



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021 (Revised 2020)

**Banyule City Council
Animal Management**

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Domestic Animal Management Plans

Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act requires Council to prepare a domestic animal management plan:

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resource), prepare at four year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
- (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 plan.

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- (3) Every Council must -
- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
 - (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
 - (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Statutory Compliance

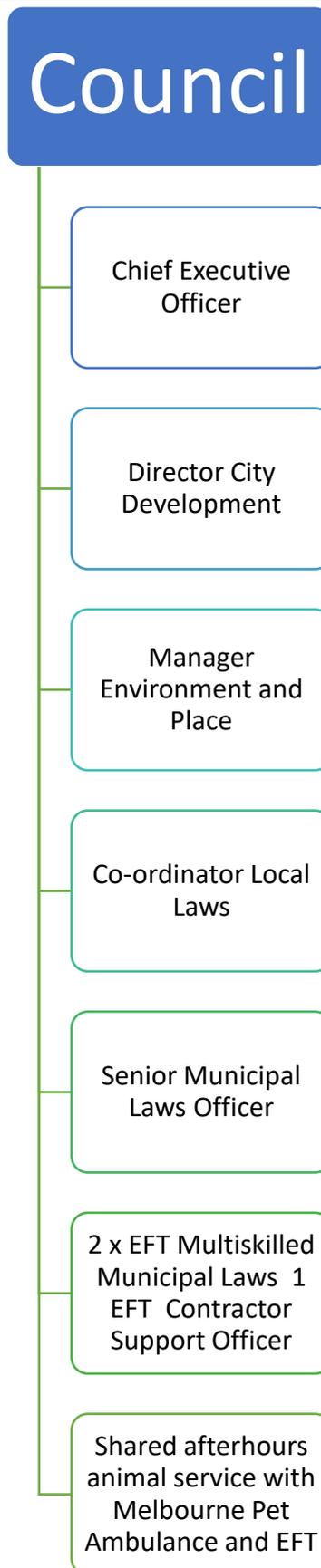
Council is required to provide an animal management service to ensure that community amenity and safety is not compromised by animals, customer requests and complaints are responded to, and that all relevant Acts, Regulations and Local Laws are enforced. In doing so, Council must comply with the following Acts and Regulations:

- Domestic Animals Act and Regulations 1994;
- Impounding of Livestock Act 1994;
- Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986;
- Infringements Act 2005; and
- Local Government Act 1989.

And have regard to applicable guidelines and standards including:

- Code of Practice for the Management of Animals in Shelters and Pounds;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Pet Shops;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Breeding and Rearing Establishments;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Boarding Establishments;
- Code of Practice for the Operation of Dog Training Establishments; and
- Code of practice for the Operation of Greyhound Establishments.





Introduction

Companion animals play an important role in today's society, be it for companionship, work, entertainment or sport, and Council wants people to enjoy them.

Pets that are well managed cause few problems and rarely come to the attention of Council. Unfortunately, when animals are acquired with little forethought or for the wrong reasons, or when they are left unsupervised, problems occur.

The State Government introduced the Domestic Animals Act in 1994 which, with subsequent amendments has a significant impact on the responsibilities of individual pet owners, including the way cats and dogs are housed and controlled. The Act and its Regulations also make it compulsory for owners to register all dogs and cats over three months of age, and control animal businesses such as pet shops and breeders.

While some in the community think of Animal Management Officers as simply 'dog catchers', this is a term that fails to capture the significant, diverse and often dangerous work of these officers.

On a daily basis, their work in responding to calls requires compassion, effective communication and patience as they provide advice, education and assistance. Where necessary, they also enforce the Act, which may result in criminal charges. For the most part, residents are happy to assist officers and will confine stray animals for collection, knowing that they will be humanely treated and wherever possible returned to their owners, or rehoused in a good home by Council's service provider, rescue groups or other stakeholders.

While council has the responsibility of administering the Act, it recognises the need to promote responsible pet ownership, provide supportive programs and meet community expectations. This plan is a base for Council to provide high quality animal services and programs now and into the future.

This Plan was developed by Banyule Council's Animal Management Officers (AMOs) in consultation with key stakeholders.



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Demographic and Banyule Profile

Context

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 establishes a legislative requirement for Local Government to prepare, implement and annually report on its Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Banyule Council's Plan has been prepared in consultation with Councillors, Council Officers and the community and seeks to balance the competing needs of animal owners, the broader community and the animals that share people's lives. Council recognises the positive health and wellbeing benefits that arise from pet ownership.

Demographic and Banyule Profile

The 20 suburbs of Banyule cover 63 square kilometres, located between 7 and 21 kilometres to the north-east of Melbourne's CBD.

Banyule comprises the suburbs of Bellfield, Briar Hill, Bundoora, Eaglemont, Eltham North, Greensborough, Heidelberg, Heidelberg Heights, Heidelberg West, Ivanhoe, Ivanhoe East, Lower Plenty, Macleod, Montmorency, Rosanna, St Helena, Viewbank, Watsonia, Watsonia North and Yallambie. Banyule is mainly residential in character, with pockets of industrial and commercial development, as well as a number of major facilities such as the Austin, Repatriation and Warringal hospitals, and major shopping centres at Heidelberg, Ivanhoe and Greensborough with smaller shopping centres in Watsonia, Rosanna, Eaglemont and East Ivanhoe. This balance of land use helps maintain economic viability and employment.

Three major waterways traverse Banyule, with the Yarra River in the east, Plenty River in the centre and Darebin Creek on its western boundary, each with their own characteristics and environmental significance. The lay of the land varies from relatively flat plains to steep hills.

The 2016 Census recorded 121,865 Banyule residents (118,304 in the 2011 Census), with 48.6% male and 51.4% female and a median age of 39. Banyule's indigenous population is 0.6% of the total population.

Purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan

The purpose of this Plan is to detail the arrangements that Council has to help manage domestic animals and work towards improved animal management in Banyule.

