

Report to the Future Melbourne (People City) Committee

Agenda item 6.5

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017 - 2021

17 October 2017

Presenter: Martin Cutter, Director City Operations

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2017 – 2021 (refer Attachment 2).
2. The DAMP is required to be submitted to the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources before 3 November 2017.
3. The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act) requires Council to produce a DAMP which will be renewed every four years. The DAMP focuses on dogs and cats and registered domestic animal businesses within the municipality.
4. The DAMP will guide the organisation in its service to the community, increasing the likelihood of animals being reunited with their owners and reducing the number of dogs and cats in shelters and potentially being euthanased.
5. The DAMP will assist the organisation to promote increased liveability within the municipality through minimising nuisance and possible danger created by some dogs and cats, by providing appropriate services and through promotion of responsible pet ownership. The DAMP will also ensure officers responsible for its implementation are skilled and trained to effectively deliver the service.
6. A discussion paper was syndicated via Participate Melbourne for first round consultation and feedback was received from 242 people or organisations.
7. The draft DAMP was endorsed by Council at Future Melbourne Committee on 15 August 2017 for the purposes of a second round of consultation. On 16 August the draft DAMP was syndicated via Participate Melbourne for a second round of consultation and feedback was received from 74 people or organisations.

Key issues

8. There has been an increase in the demand for the animal management service. This could be due to an increase in knowledge about the service and therefore more people are reporting incidents. This increase is seen in a 58 percent increase in reported dog attacks since 2013-14 and an 11 percent increase in the number of registered dogs and cats.
9. The outcome of community consultation provided a strong direction on the priorities that require additional attention including a need for more dog off-leash areas, additional emphasis on the management of cats and continuation of the dog waste bag program. Accordingly, amendments have been made to the Plan and highlighted in yellow within the document.

Recommendation from management

10. That the Future Melbourne Committee:
 - 10.1. endorses the attached Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017 – 2021
 - 10.2. authorises the Director City Operations to make any further minor editorial changes prior to publication.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 34)
2. Domestic Animal Management Plan (Page 3 of 34)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. The report accurately identifies the relevant provisions in the Act. The DAMP is required to outline the services, programs and policies the Council have established to address the administration of the Act and the management of dogs and cats in its community.

Finance

2. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations contained within the report. The plan has been prepared assuming that all initiatives will be funded within existing budgets.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a direct or indirect interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Stakeholder consultation

4. CoM underwent two rounds of community and stakeholder consultation which included consultation on a discussion paper in early 2017 before drafting the DAMP. Once drafted and endorsed by Council, the draft DAMP went to the community for further feedback.
5. CoM received 242 responses in the first round of consultation and a further 74 responses in the second round of consultation.
6. The community and stakeholders were able to respond through Participate Melbourne or by making a submission via email which was advertised through social media, face to face and text messages and emails to all registered pet owners and registered domestic animal businesses within CoM.
7. Internal stakeholder discussions were conducted with areas that may impact or have interest in the DAMP. A meeting was also conducted with the Lost Dogs' Home who is seen to be a key stakeholder as the current contracted animal pound provider.
8. There were a number of strong themes raised during these consultation periods, including:
 - 8.1. a need for more dog off-leash areas due to most areas not being within walking distance for dog owners
 - 8.2. a need to place an additional emphasis on the management of cats
 - 8.3. continuation of the current dog waste bag program, however alternatives could be considered.
9. Amendments have been made to the DAMP following the second round of consultation (refer attachment 2, with yellow highlights indicating significant amendments)

Environmental sustainability

10. There are opportunities to be environmentally sustainable and these are addressed through the following:
 - 10.1. A commitment to reduce the amount of dog waste left in public places through an enforcement campaign and providing dog waste bags to owners of registered dogs.
 - 10.2. Investigating alternative options (other than the use of plastic bags), for owners to collect and remove dog waste from public places.

Domestic Animal Management Plan

2017-2021

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Domestic Animal Management Plan legislation

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (the Act), every Council in Victoria is required to produce a Domestic Animal Management Plan (plan) which will be renewed every four years.

The plan is required to outline the services, programs and policies the Council have established to address the administration of the Act and the management of dogs and cats in their community. The specific requirements are:

- 1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary prepare at four yearly 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
 - 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
 - c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to:
 - i. promote and encourage the responsible ownership and dogs and cats
 - ii. ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any related legislation
 - iii. minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
 - iv. address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
 - v. encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
 - vi. minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
 - vii. effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs and to ensure those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and regulations.
 - 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 any further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable.
 - 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.
 - f) provide for the periodic review of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
- 3) Every Council must:

- a) review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and if appropriate amend the plan
- b) provide the Secretary (person who is head of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)) with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan
- c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Associated Legislation

DOMESTIC ANIMALS ACT 1994

The Act provides the foundation for the Council's animal management service. Key features of the Council's responsibilities under the Act include:

- registration and permanent 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
- financial provisions
- appointment of Authorised Officers.

There are six mandatory codes of practices made under the Act which are overseen by Council which relate to the operation of domestic animal businesses. Domestic animal businesses include breeding and rearing establishments, boarding establishments, shelters and pounds, pets shops, dog training establishments and greyhound establishments.

