

# Domestic Animal Management Plan



2012-2016



“ The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated ”

*Mahatma Gandhi*





<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Purpose of this domestic animal management plan</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>The City of Melton – demographics and profile</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Training of Authorised Officers</b>	<b>07</b>
	Context	07
	Current and Planned Training	08
	Our Plans	09
<b>5</b>	<b>Registration and Identification</b>	<b>10</b>
	Current Situation / Our Current Data	10
	Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies And Procedures	10
	Our Current Education/Promotion Activities	11
	Summary	12
	Our Plans	13
<b>6</b>	<b>Nuisance</b>	<b>14</b>
	Current Situation / Our Current Data	14
	Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies And Procedures	14
	Our Current Education/Promotion Activities	15
	Our Current Compliance Activities	15
	Summary	15
	Our Plans	16
<b>7</b>	<b>Dog Attacks</b>	<b>17</b>
	Current Situation / Our Current Data	17
	Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies And Procedures	17
	Our Current Education/Promotion Activities	18
	Our Current Compliance Activities	18
	Summary	18
	Our Plans	19
<b>8</b>	<b>Dangerous, Menacing And Restricted Breed Dogs</b>	<b>20</b>
	Current Situation / Our Current Data	20
	Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies And Procedures	20
	Our Current Education/Promotion Activities	20
	Our Current Compliance Activities	20
	Summary	21
	Our Plans	21
<b>9</b>	<b>Overpopulation and High Euthanasia</b>	<b>22</b>
	Current Situation / Our Current Data	22
	Rates Of Returning/Re-Housing Dogs	22
	Rates Of Returning/Re-Housing Cats	22
	Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies And Procedures	22
	Our Current Education/Promotion Activities	23
	Our Current Compliance Activities	23
	Summary	23
	Our Plans	23
<b>10</b>	<b>Domestic Animal Businesses</b>	<b>25</b>
	Current Situation / Our Current Data	25
	Our Orders, Local Laws and Council Policies and Procedures	25
	Our current Compliance Activities	25
	Summary	26
	Our Plans	26
<b>11</b>	<b>Other Matters</b>	<b>27</b>
	Current Situation / Our Current Data	27
	Our Orders, Local Laws and Council Policies and Procedures	27
	Our current Compliance Activities	27
	Summary	27
	Our Plans	27
<b>12</b>	<b>Annual Review of plan and annual reporting</b>	<b>28</b>



Under Section 68A of the Domestic Animals Act, every Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan, as follows:

**68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans**

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (of the Department of Primary Industries), prepare at 4 year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
- (2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
  - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and
  - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and
  - (c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—
    - (i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
    - (ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
    - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
    - (iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
    - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
    - (vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
    - (vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and
  - (d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and
  - (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
  - (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.
- (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.



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act) requires that each municipal council prepare an animal management plan. Melton City Council supports that strategic approach and has therefore developed this plan in accordance with the legislative guidelines. The Plan will allow the Council to undertake a consistent approach to animal management issues throughout the municipality by providing a strategic planning focus to the activities undertaken by the Local Laws unit in relation to domestic animal management.

There is increasing public view that punitive enforcement of laws alone will not result in lasting voluntary changes in behaviour. Therefore, enforcement of the Act and Local Laws should be balanced with media and public education material for responsible animal management.

In this plan, Council has sought to balance the competing needs of animal owners, the broader community and the domestic animals that share people's lives. Council also recognises the positive health and wellbeing outcomes that arise from domestic animals ownership. It is expected over the life of the plan there will be measurable improvements in animal welfare, responsible domestic animal ownership and compliance with relevant legislation. The programs and activities set out in the plan have therefore been developed with the aim to encourage more people to enjoy the pleasure derived from animal companionship, within a framework of responsible ownership.

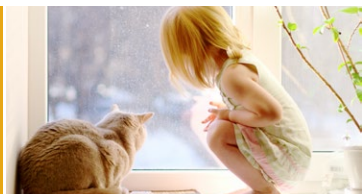
## 2 PURPOSE OF THIS DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to develop and implement a range of approaches that will:

- Improve animal management in general;
- Educate our community about responsible pet ownership;
- Ensure that satisfactory levels of compliance with legislation and community standards are established and maintained;
- Maximise the benefits to the community that may be gained by owning companion animals;
- Minimise the number of domestic animals being handed in/brought in to animal shelters; and
- Minimise the number of domestic animals facing euthanasia annually.

