

4.2 Draft Animal Management Strategy

Executive Summary

Purpose

This report seeks Council's support to exhibit the draft Animal Management Strategy for community comments.

Key Issues

In accordance with the provisions of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 (the Act), every Council must prepare at 3 year intervals a domestic animal management plan (DAMP). Yarra's first such plan must be prepared by 1 July 2008.

The draft Animal Management Strategy has been developed to provide a strategic framework and balanced management system specific to Yarra City Council which will serve the needs of both pet owners and non pet owners. It makes a number of specific recommendations in relation to issues such responsible pet ownership, pets other than cats and dogs, minimising conflict between people and pets in open space including dogs on and off lead, dog waste, and monitoring compliance, as well as evaluation of services.

It is important that the community is invited to provide feedback in relation to the draft Strategy before Council makes a decision as to whether it adopts it, with or without changes.

Financial Implications

The majority of programs identified in the draft Animal Management Strategy build on Council's existing responsibilities and will therefore be resourced from the existing budget, although additional funding will be sought for some programs in future Council budget processes.

Community Implications

The draft Strategy outlines measures that will increase the enjoyment of pet ownership while not disadvantaging those who do not own pets.

Environmental Implications

The draft Strategy seeks to manage the presence of stray and feral cat populations and to protect areas of environmental significance.

PROPOSAL

That Council seeks comments in relation to the draft Animal Management Strategy and a further report be presented to Council following the consultation period in relation to any feedback received.

4.2 Draft Animal Management Strategy

File: 65/05/01
Responsible Officer: Director City Development

Purpose

1. This report seeks Council's support to exhibit the draft Animal Management Strategy for community comment.

Background

Animals and Animal Management Services in Yarra

2. Approximately 22% of households in Yarra own a registered pet. While the rate of pet ownership in Yarra is lower than national average rates, the number of registered dogs is increasing at a rate similar to that of the population and households. However, based on estimation that only 64% of dogs and 41% of cats are registered, there may be as many as 6,998 dogs and 8,190 cats in Yarra.
3. Council receives an increasing number of requests every year in relation to animals including, those relating to barking dogs, wandering dogs, dogs off-lead, unregistered animals, etc.
4. Services currently provided by Council in relation to animal management include:
 - (a) pet registration;
 - (b) micro chipping;
 - (c) animal management patrols;
 - (d) animal collection; and
 - (e) designation of off-lead areas and some basic amenities such as bags, bins and some water bowls.

A contracted service of collecting and impounding stray cats and dogs is also provided by the Lost Dogs Home.

5. As of 7 January 2008, Council employs 2 dedicated full-time animal management officers, as well as the contracted service referred to above.

The Requirement to Prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan

6. In accordance with the provisions of the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* (the Act), as shown in Attachment 1, every council must prepare at 3 year intervals a domestic animal management plan (DAMP). Yarra's first such plan must be prepared by 1 July 2008.

7. As required by the Act, a domestic animal management plan must:
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by Council are adequate to give effect to the Act and regulations;
 - (b) outline programs for training of authorised officers to administer and enforce the Act;
 - (c) outline programs, services and strategies to:
 - (i) promote and encourage responsible ownership of dogs and cats;
 - (ii) ensure people comply with the relevant legislation;
 - (iii) minimise the risk of attacks by dogs;
 - (iv) address overpopulation and high euthanasia rates;
 - (v) encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats;
 - (vi) minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 - (vii) effectively identify all dangerous, menacing and restricted dogs;
 - (d) provide for review of existing orders and local laws to determine whether further orders or local laws dealing with management of cats and dogs are desirable;
 - (e) provide for the review of matters relating to managements of cats and dogs as necessary; and
 - (f) provide for periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review included in the Plan.
8. Every Council is required to review its Plan annually, to provide a copy to the Secretary for Primary Industries and to publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan in its annual report.
9. The draft *People and Their Pets in Yarra – Animal Management Strategy* has been developed by Council’s Community Amenity and Open Space Units with the assistance of @Leisure consultancy.

The Draft Strategy

Contents

10. The draft Strategy (Attachment 2) includes the following:
 - (a) Introduction – including the aims of the Strategy; how it meets the legislative requirements and Council’s role in animal management.
 - (b) What We Know About People and Their Pets in Yarra – including information regarding cat and dog ownership; complaints; Council pet services; pet use of public space and partner organisations in relation to animal management issues.

- (c) Benefits of Pets
 - (d) Responsible Pet Ownership – including pet selection and conditions for pets; feeding stray and feral animals and birds; pet vaccination and health; overpopulation and euthanasia; impact of pet behaviour on others; pet registration and identification; nuisance, menacing and dangerous animals; and restricted dog breeds.
 - (e) Pets Other Than Cats and Dogs – including reptiles; ferrets, guinea pigs, rabbits and mice; fish; poultry; bees and birds.
 - (f) Minimising Conflict Between People and Pets in Open Space – including dog on-lead policy; dog off-lead areas; areas where cats and dogs are prohibited; dog waste; monitoring compliance; and evaluation of animal services.
 - (g) Implementation Plan.
11. In relation to the issues raised in each of sections described above, the Strategy makes recommendations as to how Council should respond and the Implementation Plan identifies specific actions and implementation responsibilities within Council (by Division).

Aims

12. The aims of the Strategy are to:
- (a) meet Council's planning requirements as set out in the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*;
 - (b) respond to the requirements of a municipal Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) as specified by the Department of Primary Industries;
 - (c) support and facilitate the benefits of animal ownership and companionship;
 - (d) minimise local nuisance by domestic pets, and maximise residential amenity;
 - (e) provide a mechanism for community education regarding pet controls, to minimise conflicts in open space; and
 - (f) respond to the recommendations made in the Yarra Open Space Strategy 2006.
13. The Strategy will guide Council and the community towards the goal of responsible pet ownership and management.
14. The Strategy applies to any land within the City of Yarra where animals are kept, except where animals are kept for business or commercial purposes where prior town planning approval is required from Council.

Key Recommendations

15. The Strategy makes a number of recommendations in relation to the issues listed briefly above. Those of particular note are described below.

Dogs On and Off Lead

16. The Strategy supports Council's current order under the Act to classify all public land in Yarra as on-lead, with designated off-lead and dog-prohibited areas, such as playgrounds and environmentally significant areas and suggests that Council promotes that if there is no sign saying the area is off-lead or prohibited, then the area is on-lead.
17. However, to further minimise conflicts, the Strategy recommends additional controls in association with shared pathways and other recreation facilities:
 - (a) *Shared pathways*: Dogs be required to be kept on-lead on shared pathways and five metres either side, even if pathways run through off-lead areas.
 - (b) *Playground, picnic and skate facilities*: The current order requires dogs to be kept on-lead within 30 metres of all unfenced playground areas, BBQ and picnic facilities and dogs are prohibited from fenced playgrounds.

The draft Strategy recommends the following in relation to dogs and playgrounds:

- (i) On-lead reserves that have a playground - A five metre buffer area surrounding the mulch area of the play equipment would be prohibited to dogs and outside that area would be dog on-lead; and
- (ii) Off-lead reserves that have a playground - A five metre buffer area surrounding the mulch area of the play equipment would be prohibited to dogs. The area five to 20 metres out from the mulch area of the play equipment would be a dog on-lead area and outside the 20 metre buffer would be a dog off-lead area.

The Strategy also recommends restricting off-lead dogs from being within 10 metres from any skate park or BMX facility.

- (c) *Sporting grounds*: The draft Strategy also recommends that dogs be allowed off-lead on all 'unfenced' sporting grounds *when not in use for any games, club or school competition or training, or event*. However dogs would be prohibited from all grounds enclosed by fencing, such as Peterson Oval, Edinburgh Gardens. This would need to be monitored and should Council introduce any synthetic sports grounds in the future, the Strategy recommends that these be allocated as dog prohibited areas.
18. The Strategy identifies a number of issues related to off-lead areas including the number and distribution of how they are provided, the suitability of waterway corridors as off-lead areas and the nature and design of off-lead areas.

19. There are twelve existing dog off-lead reserves or areas within reserves within the municipality, mostly in the north-east and south of the municipality. To improve the distribution of off-lead areas the Strategy recommends the provision of three types of off-lead areas:
 - (a) Off-lead reserves - reserves classified as “regional” or “city wide” in the Open Space Strategy, which would be considered for off-lead reserves where dogs are permitted to run off the lead at all times. Some “regional” or “city wide” parks would remain on-lead at all times.
 - (b) Multi-zone reserves - larger reserves classified as “city wide” in the Open Space Strategy, which would be considered as multi-zone reserves where there would be designated dog on-lead and dog off-lead areas at all times. Not all city wide reserves would become multi-zone reserves.
 - (c) Time scheduled reserves - those smaller reserves classified as “neighbourhood parks” in the Open Space Strategy, which would be considered for dog off-lead exercise before 8am and after 6pm, and would remain dog on-lead during daytime hours (8am - 6pm).
20. The Strategy also recommends a hierarchy of dog off-lead parks (primary, secondary and local) consistent with the catchment of the park in order to facilitate a diversity of types of dog parks and to assist Council to provide facilities equitably and cost effectively across the municipality in line with community expectations.
21. More specifically the Strategy recommends a number of options for additional off-lead areas or changes to off-lead areas as detailed on pages 31 and 32 of the document.
22. The Strategy also recommends that identified environmentally significant areas of Yarra be signposted as prohibited to dogs and cats (including the river banks of Merri Creek and the Yarra River, and Rudder Grange Reserve etc). Prohibited areas could also be in multi-zone reserves.

Dog Waste

23. The presence of dog waste in public places is one of the primary causes of complaint to Council. Bag dispensers have been introduced in selected parks and reserves in Yarra and Council currently spends approximately \$25,000 annually on bag provision.
24. The draft Strategy suggests that the service should be increased to include dedicated animal waste bins to be installed next to all existing Council bins in its parks and gardens. It is believed this will assist in reducing the amount of dog faeces in Council parks by eliminating the need for the owners to carry the faeces, while improving the amenity of the area for those who use the parks and gardens. Currently dog faeces deposited in normal waste bins has prevented Council recycling the waste collected and the dedicated animal bins would allow the waste in the normal waste bins to be recycled.

Management of Cats

23. The Strategy recommends that Yarra adopt the position of mandatory cat de-sexing to remain in line with the views of animal welfare peak bodies (including the Cat Protection Society, Lost Dog's Home and RSPCA). A survey of Yarra's five neighbouring Councils has revealed that three of those Councils (Stonnington, Melbourne and Boroondara) have included mandatory desexing in their Strategies; while Moreland had yet to prepare its Strategy and did not have an adopted position and Darebin was not in favour of mandatory de-sexing.
24. The report on cat de-sexing which was presented to Council on 12 November 2007 recommended that mandatory de-sexing not be implemented in Yarra. However on the basis that three neighboring Councils will be supporting mandatory de-sexing and in order to give the de-sexing program the best chance of success in reducing the over population of cats, it is now considered appropriate that Yarra should introduce mandatory de-sexing of cats.
25. Currently in Yarra there are no areas in which cats are prohibited and no requirement to keep cats indoors at any time. The Strategy recommends that trapping should occur within areas of environmental significance and built up areas (during the day or night) to catch cats that may stray into these areas and either return the cat to the owner (with a nuisance notice) or impound the cat if its ownership cannot be identified.

Financial Implications

26. The majority of programs identified in the Draft Animal Management Strategy build on Council's existing responsibilities and will therefore be funded and resourced from the existing budget. However several programs, including an education and signage program, would require additional funding which would be sought as part of future Council budget processes.

Community Implications

28. The Draft Strategy outlines measures that will increase the enjoyment of pet ownership while not disadvantaging those who do not own pets. The community consultation phase aims to gauge public response to the draft Strategy and how it is recommended that it be implemented. Community feedback will inform the final Strategy where appropriate.

Environmental Implications

29. The draft Strategy seeks to manage the presence of stray and feral cat populations and to protect areas of environmental significance.

City Plan, Strategy and Policy Implications

30. The draft Animal Management Strategy is consistent with the Open Space Strategy, City Plan and other Council policies.

Consultation

31. As part of the consultation in relation to the Yarra Open Space Strategy 2006, a number of comments were received in relation to animal management issues, particularly in relation to specific parks including:
 - (a) the need for off-lead zones in particular areas;
 - (b) problems with dog waste;
 - (c) dogs near playgrounds; and
 - (d) invasion by off-lead dogs.
32. It is proposed to place the draft Animal Management Strategy on exhibition during March and April 2008. It is also proposed to hold an information session in April 2008 to provide information regarding the draft Strategy and to receive feedback.
33. A further report to Council on the draft Strategy and any submissions received during the consultation phase will be presented in June 2008.