The aim of the Plan is to:

- Support and facilitate the benefits that animal ownership and companionship has on the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Educate residents about accepted standards of animal welfare, including the care, feeding and physical wellbeing of domestic animals.
- Manage nuisance complaints about animals, which are impacting on other residents.
- Ensure that the keeping of domestic animals does not compromise accepted standards of public health or safety.

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Current Programs and Services

Council currently has the following generic animal management programs and services:

Program/Service	Service Level
Identification and registration of dogs and cats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual registration renewals sent in March
Enforcement of registration requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular reminders in the Banyule Banner and local newspapers Annual reminder notices and text messages for reminders to all registered pet owners
Investigation of nuisance animal complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initial response within 5 days Follow up as required
Investigations of dog attacks and dangerous/menacing dog complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 30 minutes if occurring and 1 hour of reporting
Dogs wandering at large	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within 30 minutes if considered an emergency and otherwise within 1 hour
Declared dog property inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted annually
Cat De sexing Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twice a year
Domestic animal business inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted annually, renewal due 10 April
Pound open for collection of animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cat Pound 7 days a week Dog Pound 5 days a week (excludes weekends)
Excess Animal Permit renewals and new permit inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annually on 31 May
Promotion of responsible animal ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media releases, Banyule Banner, social media and other promotional channels
Cat trapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cat trap cages available
Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing updates throughout the year to Laws Customer Service buddy to keep staff informed of new processes
After hours emergency service for animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runs 365 days 24 hours a day

Domestic Animal Management Plan

SECTION 1 – Training of Authorised Officers

Summary

It is critical that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their work as well as having the necessary authorisations and delegations.

Current Situation

The current training of officers include:

Officer	Cert IV in Animal Control	Cert IV in Government/Statutory Compliance	ATC – Investigation and Case Management	ATC – Municipal Law Enforcement	ATC – Prosecutors or Advanced Prosecutors	Diploma of Frontline Management	Canine Anatomy and Identification Training
1. (j)	x		x	x		x	x
2. (m)		x	x	x	x	x	x
3. (s)	x	x		x			x
4.(c)	x		x	x			x

Other training includes:

Customer Service Training, including dealing with difficult people

Manual Handling training OHS

Dog Breed Identification Training

Pets in Domestic Violence

RSPCA Conferences

Dog Bite Prevention- CSI

Stress Management Training

Managing Potentially Violent Clients

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Future Plans

Objective 1: To ensure all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and expertise to carry out their duties and functions of Council.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Conduct annual performance reviews and identify further training needs for individual officers	Coordinator/ Senior Municipal Laws Officer	Annually	Employee Development Reviews complete for all EFT officers achieved by September 2020

Objective 2: To successfully induct and manage new staff.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Monitor performance and provide guidance to employees where needed	Coordinator/ Senior Municipal Laws Officer	Ongoing	Council Induction and Performance management

SECTION 2- Registration of Dogs and Cats

Summary

Identifying and registering domestic animals is seen as the cornerstone of a successful animal management program.

Pet registration also helps us get your dog or cat home. The chief frustration of Municipal Laws Officers is when an animal is micro chipped but the owners have moved and not updated their details. If a dog or cat is not registered with Council and its microchip details are incorrect, it makes it very difficult for us to let an owner know where their animal is if it gets out.

Identification of animals is also critical in investigating complaints.

We will be attempting to increase the numbers of registered animals in Banyule, particularly in relation to cat registrations, by using a variety of methods.



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Current Situation

As at 1/7/2020, Banyule has 9,353 dogs and 4,094 cats registered, a decrease on the previous year, with an extension given to residents to allow for COVID and customer service counter being closed. The total amount of registered pets has increased as at 2 December 2020:

- Dogs- 13,576
- Cats – 6,121

	2019/2020	2018/2019	2017/18	2016/17
Registered dogs	9,353	13,047	12,718	13,013
Registered cat	4,094	5,769	5,535	5,198

Council Policies and Procedures

A fixed reduced registration fee for de sexed and microchipped animals have been set for the current financial year. This fee is reviewed and adjusted annually in line with all of Council's fees and charges.

During the second half of the registration period from 10 October, half yearly fees apply for new registrations.

Current Activities for Registration

Our current activities for pet registration, including actions from our previous plan, include:

- Providing for online registration/renewal.
- Promoting the benefits of registration and identification, chiefly being able to reunite a lost animal with its owner.
- Using Council's website/ social media to provide information to residents on registration.
- Providing, in conjunction with local vets, subsidised de sexing - (supplying owners with Australian Veterinary Association de sexing vouchers).
- Distributing registration and identification brochures, factsheets and other materials to pet owners.
- Issuing annual registration renewal notices and following up non-renewals, including by sending additional letters, calling owners, and by targeted visits to properties.
- Ensuring that information about sold/rehoused animals from domestic animal businesses (pet shops, shelters) is followed up for registration.
- Ensuring that registration and identification compliance are checked as part of managing complaints about animals.

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- Ensuring that registered dogs and cats are returned home after hours, with unregistered pets impounded, with compulsory registration prior to leaving the pound.
- Ensuring all authorised officers have a microchip scanner in vehicles.

Keeping records of animals impounded and found, including injured or dead animals, and notifying owners of injured or dead animals to seek veterinary treatment or help provide 'closure' for those that have died. Banyule's Cleansing Department also has a microchip scanner to scan dogs and cats when they are called to pick up an animal killed on roads.

- Ensuring that pet shops, breeders, shelters, vets are provided with information on registration and identification (for example, microchipping) responsibilities under the Act.
- Regularly updating/auditing Council's registration database to ensure information is current (for example, amending data to reflect notifications of deceased animals, changes of address, changes of owner) to ensure owners are not distressed or annoyed by receiving unnecessary or incorrect renewal notices, or no renewal notice.
- Ensuring that owners are charged the correct State Government levy on each registration after Council has determined its own fees.
- Promoting registration and the wearing of registration tags via Council publications and other media. This is done using 'good news' stories about pets being returned to owners because they were microchipped and registered.
- Having a reduced fee category in the registration fee structure for dogs and cats under 6 months old. Some vets do not believe that pets should be de-sexed until they are 6 months old, so this strategy still encourages pet owners to register their pets without paying a full fee for the first year.



