



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025



Interpreter service

9840 9355

普通话 | 廣東話 | Ελληνικά

Italiano | عربي | فارسی



MANNINGHAM

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Acknowledgement of Country

Manningham Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the land and waterways now known as Manningham.

Council pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging, and values the ongoing contribution to enrich and appreciate the cultural heritage of Manningham.

Council acknowledges and respects Australia's First Peoples as Traditional Owners of lands and waterways across Country and encourages reconciliation between all.

1. Domestic Animal Management Plan

Introduction

Manningham Council recognises the value of pet ownership, its overall benefit for our health and wellbeing, the importance of welfare for pets and the protection of the community and the local environment from nuisance dogs and cats. Through the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2022-2025 (DAMP) our key objectives are to:

- Promote responsible pet ownership and protect the welfare of dogs and cats.
- Protect the community and environment from nuisance dogs and cats; and
- Outline our domestic animal management services.

The DAMP, in promoting and encouraging responsible pet ownership, seeks to balance community and stakeholder needs, whilst ensuring compliance with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (The Act) and establishes guidelines so that pets and our community can live together peacefully, in harmony, without adversely impacting the environment or amenity.

Further, the DAMP includes programs for training of authorised officers and outlines programs, services and strategies that we can use to achieve the DAMP's objectives.

Legislation

Under The Act, every Council must develop and implement a DAMP every four years. The DAMP must:

- Set out a method for evaluating whether animal control services provided by Council are adequate to give effect to the requirements of The Act and regulations.
- Outline programs for the training of authorised officers.
- Outline programs, services and strategies to:
 - Promote and encourage responsible ownership of dogs and cats.
 - Ensure that people comply with The Act, regulations and legislation.
 - Minimise risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals.
 - Address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats.
 - Encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats.
 - Minimise potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance.
 - Effectively identify all dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs and

- ensure that these dogs are kept in compliance with The Act and regulations;
- Provide for review of existing orders and Local Laws made under The Act;
 - Provide for review of any other matters related to management of dogs and cats; and
 - Provide for periodic monitoring and evaluation of the DAMP.

Every Council must review its DAMP annually and publish an evaluation of its implementation in its Annual Report.

Council Plan

The DAMP is an endorsed supporting strategy in the Manningham Council Plan.

Statement of commitment to gender equality

We are committed to ensuring that all people in our community are treated with dignity, respect, and fairness.

We will consider the gender, equality, and diversity of all people in our community as we develop our plans, strategies, and services.

We will uphold our requirements in the Victorian Government's Gender Equality Act 2021 and will continue to monitor and seek ways to improve all that we do to make Manningham a safe, respectful, and inclusive community.

Process

The DAMP was developed in conjunction with Manningham Council's City Compliance team and informed by community and stakeholder consultation and independent research.

2. Key actions

Key actions and initiatives we will undertake over the next four years are summarised below.

1. Promote responsible pet ownership through increased education and information provision

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| 1.1 | <p>Develop and implement a Communication Plan, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal registration and identification• Dogs off lead• Promotion of dog friendly spaces• Picking up after your dog• Confining your cat to your property• Impacts of dogs and cats on wildlife• Barking dog information• Impacts of dog waste |
| ACTION UPDATE | |
| <p>Animal registration and identification - ONGOING</p> <p>New registrations and the identification of unregistered animals is managed reactively by officers through complaints and proactively via animal inspections when conducting park and street patrols.</p> <p>Monitoring the microchip database registry and matching to the Council database of registered animals via the Central Animal Records and Australasian Animal Registry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dogs off lead - ONGOING <p>Addressed through proactive park patrols conducted by officers and complaint based reactive investigations as well as communication via the Manningham Council website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promotion of dog friendly spaces – ONGOING <p>Addressed through promoting responsible pet ownership via the Manningham Council website and educational discussions when conducting park patrols.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Picking up after your dog – ONGOING <p>Addressed through promoting responsible pet ownership via the Manningham Council website, proactive park patrols and reactively through complaints as well as utilising footpath messaging with specialised paint/stencils.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confining your cat to your property – ONGOING <p>Cat confinement order was implemented and gazetted on 1 April 2024</p> <p>This has been developed and is currently being communicated through various messaging formats including at bus stops, on the sides of Local Law Officer vehicles,</p> | |

website and social media promotion as well as in print via pamphlets provided at various customer service points.