LOCAL LAWS AND ORDERS

Melbourne City Council's Activities Local Law 2009 requires dog owners to collect and dispose of their dog's excrement in public places and always carry a plastic bag or pooper scooper with them.

The Local Law expires in 2019 unless it is revoked earlier. It will need to be reviewed before then and if appropriate replaced.

Melbourne City Council's order under Section 26(2) of the Act (the order) requires dogs to be leashed in public places except for designated off-leash areas. The order also requires that dogs are under effective voice or hand control when off-leash in designated areas, dogs are leashed within 20m of a children's playground area and prohibits dogs from entering designated areas.

The order was last reviewed in 2010.

1 Introduction and Context

Purpose of the plan

This plan will guide the City of Melbourne in its service to the community, increasing the likelihood of animals being reunited with their owners and reducing the number of dogs and cats in shelters and potentially being euthanased.

The plan will assist the City of Melbourne to promote increased liveability of the municipality through minimising nuisance and possible danger, created by some dogs and cats, by providing appropriate services and through promotion of responsible pet ownership. The plan will also ensure officers responsible for implementing the plan are skilled and trained to effectively deliver the service.

This plan focuses solely on dogs and cats.

How was this plan prepared?

The investigations the City of Melbourne undertook in preparing the plan are summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1: INVESTIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN IN PREPARING THE PLAN

Legislation, regulations, Codes of Practice	The <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> is the foundation for Council’s animal management service. Developing this plan is an opportunity to review the City of Melbourne’s animal management service to improve the outcomes achieved. The legislation is described on pages 2 and 3 of this plan.
Local laws and orders	The Council’s local laws and orders relating to animals are described on page 3 of this plan. The plan is required to provide for their review.
Animal management data	The City of Melbourne’s animal management data was reviewed to identify trends, issues and possible priorities, which is referenced throughout this plan.
Existing services	Preparing the plan is an opportunity to reflect on the existing animal management services provided by the Council and consider possible improvements. The existing animal management service is referenced throughout this plan.
City of Melbourne profile	An understanding of the community profile will ensure the plan reflects the special attributes of the municipality. This is described in section 1 of this plan.
Community and stakeholder feedback	Community and stakeholder views were a core element in preparing the plan. Extensive feedback was obtained and this has been incorporated into the plan where possible and appropriate. The community engagement process and feedback received is explained in section 1 of this plan.
The planning context	The City of Melbourne reviewed relevant plans and

	<p>strategies and their implications for this plan. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future Melbourne 2026 • Melbourne CBD Safety Plan June 2015 Version 4 • Open Space Strategy (2012) • Homelessness Strategy 2014-2017 • Bicycle Plan 2016-2020 • Homes for People, Housing Strategy 2015 • Walking Plan 2014-2017 • Beyond the Safe City 2014-2017 • Melbourne For All People Strategy 2014-2017 • Draft Council Plan 2017-2021 • International Student Strategy 2013-2017 • Various other area and location based precinct and structure plans.
Research and best practice	The City of Melbourne reviewed the latest research and best practice in animal management.
Funding	This plan has been prepared assuming that all initiatives will be funded within existing budgets.
Staff feedback	<p>City of Melbourne staff were able to provide valuable input on trends, issues and possible priorities and initiatives. Input was obtained from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Management Team • Open Space Planning Team • Parks Services Team • Social Investment Branch • Smart City Office • Corporate Affairs and Strategic Marketing • Urban Planning Team
Partnerships	<p>In preparing the plan, the City of Melbourne considered ways to partner with others to improve outcomes and achieve a better use of resources. Existing and future possible partners include the State Government, neighbouring Councils, the Council's contracted animal pound, other animal welfare organisations, veterinarians, microchip implanters, domestic animal businesses, obedience clubs and animal trainers.</p>

Population profile

Approximately 148,000 residents live in the City of Melbourne today; this is rapidly increasing, with the population expected to grow to more than 220,000 in the next 10 years. Much of this growth will be accommodated in high and medium density housing. Australian Bureau of Statistics data reveals that 38 per cent of the municipality's population speak a language other than English at home (2011).

It is noteworthy that in 2014 there were 30,900 international tertiary student residents in the municipality, some of whom may own pets.

As a capital city municipality, there is the added dimension of the daily influx of visitors and workers. There are approximately 900,000 people, including residents, workers, students and visitors who access the city every day for work or play. This is estimated to reach 1.1 million a day in the next 10 years. Some of the visitors are dog walkers from neighbouring municipalities.

A street count in 2016 revealed 247 people are sleeping rough on Melbourne streets each night, some of whom own pets.

These features of the City of Melbourne's population pose significant challenges for Council's infrastructure, green spaces and services. Challenges for the animal management services include:

- potential increase in the number of registered animals (corresponding with population growth)
- competing demands on existing infrastructure including public parks and reserves
- high population densities with people and animals living in closer proximity to one another
- pet ownership amongst those experiencing homelessness
- the high number of temporary residents and visitors to the city raises additional challenges for community education in responsible pet ownership.

Feedback

In early 2017 the City of Melbourne went to the community to gather their feedback for the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017 - 2021. This involved an online survey which was published on the Participate Melbourne website, with a discussion paper for the community's consideration and comments, and an online forum.