Conclusion

34. The draft Animal Management Strategy has been developed to provide a strategic framework and balanced management system specific to Yarra City Council which will serve the needs of both pet owners and non pet owners.
35. Through the Strategy Council will seek to ensure that animal welfare is paramount, Council's powers are understood and respected and conflicts between people and pets in public spaces are minimized through effective community awareness and enforcement of suitable local laws.
36. It is important that the community is invited to provide feedback in relation to the draft Strategy before Council makes a decision as to whether it adopts it, with or without changes.

RECOMMENDATION

37. That Council seeks comments in relation to the draft '*People and Their Pets in Yarra – Animal Management Strategy*' dated November 2007 through a public consultation process including the following:
 - (a) the draft Animal Management Strategy placed on Council's website during the remainder of March and April 2008 for consideration by members of the public;
 - (b) public notices in the local newspapers informing those interested of the opportunity to provide feedback in relation to the draft Strategy;

- (c) letters to relevant organisations such as the local veterinary clinics; dog obedience clubs and training services; pet shops and pet supply businesses; pet care and boarding services; and peak bodies such as the RSPCA, Canine Association etc, informing them of the preparation of the draft Strategy and the opportunity to provide feedback; and
 - (d) an information session in April 2008 (date to be confirmed) to discuss the draft Strategy and to receive feedback.
38. That following the conclusion of the consultation period, a further report be presented to Council in relation to any feedback received to the draft Strategy and making recommendations in relation to the adoption of the Strategy.

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**Attachment 1 - Section 68A Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994
Attachment 2 - Draft City of Yarra Domestic Animal Management Strategy**

PART 5A—DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, prepare at 3 year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
- (2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
 - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
 - (c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
 - (i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 - (ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
 - (iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
 - (vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 - (vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and

Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994
No. 81 of 1994

Part 5A—Domestic Animal Management Plans

- (d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
 - (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
 - (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
- (3) Every Council must—
- (a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and
 - (b) provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan; and
 - (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.
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PEOPLE AND THEIR PETS
Domestic Animal Management Strategy



revised draft

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document is a Draft People and their Pets- Animal Management Strategy, prepared for the City of Yarra in November 2007.

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- Donna Stergiopoulos Animal Management Officer
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1. Introduction

1.1 Strategy aims

The aims of this strategy are to:

- meet Council's planning requirements as set out in Part 5A of the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994
- respond to the requirements of a municipal Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) as specified by the Department of Primary Industries
- support and facilitate the benefits of animal ownership and companionship
- minimise local nuisance by domestic pets, and maximise residential amenity
- provide a mechanism for community education regarding pet controls, to minimise conflicts in open space
- respond to the recommendations made in the Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006.

This strategy will guide Council and the community towards the goal of responsible pet ownership and management.

Council seeks to ensure that animal welfare is paramount, Council's powers are understood and respected, and conflicts between people and pets in public spaces are minimized through effective community awareness and enforcement of suitable local laws.

The Strategy applies to any land within the City of Yarra where animals are kept except where animals are kept for business or commercial purposes where prior town planning approval is required from Council.

1.2 Addressing Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) requirements

This Strategy incorporates the DAMP requirements as outlined in Section 68A(2) of the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*, as follows:

- an outline of intended programs, services and strategies to:
 - i) promote and encourage responsible pet ownership..... Pg 15-23
 - ii) encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats.....Pg 21
 - iii) address over population and high euthanasia rates of pets..... Pg 18
 - iv) minimize potential for nuisance..... Pg 22
 - v) identify dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs..... Pg 22-23
 - vi) minimize the risk of dog attacks.....Pg 23
 - vii) ensure compliance with the Act and regulations..... Pg 35
- annually review all existing orders and consider the need for further orders.....Pg 26-36
- periodic evaluation of all programs, services and strategies.....Pg 36-37
- a method for evaluating animal control services..... Pg 36-37
- an outline of programs for training of authorized animal management officers..... Pg 36-37

1.3 Council's role in animal management

Council can play several roles within the scope of animal management:

- **regulatory / animal control**; management of DAMP requirements. This role is the responsibility of the Local Laws and Animal Management Team situated in the Building and Regulatory Services Branch of the City Development Division.
- **pets in open space**; management of public open space for a range of uses including pet exercise and socialisation. This role is the responsibility of the Environment and Recreation Services Branch of the Asset Management Division, however, enforcement of relevant legislation regarding open space areas is the responsibility of the Local Laws and Animal Management Team.
- **keeping pets out of environmental areas**; managing the presence of stray and feral cat populations, and protecting areas of environmental significance (both flora and fauna). This role has not been a focus of Council in the past, however may be undertaken by the Habitat Management Officer, from the Environment and Recreation Services Branch of the Asset Management Division.
- **pets for leisure**; support and promotion of the leisure benefits of pets as companions, and pet services. This has not been a focus for Council in the past, however the Community Development Division could play this role.

2. What We Know About People and Their Pets in Yarra

2.1 Cat and dog ownership

Pet registration

Collecting representative cat and dog ownership figures is a requirement of the DAMP. Pet registration is one indicator of pet ownership.

The resident population and number of households in the City of Yarra have significantly increased since 2004¹. Table 1 shows the population and number of households in Yarra compared to the number of registered dogs and cats. Registered dogs increased over this time, however the number of registered cats fell.

- Approximately 22% of households in Yarra own a registered pet.
- This is low compared to the Australian average where 53.3% of households own a pet².

Table 1: Number of people and registered pets in the City of Yarra since 2004

	Population	Households	Dogs	Cats
2004	69,611	32,157	3,661	3,372
2006	72,376	35,249	3,850	2,864
2007	73,501	NA	3,890	2,792

¹ Statistics supplied by Council, and <http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/dse/dsenres.nsf/>

² Petnet website, accessed June, 2007: <http://www.petnet.com.au/petstatistics.asp>

Likely pet ownership

In Victoria it is estimated that only 64% of dogs and 41% of cats are registered with Councils³. Using these estimates, there may be as many as 6,998 dogs, and 8,190 cats in Yarra in 2007.

Lower than national average rates of pet ownership in Yarra may be due to the high proportion of renters, the higher than average residential density and small private open space. It is also plausible that there are a large number of unregistered pets in public housing. Fitzroy, Richmond and Collingwood provide a variety of public housing types totalling approximately 2,890 bedrooms⁴.

With an increase in population and a predicted increase in pet ownership, it is likely that pets will cause an increased pressure on the limited supply of public open space within Yarra.

2.2 Complaints

Type of complaints

Council records the number and type of requests received about pets.

The key requests received by Council are about barking dogs, wandering dogs, dog attacks, dogs off-lead in on-lead areas, failure to pick up after dogs, and unregistered animals. Too many animals on a property, and disturbance by noisy roosters also receive requests.

Council has reported an increase in animal related requests in recent years.

³ McMurray, R (2004) Benchmarking Victoria, an all-Council view and comparison. *Urban Animal Management Conference Proceedings 2004* (pp 69-74) Australian Veterinary Association Ltd, NSW

⁴ Statistics provided by Council

Wandering dogs, dogs off-lead in an on-lead area, failure to pick up after a dog, and unregistered animals were the main areas of increased requests, in 2007.

Table 2 shows the nature and number of complaints received during business hours since 2003. In 2007, after hours complaints included: 178 wandering animals and nuisance animals, 6 animal attacks, 23 dead animals and 36 lost animals.

Table 2: Complaints reported to Council: business hours, 2003 to 2006

NATURE OF COMPLAINT	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Barking dog	14	30	43	42	32
Wandering dog	17	25	27	34	25
Dog attack	39	24	27	25	22
Dogs off-lead in on-lead areas	11	13	15	23	15
Failure to pick up after a dog	19	18	18	22	22
Unregistered animal	33	11	13	20	16
Nuisance animal	10	22	11	19	37
Feeding of animals in public	4	10	8	8	9
Animal trespass on private property	11	7	14	7	3
Excess animals	1	4	5	7	14
Noisy rooster	6	3	4	4	2
Failure to comply with relevant Code of Practice	1	0	1	3	2
Cat attack	1	2	0	0	4
Other	10	5	0	8	4
Total	177	174	186	222	207

Addressing complaints

Council currently addresses complaints through education including providing set procedures to follow (such as the barking dog procedure), enforcement process and patrols.

Animal Management Officers conduct regular patrols throughout the municipality. During the months of daylight savings patrols are conducted outside normal business hours including weekends, and concentrate on problem areas, high use open space areas and shopping strips.

Council has a strong enforcement focus towards such non-compliance as dogs off-lead in on-lead areas, failure to carry a device to clean up after a dog, and failure to clean up after a dog. 44 animal related fines were issued in 2007.

Council has a process in place for dealing with barking dog complaints. Systematic investigation procedures are applied to all animal management complaints.

2.3 Council pet services

Pet services currently provided by Council include:

- Pet registration
- Micro chipping
Council currently organises 2 micro chipping days a year
- Animal Management Patrols
The Local Laws and Animal Management Team conducts 64 hours of regular patrols per month during daylight hours. These provide a pet management presence in open space. The purpose is to encourage good behaviour and responsible pet ownership, and ultimately reduce complaints.
- Council designates dog off-lead areas and provides a basic level of infrastructure (e.g. bins, bags and some water bowls) in some areas. It has also monitored the satisfaction of these through the Open Space Strategy.

- Business hours animal collection by Council's Animal Management Officers.
- Council contracts its role of collecting and impounding stray cats and dogs to the Lost Dogs Home in North Melbourne who provide a monthly report detailing the number of animals impounded, euthanised, reclaimed and sold.
- Lost Dogs Home Report

The Lost Dogs Home records the number of impounded cats and dogs monthly, and identifies their outcome- either destroyed, reclaimed or sold. See Table 3 for Yarra's statistics from 2005 to 2007.

Studies suggest that across Victoria, approximately 32.5% of impounded dogs, and 70% of impounded cats, are euthanised each year⁵.

In Yarra, the percentage of impounded dogs that are euthanised is lower than the Victorian average, at 14% in 2007.

The percentage of impounded cats that are euthanised in Yarra is significantly higher than the Victorian average, at 90% in 2005, 84% in 2006 and 86% in 2007.

Table 3: Lost Dogs Home Report: 2005 to 2007

YEAR	DOGS				CATS			
	Number impounded	% destroyed	% reclaimed	% sold from LDH*	Number impounded	% destroyed	% reclaimed	% sold from LDH*
2005	137	12	81	7	149	90	7	3
2006	145	16	76	8	137	84	12	4
2007	108	14	84	2	150	86	13	1

⁵ Pawsey, Cathy "Where do pets come from? Victorian Pet Acquisition Survey" Bureau of Animal Welfare, Urban Animal Management Conference Proceedings (2005)

* LDH refers to Lost Dogs Home

Comparison of Services between Councils

The organization of Domestic Animal Management services changes significantly across different Councils. Nine Councils surrounding Yarra were compared, to determine the number of Animal Management Officers employed and hours spent patrolling public space. See Table 4 for the survey results.

All Councils surveyed patrolled public space to some degree. Most Councils patrol for between 10 and 20 hours a week, however Boroondara undertakes the most at approximately 35 hours of patrols a week and Stonnington the least at approximately 4 hours of patrols a week.

Most Councils employ three staff to cover Domestic Animal Management, however in many cases patrols are undertaken by additional Officers.

As of 7th January 2008 Yarra increased the number of dedicated full time Animal Management Officers from 1.5 to 2 EFT. The after hours service requests are still contracted out to the Lost Dogs Home.

Table 4: Council survey of Animal Management personnel and patrol hours

COUNCIL	Animal Management personnel	Hours on patrol
Darebin	Separate Animal Management Unit with 3 full time officers, one administration officer	Flexible, aim for 20 hours a week
Boroondara	2 full time Animal Management Officers. All Local Law Officers patrol public space	Committed to patrol 1,800 hours per year (approximately 35 hours a week)
Stonnington	2 Animal Management Officers, and soon to employ a third. All full time positions	No set hour requirements. Patrol approx 4 hours a week
Glen Eira	3 Animal Management Officers	Patrol daily. Approx 15 hours a week
Port Philip	Separate Animal Management Unit with 3 full time officers	At least 10 hours a week
Maribyrnong	2 full time Animal Management Officers. 6 Local Law Officers also undertake patrols	Approximately 10-15 hrs a week.
Moonee Valley	3 Animal Management Officers	Don't have a set number of hours, mainly patrol on weekends
Moreland	Administration team of 5 people in the Local Laws Unit with. Also 2 rangers who patrol	Patrols based on complaints, no set number of hours
Melbourne	'Health Department' is responsible for law enforcement (with Domestic Animal Management mainly taken up by 1 Officer)	The Lost Dogs Home is contracted to patrol for approx 15 hours a week
Yarra	2 Full time animal management officers as of 7/1/2008.	64 Hours per month (8hr / week / officer)

2.4 Pet use of public space

How many residents walk dogs?