Through engaging with our community, Council seeks to improve the working, living and recreational environments of our municipality by providing a range of services and facilities that meet or exceed community expectations. Council's Local Laws unit underpins its service delivery and approach to animal management issues in order:

- To create an environment where people and domestic animals can peacefully coexist within the community;
- To proactively inform and educate the community about the needs of companion animals and promote responsible domestic animals ownership;
- To proactively ensure that the needs of the wider community are reflected through Council's domestic animal management policies;
- To protect the community and the environment from feral and nuisance dogs and cats;
- Enable a program for registration and identification of dogs and cats which recognises and promotes responsible animal ownership;
- To identify and control restricted breed, dangerous and menacing dogs;
- To develop a scheme for domestic animal businesses which promotes the maintenance of standards of those businesses; and
- Matters related to the boarding of dogs and cats.



### 3 THE CITY OF MELTON – DEMOGRAPHICS AND PROFILE

The City of Melton has a population of about 122,000 - projected to rise to 143,710 by the year 2017 and is located in the outer western fringe of Melbourne, about 40 kilometres west of the Melbourne GPO. The City of Melton is bounded by Moorabool Shire in the west, Macedon Ranges Shire in the north, Hume and Brimbank Cities in the east and Wyndham City in the south. The City of Melton includes the suburbs and localities of Brookfield, Burnside, Burnside Heights, Caroline Springs, Diggers Rest (part), Exford, Eynesbury (part), Hillside, Kurunjang, Melton, Melton South, Melton West, Mount Cottrell (part), Parwan (part), Plumpton, Ravenhall, Rockbank, Taylors Hill, Toolern Vale and Truganina (part).

Under the Melbourne 2030 strategy, the Victorian Government approved Toolern, a new development area south of Melton Township, as one of Victoria's major new growth centres within the Urban Growth Boundary. Toolern will be an entirely new community and home to up to 100,000 people over the next 20 years.

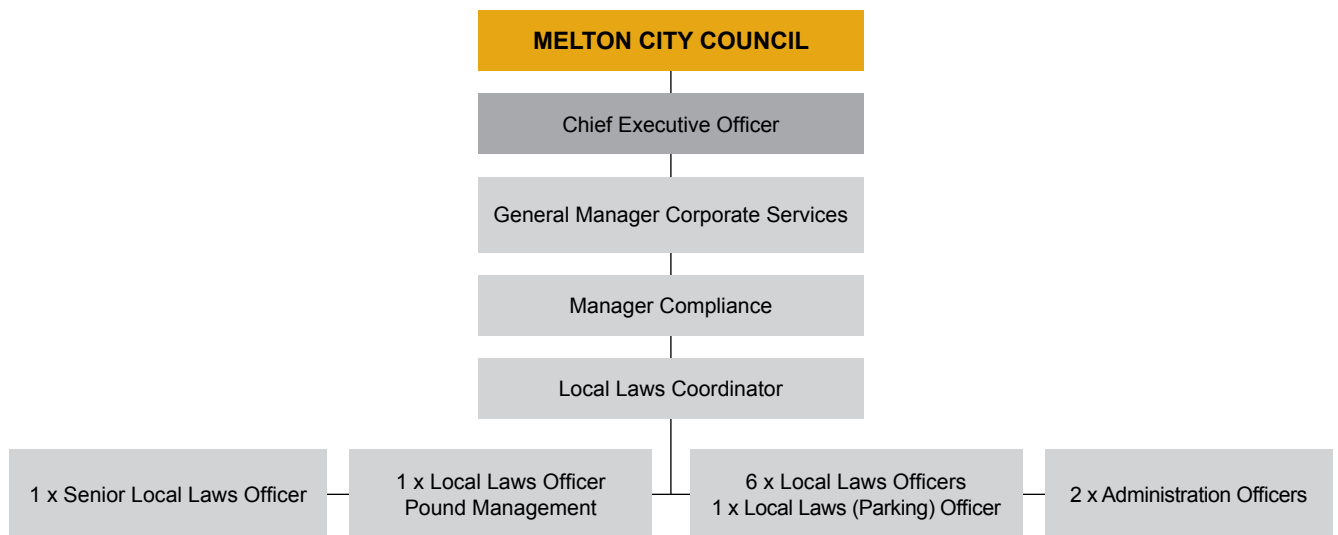
Melton City offers an affordable blend of urban and rural living opportunities within its 528 square kilometre boundary. There are planning provisions in place to ensure that the City retains this unique character as it grows to become a major regional centre within the next two decades.



## 4 TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

### CONTEXT

Animal management functions at the City of Melton are conducted by the Local Laws unit, which has responsibility for most of Council's compliance functions. These functions also include administration and regulation of Parking, Disabled Persons Parking Scheme, School Crossings, Local Laws (e.g. permits, building sites, abandoned vehicles, street selling and collections, animal control etc), Livestock and Litter. The Local Laws unit sits within the Compliance group. The organisational relationship is shown below.