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Objective 1: To increase dog and cat registration rates by 5% each year via education and promotion.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Continue supplying de sexing vouchers to low income earners	Coordinator	Ongoing	Number of vouchers redeemed
Include registration, identification and renewal information in rates notices, newsletters, on the web and via social media	Municipal Laws Officers	January-March yearly	Number of promotional activities undertaken
Include Responsible Pet Ownership Brochure, in kits for new residents	Communications	Ongoing	All requested new resident kits contain pet information
Promote registration and the wearing of registration tags via appropriate Council communication channels, particularly by using 'good news' stories of pets being returned to their owners because of microchipping and registration	Municipal Laws Officers / Communications	Ongoing	Number of promotions
Automatic registration up until next renewal period of cats being de sexed via Council's program	Municipal Laws Officers	Twice a year	Number of cats registered each year

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Objective 2: To increase pet registration by 5% via compliance initiatives

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Ensure all animals identified from a complaint are registered	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	All details are recorded on Customer Service Requests when AMOs deal with the complaint
Ensure a 5% increase in dogs and cats registrations are entered on system each year	Coordinator	Yearly	5% annual increase
Use text messaging for pet registration renewal reminders	Municipal Laws/ Administration	Yearly	Increase in number of registration renewals
Pet registration renewals emailed to residents who opt in	Coordinator	Yearly	Number of email renewals sent and response rate

Objective 3: To increase pet registration rates by 5% each year using improvements in technology.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Increase use of mobile technology, so AMOs can, for example, search pet registration and customer request databases to identify properties where animals are not registered	Municipal Laws Officers	Daily via laptop	Increased number of animals identifiable by registration and recorded on CRM
Provide online registration for pets	Municipal Laws Officers /IT/Coordinator	December 2021	Number of residents using online registration

SECTION 3 – Nuisance Complaints

Summary

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The most common nuisance complaints received by Council relate to barking dogs. (Dog at large and dog attacks are dealt with under Section 4 of this plan as they are not categorised as nuisance complaints.)

The majority of time AMOs spend dealing with complaints relates to barking dogs and it is therefore critical that AMOs strategies and activities are in place to reduce the number of complaints from the public. Barking dog complaints require far more time for the AMO to resolve given the need to substantiate the complaint, which can often lead to frustration by the complainant and dog owner.

Current Situation

Between 1 July 2019- 30 June 2020, Council received the following number of complaints

Complaint type	2019/20	2018/2019	2017/18	2016/17
Nuisance Cats	212	162	225	221
Responsible Pet Ownership	326	403	541	284
Animal Special Requests	156	119	120	163
Barking Dog	312	374	340	319
Found Dog	352	420	497	518
Found Cat/Cat in Cage	138	161	204	185
Lost Cat Reports	101	81	104	99
Lost Dog Reports	106	139	161	216
Stray Livestock/Farm Animal	3	7	2	2
Dog Attack	98	92	83	73
Dog at large/ Rushing/ Menacing	235	216	261	256

Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Dogs and Cats in Public Places Orders

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In line with its statutory powers under section 26 of the Act, Council has an existing Order for Dogs and Cats in Public Places which was adopted by Council in 1998. The Order requires that dogs are to be kept on leash when on a Council road or footpath and within 5 metres of a designated shared footway, children's playground or barbeque area.

Dogs and cats are prohibited from entering environmentally sensitive areas as designated by signs in the following parks and reserves:

Brown's Nature Reserve, Greensborough (as per existing covenant)
Banyule Flats Wetland and Banyule Billabong, Heidelberg

Horseshoe, Reedy and Bailey Billabongs in **Wilson Reserve, Ivanhoe**

See Amendment *

Warringal Swamplands, Heidelberg
Yandell Reserve (within already fenced areas), Greensborough
St Helena Bush Reserve (within already fenced areas), St Helena
Rockbeare Park, Ivanhoe

For the purpose of any order made under section 26 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, within the City of Banyule and as a guide for implementation, a dog shall be deemed to be under effective control of its owner if;

- (a) it is within 75 metres (clear and unobstructed) of its owner; and
- (b) will return to its owner upon command.

Local Laws

Banyule City Council General Local Law Number 1 was reviewed in 2014 and was adopted formally by council, with effect on 15 April 2015. Part 10 of the Local Law Number 1 deals with the keeping and control of animals within Banyule. The main objectives are to control the number and type of animals and to control animal behaviour to minimise adverse impact on other residents.

It is an offence to keep more than a prescribed number of animals without the written consent of Council via a permit.

As at 30 June 2020, there were 96 households with active excess animal permits registered. This figure changes regularly due to residents moving in and out of Banyule. These permits are renewed annually on 31 May.

	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Number of Excess Permits issued/current	96	81	89	86

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The table below lists the maximum number of animals allowed to be kept without the need for a permit. Permits are also required for goats, horses, roosters and other animals.

Type of Animal	Maximum Allowed
Dogs	2
Cats	2
Poultry	10
Pigeons and/or Domestic Birds	20
Guinea Pigs	4
Rabbits	4
Rooster	0

The conditions in which excess animals must be kept are:

- (a) The ground surrounding the place where the animal is kept is free from dry grass, weeds, refuse, rubbish or other material capable of harbouring rodents or vermin;
- (b) The place where the animal is kept and the surrounding area is well drained;
- (c) All food for consumption by the animal is kept or stored in a vermin proof receptacle;
- (d) Any area where the animal is kept is thoroughly cleaned as often as necessary to keep the area clean and sanitary at all times;
- (e) All manure, excrement, refuse or rubbish produced or accumulated by the animal is disposed of, as soon as practicable, so that it does not cause a nuisance or create a condition which is offensive or dangerous to health.

