

Attachment Two

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021/25 - Submissions

One	<p>There is no detailed discussion about bin management and poo-bag provisions in high-traffic areas across the draft plan. For example, the addition of walking tracks around Huntingdale Wetlands has increased foot traffic.</p> <p>Bins including recycling should have been implemented along with this path construction. The opening of the wetlands at Kevin St cul de sac and at the Carrol St end is a popular walking track for everyone and dog owners. The same along Scotthman's Creek from Huntingdale Rd to Warrigal Rd. Yet there are no intermittently placed bins. As lockdown has proved how much the community needs for these lovely tracks, please ensure the provision of recycling and waste bins.</p> <p>I find spray-painting signs a wasteful spend when a bin would aid in disposing of dog poo. It's about ease of access that will get buy-in from the community, not, signs. I don't want such graffiti on my nature walks.</p> <p>This is the same along the freeway path {(Timminds St to Huntingdale Road) very popular for dog walkers but no bins provided.</p> <p>In other council areas, bio-degradable poo bags are provided and I would encourage Monash Council to consider this and elevate our council to an environmentally friendly, sustainable, safe, dog-friendly council.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>Local Law controls provide that dog owners are required to carry a bag with them at all times they are exercising their pet for the purpose of cleaning up after their dog. Poo bag dispensers are provided at parks where patronage is the highest and whilst the plan includes the roll out of more dispensers there needs to be a balance applied to the number of bins provided in terms of need, convenience and serviceability. They are implemented as needs arise.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Two	<p>Your webpage does not have any transparency on fines for pets who are not registered or are late in registration. There are no times of the year when amnesty is provided so that those who have become behind on their pet registration are encouraged to register without punishment. A lot of people want to do the right thing but fear outlandish fines and punishment. Door knocks do not take into consideration the stress that pet owners may feel at being harassed and intimidated by the council. Your draft speaks to Monash council and addresses issues only from the Council's point of view. What about the point of view of the community? Are you working to assist them? Your plan does not reflect this. What rights and assurances do they have? Where is this addressed? The council needs to work FOR the people of Monash.</p> <p>Officer Comment: <i>Consistent feedback from the community supports Council's enforcement approach to pet owners failing to register their pets. Animal registration sits as the cornerstone of animal regulation in Victoria. Reminder notices are issued as well as text messages and phone calls made in relation to late registrations and no enforcement action is taken when a person responds to these. Fines are generally issued in circumstances where an animal has never been registered or remains unregistered following reminders to do so. Fines are a last resort</i></p>

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	<p><i>for Council and we always try and work with people and it is not a strategy to be punitive to encourage people to do the right thing, Fines if they are issued are the consequence of non compliance, and even then if the individual situation warrants. We regularly review our website content and will as part of this consider any changes that may be required.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Three	<p>Using the pitch as an off leash area means substantial safety risk for players, any injury is compromised with what the dogs leave behind, it is never cleaned up properly and sometimes not even attempted. The dogs have dug holes, worn down patches and the grounds maintenance is a substantial investment for the council to maintain. At the level of our competition we must strictly adhere to standards set by our governing body, these are not the same standards that dogs require, a space for off leash dogs is easily maintained without having to go to the extent we need. Unsupervised dogs pose a risk to any others using the pitch for its intended purpose. Thanks again for allowing our feedback.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Four	<p>I think it is tremendous that a bunch of largely untrained animals and negligent owners are given a space so:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) dogs defecate everywhere and it remains lying on the surface to be imposed on others. b) dogs are allowed to holes in the pitch so other people can be injured. c) people using the pitch for other purposes get jumped on, threatened or injured by dogs. d) birds and wildlife get attacked and sometimes killed by dogs. e) smaller dogs get bitten or pinned by much larger dogs. f) children get chased after the dogs jump the fence. <p>In every case, owners will not break from their important conversations, refuse to believe it was their dog when confronted, and promptly do sweet NOTHING. Since council has never done anything in response to previous complaints or done any random patrols, the owners apparently now believe there is no consequence for their actions or lack thereof.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>Park patrols are conducted on a routine and daily basis. However the number of patrols, the locations visited and their duration are constrained by the staff resources available to do this. Nonetheless, where concerning behaviour is reported the patrol frequency at a specific site is increased in response. The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas. The plan also confirms that 20 patrol hours per month will be delivered on weekends in addition to those conducted on weekdays. Our officers will be in contact to discuss the circumstances of the situation you refer to and see if there is any action needed or if there is anything we can do to assist.</i></p>
Five	<p>Please, there must be more severe consequences to those people who disregard others and allow their dogs to bark at night.</p> <p>Sleep deprivation is a dangerous medical condition, it can shorten people's lives.</p> <p>How can a dog have more rights than a person??</p>

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	<p>A dog that barks once or twice at night is a “nuisance” not an “annoyance”. Say it like it is and not soften it down just because it’s politically correct to love dogs. Owners must be held accountable and not just wave it away saying “the dog must be bored”.</p> <p>It’s ridiculous to think that a person has to organise their life, in their own home, around an untrained, undisciplined nuisance dog belonging to rude people next door. Thankyou for this opportunity</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>For Council to take action about a barking dog it is required to undertake an investigation to determine if a nuisance is occurring. The test for this must meet the legal standards around persistence, substantialness and unreasonableness and few cases meet this standard. Nonetheless, complaints are routinely investigated and it is noted that the plan includes an action to improve the barking dog complaint/investigation procedure. It does rely on cooperation and information including the keeping of logs and the making of statements from the complainant. Our officers will contact you to discuss your particular circumstances.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Six	<p>Management Plan needs to reflect the increased conflict of dogs off lead with other recreation and conservation objectives in public open spaces. Upcoming review of dog off lead areas needs to recommend "on lead" restriction for Damper Creek Conservation Reserve to reflect the recognised conservation values and also the passive recreation capacity issues within this narrow confined corridor. The review also needs to look for appropriate new sites for off leash activity or fenced dog parks. Also a communication strategy to promote these sites.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>The concerns raised will be addressed in the planned action to periodically review off and on-leash areas.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Seven	<p>Sport is important from a social and wellbeing aspect for our community. We need to ensure our facilities are free from health risks relating to dog faeces. In addition, as Monash residents, we need facilities that are at the NPL standard required by Football Victoria to continue hosting top-tier football in Monash. This gives local residents the ability to watch quality football games but also has the flow-on effect of visiting team supporters and players spending money at our local businesses.</p> <p>Unfortunately, we do have irresponsible dog owners who are not following common decency by picking up faeces which then leaves volunteers having to pick these up before games or worse still having players using the facility falling on them. There are also many spots of dead grass where dogs urinate which then takes months to repair. Many hours of work are put into ground maintenance by both council and club volunteers. When large dogs are allowed to run freely on damp grass the turf is ripped up and destroyed.</p> <p>Additionally, as these specific facilities are in a pristine condition many local children use them during the week and weekends for social gatherings and parklike activities. Again, as this is a fenced area we have witnessed many dog owners allowing dogs to be off-lead which has led to minor incidences of dogs jumping on children or showing aggression where children are running or throwing balls, etc.</p> <p>Whilst we request that dogs do not be allowed on these NPL pitches we do recommend</p>

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	<p>that specific off-leash dog areas are created in the spaces around these venues. This would then allow for safe and clean venues for all residents to utilise.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Eight	<p>what has monash got to do with things - gardeners creek in in whitehorse</p> <p>get your facts right = i am a rate payer in whitehorse - and i dont like outsiders like you free loading on my rates</p> <p>The draft plan is well written and comprehensive. One of the big issues I have been aware of for some time (and this has been well identified in the draft plan) is the conflict between areas used for organised sports and their use as dog areas - particularly with the continual recalcitrance of some owners in picking up faeces. One can imagine the feeling of a player rolling on one of these droppings during a game. Dogs also have a habit of digging which can be a real safety issue with a player tripping over a hole let alone being annoying to the sporting tenant who have usually put in considerable time and effort to make the ground ideal for their game.</p> <p>It is certainly important to have enclosed spaces for dog activity as some dogs do not readily return on command and might "escape" and it also provides a safe, defined and social area. However it is necessary that these activities be separated and for there to be specific, separate enclosed dog areas for dog activity that are not also shared with organised activities.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>Gardiners Creek extends through a number of municipalities including Monash, Whitehorse, Boroondara and Stonnington. These are public areas and are used by people from various areas. Council as with other Councils does not seek to limit the use of its open spaces to residents alone.</i></p> <p><i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Nine	<p>The off leash areas currently provided by Monash are fantastic and should remain as they are. It does not make sense to have fields used for one reason only a couple of times a week. Allowing unleashed dogs gives free play and allows proper use by tax paying citizens</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas. The reviews will include consultation with dog owners who utilise fields where organised sport is played.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>

