</b>	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance	Provides assurance that residents can access prevention, support and are held accountable if their animals are causing a nuisance.
<b>Dog attacks</b>	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.	Provides assurance that there are policies and procedures to minimise the risk of dog attacks on the public and other animals
<b>Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs</b>	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to ensure that those dogs are compliant with the Act and Regulations	Provides assurance that these dogs are kept in accordance with the Act and Regulations to ensure there is minimal risk to residents

Theme	Requirement	Benefit
<b>Domestic Animal Businesses</b>	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are complying with the Act, the Regulations and related Code of Practices.	Provides assurance that Domestic Animal Businesses understand their obligations and are compliant with Act, the Regulations and related Code of Practices.
<b>Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting</b>	Council must review their DAMP annually and submit a review to the Department.	Provides assurance that the targets in the DAMP are being met.
<b>Other matters, including:</b> - <b>Reviewing existing order</b>	Council may review current orders and make new orders in relation to dogs and cats	Provides assurance that council is reviewing existing orders and making necessary changes where necessary

## 1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

In preparing this Plan, the following methodology has been applied:

- Existing animal management operations were reviewed including existing procedures, local laws and orders.
- The strategic content was reviewed including plans and strategies that might be relevant to animal management.
- A Community Survey was conducted via the Shape Monash portal during May 2021. This survey sought community input on a range of issues, including access to open spaces, animal registration and nuisance cats.
- 177 residents provided feedback, submitting 186 responses.
- Results of this survey across all subject matter showed the following areas were cause for most concern to residents:-
  - Education to be provided in a number of languages (this to be provided in hard copy and online);
  - Requests for fenced 'off leash' areas to separate smaller and larger dogs;
  - Education around dog faeces (including enforcement & more availability of dog poo bags);
  - Encouraging animal adoption;
  - Nuisance animals – both dogs barking and cats trespassing.
- A Gender Impact Assessment was conducted which identified a growing understanding of the link between animal abuse and family violence. It also found that different genders experience animal ownership differently. Acknowledging the need to better understand the impacts on gender this plan includes a more detailed assessment to be completed in the second year of the plan.
- The draft plan was released for public submissions and the comments received echoed the concerns and calls for action that were identified in the earlier consultation and were considered in the development of this plan.

### 1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFILE OF COUNCIL

Monash Council is located between 13 and 24 kilometres south-east of Melbourne CBD and covers an area of approximately 81.5 square kilometres. The municipality is predominantly residential, and contains substantial industrial, commercial and recreational areas.

The cultural diversity of Monash's residents is amplified by the fact that 49% of Monash's residents were born overseas, with the most populous being from China, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Greece, Italy, Vietnam, Hong Kong, South Korea and Indonesia. Other than English, the main languages spoken in Monash households are Mandarin, Greek, Cantonese, Italian, Sinhalese, Vietnamese, Tamil, Korean, Hindi and Indonesian.

Monash residents are generally highly skilled and well-educated. Thirty-five percent (35%) of Monash residents have a bachelor university degree or higher qualification, compared with 27% of the Greater Melbourne population.

In June 2020, businesses in Monash provide 144,478 local jobs. This makes Monash the second largest employment destination in Melbourne, after the Central Business District.

Monash estimated resident population for 2020 was 204,936 with a population density of 25.16 persons per hectare, making it one of the most populous municipalities in Victoria.

Suburbs within Monash's municipal boundaries are:

- Ashwood
- Clayton
- Glen Waverley
- Hughesdale
- Huntingdale
- Mount Waverley
- Mulgrave
- Notting Hill
- Oakleigh
- Oakleigh East
- Wheelers Hill

Monash also incorporates parts of the suburbs of Burwood, Chadstone and Oakleigh South.

Adjoining municipalities are the cities of:

- Boroondara
- Glen Eira
- Greater Dandenong
- Kingston
- Knox
- Stonnington
- Whitehorse

Major features of Monash include:

- Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster
- Monash University in Clayton;
- Monash Medical Centre in Clayton;
- Four private hospitals in Clayton (2), Mount Waverley and Mulgrave;
- Major shopping precincts in Brandon Park, Clayton, Glen Waverley, Mount Waverley, Oakleigh and Mulgrave;

- Regional parks managed by Parks Victoria including Jells Park, Bushy Park, Shepherds Bush, Scotchmans Creek Linear Park and Corhanwarrabul Wetlands;
- Well positioned and maintained public parks and reserves throughout Monash for both active and passive recreational pursuits.

Monash has extensive areas of public open space well distributed and located across the municipality. Over 90% of the available open space is owned and managed by Council. These spaces provide important leisure and recreation opportunities for the public to exercise their dogs.

## 1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council currently delivers a range of animal management programs and services including the following:

Program/Service:	Service Level:
<i>Identification &amp; Registration</i>	11,624 dogs & 5044 cats
<i>Identification &amp; Registration- doorknock campaigns</i>	One cycle per year post renewal period
<i>Response to low risk domestic animal complaints</i>	Three working days
<i>Response to high risk domestic animal complaints</i>	Immediate
<i>Request to collect stray animal</i>	Same day
<i>Dangerous Dogs complaints</i>	Twice annual programmed inspections Immediate response to high risk incidents
<i>Routine street/park patrols</i>	Daily
<i>Programmed weekend park patrols</i>	20 hours per month
<i>Pound Services</i>	Mon – Fri 8am-8pm Sat – Sun 9am – 5pm
<i>After hours emergency service</i>	5pm – 8.15am daily 5pm Friday – 8.15am Monday
<i>Cat trap programme</i>	Cat traps available to the community

## 1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

	2016		2020	
	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats
Number of registered dogs / cats	11,462	4,690	11,624	5,044
	De-sexed- 9,073	De-sexed- 4,592	De-sexed- 10,320	De-sexed- 5,037
	Entire – 2,389	Entire – 98	Entire – 1,304	Entire – 7

Number of declared dogs (dangerous, menacing, restricted)	Dangerous – 5 Menacing – 2 Restricted - 8		Dangerous – 3 Menacing – 1 Restricted - 0	
Number of registered domestic animal businesses	6		7	
Number of animals Seized/Surrendered	Seized – 7 Surrendered- 122		Seized – 3 Surrendered- 108	
Number of cats/dogs Reclaimed/ Rehomed/ Euthanised <small>(includes stray and wild animals offered up to the pound by members of the public)</small>	Reclaimed – 557 Rehomed – 92 Euthanised - 9	Reclaimed – 53 Rehomed – 435 Euthanised - 121	Reclaimed – 276 Rehomed – 46 Euthanised - 13	Reclaimed – 54 Rehomed -496 Euthanised - 214
Number of prosecutions associated with dogs	29		4	
Estimated dog/cat (owned) population	Not estimated	Not estimated	37,392	24,811
Number of complaints relating to cats and dogs	Dogs and cats - 2004		Dogs and cats - 2212	

### Registered Dogs & Cats

The overall number of dogs and cats registered with Council in 2020 has increased by 3.2% increase from 2016. Dog registrations increased by 1.4% and cat registrations by 7.5%.

Of note is the change in de-sexed and entire animals since 2016. Overall, there was a 12.4% increase in the number of de-sexed animals. There was a 13.7% increase in dogs and 9.7% increase in cats.