Thirty-three percent of Yarra residents, who answered the open space survey, walk a dog⁶. Of these, approximately seventy percent walk dogs daily.

This corresponds to a high demand for public space for this activity.

Table 5 shows the percentage of respondents who walk dogs from each suburb.

Where Yarra residents walk dogs

Reserves in Yarra⁷:

- Barkly Gardens
- Burnley Park and Oval
- Citizens Park
- Curtain Square*
- Darling Gardens*
- Dights Falls Park
- Edinburgh Gardens*
- Merri Creek Reserve
- Park Street Reserve
- Quarries Park
- Yarra Bend Park*

Reserves outside the municipality⁸:

- Princes Park, City of Melbourne*
- Yarra Park / MCG, City of Melbourne
- Royal Park, City of Melbourne
- Royal Botanic Gardens, City of Melbourne
- Darebin Parkland, City of Darebin
- Studley Park, City of Boroondara
- Yarra River Linear Park
- Carlton Gardens, City of Melbourne*

⁶ Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006, household survey

⁷ Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006, household survey

⁸ Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006, household survey

* Reserves are also in the list of top ten most visited parks by Yarra residents.

Carlton Gardens is used as open space by nearly 50% of Fitzroy residents who walk dogs, with dog walking listed as a main reason for visiting the reserve.

Yarra residents identified that dog off-lead zones are required in this park, however the Carlton Gardens Master Planning process determined that this was not compatible with the park's status as a 'garden'.

Table 5: Proportion of people who walk dogs, by suburb⁹

Suburb and postcode	% survey respondents who walk dogs
Abbotsford (3067)	37%
Fairfield and Alphington (3078)	37%
Richmond, Burnley and Cremorne (3121)	35%
Princes Hill and North Carlton (3054)	34%
North Fitzroy and Clifton Hill (3068)	32%
Fitzroy (3065)	27%
Collingwood (3066)	18%
WHOLE MUNICIPALITY	33%

Designated dog areas and facilities

Dog off-lead zones

Council has ten dog off-lead zones within Yarra, at local, citywide¹⁰ and regional¹¹ scale reserves.

Anecdotally, there is high demand for dog off-lead areas within close proximity to where residents who own dogs live. However not all residents

have public open space within close proximity to their home and not all residents want off-lead dogs in parks.

- **Local off-lead zones**
Burnley Park, Citizens Park, Coate Park, Flockhart Reserve, Kevin Bartlett Reserve and Edinburgh Gardens.
- **Citywide off-lead zones**
Barkly Gardens, Darling Gardens, Hall Reserve and Quarries Park
- **Regional off-lead zones**
parts of Yarra Bend Park: Westfield Reserve, Westfield South, Deep Rock Road, Fairlea Road and Collins Oval (in the City of Boroondara)

No dog areas

Dogs are currently prohibited from all fenced playgrounds within Yarra, and the following reserves:

- Batman Reserve, North Fitzroy
- Cairns Reserve, Richmond
- Edwardes Place, North Fitzroy
- Gary Owen Park, Fitzroy
- McNamara Reserve, Collingwood
- Urban Arts Square, Richmond
- Whitlam Place, Fitzroy
- Yarra Bend Golf Course
- Parts of Yarra Bend Park: Galatea Point and the Studley Park Golf Course (both in the City of Boroondara)

⁹ Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006, household survey

¹⁰ Citywide scale reserves attract visitors primarily from Yarra and adjoining municipalities, for visits of 3-4 hours.

¹¹ Regional scale reserves attract visitors from Melbourne-wide and adjoining municipalities, and are designed for visitors to stay for half a day to a day.

Dog facilities

Dog drinking taps and waste bag dispensers are provided in some parks. Council spends approximately \$25,000 annually on plastic bag supplies.

- 6.3% of residents¹² believed improvements to existing facilities or additional facilities were needed
- 5.9% of respondents were satisfied with dog facilities
- 3% of respondents were unsatisfied with dog facilities

Cat controls

Currently there are no areas where cats are prohibited. Currently there is no requirement to keep cats indoors at any time.

Yarra Bend Park

Yarra Bend Park sits within the boundaries of the Cities of Yarra, and Boroondara. The Park is managed by Parks Victoria on behalf of the Yarra Bend Park Trust (formed under the provisions of the *Kew and Heidelberg Lands Act 1993* and reports to the Minister for Environment and Climate Change).

The draft *Yarra Bend Park Regulations 2007* is to be adopted shortly, to provide for the use of services and facilities, safety of visitors, and the protection and management of Yarra Bend Park.

To accommodate a variety of Park users and help maintain the conservation values of the area, Yarra Bend Park has designated dog off-lead, prohibited and on-lead areas.

- **Off-lead areas:** Westfield Reserve, Westfield South, Deep Rock Road ovals, Fairlea Road ovals, Collins Oval
- **Prohibited areas:** Galatea Point, Studley Park Golf Course, Yarra Bend Golf Course
- **On-lead areas:** all remaining areas of Yarra Bend Park

Dogs must be kept on-lead while on or within five metres of asphalt shared use trails, and at playgrounds and picnic areas.

Dogs are able to access the Yarra River at canoe ramps.

Dog owners must pick up after their dog and dispose of the waste in park bins. Park bins are provided near public toilets and picnic areas.

Animals other than dogs, at Yarra Bend Park

Dogs are the only domestic pets permitted in Yarra Bend Park.

Fox populations are known to exist within the park, and annual fox trapping programs are in place to control numbers.

Yarra Bend Park has established and maintains a rabbit free status, which is a major strength of the Park. Domestic rabbits are not permitted in the Park as they can damage flora and burrowing can affect habitat values, and cause erosion

Anecdotal evidence suggests that kangaroos may be moving into the area as a result of the drought. Kangaroos are welcomed and protected within the Park, and in particular are attracted to the golf courses. Scent left by dogs is a natural deterrent to wildlife, and as such it is vital that dog owners comply with Park regulations regarding dog on-lead, off-lead and prohibited areas to protect the movement of wildlife.

Enforcement

Parks Victoria Rangers regularly patrol Yarra Bend Park to provide information and education on appropriate dog behaviour.

In addition, Animal Management Officers from the City of Yarra can patrol areas of Yarra Bend Park that cover City of Yarra land.

¹² Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006, household survey

2.5 Pet Partners

The following businesses operate within the City of Yarra:

- four veterinary clinics
- two dog obedience clubs / training services
- six pet shops, food / supply / accessories stores
- one dog boarding service (day time boarding only).

Local veterinary clinics

- Clifton Hill Veterinary Clinic ph: 9489 4055
- Carlton Veterinary Surgery ph: 9347 1988
- Fitzroy Veterinary Clinic ph: 9489 2195
- Richmond Veterinary Clinic ph: 9428 2220

Local dog obedience training

- Northcote Dog Obedience Club, Alphington Park, Alphington ph: 9459 3390
- Command Dog Training School, Richmond ph: 1300 655 364

Local dog and cat care / boarding

- Dog Zone, Richmond ph: 9427 9888
- Cat Boarding Collingwood, Collingwood ph: 9486 9807
- Cats Cosmopolitan Boarding Cattery, Collingwood ph: 9415 1281
- Cats in the City, North Fitzroy ph: 9489 2195

Local pet shops and food / supply / accessory stores, and grooming

- Pets on Brunswick St, Fitzroy ph: 9417 1400
- Pets Paradise, Richmond ph: 9421 6174
- Zacs Pet Supplies, Clifton Hill ph: 9486 8445
- Pet Art, North Fitzroy ph: 9489 2557
- Laundry Mutt Dog & Cat Supplies and Dog Wash, Richmond ph: 9421 4950
- Going to the Dogs (grooming service), Richmond ph: 9427 7434

Peak Bodies

- Canine Association of Victoria; <http://www.vca.org.au/>
- Agility Dog Association of Australia Ltd; <http://www.adaa.com.au/>
- Assistance Dogs Australia; <http://www.assistedogs.org.au/>
- RSPCA; <http://www.rspcavic.org/>
- Guide Dogs Victoria; <http://www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au/>

Sources of information

There are a number of support services and groups in Melbourne that provide information and pet related services:

Council reference

- **Urban Animal Management Conferences:** Provide a forum for local government to explore new and better ways to manage pets in society

General information

- **The Australian Companion Animal Council:** A forum for the pet care industry to promote the benefits of socially responsible companion animal ownership to the wider community
- **Petcare Information and Advisory Service (PIAS):** Promotion of socially responsible pet ownership

Education and training courses

- **Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC):** National association representing pet industry sectors including pet shop owners, kennel and cattery owners, and pet care providers
- **The Dog Safe Project:** Aims to minimise the incidence of dog bites to children by providing education through schools, community groups and local government
- **PetPEP:** A curriculum based education program for school children teaching understanding of the responsibilities of animal ownership
- **The Canine Good Citizen Instructors Course:** Produces qualified dog trainers capable of assisting dog owners with basic training and behaviour modification techniques for dogs

Useful websites for further information

- Responsible pet ownership: <http://www.pets.info.vic.gov.au/>
- The Lost Dogs Home: <http://www.dogshome.com>
- Cat Protection Society, Victoria: <http://www.catprotection.com.au>
- Petnet: <http://www.petnet.com.au/>

How should Council respond?

1. Communicate the following information about pets to residents (using a range of electronic and hard copy information) and open dialogue with pet owners and stakeholders:
 - | Council's role in pet management and who does what
 - | Possible options to address requests (if the complainant feels comfortable) before going to Council, and what process to follow
 - | Provide information on pet related services in the City and other partners who may assist
2. Continue to collect information about pet ownership, to provide more representative cat and dog ownership figures as per the DAMP requirements. This may be in the form of annual door knocks, telephone interviews and registration databases
3. Review opportunities and methods for evaluating animal control services. This Strategy recommends an evaluation method
4. Council will maintain its current role in animal management. Council may need to enhance management of pet use of open space because of increasing demand and space constraints
 - | Enhanced management may involve revision of dog on-lead, dog off-lead, and cat and dog prohibited areas over time
 - | Council is not in the business of organizing pet competitions or sports, or providing the equipment required for these

3. Benefits of Pets

There is a wide range of benefits to owning a pet. Council has the opportunity of promoting these benefits in addition to addressing compliance issues and managing conflicts. The key benefits of pet ownership relate to health, responsibility and companionship.

Pets may:¹³

- motivate people to exercise regularly
- create opportunities to meet people and make new friends
- teach responsibility, as pets require ongoing care
- provide companionship and prevent loneliness

Pets are increasingly kept for companionship. Companion animals are proving so beneficial that projects (such as 'Petlink') have been established to assist older and frail adults remain as pet owners by organising volunteers to walk, bath and take pets to veterinary check-ups etc. This may also benefit the volunteers, who cannot or choose not to own a pet themselves¹⁴.

Those who own pets reportedly: visit the doctor less often, use less medication, recover quicker from illness and surgery, and deal with stressful situations better¹⁵.

Pets can benefit more than the owners

As not all residents can own a pet, there are ways to benefit from pets without being an owner. These include:

- exercise a friend's or neighbour's pet
- meet other dog owners in the local park to talk / exercise together

- register to look after guide dog puppies before they start school
- participate in a pet related volunteer program (e.g. Petlink)

Working Dogs

Many animals are employed for work:

- *Seeing Eye or Guide Dogs* for people with a vision impairment, and to assist people with a disability
- *Therapy dogs* for people with restricted movement or confined to indoors, often used in retirement homes and hospitals
- *'Sniffer' dogs* at customs and used by police in searches
- *Working or cattle dogs* for farm work
- *Guard dogs* to watch and protect property.

Responding to the needs of working dogs

Many people are not familiar with working dogs and don't know how to respond to the needs of working dogs or their owners. This may lead to discrimination or embarrassment.

Generally speaking, if a dog is in harness or wearing a coat it is working and should not be patted, played with or distracted.

Working dogs do not require registration with Council and are permitted to travel on public transport.

The *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* and *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* override the *Health Act*, which prohibits dogs from entering food premises.

In Victoria, police dogs and their handlers can enter any public property, but require a warrant to enter private premises. Section 12A of the *Australian Federal Police and other Legislation Amendment Act 2003* provides immunity from state and territory laws for police dogs, including explosive detection canines (EDC) when on a premise with their police dog handlers.

¹³ McCallum Research, Mackay H. (1992) What Australians Feel About Their Pets; and Headey B, (1999) "Do Pet Owners Enjoy Better Health? Results from the German Socio-Economic Panel" Animal, Community Health and Public Policy Symposium, Sydney 1999

¹⁴ Petlinks: a new service for home and community care, www.petnet.com.au/uam/eidelson96.html

¹⁵ Pet Statistics from PerNet: <http://www.petnet.com.au/petstatistics.asp>

How should Council respond?

