

City of Boroondara

Domestic Animal Management Plan

2021-2025



Responsible Pet Ownership

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1. Corporate Framework	4
1.2. Legislation	4
1.3. Scope	6
1.4. Objective	6
1.5. Consultation	6
2. Background and Context	7
2.1. Boroondara Community Profile	7
2.2. Domestic Animal Management Snapshot	8
2.3. Animal Management Staffing and Structure	9
2.4. Current Programs and Services	9
3. Current Activities and Strategic Directions for Domestic Animal Management	10
3.1. Training of Authorised Officers	10
3.2. Registration and Identification	12
3.3. Nuisance	16
3.4. Dog Attacks	20
3.5. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs	23
3.6. Population and Euthanasia	24
3.7. Domestic Animal Businesses	26
4. Implementation, monitoring and annual review	28
 Attachment 1- Animal Management Officer Training Register	 29

Executive Summary

The Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-2025 (DAMP) is a four-year plan detailing the City of Boroondara strategic approach to the delivery of domestic animal management services. The DAMP addresses the requirements prescribed in section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Act) including:

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

Importantly, the DAMP focuses not only on these prescribed requirements but takes a holistic approach to responsible pet ownership. It builds on the achievements of previous plans and responds to the evolving nature of pet ownership and the expectations of the Boroondara community. It also aligns with the City of Boroondara Community Plan and considers related feedback captured during the recent consultation process of its review.

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

1. Introduction

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

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

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

1.1 Corporate framework

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

- Council's Boroondara Community Plan 2021-2031
- Urban Biodiversity Strategy 2013-2023
- Open Space Strategy 2013-2026

1.2 Legislation

Victorian *Domestic Animals Act 1994*

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

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

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

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

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Section 68A of the Act prescribes that every Council in Victoria must prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan and every four years, it is renewed. It must outline the services, programs and policies Council has established to address the administration of the Act.

Section 68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

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

1.3 Scope

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

1.4 Objective

The objective of the DAMP is to achieve Council's responsibilities under section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994 and respond to community expectations through:

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

1.5 Consultation

The Act requires Municipal Domestic Animal Management Plans to be developed in consultation with the Secretary - Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) via the Animal Welfare Unit.

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

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

2. Background and Context

2.1 Boroondara Community Profile

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

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

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

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

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



Figure 1: Map of City of Boroondara

2.2 Domestic Animal Management Snapshot

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

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

Table 1 provides a summary of key statistics and background information relevant to Domestic Animal Management in the municipality.

Table 1 Domestic Animals Profile (Snapshot)

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

2.3 Animal Management Staffing and Structure

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

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

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

Animals are returned home to their owners or, delivered to the RSPCA in cases where owners are not contactable, animals cannot be identified or an attack has taken place.

2.4 Current Programs and Services

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

Table 2 - Current Programs and Services

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

Pound facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The RSPCA is open to the public from 10am - 4pm Monday-Saturday. Officers have access 24 hours a day for impounding.
De-sexing voucher scheme (MAV/AVA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discounted de-sexing vouchers are provided for concession and pension card holders.
Education and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication tools and channels used to promote responsible pet ownership including social and print media, pet expo, VMS boards and targeted education and compliance programs.
After Hours Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The After Hours Service operates every day of the year.
Domestic Animal Business inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council registers and conducts annual audits. Responds to complaints and proactively surveys for unregistered businesses
Declared Dogs (Dangerous/menacing or restricted breed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council conducts annual inspections and follow up inspections for any non-compliance issues. Regular contact is maintained with owners.
Crisis care of animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Injured animals are taken to the RSPCA during the hours of 9am-6pm where they will be checked by the RSPCA veterinary service or to the nearest veterinary clinic for immediate treatment. Injured animals found after hours are taken to the Animal Emergency Centre - 37 Blackburn Road, Mt Waverley.

3. Current activities and Strategic Directions for Domestic Animal Management

3.1. Training of Authorised Officers

Section 68(A)(2)(b) of the Act requires a domestic animal management plan to identify and outline a program for the training and professional development of authorised officers to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to deliver an optimum animal management service.

