

## 6.3.2 Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021 - 2025

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### Recommendation(s)

That Council adopts the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025.

### Attachments

1. 2021 2025 Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022 [6.3.2.1 - 38 pages]

### Executive Summary

A new 4-year Domestic Animal Management Plan is a statutory requirement and should be submitted to the Minister by Council by 30 June 2022.

An attached Domestic Animal Management Plan has been prepared, in consultation with residents, service users and relevant employees, to ensure that Council activities are directed at the issues presented by the keeping of domestic animals in our community. The Domestic Animal Management Plan complies with all statutory requirements.

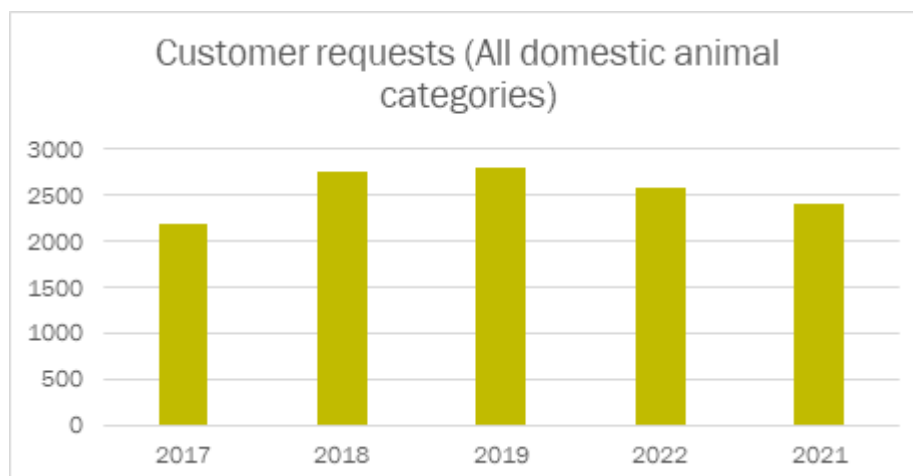
### Background

#### *Service snapshot*

The *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 (the Act) sets out a range of regulatory controls relating to domestic animals and domestic animal businesses. The Act provides for Councils to collect revenue from registrations and to administer the majority of the laws created in the Act.

These services are provided by the Compliance Services and Prosecutions team, within the Regulatory Services business unit.

In 2022, Council expects to register approx. 17,200 domestic animals, and anticipates approx. \$770,000 in associated revenue (FY22/23). The volume of animal management customer requests is expected to increase, particularly in light of the development of the growth areas, though the service request trends were impacted significantly by COVID lockdowns:



*Requirement for a Domestic Animal Management Plan*

To meet requirements of Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994, all councils are required to prepare and maintain a Domestic Animal Management Plan, for approval by the Secretary of the Department of Economic, Jobs, Training and Resources.

This document sets out the actions and strategies that Compliance Services will undertake to achieve the purposes of the Act.

The Plan must be reviewed annually and renewed every four years. A new plan for the next four years is due to be finalised and submitted to the Secretary by the end of June 2022.

The plan must include an evaluating mechanism to ascertain if Council's animal control services are adequate in meeting the requirements of the Act and the needs of the community. It must also outline the programs, services, and strategies which Council intends to pursue, relating to a defined list of specified areas.

The specified areas that must be addressed within the plan are as follows:

1. Training of Authorised Officers – The draft Plan outlines the types and frequencies of trainings courses and programs to be undertaken by officers. This is to ensure officers can properly administer and enforce requirements of The Act within our municipal district.
- 9.
2. Registration and Permanent Identification – Council registration and permanent identification by microchip are legal requirements under the Act. Officers and Council must ensure people comply with this and other legislative requirements under the Act, through the promotion of responsible pet ownership and enforcement of identified breaches. The registration cycle is one of the primary opportunities to reach new animal owners, and to communicate with owners about our animal management services. The plan also includes actions to try to detect unregistered animals.
- 10.
3. Nuisance Dogs and Cats – The Plan outlines measures to be put in place, to lessen the potential occurrence of dog and cat nuisance. The type of nuisance most reported to us are barking dogs, followed by general cat nuisance. The Plan includes actions directed at improving owner's knowledge around these issues and to improve the way we handle such matters. Other matters addressed include dogs wandering at large and dogs and cats that have been contained requiring collection.

In respect of nuisance animal behaviour in public places, we do not currently have evidence indicating "hot spots", however we anticipate that this may arise as a function of increased population growth. To "stay ahead of the curve", and to be able to properly inform future initiatives, the draft Plan includes initiatives to improve the reporting of nuisance issues, and to track the localities affected.

4. Dog attacks – Risk of attacks by dogs on people and other animals must be minimised where possible. The Plan describes our approach to the investigation of all reports of alleged attacks, education for community members on prevention, and conducting regular patrols to address non-compliance, amongst other things. As above, improved data collection and reporting of the locations of dog attacks will help to identify problematic locations that may benefit from dedicated outreach.
5. Dangerous, Menacing & Restricted breed declared Dogs – These declarations are a key power of Council following incidents of dog attacks, and allow for certain categories of dogs to be declared, identified, and made subject to specified restrictions. Council officers must ensure that all dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and related regulations through

effective identification of them within the community. Regular audits on the keeping of such dogs are to be undertaken and any non-compliance addressed.

6. Pet Overpopulation & High Euthanasia Rates – This topic addresses these issues for both dogs and cats. The Plan acknowledges high rates of euthanasia are currently seen with cats, due to pets not being desexed or contained to the owner's property, resulting in overpopulation. When they are impounded, because of the nuisance, they are disproportionately not collected, and not re-homed. Education and enforcement around requirements of the Act, as well as relevant council orders, local laws, policies, and procedures is to be undertaken. Grant funded programs to subsidise desexing to raise desexing rates will be pursued.
7. Domestic Animal Businesses – We have a small number of registered domestic animal business in Cardinia. These include breeding, boarding, and training establishments, as well as pet shops. Such businesses must comply with stringent requirements, and these must be regularly audited for compliance. The Plan sets out a regime of auditing and compliance checking, from initial application and through the life of the business. We must also work to identify any unregistered businesses and ensure up to date information is easily accessible.
8. Other Matters – In this section, the Plan refers to proposed measures to ensure domestic animals are adequately planned for in emergency situations, and arrangements are in place to ensure that we can manage and emergency situations. The Plan also addresses the need for animal housing assistance by victims escaping family violence.

### **Policy Implications**

The Draft Plan describes the actions and policies that Regulatory Services are currently planning, relating to domestic animal management functions.

During the life of the Plan, the plan will be reviewed annually. This may result in new trials and initiatives, and operational procedures being created and updated. By doing this, Regulatory Services will ensure that the purposes of the Act continue to be met efficiently and effectively.

### **Relevance to Council Plan**

#### **2.1 We support the creation of liveable spaces and places**

2.1.1 Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need.

#### **5.1 We practise responsible leadership**

5.1.1 Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making.

### **Climate Emergency Consideration**

This Domestic Animal Management Plan does not raise Climate Emergency considerations.

### **Consultation/Communication**

As part of the creation of a new Domestic Animal Management Plan community consultation is required. We have undertaken a multi-stage engagement approach while creating this Draft Plan.

The first stage involved obtaining feedback from staff within the Compliance team, to identify feedback on our current operations, policies and programs, and to consider any current improvement opportunities.

We also reached out to other teams within Council, who would be directly impacted by actions in the new plan for their input. This stage of consultation resulted predominantly in improvements and updating of our operating procedures, and also highlighted two areas for improvement, which have been incorporated as actions for the first year of the plan (namely, review of our Barking Dog Nuisance approach, and changes to our data collection to monitor 'hot spots')

Stage two of consultation involved a targeted survey of our current animal management service and initiatives. This was sent to a combination of registered dog and cat owners and customers who had lodged an animal related complaint or request in the prior twelve months. In total 7,328 people received the survey, of that 1,342 completed the survey.