The City of Melbourne also attended community festivals including the Carlton Neighbour Day, Docklands Neighbour Day and Kensington Community Festival to seek community feedback face to face.

The community engagement opportunity was promoted through a range of digital channels that targeted pet owners and non-pet owners. The significant increase in participation compared with the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan could be indicative of people's preference to be able to have their say online.

The City of Melbourne received 242 completed questionnaires in 2017. This was a substantial increase on the 20 questionnaires submitted during the preparation of the previous plan in 2013. Of the 2017 respondents, 52 per cent were dog owners, 10 per cent were cat owners, 12 per cent owned both a dog and a cat and 26 per cent described themselves as neither a dog or cat owner.

Respondents were asked to identify the matters they thought should be the top priorities for the City of Melbourne to focus on in the plan. The top priorities included:

Priority focus	Percentage of respondents
Registration and microchipping	16 per cent
Lost and unwanted cats and dogs	15 per cent
Desexing of cats and dogs	13 per cent
Dogs in public places	12 per cent
Domestic Animal Businesses (e.g. pet shops, boarding or shelters)	10 per cent
Impact of cats and dogs on the environment	8 per cent
Dog attacks	6 per cent
Trespassing and nuisance cats	6 per cent
Barking dogs	5 per cent
Aggressive dogs	5 per cent

Key themes arising from the qualitative feedback were:

- recognition of the benefits of pet ownership for people's health and wellbeing
- the City of Melbourne is generally being a great place to own pets which could be even more pet friendly
- the need to pick up dog excrement. There was support for dog bags to be provided by the City of Melbourne
- the need for dog owners to keep their pets under effective voice or hand control, leashed and out of areas of parks where required; this includes short leashes in crowded areas
- A balance needed with respect to places where dogs are permitted, with some advocating more places for dogs and others advocating fewer places for dogs. Many say apartments dwellers need places to exercise their dog
- difficulties with taking their pets on public transport
- negative effects of barking dogs, especially in apartments
- A concern that cats should not be allowed to roam
- some concerns for the welfare of animals, particularly unowned animals

This feedback was considered when preparing the draft plan which was presented to Melbourne City Council's Future Melbourne Committee on 15 August 2017.

A second round of community feedback was sought on the draft plan. The draft plan and a short survey were syndicated on Participate Melbourne, which was promoted by text message to registered pet owners and by email to each of the registered domestic animal businesses in the City of Melbourne.

74 responses to the survey, three submissions (including one from RSPCA Victoria and Lost Dog's Home) were received in the second round of community feedback.

The feedback on the draft plan is summarised below:

- a demand for more dog off leash areas, with a trend that most areas are currently not within walking distance of dog owners
- a call for more patrols and enforcement of the requirements relating to dogs in public places – this includes removal of dog waste from streets and parks
- continuation of the current dog waste bag program, however some respondents queried the costs and environmental impacts
- concerns about pet ownership among temporary residents
- additional emphasis on cat management
- the need to support pet ownership in apartments and the promotion of the positive impacts of pet ownership

This feedback was considered and led to a number of amendments to the plan.

Implications for this plan

The plan allows the City of Melbourne to understand and respond to the changing environment. The following implications of the City of Melbourne's investigations have a bearing on this plan:

Themes

1. Planning public spaces needs to consider access for dogs

Implications for this plan

There is a need for more dog off leash areas to ensure they are within walking distance of the dog owner. There is also a need for the enforcement and control of these areas which includes ensuring dogs are under effective voice or hand control and out of areas where dogs are prohibited

2. Dog excrement

There is a demand for the City of Melbourne to provide dog bag dispensers in all parks. The cost of this service and alternatives need to be considered

3. Smart city initiatives

Initiatives and innovations in technology and practices will need to be developed through a close working relationship with the City of Melbourne's Smart City Office

4. Challenge of urban growth

The City of Melbourne is experiencing significant population growth and urban

- development. It is expected dog and cat ownership will increase placing further demand on public spaces and Animal Management Officer resourcing
5. Pet ownership amongst the student population
Some of the students living within the City of Melbourne are thought to own pets and they are usually temporary residents
 6. Community support services
The City of Melbourne works to balance the needs of all community members including those experiencing homelessness who own pets
 7. Cat management
Unowned cat populations need to be addressed with the view to decrease the number of cat nuisance complaints and cats entering the contracted pound facility

2 Plans

2.1 Training of authorised officers

68A(2)(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.

The City of Melbourne is committed to ensuring the Animal Management Team is trained and competent in its duties and delivers an effective and professional service to the community.

All authorised Animal Management Officers must meet the requirements of their position descriptions. The minimum requirement is a Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation or equivalent. All officers also undergo an induction program and are trained in relevant standard operating procedures.

All City of Melbourne permanent Animal Management Officers meet the minimum requirements.

Objective 1

Ensure all officers are trained and skilled

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify additional training opportunities to upskill officers	Annually	Completion of annual goals and performance appraisals
Ensure all officers attend industry training and seminars	Ongoing	Completion of State Government provided training Attendance at the annual Australian Institute of Animal Management conference
Develop a job share program within the City of Melbourne to train and upskill staff from other work areas	2018	Staff participating in a job share program
Review the number of full time staff and the hours of operation ensuring it meets the communities expectations	2018	Review completed

2.2 Registration and Identification

68A(2)(c)(v) *Outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.*

- *Also addresses 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d),(f).*

All dogs and cats are required to be registered annually. Registered pets are also required to wear an identification marker outside their premises. All dogs and cats being registered in Victoria for the first time must be microchipped before they can be registered.

