

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029



Moorabool
Shire Council

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Mayor Opening Message

Pets are an important part of life in Moorabool. They bring joy and companionship, but also come with responsibilities for their care, safety, and impact on the community.

As our Shire continues to grow, so does the need for effective animal management. This Domestic Animal Management Plan builds on the work of the last four years and sets clear priorities for the future. It focuses on supporting responsible pet ownership, protecting animal welfare, and ensuring our neighbourhoods remain safe and welcoming.

Together, we can ensure Moorabool remains a place where pets are cared for responsibly, people feel supported, and the community continues to thrive.



Mayor, Cr Steve Venditti-Taylor

Mayor Cr Steve Venditti-Taylor

Introduction

Pets are a big part of life in Moorabool. They bring joy, companionship, and connection for thousands of households across our growing community. But with pet ownership comes responsibility, to care for their health and wellbeing, keep them safe, and ensure they don't impact others or the environment.

Moorabool is expanding rapidly, and so is our pet population. As more people choose to call our Shire home, we're seeing rising demand for animal management services, from registration and rehoming, to addressing nuisance complaints, enforcing our cat curfew, and protecting public safety.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2026–2029 sets out how Moorabool Shire Council will meet these needs over the next four years. It builds on the achievements of the last plan while responding to new challenges facing our community.

This Plan focuses on creating a balanced approach that supports responsible pet ownership, promotes community safety, protects animal welfare, and maintains neighbourhood amenity. It outlines clear actions and goals to guide how we:



Animal Registration & Compliance – improving registration and identification so more pets can be safely returned home



Community Education & Engagement – providing education, advice, and resources to support responsible pet ownership



Minimising Animal Nuisance – addressing issues like barking, wandering animals, and nuisance complaints to protect neighbourhood amenity



Responsible Pet Ownership – encouraging desexing, microchipping, and meeting legal obligations as a pet owner



Officer Training & Professional Standards – building officer capability to ensure professional, effective, and consistent service



Preventing Dog Attacks and Promoting Safety – reducing dog attack risks through prevention, education, and enforcement



Domestic Animal Businesses – monitoring and regulating breeding, boarding, and pet shop businesses to safeguard animal welfare and legal compliance



Animals in Emergencies – including pets and animals in emergency preparedness and response so they're not forgotten in a crisis



Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting – reviewing progress each year to ensure the Plan remains relevant, with reporting to the community and State Government

The Plan also outlines how Council will work closely with partners such as vets, rescue groups, and other agencies to achieve better outcomes for pets, owners, and the wider community.

Each action in this Plan is designed to be practical and responsive to the unique needs of Moorabool. We will review progress annually to make sure the Plan remains relevant and effective as our Shire continues to grow and evolve.

Together, we can build a community where pets are cared for responsibly, people feel safe and supported, and animals, owners, and neighbours can live happily side by side.

What is a Domestic Animal Management Plan?

A Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) is a four-year plan that every Victorian council must prepare under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

It sets out how Council manages dogs and cats in our Shire, including registrations, enforcement, education and safety. The goal is to strike a balance between the benefits of pet ownership and the needs of the broader community

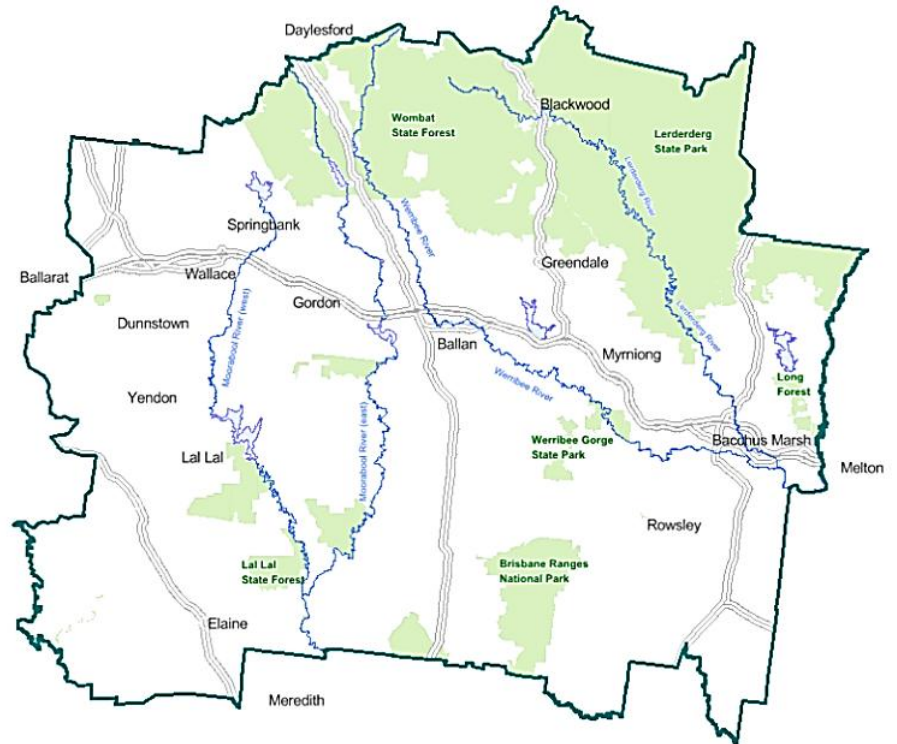
Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Our Shire

Moorabool Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land, the Wadawurrung People in the south and west, the Dja Dja Wurrung in the north, and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung in the east, and pays respect to their Elders past and present.



Located between Melbourne, Ballarat and Geelong, Moorabool Shire spans more than 2,110 square kilometres and encompasses 64 unique localities, from fast-growing urban communities to rural and agricultural landscapes.



Moorabool is known for its vibrant communities, natural environment and lifestyle appeal, offering residents an inspiring place to live, work and play.



The Shire is home to over 39,000 residents, with population forecasts predicting that figure will double over the next two decades. This growth brings exciting opportunities but also unique challenges in domestic animal management.














Our Domestic Animal Management Plan reflects our proactive approach to supporting both pets and people in a rapidly evolving region.

