



CITY OF
MONASH

**DOMESTIC
 ANIMAL
MANAGEMENT
PLAN
2026-2029**

1 INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

1.1 PURPOSE OF DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) requires council to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years.

The plan must set out a method for evaluating whether the animal management services provided by council are adequate to give effect to requirements of the Act and the Domestic Animal Regulations 2015.

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

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

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

Theme	Requirements	Benefit
Evaluation	The DAMP must set out a method council uses for evaluating whether the animal control services provided are effective and achieve requirements under the Act and Regulations	Provides evidence that council programs are effective, efficient and deliver on Government's expectations.
Training of Authorised Officers	The DAMP must set out training programs for the training of authorised officers.	Provides assurance that Authorised Officers are suitably trained to carry out their duties effectively.

Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation	The DAMP must set out programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with relevant legislation and associated codes of practice	Provides assurance that responsible pet ownership and residents understand their obligations.
Programs to address over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates	The DAMP must set out programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.	Provides assurance that council is providing programs and education to reduce the population of unregistered animals and the euthanasia rates within their municipality.
Registration and identification	The DAMP must set out programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.	Provides assurance that residents are aware of their obligations and as a result register and identify their cats and dogs.
Nuisance	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance	Provides assurance that residents can access prevention, support and are held accountable if their animals are causing a nuisance.
Dog attacks	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.	Provides assurance that there are policies and procedures to minimise the risk of dog attacks on the public and other animals
Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breed dogs	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to ensure that those dogs are compliant with the Act and Regs	Provides assurance that these dogs are kept in accordance with the Act and Regs to ensure there is minimal risk to residents
Domestic Animal Businesses	The DAMP must outline programs, services and strategies to ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are complying with the Act, the Regs and related Code of Practices.	Provides assurance that Domestic Animal Businesses understand their obligations and are compliant with Act, the Regs and related Code of Practices.
Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting	Council must review their DAMP annually and submit a review to the Department.	Provides assurance that the targets in the DAMP are being met.

Other matters, including: - Reviewing existing order	Council may review current orders and make new orders in relation to dogs and cats	Provides assurance that council is reviewing existing orders and making necessary changes where necessary
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1.2 PROCESS APPLIED IN DEVELOPING THE PLAN

In preparing the Plan, the following considerations have been made:

- Reviewing the current DAM plan to identify opportunities for refining existing objectives. Existing animal management operations were reviewed including existing procedures, local laws and orders.
- The strategic content was reviewed including plans and strategies that might be relevant to animal management.
- Feedback from community consultation.
- The findings of a Gender Impact Assessment that was prepared to help inform this plan.
- Research, including an assessment of the Victorian Cat Management Strategy 2025-2035 and the Victorian pet census which was conducted July 2023.

1.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND PROFILE OF COUNCIL

Monash City Council is located between 13 and 24 kilometres south-east of Melbourne CBD and covers an area of approximately 81.5 square kilometres. The municipality is predominantly residential, and contains substantial industrial, commercial and recreational areas. The municipality has an estimated population of around 203,560 residents, making it one of the most populous municipalities in Victoria. The City of Monash population forecast for 2025 is 213,803 and is forecast to grow to 250,219 by 2041.

The municipality holds a strong multicultural position, with approximately 95,826 of the population born overseas.

At the last census, data revealed that businesses in Monash provided 130,172 jobs, making it the second largest employment destination in Melbourne, after the Central Business District.

The cultural diversity of Monash's residents is amplified by the fact that just over 50% of Monash's residents were born overseas, with the most populous being from China, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Greece, United Kingdom, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Italy and New Zealand. Other than English, the main languages spoken in Monash households are Mandarin, Greek, Cantonese, Sinhalese, Hindi, Vietnamese, Tamil, Italian, Korean, Hindi and Punjabi.

Suburbs within Monash's municipal boundaries are:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| • Ashwood | • Mulgrave |
| • Clayton | • Notting Hill |
| • Glen Waverley | • Oakleigh |
| • Hughesdale | • Oakleigh East |

- Huntingdale
- Mount Waverley
- Wheelers Hill

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

Adjoining municipalities are the cities of:

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

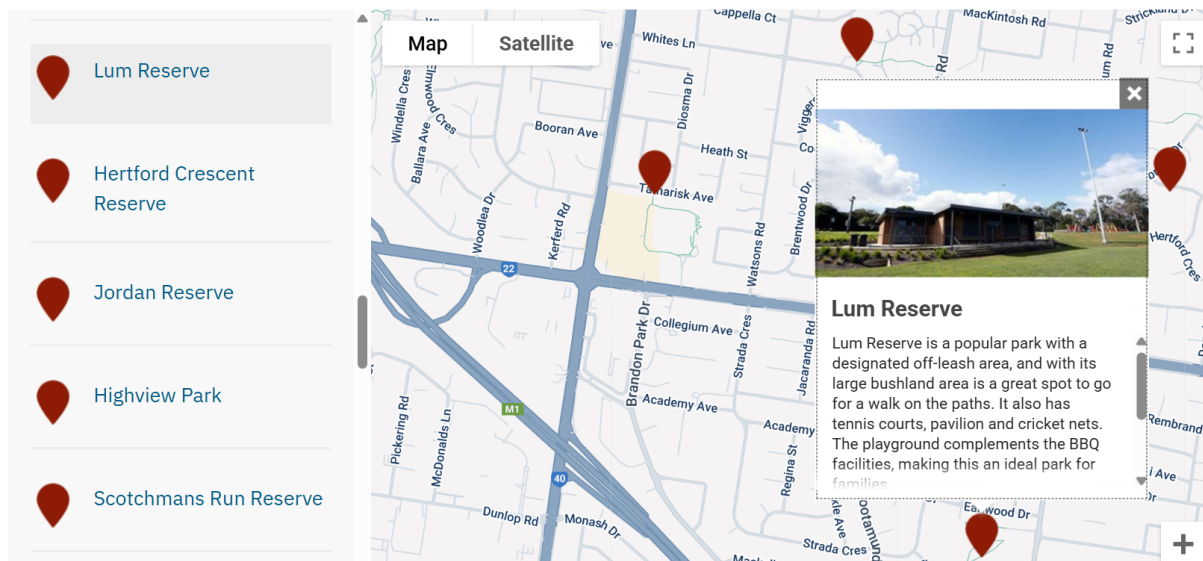
Major features of Monash include:

- Monash National Employment and Innovation Cluster
- Monash University in Clayton, which includes the Victorian Heart Hospital
- Monash Medical Centre in Clayton
- Four private hospitals in Clayton (2), Mount Waverley and Mulgrave
- Major shopping precincts in Brandon Park, Clayton, Glen Waverley, Mount Waverley, Oakleigh and Mulgrave
- Regional parks managed by Parks Victoria including Jells Park, Bushy Park, Shepherds Bush, Scotchmans Creek Linear Park and Corhanwarrabul Wetlands
- Well positioned and maintained public parks and reserves throughout Monash for both active and passive recreational pursuits
- Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) project works are being undertaken within the municipality
- Home to manufacturers of global healthcare services such as Moderna and Pizer

Monash has extensive areas of public open space well distributed and located across the municipality. Over 90% of the available open space is owned and managed by Council. These spaces provide important leisure and recreation opportunities for the public to exercise their dogs and there are 47 areas within the municipality where dogs can be exercised off-leash.

Interactive maps have been created to assist dog owners to locate a park appropriate to their needs.

<https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/Residents-Property/Animals/Dogs/Off-leash-areas-for-dogs/Dog-off-leash-areas-map>



1.4 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

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

Program/Service:	Service Level:
<i>Identification & Registration</i>	<i>5602 cats & 11,903 dogs</i>
<i>Identification & Registration- doorknock campaigns</i>	<i>Twice annually, post renewal period</i>
<i>Request to collect wandering dog</i>	<i>Same day</i>
<i>Response to low risk domestic animal complaints</i>	<i>Three business days</i>
<i>Response to high risk domestic animal complaints</i>	<i>Immediate response</i>
<i>Domestic animal complaints</i>	<i>three business days</i>
<i>Dangerous Dogs complaints</i>	<i>Immediate response to high risk incidents</i> <i>Twice annual programmed inspections</i>
<i>Routine street/park patrols</i>	<i>Daily</i>
<i>Pound Services (lost collection pick-ups)</i>	Mon – Sat 9am-4.30pm Sun & Public Holidays 11.30am – 3.30pm
<i>Micro-chipping and/or desexing programs</i>	<i>As available</i>
<i>Low cost Vaccination sessions</i>	<i>As available</i>
<i>Responsible Pet Ownership School information sessions</i>	<i>As programmed by the State Government</i>
<i>After hours emergency service</i>	4.45pm – 8.15am daily 4.45pm Friday – 8.15am Monday (weekend)
<i>Cat trap service – traps provided to residents. Cat traps to assist lowering semi-owned, unowned and feral cat numbers</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>
<i>Animal management promotion of services and general welfare</i>	<i>Council festivals and events</i>

1.5 DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS

	2020		2024	
	Dogs	Cats	Dogs	Cats
Number of registered dogs / cats	11,624 De-sexed- 10,320 Entire – 1,304	5,044 De-sexed- 5,037 Entire – 7	11,903 De-Sexed – 9,961 Entire - 1942	5602 De-Sexed – 5,595 Entire - 7
Number of declared dogs (dangerous, menacing, restricted)	Dangerous – 3 Menacing – 1 Restricted - 0		Dangerous – 6 Menacing – 0 Restricted - 0	
Number of registered domestic animal businesses	7	"	6	"

Number of animals Seized/Surrendered	Seized – 3 Surrendered- 108		Seized – 14 Surrendered - 39	Seized – 0 Surrendered - 63
Number of cats/dogs Reclaimed/ Rehomed/ Euthanised (includes stray and wild animals offered up to the pound by members of the public)	Reclaimed – 276 Rehomed – 46 Euthanised - 13	Reclaimed – 54 Rehomed -496 Euthanised - 214	Reclaimed – 289 Rehomed – 70 Euthanised - 23	Reclaimed – 53 Rehomed – 469 Euthanised -166
Number of prosecutions associated with dogs	4		14	
Estimated dog/cat (owned) population	37,392	24,811	13,500	7600
Number of complaints relating to cats and dogs	Dogs and cats 2212		Dogs and cats 2845	

Registered Cats and Dogs

Since the last Plan, Council has observed a 5% overall increase in registration numbers. Specifically, dog registrations have risen by 2.4%, while cat registrations have surged by 11%.

Registered Domestic Animal Businesses

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

- Two pet shops
- One dog training business
- Three catteries

Estimated dog and cat (owned) within the Monash Municipality.

The Victorian Government conducted the first pet census in 2023 and attracted over 37,000 responses. While the survey does not break down into municipal data, key findings estimate that there are approximately 4.3 million pets in the state, with dogs accounting for 41% and cats for 24%.

- There are an estimated 1.4 million Victorian households with a pet. The census estimated that there are approximately 4.3 million pets in the state, with dogs accounting for 41% of that number. This translates to roughly 1.77 million dogs in Victoria.
- Dogs are the most common type of pet.
- 51% of dog owners acquired their dog from a breeder, compared to 10% of cat owners.
- 28% of cat owners got their cat from a rehoming organisation and 22% from an animal shelter.
- Victorians spent \$6.6 billion on their pets in the year leading up to the census.

- 10% of Victorian adults planned to get a pet in the next 12 months.
- 98% of Victorians said their pets had a positive impact on their lives.
- Across Victorian Council's approximately 227,000 cats are registered, however the census estimates that there are around 914,000 pet cats in Victoria.

2. TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

2.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

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

The Community Safety and Amenity Department has four Business Support Officers who amongst other responsibilities provide support with matters including animal management, animal registrations, permits, enquiries and complaints. The department includes two Infringement Review Officers who are responsible for the management of infringements notices issued under a range of legislation including animal management controls. The Business Support and Infringement Review Officers report to the Coordinator - Business Support.

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

As part of our animal management strategy, Council recognises the importance of authorised officers being adequately trained. All Community Laws Officers are required to obtain the Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation and the Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance). These certifications cover skills such as animal handling, investigation, report writing, communication, and time management.

Table 1 sets out the proposed training opportunities for officers during the forthcoming four year period.

2.2 OUR PLANNED TRAINING FOR AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Table 1: Training Status for Authorised Officers

Authorised Officer Training	When	Timeframe
Certificate IV Animal Regulation & Management, and Government Investigations	As determined in individual performance development plans	Newly appointed officers who do not hold appropriate certificate will be required to start course within 18 months.
Industry training – animal handling	Ongoing	Officers to attend when training available.

Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days	Officers to attend when training is available	Officers to attend when training available.
Canine DNA evidence collection	Officers to attend when training is available	Officers to attend when training is available
In-house training on relevant subject matter, e.g. brief preparation, statement taking	Ongoing	Officers to attend quarterly training as needs are identified
In-house training and e-learning modules (i.e. Code of Conduct, Fraud & Corruption, Negotiation and Conflict)	Ongoing	Officers to attend as part of Learning and Development Training
Induction program for new staff	Completed	Corporate training internally
Australian Institute of Animal Management seminars/training	Ongoing	Officers to attend training and/or seminars when available.
Training on handling pets in emergency	Ongoing	Officers to attend training and/or seminars when available.
Attendance at Eastern regional emergency management exercises	Ongoing	Officers to participate when required.
Defensive driving course	Ongoing	Officers to attend as the need arises
Canine Anatomy and Identification Training	Ongoing	Officers to attend training and/or seminars when available. Six officers are currently booked to attend this training in 2025.

2.3 OUR PLAN

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

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify additional training opportunities in consultation with management and staff	Annually	Documentation and performance conversations must be completed and integrated into each officer's development plan, as part of the annual organisational development training program.

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

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete a development plan process with each staff member, identifying training needs.	Annually at time of performance conversations	Completion of all identified training activities in development training plan
Authorised officers to receive training on prevention of family violence and responding to disclosures.	Ongoing	Attend as available

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

3.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Council's approach to education and enforcement is based on the principles of Educate, Ask, Tell, and Enforce.

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

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

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

Current programs and information include:

Over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates

- Night-time curfew for cats
- Pound services that focus on reuniting animals
- Understanding of the ability for vets to reunite animals

Registration and identification of dogs and cats

- Distribution of registration brochures and fact sheets, e.g. 'Living with Dogs and Cats' pamphlet as a guide for both pet owners and non-owners

- Publish information on the Council website and in the Council resident's newsletter to advise of the registration period and requirements
- Follows up pet owners that have not renewed their pet registration
- Annual door knock program
- Improve the accuracy of Council registration database with Microchip Registry data annually.
- Promote the requirement for owners to "pick up" after their dogs and dispose of waste appropriately
- Increasingly provide dog waste bins and drinking fountains at parks
- Increase in off leash dog areas

Nuisance

- Topical articles on animal management and current animal issues are published in the monthly resident news bulletin
- Face to face contact with residents and regular patrols are conducted in parks and reserves. This allows officers an opportunity to interact, educate and advise pet owners on responsible pet ownership.
- During patrols, temporary corflute signs are erected with educational messages regarding animal registration and the importance of cleaning up after dogs.
- Investigation of contraventions of Local and State controls
- Signage in parks and reserves to remind dog owners of the rules applicable when visiting a park.
- Cat trap service to help control semi-owned or feral cats

Dog Attacks

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

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

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

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

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

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

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

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

Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB)

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

Additional Animal Permits

To support neighbourhood amenity and promote healthy, responsible pet ownership, owners must obtain a permit to keep more than the allowed number of cats or dogs if they have two or more. Authorised officers inspect properties to confirm suitability for the proposed number of animals, including appropriate housing and measures to mitigate nuisance risks. Council currently has 49 issued additional animal permits.

Emergency Management

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

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

Public Education Program

Animal Welfare Victoria conducts public educational sessions in schools and kindergartens about responsible pet ownership. This includes the 'We Are Family' program, which is specifically aimed at parents of children aged 0 to 4 years, the group most at risk of dog attacks. It provides information and strategies for parents to ensure a safe relationship between children and pets. The program is available to all hospitals with antenatal programs and all maternal and child health centres. The Responsible Pet Ownership Education program teaches children from ages 4-12 about living safely with dogs and responsible pet ownership in general.

Educational programs and activities conducted by Council include scheduled participation in Council festivals and events. These engagements not only promote responsible pet ownership but also foster positive interactions with the community, enhancing the connection between residents and Council officers.

Council recently facilitated in partnership with the RSPCA to deliver several low cost vaccination days, which has included distributing education packs upon attendance. These packs provide valuable information on responsible and enjoyable pet ownership, as well as literature relevant to the species being vaccinated. By offering these vaccination days, it assists in promoting healthy pet ownership by helping to prevent potentially harmful diseases and fostering a safer, more informed community.

In 2025, Council will partner with Animal Aid Victoria to introduce a new pound facility service. The focus will be on reducing the number of animals needing the pound through a reuniting-first approach. This strategy promotes responsible pet ownership by encouraging lifetime tags and updated contact information, ensuring lost pets are quickly returned to their families.

