

## 7.4 Adoption of Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Executive Summary

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the revised City of Boroondara Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 (DAMP) for its consideration and adoption (**Attachment 1**).

#### Background

The Victorian *Domestic Animals Act 1984* (Act) prescribes requirements for the responsible ownership of dogs and cats, to promote animal welfare and the protection of the environment. The Act requires all Victorian Councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan at four-yearly intervals to provide the foundation for the delivery of Council's animal management services and their compliance and enforcement obligations.

The City of Boroondara's current Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 has been reviewed and informed by key stakeholders and community consultation, research and benchmarking to deliver a new strategic plan detailing our approach as well as targeted programs for delivery by Council's Animal Management Services.

#### Key Issues

Community consultation on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan commenced on 1 November 2021 via Council's 'Engage Boroondara' page for a period of 28 days (**Attachment 2**).

Fourteen submissions were received via the 'Engage Boroondara' page. This is similar to the number of submissions received from the community consultation undertaken in 2016 on the current DAMP

Most respondents were in support of the plan. Feedback was also provided on the DAMP by 78% of all respondents whether they were or were not in support of the DAMP (**Attachment 3**).

All feedback has been reviewed and the DAMP amended to address the matters raised as they relate particularly to cat containment and the impact of cats on the community and wildlife. These related enhancements form an important part of the future considerations and actions by Council's Animal Management Team.

The DAMP is reviewed and reported on annually thereby allowing the opportunity for an assessment on the progression of the proposed actions and level of success. It will also enable Council to continue to be responsive to emerging animal management issues.

#### Next Steps

On consideration and acceptance of the Officer's recommendation, the DAMP will be submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions via Animal Welfare Victoria, no later than March 2022 and published on Council's website.

## **Officers' recommendation**

That Council resolves to adopt the City of Boroondara Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025.

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**Responsible director:**     **Scott Walker, Director Urban Living**

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## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present to Council the revised City of Boroondara Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 (DAMP) for consideration and adoption (**Attachment 1**). The final DAMP must be submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions no later than March 2022.

This report also informs Councillors of feedback received from the community consultation on the City of Boroondara draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025, its consideration and adoption as appropriate, into the final version (**Attachment 2**).

## 2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan

The DAMP addresses the following prescribed requirements from the *Domestic Animals Act 1984* (Act):

- Staff training and development
- Registration and identification
- Nuisance
- Dog attacks
- Dangerous, menacing and restricted dog breeds
- Population and euthanasia; and
- Domestic animal businesses.

The DAMP considers and aligns with several priority themes detailed in the Boroondara Community Plan 2021-2031. It aligns with the expectations expressed in the following themes:

- Theme 1 Community, Services and Facilities by delivering administrative and field services in amenity and animal management
- Theme 2 Parks and Green Spaces by supporting the promotion, use and enjoyment of outdoor spaces by the community
- Theme 3 The Environment by supporting the initiatives to reduce the impact on the local environment and biodiversity
- Theme 7 Leadership and Governance by engaging with the community and delivering good customer service.

The DAMP aligns also, with the Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2013-2023 and Open Space Strategy 2013-2026.

## 3. Background

The Act requires all Victorian Councils to prepare an Animal Management Plan at four-yearly intervals. The City of Boroondara Domestic Animal Management Plan expired in December 2021. An extension was, however, sought and granted by Animal Welfare Victoria on behalf of the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions, to submit Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 no later than March 2022. The extension was sought to enable appropriate staffing and the drafting of a new plan which included stakeholder consultation.

The community was invited to provide feedback on the City of Boroondara draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 from 1 November 2021 to 28 November 2021 via the “Engage Boroondara” page on Council’s website (**Attachment 2**).

Fourteen submissions were received including comments from residents provided in two emails sent to Council during the preceding months regarding related matters noting one of these residents also provided detailed feedback at the Engage Boroondara website (**Attachment 3**).

Most respondents were positive. Some respondents, however, expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of the draft DAMP including lack of action regarding cats and no recommendation to impose a cat curfew. Importantly, suggestions were provided for improving the DAMP and in Council’s provision of animal management services. All feedback was considered and this was used to amend and enhance the DAMP.

#### 4. Outline of key issues/options

Detailed responses and suggestions from the respondents offered the opportunity for officers to assess, reconsider and incorporate these in the DAMP.

Positive feedback included:

- please keep up the good work of the Boroondara animal control. They are a vital service that help keep our community safe.
- I support Council’s efforts to improve responsible cat ownership
- CALD great to see as well as review of dog signage.

Four key themes were identified from the feedback of five respondents who did not support the DAMP as follows:

1. Lack of responsible cat ownership; need to address roaming cats, introduction of a cat curfew, multiple cat ownership, cat nuisance, lack of services for cat owners.

Response: The DAMP had already considered these matters and had detailed targeted activities. The issue of a cat curfew will remain under regular review by Civic Services. The plan has, however, been amended to enhance the suite of activities and to further detail targeted actions including:

- action to clarify Council’s response to the management of cat nuisance complaints (to ensure residents are aware of the services available to them)
- partnering with the RSPCA to develop a cat ownership enrichment program
- a review of microchip data to identify unregistered cats
- focused approach on education on the issue of community cats
- targeted desexing and cat trapping programs
- exploring legislative opportunities to regulate cats ‘at large’ noting that, unlike dogs, the *Domestic Animals Management Act 1994* does not regulate cats ‘at large’.

## 2. Wildlife; the impact of cats and wildlife protection

Response: Data has been sought regarding the impact on wildlife and other sensitive locations in Boroondara both from dogs and cats. Infrastructure has and continues to be installed by Council where there is an interface between sensitive wildlife nature reserves and dog off-leash areas, for example. In addition, targeted cat trapping programs in sensitive wildlife nature reserves are currently underway.

## 3. Lost and found pets; system to reunite pets with owners

Response: The current practice is for all attempts to be made to reunite an animal with its owner as a priority. For example, where a dog is found at large, the first step taken by an Animal Management Officer is to scan for a microchip using their handheld scanner. Where contact details of the owner are up-to-date and they can be contacted, the dog will be reunited with its owner directly. Where contact details are out of date or the owner is not available, the dog is taken to the RSPCA.

Further, an activity in the DAMP detailed actions to develop a lost and found page on an appropriate media platform to support our ability to reunite animals with their owners.

## 4. Infringements for owners who do not pick up their dog's faeces

Response: An infringement is not able to be issued to a dog owner in this regard unless their dog is observed defecating and the owner not stopping to collect it. In most instances, complaints are received from residents who continually find dog faeces on their nature strip. Council will reinforce its messaging to dog owners to pick up their dog's faeces, under the banner of responsible dog ownership. It is noted this is an issue across all Councils and will be discussed at future meetings with neighbouring councils.

Assertions were incorrectly made regarding the application of legislative tools available to Animal Management Officers. This has highlighted however, the importance of making available to our customers, clear and concise information to assist them to make informed decisions and/or how to take action. Several other matters were raised and while not directly related to the DAMP will be considered in the context of the wider animal management activities.

## 5. Consultation/communication

On adoption by Council, the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 will be submitted to Animal Welfare Victoria to meet Council's obligation to the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions in accordance with the Act.

The new DAMP will be made available on Council's website.

## 6. Financial and resource implications

Implementation of the new DAMP falls mainly within current Council budget limitations.

Future additional funding, however, may be needed for the following actions:

- Proposed targeted cat de-sexing program
- Pet Expo in 2023
- Printing of enhanced information pamphlets and posters including interpreter costs for the translation of information in key languages

Unexpected additional cost impacts may result due to future legislative changes.

## **7. Governance issues**

There are no conflict-of-interest issues arising from the development of the new DAMP. It has also been developed to be compliant with Council's obligations under Human Rights legislation.

## **8. Social and environmental issues**

The adoption by Council of the DAMP builds on the achievements of previous City of Boroondara Domestic Animal Management Plans. It provides the foundation to fortify and enhance Council's approach to domestic animal management and deliver services and innovative programs to address legislative and community expectations.

It focuses on achieving a positive impact on the community and social wellbeing and safety as well as exploring measures to support animal welfare and safety. The DAMP aims also, to deliver a positive impact on the natural environment, biodiversity and wildlife habitat within the municipality.

## **9. Evaluation and review**

In accordance with the Act, the DAMP is reviewed at least annually to assess progress with the detailed activities and provides an opportunity for it to be amended and enhanced in recognition of emerging issues.

Details of these reviews are reported to the Secretary of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions via Animal Welfare Victoria.

## **10. Conclusion**

The DAMP aims to provide a balanced approach to meet both Council's statutory obligations and community expectations.

Through consultation, the opportunity was provided for the wider community to provide feedback. The feedback provided offered greater insight to better understand certain changing needs and expectations of some members of our community. Having considered the feedback from respondents, enhancements to the DAMP were made to provide a strengthened and balanced approach to animal management in the municipality.

**Manager:** Paul Mitchelmore, Manager Civic Services

**Report officer:** Dianne Yans, Projects and Strategy Officer

Domestic Animal Management Plan



# **City of Boroondara**

## **Domestic Animal Management Plan**

### **2021-2025**



## **Responsible Pet Ownership**



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### Executive Summary

To improve animal management in Victoria, the State government amended the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Act) requiring all local councils to develop a Domestic Animal Management Plan every four years which details its strategic approach to the delivery of domestic animal management services.

The City of Boroondara Domestic Animal Management Plan for 2021-2025 (DAMP) addresses the requirements prescribed in section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Act) including:

- staff training and development
- registration and identification
- nuisance
- dog attacks
- dangerous, menacing and restricted dog breeds
- population and euthanasia; and
- domestic animal businesses.