Control of Noisy Animals and Birds

An *owner* or *occupier* of any *land* where an *animal* is kept or allowed to remain must not allow the *animal* to make noises or sounds which will create a nuisance that may unreasonably or adversely affect:

- (a) The peace and comfort of any *person*; or
- (b) The amenity of any other *land*.

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Council Policies and Procedures

Current Activities

Our current educational, promotional and compliance activities include:

All nuisance complaints

- Provide information on Council's website and in its newsletters relevant Local Laws and Orders, types of nuisance and how to report and record ongoing nuisance (for example via a barking dog diary, cat trespass) to support complaints.
- Provide one on one advice, education and assistance to animal owner.
- Distribute relevant brochures, factsheets and other materials regarding nuisance issues.
- Record all nuisance complaints on the Customer Request Management system.
- Investigate nuisance complaints effectively.
- Ensure nuisance investigation timeframes are as short as possible to reduce complainant's frustration.
- Review Council policies and procedures relating to nuisance.
- Ensure notices to comply, notices of objection, infringements, and prosecutions are in line with Council policies, procedures and guidelines.

Cat Trespass Complaints

The major issue of concern about cats are unowned or stray cats that roam the Neighbourhood fighting with other cats over territory, and generally creating a nuisance by spraying and defecating on private property.

Throughout the kitten season, which is generally in spring but can go longer depending on weather, Council receives many complaints about cats with kittens taking up residence on private property. In many cases, residents feel sorry for the animals and start leaving food for them, which can exacerbate the problem. Cats are a large concern for Banyule and there needs to be more cat awareness and education.

Current activities relating to cat trespass:

- Strongly encouraging desexing of pets to reduce wandering and organising desexing on the owners behalf, along with free animal transport to the vet if required.
- Actively encouraging cat owners to confine their cats to their property to enhance animal welfare and reduce the incidence of nuisance.

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- Providing cat cages, and requirements relating to trapping, to local residents to trap cats trespassing on their property in order to reduce the impact of stray/unowned cats.
- Ensuring the cat trapping program is undertaken in the most humane way, with cats picked up as soon as practicable after capture to reduce animal distress. Council recommends that all residents set traps before going to bed at night and call Council first thing in the morning for a pick up.
- Continuing to issue excess animal permits to reduce the possibility of nuisance complaints.
- Investigating nuisance cat complaints to mitigate ongoing complaints, including letterbox drops to homes surrounding that of the complainant.
- Work with residents experiencing mental illness/animal hoarding to reduce the number of pets they have and ensure those they keep are healthy, manageable and registered.
- Work with the Department of Housing to ensure compliance in relation to their properties and known hoarders.

Council Officers will:

- Supply cat traps to residents' properties and collect any trapped cats within as short a time as possible to minimise distress to the animal;
- Assist the resident to take formal ownership of stray cats by organising and paying for micro chipping, desexing and registration through Council's desexing program.



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Barking Dog Complaints

Barking dog complaints are the most common type of complaint and take the most time to resolve variety of methods. Common reasons for dogs barking include:

- Wrong choice of dog breed
- Lack of exercise
- Boredom, loneliness and frustration
- Feeling under threat (another dog, or loud noise such as thunder or fireworks)
- Poor living conditions
- Multi-unit developments (closer living conditions)
- Ill health

Complainants who contact Council about a barking dog will be asked to speak to the dog's owner in the first instance to open the line of communication between the parties and to see if anything can be done to stop the dog barking.

Complainants are mostly reluctant to discuss issues of barking dogs with neighbours, but Council recognises that communication is critical to resolving issues.

Current activities relating to barking dogs:

- Constantly reviewing processes regarding neighbourhood complaints about nuisance barking.
- Providing information on the causes of excessive barking, including separation anxiety, boredom, external stimuli, territorialism, communication with other dogs etc.
- Encouraging owners of barking dogs to seek advice from Council/professional dog trainer/animal behaviourist on how to reduce their dog's barking.
- Encouraging complainants to contact owner of a barking dog and advise them of their concerns as a first step in resolving the issue before starting the investigation process.
- Including mediation through the Dispute Settlement Centre as part of a new process to open lines of communication, with the hope that residents can work together on a solution.



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Dog litter complaints

Under Local Law 10.6 Dog Excrement, a dog owner must:

- (a) Remove and dispose of faeces deposited by their dog; and
- (b) Carry a litter device and must produce such litter device upon request of any Authorised Officer, in any public place.

Current activities relating to dog litter activities currently undertaken:

- Advising dog owners of the legal requirements relating to cleaning up dog litter by distributing educational materials (see 'All nuisance' section for methods) and, during patrols in parks and public places, providing dog walkers doing the right thing with information, dog 'pooch pouches' and leads.
- Continuing to enforce the collection and disposal of dog litter by the owner/person in charge of the dog as well as the requirement to carry a suitable collection means.

Dog Parks

- In 2007, the Municipal Laws Officer's investigated the possibility of including a fully fenced dog park in Banyule, incorporating this into the Public Open Space Strategy, which led to funding for a feasibility study. This early work was successful, with Banyule now having four fenced dog parks:
 - Price Park, Lyon Road, Viewbank
 - Ford Park, Banksia Street, Bellfield
 - Malahang Reserve, Oriel Road, Heidelberg West
 - Malcolm Blair Reserve, Karingal Drive, Eltham

These parks are fully fenced off-lead exercise areas with park benches, dog waste bins and drinking fountains with dog bowls. They are fully maintained and serviced by Council's Parks and Gardens Department.