Regarding entire animals, there was a significant decrease. 1085 fewer registered dogs were entire, or a 45.4% decrease, and 91 fewer entire cats, or 92.8% decrease.

### Registered Domestic Animal Businesses

Seven Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are registered in Monash. These comprise:

- three pet shops;
- two catteries
- one dog trainer; and
- one boarding kennel.

### Estimated dog and cat (owned) within the Monash Municipality (based on 2016 census)

There appears to be no current research to help estimate the true number of pets kept in Australian households. Market research company BIS Shrapnel estimated in 1998/1999 that 40 per cent of

households in municipalities owned one or more dogs at a rate of 1.44 dogs/household; and 26 per cent of households in the municipality owned one or more cats at a rate of 1.47 cats/household (*BIS Shrapnel report to the Department of Primary Industries*).

Noting that these formulas and rates of ownership have not been reviewed and updated since 1998/99 the assumption of the estimated dog and cat populations has not been tested. However, it can be assumed that significant numbers of dogs and cats that are kept within the municipality may not be registered.

	2020 Registration Numbers	BIS Shrapnel report using population density
<b>Dogs</b>	11,624	37,392
<b>Cats</b>	5044	24,811

## 2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

### 2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The functions and responsibilities around animal management are delivered by the Community Laws team that sits within the Community Amenity Department. The department comprises two Senior Community Laws Officers and six full-time Community Law Officers. All officers are multi-skilled and provide animal management, as well as general community laws services. These officers report to the Coordinator, Community Laws.

The Community Amenity Department has four business support officers who amongst other responsibilities provide support with matters including animal management, animal registrations, permits, enquiries and complaints.

In addition to the animal management service provided during business hours, an after-hours service is also provided.

As part of our animal management strategy, Council recognises the importance of authorised officers being adequately trained. All staff have or will be required to gain the Certificate IV Animal Control and Regulation and Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance) which addresses the skills of animal handling, investigation, report writing, communication and time management.

Table 1 sets out the status of training for our officers and training proposed during the forthcoming four year period.

### 2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

**Table 1: Training Status for Authorised Officers**

Authorised Officer Training	Current (2020)	Planned
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<b>Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation</b>	Completed by all officers	Newly appointed officers to achieve if required
<b>Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance)</b>	Completed	Newly appointed officers to achieve if required
<b>Industry training – animal handling</b>	Ongoing	Officers to complete every 18 months
<b>Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days</b>	Officers to attend when required	Officers to attend when required
<b>Canine DNA evidence collection</b>	Awaiting advice from Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR).	Officers to have refresher when Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) advises program recommenced
<b>In-house training on relevant subject matter, e.g. brief preparation, statement taking</b>	Ongoing	Officers to attend quarterly training as needs are identified
<b>In-house training and e-learning modules (i.e. Code of Conduct, Fraud &amp; Corruption, Negotiation and Conflict)</b>	Ongoing	Officers to attend as part of Learning and Development Training
<b>Induction program for new staff</b>	Completed	Corporate training internally

### 2.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 1:** To identify training opportunities as a part of the development of a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by authorised officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
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Identify additional training opportunities in consultation with management and staff	Annually	Documentation and Performance conversations to be finalised and incorporated into individual officers' training plan as part of the annual organisational development training plan
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**Objective 2:** Maintain training for Animal Management officers as part of performance planning ensuring they have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete a development plan process with each staff member, identifying training needs	Six monthly at time of Performance Conversations	Completion of all identified training activities in development training plan
Authorised officers to receive training on prevention of family violence and responding to disclosures.	April 2023	Training delivered

### 3. PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

Councils approach to education and enforcement is guided by the notion of Educate/Ask/Tell/Enforce.

In doing so this means that education is the highest priority with enforcement generally occurring as a last resort when other methods have failed, or in some circumstances as an immediate response to wilful non-compliance or for serious matters such as failing to register animals and dog attacks. Our engagement with the community tells us that this approach is consistent with their expectations.

This Plan focuses on continuing best practice for the management of dogs and cats in Monash and to promote responsible pet ownership.

#### 3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Monash has an extensive number of programs and information currently in place to that promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislative and/or regulatory requirements. The information is provided through by a variety of methods including pamphlets, monthly news bulletin delivered to households, Council's website and increasingly social media.

Current programs and information include:

#### **Over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates**

- Night-time curfew for cats.

- Pound services that focus on rehoming animals

### **Registration and identification of dogs and cats**

- Distribution of registration brochures and fact sheets, e.g. 'Living with Dogs and Cats' pamphlet as a guide for both pet owners and non-owners;
- Publishes information on the Council website and in the Council resident's newsletter to advise of the registration period and requirements;
- Follows up pet owners that have not renewed their pet registration;
- Annual door knock program;
- Improve the accuracy of Council registration database with Microchip Registry data annually.
- Promotes the requirement for owners to "pick up" after their dogs and dispose of waste appropriately; and
- Increasingly provides dog waste bins and drinking fountains at parks.

### **Nuisance**

- Topical articles on animal management and current animal issues are published in the monthly resident news bulletin.
- Face to face contact with residents and regular patrols are conducted in parks and reserves. This allows officers an opportunity to interact, educate and advise pet owners on responsible pet ownership.
- Investigation of contraventions of Local and State controls
- Signage in parks to remind dog owners of the rules applicable when visiting a park.

### **Dog Attacks**

Dog owners are encouraged to implement one or more of the following measures to reduce dog attacks:

- match dog breed choice with the dog owner's lifestyle;
- have dogs de-sexed to reduce their aggression or desire to wander at large;
- implement early socialisation and training for the dog;
- provide suitable conditions for confining the dog at its home;
- provide environmental enrichment at its home to relieve pent up energy; and
- regularly exercise the dog.

Officers also focus on owners and the general public in promoting the important principles of dog attack avoidance. This is promoted through information brochures and on Council's website.

Council's priority regarding dog attacks is not only through education and owners being able to control their dogs and reinforcing the importance of this, but also where an attack does happen to take action and steps to protect the community from future attacks by the same dog.

Where injuries have occurred to a person or another animal by a dog that is of a serious nature (as defined by the Domestic Animals Act 1994), Council is likely to elect to have the matter heard in the Magistrates' Court, where there is sufficient evidence to support a prosecution. This reinforces the seriousness of the matter and is appropriate given the harm that can occur from dog attacks.

### **Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs**

Fact sheets are provided to the owners of these dogs informing them of their obligations and responsibilities as part of choosing to own such breeds.

Officers also offers and provide one on one education and instruction to owners, and this is available on request.

### **Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB)**

Council advises and educates DAB operators on any changes to legislation or on any new codes of practice that relates to their business. This is done via visits to the premises, and education not only during renewal of the business registration, but on an as needs basis where the business may need further education or follow up. Each business is also supplied with material from the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR).

### **Emergency Management**

The Community Laws team ensures that emergency relief and recovery components of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP), provides details regarding local arrangements and providers for relevant animal welfare services including:

- Liaising with relevant animal welfare agencies and organisations to enable effective and timely delivery the animal welfare service; and
- Provide information to Council's communications team relating to the management of animals impacted by an emergency.