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Ten	<p>Do not bow to the bullying from Eastern Lions Soccer Club to ban dogs from their turf pitch at Gardiners Creek Reserve in Burwood. Dog owners have already lost one turf pitch after Pitch 2 was converted to synthetic turf and now the soccer club wants to ban dogs from the only remaining turf area. Dogs need their freedom and off-leash areas!</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The status of Gardiners Creek reserve will be the subject of a review during the life of the plan and community engagement will occur as part of the process. This will include hearing the views of all stakeholders including dog owners, sports clubs and other users.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Eleven	<p>I am very concerned about what the results of your review may be in terms of the off leash dog areas. In particular I am worried about Jack Edwards Reserve in Oakleigh, a shared area with Oakleigh Cannons. It is no secret that The Oakleigh Cannons have long fought to be rid of sharing 'their' facility with others in the community.</p> <p>I have walked dogs there since 1996 and the erosion of where we can walk dogs over time has been ridiculous. The abusive behaviour from the Football fraternity has died down, but we are aware that \$3 million dollars has been given to update facilities at this location. Many of us are wondering what that means for us, the dog walkers. You may hear stories of dog faeces being on the grass pitch, or how dogs 'ruin the ground'. Both claims are blatantly untrue. Ask for evidence of this. If anyone has somehow missed any dog poo at the time of excretion, other walkers have picked it up. Any destruction of the ground is from the studs of soccer boots. Having walked there for 25 years, I have found the dog walkers to be conscientious about keeping the area pristine. I don't believe that can be said for the littering football fraternity....the mess on the synthetic pitch, the food left behind after games etc needs to be addressed.</p> <p>In these covid times, there have been more dog walkers, but no more piles of faeces. There have been, however, loads of unmasked soccer players, playing in organised groups not following the rules, not even pretending to follow the rules. If police have turned up, the soccer players take off, hide behind the scout hall or just take off. It is evident who the more responsible group is. However, you, the council, give more money to the Oakleigh Cannons. Seriously.</p> <p>Don't reduce our dog walking area further and certainly don't pander to the Cannons. Of course they want the area all to themselves, who wouldn't? We are all paying rates to the council and we all need to be addressed. It would be ideal to have our own area, fenced of course with poo bags and water. Maybe give us serious money for a dedicated dog walking park?</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The status of Jack Edwards reserve will be the subject of a review during the life of the plan and community engagement will occur as part of the process. This will include hearing the views of all stakeholders including dog owners, sports clubs and other users. It is noted that ground maintenance will also be a consideration during the review process.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twelve	<p>I'm a member and play/coach at eastern lions soccer club. We have a very nice ground that is used by everyone and also to walk dogs. The issue I have is that people never clean up after their dogs and we have to clean up all the dog poo before our games otherwise it is</p>

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	<p>unplayable. People whinge and whine if the gate is locked to access the pitch as they can't walk their dogs. However they don't bother to clean up after their dogs. How is that fair to the kids that use the facilities and can't do so because of the dog poo. You need to stop people using the pitch 1 for their dog walks. There is another ground a few metres away pitch 3 where they can use the ground and clean up after the dogs. You also need to put signs to advise people if they don't clean up after their dogs they will be fined and ensure you enforce it. The club doesn't say much about people using it to walk their dogs and not clean up after them, when their owners should be doing so. You need to make it a non dog ground or start fining people for not clean up their dogs crap.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The status of Gardiners Creek reserve will be the subject of a review during the life of the plan and community engagement will occur as part of the process. This will include hearing the views of all stakeholders including dog owners, sports clubs and other users. Ground maintenance will also be a consideration during the review process and increased education around the requirement to clean up after dogs is set out as plan action.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirteen	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission.</p> <p>I agree with the feedback that dogs being allowed to roam unleashed in Monash's updated sporting pitches/reserves is far from ideal, especially during training and competition season. Faeces and pitch degradation are the main concerns here. They add large costs to ongoing surface maintenance and can significantly (& negatively) impact sporting activity.</p> <p>As an example, in recent times, pitch 1 at Gardiners Reserve appears to have become a meeting place for 10-20 dogs on some evenings & whilst I sympathise with the residents/dog owners, I do ask myself why they cannot be allocated to pitch 3 which is not utilised for top level Victorian sporting competition, & has less concerns around pitch degradation from such consistent, ongoing use for animal exercise.</p> <p>I would think as a minimum compromise that during competition season, in this example, pitch 1 at Gardiners Reserve should be protected, especially if it is eventually resurfaced & upgraded (which I believe is under council consideration).</p> <p>Perhaps in the off season pitch 1 could be utilised by animal owners, and the rule for animal use at such sporting facilities/reserves in-season might be to allocate one of the fields (pitch 3 in this example) for ongoing animal access/use when it is not being utilised for training and competition (say up to 1.5 hours before training is scheduled to commence).</p> <p>Thank you for your time and consideration.</p> <p>Please feel free to reach out at any point.</p> <p>Regards,</p> <p>Officer comment:</p>

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	<p><i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas. The status of Gardiners Creek reserve will be the subject of a review during the life of the plan and community engagement will occur as part of the process. This will include hearing the views of all stakeholders including dog owners, sports clubs and other users. Ground maintenance will also be a consideration during the review process and increased education around the requirement to clean up after dogs is set out as plan action.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Fourteen	<p>Soccer grounds where kids and adults train and play should never be used as dog parks because there will always be dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs and dog owners who do not have their dogs under control and think it is ok for their dogs to go up to people to smell them or worse without their consent because it is an off leash park. Humans in particular kids should always come first at soccer/footy grounds. This is a no brainer especially at grounds like at jack edwards reserve and gardeners reserve where the grounds are fenced and the clubs play at a relatively high level. They should not be worried about dog poo or their safety from dogs approaching them.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas. The status of Gardiners Creek reserve will be the subject of a review during the life of the plan and community engagement will occur as part of the process. This will include hearing the views of all stakeholders including dog owners, sports clubs and other users. Ground maintenance will also be a consideration during the review process and increased education around the requirement to clean up after dogs is set out as plan action.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Fifteen	<p>I fully support the provision of open plan areas for dogs, however they need to be separate from facilities used for Sporting Activities.</p> <p>Unfortunately on way too many occasions, I have been training at Gardiners Creek Reserve Pitch 3, or warming up or pre-game inspecting on Gardiners Creek Pitch 1 and found multiple locations of dog faeces on the ground due to the owners not picking it up.</p> <p>Unfortunately the solution isn't to tell them to pick up their animals faeces because it is too prevalent. Even worse has been having players ending up finding out they have fallen in said faeces as a pile has been missed on the pitch.</p> <p>The Gardiners Creek facility, especially Pitch 1, is a facility that we need to support to maintain the surface for NPL and State League Soccer, both seniors and juniors.</p> <p>Unfortunately the dogs on the ground, not just the faeces not picked up but the effects of turf burning due to dog urination means the surface is impacted requiring more work to be done. Restricting this ground from dogs would enable the surface to be preserved.</p> <p>Selection of open space areas where organised sport does not occur would be a much better solution for dog recreation as then the impact is minimised.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>

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Sixteen	<p>Gardiners Reserve in Sixth Avenue has 3 pitches used exclusively for soccer by Eastern Lions and Waverley City.</p> <p>Pitch 1 is opposite the main pavilion and is used by dog owners to exercise their dogs. The reason is that it is enclosed and therefore a safe area for exercise. This pitch is used every day of the week for soccer training and league games by children and adults. On some occasions it is used by local schools for their sports.</p> <p>Due to use by some dog owners there is dog waste left on the ground and bare patches caused by dog urine. This is not a healthy situation and does nothing for the look of the ground. I would propose that those wishing to exercise their dogs be moved to pitch three which is closer to the Highbury Road end of Sixth Avenue. To make it more conducive for dogs it would need to be enclosed. There is no wish by either soccer club to restrict the dog owners exercising their dogs but for the sake of a few it has become a health hazard with dog faeces. No amount of education will stop the small percentage of dog owners causing this problem. As for the bare patches on the ground caused by dog urine, it destroys any effort that Monash Council put in to keep the ground looking nice.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas. The status of Gardiners Creek reserve will be the subject of a review during the life of the plan and community engagement will occur as part of the process. This will include hearing the views of all stakeholders including dog owners, sports clubs and other users. Ground maintenance will also be a consideration during the review process and increased education around the requirement to clean up after dogs is set out as plan action.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Seventeen	<p>Dog faeces on the soccer pitch at Eastern Lions represents a serious health and safety problem should it come in contact with a players open wound.</p> <p>Dogs should not be permitted to defecate on the ground of a sporting facility that hosts the highest level of competition in The state.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Eighteen	<p>No dogs aloud.</p> <p>I had a game there during the 2021 soccer season. My keeper was warming up behind the goals, when he went to ground during his warmup he unfortunately fell on some dog fesces all over his shirt and pants. It was disgusting as the poor kid stunk to high heaven as he did not have another shirt and pants to change into.</p> <p>Absolutely absurd having dogs roam free on Gardners Reserve</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Nineteen	<p>The risk associated with faeces that are left at off leash areas where children play sport must be eliminated.</p>

