Bayside City Council

Domestic Animal Management Plan

2022–2026



Bayside
CITY COUNCIL



Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Bayside City Council proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Council acknowledges the Bunurong's continuing relationship to the land and waterways and respects that their connection and spiritual identity is maintained through ancient ceremonies, songlines, dance, art and living culture.

Council pays tribute to the invaluable contributions of the Bunurong and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island elders who have guided and continue to guide the work we do.

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1. Introduction and context

This Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) has been prepared to build on Council's 2017-2021 DAMP and provide a plan for activities, services and programs that Bayside City Council will deliver to support and encourage responsible dog and cat ownership over the next four years.

The past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted areas of focus for this DAMP, as the number of dogs have increased and how we live and work has changed.

1.1 Purpose of this Domestic Animal Management Plan

All Councils in Victoria are required by State legislation to prepare a four-year DAMP.

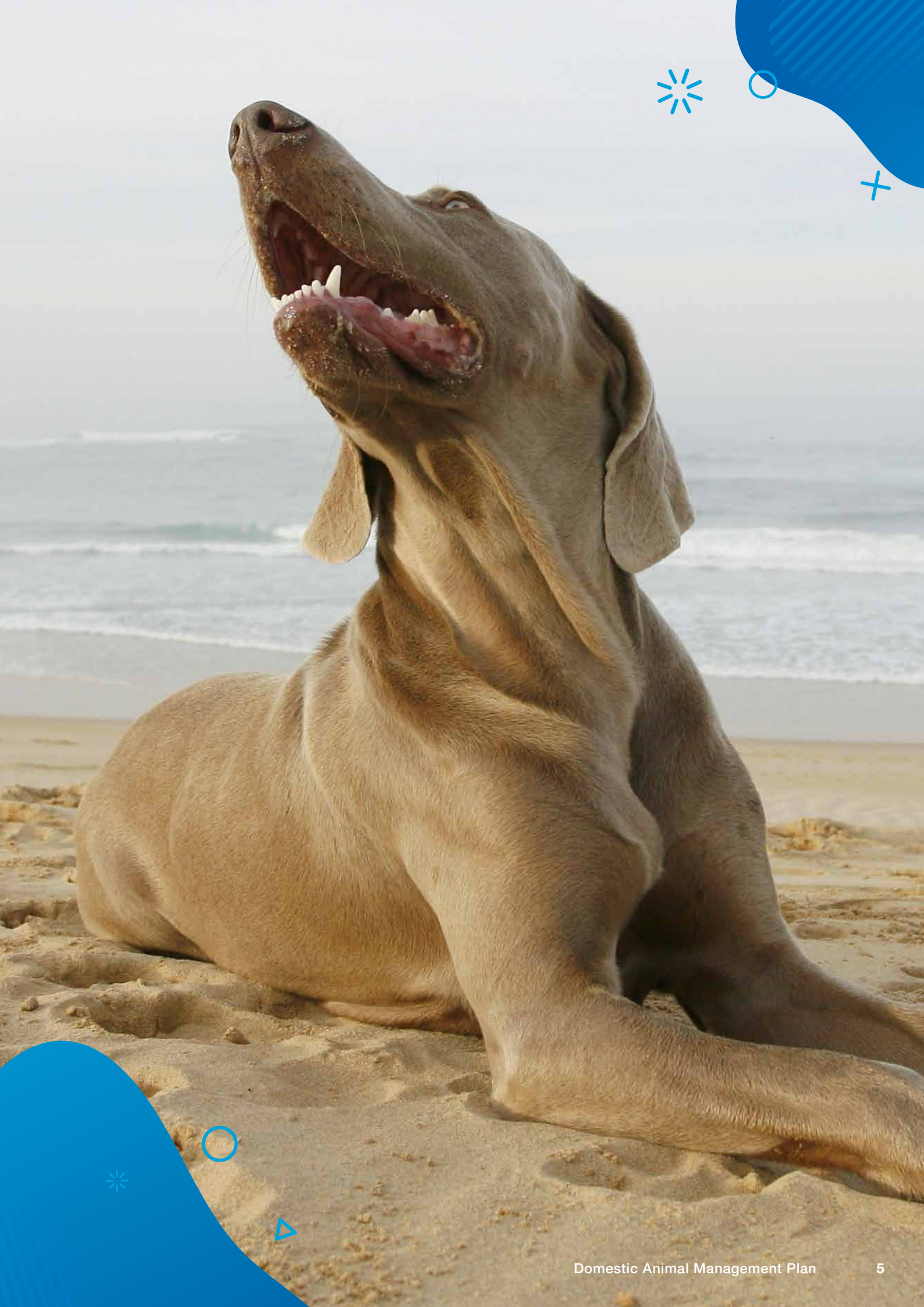
The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the DAA) requires Council to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years.

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
- minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
- address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
- encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
- minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
- 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
- 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
- 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
- provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy, or review outlined under the plan.

Council is also required to annually 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 and 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 regulations.	Provides assurance that these dogs are kept in accordance with the Act and regulations 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 regulations and related Codes of Practice	Provides assurance that Domestic Animal Businesses understand their obligations and are compliant with Act, the regulations and related Codes of Practice.
Annual review of plan and annual reporting	Council must review its 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 changes where necessary.

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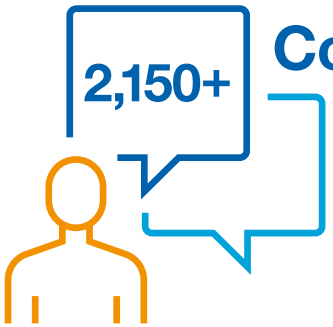
1.2 Process applied in developing the plan

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

- A strategic review was undertaken of Council plans and strategies that might be relevant to animal management.
- Existing animal management operations were reviewed including existing procedures, Local Laws, Council Orders and service resources.
- Analysis of data (customer contact/complaints, registrations etc.) over the past years to help understand emerging trends
- An extensive community engagement and research program was undertaken from 18 October – 28 November 2021 to seek community feedback on a range of issues. More than 2,150 community members participated through a variety of methods:
  - 5,700 posted or emailed surveys sent to randomly selected representative Bayside households (1,257 responses)
  - 897 open access surveys completed by community members
  - 31 in-depth interviews with key stakeholder group representatives
  - 250+ conversations during six pop-up engagement events at prominent locations
  - 100 contributions via an interactive map, providing location-specific feedback
  - 3,012 visitors to the *Have Your Say* project website: **yoursay.bayside.vic.gov.au/pets**
- Community engagement survey found that different genders experience animal ownership differently – for example, females show a significantly higher incidence of reporting that having a pet makes them feel much safer when at home (48%) compared to males (22%). When walking outside in public places with their pet, again, females show a significantly higher incidence of saying they feel much safer (41%) than males (15%).
- Council acknowledges the need to better understand the impacts on gender and will undertake a detailed Gender Impact Assessment during the four year plan.
- Feedback was also sought from Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Advisory Committee to help better understand dog and cat issues for people with disabilities and their carers.

Key considerations when aligning this Plan with other Council strategies are as follows:

- Bayside 2050 Community Vision: Bayside in 2050 leads the way demonstrably as a diverse, healthy and liveable place. We value economic and cultural progress, environmental sustainability and protection of open spaces and coastline, and we nurture inclusiveness, safety, accessibility, community vibrancy, creativity and innovation.
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025: Recognises the benefits of a connected, respectful, active and inclusive community.
- Active by the Bay Recreation Strategy 2013-22: Guides the planning, management and provision of recreation facilities and services, recognising the contribution of pets to an active lifestyle.
- Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2027: Action 37 to review dog restrictions to increase protection of significant biodiversity values from wildlife predation and disturbance, and nutrient enrichment of vegetation (from faeces). Action 38: Prohibit cats from all conservation reserves.
- Open Space Strategy: There are challenges in providing space for dog owners alongside the recreation needs of other members of the community. This strategy recognises the benefits associated with pets and the benefits of accommodating dog walking and exercise within open space. Research findings from community engagement on this Plan will be used to inform the review of the Open Space Strategy, planned for 2023-2024.



Consultation

Community members informed this plan through a survey, in-depth interviews and pop-up sessions.

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1.3 Profile of Bayside

The area now known as Bayside was originally inhabited by the people of the Kulin nation. The coastal land from Brighton to Mordialloc is the traditional country of the Ngaruk William clan of the Kulin nation.

Bayside City Council is located south of Melbourne, along Port Phillip Bay, which forms the western boundary of Bayside, while the Nepean Highway and the Melbourne to Frankston railway line forms most of the eastern boundary. The northern boundary, along Glen Huntly Road, is just eight kilometres from Melbourne's central business district. The city, covering an area of 37 square kilometres, comprises the former cities of Brighton and Sandringham, and parts of the former cities of Mordialloc and Moorabbin. Bayside City Council was created on 14 December 1994, and is home to more than 107,541 individuals, which has been steadily increasing for over a decade.

The City of Bayside is adjoined by the Cities of Port Phillip, Glen Eira and Kingston, and encompasses all or part of the suburbs of Beaumaris, Black Rock, Brighton, Brighton East, Cheltenham, Hampton, Hampton East, Highett and Sandringham.

Renowned for its quality of life, Bayside is characterised by unique and appealing villages, sandy beaches, coastal environments, lush parklands, quality residential areas, a vibrant arts scene and a proud, colourful history which is reflected in our heritage buildings and sites – all of which make this city a place where the community wishes to live, work and play.

As a Council, our purpose is to work with our community to make Bayside make a diverse, healthy and liveable place for all.

Bayside's natural environment, from the 17-kilometre stretch of sparkling coastline to the urban forest of our streets, is an important and valued asset. Preservation and enhancement works are completed each year to help maintain our natural environment and protect it from the impact of development, increased use and climate change.