Animal Statistics and Data 2021 - 2024

Every year, we keep track of the numbers to help us understand how animals are being cared for in our community and how we're doing in supporting responsible pet ownership.




By looking at things like registration, impoundments, rehoming, and other key activities, we can see what's working well and where we might need to improve.

This section presents key data from the past four years, highlighting trends and insights that guide our approach to domestic animal management.

	Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
 Registered Dogs		6,052	5,761	5,705	5,584
 Registered Cats		1,700	1,648	1,618	1,544
 Impounded Dogs		201	175	237	214
 Impounded Cats		262	320	401	333
 Returned to owner		139	155	178	149
 Adopted from Pound		3	9	27	22
 Sent to Rescue		58	76	80	159
 Vet Kitten Adoption		78	112	106	68
 Dogs Euthanised		17	9	13	13
 Cats Euthanised		85	114	213	139
 Cat Traps Hired		36	34	27	34
 Barking Complaints		163	139	104	96
 Dog Attacks		102	89	78	79

Domestic Animal Business Data

This section outlines Moorabool Shire's domestic animal business records and compliance activity over the 2021–2024 period.

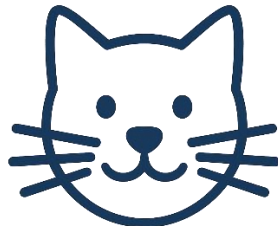
	Year	2021	2022	2023	2024
 Registered Establishments		13	9	9	10
 Audits Conducted		13	9	9	10
 Reports of Unpermitted operations		21	26	18	16

Note: The data above reflects records from the 2021–2024 period.

2024 Statistics Recap



DOGS REGISTERED
5,584



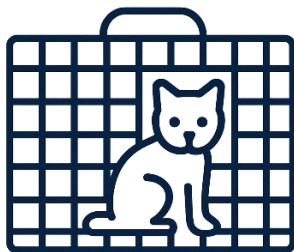
CATS REGISTERED
1,154



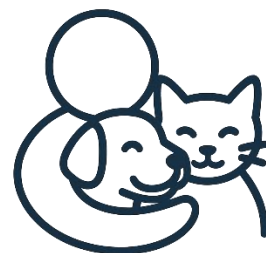
DOG ATTACKS
79



IMPOUNDS
547



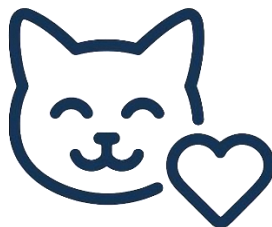
CAT TRAPS
34



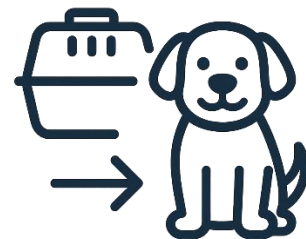
REUNITED
149



ADOPTED
22



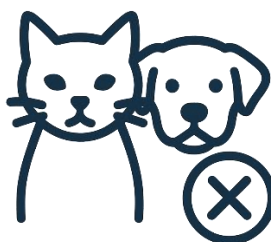
KITTEN PROGRAM
68



SENT TO RESCUE
159



BARKING DOGS
96



EUTHANISED
152

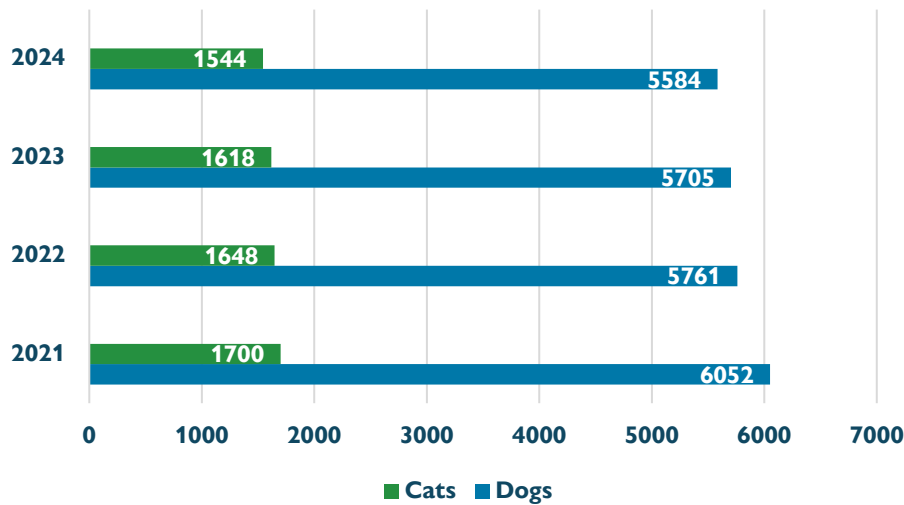


REPORTS ATTENDED
1,013

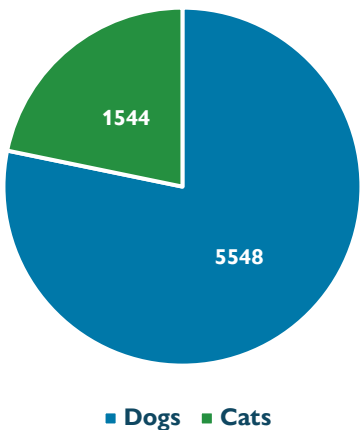
Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Key Trends and Insights

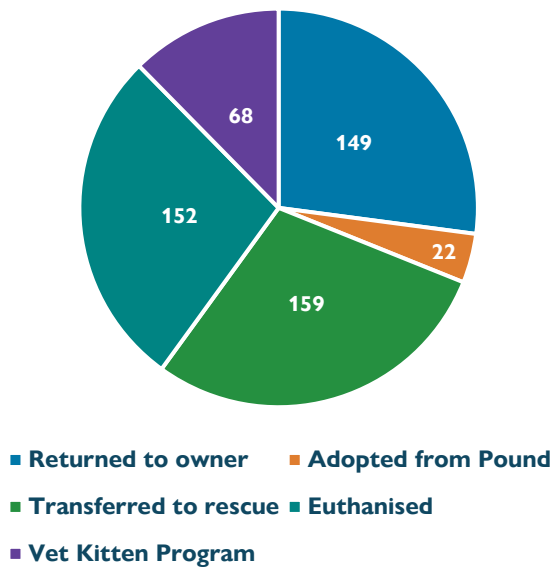
Dog and Cat Registrations Trend 2021–2024