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	<p>eg soccer grounds and football grounds.</p> <p>The damage incurred by dog urine at the eliet soccer grounds (Oakleigh and Eastern Lions in the Monash Council) should be avoided to ensure compliance with Football Victoria standards, and ensure a safe playing surface for the soccer players. Both grounds have significant areas where the stability of the ground is compromised because of divots left from dog urine.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas. The status of Jack Edwards and Gardiners Creek reserve will be the subject of a review during the life of the plan and community engagement will occur as part of the process. This will include hearing the views of all stakeholders including dog owners, sports clubs and other users. Ground maintenance will also be a consideration during the review process and increased education around the requirement to clean up after dogs is set out as plan action.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty	<p>Pitch 1 of Gardiners Creek (Eastern Lions Football Club) is currently a leash free ground for dogs, however, this ground for free use, also comes with dog owner's responsibility. As a current Under 14's Team Manager, I am faced with picking up / cleaning up after these dogs on a regular basis - many times, we have to water down and put sand or dirt. Owner's are neglecting their responsibilities for the use of the ground and ignoring any consideration of the children that play there every week.</p> <p>There are patches in areas where the grass is badly damaged, due to frequent urination spot for the dogs.</p> <p>Also being a dog owner, I recognise over nitrate in grass during to dog urination, again this causes unsightly grass patches and on heavy rain days, becomes a mud patch that does not provide any traction.</p> <p>On occasion, there will be need to use dirt to cover holes that were dug up, most definitely by dogs. Again, if any of the pre-game preparations misses out, it can be dangerous to ankle roles and even knees.</p> <p>As a dog owner, I know it is important for dogs to have free leash with other dogs, however, this means owners need to take their responsibilities and show consideration of other users of the grounds.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty One	<p>Easternlions @ sixth ave Burwood is our Club , our main pitch has to be kept to a top notch standard owing to the rules of FFV and the level that we were promoted to , our (pitch 1) is subjected to dogs being allowed to roam freely , this is a health and safety disaster as we all know how toxic their poo is , now when people take their dogs to parks they are made to take bags for collection this does not happen here . I would recommend that dogs be banned on this ground as their are many other parts of grass area around ,</p>

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	<p>Could signs be erected that NO DOGS are allowed on the fenced areas , Hoping for feed back on this subject Regards</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Two	<p>I wish to object to the use of the Eastern Lions Soccer club pitch 1 as an off lead dog exercise area.</p> <p>This pitch is used as an NPL semi professional soccer pitch. That elite athletes play on a surface that is liberally scattered with dog faeces is both unhygienic and unprofessional.</p> <p>Whilst owners are supposed to pick up after their dogs they often don't.</p> <p>Dogs should be banned from this facility and made to go elsewhere.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Three	<p>As this is a NPL soccer ground, I do not understand how dogs can be allowed to run around on the ground & defecate on the pitch. When a player falls, they could land in fecal remains, which is a health & safety issue. Fecal matter is full of the nasty things removed from the body.</p> <p>This should be a training & playing ground only.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Four	<p>I would like to ask if it would be possible to restrict the use of dogs on Pitch 1 (Main pitch) of Gardeners Creek Reserve in Burwood. It is disgusting having to walk around at training and try to see if there is any dog deposits left on the pitch, as many owners don't pick it up. It is a health hazard as well as the fact that it ruins the grass that we play on. We play in the top league in Victoria (NPL 1) and it is terrible to see our main pitch used in this way. No dogs should be allowed on the main pitch as there is plenty of other space on pitch 3 down Sixth Avenue.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Five	<p>My son is currently a registered player in the Under 11K Eastern Lions Soccer club and has been there for several years now.</p>

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	<p>Currently our main grass pitch [P1] at Gardiners Creek (right outside the pavilion) is an off leash dog area. The countless time that Dog Owners do not clean up after their dogs is getting to a stage where it is simply out of control. Every week we have to clean up after the dogs mess before anyone can play or train, and this is a health hazard not only to the adults at the club but also to the children. There are also patches of dead grass, worn patches and unfortunately 'off leash' sometimes equates to uncontrolled. We also train at Batesford Reseve and we are experiencing the same problems. It has literally become a tip for dog faeces.</p> <p>While we understand the need for off leash areas and know that Monash does provide many spaces for this purpose, it is imperative to our agreement with Football Victoria that our main pitch is maintained to an acceptable standard for the level of competition we have achieved.</p> <p>I wish to formally request that the City of Monash reconsiders the off the leash policy on these grounds mainly from the aspect that we have children and adults participating on a daily and weekly basis on these sporting grounds. My concerns are shared by the Eastern Lions Soccer club community. In light of our concerns I ask that the City of Monash gives consideration to ban the off the leash rule on these sporting grounds on the basis of health and safety of all participates on these sporting grounds. I also note that presently there are more off the leash parklands for dog owners to have their dogs exercise in the City of Monash than there are for our Eastern Lions children and club participants to participate on sporting grounds without fear or concern for their overall health due to dog faeces on these sporting pitches.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Six	<p>There are plenty of parks around the area and we want to keep 1 for the best team in the Burwood community to flourish. With a bit more professionalism and council support the club could become a better environment from the bottom up.</p>
	<p>Officer comment: <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Seven	<p>Hi,</p> <p>I play at Eastern Lions soccer club in Burwood. I very much understand the need to have dog parks, but when the use for dogs clashes with local sport it can be very problematic.</p> <p>At our home ground at Sixth Avenue, our pitch has been consistently affected and at times ruined by the presence of dogs. There is often fecal matter from owners that have not picked up after their dogs, which is not only disgusting but a genuine health risk.</p> <p>Similarly, places of the pitch are often torn up or grass destroyed from urine. These create tripping hazards, or even render the pitch unplayable because of its condition</p>

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	<p>There are countless parks and places for people to walk their dogs, including the local creek path, but not for us to play soccer or sport. We are very limited and the hundreds of members of our club would be very grateful if the pitch was left untouched by animals so it is in a useable and safe condition.</p> <p>Sometimes, there are even dogs growling and barking at young children who have come to train and play football.</p> <p>I hope you recognize the lack of safety and understand that sports pitches should be left for people to play and dogs can be walked elsewhere!</p> <p>Thank you :)</p>
	<p>Officer comment: See above.</p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Eight	<p>I am a player for Eastern Lions soccer club within the top league of soccer in Victoria. It is time to protect the main pitch so that it can be protected and maintained for use of all ages within the club. As a semi - professional club now, the pitch requires protection and animals should no longer be allowed to use it.</p> <p>Officer comment: See above.</p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Twenty Nine	<p>Hi there, my submission is in regards to Gardiners Creek Reserve Pitch 1. I am a senior player at the club & find it rather shocking & annoying that our main pitch is allowed to have dogs on it. Being a player & walking out to train or warm up on the pitch & finding dog crap on it is a joke along with the patches of dead grass from dogs urinating on it also.</p> <p>This doesn't just occur on training nights but also game days which is even more of a joke when an away club comes to our ground & sees dog crap on our pitch. We are in the Top Tier league of Victorian Football & can't be taken seriously as a club when this occurs.</p> <p>Officer comment: See above.</p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirty	<p>It would be appreciated if you could please reconsider Gardiner's Creek Reserve as an off leash park. Although I appreciate the need for these areas an NPL sports ground is not the best place. The owners never clean up after their dogs and the damage caused to the ground by the dogs either doing their toilet needs or at times digging, mean the council have to continually do additional maintenance that could be avoided.</p> <p>This ground is actively used for training and games days across the pre and official season. Grateful for your consideration.</p> <p>Officer Comment</p>

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Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021/25 - Submissions

	<p><i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirty One	<p>I would like to request that the turf pitch at Gardiners Reserve, referred to as Pitch 1, be added to the synthetic pitch as a dog free area. There is plenty of space around the pitches & on pitch 3 for lease free areas.</p> <p>Officer Comment <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirty Two	<p>I am a life member of Eastern Lions Soccer Club. I noticed in your draught that dogs are not allowed on the turf pitch at Jack Edwards reserve because it is an NPL 1 facility. Our ground at Gardiners Creek Reserve is also a NPL 1 Facility, however the pitch is leash free!! This needs to be changed to come in line with Jack Edwards Reserve.</p> <p>Thank You.</p> <p>Officer Comment <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirty Three	<p>I play for Eastern Lions and to have our main/senior pitch full of dogs prior to training/playing is ridiculous. The fact that it is seen as a 'dog park' by owners around the area is laughable and should not be tolerated moving forward. If soccer wants to be taken serious in this country then we cannot have a main soccer pitch shared with a dog park. To be running around in uneven grass patches due to urine from dogs is unsafe. Obviously the dog poo is a whole separate issue.</p> <p>Officer Comment <i>See above.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirty Four	<p>I write in support of the development of more areas for dogs to be exercised off leash. This includes opposition toward any movement that stops dogs to be exercised on ovals used for local sports. A proactive measure the council could take is to place more bins and poo bag dispensers in popular dog exercising zones. This would limit the amount of dog poo that could upset people who dislike animals. The walking path leading to the city running parallel to the Monash Freeway is a good example where there is inadequate bins and bag dispensers.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas. The reviews will include consultation with dog owners who utilise fields where organised sport is played.</i></p>

