Domestic Animal Management Plan

2026 – 2029

Adopted by Council:

Review Dates:

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DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (The Act), every Council must prepare a domestic animal management plan, as follows:

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

(1) *Subject to subsection (1A), each Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, prepare a domestic animal management plan on 4 December 2025 and at the end of each period of 4 years after that day.*
(1A) A Council may apply to the Secretary for an extension of time within which to prepare a domestic animal management plan.
(1B) The Secretary may grant an extension of time under subsection (1A) if the Secretary believes that special circumstances exist that warrant the granting of an extension.

(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; and

(b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and

(c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—

(i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and

(ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation; and

(iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and

(iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and

(v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and

(vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and

(vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and

(d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and

(e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and

(f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

(3) Every Council must—

(a) review its 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.

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Yarra was created in June 1994 following the Victorian Government's restructure of local government. The City of Yarra is located close to Melbourne's Central Business District. Neighbouring Councils are Moreland and Darebin (to the north), Boroondara (to the east), Stonnington (to the south), and Melbourne (to the west). The City of Yarra includes the suburbs of Abbotsford, Alphington (part), Burnley, North Carlton, Clifton Hill, Collingwood, Cremorne, Fairfield (part), Fitzroy, North Fitzroy, Princes Hill and Richmond.

The traditional owners of the land are the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung who originally inhabited the area that is now known as Fitzroy, Richmond and Collingwood. Yarra continues to be an important meeting place for Aboriginal people in Victoria.

Yarra has more than 230 hectares of open space including large historical gardens particularly Edinburgh Gardens in North Fitzroy and Darling Gardens in Clifton Hill. The Merri Creek and Yarra River, which form two of Yarra's boundaries, have adjoining linear open space reserves which are highly valued by residents of Yarra and wider metropolitan Melbourne for their recreational and nature conservation values.

The current estimated population for the municipality is more than 91,000 according to the 2021 Census.

The Victorian 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 (referred to hereafter in this document as the DAMP). Yarra City Council supports this strategic approach and has developed its DAMP using the guidelines provided by the Department of Agriculture Victoria.

The DAMP is required to specifically inform both the State Government and interested parties how the Council has equipped and trained its authorised officers and provided processes for them to enforce the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and associated Regulations. The DAMP is not intended to regulate how the Council investigates or enforces its Local Laws or other Policies which relate to the management of animals. These Local Laws and Policies may be referred to where they complement the DAMP and will be enforced in conjunction with the DAMP where appropriate.

Yarra City Council encourages responsible 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.

Council's role in Animal Management

Council plays a number of roles within the scope of animal management. The key focuses in the delivery of animal management services include:

- To promote responsible pet ownership in the City of Yarra;
- *To respond to issues raised by the community about nuisance animals (e.g. barking dogs);*
- *To enforce the legislation relating to domestic animals;*

- *To encourage the registration of companion animals;*
- *To educate the community on topics related to animal management and control.*

Process applied in developing this plan

The DAMP was prepared by the Compliance and Parking branch. Other relevant areas of Council and external stakeholders and agencies have also been consulted regarding the content of this plan.

Training of authorised officers

68(A)(2)(b) Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of Domestic Animals Act 1994 in the Council's municipal district.

Context

The purpose of this plan is to provide the Yarra City Council with a strategic framework that delivers policy direction and action plans for animal control services for the next four years.

The *Domestic Animals Act 1994* confers a range of powers and responsibilities to Councils for the delivery of animal control services. This plan articulates how Council intends to discharge its responsibilities as prescribed in the Act.

As of February 2025, there were:

- *6606 dogs, and 3016 cats registered within the City of Yarra*
- *12 Domestic Animal Businesses registered*
- *2 Commercial Dog Walking permits in the City of Yarra*

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1. Current and Planned Training

Yarra City Council employs two full time Officers in relation to Animal Management. Their primary responsibilities are to deliver animal control, education and enforcement activities in accordance with the Domestic Animals Act and the Council's General Local Law.