From this survey, we were able to get an insight into the knowledge and mindsets around animal management within the municipality. It showed an encouragingly strong awareness of rules by dog owners and slightly lower awareness of rules by cat owners. There was a high proportion of respondents that had an interest in further information on various animal management topics. Respondents were asked to rank animal management issues by importance, and the responses were very consistent with our operational emphasises and matches well with our focus areas set out in the draft plan. The top 3 issues identified were cats roaming, owners not collecting dog poo and dog attacks. Half of dog owners utilised off leash parks in some capacity, though awareness of such parks was quite low at only 47%. Upon being presented with details of where money from registration fees go, 78% believed this amount to be acceptable, good, or excellent value-for-money. Some of the data from the survey was then used in the creation of the draft plan.

Stage three of the consultation then involved putting a copy of the draft document out to the public for review for a period of four weeks through the Creating Cardinia page, and through social media channels. This was accompanied by another survey, to respond to the actions outlined in each of the 8 sections of the plan, to which we received 16 responses. This level of response is low, but perhaps not unexpected, given the nature of the document.

Due to the number of responses, it is not possible to draw broad conclusions regarding the draft plan. The individual comments expressed a range of views about the topics in the plan, as well as about topics outside of the parameters of the plan. This consultation did not identify any fundamental defects in the document, though we acknowledge that there is a wide variety of opinion about animal management issues.

We respectfully submit that the process of consultation, planning and careful consideration in creating this draft plan has resulted in a document that meets the needs of the community and meeting the requirements under the Act.

### **Financial and Resource Implications**

Actions specified within the Domestic Animal Management Plan will be met within the Regulatory Services operational budget. Any additional financial implications will be assessed as required through the annual budget process.

### **Conclusion**

As can be seen above, the Domestic Animal Management Plan presented for adoption reflects appropriate strategies to meet the strategic objectives of the animal management under the Act.

It has considered a combination of legislative needs, internal data around the prevalence and handling of relevant issues, and feedback from internal staff, registered animal owners and residents.

It is respectfully submitted that the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 be adopted.



**Cardinia Shire Council**

# Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25

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## DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, requires every Council in Victoria to prepare, in consultation with the Secretary<sup>1</sup>, a Domestic Animal Management Plan. A new Plan must be prepared every 4 years.

Each Domestic Animal Management Plan must:

1. Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
2. Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
3. Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district:
  - a. to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats;
  - b. to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation;
  - c. to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals;
  - d. to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats;
  - e. to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats;
  - f. to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance;
  - g. to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
4. Provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
5. Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
6. Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the Plan.

Every Council must:

1. Review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the Plan;
2. Provide the Secretary with a copy of the Plan and any amendments to the Plan; and
3. Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan in its annual report.

This Domestic Animal Management Plan has been prepared to comply with these requirements.

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<sup>1</sup> Secretary means the person who is, for the time being, the Department Head of the Department of Economic, Jobs, Training and Resources (s68A of the DAA)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires all Councils in Victoria to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP). Each Plan is required to be reviewed annually and renewed every 4 years. The Plans relate to Council's management of dogs and cats.

This is Cardinia Shire's Domestic Animal Management Plan for 2021-2025. It has been prepared following a review of Council's current services, programs and strategies together with feedback received from Councillors, Council staff and the community.

This Domestic Animal Management Plan addresses Council's responsibilities under the *Domestic Animals Act*, as well as the local laws and orders relating to dogs and cats.

The Plan is structured around the following 8 strategic themes:

- Training of Authorised Officers
- Registration and Identification
- Nuisance dogs and cats
- Dog Attacks
- Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs
- Overpopulation and Euthanasia
- Domestic Animal Businesses
- Other matters

## INTRODUCTION

The *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 (the DAA) provides the foundation for Cardinia Shire's animal management service. The purpose of the service is to promote animal welfare, the responsible ownership of dogs and cats, and the protection of the environment.

Every Victorian Council is required to produce a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) which is reviewed annually and renewed every 4 years. This is Cardinia Shire's Plan for 2021-2025.

### *Purpose of the Plan*

The DAMP will guide Cardinia Shire in its service to the community, increasing the likelihood of animals being reunited with their owners and reducing the number of dogs and cats in shelters and potentially being euthanised.

It will assist the Shire in minimising nuisance and possible danger created by some dogs and cats. It will also ensure that officers responsible for implementing the plan are skilled and trained to effectively deliver the service.

The DAMP sets out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by Cardinia Shire Council is adequate to give effect to the requirements of the DAA and the regulations; and outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the DAA in Cardinia Shire Council.

### *Mission Statement*

To encourage and facilitate responsible pet ownership through education and innovative strategies that allows people and pets to integrate safely and harmoniously within Cardinia Shire.

### *Link to Cardinia's Council Plan and Vision*

Cardinia's Council Plan 2021-2025 (June 2021) is Council's key strategic document that will that help to prepare for the challenges ahead. It will deliver Council's vision by focusing efforts on:

- **Strong communities**
- **Liveable places**
- **Thriving Environments**
- **Prosperous economies**

while also being **responsible leaders**

The Cardinia DAMP links with the Council Plan and will support achieving these keys directions by delivering the following:

Councils	Action delivered through the DAMP
<b>Strong communities</b>	<p>Conducting community engagement during key animal management projects or Local Law reviews to ensure residents are involved in the decision making when it comes to matters involving their cats and dogs.</p> <p>Responsible pet ownership can be a feature of strong communities.</p>
<b>Liveable Places</b>	<p>Provide places for people to exercise their dogs in line with community expectations. This includes monitoring the community's needs, and patrolling and</p>

Councils	Action delivered through the DAMP
	<p><b>monitoring public spaces to ensure they are safe and can be enjoyed by all residents throughout the Shire.</b></p> <p><b>Educate the community and enforce the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and Council's local laws relating to the keeping of dogs and cats.</b></p>

### *Shire Profile*

Cardinia Shire is situated about 55 kilometres south-east of the Melbourne CBD and is one of eight 'interface Councils' forming the perimeter of metropolitan Melbourne, providing a transition between urban and rural areas.

The Shire's population is 131,834. The population is forecast to grow to 183,596 by 2031<sup>2</sup>. It is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Victoria.

Neighbouring councils include Casey, Yarra Ranges, Baw Baw, South Gippsland and Bass Coast Councils.

It comprises 1,280 square kilometres of land – which is larger than Casey Council and Bass Coast Council but smaller than Baw Baw Shire and Yarra Ranges Shire.

The Shire has 3 distinct geographic areas. Each presents different challenges for the domestic animal management service.

Our **urban areas** of Beaconsfield, Pakenham and Officer and our railway towns of Nar Nar Good, Tynong, Garfield and Bunyip are a mix of traditional country towns and new metropolitan areas.

Our **hills area** sits at the Dandenong Ranges foothills and is home to country charm villages including Emerald, Gembrook, Cockatoo and Upper Beaconsfield.

Our **southern rural area** has rich, productive landscapes that support local farming, food production and rural living across our townships including Koo Wee Rup and Lang Lang. The area also includes the catchments for internationally significant Ramsar wetlands which support migratory shorebirds and other waterbirds, fish and marine invertebrates.

### *Council's Animal Management Service*

Cardinia Shire's Compliance Services team is primarily responsible for implementing and managing the Domestic Animal Management Plan. This team sits within the Regulatory Services business unit of Cardinia Shire.