City of Melbourne’s current data

The number of registrations for the last five years is displayed below. There has been a 15 per cent increase in total dog and cat registrations in the City of Melbourne since 2015. Growth in pet ownership can be expected given the growth in the residential population.

The number of registrations includes approximately 1,000 new registrations each year, however approximately the same number of animals leave the City of Melbourne each year because the owner moves away from the municipality or the pet is no longer with them.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Dogs	3088	3068	3029	3128	3449
Cats	1788	1711	1569	1603	1878
Total	4876	4799	4598	4731	5327

City of Melbourne’s current requirements, initiatives and procedures

These include:

- Reduced registration fees are available for particular categories of dogs and cats including those that are desexed, over 10 years old, and/or obedience trained (in compliance with the regulations) and for pet owners who are concession/benefit card holders.
- The City of Melbourne has rolled out the use of lifetime registration tags and utilises email and text messaging in the registration renewal process which has seen an increase in the number of registrations renewed on time.
- The City of Melbourne has also rolled out the use of email to send animal registration renewal forms.

City of Melbourne’s current compliance activities

These include:

- Follow up of unpaid registration renewals. This includes a number of emails and text messages, phone calls and property visits, the application of a late fee and infringement notices.
- Targeted door knocks to check for unregistered pets.

City of Melbourne’s plans

Objective 1

Improve the accuracy of the pet registration database.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the use of digital channels (text messaging introduced in 2016) for achieving an increase in the number of registrations renewed on time	2018	Increase in the number of registrations renewed on time
Undertake targeted door knocking of identified areas to check for unregistered and unidentified dogs and cats	Annual	Increase in the number of animals that are registered Recording the number of unregistered and unidentified animals picked up during doorknocks
Contact microchip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are microchipped. Check all animals are also listed on the City of Melbourne’s pet registration database and follow up those that are not	2019	Demonstrated increase in the numbers of pets registered with the City of Melbourne following microchip registry cross referencing exercise
Continue to promote the use of emails to receive pet registration renewal notices	Annual	Increase in the number of registration renewal notices sent via email

2.3 **Nuisance**

68A(2)(c)(vi) *Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.*

- *Also addresses 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), (f).*

Dogs cause a nuisance when they bark excessively, wander at large, are not properly controlled in parks and reserves and when their owner does not remove their excrement from public places.

Cats cause a nuisance when they trespass on neighbouring properties. It is acknowledged that the number of complaints received by the City of Melbourne is not high, however there is number of recurrent complaints in particular areas of the municipality, many of which relate to unowned cats. The cat management review recommended in section 2.6 will help to address cat nuisance complaints.

City of Melbourne's current data

It should be noted that while the number of complaints regarding dog waste, leashing of dogs and dogs that are wandering at large is not high relative to other customer service requests, these issues were strongly reflected in the qualitative feedback received in the online survey for this plan.

Nuisance barking is an ongoing issue in any municipality. The complaints to the City of Melbourne remain constant.

City of Melbourne's current orders, Local Laws, policies and procedures

These include:

- The order sets out the requirements for dogs in public places, including the requirement they be leashed at all times except when in designated off leash areas. The order also prohibits dogs from entering certain areas. Dogs are required to be leashed within 20 metres of a children's playground or public barbecues.
- Melbourne City Council's Activities Local Law 2009 requires dog owners to collect and dispose of their dog's excrement and to carry a plastic bag or pooper scooper with them that is suitable for collecting dog excrement when in a public place.
- The City of Melbourne provides information on their website about preventing nuisance barking, cats becoming a nuisance and the requirements to remove your dog's excrement.
- The City of Melbourne has recently produced a short video on the six key responsibilities of owners taking their dogs into public places.
- The City of Melbourne provides 51 dog bag dispensers throughout the municipality. The cost of bags and maintaining the dispensers is approximately \$80,000 per annum. Most dispensers need filling daily or every second day and the dispensers

are frequently damaged. In June 2017, approximately 20 had been replaced in the previous six months.

The City of Melbourne considers the current requirements of the order and Local Law are appropriate, however a review of both are required as the Local Law reaches its mandatory review date.

The City of Melbourne will trial providing dog waste bags to registered dog owners and having bag waste bags for sale which may reduce the number of bags taken from the dispensers and decrease the cost of the service.

In 2011 the City of Melbourne undertook a comprehensive review of the management of cats and concluded that a cat confinement requirement was not warranted. This is because of the small number of complaints received every year and, being an inner suburban municipality, a confinement requirement to protect wildlife could not be justified.

City of Melbourne's current compliance activities

These include:

- The City of Melbourne investigate all barking dog requests and mediation of the majority of issues to resolution by providing education on responsible pet ownership and the benefit of socialisation of dogs. Complainants are encouraged to speak to the owner of the dog directly and as soon as possible.
- Proactive patrols to ensure dogs are not wandering at large and that dog owners are complying with the order.
- Investigation into and response to complaints about dogs wandering at large or not complying with the order.
- Proactive cat trapping programs to reduce the number of unowned cats and responding to complaints about trespassing cats.
- Promotion of responsible pet ownership including the benefits of desexing, socialisation and training of dogs on the City of Melbourne's website.
- Funded dog training events to promote the need for dogs to be socialised and to increase awareness of responsible pet ownership. There were three events held in Fawkner Park which were well attended and received positive feedback. The City of Melbourne will consider rolling out this event to other areas of the municipality.
- Education, investigation, enforcement and, when necessary, prosecution of offending pet owners.