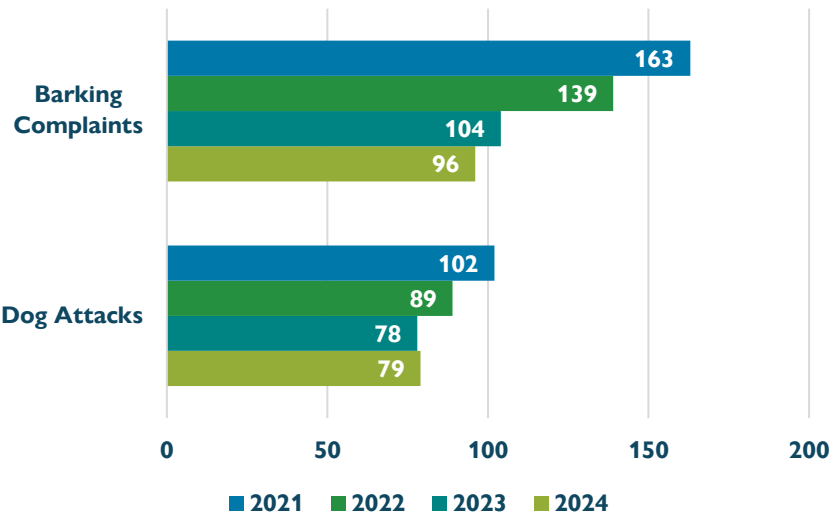
2024 Dog vs Cat Registrations



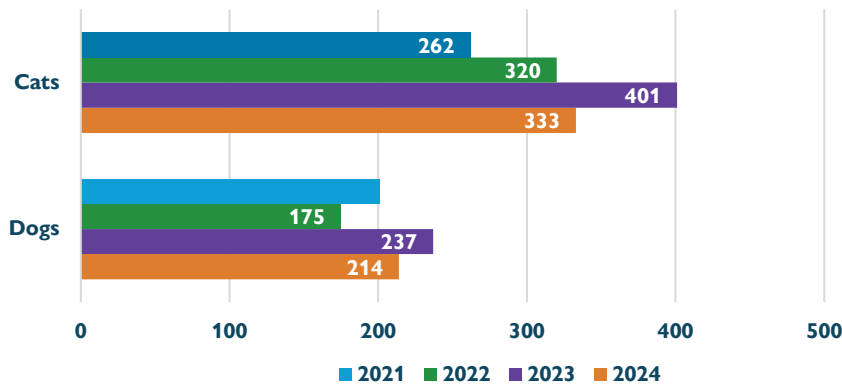
2024 Impounds Outcome Breakdown



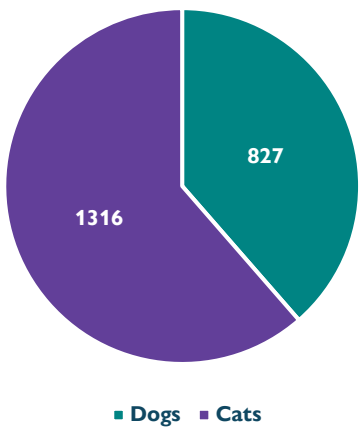
Dog Attacks vs Barking Dogs 2021–2024



Dogs vs Cats Impounds (2021–2024)



Dog vs Cat Impounds (2021–2024)



Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Looking Back: What We Achieved (2021–2025)

This section highlights key achievements from the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021 - 2025, covering the period from 2021 to the end of 2024.

As 2025 is still in progress and figures continue to change, this section does not include data from the current year. Achievements for 2025 will be reported separately as part of Council's annual reporting.

During the last four years, we've been working hard to support responsible pet ownership and community safety across the shire. Here's what we've achieved together:



Promoting Responsible Pet Ownership

We've provided education and information to help pet owners understand their responsibilities. This included sharing regular updates on our website and social media and attending local events.

- We hosted multiple information stalls at community events, giving residents a chance to meet our officers and learn about responsible pet ownership.
- We supported the community by providing **74** discounted microchipping services to help more pets be identified and returned home if lost.



Supporting Cat Curfew Awareness

Since the introduction of the cat curfew in 2021, we've worked with the community to encourage safe and responsible cat management.

- We loaned out **121** humane cat traps to help residents manage trespassing or nuisance cats.
- Our officers conducted proactive trapping programs, removing unowned or feral cats from problem areas.



Encouraging Pet Registration

We promoted the importance of registering pets by offering reminders throughout the year, and discounted rates to Pension Card holders and seniors.

- On average, we registered more than **5,500** dogs and **1,500** cats each year.
- We helped reunite **621** lost pets with their owners thanks to up-to-date registration records.



Managing Nuisance Complaints

We responded to community concerns about barking dogs and other nuisance issues.

- Our team investigated **502** barking dog complaints between 2021 and 2024.
- We completed a review of our barking dog process in 2025 to improve how we manage complaints.



Supporting Domestic Animal Businesses

We monitored and supported local businesses like boarding kennels, breeders, and pet shops to make sure they met required standards.

- We conducted annual audits of registered Domestic Animal Businesses.
- We investigated **81** complaints about unregistered or non-compliant businesses.



Building Skills in Our Team

We invested in training for our Community Safety Officers to ensure they could confidently and safely carry out their work.

- Every officer completed mandatory training in areas like animal handling, Animal behaviour, and customer service.
- Officers also completed training in domestic violence awareness and mental health first aid to help them better support residents.

Looking Back: What We Achieved (2021–2025)



Responding to Dog Attacks and Dangerous Dog Complaints

We prioritised community safety by responding quickly to reports of dog attacks and dangerous or menacing dogs.

- We investigated **348** dog attacks over the past four years.
- We declared **23** menacing dogs and **5** dangerous dogs, keeping these records up to date on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.