1. Promote the benefits of responsible pet ownership
2. Assist residents to maximise the benefits of pet ownership
 - | provide access to available information that enables good decisions e.g:
 - o choosing the right breed of dog to suit interest and lifestyle
 - o how owning a dog can motivate you to exercise
3. Provide information to residents and businesses about supporting working dogs in their role
4. Provide information about how pet owners can help others who cannot own a pet
5. Promote opportunities to walk and socialise dogs
6. Continue to identify partners who can promote and facilitate the benefits of pet ownership
7. Encourage retention of sufficient open space in new dwellings to accommodate pets

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4. Responsible Pet Ownership

In order to facilitate the benefits of pet ownership, minimise conflict with others, and reduce the need for Council intervention, there is a need for one united voice across Council on pet issues and protocols. Good marketing, education, communication between stakeholders, and the development of incentives to do the right thing are also required.

A key principle in Council's approach is to provide the necessary leadership information and encouragement to prevent conflict, minimise the number of pets that are unwanted, and enhance responsible pet ownership.

Some key areas where the greatest advantage can be gained are:

- increasing the proportion of pets registered
- provide information about acceptable pet behaviour, especially in public
- maintaining a suitable number of pets, and in suitable conditions
- encouraging residents to choose the right pet for their lifestyle and dwelling type

4.1. Choosing the right pet

Some pets are abandoned as they don't suit the owner's lifestyle, or because of lack of knowledge about (and subsequent disapproval of) the pet's behaviour¹⁶.

There are many sources of easily available information about how to choose the right pet. Websites listed in the 'Pet Partners' chapter of this document, under 'peak bodies' and 'other useful websites' is a good

¹⁶ Marston, Bennett and Toukhatsi "Cat stats: tracking cat admission to shelters in Melbourne" Animal Welfare Science Centre, Monash University. Urban Animal Management Conference Proceedings (2005)

place to start. The PetNet website has a simple 'select-a-pet' survey that identifies suitable breeds for prospective owners.

As there is a high proportion of people renting in Yarra, there is value in ensuring that people can find the right type of accommodation to suit their pet's needs. It should be noted that a high rate of transience exists in Yarra, resulting in some pets not living in Yarra long and some pets being left behind when owners leave Yarra.

Here are some helpful tips for people seeking pet-friendly rental accommodation¹⁷:

- Prepare a pet résumé including all medical records, obedience school certificates and written references from past landlords, neighbours, obedience schools and veterinarians
- Offer to jointly develop a pet agreement to clearly define behaviour appropriate to the rental premises, and actions to be taken if issues arise
- Pets are not permitted to be kept in many Strata Title properties because of specific Body Corporate By-laws. Check the By-laws to identify any special conditions for pets
- Department of Human Services (public housing) prohibits some types and number of animals

How should Council respond?

1. Direct residents to information sources about choosing the right pet
2. Promote the importance of choosing pets that complement the owners' lifestyle and residence
3. Promote ways for pet owners to find the right type of accommodation that will suit them, and ways renters can responsibly keep pets
4. Promote a contact in Council to provide this type of information

¹⁷ PetNet: www.petnet.com.au

4.2 Suitable conditions and number of pets

Wandering dogs and nuisance cats are major issues for Council.

Yarra has a high proportion of small dwellings with limited private space, increasing population density and a high proportion of dwellings without public open space within 400m.

Anecdotally, smaller dwellings without private space tend to be less able to accommodate multiple pets without affecting their welfare and others' lifestyles.

For these reasons Council limits the number and type of pets that residents are allowed to keep in houses and flats/units (without a planning permit). For example in a flat or unit only one dog over six months old can be kept (compared to 2 in other dwelling types).

Permits

To keep additional pets to those outlined in Appendix 3, residents must apply for a planning permit or local law permit.

Council, to date, has 4 excess animal permits with one of those being issued in 2007.

Suitable conditions for pets

Council's Local Laws set out a number of requirements for pet owners about the conditions in which pets must be kept, regarding:

- land requirements
- animal shelter requirements (cleanliness and location)
- storage of pet food

How should Council respond?

1. Continue to limit the number of pets allowed on properties including houses and flats / units (without a permit)
2. Advertise when, what and how many pets a permit is required for, and how to apply for additional pets
3. Encourage retention of sufficient open space in new dwellings and those being renovated to accommodate pets

4.3 Feeding stray and feral animals and birds

Feeding stray animals helps to increase their population. Feeding birds in public, especially pigeons, is an offence against Yarra's Local Law.

Birds can create hazardous amounts of bird waste, cause damage to buildings, and negatively impact public amenity¹⁸.

Because of this, feeding birds is not permitted within Yarra; residents are encouraged to report stray and feral cats to Council's Local Law and Animal Management Team rather than feeding them.

How should Council respond?

1. Encourage residents not to feed birds, and explain why
2. Monitor pigeon population when required e.g. near food premises and intervene as required
3. Encourage residents to report stray and feral animals to Local Laws and Animal Management Team
4. Take enforcement action where appropriate

¹⁸ Update on Pigeon Management- report by the City of Melbourne, 2004

4.4 Pet vaccination and physical health

Vaccinating both cats and dogs is important for their well being.

- Cats can be vaccinated (primarily against Feline Enteritis) from six to eight weeks of age and require booster vaccinations by a veterinary surgeon
- Dogs can be vaccinated against Canine Distemper, Kennel Cough, Viral Hepatitis and Parvo Virus. Puppies can receive their first vaccination between six to eight weeks of age, their second at 12 to 16 weeks old and then a booster vaccination every 12 months¹⁹

Non-vaccinated dogs taken to dog off-leash areas and unvaccinated wandering strays can cause the spread of disease.

Overweight Pets

Studies suggest that well over half of Melbourne's pets are now in the overweight range, with many double their ideal weight²⁰.

Overweight pets are more likely to develop diseases, including joint disease (arthritis), breathing difficulties, heart disease, diabetes, reduced liver function, decreased heat tolerance, skin disease, increased risk of developing cancer and reduced quality of life in general.

Pets need regular exercise and socialisation. Most dogs need daily walks, though some breeds may require more.

How should Council respond?

1. Promote and where possible subsidise pet vaccination
2. Provide information to encourage pet owners to keep their pets active, socialised and healthy

¹⁹ Victorian Canine Association- www.vca.org.au

²⁰ Edwards, Lorna 'Pets make pigs of themselves' The Age newspaper article, 2/5/2007

4.5 Over-population and animal euthanasia

If more pets were prevented from getting lost, impounded and destroyed; and fewer were unwanted and abandoned, there would be less unintentional breeding, unwanted litters, feral animals or euthanasia.

Lost and unwanted animals

108 dogs and 150 cats were impounded in Yarra, in 2007. 84% of dogs and 12% of cats were reclaimed²¹. This is an average reclaim rate for dogs, however a particularly high reclaim rate for cats, compared to Victoria wide statistics at 5%²².

The most effective way to reunite lost pets with their owners is through micro chipping and registration. Micro chipping is now a legal requirement for new cat and dog registrations, for animals over 3 months of age.

The best way to overcome abandonment, or people giving up their pets, is to provide prospective pet owners with good information to help them choose the right pet, and then assisting with information about responsible pet ownership, and training tools to overcome potential obedience issues.

Unintended litters

Nearly three-quarters of cat admissions to Melbourne shelters are multiple-cat admissions (either cat colonies, or kittens with or without their mother). 63.8% of kitten only admissions were strays, with 32.6% surrendered by owners²³.

This identifies unintended litters, both from owned and stray cats, as a major burden to Domestic Animal Management services throughout Melbourne.

There are a number of measures that can minimise the likelihood of unintended litters:

- pet de-sexing at an early age
- reporting stray and feral animals to Council, rather than harbouring them
- keeping pets inside at night
- undertaking cat trapping to get stray and feral cats off the streets

Pet de-sexing

There are many reasons for and benefits to pet de-sexing²⁴:

- reduces territorial aggression in male dogs and cats
- reduces the incidence of infections, cancers and other diseases of the reproductive systems
- prevents the inconvenience of a dog or cat coming into season
- reduces spraying (cats) or marking territory with urine (dogs)
- de-sexed cats and dogs live longer and are less likely to wander far from their home
- removes the possibility of having unwanted puppies and kittens
- the result is generally a happier, healthier animal that makes a better family pet.

²¹ Statistics provided by the Lost Dogs Home

²² Marston, Bennett and Toukhatsi "Cat stats: tracking cat admission to shelters in Melbourne" Animal Welfare Science Centre, Monash University. Urban Animal Management Conference Proceedings (2005)

²³ Marston, Bennett and Toukhatsi "Cat admission to Melbourne shelters- a report to the Bureau of Animal Welfare" Animal Welfare Science Centre, Monash University (2006)

²⁴ <http://www.effect.net.au/>, and The Cat Protection Society <http://www.catprotection.com.au/>

How should Council respond?

1. Disseminate relevant information to residents, and provide links to animal advocacy groups such as the Cat Protection Society of Victoria, the RSPCA, and the Lost Dogs Home. (Refer to the 'pet partners' section of this document for further references)
2. Promote the benefits of pet de-sexing
3. Promote the benefits of cats being kept in at night
4. Mandatory cat de-sexing
5. Continue trapping feral and stray animals in Yarra
6. Promote a 'No Cost Surrender Program' throughout the municipality through estate agents and landlords, to reduce the incidence of animals being abandoned by transient or irresponsible owners

4.6 Impact of pet behaviour on others

Ensuring that pets do not disturb other people and other animals is an important and serious pet owner responsibility.

Wandering Cats

Cats must not become a nuisance by wandering onto private property without permission from the owner / occupier.

Cats are commonly known to be a major threat to wildlife in the bush, less recognised is that the same applies to cats in towns and cities²⁵.

There are several reasons why cats should not be left outside over night:

- cats can roam a long way, making them vulnerable to attack by other animals and exposing other wildlife to attack from them.
- cats tend to do most of their hunting at night, and pet cats kill on average an estimated 32 wildlife a year. Stray cats in cities kill on average five wildlife a week²⁶
- protection of wildlife is a priority in the Yarra, and allowing cats to roam overnight conflicts with this
- cats are more likely to be hit by a car, or injured in a fight, at night. 94% of car accidents or fights involving cats occurred at night²⁷
- confining a cat at night is not an animal welfare issue; there are no ill effects when a cat is home-based. In fact cats may live up to three times longer if home-based overnight²⁸

For their own safety, and the safety of native animals, cats should be kept inside at night.

²⁵ Platt, S (1999) Land for Wildlife Notes "Cats and wildlife- how you can protect both" DNRE

²⁶ Platt, S (1999) Land for Wildlife Notes "Cats and wildlife- how you can protect both" DNRE

²⁷ A three-week study conducted by the Cat Protection Society found that

²⁸ Department of Primary Industries – Cat Management Manual

The City of Greater Bendigo, Frankston City and the Shire of Yarra Rangers have made an Order under the Act requiring the mandatory confinement of cats at night.

Cat trapping is an effective and safe way to manage cat behaviour at night. It is also an effective way to reduce the feral cat population. Council will increase its trapping program and any registered cat that was trapped would be identified through its registration tag and returned to its owner, who may be issued with a Nuisance Notice under the Act and subject to prosecution should the cat be trapped again.

Wandering Dogs

Wandering dogs (usually within the vicinity of the owner's home) is one of Council's main animal management (health and safety) issues.

Uncared-for dogs are likely to be a disease risk, and scavenging dogs are likely to result in a litter nuisance. In general, uncontrolled dogs can be an issue for responsible pet owners as wandering animals can disturb dogs on-lead, which may result in injury or worse²⁹.

Barking Dogs

Dogs bark for a reason, and the problems are easier to rectify if addressed as soon as they eventuate. Common reasons for barking are:

- lack of exercise
- boredom, loneliness and frustration
- feeling under threat / fear (e.g. of thunder, fireworks)
- poor living conditions (e.g. no shelter or impinging flood lights)
- ill-health

Dogs that bark usually benefit from more exercise, socialisation or a more interesting environment. Dogs barking at passers-by may need to have

their access to views obstructed (e.g. solid fencing or a hedge). If the problem persists, dogs may benefit from attending obedience clubs.

Recommended barking dog procedure

Residents concerned by a barking dog should they be so inclined may politely approach the dog owners to notify them of the issue or contact Council, as outlined below.

On receipt of a barking dog complaint, Council will contact the dog owner to advise that a complaint has been made, and offer advice on how to rectify the problem. If unable to reach the dog owner, an information sheet will be left at the premises with a request to contact Council. The complainant will be provided with a noise log to complete when the dog barks. After seven days Council will contact the complainant to determine if the problem has been rectified. If the problem persists the dog owner will be advised of the further complaint and enforcement action that may be taken. If barking continues after the dog has been declared a nuisance the owner may be prosecuted.