City of Melbourne's plans

Objective 1

Minimise the number of barking dog complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and update the information the City of Melbourne provides about preventing excessive barking and how they deal with barking dog complaints	2018	Review undertaken and information updated as appropriate
Review the procedures for dealing with excessive barking	2021	Review undertaken and procedures updated as appropriate

Objective 2

Minimise the number of complaints received in relation to dogs in public places

Activity	When	Evaluation
Include information about Council's local laws and order on the City of Melbourne's website	Ongoing	Information audited annually
Develop a six-month campaign to promote the 2017 responsible dog owner video on the six key principles for dog owners visiting public places	2018	Campaign rolled out and engagement reviewed
Review Council's order made under Section 26(2) of the Act	2018 - 2019	Review completed and order amended if required
Continue to identify, monitor and patrol known hotspots	Ongoing	Hotspots identified from customer service requests and observations of City of Melbourne staff Patrols focus on known hotspots
Review Melbourne City Council's Activities Local Law	2019	Review completed and Local Law amended if required

Objective 3

Minimise the amount of excrement left on roads, footpaths, parks and reserves

Activity	When	Evaluation
Trial providing dog waste bags to registered dog owners upon request and upon renewal of their dog's registration	12-month trial to be undertaken in 2019	Evaluate take-up rate by residents, cost of the program and feedback from Parks Services Branch on the incidence of unremoved dog excrement
In collaboration with other Council's, investigate alternative options (other than the use of plastic bags) for owners to collect and remove dog waste from public places.	2019	Investigation complete, alternatives considered and implemented where viable
Continue to identify, monitor and patrol known hotspots where dog excrement is commonly not removed	Ongoing	Hotspots identified from customer service requests and observations of City of Melbourne staff Patrols focus on known hotspots

Objective 4

Minimise the number of cat nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education to cat owners and complainants about cat enclosures and nuisance issues	2017 and ongoing	Reduction in the number of complaints relating to trespassing cats

2.4 Dog attacks

68A(2)(c)(iii) Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on animals and people.

- Also addresses 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), (f)

There were 43 reported dog attacks on people and other animals in 2013 - 14, 43 in 2014 - 15, 62 in 2015 - 16 and 68 in 2016 - 17. This increase is of concern to the City

of Melbourne, even if some of the increase reflects the higher incidence of reporting dog attacks following better community awareness and media coverage on the issue.

A review of dog attacks in the City of Melbourne found that since 2014, 90 per cent of reported dog attacks and rushes occurred while the owner was with their dog. Some of these attacks resulted in serious injury including surgery and hospitalisation or veterinary care and in five cases, the death of a dog.

This contrasts with the results of a 2009 study by Monash University that found 86 per cent of dog attacks causing hospitalisation in Victoria occur in private homes. The difference in the City of Melbourne's data might reflect the fact that not all dog attacks that occur in private homes are reported to Council.

Key initiatives to reduce the risk of dog attacks include desexing of dogs, early socialisation and training of dogs, ensuring animals are not permitted to wander at large, educating the community (particularly children) about bite avoidance and how to behave around dogs, educating the community and enforcing the requirements with respect to dogs accessing public spaces with their owner.

Many organisations and veterinarians provide puppy pre-school classes for owners of puppies. These classes help to socialise puppies around other humans and dogs.

The State Government operates a number of programs designed to improve safety around dogs including:

- The *Living Safely with Dogs* Program which visits over 2,000 kindergartens and 800 primary schools annually promoting vital safety messages.
- The *We are Family Program* that educates expectant parents and parents of children 0-4 years old on pet safety around young children. It is delivered through antenatal centres in 70 hospitals and 680 maternal and child health centres each year.
- *Pet Town* which is an interactive learning tool educating kindergarten and primary school aged children on responsible pet ownership and dog safety.

City of Melbourne's current orders, Local Laws, policies and procedures

These include:

- The order requires dogs to be on a leash not exceeding three metres in length in all public places except for designated off leash areas. The order also requires that dogs be leashed within 20 metres of a children's playground and a permanent barbecue area. Dogs are prohibited from entering designated spaces. These areas are shown on the City of Melbourne's website.
- Promotion of responsible pet ownership including the benefits of desexing, socialisation and training of dogs on the City of Melbourne's website.
- Information about the dangers, implications and ways to report dog attacks on the City of Melbourne's website.
- Communication with dog owners during parks patrols to educate them on requirements to control of dogs in public places.

- Desexing vouchers for concession/benefits cards holders (33 per cent discount).
- Free dog training events with a professional dog trainer. These were rolled out in 2016 - 17 and will be continued in 2017 - 18.
- A short animated video about responsible dog ownership in the City of Melbourne. This was produced in 2017 and talks about the six key responsibilities of owners taking their dogs into public spaces. It will be promoted via the City of Melbourne's website.