Bayside is well known for its tree-lined streets, significant parks and open spaces, and its indigenous flora and fauna area. Bayside also is home to the iconic Brighton bathing boxes which attract a large number of visitors to the area every day.

1.4 Context and current situation

Over the past four years, key service statistics including reduced impounding and euthanasian numbers, customer complaint numbers, and reduced service response times demonstrate Council's Animal Management service is performing well and that in general dog and cat owners are doing the right thing as responsible pet owners.

Council's annual Community Satisfaction Survey 2021 and Local Government Performance Reporting Framework indicators for Animal Management remain strong including a satisfaction rating of 7.38 out of 10, which is categorised as 'Very Good'.

Perceptions regarding the importance of pets remain consistent to 2017, with almost all pet owners (99%) agreeing that they are an important part of their life, and they contribute to improved exercise and mental health outcomes. Research also shows a slight increase in perception that Council recognises the importance of pets.

Over the past DAMP period, 92% of all impounded dogs and cats (98.9% of dogs and 72.9% cats) have been returned to their owners or rehomed. This high rate reflects the importance of pets for their owners and high levels of microchipping and pet registration combined with Council's Animal Management service enabling reunification or rehoming.

Barking dogs and dogs off-leash continue to be key issues of community concern, along with uncollected dog waste and cats trespassing.

Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has seen changes within Bayside not previously experienced. Findings of the Community Research Survey, undertaken in October and November 2021 to inform the drafting of the Domestic Animal Management Plan, indicate that during COVID-19 there may have been up to 8% of households who acquired a pet for the first time, and 19% who got a new pet but have had one before. COVID-19 also resulted in changes to dog walking behaviour among those who already had a dog(s), with 31% going on more walks per day and 25% walking at different times of the day. One in four of those who had changed their behaviour said they would continue with these new behaviours in the future.

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Survey respondents (8%) who got a pet for the first time during the pandemic had slightly lower levels of awareness of a range of domestic animal requirements, specifically the cat curfew, the need for cats to be desexed and registered, the need for dog owners to have effective control, and that uncollected dog poo can cause bacteria in the bay.

Concerns were also raised by survey respondents that issues may increase due to a sharp influx of new pet owners during COVID-19 and those whose pets are being left alone as people return to workplaces during the day.

Dog ownership over the pandemic has increased from 11,932 registered dogs in 2018/2019 to 12,481 registered dogs in 2020/2021.

There was a 22% increase in dog attacks in 2020-2021 from the preceding three years. This may be due to increased use of open space during the pandemic combined with lower levels of knowledge and understanding of responsible pet ownership among new pet owners, who were also impacted by limited access to training and support during the pandemic.

Programs and activities in this DAMP seek to build on many of the current programs and activities to support new pet owners.

The number of registered cats continues to decline as a longer-term trend.



Animal Management programs and services

Council currently delivers a range of animal management programs and services as outlined in the following table

Program/Service:	Service Level:
Dog and Cat identification and registration	• Website information • Online registration process • High levels of pets reunited with owners • Prompt reactive investigations • Park patrols • 12,481 Dogs and 3,659 Cats (2020/2021)
Identification and registration	• Annual registration renewal process • Annual registration audit checks • Doorknock follow-up campaigns
Response to low-risk domestic animal complaints	• Prioritised based on risk • Average response time in 2021/2022 was 1.78 days per complaint
Response to high-risk domestic animal complaints	• Immediate
Declared Dangerous or Menacing dogs	• Annual audits
Routine street / park patrols	• Daily on weekdays • Complaint locations monitored • Dedicated proactive patrols over summer • Targeted and random patrols over winter weekends for sports grounds and the foreshore • Dedicated proactive patrols when beach restrictions change and sport seasons commence
Education and promotion	• Annual pet expo (not held past two years) and registration day • Publication of responsible pet ownership newsletter • Council website and e-newsletter • Council magazine Let's Talk Bayside • Social media • SMS and direct email • Signage and notifications
Desexing program	• Subsidized desexing program for eligible residents
Pound services	• 10am – 6pm weekdays • 9am – 1pm weekends
Dogs on/off leash	• Order in place restricting dogs off-leash in designated areas • 29 designated dogs off-leash areas
Cat trap program	• Cat traps available to the community • Mandatory desexing of all cats • Night-time cat curfew in place
After hours emergency service	• Collection and impounding of stray dogs • Dog attack attendance / calls taken
Provision of dog poo bags at parks	• All year Approximately 1.9 million bags per annum.

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1.5 Domestic animal statistics

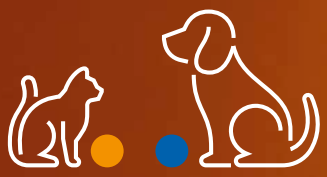
Dog statistics	2012/13	2016/17	2020/21
Number of dogs registered	12,561	12,332	12,481
Number of registered declared dogs	6	1	3
Number of impounded dogs	307	202	97
Number of impounded dogs returned to owner	297	199	91
Number of dogs rehoused	4	2	4
Number of dogs euthanised	6	1	2
Cat statistics			
Number of cats registered	4,411	4,202	3,659
Number of impounded cats	67	78	43
Number of impounded cats returned to owner	28	23	17
Number of cats rehoused	17	14	12
Number of cats euthanised	22	41	14
Service statistics			
Animal infringements for dogs and cats	672	462	256
Dog poo complaints	9	19	19
Animal registration enquiries	371	699	2758
Removal of dead animals	No data	137	138
Cat trapping, delivery of cat cages	68	74	101
Dog attack on person / animal	77	91	109
Dog rush complaints	6	17	22
Complaints relating to dogs barking	319	362	310
Complaints regarding dogs on foreshore	14	14	29
Complaints regarding dogs off-leash	71	115	182
Dogs picked up by Council or pound	216	265	123
Complaints relating to dogs wandering	146	86	77
Feral/domestic cats to be collected	39	47	20
Other general animal complaints	127	288	110
Calls seeking educational information	61	52	57
Number of initiated prosecutions	82	43	11
Number of successful prosecutions*	77	38	9

*Unpaid animal infringements are lodged with Fines Victoria. Non-infringeable and court elected infringements are prosecuted

Domestic Animal registrations 2017-2021

The number of registered dogs and cats for each of the four years of the 2017-2021 DAMP

Dog and cat registrations



2017/18

3,866 | 11,874

2018/19

3,773 | 11,932

2019/20

3,699 | 12,143

2020/21

3,659 | 12,481



2. Training of authorised officers

2.1 Context and current situation

Council recognises the complexity of managing often-divergent community demands, opinions, and expectations in relation to domestic dogs and cats.

These vary according to whether residents own a pet or not, opinions as to the type and level of freedom pets should have in our community, knowledge and understanding of pet behaviour and their needs, and past experiences in relation to pets and pet owners.

The functions and responsibilities around animal management are delivered by Bayside City Council's Local Laws team, which forms part of the Amenity Protection Department. There are six Local Laws Officers and one Team Leader, who report to the Local Laws and Parking Coordinator.

All officers are multi-skilled and provide animal management, as well as general Local laws services. These officers perform the following roles:

- Registration of dogs and cats and registration compliance through targeted door knocks to identify unregistered animals
- Providing advice to pet owners and information to the wider community
- Managing neighbourhood issues and complaints relating to pets
- Ensuring streets, parks and beaches are patrolled to educate and enforce responsible pet ownership.
- Inspections of domestic animal businesses and applying State legislation and Council policies to the management of pets and pet related businesses and activities
- Responding to animal welfare issues; and
- Operation of the pet day care centre (day holding facility) and liaison with Council's pound provider.

In addition to the animal management services provided during business hours, an after-hours service is also provided to collect stray dogs and transport them to The Lost Dogs Home.

During daylight savings, two additional officers are also engaged to increase patrols of parks, reserves and the foreshore for animal management and Local Law issues.

The Local Laws Team also has three Administration Support Officers who, among other responsibilities, provide support with animal management matters including registration, permits, enquiries and complaints.

2.2 Our planned training for authorised officers

Council is committed to maintaining staff training and education programs to ensure our people continuously improve their knowledge, skills and experience to deliver high quality services and customer experiences that ensure animal welfare, and protect the safety and amenity of our community and environment.

All officers have an annual performance and development plan which is reviewed regularly.

The below table sets out the current and planned training status for our officers during the forthcoming four-year period.

Authorised officer training	Current (2021)	Planned
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	Completed by all officers	Newly appointed officers to achieve if required
Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance)	As needed	Identified as a development opportunity through performance planning with officer
Industry training – animal handling / Investigation / Customer service	As needed	Officers to attend when required
Animal welfare Victoria – training and information days	As needed	Officers to attend when required
In-house training on relevant subject matter e.g. brief preparation, statement taking	Ongoing	Officers to attend training as needs are identified
In-house training and e-learning modules (i.e. Code of Conduct, Fraud & Corruption, Negotiation and Conflict, Child Protection, Diversity and Inclusion, Indigenous Cultural Awareness)	Ongoing	Officers to attend training as needs are identified
Induction program for new staff	Ongoing	Requirement for all new officers

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2.3 Our plan

Objective: Ensure Local Law Officers have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Provide training on effective customer centric service delivery, complaint management and issue resolution.	Annually	Increase in customer satisfaction ratings.
Additional training opportunities identified in consultation with Management and Staff.	6 months	Training identified and documented in each officer's performance plan.



3. Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation

Bayside City Council provides many services to encourage responsible pet ownership that are funded by registration fees. These programs are centred around education, communication, incentives and regulation including pet registration and compliance/enforcement activity.