How should Council respond?

1. Promote the need for residents to keep cats and dogs under effective control when outside private property
2. Promote the value of keeping cats indoors at night to prevent them becoming a nuisance and for their safety
3. Educate residents about *why* dogs bark, and promote ways to prevent barking
4. Advertise a process for residents to follow when they are concerned about a barking dog

²⁹ McArthur, G (2006) *Meet and Greet: an etiquette guide for off-leash dog park behaviour*
Gwen McArthur, QLD, Australia

4.7 Pet registration and identification

Cats and dogs over three months old must be registered annually. The registration fee helps Council to provide the infrastructure needed for animal management, including tags. Part of the fee is returned to the state government to fund pet education and support programs.

The benefits of pet registration are:

- it provides Council with statistics to inform planning and management
- it allows lost or found animals and their owners to be traced
- when responding to calls about wandering, vicious, or nuisance pets, Council can contact the owner swiftly
- owners who register and identify their pets are more likely to be responsible pet owners hence minimising stray animals, feral animals and over population

If an animal is unregistered and / or not wearing its identification tag when off its owner's premises, a fine may be issued to the owner.

Pet complaints in public housing

Most public housing pet concerns are dealt with by the Housing Officers, however Council is contacted for assistance when:

- a person has been attacked by an animal
- neglect of an animal is causing sanitation or health problems
- an animal is repeatedly wandering at large beyond the owner's and immediate neighbour's premises
- a Domestic Animals Business (breeder) is operating
- when excess animals are on the property

An animal welfare agency such as the RSPCA is contacted when:

- an animal appears to have been abandoned
- an animal appears to have been maltreated, harmed or neglected.

Microchipping

New legal requirements came into effect in Victoria on 1st May 2007 regarding micro chipping. Regulations now require all new pets being registered with Council for the first time to be micro chipped before registration will be processed. This includes cats and dogs that move into Yarra from another municipality.

Part 4A of the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act* contains provisions for permanent identification systems for cats and dogs. This includes the sale and distribution of micro chips and scanners, the implantation of micro chips, and the operation of registries.

How should Council respond?

1. Promote pet registration and its benefits
2. Continue to promote the legal requirement to micro chip pets, and hold micro chipping days
3. Seek to monitor pet registration statistics
4. Provide incentives to register pets
5. Survey a sample of past pet owners who haven't renewed their pet's registration, to find out why

4.8 Nuisance, menacing and dangerous animals

Nuisance animals

Under Clause 37.1 of Local Law No.3, Council may direct any resident to permanently remove any rooster or other animal from their place of residence, which in the opinion of Council is detrimental to the general amenity of the neighbourhood.

Menacing dogs

Under the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*, dogs can be listed as menacing or dangerous if the following criteria are proved:

- they have rushed at or chased a person; or
- they have been declared menacing by another Council

Owners of a menacing dog:

- must notify Council if it has rushed at, or chased a person, has gone missing, or has a new owner
- are required to muzzle the dog whenever it is off private premises
- may be required to leave the dog on-lead in off-lead areas³⁰

Dangerous dogs

Dogs can be declared dangerous if they have:

- caused *serious* injury to a person/animal by biting or attacking; or

- been a menacing dog and the owner has been fined twice for not muzzling or leashing the dog when required; or
- been declared dangerous by another Council; or
- have / are being used as a guard dog on a non-residential premise

Owners of a dangerous dog must:

- notify Council if it has gone missing or has a new owner
- muzzle the dog and keep it on-lead whenever it is off private premises
- construct an enclosure on the premises
- display a dangerous dog sign at all entrances to the premise
- place a red and yellow striped collar on the dog when off private premises

Penalties for menacing or dangerous dogs

Upon conviction in a Magistrates Court and upon direction of a Magistrate, dog owners are responsible for any damage caused by:

- a dog bite
- their dog rushing and knocking over a person
- the trauma caused by being chased by a dog

Penalties for not abiding by the menacing or dangerous dog laws include:

- prosecution from Council or the Police
- \$500 fine for not complying with muzzling, leashing and display of warning sign requirements, for a first offence (current 2007)
- \$1,000 fine for second and subsequent offences (current 2007)

³⁰ A full list of these requirements is provided in Part 3 of the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*.

Dog attacks

The occurrence of reported dog attacks within Yarra has remained steady over recent years, however it remains a cause of concern.

“Statistics state wide show that children aged up to nine are the most common victims of serious dog attacks, with most attacks occurring in the home”³¹. Most injuries are to the face or head, usually caused by children putting their face close to a dog’s mouth or hugging the dog tightly around its neck.

Education about how to approach an unfamiliar dog may reduce such incidents and parents should be encouraged to closely supervise their children around dogs. This could occur through Council’s maternal health role, and through Kindergartens, early childhood centres and Primary Schools.

The Department of Primary Industries (DPI) conducts school visits across the State annually promoting responsible pet ownership and educating children in dealing with dogs in general.

How should Council respond?

1. Educate residents (especially new parents) about dogs and their behaviour
2. Promote ways in which people (especially children) should approach unfamiliar dogs

³¹ Media Release from the Minister for Agriculture “Education is the key to reducing dog attacks” May 18, 2006

4.9 Restricted dog breeds

There are a number of dog breeds that have restrictions as pets in Victoria. The restricted breeds are:

- Dogo Argentina
- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileiro
- American Pit Bull Terrier, and the Pit Bull Terrier

Restricted dog breeds:

- are prohibited from being imported into Australia³²
- cannot be re-registered unless the dog was first registered in Victoria prior to 2nd November 2005³³
- must be declared as a restricted breed dog when they are registered
- are controlled by additional requirements in the Act³⁴

How should Council respond?

1. Make information about dogs of restricted breed available to residents
2. Promote the ‘Dob in a Restricted Breed Dog’ program
3. Manage dogs of restricted breed in accordance with the *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994*
4. Maintain a register of dogs of restricted breeds

³² By the *Commonwealth Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulations 1956*.

³³ Department of Primary Industries- www.dpi.vic.gov.au

³⁴ The *Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* sets out a number of requirements for keeping restricted breeds

5. Pets other than Cats & Dogs

5.1 Reptiles

The keeping of some reptiles may cause concern to neighbours, although small tortoises, frogs and lizards may not be problematic if well looked after. As these animals only need limited exercise and space, they may be ideal pets for residents of flats and units.

Various snakes and reptiles are protected and as such, keeping of these animals must be in accordance with all relevant Acts and regulations.

The Department of Primary Industries has a *Code of practice for the welfare of animals- Private keeping of reptiles (Victoria), 2003*, which residents wishing to keep reptiles must comply with.

Most native animals are protected and require a permit for the Department of Sustainability and Environment to be kept as pets.

5.2 Ferrets, Guinea Pigs, Rabbits And Mice

As these animals only need limited exercise and space, rodents may be ideal pets for residents of flats and units.

The breeding habits of rodents and rabbits can create excessive numbers of these animals and an increased likelihood of escape. While keeping up to two ferrets, guineapigs, rabbits or mice is permitted, residents are encouraged to own same-sex rodents.

De-sexing of male rabbits and ferrets is often undertaken for the benefit of reducing aggression in the animal.

5.3 Cold Water and Tropical Gold Fish

There are few issues in relation to keeping cold water and tropical gold fish. Outdoor fishponds however need to comply with relevant pool safety requirements.

A person must not release fish into any public waterways or water bodies.

5.4 Poultry

Owning up to five poultry birds is permitted (subject to proper siting of enclosures), unless residents live in a flat or unit in which case the keeping of poultry is prohibited.

Residents wishing to keep poultry must comply with the regulations set out in the *Victorian Code of Accepted Farming Practice for the Welfare of Poultry, 2003*. This Code is intended as a set of guidelines to provide detailed minimum standards of care required to meet owner obligations under Victorian laws.

Requests have been registered with Council regarding noisy roosters. In accordance to Clause 37 of Local Law No 3, Council may direct the owner to permanently remove the rooster (or any other animal) if, in the opinion of Council, it is detrimental to the general amenity of the surrounding neighbourhood.

5.5 Bees

Provided that requirements of the *Apiary Code of Practice 1997* and the *Livestock Disease Control Act 1994* are met, bee keeping is permitted to Yarra residents.

The *Apiary Code of Practice 1997* addresses types of apiculture, definitions of practices, management requirements and statutory requirements. Of note is the limitation on the number of hives allowed to be kept, depending on the size of the property.

The *Livestock Disease Control Act 1994* requires beekeepers with one or more hives to be registered with the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) as a beekeeper. Registration enables DPI to conduct disease prevention and control programs for the benefit of beekeepers. This includes the mailing of useful information.

5.6 Birds

The Department of Primary Industries has a *Code of practice for the housing of caged birds 2001*, which residents wishing to keep birds must comply with. Some protected species require their owners to be licensed.

Residents must also comply with Council's Environment Local Law No 3, clause 36, in relation to animal shelters.

How should Council respond?

1. Promote information and relevant Acts and regulations about keeping pets other than cats and dogs
2. Allow residents in flats and units to keep up to two rodents and two reptiles without a permit

6. Minimising conflict between people and pets in open space

Due to increasing residential densities, busy lifestyle commitments and restrictions on pets in public space, formal pet exercise and socialisation in public space is becoming more important and in greater demand³⁵.

However the *Yarra Open Space Strategy 2006* identified a number of conflicts between dogs and other park users. The major conflicts and issues identified were:

- the presence of dog excrement in open space
- the lack of dog waste facilities
- dogs off-lead in designated on-lead areas, and upsetting other park users and wildlife
- lack of designated dog off-lead areas
- conflicts between dogs and cyclists
- lack of drinking taps for dogs

Dog walking is commonly incorporated with a number of other informal activities in parks and reserves, and therefore needs to be accommodated in the same way as those (such as informal ball sports, Frisbee, picnics, sun-baking, kite flying, and lying on the grass).

It is recognised however that there are some places where it is not appropriate to have dogs. These include: sites of environmental significance, small sites, sites with a civic function and within playgrounds.

³⁵ McArthur, G (2006) *Meet and Greet: an etiquette guide for off-leash dog park behaviour*
Gwen McArthur, QLD, Australia

6.1 Dog on-lead policy

A Council Order was made in 1998 under section 26 of the *Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Act 1994* to classify all public land in Yarra as on-lead, with designated off-lead and dog-prohibited areas. In broad terms, any dog that leaves its owner's property must be on a lead³⁶. Thus, dogs must be on-lead:

- in all streets, roads, nature strips and public car parks
- in public open space, except where specifically designated otherwise

This on-lead policy has considerable merit, however to minimise the conflicts identified in the *Yarra Open Space Strategy 2006*, additional controls are recommended associated with shared pathways and other recreation facilities.

To reinforce this policy it will be advisable if Council promotes that if there is no sign saying the area is off-lead (or prohibited) then the area is on-lead.

Shared pathways

Yarra has five main shared pathways; along the Merri Creek, the Yarra River, Linear Reserve, the railway reserve and throughout Yarra Bend Park. Of these, Council manages Linear Reserve and the railway reserve only. Currently it is required that dogs must be on a lead on any footpath or shared path, at all times.

Due to the unpredictable nature of dogs, opportunities for distraction on a path, the speed at which a cyclist may be travelling, limited sightlines on some paths and the possibilities of a dog not being seen until too late, it is suggested that off-lead dogs are best kept away from shared paths, and dogs are kept on-lead when the owner is on the path.

³⁶ A lead is specified as a chain, chord or leash not exceeding two metres in length (Council Order, July 1998)

Playground, picnic and skate facilities

The current Council Order made under section 27 of the *Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* requires dogs to be kept on-lead within 30 metres of all unfenced playground areas, BBQ and picnic facilities. Dogs are prohibited from fenced playgrounds. Due to the vulnerability of children the principle of separating playgrounds and dogs is quite reasonable.

In an ideal world there would be a range of play spaces that are both fenced and unfenced, and some where dogs may be acceptable. However a limited range of play spaces and availability of open space generally prohibits such flexibility.

As some Council reserves with playgrounds are very small, the specified distance (30m) may be unreasonable in many cases, especially when a family may wish to visit the park while walking a family pet. Therefore it is recommended that on-lead reserves that contain a playground establish a five metre buffer surrounding the mulch area of the play equipment to be prohibited to dogs. Space outside this five metre buffer is dog on-lead. For playgrounds in off-lead reserves, a five metre buffer surrounding the mulch area of the play equipment should be prohibited to dogs, and an additional 15 metre buffer from the prohibited area remain as dog on-lead. Space outside this second buffer area can be dog off-lead.

If a playground is fenced, no prohibited or on-lead buffer is necessary. Dogs are required to be kept outside the fence, however they should not be left tethered in a public place as they may become threatened, aggressive, or vulnerable to attack.