Supporting Cat Containment

Cat containment can be supported by providing cat owners with resources and information to assist with transitioning their cat to a stay-at-home lifestyle. Councils' Cat Control Order requires that cats are confined to their property between sunset (or 7pm) and sunrise. To support cat owners in transitioning to an indoor or contained lifestyle, distribution of information to assist will be a focus within the plan. This may include information on how to build cat enclosures, how to transition cats to an indoor lifestyle and being aware of plants toxic to cats either in the yard or in the home.

Reuniting Pets Legislation

Effective from 1 October 2022, the Domestic Animals Amendment (Reuniting Pets and Other Matters) Act 2022 introduced reforms to the Domestic Animals Act 1994. These reforms allow shelters and participating vets to efficiently reunite pets with their owners and report data to Council. This ensures Council oversight of dog and cat movements. In certain cases, Council officers must collect animals, maintaining a relationship with participating vets.

3.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS:

Dog Control Order - Number 6

On 28 March 2023, Monash Council adopted Dog Control Order Number 6 under section 26(2) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994. This order introduced 14 new off-leash areas, giving dog owners more places to enjoy with their pets. Additionally, it adjusted the boundaries of eight existing areas, either expanding or reducing them. Furthermore the Order expanded the prohibition of dogs to include specific parts of Gardiners Reserve, Ashwood Reserve, and Napier Reserve due to the installation of synthetic playing surfaces.

In summary Dog Control Order - Number 6 provides that:

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

Prohibited Areas - A dog must not enter a Prohibited Area. The prohibited areas within Monash City are the turf pitch and synthetic pitch at Jack Edwards Reserve and the synthetic pitch at Gardiners Reserve, Ashwood Reserve, Napier Reserve and the turf pitch at Holmesglen Reserve. The Mulgrave Reserve Wetlands are also a prohibited area.

Owner's obligations in a Designated Reserve – provides for exercise off a chain, cord or leash, with some restrictions. There are 47 designated reserves within the City of Monash.

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

Cat Control Order

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

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

Mandatory Cat De-Sexing Order

At its meeting of 30 September 2014, Council resolved that newly registered cats are required to be desexed at time of registration (s.10A of the Act). This came into effect as of 1 January 2015 and exemptions apply in accordance with the Act.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024

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

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

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Enforcement Guidelines

Council's enforcement efforts adhere to established guidelines that support activities aimed at protecting the community, environment, and amenity. Officers are required to investigate, enforce, and ensure compliance with a range of legislative provisions, including animal management activities. These guidelines help officers respond promptly and consistently, enabling them to achieve outcomes that foster behavioural change.

3.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Reduce the number of pecuniary compliance actions by educating the community about their legislative obligations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Distribution of fact sheets and web content regarding legislative obligations.	Sent annually with renewals and with all new registrations	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners
Use of dog poo stencils on walking tracks, entries to parks and on footpaths (response to resident complaints)	Ongoing	Decrease in complaints around dog poo being left by dog owners
Programmed park patrols for educating the community	Ongoing	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners
Continue the use of magnetic reminders around pet registration and other relevant messaging on all Compliance vehicles	Annually	Increased awareness that pets need to be registered.
Continue the use of corflute signage in reserves during park patrols. Update to maintain relevance as required.	Ongoing	Increased awareness of roles and responsibilities from pet owners
Schedule specific articles prepared and put in the monthly bulletin to meet needs of the community	Quarterly	Educate to meet the demands of trends/weather
Advertise Council's local law requirement for additional animal permits	Annually	Increased awareness of the necessity to apply and hold an additional animal permit via digital platforms

Objective 2: Promote animal welfare platforms

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote Animal Welfare platforms, following assessments to ensure consistency with the objectives of this plan.	ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance to be monitored.
Promotion of Council's pound facility to assist animal owners with a range of animal welfare educational tools	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance to be monitored. Less animals attending the pound. Digital posts and articles produced in partnership to promote welfare

Communicate with vet clinics to outline their ability to attempt to reunite animals with owners.	Ongoing with annual monitoring	Monitor via reporting function on how many vets have opted into responsible reuniting and number of animals reunited.
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4. PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVER-POPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

4.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

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

Animals impounded in Monash and euthanised during 2024 compared with those recorded for 2020 are shown in the below table.

Animals Impounded and Euthanised

Animals	2020	2024
Impounded Dogs	297	306
Impounded Cats	450	379
Euthanised Dogs	13	23
Euthanised Cats	214	166

These statistics show a steady number of dogs being impounded. Officers continue to ensure wandering dogs are collected at the earliest opportunity for their welfare and the safety of other pets and people, however it may indicate that more work can be done to help owners ensure dogs are secured to their property such as regular boundary checks to ensure fences and gates are secured. While there is a slight decrease in both impounded and euthanised cats, it demonstrates that cat management strategies remain a necessary focus. The Victorian Cat Management Strategy 2025-2035 presents key themes which will involve Council as key stakeholders in implementation.

	DOGS		% change	CATS		% change
Year	2020	2024		2020	2024	
De-sexed animals registered	10,320	10,002	-3.9%	5,037	5,691	+12.98%
Entire animals registered	1,304	2027	+55.4%	7	7	0%

The previous plan aimed to increase the number of registered desexed animals, and this was achieved for cats. This is largely due to the requirement for cats to be desexed at the time of registration (exemptions apply), together with an increase in cat registration numbers.

Pound Services

Starting from 1 August 2025, Council's pound facility for cats, dogs, and livestock will move from the RSPCA in Burwood to *Animal Aid* in Coldstream. This change was prompted by the RSPCA's shift in business model, which led to their decision to no longer provide pound facilities to Victorian councils. Consequently, Council had to tender for a new facility. Following the public tender process, Animal Aid was awarded the contract.

There will be a conscious focus on reducing the number of animals that need to visit the pound by prioritising a reuniting first approach. This strategy aims to promote responsible pet ownership with key messaging being around ensuring that lifetime tags are worn and contact information is up to date. It also ensures that lost pets are quickly and safely returned to their families.