Compliance Services Officers are trained and dedicated to maintaining community safety and amenity. This is achieved by balancing enforcement activities with community education and compliance. The current staffing structure is provided on page 14. PAGE NUMBER MAY CHANGE

In addition to administering the state-wide requirements of the DAA, Council has the following requirements that are also administered by the Compliance Services team:

- *Cat are required to be desexed* - All cats over the age of 3 months must be desexed (Council Order pursuant to DAA and s46 of Local Law No 17).

<sup>2</sup> This growth will predominately be in Pakenham, Officer, Officer South, Beaconsfield and Nar Nar Goon North.

- *Dogs are required to be leashed in public places except in dedicated dog off-leash areas* (Council Order pursuant to DAA and clause 46 of Local Law No 17).
- *Dog owners are required to carry a bag that is suitable to remove their dogs' faeces from public places* (clause 46 of Local Law No 17).
- *24 hour Cat Curfew* - All cats are required to be confined to their owner's property (Council Order pursuant to DAA and clause 46 of Local Law No 17).
- *Keeping multiple animals* A permit is required to keep more animals than the amount specified in the tables below (s40 of Local Law No 17).

	Land less than or equal to 4000m2	Land greater than 4000m2
<b>Cats, maximum number unless by permit</b>	2	4
<b>Dogs, maximum number unless by permit</b>	2	4

The following standard procedures and policies are used in the animal management service.

- Compliance Services – Picking up Cats Procedure
- Compliance Services – Picking up Dogs Procedure
- Compliance Services – After hours Procedure
- Compliance Services – Handling Domestic Animals procedure
- Compliance Service – Declared Dog and Destruction Procedure.
- Use of Bite Sticks Policy
- Declared Dog Audit policy
- Compliance Services and Prosecutions– Dog Attack response, seizure, investigation and prosecution procedure

#### *Key Outcomes of DAMP 2017-2021*

The table below lists the outcomes of the actions in the DAMP 2017-21

Sec	Program/service initiative	Action	Completed/outcome
9.1	Conduct Animal Management Officer Training.	Arrange attendance at all Animal Welfare Victoria Training Seminars. Animal management handling and training. Training programs with other Councils.	<b>All staff attended Animal welfare Victoria training sessions including, additional specific animal training programs.</b> <b>Training provided by local dog training organisation which included dog and cat handling using live animals.</b>
9.2	Promote and Encourage responsible Pet Ownership.	Distribute pet brochures throughout Cardinia. Introduce dog off-leash areas. Display pet educational material at Cardinia Civic Centre and maintain and update information on Council's website. Encourage re-housing practices, where pet owners are unable to care for their pet. Enforce Council Local Laws that	<b>Brochures have been produced and distributed from Civic Centre. Information listed on Council's website.</b> <b>Extensive media releases during life of Plan.</b> <b>Agreement with Lost Dogs Home to rehouse all unclaimed pets where possible.</b>

Sec	Program/service initiative	Action	Completed/outcome
		require all cats over 3 months of age to be de-sexed.	
9.3	Ensure compliance with Act and Regulations.	Conduct an annual doorknock to identify and register all dogs and cats. Provide 24 hour 7 day per week response service. Enforce microchip requirements for all new pet registrations. Monitor compliance of dogs on leash in public areas.	<b>Doorknocks have been conducted each year to identify unregistered dogs and cats.</b> <b>After hours service has continued dealing with all pet related issues.</b> <b>Council will only accept dog and cat registrations that show proof of micro chipping.</b> <b>All off leash parks are regularly patrolled with no incidents reported to date at any off leash location.</b>
9.4	Minimise the risk of dog attacks.	Monitor and review dog off-leash areas. Conduct regular patrols of all council parks and reserves.  Ensure properties have suitable fencing to securely contain dogs.	<b>Since introduction of leash free areas there have been no reports of any animal behavioural issue at off leash parks. All off leash parks have been regularly checked by staff.</b> <b>Notices have been issued to properties for failing to provide adequate fencing to secure dogs.</b>
9.5	Address over population and high euthanasia of dogs and cats.	Encourage re-housing and adoption of unwanted dogs and cats. Hire of cat cages for trapping of feral cats.	<b>Cat traps are readily available for hire. Unclaimed dogs and cats that pass assessments have been rehoused.</b>
9.6	Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.	Annual mail out of dog/cat registration renewal forms. Mail out reminder notices for unpaid animal registrations.	<b>Registration renewal forms sent out mid-February each year.</b> <b>Final Reminder notices sent out mid-May each year.</b> <b>Regular media releases encouraging pet registration, web site notice referring to pet registration.</b>
9.7	Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.	Encourage the use of cat enclosures. Hire of anti-barking collars. Pet owners to carry dog tidy bags when walking dogs.	<b>In cases of cat wandering issues officers have promoted the installation of cat enclosures.</b> <b>Letter box drops of brochures for reports of wandering cats. Cat cage hire available.</b> <b>Anti-barking collars readily available for hire.</b>
9.8	Dangerous Dogs, Menacing Dogs and Restricted Breed Dogs.	Programmed inspections of registered properties housing Restricted, Declared or Menacing Dogs. Ensure information is readily available that clearly outlines restrictions for the above dogs.	<b>All properties housing RBDs, Dangerous/Menacing dogs are audited annually. Inspections carried out on registered American Staffs, all new registration applications for American Staff/ Staffs are inspected prior to registration approval.</b>
9.9	Review existing orders made under the Act and Local Laws.	<b>Restrict the number of dogs and cats permitted on a property without a permit. Review of dog off-leash zones.</b>	<b>2 dogs and 2 cats permitted, an excess animal permit is available to residents to keep more than above providing relevant conditions are accepted with appropriate housing</b>

## Consultation Process

The plan was developed in consultation with Councillors, the Compliance Services team, Parks Planning, and the Cardinia community.

### Community Input

Council sent a survey out to a subset of residents with a registered dog and cat. The survey was administered online and all registered dog and cat owners who had provided a valid email address were invited to participate. 6969 of the 10,846 households with a registered dog or cat had an email (64%) and were therefore sent an invitation to participate in the survey. 1,288 of these completed the survey (18% of those emailed, 12% of all households with a registered pet).

There were also 359 people identified from the CRM database who had contacted Council in the previous 12 months and who had not already been sent the survey. These people were also invited to participate and 54 completed the survey (15%).

The survey was open from 12-18 January 2022 and was managed through the Limesurvey surveying system.

A total of 1,342 people completed the survey.

The following is a summary of the findings.

Awareness of Council requirements relating to the type of pet you own:

- There is a very high (above 90% of respondents) level of awareness of Council requirements relating to i) the requirement for dogs and cats to be registered and microchipped, to carry a dog poo bag in public places, and for dogs to be on leash except in designated off leash areas
- There is a high (above 80%) level of awareness of Council's 24-hour cat curfew, that cats must be desexed before they are registered and that Council has dedicated off-leash parks.

Information deemed useful to help with owning a dog or cat:

- The most useful information relates to Council rules and regulations, finding a local and emergency veterinarian and how to know if a breeder is legitimate/reputable.
- 22% of respondents said they already know all they need to know.
- A high number of respondents trust Council to provide information on a wide range of topics.
- The 3 most popular methods to receive Council information included with registration renewals, on Council's website and in a new pet owner pack. Less popular methods included via rates notice, *Connect* magazine, social media and brochures/flyers in the mail.
- Most respondents indicated that they do not need any more information about responsible pet ownership (73%).19% said they need some more information and only 1% said they need a lot more information.
- The most significant priorities for Council were nominated as cats roaming outside their property (43%), uncollected dog poo (36%) dog attacks (31%), nuisance barking (26%, dogs off-leash where or when they shouldn't be (36%) and dogs not confined to their property (21%).
- 23% of dog owners walk their dog in an off-leash area once or more a week. Half said they never walk their dog off-lead in designated off-leash area.