Council provides a registration tag, lost and found register, dogs at large response, investigations of dog attacks and nuisance problems (cats and dogs). The service also:

- undertakes regular patrols and enforcement action
- reviews signage
- provides information and ability to register pets via our website
- delivers subsidised desexing programs
- monitors compliance of Domestic Animal Businesses, and
- runs events to promote animal welfare, responsible pet ownership and pet registration.

The community research survey revealed that awareness of Council regulations remains stable over time, although there have been slight increases in awareness of the ability to register pets online, that dog owners need to carry poo bags when walking their dog, and the requirement to register dogs and cats.

Community research survey respondents who got a pet for the first time during COVID-19 had slightly lower levels of awareness of a range of domestic animal requirements, specifically the cat curfew, the need for cats to be desexed and registered, the need for dog owners to have effective control, and that uncollected dog poo can cause bacteria in the bay.

Most survey respondents say they have seen dog behaviours that go against animal management laws (mostly uncollected dog poo), however, seeing dog owners and dogs doing the right thing is just as widespread.

Barking dogs and dogs off-leash continue to be key issues of community concern along with uncollected dog waste and cats trespassing.

Current programs and information include:

Registration and identification of dogs and cats

- Distribution of registration brochures, fact sheets and pamphlets on responsible pet ownership
- Information on the Council website providing advice on the registration period and requirements, along with reminder text messages during the registration renewal period
- Follow-up unrenewed pet registrations including through annual door knock program
- Follow-up new owner notifications to ensure they become registered
- Promote the requirement for owners to pick up after their dogs and dispose of waste appropriately
- Online registrations process for new pet owners.

Over-population and euthanasia rates

- Night-time cat curfew
- Mandatory desexing of cats
- Pound services that focus on reuniting and rehoming animals.

Nuisance

- Information on barking dogs provided to residents
- Cat cage service provided free of charge to residents
- Investigation into nuisance complaints based on priority, risk and provisions of the Domestic Animals Act (DAA)
- Regular patrols including dedicated summer patrols, to comply with on-leash requirements, encourage dog owners to maintain effective control, pick up after pets, and comply with the law.
- Signage at parks and along the foreshore about key dog rules
- Pooch pouch and dog waste bags provided to dog owners.

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Dog attacks

- Officers patrols for compliance with legislation including effective control in on-leash and off-leash areas
- Educate and encourage de-sexing of dogs to reduce aggression
- Keeping dogs secured to their property
- Encourage regular exercise for dogs
- Take enforcement action including prosecution of dog attack offences consistent with the DAA.

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

- Information provided to dog owners on their responsibilities
- Annual audits conducted.

Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB)

- Council provides required information to DABs on changes to legislation and codes of practice
- DABs audited during business registration renewals.

Emergency management

- Care of pets included in Council Emergency Management Plan
- Emergency Management provisions also included in Council's Pound service provider's contract (Lost Dogs Home).

Public education program

- Pet newsletter provided to pet owners
- Information published through Council's various communication channels
- Update website on designated off-leash areas and general pet ownership requirements
- Signage at parks and along the foreshore about key dog rules
- Annual pet expo promoting responsible pet ownership (not held last two years due to COVID-19 - new model for promotions proposed as more frequent pop-up stands rather than an annual pet expo
- Proactive patrols incorporating education and enforcement of legislation
- Pooch pouch, dog waste bags and brochures handed out by Officers to promote responsible pet ownership.



3.2 Our orders, local laws, council policies and procedures

Council has several orders made under the domestic animals Act and council local laws which seek to protect the safety and amenity of the community, protection of the environment and prevention of nuisance and domestic animal overpopulation.

Order No. 5 made under Section 26 of the DAA (effective 3 September 2015)

Key requirements under the order:

- Prescribes area where dogs are prohibited (prohibited areas), allowed off-leash (designated areas), and requires dogs to be on a leash in all other areas.
- In dog off-leash areas dogs must be under effective control of their carer and must not in any way interfere with other people or dogs.
- Dogs must be on a leash when within 20 metres of a playground, an area where a sporting event or practicing of the sporting event is taking place, permanent barbeque or picnic area, area where a public meeting is being held, and signed on-leash areas around lakes, ponds or other water courses.
- Restricts the number of dogs a person can have control over in a reserve, public place or designated area to four dogs.

The order provides a schedule of designated off-leash areas and hours of access that apply to these areas.

Order No. 25 made under Section 25 of the DAA (effective 22 December 2011)

Key requirement under the order:

- Cats must be confined to their property between the hours of 9.00 pm and 6.00 am in daylight saving time and between 8.00 pm and 6.00 am at other times of the year.

Order No. 10A made under section 10A of the DAA (effective 22 December 2011)

Key requirement under the order:

- Any cat being registered for the first time must be desexed.

Bayside Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2021, Sections 25-27 (effective 1 July 2021)

Key requirements under the local law:

- Section 25 (Keeping of Animals) stipulates the number and type of animals that can reside at any one household without the need for a permit.
- Section 26 (Accommodation of Animals) stipulates the requirement to adhere to accommodation requirements associated with keeping ‘excess animals’ accommodation requirements.
- Section 27 (Animal Excrement) stipulates that people in charge of animals must remove their animal’s litter and must carry a device for doing this; and prohibits animals digging Council Land other than sand at a beach.

3.3 Our plan

Objective: Increase responsible pet ownership behaviour and compliance with the law through education, communication, incentives and effective enforcement.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Develop a strategic annual education and communication program.	Annually	Delivery of plan relative to performance indicators to measure effectiveness.
Review information provided to new pet owners.	Annually	Information raises knowledge and understanding of Responsible Pet Ownership issues and reduces non-compliance.
Implement a short training and knowledge assessment for on-line registration of new pets.	Year 2	Number of new pet registrations who have completed the training.

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Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Establish a found pets program via Council's social media channels.	Year 2	Program established and reach and engagement with posts.
Develop a program to encourage training of dogs through awareness, education and incentives.	Year 3	Monitor number of new pet owners who undertake dog training.
Review dog restriction signage to include QR codes, open space etiquette, impacts of uncollected dog poo and why effective control is important.	Year 3	Decrease in dog off-leash, rushes, uncollected poo complaints.
Improve education material for cat owners who ignore the cat curfew to improve understanding and compliance.	Year 1	Program developed and communicated with cat owners.
Promote Animal Welfare platforms that are consistent with this plan.	Year 1	Higher views recorded against webpage link.
Review the current desexing rebate program to help increase early puppy and kitten registrations.	Year 2	Report back on finding, as part of the annual DAMP review.
Develop a program of regular pop-up stands at Council and community events to support engagement, education, registration and feedback.	Annually	Four events per annum resulting in constructive feedback from attendees.
Review policies, procedures and resourcing to ensure officer patrols are targeted and enforcement action is firm and proportionate.	Annually	Patrols are prioritised and enforcement action affirms the importance of compliance with the law especially where safety or amenity issues pose a risk to the community, other animals or the environment.
Continue approaches to recognise and promote positive behaviour of dog owners doing the right thing.	Ongoing	Improve community perceptions and measure reach and engagement with these messages.

Objective: To ensure animal management services respond to community needs.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Establish community working groups and strengthen partnerships to provide input/feedback on emerging domestic animal issues.	Ongoing	Insights which can better inform approaches and networks to promote responsible pet ownership.
Trial developing etiquette standards at a sportsground involving sports clubs and local dog off-leash users.	Year 1	Review of 2022 trial.
Trial the use of outdoor lights at selected sportsgrounds over winter to expand access to open space for dogs off-leash purposes.	Year 1	Review of 2022 winter trial.

4. Programs to address over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates

Council is committed to supporting the humane treatment of animals and to reduce the number of unwanted or unowned pets in the community.

In 2010, mandatory desexing for cats was introduced in Bayside as part of the strategy to address the cat overpopulation challenge and to reduce euthanasia rates.

Unowned cats run the risk of not being desexed or carrying disease which results in unwanted litters, a poor state of health for these animals and impacts on wildlife.

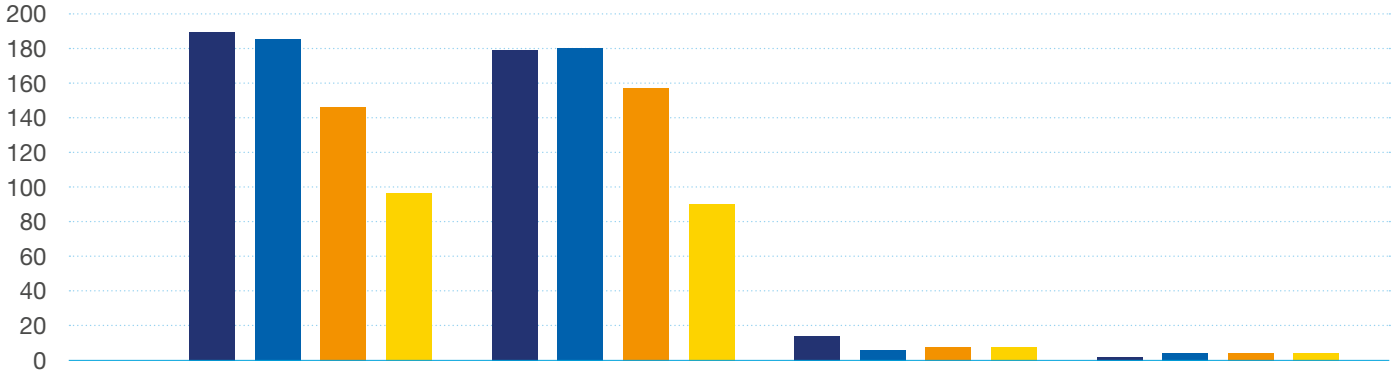
Council places a limit on the number of animals that can reside with any one household. This is to ensure the health and wellbeing of the animals, to minimise any adverse impact on neighbourhood amenity and inappropriate practices such as the hoarding of animals. However, Bayside City Council does consider applications from households that want to keep more than the prescribed number of animals and issues permits when approved in accordance the local law, Division 3 – YOUR PET, section 25, Keeping Animals.