Messaging to animal owners will emphasise the importance of keeping contact information with Council up to date and ensuring that lifetime tags are worn, not faded, and can be easily read. Owners can contact Council for a free replacement tag if needed. This will help reunite animals with their owners without requiring a visit to the pound.

Acknowledging that this move will require adjustments for the community, it is important that time is spent to satisfactorily communicate with residents about where animals will be taken should Council officers not be able to reunite an animal in the first instance.

Cat Trap Service

Council delivers a cat trap service, making cat traps available to the public so they can trap stray cats on their property. In 2024, cat traps were provided to 188 residents to help control semi-owned and feral cat populations. According to Victoria's pet census, there are approximately 227,000 registered cats and an estimated 914,000 pet cats, with an unknown number of stray and feral cats. Council will continue to administer this program as it aligns with Action 12 of the Cat Management Strategy, which focuses on reducing the impacts of semi-owned and unowned cat populations. These cats often contribute to wildlife and biodiversity impacts, pose disease transmission risks, and can rapidly reproduce.

Cat Curfew

In 2021, Council introduced a cat curfew requiring all cats to be securely confined between sunset (or 7:00 PM, whichever is later) and sunrise. The benefits of this curfew are significant for cats, owners, and wildlife alike. There has been a noticeable increase in community awareness regarding the curfew. This heightened awareness, along with changes in the behaviour of residents and pet owners, has led to a broader understanding that cats should not be roaming at night.

Complaints often reflect an awareness of the curfew, with residents expecting their neighbours to comply. However, more work can be explored to assist owners in transitioning their cats to an indoor lifestyle at night. This can be achieved through the use of cat enclosures and changes in routine, such as keeping cats indoors after their evening meal.

The Victorian Pet Census revealed that 88% of respondents with a cat kept them contained to their property, indicating a positive trend towards responsible pet ownership generally.

Year	Cat nuisance complaints received
2022	97
2023	238
2024	235

Park Patrols – Off-Leash Areas

There are 47 areas in Monash where dogs can be exercised off leash. The areas were subject to extensive public consultation when Council engaged with the community on the Monash Dog Off Leash Policy. The policy details minimum standard provisions when considering whether an off-leash area is appropriate. These standards are used to guide designs, plantings, structures, amenities and the management of off-leash areas, which may include fenced and partially fenced off-leash areas.. Existing areas have been enhanced to include dog poo bags, drinking water facilities and informative signage.

The Victorian Pet census identified that 68% of respondents said they walk their dog at least once a day, with 55% choosing a designated off-leash area as their preference. Community Laws officers patrol these areas on a routine basis to ensure compliance with the relevant controls and to educate dog owners around a range of matters such as registration and picking up after dogs.

4.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS:

Cat Control Order

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

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

Mandatory Cat De-Sexing

At its meeting of 30 September 2014, Council resolved that newly registered cats are required to be desexed at time of registration (s.10A of the Act). This came into effect as of 1 January 2015 and exemptions apply in accordance with the Act.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Refer to 3.2

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law Part 7 – Keeping of Animals contributes to the control and overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of animals permitted to be kept.

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

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

Cat Trap Service

Council provides cat traps to the community and in 2024 189 residents were provided with traps. Cat trapping assists in lowering the number of semi-owned, unowned and feral cat numbers, and also assists residents to manage nuisance cats that may be present on their land during prohibited times.

4.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: To provide readily accessible information to the public in relation to overpopulation and high euthanasia rates

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote confinement of animals to owner's premises to prevent stray cats and dogs and possible euthanasia if the animal is not microchipped and registered	Ongoing	Promotes compliance and the importance of registration
Provide information on how to create a cat enclosure to keep cats contained to properties.	Ongoing	Less reports of wandering/nuisance cats to be monitored. Distribution of fact sheets and digital advertising
Review the cat trap service program with a view to identifying how the program might be enhanced in terms of reducing wild cat population	December 2026	Less reports of wild cats and nuisance cats
Where appropriate implement actions that may arise from the State Government Cat Management Strategy 2025-2035	Ongoing	Less reports of wild cats and nuisance cats. Monitor actions required of Council

Objective 2: Reduce the number of cats and dogs euthanised

Activity	When	Evaluation
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Promote the benefits of pet registration and keeping Council updated with relevant contact information to help reunite animals with their owners, ensuring they are not impounded and taken to the pound.	Ongoing with annual monitoring	Monitor number of cats and dogs taken to pound facility / euthanised.
Actively promote animal adoption programs to assist in the reduction of euthanasia rates.	Ongoing	Monitor adoptions and advertise digitally where available.

Objective 3: Actively seek opportunities to deliver low cost cat desexing programs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Apply and participate in government grant opportunities as they become available	As available	Number of cats desexed by the end of the desexing program.

5. REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

5.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

OUR CURRENT DATA

Registrations of dogs and cats with Council for 2024 calendar year and the categorisation of these registrations are shown below.

Dog and Cat Registrations for 2020– 2024

	DOGS			CATS		
Year	2020	2024	% change	2020	2024	% change
Total number of animals registered	11,624	11,903	+2.4%	5,044	5,502	+9%

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

- making available to residents a pamphlet titled 'Living with Dogs and Cats' as a guide for both pet owners and non-owners;
- follow up pet owners that have not renewed their pet registration;

- publish information on the Council website and in the Council newsletter distributed to residents to advise of the registration period and requirements;
- promote the requirement for owners to “pick up” after their dogs and dispose of waste appropriately;
- provide dog waste bins and drinking fountains at some reserves; and
- distribute registration brochures and fact sheets to residents.

Between 2020 and 2024, there has been an increase in both dog and cat registrations, with a 2.4% increase in dogs and a 9% increase in cats. This rise in cat registration numbers is particularly encouraging. Cat registration often sees the least compliance, but consistent messaging and continued education for cat owners have contributed to improved compliance.