- The most important reasons influencing choice of off-leash park is that it is close to home (58%), it is a large space (46%), it is a secure/fenced space for dogs (37%), it has interesting areas for my dog to explore (36%) and it provides socialisation for my dog (31%).
- Awareness of off-leash areas is relatively low (37% overall). It is highest amongst the under-35s (51%).
- Those respondents who let their cat roam mostly do so due to a perception that it is too difficult to keep their cat contained. More than half of those who let their cat roam freely at night say that it is too difficult to keep their cat contained (57%) and a similar proportion say their cat doesn't like being contained (57%). Almost half of those who let their cat roam freely during the day and four in ten of those who let their cat roam freely at night believe that their cat does not catch wildlife because it has a bell (46% and 43% respectively).
- Allowing a cat to roam is significantly more common amongst households in the Hills region (32%, compared to 16% Growth). This suggests that the Hills region would be the best place to start with regards to improving adherence to containment rules.
- 14% of those who said they allow their cat to roam freely (n=83) indicated that they were not aware of the cat curfew, and 7% were unsure; meaning most of those who admit to letting their cat roam freely know they shouldn't. Of those who said their cat is too difficult to contain (n=48), 17% were unaware of the cat curfew, and a further 17% were not sure.
- Respondents were advised that their registration fees were used for off-leash parks, collecting and returning pets, following up complaints, investigation of dog attacks and cat trapping programs. 78% of respondents said this was excellent, good or acceptable value for money. 15% of respondents said this was poor or very poor value for money and 7% said they did not know if was good value or not.
- Of those who have made contact with Council in the last 12 months regarding an animal management issue, 48% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the outcome of their enquiry. 32% said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.
- The most significant issues experienced by respondents but not reported to Council included unretrieved dog poo (most common in the growth area ie 58%), seeing a dog off leash where it shouldn't be (38%) and neighbours dogs barking (25%). Those in the Hills region more commonly report having seen or picked up a lost dog (20%) and a high proportion of respondents from the eastern region (33%) report not seeing any domestic animal management issues.



## **Structure of this Plan**

The Plan is structured on the following Strategic Themes:

1. Training of Authorised Officers
2. Registration and Identification
3. Nuisance dogs and cats
4. Dog Attacks
5. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs
6. Overpopulation and Euthanasia
7. Domestic Animal Businesses
8. Other matters

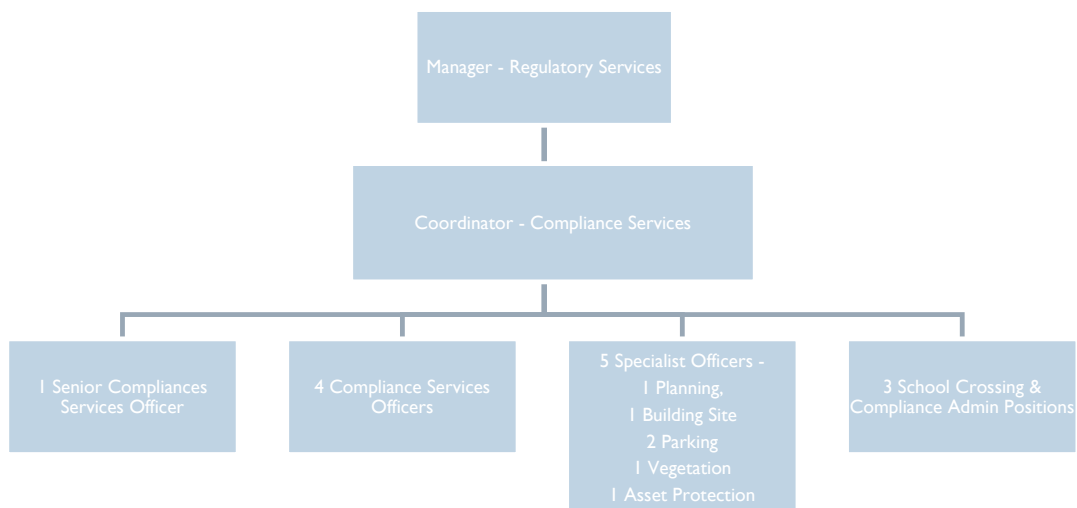
The mechanisms for conducting annual reviews and reporting and for making amendments to the Plan are contained at the end of the Plan.

## 1. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

The purpose of this part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to promote actions that ensure all animal management officers are skilled and appropriately trained to deliver our services and programs.

### Current situation

There are eleven field officers within the Compliance Services team, six of whom deal with animal management issues as part of their daily work activity. In addition to animal management, all officers also undertake planning enforcement, local laws and parking enforcement. The organisational structure is set out in the chart below.



The Compliance Services team apply Standard Operating Procedures to ensure consistency of approach across the team. Staff are trained and experienced in conducting animal management investigations.

New officers are required to undertake a structured induction program focusing on the skills needed to be an effective authorised officer. Ongoing training is also undertaken.

### Current and planned training table

Authorised Officer Training	Current (2017)	Planned
Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution, computer skills	Staff are routinely required to attend industry training.	Annually

<b>OHS training – dealing with aggressive customers</b>	Training is offered annually as internal training available to all council staff	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days</b>	All Compliance Staff attend these sessions on a rotating basis or as they become available	<b>As listed by Animal Welfare Victoria</b>
<b>Induction program for new staff – animal handling</b>	All staff as part of their induction process are taken through a training program that covers such issues as, manual handling, use of animal specific equipment, procedures, animal diseases, dog/cat behaviour, aggressive dogs, feral cats and body language.	<b>All new staff</b>
<b>Authorised Officer Training</b>	Council’s prosecution team provides training for new authorised officers to address core competencies and skills.	<b>2022/2023</b>
<b>Internal Organisational Training</b>	Staff attend in-house training over a range of case management principles	<b>Annually</b>
<b>Animal handling training provided by Accredited Trainer</b>	All staff attended “hands on” animal handling training that deals with, seizing dogs, aggressive dogs, behavioural issues, cat trapping, handling cats.	<b>Training will be offered on a rotational basis depending on availability</b>
<b>DNA sample taking</b>	<b>Currently investigating training courses for AMO’s to be trained and authorised in DNA sample taking</b>	<b>2022/2023</b>

## 2. REGISTRATION AND PERMANENT IDENTIFICATION

The purpose of this part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to promote actions that ensure encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act.

### Current situation

All dogs and cats over the age of 3 months are required to be registered (s10(1) of the DAA).

Animal registrations need to be renewed in April each year.

All dogs and cats are also required to be implanted with a prescribed permanent identification device (eg microchip) before it is registered with unless the animal is exempt pursuant to the exemptions listed in the DAA (s10C of the DAA).

In addition:

- Council requires evidence that cats over 3 months are desexed before it can be registered.
- Households with multiple pets must have a permit as required by Local Law 17.

*Our current data 2021-22*

	Registered	Desexed (%)	Totals animals registered
<b>Cats</b>	3695	3400 (92%)	17239
<b>Dogs</b>	13,511	11,025 (82%)	

9,686 households in Cardinia Shire own a pet. This is approximately 18% of the Shire's total number of households.

*Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures*

- Cat desexing: All cats over the age of 3 months must be desexed (Council Order pursuant to DAA and clause 46 of Local Law No 17).
- Animal numbers: A permit from Council is required to keep more animals than the amount specified in the tables below (clause 40 of Local Law No 17).
- Compulsory microchipping of dogs and cats for all registrations.