The DAMP builds on the achievements of previous plans and responds to the evolving nature of responsible pet ownership, the expectations of the Boroondara community and aligns with the City of Boroondara Community Plan.

The DAMP is informed by consultation with key internal and external stakeholders, community consultation, research and benchmarking. It aims to support pet owners to enjoy and manage their pets in ways to enhance their health and welfare, balanced with consideration of the safety, amenity and the needs and wellbeing of the wider community. A key aim is the continued and strengthened focus on ensuring effective responsible pet ownership through a combination of targeted community education and compliance approaches.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### Introduction

Companion animals are recognised for the psychological and physical benefits they bring to their owners and the community more broadly. Pets have increasingly become a valued part of people's lives with pet ownership increasing significantly in recent years. In the City of Boroondara for example, new pet registrations for 2021 have increased by over 15%.

The care and welfare of companion animals within Boroondara is an important priority and commitment to achieving enhanced community and animal health and welfare outcomes is demonstrated through the delivery of a municipal-wide animal management service.

The DAMP responds strategically to the identified needs of the community, with a key focus on the promotion and support of pet owners to take an active role in responsible pet ownership. Council aims to keep the community and domestic animals safe through the provision of education, communication and engagement, alongside performing its legislative functions.

#### 1.1 Corporate framework

The implementation of the DAMP contributes to enhancing the health and safety of the community and companion animals as well as protecting amenity and the environment, through the effective management of cats and dogs within the municipality. In so doing, the DAMP demonstrates alignment with the City of Boroondara:

- Community Plan 2021-2031
- Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2013-2023
- Open Space Strategy 2013-2026.

#### 1.2 Legislation

##### **Victorian *Domestic Animals Act 1994***

The Act provides the legislative foundation for the delivery of Council's animal management services and their compliance and enforcement. Key responsibilities include:

- registration and identification of dogs and cats
- control of dogs and cats including particular controls for dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
- registration and conduct of domestic animal businesses
- boarding of dogs and cats
- appointment of Authorised Officers.

There are also six enforceable mandatory codes of practice made under the Act which are administered by Council relating to the operation of domestic animal businesses. These are:

- breeding and rearing establishments
- boarding establishments
- shelters, pounds, and pet shops
- dog training establishments, and
- greyhound establishments.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### Domestic Animal Management Plan

Section 68A of the Act prescribes that every Victoria Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan every four years which outlines the services, programs and policies established to address its administration as follows:

#### Section 68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

- 1) Each Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions) prepare a domestic animal management plan at the end period of each four years.
- 2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
  - a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
  - b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
  - c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
    - i. to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
    - ii. to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
    - iii. to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
    - iv. to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
    - v. to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
    - vi. to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
    - vii. to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
  - d) 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
  - e) 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
  - f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the DAMP.
- 3) Every Council must—
  - a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the DAMP; and
  - b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the DAMP and any amendments to the DAMP; and
  - c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the DAMP in its annual report.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### 1.3 Scope

The scope of the DAMP encompasses Council's compliance and regulatory responsibilities for the delivery of animal management services in accordance with the Act. These are completed in conjunction and with an emphasis to promote responsible pet ownership through targeted community education programs.

### 1.4 Objective

The objective of the DAMP is to achieve Council's responsibilities in accordance with the Act and respond to community expectations through:

- Promotion of the responsibilities of owners of domestic animals using a combination of community education and compliance approaches
- Ensuring Officers are adequately trained to fulfil Council's responsibilities under the Act
- Ensuring efficiency, effectiveness and quality of Council's animal management services
- Provision for the welfare of domestic animals within the municipality
- Protection of public safety from the risk of dog attacks
- Identification and management of declared and restricted breed dogs (RBDs)
- Promotion of registration and identification of all domestic animals in the municipality
- The protection of native flora and fauna from the potential impact of cats and dogs
- Ensuring Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB) are managed according to relevant Codes of Practice.

### 1.5 Consultation

The Act requires domestic animal management plans be developed in consultation with the Secretary - Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions via Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV).

The DAMP is informed by a review of relevant literature, benchmarking with other Councils, community consultation and consultation with internal and external stakeholders including:

- Animal Management Officers and team leadership
- Environmental Sustainability and Open Spaces
- Customer and Communication, Customer and Transformation
- Community Planning and Development, Community Support
- Liveable Communities, Community Support
- Traffic and Transport, Places and Spaces
- Customer and Communication, Customer and Transformation
- Health and Wellbeing Services, Community Support
- Boroondara Community
- Local veterinary practices and Domestic Animal Businesses
- Peak bodies such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) and the Australian Veterinary Association.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

## 2. Background and Context

### 2.1 Boroondara Community Profile

The City of Boroondara is located in Melbourne's inner east and covers an area of 60 square kilometres. The municipality includes 12 suburbs (as shown in Figure 2 below) spanning five precincts including:

- Central precinct (Camberwell, Canterbury and Surrey Hills);
- North East precinct (Balwyn, Balwyn North and Deepdene);
- North West precinct (Kew and Kew East);
- South East precinct (Ashburton and Glen Iris); and
- South West precinct (Hawthorn and Hawthorn East).

The City of Boroondara is recognised as one of Victoria's healthiest local government areas where residents generally enjoy good health and wellbeing. The municipality is primarily a residential area with some commercial, industrial and institutional land uses. The estimated resident population is 183,199 having grown by 3.5% since the previous plan was prepared.

Relative to the rest of Melbourne, the municipality is home to a high proportion of people who are post-retirement age.

Of people living in the City of Boroondara 31% speak a language other than English at home. Representing the top three most common languages spoken, excluding English are Mandarin, Cantonese and Greek.

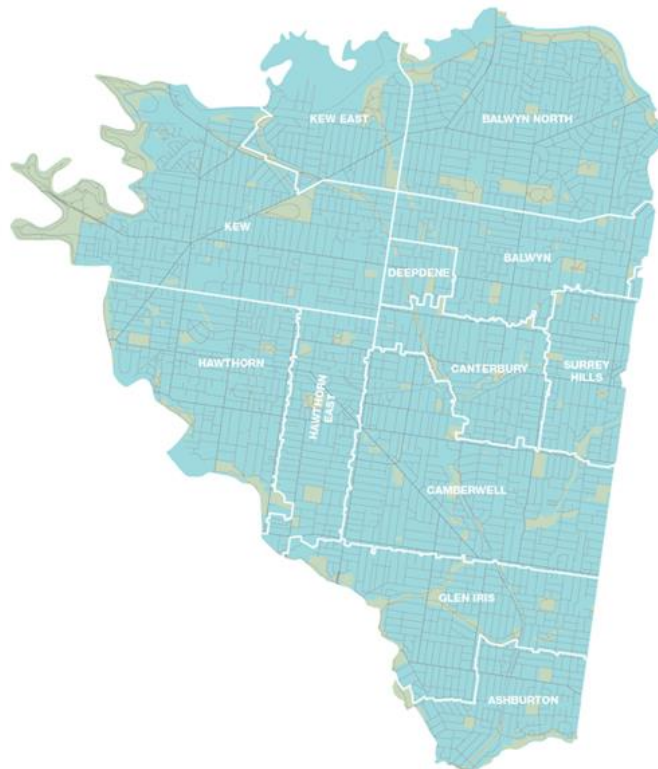


Figure 1: Map of City of Boroondara



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### 2.2 Domestic Animal Management Snapshot

The City of Boroondara boasts a range of open spaces, including parks, gardens and reserves many of which are well utilised by different sectors of the community. There are currently 46 designated dog off-leash areas in the municipality (established under section 26 of the Act).

The municipality has seen a 3.5% increase in (human) population and an upward trend in pet ownership with 2021 seeing an increase of over 1,000 additional dog and cat registrations.

Table 1 provides a summary of key statistics and background information relevant to domestic animal management in the municipality.

**Table 1 Domestic Animals Profile (Snapshot)**

Key Statistics	
Population (estimated resident population in 2018)	183,199
Geographic area of municipality	60 Km <sup>2</sup>
EFT Authorised Animal Management Officers (AMOs)	4 + 1 Team Leader
Average number of requests (across all categories) per AMO (not including the Team Leader) annually	2,230
Number of newly registered dogs (2021)	2,404
Total number of dogs registered in City of Boroondara (2021)	15,960
Number of registered declared dogs (dangerous, menacing or restricted breed)	4
Number of newly registered cats (2021)	833
Total number of cats registered in City of Boroondara (2021)	5,403
Number of registered Domestic Animal Businesses	6
Number of successful prosecutions (resulting in charges) per offence (not per offender) from January 2017 to June 2021	127
Number of cats and dogs impounded financial years (2018 -2021)	421
Average % of dogs reclaimed financial years (2018 -2021)	80
Average % of dogs euthanised financial years (2018 -2021)	2.5
Average % of cats reclaimed financial years (2018 -2021)	13
Average % of cats euthanised financial years (2018 -2021)	22



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### 2.3 Animal Management Staffing and Structure

Animal management services are delivered by a team of four full-time Animal Management Officers (AMOs), reporting to the Team Leader, Field Services. The team sits within the Civic Services Department under the Directorate of Urban Living.

The primary responsibility of the AMOs is to deliver animal control services, education, and compliance and enforcement activities in accordance with the Act, Council's Amenity Local Law 2019 and gazetted Orders.

Council provides Animal Management Services Monday to Friday. For urgent cases, such as a dog attack or dog pick up, Council provides a 24 hour on-call service which operates seven days a week.

All efforts are made to reunite a pet with its owner. Officers will scan for a microchip and where the owner can be contacted, they will be reunited with their pet directly. Where there is for example no microchip, contact details are out-of-date and or an attack has taken place, the animal is delivered to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

### 2.4 Current Programs and Services

Current programs and services provided through Council's domestic animal management service are summarised in the table 2.

