



# **ATTACHMENTS**

**Special Council Meeting  
Under Separate Cover  
Wednesday, 21 December 2022**



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## DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

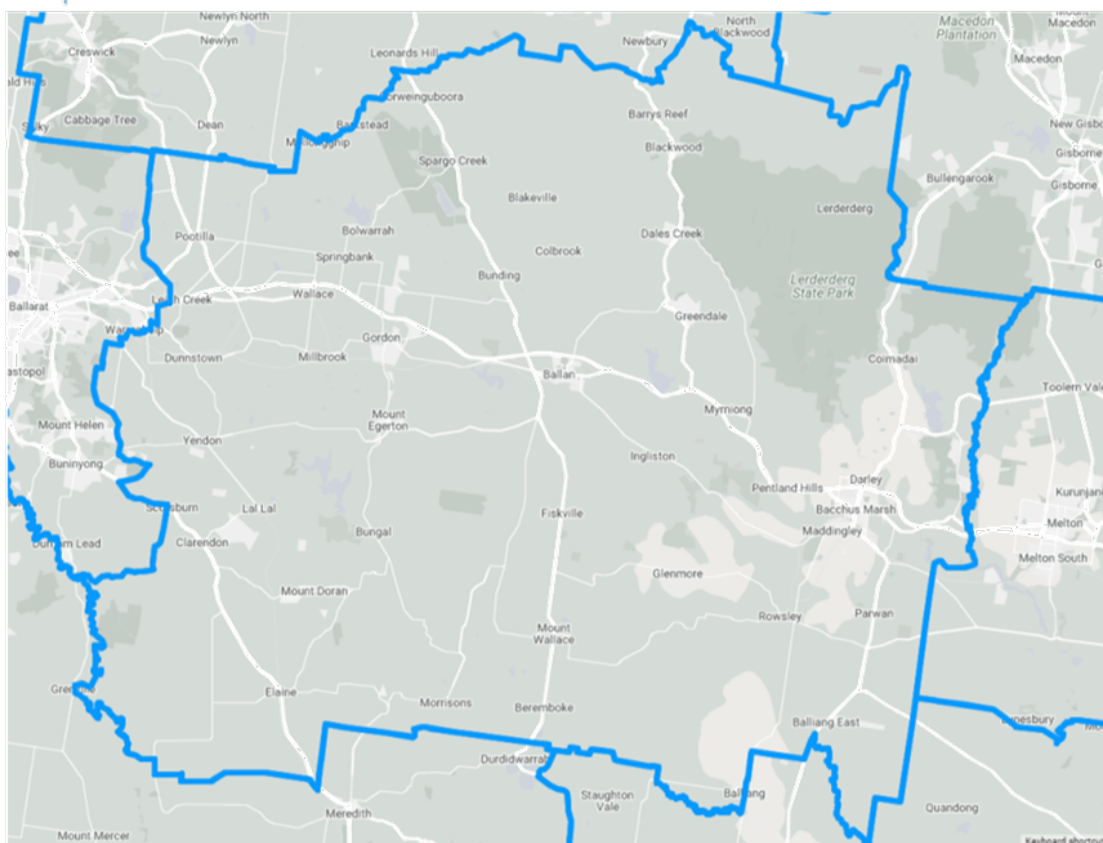
### OUR SHIRE

Council acknowledges its indigenous history and pays its respects to all aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are a part of the Shire and is home to the Wadawurrung Tribe in the south and west, the Dja Dja Wurrung Tribe in the northern ranges and the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Tribe in the east.

Moorabool Shire spans across more than 2,1110sqm, consists of 64 localities and is nestled between Melbourne, Geelong and Ballarat. The Shire is one of the fastest-growing peri-urban municipalities beyond Melbourne's metropolitan fringe and is experiencing unprecedented growth and the current population of 36,344 is forecast to double in the next 20 years.

The Shire is known for its natural environment and lifestyle options which creates an inspiring place to live, work and play.

### Map of Moorabool Shire Council





### Review of the DAMP (2018-2021)

In accordance with the legislative requirements, Council officers undertook a review of the DAMP, which included extensive community consultation in line with Council's Community Engagement Framework.

Consultation with the community was undertaken via Council's "Have your Say" between 4th July-18th July 2022.

This consultation process was promoted on the front page of Council's website, through social media and a media releases during the community consultation period. A total of 34 responses were received with four priority areas identified, being:

- Promotion of responsible pet ownership
- Cat confinement
- Mandatory de-sexing
- Minimise the risk of dog attacks on people and animals

Additional comments from the community included:

- Further provisions for off leash dog areas
- Cat and dog registration fees
- Volunteer transport services for vet care

Council has sought to address the above issues raised by the community in the DAMP 2021-2025, by including these in the Action Plan.

### Current Domestic Animal Service

Council undertakes a large variety of services in relation to domestic animals. The table below highlights the major program/service areas and what we do.

These programs are predominantly undertaken by the Community Safety team supported by other areas of Council and a number of community-based organisations.

PROGRAM/SERVICE	WHAT WE DO
Operation of the Domestic Animal Pound (the Pound)	<p>The Pound provides a short-term facility for impounded and surrendered dogs or cats. The Pound is managed and maintained in accordance with the Code of Practice for Pounds and Shelters.</p> <p>All dogs and cats in the pound are cared for by trained pound keepers and the Pound is open at set hours for the community to either seek to collect their impounded dog or cat, surrender or hand over a dog or cat.</p> <p>If dog or cat is not claimed after the mandatory holding time, the Community Safety staff seek to find alternate homes for dogs or cats either via direct adoption or the support of refuge agencies. Dogs and cats not able to be rehomed, are euthanised.</p> <p>Council supports a kitten program which is in conjunction with a Local vet. This service provides affordable desexed kittens to the public.</p> <p>The Pound is also utilised for dogs and cats that are awaiting the outcome of legal proceedings.</p>
Register dogs and cats	<p>The Act requires that all dogs and cats over three months are required to be registered.</p> <p>All dogs and cats must be registered by April each year.</p> <p>The benefit of registration is that it provides the most up to date ownership details which assists in reuniting lost dogs and cats.</p>

Complaints regarding nuisances	<p>Council investigates all complaints of dogs and cats creating a nuisance.</p> <p>Nuisance complaints are generally barking dogs, uncontained dogs and cats (including feral cats).</p> <p>Community Safety officers initially seek to work with the animal owner and those affected to achieve an acceptable outcome.</p> <p>If a resolution cannot be obtained by consensus, officers verify the validity of the complaint which may lead to appropriate enforcement action.</p>	
Responds to reports of dogs and cats outside owner's properties	<p>Council receives complaints regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dogs that are wandering at large</li> <li>• inadequate fencing/enclosure for dogs and cats</li> </ul>	<p>Community Safety officers investigate complaints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• impound wandering dogs</li> <li>• inspect fencing/enclosure to ensure adequacy</li> <li>• if not compliant, serve notices under the Local Law</li> </ul>
Dangerous and menacing dogs	<p>Council receives complaints regarding dogs that have attacked or rushed people or other animals. Council provides a 24hr response service to investigate these issues.</p> <p>When investigations can identify the offending animal, Council can undertake enforcement action under the Act. This action can be varied and wide ranging from seeking to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• destroy the dog</li> <li>• declaring the dog as dangerous</li> <li>• declare the dog as menacing</li> <li>• issue infringements to owners</li> </ul> <p>Any of these actions can potentially lead to action in the Magistrates Court.</p>	
Undertake inspections of Domestic Animal Businesses	<p>To ensure that any Domestic Animal Business (breed, board or train animals) complies with the Code of Practice for Pounds and Shelters.</p> <p>Council registers Domestic Animal Businesses and undertakes yearly inspections.</p> <p>Businesses identified as operating without registration are investigated to ensure they comply with the Act and in conjunction and any other relevant legislation. This is done in conjunction with other areas of Council.</p>	