The table below sets out the training activities currently undertaken by Animal Management Officers and those activities that are anticipated in the life of the plan.

Authorised Officer Training	
Industry training including animal handling, animal assessment, statement taking, prosecution and computer skills.	All onboarding and continuous, weekly conferencing.
OH&S training- dealing with aggressive customers.	As required and approved.
Cert IV in Local Government.	As required when recruitment is undertaken, depending on level of experience.
Animal Welfare Victoria training days.	As offered by the Department, officers are required to attend all session offered.
Hands on animal handling training.	Completed - Refresher training every two years
Induction training with Senior Team Leader council e-learning	Completed - Ongoing courses and e-learning as required.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training needs that should be undertaken by Authorised Officers by January 2026.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify minimum industry and legislative training requirements via consultation with management and staff. Training to be documented on a register.	Ongoing	Staff to complete minimum training within 6 months from date of commencement.
Identify additional training opportunities by consultation with management and staff.	Ongoing	As required every two years and recorded by coordinator compliance and construction

All Compliance officers (local laws) will maintain skills in animal handling and management.		

Objective 2: Review and update current Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) within the branch in consultation with officers and management to enable consistent enforcement and education.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Coordinator to review and distribute SOP's to all officers for comment and feedback to enable best practice and confirm legislative requirements.	By June 2026	Regular meetings with staff and individuals, review and consult with the coordinator and management. Update and review current SOP's.

Objective 3: Improve officer's ability to correctly identify dog breeds and interpret Breed Standards that may be prescribed from time to time.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Industry training as available from Animal Welfare Victoria for Officers to attend and complete.	As available	Ongoing

Objective 4: All Officers to be offered the opportunity to complete formal prosecution training.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Officers to develop the ability to prosecute in Court and gain the necessary skills in understanding the prosecution process. To be considered as appropriate.	Ongoing	Review current capabilities and offer training to develop skills required, including prosecution processes.

Objective 5: To maintain high technical legislative knowledge within the team.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Weekly meeting with the Senior Team Leader Civic Compliance.	Weekly from 2025	Confirm the understanding of any legislative changes including amendments to the Council Order with staff at each session.

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2. Registration and Identification

The Domestic Animals Act 1994, 68A (2) (c) (v) provides that Council must: "... outline programs, services and strategies to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats..."

The following data illustrates the trends in domestic animal registrations during part of the period of the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan.

Annual Registration	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Cats	3067	2994	3150
Dogs	6945	6507	6882
Total	10,012	9501	10,032

**Registrations can fluctuate due to pet owners moving and pets passing away at any given time the data is analysed.*

Overall domestic animal registrations have increased.

There has been over 5.58% (figure as of 2024 annual review) net increase in pet registrations since the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan adopted by Council. During the previous DAMP Council has maintained actions from the previous plan by:

- *Follow up of non-renewed registrations through a mail-out of reminder letters and SMS's, including reviewing and improving the process*
- *Review of the current methodology for unpaid registrations*
- *Review of the promotional material regarding positive benefits from registration*
- *Liaison with local Veterinary Practices to ensure relevant information on responsible pet ownership is available*
- *Liaison with our contracted pound to incentivise adoption through subsidised animal registration*
- *Increase education in parks and awareness to register by Compliance officers.*

In accordance with the Plan, Animal Management Officers also provided feedback to the organisation's Communications team with a view to ensuring the message to the public about positive benefits of registration and identification remains relevant.

Registration and Identification - Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws:

Yarra City Council's General Local Law section 60 regulates the number of cats and dogs that can be kept on a property - a maximum of 2 dogs and 2 cats per property and a maximum of 1 dog and 1 cat per unit or flat.

Unless permitted under the Planning Scheme applicable to the land, a person must not, without a permit, keep or allow to be kept on any land, any more of each species or group of animals and birds specified in the Local Law.