Objective 1: Reduce the number of nuisance complaints via education

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Provide more information to residents about the Dispute	Municipal Laws Officer	Only if both parties agree to	Feedback on the mediation from both

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Settlement Centre and, where necessary, organise mediation, providing a summary of the issue to the mediators with details of both parties with their consent.	handling the investigation	the mediation	parties and reduction in ongoing complaints
Park Patrols	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing and increased during COVID	Number of park patrols and compliance and awareness increased during COVID
Review enforcement policies and procedures	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Number of policies and procedures reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation
Provide information about cat enclosures and cat nuisance issues to cat owners	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Reduction in number of nuisance cat complaints and impounded cats
Promote fully fenced dog parks within Banyule	AMOs	Ongoing	Number of promotions undertaken
Develop a new Barking Dog Process	Municipal Laws Officers / Coordinator	June 2021	Completion of Barking Dog Process

Objective 2: Reduce the number of nuisance complaints using compliance

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Continued implementation and promotion of the cat desexing program in Banyule	Municipal Laws Officers/ Coordinator	Running Annually	Number of cats desexed/microchipped vs how many we impound
Letterbox drop areas around cat trespass complaints prior to trapping to promote registration, identification and education.	Municipal Laws Officers	Each CRM received	Reduction of the number of cats impounded
In conjunction with residents, trap semi owned/owned cats in response to trespass complaints	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Increase in cat registrations, fewer cat trespass complaints

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			and reduction in cats impounded
Ensure complaints are dealt with effectively, efficiently and satisfactorily	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	KPI reporting for city Development Monthly Report

Objective 3: Use technology to assist in reducing and resolving nuisance complaints

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Investigate web-based online complaint lodgement, including providing better information about what constitutes a nuisance	Municipal Laws Officers / Coordinator/ Communications	December 2021	Online complaints launched and number of online complaints received

SECTION 4 – Dog Attacks and Dog Confinement

Summary

A critical role for Council is to minimise the number of dog attacks due to the potential damage that dogs can inflict on other animals and people.

It is important that Council raises community awareness on how to reduce the risk of a dog attack.

The identification of animals, including declared dogs, is important as is ensuring dogs are contained to their property at all times.

Current Situation

Customer Service Requests for dog attacks include those causing minor injury to those causing serious injury. Analysis of the data shows that most attacks were rushes by dogs with minor injuries eventuating.

Complaint type	Total 30	Total 30	Total	Total
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	June 2020	June 2019	30 June 2018	30 June 2017
Dog Attack	98	92	83	73
Rushing/Wandering at Large and Menacing dogs	235	216	261	256
Dog Found/Containment	352	420	497	518

Current Activities

Our current educational, promotional and compliance activities include:

- Raising awareness of the risk of dog attacks in the home, in the street and in parks, and reducing these risks by:
 - distributing brochures, factsheets and other materials regarding dog attacks;
 - providing information with registration renewals and in new resident packs
- Promoting effective confinement and control of dogs.
- Promoting desexing of dogs to reduce aggressive tendencies and wandering.
- Promoting early socialisation of dogs with other animals and humans.
- Promoting regular exercise of dogs.
- Responding to dog attack reports within 1 hour (the top priority for Municipal Laws Officers).
- Responding to dog wandering complaints.
- Providing an afterhours number for the community to report dog attacks.
- Prosecuting owners for breaches of the Act.
- Ensuring all reported dog attacks are recorded and investigated, meeting all points of proof provided in the Act, seizing dogs and prosecuting owners in accordance with the Animal Act 1994.
- Introduced more fully fenced dog parks within Banyule
- Produced a brochure on 'Victims of dog attacks' to provide information on what Council can and can't do under the legislation.

Future Plans – Dog attacks and Dog Confinement

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Objective 1: Reduce the incidence of wandering dogs and dog attack in the community through education.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Provide residents with information on implications for their dog and themselves if their dog attacks a person or animal	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Reduction in number of dog attacks
Promote the importance of training, socialising and de sexing dogs at an early age	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Reduction in number of dog attacks
Encourage and provide residents with information on how to report dog attacks whether on public or private property	Municipal Laws Officers / Communications	Ongoing	Amount of information available via a range of channels

Objective 2 - Reduce the incidence of wandering dogs and dog attack in the community through compliance.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Patrol and identify properties where containment may be an issue	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Increased compliance Ensure reported via CRM and follow up done with owner and registration
Concentrate patrols in high risk areas	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Increased compliance

Objective 3: Reduce the incidence of wandering dogs and dog attacks in the community through technology.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Use Council's social media to educate the community on the effects	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Number of social media posts

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of wandering dogs and dog attacks			
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SECTION 5- Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Summary

A **restricted breed dog** is defined as a dog that fits the Approved Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria. These may be pure or cross bred American Pit Bull Terriers (or Pit Bull Terriers), Perro de Presa Canarios (or Presa Canario), Dogo Argentinos, Japanese Tosas, or Fila Brasileiros.

While restricted breed dogs may not have attacked a person or animal or displayed signs of aggression, they are considered a higher risk to community safety than other breeds.

Only the American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier) and one Dogo Argentino is known to be in Victoria. Cross breeds of restricted breeds are also considered a restricted breed dog.

The Parliamentary Inquiry into restricted breed dog legislation was established in 2015. The Economy and Infrastructure Committee undertook a detailed investigation into the management of different breeds of dog, and into dog attacks, their causes and prevention strategies. The Inquiry received 502 written submissions and heard from 16 organizations and individuals at public hearings. The Inquiry's report was published in March 2016, with 31 recommendations.

The State Government agrees or agrees in principle with 25 of the Inquiry's recommendations, including that the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Act) be amended to allow the registration of restricted breed dogs, while retaining all other restrictions related to restricted breed dogs.

The proposed amendment to the Act allows for the registration of restricted breed dogs but does not change any of the strict controls applying to restricted breed dogs that are currently in place. Restricted breed dogs will still be required to:

- be desexed;
- be kept on a leash and muzzled at all times when in public;
- securely confined to their owner's back yard; and
- Wear a red and yellow striped collar at all times.