4.1 Context and current situation

Council's approach to education, promotion and enforcement of responsible pet ownership, including through registration, offering desexing discounts and re-homing unwanted or impounded animals, has ensured high return rates to pet owners and very low euthanasia rates. In 2020/2021 two dogs and 14 cats had to be euthanised, 13 of which were considered either semi-wild or aggressive/unsuitable temperament for rehoming.

From 2017 until 2021, the number of impounded of dogs has reduced each year while the number of registered dogs has increased. Euthanasiaz rates remain very low.

Impounded Dog Statistics 2017/2021



	Impounded dogs	Dogs returned to owner	Dogs rehomed	Dogs euthanised
2017/18	187	179	7	1
2018/19	185	180	3	2
2019/20	164	157	4	2
2020/21	97	91	4	2

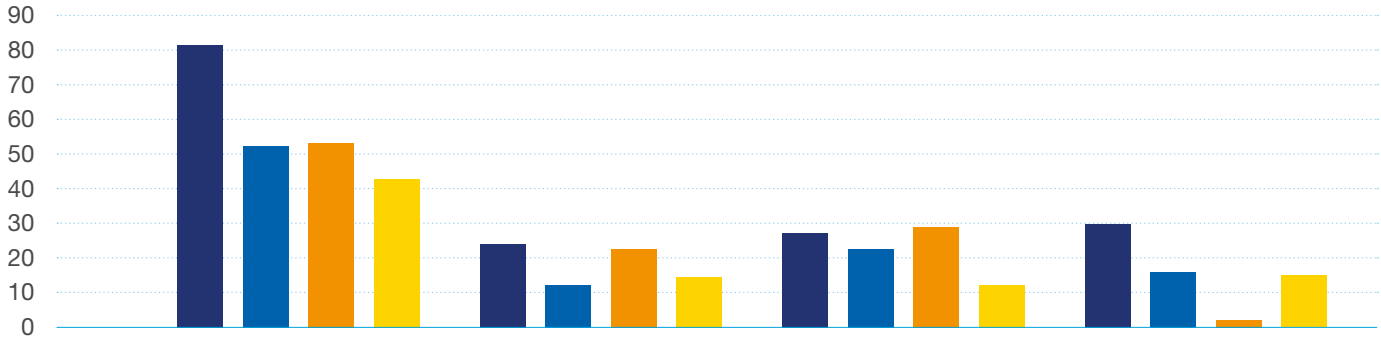
The number of impounded cats has also reduced and remain at very low levels with cat registration numbers reducing over the same period. Euthanised rates for cats also remain low.

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FROM
2017-2021
Registered dogs ↑
Impounded dogs ↓

Impounded Cat Statistics 2017/2021



	Impounded cats	Cats returned to owner	Cats rehomed	Cats euthanised
2017/18	81	24	27	30
2018/19	52	13	23	16
2019/20	53	22	29	2
2020/21	43	17	12	14

2017/18 2018/19 2019/20 2020/21

Current programs and information include:

- information and education approaches
- discount desexing vouchers to eligible residents
- provision of cat traps for trespassing cats
- enforcement of the cat curfew
- patrols to collect stray and feral cats
- investigation of backyard breeding establishments and instances of animal hoarding.

4.2 Our orders, local laws, council policies and procedures

Current Orders:

Order No. 10A made under Section 10A of the DAA

Requires that a cat being registered for the first time must be desexed.

Order No. 25 made under Section 25 of the DAA

Requires that Cats are confined to their property between the hours of 9.00 pm and 6.00 am in daylight saving time and between 8.00 pm and 6.00 am at other times of the year.

Current local laws:

Bayside Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2021

Stipulates the number and type of animals that can reside at any one household without the need for a permit.

Current policies and procedures

- If an animal is impounded and registered, without prior history, all reasonable efforts are made to return the pet to their owner.
- If the pet is unregistered or has prior history, the pet will be impounded at Councils Day Stay facility for 24 hours, and released, once impound fee and pet registration has been paid.
- If the pet has ongoing prior history or owner is unable to be contacted, Council will impound the animal at our pound service provided, until owner can collect their pet or look at alternative for the animal, if no owner located.

Objective

Reduce the number of cats and dogs euthanised by encouraging pet dexexing.

4.3 Our plan

Objective: To ensure pet populations do not increase due to unwanted litters from dogs and cats at large.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Review Council's cat trapping program to better manage cats found trespassing and breaching the cat curfew.	Year 2	Complaints. Cat impoundment and euthanasia rates.
Promote confinement of dogs and cats to owner's premises to prevent stray cats and dogs wandering.	Ongoing	Reduced collected and impounded dogs and cats and associated complaints.

Objective: Reduce the number of cats and dogs euthanised, by encouraging pet desexing, and compliance with laws.

Continued education/promotion activities

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Discount desexing vouchers to eligible residents.	On Application	Number of vouchers provided.
Provide positive information on desexing during events and through various communication channels.	Ongoing	Regular articles on the topic included.

Continued management and compliance activities

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Patrols to collect stray and feral cats.	As required	Data on collections.
Enforcement of cat curfew.	Ongoing	Complaints and enforcement data.
Continue to provide free cat traps for nuisance and trespassing cats.	As required	Number of trap requests and impounded cats.
Investigate backyard breeding establishments and animal hoarding.	As required	Number of investigations.

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5. Registration and identification

5.1 Context and current situation

Under the Domestic Animals Act all dogs and cats are required to be registered with Council at 3 months of age, which includes a requirement to be microchipped. Importantly, registration and microchipping support the quick return of pets to their owners which, in turn, minimises the pet's distress from being confined in an unfamiliar environment waiting for their owners. It also provides insights to assist with planning local services, programs, and infrastructure and avoids risks of rehoming or euthanisation of an owned pet.

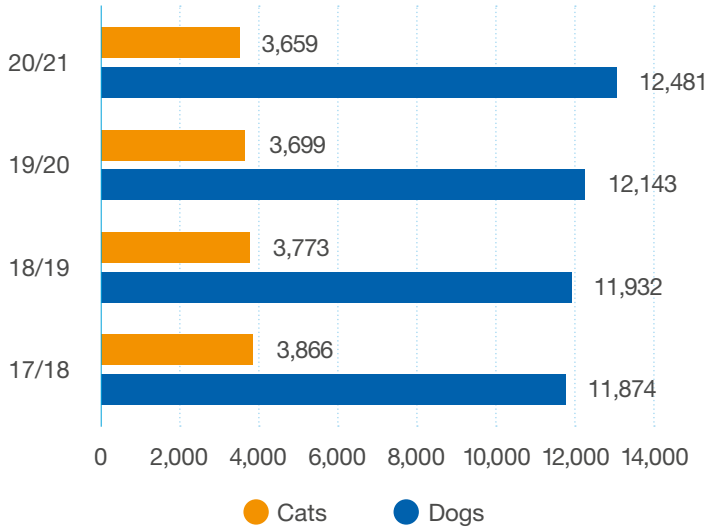
The overall number of dogs and cats registered within Bayside in 2020/2021 has decreased by approximately 2.4 per cent (394 animals) relative to 2016/2017. For this period, the number of registered dogs has increased by approximately 1.2 per cent (149 dogs) relative to 12,332 dogs in 2016/2017 with increases most noticeable during COVID-19. The number of cats registered has reduced by 12.9 per cent (543 cats) in comparison to 2016/2017 with a more gradual reduction over the past two years.

All dogs and cats are required to be registered with Council at 3 months of age, which includes a requirement to be microchipped.

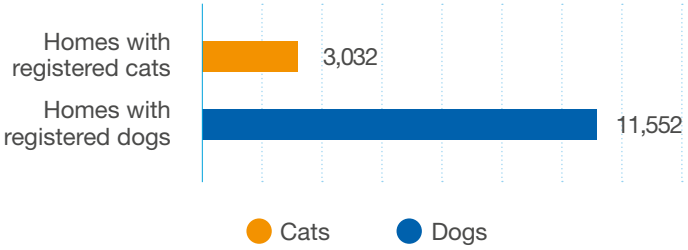
Our Current Data

The number of registered of dogs and cats over the four financial years of the 2017/2021 DAMP are shown below.

Dog and cat registration



Homes with registered dogs or cats



A high-level analysis of dog and cat registrations against community engagement survey responses indicates that around 20% of households who said they have a dog and/or cat haven't registered their animal (down from one third in 2017). The incidence of having an unregistered animal is slightly higher for households with cats (29%, compared to 36% in 2017) than households with dogs (18%, compared to 29% in 2017). This equates to potentially 9% of all households in Bayside with an unregistered animal.

Current activities:

- Annual promotion and reminders at registration renewal time
- Door knocks
- Free microchip day
- Microchip database searches
- Enforcement of unregistered animals
- Regular patrols of parks reserves and foreshore.

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5.2 Our orders, local laws, council policies and procedures



Current local laws:

Council's Neighbourhood Amenity Local Law 2021

Section 25 keeping Animals:

Keeping of Animals controls overpopulation of animals in Bayside by restricting the number of permitted animals. It requires an annual permit from Council from to keep more than two dogs or two cats.