The Local Law is currently under review, and the upcoming DAMP will be updated should any amendments to these regulations occur after this process is finalised post September 2026.

Council Policies and Procedures:

- *Application for registration and renewal of registration of dogs and cats (form approved by Council and fixed fees)*
- *Procedure associated with seizure and impounding of unregistered and/or unidentified dogs and cats*
- *Process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dogs and/or cats.*
- *Prescribed yearly program each June to follow up on unpaid animal registration renewals.*

Cats and Compulsory Desexing

On 1 March 2010, Council introduced compulsory cat desexing with the Council Order under The Act to reduce the number of stray and feral cats in the community. Cat owners in the City of Yarra must have their cat desexed before it may be registered for the first time at three months of age.

Desexing not only reduces the population of stray, unwanted animals, but it also helps pets to live longer and healthier lives. Owners of cats already registered with Council, which are not already desexed, must have their cat desexed prior to renewing their pet registration. Exceptions apply when a veterinarian has advised against desexing for health reasons or where a cat is being kept for recognised breeding purposes. Owners will need to provide Council with a letter from their veterinarian or a copy of their breeding certificate.

Council is also investigating incentivised options to support the community and promote desexing. If this is feasible and available, Council will communicate this with relevant community members.

Reduced Fees

Reduced registration fees are applicable for people who hold a State Concession. Please note, you must be eligible within the meaning of State Concessions Act 1986 and must supply your current Department of Social Security Pension Number, Department of Veterans Affair Pension Number.

In special cases where financial hardship may be proved, the Manager Compliance and Parking may waive all or part of a registration fee. For all new cats and dogs aged 6 months, registration fee is waived at initial registration.

For dogs and cats adopted through the Lost Dogs Home or any other registered foster care network, we have introduced free initial registration facilitated at the time of adoption.

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Our Current Education / Promotion Activities

Our activities include:

- *Producing and distributing of a range of information brochures relating to positive responsible pet ownership.*
- *Displaying information in a range of public places and veterinary practices.*
- *Coordinating numerous follow-ups and reminders for non renewed animal registrations.*
- *Maintaining information on Council's website.*
- *Conducting regular park patrols and liaise with sporting clubs.*
- *Assisting Council's Open Space department in park sign audits and provide feedback and details.*
- *Coordinating an annual letter sent to primary school encouraging them to participate in Councils primary school education program.*
- *Offering local schools educational assistance for being safe around dogs*

Our Current Compliance Activities

Our activities include coordinating:

- *Regular park patrols for direct engagement with pet owners and pets including random checks of registration and tag details.*
- *Enforcement via Infringement notices, official warnings and prosecutions as required.*
- *Follow-up of notification from Lost Dogs Home of claimed or rehoused pets within the municipality.*
- *Follow-up of unpaid renewals via telephone and door knocking as appropriate.*
- *Authorised Officer equipped with microchip scanners.*
- *Annual audit of all Domestic Animal Businesses.*
- *Annual audit of declared dangerous/menacing dogs.*
- *Increased number of animal transport vehicles.*
- *Educational activities – school talks, Yarra News and the website information.*

The table below details the type and number of offences that have resulted in the issue of enforcement notices.

Enforcement Action by Offence / Category	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29
Dog / Cat not wearing ID marker	0	0					
Dog at large daytime	73	38					
Dog at large nighttime	65	38					

Nuisance Dog / Cat	0	0					
Dog / Cat in Prohibited Place	25	20					
Fail to Register Dog / Cat	106	82					
Fail to Renew Registration Dog / Cat	121	87					
Dog attack – non-serious injury	9	10					
Allow dog to rush or chase	3	1					
Prosecutions for serious Dog Attacks	18	5					
Prosecutions for non-serious dog attacks	3	5					

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Summary

Overall Council's strategies have resulted in consistent registration and compliance within the municipality. The objectives over the next four years include:

- *Improve animal registration and annual renewal process*
- *Improve registration database with correct information and reduce dogs wandering at large with follow up enforcement action.*
- *Improve responsible pet ownership and education in relation to registration requirements.*

Objective 1: Improve animal registration and annual renewal process.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improved communications with pet owners, with an additional mid-year notification.	Annually in November	Action any animal updates following the notification. Improve customer experience and reduce errors at time of renewal.
Improved communication planning and increased efficiency with enforcement processes.	Annually in February/March	Consistent follow up processes to be followed each renewal period. Take appropriate enforcement action in a timely manner.