	Land less than or equal to 4000m <sup>2</sup>	Land greater than 4000m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Cats, maximum number unless by permit</b>	2	4
<b>Dogs, maximum number unless by permit</b>	2	4

*Our Current Education/Promotion Activities*

- Quarterly media releases promoting pet registration in local newspapers, on Council social media channels and 'Connect' Magazine.
- Free registration of dogs and cats under the age of three months for first year of registration.
- Information regarding registration of pets readily available on Council's website.
- Annual mailout of dog and cat registration renewal forms, followed up with a reminder and final notice.

- SMS reminders and follow up of non-renewal of registrations, including targeted cold-calling where registrations have not been renewed,.
- Free dog and cat transfer of registration when relocating to Cardinia Shire Council, if the animals are currently registered with another Council.
- Half price dog and cat registration when animal has been obtained from an approved shelter.

**Discussion**

Registration is important because it assists in the return of lost animals to their owner, including in some circumstances direct return without the need for them enter the pound. It also ensures that the animal management service is funded by those that own domestic animals.

The number of registrations varies year to year. The variation is a function of new registrations and animals that are removed from the register because the animal has died, the owner has moved, the pet is no longer living with them or because the owner has not renewed the registration. There has been a recent increase in pet ownership associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. Many of these are first time pet owners.

Planning for a long-term significant increase in the number of registered dogs and cats accompanying significant population growth will be addressed in forward planning.

Community feedback suggests there is a high level of awareness of the requirement to both microchip and register dogs and cats. However with an average of 3 new households moving into the Shire each week, there is ongoing challenge to secure first registrations. Many pet owners wrongly believe that a microchip means their pet is also registered.

**Action plan – Registration and Permanent Identification**

Objective 1: To ensure all dogs and cats are registered and permanently identified Council as required by the DAA.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide comprehensive information on Council’s website about registration and identification requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• requirements to register and permanently identify their dog and cat</li> <li>• benefits of registration and permanent identification</li> <li>• when registration is due</li> <li>• how and where to register</li> <li>• fee structure</li> <li>• information to provide (e.g. microchipping, desexing certificates)</li> <li>• how to notify Council that they are no longer the owner, they have changed address or the pet is deceased</li> <li>• highlight renewal period in March and April</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Promotes compliance.
Review information provided on Council's website relating to dog and cat registration and identification for its clarity and detail	2022/2023	Improves dissemination of information to the community Increases registered number of dogs/cats

Mail out registration renewal forms.	Annually (Feb)	Provides residents every opportunity to register they pets prior to 10 April.
Issue media releases through Council's Communication Department, published in the internal Council magazine notifying residents of the requirements relating to registration requirements, including renewal date and animals to which a reduced fee applies.	Annually (Feb)	Raises awareness relating to responsible ownership. Assists AMOs ensuring strays can be returned as soon as collected. Promotes compliance.
Mail out of final notices for registration renewals.	Annually (June)	Increases registered number of dogs/cats
Send out SMS reminder alerts to owners of animals who haven't paid for registration by the due date.	Annually (May)	Increases registered number of dogs/cats
Complete an annual audit of unpaid registrations by combination of cold calling or systematic door knocking program	Annually (Oct)	Increases registered number of dogs/cats Cleanse data of pets that should be removed from the database.
Offer transfer of current registration from other municipalities	Ongoing	Encourages new residents to transfer registration
Provide online registration/renewal, and a range of registration payment methods - credit card, BPay, cheque.	Ongoing	Convenience for public.
Allow residents to view their registration details via Council's website and make minor changes.	Ongoing	Promotes accurate information and customer friendly access.
Pro rata rates for the yearly registration mid-year.	October, annually	Encourages greater uptake of registration throughout the year
Offer discounted or reduced registration fees for adopted dogs or cats in the first year of registration	Ongoing	To reward residents who adopt animals through pounds or shelters.

### 3. NUISANCE DOGS AND CATS

The purpose of this part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to identify actions, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to cause a nuisance. .

Cardinia Shire Council's Local Law 17 sets out laws which must be complied with by all residents and provides Compliance Services Officers the tools required to handle such complaints.

#### Current situation

*Our current data*

Activity	2019/2020	2020/2021
Pick up contained dog	12	21
Dogs reported wandering at large	50	60
Barking dog complaints	248	238
Pick up contained cat	29	13
Cat nuisance	133	162

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

- Compulsory de-sexing of all cats over the age of 3 months (Domestic Animals Act 1994 s.10A(1)).
- Dogs must be on leash at all times unless in designated off-leash zones (Cardinia Shire Council Local Law 17 clause 45.)
- All cats must be secured to the premises of the owner (Domestic Animals Act 1994 s.25(1)).

*Our Current Procedures*

- Cardinia Shire Council's Local Law 17
- Handling 'aggressive dogs'
- Collection of dogs after hours
- Decision making of declaring dogs 'Dangerous, Restricted Breed, Menacing.'
- Manual Handling - lifting into and removing dogs from vehicles.
- Manual Handling - transferring feral cats from cages.

Refer Appendix A,B,C,D,E and F

*Our Current Education/Promotion Activities*

- Provide educational material through letterbox drops and advocate responsible ownership relating to confinement of cats and dogs and animal nuisance.
- Provide information on Council's website to report nuisance animal complaints.
- Media releases – Animal Nuisance.

*Our Current Compliance Activities*

Enforcing Prosecute non-compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and breaches of Council's Local Law 17.

This includes;

- Issue 'Warning Notices' and 'Notices to Comply.'
- Issue Infringement Notices.
- Programmed patrols of areas.
- Provide cat and dog traps.
- Provide 24-hour service for the collection of dogs, nuisance and stray animals and reports of dog attacks.
- Robust inspection and consideration of all excess animal permits, including consultation with potential affected residents
- Unscheduled inspections of all declared Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breeds dogs.

**Discussion**

Dogs cause a nuisance when they bark excessively, wander at large, are not kept under effective control by their owner in public places and when their faeces are not picked up in public places. Cats cause a nuisance when they wander at large including on to neighbouring properties.

Council receives many barking dog complaints. The number is expected to increase associated with the growth in population in general and the incidence of development occurring on smaller lots sizes. Many complaints are resolved quickly, by notifying the owner who may be unaware that there is problem. However many are not easily resolved and require more detailed investigation.

Council will investigate alleged barking nuisance, and require complainants to record the offensive barking in a diary format at the time of making their complaint. In this way, information about the complaint can be quickly assessed, which in turn helps to streamline the assessment and resolution of the complaint.

The 24-hour cat curfew introduced in 2000 and it has helped to reduce the number of cats entering private properties, along with a reduction in the impact on native and sensitive fauna.

Cat and dog traps are available for residents to trap animals that are regularly present on their property, along with helpful information to ensure that residents use the traps appropriately.

Dogs are required to be leashed in public places, except in a designated off leash park. Dogs are also required to be kept under effective control in an off-leash park. Dog owners are required to remove their dog's faeces from public places and are required to carry a bag suitable for removing dog faeces. These measures allow residents to comfortably enjoy public places throughout the Shire, and promoted public safety. The public information provided to owners in respect of dogs in public places is scheduled for review and update.

Council's Local Law 17 is scheduled for review in 2022.

Council's procedures relating to managing nuisance animals will be reviewed during the life of the Plan. The Barking Dog Procedure will be reviewed in 2022/2023.



