

DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2021-25

WHAT WE HEARD (AUGUST 2021)

The work of animal management in Hobsons Bay is guided by a Domestic Animal Management Plan, which is developed every four years in line with state government legislation.

The plan aims to promote responsible pet ownership, manage and evaluate animal safety and welfare, protect the community and the environment from nuisance cats and dogs, as well as authorise Council officer enforcement practices.



Thank you to everyone who shared their experiences, concerns and ideas on animal management in Hobsons Bay throughout June and July 2021. We heard from many people who live all over Hobsons Bay, including both pet and non-pet owners.

Whether you chatted with us in person, attended our virtual drop-in session, submitted a survey online or contacted us directly, all feedback has been collated and a summary of what we heard is presented below.

The community engagement process

From 9 June to 7 July 2021, Council sought feedback from both pet and non-pet owners throughout Hobsons Bay to capture community concerns and thoughts surrounding pet ownership, animal and community welfare and the environmental impact caused by domestic pets.

Both in-person and online engagement activities were on offer, including:

- **‘Hitting the Streets’** sessions at two locations on Sunday 4 July
- **a market stall** at Spotswood Slow Food Market on Saturday 26 June, 8am-1pm
- **a virtual community drop-in session** via Zoom on Thursday 17 June, 5-6pm
- **an online survey** on the project’s website on Participate Hobsons Bay
- **email and phone calls** to share feedback

These community engagement opportunities were primarily shared via Council’s digital platforms.

Who got involved

We received 322 survey submissions over this time and 5 emails sharing feedback. We also hosted conversations with and received valuable feedback from 33 community members across our virtual and in-person engagement sessions.

We received feedback from residents located within all suburbs of Hobsons Bay as well as two suburbs outside of the municipality. The majority of respondents were from Newport, Altona and Altona Meadows.

Most respondents were pet owners, with over half owning dogs, 20% owning cats and almost 10% percentage owning other pets. Almost 18% of responses were provided from non-pet owners.



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What we heard

The community were asked to share if they had experienced any issues relating to dogs off leads. Most respondents had not experienced issues, however of those who had, the top three areas of concern were dogs off lead in on lead areas, ineffective animal control and dog litter.

When asked to rank issues of most concern relating to cats and dogs, cats threatening wildlife and dog litter were the most concerning among respondents.

Common issues raised relating to nuisance dogs included barking dogs, dog litter and dogs in conservation areas. Relating to nuisance cats, the most common issues shared were of cats trespassing, cats threatening wildlife and cat litter. There were also issues raised of cats fighting and stray cats.

The community were asked if they had ideas to contribute regarding animal management in Hobsons Bay. The most common suggestions were for more enforcement around dogs off leash, to implement a cat curfew, to provide more bins to dispose of dog litter, monitor conservation areas and for more dog off lead areas.

Newport Lakes was referenced a number of times as an area to monitor, enforce local laws and protect wildlife.

Some requests were made to increase fines and the enforcement of these. Other requests were made to reduce animal registration fees, while suggestions were also made relating to education regarding responsible pet ownership, the management of stray cats and cat trapping (including community involvement) and more enforcement of animal management matters.

A number of comments were made relating dog parks, reserves and restricted areas. Some specific requests included for more signage in dog off lead areas, providing dog litter bag dispensers, reviewing dog off lead areas, and the fencing and creation of areas within dog parks.

Next steps

Thank you to all community members who got involved and shared valuable feedback.

Council will consider all suggestions, comments and concerns alongside other relevant legislative and planning considerations when drafting the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2021-25, before sharing this for a second round of community consultation on the project website, participate.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/DAMP.



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