Objective 2: Improve registration database with correct information and reduce dogs wandering at large with follow up enforcement action.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Prior to release	Ensure animal registration is updated.
Investigate the benefits and costs of returning pets to their owners, rather than immediately impounding them on their first offence, when possible.	Monthly	Complete a review of the impounding process for animals found at large.

Objective 3: Improve responsible pet ownership and education in relation to registration requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Research approaches to improve registration and renewal levels by implementing appropriate initiatives.	Ongoing	Monitor yearly unpaid registration program and implement new initiatives to raise compliance.
All new registrations from February to be given an additional 2 months free registration due to issuing renewals.	Ongoing	Monitor registration applications and numbers

Identify opportunities to communicate with the community about animal management activities, including the benefits of registration.	November	Develop a communication plan informing the community of the benefits of pet registration.
Annual check of microchipping databases to increase registration of cats & dogs.	Ongoing	Match data from microchipping database with COY animal registration database.
Review of animal registration process	Ongoing	Implementation of online animal registrations completed.
Monitor and enforce cat curfew	Ongoing	Cat curfew adopted by Council to be enforced from 1 January 2024.
Evaluate communication plan with pet owners with a view on compliance	Ongoing	Monitor compliance rates at the end of the registration renewal process.
Explore the feasibility of a permanent proactive park patrol officer to introduce park patrol targets and increase officer presence in parks.	2025	Commence requirement if approved.

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3. Nuisance

68A (2) (c) (vi) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 outlines programs, services and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.

Current Situation

The data below illustrates the number of requests received by Council from customers in relation to nuisance caused by cats and dogs:

Nature of Complaint	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29
Barking Dogs	30	31					
Domestic Animal Pick-up	260	181					
Dog Faeces	37	33					
Excess Animal Permits	8	8					
Cat Cage Requests	13	5					
General Animal Requests	1165	1964					

Some categories of complaint may generate more than one contact with Council as part of an ongoing investigation process.

In relation to barking dog complaints an improved implemented processhas resulted in community members having a stronger understanding how to make a complaint with Council. Council has increased its focus on education and dispute resolution.

Yarra City Council encourages dog owners to maintain adequate fencing to prevent animals wandering from their premises. Council provides services to collect wandering animals and may impound dogs, issue Infringements and prosecute pet owners when an offence is found.

Council provides a cat trapping program and any registered cat that is trapped will be identified through its registration tag and returned to its owner, who may be issued with a notice under section 23 of the Act and subject to prosecution should the cat be trapped again.

The cat trapping procedure is reviewed yearly in conjunction with Council's Compliance Administration team and statistics obtained from the Lost Dogs Home. An improved cat cage and trapping procedure has led to improvements in officer safety.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures List Orders:

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

Council's Local Law:

Council's General Local Law regulates the number of cats and dogs that may be kept on private property. In addition, the Local Law requires dog owners to remove and dispose of any waste deposited by the dog. It's also an offence not to carry a litter device when out in public with a dog.

Yarra City Council's General Local Law section 60 regulates the number of cats and dogs that can be kept on a property - a maximum of 2 dogs and 2 cats per property and a maximum of 1 dog and 1 cat per unit or flat.