### **Public Education Program**

Council's partnership with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) allows it to implement programs into schools about the importance of responsible pet ownership. The 'We Are Family' program is currently used throughout Monash which focuses specifically on the parents of children 0 to 4 years, the most at risk group to a dog attack. It provides information and strategies for parents to ensure the child and pet relationship is a happy and safe one.

## **3.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **CURRENT ORDERS:**

#### **Dog Control Order - Number 5**

On 28 May 2019 Monash City Council resolved to make Order Number 5 pursuant to section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 which expanded the prohibition of dogs at Gardiners Reserve as result of the installation of the synthetic playing surface and the significant investment that was made. The order did not affect all parts of the reserve. . The Dog Control Order - Number 5 imposes the following (summarised):

***Dogs must be under effective control*** by means of a chain, cord or leash (not exceeding 1.5 metres in length) while in a Public Place.

***Prohibited Areas*** - A dog must not enter a Prohibited Area. The prohibited areas within Monash City are the turf pitch and synthetic pitch at Jack Edwards Reserve and the synthetic pitch at Gardiners Reserve. Particular conditions apply.

***Owner's obligations in a Designated Reserve*** – provides for exercise off a chain, cord or leash, with some restrictions. There are 31 designated reserves within the City of Monash.

**Owners must be equipped to remove dog faeces** at all times.

### **Cat Control Order**

On 25 August 2020 Monash City Council resolved to make an Order pursuant to section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to introduce a Cat Curfew effective from 10 April 2021. The Cat Control Order imposes the following (summarised):

**All cats must be securely confined** between the hours of sunset or 7.00pm whichever is the latter, and sunrise.

### CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

#### **Council's Local Law No 3 – Community Amenity**

Amongst other things, this Local Law regulates the keeping of animals in Monash. It requires an annual permit from Council to keep more than two dogs and two cats.

The Local Law also contains requirements for housing animals, controlling animal odours and removing dog excrement from a road or Council land.

### 3.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 3:** Reduce the number of pecuniary compliance actions by educating the community about their legislative obligations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Distribution of fact sheets and web content regarding legislative obligations.	Sent annually with renewals and with all new registrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners</li></ul>
Use of dog poo stencils on walking tracks, entries to parks and on footpaths (response to resident complaints)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Decrease in complaints around dog poo being left by dog owners</li></ul>
Programme park patrols for educating the community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners</li></ul>
Continue the use of magnetic reminders around pet registration and other relevant messaging on all Compliance vehicles	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased awareness that pets need to be registered.</li></ul>
Continue the use of corflute signage in reserves, and update to maintain relevance as required.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners</li></ul>
Schedule specific articles prepared and put in the monthly bulletin to meet needs of the community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Educate to meet the demands of trends/weather</li></ul>

**Objective 4:** Promote Animal Welfare platforms.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote Animal Welfare platforms, following assessments to ensure consistency with the objectives of this plan.	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance to be monitored.
Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote cat curfew in various forms including social media, Council's website, bulletin articles and other means	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance to be monitored. Number of digital posts and articles.

#### 4. PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVER-POPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

##### 4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council is committed to reducing the unnecessary euthanasia of animals impounded and only after alternatives to house or re-home have been exhausted will euthanasia be considered. This is always the course of action and last option considered.

Animals impounded in Monash and euthanised during 2020 compared with those recorded for 2012 and 2016 are shown in the below table.

**Table 2 – Animals Impounded and Euthanised**

Animals	2016	2020
Impounded Dogs	546	297
Impounded Cats	462	450
Euthanised Dogs	9	13
Euthanised Cats	121	214

These statistics show a significant decrease in the number of dogs being impounded. However, there is a marked increase in the number of cats that have been euthanised and this in part correlates with an increase of wild cats being impounded. The reasons for the increase are not well understood at this point in time and will be further explored as an action arising out of this Plan.

Year	DOGS		% change	CATS		% change
	2016	2020		2016	2020	
De-sexed animals registered	9,073	10,320	+13.7%	4,592	5,037	+9.7%
Entire animals registered	2,389	1,304	- 45.4%	98	7	- 92.8%

The previous plan aimed to increase the number of registered desexed animals, and this was achieved as in 2020 there were 12.4% more desexed animals registered than in 2016.

This also resulted in a 47% reduction in the total number of entire animals that were registered over the same period.

## 4.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT ORDERS:

#### **Cat Control Order**

On 25 August 2020 Council resolved to make an Order pursuant to section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to introduce a Cat Curfew effective from 10 April 2021. The Cat Control Order imposes the following (summarised):

**All cats must be securely confined** between the hours of sunset or 7.00pm whichever is the latter, and sunrise.

### CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

#### **Refer to 3.2**

**Council's Local Law No. 3 – Community Amenity Part 8 – Keeping of Animals** controls overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of permitted animals. There are no orders currently for overpopulation or high euthanasia.

### CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

If an animal is impounded all reasonable efforts are made to locate the owner, house or re-home impounded animals. Only after alternatives to house or re-home have been exhausted, will euthanasia be considered, always as the last option.

## 4.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 5:** To provide readily accessible information to the public about the causes leading to overpopulation and high euthanasia rates

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote confinement of animals to owner's premises to prevent stray cats and dogs and possible euthanasia if the animal is not microchipped and registered	Ongoing	Promotes compliance and the importance of registration

Review the annual cat trapping programme with a view to identifying how the programme might be enhanced in terms of reducing wild cat population	Dec 2022	Less reports of wild cats and nuisance cats
In partnership with animal welfare agencies, investigate the prevalence of wild cats and explore recommendations to reduce the unowned cat population.	<b>June 2023</b>	Investigation undertaken and recommendations implemented

**Objective 6:** Actively seek opportunities to deliver low cost cat desexing programs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Participate in government grant opportunities as they become available	As available	Number of cats desexed by the end of the desexing program.
Approach animal welfare organisations to explore partnerships and cat desexing options	Dec 2022	Programs considered and subsequently delivered within budget constraints.

**Objective 7:** Develop partnerships to strategically address to reduce the unowned cat populations and programmes designed to address a reduction in high euthanasia rates

Activity	When	Evaluation
Engage with animal welfare organisations seeking opportunities to partner programmes specifically designed to reduce unowned cat populations and programmes designed to reduce high euthanasia rates.	Ongoing	Partnerships with these organisations and programmes being run effectively.

## 5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

### 5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

- Messaging on all Community Laws vehicles
- Corflute signage in parks and reserves
- Door Knocks
- Microchip database searches
- Enforcement of unregistered animals

#### OUR CURRENT DATA

Registrations of dogs and cats with Council for 2020 calendar year and the categorisation of these registrations are shown below.