Yarra has one skate facility in Edinburgh Gardens which is located in an on-lead area. Should further skate and BMX facilities be developed, it would be reasonable to establish a ten metre on-lead buffer around the facility as dogs may stray into the path of a rider and cause an accident.

Waterway corridors

The Yarra River and Merri Creek provide important environmental corridors throughout the municipality. They provide snake habitat, pockets

of remnant vegetation and flora of state significance, as well as sites of state and regional geological and geomorphological significance³⁷.

These corridors are popular spots to walk, swim and socialise dogs.

Snake bite is a realistic concern in these corridors.

The practice of swimming dogs has been a concern in some areas due to bank degradation. To control this issue, Parks Victoria now provide several dog access points into the Yarra at Yarra Bend Park. Canoe ramps at Yarra Bend Park may also be used as dog access points.

There are eleven on-lead waterway corridor reserves in Yarra. These are:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| ■ Annette's Place / River Street | ■ Loys Paddock |
| ■ Batson Reserve (also Rushall Reserve) | ■ Ramsden Street Reserve |
| ■ Coulson Reserve | ■ Rudder Grange Park |
| ■ Collingwood Children's Farm | ■ Thomas Kidney Reserve |
| ■ Dights Falls | ■ Walker Street Reserve |
| ■ Fairfield Park | |

There are another nine reserves associated with waterway corridors. Seven of these are currently designated as either multi-zone or off-lead reserves (see Table 6 on page 31).

Alphington Park could possibly become a dog off-lead area, however, leaving an on-lead buffer from the wetland and water's edge.

Knotts Reserve is a waterway corridor reserve with a synthetic athletics facility on it. Due to the risk to athletes and the nature of the surface, this site would not be suitable as an off-lead area. Knotts Reserve would be better as a dog prohibited area.

³⁷ Yarra Open Space Strategy

Sporting grounds

There are nineteen sites with sporting grounds (AFL, cricket or soccer / football) in Yarra. While there is no established grading system to reflect the standard of grounds, there are a number of characteristics that indicate quality.

Generally speaking, sand based ovals and turf wickets represent higher quality grounds, and require greater maintenance at substantially higher cost. These grounds are often enclosed by wire mesh fencing. Dogs can dig up and damage sand based ovals, and the issue of dog waste is problematic to all sporting grounds.

Council recognises these constraints, however there is limited opportunity for dog off-lead exercise in the municipality. At this time, Council wishes to permit dog off-lead use on all *unfenced* sporting grounds in the City, when not in use for games, club or school training or competition, or other event. Dogs are prohibited from fenced sporting grounds³⁸.

Should Council provide synthetic sports surfaces in future, it is recommended that dogs be prohibited from these grounds as they are costly to maintain and difficult to remove dog waste from.

To maintain ground surfaces and minimise potential conflicts between dog owners and sporting clubs, it is recommended that Council (in conjunction with relevant sporting clubs) monitor dog use of ovals. Ongoing education aimed at dog owners and sport club members will be required to ensure mutual understanding, respect and responsibility between users. It is also recommended that lease agreements with sporting clubs include requirements to pick up all dog waste and to fill in holes in the playing surface, prior to club use of the grounds.

Dogs must be under effective control by means of a lead whenever a sporting ground is in use for games, club or school training or competition, or other event, as per Council's Order.

³⁸ A fenced sporting ground is enclosed by a wire mesh fence, such as Peterson Oval in Edinburgh Gardens, for example.

Additional management may be required at sporting grounds to minimise conflicts between dogs and users. This may include:

- signage to ensure owners know when and where dogs are permitted off-lead
- periodic patrols by authorised Council Officers to notify pet owners of their responsibilities and to monitor potential conflicts between dogs and sport
- provision of bins to facilitate disposal of dog waste.

How should Council respond?

1. Retain the on-lead policy for dogs in public, unless a reserve is signposted otherwise
2. Promote to residents that if there is no sign saying the area is off-lead or prohibited then the area is on-lead
3. Promote the fact that dogs can be exercised and socialized on-lead
4. Ensure sufficient signage is strategically placed so that all dog walkers are well informed about the area they are entering
5. Amend the Council Order to ensure dogs on shared paths and five metres either side are on- lead at all times, even if pathways run through off- lead areas
6. Encourage people riding or running with dogs to keep the dog on-lead or well off shared paths
7. Allow dogs to be off-lead on unfenced sporting grounds when not in use. Prohibit dogs from fenced sporting grounds at all times
8. Continue regular inspections of sports grounds, and monitor potential conflicts between dogs and sport

9. Discourage residents from tethering a dog in public
10. Stencil and / or signpost shared paths to advertise the on-lead policy and the preferred code of conduct
11. Introduce a local law restricting off-lead dogs from being within ten metres from any skate park and BMX facility
12. Change the distance an on-lead dog can be from a playground to five metres
13. Change the distance an off-lead dog can be from a playground to 20 metres
14. Prohibit cats from all dog on-lead parks in the waterway corridors, and all sites of environmental significance

6.2 Dog off-lead areas

There are a number of issues related to off-lead areas. These are the number and distribution of how these are provided, the suitability of waterway corridors as off lead areas, and the nature and design of off-lead areas.

Number and distribution of off-lead areas

There are twelve existing dog off-lead reserves or areas within reserves (multi-zone sites).

Equitable distribution of off-lead areas in Yarra is problematic. Most off-lead areas are in the north-east and south of the municipality. There is a lack of off-lead areas throughout the centre of the municipality in the suburbs of Fitzroy, Collingwood and Carlton to meet current demand.

Many residents do not have a dog off-lead area within 400m of their home, and it will not be possible to create these as there is not public open space within 400m of all households.

In the absence of sufficient off-lead space, there are several options to provide for dog off-lead exercise. These include: designated off-lead zones within on-lead parks, time scheduling parks, and off-lead reserves.

Types of off-lead areas

Anecdotal evidence suggests that with increased dog restrictions in public space, there is an increasing tendency for people to run dogs off-lead in on-lead areas. Demand has also been shown for designated areas, especially for small dogs that may need more protected environments, by some pet owners whose pets may not be well socialised, or that are seen as a threat to other people or dogs, or need some containment³⁹.

Multi-zone parks (i.e. where a park may have a designated off-lead area and the rest in on-lead) are a common solution to the demand for more off-lead space in municipalities across Victoria, in larger parks that can accommodate both uses. For Yarra, reserves classified in the Open Space Strategy as *city-wide* reserves are suitable for multi-zone functions.

Council officers in Yarra have observed that owners are more compliant in reserves that have both on and off-lead zones, compared to on-lead only reserves⁴⁰.

Time scheduling public space for off-lead dog activity (i.e. where a park or beach may be off-lead at certain hours and on-lead at other hours) has proven successful in overseas park examples including Central Park, New York; however is rarely used in Victorian parks. Due to the demand on open space in Yarra, time scheduling will be necessary to accommodate dog off-lead exercise in smaller reserves, without inhibiting other park functions from occurring. Reserves classified in the Open Space Strategy as *neighbourhood parks* are suitable for time scheduling.

Time scheduled parks should allow dog off-lead exercise before 8am and after 6pm, year round.

³⁹ McArthur, G (2006) *Meet and Greet: an etiquette guide for off-leash dog park behaviour* Gwen McArthur, QLD, Australia

⁴⁰ Council's Community Amenity Quarterly Report, February 2007

A strategy for easily identifying what area (or when an area) is off-lead will be crucial in determining the success or otherwise of these strategies. Council will need to reinforce the policy: **if there is no sign it is on-lead.**

Clear delineation of multi-zone parks is absolutely paramount, along with appropriate and adequate signage to inform off-lead regulations and time scheduling.

To improve the distribution of off-lead areas, it is considered beneficial to provide three types of off-lead opportunities:

- **off-lead reserves:** no restrictions, some regional and city-wide reserves will be suitable
- **multi-zone reserves:** designated off-lead areas within on-lead reserves, some city-wide reserves will be suitable
- **time scheduled reserves:** off-lead exercise is permitted before 8am and after 6pm, all other times the reserve is on lead; some neighbourhood reserves will be suitable

All reserves classified in the Yarra Open Space Strategy as *local* or *small local* are too small for off-lead exercise and are to remain on-lead at all times unless signposted as prohibited due to other issues, such as environmental significance. Flockhart Reserve is an exception to this rule, as it is classified as local, however is to be an off-lead reserves with no restrictions as this is how the reserve has been used previously.

The additional off-lead areas proposed in this plan have been based on internal stakeholder consultation, reserve characteristics, and location, size and proximity to existing off-lead sites.

The nature and design of off-lead areas

Apart from being off-lead, there is likely to be a demand for different types of dog parks. These might range from simply an area designated as off-lead but with no facilities to those with minimal facilities such as a drinking bowl and bins for dog waste, to those with fences, dog waste bags, specialised bins, and doggy play equipment or cafés as now found in some places.

It is desirable to provide a diversity of types of off-lead areas, that include a combination of fenced and unfenced areas, large and small spaces, areas of rough vegetation and manicured spaces for running with the dog, those that are incidentally lit (by street or sports lighting) and unlit reserves, in each precinct.

The strength of demand for fenced dog parks in Yarra is not able to be quantified. This may be something that Council surveys its constituents about. Currently there are no fenced off-lead areas in Yarra, however two are proposed for Linear Reserve and Yarra Bend Park. Fenced dog parks have proven popular in other Victorian municipalities.

Dog off-lead park hierarchy

A hierarchy of off-lead dog parks that is consistent with the catchment of the park will facilitate a diversity of types of dog parks and assist Council to provide facilities, equitably and cost effectively across the municipality, and in line with community expectations.

The top tier of the hierarchy proposed is Primary Off-lead Park; this is a park with the highest degree of accessibility, catering for users that may travel further than a short walk, and where they may expect to find a social atmosphere, meet other dogs, and have some level of support facilities such as a fence and public toilets etc. This will be Council's priority for development. The second tier is Secondary Off-lead Parks, these are likely to be smaller and have fewer facilities, while the lowest tier is Local Off-lead Parks that are not likely to have any dog specific facilities. Characteristics of each park in the proposed hierarchy are provided in Appendix 2.

Council should aim to provide two or three Primary Off-lead Parks in the municipality. Yarra Bend Park can be promoted as a Primary Off-lead Park due to its status as a Parks Victoria reserve and high level of accessibility and existing facilities. Council should also aim to provide at least one Secondary Off-lead Park in each precinct of the municipality.

Off-lead areas in waterway corridor reserves

Seven of the twelve existing off-lead areas are in waterway corridors. Table 6 shows the existing dog off-lead or multi-zone sites that are in waterway corridors.

Table 6: Dog off-lead or multi-zone sites that are in waterway corridors

Off-lead waterway corridor reserves	Multi-zone waterway corridor reserves
Burnley Park and Circus Site	Halls Reserve
Coate Park	Quarries Park
Flockhart Reserve	Yarra Bend Park ⁴¹
Kevin Bartlett Reserve	

Some off-lead areas in waterway corridors are appropriate due to the size of the space available and the demand for walking dogs in these areas. Where shared paths dissect these areas it is proposed they be on-lead. Wetland areas and riverbanks are proposed to be on-lead (except where designated otherwise).

Pet owners should be made aware that in these waterways corridors they may be in snake habitat.

How should Council respond?

