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DOMESTIC ANIMAL

MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012 – 2016



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Domestic Animal Management Plans

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

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

- (1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary (*of the Department of Primary Industries*), prepare at 4 year intervals a domestic animal management plan
- (2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—
 - (a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations
 - (b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district
 - (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
 - (ii) to ensure people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation
 - (iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
 - (iv) to address any overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
 - (v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
 - (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 those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations
 - (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
 - (e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary and
 - (f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan
- (3) Every Council must—
 - (a) review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan
 - (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

Executive summary

The City of Port Phillip Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) has been developed to adhere to the State Government requirement that all Councils have a DAMP in place. Our DAMP aims to provide harmonious and responsible pet ownership across the City of Port Phillip focusing on the registration of pets, effective control of dogs within public areas, pet residential management, pet microchipping and desexing and the encouragement of owners to pick up dog poo.

The DAMP is developed by the Animal Management Team in consultation with the Domestic Animal Management Community Reference Group and then open for public comment.

The DAMP presents information on registered domestic animal statistics, the Animal Management staffing and operational structure and current programs and services.

In detail, the DAMP document outlines the planned programs and initiatives of the Animal Management Team including training and development, community education of responsible pet ownership, identification and registration, compliance and enforcement of Local Laws associated with pet ownership, domestic animal businesses and declared dogs.

Our performance monitoring and evaluation process is also outlined within the DAMP document including key performance indicators and the review cycle for this plan.

Introduction

Purpose of this Domestic Animal Management Plan

The State Government amended the Domestic Animals Act 1994, to improve animal management in Victoria, by requiring that all Councils have a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP). The City of Port Phillip supports this strategic approach and has developed its DAMP using the guidelines provided by the Department of Primary Industry.

The aims of the DAMP are to promote harmonious and responsible pet ownership.

The City of Port Phillip encourages animal ownership and recognises the positive benefits associated with pets. Animal ownership can provide community members with opportunities to connect with other people and encourages greater use of open space.

In the City of Port Phillip responsible pet ownership will focus on:

- education
- registration of pets
- keeping dogs under effective control and influencing compliance with restricted area requirements
- managing pets to not adversely impact on residential amenity
- microchipping and desexing of pets
- encouraging owners to pick up dog poo.

These aims will be achieved through implementation of a range of initiatives including education and enforcement of legislative requirements, community consultation and interaction with key stakeholders.

Process applied in developing this plan

The draft DAMP was prepared by the City of Port Phillip's Animal Management Team, in consultation with the Domestic Animal Management Community Reference Group (DAMCRG), prior to the DAMP being advertised for public comment.

The DAMCRG was formed in 2010 after significant public consultation to review the dog off leash areas in 2009. The committee comprises six members of the public, two officers from the Council and is chaired by a councillor. The aim of the committee is to provide a closer connection between the Council and the community about animal management issues.

Other relevant areas of Council have also been consulted about the content of this plan.

Training of authorised officers

68A (2)(b) states Council's must "Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district".

Context

The City of Port Phillip is located in Melbourne's inner southern suburbs, between two and eight kilometres from the Melbourne General Post Office. The city is bounded by the Cities of Melbourne, Stonnington, Glen Eira and Bayside, and Port Phillip Bay. It includes 20.62 square kilometres of area and 11km of beaches. The current estimated population for the municipality is 98,524.

The city includes the suburbs of Albert Park, Balaclava, Elwood, Middle Park, Port Melbourne (part), Ripponlea, South Melbourne, St Kilda, St Kilda East (part), St Kilda West and part of the St Kilda Road area (Melbourne 3004).

There were 5873 dogs and 3001 cats registered within the City of Port Phillip for the 2011/12 registration period. There has been a steady increase in the registration of dogs. As a result of registration incentives and improved operational methods, there has been a 13.5% increase since 2008. Cat registration rates have declined during the same period by 9.8%.

Because of the high volume of rental accommodation, there is a significant changeover of animals, as well as people. This brings with it the ongoing challenge of educating the changing community.

There are 11 Domestic Animal Businesses registered, including one pet shop, six dog training establishments and four boarding establishments.

The Animal Management Team has three full time animal management officers.

Current and planned training

The objective of training and development is to ensure all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work.

An annual training program is developed with each staff member, to ensure they receive appropriate skills maintenance and development throughout the year.

All Animal Management staff are provided the opportunity to gain the Certificate IV Animal Control and Regulation and Certificate IV Government and Statutory Compliance. These qualifications address the skills of communication, animal handling, report writing, investigation and time management and form the minimum standard training required by an animal management officer.

Authorised Officer Training - Basic	Current (2012)	Planned
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation Officer 2 NB Officer 1 and 3 have previously obtained this qualification	Completing	
Industry training – animal handling, animal assessment Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	Completed Completed To be completed	Annual refresher training, if available
Industry training – statement taking and investigation skills Officer 1, 2, 3	Annual refresher, when available	Annual refresher, when available
OH&S training – dealing with aggressive customers Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	Biannual training available through corporate training internally	As per individual workplan, every two years
Customer service training – conflict resolution, Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	Biannual training available through corporate training internally	As per individual workplan, every two years
Bureau of Animal Welfare – training and information days Officer 1, 2, 3	All officers to attend, when notified	All officers to attend, when notified

Authorised Officer Training - Additional	Current (2012)	Planned
Industry training – various, as available Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	As per individual workplan	As per individual workplan
OH&S training – defensive driver training Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	All officers to complete as noted in personal work plan	All officers to complete as noted in personal work plan
Diploma of Management Officer 1	Currently completing	To be considered during annual review of training needs
Other Officer 1 Officer 2 Officer 3	Further training to be identified as part of annual work plan review and individual plan developed for each officer	Annual review of training requirements

Our plans

Objective 1: Review and update current induction plan for new staff

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff	By June 2013	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into an approved induction plan by June 2013
Identify additional training opportunities by consultation with management and staff	By June 2013	Documentation to be finalised and incorporated into individual officer's training plan as part of organisational development plan process by June 2013

Objective 2: Develop and maintain a training calendar for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training as part of annual performance planning process

Activity	When	Evaluation
Complete development plan process annually with each staff member, identifying training needs	Annually	Completion of development plan process

Objective 3: Annual review of internal processes with staff, to ensure consistent application of investigation processes

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review processes to accommodate legal changes and ensure consistent application of enforcement processes	By July annually	Annually – updated procedures document finalised and approved

Objective 4: Develop networks with key community groups and domestic animal businesses

Activity	When	Evaluation
Information sessions to be conducted with domestic animal businesses, local dog groups, vets and other key interest groups	Quarterly commencing 2013	Quarterly information sessions, alternating between off leash parks and targeted forums. Dates to be available on website. Sessions to be attended by animal management staff
Information sessions within off leash areas. Information tent to provide forum for park users to speak with the animal management team		

Registration and identification

68A(2)(c)(v) states Council's must "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

Table 1: Comparison of registration data 2008/9 – 2011/12

	Measure	Actual 2007/8	Actual 2011/12
	Dog registration	5173	5873
	Cat registration	3296	3001

In the DAMP 2008-2011, a free initial registration scheme was launched to promote desexing and registration. This scheme was an outstanding success and has been improved as a result of feedback from the community. The scheme has been modified to simplify the requirements for everyone.

The new scheme provides that:

Cats and dogs less than six months of age will receive free initial registration:

- whether desexed or not
- if purchased or adopted within the previous four weeks (proof required)
- if microchipped.

Cats and dogs six months or older, will receive free initial registration:

- if purchased or adopted within the previous four weeks (proof required)
- if desexed
- if microchipped.

This scheme acts to encourage registration and desexing. Desexing is shown to decrease many undesirable behaviours in both dogs and cats. As the majority of new animals are either purchased at eight weeks or via an animal shelter, where they are sold desexed, the new scheme will enable the majority of people to be eligible for free initial registration, providing they register within four weeks of purchase.

This is a generous incentive to help identify the animals within the Council area. Importantly it encourages desexing of animals and identifies animals for future registration.

The importance of animal registration and microchipping is particularly relevant when considering the number of animals we are then able to return safely to their owners. It also means animal owners can be alerted to the fate of their animals if they are deceased, as all animals collected on Port Phillip roads are scanned and held for a period so the owner can be contacted.

Table 2: Impound statistics – Calendar year 2007 and 2011

Species	Euthanised 2007	Euthanised 2011	Rehoused, released 2007	Rehoused, released 2011	Reclaimed 2007	Reclaimed 2011	Total impounded 2007	Total impounded 2011
Dog	16	11	14	13	127	130*	157	154
Cat	55	68	52	6	21	30*	130	114
Other	8	n/a	11	n/a	0	0	19	14

*43% of dogs reclaimed (56) were unregistered and 50% of reclaimed cats (115) were unregistered. All animals must be registered on release.

Park Towers Project

In the previous plan, Council partnered with the Port Phillip Community Group to attempt to address issues related to registration and animal complaints within the Park Towers housing complex. Park Towers is the largest high rise social housing development in Melbourne. The project included starting a dog walking club and providing opportunities to educate people within the complex about responsible animal management.

While the project did result in moderate increases in registration compliance, the complex issues surrounding this particular environment made it difficult to continue the project beyond the initial project period.

Our registration and identification Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Local Laws

Community Amenity Local Law No 3 – Clause 19-Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (s.42).

Council policies and procedures

- procedure for appointment of agents for registration (s.12)
- application for registration and renewal of registration of dogs and cats (form approved by Council and fixing fees) (s.14)
- procedure for the registration/refusal of registration/renewal of registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs

- procedure associated with seizure and impounding of unregistered and/or unidentified dogs and cats
- enforcement protocols associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding breaches of the DAA
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog and/or cat owners (Part 7D)

Our current education/promotion activities

Current identification and registration activities include:

- maintenance of computerised registration database
- execution of marketing campaign
- participation in State Government Pet Registration Incentive Scheme
- implementation of extensive patrolling activity
- implementation of door knock program
- attendance at major pet events within the City of Port Phillip and in neighbouring councils
- rehoused animal notification
- patrols.

Planned programs and initiatives

- increased advertising prior to animal registration renewals in local media, to increase awareness of registration requirements
- free initial registration program for new dogs and cats, as detailed in the scheme above
- audit of microchip records against council registration database

Our current compliance activities

Activity	Time
Annual door knock	June - August
Patrols	All year
Rehoused notification follow up	All year

Infringement type	2007	2010	2011
Registration offences	222	79	47

Summary

As a result of the use of a mixture of education and enforcement tools, registration has been increasing within the municipality. Due to the unique nature of high density dwellings, a high turnover of residents and difficult to access apartments, the use of incentives such as the free initial registration has increased registration numbers. Registration remains a priority as part of all investigations and patrols.

Our plans

Objective 1: Improve the accuracy of the Council registration database by cross referencing with microchip registry data by September 2013

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting microchip registries to obtain details of microchipped dogs and cats in the municipality. Check all animals are also listed on Council's pet registration database, and follow up those that aren't	September 2013 and then annually	Demonstrate Council's pet registration database can be accurately cross referenced with microchip registries Demonstrate increase in numbers of pets registered with Council following microchip registry cross referencing exercise

Objective 2: Increase dog and cat registration numbers each year

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release	Prior to every release	Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner
Increased promotion of registration requirements in the local media	Prior to April each year	Review local media to ensure registration is advertised/promoted annually
Free initial registration scheme	Available all year	Review additional registration numbers from the program

Nuisance

68A(2)(c)(vi) states Councils must “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

Dog poo

Dog poo is a fact of dog ownership and the failure of owners to pick up after their dogs has proved quite difficult to enforce. Council is reviewing its approach to dog poo to incorporate strategies to educate, enforce and ultimately reduce the volume of dog litter left on the streets. Dog litter is not just an eyesore, but can be hazardous and we want to remind people that responsible animal owners collect their dog's litter.

Use of a variety of techniques, such as patrols, letter box drops, posters, temporary signage, temporary bins and enforcement is likely to have the most success in educating the public and changing the behaviour of dog owners visiting or living in Port Phillip.

Results 2008 - 2011

In certain locations temporary dog poo bins and reminder signage have proved successful. The fundamental issue of people not picking up after their dogs can be linked to registration. The experience of patrolling indicates that people with registered dogs are more likely to carry appropriate bags to pick up after their pet. This is a major reason that registration remains a key priority.

Noise

Noise nuisances are also a major concern. The City of Port Phillip provides information to people regarding noise nuisances and how to combat them. This generally resolves most enquiries, however for the more serious noise issues there is an escalated process to deal with these cases. Due to the high density nature of the City of Port Phillip, we also suffer the side effect of the highest number of barking dog complaints in the state.

The process for dealing with barking dogs tries to balance the interests and rights of both the dog owner and the complainant. The majority of cases are resolved after the initial complaint, but some may require the complainant and dog owner to keep noise logs to assist in the investigation. Only six infringements were issued during 2010/11 where officers were satisfied that a nuisance did occur. No matters were referred to court.

If you have concerns about a barking dog, often the easiest way to resolve the matter is to talk to your neighbour, as the majority of times they are unaware of the issue. If your own dog barks significantly you can speak to an animal management officer for advice or speak to your local vet or trainer who can provide assistance. The majority of cases involve dogs that are bored or can see visual stimulation. These two issues

can be easily resolved with training, toys, blocking the view or increased walking time.

Cat nuisance

Cats trespassing can be a problem. Generally this is not a major issue in Port Phillip, but should it occur, we can provide traps and advice to the parties involved.

Table 3: Customer requests received, by category

Complaint type	2007	2010	2011
Dog collections	286	185	107
Barking dogs	260	350	303
Dog off leash/not under effective control	117	84	86
Cat collections	113	76	40
Trespassing cats	91	117	96
Dogs wandering at large	71	65	106

Table 4: Infringement Data – comparison by year

Infringement type	2007	2010	2011
Contravening Council Order*	70	30	102
Dog at large daytime	45	10	12
Dog/cat causing a nuisance	3	6	1
Failure to remove faeces	1	0	0
Failure to comply with a notice	1	1	0

*Contravening Council Order includes charges for off leash, effective control and prohibited areas.

Nuisance Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Orders

- Council Order 3 - Order requiring dogs and/or cats to be restrained in a specific manner when in public places (s.26)
- Council Order 3 - Order prohibiting dogs and/or cats from being present in specific areas of the municipal district (s.26)

Local Laws

- Community Amenity Local Law No 3, clause 19 - Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (s.42)
- Community Amenity Local Law No 3, clause 50 - Local Law requiring dog owners remove and dispose of faeces deposited by their dogs in public places (s.42)

Council policies and procedures

- process regarding trespass of dogs and/or cats on premises without permission (s.23)
- process regarding dogs found in control zone or conservation zone (s.31)
- policy and procedure regarding noise nuisance complaints for dogs and/or cats (s.32)
- process associated with seeking orders from a Magistrate for owners to abate noise nuisance or for an order to confine (s.32)
- process associated with the surrender of dogs and/or cats by owners (s.33A)
- process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs and cats causing a nuisance
- enforcement process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dogs and cats causing a nuisance
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog and/or cat owners (Part 7D)

Our current education/promotion activities

Current activities to curb nuisance issues include:

- distribution of dog poo bag holders with new animal registrations
- provision of information about animal nuisances at all Council offices
- provision of cat traps for trapping trespassing or nuisance cats
- provision of information about barking dog causes and solutions
- an escalated process for responding to dog barking complaints, allowing time for rectification or training resolutions
- 'do the right thing – pick up your poo', an ongoing comprehensive project to tackle the issue of dog poo
- continued education regarding noise issues
- patrolling

Our current compliance activities

- patrols
- investigations
- enforcement activity associated with patrols and investigations

Summary

Noise nuisance complaints continue to be a major issue, as a result of increased animal ownership in high density areas. Living in apartments or small properties with dogs is challenging and a priority will be to educate dog owners about training and responsible animal ownership. It is expected that noise nuisance complaints will continue to stay at high levels, due to the nature of the municipality.

Dog poo remains a problematic issue in terms of enforcement and feedback from the community reference group is that provision of dog poo bags should be reconsidered.

Our plans

Objective 1: Improve and update information on Council website regarding nuisance issues

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education material about nuisance issues on the Council website	By June 2013	Completed and material to be reviewed and updated every 6 months

Objective 2: Evaluate and improve process for managing barking dog complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve letters/information provided as part of the barking investigation process	June 2013	Completed and material to be reviewed annually as part of process review

Objective 3: Improve dog litter compliance

Activity	When	Evaluation
Assess current compliance level by auditing dog litter at various key locations	June 2013	Audit and do quarterly assessments of compliance at several key locations: Dow Street, Port Melbourne; Gasworks Park; Lagoon Reserve; Port Melbourne off leash beach between Kerford and Langridge Streets; Peanut Farm; Botanical Gardens
Complete an analysis to determine feasibility of reinstating provision of free plastic bags at off leash areas within the municipality.	December 2013	Provide report to Council with estimated cost of contract to install and refill dog poo bag dispensers within the municipality to enable Council to determine whether to reinstate this service.

Dog attacks

68A(2)(c)(iii) states Councils must “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

Table 5: Customer requests received, by category

Complaint type	2007	2010	2011
Dog attack	55	62	75
Dog rush	15	13	14

Table 6: Infringement data

Infringement type	2007	2010	2011
Dog rushing or chasing a person	0	2	2
Non serious injury by a non dangerous dog	n/a	10	15

Table 7: Enforcement under the DAA 1 January to 31 December

Dog attack information	2007	2010	2011
Dog attacks resulting in prosecution (*one prosecution for failing to comply with dangerous dog requirements, ** attack in June 2010)	9	6*	1**
Total cases referred for prosecution (includes unpaid infringements)	23	30	31
Dogs destroyed after court cases (***) breach of dangerous dog requirements)	3	1	1***
Seized dogs, as a result of attack (****one dog seized for failing to comply with dangerous dog requirements)	6	2****	1
Total Declared dangerous/restricted breed dogs	6	6	7
VCAT – review of dangerous dog declaration – decision affirmed	0	0	1

Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures on dog attacks

Orders

- Council Order 3 - Order requiring dogs and/or cats to be restrained in a specific manner when in public places (s.26)
- Council Order 3 - Order prohibiting dogs and/or cats from being present in specific areas of the municipal district (s.26)

Local Laws

Community Amenity Local Law No 3, clause 19 - Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (s.42).

Council policies and procedures

- process relating to seizure of dogs found at large or not secured to owner's premises (s.24)
- process relating to attacks or bites by dogs (s.29)
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- procedure for serving notices of seizure relating to seizing of identified dogs (s.84H)
- procedure for owners when recovering dogs that have been seized by Council (s.84M)
- process associated with disposal of seized dogs (s.84O)
- process associated with destruction of dogs after Court order or exercising Council power to destroy a dog (s.84P)
- procedure to identify how and when to exercise power of immediate destruction of dogs (s.84TA, TB and TC)
- process associated with seeking orders from Magistrates in relation to dogs found outside owner's premises and owners of dogs found guilty of attacking (s.84W)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog owners (Part 7D)
- process associated with registration of dogs and the fee structure for registration (Schedule to the Act)
- process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs after a dog attack
- enforcement process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dog attacks

Our current education/promotion activities

- patrolling
- use of educational signage in off leash areas – promoting “off leash rules”
- promote RPO schools programs
- promotion of court results
- promote Crimes Act provisions
- Domestic Animal Management Community Reference Group

Our current compliance activities

- patrolling
- declarations
- enforcement protocols – infringements, prosecution, destruction orders
- targeting hot spots, including restricted beach areas in summer

Summary

Serious dog attacks remain a major risk, despite the fact that they do not occur regularly. Historically Spring and Summer have been major risk periods for serious dog attacks. Between the period of 1 November to 31 March, official warnings are generally not issued along the foreshore or beach areas, due to the high risk of conflict between dogs and people in those areas. This approach, while not popular, has reduced the number of serious attacks that have been investigated in these areas. Breaches of the Council Order in relation to dogs not being under effective control, are also taken very seriously as this can identify behavioural issues before a serious attack occurs.

Our plans

Objective 1: Improve reporting of dog attacks

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve information on the website for attack investigations	June 2013	Website updated and reviewed every six months
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report using media articles, public notices in parks etc, A-frame billboards, talks with local dog groups	June 2014	Evaluate this activity (and overall objective) by comparing number of dog attacks reported to council pre and post campaign. Meet objective of increasing reports

Objective 2: Improve awareness of safety around dogs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (e.g. confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc) through media articles, mail outs, website info, A-frame signage or billboards, targeted patrols during peak dog attack times etc	June 2014	Conduct a community survey pre and post campaign, to measure any changes in knowledge about dog attack prevention
Promote dog training through local media and website		Record type and number of education materials distributed
Promote 'Responsible Pet Ownership' and 'We Are Family' programs		Numbers of campaign patrols conducted
Proactive patrolling regarding effective control	Ongoing	Documented patrols throughout year
Promote positive media stories regarding animal management practices to improve education	Ongoing	Develop media releases
		Count the number of media stories generated by the animal management team

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

68A(2)(c)(vii) states Councils must “Outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure 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

Table 8: Declared dogs in the City of Port Phillip

Classification	31/12/07	August 2011	April 2012
Restricted breed	2	2	2
Dangerous dogs (* One dog destroyed, one dog left area)	0	3	1*
Menacing dogs	1	2	2

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Council policies and procedures

- process for the registration/refusal of registration/renewal of registration of dangerous and restricted breed dogs (s.17)
- process associated with when a dog is declared dangerous (s.34)
- process associated with when a dog is declared menacing (s.41A)
- process associated with when a dog is declared to be of a restricted breed (s.98A)
- policy associated with issuing permits to keep more than two restricted breed dogs on a premises (s.41J)
- procedure to provide details of dangerous dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) (s.44AE)
- procedure to provide details on VDDR of dogs destroyed in relation to s.84TA, TB and TC (s.44AEA)
- policy and procedure associated with seizure and impounding of dangerous and restricted breed dogs
- enforcement protocol associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog owners (Part 7D)
- policy regarding how and when to exercise the power of immediate destruction of a dangerous dog found at large

Our current education/promotion activities

- using DAMCRG to promote issues
- auditing properties with these animals and advising of obligations
- write to owners re Crimes Act provisions and implications
- check of industrial areas for guard dogs
- educating residents on reporting rushes and minor issues
- dangerous dog hotline

Our current compliance activities

- enforcement protocols
- inspections/audit of compliance
- microchip register – breed of dog check
- check of industrial areas
- VDDR updates

Summary

Restricted breed, menacing and declared dangerous dogs are not a significant problem within the City of Port Phillip. Low numbers mean inspections for compliance can be done routinely.

Our plans

Objective 1: Ensure accuracy of registration database for restricted breed dogs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Flag certain breeds on registration database for assessment under the approved standard by August/September each year	Annual check of existing dogs and then annually of newly registered dogs in August/September each year	Audit form completed by officer on file
Cross reference microchip database information with current council registration database for potential restricted breed dogs	Annual check of existing dogs and then annually of newly registered dogs in August/September each year	Audit form completed by officer on file
Inspect all industrial properties in the municipality for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes yearly	Annual check	Audit form completed by officer on file
Educate the community about what is a declared dog	Update information on website by June 2013	Ensure information updated and revised annually with scheduled checking

Objective 2: Inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are following the keeping requirements

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure compliance with DAA requirements	6 monthly	Audit form completed and signed off by officer

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Overpopulation and high euthanasia

68A(2)(c)(iv) states Councils must “Outline programs, services and strategies to address any overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.” - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f).

Current situation

Table 9: Registered desexed and not desexed animals for 2011/12

	Number
Cats - total	3001
Desexed	2920
Not desexed	81
Dogs - total	5873
Desexed	5001
Not desexed	872

Table 10: Customer requests received, by category

Complaint type	2007	2010	2011
Dog collections	286	185	107
Cat collections	113	76	40
Trespassing cats	91	117	96
Dogs wandering at large	71	65	106

Table 11: Impound statistics – Calendar year 2007 and 2011

Species	Euthanised 2007	Euthanised 2011	Rehoused, released 2007	Rehoused, released 2011	Reclaimed 2007	Reclaimed 2011	Total impounded 2007	Total impounded 2011
Dog	16	11	14	13	127	130*	157	154
Cat	55	68	52	6	21	30*	130	114
Other	8	n/a	11	n/a	0	0	19	14

*43% of dogs reclaimed (56) were unregistered and 50% of reclaimed cats (115) were unregistered. All animals must be registered on release.

The contract for the pound facility went to public tender in 2010, with The Lost Dog's Home being awarded the contract. The Lost Dog's Home only rehouse animals that are suitably fit, in terms of temperament and health.

Our overpopulation and high euthanasia Orders, Local Laws, Council policies and procedures

Local Laws

Community Amenity Local Law No 3, Clause 19 - Local Law regulating the numbers of dogs and/or cats that can be kept at a property (s.42).

Council policies and procedures

- process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs and cats in the community
- process regarding seizure of documents (s.75)
- process associated with entering into written agreements with animal shelters or community foster care networks to provide impounding or rehoming services (s.84Y)
- process regarding attendance at VCAT to hear appeals of dog and/or cat owners (Part 7D)

Our current education/promotion activities

- 'Who's for cats?' program – to educate semi cat owners
- trap loan (free service)
- website information

Our current compliance activities

Routine trapping of feral cats to ensure a decline in the feral cat population, making it a better environment for domestic cats.

Summary

Excess animal population is not a significant issue in the City of Port Phillip. The majority of animals registered are already desexed. There are isolated areas where stray cats are trapped routinely and use of the 'Who's for cats?' campaign is hoped to reduce this problem in the future.

Our plans

Objective 1: Raise awareness about the semi owned cat population

Activity	When	Evaluation
Implement 'Who's for cats?' education campaign in local area. Utilise the following resources (available from BAW): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Are you feeding a bigger problem?' (Who's for Cats? campaign fact sheet) - distribution throughout the municipality, placement on website - upload TV commercial file to website 	Ongoing	Measure number and type of education materials distributed Record number of semi owned cats handed in to local pound/shelter Number of media stories published

Objective 2: Identify and close down all illegally operating domestic animal breeding establishments in the municipality

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake education campaign to promote awareness about definition of breeding DABs, and COP requirements for businesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advertisements in local classifieds - website information - follow up people advertising pets for sale (e.g. in local papers or on local noticeboards), to determine if they are a DAB and are registered with Council 	Ongoing	Proactive investigations completed and kept in records database
Audit every DAB each year for compliance. Enforce compliance with minimum requirements	Annually	Number of audits conducted, and summary of outcomes

Domestic animal businesses

68A(2)(c)(ii) states Councils must “Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation” - also addresses 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(d),(f).

Current situation

There are 11 registered domestic animal businesses (DABs) consisting of:

- one pet shop
- zero breeding establishments
- six dog training establishments
- zero shelters
- four boarding establishments

All DABs are audited annually as stated in the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan and no noncompliance issues have been detected to date.

Our current Orders, Local Laws and Council policies and procedures

Local Law

Community Amenity Local Law No 3, clause 19 - Limit on number of animals that can be kept at a property.

Council policies and procedures

- all DABs must be registered
- fixed registration annually (all businesses pay the same \$222 fee) including the \$10 for the State Government levy
- forms for registration and information on Council website and at Council offices
- all DABs to be audited annually
- process for completing audit
- process for managing minor noncompliance
- process for managing major noncompliance
- each registration to be individually considered on the need for specific conditions
- process for serious and continuous failure to comply and consideration of refusal to issue permit
- enforcement protocol for issuing notices to comply, infringements or prosecuting
- standard record/audit sheets on database of registered DABs
- process to attend VCAT
- process for registering new businesses
- process to refuse to register
- ‘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 current education/promotion activities

- annual DAB audit
- provide all DABs with relevant Code of Practice

- BAW fact sheets on DABs available in Council offices and sent to registered DABs
- website lists pound animals, registered DABs and promotes responsible purchase and using registered DABs

Our current compliance activities

- register all DABs
- annual audit
- follow up any noncompliance as required
- regular patrols for new/nonregistered DABs
- occasional 'drop in'/ unannounced inspections
- regular Google and local paper checks to search for possible undiscovered DABs
- follow up registration after receiving 'Section 13 DAA' forms (required of DABs for notification of any animal sold or given away)
- check that local vets are sending notices under s13 of DAA regarding the sale of kittens

Summary

The Council has a low level of DABs, with few compliance issues, so regular compliance/education activities will continue.

Our plans

Objective 1: Ensure that all animal management officers are updated on the legislation in relation to DABs

Activity	When	Evaluation
As a team, the Animal Management staff are to review all of the fact sheets, documents, matrix of changes and new DAA	By Dec 2012	Add to skill matrix that officers have been to AMO seminars and read all DPI provided information

Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DABs and investigate any suspected unregistered DABs

Activity	When	Evaluation
Audit all DABs at least annually	Ongoing, at registration period	All DABs audited

Objective 3: Promote the new legislative requirements for breeding DABs to all community, using tools provided by DPI to promote to possible breeders

Activity	When	Evaluation
Send to anyone with an excess animal permit	Annually	Number of excess permits Number of new DABs

Other matters

68A(2)(e) states Councils must “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

Council Order 3

Council Order No 3 was reviewed extensively in 2009. That review received significant public comment and resulted in the formation of a community reference group. The result of the 2009 review was that the total area available for access to exercise dogs off leash was increased. A proposal to limit the number of dogs a person could walk and maintain effective control was rejected, due to significant response from professional dog walkers who work within the municipality.

Despite the popularity of the beaches for general use through summer months, council maintains five beaches with 24 hour off leash dog access and two with morning access between 1 November and 31 March.

Table 12: Breaches of the Council Order 2011

	Total Official Warnings	Total Infringements
Breach of Council Order (s26)	31	102

Parks Victoria and Council Order 3

In 2009 Parks Victoria requested that Albert Park Reserve be included in the Council Order. Albert Park Reserve is Crown land managed by Parks Victoria. As part of this agreement, the Council requested additional area be considered for off leash access within the reserve. Parks Victoria agreed to designate a section of reserve adjacent to Albert Road for this purpose. This reserve is approximately 25,000 square metres, which is a larger space than either Lagoon Reserve or Gasworks Park, with each section partially fenced and with a service road or tram zone acting as a buffer before Albert Road.

Since the inclusion of Albert Park Reserve within the Council Order and the patrols by the animal management team, there has been improved compliance with leash control within the reserve. Incidents of dog attacks on native wildlife have decreased.

Albert Park Reserve and the Australian Grand Prix

Albert Park Reserve is the location of the Australian Grand Prix. With the exception of the 7 day period that is controlled by the Australian Grand Prix Act, access is available to all off leash areas within the Albert Park Reserve both prior to and after the Australian Grand Prix. Infrastructure does get installed within part of the off leash areas, however substantial off leash areas remain available. During the 7 day Grand Prix period dogs can be exercised within the Albert Park Reserve on lead north of the Junction Oval and Oval 1.

Our current Council policies and procedures

Council policies and procedures

Enforcement protocol is in place for investigating breaches of the Council Order.

Our current education/promotion activities

- patrols
- joint patrols with Parks Victoria rangers
- website information
- DAMCRG

Our current compliance activities

Currently we meet compliance standards through regular patrols.

Summary

Breaches of the Council Order are taken very seriously, whether off leash in a leash control area or not under effective control, for example. Compliance at this level can significantly reduce the risk of a serious attack occurring. Council officers work closely with Parks Victoria to ensure compliance with the Council Order within the Albert Park Reserve.

Our plans

Objective 1: Improve awareness of the Council Order 3 requirements

Activity	When	Evaluation
Audit signage	Annually	Audit form completed and works completed prior to 1 November each year for enforcement signage along foreshore and in major parks
Patrols, including patrols of Albert Park Reserve with Parks Victoria Rangers	Ongoing	Ensure all areas are patrolled regularly, using the spreadsheet Quarterly meetings with Parks Victoria to determine targeted patrol requirements Statistics provided to Parks Victoria rangers regarding patrols within the Albert Park Reserve as part of quarterly meetings
Create a CoPP specific information brochure, including information about Council Order 3 and other animal management information	December 2012	Brochure developed and provided with all new registrations and renewals in 2013. Brochure provided to all DABs and local vets, Town Halls and on website.
Audit current off leash parks for safety of dogs, using surveys at the off leash parks	December 2014	Provide a report to Parks and Open Space team to assist planning of open space

Objective 2: Plan for review of Council Order No 3

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a strategy to assist determining when and how the next review will take place	June 2014	Strategy completed and approved by Council
Time frame and scope of next review planned	June 2014	Date set for next review, as a result of being informed by the strategy development
Consider and evaluate whether alternative off leash areas should be provided during the Grand Prix period	June 2015	Provide a report to Council assessing options, with assistance from Parks and Open Space.
Conduct a trial, using the current Council Order, to assess viability of providing evening access to additional beach areas within the municipality.	June 2014	Plan and develop a plan to assess viability of evening access at Middle Park Beach, including assessing feedback from all users of the area. Provide a report to Council on viability and whether this could be included in a future Council Order review

Annual review of plan and annual reporting

68A(3) Every Council must—

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

The DAM Plan must be reviewed and evaluated each year and the evaluation of the implementation must be included in the Council annual report.

Table 13: Evaluation of implementation of DAM Plan (July annually – for inclusion in the annual report)

	Comments
For each activity, was it completed?	Yes/No
If no, provide an explanation for each activity not completed	
Did you complete each objective successfully?	Yes/No
If no, provide an explanation	
If yes, describe level of success	
Are any amendments required for the DAM Plan? If so, please describe	
If DAM Plan has been amended, has a copy been provided to the Secretary?	