### Domestic Animal Data (based on 2011/12 year)

Category	Quantity
Registered Dogs	14,652
Registered Cats	3,697
Registered Domestic Animal Businesses	10
Dangerous Dog (Attack)	2
Dangerous Dog (Guard)	1
Menacing Dog	3
Restricted Breed (September 2011 legislation)	12



**CURRENT AND PLANNED TRAINING**

Authorised Officer Training - Basic	Current (2012/13)	Planned
<b>Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation</b>		
Officer 1	Commenced	
Officer 2	Commenced	
Officer 3	Commenced	
Officer 4		Commence 2013
Officer 5		Commence 2014
Officer 6		Commence 2015
Officer 7	Commenced	
<b>Certificate IV in Government (Statutory Compliance)</b>		
Officer 1	Commenced	
Officer 2	Commenced	
Officer 3	Commenced	
Officer 4		Commence 2013
Officer 5		Commence 2014
Officer 6		Commence 2015
Officer 7	Commenced	
<b>OH&amp;S training – dealing with aggressive customers and conflict resolution</b>		
All Officers	Refresher training undertaken by all officers bi-yearly	
<b>Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days</b>		
All Officers	As required, officers to attend alternate sessions	
Induction program for new staff	As required	
<b>Firearms training</b>		
Officers holding firearms licence	Half day refresher training on a yearly basis.	Yearly
<b>Authorised Officer Training - Additional</b>		
<b>Industry training – time management</b>		
All Officers	As part of the Corporate Training program	Yearly
<b>Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government Professionals – training and information days</b>		
All Officers	As required	





## OUR PLANS

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work by encouraging those staff to:

- Undertake relevant educational training;
- Attend in-service days provided by relevant industry bodies.

**Objective 1:** Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by Authorised Officers.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff	By 30 September 2013	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training policy
Identify additional training opportunities by consultation with management and staff	By 30 September 2013	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved council training policy

**Objective 2:** Develop and maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training by September 2013.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a spreadsheet listing each officer's name, and their completed training, along with proposed training	By September 2013	Quarterly review of spreadsheet, to ensure its accuracy and to determine whether proposed training goals have been met for each officer

**Objective 3:** Ensure all Authorised Officers have completed their minimum training requirements within three months of appointment.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements for officers (e.g. OH&S, animal handling), and create document to record when officers have completed each course	By December 2013	Monthly review spreadsheet and ensure each officer has completed their minimum training requirements within three months of appointment



## 5 REGISTRATION & IDENTIFICATION

### CURRENT SITUATION / OUR CURRENT DATA

The rate of registration in Melton City is comparable with like Councils across the western region.

Experience throughout Victoria has shown that higher levels of registration generally lead to higher levels of overall compliance with animal management requirements.

Generally, registered animals are returned to their owners quicker and therefore the process becomes more cost effective. This is because officers can instantly identify the animal from its registration tag/microchip and then contact the owner to arrange immediate return. Being able to return animals in this way saves costs for both the council and the owner. Council is constantly seeking ways to increase the ratio of dogs and cats that are registered to the number that are not registered and comply with State Government legislation. To increase registrations and identification of animals Council proposes to:

- promote the benefits of animal registration;
- establish procedures for domestic animal businesses to notify Council of any animals sold or given away as required by Section 13 of the Domestic Animals Act 1994;
- continue the annual animal audit by door knocking all premises in the municipality; and
- review annually the animal registration fees.

When the State Government created the Domestic Animals Act, they recognised that the cost to councils of providing animal management services would significantly increase. They therefore created registration fees as a means of ensuring that the costs could be recovered from the principal users of these services – domestic pet owners.

Feedback to Council advocates that more should be done to ensure animals are registered, so that the cost of providing additional services can be offset.

### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 11th August 2011, Council resolved to introduce a Local Law that requires all cats to be de-sexed prior to registration.

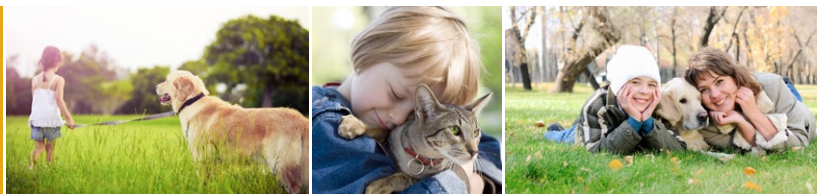
Melton Shire Council General Local Law 2005

Part 6 Division 1 – Keeping of Animals

602 Dogs – Permit required to keep more than 2 dogs on land over 3 months of age.

603 Cats - Permit required to keep more than 2 cats on land over 3 months of age.

603A Responsible Breeding, Sale, Transfer and Ownership of Cats



### OUR CURRENT EDUCATION / PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Use Council's website to provide information to residents on when registration is due, how and where to register, fee structure, registration form, what information they need to provide (e.g. microchipping, desexing certificates), letting Council know they are no longer the owner, have changed address or the pet is deceased. Highlight renewal period on website in March and April.