5.3 Our plan

Objective: To increase and maintain high levels of pet registration and permanent identification and improve promotion of pet registration and responsible pet ownership.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Conduct annual door knocks throughout the municipality to ensure dogs and cats are registered.	Annually	Review door knock results, to see if any unregistered pets identified that lead to increase in registration.
Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting microchip registries to obtain details of pets in the municipality that are microchipped. Cross reference Council's registration data with the microchip registry to identify unregistered animals.	Annually	Review data, to see if any unregistered pets identified that lead to increase in registration.
Review the registration audit process, with a view of incorporating a Pet Concierge role to the Amenity Protection team to assist with the delivery of registration services.	Ongoing as part of communications plan	Registration program is advertised, promoted and process outlined.
Provide Domestic Animal Businesses and Veterinarians with information on registration and identification responsibilities.	Annually	Information on responsible pet ownership provided to DABs and vets.
Check pet registrations when undertaking park patrols to ensure details are current.	On Going	Review data, to see if any unregistered pets identified during patrols.
Review registration fees for Assistance Dogs.	Year 1	Registration fee supports those who require an Assistance Dog to aid with disabilities.

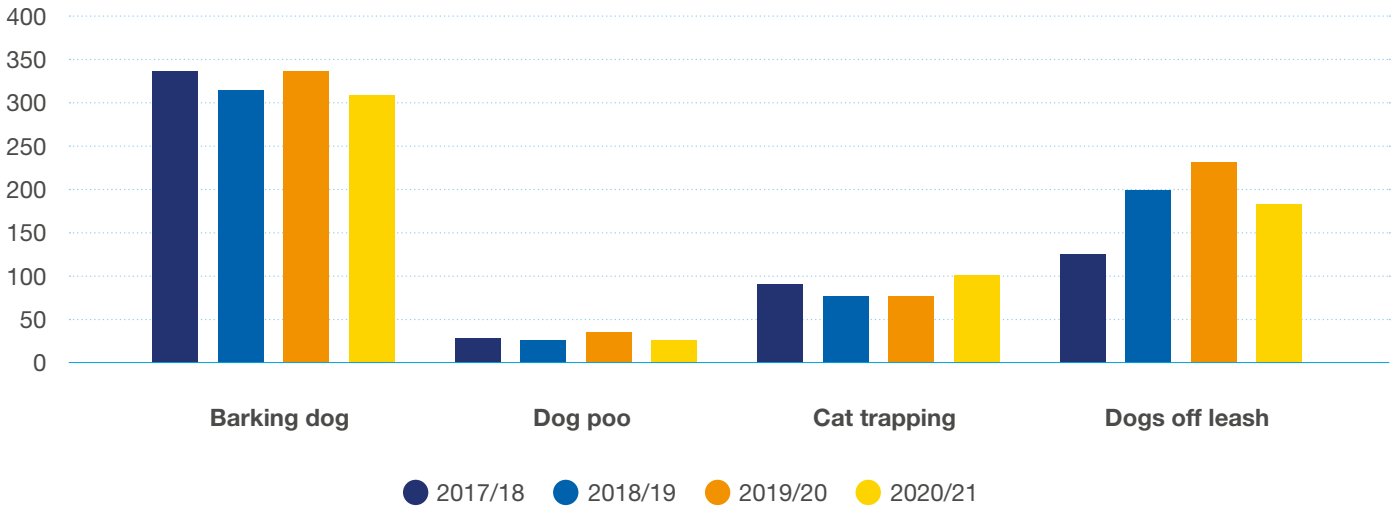
6. Nuisance

6.1 Context and current situation

Bayside has an extensive number of programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislative and/or regulatory requirements. Information is provided through a variety of methods including signage, pamphlets, *Let's talk Bayside* magazine delivered to all households, Council's website and weekly e-newsletter and social media.

Council receives four typical types of nuisance complaints: barking dogs, dogs off-leash in on-leash areas, dog litter and requests for cat traps. However, complaints for dog litter, barking dogs and dogs off-leash all decreased in 2021.

Nuisance complaints





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Community research findings:

- The vast majority of respondents (88%) indicated they had seen positive dog/dog owner behaviour in the year prior – an eight-point decrease from 96% in 2017. A similar proportion (89%) indicated seeing negative dog/dog owner behaviours – up slightly from 84% in 2017.
- COVID-19 may have influenced noticing negative behaviours as there was an increase in pet ownership during this time, indicating an influx of new/inexperienced owners. In-depth interview participants also observed that increased poor behaviour was likely due to inexperience or new owners not knowing the rules.
- The survey also revealed that respondents who indicated they had got a pet for the first time during COVID-19 showed notably lower incidences of being aware of:
  - Night-time cat curfew (56%)
  - Cats needing to be desexed to be registered (57%)
  - Dog owners having to have effective control (87%)
  - Cats having to be registered (71%)
  - Uncollected dog poo washing into the bay can create bacteria (75%).
- Over one third (38%) report having seen cat behaviours that do not align to regulations: cats on streets / in yards at night, cats preying on wildlife, and/or trespassing or wandering cats.
- Households with dogs showed higher incidences of noticing:
  - Dog owners who pick up their dog's poo (88%, 69% no pets)
  - Dogs happily playing under supervision (85%, 56% no pets)
  - Dog owners who have their dogs on leash when they are meant to (86%, 66% no pets)
  - Dogs in public spaces who are friendly and well behaved (89%, 64% no pets)
  - Off-leash dogs who return to their owner when called (77%, 45% no pets)
  - Sportsground grass damaged by dogs digging (17%, 11% no pets).

These findings highlight an opportunity to encourage non-pet owners to see the positive behaviours of dog owners.

- Households without dogs showed higher incidences of noticing:
  - Dogs annoying or intimidating people (33%, 15% dog owners)
  - Dogs off-leash when they shouldn't be (59%, 49% dog owners)
  - Dogs in children's playgrounds (24%, 15% dog owners)
  - Dogs or cats in conservation zones (heathland, marine sanctuary) (7%, 3% dog owners).

These findings show that there are several shared public space usage challenges where non-dog owners tend to notice problem behaviours more than dog owners.

Open Space - Parks, beaches, shared/ sports areas (insights from Community Research Survey)

While behaviour is "pretty good" in residential streets and around shops, the general consensus was that owner & pet behaviour is "a different story" in open areas.

There is some perception that owners seem oblivious to the comfort of others when their dog provides unwanted attention to others – including dogs using the same space.

Participants report that there are lots of off-lead offences in on-lead areas in parks and on beaches/foreshore car parks (before the beach off-lead areas).

These findings show that there are several shared public space usage challenges where non-dog owners tend to notice problem behaviours more than dog owners.

Council's Local Law was reviewed in 2019/2020 which includes requirements that when in public people must pick up their dog's waste and always carry litter removal devices. They must also ensure their dog does not dig on any part of Council Land other than sand on a beach.

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Uncollected dog poo

Poo pick-up is a ubiquitous concern – often owners are unaware due to not observing their dogs off lead; some just don't want to pick up after their pet. Generally, people are doing the right thing with their dogs but there are a few (a perceived minority) who aren't.

Council will increase awareness of impacts of uncollected dog poo on both amenity and the environment as it is toxic, ends up in the Bay, and can significantly impact some people in the community, such as those using wheelchairs. Awareness will be pursued as part of the annual communication plan and the use of storytelling reflecting the community member's experiences, and important facts about uncollected pet poo in the environment.

Barking Dogs

Barking dogs left alone during the day or generally barking at night can be a persistent problem at times and may be a growing concern given an increase in overall pet ownership during COVID-19 and changes to how we work.

Investigation of barking dog complaints are often challenging due to the required evidence to establish if nuisance barking is occurring and the hesitancy of neighbours to escalate a concern at the risk of damaging neighbour relations and creating conflict.

We will review our approach for barking dog nuisances to seek effective resolution while minimising the potential for neighbour conflict. This is challenging as the investigation ultimately requires evidence that someone is experiencing a nuisance.

Cats trespassing and cat curfew compliance

Cat trap requests increased to their highest levels (101 requests) in 2020/2021 of the four years of the 2017-2021 DAMP.

In the Community Research Survey those who indicated they had got a pet for the first time during COVID-19 showed notably lower incidences of being aware of:

- Night-time cat curfew (56%)
- Cats needing to be desexed to be registered (57%)
- Cats having to be registered (71%)

Additionally, almost two thirds (65%) of cat owners indicated their cats were outdoors during the day weekly or more often, whereas one in six owners (17%) report their cats outdoors after dark weekly or more often.

Approximately 33% of respondents supported introducing cat containment to ensure sensitive environmental areas and native wildlife are protected.

Council's Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2027 includes an action to review existing cat curfews and improve effectiveness as appropriate.

Furthermore, the RSPCA highlights the health benefits for cats and other animals in being contained at home.

Based on these factors, Council will transition to a permanent cat containment (day and night) across the four years of the DAMP as an action in section 10. This will ensure the community are supported to transition their existing cats to cat containment and that for the long-term, cats and native wildlife are safer and protected.



33% OF Respondents

Supported introducing cat containment to ensure sensitive environmental areas and native wildlife are protected.

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6.2 Our orders, local laws, council policies and procedures

Current orders:

Order No. 5 made under Section 26 of the DAA (effective 3 September 2015)

Key requirements under the order:

- Prescribes area where dogs are prohibited (prohibited areas), allowed off-leash (designated areas), and requires dogs to be on a leash in all other areas.
- In dog off-leash areas dogs must be under effective control of their carer and must not in any way interfere with other people or dogs.
- Dogs must be on a leash when within 20 metres of a playground, an area where a sporting event or practicing of the sporting event is taking place, permanent barbeque or picnic area, area where a public meeting is being held, and signed on-leash areas around lakes, ponds or other water courses.
  - Restricts the number of dogs a person can have control over in a reserve, public place or designated area to four dogs.

The order provides a schedule of designated off-leash areas and hours of access that apply to these areas.

Current local laws:

Section 27 Animal Excrement and conduct:

Dog owners are required to pick up after their animal and always carry litter removal devices. Dog owners must also ensure their animal does not dig on any part of Council Land except sand at a beach.