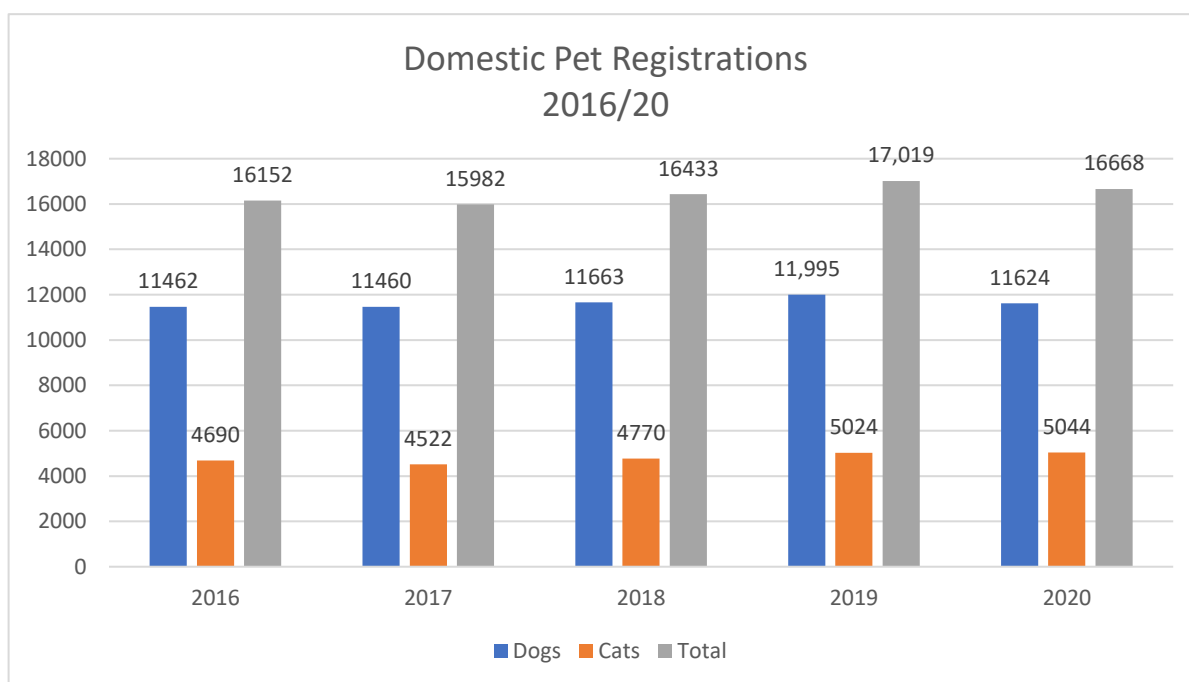
#### Dog and Cat Registrations for 2016 – 2020



	DOGS		% change	CATS		% change
Year	2016	2020		2016	2020	
Total number of animals registered	11,462	11,624	+1.4%	4,690	5,044	+7.5%

Trends in pet registrations since 2012 are shown in Graph 1 below.

**Graph 1: Pet Registration Trends 2016/20**



There are a number of actions that were identified in the previous plan that have been implemented so assist in the education of residents and to promote the importance of animal registrations. These have been well received and are proposed to be undertaken on an ongoing basis. They are summarised below.:

- making available to residents a pamphlet titled 'Living with Dogs and Cats' as a guide for both pet owners and non-owners;
- follow up pet owners that have not renewed their pet registration;
- publish information on the Council website and in the Council newsletter distributed to residents to advise of the registration period and requirements;
- promote the requirement for owners to "pick up" after their dogs and dispose of waste appropriately;
- provide dog waste bins and drinking fountains at some reserves; and
- distribute registration brochures and fact sheets to residents.

There has been some increase in both dog and cat registrations between 2016 – 2020, although there was a slight decrease from the last to current year. Overall there has been 3% increase from 2016.

Encouragingly there was a 7.5% increase in the number of cats registered. This is an area where we often see the least amount of compliance with regard to registrations.

## 5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT ORDERS:

Section 10C of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 requires cats and dogs to be microchipped as a condition of registration (which is compulsory once the animal is three months of age).

Dogs and cats being registered for the first time must be micro-chipped. Micro-chipped animals can be promptly returned to their owners when they stray or become lost.

### CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

**Refer to 3.2**

#### **Council's Local Law No. 3 – Community Amenity**

*Part 8 – Keeping of Animals* controls overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of permitted animals. It requires an annual permit from Council to keep more than two dogs and two cats.

### CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

#### OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Current compliance activities are listed below, and will be carried out as part of the 2021 -2025 plan.

## 5.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 8:** Improve the accuracy of Council registration database by cross-referencing with micro-chip registry data.

Activity	When	Evaluation
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<p>Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting micro-chip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are micro-chipped. Cross reference Council's registration data with the registry to identify unregistered animals and follow up those that are not.</p>	<p>Annually by 30/09</p>	<p>Demonstrate Council's pet registration database can be accurately cross referenced with micro-chip registries</p> <p>Demonstrate an increase in numbers of pets registered with Council following microchip registry cross-referencing exercise.</p>
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**Objective 9:** Improve promotion of pet registration and responsible pet ownership.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Increase publicity and education regarding animal registration and micro-chipping among Council's non-English speaking residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• publishing information for CALD communities;</li> <li>• Liaise with and provide information to Monash University for inclusion in student publications</li> </ul>	<p>March <i>(as part of the registration initial mail out)</i></p> <p>May <i>(as reminders are sent to residents)</i></p> <p>June/July <i>(when door knocks occur)</i></p>	<p>Review relevant publications to ensure registration is advertised/promoted</p>
<p>Increase publicity and education regarding animal registration and micro-chipping among all residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• posting information on Council's website and social media, e.g. Facebook &amp; Twitter;</li> <li>• placing temporary signage on vehicles promoting pet registration; and</li> <li>• placing temporary signage in reserves promoting pet registration</li> <li>• On hold messaging prior to and during registration renewal period</li> <li>• SMS reminders sent to residents who have not</li> </ul>	<p>March <i>(as part of the registration initial mail out)</i></p> <p>May <i>(as reminders are sent to residents)</i></p> <p>June/July <i>(when door knocks occur)</i></p>	<p>Review relevant media to ensure registration is advertised/promoted</p>

renewed animal registration.		
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**Objective 10:** Improve compliance with pet registration requirements

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake annual registration door knock program	By 30/09 annually	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Record of unregistered and unidentified animals detected during door knocks. Infringements issued for unregistered animals.
Park Patrol education	Ongoing	Number of patrol hours Educate residents regarding responsible pet ownership, picking up after their dogs and the importance of registration
Community Education at Council Events	Ongoing	Number of events
Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting micro-chip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped	Ongoing	Increase in registration/identification of unregistered animals

## 6 NUISANCE

### 6.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

The main nuisance with cats in Monash is caused by stray and wild cats. These cats are enticed to remain in an area by residents feeding and other plentiful food supplies. They are the main cause of attacks on the natural habitat, including native animals and compromise the amenity of the area. Council provides cat traps to residents to enable them to trap cats which are then collected by Council offices. Demand for these is often high and there can be longer waiting periods to obtain them. Additionally, officers proactively set traps in areas of the municipality where nuisance and wild cats are known to be of concern.

The introduction of Clause 135 of the Local Law No.3 where it can be an offence for a person to feed an uncaged animal that is causing damage or a nuisance if an authorised officer issues a direction for it to stop and the person does not do so. The local law and the direction to cease the feeding has assisted in raising awareness of the problems caused by feeding wild cats.

A night-time cat curfew was adopted as an action of the last Plan. The curfew has been introduced by Council and commenced 10 April 2021. The effects are yet to be analysed though it is expected that cat containment will be normalised through heightened awareness and a willingness to comply with the legal control.

### ***Barking Dogs***

Council's role includes investigating nuisance caused by barking dogs. When a complaint is made, officers undertake investigations. This includes speaking to the complainant, the dog owner and attending the location to determine what is occurring and to establish whether the barking goes beyond mere annoyance, and if a nuisance offence has occurred.