5.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

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

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

CURRENT ORDERS:

Mandatory Cat De-Sexing

At its meeting of 30 September 2014, Council resolved that newly registered cats are required to be desexed at time of registration (s.10A of the Act). This came into effect as of 1 January 2015. Exemptions apply in accordance with the Act.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Refer to 3.2

Council’s Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024

Part 7 – Keeping of Animals controls overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of permitted animals. It requires an annual permit from Council to keep more than two dogs and two cats

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

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

- Conduct Park Patrols of reserves and dog off leash areas
- Conduct door knocks to increase registration numbers and follow up owners that have not renewed their pet registrations.
- Ensure all impounded animals that are reclaimed are registered with Council prior to their release
- Enforcement of unregistered animals
- Messaging regarding animal registration on Community Laws vehicles
- Corflute signage in parks and reserves
- Promotion to keep animal owner contact details up to date and to ensure lifetime tags are worn.

5.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Improve compliance with pet registration requirements

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake annual registration door knock program	By 30 September, Annually	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Record of unregistered and unidentified animals detected during door knocks. Infringements issued for unregistered animals.
Park patrol education	Ongoing	Number of patrol hours Educate residents regarding responsible pet ownership, picking up after their dogs and the importance of registration
Community education at Council events	Ongoing	Number of events
Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting micro-chip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped	Ongoing	Increase in registration/identification of unregistered animals
Increase publicity and education regarding animal registration, micro-chipping and the benefits of de-sexing	Annually, Ongoing	Promote digital advertising Temporary signage on vehicles to promote registration

		Temporary signage at reserves and off leash areas to promote registration On hold messaging prior to and during registration renewal periods SMS reminders to residents prior to registration period beginning, directly before 10 April, and after 10 April to residents who have not renewed registration.
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Objective 2: Increase awareness among culturally and linguistically diverse communities about registration requirements

Activity	When	Evaluation
Produce information regarding registration and de-sexing requirements in multi-lingual formats	ongoing	Promote digital advertising and promotion, include pamphlets into registrations in different languages, promotion at festivals and fun days.

Objective 3: Improve the accuracy of Council registration database by cross-referencing with micro-chip registry data.

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

6 NUISANCE

6.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Nuisance

- Topical articles on animal management and current animal issues published in the monthly resident news bulletin from time to time.
- Face to face contact with residents and regular patrols are conducted in parks and reserves. This allows officers an opportunity to interact, educate and advise pet owners on responsible pet ownership.
- Park patrols are supported by the temporary installation of corflute signage advertising animal registration and the importance of picking up after dogs.
- Investigation of contraventions of Local and State controls
- Signage in parks to remind dog owners of the rules applicable when visiting a park.
- Cat trap service to help control semi-owned or feral cats
- In the 2024 calendar year, 648 nuisance complaints were received and actioned by Council, this includes but is not limited to barking dog complaints, cats not being contained to a property and general nuisance complaints.

Barking Dogs

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

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

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

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

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

Year	Barking Dog Complaints received
2022	310
2023	266
2024	302

Dog Faeces

Existing controls require dog owners to carry bags with them when their dog is being exercised in public and to remove their dogs' faeces from public places as well as properly dispose of the waste.

It is disappointing that the enjoyment of public spaces is compromised when some owners fail to clean up after their pets. This remains a significant for concern for Council and well as users of these public recreational spaces whether they are used for informal recreation or for organised sport. Although most dog owners do the right thing it is necessary to heighten our educative approach to reaffirm that not picking up after your dog is not only the persons responsibility as a responsible dog owner, but that failing to do so has a potentially significant impact upon the enjoyment of these spaces by residents. It is unacceptable and inexcusable for a person to not pick up after their dog and it is a basic and fundamental expectation from the Monash community and Council that people do this. To support compliance, high-use off-leash areas have been equipped with poo bags, making it easier for dog owners to fulfill this basic and fundamental expectation from both the community and Council.

Dedicated off-leash areas for dogs

Exercising dogs outdoors can sometimes cause nuisances and create conflicts with other users of recreational areas. Council has dedicated significant effort investigating the benefits of off-leash areas and, after considerable consultation, adopted the Monash Dog Off-Leash Policy. The policy details minimum standard provisions when considering whether an off-leash area is appropriate. These standards guide the design, planting, structures, amenities, and management of off-leash areas, which may include fenced and partially fenced zones. They also encompass the planning and management of all off-leash areas, including unfenced, partially fenced, and fully fenced spaces. Additionally, the standards consider areas where off-leash activities may not be appropriate, such as those with high levels of biodiversity and native flora and fauna. In these designated conservation reserves (e.g., Dampier Creek Conservation Reserve), dogs are required to be on-lead.

There are currently 47 areas in Monash where dogs can be exercised off-leash. These areas have either been created, upgraded, or amended since the last plan. Some areas have been enhanced to include dog poo bags, drinking water facilities, and informative signage, where practicable, in accordance with the Policy.

The Victorian Pet census identified that 68% of respondents said they walk their dog at least once a day, with 55% choosing a designated off-leash area as their preference. Community Laws officers patrol these areas on a routine basis to ensure compliance with the relevant controls and to educate dog owners around a range of matters such as registration and picking up after dogs.

Cat Trap Service

Council delivers a cat trap service, making cat traps available to the public so they can trap stray cats on their property. According to Victoria's pet census, there are an estimated 914,000 pet cats in Victoria, with an unknown number of stray and feral cats. Council will continue to deliver this program as it aligns with Action 12 of the Cat Management Strategy, which focuses on reducing the impacts of semi-owned and unowned cat populations. These cats often contribute to wildlife and biodiversity impacts, pose disease transmission risks, and can rapidly reproduce.

Cat Curfew

In 2021, Council introduced a cat curfew requiring all cats to be securely confined between sunset (or 7:00 PM, whichever is later) and sunrise. The benefits of this curfew are significant for cats, owners,

and wildlife alike. There has been a noticeable increase in community awareness regarding the curfew. This heightened awareness, along with changes in how pet owners manage their cats, has led to a broader understanding that cats should not roam at night.

Complaints often reflect an awareness of the curfew, with residents expecting their neighbours to comply with it. However, more work can be explored to assist owners in transitioning their cats to an indoor lifestyle at night. This can be achieved using cat enclosures and changes in routine, such as keeping cats indoors after their evening meal.

The Victorian Pet Census revealed that 88% of respondents with a cat kept them contained to their property, indicating a positive trend towards responsible pet ownership generally.

Year	Cat nuisance complaints received
2022	97
2023	238
2024	235

6.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT ORDERS:

Cat Control Order

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

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

Mandatory Cat De-Sexing

At its meeting of 30 September 2014, Council resolved that newly registered cats are required to be desexed at time of registration (s.10A of the Act). This came into effect as of 1 January 2015. Exemptions apply in accordance with the Act.

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024 Clause 62– Keeping of Animals controls overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of permitted animals. It requires an annual permit from Council to keep more than two dogs and two cats.

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024 Clause 45 - requires persons walking dogs to remove the dogs' excrement from a road or Council land and requires the person to have a bag in their possession for the purpose of removing excrement.

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024 Clause 65 - prohibits the feeding of an uncaged animal that is causing a nuisance or damage to property.

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024 Clause 63- requires any structure used for housing an animal and the area within three (3) metres of such structure must be maintained:

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

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024 Clause 64 - requires an occupier of any land on which any animal is kept must not allow any noise or smell to emanate from the animal which interferes with the reasonable comfort or convenience of persons who occupy adjacent or nearby land.

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Enforcement Guidelines

Council's enforcement efforts adhere to established guidelines that support activities aimed at protecting the community, environment, and amenity. Officers are required to investigate, enforce, and ensure compliance with a range of legislative provisions, including animal management activities. These guidelines help officers respond promptly and consistently, enabling them to achieve outcomes that foster behavioural change.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Council's focus will continue to be to address complaints about barking dogs, nuisance cats and dog faeces. The tables below show that nuisance complaints have trended similarly over a three-year period. For this reason, these issues will continue to be high priorities for officers throughout the duration of this plan.

Activities for these complaints include:

- Conducting regular park patrols and liaison with sporting clubs
- Park audits of signage and updating signage where possible
- Enforcement via official warnings, infringement notices and prosecutions as required
- Continuance of the cat trap service
- Education for cat owners about how to keep cats contained

Year	Cat nuisance complaints received
2022	97
2023	238
2024	235

Year	Barking Dog Complaints received
2022	310

2023	266
2024	302

6.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Reduce cat nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue the delivery of education programs that promotes the well-being of cats and the environmental benefits that arise from them being contained at night.	Ongoing	- Digital educational materials published to online platforms - physical educational materials delivered to cat owners - reduction in number of nuisance complaints about cats.
Provide education material about cat enclosures	Ongoing, as available	Digital distribution of information
Where appropriate implement actions that may arise from the State Government Cat Management Strategy 2025-2035	Ongoing	Less reports of wild cats and nuisance cats. Monitor actions required of Council
Include information regarding confinement, toxic plants in the home, the importance of desexing and other information relating to responsible pet ownership in animal registration information packs each year and on Council's website and publications	March annually	Review information included annually. Information published to website where applicable. Educational materials promoted via digital platforms where applicable.
Review cat trapping procedure and information on website	December 2027	Procedure updated and information available on website

Objective 2: Reduce dog nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to provide dog poo bag dispensers in parks and off leash areas subject to Council budget process	Ongoing	Monitor bag dispensers to ensure availability to dog walkers
Review barking dog complaint/investigation procedure and review information published on Council website	December 2027	Procedure and web content reviewed for accurateness and most up to date industry knowledge
Continue to promote awareness of the requirement to pick up dog faeces. Distribution of digital and physical educational materials	Ongoing	Community feedback and number of complaints received. Decrease in complaints regarding dog faeces

Audit and affix signage to off leash areas. Continuance of the use of stencils in reported nuisance areas.		
Include information regarding barking dogs, dogs at large and other information relating to responsible pet ownership in animal registration information packs each year and on Council's website and digital publications	March annually	Review information included annually.
Promotion of 'Dog Etiquette' signage in off leash areas and create flyer to be promoted to community in different languages.	As per budget considerations and as required	Promotion on digital platforms and in off-leash areas

7 DOG ATTACKS

7.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

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

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

Council is the primary investigative authority in relation to dog attacks. It is important for community members to know where and how to report dog attacks in the first instance. While prevention of dog attacks is the ideal solution, Council recognises that educational material on prevention and reporting mechanisms may be necessary including material in languages other than English.

Nature of Attacks	Year 2022	Year 2023	Year 2024
Dog attacks reported	126	130	123
Dog attacks prosecutions	8	4	14

Fines issued	7	18	19
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7.2 OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT LOCAL LAWS:

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024 Clause 62– Keeping of Animals controls overpopulation of animals in Monash by restricting the number of permitted animals. It requires an annual permit from Council to keep more than two dogs and two cats.

Council's Community Safety and Amenity Local Law 2024 Clause 45 - requires persons walking dogs to remove the dogs' excrement from a road or Council land and requires the person to have a bag in their possession for the purpose of removing excrement.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Authorised officers routinely:

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

7.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Increase reporting of dog attacks in the community

Activity	When	Evaluation
Increase public awareness of what constitutes a dog attack/dog rush and how to report, using media articles, public notices in parks, website updates.	Ongoing	Evaluate this activity by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council.
Promote successful dog attack prosecution outcomes via digital platforms	As available	Evaluate this activity by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council.