Use media releases and/or paid advertising to advise residents of registration requirements, including renewal date and animals to which a reduced fee applies, in local paper, Council newsletters, on local radio, prior to start of renewal period (e.g. in March and April) – (to be implemented).

When requested or required to, Authorised Officers provide instruction in responsible pet ownership and animal dog behaviour to residents. Topics covered are:

- responsibilities of dog or cat ownership;
- selecting a breed that is appropriate to their lifestyle and home environment;
- adopting a dog or cat from Council's adoption programme, the Lort Smith Animal Hospital, the Lost Dogs' Home or the RSPCA;
- identifying and registering their dog or cat;
- vaccinating their dog or cat;
- desexing their dog or cat;
- socialising their dog or cat around other animals and humans;
- undertaking appropriate obedience training;
- confining their dog or cat to their property; and
- exercising their dog.

Provide for online registration/renewal.

Provide for a range of registration payment methods – cash, cheque, credit card or BPay.

In conjunction with Melton City Council's Djerrwarrh Festival, on parade day the Local Laws unit promotes responsible pet ownership by providing microchipping and registration service.

“ Questers of the truth, that's who dogs are; seekers after the invisible scent of another being's authentic core ”

*Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson*



## OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Animal management functions at the City of Melton are conducted by the Local Laws unit, which has responsibility for most of Council's compliance activities. Current activities include:

- Domestic Animal Complaints – dog attacks, wandering dogs, nuisance complaints;
- Patrol public places - proactive and reactive;
- Domestic Animal Business Inspections – conducted annually;
- Follow up registration for animals notified as sold by domestic animal businesses – by letter, phone call, visit, if owner fails to register;
- Dangerous Dogs and Restricted Breed Inspections – conducted annually;
- Cat Trapping – provide cat trapping cages to residents to assist in containing cats at large on their property;
- Issue registration renewal notices annually;
- Follow-up non-renewals – additional letter, visit property (targeted door knocking);
- Regularly update/audit registration database to ensure information is current (e.g. amend data to reflect notifications of deceased animals, change of address, change of owner) to ensure owners are not distressed or annoyed by receiving unnecessary or incorrect renewal notices or not receiving a renewal notice at all;
- Random audit of advertisements of dogs and cats for sale (e.g. local paper) contain the microchip number of the animal being sold;
- Ensure all seized and impounded animals are identified as required by Council and registered to their owner prior to their release;
- Review the registration fee schedule to determine if there are any changes that can be made to encourage further registrations;
- After Hours Emergency Service – dog attacks, contained dogs, injured animals, wandering livestock; and
- Animal Pound – Open to the public 7 days a week (excluding public holidays);

## SUMMARY

To encourage people to manage pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

Maximise the number of registered and identifiable domestic animals within the City of Melton.

Maximise compliance with the Domestic Animal Act 1994, General Local Law 2005, orders and regulations (State and Local).

# Registration & Identification



## OUR PLANS

**Objective 1:** Improve the ongoing accuracy of council registration database by cross-referencing with microchip registry data.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Undertake a sample review of newly microchipped dogs and cats in the municipality by contacting registration microchip registries in the municipality that are microchipped.</p> <p>Check all animals are also listed on council's pet registration database, and follow up those that are not</p>	Ongoing	<p>Demonstrate council's pet registration database can be accurately cross referenced with microchip registries</p> <p>Demonstrate increase in numbers of pets registered with council following microchip registry cross referencing exercise</p>

**Objective 2:** Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 2 % each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Prior to every animal release.	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner.
Targeted door knocking of 5% of the municipality each year to check for unregistered and un-identified dogs and cats	Annual door knocks for the months of June to September each year to pick up missed registrations	<p>Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner.</p> <p>Records of number of unregistered and un-identified animals picked up during door knocks.</p>



## 6 NUISANCE

### CURRENT SITUATION / OUR CURRENT DATA

#### Dogs

Barking dog complaints have increased in recent years with the rising incidence of pets being left alone during the day, increases in housing density and declining levels of tolerance generally. Excessive barking is caused by but not limited to:

- Separation anxiety;
- Boredom;
- External stimuli (e.g. passersby, other dogs barking, cats);
- Territorialism (visitors to the property); and
- Communication.

Often the owner is not at home to hear or stop excessive barking. Council has procedures for dealing with barking dog complaints including a checklist and flow chart of procedures to follow and forms officers use to complete the investigations. It is considered that the procedures are effective in dealing with this issue.

As part of being a responsible pet owner puppy socialisation and dog obedience training should be encouraged and promoted through local obedience training schools.