## Action plan – Nuisance Dogs and Cats

Objective 1: Provide readily accessible information to the public relating to animal nuisance

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and update the online and paper-based information provided to residents about council's on- and off-leash areas, making clear the location and boundaries of off-leash areas and the requirements applying in different spaces. This will include the need to remove dog faeces and carry a bag that is suitable for removing dog faeces.	2022/2023	Comprehensive review undertaken.
Review and update signs in public places relating to leash and off-leash requirements. Investigate a QR code link to council's website for more detailed information.	2023/2024	Review undertaken. Signs updated.
Promote and inform residents of the designated off-leash locations and the requirements in these areas.	Ongoing	Media releases, webpage and face to face contact in public places.
Provide information on Council's website with nuisance animal complaints, including owner responsibilities, causes of excessive barking and suggestions for reducing a dogs' barking.	Ongoing	Easily accessible information available for the public.
Issue regular media releases on responsible ownership, dogs in public places, barking dogs and the need to contain dogs and cats to their property.	Quarterly	Informs and educates the public.
Ensure all eligible primary schools within the Shire are aware of the <i>Responsible Pet Ownership</i> primary school program that is offered to all primary schools each year by Animal Welfare Victoria	Annual	Maximise the number of schools within the Shire participating in the program each year

Objective 2: Ensure Council's policies and procedures are up to date and appropriate for Cardinia Shire

Review Local Law 17	2022	Review pending
Gather data to assist in monitoring the incidence and reporting of nuisance dog behaviour in all Council reserves	2023	Improved data collection practices, with ability to identify trends and locations of concern
Monitor the use of Council's Off Leash Parks in anticipation of increased usage	2022/2023	Ongoing data evaluation to help inform decision making
Review the Council Procedure in relation to the investigation of Barking Dog or nuisance noise complaints	2022/2023	Streamlined procedures and guidance for AMO's investigating complaints.
Conduct a review of all Council animal management procedures	2023/2024	Procedures reviewed and updated
Enhance data collection opportunities to obtain more detailed information	2023/2024	Will provide for more and better information of trends, and will

about locations where nuisance animal behaviour is concentrated		support annual review of our strategy.
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## 4. DOG ATTACKS

The purpose of this part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to promote actions that ensure, services and strategies that minimise the risk of injury to people and other animals resulting from dog attacks.

### Current situation

*Our current data*

Activity	2019/2020	2020/2021
Dog attack	46	43
Dog rush	21	21

All complaints of dog attacks are treated as a high priority by staff and Council will explore all enforcement options when a breach of law occur.

The prolonged COVID 19 restrictions interrupted the typical patterns of dog aggression reports. Changes to court processes also resulted in fewer prosecutions occurring that we would typically expect.

Compliance Services apply a Dog attack – initial response, seizure, investigation and prosecution procedure to ensure that a consistent approach is taken by all Compliance Services Officers when investigating dog attack offences and referring matters to the Magistrates Court.

Council has a discretionary power to seize dogs during the investigation of suspected attacks. Council officers make these decisions using a risk-based methodology, which is reviewed from time to time.

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

- Leash requirement for dogs except in designated off-leash zones (Cardinia Shire Council Local Law 17 clause 45.)
- Effective control of dogs requirement in designated off-leash areas (Cardinia Shire Council Local Law 17 clause 45.)
- The After Hours Procedure which prioritises after hours requests relating to animal aggression.
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- Dog attack – initial response, seizure, investigation and prosecution procedure
- Dog Control Decisions Policy

*Our Current Education/Promotion Activities*

- media releases in local newspapers, on Council social media channels and Cardinia 'Connect' Magazine advocating to the public to choose pets carefully.
- Media releases to inform the public of Council's prosecution results.
- Website information to report all dog attacks immediately.

### Discussion

Council is aware that not every dog attack is reported. This is why Council has a strong focus on encouraging people to report all dog attacks which occur.

Publication of Court outcomes is critical to keep the public informed and acts to deter others.

If a dog attack occurs, it is Council's responsibility to conduct a full investigation and potentially to bring the owner before the Court. The complaint is treated with the up most seriousness and is

always followed up. Communication with the public is essential to give them every option to lodge a complaint. One dog attack is too many.

Most dog attacks and dog rushes occur in and around the family home (including on the footpath near the family home). Containing dogs to the property is a key measure to reduce dog attacks.

Dogs that have not been adequately socialised with humans and other dogs/animals are more likely to display aggressive tendencies. People should be encouraged to attend formal programs to socialise their dog and to expose their dog to a variety of situations.

When a dog attack occurs, there are a range of powers that Council can exercise to reduce the likelihood of reoccurrence, including imposing restrictions on the dog or owner, applying for orders to ensure improved behavioural training occurs etc.

It is important to ensure children know how to behave around dogs. This is especially important for children that don't live with or have experience with dogs. Animal Welfare Victoria's school and kindergarten programs are designed to reduce dog attacks on children. Council will encourage all schools and kindergartens to undertake the program.

## Action plan – Dog Attacks

Objective 1: To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to the prevention of Dog Attacks (Education/Promotional Activities).

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Raise awareness of risk of dog attacks in the home, in the street and in parks and how to reduce these risks through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution of brochures, factsheets and other material developed by the Bureau of Animal Welfare and/or Council, regarding dog attacks</li> <li>• Information included with registration renewals</li> <li>• Media releases in relation to successful prosecutions of dog attacks</li> <li>• Actively promoting the Bureau of Animal Welfare Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO).</li> <li>• Providing information to vets, pet shops, breeders, shelters, etc, to display and/or hand out</li> <li>• Council's social media (Facebook, Twitter)</li> </ul>	Ongoing throughout each year.	<p>Reduction in the number of dog attacks</p> <p>Less dogs and cats at large</p> <p>Reduction in the number of nuisance animal complaints</p>
<p>Provide information on how to report dog attacks – if bitten or witness an attack on a person or animal.</p> <p>Promote and encourage the reporting of dog attacks whether on public or private property</p> <p>Provide information on the consequences of a dog attack.</p>	Ongoing throughout each year.	<p>Media releases</p> <p>Council website</p> <p>Council magazine</p>
Review signage in public places. Investigate a QR code link to Council's website with important information	2022	<p>Council's website</p> <p>On ground signage</p>
Actively encourage all eligible kindergartens within the Shire are aware of the Living Safely with Dogs program offered by Animal Welfare Victoria.	Annual	Maximise the number of kindergartens within the Shire participating in the program each year
Actively encourage all eligible primary schools within the Shire are aware of the Responsible Pet Ownership primary school program that is offered to all primary schools each year by Animal Welfare Victoria	Annual	Maximise the number of schools within the Shire participating in the program each year

Objective 2: To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to the prevention of Dog Attacks (Compliance Activities).

<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Maintain dog attack investigation and enforcement policy and procedures.	In place	Ensures consistency
Investigate all complaints regarding alleged dog attacks	Ongoing	Audit carried out to ensure complaints have been investigated thoroughly
Respond to/attend dog attack reports as a matter of top priority for AMOs.	Ongoing	Ensures public safety
Conduct regular patrols to make sure dogs are confined to premises.	Ongoing	Day to day process Promotes compliance AMOs visible to public
Educate construction workers in new estate areas, etc, of the requirement to prevent their dogs from roaming.	Ongoing	Day to day patrols
Report outcomes of major dog attack prosecutions to local media to raise awareness in the community of the need to report dog attacks and Council's action in relation to attacks.	Ongoing	Public interest General deterrence
Provide an after-hours number to report dog attacks.	Ongoing	Through after hours' number Website Face to face
Dog control decision process is in place, and each prosecuted attack is considered in relation to this policy	Ongoing	Provided to owners of attacking dogs and victims
Proactively patrol all designated off leash dog parks	Ongoing	Ensures public safety

## 5. DANGEROUS, MENACING & RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

The purpose of this part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to promote services and strategies that effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in the Shire and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the DAA and its regulations.