1. Promote the municipality-wide on-lead policy: if there is no sign, the park is on-lead
2. Where off-lead reserves are in waterway corridors, introduce a 30m on-lead buffer from wetlands and the water's edge

⁴¹ Yarra Bend Park is managed by Parks Victoria and currently has delineated on-lead, off-lead and dog prohibited areas, which should be retained

3. Consider allocating additional off-lead areas so as to provide a relatively equitable distribution of spaces by precinct:

Existing provision of off-lead areas, and options for change by precinct are:

Precinct 1: North Carlton

- No existing off-lead areas (currently under serviced)
- Consider adding Curtain Square as a time shared off lead reserve
- It is assumed residents will continue to use dog off-lead areas in Princes Park, outside the municipality. There is a dog user group at this site

Precinct 2: North Fitzroy / Clifton Hill

- Currently very well serviced with four existing multi-zone areas: Edinburgh Gardens, Darling Gardens, Quarries Park and Hall Reserve
- Support development of fenced off-lead areas at the 'Old Silo Site' in Linear Reserve
- Consider adding Coulson Reserve as an off-lead reserve
- Change Quarries Park and Hall Reserve from multi-zone reserves to off-lead reserves
- Continue to prohibit dogs from Peterson Oval in Edinburgh Gardens

Precinct 3:Alphington / Fairfield

- Currently well serviced with existing off-lead areas in two reserves: Coate Park and areas in Yarra Bend Park (Westfield Reserve, Westfield South, Deep Rock Road, Fairlea Road and Collins Oval)
- Consider adding Alphington Park as a time share off-lead reserve (prohibit dogs from the Alphington Park wetland)
- Consider adding Fairfield Park as a dog off-lead reserve

Precinct 4:Fitzroy

- No existing off-lead areas (significantly under serviced)
- Consider adding Atherton Reserve as an off-lead area when the oval is not in use

Precinct 5:Abbotsford / Collingwood

- One existing off-lead area: Flockhart Reserve (currently under serviced)
- Consider adding Gahan Reserve as a time share reserve
- Consider adding Johnson Street Reserve as an off-lead park (a fence will be required at this site)
- Add Victoria Park as an off-lead reserve when not in use, as it is an unfenced sporting oval
- It is assumed some residents will continue to use the off-lead area at Collins Oval (within Yarra Bend Park) via the Gipps Street footbridge (outside the municipality)

Precinct 6:Richmond

- Two existing off-lead areas: Citizens Park and Burnley Park & Circus Site (currently under serviced)
- No additional off-lead areas recommended as alternative reserves in the precinct are too small
- It is assumed some residents will continue to use off-lead areas in Yarra Park and around Richmond Cricket Oval, outside the municipality

Precinct 7:Burnley

- One existing multi-zone area at Barkly Gardens, and one off-lead area at Kevin Bartlett Reserve
- Change Barkly Gardens from multi-zone to time share
- Change Kevin Bartlett Reserve from off-lead to multi-zone
- Consider adding McConchie Reserve as a time share reserve
- Consider adding Loys Paddock as an off-lead reserve

4. Allow dogs off-lead on sporting grounds when not in use for games, club or school training or competition, or other event
5. Undertake additional management measures at sporting grounds to articulate dog off-lead regulations and manage ground surfaces
6. Maintain a diversity of different types and hierarchy of dog friendly parks in the City
7. Monitor demand for fenced dog off-lead areas, and introduce the two fenced enclosures as proposed

8. Trial a fenced off-lead area in the south of the municipality, if demand arises
9. Review existing delineations at multi-zone parks
10. Prepare a map of off-lead parks and zones for publishing, and distribute to all dog services in the City
11. Classify dog off-lead parks according to the proposed hierarchy and promote what users may expect to find at each
12. Ensure facilities are incrementally brought in line with the hierarchy of dog off-lead parks
13. Make pet owners aware that in waterway corridors they may be in snake habitat

6.3 Areas where cats and dogs are prohibited

Currently dogs are prohibited from seven reserves in Yarra:

- McNamara Reserve, Batman Reserve, Edwardes Place, Garry Owen Park and Whittlam Place
(Dog use is excluded at these sites as the reserves are too small)
- Urban Arts Square (corner Punt and Bridge Road)
(Dog use is excluded, because of the site's civic function)
- Cairn's Reserve
(Dog use is excluded because of habitat value)

Civic and Habitat reserves

Cairns Reserve and Urban Arts Square are best changed to on-lead, in line with the municipal wide on-lead policy. Having a dog on-lead in these areas is not considered detrimental to their primary function.

Small reserves

Dog off-lead exercise in small reserves can cause conflict with other park users, and may prevent some potential users from visiting the reserve (i.e. older adults who may be fearful of dogs)⁴². For this reason, dogs should be on-lead in small reserves as a general rule, where 'small' refers to any park classified as local or small local in the Yarra Open Space Strategy.

Environmentally significant areas

Yarra has a number of sites of environmental significance⁴³. However cats and dogs are currently not excluded from these areas.

⁴² McArthur, G (2006) "Meet and Greet- an etiquette guide for off leash dog park behaviour" Gwen McArthur, Australia

⁴³ Yarra Open Space Strategy

Cats and dogs can damage environmentally significant areas by traumatising, injuring or killing small birds and animals; trampling flora; and disturbing or causing erosion on the edges of water courses. Hence pets should be formally excluded from these areas. Reasons and associated benefits for restricting pets from these areas should be promoted.

Sections 25a, 26a and 42a of the *Domestic (Feral & Nuisance) Animals Act 1994* outline Council's options regarding cat restrictions, by:

- restricting the hours which a cat may be off its owner's property
- prohibiting cats from entering specified public areas in the City
- prohibiting or restricting cat ownership in areas of the municipality where threatened native fauna are at risk of attack

The Wildlife Act 1975- Section 48 also addresses issues of cats and dogs in environmentally significant areas and wildlife.

Whilst cats are not often walked, it would be beneficial to restrict cats wandering into significant areas, and enable Council to have cats (both domestic and stray / feral) removed from them. Trapping of cats in environmentally significant areas, either during the day or overnight, would be a responsibility of the Habitat Management Officer at Council.

How should Council respond?

1. Ensure dogs are on-lead in all reserves classified as local and small local
2. Exclude pets from environmentally significant areas
3. Allow cat trapping (domestic and stray / feral) in areas of environmental significance
4. Enforce the Wildlife Act 1975- Section 48

6.4 Dog waste

The presence of dog waste in public places is one of the primary causes of complaint to Council. Dog waste is a serious environmental and health issue, it is a concern for sports ground and park users, and it is a major source of contamination.

Droppings may contain harmful bacteria that can transmit diseases to humans. Nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphate from faeces can also stimulate weed growth⁴⁴.

To overcome waste management issues, all dog owners should carry more than one plastic bag when off private property, to clean up after their dog. Fines can be issued for not having a bag.

Bag dispensers have already been introduced in selected parks and reserves in Yarra. Council currently spends in order of \$25,000 annually on bag provision. The demand for bags appears to be increasing with community consultation identifying that the number of bag dispensers and the frequency of plastic bag restocking is not sufficient⁴⁵.

To enhance this service it is proposed that dedicated animal waste bins be installed next to all existing Council bins in its parks and gardens. It is believed this will assist in reducing the amount of dog faeces in the parks and gardens by eliminating the need for the owners to carry the faeces home, while improving the amenity of the area for those who use the parks and gardens.

Currently dog faeces deposited in normal waste bins has prevented Council recycling the waste collected and the dedicated animal bins will now allow the waste in the normal waste bins to be recycled.

In the annual mail out of animal registration, Council has included an information sheet informing the owners of the availability of free pooper

⁴⁴ www.dpi.vic.gov.au

⁴⁵ Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006

scoopers (and bags) available at the three town halls on presentation of the leaflet.

Education, incentives and communication can establish local ownership and policing of 'pick-up' requirements at off-leash reserves, at relatively small cost. The provision of incentives and rewards is an effective way to encourage picking up and disposing of dog waste. For example, rewards could include a gift voucher, movie tickets or pet services etc.

In conjunction with providing incentives and rewards for good behaviour; where non compliance is detected Council should provide 'swift and decisive' enforcement action where appropriate under the Ask, Tell and Enforce philosophy, once the necessary signage is in place.

Due to the high transient population of Yarra, it will be important to maintain education programs.

How should council respond?

1. Promote the requirement for owners to "pick up" after their dogs, and dispose of waste appropriately (in the dedicated animal waste bin, or take it home)
2. Install dedicated animal waste bins next to all existing waste bins in Council's parks and gardens.
3. Ensure all owners are reminded to carry a sufficient supply of plastic bags with them, and to pick up and dispose of dog waste
4. Provide a annual one off supply of pooper scoopers and plastic bags to registered owners to be collected at the town halls.
5. Ensure bins are placed in all parks permitting dog access
6. Fine dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs
7. Where possible provide taps for owners to wash their hands

6.5 Monitoring compliance

Two levels of enforcement are proposed following a communication strategy to encourage people to behave responsibly:

- provide incentives for, and reward, good behaviour
- monetary fines for bad behaviour

Cyclical educational programs outlining regulations and the associated benefits of those are also recommended.

Patrols

Council undertakes periodic patrols to observe the behaviour of dog owners in public spaces, and encourage dialogue with people and their pets. Extra patrols are undertaken outside of work hours, and in excess of the required 64 patrol hours. During patrols officers have found that in general⁴⁶:

- owners carry pick-up devices, however do not always use them
- owners are generally compliant in reserves that have both on and off-lead zones
- dogs off-lead are often sighted in reserves that only permit on-lead exercise

Previously Council has used various incentives to promote and reward good behaviour observed during patrols. Rewards in the past have included free pooper-scoopers, movie passes and gift vouchers⁴⁷.

An on going education program has been undertaken by Council where owners found not doing the right thing were issued with a verbal warning and in some cases given a 'pooper scooper'⁴⁸. Whilst education programs should continue, Council should now enforce the legislation by providing 'swift and decisive' enforcement action where appropriate.

⁴⁶ Council's Community Amenity Quarterly Report, February 2007

⁴⁷ Council's Community Amenity Quarterly Report, February 2007

⁴⁸ Council's Community Amenity Quarterly Report, February 2007

Registration and renewal follow-ups

Annual surveys are one method of gauging accurate rates of cat and dog ownership. The survey could target rental accommodation and public housing where registration may be less likely.

Annual door knock should continue in September / October throughout the municipality for the purpose of identifying unregistered dogs and cats and animals whose registration has not been renewed.

Rewards for having a registered dog may be issued. Warnings and incentives may be provided to register other pets.

Telephone interviews may also be useful to target residents who have not renewed their pet's registration, to determine why.

Information gained throughout these processes can provide useful benchmarking information to inform Council of the extent and nature of education programs required.

Fines

Council currently has authority under state legislation and local laws to issue fines and other notices.

Existing animal related Local Laws as outlined in *Roads and Council Land Local Law, No.2 of 2002*, and *Environmental Local Law, No. 3 of 2002* are satisfactory. At this stage it is believed current penalty units per offence is sufficient deterrent to obtain over all compliance once Council commences enforcement of the legislation; this can be revisited at the annual review of the Animal Management Plan.

6.6 Evaluation of animal services

Performance indicators are required to monitor Council's role regarding animal management, both in terms of the DAMP requirements as set out by the Department of Primary Industries, and resident perceptions regarding animal facilities and maintenance in the municipality.

DAMP requirements

Performance indicators required to monitor Council's role in facilitating Domestic Animal Management include:

- Rates of cat and dog registration (compared to rates of cat and dog ownership)
- Number and type of animal requests
- Number of dog attacks causing injury per 1,000 population
- Total percentage of cats and dogs impounded each year, and the outcome (percentage reclaimed, re-housed and destroyed)
- Total percentage of cats trapped each year, and the outcome (percentage reclaimed, re-housed and destroyed)
- Declared dog compliance rates
- Rates of compliance during patrols

Council should seek to prepare a realistic target (considering the high transient population) for each item above and compare these targets to actual results each year. Services contracted to other providers should request any necessary statistics and information in any service agreement with the providers. Services currently provided by the Lost Dogs Home includes provision of this necessary information.

Performance indicators should be collected annually and results be reviewed every three years. Alternatively, indicators could be collected monthly and results reviewed annually.

Details of the performance indicators and targets used to monitor the DAMP requirements are outlined in Attachment 1- Key performance indicators.

Resident perceptions

It is highly desirable that Council monitor the demand for pet services and facilities. This can be achieved through distribution of a household survey on a biennial basis. The survey should seek to monitor resident satisfaction of Council's animal management services and processes for dealing with animal related issues.

The survey should include questions about:

- satisfaction with Council's procedure for addressing animal complaints and queries
- the perceived presence of stray and feral animals in the neighbourhood
- satisfaction with Council's provision of dog facilities
- satisfaction with Council's maintenance of dog facilities
- where residents go to walk dogs
- where residents would like to go to walk dogs, but can't, and why
- conflicts experienced with other park users
- other comments

Training and development

Currently Council provides animal management services under contract to the Lost Dogs Home and as such requires all rangers and staff be appropriately qualified to undertake such work. This training and development requirement will continue to ensure Council officers are able to manage issues raised by the community effectively.

Details of the training and development program are outlined in attachment 2- Animal Management Officer training and development.

How should council respond?

1. Undertake cyclical education and awareness campaigns about animal management regulations
2. Continue to provide patrols:
 - issue rewards for good owner behaviour and fines for bad owner behaviour where appropriate
3. Seek to monitor pet registration rates through the annual door knock
4. Continue to gauge residents' attitudes and preferences through biennial surveys. Monitor residents' perceived importance and performance of Council's animal management services
5. Include 'monitoring of performance' in any animal management contracts, where services are contracted to external providers
6. Maintain a staff training and development program with an appropriate service provider

7. Implementation Plan

Implementation responsibilities are divided between four parts of Council: City Development Division (City DD), Asset Management Division (AMD), the Habitat Management aspect of the Asset Management Division (HM), and the Community Development Division (Comm DD).