Responding in Emergencies

We strengthened our ability to care for animals during emergencies like fires and storms.

Officers took part in 'Exercise Burndawan', a council-run emergency management exercise mock emergency scenario. Community Safety officers were tasked with the set up and activation of an animal relief centre.



Reducing Euthanasia and Supporting Rehoming

We've worked hard to further reduce euthanasia rates and find new homes for animals in our care.

- Through our Pound Adoption Program, we rehomed **218** dogs and **665** cats between 2021 and 2024.
- We continued supporting the Kitten Adoption Program with the Bacchus Marsh Veterinary Centre, helping **325** kittens find loving homes.
- We partnered with rescue groups to increase rehoming opportunities, reducing the number of animals euthanised.



What We Do: Domestic Animal Services in Moorabool

We're committed to helping people be happy, responsible pet owners, and making sure our communities are safe and enjoyable places for everyone.

Here are some of the key services we offer to support pets and their people:



Animal Registration and Microchipping

Each year, we manage the registration process for dogs and cats, help owners keep their details up to date, and provide discount microchipping services for residents.



Impounding and Rehoming

Through our pound facility and partnerships with rescue groups, we care for lost and unclaimed pets and help many find loving new homes.



Education and Local Laws

From community campaigns to property visits, we work to educate and guide pet owners while enforcing important animal laws to keep everyone safe.



Cat Curfew Enforcement & Cat Trapping

We help enforce the Shire's night-time cat curfew and provide humane cat traps for hire to manage nuisance and feral cats.



Responding to Community Reports

We respond to community reports about wandering animals, barking dogs, nuisance concerns and dog attacks, always aiming for timely, supportive solutions.



After-Hours Emergency Service

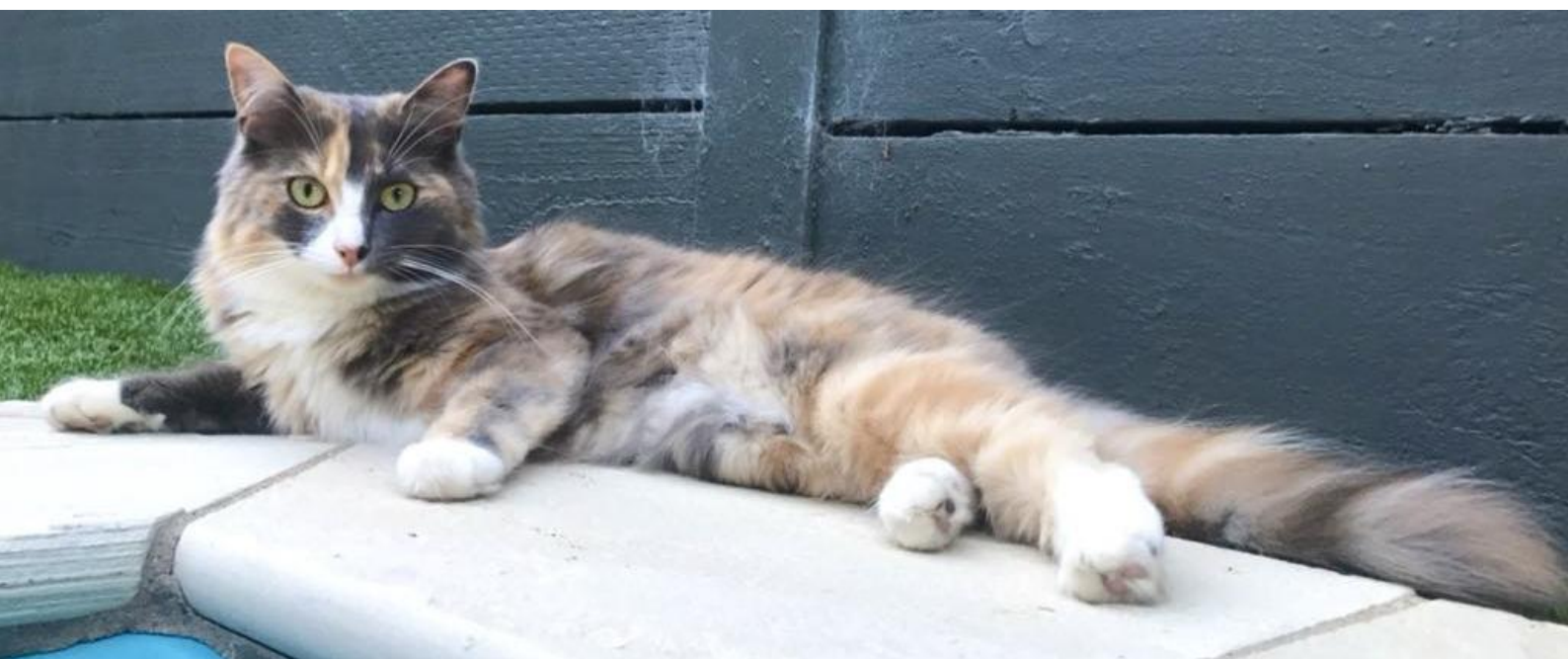
Our team is on call 24/7 for urgent animal-related issues like dog attacks or stray livestock causing a hazard on roads.



Permits for Pets and Animal Businesses

We assess, and issue permits for people with more pets than the permitted limits and manage the registration and inspection of Domestic Animal Businesses like breeders or boarding kennels.

We're always reviewing and improving our services to make sure they meet the needs of our growing community, while staying in line with state laws and local priorities.



Our Guiding Principles

Everything we do in domestic animal management is guided by a set of values that put people, pets, and the environment first. These principles help shape the way we deliver services, make decisions, and support our community:



Encouraging Responsible Pet Ownership

We help pet owners understand their responsibilities through education, support, and clear information so they can care for their animals and be good neighbours.



Protecting Our Environment

We encourage pet ownership that's kind to our natural surroundings, helping to reduce impacts on wildlife, waterways, and shared public places.



Planning Ahead

As Moorabool continues to grow and change, we adapt our programs and services to match. We're planning not just for today, but for the needs of tomorrow too.