Our current compliance activities

- Park patrols
- Door knocks
- Cat trapping program
- Investigate, Education & Enforcement
- Poo bag dispenses in parks and pooch pouches (for carrying litter devices) handed out for free
- Ensuring microchip records are up to date when releasing impounded animals.

6.3 Our plan

Objective: Ensure Council's education, communication and compliance activities reduce nuisance complaints.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Review and amend barking dog process and look to incorporate technology to aid in evidence gathering.	Year 2	Procedure updated.
Include nuisance issues in the strategic annual education and communication program to help the community better understand the issues, impacts and ways to comply. This may involve pop-up events, brochures, handouts, social media, articles and website information.	Annual	Annual education program implemented and delivered.
Strengthen enforcement around cat traps for nuisance cats.	Year 2	Procedure updated and implemented .
Provide education material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners in registration information packs each year.	Annual	New cat owners receive information on registration of their pet.
Review the location provided for poo bag dispensers in parks.	Year 4	Review undertaken and implemented.
Research dog poo bag dispenser activity to ensure suitable refilling schedule and use signage to encourage users to only take what they need.	Year 4	Research undertaken and followed up with contractor regarding refills – Open Space. Provide suitable signage at dispensers.
Increase patrols to encourage/promote effective control.	Ongoing	Patrols recorded and higher visibility noted by the community with attendance to relevant events/complaints.

7. Dog attacks

7.1 Context and current situation

All reports of dog rush or dog attacks are fully investigated by Councils Local Laws team.

Preventing inappropriate behaviour of dogs, towards people, other dogs and wildlife is a vital role played by Council and community. Council promotes a range of strategies to the community to help minimise the risk of injury from dogs.

Council Pound Services also ensures that dogs rehomed from the pound are temperament tested to ensure they are suitable for adoption.

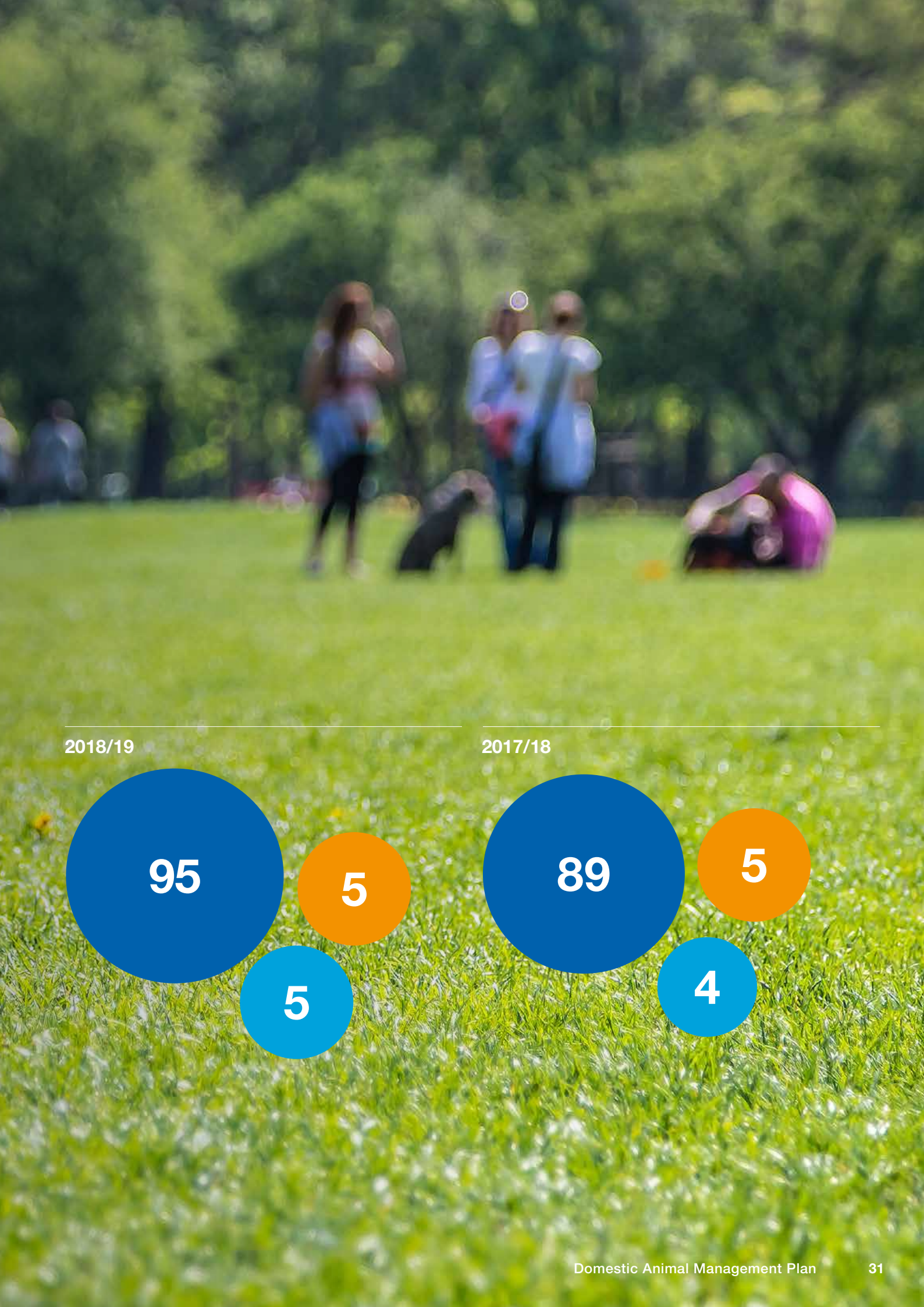
To reduce the risk of dog attacks, officers regularly patrol the municipality for wandering or at-large dogs and identify owners that are not complying with animal management requirements. The risk of dog attacks can also be minimised through dog owners complying with legislation.

The increase in dog attacks in 2020/2021 is thought to be linked to the increase in the number of first-time dog owners. These new dog owners are more likely to show a lower level of maintaining effective control of dogs, and may have also been restricted in seeking suitable training during the pandemic.

Council will continue its current efforts and seek to provide increased support to new dog owners on effective control and the benefits of training.

Dog attack in Bayside recorded for 2017-2021 are shown below.




2018/19
95
5
5
2017/18
89
5
4

7.2 Our orders, local laws. Council policies and procedures

Current orders:

Order No. 5 made under Section 26 of the DAA (effective 3 September 2015)

Key requirements under the order:

- Prescribes area where dogs are prohibited (prohibited areas), allowed off-leash (designated areas), and requires dogs to be on a leash in all other areas.
- In dog off-leash areas dogs must be under effective control of their carer and must not in any way interfere with other people or dogs.
- Dogs must be on a leash when within 20 metres of a playground, an area where a sporting event or practicing of the sporting event is taking place, permanent barbeque or picnic area, area where a public meeting is being held, and signed on-leash areas around lakes, ponds or other water courses.
  - Restricts the number of dogs a person can have control over in a reserve, public place or designated area to four dogs.

Our current compliance activities

Authorised officers routinely:

- Conduct patrols with a specific focus on high-risk areas
- Promote Responsible Pet Ownership to new and existing dog owners to promote dog training and socialisation.
- Educate dog owners about the need for dogs to be under effective control, at all times, including in off-leash areas.
- Promote the need to always secure dogs at their property so they are not at-large
- Investigate complaints, educate, and enforce laws and restrictions
- Promote the need to supervise children when dogs are present
- Use declaration/destruction powers of the DAA consistent with legislation and proportionately.

7.3 Our plan

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

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Promote the State 'Dangerous Dogs Hotline' 1300 101 080.	Ongoing	Information on Council website.
Regular patrol reserves and foreshore and educate dog walkers.	Ongoing	Dog owners educated regarding pet ownership and effective control.
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (e.g. confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc.) through media articles, website and social media information and targeted patrols.	Ongoing	Compare number of reported dog attack incidents pre and post campaign. Number of media articles published. Number of patrols conducted.
Where appropriate, utilise media releases or other means to inform the community about successful prosecutions of serious dog attacks.	Ongoing	Number of successful prosecutions promoted.
Run responsible dog ownership course and highlight ways of minimising the risk of dog attacks.	Years 1-4	Program planned and implemented.
Review of data systems to enhance detailed data collection and analysis for dog attack and harassment incidents to inform tailored education and enforcement activities.	Year 1	Tailored education/ enforcement activities undertaken for root cause of attacks.

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8. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 defines dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs.

- Menacing dogs: A dog declared by Council that has inflicted a non-serious bite to a person or animal; shown aggressive behaviours (snarling, growling, raised hackles) when rushing up to a person; or chased a person.
- Dangerous dogs: A dog declared by Council that has caused serious injury or death to a person or animal by biting or attacking. Dogs can also be declared as dangerous if the owner has received 2 or more infringement notices for the dog being menacing and hasn't complied with restraint requirements. A dog can also be declared dangerous under corresponding legislation in another state or territory. A dog that is kept for the purpose of guarding non-residential premises (Guard dog) is automatically a dangerous dog under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.
- Restricted breed dogs: Dogs of the following breeds are defined by Victorian State Government legislation. These dogs have not necessarily shown any dangerous behaviours, but have been classified by the State Government as a higher risk to community safety than other breeds
  - Japanese Tosa
  - Fila Brasileiro
  - Dogo Argentino
  - Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario)
  - American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier).

8.1 Context and current situation

Council currently has three declared menacing dogs. All three dogs have been declared by Bayside City Council to limit risk against the community for past offending behaviours of these dogs. Council currently does not have any declared dangerous dogs within the municipality.

Council is committed to ensuring owners of any of these types of dogs are aware of their responsibilities, and actions they can take to minimise the likelihood of inappropriate behaviours in their dogs.

