

**Domestic
Animal
Management
Plan**
2021-2025





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Introduction

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act)* requires all Victorian Councils to prepare a four yearly Domestic Animal Management (DAM) Plan. The legislation requires that a DAM Plan outline the programs, services and policies to address the administration of the Act and the management of domestic animal issues.

Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* states the following with regards to domestic animal management plans.

Section 68A of the Act Council to prepare a domestic animal management plan

1. Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary of Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), prepare at four year intervals a domestic animal management plan.
2. A domestic animal management plan prepared by the Council must:
 - a. set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by 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 Council's municipal district; and
 - c. outline programs, services and strategies which Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to:
 1. promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and
 2. ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and
 3. minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and other animals; and
 4. address an over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
 5. encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
 6. minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
 7. 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 relates to 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 Councils municipal district that it thinks necessary; and
 - f. provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlines under the plan.
3. Every Council must-
 - a. review its domestic animal management plan 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.

An extensive assessment of Council's DAM Plan 2017 /2021 found that it had performed well with the Animal Management Team achieving high levels of success in a number of areas. Due to the successful operation of the plan, it has been brought forward and used as the platform of the new DAM Plan 2021/2025.

The DAM plan has been enhanced to promote the services relevant to animal management by focusing on public safety, animal welfare, resident service, community harmony, education, prevention and enforcement.

This plan is designed to continue supporting an environment which is safe for both animals and public by ensuring appropriately skilled Officers are available to perform the increasingly complex and demanding role of animal management.

The development of guidelines, work processes, educational services and assistance with respect of all domestic animals will continue to expand over the term of this plan.

Identified improvements and benefits attributable to the DAM Plan 2017 /2021 include:

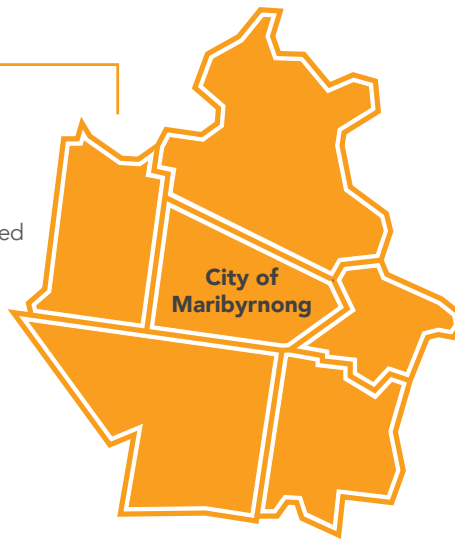
- Creation of an Animal Management Operational Instructions Manual
- Enhanced Work Instructions providing expedited response and resolution times and prevention instead of response
- Review and implementation of Councils General Purposes Local Laws 2015
- Animal Management Officers (AMO) respond to all requests for service within one hour of them receiving the request and attend on site immediately in the case of an emergency and within one working day in non-urgent matters
- Entering into a new contract with the Lost Dogs Home with an emphasis on reduction of euthanasia of animals
- Promoting benefits of pet registration which provides quicker reunion of pets to their owners
- Changing cat management service delivery from part time contractor to a full time employee delivering consistency and more timely response and resolution times
- Ongoing training of AMOs in the principles of ongoing process improvement, pursuit of quality and excellence in resident service
- Reduction in actual costs to Council in the provision of animal management services.

Municipality demographic and profile

31.2
square kilometres

The City of Maribyrnong is an inner-west municipality.

It is the smallest and most densely populated municipality in the Western Region.



9 Suburbs

- Braybrook
- Footscray
- Kingsville
- Maidstone
- Maribyrnong
- Seddon
- Tottenham (industrial precinct)
- West Footscray
- Yarraville

40%
Born overseas

From
135
Countries

42%

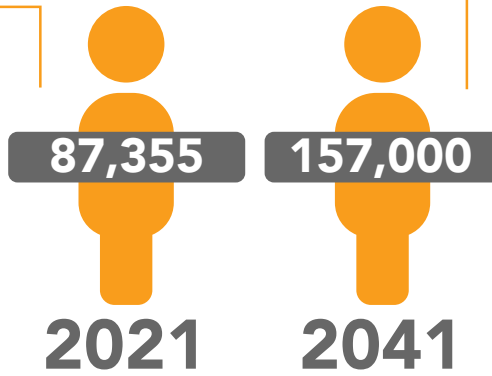
Speak a language other than English at home

80+

Different languages spoken

Placing a greater emphasis on the need to educate AMOs on cultural sensitivities in respect of education of residents concerning responsible pet ownership and keeping of animals.

Population

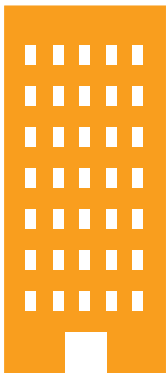


67%
Forecast increase

The City's population has grown approximately 3% each year as a result of the trend towards inner suburban living.



%



A high percentage of new residents are now accommodated in multi-level apartments and multi residential dwellings.

This has created new demands on animal management Officers in terms of access, investigation and resolving of complaints in these buildings and environments.



The State Government has regularly amended the Act to reflect increased community awareness in respect of animal welfare issues and to enable proper responses by Council.

Increased popularity of pet ownership as a result of COVID19 has added to exponential growth in demand on Councils to provide timely responses to nuisance barking complaints, domestic animal welfare and behaviour issues, dogs off lead and residents keeping of menacing or dangerous dogs.

Domestic animal statistics

The figures provided in the tables below show an average total over the previous five years but also individual years for more accurate assessment.

Current statistics

Animal management plan	2017/21 Average	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Population for Maribyrnong City Council	92,294	89,361	91,387	93,448	94,982	97,453
Area in square kilometres	32	32	32	32	32	32
Approximate number of residential properties	36,666	35,699	36,343	36,789	37,836	38,988

Dogs	2017/21 Average	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of registered dogs	6,756	6,649	6,522	6,579	7,760	6,270
Registered dangerous dogs	6	8	7	4	5	2
Registered restricted breed dogs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Registered guard dogs	7	7	7	7	7	7
Enforcement - dogs at large not confined	196	230	235	210	112	170
Enforcement - not registering dog	248	177	436	240	140	102
Enforcement - dangerous dog not confined	1	1	1	1	1	0
Enforcement - non serious injury	7	15	9	2	2	4
Enforcement – serious injury	1	2	0	0	2	2
Enforcement - dog rush	1	0	4	1	0	0
Impounded dogs	224	280	231	229	157	192
Dogs euthanised	25	30	17	29	23	19

Cats	2017/21 Average	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of registered cats	3,192	2,989	2,997	3,044	3,721	3,207
Number of stray cats impounded	364	505	414	214	324	225
Number of cats euthanised	168	223	214	136	101	101

Domestic Animal Businesses	2017/21 Average	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number of registered businesses	8	7	7	8	9	9
Permits withdrawn by Council due to Breaches of Domestic Animals Act	0	0	0	0	0	0

Departmental structure

The Animal Management Team forms part of the Regulatory Services Unit under the Director Infrastructure Services. The direct line control falls with the Coordinator Parking and Local Laws which enables transparent and immediate support, advice and transfer of information and resources between all areas of operation including Animal Management, Local Laws, Parking and Compliance.

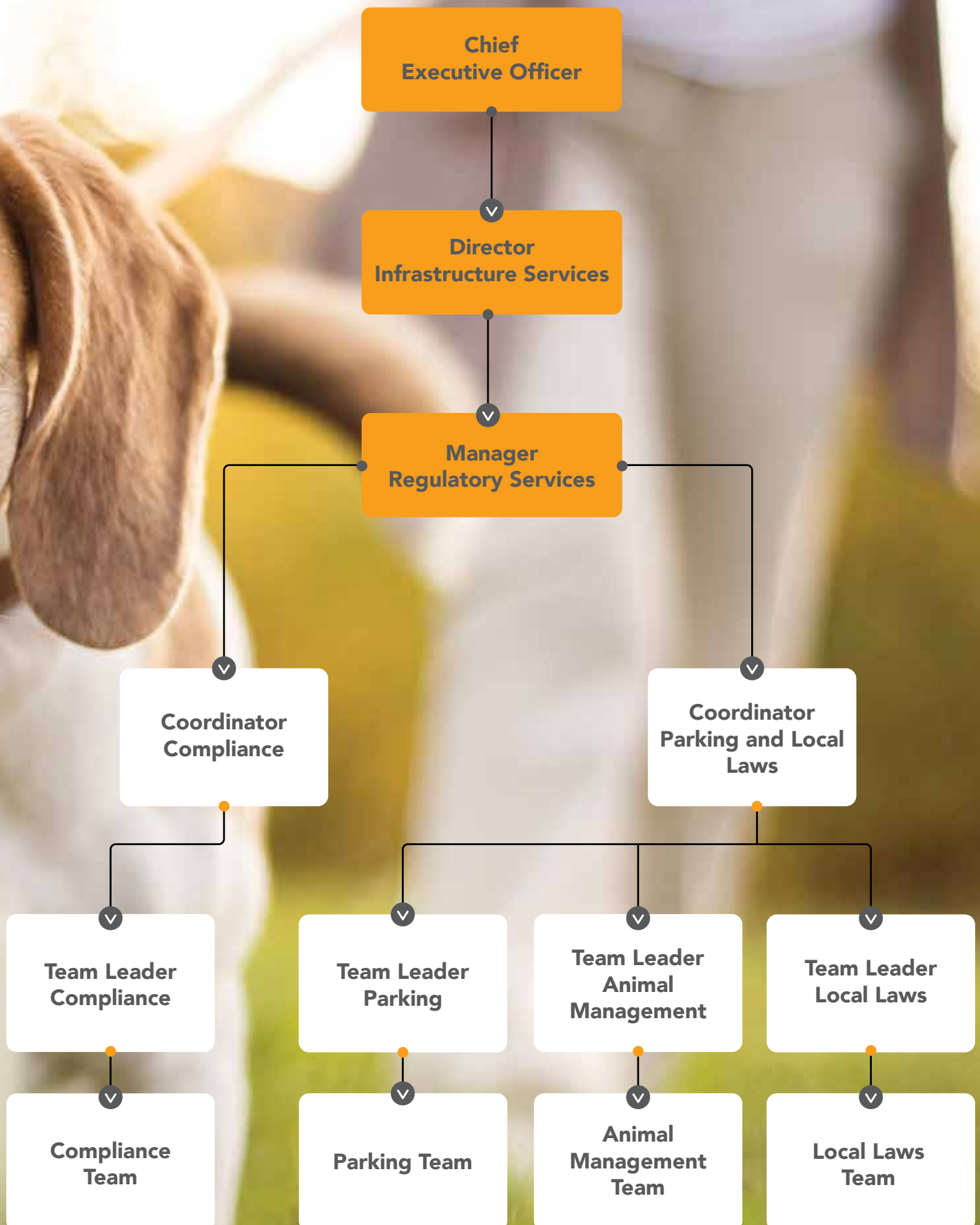
The Animal Management team consists of one (1) x Team Leader, three (3) x Animal Management Officers and contracted arrangements for pound operations, after hour's service and specific events and programs throughout the year.

Whilst the team size is small, qualified and experienced officers from other areas of the Parking and Local Laws teams provide additional support when required as well as back filling positions to ensure the maximum amount of service is provided at all times.

Council is committed to ongoing process improvement and animal management work instructions are constantly reviewed and amended with the aim of striving for excellence and best practice. The animal management team hold regular workshops to identify opportunities to enhance service delivery. When agreed, operational work instructions are updated accordingly.



Organisational structure



Officer training and development

Requirement

68(A)(2)(b) of the of the Act outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer

To ensure that all Staff involved in animal management have the training, knowledge, skills and qualifications necessary to carry out their work in a safe and legislatively compliant manner. This includes a mix of practical “hands on” in-house training, through to structured courses and industry applicable workshops. The training also includes changes which reflect community needs and any future legislative changes.

Councils’ structure of Regulatory Services as outlined in Section 4 facilitates communication and resource sharing between individual units which provides valuable back up in times of emergencies and at other times when necessary.

The annual review of this plan has identified further training requirements in respect of emergency response management, conflict management and refresher training in animal handling.



Current qualifications

Officers	Description
Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate IV Investigations • Authorised in accordance with <i>Domestic Animals Act</i> • Safe animal handling training • Induction training / Equal Employment Opportunity training • Occupational Health and Safety training • Bullying in the workplace prevention training • Conflict management training • Customer service training • 20 years Vic Police including 12 years prosecutions experience • 25 years Local Government experience Local Law Enforcement and Animal Management
Animal Management Officer 1 (AMO 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate 1V in animal control and regulation • Safe animal handling training • Induction training / Equal Employment Opportunity training • Occupational Health and Safety training • Bullying in the workplace and Conflict resolution training • Customer service training
Animal Management Officer 2 (AMO 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate 1V in animal control and regulation • Safe animal handling training • Induction training /Equal Employment Opportunity training • Occupational Health and Safety training • Bullying in the workplace and Conflict resolution training • Customer service training
Animal Management Officer 3 (AMO 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate 1V in animal control and regulation • Safe animal handling training • Induction training / Equal Employment Opportunity Training • Occupational Health and Safety Training • Bullying in the workplace and Conflict resolution training • Customer service training • Animal Handling training

Planned programs and development

The following objectives have been chosen as important aspects of animal management development and continuous improvement for Council and the community needs.

Our plans

Although Council's Animal Management Team are small, they possess a strong motivation and passion to ensure they perform to the highest standard possible. Through continued training and self-development opportunities the Officers will maintain the highest standard of performance and motivation.

Objective 1

Ensure all Officers are adequately trained in accordance with legislative requirements to enable them to perform their duties.

Activity	When	Evaluation
To identify any mandatory, role specific and individual officer training needs to be included in the Animal Management Training Register	Current and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Items identified and placed in the registerAll actions completed for relevant competency

Objective 2

Annual review of internal processes with staff, to ensure consistent application of legislation, compliance, and enforcement.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review investigation, compliance and enforcement processes to accommodate legal and other changes to ensure operational and service consistency	By July annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Annually – updated procedures, and officer guidelines finalised and approved training undertaken and officers competentOfficers using appropriate enforcement in circumstances where acceptable behaviours and compliance are not being achieved through an educative approach

Objective 3

Maintain a training register for individual Officers detailing completed and proposed training.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Enhance current Animal Management Training Register</p> <p>Listing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current qualifications • refresher training undertaken • proposed future training • higher duties undertaken • performance reviews conducted 	December 2021	<p>Register is in place and updated as required. Discussed at monthly meetings to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • input of training completed • recognition of qualifications achieved • workshops attended • higher duties performed • quarterly review of training register to ensure annual target is achieved

Objective 4

Ensure all Authorised Officers have completed their minimum training requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Identify and prioritise immediate training requirements such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • induction training • OH&S training • workplace bullying • customer Service • conflict Management 	Within three months of appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure completion of induction training and minimum subjects within three months of appointment. • Register to be assessed monthly to ensure training is completed including refresher training
<p>Identify minimum training requirements role specific tasks such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safe animal handling • Cert IV in Animal Control and Regulation 	Within 12 months of appointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all job specific training requirements are successfully completed. • Monthly review of register to ensure training is completed including refresher training



Objective 5

Undertake a review of all policies, procedures and work instructions including working within the confines of General Purpose Local Laws.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify opportunities for introduction of policies and procedures which will enhance laws relating to animals within the General Purpose Local Laws	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing review of General Purpose Local Law and recommend amendments as appropriate in relation to specific issues relating to animal management• Engage with members of the public and other key stakeholders, to gauge community concerns and attend workshops, meetings, discussions and reviews conducted during review period to ensure opportunities are realised
Conduct internal review of work instructions and policies relevant to Animal Management and daily activities	March 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of operational work procedures and updating to ensure ongoing process improvement to service delivery

Registration and identification

Requirement

68A(2)(c)(v) of the Act outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats - also addressing 68A(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f).

The most effective way to improve responsible pet ownership is to ensure compliance with the requirements of legislation Act in terms of registration and care of animals.

Current situation

Council AMOs conduct daily patrols in parks and gardens to ensure stray animals are captured, returned to their owner if appropriate or impounded when necessary.

Data/statistics

Refer to Domestic Animals statistics on page 7.

General purpose Local Laws

Council's General Purposes Local Law 2015 deals specifically with the keeping of animals. This local law provides for control of nuisance animal behaviour, animal welfare in regards to numbers and housing of animals and dog on lead requirements to ensure interaction between residents and dogs is as safe as practicable in public areas.

Council policies and procedures

- Registration fees determined by Council annually
- Delivery of pet registration renewal notifications prior to 10 April each year
- Compulsory registration of impounded animals prior to retrieval by owner
- Door knock and enforcement protocols with respect to enforcement of owners of animals found unregistered.

Our current education/promotion activities

- Promotion of responsible pet ownership through bi-annual Pet Expo
- Periodical campaigns to inform residents of legislative changes and to enhance responsible pet ownership through various media outlets
- Daily patrols including foot patrols in parks and gardens to protect members of the public from any nuisance behaviour involving dogs off lead and to provide residents with the opportunity to interact with AMOs in a friendly and advisory manner
- Due to COVID-19 for the 2020/21 registration period, registration of all pets was waived for this financial year and those who paid the registration were able to apply for and get a full refund of those fees to assist with financial stresses. This resulted in more pet registrations for the year which has flowed on into the 2021/22 period for cats in particular.

Our current compliance activities

- Delivery of pet registration renewal notices, text messages and door knocks prior to enforcement action against owners of unregistered animals
- Proactive return of owner identified stray dogs to their owners' premises. This is done only where the owner identified and at home. Subsequent incidents of the dog straying again result in prosecution and possible impounding of the dog. This has achieved cost savings for Council, cost savings for residents in terms of time travelling to the pound and the payment of pound fees to reclaim their animals and reduced numbers of impounded animals
- Follow up all pet adoption notifications and with owners who fail to renew pet registrations
- Maintaining a dedicated cat nuisance and stray cat enforcement Officer to reduce nuisance cat incidents throughout the municipality.



Our plans

Summary

Registration of pets is a priority of Council which enables lost pets to be reunited with their owners in a timely manner and enables Council to identify nuisance or dangerous animals.

Objective 1

Improve the accuracy of Council registration database by cross-referencing with microchip registry data.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure pets are registered by prioritising education over enforcement where practical	April each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess data of the number of renewed and newly registered pets including detection rates of unregistered pets throughout the year
A strong emphasis will be placed on educating pet owners through media campaigns and personal interaction between AMOs and residents going forward	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Evaluation of customer requests to ensure Officers follow up including the number of campaigns completed through communications team
Improve accuracy of Council pet registration database by contacting microchip registries to obtain details of dogs and cats in the municipality that are micro chipped	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstrate increase in numbers of pets registered with Council following microchip registry cross referencing exercise
Check all animals are also listed on Council's pet registration database, and follow up those that are not registered	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Higher response to registration renewals prior to expiry date

Objective 2

Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 10% each year.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review annual increase in registration numbers. Review number of dogs and cats being seized and impounded who are not registered to their owner
Conduct annual door knocking of 100% of the previously registered animals not renewed each year	May each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enforcement of owners found with unregistered animals
Identifying those animal registrations not renewed due to no longer being in municipality therefore removing from registry	May each year	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review number of dogs and cats not renewed and identify need for removal from database during doorknock



Nuisance

Requirement

Section 68A(2)(vi) of the Act outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance {also addresses 68K(2)(a),(c)(i),(c)(ii),(d),(f)}

Objective

To encourage responsible pet ownership by providing a timely and professional response to residents with a minimum of fuss.

Current situation

Council is guided by the Act, State and Local Laws to ensure that all members of the community are complying with the current legislation.

Council Officers aim to inform, educate and communicate to the community their responsibilities in relation to pet ownership. If the educative approaches are not successful, Officers use letters, notices, infringements, referral to the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria and where appropriate Court summonses to ensure compliance with the law.

Officers may liaise with intra departmental departments such as building, town planning and environmental health to assist in effectively ensuring compliance.

Our current compliance activities

- Visible presence of staff conducting mobile patrols within suburban streets and foot patrols throughout all parklands
- Where appropriate, educational discussions pertaining to collection of litter and off leash issues
- Enforcement of litter and other offences pertaining to legislative breaches
- Investigation of complaints through Service Requests pertaining to nuisance issues such as barking dogs and welfare issues
- Cat management specialised enforcement program
- Inspections of domestic animal businesses and enforcement of any breaches detected.

Our plans

Summary

Nuisance animals can have a serious negative effect on the amenity and peaceful enjoyment of property for residents. Noise issues in particular can cause sleep deprivation, stress, domestic issues and disputes between neighbours.

Objective 1

Provide best practice enforcement to ensure residents maintain community harmony and peaceful enjoyment of their properties.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate community support for the introduction of a cat curfew	June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outcome of evaluation
Undertake consultative process and provide residents and key stakeholders with an opportunity to have input via written or verbal submissions	August 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess level of support and develop a draft Cat Curfew policy (if supported)
Prepare and implement a Cat Curfew Plan (if supported)	September 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit plan for Council consideration and endorsement
Media support and promotion of Cat Curfew (if implemented)	December 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Media outcomes including electronic media
Develop a cat desexing promotional package with potential financial support, vouchers and vet support	June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of additional desexing notifications• Update of registrations showing desexed cats• Increase in registration of cats

Objective 2

Promote responsible cat ownership and curfews.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responding to reports and or complaints re nuisance cat behaviour• Number of booklets distributed• Reduction in impounded cats• Reduction in complaints in relation to stray cats
Undertake a media campaign based on responsible pet ownership and security of cats within their yards	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduction in impounded cats• Increase in cat registrations



Dog attacks

Requirement

68A(2)(c)(iii) of the Act 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).

Objective

To ensure Council Officers are taking appropriate and immediate action to reduce the risk of injury to members of the public and other animals, including investigation, identification of owners, seizing of dogs and prosecution of offenders.

Current situation

Dog attacks remain the most critical process for Officers. All attacks are treated as urgent to ensure the response to complainants are acted upon immediately.

Experience has shown that outcomes have a greater success of resolution if acted upon immediately with a higher standard of evidence and more accurate statements obtained which assist in the investigation and prosecution.

Ongoing training of Officers in the area of investigations is to occur over the next 12 months including an enhanced interaction and partnership with R.S.P.C.A. to allow for investigatory techniques of staff to be exchanged and developed.

Foot patrols have provided a very effective way of visible presence in parklands and enforcement activities where appropriate.

But a very successful initiative implemented in 2019 has been the introduction of pushbike patrols by officers which have enabled a greater patrolled area, a notable surprise for people walking through the parks and very positive feedback from residents and park users.

On the enforcement side, the pushbikes have enabled officer's greater ability to catch up to and prosecute appropriate matters within the parks whilst creating a discussion point and greater topical interaction with residents.

Data/statistics

Refer to Domestic Animals statistics on page 7.

General purpose Local Laws

Council's General Purpose Local Law supports the Act in the controlling of animals which can impact on dog attacks. Specifically:

- *Clause 44 Keeping of Animals*
- *Clause 46 Animal Shelters*
- *Clause 48 Animal Noise.*

Council policies and procedures

- Animal Management Operational Instructions Manual
- Initiation of investigation into dog attacks
- Appropriate seizure of dogs involved in attack
- Agreement with Victoria Police to take over and deal with all serious dog attacks to ensure the highest standard of investigation and appropriate prosecution occurs
- Assist Victoria Police in investigations when required

Council policies and procedures (cont.)

- Communication with Complainants
- Restricted Breed Dogs Investigations
- Dog Attack
- Dangerous or menacing dogs
- Barking dogs
- Wandering/stray dogs
- Contained stray dogs
- Stray cats
- Nuisance Cats
- Domestic animal patrols
- Surrendered dogs
- Pound Operations
- Issue of infringements
- Domestic animal businesses
- Pet registration checks.

Our current education/promotion activities

- Promoting responsible removal of excrement produced by pets
- Encouragement of removal by placement of litterbags and dispensers throughout all parkland
- Maintaining a visible presence of Officers in and around parklands
- Conducting annual micro chipping days involving educational discussion by Vets, Lost Dogs Home staff and animal management staff
- Conduct Biannual pet expo.

Our current compliance activities

- Visible presence of staff by mobile patrols within suburban streets and foot and pushbike patrols throughout all parklands
- Enforcement of all dog attacks when responsible person can be identified
- Enforcement of dogs at large and off leash
- Investigation of complaints pertaining to nuisance, including barking dogs, dogs at large or off lead.



Our plans

Summary

Dog attacks nationally over recent years have been highlighted creating a genuine fear by residents of the potential outcome of serious or fatal injuries. Further education and promotion of responsible pet ownership is a critical tool in reducing the risk of dog attacks.

Animal Management staff understand the seriousness of dog attacks and the devastating impact placed on victims. Proactive patrols and regular discussions with community members goes toward the minimisation of dog attacks. In addition, the response to these complaints and early investigations concerning any reports of aggressive dogs can have a positive outcome.

Objective 1

Promote and support the reporting of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Promote responsible pet ownership and consequences of dog attacks.</p> <p>Promotion through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspaper promotions • Council website information • Community letter drops • Electronic media such a Facebook • Educational visits to schools 	<p>Current and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate and evaluate all reported dog attacks • Promote reported dog attacks through media outlets to increase community awareness • Provide ongoing support to victims of dog attacks to ensure full support of prosecution where appropriate • Evaluate number of reported attacks pre and post promotional program
<p>Inform the community of prosecution outcomes of dog attacks</p>	<p>Current and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback through media outlets and statistical information available through website

Objective 2

Prevent the opportunity of dog attacks resulting in a reduction of reportable incidents.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Develop and promote key dog attack prevention messages such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of off leash areas• Responsible animal handling and control techniques• Promotion of dog obedience training• Community awareness of dealing with aggressive dogs	<p>Current and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate number of reported attacks pre and post promotional program• Community feedback surveys conducted through mail outs and Pet expo's dog attack prevention program• Record type and number of education materials distributed

Objective 3

Enhance investigation process to ensure prosecutions are conducted in a timely manner to minimise impact on victim and witnesses.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Ensure all reports are acted on immediately or within 24 hours</p>	<p>Current and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of Council's customer complaints data
<p>Set key performance indicators for Officers to complete dog attack investigations within a six week timeframe</p>	<p>Current and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review investigations monthly to evaluate percentage completed within timeframe
<p>Further training of Animal Management Officers in area of investigation techniques and victim support skills</p>	<p>Current and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the quality of reports and briefs of evidence post training• Discuss incident and obtain feedback from victims and witnesses regarding the interaction and support provided by investigating officer

Objective 4

Enhanced patrols of parklands and designated reserves as listed in Council Orders specific to off leash areas.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide increased foot and pushbike patrols of parklands to ensure compliance with off leash time restrictions	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of staff activities and log books confirming attendance and patrol of parklands• Review enforcement activity specific to dog at large offences
Review current Orders specific to listed parklands pertaining to off leash areas as to suitability and applicable time restrictions currently in place	December 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consult with residents and dog owners including relevant Council Departments impacted on by current Orders

Declared, dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

Requirement

68A(2)(c)(vii) of the Act 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).

Objective

Ensuring that all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are identified and lawfully kept by owners to minimise the risks of dog attacks in the community.

Current situation

All officers regularly discuss issues around the identification and processing of restricted breed dogs. City of Maribyrnong has no restricted dogs registered.

A collaborative approach to neighbouring Councils has been utilised to support investigators in identifying restricted breed dogs in the past and will be a focus over the next 12 months with changes to legislation expected.

Data/statistics

Refer to Domestic Animals statistics on page 7.

Council policies and procedures

- Revised General Purposes Local Law 2015
- Process for ensuring database correctly identifies all known dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

- Policy for identifying and declaring:
 - Dangerous dogs
 - Restricted breed dogs
- Process associated with the identifying and recording of dangerous dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry
- Assist Victoria Police in investigations where appropriate dangerous or restricted breed dog is involved.

Our current/ongoing activities

- Continuous support by providing advice and information about dangerous and declared dogs with respect control in public places as well as home security
- Dealing with complaints with respect to reports of dangerous or purported declared dogs in the community.

Our current compliance activities

- Systematically visit non-residential properties within the municipality including outside "normal business hours" to identify possible "dangerous dogs"
- Ensure all declared dogs premises are audited on an annual basis for compliance regarding security and housing
- Ensure all reports of a dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dog are treated as a high priority with prosecution undertaken where appropriate
- Seizure of identified restricted breed dogs as appropriate
- Declaration of restricted breed dogs when detected.

Our plans

Summary

As a consequence of the recent trend by some to own dogs which have the potential to be a danger to the community Councils' animal management Officers make regulation of these dogs the highest priority.

Animal Management Officers conduct daily patrols in public places to detect and investigate any stray, dangerous or restricted breed dogs. In addition any report concerning suspected dangerous or restricted breed dog is responded to as a matter of urgency.

Officers maintain a highly visible presence in streets and parks throughout the municipality and any report of a stray or dangerous dog is responded to urgently. This not only protects the animal from traffic but the community from any aggressive or frightened dog.

Animal Management Officers have a close working relationship with outdoor staff including park Rangers and maintenance crews.

These staff members regularly notify location and description of any animal management issues. By developing and encouraging inter departmental communication and cooperation the reporting of and responding to potentially dangerous dogs is greatly enhanced.

During the course of the previous domestic animal management plans significant reductions in stray dog numbers has been achieved. It is now unusual to sight a stray dog or a dog off lead in any public place throughout this municipality.

Objective 1

Identify and register all declared dogs found within the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all Animal Management Officers have completed training in correct identification of restricted breed dogs	Within three months of commencing with Council	Ongoing testing of Officers at Lost Dogs Home by testing on a range of similar and confirmed restricted breed dogs
Identify registered animals with Council which are potentially restricted breed dogs	May each year	Attend addresses and reassess grown dogs for potential restricted breed dogs

Objective 2

Ensure correct housing and exercising of restricted/dangerous breed dogs by owners.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Any restricted breed dogs registered with Council must be housed correctly to ensure security and confinement	Ongoing	Attend registered address and assess the premises to ensure compliance of security and confinement of restricted breed dogs
Ensure that all restricted breed dogs comply with legislative requirements outside the home	Ongoing	Discuss with dog owners and advise and enforce requirements when these dogs are outside their premises
Attending registered properties to ensure compliance with housing requirements	Ongoing	Attend properties and inspect security levels and discuss concerns with owners if deficiencies are found



Over population and high euthanasia

Requirement

68A(2)(c)(iv) of the Act 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).

Objective

To develop strategies and educational opportunities to address the overpopulation of dogs and cats in order to minimise the euthanasia rates.

Current situation

Euthanasia is a community concern with a great deal of work being done to reduce the current rate. Feral cats remain a very difficult issue to resolve and result in a higher than acceptable euthanasia rate.

In comparing euthanised animals with statistics at the commencement of the 2017/21 Domestic Animal Management Plan the euthanasia rate was 14.76% for dogs and 74% for cats most of which were feral, sick or diseased.

Results provided in the 2021 figures show rates have reduced significantly to 7.4% for dogs and 49.75% for cats.

These significant improvements in the reduction of euthanasia rates is attributable in part to Council's new process of returning owned pets directly to their owners where possible and rehoming of unclaimed pets for any animal assessed by a vet to be suitable for rehoming.

Maribyrnong Council does **not** rehome unsuitable animals which would likely go on to cause nuisance or danger to other residents either within or outside our municipality. This policy reduces the likelihood of dog attacks and nuisance issues and increases the safety of our municipality for community members.

The Lost Dogs Home website provides photos of all resident dogs and cats waiting for their owners to reclaim them so if residents have lost their family pet, they simply jump on their web site or access the site through Council's website and search through the photos to find their pet. This process has further reduced the return time and euthanasia rates of impounded animals.

For access to this site reference is: dogshome.com/lost-found/lost-a-pet and check for your lost cat or dog.

Data/statistics

Refer to Domestic Animals statistics on page 7.

General purpose Local Laws

Council's General Purposes Local Law 2015 supports the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* in the controlling of animals which can impact on stray animals and reducing the possibility of impounding and euthanasia. Specifically:

- *Clause 44 Keeping of Animals*
- *Clause 46 Animal Shelters.*



Council policies and procedures

Procedures for:

- Communication with complainants
- Restricted breed dogs
- Dog attacks
- Dangerous or menacing dogs
- Barking dogs
- Wandering stray dogs
- Confined stray dogs
- Stray cats
- Nuisance cats
- Domestic animal patrols
- Surrendered dogs
- Issue of infringements
- Domestic animal businesses and
- Cat trapping.

Our current/ongoing activities

- Dedicated full time Officer performing duties specific to cats
- Promote and encourage cat control within residences
- Promote and encourage de-sexing of all pets
- Promotion and education of responsible pet ownership through media and annual microchipping days and bi annual Pet Expo.

Our current compliance activities

- Systematically visit non-residential properties within the municipality outside "normal business hours" to identify possible "dangerous dogs"
- Ensure all declared dogs premises are audited on an annual basis for compliance regarding security and housing
- Ensure all reports of a dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dog are treated as a high priority with prosecution undertaken where appropriate
- Seizure of identified restricted breed dogs
- Declaration of restricted breed dogs where identified
- Encouragement of re-homing of suitable animals only program by Lost Dogs Home to minimise the need for euthanasia.

Our plans

Summary

In order to reduce the over population and euthanasia of unwanted pets Council encourages desexing and rehoming of pets where appropriate.

Objective 1

Promote desexing of animals.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Actively encourage desexing of pets to reduce the over population of unwanted animals	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Through notification of desexing of pets by owners
Promotions through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Web sites Media outlets and mail drops with registration renewals Discount vouchers at pet expo and micro chipping events 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction in impounded , animals which require re-homing or euthanising Higher number of animals retrieved or rehomed prior to euthanising
Develop a Cat desexing promotional package with potential financial support, vouchers and vet support	June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of additional desexing notifications Update of registrations showing desexed cats Increase in registration of cats

Objective 2

Promote Registration and micro chipping of animals to ensure impounded animals are retrieved.

Activity	When	Evaluation
<p>Actively encourage registration and re-registration of pets to ensure return of impounded pets to rightful owners as expeditiously as possible.</p> <p>Promotions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Web sites• Media outlets and mail drops with registration renewals• Discount vouchers at pet expo and micro chipping events• Annual door knocks	<p>2021 and ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase of registered pets annually• Increase of re-registration of pets annually• Reduction in impounded, unregistered pets• Reduction in number of euthanised pets



Domestic animal businesses

Requirement

68A(2)(c)(ii) of the Act 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),(d),(f).

Objective

To ensure that all domestic animal businesses comply with planning requirements through unplanned inspections to ensure compliance and welfare of animals under their control.

Current situation

Data/statistics

Maribyrnong City Council currently has eight Domestic Animal Management Businesses operating within its municipality.

Council operating procedures

- Inspections of existing and new domestic animal businesses in line with mandatory code of practice
- Ensure all relevant Domestic Animal Businesses are advised of any review of the Code of Practice for their type of business
- Provide education that a Domestic Animal Business is not limited to commercial activities.

Current/ongoing compliance activities

- Register all identified Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality.
- Conduct annual inspections/audits of each premises
- Follow up on any non-compliance
- Liaise with other units within Council to provide advice when planning applications for Domestic Animal Businesses are received to ensure legislative compliance in terms of construction and operations
- Investigate and act on any complaints received.

Our plans

Summary

Council will work in partnership with all domestic animal businesses to ensure the services provided to community members comply with legislative requirements and that the welfare of the animals under their control is maintained at the highest possible standard.

Objective 1

Promote compliant domestic animal businesses in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct unplanned visits and inspections to registered domestic animal businesses	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Undertake a minimum of two inspections each year of all registered businesses• Present feedback to operators of Inspection outcomes
Educate and advise proprietors on any adverse findings from these inspections	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate the findings from inspections and provide feedback to proprietors to ensure improvements• Undertake further inspections to confirm corrective action has been taken to eliminate previous adverse findings
Investigate continued breaches of legislation through non-compliant operation of business	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educate proprietors in order to negate adverse findings• Where appropriate, prosecute proprietor for breaches and withdrawal of permit



Other matters

Requirement

68A(2)(e) of the Act provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of animals in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.

Objective

Having regard to the limited resources the animal management unit continues to provide an effective animal management service.

To improve service delivery the unit intends to explore innovations to identify and respond to emerging trends in pet ownership.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review after hours and weekend staffing levels	October 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess viability and community support for extending service
Review Pound Operations	February 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess other options, effectiveness and value for money
Encourage new pet registrations	November 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess community support for free pet registration for the first year of registrations

Annual review of Plan and annual reporting

Requirement

68A(3) of the Act every Council must:

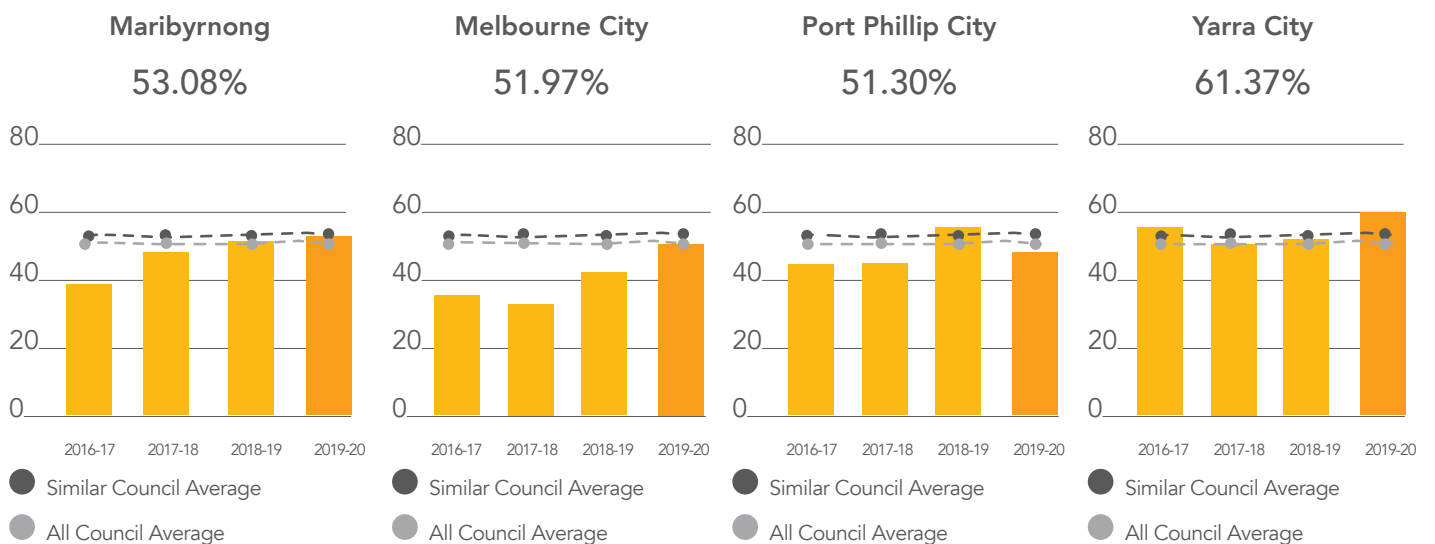
- review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan
- provide the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan
- publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report.

Additional supporting data

The following data is taken from the Know Your Council web site which can be accessed at knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au. Improvements in all areas have been achieved by Maribyrnong in comparison to previous years particularly around reclaim and rehome rates.

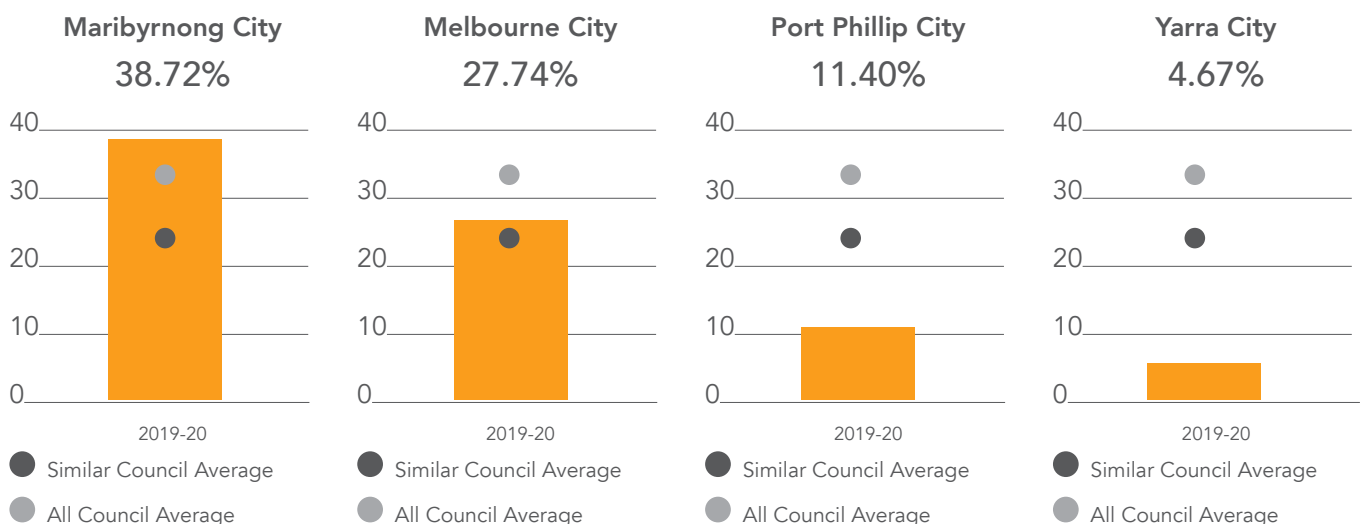
Animals reclaimed from Council

Percentage of all collected cats and dogs which have been reclaimed.



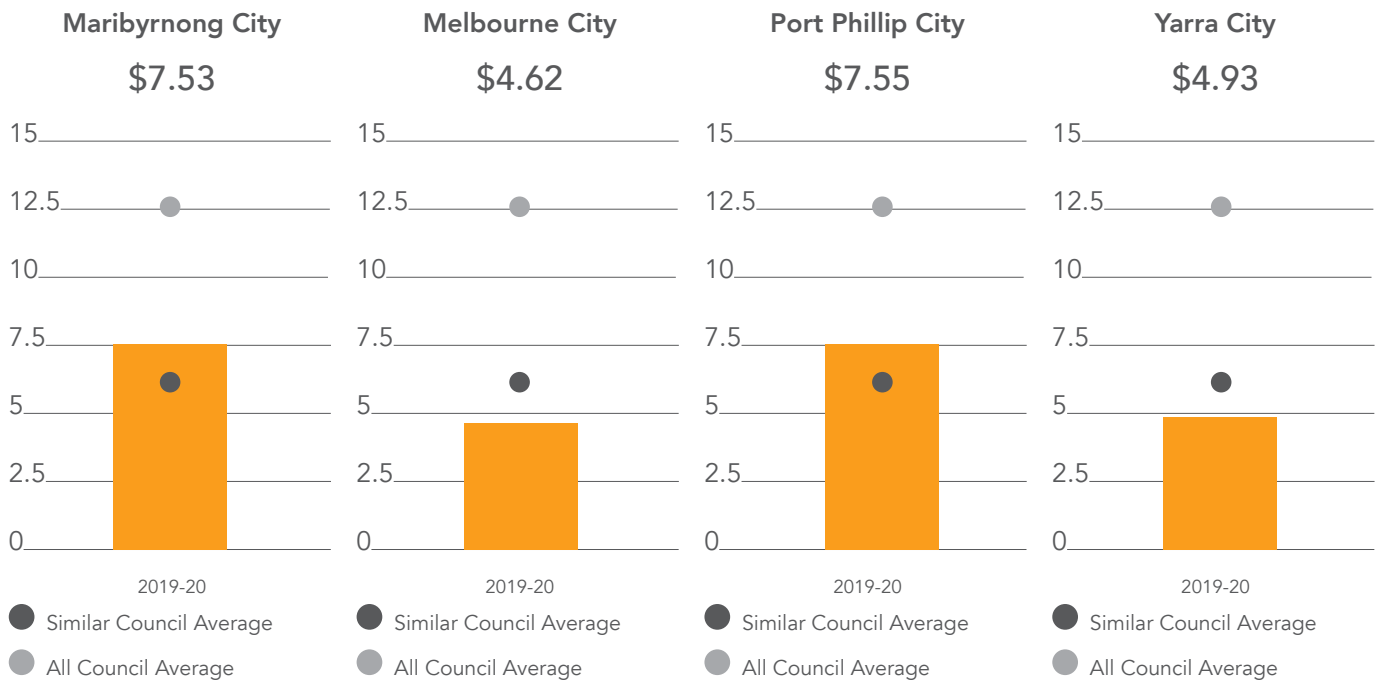
Animals rehomed

Percentage of all collected cats and dogs which have been rehomed. New indicator from July 2019.



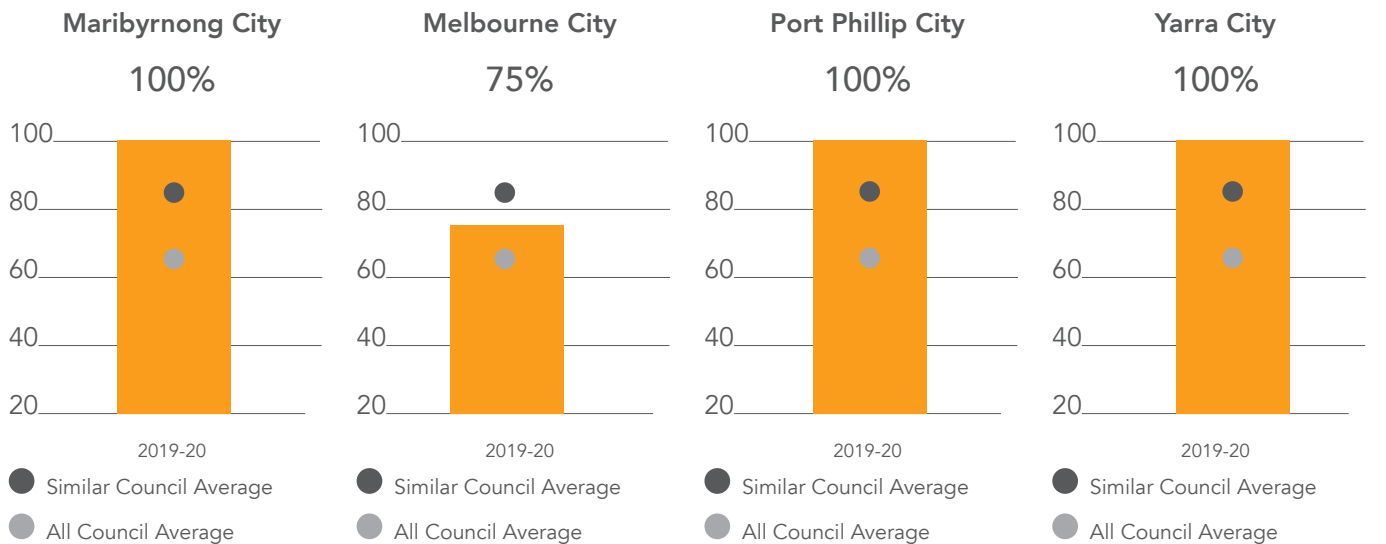
Cost of animal management service per population

Direct cost to Council of the animal management service per population. New indicator from July 2019.



Successful animal management prosecutions

Percentage of successful animal management prosecutions. New indicator July 2019.



Maribyrnong City Council

Corner Hyde and Napier Streets Footscray
Mail address PO Box 58, Footscray VIC 3011
Phone: 9688 0200
After hours/emergency: 9688 0200
Fax: 9687 7793
Email: email@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au
www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au



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