List of Council Policies and Procedures:

Current Standard Operating Procedures and processes cover the following:

- *Brief preparation*
- *Statement guidelines*
- *Infringement notices – Animals*
- *Decision to destroy or declare dangerous dog*
- *Dog attack - rush investigation*
- *Conducting proactive park patrols*
- *Dog at large – contained*
- *Summaries for investigations*
- *Animal handling*
- *Seizure protocol*
- *Surrender of animals*
- *Barking dog process/booklet on webpage.*

Our current Education/Promotion Activities

- *Primary schools encouraged to participate in Council's school's visitation program*
- *Periodical review of Council Orders made in alignment to s.26 Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Ongoing review of signage related to control of dogs in parks*
- *Education and enforcement campaign through programmed park patrols*
- *Review and evaluate the success of the education/enforcement campaign*
- *Provision of information to complainants and cat owners in relation to cat trespass on other properties*
- *Provision of information to dog owners and complainants in relation to issues of noise from barking dogs, including new information booklet.*

Our current Compliance Activities

- *Proactive patrols of Council parks and reserves, activity areas and residential areas*
- *Investigations of both reported and proactively detected complaints and breaches*

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- *Ensure that notices to comply, notices of objection, infringements, warnings and prosecutions are in line with Council Policy and Procedures*
- *Actively work with other agencies on the broader nuisance issues, including the Animal Welfare Bureau Victoria, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Victoria Police.*
- *Take appropriate enforcement action in a timely manner, including the issue of notices to comply and warning notices, infringements, animal management agreements or prosecutions.*
- *Follow up on all unpaid registration renewals via telephone and random door knocking.*

Summary

The nuisance caused by barking dogs is a matter that requires an ongoing assessment of the levels of reasonable complaints and whether Council's activities help reduce these levels.

Similarly, the issue of cat trespass is affected greatly by the levels of compliance and responsible pet ownership and future actions will be aimed at reviewing and upgrading actions by Council depending on the complaint levels. Officers regularly meet with management to discuss process improvements in dealing with noise and other nuisances. This will continue yearly as per the plan.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Reduce dog nuisance complaints.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and evaluate Council's response to complaints about barking dogs and explore best practice models to inform a revised procedure and educative materials	Ongoing	Monitor complaints via yearly statistics.
Review Councils database in conjunction with City of Yarra's General Local Law clause 60 which puts permit requirements on the amount of pet's residents can have in a unit/flat and a dwelling.	Ongoing	Monitor in the influx of Excess Animal Permits that Council receives.

Objective 2: Reduce nuisance and promote responsible pet ownership in parks.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Explore the feasibility of an ongoing proactive patrol officer.	2025	To be determined.
Participate in Council and private run events and expos. Provide advertising material and brochures.	As required	Feedback and interaction from community and organisations conducting events.

Temporary signage utilised in hotspots regarding responsible pet ownership	As required	Feedback and interaction from community and park users.

Objective 3: Reduce cat nuisance and promote responsible cat ownership.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Update Council's webpage with links to the Animal Welfare Bureau webpage on cat containment.	Yearly	Complete review and implement changes.
Review existing publications about responsible cat ownership from a range of organisations and providers with the view to making such publications available at Council offices and libraries.	Yearly	Complete review and implement changes.
Review the adopted night time cat curfew and explore if there is a need to expand on the curfew.	2028	Council to determine if further curfew restrictions are required for example 24/7.

Objective 4: Assist dog owners to fully understand Yarra's General Local Law that requires owners remove faeces deposited by their animals in public places.

Activity	When	Evaluation
With assistance from the Open Space & Infrastructure departments. Identify and understand the areas of the municipality where there is a higher prevalence of owners failing to remove faeces deposited by their dogs and in addition the impact of cats and dogs can have in wildlife sensitive areas.	2025 and ongoing	Complete review and implement changes – depending on budget implications.
Design temporary signage (containing educative messages) that are highly portable and display such signs for short periods on a rotation basis at the identified parks and reserves.	2025 and ongoing	Interaction and positive feedback from the community and park users.
Social media campaigns targeting dog owners to clean up after their dogs.	2025 and ongoing	Ongoing.