Compliance action general	<p>Council is committed to providing support and education for animal owners in the first instance to bring about compliance.</p> <p>Council will however take enforcement action where compliance cannot be gained via other means or where it is considered appropriate that enforcement action must be taken based on risk and public benefit.</p>
Compliance action for impounded dogs and cats	<p>Owners of unregistered dogs and cats will receive an infringement. Where appropriate, owners will receive an infringement for the animal wandering at large.</p> <p>Owners of registered dogs and cats will not receive an infringement for dogs and cats wandering at large for the first offence in any 12-month period.</p>
After-hours emergency service	<p>Council provides an emergency after hours program that will respond to a variety of issues involving dogs and cats. Council will investigate and respond to dog attacks at all times.</p>
Educational programs	<p>Educational programs and the promotion of responsible pet ownership is Council's main focus to reducing antisocial behaviour or environmental damage by dogs and cats.</p> <p>Council undertakes a number of educational programs to inform owners of their responsibilities of dog and cat ownership. Council provides support to owners to comply with minimum standards and how to look after their dog and cat in way that is positive for the pet and do not pose any threat or nuisance to others.</p>

### Service level for domestic animal management issues

The animal management service has set service levels as per the table below.

PROGRAM/SERVICE	SERVICE LEVEL/RESPONSE TIME
Response to domestic animal complaints	7 business days
Response to dangerous Dogs complaints	1 business day
Animal pound opening hours	9.30-11am & 4-5pm weekdays 8-10am & 3-4pm weekends and public holidays
Domestic Animal Businesses inspections	All businesses inspected annually
After hours service	365 days a year after hours service for animal emergencies including dog attacks

## TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

In order to meet the requirements of the Act, and to meet community expectations, it is imperative that Council ensures that all authorised officers are appropriately trained in all aspects of animal management control.

Council's Community Safety Team is responsible for the delivery of a range of community safety services, including animal management. The current team consists of:

- Four fulltime Community Safety Officers
- One part time Community Safety Officer
- Three casual Pound Keepers

All Community Safety Officers are trained as Authorised Officers and the provision of the animal management services is delivered by the equivalent of two full time Community Safety Officers and supported by Pound Keepers.

A training plan is maintained which sets out minimum and mandatory training requirements, identifies the training status of individual Officers, and identifies opportunities for future training. Council Officers are provided with on-the-job training, support and ongoing coaching. Following annual team business planning, an individual Performance Review and Development Plan is established for each Officer, which sets out their key objectives for the year as well as their development and training goals. Council's Domestic Animal Management Plan is consulted during the planning, preparation and review of each Officer's Plan.

As a minimum Council's Authorised Officers are encouraged to obtain one of the following qualifications:

- Certificate IV in Local Government (Animal Management)
- Certificate IV Animal Control and Regulation
- Certificate IV Statutory Compliance

The majority of the team has already obtained one of the above qualifications.

Two of the Authorised officers are also authorised microchip implanters. This enables Council to provide a cost-effective microchipping service to pet owners.

Due to the nature of the service involving dealing also with people (who can be highly emotive), Council Officers undertake supplementary training in understanding domestic violence, mental health first aid and human first aid.

In conclusion, Community Safety Officers continue to be supported with relevant training ensuring they have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively and efficiently perform their regulatory role. The table below outlines the planned training of Authorised Officers for the 2021-2025 period.

## Community safety officer training plan

Training	Timeframes
<b>Occupational health and safety</b>	
• Dealing with difficult customers	Every 2 years
• Working alone	Every 2 years
• Domestic violence awareness	Every 2 years
• Drug awareness	As required *
<b>Animal management specific training</b>	
• Animal handling	Every 2 years
• Animal assessment	Every 2 years
• Restricted breed assessment	As required *
• Pets in an emergency	Every 2 years
<b>Training in legislative processes</b>	
• Evidence gathering/investigations	As required *
• Statement gathering	As required *
• Certificate IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services)	As required *
<b>General training</b>	
• Australian Institute of Animal Management Conferences/seminars	As required *
• Animal Welfare Victoria seminars	As required *
• Conferences and seminars generally on animal management issues	As required *
• Internal Council provided training	As required *
• Industry/legislative changes/updates	As identified at time of change/update

\* Based on Council Officer individual annual performance plan



## PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

Council recognises that pet owners have significant responsibilities and obligations in relation to the care of their animal.

To encourage pet owners and other stakeholders to comply with all relevant legislation, Council works continuously to educate the community to keep up to date with relevant legislation and look at ways of introducing initiatives to encourage responsible pet ownership.

Social media is regularly used to promote adoption/fostering of domestic animals, responsible pet ownership, registration and desexing.

Moorabool Shire Council's operational, educational and promotional activities		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Providing of information	Providing information via Council's website and social media platforms including Council's dedicated Animals Facebook page	Ongoing
Kitten Adoption Program	Council works with a local vet to support a program that provides affordable desexed kittens. This program supports responsible cat ownership and reduces the need for the community to take on a 'free cat to a good home'	Ongoing
Dog and cat registration	Providing financial incentives on registration fees for those who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adopted dog and/or cat from the Pound</li> <li>• desex their dog or cat</li> <li>• who register their dog or cat before it reaches 6 months of age</li> </ul> Council also honors registrations from other Council areas within the state	Ongoing
Dog and cat adoption program through the pound	By purchasing from the pound, a dog and cat is desexed and temperament tested to ensure the dog or cat fits in with the needs of the family	Ongoing
Event based promotional activity	Council has a pop up at events for the public to interact with Community Safety officers to assist the community to understand responsible pet ownership	At major events
Site patrols	Having a presence in off leash areas and streets has the opportunity for Community Safety Officers to engage with the community and provide information on local requirements and responsible pet ownership.	Weekly
Cat Curfew	Council introduced a Cat Curfew in 2020/21. This curfew places an obligation on cat owners to ensure their cats are contained at night to reduce any negative impacts cats may have including indiscriminate breeding, nuisance and attacks on native wildlife.	Ongoing

Council seeks to educate the community to keep up to date with relevant legislation and looks at ways of introducing initiatives to encourage responsible pet ownership. Where compliance requirements cannot be obtained through educative means, appropriate enforcement action is undertaken.



## PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES

Council's Domestic Animal Pound provides a safe haven for lost, surrendered and abandoned dogs and cats within the Shire. The Pound operates in accordance with the Act and Code of Practice for the Operation of Pounds and Shelters.

The priority of our Community Safety officers is to reunite lost dogs and cats with their owner.

Moorabool Shire Council utilises social media (Facebook) as a tool to engage with the community to reach a broader audience with the aim of reuniting lost dogs and cats with their owners. To date, our Facebook page (Moorabool Pet Adoption) has over 5,100 likes and followers.

Our Facebook page is also utilised to promote pound pet adoptions and responsible pet ownership.

The largest identified issue for Council is the number of unowned/semi owned cats that are not desexed (cats being fed by people but are not seen as their cat but rather one they are helping). These cats end up coming into the care of the Pound or remaining in the area allowing them to breed indiscriminately.

Council supports the Bacchus Marsh Veterinary Centre Kitten Adoption Program with the aim of finding forever homes for unwanted cats that find their way into the Pound. Council works with reputable shelters and rescues organisations to rehome dog and cats. Euthanasia is used as a last resort and is generally used for feral cats as they are not able to be handled and as such cannot be rehomed

Numbers of cats and dogs impounded and subsequent outcomes			
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Dogs</b>			
Impounded	287	198	181
Reclaimed from pound	223	145	148
Euthanised	11	15	10
Rehomed/sent to rescue	33	38	33
<b>Cats</b>			
Impounded	428	350	263
Reclaimed from pound	16	31	16
Euthanised	202	131	80
Rehomed/ sent to rescue	120	188	167

Dogs and cats impounded have decreased considerably since 2019/20. This reduction may be due to a number of factors such as the Kitten Adoption Program and other educational programs. However, it is believed that COVID-9 has had a major impact on impounds as more people were working from home and potentially providing more care and attention to their pets. As the impacts on our day to day lives of COVID-19 subside, the trend in impoundments will need to be reassessed.

Euthanasia rates, especially of cats, has also dropped from 2019/20 and again this is thought to be due to COVID-19. As a result of the increase in adoptions of dogs and cats from Refuges, Council was able to transfer more dogs and cats to Refuge accommodation for rehoming. The return to pre COVID living may potentially see a drop in adoptions and thus potentially higher euthanasia rates as dogs and cats cannot be found forever homes.

Moorabool Shire Council's current operational, educational and promotional activities		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Kitten Adoption Program	Council supports the Kitten Adoption Program with a Local vet to reduce euthanising rates by rehoming unwanted kittens. This Program reduces the potential for unwanted breeding by desexing all the kittens before purchase.	Ongoing
Registration fee incentives	Discounted registration fees apply for desexed animals to promote registration and indiscriminate breeding.	Ongoing
Pound Dog Adoption Program	Adopting desexed dogs from the Pound reduces euthanasia rates and indiscriminate breeding.	Ongoing
Working with refuge agencies	Council is able to rehome dogs and cats from the Pound to reduce euthanasia rates.	Ongoing
Cat trapping programs	<p>Cat trapping programs are generally aimed at trapping feral cats to reduce breeding, nuisance and damage to the environment. Adult feral cats are mostly euthanised as they cannot be rehomed. New homes are generally sought for kittens, where possible.</p> <p>Humane traps to enforce the cat curfew are available to the community.</p>	Ongoing

## REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION

All dogs and cats over the age of three months are required to be microchipped and registered, with registration being renewed on 10 April each year in accordance with the Act.

Registration renewal notices are issued to owners of all registered dogs and cats in March each year and can be paid online. Promotion of cat and dog registrations through, social media and Council's website occurs in the lead up to 10 April each year.

Council is committed to reuniting registered dogs and cats with their owners. Dogs and cats wearing their registration tags is an essential part in assisting in a prompt return to an owner. When a registered dog or cat is found with its Council registration tag on, it can quickly be reunited with its owner reducing both stress on the pet and the owner.

On 1 April 2022, 1,703 cats and 6,041 dogs were registered within the Shire. Council does recognise that cat registration rates are low in comparison to dogs. This is a Statewide issue that needs to be addressed via education programs and promoting awareness of the legal requirement and benefits of registration.

Council recognises that increasing the number of cats and dog registrations will enable Council to deliver a more efficient and targeted Animal Management Service to our community. It also has the added benefit of assisting in the return to home process, by reuniting lost cats and dogs with their owners.

Owners of registered dogs and cats impounded receive a reduced initial impound for the first impoundment in any 12-month period. These fees are used directly to support the running of the animal management services that Council delivers. Unregistered dogs and cats may be subject to infringement on top of pound fees.

Council offers a discounted microchipping service.

The Act specifies how Council administers registration, registration exemptions, the renewal process and how registration fees should be set.

Domestic animal businesses notify Council of new owners who are then followed up and provided with responsible pet ownership and registration information.

Domestic animal registrations at 1 April each year				
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Dog Desexed	3697	4661	4676	4603
Dog Entire	1130	1696	1503	1448
Cat Desexed	1239	1634	1638	1659
Cat Entire	37	61	49	44

Moorabool Shire Council's operational, educational and promotional activities		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Registration fee incentive	Reduced fee registrations for a number of reasons in accordance with the Act.	Ongoing
Pro rata registration fees	Pro rata rates for dogs and cats registered between October and end of February each year. Dogs and cats registered from March only pay for the following year.	Ongoing
Registered dog and cats impounded	Registered dogs and cats impounded receive a reduced impound fee.	Ongoing
Microchipping	Low-cost microchipping option.	Ongoing
Dog and cat registrations reminders	Dog and cat owners and new dog and cat owners are reminded to renew or register their pet.	Ongoing but principally around registration renewal periods
Enforcement protocols	Owners of unregistered dogs and cats may face infringement and enforcement action.	Ongoing

## NUISANCE CAUSED BY DOMESTIC ANIMALS

Council has a major role to play in ensuring the community are not adversely affected by unnecessary nuisance from dogs and cats. The Act, Regulations and the Moorabool Shire Council Local Law No. 1 (2019) provide measures to control nuisance.

Council's Local Law 2019 (Council Local Law) regulates a number of issues including, but not limited to:

- the number of dogs and cats kept on a property
- permit conditions for additional dogs and cats
- nuisances caused by dogs and cats
- the removal of dog faeces in a public place

The following table details the number of contacts Council receives each year regarding nuisance dogs and cats.

Cat and dog contacts to Council 2019/20 to 2021/22			
	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022
Dog barking	89	147	148
Dog attack person	30	35	28
Dog attack animal	54	56	69
Dog other	597	407	284
Cat Lost/Found Nuisance	72	67	48
Cat other	44	47	34

Contacts regarding barking dogs increased considerably for the two years post 2019/20, whereby contacts regarding roaming and general contacts reduced.

### Cat control

A feasibility study was undertaken in response to the 2018-2021 DAMP to introduce a cat curfew to reduce the number of cats wandering at night. The dawn to dusk cat curfew was implemented in 1 July 2021. Humane cat traps are available for residents to hire from Council to trap nuisance, trespassing, wandering, feral, and semi owned cats.

Community Safety officers undertake humane cat trapping programs where a number of unowned or semi-owned cats were found to be creating a nuisance. A previous instance resulted in more than 80 cats and kittens trapped and removed from one property.

### Barking dogs

Community Safety officers have developed and updated the process in relation to the investigation of alleged nuisance barking dogs. Investigations at times can be quite complex and drawn out with significant resources utilised. Officers determine if a nuisance exists in accordance with the Act, aim to resolve the alleged nuisance through mediation and education, and as a last resort undertake enforcement.



### Dog off-leash areas

In 2003 Council adopted an order that dogs be always on a lead within the community, other than in a designated off-lead area. Doggie waste bags are available at off-lead areas and throughout the Shire to encourage dog owners to collect and dispose of faeces appropriately.

Moorabool Shire Council's operational, educational and promotional activities include:		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Barking dogs	Ongoing review of the dog barking response process to provide a more cohesive and consistent response to barking dog complaints	Annual
Cat traps	Provision of humane cat traps for hire where there are complaints of cats that are wandering at night (not complying with curfew) or feral cats	Ongoing
Street and park patrols	Undertake street and park patrols on foot where Community Safety Officers can meet and discuss with dog owner issues about nuisance control including having dogs on lead and picking up animal faeces	Ongoing

## DOG ATTACKS AND DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREEDS

The community's understanding of what constitutes a dangerous or restricted dog may not broadly align with the classifications as per the Act. It is clear the community has concerns about dangerous dogs in the community and the lack of management by owners.

Dog attacks against people and other animals unfortunately do occur in the Shire. Community Safety officers respond to reports relating to dog attacks/rushes and aggressive wandering dogs as a matter of urgency, 24-hours a day.

Dogs found wandering at large or not securely confined to their owner's premises are seized and impounded. If the owner can be identified and the dog has not been involved in a dog attack or rush, then officers will promptly reunite the dog with its owner.

Dog attacks are investigated thoroughly, with Community Safety officers trained to collate all evidence relating to an attack. Dogs suspected of having been involved in an attack may be seized and held pending an investigation or prosecution outcome.

Where appropriate, Council may propose to declare a dog menacing or dangerous that has been involved in an attack or rush.

In some cases, the owner may elect to surrender or euthanise their dog that has been involved in an attack or rush. Community Safety officers understand that this can be an emotional time for an owner and will endeavour to facilitate and support owners during this process.

When Council deems it appropriate, the owner of a dog involved in an attack or rush may be prosecuted.

Community Safety officers are responsible for maintaining the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) for dogs declared menacing and dangerous within the Shire.

As a peri-urban Shire, Community Safety officers often respond to dog attacks on livestock which can have a devastating effect on our farming community. Community Safety officers work with livestock owners and provide a humane dog trap which officers can set in locations as required.

Where Community Safety Officers respond to an attack on livestock and are unable to identify the offending dog or owner, the officers will either door knock the area or distribute letters to surrounding properties reminding dog owners of their obligations in respect to responsible pet ownership.

Dog attack statistics		
	2020/2021	2021/2022
Dog attacks on person	35	28
Dog attacks on an animal	56	69
Dogs declared dangerous	11	11
Dogs declared menacing	12	19

During 2021/22, Council received 97 reports concerning dog attacks; 69 attacks were on animals and 28 were on people. Two of these reports were taken to the Magistrate's Court. Currently the Shire has 19 declared menacing and 11 dangerous dogs. There has been a small percentage rise over the last two years in overall dog attacks.

Moorabool Shire Council's operational, educational and promotional activities include:		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Street and park patrols	Patrols provide a visual presence especially in off leash areas to ensure that owners have their dogs under control at all times	Ongoing
Dog attack procedure	Ongoing review of the dangerous dog procedures to ensure that Council provides the most appropriate response to dog attacks and reduce the likely recurrence	Yearly
Response to dog attack notifications	Prompt response to dog attacks including out of business hours. Dogs suspected of being involved in an attack may be seized and impounded to the reduce the potential for further attacks and to gain evidence to be able to form the basis of an investigation	Ongoing
Declared dangerous dogs	Community Safety officers undertake unannounced visits to premises where dangerous dogs are housed. Officers provide advice and guidance to the owners to reduce the potential for a dangerous dog to escape or pose a risk to the community	Ongoing
Enforcement after a dog attack has occurred	Community Safety officers undertake enforcement action as necessary after investigating a dog attack	Ongoing



## DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES

In Victoria, the Act defines Domestic Animal Businesses as any of the following:

- A Council Pound (operated by the Council or a contractor on behalf of a Council)
- A dog or cat breeding business - where three or more fertile females and dogs or cats are sold (whether a profit is made or not), and the proprietor is not a member of an Applicable Organisation. If the proprietor is a member of an Applicable Organisation, they are exempt from registering as a breeding Domestic Animal Business if they have less than 10 fertile female dogs or cats AND no more than two dogs or cats are not registered with an Applicable Organisation.
- A dog training establishment (where the business is run for profit).
- A pet shop (operated in a permanent location that must be open at least five days per week).
- An animal shelter (e.g., welfare organisations such as the RSPCA and The Lost Dogs' Home).
- An establishment boarding dogs or cats (where the business is run for profit to provide overnight, daycare or homecare boarding).
- An establishment that is rearing dogs or cats (where the business is run for profit).

All Domestic Animal Businesses must be registered annually with Council and comply with the appropriate mandatory Code of Practice. Under current legislation Council has the authority to refuse registration of a business if they are not able to meet the legislation and relevant Code of Practice.

There are nine registered Domestic Animal Businesses within the Shire. This includes the Council's Pound, one breeding establishment, two pet shops, one training facility and four boarding establishments.

Council is responsible for ensuring compliance of all Domestic Animal Businesses. Council's enforcement and compliance duties in relation to Domestic Animal Businesses include:

- Providing a copy of the relevant Code of Practice
- Ensuring that all Domestic Animal Businesses are registered
- Undertaking annual auditing of all registered Domestic Animal Businesses
- Following up any non-compliance as required
- Investigating suspected unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses
- Liaising with Council's Planning Team to ensure planning conditions are adhered to

Moorabool Shire Council's operational, educational and promotional activities include:		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY
Engagement with Domestic Animal businesses	<p>Community Safety officers engage with Domestic Animal business to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist owners with understanding their responsibilities under the relevant Code of Practise</li> <li>• Ensure compliance with minimum standards</li> </ul>	Ongoing
Auditing	Undertake annual audits of all registered Domestic Animal businesses	Annual
Domestic Animal business auditing process	Ongoing review of the auditing process for Domestic Animal businesses	Annual
Enforcement	<p>If an unregistered Domestic Animal Business is identified. Community Safety officers work with all stakeholder agencies, including Council's Statutory Planning Team to ensure relevant approvals are obtained or the business ceases operation</p> <p>Community Safety officers actively search for unregistered Domestic Animal businesses via advertising placed on social media platforms</p>	Ongoing

## ANNUAL REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING

In line with the Act, Council must review its DAMP annually and amend the Plan, as needed. The following activities outline how it will meet these requirements.

Activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under the Act		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide the Secretary with a copy of the DAMP and any amendments to the Plan	Commencement of the plan and as required if any amendments made	Copy provided to Secretary
Review the DAMP against the Action Plan and update as required	Annual	Plan reviewed
Review the DAMP and publish an evaluation of the Plan in the Council's Annual report	Annual	Review information included in the Council Annual Report
Undertake a Major review of the DAMP	2025	Major review undertaken

## ACTIVITIES & ACTIONS

The tables below detail a number of Actions and Activities Council will undertake to comply with its obligations and its desire to support the community and to promote the benefits of dog and cat ownership while reducing any negative impacts on the community.

The Actions below respond to the main issues raised in the consultation process and provide a tool to monitor Council's compliance with its responsibilities under the Act.

### Action Plan – 2021-2025

#### TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

Activity	When	Evaluation
Maintain a training register for individual Community Safety officers detailing completed and proposed training.	Annual	Review of training register
Review induction process for new Community Safety officers	2024	Reviewed induction process completed

#### PROGRAMS TO PROMOTE AND ENCOURAGE RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP AND COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION

Activity	When	Evaluation
Include Information with registration renewals on responsible pet ownership	2024	Information provided with registration renewals
Audit the amount of cat traps available to residents to ensure supply meets demand	2023	Total number of requests over a three-month period (breeding season) relative to number of cages available
Host a meet the Community Safety officer program on targeted issues	2023	Number of community members attending, and feedback received
Provide discounted microchipping services to the community	2023	Number of dog and cat owners who take up the service
Undertake proactive Responsible Ownership education session at Primary Schools	2023	All primary schools who would like an education visit are visited once every two years

**PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS OVERPOPULATION RATES AND ANY HIGH EUTHANASIA RATES**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify and report illegally operating breeding establishments in the Shire and assisted by the Victoria Police, RSPCA, Microchip database and Animal Welfare Victoria	Annual	Report on number of investigations and the outcomes of each investigation
Expand partnerships between Council and rescue groups in accordance with the Act	Annual	Report on the number of new partnerships established through this process
Promote the adoption of Pound dogs and cats	Annual	Number of dogs and cats adopted from the Pound
Seek to work in partnerships with industry stakeholders to introduce a low-cost desexing programs	2023	Number of established desexing programs established
Investigate any options to support people to access veterinary services	2024	Undertake investigation

**REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct phone, email or social media engagement with pet owners who have not renewed dog and cat registration	Annual	Number of dogs and cats not renewed, renewed
Promote registration discounts and concessions available for desexing and microchipping dogs and cats	Annual	Summary of promotional activities undertaken
Undertake educational programs to promote the benefits of dog and cat registration	Annual	Summary of promotional activities undertaken
Investigate the ability to implement a dog and cat annual registration promotion program	2023	Summary of the outcome of the investigation
Investigate the ability to include a discounted registration rate for Assistance animals	2023	Summary of the outcome of the investigation

**NUISANCE CAUSED BY DOMESTIC ANIMALS**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education and guidance for cat complaints to support the Cat Curfew	Annual	Summary of activities undertaken
Carry out cat trapping in hot spot areas to decrease the number of nuisance complaints	Annual	Number of traps set (days) Number of cats trapped
Undertake review on barking dog process	2024	Review completed
Undertake a review of the dog off leash areas	2024	Review completed

**DOG ATTACKS AND DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREEDS**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide regular Community Safety officer park patrols in both on and off-leash parks	Annual	Number of park patrols undertaken
Increase awareness of effective and appropriate containment for dogs with a focus on reducing the number of dogs wandering	Annual	Number of wandering dogs impounded
Ensure all declared dogs within the Shire are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) and the VDDR is kept up to date	Annual	Number of declared dogs registered
Conduct property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance with the Act	Annual	Number of properties inspected

**DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESSES**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify and ensure that all Domestic Animal businesses are registered	Annual	Number of Domestic Animal businesses registered
Conduct annual audits of all registered Domestic Animal Businesses	Annual	Number of Domestic Animal businesses registered
Investigate and act upon public complaints about Domestic Animal Businesses	Annual	Number of Domestic Animal businesses investigated



## Domestic Animal Management Plan Community Consultation 4 – 18 July 2022

Consultation results and comments.

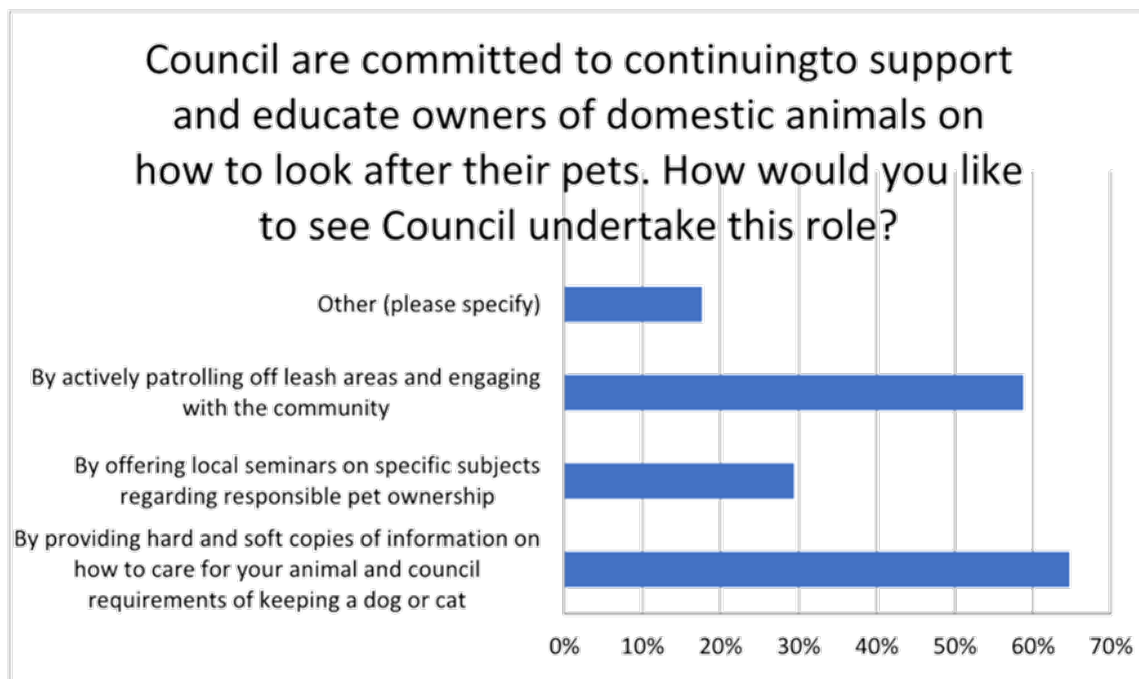
### Respondents

34 of which 33 lived within the Moorabool Shire. All respondents did not answer each question or provide comments.

### Animal ownership

30 respondents stated they own either a cat or a dog of these 10 owned a dog, 5 owned a cat and 5 owned both a cat and a dog.

### Education initiatives



**Comments by respondents for other**

By patrolling areas to fine off lead dog walkers  
Post to residents who have animals registered  
When registering an animal, a pack would be good to send/give the owners.  
All of the above  
Every owner who doesn't pick up their dog poo, should be fed that dog poo  
Be more active and approachable in the community  
Plenty of markets and community events to attend  
Could run workshops etc  
Online digital info  
Seminars of an evening

**Dogs on leash and off leash areas**

97 % of respondents were aware that dogs needed to be on leash when not on private property or in a dog off leash area,

68% of respondents were aware that Council has Off leash areas for dogs

70% of respondents would like to see more off leash parks in the Moorabool Shire

**When asked where people would like to see additional off leash areas the following were the responses**

Gordon  
Maddingley  
Anywhere  
Along the waterways  
Everywhere  
You need to provide for ALL small towns and communities, not just Bacchus Marsh and Ballan!!  
Maddingley and not just the Rex reserve. Darley near the river. Walkway between grant & Fiskin streets. Allow off lead around avenue walk, next to fence and away from track.  
Maddingley  
I believe one could be use put in quite easily on the Station street side of Maddingley park. I am sure there are spaces in other Council owned areas that simple fences could be constructed on to offer this. I also feel for the Baseball club having to share their sports space with dogs and owners who do not clean up after their pets  
Within the shire  
Bacchus Marsh  
Not sure



**When asked what people would like to see in off lead parks the following were the comments**

Fenced area for dogs to run off lead without fear of running away  
Purpose built off lead areas away from walking tracks and playgrounds  
Fenced in area for dogs to run and play  
Bins, poo bags, park next to it like masons lane setup  
Fenced secure area. Maybe 2 separate areas, 1 for large dogs, 1 for small dogs. Maybe an agility course, water fountain, shade, seating, shelter, dog poo bags and bin  
Signage. Poop bags. BINS.  
Safe, fenced area  
Not sure  
Agility parks

**Registration fees**

**The community were asked what they believed council does for the animal registration fees charged. The following comments were received.**

Support the pound / strays  
Pound services, welfare checks on reported animals not being cared for  
Nothing  
Funds the pound facilities  
Bribes and paying over market rates for work done by 'mates'  
Towards staff wages  
Nothing  
Nothing  
No idea  
Money to run the local pound  
Keeps Pound running  
Runs the pound and limited education, rangers  
Maintain pound. Animals at large. Missing animals. Inspections etc  
Offenders of dog attack need more education and suffer greater penalties to stop reoccurrence!!!  
Unknown  
No idea  
Employs people  
Unsure  
It's supposed to go towards educational material for pet owners and helping return lost pets to their owners. But my honest and educated opinion is Revenue raising. I certainly don't get anything for having my animals registered because if they got out they'd probably be taken to Ballarat. I've worked in local government for a long time, especially the animal management team, so I know where the money goes.  
Providing personalised registration tag with name and phone number of owners to aid returning dog to their peers without council involvement  
Unclear as council does not seem to release this information  
No idea  
Ranger fees. Pound maintenance. Poop bags.  
Not sure  
Officers looking after animals within the shire. The collection and return of pets. Support for animal owners.

Employs comm safety officers, provides pound, vet checks, etc  
 Paying for pounds and resources for animals that escape etc  
 No idea what they do with it  
 Not enough - could offer discounted desexing programs  
 Back into adoption programs. Pound fees  
 Runs various pet education and enforcement, ranger, pound etc.  
 No idea

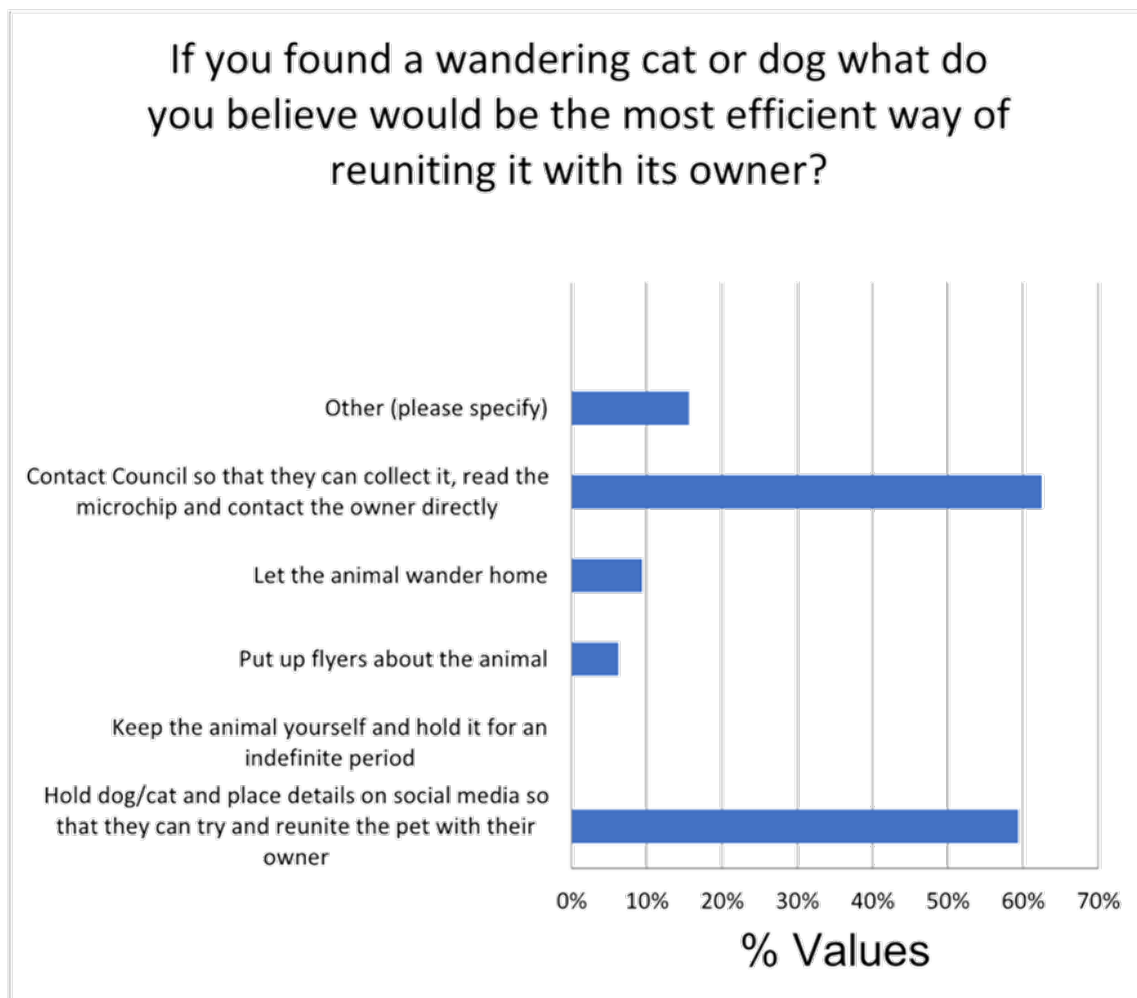
**When asked what registration fees should be spent on the following comments were received**

Education, all registration should receive in large print that dogs must be on Leeds accept in off led areas. So so so many people walk off lead, do not clean up dog poo !! Early morning patrols of werribee vale road area, maddingley park would certainly pay OT rates of workers because so many walk off leed and do not care.  
 Pound services, welfare checks on reported animal welfare, some sort of wildlife services for injured wildlife  
 Patrolling for off lead walkers in a lead area  
 As above  
 On actually benefiting the community  
 Developing off lead areas  
 Shelters and dog facilities  
 Fixing the roads  
 Education.  
 Put some money towards wildlife preservation  
 Running of the pound and upkeep of off leash parks and community awareness of laws relating to animals in the council area  
 More pet friendly areas, watering systems so dogs have have a drink in off leash areas and main streets.  
 Compliance, education  
 Education for out owners and more staff to investigate and time to manage dog attacks to eliminate the dog from reoffending  
 Education and off leash fenced park.  
 It's not 1:1, the real question is what should the council do about animal control  
 Actually attending when someone calls for help  
 Upgraded pound facilities  
 Offering free or discounted desexing program, microchipping day or vaccination and health assessment day. It's getting harder and harder to get a vet appointment these days with the vet shortage so I'm sure some vet students wouldn't mind the opportunity to get some hands on experience  
 Implementing a procedure to return registered pets to their owners  
 services for pet owners  
 Assistance with cat and dog related enquiries and to take action where required. Provide suitable off leash areas for dogs to play.  
 In addition.... Mowing dog areas. Provide more off lease. Agility park!!!!  
 Pound, rangers and off leash areas  
 I believe that animal registration is too expensive. It deters people from registering. Our registration is one of the highest in the state and it is not in line with services we receive especially in the instance that your animal is well secured and does not get out. I feel that lowering the rate would get more animals on the system as the cost can also deter those on a lower income.  
 More comm safety officers

Saving more animals  
Unsure  
As above.  
As above  
A dog park

### Reuniting pets with their owners

Respondents were asked what they believed would be the most efficient way of reuniting a wandering pet with its owner. The following were the responses.

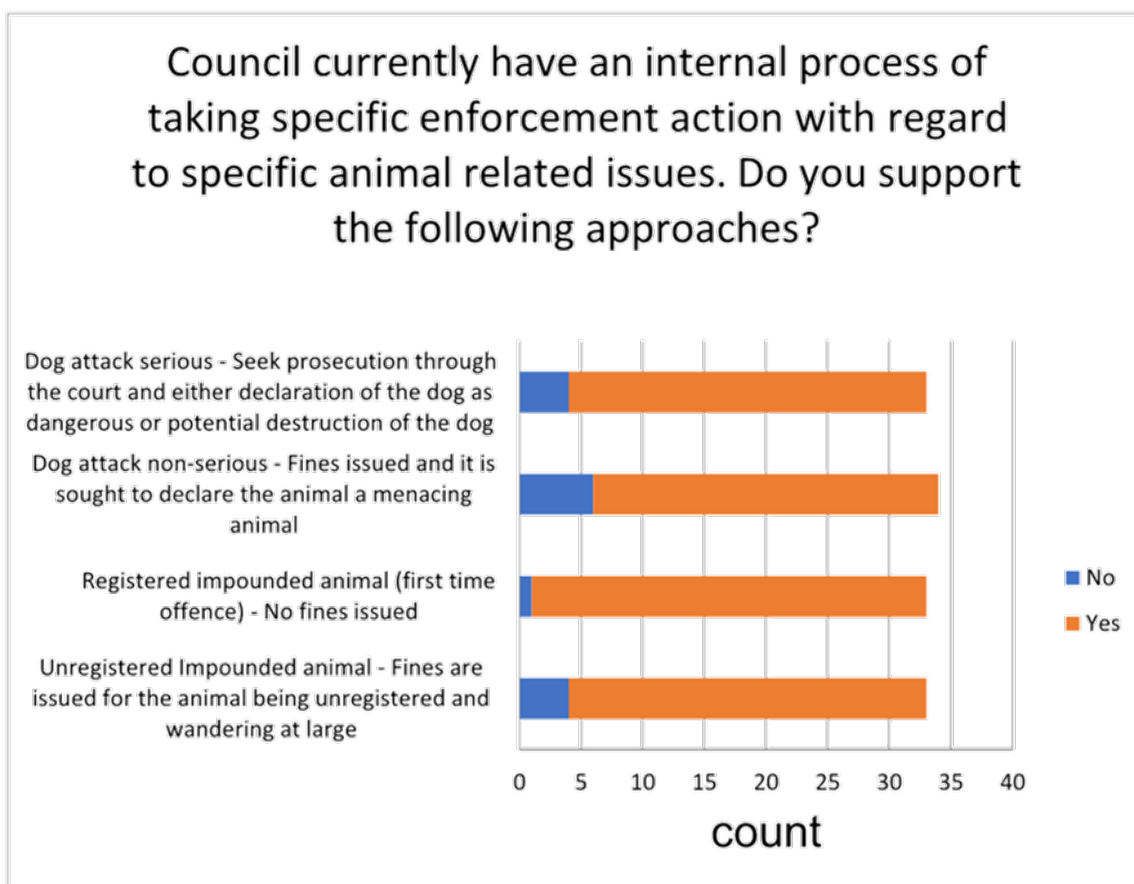


**When requested to explain their response re the above question the following responses were received**

Because they should be registered and microchipped. Not everyone has social media. Repeat offenders have no consequences for wandering dogs.  
Most of the time here it's much quicker if you use social media to get the animal home. But when it's not effective within an hour council is the best option  
I don't want to approach a stray dog and there is no direct contact to the pound  
It works  
Residents groups are a great way to reunite animals with their owners.  
I am unable to hold any lost animal at my premises.  
Not sure  
Roaming cats are difficult to catch and the pound is a long way to drive. It would be easier to have reciprocal rights to go to Ballarat  
Save impound fees and fines for owner. Ownership confirmation.  
Take to the vet to check microchip and reunite without going to the pound, less stress for the animals  
To save the animal from going to pound  
It prevents stress of a pet being held in a cage  
Council need to know for repeat offenders. And I have a dog. So I'm not able to care for others.  
The owner may not be aware it's escaped and may be missed.  
Because in a one off situation where a child has left a gate open accidentally it is a nice community thing to do and can stop a neighbour from having to pay at large fees.  
Give the owner some time before calling council. Door knock and post on fb etc  
To prevent the person having to pay a ridiculous amount of money to get their animal back  
Animal goes back to its rightful owner  
I have other pets so can't hold. Council also list on social media. Safest option, and council can track.

**Enforcement activities.**

**The survey provided information on how Council currently enforces certain offences and sought comments on the current approach. The following was the feedback**



**Respondents were then asked if they had any comments regarding Councils enforcement approach. The following were the comments received**

We have had the horrible experience of being attacked by an off lead dog - and the person got a warning. No good - monetary fines are the only way to make people follow basics rules, and not a \$50 it needs to be \$300

Lots of dogs and many repeat offender at large in our area on a regular basis, but most people seem to be notifying on Facebook.

There are too many people walking their dogs off lead and this needs to be stopped!

Also the number of dogs that have escaped their house is unbelievable. Owners need to be more responsible!

Only that a dog shouldn't be put down unless it is a last resort- attempts to rehome the dog so that retraining can take place should be sought first

Need to be firmer with any animal that attacks, restrict it from going out in the community and fine for owner

There is a lack of enforcement

No

Non serious dog attacks the animal in question should be made to do training and have a psychological exam done to make sure it doesn't attack again

Doesn't appear to be funded enough.

Fines too high along with impound fees. Consideration should be given ie escape during inclement weather, possibility of Diane one letting pets out.

Yes the current procedures for dog attack are inadequate and need updating. What council considers non serious is absolutely serious and the dogs end up reoffending. Harsher penalties and education is required



Dog attack serious - owner should have some consequences, never allowed to own a pet and/or potential jail time

Shouldn't be finding people for unregistered animals just pay pound fee and registration to obtain animal. Don't need a further fee for unregistered

Each situation needs to be assessed on its merits. An animal might not be registered solely because someone chose to buy food for their family and animal rather than pay a registration fee and go hungry. So giving a fine would only add to their troubles and further non registration of the animal. Maybe if they are in financial hardship offer them the first year of registration free.

There needs to be LARGER fines for non registered animals

Lack of transparency regarding what council does with registration fees

Staff seemed keen to help when I reported an injured cat.

Doing a good job. Need more bins. Need more dog fenced area. With agility.

I appreciate that the team to a great job and work hard to reunite owners and work with owners for better outcomes for animals and owners but more resources would help them do this. Allowing those with a first unreg or at large offence to not have a fine issued would show Council are more understanding and less about making money.

The extension of registration of a puppy from 6 months back to 12 months is also a more positive look for Council. There are not thousands of animals registered between the ages of 6-12 months and offering the lower fee until the dog is 12 months gives a more positive customer experience and is in keeping with vet research which is showing more and more that dogs should be de-sexed at 12 months plus. In this instance of owners having to pay \$200 for a dog that is being desexed in two months as advised by a vet, customers walk away and we lose them off the system because most are organised to do the right thing but are following vet orders.

No

We have roaming animals in myrniong often . My children can't walk around freely . Though the council have handled my complaints then the owners return to old habits. Some patrolling would be good

Animal under 12mths should be pup/kitten fee. Not 6mths

No

## Cat Curfew

**When asked if they thought that the cat curfew was effective the response was that 72 % felt it was not effective with 28% believing it was.**

**When asked to provide reasons for this view the following comments were received**

Heaps of cats still around at night

Not sure how we would know if it is or isn't.

It's extremely hard to get an farm cat to stay inside. Bacchus marsh totally different but in rural settings it's not as easy

Cat curfew should be 24 hours! Cats need to be kept indoors.....no exception!

We still have a stray cat on our property overnight

No research done to see if it's effective

Safer for wildlife and the cats not being out at night

Too hard to enforce. Cats should be confined 24/7 for their own safety. Most people keep dogs contained to their property but not cats. There should be more education around this. Perhaps run some workshops on how to contain cats and how to catch wandering ones.

Owners cannot afford to pet proof their property. Some cats are older and habits difficult to change in the short term. Should apply to animals born after a certain date, leniency on those before that date.

Needs time to fully introduce

See cats after hours on camera

It's not enforced

Cats in my neighbourhood still roam at night. More education needs to be done as I believe most people are unaware.

The curfew should be 24/7 but people aren't going to care, and cats don't work off an alarm clock. The rule is a bit hypocritical, if dogs have to be confined to the property 24/7 unless on leash, why aren't cats? Should be the same rule for both considering how much of an issue cats can be (e.g. annoying for neighbours, breeding, destruction of wildlife)

Because at times I have had to keep dog inside due to cats outside window after dark.

Unfortunately, I still see many cats roaming during that time. I also strongly believe the council should follow the lead of other councils and have 24/7 curfews. The damage cats, both feral and domestic, do to our native animals is incredibly sad.

Not able to be enforced. Not enough staff to support those that require cat traps.

Owners locally think it is a joke.

More education about cat run options from a wider Council perspective would be good.

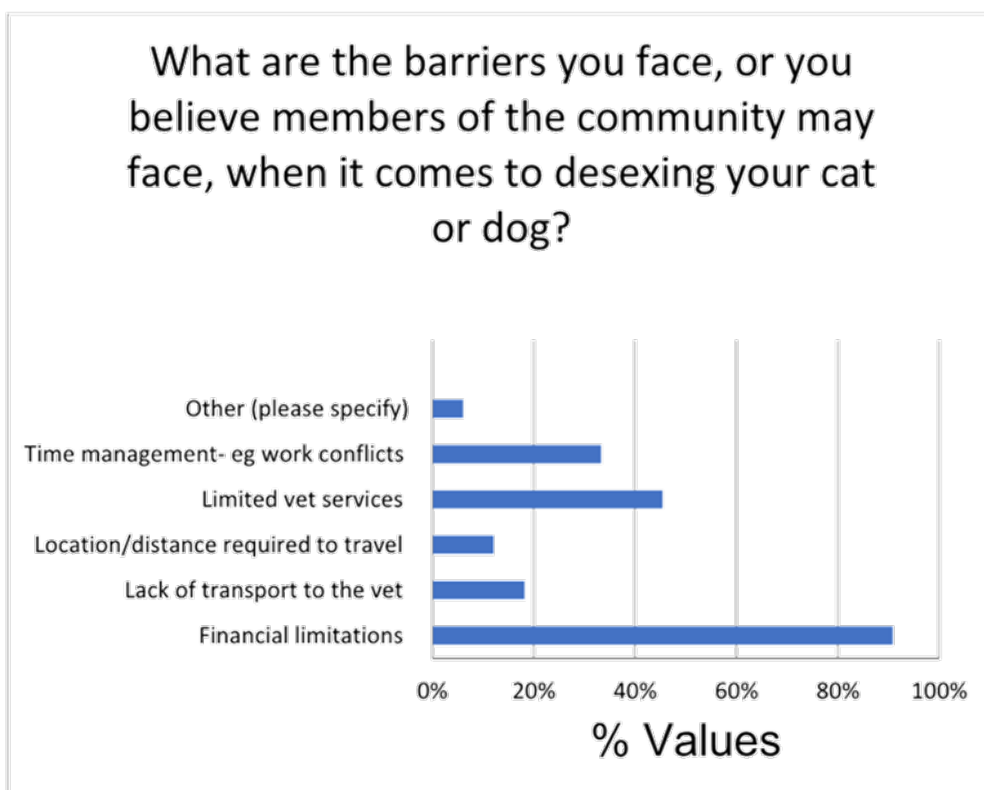
Not sure

I don't see as many cats wandering as previously

I see lots of cats out during curfew hours. Unsure where their actual home is.

### Desexing cats or dogs

People were asked what barriers they believed people faced in desexing their cat or dog, the following were their responses



When requested to provide comments regarding their responses the following were received

If you can't afford it then you should be able to own a pet

I don't but a lot people can't afford this, also it's extremely hard to get a vet appointment for even an emergency now. It's a crisis with regards to access to vet care.

People don't want to spend the money nor do they have the time

The cost

Whilst it is the right thing to do, it is not cheap and for those people on low income it could really impact them.

Cost and most importantly age appropriate for desexing

Other people find coming up with large sum of money to desex unaffordable so therefore don't desex their pets.

It is very hard to get a vet appointments due to closures and others not taking new clients

But if you can't afford to care for a pet you shouldn't have it

There is only one local vet covering BM, Darley and Maddingley.

## Final issues

### **The final questions allowed respondents to raise any other issue regarding animal management and these were the comments received**

People not cleaning up after dogs poo - it's a major issue at all walking areas. Leashed areas people don't care - often left in middle of paths

Too many dogs off lead in residential areas.....owners need to be fined to stop this.....patrol is needed!

Registration appears too expensive based on the information I currently have on where the money is spent

I feel unsafe when walking along the river due to dogs offlead in on lead areas. I have never seen council on patrol

No

There needs to be a limit of how many dogs / cats can be on one property. The house on corner of Duncan Street has more than 10 which is cruel to animals, smells and they are noisy.

Barking dogs is another issue. Maremmas should not be allowed on small acreage. They are very menacing.

Councillors should be more active on the need for cat curfews and keep personal views to themselves.

Looks at costs of registering. Needs a rewards system for those that comply. Pensioners and those in Centrelink to have even more reduced rates or if more than one animal, subsequent animals lower fees

Please review procedures and penalties relating to dog attack, please provide extra staff to ensure incidents are managed effectively to keep the community safe!!!

The amount of Dog waste in the streets is horrible.

Maybe more bins? and a Mail out to all Dog owners requesting they do the right thing or the threat of fines?

Make a law that on may the 4th, all pets be dressed as yoda.

This is the way.

Keep up the great work at the animal pound !!

Don't understand limits on dogs without a permit, should be 3 like cats

Council to offer discount desexing days, cheaper pet registration.

There should be a registration discount for elderly dogs. My dog is 15 and sleeps all day and is slow moving so little to no chance of her being "at large".

No

As stated earlier, I believe the council must move to have a 24/7 cat curfew, and enforce it.

Why was the ages of registering a pup/kitten changed from 12mths to 6mths?