City of Melbourne's current compliance activities

These include:

- Prompt response to reports of dogs found to be wandering at large.
- Proactive patrolling of public places to ensure compliance with the requirements of the order with regard to dogs in public places.
- Use of established procedures and options available under the Act in relation to reported dog attacks and rushes including official warnings, notices to comply, infringement notices, declaration of a dog as menacing or dangerous, court prosecution or the seeking of an order for the destruction of the dog. These responses are not hierarchical and can be enacted simultaneously.

City of Melbourne's plans

Objective 1

Increase public awareness to report dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report a dog attack	2018 3 month trial	Compare the number of dog attacks reported to the City of Melbourne before and after the campaign Undertake a community survey before and after the campaign to measure awareness of dog attacks and how to report them

Objective 2

Increase the number of dogs that have undergone obedience training by 1 per cent a year until 2021

Activity	When	Evaluation
Boost promotion of the benefits of obedience training on the City of Melbourne's website	2017	Number of dogs participating in dog training events Number of dogs progressing to approved obedience training Number of registered dogs that are listed as having undergone approved obedience training
Provide four free dog training events with a professional dog trainer in 2018. Depending on success, repeat the events in subsequent years. Encourage participants to progress to approved obedience training	2018 and Ongoing	Number of dogs participating in the dog training events Number of dogs progressing to approved obedience training Number of registered dogs that are listed as having undergone approved obedience training

2.5 **Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs**

68A(2)(c)(vii) Outline programs, services and strategies 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.

- Also addresses 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), (f)

The Act has special requirements for dealing with dogs that have been declared either a dangerous or menacing dog and for dogs that are a restricted breed.

The City of Melbourne has no registered dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs. However it receives a number of customer service requests each year to investigate potentially dangerous or restricted breed dogs. These are often matters involving a dog attack or a report of an aggressive dog.

City of Melbourne's current orders, Local Laws, policies and procedures

There are special requirements and procedures to enact in the event that the City of Melbourne has a dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dog.

City of Melbourne's plans

Objective 1

Identify any declared dogs in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Cross-reference microchip database information with current pet registration database for potential restricted breed dogs	2019	Review undertaken. Any restricted breed dogs identified are registered in accordance with requirements of the Act
Continue to provide information on the City of Melbourne's website about what is a declared dog	Ongoing	Undertake short online surveys in 2018 and 2021 that test the community's understanding of what is a declared dog
Take appropriate action should a declared dog be identified in the City of Melbourne's municipality	Ongoing	Known dogs identified and regular audits conducted to ensure compliance

2.6 Over population and high euthanasia

68A(2)(c)(iv) Outline programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats

- Also addresses 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), (f)

The number of dogs and cats impounded in the City of Melbourne in 2016 was 116 and 132 respectively. There has been a decrease in both numbers over the last 10 years.

In 2015 - 16, 89 per cent of dogs were rehomed or reclaimed by their owner. Those that are not claimed or rehomed were mostly reported to have health and temperament issues.

In 2015 - 16, 73 per cent of cats were rehomed or reclaimed. Those that were not claimed or rehomed were mostly reported to be unowned and deemed to be wild or feral.

The number of unwanted and unowned animals is a result of:

- overpopulation of dogs and cats
- animals being relinquished or abandoned
- animals unable to be reunited with their owner because of inadequate identification including inaccurate microchip details
- the presence of feral cat colonies in the municipality.

The City of Melbourne is aware of several unowned and feral cat colonies in the city that are unwittingly exacerbated by residents who regularly feed these cats, making them difficult to contain.

Strategies to reduce the number of unowned and unwanted animals include:

- registration and microchipping to increase the number of lost animals that are reunited with their owner
- desexing of animals to reduce pet overpopulation
- containment of animals to reduce the number of animals that are lost
- education in appropriate pet selection to reduce relinquishment and abandonment of pets
- education of prospective pet owners to consider choosing an animal from a shelter
- promotion of the presence of stray or lost animals on The Lost Dogs' Home website
- proactive trapping of feral cat colonies in the municipality.

The City of Melbourne has a high number of students, including many from overseas who live here for the duration of their studies. Some of these students are thought to own pets, although it is not known how many do so. The City of Melbourne is concerned about what happens to pets left behind when a student leaves. The City of Melbourne will engage with students to disseminate the requirements and expectations via peak student bodies, student conferences and cultural festivals, the Lord Mayor's Student Welcome, student welcome packs provided to new students, social media and in the *International Student Guide* produced annually for Study Melbourne and the City of Melbourne. The key messages will include the responsibilities of owning a pet, appropriate pet selection, planning for the long term and alternatives to buying a pet such as foster programs.

Research will also be undertaken to better understand the issues of pet ownership amongst the student population including types of pets obtained, triggers to obtaining a pet and how a pet is obtained. This could occur via focus group discussions.