8.2 Our policies and procedures

Current policies and procedures

Council's animal registration process requires all owners of dogs to declare that the dog's breed has been correctly identified and confirm it is or is not a restricted breed, declared dangerous or declared menacing dog.

All declared dangerous/menacing dogs are placed on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.

Current compliance activities:

Each year Council Officers inspect each property that contains a restricted dog breed or declared dangerous dog. Council currently does not have any declared dangerous dogs within the municipality.

8.3 Our plan

Objective: Identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Review process for declaration of dangerous and menacing dogs in order to improve alignment with changing legal requirements and community expectations.	Year 4	Procedure updated and implemented.
Educate the community about what is a declared dangerous or menacing dog.	Ongoing	Information available on website and social media articles distributed.

Objective: Identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Conduct random property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance.	Annually	Review of inspection reports and updates to the registration database.

9. Domestic animal businesses

Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are establishments such as animal shelters, pet shops, animal breeding and/or rearing establishments, boarding and/or training facilities that are run for profit. municipality

9.1 Context and current situation

There are currently five registered domestic animal businesses known to be operating in Bayside.

- 2 Dog training establishments
- 3 Boarding establishments

Current Education/promotion activities

Activity	Schedule
Verbal information provided at time of audit	Annual
Animal Welfare Victoria written material	Annual

Current Management and compliance activities

Activity	Schedule
Registration of DABs	Annual
Auditing of DABs	Annual
Issuing/enforcement of infringement notices/ notices to comply	As required
Patrols and follow-up of suspected unregistered/ new DABs	As required
Unannounced inspections to ensure compliance generally and with relevant registrations of animals etc.	As required



5 registered domestic animal businsses

9.2 Our policies and procedures

- Provide relevant mandatory Code of Practice to proprietors/ staff of existing and proposed domestic animal businesses.
- Ensure DAB is registered and audited annually
- Investigate all reported complaints about domestic animal businesses.

9.3 Our plan

A review of the presence of animal businesses will be undertaken to ensure information is accurate and DABs operate in line with state government and Council's requirements.

Objective Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses operating in the municipality are registered.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Review all DABs in the municipality and ensure they continue to be registered with Council.	Annually	All DABs maintain up to date registration.
Undertake an investigation to identify any non-registered DABs operating in the municipality and take appropriate action to ensure registration and compliance with requirements.	Annually	Numbers of DABs that are found to be unregistered as a result of the investigation.

Objective. Ensure DAB compliance with relevant requirements.

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Conduct compliance inspections on DABs	Annually	Compliance rates of DABs.

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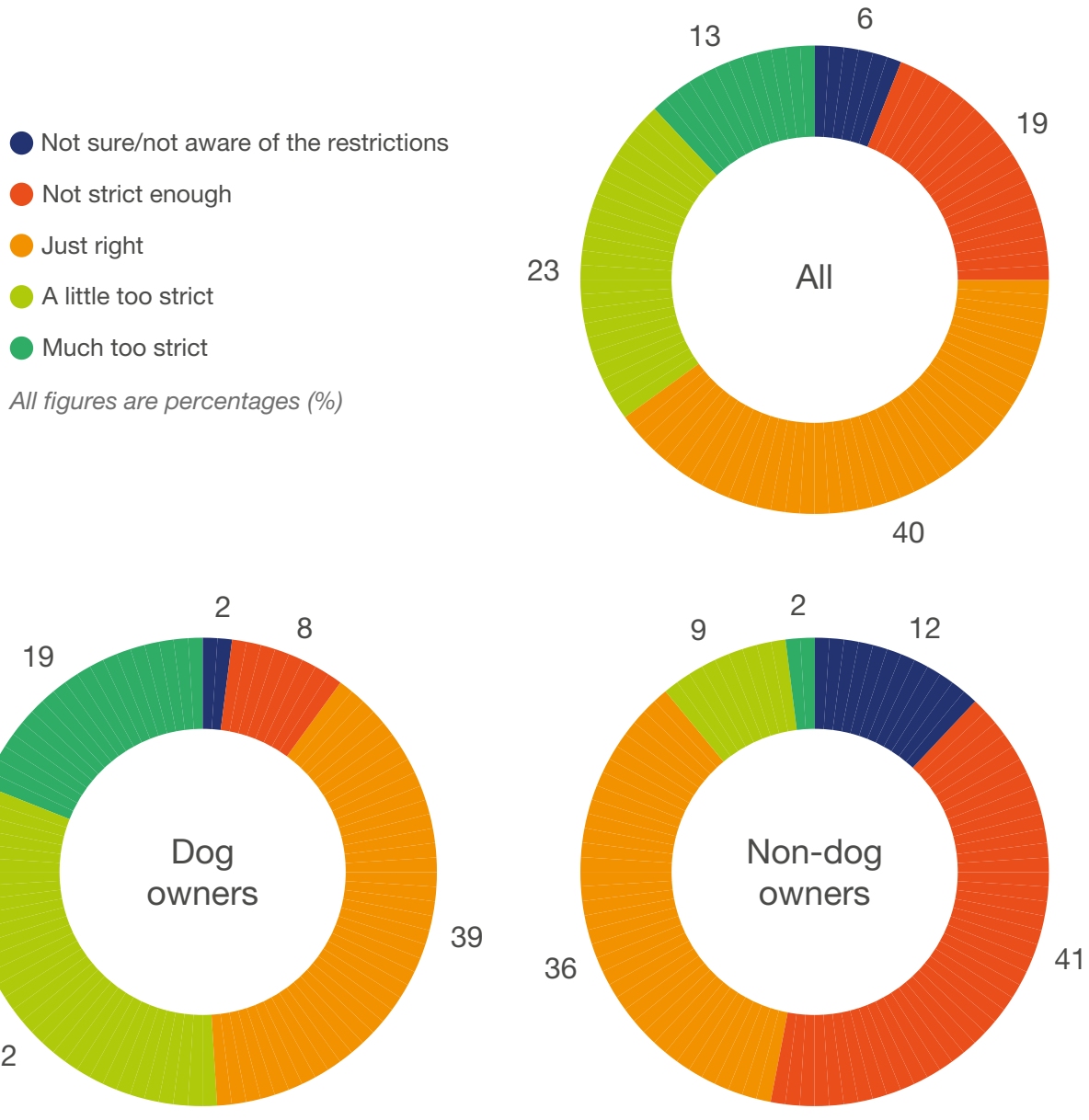
10. Other matters

10.1 Context and current situation

Dog off-leash restrictions

There is divide between dog owners and non-dog owners illustrated by responses to the community research program. Council sought to understand perceptions of the strictness of current off-leash restrictions in providing a good balance for sharing Bayside's public spaces: dog owners often feel they are too strict (51%), while non-dog owners commonly think they are not strict enough (41%). Notably, there is some parity between dog owners and non-dog owners (39% and 36% respectively) on the balance of restrictions being just right.

Percpection of the strictness of off-leash restrictions



The current restrictions will not be changed as part of this DAMP, other than a review of beach restrictions outlined below, as there is no consensus between dog owners, who often find them too strict, and non-dog owners who often perceive them to be not strict enough. Council will continue to focus efforts on community education, dog training opportunities, high visibility patrols and appropriate compliance action, and various communication campaigns to support effective and responsible off-lead behaviours and increased compliance with dog restrictions and effective control rules.

Dogs off-leash on sportsgrounds

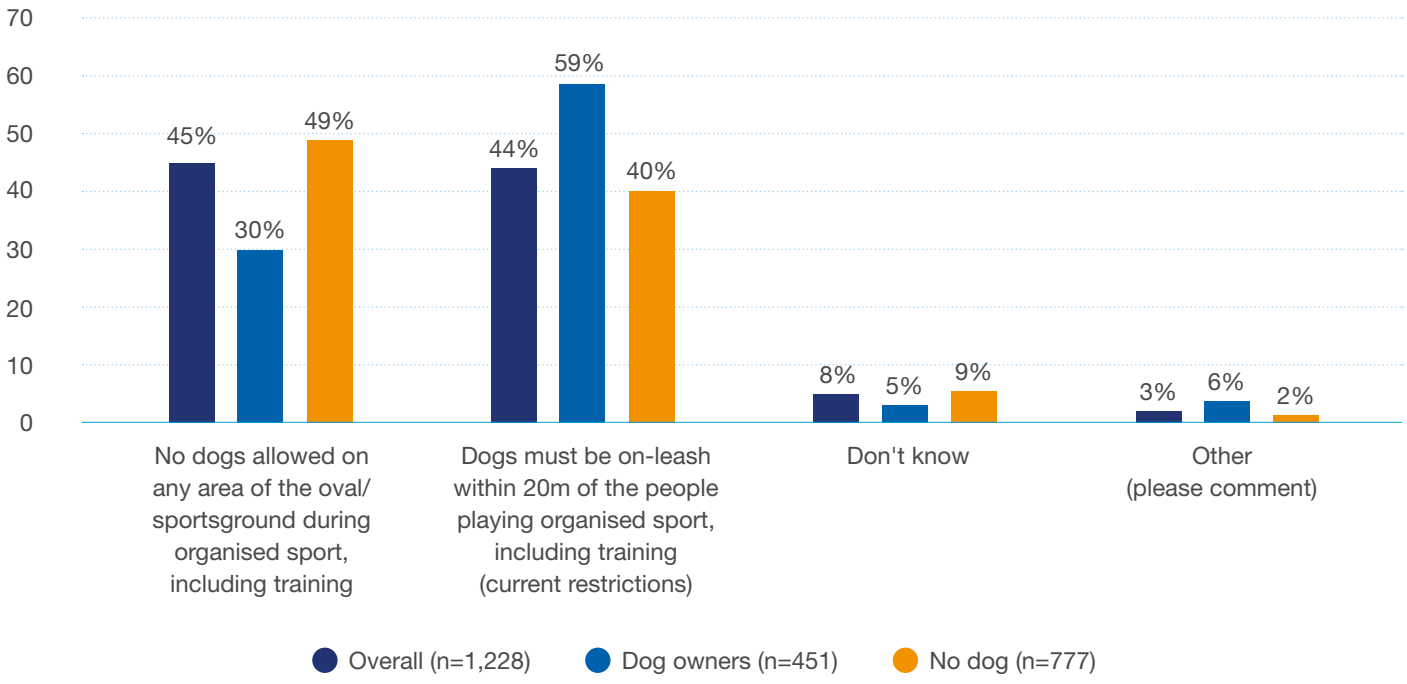
The current controls for dogs accessing sporting grounds during organised sport are set out in Council's Order made pursuant to Section 26(2) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. The order includes a range of restrictions for dogs and cats including a specific requirement that a dog in a designated off-leash area must be on leash if it is within 20 metres of an area where an organised sporting event or the practicing of the sporting event is taking place.