- Impacts of dogs and cats on wildlife – ONGOING

This has been achieved via educating residents/animal owners reactively and proactively via social media, updated media releases and proactive/reactive park patrols.

- Barking dog information – ONGOING

Provide educational material to complainants and dog owners as well as providing educational material via the Manningham Council website.

- Impacts of dog waste – ONGOING

Promotion of responsible pet ownership via the Manningham Council website, proactive park patrols and reactively through complaints as well as utilising footpath messaging with specialised paint/stencils.

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| 1.2 | Investigate opportunities for education events such as a pets in the park, million paws walk days, and pop-up stations at community events. |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

Council officers regularly attend meetings and continue to work with Friends of Manningham Dogs and Cats (FOMDAC) to deliver ongoing messaging around responsible pet ownership.

We have ongoing messaging through face-to-face meetings with the public and continuing to work with FOMDAC to promote messaging regarding responsible pet ownership.

A communication plan has been developed for the implementation of the cat confinement order.

2. Promote and encourage responsible cat ownership to support implementation of a new 24-hour cat confinement requirement

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| 2.1 | Develop and implement a targeted communication and education plan to encourage responsible cat ownership including promoting the benefit of cat containment. Focus on welfare benefits for cats. |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

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|---|---|
| A communication and education plan has been developed and is now being implemented. | |
| 2.2 | Collaborate with community organisations to provide support and increase options and accessibility of cat enclosures. |
| ACTION UPDATE | |
| ONGOING | |
| External stakeholders have been engaged as part of the interest group consultation phase; this is a continual work in progress. | |

3. Introduce a 24-hour cat confinement order across Manningham to support the welfare of domestic cats and protect the natural environment.

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| 3.1 | Through further consultation with the community, introduce a pilot 24-7 cat confinement Council order. |
| ONGOING | |
| The Cat Confinement Order has been adopted by Council and commenced on 1 April 2024. | |
| 3.2 | Develop processes including an educative campaign to support the 24-hour cat confinement pilot. |
| ACTION UPDATE | |
| COMPLETED & ONGOING | |
| A communication plan has been developed and has been implemented. An ongoing education campaign is continuing with attendance at Friends of Manningham Dogs and Cats (FOMDAC) meetings to discuss the Cat Confinement Order with the Community, social media posts, messaging on vehicles and public notices in bus shelter etc. Additionally, Officers will continue to educate cat owners on an individual basis as required. | |
| 3.3 | Implement a pilot 24/7 cat confinement order, inclusive of amnesty and education campaign. |
| ACTION UPDATE | |
| COMPLETED & ONGOING. | |
| Cat Confinement order gazetted and commenced 1 April 2024 | |

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| 3.4 | Evaluate the pilot cat confinement order. Provide a report to Council identifying successes, challenges, and suggested future direction / improvements. |
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| ACTION UPDATE | |
| ONGOING | |
| The evaluation will be ongoing throughout the life of the Cat Confinement Order and a final report will be presented to Council in December 2025. | |

4. Promote desexing rates

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| 4.1 | Continue to investigate and deliver discounted and easy to access desexing services. |
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| ACTION UPDATE | |
| ONGOING | |
| Ongoing consultations continue with relevant vets in the Manningham area to investigate discounted desexing services. As part of the Cat Confinement Order’s external interest group consultation phase, the Cat Protection Society has shown an interest in assisting Manningham with a reduced cost desexing scheme for cat owners. Additionally, Manningham Council is exploring opportunities with the East Doncaster Veterinary Hospital and the Blue Cross Animal Shelter. | |

5. Undertake activities to better identify pet registration non-compliances

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| 5.1 | Undertake an enhanced door knock compliance program to follow up on failure to renew registration. |
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| ACTION UPDATE | |
| ONGOING | |
| Each registration renewal year, we follow up failure to renew registrations with attendance at the properties where appropriate as well as phone calls, SMS campaign, letters, and educational discussions with pet owners. | |

| | |
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| 5.2 | <p>Undertake enhanced activities to better identify registration non-compliance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration checks in the field • Microchip registry audit. • Dog and cat sale notification follow ups |
|-----|--|

ACTION UPDATE

- Registration checks in the field - ONGOING

In field officer patrols are conducted proactively and reactively and through this process, registration checks are completed.