Council can only intervene a barking dog complaint if it is legally classed a "nuisance". A nuisance can be defined as persistent, substantial and unreasonable.

When a complaint is lodged with Council, it is often because the neighbour-to-neighbour approach has not worked. Council's initial response is to obtain a statement from the customer about the times the barking occurs and the impact it has on the complainant, and may also request that they keep a log, so as to determine the frequency of barking and also whether there may be a cause that could be attributed to the behaviour dependant on when it may be occurring and its frequency. The dog owner is provided with information how the barking may be reduced and is asked to implement strategies.

The investigation proceeds with enquiries with other neighbours and the officer making their own observations. The dog owner is again made aware that an investigation is underway, and once all the available evidence has been collected the dog owner may be formally interviewed.

Council will continue to review its procedures so that they are consistent with best practice.

### ***Dog Faeces***

Existing controls require dog owners to carry bags with them when their dog is being exercised in public and to remove their dogs' faeces from public places as well as properly dispose of the waste. It is disappointing that the enjoyment of public spaces is compromised when some owners fail to clean up after their pets. This remains a significant concern for Council and well as users of these public recreational spaces whether they are used for informal recreation or for organised sport. Although most dog owners do the right thing it is necessary to heighten our educative approach to reaffirm that not picking up after your dog is not only the person's responsibility as a responsible dog owner, but that failing to do so has a potentially significant impact upon the enjoyment of these spaces by residents. It is unacceptable and inexcusable for a person to not pick up after their dog and it is a basic and fundamental expectation from the Monash community and Council that people do this.

### ***Dedicated off-leash areas for dogs***

Exercising dogs outdoors can cause nuisances and create conflict between other users of recreational places and vice-versa. There is on-going community interest in the provision of dedicated exercise areas for dogs in the form of 'dog parks' and there are increasing pressures to reduce or limit more traditional off-lead areas in recreational spaces that have been improved including through the installation of synthetic surfaces over the years. The conflict between the use of these spaces for organised sport, and

off lead exercise for dogs both through damage to surfaces and uncollected dog faeces does arise. In light of this and where Council may undertake significant improvement to reserves, it would be appropriate to consider the appropriateness of these areas being shared spaces for dogs and specialised recreational pursuits.

Work exploring the feasibility of fenced off-leash areas is currently underway and will be the subject of Council decisions during the early stages of the roll out of this plan. Nonetheless this work highlights that the creation, implementation and ongoing management of these areas is a relatively new field that is both complex and potentially contentious. As the designation of Councils dog off lead areas occurred many years ago, as decisions are made with regard to dog parks, it would be appropriate to review to review all off and on-leash areas, and determine if they are still appropriate, whether there are new opportunities or whether changes to the designation may need to be made.

### **Nuisance summary**

Statistics for nuisance-type resident issues recorded for 2020, as against those recorded in 2016, are shown in Table 3.

#### RESIDENT SERVICE REQUESTS AND COMPLAINTS

Nature of Request/ Complaint	Year		% change 2016 -2020	
	2016	2020	Variation	Comment
All dog & cat complaints	2004	2212	↑	The number of complaints remains largely the same as the increase noted here largely relates to improvements made to the identification and recording of complaints.
Dogs - Barking	119	193	↑	
Dogs - Impounded	546	297	↓	
Dogs - Euthanised	9	13	↑	
Cats - Nuisance	24	196	↑	Significant increase reflects improvements made associated with the identification and recording of complaints.
Cats - Impounded	462	450	↓	
Cats - Euthanised	121	214	↑	Increase correlates with impounded wild cats that are not suitable for rehoming
Infringements Issued	261	325	↑	Increase is consistent with the identification of unregistered animals

When comparing statistics between 2016 and 2020, the following variations are noted:

- the total number of dog and cat requests and complaints have increased by 10% however the increase is thought to be largely related to improvements with the identification and recording of complaints associated with cats.
- the number of animals impounded have decreased
- the number of cats euthanised have increased; and
- the number of infringement notices issued has increased by 24%.

## 6.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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## CURRENT ORDERS:

**Council's Local Law No. 3 – Community Amenity Part 8 – Keeping of Animals** controls overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of permitted animals. It requires an annual permit from Council to keep more than two dogs and two cats.

**Council's Local Law No 3 – Community Amenity**, at clause 89 requires persons walking dogs to remove the dogs' excrement from a road or Council land.

Clause 132 requires any structure used for housing an animal and the area within three (3) metres of such structure must be maintained:

- in a clean, inoffensive and sanitary condition;
- so as not to cause any nuisance; and
- to the satisfaction of Council or an authorised officer.

Clause 134 requires an occupier of any land on which any animal is kept must not allow any noise or smell to emanate from the animal which interferes with the reasonable comfort or convenience of persons who occupy adjacent or nearby land..

Clause 135 prohibits the feeding of an uncaged animal that is causing a nuisance or damage to property.

The three main issues in Monash that are raised relate to barking dogs, wild cats and uncollected dog faeces. The community survey undertaken also identified that the issue of investigating further fenced off-leash areas for dogs was an important consideration for residents.

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## OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

### 6.2.1 Summary

An increase in the total number of complaints regarding cats and dogs indicates that this is an area that requires continued focus. It is encouraging that the number of animals impounded has decreased, however, in contrast the number of cats euthanised has increased.

Council's focus in recent times has been to address complaints about barking dogs, nuisance cats and dog faeces. These will continue to be high priorities for officers over the currency of this plan.

Activities for these complaints include:

- Conducting regular park patrols and liaison with sporting clubs
- Park audits of signage
- Enforcement via official warnings, infringement notices and prosecutions as required

## 6.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 11:** Reduce cat nuisance complaints by delivering ongoing education programs via website and bulletins around the night time curfew for cats.

Activity	When	Evaluation
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Continue the delivery of education programs that promotes the well-being of cats and the environmental benefits that arise from them being contained at night.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media prompts</li> <li>• Information mail-outs to cat owners</li> <li>• Bulletin articles</li> <li>• A reduction in the number of nuisance complaints about cats</li> </ul>
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**Objective 12:** Reduce and minimise the amount of nuisance dog complaints to Council by education and enforcement.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve the barking dog complaint/investigation procedure and ensure it is published on the Council website	Dec 2022	Procedure updated and information available on website
Continue to roll out the provision of dog faeces disposal bins and bag dispensers in parks subject to annual Council budget process	Ongoing	Increase in new bins and dispensers installed over the life of the plan
Increase awareness of the requirement to pick up dog faeces by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distributing brochures; and</li> <li>• using stencilled designs on footpaths in reserves</li> <li>• procure and utilise a range of stencils in languages other than English.</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Jun 2023	Community feedback and number of complaints received. Decrease in complaints regarding dog faeces
Implement any outcomes of feasibility work around improvements to dog off leash areas and 'dog parks' as may be resolved upon by Council	To be determined and subject to Council resolution	Implementation of relevant Council resolutions
Conduct a periodic review of off and on-leash areas	Commencing 2022	Reviews conducted, community and stakeholder consultation and recommendations made to Council
Include information regarding confinement, barking dogs, dogs at large and other information relating to responsible pet ownership in animal registration information packs each year and on Council's website and publications	March annually	Review information included annually.