### *Current situation*

Declared	2016	2021
Dangerous Dogs	12	5
Restricted Breed Dogs	0	0
Menacing Dogs	37	19

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

- Dog Control Decisions Policy
- Declared Dog Audit Policy
- Dog attack – initial response, seizure, investigation and prosecution procedure Declared Dog and Destruction Procedure
- Compliance and Enforcement Policy
- All Dangerous Dogs, Restricted Breed Dogs and Menacing Dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) (s.44AE).

### *Our Current Education/Promotion Activities*

- media releases in local newspapers, on Council social media channels website and Cardinia 'Connect' Magazine encouraging people to choose pets carefully.
- Media releases to inform the public of Council's prosecution results.
- Website information to report all dog attacks immediately
- Brochure sent to all dog owners "Things you should know about restricted breed dogs."

### *Our Current Compliance Activities*

- Unscheduled audits of all properties housing declared dangerous and restricted breed.
- All Dangerous Dogs, Restricted Breed Dogs and Menacing Dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) (s.44AE).
- Investigations when the public reports possible restricted breed dogs.
- Strict monitoring of owners of declared dogs.
- All breaches are dealt with through enforcement, typically including prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

## Discussion

On occasion, Council exercises discretionary power to impose a Dangerous Dog declaration, Menacing Dog declaration and to destroy dogs that have been found to have committed attacks. These decisions are made under delegation by the Manager, Regulatory Services, according to the process set out in the Dog Control Decisions Policy. This policy sets out the discretionary factors to be considered.

When a dog is declared, the DAA has strict requirements for owners that must be complied with. Council will continue to ensure such dogs are identified and their owners are aware of and comply with their responsibilities. Such dogs are strictly monitored with formal and on the spot inspections to ensure compliance and overall public safety.

All enquiries from the public regarding the possible incidence of a dangerous and restricted breed dogs within the Shire are dealt with immediately. Council also seeks to identify any declared dogs that may be present in the municipality but are not present as such on Council records.



### Action plan – Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Objective 1: To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs (Education/Promotional Activities).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide residents with information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The types of declared dogs and how they are to be identified and kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations, including prescribed collars, signage at premises, housing requirements, muzzling, etc</li> <li>• How to report menacing dogs, dog bites</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Website. Face to face. Media releases.
Ensure all owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Act regarding identification and keeping these dogs by providing them with relevant sections of the Act, brochures, fact sheets/develop information kit.	Annually (Feb)	Education. Gains compliance. Provides owners of declared dogs every opportunity to comply.
Patrol industrial sites or building sites that may have guard dogs to promote legislative requirements.	Ongoing	Education. Promotes public safety and compliance with the Act.

Objective 2: To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs (Compliance Activities).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure that Council's declaration policies and procedures are sound and robust to support any appeals to VCAT.	Annually	Ensures consistency.
Ensure all declared dogs are accurately registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and that details regarding change of owner/change of address/death of dog are updated as soon as possible.	Ongoing	Legislative requirement. Consistency. Accurate record keeping.
Respond to complaints regarding Menacing, Dangerous and Restricted Breed dogs as a matter of priority and urgency.	Ongoing	Promotes public safety. Public awareness.
Conduct annual audits of the premises of all dangerous or restricted dogs	Annually	Ensures compliance
Follow-up non-compliance issues until owner complies.	Ongoing audits	Legislative requirement.
Use microchip registries to identify possible restricted breed dogs within the municipality.	Ongoing	Ensures compliance

## 6. PET OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

The purpose of this part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to promote actions to address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

### Current situation

In 2020/2021 341 dogs and cats entered Council's pound. The breakdowns are provided below.

*Our current data 2020/2021*

Status	Dog	Cat	Total
Euthanized	7	74	81
Adopted	5	43	48
Reclaimed	173	39	212
Total	185	156	341

*Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedure*

- Compulsory de-sexing of all cats over the age of 3 months, Cardinia Local Law No 17 Clause 46
- 24 hour cat curfew - All cats must be secured to the premises of the owner.

*Our Current Education/Promotion Activities*

- Media releases promoting responsible pet ownership and issues relating to breeding in local newspapers, on Council's website and Cardinia 'Connect' Magazine.
- Free registration of dogs and cats under the age of 3 months for first year of registration.
- Readily accessible information through brochures and fact sheets from the DPI relating to animal keeping.
- Reduced rate for the first year of registration for any adopted dogs and cats

*Our Current Compliance Activities*

- Ensure all cats are de-sexed prior to registration.
- All cats must be secured to the premises of the owner
- Hire of cat traps
- Issue infringement notices for dogs and cats found at large

### Discussion

Current activities appear to suggest that dogs that are impounded are highly likely to be reclaimed by their owner or adopted. A very small proportion of dogs are euthenaised due to being abandoned and unsuitable for re-homing.

However, the data indicate a high number of cats will not be claimed if they are impounded by Council staff, and will be euthenaised.

As Cardinia Shire is rapidly growing, there is need for education through new resident's packs, and media releases to ensure compliance relating to animal keeping.

The implementation of compulsory de-sexing of all cats over the age of 3 months and the requirements to secure all cats to the owner's premises are a few tools used by Council to curb

overpopulation and therefore reduce the euthanasia rate. Council hires cat traps to the public, which is well utilised.

Council has applied for and received grants to promote the desexing of cats, particularly among the pensioners. We will continue to seek and apply for similar grants and partnerships to reduce the incidence of unwanted cat breeding.

Many well intentioned people feed stray or feral cats without taking on the full legal responsibility for the animal. These cats are known as semi-owned cats and by and large they are not desexed. Cats breed extremely fast, which is why it is so important that cats are desexed to prevent unwanted numbers. Feeding an unowned cat and not taking full responsibility can contribute to cat overpopulation issues because the cats are strong enough to reproduce and therefore more kittens are brought into a life of disease and neglect which can have significant impacts on local wildlife and create amenity issues for residents. The main initiatives for addressing semi-owned cats are to promote awareness and encourage responsible ownership.

### Action plan - Overpopulation and High Euthanasia Rates

Objective 1: To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Overpopulation and High Euthanasia (Education/Promotion Activities).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Seek and implement projects to actively promote low cost desexing of cats	As available	Promotes compliance, and reduces incidence of unwanted breeding.
Enforce confinement of animals to owner's premises to prevent straying and possible euthanasia, if not registered.	Ongoing	Promotes compliance. Assist public. Convenience for public.
Promote 'saving a life' by adopting cats/dogs from pound or shelter and promote the benefits of adoption from pound or shelter – e.g. usually cheaper than buying from a pet shop, breeder or on-line (especially when taking micro chipping, registration and desexing costs into account).	Annually	Promotes compliance. Assist public. Convenience for public. Media releases. Website. Council magazine.
Offer half price first registration if proof provided that animal was adopted from an approved pound or shelter.	Ongoing	Promotes compliance. Assist public. Convenience for public. Media releases. Website. Council magazine.
Endeavour to return animals to owners on the first offence, if applicable	Ongoing	Provides an education opportunity
Actively promote the updating of microchipping information	Ongoing	Face to Face Website Media releases

Objective 2: To provide readily accessible information to the public relating to Overpopulation and High Euthanasia (Compliance Activities).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide information to residents about the implications of feeding unowned cats.	Ongoing	Reduce the incidence of people feeding unowned cats without taking full responsibility for them.