- Microchip registry audit - ONGOING

This will be completed during the current registration period to identify any new pet adoptions into the area. This will also be completed monthly and audited accordingly.

- Dog and cat sale notification follow ups - ONGOING

This continues to be achieved.

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| 5.3 | Investigate feasibility of providing further incentives for registration of young animals that are not yet desexed. |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

We are investigating options for registration incentives for animals under 6 months of age, inter-council registration transfers as well as animals registered in Manningham through agreement with a specific local animal shelter.

6. Reduce dog waste in public spaces

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| 6.1 | Partner with the Waste Team to review the number and placement dog waste bins in parks, reserves and on linear trails to ensure that there are sufficient facilities provided. |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

This is an ongoing action being discussed with the waste team regarding the number and placement of dog waste bins in parks, reserves and on linear trails.

Officers continue to educate the community reactively through complaint investigations as well as proactively through park and street patrols. Additionally, Council is implementing ongoing responsible pet ownership messaging through stencils on paths and regular educational communications.

7. Increase patrols, education, and enforcement activities

7.1 Undertake additional proactive patrols of parks, reserves, sports fields and linear trails to actively enforce against non-compliance of dog controls and to enhance our ability to respond to an increasing number of requests for service in a timely manner.

Utilise patrol activities to support ongoing community education initiatives around responsible pet ownership.

ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

Prioritising proactive park patrols

7.2 Review and improve processes in responding to and investigating barking dog complaints.

ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

Continually reviewing and updating processes and procedures to ensure best practices

8. Ensure a balanced approach to dog off lead areas in Manningham

8.1 Ensure that provision for dog walking is taken into consideration at part of Council's open space planning processes and to consider:

- Design options to prevent dogs from straying from off lead areas
- Provision of an additional fenced off lead dog area in an appropriate location east of Mullum Mullum Creek
- Provision of lighting in popular dog walking areas, in accordance with Manningham Public Lighting Procedures and Guidelines.
- Feasibility of incorporating dog agility equipment within appropriate off lead areas.

ACTION UPDATE

- Design options to prevent dogs from straying from off lead areas – ONGOING
Adequate signs are located in all relevant parks/reserves, however the signage in reserves is being updated where required through the Park Sign audit which is currently being completed. Provisions for dog walking is taken into consideration during any planning of playground or park upgrades.

- Provision of an additional fenced off lead dog area in an appropriate location east of Mullum Mullum Creek – ONGOING

Council has recently received grant funding from the state government for the design and delivery of a dog park upgrade at Warrandyte Reserve, located east of the Mullum Mullum Creek as per the objective, and at Burgundy Reserve in Doncaster Hill. These will be delivered in 2026.

- Provision of lighting in popular dog walking areas, in accordance with Manningham's Public Lighting Procedures and Guidelines. – ONGOING

Opportunities to provide additional lighting in parks are considered where this aligns with the Park Improvement Program 2020 and the Manningham Open Space Strategy 2014.

- Feasibility of incorporating dog agility equipment within appropriate off lead areas. – ONGOING

Discussions are regularly held with the Parks and Open Space team to assess parks/reserves and determine which ones may be suitable and would benefit from such equipment, keeping in mind budget constraints associated to such upgrades and modifications.

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| 8.2 | Partner with Manningham Infrastructure teams to undertake a signage audit in parks, reserves, sports fields and linear trails, having regard to Manningham City Council Outdoor Signage Strategy. |
|-----|---|

ACTION UPDATE

COMPLETED & ONGOING

This is completed reactively & proactively through our park patrols and an audit of park signs has been completed. The findings of this audit will be addressed with the relevant departments to address any necessary changes/modifications required.