City of Melbourne's current orders, Local Laws, policies and procedures

These include:

- Since 1 July 2017 the City of Melbourne's pound service for dogs and cats has been provided under contract by The Lost Dogs' Home in North Melbourne. This is closer and more convenient for residents than previous years where the pound service was provided by the RSPCA in Burwood East. The Lost Dogs' Home seeks homes for as many lost and unwanted animals as possible.
- Returning registered lost and stray animals home to avoid them going to the pound.
- The City of Melbourne's website provides information on locating lost animals and what people should do if they have found a lost animal.
- The *Who's for Cats* campaign is an education platform designed in part to reduce the number of unowned cats by encouraging people not to feed unowned animals or to take full ownership and responsibility for them. The City of Melbourne distribute relevant information to residents in areas where unowned cats are thought to be fed.

- The City of Melbourne provides pet shops with information to give to new pet owners about responsible pet ownership.
- People purchasing an animal from an approved shelter are eligible for a free first-year registration.
- Desexing vouchers are available for pet owners with a benefits or concession card (33 per cent discount).
- Free dog training events with a professional dog training establishment have been rolled out in 2016/17.

Melbourne City Council’s Activities Local Law 2009 places no restriction on the number of animals that may be kept on a property. It is not considered that such a restriction is warranted in the City of Melbourne.

City of Melbourne’s current compliance activities

These include:

- proactive park and street patrols to check for unregistered animals
- random doorknocks to check for unregistered animals
- prompt response to reports of dogs wandering at large
- monitoring of data associated with animals entering the pound.

City of Melbourne’s plans

Objective 1

Minimise the number of animals entering the City of Melbourne’s pound

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to return registered animals to their owner if collected as stray or lost	Ongoing	Increase in the number of animals returned to their owner without having to go to the pound
Hold one or more focus group sessions with international students to better understand the incidence of and issues associated with pet ownership amongst the international student population	2018	Better understanding of the incidence of and issues associated with pet ownership amongst the student population. Program updated to accord with any insights gained
Develop and implement an education and engagement program with international	2019	Program developed and implemented

students in regards to pet ownership

Investigate section 84Y agreements with vet clinics within the City of Melbourne and neighbouring municipalities	2018	Number of section 84Y agreements with vet clinics Number of animals returned to their owner from a vet clinic
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Objective 2

Increase the number of animals that are reunited or rehomed

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and update the animal pound contract to minimise the number of cats and dogs euthanased that are able to be rehomed to reduce euthanasia of animals able to be rehomed to zero	Annual	Decrease in the number of cats and dogs euthanased that could be rehomed, to a consistent zero euthanasia rate as soon as practicable
Review and update all education material on the impacts of cat overpopulation and the benefits of obtaining a pet from an approved animal shelter	2018	Review completed and information updated
Review and update all education material on the benefits of registering, microchipping and desexing pets	2018	Review completed and information updated
Review pound statistics to monitor trends in the types of animals admitted to the pound and rates of return, rehoming and euthanasia	Ongoing	Annual review completed
Undertake a review of the presence and management of unowned cats within the City of Melbourne with the view to reducing the number that are euthanased	2018	Review completed
Implement the findings of the review	2019 and ongoing	Actions implemented

2.7 **Domestic animal businesses**

The City of Melbourne is responsible for the registration of a premises as a domestic animal business. These include:

- pet shops
- dog and cat breeding establishments where there are three or more fertile females and animals are sold (whether a profit is made or not) for an enterprise whose proprietor is not a member of an applicable organisation
- animal shelters and pounds
- boarding facilities including day care, overnight and home boarding
- dog training and rearing establishments.

All domestic animal businesses must be registered annually with their local council and comply with the appropriate mandatory Code of Practice. Business premises must also comply with other requirements including building, health, planning and Local Laws.

There are currently seven registered domestic animal businesses in the City of Melbourne including one animal shelter, one animal shelter and pound, three pet shops and two animal boarding establishments. This has been consistent over a number of years.

The State Government has introduced new record keeping requirements for pet shops in Victoria as part of its crackdown on illegal puppy farming. From 1 July 2015 pet shop owners must keep detailed records on every individual dog or cat offered for sale, including where they are sourced from.

There are further proposed legislative changes which seek to deliver on the State Government's commitment to reform the dog breeding and pet shop industries. An amended bill is due to be tabled in Parliament in 2017.

City of Melbourne's current compliance activities

These include:

- annual scheduled audits of existing domestic animal businesses to ensure compliance with the relevant code of practice (work plans are provided where non-compliance is detected)
- random audits of existing domestic animal businesses
- response to complaints from the community
- infringements and prosecutions of businesses that fail to comply with work plans and the relevant code of practice
- searches and enquiries to identify unregistered domestic animal businesses
- promotion of registered domestic animal businesses on the City of Melbourne's website.

City of Melbourne's plans

Objective 1

Identify and register all domestic animal businesses in the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Use existing standard work guidelines to search for unregistered domestic animal businesses	Annual	Compare number of registered domestic animal businesses before and after the search
Publish and promote a list of all compliant domestic animal businesses on the City of Melbourne's website	Annual	List maintained and updated where required
Ensure all newly identified domestic animal businesses are registered	As required	New domestic animal businesses are registered or action is taken for failing to register a business
Review standard work guidelines used to search for unregistered domestic animal businesses	2019	Review undertaken

Objective 2

Ensure domestic animal businesses comply with all legislative requirements including any new requirements introduced by the State Government.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate and act upon public information about non-compliance	Ongoing	All requests are actioned within allocated time frame
Implement audit schedule of businesses	Annual	Audits undertaken as required
Review application and renewal processes to ensure businesses comply with requirements	2019	Review undertaken

2.8 Other matters

Planning for urban growth

The population of the City of Melbourne is growing rapidly. The implications for the animal management service include:

- potential increase in the number of dogs and cats
- increase in the number of households and dogs living in closer proximity to one another
- increasing demand for additional dog off leash areas
- greater demands on public open space by all members of the community, including dog owners
- animals and their owners need to be considered in planning for future public open space.