Objective 2: Reduce and minimise the risk of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Actively doorknock to identify unregistered animals	ongoing	Registrations of animals and education of owners.
Regular park patrols including weekends	20 hours of weekend patrols per month	Dog owners spoken to and educated regarding enjoyable pet ownership and effective control.

8 DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

8.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

In accordance with legislative requirements, a dog may be declared either menacing or dangerous, which places specific legal obligations on the owner to keep the dog in compliance with the provisions of the Act. Community Laws officers may recommend to Council delegates that a dog be declared either menacing or dangerous, or this may be determined through court proceedings.

Definitions for dogs fitting one of these three classifications are:

A **Dangerous Dog** is either:

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

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

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

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

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

The number of dangerous, menacing, guard dogs and restricted breed dogs registered in Monash 2020 to 2024 is shown below.

Declared dogs	Year 2020	Year 2024
Number of declared dogs (dangerous, menacing, restricted and guard dogs)	Dangerous – 3 Menacing – 1 Restricted - 0	Dangerous – 6 Menacing – 1 Restricted - 0

In the previous plan, it was noted that Community Laws Officers place significant emphasis on dog attacks due to the critical importance of community safety. There must be sufficient grounds for a dog to be declared a 'dangerous dog,' which are determined by the circumstances surrounding the incident, including the extent of any injuries to other animals or people. Although the number of dangerous dog declarations has not increased dramatically, the thoroughness of investigations and enforcement actions demonstrates that officers take these matters very seriously once reported.

8.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

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

Domestic Animals Act 1994

- Division 3 - Particular provisions for the control of dangerous dogs
- Division 3A - Particular provisions for the control of menacing dogs
- Division 3B - Particular provisions for the control of restricted breed dogs

CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES:

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

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

8.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Ensure declarations are completed in accordance with evolving legal changes, and ensure all registers are accurate

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create new declarations as required	As required	Report updates of declared dogs to annual report
Review and update process to declare dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs to ensure up to date with any legal changes	December 2026 And December 2028	Ensure compliance with legal changes.
Reporting on Victorian Dangerous Dog Register	As required	Review annually to ensure new declarations are reported to register
Canine Anatomy and Identification Training (CAIT)	Ongoing	Officers to attend training and/or seminars when available. Six officers are currently booked to attend this training in 2025.

Objective 2: Ensure declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations

Activity	When	Evaluation
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Conduct inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance	Annually by 30 June	Annual inspection conducted and recorded against registration database.
Investigate reports/complaints of reported keeping of a declared dog	Ongoing	Number of complaints received to be reviewed annually.
Cross-reference micro-chip database information with current Council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs	Annually	Cross referencing with Council's registration database

9 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

9.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Registered Domestic Animal Businesses

Six Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are registered in Monash. One less than the previous period. These comprise:

- Two pet shops
- One dog training business
- Three catteries

Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB)

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

In the past 12 months, Monash has seen one new DAB open. Assessment prior to permit issuance involved multiple departments within Council including Planning, Building and Community Laws.

9.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Our current Compliance Activities

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

Summary

The six DAB's registered in Monash are sufficiently monitored via spot checks and compliance inspections. Accurate registers of DABs are maintained and reported to State Government bodies as required.

9.3 OUR PLAN

Objective 1: Maintain an up-to-date register of all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review all DABs in the municipality and ensure they continue to be registered with Council.	Annually as renewal period occurs	Numbers of DABs that are found non-compliant
Raise awareness of requirement to register DABs	As required	Digital advertising on definition of DABs and registration requirements in accordance with code of practises
Inspect properties with excess animal permits to ensure they are not a breeding business	Annually with excess permit inspections	Number of DABs established as a result of inspections

Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DAB's to maintain compliance

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct compliance inspections on DABs	Annually as renewal period occurs	Number of DABs that are found non-compliant

10 OTHER MATTERS

10.1 CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION

Emergency Management

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

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

The Victorian Emergency Animal Welfare Plan was recently reviewed, updated and published in November 2024 to ensure it provides a strong framework for responding to animal welfare emergency needs in Victoria.

Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with State legislation and the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV). The plan was reviewed and endorsed by the Municipal Emergency Planning Committee in November 2022.

The Monash Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee meets at least three times a year. Its membership includes representatives of State Government departments and organisations, local businesses, non-government organisations with a role in emergency management, and Council officers.

Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (POCTA) Legislation

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

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

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

Pound Services

Operating a pound facility is essential for Council to fulfill its statutory responsibilities related to animals, as mandated by the Domestic Animals Act 1994. For over 20 years, RSPCA Victoria has operated pound facilities on behalf of Council through a contractual arrangement, offering a convenient location for the Monash community. Whilst acknowledging Councils long-standing partnership, RSPCA Victoria has notified officers that, due to a shift in their strategic business model, they will no longer provide pound facility services to Victorian Councils. Consequently, Council has found itself in a position to identify a suitable alternative pound facility to fulfill this role due to the absence of having its own pound facility. After a public tender process, Animal Aid Coldstream was awarded the contract to provide pound services for Council. It is a priority for Council officers to maintain proper communication channels with the community and have a focus on reuniting animals with their owners as an alternative to having them immediately impounded.

10.2 OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

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

CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES:

Council officers participate in Emergency Management training, and attend exercises held with other municipalities within the region to participate in training opportunities to manage animals in emergency situations. This occurs bi-annually. This gives officers opportunities to participate in this exercise to allow for possible real-world situations.

10.3 OUR PLAN

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

Objective 1: Ensure Councils Emergency Animal Welfare Plan (EAWP) is updated and represents current knowledge contingencies and represents best practice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the EAWP plan	Upon policy review	Plan reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders including animal welfare agencies.

11 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

EVALUATION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS MANAGEMENT PLAN

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