Properties containing a restricted breed dog must display a specific turquoise warning sign at the entrance to the property indicating that a restricted breed dog is housed there. Bans on breeding, adopting or transferring the ownership of restricted breed dogs will also remain in place.

A **dangerous dog** is a dog that has attacked a person or animal or which, in the opinion of a Council, has caused serious injury to a person or another animal.

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The owner of a dangerous dog has to meet stronger control provisions, including erecting an approved housing enclosure meeting the requirements of the Domestic Animal Regulations 2015

A dog is said to be a **menacing dog** if the dog causes a non-serious bite injury to a person or animal. This is in addition to the existing power to declare a dog to be menacing if it rushes at or chases a person.

A 'Rush' means that a dog has approached a person within 3 metres in a menacing manner, including by displaying aggressive behaviour such as snarling, growling and raising the hackles.

A menacing dog declaration can be upgraded to a dangerous dog declaration if the owner of the menacing dog has been issued with two infringement notices for failing to comply with requirements, such as leashing or muzzling their dog while in public places.

It is important that the properties where these dogs reside are inspected regularly to ensure that all requirements of keeping a declared dog are being met. These dogs have the potential to cause great harm so it is important from a community safety perspective that they are kept in accordance with the Act and Regulations.

Current Situation – Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

- All dogs that have been declared a menacing dog, restricted breed or dangerous dog are inspected annually. The inspections are to ensure that the animal is being housed in accordance with the legislative requirements under the Act and regulations.
- All declared dogs are registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry

Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Current Activities

Our current educational, promotional and compliance activities include:

- Ensuring that all owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Act regarding identification and keeping these dogs by providing them with relevant sections of the Act, brochures and factsheets (information kit).
- Ensuring all declared dogs are accurately registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and that details regarding change of owner, change of address, death of dog are updated as soon as possible (www.ddvic.registry-service.com).
- Ensuring that declared dog registration information on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and Council's Register is the same.
- Performing annual inspections of all properties with declared dogs to ensure compliance with the Act and regulations.

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- Following-up any non-compliance issues until the dog owner complies.
- Responding to complaints regarding declared dogs within 30 minutes.
- Ensuring the necessary enforcement action is taken for known problem dogs and, where necessary, they are declared to minimise the risk of future occurrences.

Future Plans- Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Objective 1: Identify all declared dogs in Banyule using education.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Ensure the owners of known problem dogs are advised of legal implications, where necessary, to minimise risk	Municipal Laws Officers	As required	Number of owners advised as a result of a complaint

Objective 2: Identify all declared dogs in Banyule using compliance.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Prosecute where necessary any breaches of the Act	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Increase in number of successful prosecutions
Ensure that all declared dogs are inspected on a schedule but annual/random inspection	Municipal Laws Officers	Annual	Number of inspections reported annually

Objective 3: Identify all declared dogs in Banyule using technology.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
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Investigate the availability of relevant products which may assist in the safe keeping of declared dogs, such as enclosures, signs etc.	Municipal Laws Officers	Annually	Available products identified
Report on the Department of Economic Development Jobs, Transport and Resource Declared Dog Database any dog that has been surrendered for aggression issues.	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Reports on surrendered dogs due to aggression

SECTION 6 – Overpopulation and High Euthanasia

Summary

Banyule Council contracts the Cat Protection Society in Greensborough and the Nillumbik Regional Shire pound as our cat and dog pounds respectively.

Current Situation - Our current data

The following impound data from the Cat Protection Society and Nillumbik Regional Shire Pound is detailed below:

	Dogs 19/20	Dogs 18/19	Dogs 17/18	Dogs 16/17	Cats 19/20	Cats 18/19	Cats 17/18	Cats 16/17
Impounded	182	515	213	220	152	141	248	281
Released to owner	141	456	190	165	30	24	38	37
Rehoused	29	48	17	48	98	76	144	166
Euthanized	8	11	6	7	24	41	66	78

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Most cats impounded are usually semi-owned strays or semi-feral cats with no microchip details.

Our current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures Council Policies and Procedures - Current Activities

Our current educational, promotional and compliance activities include:

- Promoting the benefits of de sexing – no surprise litters, fewer unwanted animals in the community, fewer animals euthanized, reduced aggression, reduced wandering.
- Continuing registration and microchipping programs to ensure pet cats and dogs can be returned to their owners to reduce euthanasia rates.
- Promoting confinement of animals to owner's premises to prevent straying.
- Investigating reports of animal hoarding.
- Investigating Customer Request Management reports of unauthorised 'backyard breeders' to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business.
- Providing cat cages to local residents for trapping cats trespassing on their property.
- Impounding trapped cats at the Cat Protection Society where the animal will be assessed for its suitability for adoption or euthanized.
- Impounding dogs without identification at Nillumbik Shire Pound where the animal can be assessed for its suitability for rehoming.
- Encouraging formal adoption of unwanted cats by assisting the 'carer' to have the cat microchipped and desexed under the Australian Veterinary Association's desexing voucher scheme and providing free registration for newly registered cats.
- Reducing the dumping of unwanted animals by accepting surrendered animals.
- Assisting residents to take responsibility for microchipping new cats and providing desexing vouchers to help control unwanted breeding.
- Providing a link on Banyule Council's website to the Nillumbik Pound's page that has photos of impounded animals where no owner has been able to be contacted.

In the 2007 Domestic Animal Management Plan, Council identified that it had a cat overpopulation issue, which created a workload equivalent to a Full Time Officer, with the impound rate at the Cat Protection Society in excess of 800 cats/kittens.