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

Current Training Activities

As Authorised Officers under the Act, it is critical the training and ongoing development of AMOs is designed to ensure they are equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications to undertake their duties efficiently and effectively. For AMOs to successfully undertake their duties, Council is committed to and achieves this through its induction program and targeted ongoing Professional Development Program.

Training activities include:

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

Training and development initiatives are considered within the context of identified needs through the AMO's Personal Development Program. Each year training opportunities are offered to employees through Council's Learning and Development program as well as access to other targeted internal and external opportunities. This allows officers to respond effectively to current and emerging community and animal management issues as well as organisational priorities.

Refer to Attachment 1 - Animal Management Officer Training

Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Enhance skills and knowledge of authorised officers		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Initiate regular meetings with neighbouring councils to provide opportunity to share learnings and enhance our services to our customers	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation and success of meeting
In consultation with Council's People Culture and Development team, identify current industry and legislative training requirements and maintain Council's Animal Management Staff Guidelines.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update training register • AMOs participate in at least 1 training session annually • Officers attending training report and share learnings with the team
Identify and provide opportunities for officers to attend required training. Identify and provide opportunities for officers to support their professional development to build confidence and skills.	Within 6 months of commencing with Council and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum training requirements are met • Opportunities are documented in officers development program
Regular team meetings to share experiences and enhance knowledge.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of learnings from attendance at training sessions or on the job experiences • Enhancing learning and consistency • Meeting minutes

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

3.2. Registration and Identification

Section 68 (2)(c) (v) of the Act requires a domestic animal management plan to outline the programs, services and activities designed to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats.

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

Current Situation

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

Table 4 - New registrations for dogs and cats

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

New cat registrations

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

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

New dog registrations

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

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

Registration versus ownership

The registration rates for both dogs and cats are considered to be substantially lower than actual ownership levels which is typical in other municipalities.

The RSPCA provides pound services for the City of Boroondara. Reclaim data from the RSPCA in table 5 demonstrates the percentage of dogs which are registered on release remains on average at approximately 50%.

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

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

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

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

Council Orders and Local Laws

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

Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

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

Education and Promotional Activities

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

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

Compliance Activities

Activities include:

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

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

Table 6 - Summary of enforcement action related to registration

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

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

Please note 2021 data are impacted due to COVID restrictions

Summary

Council's strategies have shown improvement in registrations. Renewals however, while they have not declined, are significantly low as a percentage of the increasing total of new registrations. Opportunities will be created to enhance compliance by focusing on the benefits and value to the pet owner of registration and in particular, the importance of being able to quickly reunite them with their pet. This will form part of a broader campaign in improving responsible pet ownership and take advantage of the multiple available communication platforms.

Planned Activities

Objective 1 Improve responsible pet ownership and education		
Activities	When	Evaluation
Deliver a communication program to engage local CALD communities and other targeted groups to promote registration and responsible pet ownership. Explore opportunities to disseminate and communicate key messages.	December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication plan developed New tools developed and trialled Community feedback Increase in registrations Communication plan Consultation Analysis of registration database
Deliver a community Pet Expo to promote responsible pet ownership.	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of registered attendees Satisfaction of attendees and participants
Update pet registration kit for customers and assess options for its distribution	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available Budget Number of kits distributed
Establish park patrol targets for proactive attendances to enhance the amenity of our parks and reserves.	Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor interaction with pet owners Feedback from stakeholders

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

3.3. Nuisance

Sections 68A (2)(c) (vi) and 68A (2) (a), (c) (i), (c) (ii), (d), (f) of the Act requires a domestic animal management plan to outline the programs, services and strategies intended to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

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

Current Situation

Section 32 of the Act establishes what is defined as a nuisance created by a dog or a cat and that an occupier of any premises where a dog or cat is located, must not allow them to be a nuisance. A nuisance caused by a barking dog is the most common issue represented in Council's nuisance-related data.