Keeping Our Community Safe

Reducing the risk of dog attacks, stray animals, and nuisance behaviour is a key focus. Our aim is for everyone to feel safe and respected in shared spaces.



Working Together

Partnerships are powerful. We team up with rescue groups, vets, other government agencies, and our local community to create stronger outcomes for animals and people.

Legislation and Local Laws

Moorabool Shire Council manages domestic animals under a range of legal mechanisms that protect community safety, animal welfare, and public amenity.

Key legislation includes:



Domestic Animals Act 1994

Sets Council's responsibilities for registration, microchipping, enforcement, dangerous dogs, and domestic animal businesses.



Moorabool Shire Community Local Law No.1 (2019)

Covers local rules on the number of pets, keeping animals, nuisance issues, and removal of dog faeces.



Code of Practice for Pounds and Shelters (2022)

Outlines care standards for impounded animals. These laws guide how we balance responsible pet ownership with the rights of the broader community.



Domestic Animal Management Plan

Animal Registration & Compliance

Animal Registration & Compliance

Registration is more than a legal requirement, it's your pet's ticket home if they ever get lost.

In Victoria, cats and dogs must be registered with Council once they reach three months of age. Registration helps ensure lost pets can be safely identified and reunited with their owners and it also helps avoid fines under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

We take an education-first approach to animal registration. We focus on helping pet owners understand their responsibilities and make it as easy as possible to do the right thing. Our Community Safety Officers work with the community to raise awareness, provide advice, and support owners to register and keep their details up to date.

Behind the scenes, we actively maintain our animal registration database to keep it current when pets move, change owners, or pass away.

When education and support aren't enough, we follow a fair and transparent approach to enforcement in line with Council's Enforcement Policy. Formal action, such as warnings, Notices or fines, is only taken when necessary to encourage compliance and protect the wider community.

By keeping pets registered and details up to date, we can reunite lost animals with their owners faster, keep our community safer, and ensure every pet is accounted for and protected.

Registration fees help cover the cost of vital animal management services, including pet registration and identification systems, officer patrols and investigations, community education, emergency response for animals, the operation and upkeep of Council's pound facility, and the maintenance of off-leash parks and dog-friendly spaces.



Animal Registration & Compliance

Our Actions: Supporting Pet Registration & Compliance

Every year, we take practical steps to help more pets get registered and stay registered. From checking tags to offering affordable microchipping, our goal is to make registration easy, accessible, and something every pet owner feels confident about.

These actions outline how we'll continue promoting registration and compliance over the next four years, helping keep pets safe, owners supported, and our community protected.

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Run an annual registration campaign in high non-compliance areas that includes signage and targeted social media posts to encourage registration.	Annually	Increased registration compliance in targeted areas

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an annual audit of microchip registries to identify microchipped animals within the municipality and notify owners of their legal obligation to register their dog or cat with Council.	Annually	Number of animals identified; number of notification letters sent; increase in new registrations following notification.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Offer two subsidised microchipping events per year to encourage new registrations and improve identification rates.	Twice yearly	Number of microchips implanted; new registrations linked to events.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Introduce visible tag checks during park patrols to identify unregistered animals and promote compliance.	Ongoing	Number of checks conducted; number of unregistered animals identified and registered.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Launch targeted social media promotions (e.g. puppies, pensioners) to encourage timely pet registration and renewals.	Annually	Engagement metrics on posts; increase in on-time renewals.



Domestic Animal Management Plan
Community Education
& Engagement

Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Community Education & Engagement

We promote responsible pet ownership through education and outreach.

We believe that education not only helps pet owners but benefits the whole community by reducing nuisance complaints, improving animal welfare, and creating safer, friendlier neighbourhoods for everyone.

We deliver tailored programs across the shire, including pop-up stalls, and targeted campaigns on pet registration, microchipping and animal welfare.

We work with local vets, rescue groups, and other partners to extend our reach.

Our focus is on education first, providing advice and support to help pet owners do the right thing. We welcome community feedback to help shape our programs and keep them responsive to local needs.

Education activities are reviewed annually to ensure they remain effective and relevant.



Community Education & Engagement

Education & Engagement Action Plan

These actions outline how we will continue promoting responsible pet ownership through education and community partnerships over the next four years.

Our focus is on providing support and information first, helping pet owners understand their responsibilities, and encouraging positive choices that benefit the whole community. By building awareness and celebrating responsible ownership, we aim to create safer, stronger neighbourhoods for people and pets alike.

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a calendar of annual education events (e.g. Festivals, Adoption drives, school visits) to engage the community.	Annually	Number of events held; attendance figures; community feedback.
Activity	When	Evaluation
Create an online education hub with resources for pet owners, accessible via QR codes at dog parks and key public spaces.	2026	Hub launch; number of QR code scans; page views.
Activity	When	Evaluation
Distribute pet ownership information packs to new pet registrants to promote responsible pet care and awareness of Council services	Ongoing	Number of packs distributed; feedback survey responses; new registrant engagement.
Activity	When	Evaluation
Launch a “Show Off Your Pet” social media series to celebrate responsible pet ownership and promote key messages.	Monthly	Engagement metrics; submissions received.



Domestic Animal Management Plan

Minimising Animal Nuisance

Minimising Animal Nuisance

We are committed to reducing nuisance caused by dogs and cats to protect community amenity and neighbourhood amenity. By reducing nuisance issues,

We help build safer, harmonious neighbourhoods where pets and people can live comfortably together.

We respond to complaints about barking dogs, roaming animals, and other nuisance behaviours, working with pet owners to resolve issues through education and support wherever possible.

We encourage responsible pet ownership through advice, resources, and proactive patrols, while enforcing the Domestic Animals Act and local laws when necessary.

Proactive patrols include regular checks in problem areas, speaking with pet owners, and offering advice on preventing nuisance behaviours.

Our focus is on balancing education and enforcement to minimise nuisance impacts and promote peaceful coexistence between pets and the community.

We follow Council's Enforcement Policy to ensure a fair and consistent approach, focusing on education and voluntary compliance first.



Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Minimising Animal Nuisance

We work to reduce nuisance caused by pets so everyone can enjoy a peaceful, respectful neighbourhood. We focus on education first, helping pet owners understand their responsibilities and providing advice and resources to prevent problems before they happen.

When issues do arise, we take a fair and balanced approach that encourages voluntary compliance while using enforcement where necessary to protect the community.

The following actions outline how we'll continue working with pet owners and the broader community to minimise nuisance over the next four years.

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Collaborate with local vets and pet businesses to display educational posters and resources on nuisance prevention and pet owner responsibilities.	Ongoing	Number of locations displaying materials; community feedback; reduction in nuisance-related complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and distribute targeted educational resources to owners on managing barking dogs, dog containment, and cat containment responsibilities.	Annually	Materials distributed; reduction in nuisance-related complaints; engagement metrics.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote and encourage use of cat enclosures and confinement practices through Council communications to support compliance with the existing cat curfew.	Annually	Community engagement feedback; reduction in cat roaming complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Install and maintain dog waste bag dispensers at parks and key public areas to support responsible dog ownership and reduce dog waste issues in public spaces.	Ongoing	Number of dispensers installed; frequency of refills; reduction in dog waste complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake a study into the current cat curfew to assess whether it meets community expectations and remains effective for the community.	2026	Completion of study report with findings and recommendations presented to Council.



Domestic Animal Management Plan

Responsible Pet

Ownership

Responsible Pet Ownership

We work closely with pet owners to keep animals safe, neighbours happy, and the community protected. Our first priority is always education, officers provide advice and guidance through friendly conversations, property visits, patrol interactions, and written information to help owners meet their responsibilities.

We also take a proactive approach by monitoring public areas, checking registrations, and offering support before issues escalate. While most matters are resolved through cooperation and advice, formal enforcement action may be taken if serious risks arise, or problems persist.

Officers are trained to communicate respectfully and work towards resolving issues calmly. For urgent matters, such as dog attacks, after-hours support is available.

When enforcement is needed, we use a fair and proportionate approach. This may include issuing warnings or Notices to Comply, fines, or seizing animals in urgent situations. For major or ongoing offences, prosecution may be necessary.

Every enforcement action follows Council's Enforcement Policy to ensure fairness and transparency. All decisions are properly documented and reviewed, and we make sure to clearly explain your rights and responsibilities throughout the process.

Responsible Pet Ownership Actions

We focus on education, support, and practical guidance to help pet owners do the right thing before enforcement is needed. These actions set out how we'll keep promoting responsible pet ownership across the community, making sure pets stay safe, neighbours stay happy, and everyone knows their rights and responsibilities.

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a targeted campaign on dog containment responsibilities using digital and print materials.	2026	Campaign reach metrics; reduction in roaming complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a "Responsible Pet Ownership FAQ" page on Council's website to answer common questions and help pet owners understand their responsibilities.	2027	FAQ page published; website visits; fewer common enquiries to Council

Activity	When	Evaluation
Set up a regular patrol schedule in off-leash parks to engage directly with dog owners about safety, registration, and responsible behaviour.	Quarterly	Number of patrols completed; owner interactions; observed compliance improvements.



MOORABOOL
SHIRE COUNCIL

COUNCIL OFFICE
HALLETTS WAY DARLEY

**Domestic Animal Management Plan
Officer Training &
Professional Standards**

Officer Training & Professional Standards

Our Community Safety Team plays a vital role in promoting responsible pet ownership, enforcing state and local laws, and keeping the community safe. The team includes five Community Safety Officers and three Pound staff, reporting to the Coordinator Community Safety, bringing expertise in animal management, investigations, Animal handling, and emergency response.

Every day, officers respond to reports, patrol public spaces, return lost animals, investigate incidents, and help educate the community. They are trained to manage a wide range of situations with professionalism, care, and confidence.

Council prioritises ongoing training and continuous improvement to support officers in their roles. Key training areas include:

- Animal handling and behaviour
- Investigation and evidence collection
- Conflict resolution and managing difficult situations
- Mental health awareness and trauma-informed practice

To further build skills, Council also supports:

- **Cross-Training:** Officers are encouraged to develop skills across different core functions of the department to increase flexibility and coverage.
- **Mental Health Support:** Resources and debriefing are provided to help officers manage the emotional challenges of the role.

New officers complete structured onboarding with mentoring from experienced team members. Council regularly reviews feedback and training needs to ensure all officers are supported with clear procedures, professional standards, and the tools they need to do their job well.

Officer Training & Professional Standards

Supporting Our Team

Our Community Safety Officers play an important role in keeping pets, people, and the community safe every day, they respond to lost pets, investigate complaints, assist in emergencies, and help make sure everyone is following the rules.

To do their job well, they need the right skills, tools, and support. That's why we are committed to providing regular training, opportunities to learn new skills, and resources to help officers stay safe, confident, and effective in the community.

The actions below show how we will continue supporting our officers over the next four years.

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Introduce yearly refresher training for officers in animal handling and safety.	yearly	Training attendance records; officer feedback.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Maintain and annually review the officer training register to ensure all required qualifications and refresher courses are current.	Annually	Training register reviewed and updated.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide all new officers with a structured induction program and on-the-job mentoring.	Ongoing	Completion of induction checklists; new officer feedback.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Hold a quarterly officer debrief to review animal management cases, share learnings, and improve enforcement practices	Quarterly	Debrief conducted; actions arising documented.



Domestic Animal Management Plan

Preventing Dog Attacks & Promoting Safety

Preventing Dog Attacks & Promoting Safety

Dog attacks can have serious consequences, not just for the people or pets directly involved, but for the wider community. They can cause physical harm, emotional distress, and fear that affects how safe people feel in their neighbourhoods. That's why we take dog attacks seriously, acting quickly to respond, support those affected, and work proactively to prevent attacks from happening in the first place.

Our Community Safety Officers play a vital role in protecting the community. When a dog attack is reported, officers treat it as a priority. They respond quickly to make sure everyone is safe, contain the situation, and check on any animals involved. Officers then carry out a thorough investigation, gathering evidence, speaking with witnesses, and keeping victims informed and supported throughout the process.