Council introduced a free cat de sexing/microchipping program in August 2013, with 60 cats/kittens desexed. The first program specifically targeted owners who had cats

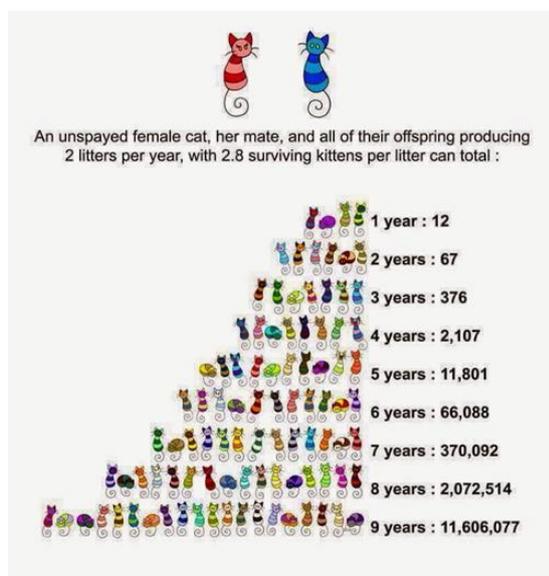
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that produced numerous litters that were surrendered to Animal Management Officers, with some cats having up to seven or more litters.

Banyule is committed to reducing the number of unwanted cats and kittens in Banyule. To 30 June 2017, Council has run eight desexing sessions, with approximately 60 cats desexed and microchipped at each session – 480 cats in total. This program assists in achieving full ownership of cats, less straying and critically reducing the number of unwanted litters and therefore euthanasia.



The chart below outlines the impact of just one female cat reproducing.



Future Plans

Objective 1: Reduce the amount of euthanasia rates at Council Pound (feral/unowned cats excepted) and increase the percentage of desexed animals on Council's database through education.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Continue with the rehousing/adoption program to assist in reducing euthanasia rates	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Reduction in euthanasia rates

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Continue to promote the free cat desexing program	Coordinator/ Laws Officers	Annually	Number of cats desexed and microchipped
Promote desexing during all animal request contacts	Laws Officers	Daily	The number of desexed dogs and cats on Council's registration database
Involve breed clubs and rescue services to assist in rehousing animals, particularly surrendered animals	Laws Officers	Ongoing	Links with clubs and rescue services and number of animals rehoused by them
Provide vouchers for subsidised de sexing with registration	Laws Officers	Ongoing	Number of vouchers used

Objective 2: Reduce euthanasia rates at Council Pound, through compliance.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Promote microchipping, registration and desexing with pet owners and ensure compliance	Laws Officers	Ongoing	Increase in registration rates and decrease in euthanasia rates

Objective 3: Reduce percentage of non desexed animals on database through identification with technology

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Ensure pound processes are followed to ensure all dogs with no ID or chip are photographed so they can be posted on Nillumbik's Website and Facebook page to increase reunification rates	All Municipal Laws Officers impounding	Ongoing	Links to Nillumbik Shire Pound on the Banyule website and number of animals reclaimed and registered
Offer free registration for newly adopted cats through our service provider and to residents	Municipal Laws Officers	Bi-annually through the desexing	Increase in number of animals on the registration database

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using Council's cat desexing program. NOTE: Registration only applies until the annual registration renewal date of April 10		program and throughout the year for adopted cats/kittens via Cat Protection Society	
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SECTION 7 – Domestic Animal Businesses

Summary

Banyule has nine domestic animal business (DAB) registrations.

In the six months to June 2017, there were a number of enquiries in relation to the start-up processes, relevant codes and legislation around doggy day care businesses. Animal Management Officers worked in conjunction with Planning Investigators to ensure consistent information.

Council will continue ensuring all new businesses are registered and that it works with proprietors to ensure all standards relating to the Act and code of practice are met.

Current Situation

Council audits all businesses once a year and there have been no significant issues with compliance. There is one shop selling rescue cats and kittens in Banyule.

Domestic Animal Businesses are inspected at registration renewal time annually and documented on a register for auditing purposes.

Our Current Activities

Our current educational, promotional and compliance activities include:

- Providing a relevant mandatory Code of Practice to proprietors/staff of existing and proposed domestic animal businesses.
- Ensuring all relevant Domestic Animal Businesses are advised and involved in any review of the mandatory Code of Practice for their type of business.
- Registering all identified Domestic Animal Businesses within Banyule, including:
 - Breeding and rearing establishments
 - Pet shops
 - Shelters and pounds
 - Boarding establishments

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- Dog training establishments
- Inspecting Domestic Animal Businesses annually to ensure compliance with the Code.
- Following-up non-compliance issues with information on required actions and timeframes for resolution, further inspections, and prosecutions where necessary.
- Reinforcing the requirement for Domestic Animal Businesses to notify Council of any animals sold or given away, as required under S13 of the Act.

Future Plans

Objective 1: Ensure, through education, that all Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Banyule are identified, registered and complying with the Code of Practice.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Provide advice to other Council unites when planning applications for domestic animal businesses are received to ensure appropriate conditions are placed on construction, operation, etc	Municipal Laws Officers	As required	All legislative requirements are achieved
Provide owners with information on updates to the Code of Practice and other information where necessary	Municipal Laws Officers	As required	All legislative requirements are achieved
Ensure Council provides all Domestic Animal Business details to Pet Exchange Register	Municipal Laws Officers	When permit is issued by Council	All current Domestic Animal Businesses comply with legislation and have source numbers provided

Objective 2: Ensure, using compliance, that all Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Banyule are identified, registered and are complying with Code of Practice.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses within Banyule	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses are registered and renewed each year

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Ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are inspected at least annually	Municipal Laws Officers	Annually	Domestic Animal Businesses inspected and audits completed
Investigate any complaint relating to the operation of a Domestic Animal Businesses.	Municipal Laws Officers	When required	Records of and resolution of complaints to achieve compliance
Conduct 'unscheduled' inspections/audits of each Domestic Animal Business in relation to conditions of registration to determine compliance with the Act, relevant mandatory Code of Practice, and any terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on that registration	Municipal Laws Officers	Annually	Increase in compliance
Ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are providing information on the sale of animals	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Sale of animal information received with increased registrations

Objective 3: Ensure, using technology, that all Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Banyule are identified, registered and are complying with the Code of practice.