**Table 2 - Current Programs and Services**

Program or Service	Service Level to Community
Registration and identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual registration renewal notices, including comprehensive follow up process designed to improve compliance (letters and phone calls).</li> </ul>
Nuisance (barking dog) requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customer receives an automated acknowledgement when a matter is advised by email. When received by phone a 'case' is created. Follow up contact is made by AMOs.</li> <li>A barking dog guide is available at Council's web site to inform a potential complainant of the options available to them to resolve their concern including how to collect information required to enable Council to undertake an investigation.</li> </ul>
Dog requests (dog attacks, rushes and wandering dog)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Immediate response if the situation is deemed dangerous.</li> </ul>
Wandering cat complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humane cat cages are available for hire.</li> <li>Protocols in place governing the use of these cages to ensure the welfare of the confined cat is protected.</li> </ul>
Dogs on/off leash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Council's Dog Control Order designates dog off-leash areas and prescribes the obligations of dog owners when using these areas.</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A digital map of dog off-leash parks is available on Council's website. The map is accessible on mobile devices providing ease of use for dog owners.</li> </ul>
Park / Street patrols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routine patrols of parks and reserves.</li> <li>Targeted patrols of high use or problematic areas as required.</li> </ul>
Pound facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The RSPCA at 3 Burwood Hwy, Burwood East is open to the public from 10am - 4pm Monday-Saturday. Officers have access 24 hours a day for the drop off, of animals.</li> </ul>
De-sexing voucher scheme (MAV/AVA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discounted de-sexing vouchers are provided for concession and pension card holders.</li> </ul>
Education and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication tools and media channels used to promote responsible pet ownership including social and print media, pet expo, VMS boards and targeted education and compliance programs.</li> </ul>
After Hours Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An After Hours Service operates every day of the year.</li> </ul>
Domestic Animal Business inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council registers and conducts annual audits.</li> <li>Responds to complaints and proactively surveys for unregistered businesses</li> </ul>
Declared Dogs (Dangerous/menacing or restricted breed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council conducts annual inspections and follow up inspections for any issues of non-compliance.</li> <li>Contact is maintained with owners.</li> </ul>
Crisis care of animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Injured animals are taken to the RSPCA during the hours of 9am-6pm where they will be checked by the veterinary service or, to the nearest veterinary clinic for immediate treatment.</li> <li>Injured animals found after hours are taken to the Animal Emergency Centre - 37 Blackburn Road, Mt Waverley.</li> </ul>

## 3. Current activities and Strategic Directions for Domestic Animal Management

### 3.1. Training of Authorised Officers

**Goal:** To ensure and enhance the skill and knowledge of staff involved in animal management, to deliver best practice programs and services.

#### Current Training Activities

As Authorised Officers under the Act, it is critical the training and ongoing development of AMOs is designed to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications to undertake their duties efficiently and effectively.





## Domestic Animal Management Plan

Training and development initiatives are considered within the context of identified personal and professional needs through Council's Personal Development Review program. Each year training opportunities are also offered to employees through Council's Learning and Development program. This allows officers to respond effectively to current and emerging community and animal management issues as well as organisational priorities.

Training activities include:

- Formal training provided by accredited registered training organisations
- Training opportunities provided internally by Council
- Short skills refresher courses on relevant topics
- Peer mentoring and on the job training
- Attendance to industry forums and training sessions.

Refer to Attachment 1 - Animal Management Officer Training

### Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Enhance skills and knowledge of authorised officers		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Initiate regular meetings with neighbouring councils to provide opportunity to share learnings and enhance our services to our customers	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiation and success of meeting</li> </ul>
Review and maintain Council's Animal Management Staff Training Guidelines.	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When completed</li> </ul>
Identify and provide opportunities for officers to support their professional development to build confidence and skills.	Annually/ Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Documented in officers development program</li> <li>• Officers to report and share learnings with team</li> </ul>
Regular team meetings to share experiences and enhance knowledge.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of learnings from attendance at training sessions or on the job experiences</li> <li>• Enhancing learning and consistency</li> <li>• Meeting minutes</li> </ul>



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

Objective 2 - Maintain currency of internal policies and procedures		
Activities	When	Evaluation
Review and update Animal Management Standard Processes (SOPs)	December 2022 / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOPs allocated and reviewed as scheduled</li> <li>Procedures reviewed</li> <li>Updates recorded</li> </ul>
Conduct workforce planning exercise to assess adequate resourcing for planned and additional activities (noting significant increase in new registrations is likely to increase the workload of AMOs)	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings conducted with staff</li> <li>Findings delivered to Senior Management</li> </ul>

### 3.2. Registration and Identification

**Goal:** To increase animal registration compliance in the City of Boroondara and ensure all lost animals are safely and quickly returned to their owners.

#### Current Situation

The registration and identification of dogs and cats remains an ongoing priority for Council. Domestic animal registrations on average have continued to increase. The total number of animal registrations in the City of Boroondara as of 2021 was 21,363 consisting of 15,960 dogs and 5,403 cats. The total new animal registrations increasing from 2,822 in 2017 to 3,237 in 2021, representing a 12% increase over this period as shown in table 4.

**Table 4 - New registrations for dogs and cats**

Annual Registrations					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Cats - new registrations	694	798	827	688	833
Dogs - new registrations	2,128	2,163	2,345	2,127	2,404
Total - new registrations	2,822	2,961	3,172	2,815	3,237

#### New cat registrations

New cat registration numbers have increased significantly from 2017 to 2021 by 22.1% in comparison to the 2.6% increase shown in the preceding 4 years.

New cat registrations fell however, in 2020 by 17.4% in comparison to the new registrations recorded in 2021.



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### New dog registrations

New dog registration numbers have also increased from 2017 to 2021 by 11.5% in comparison to the 2.3% decrease shown in the preceding 4 years.

New dog registrations, like new cat registrations fell in 2020 by 11.5% in comparison to the new registrations recorded in 2021.

### Registration versus ownership

The registration rates for both dogs and cats are considered to be substantially lower than actual ownership levels which is typical in other municipalities. Council will be undertaking multiple activities focused on improving the registration status within the municipality.

Council partners with the RSPCA delivering contemporary animal management services. The RSPCA also provides pound services. Reclaim data from the RSPCA in table 5 demonstrates the percentage of dogs which are registered on release remains on average at approximately 50%.

The reclaim data from the RSPCA suggests only 7% on average of the cats impounded, are registered prior to release. This demonstrates opportunities for Council to further promote the benefits of registration and in particular to cat owners.

**Table 5 - Pound data from the RSPCA for dogs and cats**

Category	Jul - Jun 2018/19	Jul - Jun 2019/20	Jul - Jun 2020/21
<b>Dogs</b>			
Total impounded *	222	177	143
Number of dogs registered prior to release	115	92	80
% of dogs already registered prior to release	48%	48%	44%
<b>Cats</b>			
Total impounded*	208	172	201
Number of cats registered prior to release	14	14	12
% of cats already registered prior to release	7%	8%	6%

\* Total impounded refers to animals brought into RSPCA by Council and by Boroondara residents dropping of strays and surrendering a pet

### Council Orders and Local Laws

- City of Boroondara *Amenity Local Law 2019*, Clause 51 regulates the number of domestic animals including cats and dogs that can be kept on a property.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

- application for new registration and their renewal for dogs and cats (including online form).
- seizure and impounding of unregistered or unidentified dogs and cats.
- follow up of unregistered dogs and cats.
- Issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding for example dogs and/or cats that have not been registered or renewed for registration, dog attacks or barking dogs.

### Education and Promotional Activities

A variety of platforms and opportunities are employed to engage and communicate with residents and visitors to the City of Boroondara on the matter of responsible pet ownership including:

- brochures, booklets, postcards, published articles promoting responsible pet ownership
- social media to communicate key messages
- display of information in a range of public places
- follow-up/reminders for non-renewed registration
- maintenance of information on Council's webpage and online registration form.

### Compliance Activities

Activities include:

- regular patrols for direct engagement with pet owners and pets
- targeted compliance and enforcement
- follow-up on notification from pet welfare agencies of claimed or rehomed pets within the municipality
- response to customer complaints.

Table 6 details the type and number of offences resulting in an infringement notice being issued. It is uncommon for the types of offences noted below to proceed to Court as a single charge but rather is usually included with other more serious offences, such as a dog attack.

**Table 6 - Summary of enforcement action related to registration**

Number of Domestic Animal Management Infringement Notices (DINS) issued					
Offence type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (as of mid-2021)
Fail to register dog/cat	160	136	84	56	11
Fail to renew registration dog/cat	59	8	71	2	3



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

Number of prosecutions					
Offence type	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021 (as of mid-2021)
Fail to register dog/cat	0	7	2	0	3
Fail to renew registration dog/cat	0	0	0	0	0

Please note 2021 data are impacted due to COVID restrictions

### Summary

Current strategies have resulted in an improvement in new pet registrations however, renewals, while they have not declined are significantly low as a percentage of the increased total of new registrations. Opportunities will be created to enhance compliance by focusing on the benefits and value to pet owners of registration and in particular, how this enables an AMO to reunite them with their pet if they get lost. Registration and its renewal, will form part of a broader campaign in improving responsible pet ownership and take advantage of the multiple available communication platforms.