#### Cats

Cats that are wandering at large annoy neighbours and may be harmed by cars and other domestic animals. If they are not desexed, cats can also contribute to the population of stray and feral cats. Cat owners need to be encouraged to be responsible pet owners rather than semi owners who feed their cats but take no further responsibility for the cat. This practice escalates overpopulation of cats and cats becoming feral. Council's intention is to develop local education programs and target local situations.

### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 29th March 2010 Council resolved an order requiring all dog owners to walk their dog on a lead once off their property.
- At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 11th August 2011, Council resolved to introduce a Local Law that requires all cats to be de-sexed prior to registration.

Melton Shire Council General Local Law 2005

Part 6 Division 1 – Keeping of Animals

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## OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Provide when requested or direct to Bureau of Animal welfare website for relevant brochures, fact sheets and other material regarding nuisance issues.

Clearly identified and signed fenced off-leash areas within Navan Park, corner Coburns Road and Centenary Avenue Melton West and Boronia Reserve, Boronia Drive Hillside.

## OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

All nuisances:

- Record all nuisance complaints on a database to track resolutions, repeat offenders;
- Investigation of nuisance complaints are started, for:
  - dogs and cats at large/not securely confined to premises, within 1 hour;
  - trespassing on private property, within 1 hour;
  - noise nuisance (barking, caterwauling, etc), within 24 hours
- Offer to waive fine if owner attends relevant training to address specific nuisance or general responsible dog/cat ownership course; and
- Ensure notices to comply, notices of objection, infringements and prosecutions are in line with Council Policy and Procedures.

At large and trespass:

- Patrol public places to check for dogs or cats at large;
- Council Order passed requiring the restraint of dogs in public places;
- Cat cages are provided to local residents for trapping cats trespassing on their property (deposit of \$20 required and fully refunded when trap is returned);
- Local law permit required when more than 2 dogs or cats are kept on a property; and
- Designated off-leash dog exercise areas established;

Barking dogs:

- Complainants are encouraged to contact owner of barking dog and advise them of their concerns as first step to resolving issue;
- If not resolved, authorised officer will contact owner of barking dog to attempt rapid resolution/provide them with information and ideas to reduce barking;
- Provide barking dog diary to complainant;
- Encourage parties to seek mediation where possible; and
- Carry out investigation to determine legal issues.

## SUMMARY

The investigation of nuisance domestic animals is treated as a priority by the Local Laws unit. However investigations can be complex in their very nature and may result from neighbour disputes. The Local Laws unit encourages all parties to resolve the nuisance issue between themselves or by utilizing the services of the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria prior to instigating, if any, fines or legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court.



**OUR PLANS**

**Objective 1: Resolve cat nuisance complaints.**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners in registration information packs each year.	2014	Number of booklets distributed
Assist residents in dealing with cat trespass / nuisance problems by purchasing additional cat cages and provide them to local residents for trapping nuisance cats	Ongoing	Number of traps purchased Numbers hired out Number of cats impounded
Council administration to investigate the options for a cat collection and trapping service.	2014	Report to be provided to Council with costing and options.

**Objective 2: Resolve dog nuisance complaints.**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Put in place a local law regarding the collection and disposal of dog faeces.	2014	Local Law adopted by Council
Include information regarding confinement, barking, dogs at large etc in registration information packs each year	2014	Number of booklets distributed
Council to investigate the opportunities to create new off-leash areas in passive recreation reserves	Yearly	New park established
Council to review the existing service standard of off-leash parks and look at the potential to improve amenities (shelter, seating, on site water)	Yearly	Number of facilities installed.
Provide details on Council website about animal welfare, suitability of animals for particular lifestyles and training services	2014	Information on website.



# Dog Attacks



## 7 DOG ATTACKS

### CURRENT SITUATION / OUR CURRENT DATA

This is a critical animal management role. It is generally thought that dog attacks occur predominantly in and around the family home. All dog owners should be encouraged to confine their dogs to their property unless they are under effective control and to take their dog to a recognised obedience training school. This introduces basic training which helps the owner to understand his or her responsibilities and importantly helps with socialisation of the dog and minimizes aggressive tendencies.

Residents should be reminded that every dog has the capacity to bite. Children should be supervised around dogs at all times. Dog owners should be made aware of the potential implications for their dog if it bites.

### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 29th March 2010 Council resolved an order requiring all dog owners to walk their dog on a lead once off their property.

Melton Shire Council General Local Law 2005

Part 6 Division 1 – Keeping of Animals

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603A Responsible Breeding, Sale, Transfer and Ownership of Cats





## **OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES**

Provide when requested or direct to Bureau of Animal welfare website for relevant brochures, fact sheets and other material regarding nuisance issues.

Clearly identified and signed fenced off-leash areas within Navan Park, corner Coburns Road and Centenary Avenue Melton West and Boronia Reserve, Boronia Drive Hillside.