When action is required, officers follow a fair and proportionate approach based on the circumstances. This might include seizing the dog to prevent further harm, issuing formal declarations under the Domestic Animals Act (such as declaring a dog dangerous or menacing), or in serious cases, taking legal action. Officers also assess fencing and housing at the dog's property to check whether improvements are needed to reduce future risks. Declared dogs are monitored each year with compliance checks, and all records are maintained on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry. For complex or high-risk cases, Council may develop a tailored management plan to ensure the dog is managed safely in the community.

Prevention is just as important as response. Alongside this enforcement work, we focus on helping owners reduce the risk of attacks through education and support. Officers provide advice about secure fencing, effective containment, and training that can help prevent aggressive behaviour. We offer guidance to dog owners on their obligations for keeping dogs contained.



Preventing Dog Attacks & Promoting Safety

Action Plan: Preventing Dog Attacks and Promoting Safety

The following actions outline how we will continue working to reduce the risk of dog attacks, promote safety, and support responsible dog ownership in our community:

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Introduce digital resources on what to do during and after a dog attack, providing guidance for both victims and owners.	2027	Resources launched; web analytics on downloads/views.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and distribute fencing and containment fact sheets to support dog owners in securing their properties effectively.	2026	Fact sheets produced and distributed; number of downloads/views; reduction in containment-related incidents.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a declared dog owner compliance checklist to support owners in meeting legislative requirements.	2027	Checklist developed; distributed to declared dog owners.





Domestic Animal Management Plan
Domestic Animal Businesses

Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Domestic Animal Businesses

We are responsible for regulating Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) such as pet shops, breeding establishments, and shelters to ensure they meet the standards set by the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and relevant Codes of Practice.

By regulating these businesses, we help ensure animals are cared for responsibly and the community is protected from unethical or unsafe practices.

We work closely with local businesses to monitor compliance, support best practice animal care, and protect animal welfare and community safety.

Actions to Support and Regulate Domestic Animal Businesses

Our approach focuses on education and support first, working with businesses to help them meet their obligations while using enforcement when necessary to protect animal welfare and public safety.

Council also monitors emerging trends, including online pet sales, to identify and address unregistered or non-compliant operators.

We work closely with Domestic Animal Businesses to support high standards of animal care, compliance with the law, and responsible operations.

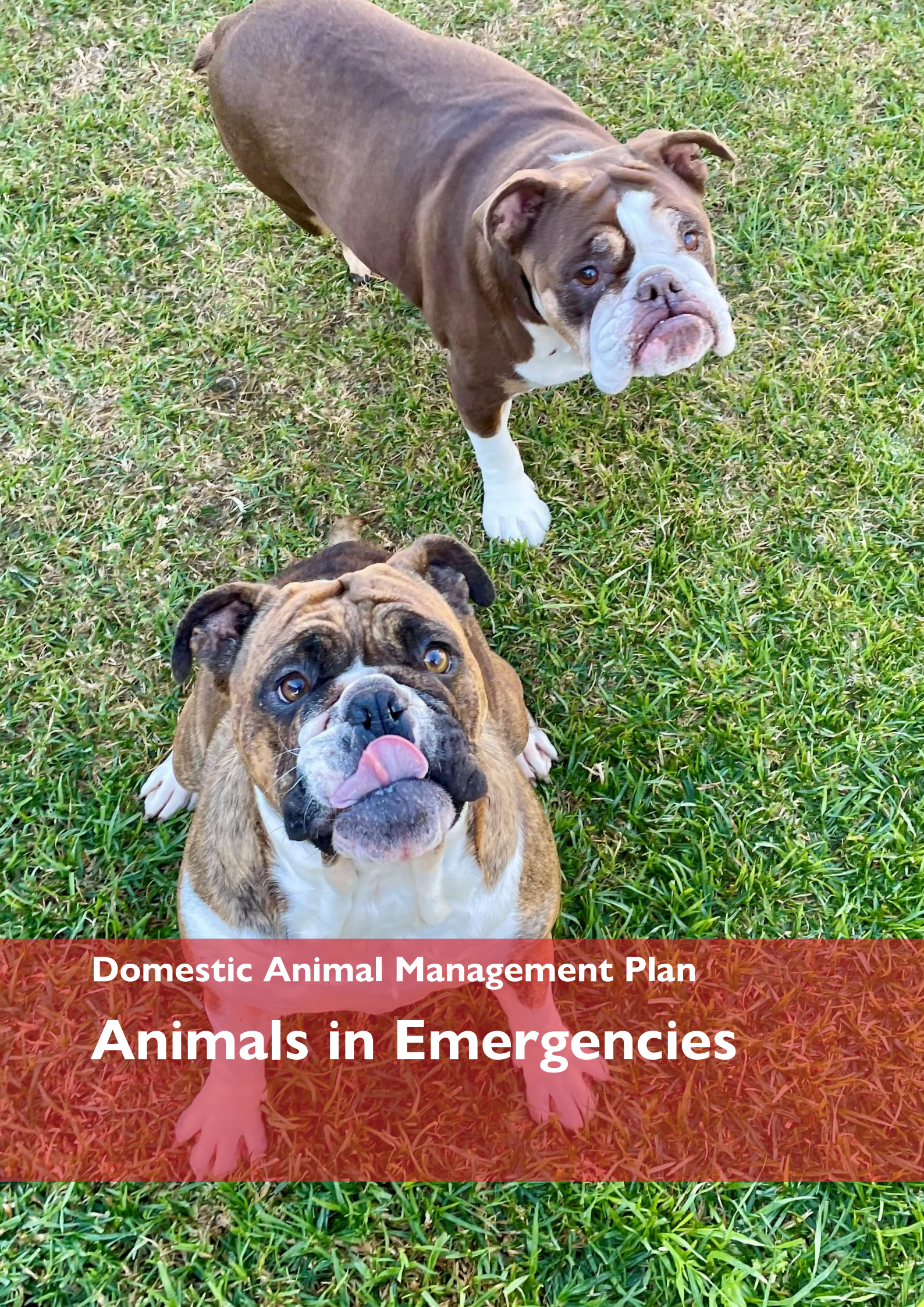
The following actions outline how we will regulate, support, and monitor Domestic Animal Businesses over the next four years.