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Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021/25 - Submissions

	<p><i>Local Law controls provide that dog owners are required to carry a bag with them at all times they are exercising their pet for the purpose of cleaning up after their dog. Poo bag dispensers are provided at parks where patronage is the highest and whilst the plan includes the roll out of more dispensers there needs to be a balance applied to the number of bins provided in terms of need, convenience and serviceability. We continue to monitor locations and patronage and install these as required.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
<p>Thirty Five</p>	<p>I would love to see all sporting grounds become dog free. I think it quite disgusting that our children go and train or play and come back with dog poo on their shoes/boots.</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>The plan acknowledges the need to revisit dogs being exercised on specialised surfaces and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
<p>Thirty Six</p>	<p>I am a dog owner who is a daily dog walker (~6 km/day at least during the last 2 years). My bug bear is with dog faeces. There has been a proliferation of a) dog faeces not being picked up and b) people picking it up and dumping the bag in the bushes / beside the footpath (which is perhaps even worse). Behind Salesian College (b/n Huntingdale and Waverley Rds is dreadful + park in Rosemary St), SUP along Warrigal Rd near Middle Rd etc. Monash removed a lot of bins from bus stops a few years ago - consider more bins along shared user paths (SUPs) (at least at the major road crossings) / larger play grounds (I look for domestic garbage bins left out on the street).</p> <p>The dog drinking fountains (e.g Huntingdale Rd, Electra Reserve) are good but the one on the Scotchmans Creek Linear path / drummond St is broken.</p> <p>There needs to be dog bag dispensers located more frequently - i know the sites near where I frequent (but these are refilled at low frequencies), but even more could be located along the scotchmans creek trail / linear path say near the Huntingdale Wetlands and further east to Foster Road. These are useful & the SUP are heavily used under current covid conditions I think the signage spray painted on SUPs is good to remind people. It should also flag people needing to use leads / lease off areas, as I am frequently having to manage people not walking their dog on a lead.</p> <p>Thanks</p> <p>Officer comment: <i>Local Law controls provide that dog owners are required to carry a bag with them at all times they are exercising their pet for the purpose of cleaning up after their dog. Poo bag dispensers are provided at parks where patronage is the highest and whilst the plan includes the roll out of more dispensers there needs to be a balance applied to the number of bins provided in terms of need, convenience and serviceability. At present around half a million poo bags are already provided each year and the existing dispensers are being upgraded to increase the number of bags they can hold in order to keep pace with demand. Dispensers are currently refilled twice a week. We continue to monitor locations and patronage and install these as required. Our maintenance staff have been asked to attend and undertake whatever repairs may be necessary with the drinking fountain at Scotchmans Creek Linear path / Drummond St</i></p>

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	<p>No change to the plan is required.</p>
Thirty Seven	<p>Feedback on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan</p> <p>Having read this entire plan, the focus is clearly on “managing” animals, especially dogs, to minimise the freedoms of dog owners, always putting the interests of others in the community above healthy and responsible pet ownership.</p> <p>To be a responsible dog owner, daily walks are a must. Dogs are social creatures, and are in general much better behaved, bark less, less stressed, when they get a daily walk, including off-lead freedom to sniff their environment, and safely interact with other dogs.</p> <p>I live in the forgotten corner of Monash, Oakleigh South. We have fewer parks in general, needing to rely on school ovals to supplement council parks. A quick look at the map of dog-of-leash area published on the council website reveals NOT ONE area in this forgotten corner of Monash (bounded by North Rd/Wellington, Centre Rd, Warrigal Rd all the way across to Springvale Rd.</p> <p>From my home there is one sole off-lead area in walking distance. It is Jack Edwards Reserve. I see in your proposal that dogs will now be prohibited from the turf soccer pitch (already having been banished from the astro-turf pitch). One of the few benefits of this as an off-lead park has been that the turf pitch provided a safe dog-walking area that was actually fenced. Now this is to be taken away. I have never personally observed a dog-poo on the pitch (nor an owner wilfully leaving one behind). Surely a better education campaign, or perhaps even some council enforcement would be a reasonable response to any concern rather than banishment of all dogs. No doubt your received feedback didn't reflect this, as the soccer clubs would have been well coordinated in suggesting members respond to your survey, to force dogs out. (I would have perhaps more sympathy with</p> <p>the sensibilities of the soccer clubs that inhabit the park, if they weren't persisting in running group coaching (without masks), and leaving rubbish (water bottles, etc etc) all over the place, during covid lockdowns.)</p> <p>The location of dog parks in Monash is also problematic – this being one example of many. Instead of providing an off-lead area in an appealing park, with a decent playground nearby (yes – families often own dogs!), dog parks are mostly relegated to distant ovals, or, as with Jack Edwards, located in the industrial zone away from any other amenities. I had in the past been made to feel unsafe at that same dog park – due to the isolated location industrial area. Likewise, when I had once or twice walked my dog at Mulgrave park (AFTER visiting Jells park, but being unable to walk off-lead there). Fortunately (perhaps) this is less likely at present – as more dog walkers are in the parks, improving safety (no doubt due to the 5km rule and difficulty accessing more appealing dog parks elsewhere).</p> <p>Instead I would point council to some examples of adjacent councils that manage to successfully incorporate off-lead areas into appealing multi-use parks: Namatjira and Bald Hill parks nearby in Kingston are thankfully in our 5km – we can't rely on our own council for amenities so need to rely on Kingston instead. Murrumbeena Park is another example – an appealing playground for families, where there is also an off-lead area to walk dogs. So a</p>

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young family doesn't have to choose between responsibly exercising the dog, and the enjoyment and positives for mental health and development of the children.

In Monash, we suffer for a lack of dog off lead areas in general. There are so many examples of parks and ovals, where an off-lead area would be appropriate, and encourage walkers into underutilised parks. E.g. Scammell Reserve in Oakleigh South – when the area is underutilised in general, the oval itself, or even the back corner of the park around cricket nets, are surely suitable for dogs, without any harm to other park users. Clayton Football club – a fenced oval perfect for allowing dogs – easy

enough to restrict use to times when football/cricket teams aren't playing or training. And a pathway around the outside of the oval, which is almost exclusively walked with dogs already – to the detriment of nobody.

Even the signature park of Monash (Jells) – an absolutely massive area, with multiple uses, upgraded playgrounds, fenced wetlands etc etc – does not have a single dog-off-lead area. We used as a family to meet there regularly – until family members got dogs – now it is a forced choice – a great playground for the kids (but need to make a separate trip to walk the dog) – or walk the dog – but

there isn't anywhere in Monash to do so, where you can also access decent playgrounds. This is unfair to families – who after all, are the majority of park users! Why?

Please look to other councils for better examples of how to be dog-friendly. It is such a breath of fresh air, and a release of underlying stress, to take the dog for a walk pretty much anywhere outside Monash (when 5km rule does not apply), as the acceptance of dogs is just so much better! I've even seen examples in Knox council where the playground was fenced (to keep the dogs in the off-lead area out – AND keep young kids safely in!) Trying to hide dogs away in tiny parks, in the backblocks, instead of allowing them to be a part of the community and family life (as they always have been through human history) does all Monash residents a disservice.