## 7 DOG ATTACKS

### 7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Dog attacks in Monash recorded for 2016 and 2020 are shown below.

#### Recorded Dog Attacks

Nature of Attacks	Year - 2016	Year - 2020
Dog attacks reported	54	116
Dog attacks prosecutions	8	4
Fines issued	4	15

There was a significant increase of dog attacks reported to Council in 2020 compared to previous years. Anecdotally, there is an awareness that some dog attacks do go unreported for varying reasons. The evidence related to the increase in dog attacks suggests the increase can be attributed to the Covid-19 pandemic where pet ownership numbers are known to have increased, particularly relating to the mental and well-being benefits of having a pet during periods of lockdown and isolation. Given the varying restrictions that were and continue to be in place during this time, a contributing factor could be that owners were unable to attend dog training classes to teach their dogs how to socialise, and in some instances how to manage and control their dogs in various settings. Coinciding with this there was also an increase in the number of people in parks and streets exercising, and this could also have contributed to the increase in dog attacks.

Reported dog attacks receive the highest priority from authorised officers. Depending on the severity of an incident, there are a range of actions that Council can consider. These can include, but are not limited to, the issuing of fines, prosecution, declaring dogs menacing or dangerous which places additional obligations on the owner associated with the keeping of the animal. Where serious injury results from a dog attack, Council may seize the offending dog pending the outcome of any prosecution and can ultimately determine to seek a range of outcomes including to euthanise a dog where it is considered it may pose an unacceptable risk to the community.

To reduce the risk of dog attacks, officers regularly patrol the municipality for wandering or at-large dogs and dogs and to identify instances where their owners that are not complying with animal management requirements. The risk of dog attacks can also be minimised through easily controllable measures such as dogs being required to be leashed within 20 metres of any occupied children's playground or play equipment, occupied picnic area or organised sporting event.

### 7.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### CURRENT ORDERS:

**Council's Local Law No. 3 – Community Amenity Part 8 – Keeping of Animals** controls overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of permitted animals. It requires an annual permit from Council to keep more than two dogs and two cats and includes a range of similar requirements for other animals.

**Council’s Local Law No 3 – Community Amenity**, at clause 89 requires persons walking dogs to remove the dogs’ excrement from a road or Council land.

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## OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Authorised officers routinely:

- maintain street and reserve patrols with a specific focus on high risk areas e.g. high attendance reserves;
- promptly respond to complaints; and
- use declaration/destruction powers appropriately.

## 7.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 13:** Reduce and minimise the risk of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Actively doorknock to identify unregistered animals	Ongoing	Registrations of animals and education of owners.
Regular park patrols including weekends	20 hours of weekend patrols per month	Dog owners spoken to and educated regarding enjoyable pet ownership and effective control.
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (e.g. confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc.) through media articles (with a specific focus on the multi-cultural community), website and social media information and targeted patrols.	Ongoing	Compare number of reported dog attack incidents pre and post campaign Number of media articles published Number of patrols conducted
Activity	When	Evaluation
Where appropriate, utilise media releases or other means to inform the community about successful prosecutions	Where appropriate	Promoted

## 8 DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

### 8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Definitions for dogs fitting one of these three classifications are:

A **Dangerous Dog** is either:

- a dog declared as dangerous by the Council (e.g. it has caused death or serious injury to a person or animal); or
- a dog kept as a guard dog for the purpose of guarding non-residential properties or a dog trained to attack or bite a person or thing when attached to or worn by a person.

A **Menacing Dog** is a dog declared menacing by the Council because it has:

- rushed at or chased a person; or
- bitten a person or animal causing a non-serious injury to that person or animal; or
- has been declared a menacing dog under a law of another State.

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

- Japanese Tosa;
- fila Brasileiro;
- dogo Argentino;
- Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario);
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier).

The number of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs registered in Monash 2012 to 2020 is shown below.

#### REGISTERED DANGEROUS, MENACING OR RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

Dog Classification	2016	2020	% change 2016-2020
Dangerous dogs	5	3	40% ↓
Menacing dogs	2	1	50% ↓
Restricted breed dogs	8	0	100% ↓
<b>Totals</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>73% ↓</b>

These statistics show a significant reduction in the total number of dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs registered when compared with 2016 statistics. This is largely due to attrition (whereby an animal is deceased or the owner has left the municipality).

## 8.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Undisciplined and/or inadequately trained dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs in public places pose the largest risk to the public and authorised officers. These categories of dogs are dealt with in accordance with the relevant legislation and Council procedures.

### CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES:

During the course of a year inspections are conducted on each property that contains a restricted breed or declared dangerous dog. In line with State Government legislation, Council deems the control of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs as a very serious matter.

Random door knocks that are conducted throughout the municipality annually also assists to identify these types of dogs. Authorised officers also conduct routine street and park patrols and promptly respond to complaints from residents.

### 7.1.5 Summary

There has been a reduction in the total number of dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs registered within the municipality and current protocols for the management of these breeds, together with our plans for the currency of this plan, are considered appropriate for the management of these dog categories.

## 8.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 14:** Identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review process for declaration of dangerous & menacing dogs in order to improve alignment with changing legal requirements	By May 2023	Compliance with legal changes  Successful defence of VCAT appeals against Council's declaration decisions.
Cross-reference micro-chip database information with current Council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs	Annually	Cross referencing with Council's registration database
Inspect all industrial properties in the municipality for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes	Annually as part of door knock process	Number of guard dogs identified as not registered

**Objective 15:** Effectively inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are following the keeping requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct inspections	By 30/06 annually	Review of inspection reports and updates to the registration database.

## 9 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

## 9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

### 9.1.1 Our current data

Seven Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are registered in Monash.

These comprise of:

- three pet shops
- three catteries
- one dog trainer
- one boarding kennel

## 9.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

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

The *Act* and associated regulations specifically regulate DABs. Comprehensive codes of practice developed from those regulations require no additional policies or procedures from Council.

#### 9.1.4 Our current Compliance Activities

Compliance inspections of DABs are conducted annually by authorised officers. In addition, spot checks on DABs are carried out throughout the year. Should public complaints relating to DAB animal management practices be received, they are promptly investigated and responded to.

#### 9.1.5 Summary

The seven DABs registered in Monash are sufficiently monitored with spot checks and compliance inspections. Accurate registers of DABs are maintained.

## 9.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 16:** Maintain an up-to-date register of all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review all DABs in the municipality and ensure they continue to be registered with Council.	30/6 annually	Numbers of DABs that are found non-compliant

**Objective 17:** Maintain DAB compliance.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct compliance inspections on DABs	30/6 annually	Number of DABs that are found non-compliant

## 10 OTHER MATTERS

### 10.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

#### 10.1.1 Emergency Management

Like all municipalities in Victoria, Council maintains a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) for responding to natural disasters and emergencies. The purpose of the MEMP is to provide a coordinated response and then recovery to support an emergency-affected community. This plan sets out the procedures to be followed when Council and community resources are required in the case of an emergency.

The City of Monash is generally a low risk area however storm, flood damage, major transport emergency or chemical spillage may require an appropriate and prompt response. It is important for residents to know how the MEMP operates and what to do in an emergency.

The Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan was recently been reviewed and updated in consultation with the wildlife welfare sector in response to the 2019/20 bushfire season, to ensure it provides a strong framework for responding to animal welfare emergency needs in Victoria.

The plan is a joint responsibility of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP). Under the plan, DJPR is responsible for coordination of activities relating to all animals other than wildlife, DELWP is responsible for coordination of activities relating to wildlife.

In 2017 an Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP) was developed for Monash which outlines the procedures to enable council animal management staff to understand their roles and responsibilities when undertaking activities assigned to Council and when they are assisting members of the community to manage their companion animals and livestock during an emergency. Given the passage of time, and to ensure relevance and readiness it is necessary to review and update the EAWP.

#### 10.1.2 Pound Services

Council has always outsourced its pound services as it has been a cost effective means to do so - especially in the absence of owning, having access or being able to easily establish and locate such a facility. Nonetheless, the costs associated with these services have increased significantly over the past seven years. The increase is due to service providers that are primarily animal welfare agencies, applying cost recovery models that see Councils contributing to the costs associated with the end-to-end care of impounded animals (i.e. care from the time an animal is impounded to the time it is either claimed or rehomed). In the past, Councils were only charged for the costs associated with the first eight days of care being the statutory holding period, as after this period, the agency owned the animal. It is intended to

review the cost effectiveness of outsourcing pound services and exploring the feasibility of alternative models such as shared services with close by Municipalities and bringing the service ‘in-house’ on either a local or regional basis.

### **10.1.3 Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (POCTA) Legislation**

The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 (POCTA) allows for the authorisation of local government officers, who are employees of council and authorised under Section 72 of *the Act*.

Council officers who are authorised under POCTA have the powers to investigate cruelty, seize and dispose of animals, destroy suffering animals, deal with abandoned or distressed animals and prosecute cruelty offences.

Council officers are not authorised as POCTA inspectors as the investigation of POCTA offences that occur within the municipality are currently investigated by the RSPCA and police. The RSPCA and police have demonstrated an ability to adequately respond to animal welfare matters that are controlled under the provisions of POCTA, however Council’s Animal Management Officers are available to assist in these investigations when requested to do so.

### **10.1.4 Gender Impact Assessment**

The Gender Equality Act 2020 requires Council, as a defined entity, to conduct gender impact assessments so that its policies, programs and services are designed to benefit everyone in our community. A Gender Impact Assessment:

- Assesses the effects that the policy, program or service may have on people of different genders.
- Explains how the policy, program or service may be changed to better support people of all genders and promote gender equality.
- Where practicable, applies an intersectional approach to consider how gender inequality can be compounded by disadvantage or discrimination that a person may experience on the basis of other factors such as age, disability, or ethnicity.

A Gender Impact Assessment conducted as part of the development of this plan revealed the growing understanding of the link between animal abuse and family violence. Accordingly, the Plan includes authorised officers receiving training on prevention of family violence and responding to disclosures (section 2.2).

An intersectional approach was also considered, with one of the key activities of the plan being to increase publicity and education among Council’s non-English speaking residents.

In addition, in order to understand any gendered differences in the community’s views, gender-disaggregated data was collected and analysed to inform this final version of the Plan.

The data showed that different genders experience pet ownership differently. For example women were more likely than men to own a cat and were less supportive of stronger law enforcement as compared to men. Similarly, 43% of males as compared to 36% of females were supportive of increased

registration fees to fund additional animal management programs. Those who preferred not to say which gender they identified with were the least inclined (12.5%) to support such a proposal.

The examination of gender impacts in terms of animal management and ownership are still not well understood but given their importance an objective has been set to explore them in greater detail in the second year of the plan.

## 10.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

#### 10.2.1 OUR CURRENT COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Monash Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP) deals specifically with the welfare of animals in Monash in case of an emergency. In the plan trained personnel are appointed to respond to any such emergencies.

#### 10.2.2 SUMMARY

Emergencies may pose a risk to animal welfare. Where this occurs owners and carers of animals may be under considerable stress. The primary responsibility and duty of care remains with the person in charge of the animal. However Council does have a role and responsibility to play if an emergency is to occur. Council's responsibilities are outlined in the MEMP and the EAWP.

## 10.3 OUR PLAN

**Objective 18:** Ensure Councils Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP) is updated and represents current knowledge contingencies and represents best practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the EAWP plan	December 2022	Plan reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders including animal welfare agencies.

**Objective 19:** Ensure the delivery of pound services are cost effective

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the cost effectiveness of outsourcing pound services and exploring the feasibility of bringing the service 'in-house' on either a local or regional basis.	December 2023	Feasibility report prepared and considered.



**Objective 20:** Further explore the impacts on gender that are associated with the implementation of this plan.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a methodology to gather data and investigate research to inform a more detailed assessment of the impacts on gender associated with this plan and the plans that will follow.	November 2023	Gender impact assessment completed and included in the 2023 annual evaluation process.

## 11 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

A review of this DAM Plan will be conducted annually. The review will evaluate the activities listed under each objective in this plan to determine whether they have successfully been activated, are in progress or otherwise. In each case, action or none action should be commented on. The annual evaluation of this DAM Plan will be:

- published in Councils' Annual Report; and
- provided to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Secretary together with any amendments to the plan.

## EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN

Complete for each activity	
Was each activity completed?	Annually
Describe any changes you will make if you do that activity again.	Annually
Was an activity not done or is now not planned to be done?	
If an activity was unsuccessful and you don't plan to do it again, outline insights you have into why it didn't work.	
Complete for each objective	
Did you meet your objective by carrying out the planned activities?	Yes/No
Describe your level of success/progress in meeting the objective.	

## 12.3 SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2021 - 2025

**Objective 1:** To identify training opportunities as a part of the development of a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by authorised officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify additional training opportunities in consultation with management and staff	Annually	Documentation and Performance conversations to be finalised and incorporated into individual officers' training plan as part of the annual organisational development training plan

**Objective 2:** Maintain training for Animal Management officers as part of performance planning ensuring they have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete a development plan process with each staff member, identifying training needs	Six monthly at time of Performance Conversations	Completion of all identified training activities in development training plan
Authorised officers to receive training on prevention of family violence and responding to disclosures.	April 2023	Training delivered

**Objective 3:** Reduce the number of pecuniary compliance actions by educating the community about their legislative obligations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Distribution of fact sheets and web content regarding legislative obligations.	Sent annually with renewals and with all new registrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners</li> </ul>
Use of dog poo stencils on walking tracks, entries to parks and on footpaths (response to resident complaints)	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decrease in complaints around dog poo being left by dog owners</li> </ul>
Programme park patrols for educating the community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners</li> </ul>
Continue the use of magnetic reminders around pet registration and other relevant messaging on all Compliance vehicles	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness that pets need to be registered.</li> </ul>

Continue the use of corflute signage in reserves, and update to maintain relevance as required.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners</li> </ul>
Schedule specific articles prepared and put in the monthly bulletin to meet needs of the community	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate to meet the demands of trends/weather</li> </ul>

**Objective 4:** Promote Animal Welfare platforms.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote Animal Welfare platforms, following assessments to ensure consistency with the objectives of this plan.	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance to be monitored.
Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote cat curfew in various forms including social media, Council's website, bulletin articles and other means	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance to be monitored. Number of digital posts and articles.