### Planned Activities

Objective 1 Improve responsible pet ownership and education		
Activities	When	Evaluation
Deliver a communication program to engage local CALD communities and other targeted groups to promote registration and responsible pet ownership. Explore opportunities to disseminate and communicate key messages.	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication plan developed</li> <li>Consultation</li> <li>New tools developed and trialled</li> <li>Availability and feedback</li> </ul>
Deliver a community Pet Expo to promote responsible pet ownership.	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfaction of attendees and participants</li> </ul>
Enhance available online resources on responsible pet ownership	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When completed</li> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>
Establish park patrol targets for proactive attendances to enhance the amenity of our parks and reserves.	Weekly / Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor interaction with pet owners</li> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

<b>Objective 2 - Improve new and renewal dog and cat registrations</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Review pet registration services to enhance ease of customer access and use including potential for SMS reminders	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When completed</li> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>
Mail-out registration renewal letters by mid-February. (Including a reminder of the importance to ensure microchip details are up to date).	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of letters sent</li> <li>Analysis of new and renewal of registrations</li> <li>Increase in registration renewals</li> </ul>
Utilise Council's web page, social media and mobile displays/A-board signs or digital signs on trailers to remind pet owners to register new or renew the registration of their pet.	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of hours and locations of display of the signage</li> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>

### 3.3. Nuisance

**Goal:** To reduce the incidence and impact of nuisance created by dogs and cats.

#### Current Situation

Section 32 of the Act defines a 'nuisance' as created by a dog or a cat and, prescribes that an occupier of any premises where a dog or cat is located, must not allow them to be a nuisance. Council's animal nuisance related complaint data shows the most common issue was a nuisance caused by a barking dog.

In 2019, with the introduction of a new nuisance complaint process, there has been a significant reduction in requests to investigate barking dog complaints. Complainants are required to complete a 'barking dog diary' detailing the times and extent of the barking, for a period of 7 days. This information is used to assist AMOs assess the validity of a complaint and otherwise resolving a matter.

Council encourages pet owners to maintain adequate fencing or containment facilities within their homes to prevent pets wandering from their premises. Council provides a service to collect wandering animals and those which have been trapped. All efforts are taken to identify and reunite an animal with its owner before being taken to the RSPCA.

The number of contacts received by Council from customers in relation to potential nuisance issues relating to dogs and cats is illustrated in table 7.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

**Table 7 - Nuisance requests received by Council**

Nature of Request					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Barking Dogs	839	663	302	223	92
Domestic Animal Pick-Up (immediate action cats and dogs at large or contained)	489	517	505	472	288
Excess Animal Permits	31	90	92	35	65

\*Data for 2021 does not represent a full calendar year (to July 2021)

Failure of dog owners removing faeces left by their dogs has been increasing and is an issue not confined to the City of Boroondara. There are a number of parks and sporting grounds identified where this issue is of significant concern. AMOs continue to provide targeted responses to these issues. Council is also collaborating with the RSPCA and certain other Councils to develop enhanced and targeted messaging to address this particular issue.

### Council Orders and Local Laws

- City of Boroondara Dog Control Order (made under the provisions of Section 26 of the Act) requires
  - dogs to be restrained in a prescribed manner when in public places
  - dogs being prohibited from certain public places.
- City of Boroondara *Amenity Local Law 2019* and *Domestic Animals Act 1994*
  - regulates the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (section 42 of the Act).
  - requires dog owners to remove and dispose of faeces deposited by their dogs in public places (section 42 of the Act).
  - requires dog owners to carry a device suitable for the removal of faeces deposited by their dog (section 42 of the Act).
  - requires any animal or bird kept on private land must not cause a nuisance to surrounding or neighbouring owners or occupiers of land (Clause 53).

### Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

- nuisance requests for dogs and cats (Section 32 of the Act)
- enforcement process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and commencement of prosecution proceedings.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### Education and Promotional Activities

- periodic review of Council's Dog Control Orders made under section 26 of the Act
- review of Council's dog signage including:
  - (a) removal of dog faeces
  - (b) carrying a device (bag) at all times to effect the removal of dog faeces
  - (c) designation and use of dog on leash and dog off-leash parks.
- education and information provided through park patrols.
- communication with customers and cat owners concerning cat trespass.
- communication with customers and dog owners concerning issues of nuisance from barking dogs.
- social media campaign to educate dog owners about managing excessive barking.
- barking dog guide to inform potential complainants about ways to resolve the issue.

### Compliance Activities

- regular and targeted patrols conducted in parks and other public places.
- provision of cat cages to residents.
- enforcement proceedings taken in cases where alternatives for dispute resolution and/or advice and information about barking dogs, has failed to abate the issue.
- dog attacks.

### Summary

Council's initiatives having significantly reduced nuisance complaints caused by barking dogs however, community concern remains. Further review will be undertaken of current resources, practices and potential upgrading of actions by Council in the assessment of complaints and feedback from the community. Issues regarding nuisances caused by cats and the potential introduction of a cat curfew has been raised with Council and most recently in feedback from community consultation. There will be multiple targeted activities focused on responsible cat ownership as well as discrete cat trapping programs in sensitive areas across the municipality. The necessity for a cat curfew will continue to be reviewed ongoing as well as part of the scheduled review of the DAMP.





## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Improve cat ownership		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Deliver a targeted program focused on responsible cat ownership including the importance of socialisation, enrichment of cats' lives in the home and their safety. Program to consider : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>targeted groups</li> <li>community semi-owned cats</li> <li>further promotion of de-sexing.</li> <li>Council's online presence to raise community awareness</li> </ul>	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Yearly progress</li> <li>Community feedback</li> </ul>
Update Council's website with link to DJPR webpage on cat containment	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When completed</li> </ul>

Objective 2 - Assist dog owners to understand obligations in the use of Council parks and reserves		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the signage used in Council parks and reserves relating to dogs	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signage reviewed</li> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Planned rollout</li> </ul>
Targeted campaign focused on dog owners to clean up after their dogs	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction of complaints</li> <li>Warnings / Infringements</li> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>

Objective 3 - Reduce dog nuisance complaints		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Explore independent service to verify barking dog complaints	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review completed</li> </ul>
Review Council's Order relating to the designated dog off-leash areas.	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review completed</li> <li>Council Report for consideration and decision to amend as recommended</li> </ul>
Assess data to identify priority sites	July 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyse data</li> <li>Implement program</li> <li>Evaluate the effectiveness of measures</li> </ul>



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### 3.4 Dog Attacks

**Goal:** To minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

#### Current Situation

On average, 85 dog attacks were reported each year over the past 4 years. The number of dog attack requests declined in 2018, similar numbers have however, returned and continue to increase.

One factor considered to have contributed to the increase in reported attacks in 2020, is pet owners being at home for extended periods (due to COVID) and increasingly while going out for their own exercise, are taking their dog. The data indicates a high number of incidents of dog attacks occurring on streets which is largely attributed to dogs being walked off-leash from their home to a park in addition to not being securely confined to their owner's property.

**Table 8 - Reported dog attacks**

Dog Attacks					
	2017	2018	2019	2020	Average
Attacks on Street	55	34	30	53	43
Attacks in Parks	34	40	54	36	41
Total reported dog attacks	89	77	84	89	85

Infringement notices issued					
Offence Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Dog attack - non-serious injury	14	12	10	17	7
Dog attack - serious*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dog rush or chase	1	5	0	2	0
Nuisance dogs/cats	6	2	2	1	2
Dog at Large day time	249	196	142	93	25
Dog at Large night time Offence 2718	41	30	25	24	5

\*Where dog attack are serious the matter is prosecuted at court



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

Prosecutions					
Offence Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021*
Dog attack - non-serious injury	3	9	1	4	8
Dog attack - serious	10	10	2	3	9
Dog rush or chase	0	7	1	0	0
Nuisance dogs/cats	1	2	1	0	0
Dog at Large day time	6	10	5	0	3
Dog at Large night time	0	2	0	0	0

### Council Orders and Local Laws

- City of Boroondara Order requiring dogs to be restrained in a prescribed manner when in public places (made under the provisions of section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994).
- City of Boroondara Dog Control Order prohibiting dogs in particular areas in the municipality (made under the provisions of section 26 of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994).
- City of Boroondara Amenity Local Law 2019 regulates the number of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property.

### Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

- seizure of dogs found at large or not secured to owner's premises (section 24 of the Act)
- dog attacks or bites (section 29 of the Act)
- declaration and euthanasia of dogs (various sections of the Act)
- Council Standard Operating Procedures
- statutory process for the seizure of documents (section 75 of the Act)
- statutory process for serving notices of seizure relating to seizure of identified dogs (section 84H of the Act)
- statutory process for dog owners and established practice when recovering dogs that have been seized by Council (section 84 of the Act)
- statutory process for registration of dogs and the fee structure for registration (Schedule to the Act)
- statutory process for seizure and impounding of dogs after a dog attack
- statutory process for issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Education and Promotional Activities

- periodic review of Council's Dog Control Order (section 26 of the Act).
- periodic review of Council website content.
- community education sessions.
- compliance and enforcement activities through targeted and regular park patrols.
- utilising Council's media platforms to deliver reminders and messaging regarding registration and responsible pet ownership.

### Compliance Activities

- conduct regular park patrols by AMOs and Local Laws Officers
- investigation of complaints and take appropriate action including education and possible enforcement.
- periodic review of content on Council's website.

### Summary

Dog attacks remains a key focus for domestic animal management planning. Future actions aim to educate the community to reduce the risk of dog attack. Improving our data capture, reporting and analysis will further assist in the development of evidence-based dog attack prevention strategies.

### Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Improve community awareness		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Guidance to dog owners of their responsibilities in controlling their dog's behaviour	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreed commentary</li> <li>• Community feedback</li> </ul>
Identify opportunities to promote the State government's <i>Pet Town</i> learning App including on Council's web site	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reported opportunities</li> <li>• When complete</li> </ul>

Objective 2 - Reduce the number of reported dog attacks within the municipality		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Deliver regular and targeted patrols in parks and reserves, including dog off-leash areas to enhance the amenity of our parks and reserves	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roster and patrol record</li> <li>• Number of patrols conducted per month</li> </ul>



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### 3.5 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

**Goal:** To ensure all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs in the municipality are identified and secured in accordance with the Act and regulations.