The mental health benefits to their humans of all pets has become so clear during the pandemic, that council should take note, and instead of contributing to increased stress to dog-owners of finding a decent place to walk (or risking a fine for letting their dog off-lead in a non-approved park – regardless of whether there is another human anywhere in sight):

- Increase the number of off-lead areas
- Look for opportunities in existing parks to make dogs welcome
- Provide more poo-bags (and keep the dispensers full) - to encourage compliance
- Incorporate dog off-lead areas into appealing parks that also have playgrounds
- Choose education instead of banishment of dogs from sports grounds
- Remember that the City of Monash extends to the south beyond North Rd

Officer comment:

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	<p><i>It is noted that Jells Park is managed by Parks Victoria and Council has no role to play in terms of what activities may or may not occur on that land.</i></p> <p><i>There are currently 31 off-leash areas within the municipality and feasibility work is currently underway looking at improvements to dog off leash areas and 'dog parks' as may be resolved upon by Council. The plan looks to see this work continue and includes an action to periodically review on and off-leash areas.</i></p> <p><i>Council has prepared the Monash Open Space strategy that looks at how and where Council may provide open space into the future. There is less open space in the southern part of the Municipality and the strategy makes recommendations with regard to more open space. It does take time and will be costly however. With dog off lead areas, Council takes a Municipal approach understanding that there are competing needs for our open space areas. With dog off lead areas, they will generally not be located in proximity to another area, even where that open space is in another Municipality. It is common for people to cross Municipal boundaries for many many reasons and access to open space and dog off lead areas is no different.</i></p> <p><i>Local Law controls provide that dog owners are required to carry a bag with them at all times they are exercising their pet for the purpose of cleaning up after their dog.</i></p> <p><i>Poo bag dispensers are provided at parks where patronage is the highest and whilst the plan includes the roll out of more dispensers there needs to be a balance applied to the number of bins provided in terms of need, convenience and serviceability.</i></p> <p><i>At present around half a million poo bags are already provided each year and the existing dispensers are being upgraded to increase the number of bags they can hold in order to keep pace with demand. Dispensers are currently refilled twice a week.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirty Eight	<p>These are points and my submission re: the Animal Management Plan. I believe it closes today.</p> <p>There was no time on the website that I close see, so I take it that means until midnight? These are my thoughts:</p> <p>They're killing nearly one in two cats. Kill rate has increased due to night curfew.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- adopt policy of impoundment being the option of last resort, given that nearly one in two cats are being killed. This will save them money.- Reduce impounds by returning identified animals straight home instead of to pound- Staff to be licensed microchip Implanter so they can be microchipped and registered on the spot- All staff to carry wand-type microchip scanners, so they can scan cats in traps- Have at least one staff member be a POCTA- authorised Officer

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">- free desexing in areas of high cat intake - will quickly pay for itself - free desexing of strays who people are feeding, as long as they're happy to have them microchipped and registered in their name. Convert 'semi owners' to 'owners', increasing 'responsible pet ownership' - issue excess animal permits for businesses that adopt stray cats (for rodent control); better for wildlife than using poison - review pound contractor's kill policy, to determine why killing has increased by nearly 80% since 2016 - require pound contractor to use evidence-based methods for personality assessments (continuous rather than one-off assessments for cats; at least three, preferably six, days in care before assessing cats' sociability) - require pound contractor to reduce its killing and explain why it's killing 80% more cats since curfew was enacted. - require pound contractor to make Animals it's going to kill available to rescue groups. (This will become law soon; they may as well do it now). I'm told there are very few groups they'll work with - provide some \$ towards vet fees for animals who rescue groups save; or require pound contractor to vetwork them before release - establish agreement to access adjoining councils' registration databases, so they can return more animals straight home - develop s84Ys with more rescue groups; mandate that the pound contractor must honour these - Develop s84Ys with interested vets, so they can return identified animals straight home instead of to pound - Include reminder and instructions on updating microchip info with registration renewals (37% of chips have old info). <p>Reducing breeding, through targeted free desexing, will likely achieve the greatest animal welfare improvements. And save hundreds of thousands of dollars. And lots of lives.</p> <p>And reduce trauma on contractor staff.</p> <p>Reactive trapping and killing won't work, as they're only scratching the surface of the stray cat population.</p> <p>As previously submitted last time, it has been proven that TNR (Trap, Neuter, Release) decreases cats impact on wildlife. Whole cats use more energy and resources (food) when</p>
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	<p>breeding. They will also migrate to areas left vacant with the removal of other cats, thus increasing the death rate of wildlife in that area.</p> <p>The only way that's been proven to lower stray cat numbers is to TNR.</p> <p>Please see my previous submission with the Professor Jacqui Rands' report linked:</p> <p>"I would ask that you fully read the information, including studies & findings from Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand, BVSc, DVSc, Diplomate ACVIM (Int. Med), MANZCVS that can be found</p> <p>at https://petwelfare.org.au/2017/07/06/managing-cats-humanely-scientificallly-reduce-cat-numbers-wildlife-predation-costs/</p> <p>"In an Australian city of 100,000 residents, it is estimated there are around 6,000 stray cats. On average, one in 15-20 people in Australia feed daily a stray cat they do not perceive they own; most of these are not desexed. The urban stray cat population is steadily increasing as the human population increases."</p> <p>"B. Management options for reducing urban stray cat populations</p> <p>The options for managing cats in suburban areas are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continue with the same management methods2. Capture and remove (kill)3. Legislate to ban feeding4. Magic wand and make them disappear5. Desex and adopt or return – Community Cat programs" <p>This article by Professor Rand is greatly comprehensive, outlines what's worked & what doesn't. Educated and we'll informed suggestions and findings are enclosed and have been used in part in my submission today. Please avail yourselves of the Professor's work as an integral part of my submission."</p> <p>Please consider the whole of the Professor's report as part of my submission.</p> <p>There could also be more dumping of cats in the area as people adopted during Covid-19 and have found they don't want the cats anymore for whatever reason.</p> <p>There's no reason to be killing so many souls. It's barbaric and completely unnecessary. Thankyou for your time today.</p>
	<p>Officer comment:</p>

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Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021/25 - Submissions

	<p><i>Instead of impounding them, officers routinely return stray animals to their home in circumstances where the animal is registered and identifiable. To assist in this process officers carry a microchip scanner.</i></p> <p><i>As discussed in the plan 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.</i></p> <p><i>It is anticipated that legislation will soon be introduced that will enable vet clinics and others to hold and release stray animals to their owners as an alternative to them being impounded.</i></p> <p><i>Council's pound services are delivered under a contractual arrangement with the RSPCA who are required to deliver the services in accordance with legislative requirements and industry best practice. The RSPCA are recognised as leaders in animal welfare and there is high degree of confidence that animals in their care are being managed, and if necessary, euthanised appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>Under the terms of their contract, the RSPCA will deliver localised animal welfare programs and it is likely these will initially focus on cats.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
Thirty Nine	Due to its format this submission is presented in the following pages.
	<p><i>Officer Comment:</i></p> <p><i>Council's pound services are delivered under a contractual arrangement with the RSPCA who are required to deliver the services in accordance with legislative requirements and industry best practice. The RSPCA are recognised as leaders in animal welfare and there is high degree of confidence that animals in their care are being managed, and if necessary, euthanised appropriately.</i></p> <p><i>Under the terms of their contract, the RSPCA will deliver localised animal welfare programs and it is likely these will initially focus on cats. These programs could include cat de-sexing programs and these will be explored with them. Furthermore the plan includes the following actions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>• 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.</i><i>• Actively seek opportunities to deliver low-cost cat de-sexing programs</i> <p><i>Instead of impounding them, officers routinely return stray animals to their home in circumstances where the animal is registered and identifiable. To assist in this process officers carry a microchip scanner.</i></p> <p><i>Officers do not release animals to the public that are neither registered or microchipped given such animals are released from the pound. It is therefore unnecessary for Council staff to microchip animals as an additional service.</i></p>

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	<p><i>It is anticipated that legislation will soon be introduced that will enable vet clinics and others to hold and release stray animals to their owners as an alternative to them being impounded.</i></p> <p><i>No change to the plan is required.</i></p>
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Draft DAMP comments

Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021 – 2025 Submission

Overview

Introduction

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft plan.

I have provided some information about additional initiatives that will provide many financial and animal welfare benefits to Council, which I hope are helpful.

About me

I have worked with Australia's foremost expert in companion animal management, Emeritus Professor Jacquie Rand, and am familiar with research on best-practice companion animal management.

I have been also heavily involved with animal rescue for nine years and have developed an understanding of the main issues facing councils with respect to animal management.

Request to present to councillors

I would like to present my submission to councillors at a meeting (by phone) and look forward to information on how I can register to do this

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Reduce costs by directly returning more animals home ; adopt policy of impoundment as option of last resort	7
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Reduce costs through targeted free cat desexing	18
Reduce costs through Cooperative Desexing Program	26
Reduce costs through proactive desexing of stray cats	27
Conclusion and contact details	30

Draft DAMP comments

Survey

Only 0.9% of residents completed the survey (177 residents of 204,936). It is therefore important not to make decisions that may affect many residents based solely on the survey, as the survey is not representative of the community.

Family violence training

I commend Council for considering this. This is the first DAMP I have read which has done so. Thank you!

3.3 Dog poo stencils

Very innovative!

Cat curfew

Although this has come into force, I expect Council will not see the outcomes it predicted. As is already evidenced, killing rates have substantially increased. This won't achieve long-term reductions in stray cat numbers, as detailed below.

4. Euthanasia

Nearly one in two cats (48%) who are impounded are being killed (214 cats out of 450, p15). This is extremely high for a city council.

The draft DAMP states, '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.'

Without knowing how many times cat traps have been loaned to residents, I expect the increase may be due to an increase in trapping of stray cats, due to the night curfew.

At first glance, this may seem like a positive outcome. Unfortunately, research has found that reactive trapping (and usually killing) of stray cats does not reduce the stray cat population.

Details on how this can be addressed are detailed elsewhere.