Promote the Bureau of Animal Welfare Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) Schools Program. ([www.pets.dpi.vic.gov.au/01/main.htm](http://www.pets.dpi.vic.gov.au/01/main.htm)) which addresses living with dogs and minimising the risk of dog attacks. This program is particularly important for children who don't have any experience with dogs.

## **OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES**

- Respond to dog attack reports immediately and as top priority for authorised officers;
- Emergency 'after hours' contact to report dog attacks;
- Regular patrols are conducted to make sure dogs are confined to premises;
- All reported dog attacks are recorded and investigated to meet all points of proof provided in the Act. Dogs are seized and prosecutions are undertaken when appropriate;
- On-leash requirements are enforced;
- Authorised officers proactive in declaring dogs dangerous or menacing; and
- Unclaimed dogs at the pound are temperament tested to determine whether they are suitable for re-homing.

## **SUMMARY**

Any reported attacks by domestic animals are treated as a high priority by the Local Laws unit.

All reported attacks are investigated to a conclusion.

In determining the most appropriate action to be taken the victim or victim animal owners preference is factored into the decision making process.

Council encourages that all attacks be reported to enable:

- a) accurate statistics being kept to determine the extent of the issue within the community;
- b) assessment of resourcing based on analysis of any improving or worsening trends;
- c) determination of any other appropriate strategies.

# Dog Attacks



## OUR PLANS

**Objective 1:** Encourage reporting of dog attacks in the community. (shorter term objective – initial education / enforcement activities will increase reporting of incidents)

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report using media articles, public notices in parks etc, A-frame billboards, website updates, direct mail, etc	Yearly ongoing	Evaluate this activity (and overall objective) by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council pre and post campaign.

**Objective 2:** Decrease the time taken to report dog attacks in the community. (longer term objective, once initial increase in reporting has dropped off, the objective is to see a reduction in actual incidents occurring)

Activity	When	Evaluation
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (eg confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc) through media articles, mail outs, website info	Twice Yearly	Compare number of reported dog attack incidents pre and post campaign. Number of media articles published
Develop Council policy on dog attack enforcement, declaring a dog or exercising power to destroy a dog	December 2013	Policies developed and adopted by Council



## 8 DANGEROUS, MENACING & RESTRICTED BREED DOGS

### CURRENT SITUATION / OUR CURRENT DATA

The City of Melton currently has 3 declared dangerous dogs, 3 declared menacing dogs and 12 restricted breed dogs.

The level of compliance with declared dog legislation within Melton City is seen as very high. On that basis, it not seen as necessary at this time to introduce any new activities in relation to them. Declared dog requirements will however continue to be monitored with regular inspections.

### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 29th March 2010 Council resolved an order requiring all dog owners to walk their dog on a lead once off their property.

Melton Shire Council General Local Law 2005

Part 6 Division 1 – Keeping of Animals

602 Dogs – Permit required to keep more than 2 dogs on land over 3 months of age.

### OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Ensure all owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Act regarding identification and keeping these dogs by providing them with relevant sections of the Act, brochures and factsheets.

Patrol industrial sites or building sites that may have guard dogs to promote legislative requirements.

### OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- All dogs declared by Council are accurately registered on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and that details regarding change of owner/change of address/death of dog are updated as soon as possible;
- Annual inspections of all premises housing declared dogs are conducted annually to ensure they are identified and being kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations;
- Non-compliance issues are followed-up until owner complies;
- Respond to complaints regarding menacing dogs/dangerous dogs immediately and as top priority for authorised officers;
- Patrol industrial and commercial areas/non-residential premises to check that dangerous dogs guarding premises have been declared, are identified as required, and are being kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations;

# Dangerous, Menacing & Restricted Breed Dog



- Examine registrations on Council database to identify and follow-up on suspected (non-declared) restricted breed dogs; and
- Continue to provide off-leash areas and plan for future areas in new parks. Provide appropriate facilities where economically viable (water, shelter, seating, etc).

## SUMMARY

Inspections of premises that house dangerous or restricted breed dogs are conducted on a yearly basis.

Currently undertaking an inspection program that assess dogs that fall within the 'Restricted Breed' standard associated with State Government legislative changes commenced 30 September 2011.