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4. Dog Attacks

68A (2) (c) (iii) Outline programs, services and strategies to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.

Current Situation

The table below shows a consistency in the number of dog attacks reported:

Dog Attacks & Actions Taken	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29
Reported Attacks and Rushes	108	113					
Prosecutions	21	10					
Infringement Notices Issued	12	11					
Seized as a result of dog attack	1	4					

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures List Orders:

- *Order requiring dogs to be restrained in a specific manner when in public places (s.26)*
- *Order requiring dogs from being present in specific areas of the municipal district (s.26)*

List Local Laws:

Council's General Local Law regulates the total of animals that can be kept at a private property. In addition, the General Local Law regulates the control of dogs being walked or exercised in a public space by commercial dog walkers.

List Council Policies and Procedures:

Current Standard Operating Procedures and legislative processes:

- *Statement guidelines*
- *Infringement notices – Animals*
- *Decision to destroy or declare dangerous dog*
- *Dog attack - rush investigation*
- *Conducting proactive park patrols*
- *Dog at large – contained*
- *Animal handling*
- *Seizure protocol*
- *Statutory process regarding seizure of documents (s.75 Domestic Animals Act 1994)*

- *Statutory process for serving notices of seizure relating to seizing of identified dogs (s.84H Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory process for owners and established practice when recovering dogs that have been seized by Council (s.84M Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory process associated with disposal of seized dogs (s.84O Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory process associated with destruction of dogs after Court order or exercising Council power to destroy a dog (s.84P Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory process associated with registration of dogs and the fee structure for registration (Schedule to the Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs after a dog attack*
- *Statutory process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution.*

Our current Education/Promotion Activities

- *Primary schools encouraged to participate in Council's school's visitation program*
- *Periodical review of Council Orders made pursuant to s.26 Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Ongoing review of signage related to control of dogs in parks*
- *Education/enforcement campaign through programmed park patrols*
- *Review and evaluate the success of the education/enforcement campaign*
- *Regular feedback in relation to Court outcomes via internal media.*
- *Utilisation of Councils social media tools, Facebook, Twitter, to send messages out.*

Our current Compliance Activities

- *The conduct of regular park patrols from all officers including local laws, animal management and education officer.*
- *Council offers educational presentations at schools*
- *Investigation of all complaints with a view to taking enforcement action where appropriate*
- *Issuing of Infringement notices or warnings where appropriate*
- *Regular updates of Council's website*

Summary

Dog attacks remain a key priority in relation to enforcement planning. The data above indicates a high success rate in all matters taken to prosecution. The focus moving forward will be to educate the community with a view to reduce the number of dog attacks reported. Having highly skilled trained staff is another key to Council's success in moving forward over the next four years.

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Our Plans

Objective 1: Increase reporting of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report using media articles, website and attendance at the community stall at the Gleadell Street Market and other community events.	Ongoing	Meet regularly with Council's communication department and provide feedback and articles for the website and other public advertising outlets.

Objective 2: Increase reporting of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide ongoing officer training in relation to public education and feedback to the community.	Weekly case conferencing ongoing – to continue	Monitor community feedback and notes in park patrol notes and provide feedback at meetings.
Dedicated park patrol targets for all officers.	Ongoing	One on one meetings with officers to determine enforcement and education in parks

5. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

68A(2)(c)(vii) Outline programs, services and strategies to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations.