Continued on next page

Draft DAMP comments, Continued

4.3 Our plan – objective 1

‘Review the annual cat trapping programme with a view to identifying how the programme might be enhanced in terms of reducing wild cat population ‘

‘In partnership with animal welfare agencies, investigate the prevalence of wild cats and explore recommendations to reduce the unowned cat population’

Reactive trapping does not reduce stray and unowned cat numbers

As previously mentioned, reactive trapping (and usually killing) of stray cats does not reduce their population, because of the rate at which they breed.

Currently, approximately 3-5% of urban stray cats are trapped and killed every year.

This low-level killing leads to the cats being rapidly replaced due to greater juvenile survival and more cats moving into the area (Lazenby 2014).

Killing required to reduce stray cat numbers using trapping

To use trapping and killing as a control measure, research has found that 30-50% of stray cats need to be trapped every six months for at least ten years (Miller 2014).

The average number of cats per humans in urban areas is 60 per 1,000. With a human population of 204,936 (p5), Council’s estimated stray cat population is 123,000.

To reduce this number using trapping and impounding, Council would need to trap between 3,690 and 6,148 stray cats in the first year. Assuming a cost of \$750 per cat, this would cost \$2.77M to \$4.61M in the first year.

Human population	204,936	
Stray cat population*	122,296	
Number to trap (and likely kill) in first year	(Min 30%) 3,689 (122,296*0.3)	(Max 50%) 6,148 (122,296*0.5)
Cost per cat†	\$750	\$750
Total cost in first year	\$2,766,636	\$4,611,060

This is cost-prohibitive. Residents are unlikely to support this.

Replacing killing with adoption is not feasible, especially as nearly one in

Returning animals straight home

every two of Council's cats are currently being killed.

*Based on 60 cats per 1,000 humans

+ Estimated cost of responding to the request, taking trap to person, collecting trap, taking trapped cat to pound, holding cat for eight days, then likely kill them

Workable option

Providing [free desexing in high intake areas](#), and [proactively desexing and microchipping cats to the people who are caring for them](#) will enable Council to reduce the number of stray cats, and costs.

Further details of both are provided below.

4.3 Our plan – Objective 2:

Seek opportunities to deliver low cost cat desexing programs.

This is commended. It will reduce costs and stray cat numbers.

Further details are provided below.

4.3 Our plan – Objective 3

'Develop partnerships to strategically address to reduce the unowned cat populations and... a reduction in high euthanasia rates'.

A free cat desexing program will achieve this objective. Details are below.

Returning animals straight home

. Nuisance

The significant increase (from 24 in 2016 to 196 in 2020) of calls regarding cats may be due to the introduction of the night curfew. This is further reflected in the increase in killing.

Recommendations:

As is done with barking dogs, address these issues on a case-by-case and aim to avoid impoundment.

Instead of automatically lending to trap to the complainant:

- letterbox nearby residents and inform them of complainant's concerns
- use the registration database to identify the addresses of cats who maybe visiting
- ask the complainant to keep a 'visit diary' and talk to neighbours re where the cat may live
- notify the cat's person of the complainant's concerns
- encourage the cat's family to offer deterrent devices to the complainant if that will resolve their concern
- trap and impound the cat as a last resort.

Summary

Lazenby, B.T.; Mooney, N.J.; Dickman, C.R. Effects of low-level culling of feral cats in open populations: A case study from the forests of southern Tasmania. *Wildlife Research* **2015**, 41, 407-420.

Miller PS, Boone JD, Briggs JR, Lawler DF, Levy JK, et al. (2014) Simulating Free-Roaming Cat Population Management Options in Open Demographic Environments. *PLoS ONE* 9(11): e113553. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0113553

Reducing costs and saving lives – impounding, reuniting and increasing adoptions

Overview

Introduction

Council can reduce costs and have more animals leave the pound alive by adopting a policy of impounding animals as the option of last resort.

Relatively simple changes that will enable this are detailed below.

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Returning animals straight home

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Increase reuniting rates	9
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Return animals directly home

Aim to return animals straight home, instead of impounding. This is best practice. It reduces costs, stress on animals and their family, impounds, killing and makes reuniting much easier.

For example, when collecting a dog or cat, doorknock neighbours and ask if they know where they live. Many will. Consider posting on the local community Facebook page and going to another job while waiting.

'Free rides home'

As part of registration, provide 'two free rides home' for each animal. Market this heavily, to encourage registration. Many people living with cats do not perceive they receive any value for money for registration fees, as no public facilities are provided for them, compared to dogs.

Scanning for microchips

Ensure all officers have a wand-type microchip scanners in their vehicles, which can scan all animals, including cats in traps.

S84Y's with vets and rescue groups

Develop s84Y's with interested vets and rescue groups, so that found animals can go straight home instead of to the pound. If the animal is not registered, address this later.

Licensed implanters

Have all staff become licensed microchip implanters, so they can microchip animals in situ, if required.

Nearby councils' registration database

Establish agreements with neighbouring councils to access their registration information, so that animals found near borders can be returned straight home.

Low-cost microchipping

Provide a low-cost in-home microchipping service for pensioners and residents with mobility issues. Market this widely.

Continued on next page

Improving pound contractor performance

Reuniting more animals

Recommendation:

Develop a Council lost and found Facebook page or post this on a section of Council's website.

Within 24 hours of impoundment, post a good quality photo of the animal, date and street where they were found and how to reclaim them.

This must include frightened cats who the pound may have given the 'feral' label to.

Registration fees

Recommendation:

Consider waiving the first year's registration fee for people who adopt from the pound or rescue groups. It is believed that volunteer-rescue groups are rehoming 40% of Australia's animals. Given this, including rescue groups under the system would be beneficial.

Overview

Factors that affect animal outcomes

Introduction

By adopting a policy of impounding as option of last resort, Council will significantly reduce costs and the number of animals who are impounded.

For those who are impounded, there are many ways in which Council's pound contractor can reduce costs and increase live animal welfare outcomes.

These are detailed below.

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Introduction

The proportion of animals who leave the pound alive is closely related to pound practices, in particular, its:

- euthanasia policy – for what reasons they kill someone
- assessment – the policy for assessing each animal's 'temperament' and suitability for adoption
- willingness, or not, to work with rescue groups.

It is quite common for Council's animal outcome statistics to change dramatically when it changes pound contractor, for these reasons.

Factors that affect animal outcomes

Recommendations

It is recommended that Council:

- reviews the euthanasia policy
 - reviews the behavioural assessment process used
 - requires it to be changed if it is not based on evidence
 - set KPIs for increasing live outcomes
 - reviews the FIV+ adoption policy
 - requires the pound contractor to increase its use of foster carers. Few cats do well in the pound environment, especially timid or anxious animals. In a more natural home environment, however, they thrive. More use of foster carers is one factor that enabled RSPCA Queensland to significantly reduce its cat killing)
 - requires the pound to adopt found animals to people who have expressed an interest, unless there are extenuating circumstances
 - works with the pound to develop criteria for extenuating circumstances of adoption
 - requires the pound to use foster carers
 - requires the pound to make animals available who it intends to kill to rescue groups, through s84Y's (this will become state law once the Victorian government's pound reform legislation is passed)
 - requires the pound to have an FIV+ adoption policy that is based on evidence.
-

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Factors that affect animal outcomes, Continued

Euthanasia policy

Some policies are needlessly harsh. As a result, many animals who people would like to adopt are needlessly killed.

This happens frequently when people take a cat they've found, advising them that they will adopt if no family claims them, as happened in September.

Questions to ask

Are animals killed for:

- Treatable, but expensive, health issues
- Behavioural issues (see Assessment process)
- Cat flu - easily treatable
- Ringworm - treatable
- FIV – many people have FIV+ cats already and wish to adopt another
- Cats scratching or biting staff

Behavioural assessment process

Many animals are killed for 'behavioural reasons'.

Dogs

A one-off 'test', which may include an artificial hand on a pole being used to move the dog's food away from them when eating, has been found to not give an accurate assessment of a dog's behaviour in a home environment.

A 'continuous' assessment process, made over the dog's time in the pound, is more evidence-based.

Cats

Research has found that cats need a minimum of three, and preferably six, days to decompress after arriving at the pound.

Some pound providers kill cats on intake if they are frightened or display fear-aggressive behaviour. These cats are being killed needlessly, as shown by research at RSPCA Queensland shelters.

Continued on next page

Factors that affect animal outcomes, Continued

RSPCA Queensland's experience with 'feral' cats

The RSPCA 2016 in Queensland reduced its killing of cats from 58% in 2011 to 15% in by:

- Allowing cats more time in care before assessing their levels of socialisation to humans
- Using more foster carers
- Doing off-site adoptions, at Petbarn stores (Kerr et al 2018).

Cats killed for behavioural reasons decreased by 85%, including a marked decrease in the number who were killed because they were deemed 'feral'.

After staying at the shelter for a period of time, cats who were initially labelled 'feral' on intake were not deemed 'feral'.

The number of cats deemed 'feral' reduced from 1178 in 2011 to 132 in 2016.

Cat demographics did not change in this period. It was solely how cats were assessed and cared for at the shelters that changed.