Topic	Actions:	Lead Role	Timeline
Pet Partners	1 Communicate the following information about pets to residents (using a range of hard copy and electronic information), and open dialogue with pet owners and stakeholders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council's role in pet management and who does what - Possible options to address pet related requests (if the complainant feels comfortable) before going to Council, and what process to follow - Details and contact numbers of pet related services in the City, and other partners who may assist - Cat and Dog prohibited areas, and dog on and off-lead areas 	Comm. DD	
	2 Collect information to provide more representative cat and dog ownership figures, as per the DAMP requirements Seek to monitor pet registration statistics, especially in public housing	City DD	
	3 Review opportunities and methods for evaluating animal control services	City DD	
	4 Maintain current role in animal management (may need to enhance management due to increasing demand on public open space)	All	

Topic	Actions:	Lead Role	Timeline
Benefits of Pets	1 Provide information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the benefits of (responsible) pet ownership - opportunities to walk and socialise dogs (e.g. advertise dog walking groups within the municipality) - how pet owners can help others who cannot own a pet - how to support working dogs in their role, to residents and businesses - choosing the right pet 	Comm. DD	
	2 Continue to identify pet partners; and foster partnerships with animal businesses operating in Yarra to assist dissemination of pet information	Comm. DD	

Topic	Actions:	Lead Role	Timeline
Responsible Pet Ownership	1 Make information about all aspects of responsible pet ownership available in a range of forms (hard copy and electronic), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how to choose the right pet - promote ways for pet owners to find the right type of accommodation that will suit them, and ways renters can responsibly keep pets - provide residents and pet shops (and other places where pets are purchased/adopted) with information about what and how many pets a permit is required for, and how to apply for additional pets - why not to feed stray and feral animals and birds - to report stray and feral animals to Council - the benefits of pet de-sexing - the benefits of cats being kept inside over night, and feral animals being trapped - the need to keep cats and dogs under effective control when outside their owners property - the need to "pick up" after dogs, and to carry plastic bags - why dogs bark and ways to prevent barking, and how to keep pets active, socialised and healthy - ways in which people should approach unfamiliar dogs - dogs of restricted breed - promote a "No Cost Surrender" program 	Comm. DD	
	2 Promote a contact in Council to provide pet related information, and to respond to pet related queries	City DD	
	3 Continue to limit the number of pets allowed in flats or units (without a permit)	City DD	
	4 Monitor the pigeon population when required e.g. near food premises and consider intervention as required.	City DD	
	5 Introduce mandatory cat de-sexing and confinement at night	City DD	
	6 Undertake trapping of stray and feral animals on Council land (after community education about its benefits)	City DD	
	7 Provide incentives to encourage owners to register their pets, e.g. free pooper scoopers, promotion of government or stakeholder registration incentive schemes etc	City DD	
	8 Continue to promote the need to micro chip pets; and organise and promote annual microchipping days throughout the municipality (include public housing locations)	City DD	
	9 Promote and where possible subsidise pet vaccination	City DD	
	10 Survey a sample of past pet owners who haven't renewed their pet's registration	City DD	
	11 Manage dogs of restricted breed in accordance with the Domestic (Feral and Nuisance) Animals Act 1994 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maintain a register of dogs of restricted breed 	City. DD	
	12 Ensure dogs of restricted breed are declared through the registration process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote the "Dob in a Restricted Breed Dog" Program 	City DD	

Topic	Actions:	Lead Role	Timeline
	13 Undertake annual audits of the premises of declared dogs, to check for security and housing compliance	City DD	
Pets other than Cats and Dogs	1 Make information regarding keeping pets other than cats and dogs, including links to relevant Acts and regulations, available on the Council website	City DD	
	2 Allow residents in flats and units to keep up to two rodents and two reptiles without a permit	City DD	

Topic	Actions:	Lead Role	Timeline
Minimising Conflict between People and Pets in Open Space	1 Promote: - the municipal wide on-lead policy: that if there is no sign saying the area is off-lead, then the area is on-lead - the fact that dogs can be exercised and socialised on-lead - if running or riding on a shared path, to keep the dog on-lead or well away from the path - not to tether dogs in public	Comm.D	
	2 Clearly signpost dog off-lead and dog prohibited regulations at all entry points to relevant sites	AMD	
	3 Amend the Council Order to ensure dogs on shared paths and five metres either side are on-lead at all times	City DD	
	4 Create a map showing cat and dog zones and animal related businesses and services throughout the municipality (and neighbouring municipalities where applicable). Publish on the Council website, and distribute to animal stakeholder groups in the City	AMD	
	5 Update the Council Order and introduce new Local Laws to reflect: - proposed dog on and off-lead areas; and cat and dog prohibited areas (including 30m on-lead buffer from wetlands and water's edge) - dogs on shared paths and 2 metres either side are on-lead at all times, even if the pathway runs through an off-lead area; and restricting off-lead dogs from within ten metres of picnic, skate, and BMX facilities, and five and twenty metres of unfenced playgrounds in on-lead and off-lead reserves respectively - prohibit dogs from fenced sport grounds at all times; and allow dogs off-lead on all other sport grounds when not in use for games, club or school training or competition, or other event	City DD / AMD	
	6 Install signage at sporting grounds to identify when and where dogs are permitted off-lead	AMD	
	7 Undertake additional management measures at sporting grounds where dog off-lead exercise is permitted	City DD	
	8 Stencil and or sign shared paths to advertise the on-lead policy and preferred code of conduct	AMD	

Topic	Actions:	Lead Role	Timeline
	9 Update the Council Order to prohibit cats from all dog on-lead parks in the waterway corridor, and all sites of environmental significance	City DD	
	10 Maintain a diversity of different types and hierarchy of dog friendly parks in the City - support the development of fenced dog off-lead areas at the 'Old Silo Site' within Linear Reserve	All divisions	On going
	11 Classify dog off-lead parks according to the proposed hierarchy, and promote what users may expect to find at each - phase out the provision of dog waste bags, specialised dog waste bins and bag dispensers in parks - ensure there are park bins adjacent to all off-lead areas - ensure facilities are incrementally brought in line with the hierarchy of dog off-lead parks - monitor demand for fenced dog off-lead areas - trial a fenced dog off-lead are in the south of the City	AMD	
	12 Consider allocating additional off-lead areas so as to provide a relatively equitable distribution of spaces by precinct	AMD	
	13 Review existing delineations at multi-zone parks	AMD	
	12 Prepare a map of off-lead areas for publishing, and distribute to all dog services in the City - update the "Dogs in Public- your rights and responsibilities" brochure with current information, and widely disseminate to residents, animal related businesses and other relevant animal stakeholder groups	AMD	
	13 Make pet owners aware that in waterway corridors they may be in snake habitat	Comm DD	
	14 Undertake cat trapping (domestic and stray/feral) in environmentally significant areas	HM	
	15 Enforce the provisions outlines in the Wildlife Act 1975- Section 48	HM/City DD	
	16 Utilise available information resources on dog waste management (eg. kits, tips, mock fines) from advisory and peak bodies such as the RSPCA and Victorian Litter Association Alliance	City DD	
	17 Run community education campaigns about animal related policies and their benefits (such as keeping cats indoors overnight and reporting stray animals to Council, carrying enough plastic bags etc), e.g. phone on-hold messages, displays at Council Libraries and school programs etc	Comm. DD / City DD	
	18 Undertake a biennial household survey to evaluate animal services and resident satisfaction. The survey is to monitor perceived importance and performance of Council's animal management services	City DD	
	19 Undertake an annual door knock and telephone calls to gauge rates of pet registration	City DD	
	20 Continue to undertake regular patrols to monitor park use and owner compliance - issue rewards for good owner behaviour and fines for bad owner behaviour	City DD	
	21 Include 'monitoring of performance' in any animal management contracts, where services are contracted to external providers	City DD	
	22 Maintain a staff training and development program with the Lost Dogs Home	City DD	

APPENDIX 1: Indicative 400m catchment around dog off-lead parks, and precinct boundaries

INSERT MAP HERE

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APPENDIX 2: Dog off-lead park hierarchy

The following table illustrates the nature of dog off-lead facilities and associated characteristics, which Council will work towards and residents can expect to find (in time) at each level of the hierarchy.

Hierarchy:	Characteristics
Primary	Fence to fully enclose the area enabling dogs to roam freely
	Double gate entrance to the park (effectively creating an interim holding pen) to keep dogs from escaping whilst facilitating wheelchair access
	Prominent and accessible location
	Frequent maintenance
	Large open area for running
	An area and outdoor furniture that is accessible for people with a disability
	Likely co-location with other social/ family recreation facilities such as BBQ, Picnic, sport or play areas
	Potential co-location with dog obedience club, dog agility equipment and café
	Signs at all entrances outlining that it is an off-lead area, and the park rules
	Dedicated animal waste bins next to existing park bins in close proximity to the entrance for the correct disposal of dog droppings
	Drinking fountains with fitted dog bowls at its base in close proximity to the entrance
	A public toilet or tap in close proximity to support hand washing
	Off-street car parking should be in close proximity
	Seating and shade
Future access by shared pathway	
Secondary	Signs at all entrances outlining that it is an off-lead area and relevant times, and the park rules
	Frequent maintenance
	Large open area for running
	Dedicated animal waste bins next to existing park bins in close proximity to the entrance and off lead areas for the correct disposal of dog droppings
	Drinking fountains with fitted dog bowls at its base in close proximity to the entrance
Local	Seating and shade
	Signs at all entrances outlining that it is an off-lead area and relevant times, and the park rules
	Park bins in close proximity to the entrance for the correct disposal of dog droppings

APPENDIX 3: Numbers of pets allowed to be kept without a permit

Maximum number of animals permitted (without a permit) in flats and units, by type of animal

Type of animal	Maximum allowed
Dogs- over six months old	1
Dogs- under six months old	3
Cats- over three months old	1
Cats- under three months old	3
Birds	2
Cold water and tropical gold fish	Unlimited
Any other animal species	Allowed, subject to permit

Maximum number of animals permitted (without a permit) in dwellings other than flats and units, by type of animal

Type of animal	Maximum allowed
Dogs- over six months old	2
Dogs- under six months old	4
Cats- over three months old	2
Cats- under three months old	4
Birds	5
Poultry	5
Reptiles	2
Ferrets, guineapigs, rabbits or mice	2
Cold water and tropical gold fish	Unlimited
Any other animal species	Allowed, subject to permit

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APPENDIX 4: Comments from the community consultation⁴⁹

Resident comments and general comments regarding specific parks, as noted in the *Yarra Open Space Strategy, 2006*, are listed below.

Alphington Park:

- Off-lead zone required

Barkly Gardens:

- Needs improved dog off-lead policy
- Dog access arrangements work well- perhaps consider this in other open spaces

Burnley Park and Oval:

- Has been invaded by off-lead dogs

Carlton Gardens:

- Dog off lead area required
- Cyclists should be permitted
- Recent discussions between City of Melbourne and the City of Yarra have identified that the City of Melbourne are looking for alternative locations for dog walking outside Carlton Gardens, and were seeking the views of the City of Yarra on other reserves nearby where dog walking may be possible for residents of both neighbourhoods.

Open space in Fitzroy is extremely limited and the only location in which this may be possible to provide would be in Atherton Reserve, however, it will need to be compatible with the other uses proposed in a Neighbourhood park. This is a good example of constructive liaison between the two municipalities on balancing open space needs for residents of both municipalities within the existing network.

Citizen's Park:

- Dog waste not picked up, and is an issue

Curtain Square:

- Don't visit this reserve because there is no off-lead area

Dame Nellie Melba Park:

- Has lots of dog waste at times

Darling Gardens:

- Don't visit because of dogs in the reserve
- Don't visit because of dog waste in the reserve
- Dogs near the playground are a problem
- Needs designated dog off-lead area

⁴⁹ City of Yarra Open Space Study 2006

Edinburgh Gardens:

- Stray dogs a problem
- Don't visit because of dangerous stray dogs
- Don't visit because the reserve is too busy
- Edinburgh Gardens should have dog off-lead areas
- Continuation of the off-lead area recommended
- Dog-free zones required
- Edinburgh Gardens should be dog on-lead for the safety of other open space users
- More dog waste facilities required
- Appreciate the dog drinking facilities
- Dog waste on ovals is an issue for kids playing there

Gipps St Park:

- Don't visit because dogs are off-lead and I feel unsafe

Merri Creek Reserve:

- Don't visit with dogs because of dangerous cyclists

Princess Park:

- Has well behaved dogs and owners
- Needs improved dog facilities

Quarries Park:

- Playground area should be free of dogs

Shakespeare St Park:

- Lots of dog waste is not picked up

Yarra Bend Park:

- Don't visit because there are no off-lead areas

Yarra River Linear Park:

- Dog waste facilities are required all along the Yarra
- Dog river access points are required to prevent erosion
- Dogs off-lead cause hazard for cyclists