Activity	Responsible Officer	When	Evaluation
Ensure audit documents from inspections are kept electronically against the application on Council's database	Municipal Laws Officers	Annually	Each inspection can be viewed against application on Council's database

SECTION 8 – Other Matters

Benefits of Pet Ownership

There is a wealth of scientific evidence to support the benefits of owning pets and their use in therapy. Evidence of a link between pet ownership and better health has been demonstrated by a range of different studies. Dogs encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and they have been shown to stimulate conversations between strangers and also improve a person's sense of security both at home and in public

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places. Pets are also wonderful companions and in some cases help combat loneliness and social alienation. Pet ownership also teaches children responsibility, and helps them develop their social and nurturing skills. Companion animals play an irreplaceable part in the enrichment of people's lives and have a positive influence on the social, emotional and physical wellbeing of people.

There is also much evidence to support dogs being used for therapeutical purposes in hospitals, nursing and care homes or for where people may be disadvantaged through age, illness disability or isolation.

Animal Welfare/ Abandoned Animals Issues

AMOs are authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act to deal with issues relating to cruelty and Council officers have a good working relationship with the RSPCA Inspectorate in these matters. These types of investigation have their own category created on Council's Customer Management Request so it can keep track of how many abandoned/ animal welfare complaints received.

Surrender Animals

For Banyule Council, it has always been best practice to provide a free surrender service for any resident wanting to surrender an animal. The surrender service has always been free to ensure residents are not dumping pets in unsafe places and to ensure that Animal Management Officers can discuss the issue with the owner and educate them where necessary. This also provides a good opportunity to find out about the animal's living arrangements and ensure it is rehomed to best suit its needs.

Council also keeps track of the surrendered animals reported through Customer Requests Management.

	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18	2016/17
Abandoned/Animal Welfare Customer Requests	50	28	36	56
Surrendered animals	46	41	50	57

After Hours Animal Emergency Service

There is a 24-hour service for animal emergencies within Banyule. Council's after-hours service is a shared service between Animal Management Officers and the Melbourne Pet Ambulance Service.

The after-hours service deals with:

- contained domestic animals;

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- injured animals;
- emergency services assistance; and
- dog attacks/ community safety issues involving domestic animals.

Local Government Reporting

Know Your Council and the Local Government Reporting Framework have been developed by Local Government Victoria within the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. Mandatory performance reporting started in 2014-15 and is a key initiative to improve the transparency and accountability of council performance to ratepayers.

Animal management is measured via 4 key performance indicators:

1. The cost of the animal management service;
2. The time taken to action animal management requests;
3. Animals reclaimed;
4. The number of animal management prosecutions.

This information can be found on the Know Your Council Website at www.knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au

Objective 1: To have plans/contingencies in place in the event of an emergency.

Activity	Responsibility	When	Evaluation
Develop a program that helps domestic violence victims with transport and short term housing of their pets in an emergency	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Process in place and number of people assisted
To ensure there are arrangements for pets within the relief centres designated for Banyule in the event of emergencies	Municipal Laws Officers / Emergency Management Coordinator	Completed 2020	Arrangements are in the emergency management plan for Banyule

Objective 2: Decrease the incidence of Animal Welfare complaints using education, compliance and technology

Activity	Responsibility	When	Evaluation
Provide web links to Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 information, codes (dog and cat private keeping,	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Web links added to Council website

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etc), brochures, etc, via Council's website			
Investigate complaints of animal cruelty and animal welfare	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Complaints responded to as per customer service requests
Liaise with relevant agencies such as RSPCA in relation to prevention of cruelty issues	Municipal Laws Officers	When needed	Liaison with relevant agencies
Educate the community in regards to cruelty issues	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Reduction in cruelty complaints

Objective 3: Identifying/harnessing the benefits of pet ownership via education

Activity	Responsibility	When	Evaluation
Promote the benefits of pet ownership via internal publications and the media	Municipal Laws Officers	Ongoing	Articles in Banyule Banner and social media

Community Consultation

The DAM Plan was out for community feedback for a three week period on Shaping Banyule and Facebook from the 9 August 2017 and closed on the 30 August 2017.

Council received feedback from 16 residents, with the results being:

- 14 residents owned pets
- 2 residents did not own pets

Out of these 16:

- 10 strongly agreed that we addressed the major issues relating to animal management
- 3 were not sure
- 1 disagreed
- 2 strongly disagreed

Consultation also included:

- All vet clinics within Banyule City Council
- All Dog Obedience Clubs within Banyule and the immediate radius
- Dogs Victoria
- Australia
- Pound Reform Alliance Australia

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The feedback was mostly around issues with parks and dogs not under effective control and barking dogs, which are the two major focuses for the first year of this new plan.



SECTION 9 – Review of Plan and Annual Reporting

Objective 1: Comply with Section 68A (3) of the Act.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resource Secretary with a copy of the Domestic Animal Management Plan and any amendments to the plan	January 2021	Copy supplied and signed off
Review and report annually on the Domestic Animal Management Plan and, if appropriate, amend the plan	Annually	Plan reviewed and Council briefed

Acronyms

DAMP	Domestic Animal Management Plan
BCC	Banyule City Council
CSR	Customer Service Request
VDDR	Victorian Dangerous Dog Register
RSPCA	Royal Society for Protection and Care of Animals

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POCTA	Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act
MOU	Memo of Understanding
MAV	Municipal Association Victoria
AMSTAFF	American Staffordshire Terrier
ABS	Australian Bureau Statistics
RBD	Restricted Breed Dog
DEDJTR Resource	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and
AMO	Animal Management Officer
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
AWF	Animal Welfare Victoria

Bibliography/References

- 2017 ABS Census Quickstats and Community Profile.
www.abs.gov.au/census
- 20012-2016 Banyule City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan