



**Domestic
Animal
Management
Plan
2017 - 21**

**HOBSONS
BAY CITY
COUNCIL**



Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....3

Introduction.....4

Key Statistics.....6

Process for Development of this Plan.....8

Benchmarking of Service Provision9

Hobsons Bay Staffing and Operational Structure.....10

Registration and Identification13

Nuisance.....17

Dog Attacks20

Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs22

Overpopulation and High Euthanasia25

Domestic Animal Businesses27

Other Matters28

Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting.....29

Appendix 1 – Legislation.....30

Appendix 2 – Summary Survey Results.....31

Executive Summary

The DAMP is a four year plan as required under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (*the Act*).

The Act imposes controls over dogs and cats and makes minor references to horses. Council has responsibility in relation to the keeping of other animals such as pigeons, poultry, sheep and rabbits. These matters are dealt with under The Community Local Law 2015.

The intent of the DAMP is to improve animal management across the municipality through a range of various activities focussed on controlling dangerous dogs, responsible pet ownership, identification and registration of animals and compliance and enforcement.

Some of the key activities in this plan include the following:

- Undertake a review of animal management functions to ensure appropriate resourcing is provided in order to respond to growing community demand.
- Increase animal registration rates by further expanding the program of using the Variable Message Board and placement of A-boards in the community to create awareness of responsibility to register and registration door knocks.
- Continue with returning animals found wandering at large directly to their owners where possible after a successful trial in 2016/2017.
- Implement a program to educate and enforce on leash requirements which will assist to reduce the likelihood of dog attacks in the community.
- Investigate the introduction of mandatory de-sexing prior to registration in order to address the cat overpopulation and high euthanasia rates.
- Investigate the possible introduction of a fenced off-leash reserve through the development of the Council's Open Space Strategy.

Implementation of the DAMP strategies should result in improved animal management with a focus on the control of dangerous dogs and more responsible pet ownership. Overall the DAMP should increase the community's perception of safety around animals.

The DAMP will undergo periodic evaluation including a review of implementation which will be reported in the Council's Annual Report.

Introduction

Purpose of the DAMP

Councils in Victoria are now required by the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan ('the DAMP') every 4 year interval with the objective to outline the Council's plans for animal management.

The purposes of the DAMP are to:

- document current processes and practices under the Hobsons Bay Municipality animal management responsibilities;
- improve compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*;
- increase pet owners' knowledge of the principles of responsible pet ownership and enhance community safety and awareness;
- maximise the numbers of dogs and cats that are registered in the Hobsons Bay municipality;
- minimise the harmful effect of domestic pets on the population of native birds, mammals and reptiles;
- take into account community views on animal management matters; and
- comply with the relevant provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Hobsons Bay City Council – Demographic and Council Profile

Hobsons Bay City Council covers 66 square kilometres at the northern end of Port Phillip Bay and is between seven and twenty kilometres to the south west of central Melbourne. With a population of over 93,392 the community of Hobsons Bay is diverse, active and optimistic.

Hobsons Bay is blessed with a rich variety of natural environments that run along the coastline, the Yarra River and the city's creeks. Such extensive open space areas greatly enhance the lifestyle offered by the city but also present a challenge. These areas need careful management if they are to be maintained in the face of the pressures of increased population and development.

Diversity is represented in many forms in Hobsons Bay. It can be seen in the mix of industries and businesses, its open spaces and its people. Hobsons Bay has traditionally experienced a strong community spirit that has welcomed people from many countries. We are committed to ensuring there is a place for everyone. The diversity of housing stock and the variety of industries and businesses are great bases from which to ensure that the city welcomes all. The diversity and breadth of habitats is unique in an area so close to the heart of Melbourne. It provides residents and visitors with a vast array of peaceful, natural places to visit for leisure and relaxation.

Hobsons Bay is ideally placed to become one of the State's focal points for economic development, enjoying outstanding access to the West Gate Freeway, the Western Ring Road, Citylink, the national rail line and the ports and airports of Melbourne and Geelong. This connection of infrastructure has enabled a wide range of economic opportunities.

The local economy includes a growing number of manufacturing, transport and logistics companies together with a range of smaller warehouses, light industries and service industries. Areas of Altona North, Brooklyn, Newport, Spotswood and South Kingsville are becoming increasingly important centres of industry and freight. Hobsons Bay is also home to some of Victoria's major petro-chemical, car manufacturing and petroleum industries and contains some of the state's largest industrial enterprises.

The Municipality

Hobsons Bay is currently home to an estimated 99,392 residents, with an anticipated average annual growth rate of 1.16 per cent until 2026. While the number of households is forecast to increase from 37,070 to 38,698 in 2021, the number of people living in each household is expected to remain steady at 2.54 people.

Diversity is represented in many forms in Hobsons Bay. It can be seen in the array of industries and businesses, its open spaces, its people and the communities they live in.

Located at the northern end of Port Phillip Bay, Hobsons Bay is home to such diverse and vibrant communities as Altona, Altona Meadows, Altona North, Brooklyn, Laverton, Newport, Seabrook, Seaholme, South Kingsville, Spotswood, Williamstown and Williamstown North.

Each of these communities has its own unique character, ranging from the historic seaport of Williamstown, with its range of heritage buildings, to the newer, fast-growing residential areas of Altona Meadows and Seabrook.

Since the 2006 Census, there have been a number of changes in the demographic profile of the municipality, including the median (midpoint) age.

Domestic Animals in Hobsons Bay

In 1998/199 BIS Shrapnel estimated that 40 per cent of households in Hobsons Bay owned one or more dogs at a rate of 1.44 dogs/household; and 26 per cent of households in the municipality owned one or more cats at a rate of 1.47 cats/household. (BIS Shrapnel report to the Department of Primary Industries.)

Therefore, the calculation for a municipality with 36,666 residential dwellings is:

Current 2017:

Estimated Dog Population: $(40/100 \times 37,070) \times 1.44$ dogs = 21,352 dogs.

Estimated Cat Population: $(26/100 \times 37,070) \times 1.47$ cats = 14,168 cats.

Forecast 2020:

Estimated Dog Population: $(40/100 \times 38,698) \times 1.44$ dogs = 22,290 dogs.

Estimated Cat Population: $(26/100 \times 38,698) \times 1.47$ cats = 14,790 cats.

Key Statistics

The population of Hobsons Bay has increased by over 6.5% over the last three years and animal ownership appears relatively static. The number of dogs and cats is forecast to increase by 4 per cent over the DAMP period. Given that approximately 43 per cent of dogs are registered and only 24 per cent of cats are registered this would result in approximately 650 additional registered animals. However as strategies to increase animal registration rates are progressively implemented through the life of this plan this is expected to be greater.

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic General	April 2011	April 2016
No. of EFT Animal Control Officers	2 (plus AH contract service)	5 (plus AH contract service)
Population	87,395	93,392
Number of dwellings	35,388	37,183
Area – sq kilometres of municipality	66sq km	66sq km

Cat Statistics

The statistics indicate that approximately 24 per cent of cats are registered. The challenge for Council is to increase the registration rate. However, this has proven difficult in the past due to the behaviour of cat ownership. Cats usually wander during daytime and it is often difficult for Animal Management Officers to prove ownership. The rate of owners retrieving their impounded cat is also very low at less than 10 per cent, although many of the impounded cats may in fact be strays. The DAMP will attempt to increase Cat registrations by 10 per cent through identified activities. There is also a large stray cat population due in part to the geographic nature of Hobsons Bay i.e. large areas of open space. The DAMP will attempt to address this issue through various activities as outlined. A reduction in the overall cat population will result in fewer cats being euthanized.

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic	April 2013	April 2017
Cat Registrations	3751	3387
Estimated Cat Population	14,105	14,168
Number of impoundments (cats)	641	509
Number of unregistered cats impounded	610	463 (91%)
Number of cats returned to owner	35	29
Number of cats rehoused	60	134
Number of cats euthanized	546	342
Standard cost of cat registration fee	\$96	\$111

Dog Statistics

The statistics indicate that approximately 43 per cent of dogs are registered. The challenge for Council is to increase the registration rate. Again increasing dog registration rates has proven difficult. The DAMP will attempt to increase Dog registrations by 10 per cent through identified activities. The return rate for dogs is much higher than for cats at approximately 67 percent.

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic	April 2013	April 2017
Dog Registrations	10,882	9,050
Estimated Dog Population	21,122	21,352
Number of Declared Dangerous Dogs	12	12
Number of Declared Restricted Dogs	16	6
Number of Declared Menacing Dogs	7	8
Number of impoundments (dogs)	421	242
Number of unregistered dogs impounded	148 (35%)	51 (21%)
Number of dogs returned to owner from LDH	317	162
Number of dogs returned to owner from Council	Nil	215
Number of dogs rehoused	46	60
Number of dogs euthanized	58	18
Maximum dog registration fee	\$126	\$150

Process for Development of this Plan

The existing DAMP will expire in November 2017 will be replaced by the new plan DAMP 2017-2021.

Community Consultation

A community survey was conducted which was publicised on Participate and accessible through Council's website or available in hard copy format from Customer Service locations. Animal Management Officers also conducted face to face surveys in local off leash areas. A total of 365 responses to questions were received together with 317 written feedback comments. The survey findings are attached at Appendix 2. Individual letters were sent to 16 stakeholders including local veterinarians, dog clubs, the Lost Dogs Home and local owners/operators of domestic animal businesses.

The issues of highest concern demonstrated by the survey and comments were:

- support for mandatory de-sexing of cats with 74% of respondents rating it as a high priority
- stray cats and wandering cats;
- "dangerous" dogs and dog attacks; and
- dogs off leash.

Other issues raised in community feedback included cat curfews, an increase of resources to ensure more enforcement of off leash areas/times and better enforcement of responsible pet ownership requirements.

Benchmarking of Service Provision

The animal management services provided by Council have been benchmarked against other Councils in the western region including Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham. These Councils provide the majority of statutory services in house with the exception of Melton Shire (who have their own pound). Services for the impoundment of animals for >5 days and after hours collection of roaming animals are contracted to the Lost Dogs Home. The other Councils all have temporary holding facilities and contracted after hours and pound services.

The animal management services provided by each of the Councils are as varied as they are extensive. Animal management services are generally considered in the context of cats and dogs, however due to some of the councils being on Melbourne's urban fringe and there being a number of major livestock transport routes dissecting the region, some of the councils have livestock management issues to contend with as well.

Future Considerations

The Western Region Councils that Hobsons Bay City Council have been benchmarked against have undertaken an evaluation of the feasibility of a Regional Animal Management Service. In order to achieve service efficiencies Councils have been encouraged to adopt a regional approach in developing shared service models. The Western Region Councils have already been proactive in developing a successful shared service models as evidenced by the Regional Food Kitchen (RFK) and Community Chef program.

Wyndham City Council is currently developing a plan to have a pound service in the western region. Hobsons Bay City Council is exploring the option to participate on a user pays basis.

A regional animal management approach would include a pound service to meet current and future needs with capacity to provide some allied commercial activity which could scale up as need and demand arises. The timeline for implementation of the facility is anticipated to be in the second year of this DAMP.

Hobsons Bay Staffing and Operational Structure

The Animal Management Unit at Hobsons Bay is part of the Corporate Service Directorate and currently consists of the Coordinator, 2 full-time AMOs, 1 part time AMO and one Administration Officer. In addition 2 multi-skilled Local Laws Officers provide back up support to the AMO's as needed.

With the current complement of staff the unit is operational from 8.00am-7.00pm 7 days a week with a minimum of 2 AMO's available during this time.

Both the full-time AMOs work 8.00am-4.45pm Monday to Friday. The part-time AMO works 10.15am-7.00pm Monday-Wed and 8am-5.00pm Saturday and Sunday.

The unit is currently undertaking a 3 month trial with an area based structure, dividing the municipality into 2 geographical areas based on the number of each complaint type from 2016-2017.

The trial aims to provide stability to fulfil core service and statutory requirements and balance the workload amongst the AMOs. It will also provide opportunities for the Officers to obtain new skills.

Additional services will require an increase in resourcing especially during seasonal peak periods to include summer monitoring during daylight savings.

Services Provided to the Community Relating to Animal Management

The Animal Management department is responsible for:

- promoting responsible pet ownership;
- managing of complaints relating to pets;
- impounding animals;
- investigating dog attacks;
- ensuring compliance to legislation and code of practice's relevant to domestic animals and livestock;
- animal registration process;
- management of domestic animal businesses;
- providing advice to pet owners and the community;
- returning animals directly to their owners where possible
- after hours animal emergencies.

Local Laws and Orders Relating to Animal Management

The Council has in place a variety of local laws or orders that regulate pet owners, including:

- restrictions related to dogs being on the Williamstown and Altona Beaches;
- dogs on leash requirements; and
- limits on the number of dogs and cats that may be kept without a permit.

Current and Planned Training

Authorised Officer Training - Basic	Officers	Status
Certificate IV in Local Government (Animal Control and Regulation)	All AMOs	Completed
Certificate IV in Local Government (Statutory Compliance)	3 AMOs 2 AMOs	Completed To be scheduled
Industry training Lost Dogs Home Animal Handling Training	All AMOs	Attend as appropriate workshops and seminars provided by DEDJTR Domestic Animals Unit, Legal practitioners.
OH&S training – dealing with aggressive customers	All AMO's	Refresher training to be conducted in house
Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources – Training and information days	All AMOs	Subject to schedule
OH&S training	All AMO's	Refresher training to be conducted in house
Australian Institute of Animal Management Annual Conference:	Coordinator AMOs	Subject to management approval taking into account program and perceived benefits for the AMO's and HBCC

Our Plans

Objective 5.1 To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to safely and effectively carry out their work.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with staff	Year 2017-21	Competency Requirements Evaluation
Undertake a skills gap analysis with staff on commencement of AMO role.	Year 2017-21	Competency Requirements evaluation
Staff to complete refresher training and attend industry training	Year 2017-21	Position Description review, Competency Requirements evaluation, induction program and follow up reinforcement training

Objective 5.2 To ensure that the Animal Management function is appropriately resourced to respond to customer requests and to take a proactive approach to improving responsible pet ownership

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review of operational/geographical areas and place dedicated AMO's to maintain consistency.	Year 2017-21	Productivity improvements measured by CHARM analysis and customer feedback.

Registration and Identification

In accordance with *Part 5A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 ('the Act')* 68A (2) (c) (v) outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats. Also addresses 68A (2) (a), (c) (i), (c) (ii), (d), (f)

Current Situation

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic	April 2013	April 2017
Dog registrations	10,882	9,050
Cat Registrations	3,751	3,387
Estimated Dog Population	20,522	21,352
Estimated Cat Population	13,617	14,168

All dogs and cats over the age of 3 months must be registered with Hobsons Bay in accordance with State legislation. Newly registered animals must also be micro-chipped before registration can be accepted.

Currently, new animal registrations for cats and dogs can be made in person at:

Hobsons Bay Civic Centre,
115 Civic Parade,
Altona Vic 3018 (Melways ref: 54 H10)

Or, by mail with the appropriate payment and copies of relevant proof required to:

Hobsons Bay City Council
PO Box 21,
Altona Vic 3018

Registration application forms can be downloaded online from the Council's website www.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au and submitted via email to customerservice@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au

If an animal has been impounded and is not registered with the Council the registration process must be completed prior to release of the animal. Animals that are not registered and micro-chipped must be micro-chipped prior to registration and release of the animal.

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, animal registration periods expire on the 10th April each year. Animal renewal notices are sent out every year in March allowing pet owners to renew their pets' registration via the internet or in person or by mail. Council audits the registration renewal process every year to ensure animal registration is renewed.

Animals found unsecured or 'at large' from their property and are identifiable by means of an allocated identification marker have a higher chance of being reunited with their owners. It is a requirement that dogs and cats outside of the owner's premises must wear a council identification tag as outlined in section 20 of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

The registration of animals provides the Council with an understanding of the level of pet ownership in the community and in turn assists with service planning and management.

Registration fees contribute to funding the services provided by Council in relation to animal management. \$3.50 from each dog registration and \$2.00 from each cat registration is paid to Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources to fund pet ownership and education programs such as The Responsible Pet Ownership Program. These levies are legislated under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Policies and Procedures

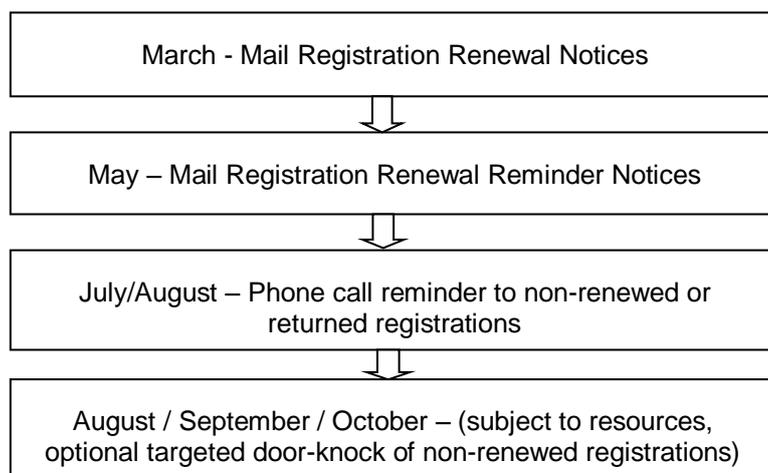
- DAMP

Local Laws

- Community Local Law 2015 – Limits concerning the number of animals and the circumstances in which they can be kept on premises.

Type of animal	All properties (except flats and units)	Flats and units
	2	1
Cats	2	1
Poultry	10	Not permitted
Domestic birds	10	5
Large birds	2	Not permitted
Pigeons	10	Not permitted
Racing pigeons	60	Not permitted
Domestic mice	2	2
Guinea pigs and ferrets	2	Not permitted
Rabbits	2	Not permitted
Fish	No maximum limit	No maximum limit
Tortoises, frogs etc.	No maximum limit	No maximum limit
Horses, donkeys etc.	0	Not permitted
Cattle	0	Not permitted
Sheep	0	Not permitted
Goats	0	Not permitted
Pigs	0	Not permitted
Other agricultural animals	0	Not permitted

Annual Registration Renewal Program



Our Plans

Objective 6.1 To increase the number of registered domestic animals in the municipality:

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue letter and phone call follow ups of non-renewed registrations	Annual	Number of registrations
Subject to budget approval conduct door knock of non-renewed registrations	Annual	Number of registrations
Expand the program of placing A-boards in the community advising of registration responsibility	On-going	Number of registrations
Place public notices on Councils animal management social media page advising of registration responsibility	At least annually	Number of registrations
Require animals to be registered prior to release from being impounded	On-going	Statutory requirement
Subject to availability, use Variable Message Board to advise of registration responsibility	At least annually	Number of registrations
Enforcement actions – issue warnings, notices to comply and infringement notices	On-going	Number of registrations
When responding to any requests and visiting addresses, check that dogs and cats are registered	On-going	Issue of warning notices for unregistered animals
Follow up with new owners of animals purchased from Lost Dogs Home and local pet shops to ensure registration	On-going	Registration of purchased animals
Investigate the possibility for new animal registrations to be transacted online	On-going	New animal registrations can be emailed as per current renewal process

Presentations to Junior Council	Annually	New registrations from parents
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Objective 6.2 To increase the number of micro-chipped domestic animals in order to assist AMOs with animal identification.

Activity	When	Evaluation
With the assistance of the Lost Dogs Home, arrange micro-chipping and cat de-sexing events	Minimum annually	Demand for appointments

Objective 6.3 To improve AMO access to registration information in the field.

Activity	When	Evaluation
In addition to being able to call back to the office new technology solutions are available for AMO's to check currency of registration in the field.	2017-21	Currently in place and testing

Objective 6.4 To improve the rate of reuniting impounded dogs with owners

Activity	When	Evaluation
Photos and details of impounded dogs and cats are now on the dedicated Animal Management Facebook Page	Ongoing	Numbers of followers

Nuisance

In accordance with Part 5A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (*the Act*) 68A (2) (c) (vi) outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance. Also addresses 68A (2) (a), (c) (i), (c) (ii), (d), (f)

Current Situation

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic	April 2013	April 2017
Number of impoundments (dogs)	421	242
Number of impoundments (cats)	641	509
Barking dog complaints	98	46
Cat complaints	234	256

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, regulates the nuisances for both dogs and cats relating to noise, trespassing and wandering animals. Hobsons Bay City Council has also introduced a number of Local Laws and Orders to help minimise and prevent nuisances which are outlined below.

Policies and Procedures

- DAMP; and
- Management of Dogs in Public Places.

Local Laws

Community Local Law 2015	
Community Local Law 2015 2015 Part 6, 50	No more than two dogs and/or two cats to be kept on a residential property or 1 for flats/units
Community Local Law 2015 2015 Part 6, 57 (2) (3)	Pet owners to remove faeces from public places and carry a means to collect faeces
Community Local Law 2015 2015 Part 6, 55 (1)	Pet owners to prevent unreasonable noise
Community Local Law 2015 2015 Part 6, 63	Regulations relating to dogs on Altona and Williamstown beaches
Community Local Law 2015 2015 Part 6, 56	Dogs must be on a leash in all public areas unless specified as an off leash area.

Our Plans

Objective 7.1 To maximise animal owner compliance with domestic animal laws, orders and regulations (State and Local)

Activity	When	Evaluation
Routine patrols and reactive	On-going	Offences identified and enforcement actions taken
Complaint response	On-going	Number of complaints resolved
Encourage de-sexing to reduce likelihood of cats and dogs from wandering	On-going	Statutory registration fee schedule that encourages de-sexing
Encourage de-sexing and registration by partnering with The Lost Dogs Home utilising the mobile de-sexing van to host discounted cat de-sexing events	Annually	Full schedule booked for each event
Enforcement through issue of notices to comply, warnings and infringement notices	On-going	Number of notices issued

Objective 7.2 To investigate and resolve nuisance animal complaints in accordance with Customer Service completion timelines.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Record complaints on Council's CHARM management system	On-going	Number of complaints resolved
Encourage dog owners to seek help from dog trainers	On-going	Information provided to owners of barking dogs

Objective 7.3 To issue infringement notices to the owners of animals being impounded as a deterrent for being at large and or unregistered

Activity	When	Evaluation
Issue infringement notices to owners of unregistered animals that have been impounded (where owners are identified)	On-going	Number of infringement notices issued
Issue infringement notices to owners of dogs that have been "at large" (where owners are identified)	On-going	Number of infringement notices issued

Objective 7.4 To monitor responsible pet ownership at beaches across the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a program that details patrols	Throughout each summer	Number of hours of patrols
Recommend signage	On-going	Suitable and effective location of signs
Issue infringement notices for offences	On-going	Number of infringement notices

Objective 7.5 To reduce the number of nuisance cat complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve the cat trap loan service	On-going	Reduced waiting time for cat traps
Consider the costs and benefits associated with introduction of a cat curfew	2017-21	Review paper developed and presented to the Council for consideration and public consultation conducted as appropriate
Promote responsible pet ownership	On-going	Website and hard copy information available
Provide information about cat enclosures	On-going	Website and hard copy information available

Objective 7.6 To improve the range of available information about animal nuisance issues

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and enhance website information	On-going	More useful and educative information on the website

Objective 7.7 To enable Animal Management Officers access to the complaints management system in the field

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate whether AMO's can access and update the CHARM complaints management system in the field	On-going	Assessment of option

Dog Attacks

In accordance with Part 5A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act) 68A (2) (c) (iii) outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals. Also addresses 68A (2) (a), (c) (i), (c) (ii), (d), (f)

Current Situation

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic	2012	2017
Number of reported dog attacks	68	44

AMO's are responsible for the investigation of dog attack reports. If the investigation provides evidence of an attack, possible courses of action Council can choose include:

- infringements; (where non-serious injuries sustained)
- menacing/Dangerous Dog Declaration;
- prosecution in Magistrates' Court;
- seek destruction/compensation orders by Magistrate; and
- seek mediation between parties for resolution of medical and/or veterinary costs
- no action.

These actions are dependent on identification of an owner of the attacking dog. Frequently, attacking dogs and their owners cannot be identified and located which is frustrating for the victims.

The Council's first priority in regard to dog attacks is to take steps to protect the community from future attacks by the same dog. Council will in some circumstances if considered appropriate, negotiate surrender of a dog with an owner and in return reduce penalties imposed on the owner.

Where injuries have occurred to a person or another animal by a dog that is of a serious nature (as defined by the Domestic Animals Act 1994), the Council may elect to have the matter heard in the Magistrate's Court, where sufficient evidence is available to form a prosecution.

Animal registration fees include a subsidy to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources to fund pet ownership and education programs such as The Responsible Pet Ownership Program.

Policies and Procedures

- DAMP; and
- Management of Dogs in Public Places.

Local Laws

- Community Local Law 2015 – No more than two dogs and/or two cats to be kept on a residential property or 1 for flats/units
- Designated Restrictions on Beaches;
- Dogs must be under effective control in a public place;
- Designated off leash zones; and
- Designated Dog Prohibited zones

Our Plans

Objective 8.1 To conduct targeted responsible pet ownership education and compliance campaigns

Activity	When	Evaluation
Annual program of “blitzes” to educate and enforce on leash requirements	On-going	Number of intercepts of owners with dogs off leash
Promote responsible dog ownership	On-going	Educational materials available on website and hard copy and cards handed out at off leash areas
Support DEDJTR’s Responsible Pet Ownership program	On-going	Statutory requirement to provide registration levy from each dog, cat and domestic animal business registration fee

Objective 8.2 To implement programs that will reduce the likelihood of dog attacks in the community

Activity	When	Evaluation
Declare dogs to be menacing or dangerous	On-going	Number of declarations
Enforcement Officers to take a proactive approach to identifying and educating dog owners with dogs off leash	On-going	Evidence of officers taking action
Enforcement actions against owners of dogs that have attacked or been at large	On-going	Dog attacks investigated
Seize and impound dogs that have attacked	On-going	Number of dogs impounded that have attacked
Provision of an “after hours” service	On-going	Contract arrangement
Patrol of on leash areas to ensure compliance	On-going	Reduced dogs at large complaints

Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

In accordance with *Part 5A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act)* 68A (2) (c) (vii) outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations. Also addresses 68A (2) (a), (c) (i), (c) (ii), (d), (f)

Current Situation

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic	April 2013	April 2017
Number of Declared Dangerous Dogs	6	12
Number of Guard Dogs	6	2
Number of Declared Restricted Dogs	16	6
Number of Declared Menacing Dogs	7	8

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* defines restricted breed dogs as any one of the following breeds:

- Japanese Tosa;
- Fila Brasileiro;
- Dogo Argentino;
- Perro de Prasa Canario; and (or Presa Canario)
- American Pit Bull Terrier. (or Pit Bull Terrier)

Owners of restricted breed dogs are required to abide by specific regulations, including:

- provision of secure enclosures;
- provision of warning signs on premises; and
- animals to be muzzled in public and on lead at all times, as defined by *the Domestic Animals Act 1994* and the *Domestic Animals Regulations 2005*.

Section 34A (a) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states:

A dog is a dangerous dog if “*The dog is kept as a guard dog for the purpose of guarding non-residential premises.*”

Hobsons Bay City Council currently has six declared guard dogs, which are therefore deemed dangerous under the Act. Owners of guard dogs must abide by specific regulations including:

- provision of secure enclosures when not guarding;
- provision of secure perimeter fencing when guarding;
- provision of warning signs on premises;
- the dog must be muzzled in public and on lead at all times; and
- the dog must wear the prescribed dangerous dog collar.

Section 34(1) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires that a Council may declare a dog to be a dangerous dog “*If the dog has caused the death of or serious injury to a person or animal by biting or attacking that person or animal.*”

The Council must register all dangerous/menacing/restricted breed dogs with the Victorian Declared Dog Register (VDDR); this is a central database that records all declared dogs. Any dangerous and restricted breed dog entered into the VDDR is declared for the life of the animal and cannot be revoked by the Council.

Animal Management Officers check registered dangerous dogs at least annually for compliance with these requirements.

Policies and Procedures

- DAMP; and
- Management of Dogs in Public Places.

Local Laws

- Community Local Law 2015 – No more than two dogs and/or two cats to be kept on a residential property.

Orders

- Designated Restrictions on Beaches;
- Dogs must be under effective control in a public place;
- Designated off leash zones; and
- Designated Dog Prohibited zones.

Our Plans

Objective 9.1 To ensure that all owners of declared dogs comply with relevant legislation and regulations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Annual property inspections of declared dogs to ensure compliance	Annually	Achieve compliance
Prosecute repeat offenders or serious breaches	On-going	Breaches prosecuted
Develop a patrol program to identify unregistered guard dogs	Annual	Number of registered guard dogs
Inform the community about legislation updates	When relevant legislation is updated	Media releases
Enforcement through issue of notices to comply, warnings and infringement notices	On-going	Number of notices issued
Monitor registrations and inspect dogs suspected of being restricted breed dogs	On-going	Possible restricted breed dogs investigated
Identify and seize unregistered RBD's	On-going	No. of seizures
Declare dogs to be "dangerous" or "menacing" as appropriate	On-going	No. of declarations
Encourage reporting of dangerous and menacing dogs	On-going	Educational programs
Record dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dog details on the Victorian Dangerous Dog Register	When dogs are declared	Currency of register

Overpopulation and High Euthanasia

In accordance with *Part 5A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act)* 68A (2) (c) (iv) outline programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats. Also addresses 68A (2) (a), (c) (i), (c) (ii), (d), (f)

Current Situation

The *Domestic Animal Act 1994* requires impounded dogs and cats to be held for at least 8 days (unless exceptions apply). Following the statutory 8-day holding period, if the animal is not claimed by the owner, ownership of the animal passes to the pound operator (The Lost Dogs Home). The LDH will then determine whether the animal is suitable for sale and re-homing. If not suitable for re-homing, the animal will be euthanized.

Feedback from the community indicates a public concern regarding the large stray cat population and euthanasia rates.

Hobsons Bay Key Statistic	April 2013	April 2017
Number of impoundments (dogs)	421	242
Number of unregistered dogs impounded	148 (35%)	51 (21%)
Number of dogs returned to owner	317	162
Number of dogs rehoused	46	60
Number of dogs euthanized	58	18
Number of impoundments (cats)	641	509
Number of unregistered cats impounded	610 (95%)	463 (91%)
Number of cats returned to owner	35	29
Number of cats rehoused	60	134
Number of cats euthanized	546	342

Cat euthanasia rates are high and will continue to be so due to the high numbers and/or feral cats that are impounded.

The Animal Shelter has a successful re-homing program with cats and dogs, which the Council supports by offering free initial registration for the animal.

Policies and Procedures

- DAMP; and
- Management of Dogs in Public Places.

Local Laws

- Community Local Law 2015 – No more than two dogs and/or two cats to be kept on a residential property.

Orders

- Dogs must be under effective control in a public place;
- Designated off leash zones; and
- Designated Dog Prohibited zones.

Our Plans

Objective 10.1 To promote the benefits of de-sexing animals to the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue participating in MAV Discount De-sexing program	On-going	Number of animals de-sexed as part of the scheme
Encourage de-sexing and registration by partnering with The Lost Dogs Home and the mobile de-sexing van to host discounted cat de-sexing events	Annually	Demand for bookings
Accept new registrations and provide reduced fees for animals that are both de-sexed and micro-chipped in accord with <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i>	On-going	Number of reduced fee registrations
Investigate the introduction of mandatory de-sexing prior to registration	2017-21	Decision

Objective 10.2 To raise awareness about responsible cat ownership issues

Activity	When	Evaluation
Providing subsidised cat de-sexing days with Lost Dogs Home and other local vet practices as required	2017-21	Review of number of cats de-sexed per session
Locate unregistered breeding businesses	In response to reports	Investigations
Enforcing the Local Law relating to prescribed number of animals on a property	On-going	Number of animal permits issued

Objective 10.3 To increase the rate of re-homing impounded animals

Activity	When	Evaluation
Liaise with animal welfare organisations to consider entering into an agreement to allow the care and re-homing of animals that might otherwise be euthanized.	On-going	Viability of agreement

Domestic Animal Businesses

In accordance with *Part 5A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 ('the Act') 68A (2) (c) (ii) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation. Also addresses 68A (2) (a), (c) (i), (c) (ii), (d), (f)*

Current Situation

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* requires registration of Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) with councils. DABs include:

- An animal shelter, Council pound or pet shop
- An enterprise that breeds dogs or cats to sell:
 - a) if the enterprise is a member of an applicable organisation, and it has 10 or more fertile female dogs or cats
 - b) if the proprietor is not a member of an applicable organisation, and it has 3 or more fertile female dogs or cats
- an enterprise that is run for profit which carries out rearing, training or boarding of dogs or cats.

Our Current Data

In the Hobsons Bay municipality, there are currently 8 registered Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs):

- 4 boarding establishments
- 3 dog training establishments
- 1 breeding establishment

Council Policies and Procedures

- DABs must be registered;
- DABs may require Town Planning approval;
- annual registration – the 2017/18 DAB registration fee is \$278.00 inclusive of a \$10 levy that is forwarded to the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources to assist with funding the State Government's pet education programs;
- forms for registration and information at the Council offices;

- all DABs to be audited annually;
- discretion for Authorised Officers when dealing with minor non-compliance;
- for serious and continuous failure to comply – possible future refusal to register;
- any new businesses – must have planning signed off AND full inspection before registration;
- cruelty issues will be referred to the RSPCA;
- Hobsons Bay City Council has a contract with Lost Dogs Home for the provision of pound services; and
- Section 13 DAA' forms – required of DABs for notification (to the Council in which the animal should be registered) of any animal sold or given away.

Our Plans

Objective 11.1 To ensure that all businesses are updated on the legislation in relation to DABs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure DABs receive updates of any changes to Codes of Practice	On-going	DABs have current Codes and are complying

Objective 11.2 To conduct inspections and audits of all registered DABs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to conduct an annual program of audits and inspections	Annually	All DABs audited
Annual registration of DABs	Annually	Number of registered DABs
Respond to complaints	Reactive inspections	Investigation and resolution of complaints

Objective 11.3 To ensure that all dogs and cats sold from DABs are registered

Activity	When	Evaluation
Follow up owners to ensure registration after receiving advice of sales by DABs	On-going	Registrations of purchased dogs and cats

Other Matters

In accordance with *Part 5A of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 ('the Act')* 68A (2) (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary

Current Situation

A review of dog off leash areas in accordance with Councils "Management of Dogs in Public Places" policy has recently been completed. The Review has concluded that there is some risk to safety at various reserves and that action may be required.

Off leash reserves are not designated for the sole use of owners and their dogs, they are shared use areas. Although in an off leash area, dog owners are required to have their dogs under effective control. Bike riders should travel at safe speeds for the area and conditions.

Community feedback from the survey undertaken to inform this plan identified that some metropolitan councils have introduced fenced off-leash parks. Further investigation and consideration should be given towards the establishment of a fenced off-leash park.

Our Plans

Objective 12.1 To conduct a review of the appropriateness of off-leash reserves.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate the possible introduction of a fenced off-leash reserve	2017-21	The concept of a fenced off leash reserve will be considered through the development of the Council's Open Space Strategy

Annual Review of Plan and Annual Reporting

- 68A(3) Every Council must—
- (a) review its DAMP annually and, if appropriate, amend
 - (b) provide the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan
 - (c) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Appendix 1 – Legislation

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act* 1994, every Council must prepare a DAMP, as follows:

68A Councils to prepare DAMPs

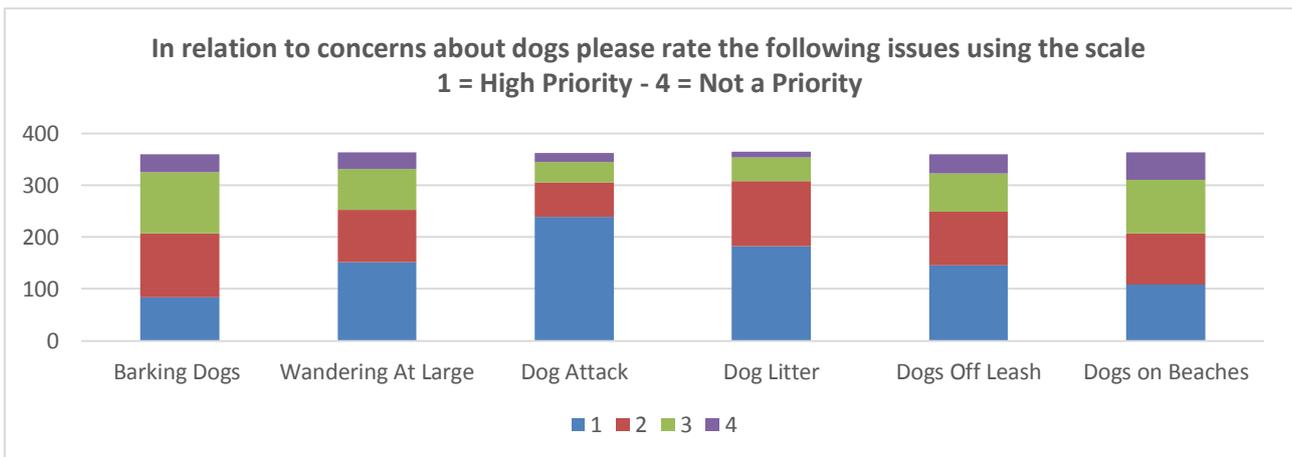
- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (*of the Department of Primary Industries*), prepare at 4 year intervals a DAMP.
- (2) A DAMP prepared by a Council must—
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district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

Appendix 2 – Summary Survey Results

Domestic Animal Management Plan Survey- Dogs

In relation to concerns about dogs please rate the following issues using the scale 1 = High Priority - 4 = Not a Priority

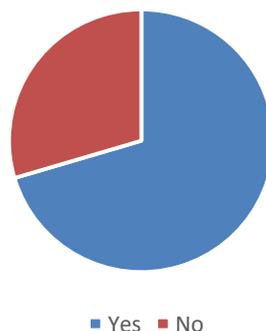
Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Response Count
Barking Dogs	84	123	118	34	359
Wandering At Large	152	101	78	32	363
Dog Attack	239	66	40	17	362
Dog Litter	182	126	45	11	364
Dogs Off Leash	145	104	73	37	359
Dogs on Beaches	108	99	103	53	363



Does anyone in your household own a dog?

Answer Options	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	70.41%	257
No	29.58%	108
Answered Question		365

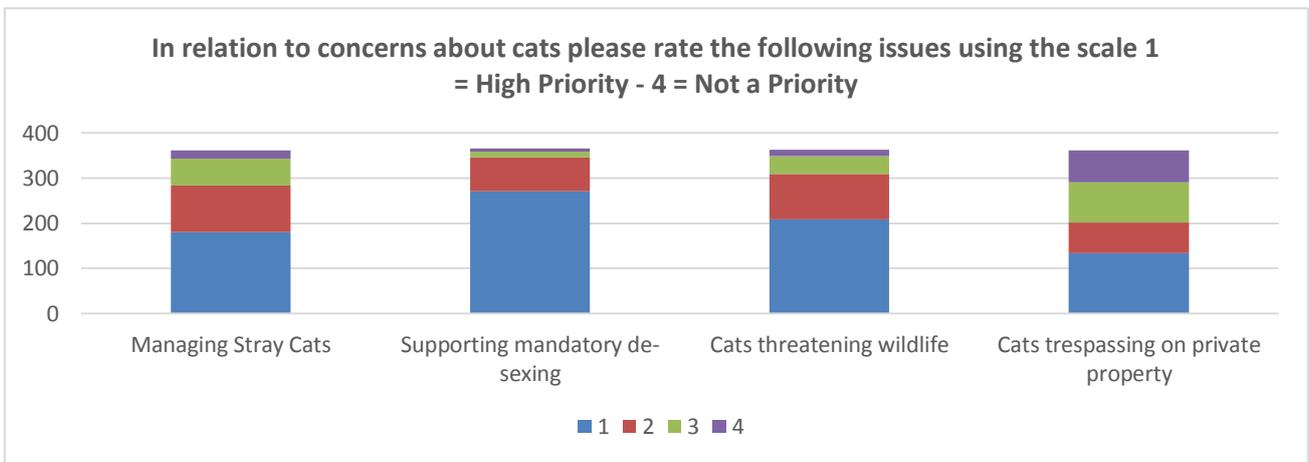
Does anyone in your household own a dog?



Domestic Animal Management Plan Survey- Cats

In relation to concerns about cats please rate the following issues using the scale 1 = High Priority - 4 = Not a Priority

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	Response Count
Managing Stray Cats	180	104	59	19	362
Supporting mandatory de-sexing	271	75	13	6	365
Cats threatening wildlife	209	100	40	14	363
Cats trespassing on private property	133	68	90	71	362



Does anyone in your household own a cat?

Answer Options	Response Percentage	Response Count
Yes	41.64%	152
No	58.35%	213
Answered Question		365