Promote the benefits of desexing of dogs and cats including the requirement that all cats in the Shire are desexed.	Ongoing	Promotes compliance. Assist public. Convenience for public.
Enforce confinement of animals to owner's premises to prevent straying and possible euthanasia, if not registered.	Ongoing	Promotes compliance. Assist public. Convenience for public.
Promote 'saving a life' by adopting cats/dogs from pound or shelter and promote the benefits of adoption I from pound or shelter – e.g. usually cheaper than buying from a pet shop, breeder or on-line (especially when taking micro chipping, registration and desexing costs into account).	Annually	Promotes compliance. Assist public. Convenience for public. Media releases. Website. Council magazine.
Offer half price first registration half price if proof provided that animal was adopted from an approved pound or shelter.	Ongoing	Promotes compliance. Assist public. Convenience for public. Media releases – Connect. Website.
Return animals to their owners, before utilising the pound.	Ongoing	Encourages registration and microchipping of pets Reduces fees and charges for owners
Offer cat trap hire to residents to assist with overpopulation of cats	Ongoing	Promotes compliance Assists public Reduces feral population and wildlife being killed

## 7. DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

The purpose of this part of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to promote actions that ensure all domestic animal businesses are managed appropriately and comply with all regulatory requirements under the *Domestic Animals Act*.

### Current situation

A Domestic Animal Business (DAB) is defined in the DAA. It means:

- An animal shelter, Council pound or pet shop, or
- An enterprise which carries out the breeding of dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) to sell if the enterprise has 3 or more fertile dogs and the proprietor is not a recreational breeder, or
- An enterprise which carries out the breeding of cats to sell if the enterprise has 3 or more fertile cats and the proprietor is not a recreational breeder, or
- An enterprise which trains or boards dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) or cats for the purposes of profit, or
- An enterprise which rears or keeps dogs (other than GRV greyhounds) or cats for the purpose of profit or sale or for a fee or for exchange of services.

Cardinia Shire Council currently has 17 registered DABs. This includes:

- 8 animal boarding establishments
- 3 animal breeding establishments
- 2 pet shops
- 4 training establishments

Each DAB needs to be registered in April each year. All premises are inspected annually to ensure the DAB complies with all relevant legislation and codes of practice.

Proactive action is also taken to ensure existing businesses that are not currently registered with Council apply for the appropriate permits and operate in accordance with relevant legislation and codes of practice.

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

- Cardinia Shire Council currently has no orders in place relating to Domestic Animal Businesses. Council acts in accordance with the requirements set in the Act.

#### *Current Education/Promotion Activities.*

- Registrations can be made via Council's website.
- Support and advice is provided to operators of proposed DABs as necessary.
- Information relating to DABs and the requirements and process for registration is provided on Council's website.
- Animal Welfare Victoria fact sheets are available at the Council offices and distributed to DABs as required.

#### *Current Compliance Activities*

- Pre-permit inspections, prior to granting a registrations and permit.
- Annual and random audits of all DABs to ensure they comply with relevant codes of practice.
- Regular patrols of newly set up or unregistered DABs.

- Investigation and enforcement of any alleged breaches in relation to permit conditions, non-compliance and unregistered businesses.

### **Discussion**

Council has a strong focus on ensuring that Domestic Animal Businesses are operating in accordance with the requirements set out in the Domestic Animals Act and the Regulations.

## Action plan - Domestic Animal Businesses

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

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all registered DABs are inspected and audited annually.	Annually	All registered DABs comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice.
Review information on Council's website regarding the registration of DABs	2022/2023	The information provided is up to date and appropriate.
Conduct unscheduled spot inspections of all DABs at least once a year.	Annually	All registered DABs comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice.
Ensure any issues of non-compliance are identified and followed up with information of required actions and timeframes for resolution including further inspections and prosecution where necessary.	Ongoing	All registered DABs comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice.
Conduct media communications regarding DAB definitions, the requirements for registration and applicable codes of practice.	Annually	Promote DAB registration and compliance with relevant legislation and codes of practice.
Actively seek to identify illegal DABs and action accordingly.	Ongoing	All DABs are identified, registered and comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice.
Respond to complaints regarding unregistered DAB's as a priority	Ongoing	All DABs operating are identified, registered and comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice.
Ensure Compliance is notified of any Council Planning applications for animal keeping, breeding and boarding.	Ongoing	Proposed DABs will be registered and comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice.
Respond to complaints regarding advertisements being placed in local newspapers, vet clinics and the internet to detect any unregistered DABs within the municipal district.	Ongoing	All DABs operating are identified, registered and comply with relevant legislation and codes of practice.



## 8. OTHER MATTERS

### Domestic pets and emergency management

The municipal district of the Cardinia Shire Council is located within both a bushfire- and flood-prone area. There were significant events in the Shire or both during the life of the last Plan. Compliance Services have extensively reviewed the contribution of the animal management service in the context of fire and flood emergency.

Council's Emergency Management Team has identified several locations within the Shire to assist animal owners in such emergencies. Compliance Services have proactively engaged with boarding facilities, to achieve standing arrangements to cater for displaced animals during these emergencies.

Council will continue to provide advice/brochures/media releases on what to consider for pets in an emergency – include their needs as part of their emergency planning, e.g. food, water, bowls, bedding, cage, medication, registration and micro chipping to help reunite pets with their owners after emergencies, external identification – e.g. collar with registration tag.

### Discussion

Council will continue to encourage residents to include their pets in their Emergency Fire and Flood Plans.

Consideration will be given to providing assistance to people escaping family violence eg free temporary animal shelter for those Cardinia residents leaving situations of family violence.

### Action plan – Other Matters

Objective 1: To ensure the safety through management of all domestic animals in emergency situations (Education/Promotion Activities).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide support for Council's Emergency Management Team in the development, review and implementation of the Municipal Emergency Animal Management Plan (MEAMP)	Ongoing	Mock Run Throughs Real Life Scenarios Education of Community
Provide information on Council's website about the need to include pets in household emergency management plans.	Ongoing	Information provided.
Ensure the Council's Pound Services Contract caters for displaced animals	Ongoing	Provisions in place, and will be incorporated in tender when contract renewed Education of Community
Review, scope and consider further initiatives provide assistance to people escaping situations of family violence.	2023	Review conducted. Findings implemented.

Objective 2: To ensure the safety through management of all domestic animals in emergency situations (Compliance Activities).

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide support for Council's Emergency Management Team in the development, review and implementation of the Municipal Emergency Animal Management Plan (MEAMP)	Ongoing	Mock Run Throughs Real Life Scenarios Education of Community
Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses have a current Emergency Management Plan	Ongoing	AMO's to asses each year as part of audits

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND REPORTING

The DAA requires the Domestic Animal Management Plan to be reviewed annually. Specifically Sections 68A(3) states that

Every Council must:

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

Council will monitor performance of the objectives that are detailed throughout the Plan by:

- Reporting on KPIs to the Manager Regulatory Services.
- Establishing an annual action plan for reviewing the Plan and evaluating its implementation.
- Reporting annually through Council's established reporting procedures in accordance with the requirements of the DAA and Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.

Annual reviews of the Domestic Animal Management Plan will be conducted by the Co-ordinator Compliance Services

Activity	When	Evaluation
Establish a framework for recording longitudinal animal management data. This will need to be considered in the context of the total population and households due to rapid housing and population growth.	2022/2023	Allows for long term trends to be reviewed.
Identify data gaps, and opportunities to improve data collection, to promote the implementation and review of the DAMP	Annual	Allows for better decision making, and monitoring of the suitability of the actions contained in the DAMP.
Conduct an annual review of the DAMP	October/November each year	Ensures the Plan continues to meet the current needs of the community and any legislative changes.
Update DAMP if required	October/November each year	Ensures the Plan continues to meet the current needs of the community and any legislative changes.
Provide the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning a copy of the plan including any amendments.	October/November each year	Copy submitted
Publish an evaluation of the implementation of the DAMP in the annual report.	With the annual report.	Evaluation published