Current Situation

Classification	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29
Restricted Breeds	0	0					
Dangerous Dogs	2	1					
Menacing Dogs	2	2					

There are only three declared dogs (see above table) currently registered with Council. Reports of restricted breed dogs are relatively few within the City of Yarra.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures List Council Policies and Procedures:

- *Standard Operating Procedure associated with seizure and impounding of dangerous and restricted breed dogs*
- *Enforcement process associated with issuing seizure notices, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution regarding dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs*
- *Statutory procedure regarding seizure of documents (s.75 Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory procedure for declaring a dog dangerous (s.34 Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory procedure for declaring a dog menacing (s.41A Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory procedure for providing details of dangerous dogs to the Victorian Declared Dog Registry (VDDR) (s.44AE Domestic Animals Act 1994)*
- *Statutory procedure to provide details on VDDR of dogs destroyed in relation to s.84TA, TB and TC (s.44AEA Domestic Animals Act 1994)*

Our current Education/Promotion Activities:

- *Primary schools encouraged to participate in Council's school's visitation program*
- *Periodical review of Council Orders made pursuant to s.26 Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *Yearly inspections to meet legislative housing requirements.*
- *Dog attack education campaign within Department of Housing high rises within Fitzroy, Atherton Gardens estate.*

Our current Compliance Activities

- *Investigate all complaints with a view to court proceedings or other action*
- *Issuing of infringement notices or warnings, depending on the case severity*

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- *Yearly inspections of known premises which dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs are kept*
- *Provide community with information on the types of declared dogs and how they are to be identified and kept in compliance with the Domestic Animals Act and Regulations, including prescribed collars, signage on premises, housing and general control*
- *Ensure that Council has effective declaration process to avoid declarations being overturned at VCAT and ensure that the declaration policies are specific for each type, namely Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted breeds*

Summary

Restricted breed, menacing and declared dangerous dogs are not a significant problem within the City of Yarra. Low numbers mean inspections for compliance are conducted regularly and processes are thorough.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Increase reporting of dog attacks in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct unannounced audit inspections of declared Dangerous and Restricted Breed dogs annually to ensure they are identified and being kept in compliance with the Act and Regulations;	Annually	Administration team to set proactive jobs for the officer to complete and record against the property.
Audit VDDR database	Annually	Senior Team Leader to confirm and cross reference April 11 yearly.

6. Overpopulation and High Euthanasia

68A (2) (c) (iv) Outline programs, services and strategies to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.

Current Situation

The table below highlights the low number of dogs and cats euthanised within the City of Yarra:

Classification	22-23	23-24	24-25	25-26	26-27	27-28	28-29
Dogs							
Impounded	197	179					
Returned to Owner	133	121					
Euthanasia (feral or unsafe to be rehoused)	13	15					
Rehoused	43	31					
Remaining in Pound	8	12					
Cats							
Impounded	296	365					
Returned to Owner	52	50					
Euthanasia (feral or unsafe to be rehoused)	67	121					
Rehoused	153	179					
Remaining in Pound	24	11					

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Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures List Orders:

On 1 March 2010, Council introduced compulsory cat desexing to reduce the number of stray and feral cats in the community. Cat owners in the City of Yarra must have their cat desexed before it may be registered for the first time at three months of age.

List Council Policies and Procedures:

- *Statutory process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs after a dog attack*
- *Statutory process associated with issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution.*
- *Standard operating procedure in relation to cat trapping*

Our current Education/Promotion Activities

- *Cat trapping hire service available to all residents*
- *Run a subsidised desexing voucher program with registrations for eligible pet owners*
- *Promote the confinement to owners' premises of cats to prevent straying and possible euthanasia if unregistered*
- *Website information updated regularly*
- *Process associated with seizure and impounding of dogs and cats in the community*
- *Desexing promotion with new registration*

Our current Compliance Activities

- *Authorised officers conduct routine trapping of feral cats.*
- *Investigation of reports of animal hoarding*
- *Limiting the numbers of permitted animals*
- *Ensure that impounded animals are de-sexed prior to release from the pound facility*
- *Conduct compliance patrols to pick up feral and stray cats and dogs to reduce unplanned breeding*
- *Referral to welfare groups for initial rehousing*
- *Regular patrols for direct engagement with pet owners and pets*
- *Enforcement via infringement notices*
- *Follow-up of notification from pet welfare agencies of claimed or rehoused pets within the municipality*
- *Maintain a cost-effective pound release fee in relation to actual cost to Council*
- *Desexing Funding Application submitted to Dept. Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions to support discounted desexing a microchipping to vulnerable residents.*