**Objective 5:** To provide readily accessible information to the public about the causes leading to overpopulation and high euthanasia rates

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote confinement of animals to owner's premises to prevent stray cats and dogs and possible euthanasia if the animal is not microchipped and registered	Ongoing	Promotes compliance and the importance of registration
Review the annual cat trapping programme with a view to identifying how the programme might be enhanced in terms of reducing wild cat population	Dec 2022	Less reports of wild cats and nuisance cats
In partnership with animal welfare agencies, investigate the prevalence of wild cats and explore recommendations to reduce the unowned cat population.	<b>June 2023</b>	Investigation undertaken and recommendations implemented

**Objective 6:** Actively seek opportunities to deliver low cost cat desexing programs

Activity	When	Evaluation
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Participate in government grant opportunities as they become available	As available	Number of cats desexed by the end of the desexing program.
Approach animal welfare organisations to explore partnerships and cat desexing options	Dec 2022	Programs considered and subsequently delivered within budget constraints.

**Objective 7:** Develop partnerships to strategically address to reduce the unowned cat populations and programmes designed to address a reduction in high euthanasia rates

Activity	When	Evaluation
Engage with animal welfare organisations seeking opportunities to partner programmes specifically designed to reduce unowned cat populations and programmes designed to reduce high euthanasia rates.	Ongoing	Partnerships with these organisations and programmes being run effectively.

**Objective 8:** Improve the accuracy of Council registration database by cross-referencing with micro-chip registry data.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting micro-chip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are micro-chipped. Cross reference Council's registration data with the registry to identify unregistered animals and follow up those that are not.	Annually by 30/09	Demonstrate Council's pet registration database can be accurately cross referenced with micro-chip registries  Demonstrate an increase in numbers of pets registered with Council following microchip registry cross-referencing exercise.

**Objective 9:** Improve promotion of pet registration and responsible pet ownership.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Increase publicity and education regarding animal registration and micro-chipping among Council's non-English speaking residents by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>publishing information for CALD communities;</li> <li>Liaise with and provide information to Monash University for inclusion in student publications</li> </ul>	March <i>(as part of the registration initial mail out)</i>  May <i>(as reminders are sent to residents)</i>	Review relevant publications to ensure registration is advertised/promoted

	June/July <i>(when door knocks occur)</i>	
<p>Increase publicity and education regarding animal registration and micro-chipping among all residents by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• posting information on Council’s website and social media, e.g. Facebook &amp; Twitter;</li> <li>• placing temporary signage on vehicles promoting pet registration; and</li> <li>• placing temporary signage in reserves promoting pet registration</li> <li>• On hold messaging prior to and during registration renewal period</li> <li>• SMS reminders sent to residents who have not renewed animal registration.</li> </ul>	<p>March <i>(as part of the registration initial mail out)</i></p> <p>May <i>(as reminders are sent to residents)</i></p> <p>June/July <i>(when door knocks occur)</i></p>	Review relevant media to ensure registration is advertised/promoted

**Objective 10:** Improve compliance with pet registration requirements

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake annual registration door knock program	By 30/09 annually	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Record of unregistered and unidentified animals detected during door knocks. Infringements issued for unregistered animals.
Park Patrol education	Ongoing	Number of patrol hours Educate residents regarding responsible pet ownership, picking up after their dogs and the importance of registration
Community Education at Council Events	Ongoing	Number of events
Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting	Ongoing	Increase in registration/identification of unregistered animals

micro-chip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped		
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**Objective 11:** Reduce cat nuisance complaints by delivering ongoing education programs via website and bulletins around the night time curfew for cats.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue the delivery of education programs that promotes the well-being of cats and the environmental benefits that arise from them being contained at night.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media prompts</li> <li>• Information mail-outs to cat owners</li> <li>• Bulletin articles</li> <li>• A reduction in the number of nuisance complaints about cats</li> </ul>

**Objective 12:** Reduce and minimise the amount of nuisance dog complaints to Council by education and enforcement.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve the barking dog complaint/investigation procedure and ensure it is published on the Council website	Dec 2022	Procedure updated and information available on website
Continue to roll out the provision of dog faeces disposal bins and bag dispensers in parks subject to annual Council budget process	Ongoing	Increase in new bins and dispensers installed over the life of the plan
Increase awareness of the requirement to pick up dog faeces by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• distributing brochures; and</li> <li>• using stencilled designs on footpaths in reserves</li> <li>• procure and utilise a range of stencils in languages other than English.</li> </ul>	Ongoing  Jun 2023	Community feedback and number of complaints received. Decrease in complaints regarding dog faeces
Implement any outcomes of feasibility work around improvements to dog off leash areas and 'dog parks' as may be resolved upon by Council	To be determined and subject to Council resolution	Implementation of relevant Council resolutions
Conduct a periodic review of off and on-leash areas	Commencing 2022	Reviews conducted, community and stakeholder consultation and recommendations made to Council

Include information regarding confinement, barking dogs, dogs at large and other information relating to responsible pet ownership in animal registration information packs each year and on Council's website and publications	March annually	Review information included annually.
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**Objective 13:** Reduce and minimise the risk of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Actively doorknock to identify unregistered animals	Ongoing	Registrations of animals and education of owners.
Regular park patrols including weekends	20 hours of weekend patrols per month	Dog owners spoken to and educated regarding enjoyable pet ownership and effective control.
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (e.g. confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc.) through media articles (with a specific focus on the multi-cultural community), website and social media information and targeted patrols.	Ongoing	Compare number of reported dog attack incidents pre and post campaign Number of media articles published Number of patrols conducted
Activity	When	Evaluation
Where appropriate, utilise media releases or other means to inform the community about successful prosecutions	Where appropriate	Promoted

**Objective 14:** Identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review process for declaration of dangerous & menacing dogs in order to improve alignment with changing legal requirements	By May 2023	Compliance with legal changes Successful defence of VCAT appeals against Council's declaration decisions.
Cross-reference micro-chip database information with current Council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs	Annually	Cross referencing with Council's registration database

Inspect all industrial properties in the municipality for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes	Annually as part of door knock process	Number of guard dogs identified as not registered
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**Objective 15:** Effectively inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are following the keeping requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct inspections	By 30/06 annually	Review of inspection reports and updates to the registration database.

**Objective 16:** Maintain an up-to-date register of all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review all DABs in the municipality and ensure they continue to be registered with Council.	30/6 annually	Numbers of DABs that are found non-compliant

**Objective 17:** Maintain DAB compliance.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct compliance inspections on DABs	30/6 annually	Number of DABs that are found non-compliant

**Objective 18:** Ensure Councils Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP) is updated and represents current knowledge contingencies and represents best practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the EAWP plan	December 2022	Plan reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders including animal welfare agencies.

**Objective 19:** Ensure the delivery of pound services are cost effective

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the cost effectiveness of outsourcing pound services and exploring the feasibility of bringing the service 'in-house' on either a local or regional basis.	December 2023	Feasibility report prepared and considered.



**Objective 20:** Further explore the impacts on gender that are associated with the implementation of this plan.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a methodology to gather data and investigate research to inform a more detailed assessment of the impacts on gender associated with this plan and the plans that will follow.	November 2023	Gender impact assessment completed and included in the 2023 annual evaluation process.