Objective 1

Ensure dog owners and dogs are considered in public open space

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake a strategic review with the City of Melbourne’s Open Space Planning Team of the dog off leash areas with a view to increasing the number of dog off leash areas within the municipality	2018 - 2019	Review completed
Review the mechanisms to ensure dog owners are considered in planning for future public open space	2019	Review completed

Emergency management

Planning for emergencies includes focusing on both the relief and recovery needs of the community.

The City of Melbourne’s website provides advice on the preparation of personal emergency plans, access to real-time information about emergency incidents and procedures for dealing with a heatwave. The City of Melbourne also has a number of designated emergency relief centres that would be available in the event of an emergency.

The City of Melbourne can ensure appropriate information is available for pet owners before, during and after emergency events. This can include accommodation options for pets during an emergency. The City of Melbourne can also use modern technology

to communicate with pet owners during such events, including SMS and social media. The City of Melbourne is an active member of the North-West Metropolitan Collaboration which consists of 14 Councils that assist each other in preparing for and responding to emergencies.

Objective 1

Be prepared for an emergency in the City of Melbourne

Activity	When	Evaluation
Collate information and procedures on planning and providing for pets during a range of different emergencies.	2017	Information collated and made available as appropriate

Smart city initiatives in animal management

The focus of the City of Melbourne’s smart city approach is:

Taking a people-led approach and enabling access to leading digital and data capabilities to support Melbourne as a bold, inspirational and sustainable city

The implications for this plan include:

- Identifying, evaluating and understanding the impacts of emerging technologies on how this plan is implemented, e.g. sensor technology.
- Ensuring that key datasets that relate to this plan are open and accessible, e.g. published on the City of Melbourne’s open data platform.

The City of Melbourne will investigate ways to apply smart solutions to the delivery of the animal management services. The initiatives could result in a raft of changes or improvements to many animal management services including data collection, communication with pet owners, reuniting or rehoming lost and unwanted animals, dealing with barking dog issues, obtaining pet registrations, monitoring pedestrian traffic in public places, refilling dog bag dispensers, even ways for pet owners to get around the city without a private car.

Objective 1

Review and implement smart city initiatives

Activity	When	Evaluation
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Review the current smart city initiatives	2018	Review undertaken
Implement smart city initiatives	Ongoing	Increase in the number of smart city initiatives used

Community support services

The City of Melbourne works to balance the needs of all members of the community to use public space including those who are experiencing homelessness. A street count in June 2016 revealed that there were 247 people are sleeping rough on Melbourne’s streets each night, some of whom own pets.

Pets provide companionship and comfort for those sleeping rough. However there are also concerns associated with animal welfare, risk of a dog attack or from pets being left unattended, the need for pets to be microchipped and registered and the means for people to travel beyond walking distance with their pet. The City of Melbourne has recently formed a new team called the Daily Support Team whose role is to support and advocate for people sleeping rough. It will connect the homeless with support agencies and the Animal Management Team where necessary.

Some veterinary clinics provide discounted veterinary services for the homeless and emergency animal boarding.

Through this plan, the City of Melbourne will identify the concerns, needs and likely services required by pet owners and work with the Daily Support Team to provide appropriate responses.

Objective 1

Identify the needs of pet owners experiencing homelessness

Activity	When	Evaluation
Understand the needs of and services available for pet owners experiencing homelessness	2018	Review undertaken
Prepare responses to each of the needs including identification of gaps in service provision	2019	Procedures updated

2.9 Annual review and annual reporting

68A(3) Every Council must-

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

City of Melbourne’s plans

Objective 1

Review and evaluate the plan annually in accordance with the requirements of the Act, amend where appropriate and complete required reports.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Establish an annual timeline and program for reviewing the plan and evaluating its implementation	Year 1	The annual timeline and program for reviewing and where necessary updating the plan is appropriate and will ensure reporting requirements are met
Ensure all programs and procedures are reviewed annually where this is required in the plan	Annual	The annual reviews are completed and are effective
Ensure each activity contained in the plan is evaluated for its relevance to and performance in meeting its applicable objective	Annual	The annual reviews are completed and are effective
If any activities are not undertaken as planned, the review will note why the activity was not undertaken and consider whether it should be omitted from the plan	Annual	The annual reviews are completed and are effective
If any activities did not meet expectations, the review will consider whether they should be omitted from the plan	Annual	The annual reviews are completed and are effective
Complete an evaluation of the plan. Submit to the Council for approval along with proposed amendments to the plan. Update the plan as appropriate	Annual	Evaluation completed.
Publish an evaluation of the implementation of the plan in the Council’s annual report	Annual	Evaluation published in the Council's annual report

If the plan is amended, submit a copy to the Secretary	Annual	Amended plan submitted where required
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APPENDIX 1:

AUTHORISED OFFICER TRAINING REGISTER