#### Current Situation

There is a small number of dogs in the City of Boroondara registered which are declared dangerous and menacing dog and are listed on the Victorian Dangerous Dogs Register (VDDR).

#### Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

- seizure and impounding of declared dangerous and menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs
- enforcement process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and commencement of prosecution proceedings
- statutory procedure for the declaration of dogs
- statutory procedure for providing details of declared dogs to the VDDR (section 44AE DAA 1994)
- statutory procedure to provide details to VDDR of dogs destroyed in relation to sections 84TA, TB and TC (section 44AEA DAA 1994).

#### Education and Promotional Activities

- periodic review of Council orders (section 26 of the Act).
- yearly inspections to meet legislative housing requirements.

#### Compliance Activities

- regular patrols and property inspections.
- investigation of all complaints. Court proceedings or other relevant action as required.
- yearly inspections of known premises where declared dangerous, menacing or restricted dog breeds are secured.
- update information on Council's website regarding dangerous, menacing or restricted dog breed.

#### Summary

The number of declared dangerous and menacing dogs and restricted dog breeds remains low in the City of Boroondara. Officers maintain a current understanding of the policy environment concerning Restricted Breed Dogs and any legislated changes.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Planned Activities

<b>Objective 1 - Identify, manage and enforce compliance of all dangerous dogs, menacing and restricted breed dogs</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Review Council's decision making matrix regarding legislative powers to declare dogs dangerous or menacing	June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When complete</li> </ul>
Conduct audits of registered dangerous and menacing dog premises	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All properties inspected</li> </ul>
Ensure declared dogs are registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR)	Annually and as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All dogs on the VDDR located in the City of Boroondara are registered with Council</li> </ul>

### 3.6 Population and Euthanasia

**Goal:** To build understanding of the cat and dog populations in the City of Boroondara and redress circumstances of preventable euthanasia.

#### Current Situation

Through its partnership with the RSPCA, Council undertakes to ensure no dog or cat is unnecessarily destroyed or harmed and wherever possible, unwanted animals are re-homed.

The number of dogs euthanised in the City of Boroondara remains low. The number of cats euthanised however, continues to be noticeably higher than dogs. With the community increasingly returning to work after recent pandemic lockdowns, some 65% of the cats impounded during 2020/2021 were either surrendered or a stray. Disappointingly, the number of cats reclaimed was also significantly low.

The hire of cat traps has recommenced since pandemic lockdown restrictions ended and requests remain low. The number of complaints regarding nuisance from cats is also low, suggesting either there is no widespread problem within the municipality or it remains unreported. The number of impounded and euthanised cats does however demonstrate a low level of registration and reclaiming which is an issue Council will be focussed on during the course of the DAMP in addition to the situation of what constitutes cat ownership and situations where a person claims to 'only to feed a cat' and fails to acknowledge ownership.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

**Table 10 - Impound, reclaim and euthanasia data for dogs and cats (to be amended)**

	Jul - Jun 2018/19	Jul -Jun 2019/20	Jul -June 2020/21
<b>DOGS</b>			
Total impounded *	222	177	143
Number reclaimed	178	139	118
Adopted, fostered, transferred to rescue	38	31	23
Euthanized	6	7	2
<b>CATS</b>			
Total impounded *	208	172	201 **
Number reclaimed	27	23	31
Adopted, fostered, transferred to rescue	129	119	122
Euthanized ( <i>incl. feral</i> )	52	30	48

\* Total impounded refers to animals brought to RSPCA by Council and by Boroondara residents dropping of strays and surrendering a pet

\*\*of the 201 cats impounded over 65% were stray or surrendered by the public

### Council Orders and Local Laws

- City of Boroondara Amenity Local Law 2019 regulates the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (section 42 of the Act).

### Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

- seizure and impounding of dogs and cats in the community
- enforcement strategy associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and commencement of prosecution proceedings.

### Education and Promotional Activities

- cat trapping devices are available to all residents to be hired.
- a subsidised de-sexing voucher program is available for eligible pet owners on registration.
- production and dissemination of a range of information and communication materials relating to responsible pet ownership.
- Council's website information is updated.
- Council policy to reunite dogs and cats found at large wherever possible through registration information, with their owners before delivery to the RSPCA.

### Compliance Activities

- authorised officers investigation of reports of animal hoarding
- limiting the number of permitted animals
- impounded animals must be registered before release and where not de-sexed, encouraged to do so.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Summary

Collaboration with the RSPCA and key internal stakeholders will focus on building an enhanced understanding and implement solutions for example to the questions of why people surrender their cats, the issues relating to cat over population and the potential impacts to neighbourhoods and sensitive wildlife reserves. Actions in the DAMP aim to respond to community expectations and reduce the number of dogs and cats which are euthanised.

### Planned Activities

<b>Objective 1 - Reduce the number of impounded cat and dogs that may be euthanised</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Partner with the RSPCA to identify information to enhance understanding reasons for high levels of cat surrender in Boroondara	June 2022 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting minutes</li> <li>Advice implemented as appropriate</li> </ul>
Assess the development of a lost and found page/pet register on appropriate media platform.	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders consulted and feasibility determined</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2 - Raise awareness and promote the benefits of de-sexing</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Annual program to promote the benefits of de-sexing and use of de-sexing vouchers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community up-take</li> <li>Feedback</li> </ul>
Explore the use of the RSPCA de-sexing van in areas where cost is likely to be a barrier to de-sexing	June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the number of de-sexed animals in the municipality</li> <li>Increase in the number of animals registered</li> <li>Raise awareness of animal welfare generally</li> </ul>





## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### 3.7 Domestic Animal Businesses

Goal: To ensure compliance of Domestic Animal Businesses with the Act and relevant Codes of Practice within the City of Boroondara

#### Current Situation

There are only a small number of Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB) in the City of Boroondara. There are currently six DABs registered with Council, including:

- 1 pet shop offering sale and adoption.
- 1 pet shop offering sale, adoption, training, boarding and day care
  - 1 doggy day care only
  - 3 Dog and Cat Boarding Facilities (all are a veterinary practice)

#### Council Orders, Local Laws and Licence Agreements

- Council has a Licence Agreement for when Dog Training Establishments seek to set up a business in the City of Boroondara. It sets out conditions which must be complied with to ensure the requirements of the Act, its regulations and the Code of Practice are met.
- City of Boroondara Amenity Local Law 2019 regulates the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (section 42 of the Act).

#### Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

- inspection of Domestic Animal Businesses prior to registration and minimum annual inspections
- registration of Domestic Animal Businesses.

#### Education and Promotional Activities

- a suite of information is provided to DABs advising their obligations under the Act, Regulations and relevant Codes of Practice and to enhance their compliance.

#### Compliance Activities

- register all DABs.
- annual inspections of DABs using standard record/audit sheets.
- reports of cruelty are assessed and investigated.
- follow up of any non-compliance as required.
- investigate non-registered DABs.
- provide all DABs with relevant Code of Practice and supporting documentation.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

### Summary

The identification of unregulated DABs is a focus noting the increase of day care/boarding businesses including the establishment of 'not for profit' operations for example. Potential issues may arise in relation to the standard of care and creating a nuisance. Council will continue to provide current information to known and newly identified DABs.

### Planned Activities

<b>Objective 1- Maintain annual audit of all registered domestic animal businesses</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Conduct audits of registered DABs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All DABs are audited and reports filed</li> <li>Infringement notices issued as appropriate</li> </ul>
Identify key information to enhance a DAB's understanding of its legal obligations	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When completed</li> </ul>

<b>Objective 2- Identify and register any unregistered domestic animal business</b>		
<b>Activity</b>	<b>When</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Review legislative requirements for the registration of DAB's and conduct web search to identify possible businesses that should be registered	6 monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Findings actioned</li> <li>Data base updated</li> </ul>

## 4 Implementation, monitoring and annual review

### 4.1. Evaluation

Council is required to review the DAMP annually and amend where appropriate. Council must also publish an evaluation of its implementation of the DAMP in its Annual Report and provide the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources a copy of with any amendments.

Review dates are:

- November 2022
- November 2023
- November 2024.



## Domestic Animal Management Plan

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### Attachment 1

#### Officer Training Register

Training attended and qualifications attained by Animal Management Officers

- Certificate IV Animal Control and Regulation
- Certificate IV in Local Government
- Certificate IV in Local Laws - Statutory Compliance
- Handle with care
- Investigation Skills
- Report writing
- Family Violence
- Animal Handling
- Animal behaviour management
- Catchpole and equipment training
- Canine Anatomy and Identification
- Understanding canine body language and aggression
- Interviewing, witness statements and brief preparation for court and tribunal proceedings
- Use of body worn camera
- AMO training program with the RSPCA
- Emergency training
- Domestic Animal Management Planning Forum
- Australian Institute of Animal Management - annual conference

## Attachment 2 - Engage Boroondara website



Plan 2021-25

in 2021-25.

[Consultations home](#) / Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25

Our Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25 details the City of Boroondara's strategic approach to animal management services for cats and dogs in our community.

Under the Victorian *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Act) every Victorian Council is required to prepare and implement a domestic animal management plan every four years.

We recognise the value of pet ownership and the benefit to the community's health and wellbeing, the importance of the welfare of pets, and the need to protect our community and environment.

### Review of Domestic Animal Management Plan

As part of our review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan we wanted to understand the current issues facing our community and identify trends in relation to pet ownership.

To do this, we looked at Council complaint data.

We also consulted with experts from organisations such as:

- the RSPCA (our animal management services partner)
- other animal support agencies
- local veterinary clinics.

### Updated Domestic Animal Management Plan

The updated Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25 aims to improve and enhance our animal management services for cats and dogs in ways that aim to keep pets, owners, and the community safe.

It will also continue to support local pet owners with enhanced resources and services.

Key updates to the updated Domestic Animal Management Plan include:

- new and easier process to register their pets online
- delivery of a targeted program to provide cat owners with resources and education on responsible cat ownership
- translated resources to better support our community

- enhanced training of our Animal Management Officers
- enhanced resources on our website to make it easier for pet owners to find the information they need
- targeted safety patrols to address increased incidences of dog attacks or anti-social behaviour

Download our updated Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25 from our Document Library to find out more information about these initiatives.

### Have your say

We want to hear your thoughts about the updated Plan. Provide your feedback below.

Alternatively, send your response to the Chief Executive Officer, Boroondara City Council, Private Bag 1, Camberwell, Victoria 3124.


Closed


### Timeline

- Review of the Plan**  
 We consulted a range of experts and local organisations, and used data from the RSPCA and Council complaints. This helped us identify emerging trends in relation to cats and dogs.
- Have your say**  
 Feedback on the updated Animal Management Plan is open until Friday 26 November 2021.
- Review and consideration of feedback**  
 Feedback and submissions on the draft Animal Management Plan will be considered and reported to Council.
- Plan submitted to Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions**  
 Once the final Animal Management Plan is adopted by Council, we are required to submit it to Victorian Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. This will happen by March 2022.

[See less](#)

### Document library


**Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25**  
 MS Word (663.96 KB)


**Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25**  
 PDF (853.61 KB)

### Contact us

If you have any questions or would like to know more, please contact us below:

Phone (03) 9278 4444

Email [boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au)

### Updated Domestic Animal Management Plan survey

Have you reviewed the updated Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021- 25 provided in the document library on this page? Required

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Do you support the updated Plan? Required

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Are you at? Required

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Where do you live? Required

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Feel free to upload a document or a photo relating to your submission here (optional).

 [Choose file...](#)

Allowed file types: pdf,doc,docx,txt,xls,xlsx,rtf,png,gif,jpg,jpeg Size limit: 1.00 MB

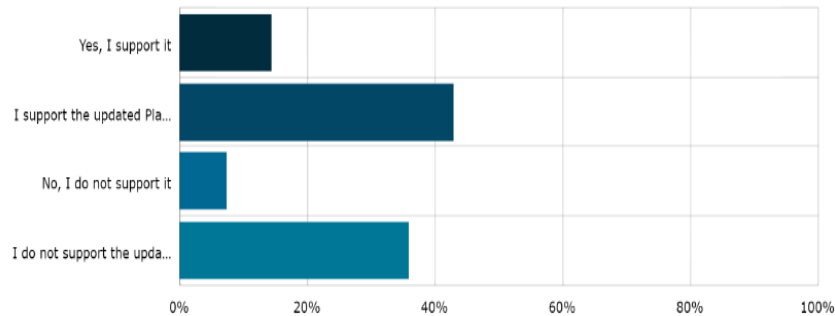
**Attachment 3 - Community Consultation Feedback****Community Consultation questions**

As part of the community consultation the following questions were posted at Councils 'Engage Boroondara' website:

- 1. Have you reviewed the updated Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2021- 25 provided in the document library on this page?**
  - Yes
  - No
- 2. Do you support the updated Plan?**
  - Yes, I support it
  - I support the updated Plan and have suggestions (Please specify)
  - No, I do not support it
  - I do not support the updated Plan for these reasons (Please specify)
- 3. Are you a:**
  - Dog owner
  - Cat owner
  - Owner of cat/s and dog/s
  - I do not own a cat or dog
- 4. Where do you live? Drop-down list**
  - Ashburton
  - Balwyn
  - Balwyn North
  - Camberwell
  - Canterbury
  - Deepdene
  - Glen Iris
  - Hawthorn
  - Hawthorn East
  - Kew
  - Kew East
  - Mont Albert
  - Surrey Hills
  - Other: (please specify)
  - Prefer not to answer
- 5. Feel free to upload a document or a photo relating to your submission here (optional).**

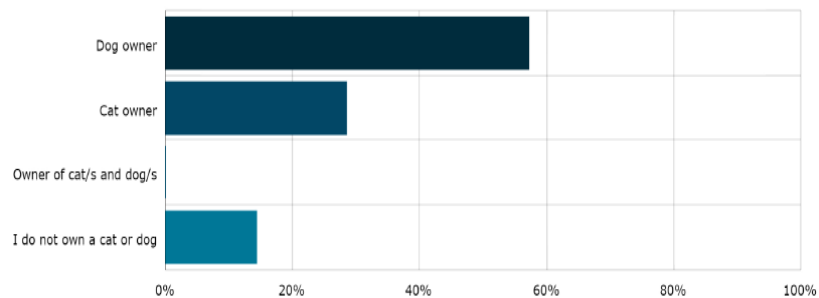
### Assessment

Question 2 - Do you support the updated plan?



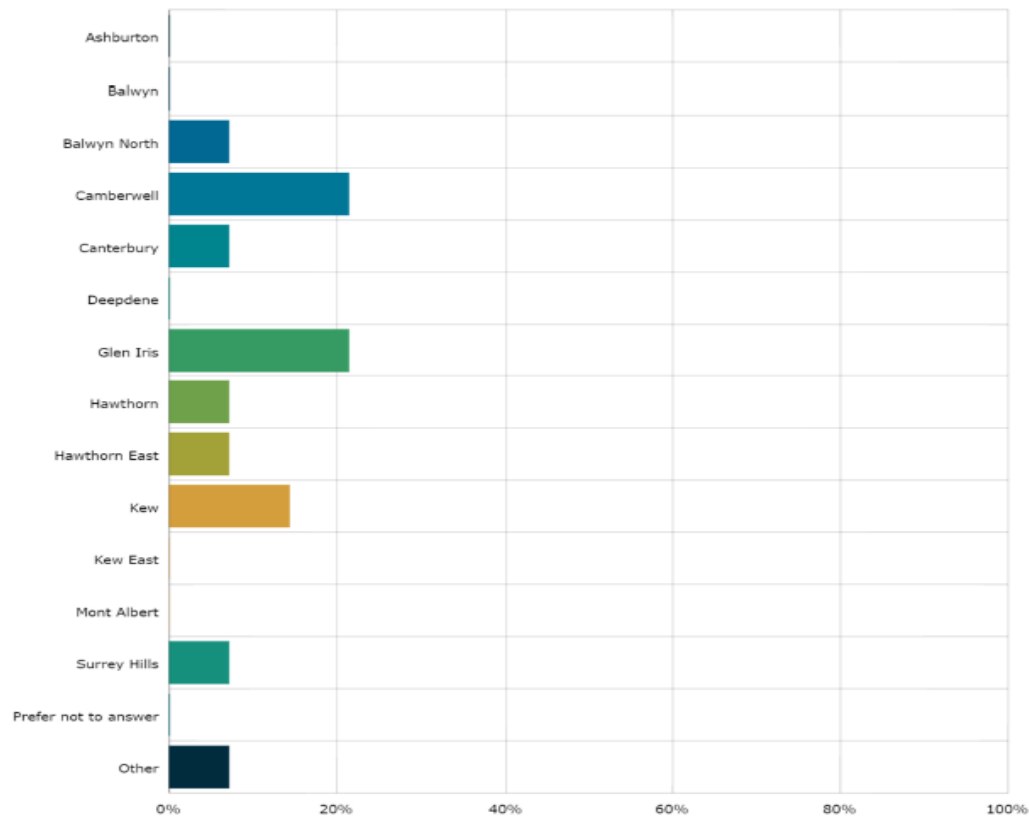
Reviewed document		Percentage
Support with no comment	2	14,29%
Support with comments	6	42.86%
<b>Total support</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>57.15%</b>
Do not support with no comment	1	7.14%
Do not support with comments	5	35.71%
<b>Total do not support</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>42.85%</b>
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	<b>14</b>	

Question 3 - Type of pet owner



Pet Owner Type	Total	Supported , no comments	Supported with comments	Do not support, no comment	Do not support with comment
Cat Owner	4		2	1	1
Dog Owner	8	1	4		3
Do not own cat or dog	2	1			1

## Question 4 - What suburb do you live in?



Suburb	
North Balwyn	1
Camberwell	3
Canterbury	1
Glen Iris	3
Hawthorn	1
Hawthorn East	1
Kew	2
Surrey Hills	1
Neighbouring Municipality	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>

## Key Issues

	Key Issues	Number of respondents
1	Lack of responsible cat ownership; need to address roaming cats, multiple cat ownership, cat nuisance, lack of services for cat owners.	2
2	Wildlife; impact of cats and wildlife protection	2
3	Lost and found pets; system to reunite pets with owners	3
4	Infringements for owners who do not pick up their dog's faeces/ dog faeces	2

Raw data from consultation

	Have you reviewed the updated Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021- 25 provided in the document library on this page?		Do you support the updated Plan?				If you have suggestions for the Plan, please specify here:	Are you a:			
	Yes	No	Yes, I support it	I support the updated Plan and have suggestions (Pls specify)	No, I do not support it	I do not support the updated Plan for these reasons (Pls specify)		Dog owner	Cat owner	Owner of cat/s and dog/s	I do not own a cat or dog
1	1					1	I DO support the Plan, however, I DO NOT support it in terms of its failure to address a serious issue within our LGA. Please see the attached document for my submission and suggested amendments for the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan.	1			
2	1			1			I support Council's efforts to improve responsible cat ownership in the municipality. There are too many cats wandering the streets, with owners believing they cannot contain their cats or that their cats "need" to wander in order to be happy. In some cases the cats are well known in their neighbourhood, and are fed by multiple households. As nice as this may be for community members, having cats wandering around on the streets is not safe for them. Council has identified a targeted program is needed - perhaps it needs to focus on the safety of the cats, not just wildlife protection. Cats that wander can be attacked by other cats (or possums, dogs or foxes), contract diseases, have accidents with cars, or snakes if near the river - owners need to be made more aware of this and, if needed, shocked into doing something for their cat. I support the proposed cat lost/found platform - this could be linked to existing platforms and social media pages (eg, Lost Cats of Melbourne, Lost Cats in the East, etc). There is very little in the plan on what Council will do when a community member finds a stray animal. Recent experience has shown that Council actually does very little and this is an area in desperate need of improvement. I recently contacted Council about a stray - was told you couldn't do anything to help, couldn't even rent or loan me a cat trap and told me to go to the RSPCA. On contacting them, the RSPCA said it wasn't their problem, they couldn't help, and I should contact the local Council. Clearly this is confusing for residents who need assistance - please fix!		1		
3	1		1								1



4	1			1			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Provide doggy poop bags at various public locations with pick up bins for used bags</li> <li>. It may greatly assist not to have poop lying about when an owner needs more than one bag on an outing</li> <li>. Cat owners need to keep cats in their own property. Cats tend to stray and urinate where they please.</li> </ul> <p>The smell of their urine is most unpleasant at the front door. Most cats will enter a neighbours doggy door and eat the the dog's food which is not meant for the cat!!!! Some will even bail up the dog inside and claim ownership!!!</p>	1			
5	1					1	Please refer to attachment.	1			
6	1			1			<p>Great to see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Targeted engagement for CALD communities</li> <li>- Plan to review Council's dog signage</li> </ul> <p>Ideas to consider (noting these may not be part of DAMP's scope)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include "adopt not shop" principles as part of the education and communication program. This is particularly important post lockdown.</li> <li>- To anticipate/respond to a potential rise in surrendered pets post lockdown, consider a partnership program (with the RSPCA and adoption centres) to maintain/increase adoption rates. This could be in the form of incentives. For example, a) when residents adopt and register a dog or cat from the program partner, they receive a one-off discount on council rates. And b) provide a free obedience class or discount on dog training courses.</li> <li>- Encourage more domestic animals businesses to open in the municipality, to meet the needs of a growing pet population in Boroondara (services and pet goods only).</li> <li>- Leverage the online community to increase "eyes" for missing pets. During lockdowns, a number of Facebook pages were created to allow local communities to report, track and respond to missing pets. The increased passive surveillance has resulted in happy stories of reunited pets with owners. This is a effective and efficient digital platform and tool for collective problem solving. Council should consider this as part of their resource for authorised officers. Or even develop one specifically for Boroondara.</li> <li>- Consider initiatives similar to City of Yarra's Pet Friendly Businesses in Chapel. Identify and encourage businesses (especially in key activity centres in Boroondara) to be pet inclusive. Urban spaces should also pet friendly, not just our parks and gardens. See Europe and Israel for case studies.</li> </ul>	1			
7	1					1	Cat ownership fees are nearly the same as dog ownership fees, but the council provides almost no services to cat owners. I would like the council to provide a breakdown of the costs covered by registration to demonstrate cat owners are not subsidising dog owners.		1		

8	1				1	DAMP must incorporate council's plan for Boroondara residents' animals found within Boroondara LGA limits, but taken by members of the public to veterinary facilities outside LGA border. Will Boroondara council officers attend these neighbouring LGA's (e.g. City of Yarra, Stonnington, Manningham) to collect these Boroondara-originating animals?? Will council proactively seek out and enter into S84Y agreements with these facilities in neighbouring LGA's that are taking Boroondara animals?				1
9	1				1	Hi, The Plan has a massive gap for addressing the issue of cat attacks on native birds, reptiles and mammals. A article released by the university Sydney (link: <a href="https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2020/05/15/lock-up-your-pet-cat-its-a-killing-machine.html">https://www.sydney.edu.au/news-opinion/news/2020/05/15/lock-up-your-pet-cat-its-a-killing-machine.html</a> ) which references recent study done in conjunction with the CSIRO (link to study in the article) found that each roaming PET cat kills approximately 186 birds, reptiles and mammals per year of which most are native. Given approximately 71% of pet cats are allowed to roam freely and there are 5403 registered cats (many more unregistered) in Boroondara, that is over 700,000 reptiles, birds and mammals, majority native, killed per year by cats in Boroondara. It's a fact that unfortunately can be swept under the carpet as cat owners don't believe their own cat would do that and it's something that goes unseen to the public, but the research is clear. I've personally also been affected with my pet chickens in the past being attacked by roaming cats during the day! cannot support this updated plan without a significant section/plan/initiative added to directly address this issue	1			
10	1			1		If the council wants to promote better compliance for dog handling and training they should provide fenced off leash spaces for dog trainers to safely train their dogs. These spaces are few if any in Boroondara, however in neighbouring Councils there are many. Council should invest some of their resources in making one or two of their many off leash areas safer for training young dogs as when they are learning to return on command. These fenced areas protect both the public if a dog did not happen to return on command while learning this skill, and it protects our dogs by giving them a safer environment to learn.	1			
11	1			1		Please look at the charging for additional pet tags. It's not a fair charge and you should present a cheaper option. The replacement pet tags are too expensive for a piece of plastic. Also please keep up the good work of the Boroondara animal control. They are a vital service that help keep our community safe.		1		
12	1			1		There needs to be fines issued for dog owners not picking up their dogs business. There should be the ability for residents to report this behaviour with evidence. The disease, illness and vet expenses caused to dog owners who do the right thing make this a necessary requirement.	1			
13	1				1			1		
14	1		1				1			

## Submission letter 1

At this stage, it appears that Boroondara Council has failed to implement meaningful reforms to cat ownership. For the next 4 years this Domestic Animal Management Plan enables cats to remain unsanctioned predators and perpetrators and allows the "owners" of free-roaming cats to feel that their cat has some kind of right to roam the streets.

When I talk about cats, I understand that not all cats are free-roaming predators under irresponsible ownership. However, that does divert the discussion away from the ones that are allowed to be predators by their "owners", which is the issue at hand.

Over the past 26 years of my life, living in Camberwell, free-roaming and predatory cats have been a reoccurring problem, from day dot.

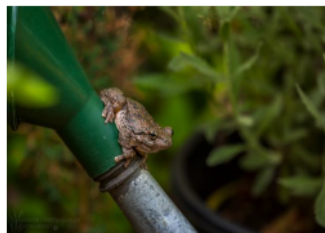
When I was younger, I have memories of our outdoor ponds being regularly stripped bare of fish, scales often scattered about the garden. We loved having fish in our ponds, but we have since given up on hoping our ponds can safely home fish. They now harbor mosquitoes, besides being a source of water for native wildlife. No wire, rock or plant ever seemed to be enough against the smarts and patience of the cats...

This is a recent image showing a "domestic" cat patiently observing our habitat pond, it highlights to some extent their predatory behavior around water.

**IMAGE:** <https://1drv.ms/u/s!Ag3iNt0-lzinvyWgLYm4PqSbtpQ?e=9tXFOI>

I have vivid memories of the family waking some nights to the sounds of cats screaming and thrashing about as they fought each other out in the street, beneath our house even! As young children, those sounds were terrifying to me and my sister.

2017 was the year that I discovered a Perons Tree Frog living in our yard and using our front pond. Each night we could hear it croaking away. It was an incredible find but not completely unexpected considering the habitat we provide for native wildlife. We were amazed, but also concerned for its longevity since we had known cats to be a problem. As a tree frog he/she was quite large, 6-7cm. Before long the croaking stopped, never to be heard again. We don't know what happened...

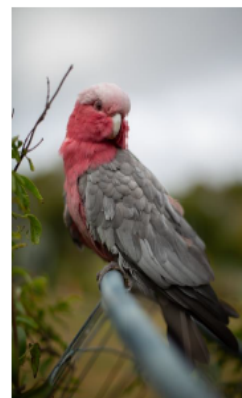


But these are the kinds of unique and beneficial native wildlife that are at risk by cats prowling through our garden. The Skinks and Geckos that call our garden home are also at risk of predation by cats lurking around the yard and through the habitat and this become all the more noticeable when you observe how a free roaming cat stalks through the garden, looking, listening, moving slowly and carefully.

In more recent years, it has been our birds being traumatised and killed by free-roaming cats coming onto our property at various hours of the night. Some nights, we are still awake to see these cats throwing themselves at the sides of the cage, sending the birds into a panic.

The below footage of a feral and free-roaming cat highlights the predatory behavior towards our birds.

**VIDEO:** <https://1drv.ms/u/s!Ag3iNt0-lzinvyWgLYm4PqSbtpQ?e=f5lSHe>



In July this year, our pet Galah Pinky, of 15 years was extracted from her cage that has secured her at night for those 15 years. The predator extracted her from her cage in the late hours of the night; there was nothing we could do other than to find her feathers scattered around the yard the next morning. It was absolutely devastating and sent me into a panic attack. Then I had to somehow break the news to my Mum and Dad, Dad who first brought her home from work, who cared for her, who's very close pet she was... Her murder coincided with two cats moving into the property across the road from us earlier this year.

My investigation into her murder spanned days, weeks, then on and off for months as I began to observe free-roaming "domestic" cats, feral cats and foxes all of which were highlighted early on as suspects in her death.