This provision of the Council Order has been in place since at least 2006. It has been interpreted and applied by Council's Enforcement Officers as allowing a dog to be off-leash on a sportsground/oval, so long as the dog remains under the effective control of its owner and at least 20 metres away from those participating in the organised sport event or training. Typically, this occurs during sports training sessions when part of a sportsground may be used for training and another part remains unused.

This approach has sought to enable shared use of these off-leash spaces.

The requirements for dogs to remain under effective control and at least 20 metres from participants has been considered a suitable measure to ensure safety of both people and dogs when followed and was reviewed in consideration of the results of the community engagement program in the context of how we can best protect the safety of dogs and people at off-leash sports grounds.

Community research established there is no clear community preference regarding protecting the safety of dogs and people at off-leash sportsgrounds during organised sport: dog owners predominantly want existing rules to apply (on-lead within 20m), whereas non-dog owners have a stronger preference for no dogs at all during sport. Overall, each option registers a similar level of support (no dogs at all 45%, on-leash within 20m 44%) as illustrated in the table below.



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To improve on a range of issues associated with dog off-leash use of sports grounds and use by sports clubs, two trials were identified in the annual review of the DAMP in 2020 to:

1. develop a code of conduct at a sportsground involving sports clubs and local dog owners to bring the two key user groups closer together and find common ground on how they can collectively share and care for shared space; and
2. trial the use of outdoor lights at selected sportsgrounds over winter to expand access to open space for dogs off-leash purposes.

Both of these trials did not proceed due the impacts of unplanned COVID restrictions; however, these are being progressed for the 2022 football season and will be reviewed in year 1 of the DAMP.

Dogs off-leash at environmentally sensitive areas: review of beach restrictions for dog off-leash access

The research program found that more than half of the community support no off-leash dog access to bushland, heathland, conservation areas (65%) and/or Rickets Point marine sanctuary (56%) to ensure sensitive environmental areas and native wildlife are protected from domestic animals. Although, this is less popular among dog owners (just under half support this).

Furthermore, action 37 of the Bayside Biodiversity Action Plan 2018–27 includes an action to review the dog restrictions adjacent to the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary (Fourth Street to the Beaumaris Sea Scouts) in conjunction with Parks Victoria. The action also aims to ensure a consistent approach between Parks Victoria and Bayside City Council to increase protection of significant biodiversity values from wildlife predation and disturbance, and nutrient enrichment of vegetation from faeces.

In response, Council will undertake a review of the dog on l eash and off leash restrictions adjacent to the Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary and for all Bayside beaches in year 4 of the DAMP.

Transition to cat containment

Cat trap requests increased to their highest levels (101 requests) in 2020/2021 of the four years of the 2017-2021 DAMP.

In the Community Research Survey those who indicated they had got a pet for the first time during COVID-19 showed notably lower incidences of being aware of:

- Night-time cat curfew (56%)
- Cats needing to be desexed to be registered (57%)
- Cats having to be registered (71%)

Additionally, almost two thirds (65%) of cat owners indicated their cats were outdoors during the day weekly or more often, whereas one in six owners (17%) report their cats outdoors after dark weekly or more often.

Approximately 33% of respondents supported introducing cat containment to ensure sensitive environmental areas and native wildlife are protected.

Council's Biodiversity Action Plan 2018-2027 includes an action to review existing cat curfews and improve effectiveness as appropriate.

Furthermore, the RSPCA highlights the health benefits for cats and other animals in being contained at home.

Based on these factors Council will transition to a permanent cat containment (day and night) across the four years of the DAMP as an action in section 10. This will ensure the community are supported to transition their existing cats to cat containment and that for the long-term cats and native wildlife are safer and protected.

Almost two thirds (65%) of cat owners indicated their cats were outdoors during the day weekly or more often…

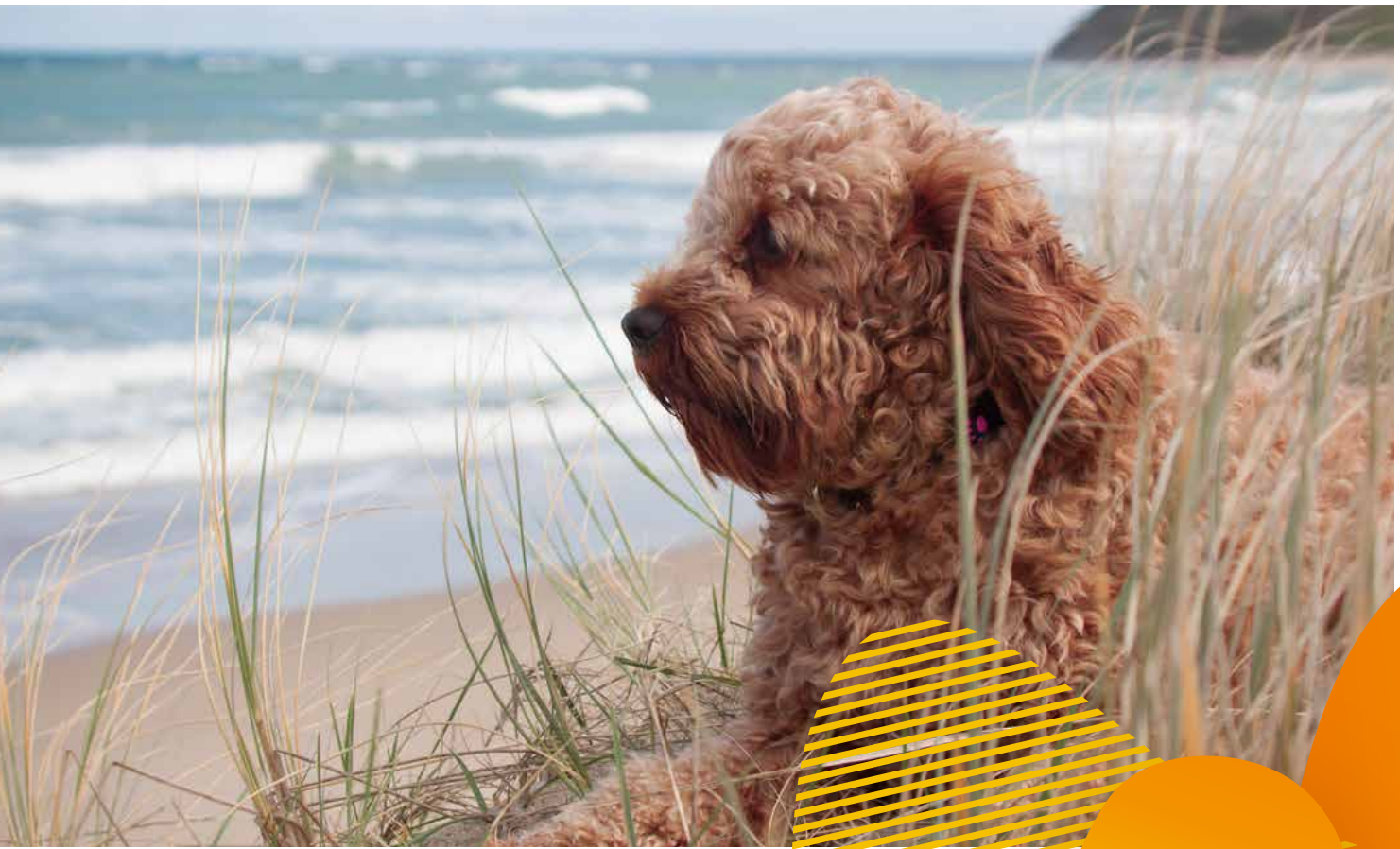
10.2 Our plan

Objective: Ensure dog and cat restrictions help to protect the environment

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Review Dog off-leash restrictions adjacent to Ricketts Point Marine Sanctuary and all beaches.	Year 4	Restrictions reviewed and adjusted as appropriate ensuring no net loss of dog off-leash area.
Transition to cat containment (day and night) to protect cats and native wildlife.	Years 1-4	Cat containment implemented and cat owners provided information to assist with transitioning their cat to containment.

Objective: Ensure continuous improvement informed by regular customer feedback

Activity	Schedule	Evaluation
Develop ongoing customer experience surveys to provide qualitative insights to inform continuous improvement of service.	Ongoing	Maintain or improve community satisfaction with animal management at “very good”.



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11. Annual review of plan and annual reporting

A review of this DAMP will be conducted annually. The review will evaluate the activities listed under each objective in this plan to determine whether they have successfully been activated, are in progress or otherwise. In each case, action or non-action should be commented on.

The annual evaluation of this DAMP will be published in Council's Annual Report & provided to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Secretary together with any amendments to the plan.

Evaluation of implementation of the domestic animal management plan

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

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