This highlights that cats' sociability cannot be accurately assessed as soon as they arrive. Research shows they need a minimum of three and preferably six, days after impoundment before sociability can be assessed. Without that, they will be given the label 'feral' and will be killed.

Many cats are being needlessly killed due to flawed assessment methods.

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Factors that affect animal outcomes, Continued

Table 6, Kerr et al, 2018

	2011		2016	
	No.	%	No.	%
Behavioral & Feral	2771	36.2%	393	21.6%
Feral	1178 #	15.4%	132 #	7.2%
Under-socialized—not Coping	426	5.6%	89	4.9%
Timid/fearful/anxious	347	4.6%	43	2.3%
Aggression towards humans	316	4.1%	112	6.1%
Inter-cat aggression	200	2.6%	0	0.0%
Inappropriate toileting	193	2.5%	0	0.0%
Untrustworthy	39	0.5%	10	0.5%
Behavioral: general	33	0.4%	0	0.0%
Redirected aggression	13	0.2%	6	0.3%
Over grooming	10	0.1%	0	0.0%
Escape behavior	8	0.1%	0	0.0%
Compulsive, obsessive, stereotypic	3	0.0%	0	0.0%
Excessive vocalization	3	0.0%	0	0.0%
Aggression towards dogs	2	0.0%	0	0.0%
Idiopathic aggression	0	0.0%	1	0.1%

The lethal outcomes of the 'feral' label – an example

The neighbour of someone who was feeding a cat family took one of the cats, Kirei, to the pound. Kirei's sister, Kimi, wasn't taken there.

I and one other person tried to get Kirei out of the pound, as soon as we knew she had been sent there. We were too late. The pound contractor had killed Kirei on intake as she 'presented as feral.'

The other person had met Kirei. Although she wasn't the most confident of cats, she was most definitely not 'feral'. She was more confident than Kimi.

A rescue group stepped in to help Kimi. Within three days in foster care, Kimi was lying on her back seeking attention.



Factors that affect animal outcomes, Continued

Kirei would have socialised quicker than Kimi. She was killed instead.

Needless killing leads to Victorian pound reforms

Needless killing of dog and cats at pounds and shelters led to a campaign to reform the pound and shelter system. The [Victorian government voted almost unanimously to reform the system](#). These reforms are now being developed.

KPIs for increasing live outcomes

Recommendation:

Set KPIs in the contract and require the pound to reduce killing by a each year.

Adopting found animals to the finder

When people find a dog or cat, they often develop a bond with the animal. When taking them to the pound, it is not uncommon for the person to express an interest in adopting them.

However, animals are often killed instead, because they don't pass the organisation's 'policy' eg given the 'feral' label even though they were perfectly fine with the adopt.

This needless killing is one of the factors that led to the Victorian pound reforms, which are now being developed.

Example:

Factors that affect animal outcomes, Continued

Please do NOT involve the [REDACTED] whatever you do. My brother took a stray to [REDACTED] a month ago, and made it quite clear if the cat was unclaimed, he would love to adopt him. After 4 weeks of medically treating the cat, my brother was told yesterday they would destroy the cat because he was too feral and they wouldn't hand him over to my brother because it was against their policy to rehome cats deemed too feral. He was great with my brother, and was probably terrified in the pound situation, being poked and prodded for 4 weeks. Don't ever surrender to [REDACTED] 🙄🙄🙄

Using foster carers

RSPCA Queensland reduced its killing of cats from 58% to 15% using a number of strategies. One of these was using more foster carers.

Few cats do well in the pound environment, especially timid or anxious animals. In a more natural home environment, however, they thrive.

Example:

Claire fostered a greyhound, named Dash. Although he was anxious, he was perfectly suitable for adoption. Claire returned him to the shelter when requested, assuming he would be adopted. He was killed instead, due to his anxiety.

Claire would have adopted him had she known he was going to be killed. This experience led to a state-wide campaign which culminated in Victorian politicians voting almost unanimously to reform the pound and shelter system. Reforms are now being developed.

Recommendation:

1. Require the pound contractor to increase its use of foster carers, especially for animals who are not coping in the pound environment.
2. Require the pound contractor to allow foster carers to adopt their foster animal, and not kill them, unless there are extenuating circumstances that mean the carer is not suitable.

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Factors that affect animal outcomes, Continued

Using rescue groups

Having rescue groups rehome animals for Council will help lower the euthanasia rate.

However, this should not replace improving the performance of the pound contractor. Why? Rescue groups are run by volunteers who must raise the funds needed for vet work and animal care. Their ability to help is also limited by the number of foster carers available.

Recommendation:

If Council would like the assistance of rescue groups:

- Develop s84Y's with them
- Mandate the pound contractor make animals who they intend to kill available to rescue groups, using s84Y's*
- pay for the cost of desexing, vaccinating and microchipping the animals who rescue groups save. This worked well for Darebin council when it mandated that its contractor must release cats it was going to kill to rescue groups. Darebin emailed a voucher for each cat a rescue group saved. The group presented the voucher to the vet. The vet sought reimbursement for the costs
- use its community reach to recruit foster carers for rescue groups, or develop its own foster carer system.

*One contractor is known for not honouring s84Y agreements.

Adoption policy – FIV+ cats

Some organisations automatically kill any cat who tests positive for FIV. One organisation's has a policy of only rehoming FIV+ cats to homes where (a) there is no other cat (b) if there is another cat, they must be vaccinated for FIV.

This policy is not based on science. Research shows that FIV+ and FIV- cats can happily cohabit, without transmission, as long as there is no serious fighting where the FIV+ cat may deeply bite the FIV- cat.

Many vets live with mixed FIV+ and FIV- cats, as I have.

Recommendation:

- Require pound contractor to not kill FIV+ cats
- Require pound contractor to not impose the above conditions on FIV adoptions

Free desexing – the many benefits

Overview

Introduction

Providing free desexing, targeted to areas of high intake, is known to:

- Increase desexing rates
- Increase responsible pet ownership rates
- Reduce stray cat numbers
- Reduce calls to Council regarding cats
- Reduce number of cats impounded
- Reduce killing in pound and shelters
- Reduce animal management costs.

With fewer stray cats, this naturally reduces any wildlife predation (even though research has found that cats in urban and semi urban areas have no impact on wildlife populations).

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Why don't people desex their cats?

Desexing rates correlate to socioeconomic factors

In Australia, multiple surveys report that most owned cats are desexed, at rates typically exceeding 90%.

The most common reason people don't desex their cats is financial.

Cat and kitten intakes are significantly higher in suburbs where 20% to 30% of households are classed as low income. In Australia, this is often defined as 2.4 people living on less than \$650 per week.

In these suburbs, there are many "free to good home" kittens and cats, because the cost of desexing cats is unaffordable.

People who take on the care of a cat or kitten often do it because they fear the cat or kitten may be killed at the pound.

Many such people can afford to feed a cat and provide inexpensive items, such as beds, but the cost of desexing, microchipping and registration is unaffordable.

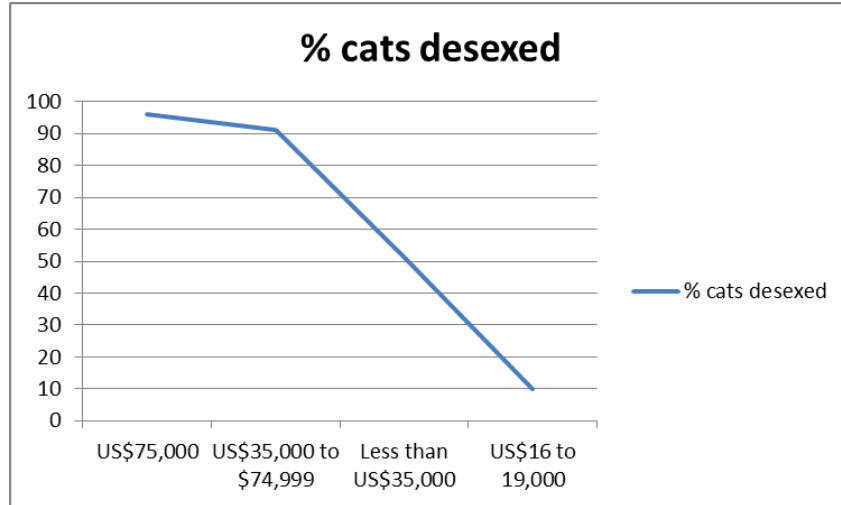
Desexing and microchipping commonly costs from \$350 to \$500 for a female cat.

Mandating that people pay for something they cannot afford, and which is difficult to enforce, doesn't make it happen. It merely drives people underground.

Why don't people desex their cats?, Continued

Relationship between desexing rates and income

The US data below highlights the link between financial disadvantage and low desexing rates (Chu 2007).



Household income	% cats desexed
US\$75,000	96
US\$35,000 to \$74,999	91
Less than US\$35,000	51
US\$16 to 19,000	10

Why haven't you got your cat desexed?