Summary

There is a low number of dogs and cats euthanised within the City of Yarra. Cat trapping is a low priority in Yarra and the level of complaints about nuisance cats suggests that 'cat over population' is not a wide problem within the municipality. Cat owners in Yarra must have their cat desexed before it may be registered for the first time at three months of age. Owners of cats already registered with Council that are not desexed must have their cat desexed prior to renewing their pet registration. Councils will continue to promote responsible pet ownership and mandatory desexing.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Raise awareness about semi-owned cat population.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Liaise with council's pound contractor to provided and address, fostering programs and methods to reduce euthanasia rates	Bi-annually	Confirm statistics and methods used.

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7. Domestic Animal Businesses

68A (2)(c)(ii) Outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation

Current Situation

As of February 2025 there are currently 12 registered Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB's) consisting of:

- *1 dog training establishment*
- *3 pet shop establishment*
- *8 boarding establishments*

All DABs are audited annually as stated in the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan and only one major noncompliance issues have been detected to date resulting in the cancellation of the DAB and prosecution. These issues have otherwise been quickly rectified.

Our Orders, Local Laws and Council Policies and Procedures List Local Laws:

Council has not made any Orders or Local Laws specific to Domestic Animal Businesses.

List Council Policies and Procedures:

- *Domestic Animal Businesses must be registered*
- *All Domestic Animal Businesses are audited periodically*
- *Standard record/audit sheets on database of registered Domestic Animal Businesses*
- *Any new businesses – must have planning permission and be subject to a full inspection before registration*
- *Non-compliance and cruelty issues are investigated accordingly.*

Our current Education/Promotion Activities:

- *Provide all Domestic Animal Businesses with relevant Code of Practice*
- *Domestic Animals Unit fact sheets on Domestic Animal Businesses available in Council offices and given or sent to registered Domestic Animal Businesses*
- *annual DAB audit and inspections for compliance with the relevant Code of Practice*

Our current Compliance Activities:

- *register all domestic animal businesses within the municipality*
- *annual audit of all domestic animal businesses for compliance with the Code of Practice, and conduct random audits and inspections if complaints are received or breaches are suspected*
- *follow up any noncompliance with the provision of correct documentation and information, education of both management and staff and prosecution where warranted*
- *Regular patrols for new/non-registered Domestic Animal Businesses*
- *Unannounced inspections*

Summary

Scheduled compliance/educational activities will continue as well as the adoption of a range of methods to identify any previously unknown Domestic Animal Business activities within the municipality. The City of Yarra will continue to educate and provide updated information to DAB proprietors.

Our Plans

Objective 1: Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality by June annually.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, using social media pages (or similar, including other online sites) identify businesses selling pets / pet products / services in the municipality.	Annually in April – May	Completed by Animal Management Officers annually.
Follow up to determine whether they are and should be registered with Council.	Annually in April – May	Completed by Animal Management Officers annually.

Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered domestic animal businesses.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Animal Management Officer to arrange annual inspections to be conducted.	Annually in June	Complete audit form and register against business on Council's corporate database.

8. Other Matters

68A (2) (e) Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary.

Current Situation

The City of Yarra currently has a set Emergency Management plan in place for domestic animals that ensures residents are appropriately prepared and resourced in an event of an emergency.

Summary

The current situation in relation to animal management appears to be healthy. In accordance with *s68A (3) of the Domestic Animals Act*, Council is required to review this plan annually and if appropriate amend the plan. Council must also publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in its annual report. For enquiries regarding this plan please contact Steve Alexander – Coordinator Compliance and Construction Enforcement on 9205 5166 or steve.alexander@yarracity.vic.gov.au.

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Review dates:

- *November 2026*
- *January 2027*
- *November 2028*

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.*