## OUR PLANS

**Objective 1:** Identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a policy on when to declare a dog	2014	Policy developed and implemented
Flag certain breeds on registration data base for assessment under the approved 'Restricted Breed' standard	2014	Data base developed of those dogs that need to be assessed against standard
Inspect all industrial properties in the municipality for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes	Yearly ongoing	Data base updated of inspection results and number of dangerous dog declarations made

**Objective 2:** Effectively inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are following the keeping requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Inspect and audit all properties in the municipality where declared dangerous dogs are kept	Yearly ongoing	100% of all properties are inspected

“ I love a good dog – a good house dog that guards the premises and has an honest bark and loves my children. I love him because he loves me. ”

*Bill Arp 1884*



## 9 OVERPOPULATION & HIGH EUTHANASIA

### CURRENT SITUATION / OUR CURRENT DATA

#### RATES OF RETURNING/RE-HOUSING DOGS

On average 54% of dogs impounded are returned to their owners. Of the remaining dogs, 34% are re-housed and the remaining 12% are euthanised. Across the State, the average number of animals returned to owners is 55%, with 20% being re-housed and 25% being euthanized. In analysing these figures, it can be seen that the City of Melton is performing very well in terms of returning dogs to their owners and re-homing dogs back into the community.

The activities undertaken by the Local Laws unit in recent years has contributed significantly to this increased rate of re-housing dogs and large reduction in the euthanasia rate.

#### RATES OF RETURNING/RE-HOUSING CATS

On average only 3% of cats impounded are returned to their owners. Of the remaining cats, 35% are re-housed and 62% are euthanized. Of the cats being impounded each year approximately 70% are either feral, semi feral or wild while 20% are kittens that are generally collected in groups of 2-6 (litters).

Even with these high numbers of feral animals Council still achieves a euthanasia rate of 62%. Of the remaining 38% of animals that are not euthanized, 3% are returned to their owners, and 35% are re-housed. This process is seen as a great result for this Council and shows that the Council is proactive in this area.

Improving registration rates and increasing desexing rates are seen as key issues in decreasing the number of unwanted cats being produced. After community consultation on this issue, Melton City Council on 11 August 2011 approved an order that requires cats to be desexed prior to registration.

#### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS, COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 11th August 2011, Council resolved to introduce a Local Law that requires all cats to be de-sexed prior to registration.

Melton Shire Council General Local Law 2005

Part 6 Division 1 – Keeping of Animals

602 Dogs – Permit required to keep more than 2 dogs on land over 3 months of age.

603 Cats - Permit required to keep more than 2 cats on land over 3 months of age.

603A Responsible Breeding, Sale, Transfer and Ownership of Cats



## OUR CURRENT EDUCATION / PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Dog and cat re-homing/adoption program to assist in the reduction of euthanasia rates;
- Advertise found dogs and cats on Council website;
- Dog and cat owners of lost animals can provide Council with animal description and contact details;
- Provide information on how to find a lost pet on Council website and Customer Service calls;
- Provide first registration free of charge if animal adopted from pound; and
- List kept of persons wanting to adopt a cat and/or dog.

## OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- Formal assessment for suitability for re-homing or euthanasia of cats and dogs;
- Investigate reports of animal hoarding;
- Review existing section 84Y agreements to establish if more are required for foster care or increase options for adoptions;
- Investigate reports of unauthorised 'backyard breeders' to ascertain whether they should be registered as a domestic animal business as specified in the Act;
- Cat cages are provided to local residents for trapping cats trespassing on their property (deposit of \$20 required and fully refunded when trap is returned);
- Compulsory desexing of cats (with exemptions) at time of registration;
- Conduct patrols to pick up feral and stray cats and dogs to reduce breeding; and
- Provide a link on Councils website to the "Who's for Cats" website.

## SUMMARY

Since the last Domestic Animal Management Plan was produced, the Local Laws unit has implemented a number of strategies that has delivered significantly better re-homing/adoption rates of both dogs and cats. There has also been improvement in the number of dogs being reunited with their owners.

The significant turnaround seen since the last plan has been the reduction in euthanasia rates of 30% down to 12% for dogs and 97% down to 62% for cats.

## OUR PLANS

**Objective 1:** Reduce the number of registered dogs that are currently entire and not part of a Domestic Animal Breeding Business each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review animal registration fees that would induce dogs to be desexed when registered and or for the life of the animal	Yearly	Number of animals desexed as part of the fee structure. Cost to run scheme
Review Council's General Local Law on the keeping of animals to provide some guidelines and conditions for permits.	2014	Number of permits for more than two animals before and after the review.