People enrolling a cat in a free desexing program in Banyule were asked, 'What was the single most important factor why you have not already had this cat desexed?' (Australian Pet Welfare Foundation, 2021).

90% said it was because desexing was unaffordable.

The program was targeted to low socioeconomic suburbs with high cat intake and cat-related calls to council. In these suburbs, 20-30% of households were living on \$650 a week or less.

Continued on next page

Why don't people desex their cats?, Continued

'Who's for cats' program has not worked

In 2007, the Victorian government launched the 'Who's for cats' program, which later went national. It encouraged people who were feeding stray cats to either officially adopt them (and get them desexed, microchipped and registered) or take them to a council pound.

It did not succeed in reducing stray cat numbers or intake, because people who are feeding stray cats :

- care about them
 - often don't have the funds to get them desexed
 - derive health benefits from caring for and interacting with them
 - do not wish the cats to be killed at the pound, which will likely occur at most pounds, as the cats will take time to be sufficiently socialised to people before they can be adopted. Few shelters/pounds provide the necessary time.
-

Free, targeted desexing – the many benefits

Free, affordable and accessible desexing is more successful

Free and affordable desexing has been found to increase the desexing rate to 90% (Chadwich, Emancipet, AIAM 2019 conference).

If Council wishes to reduce:

- costs
- impound numbers
- number of undesexed cats
- number of stray/semi-owned and unowned cats

providing free or affordable desexing in high intake or socioeconomically disadvantaged areas is a worthwhile investment. It is a better use of money and resources than mandating desexing and trying to enforce compliance.

Overcoming other barriers to desexing, such as lending cat carriers, helping to catch the cat if needed and transporting them to/from the vet may also be needed.

Free cat desexing improves people's mental health

90% of people who brought their cat to a free desexing program in Queensland said their cat helps them get through tough times (Australian Pet Welfare Foundation 2021).

One person said, 'I love my cats with everything I have. And now that they're safe, desexed, and healthy, it's bettered my mental health a lot knowing this. So I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart and my little cats' hearts too'.

People who have low incomes want to do the right thing in caring for pets. High desexing rates can be achieved when voluntary, free/affordable and accessible desexing programs are available, together with information on why it is important to desex.

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Free desexing – the many benefits, Continued

Case study – Banyule City Council

Since 2013, Banyule City Council in Melbourne has provided free desexing to residents in low socioeconomic areas twice a year. The council organises the desexing, provides carriers and transports the cat, if required.

Between **2013 and 2020, 780 cats** were desexed, microchipped and vaccinated for free (Banyule Cat Management Case Study, 2020).

The program has:

- led to these 780 semi-owned cats becoming fully-owned and registered
- reduced wandering
- reduced the number of unwanted kittens
- reduced impounds
- reduced euthanasia rates
- reduced costs.

Banyule uses their pound provider, the Cat Protection Society, and a nearby private vet clinic for desexing.

Banyule also:

- issues excess animal permits to reduce the possibility of nuisance complaints
- investigates nuisance cat complaints, including letterbox drops to homes surrounding that of the complainant
- works with residents experiencing mental illness/animal hoarding to gradually reduce the number of pets they have and ensure those they keep are healthy, manageable and registered
- works with the Department of Housing to ensure compliance in relation to their properties and known hoarders.

Banyule does not intend to impose a cat curfew, as it would be difficult and costly to enforce. Instead, Banyule encourages people to confine their cat to their property and is proactive in addressing nuisance complaints.

Continued on next page

Free desexing – the many benefits, Continued

Banyule’s cost savings and reduction in impounds

Between 2013 and 2020, **cat impounds reduced by 62%**, from 396 cats to 152 per year (Cotterell J 2020). The free desexing program has saved the council \$337,500 in impound costs.

Year	Cats impounded	Cost (at \$150 per cat)
2012-2013	396	59,400
2013-2014	359	53,850
2014-2015	481	72,150
2015-2016	487	73,050
2016-2017	284	42,600
2017-2018	274	41,100
2018-2019	217	32,550
2019-2020	152	22,800
Total impound costs		397,500
Less cost of desexing		-60,000
Cost savings		337,500
Decline in impounds	61.6%	

Current research project into free cat desexing

The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation is currently [conducting research on providing free cat desexing – for both owned and stray cats](#) . At the time of writing, more than 600 cats have been desexed.

Three Victorian councils are participating in the research.

Interested Council staff and councillors who wish to follow the progress of the research can email info@petwelfare.org.au with subject line of ‘request for email updates on CCP’.

References – Free desexing

Summary

Alberthsen C, Rand J, Morton J, Bennette P and Paterson M (2016), Numbers and Characteristics of Cats Admitted to Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) Shelters in Australia and Reasons for Surrender, Animals

Australian Pet Welfare Foundation, e-newsletter June 2021

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Banyule Cat Management Case Study, 2020

Chu K. (2007) Population characteristics and neuter status of cats living in households in the United States, Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, 234, 1023-1030

Chadwich, Emancipet, AIAM 2019 conference

Cotterell J, Submission to The House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy into the "Inquiry into the problem of feral and domestic cats in Australia, 2020

Melton City Council, Domestic Animal Management Plan Draft 2021-2025

Cooperative Desexing Program

Cooperative Desexing Program

If Council does not feel confident developing a free desexing program itself, it could develop a Cooperative Desexing Program (CDP) with the National Desexing Network (NDN), which is run by Animal Welfare League Queensland.

However, this is unlikely to be as effective as a free cat desexing program.

How it works

Under the partnership, the NDN will organise and run the program on Council's behalf.

Council will budget a set amount each year to NDN to provide ongoing desexing subsidies for residents in need. Council can decide the amount of subsidy provided per resident.

Councils currently using CDPs

At the time of writing, these councils have CDPs in place.

State	Council
VIC	Alpine Greater Bendigo Golden Plains Moirā
NSW	Hornsby Campbelltown Broken Hill
QLD	Cairns Fraser Coast Lockyer Valley Scenic Rim
SA	Whyalla

Other councils, including Banyule and Moreland, have permanent or pilot free desexing programs, which they run themselves.

Find out more

If a CDP is of interest to Council, you can call the NDN on 1300 368 992, or [email via this form](#).

Proactive desexing of stray cats

Introduction

Australia is quite regressive with respect to cat management. Unlike many overseas countries, 'trap neuter return' or 'community cat programs' are not yet recognised as the cheapest, quickest and most effective way of reducing stray cat numbers.

A current research program will hopefully change this.

Below, I have detailed how council can proactively desex cats who individual and businesses are caring for, and comply with current state legislation.

Why proactive desexing works

Many stray cats are being cared for by someone, even though they don't get them desexed and registered.

If free desexing is provided, many people are happy to have them microchipped in their name.

Using trapping (and usually killing) as a control method does not work, for reasons that are too long to go into here.

Registration fees and extra animal permits

Council could reduce registration fees to a nominal amount (eg \$2) or waive them for cats who are enrolled in free cat desexing programs.

For people or businesses who wish to have more than the number of cats permitted per property, Council can provide an extra animal permit.

Continued on next page

Proactive desexing of stray cats, Continued

Example from another council

A business's customer sought help from a rescue group for kittens who were dying on the property she frequented. The business owners and other customers wanted the cats to stay there, but were less happy about paying for their desexing etc.

The rescue group humanely trapped and funded the desexing, microchipping and vaccination of the cats.

The council then issued an 'extra animal permit' for the business.

The business was very happy that it could keep the cats it and its customers scared about, and could benefit from their mice hunting skills.

The council was happy that cats stopped breeding and weren't costing them any more money.

The rescue group was happy that there were fewer cats and kittens needing rescuing from the pound.

My experience

I have helped many individuals and businesses to humanely trap stray cats, get them desexed and microchipped, so that they can continue enjoying the cats' company and rodent control skills.

One business I helped proudly displays a plaque at the entrance to their factory, near where they have the cats' shelters, food and an automatic water dispenser, stating 'We care about more than (our product)'.

One cat is very friendly and spends his days inside the office.

Research into community cat programs

The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation is currently [conducting research into the proactive desexing of stray cats](#). At the time of writing, more than 600 cats have been desexed.

Interested staff and councillors who wish to follow the progress of the research can email info@petwelfare.org.au with subject line of 'request for email updates on CCP'.

Continued on next page

Conclusion

Community Cat Programs save human and dog lives, too

This eight minute video presents the first-hand experience of [American council pound staff where Community Cat Programs were implemented](#).It

highlights the many animal and human benefits of these programs.

Animal management staff speak about the dramatic effect in saving cats' lives, and the benefit to staff and the dogs in their care.

They now have empty cat cages.

Although Council may not yet be able to fully implement a CCP, it can drastically reduce its costs and impounds through proactive desexing, where cats have a carer.

Summary

I hope these comments have been helpful.

I would be happy to talk about these comments further with interested people.

Contact details