Through investigating Pinky's murder, I have been observing our CCTV (which has been repositioned since that night, to better observe the area around our property) and have also been positioning a camera trap in various locations in our property to document the feral and free-roaming animals that visit our property. The content of the camera trap is usually a good indicator to check other CCTV perspectives and gain a broader view of what animals are active in the street.

We now have a confinement trap set every night of the week and whilst someone is home, in an effort to bring some of these free-roaming cats under control. So far this year we have referred 3 cats to the council, one of which escaped during transfer, another was returned to the owner and the most recent was taken to the RSPCA.

Usually a "pet" being trapped, or having to retrieve a "pet" after finding it at the RSPCA would be considered a deterrent, or a lesson learnt... But no, these two cats remain very active in the neighborhood, especially at night and as I recently observed during the day also.

The cat featuring in the video below was returned to the owner by Boroondara Council after wandering on to our property and entering the trap in June this year. One month later in July the murder of Pinky occurred, coincidental or not, we don't know... Their recent arrival to our neighborhood though is very difficult not to scrutinise...

This video is of the very same cat (6 months later) and is the first to capture a daytime hunting exercise.

**VIDEO:** <https://1drv.ms/v/s!Ag3iNt0-lzinvr8xoweTGTqFbJX?e=hyh0gH>

Besides these two "domestic" cats that continue to intermittently roam at night, to my knowledge, there are a further two or three large feral cats and another two domestic cats that are regularly free-roaming in our immediate neighborhood.

Below is a link to a file where I am compiling footage and images of free-roaming/feral cats. There is a mix of footage and images from within our property and observing activity in the street. Some photos show cats stalking through the foliage of our garden looking for little critters. I would like each image and video to be reviewed.

The footage does not include the numerous fox sightings that have been recorded, as that is a separate matter (a matter that the council should be doing more about also).

**ONEDRIVE LINK:** [https://1drv.ms/u/s!Ag3iNt0-lzinvgFqx9dm8\\_GgGb5O?e=yioXGns](https://1drv.ms/u/s!Ag3iNt0-lzinvgFqx9dm8_GgGb5O?e=yioXGns)  
(Some clips have been sped up x2-4 speed due to the length of time that some cat activity spans)

I regularly add new footage and photos to this library of evidence.

My evidence and observations capture what is only the very tip of a much larger iceberg, one that is shrouded by the darkness of night, the stealthy and opportunistic behavior of cats as well as the vast suburban landscape.

In the scheme of such a large LGA, my evidence is somewhat limited and isolated to a single street, however this evidence is significant and, in some cases, highly incriminating. As an individual, there is only so much I can do in terms of gathering evidence to generate a larger picture of the problem, but more broadly the science and responses by other Councils indicates that this issue is not just isolated to my street.

When it comes to the Domestic Animal Management Plan, there is an obvious bias to it that has enabled and continues to enable Cats (but not all cats) to remain unsanctioned perpetrators and predators. On the flip side there are many restrictions and regulations around dog ownership that ensures that dogs remain regulated, scrutinised and accountable for any negative behavior that may occur within or beyond the bounds of an owner's property.

Reading the Domestic Animal Management Plan, it is more than clear that the Boroondara Council has failed to use an appropriate instrument to gauge the issue and impact of free-roaming cats within our LGA. The DAMP states that "The number of complaints regarding nuisance from cats is also low, suggesting there is not a widespread problem within the municipality."

This is not an accurate way to gauge an issue that largely goes unseen or felt by humans.

The Draft Plan also highlights a disconnect between the Climate Action Plan and the Domestic Animal Management Plan. The councils CAP talks about improvements to biodiversity, while the DAMP fails to address a key contributor to biodiversity loss, free-roaming cats.

*Amendments that I believe are needed are:*

Report a cat attack: Just like dogs, a cat can "rush at, attack, bite, harass or chase a person or animal (other than vermin), even if there is no injury caused to the animal or person."

Investigation and infringements: Relating to the above scenarios, at this stage there is no means of holding the owner of a dangerous cat accountable for that cat's actions if found to be free-roaming and attacking or hunting wildlife.

Reporting of Trespass/Nuisance: While this appears to be available through Boroondara, the transparency and communication around the process and outcomes is poor or non-existent.

Mandatory Desexing of cats: Boroondara Council is NOT listed on the RSPCA website as having compulsory cat desexing as part of the "Domestic Animal Management Plan". This needs to be amended. This area of inaction undoubtedly contributes to the breeding between domestic and feral cats within our LGA and that is not ok.

Cat Curfew and additional enforcement: A growing list of councils right across Victoria are implementing cat curfews, tighter restrictions and penalties in relation to free-roaming domestic cats. At this point, there are very few regulations in our LGA to ensure that cat owners practice responsible ownership.

At a bare minimum, Boroondara Council needs to take further action around the management of cats within our LGA. The current Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan is devoid of meaningful improvements in this area and that is really disheartening to see. We cannot allow another 4 or more years to go by without doing more.

Over my lifetime it is clear that not enough has been done in response to the issue and it is time that further steps are taken to begin bringing the ownership of cats in line with the high standard expected of dog ownership.

I would appreciate if someone could please provide me with confirmation that my submission has been received.

Warm regards,

## Submission letter 2

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding your Plan. This submission is to advise you that I do not support the Plan in its current presentation.

The Plan, whilst boldly stating on the front cover "Responsible Pet Ownership" is outrageously silent in many aspects regarding responsible Cat Ownership. I hold a view that the Plan outwardly discriminates against responsible Dog Ownership of which is the applicable circumstance for my situation.

In the first instance, in the Executive Summary, it highlights an obvious omission maybe in Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Act) or that you have yourselves omitted no mention to Cats, be it menacing, roaming non confined. Your summary goes to great pains highlighting dog problems yet absolutely no mention of Cats.

You go onto say that you take a holistic approach to responsible pet ownership yet omit to be holistic on anything else but a dog. If it is your aim to support pet owners and manage their pets, with consideration of the safety, amenity and the needs and wellbeing of the wider community, then again, why no mention of Cats?

An early example of how this Plan discriminates against dog owners is in Table 2 Wandering Cat Complaints. Humane cat cages are available for hire. Why is it that when a resident has a problem with someone else's wandering cat that the person with the problem has to hire a cage at their expense? If my dog roamed or wandered the Ranger would be out like a shot and catch and impound my dog. Yet cat owners can let their cats roam and the problem and cost at that point transfers to the person with the issue of the wandering cat.

Table 4 New Registrations. There has been a 22% increase in cat registrations since 2017 in comparison to dogs at 12%. In the proceeding 4 years you acknowledge there was only a 2.6% increase. Applying some logic around these figures and combining them with the impact of COVID 19, working from home, isolation etc there is a direct link. However the Plan does not recognise that such an increase in the cat population (and only recognising those who chose to have their cat registered) that there is an extremely higher likelihood of nuisance and wandering cats. My prejudiced view is that many cat owners just conveniently adopt the attitude that it is OK for their cat to wander around their neighbour's property because it is natural for a cat. Yet being a responsible dog owner, that notion never enters my mind and nor would it for the majority of if not all dog owners. Yet the cat is permitted to roam, mainly at night, disrupting our precious fauna and fouling their neighbour properties with urine spray and faeces and for the non desexed felines having howling territorial disputes and mating fights.

In regards to planned activities on P15 and the activity to establish park patrol targets; this activity is entirely targeted at dog owners. Why then is there not a target for an activity regarding cats? I would challenge the ranger to identify what action they take NOW when undertaking their street patrol duties when they observe a cat wandering in the local streets. In my view they would drive right past and ignore the roaming cat. The point being, if my dog was outside my front fence the ranger would stop and confine.

### Section 3.3 Nuisance.

This section is heavily tainted towards dog owners. Very little to no mention of cats. It's all about dog restraint, what dog owners should be doing with their dog. Yet you make the statement under the Act Clause 53 that any animal or bird kept on private land must not cause a nuisance to surrounding or neighbouring owners or occupiers. Yet you continue to allow cats to be a nuisance until the affected person has to hire a cage to try and trap the cat at their expense. Again under compliance activities you are heavily dog centric yet your regular and targeted patrols should be on the lookout for wandering cats. In your summary you make a passive comment about future actions for cat ownership but only after reviewing complaints and feedback. The cat issue is now and apparent.

On a more objectionable note is Page 19 Objective 1 Improve Cat Ownership. This is probably one of the more outrageous statements made in this Plan. It begs the question how you can possibly justify the activity of a targeted program focussed on socialisation and enrichment of cat's lives on the home and their safety. Really? In DECEMBER 2024? Give me a break!

Table 8. It is apparent that you have not undertaken any prosecutions or record of cats at large. Why not? The answer in my view is that you are deficient in your approach and enforcement of wandering cats because it's a bit too hard?

You may challenge my submission regarding the issue of wandering cats. In my street alone I can count up to 5 wandering cats per day on the street as I long walk my dog.

Secondly, for those of you who have camera surveillance systems at your house, replay your night vision. Whilst I am very happy for our local fox to be out every night in our street cleaning up vermin, I am less happy to see the amount of cats that trespass my property overnight, fouling my garden, spraying my front door and fighting in a local scrap of tom versus tom.

And finally I wish to congratulate responsible local authorities like the City of Knox, who reviewed their Domestic Animal Management Plan this year and did the right thing for the community and introduced a CAT CURFEW. Yes a curfew; much to the outrage of cat owners who, as previously mentioned, think that their cat has the given right to wander aimlessly and without charge.

The City of Boroondara would do well to bring its dog discriminatory Plan into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and get tougher on lazy, irresponsible cat owners.

Regards