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Launch an annual unannounced inspection program for Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure compliance with the Code of Practice.	Annually	Number of inspections completed; compliance rates.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop an internal program to monitor unregistered online breeders and take enforcement action as needed.	2026	Monitoring program established; enforcement outcomes.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Create an annual information session for Domestic Animal Business operators to explain compliance requirements and legislative updates.	Annually	Session held; attendance records; feedback.



Domestic Animal Management Plan

Animals in Emergencies

Animals in Emergencies

Emergencies like fires, floods, and storms affect not just people, but pets too. We include animals in emergency planning to help protect them before, during, and after a crisis. By including animals in emergency planning, we help protect pets, reduce risks for the community, and give peace of mind to owners during stressful times.

Council supports emergency efforts by coordinating animal relief responses.

Council helps by:

- Including pets in emergency relief operations
- Coordinating with vets, rescue groups, and support agencies
- Assisting with temporary animal shelter during emergencies, such as house fires and displacement.
- Responding to after-hours calls for animals on roads or at risk

We plan for situations like bushfires, storms, road accidents, and cases where owners are hospitalised or facing crisis, ensuring animals receive care and safe placement.

Supporting Animal Welfare in Emergencies

Moorabool Shire Council is committed to making sure animals are not forgotten in times of crisis. By preparing ahead of time, working with partners, and educating the community, we help protect pets and livestock during emergencies like fires, floods, and storms. Our actions focus on building readiness, reducing risks, and ensuring animals can be cared for safely when disaster strikes.

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Include education on pet preparedness in emergencies in community safety messaging and Council communications.	Annually	Inclusion in campaign materials; reach metrics.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Train Community Safety Officers and relevant staff in the setup, operation, and management of an Animal Relief Centre for pets and companion animals during emergencies.	2027	Training completed; scenario exercise conducted.



Domestic Animal Management Plan

Annual Review & Reporting

Annual Review & Reporting

We are committed to regularly reviewing the Domestic Animal Management Plan to ensure it remains effective, relevant, and compliant with legislative requirements.

Each year, Council evaluates the progress of actions, reviews animal management data, and identifies areas for improvement. The results are reported to Council and submitted to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action as required under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

This process helps Council track achievements, address challenges, and ensure continuous improvement in animal management services.

How We Review the Plan Each Year

We regularly review this Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) to make sure it's still working for the community. Each year, we check how we're tracking, listen to feedback, and look for ways to improve our services for pet owners and animals across the Shire.

This review helps us stay up to date with community needs, changes in law, and what's working well (or not so well).

What the Review Includes

- Checking progress on the actions and goals in the plan
- Looking at data like registration numbers, complaint trends, and rehoming rates
- Reviewing how well our education and enforcement programs are working
- Identifying any service gaps or new issues
- Speaking with key stakeholders like vets, rescues, and community members when needed

The review is led by Council's Coordinator Community Safety and approved by the Manager of Statutory Planning and Regulatory Services.

Why It Matters

This annual review helps us:

- Keep the DAMP up to date
- Plan future budgets and services
- Identify staff training needs
- Shape future education campaigns
- Prepare for the next full DAMP review (2029–2033)

Regular review and reporting means our animal management services stay focused on what matters most: the community.

Domestic Animal Management Plan:

Annual Review & Reporting

Actions:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct an annual internal review of all actions in the Domestic Animal Management Plan to assess progress and identify gaps.	Annually	Completion of review report; number of actions achieved vs outstanding.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Present the outcomes of the DAMP annual review to Council and submit required reports to the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to ensure compliance and oversight.	Annually	Report submitted to Council; website publication date.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Collect and collate data on key animal management indicators (e.g., registration numbers, impoundments, complaints, infringements) to support annual reporting.	Quarterly and Annually	Data report completed; accuracy checked; data integrated into annual review.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Submit annual DAMP review outcomes to the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) in accordance with legislative requirements.	Annually	Confirmation of submission; acknowledgment receipt from DEECA.



Appendix A - Community Consultation

We are committed to working with the community to develop a Domestic Animal Management Plan that reflects local needs, values, and priorities. Before finalising this Plan, we sought feedback and insights from a range of stakeholders and residents to help shape its goals and actions.

We invited the community to have their say through multiple consultation activities, providing opportunities for people to share their experiences, concerns, and ideas for animal management in our Shire.

How We Consulted

Community consultation on the Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan was open for four weeks, from 3 October to 31 October 2025, through Council's Have Your Say platform. The short online survey invited residents to share their thoughts on whether the Draft Plan addressed community needs and priorities for managing cats and dogs in Moorabool Shire.

To encourage participation, 4,031 text messages were sent to all registered pet owners across the Shire with a direct link to the survey. The consultation was also promoted through social media, and Council's website.

In total, 70 submissions were received, with many residents expressing support for the Draft Plan and its focus on responsible pet ownership, education, and enforcement.

Key Themes from Consultation

Cat management and containment – strong support for 24/7 containment laws and consistent enforcement to protect wildlife and reduce roaming.

Dog control and safety – ongoing concerns about off-leash dogs, barking, and safety in public spaces, with calls for more patrols and community education.

Education and communication – residents want clearer information about pet responsibilities, complaint processes, and how to report issues.

Animal welfare and rehoming – support for low-cost desexing, no-kill goals at the pound, and programs that help owners care for their pets.

What We Heard and How It Shaped the Final Plan

Community feedback played an important role in shaping the final version of this Plan. Based on what the community told us; a new action has been added to review the current cat curfew in 2026 to make sure it meets community expectations and works effectively for Moorabool Shire.

Other key themes raised through consultation, such as education, enforcement, affordability, and support for responsible pet ownership, are already addressed through the Plan's existing actions and priorities. Together, these aim to strengthen community safety, improve animal welfare, and create a fair and practical approach that benefits both pet owners and the wider community.

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