In 2019 there was a significant reduction in requests to investigate complaints regarding a barking dog with the introduction of a new enhanced assessment process. Complainants are required to complete a 'barking dog diary' to detail the times and extent of the barking for a period of 7 days. This information is used to assist in assessing the validity of a complaint and otherwise resolving a matter.

Council encourages owners to maintain adequate fencing or facilities within their homes to prevent pets wandering from their owner's premises. Council provided a service to collect wandering animals and those that have been trapped. All efforts are taken to identify and reunite an animal with its owner before it is taken to the RSPCA.

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

Table 7 - Nuisance requests received by Council

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

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

The failure of dog owners removing faeces left by their dogs has been increasing. There are a number of parks and sporting grounds identified by Council's Department of Parks and Infrastructure where this issue is of significant concern. Officers continue to provide targeted responses to these issues.

This issue is addressed in existing communications and reinforced by Officers. Council is working in conjunction with the RSPCA and other councils to develop enhanced and targeted messaging to address this particular issue.

Council Orders and Local Laws

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

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

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

Education and Promotional Activities

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

Compliance Activities

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

Summary

Nuisance caused by barking dogs is a matter requiring ongoing assessment in consideration of the concern shown by the community and whether Council's activities have helped reduce these. Focus on responsible pet ownership and in particular cat ownership and future actions will be aimed at reviewing and upgrading actions by Council on the assessment of complaints and feedback from the community.

Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Improve cat ownership		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Deliver a targeted program focused on responsible cat ownership including a focus on socialisation, enrichment of cats' lives in the home and their safety. Program to consider targeted groups as well as the matter of community cats.	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation • Evidence of effectiveness • Community feedback
Update Council's website with link to DJPR webpage of cat containment	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete • Ensure link is current

Objective 2 - Assist dog owners to understand obligations in the use of Council parks and reserves		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Review current dog park signage messaging and design to create consistency and provide clear and concise messaging.	January 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage reviewed • Consultation • Planned rollout
Targeted social media campaign focused on dog owners to clean up after their dogs	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of hits • Feedback

Objective 3 - Reduce dog nuisance complaints		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and update Council's barking dog assessment process in line to establish best practice and enhance customer experience	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review completed • Promapp updated
Undertake a review of Council's Order relating to the designated dog off-leash areas.	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review completed • Council Report for consideration and decision to amend as required
Implement a risk-based assessment program of priority sites.	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement program • Analysis of recorded data • Evaluate the effectiveness of measures

3.4 Dog Attacks

Sections 68A (2)(a),(c)(i), (c)(ii),(d),(f) of the Act requires a domestic animal management plan outline the programs, services and strategies employed to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

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

Current Situation

On average, there have been 85 reported dog attacks each year over the past 4 years. While the number of dog attack requests declined in 2018, similar numbers returned and have since continued to climb.

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

Table 8 - Reported dog attacks

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

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

*Where dog attack are serious an infringement notice cannot be issued

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

Council Orders and Local Laws

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

Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

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

Education and Promotional Activities

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

Compliance Activities

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

Summary

Dog attack remains a key focus for domestic animal management planning. The current data indicates a high success rate in all matters taken to prosecution. Our future actions aim to educate the community to reduce the risk of dog attack. Improving our data capture, reporting and analysis will assist in the development of evidence-based dog attack prevention strategies.

Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Improve community awareness		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Guidance to dog owners of their responsibilities in controlling their dog	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed commentary • Meeting minutes • Community feedback
Identify opportunities to promote the State government's <i>Pet Town</i> learning App	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reported and delivered promotion opportunities

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

3.5 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Section 68A(2)(c) (vii) of the Act requires a domestic animal management plan outline the programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous and menacing dogs and restricted dog breed in the City of Boroondara and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Act and the regulations.

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

Current Situation

In the City of Boroondara there is a small number of dogs registered that have been declared dangerous and menacing dog and are listed on the Victorian Dangerous Dogs Register (VDDR).

Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

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

Education and Promotional Activities

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

Compliance Activities

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

Summary

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

Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Identify, manage and enforce compliance of all dangerous dogs, menacing and restricted breed dogs		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Review Council's decision making matrix regarding legislative powers to declare dogs dangerous or menacing	June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review completed that encompasses feedback from relevant stakeholders
Conduct additional and unannounced audits of registered dangerous and menacing dog premises	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All properties inspected (in addition to prescribed inspection)
Ensure declared dogs are registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR)	Annually and as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All dogs on the VDDR located in the City of Boroondara are registered with Council

3.6 Population and Euthanasia

Section 68A(2)(c) (iv) of the Act requires a domestic animal management plan to outline the programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

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

Current Situation

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

The number of dogs euthanised in the City of Boroondara remains low. The number of cats euthanised however, continues to be noticeably higher than dogs. With the community increasingly returning to work after the enforced lockdown over the past 18 months, some 65% of the cats impounded during 2020/2021 were either surrendered or a stray. Disappointingly the number of cats reclaimed was also significantly lower.

The hire of cat traps has recommenced since the start of Covid-19 however, requests are low. The number of complaints regarding nuisance from cats is also low, suggesting there is not a widespread problem within the municipality. The number of impounded and euthanised cats does however demonstrate a low level of registration and reclaiming. A focus needs also to be given to what constitutes cat ownership and specifically, to the situation where a person claims to 'only to feed a cat' and fails to acknowledge ownership.

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

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

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

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

Council Orders and Local Laws

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

Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

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

Education and Promotional Activities

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

Compliance Activities

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

Summary

A focus for Council is to collaborate with the RSPCA and key internal stakeholders to build an enhanced understanding of the issues relating to cat over population and the potential impacts. Actions in the DAMP aim to achieve a reduction in the number of dogs and cats that are euthanised.

Planned Activities

Objective 1 - Reduce the number of impounded cat and dogs that may be euthanised		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Partner with the RSPCA to identify information to enhance understanding of the local cat population.	June 2022 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting minutes Advice implemented as appropriate
Develop a lost and found page/pet register on appropriate Council media platform.	December 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders consulted and feasibility determined Meeting minutes

Objective 2 - Raise awareness and promote the benefits of de-sexing		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a targeted program to promote the benefits of de-sexing and use of de-sexing vouchers.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community up-take Feedback
Utilise Council's online presence to raise community awareness of the semi-owned cat population and promote the de-sexing of cats.	June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of hits
Explore the use of the RSPCA de-sexing van in areas where cost is likely to be a barrier to de-sexing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the number of de-sexed animals in the municipality Increase in the number of animals registered Raise awareness of animal welfare generally

3.7 Domestic Animal Businesses

Section 68A(2)(c) (ii) of the Act requires a domestic animal management plan to outline the programs, services and strategies which Council intends to pursue to ensure that Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) comply with the Act, regulations and relevant Codes of Practice.

Goal: To ensure compliance of Domestic Animal Businesses within the City of Boroondara

Domestic Animal Management Plan

Current Situation

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

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

Council Orders, Local Laws and Licence Agreements

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

Council Policies and Procedures

Council's procedures and legislative processes include:

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

Education and Promotional Activities

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

Compliance Activities

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

Summary

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

Planned Activities

Objective 1- Maintain annual audit of all registered domestic animal businesses		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct audits of registered DABs	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All DABs are audited and reports filed Infringement notices issued
Update information kits to enhance a businesses understanding of their obligations	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When completed

Objective 2- Identify and register any unregistered domestic animal business		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct web searches to identify possible businesses that should be registered as DAB including dog training businesses and 'doggy day care'	6 monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search is completed Reported and actioned as appropriate Data base updated

4 Implementation, monitoring and annual review

4.1. Evaluation

In accordance with section 68A (3) of the Act, Council is required to review is DAMP annually and amend where appropriate. Council must also publish an evaluation of its implementation of the DAMP in its Annual Report and provide the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources a copy of with any amendments.

Review dates are:

- November 2022
- November 2023
- November 2024.

Attachment 1

Officer Training Register

Training attended and qualifications and attained by Animal Management Officers

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