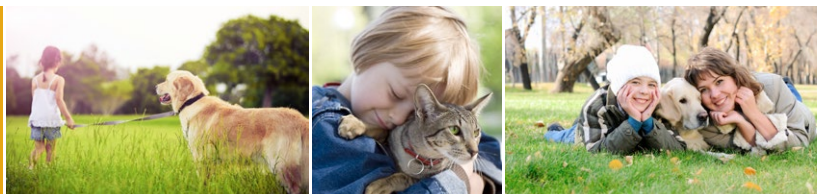

**Objective 2: Identify Domestic Animal Breeding establishments in the municipality**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake education campaign to promote awareness about definition of breeding DABs, and COP requirements for businesses: Advertisements in local classifieds  Follow up people advertising pets for sale (eg in local papers or on local noticeboards), to determine if they are a DAB and are registered with council	Yearly ongoing	Number of council registered breeding establishments before and after campaign
Audit every DAB each year for compliance. Enforce compliance with minimum requirements	April each year	Number of audits conducted, and summary of outcomes (including any DABs closed due to non compliance)

**Objective 3: Maximise the reclaim and re-homing rates for cats and dogs.**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review existing agreements with bodies for re-homing	April each year	Agreements remain valid and new agreements entered sought
Advertise wandering pets via Council's web site of seized animals	Ongoing	
Review the current hours of operation of the pound to increase the availability to access outside working hours.	2013	Hours of the pound amended
Provide a link to the DPI website that provides information on the "Who's for Cats Program"	2013	Link provided
Review the Animal Local Law and provide guidelines for the keeping of more than two dogs or cats	2013	Amended Local Law





## 10 DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

### CURRENT SITUATION / OUR CURRENT DATA

The City of Melton currently has 10 registered Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs). These DAB's are:

Breeding and rearing establishments	3
Dog training establishments	-
Pet shops	3
Shelters and pounds	1
Boarding establishments	3

### OUR ORDERS, LOCAL LAWS AND COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Provide relevant mandatory Code of Practice to proprietors/staff of existing and proposed domestic animal businesses;
- Ensure all relevant domestic animal businesses are advised and involved in any review of the mandatory Code of Practice for their type of business.

### OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- Register all identified DABs within the municipality:
  - Breeding and rearing establishments
  - Pet shops
  - Shelters and Pounds
  - Boarding establishments
  - Dog training establishments
- Conduct annual inspections/audits of each domestic animal business premises in relation to conditions of registration to determine compliance with the Act, relevant mandatory Code of Practice, and any terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on that registration;
- Follow-up domestic animal business non-compliance issues with information on required actions and timeframe for resolution, further inspections, and prosecutions where necessary; and
- Investigate and act upon complaints about domestic animal businesses.



**SUMMARY**

With the changes to the definition of domestic animal businesses – i.e. 3 or more fertile female cats, or 3 or more fertile female dogs and ‘for profit’ being removed from Act, the potential for businesses falling within this new definition has increased.

Council’s Local Laws unit will investigate reported businesses that are allegedly operating within the municipality and determine whether the business should be registered in accordance with the Act.

Council will work in partnership with registered domestic animal businesses to ensure that they are operating in accordance with the relevant code of practice.

**OUR PLANS**

**Objective 1:** Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, using yellow pages (or similar, including online sites) identify businesses selling pets / pet products/services in the municipality.  Follow up to determine whether they are and should be registered with council.	Yearly ongoing	Compare number of registered DABs before and after activity

**Objective 2:** Annually inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an annual inspection of each registered DAB	April each year	100% of DABs inspected prior to re-registration

**Objective 3:** Ensure 100% compliance with registration and mandatory codes of practice for all domestic annual businesses each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a policy to deal with audit outcomes	2014	Policy developed and implemented
Develop a policy to investigate and act upon public complaints about DABs	2014	Policy developed and implemented Number of complaints dealt with in accordance with policy



## 11 OTHER MATTERS

### CURRENT SITUATION / OUR CURRENT DATA

Melton City Council is currently exploring the feasibility of a western regional pound facility and services. Other Councils taking part are:

- Wyndham City Council
- Hobson City Council
- Maribyrnong City Council
- Brimbank City Council
- Moonee Valley City Council

This project is in the early stages of consultation and is ongoing.

### OUR CURRENT COUNCIL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Nil at this time

### Our current Education/Promotion Activities

Nil at this time

### OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

Nil at this time

### SUMMARY

The Melton City Council operates its own pound facility within the city. As part of planning for the future requirements that a growth Council will experience and that an animal management service will require, it is essential that Council explores options to deliver those services that will meet or exceed community expectations as well as being cost efficient.

### OUR PLANS

**Objective 1:** Take part in the feasibility of a western regional pound facility and services

Activity	When	Evaluation
Have representation on the project feasibility study.	2013	Contribute to study being undertaken
Present findings to CEO and Councillors		Report prepared and presented to Council's Executive for consideration.



## 12 ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

### 68A (3) Every Council must—

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





“ In ancient times  
cats were  
worshipped as  
gods; they have  
not forgotten this ”

Terry Pratchett



### **CONTACTING COUNCIL**

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Caroline Springs

Tel 9747 7200

Fax 9363 1491

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Monday, Wednesday

8:00 am - 8:30 pm

Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

8:00 am - 5:30 pm

Saturday

10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Sunday

1:00 - 4:00 pm