A key objective is to ensure that Council limits the proliferation of signage and limit the signage to only when necessary. At suitable locations, decal signs are provided on the ground along trails to advise park users of appropriate dog behaviour. A review will need to be considered of signage in all reserves to help identify what type of signs are required along with other forms of messaging to all park users about appropriate behaviours. This strategic approach will ensure that consistent messaging is provided to the whole community, signage being just one method.

| | |
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| 8.3 | Review existing dog off lead areas including parks, reserves, sports fields and linear trails, to ensure suitability of sites and facilities are provided (eg. paths, seating, signage etc) having regard to increased use of our public spaces by all users. |
| | Develop a plan to provide suitable dog off lead areas across Manningham and commit to engage with the community and key stakeholders as part of this review. |

ACTION UPDATE

COMPLETED

Manningham has a number of off lead dog areas within our municipality, however further consideration will be done on a park-by-park basis, as required. As noted, Council has recently received grant funding from the state government for the design and delivery of a dog park upgrade at Warrandyte Reserve (a location East of the Mullum Mullum Creek as per the objective) and at Burgundy Reserve in Doncaster Hill. These will be delivered in 2026.

As part of Council’s capital works program, the City Design team consider opportunities to install drinking fountains that cater for dogs, including seating, signage and other facilities to support people walking with dogs.

In the coming years, Council will commence a review of its existing Manningham Open Space Strategy 2014 and through this process, consult with the community on further opportunities to explore dog off-lead areas.

9. Promote initiatives to address dog aggression

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| 9.1 | Continue to develop and refine processes to improve the way Council manages, investigates and prosecutes dog attacks to maintain best practice. |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

We continue to develop and refine our processes and procedures in relation to dog attacks. Council has a 100% success rate in relation to the prosecution of dog attacks. All dog attacks are investigated thoroughly, along with applying appropriate enforcement action where necessary.

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| 9.2 | Analyse dog attack data and target hot spots for additional proactive patrols to actively enforce against and minimise dog attacks in the community. |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

Prioritisation of reactive patrols in identified hot spot areas through complaint-based reports and proactive patrols are performed throughout the municipality.

10. Declared dogs will be identified and appropriately managed.

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|------|---|
| 10.1 | Conduct annual declared dog property inspections for compliance with the Domestic Animal Act (including but not limited to security of fencing, animal housing and signage) |
|------|---|

ACTION UPDATE

Audit inspections are completed annually commencing in May and recorded against each animals' registration file, with inspection photographs and audit forms saved accordingly. Manningham currently does not have any declared 'Dangerous' 'Restricted' or 'Menacing' dogs within the municipality.

11. Domestic animal businesses in municipality will be identified, registered and compliant with current legislation and relevant code of practice.

| | |
|------|--|
| 11.1 | Monitor for businesses that should be registered Domestic Animal Businesses by reviewing advertisements, social media, local notice boards, etc and ensure they are compliant with legislation |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

Council continues to monitor for businesses that must be registered as a Domestic Animal Business. All identified Domestic Animal Business are inspected to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation and Code of Practice.

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| 11.2 | Annual audit and inspection of domestic animal businesses in Manningham for compliance |
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ACTION UPDATE

ONGOING

All Domestic Animal Business audits have been completed for the 2024/2025 registration renewal year

12. Ensure that Authorised Officers have the skills and knowledge required to effectively administer their role.

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| 12.1 | Conduct targeted training of authorised officers in accordance with individual staff development plans. |
| ACTION UPDATE | |
| <p>ONGOING</p> <p>Regular specialised training is conducted, externally through appropriate agencies like the RSPCA- the Dog bite prevention program and internally through on the job training, coaching and mentoring.</p> | |
| 12.2 | Continue to review and update animal management procedures. |
| ACTION UPDATE | |
| <p>ONGOING</p> <p>Standard Operating Procedures have been and will continue to be reviewed regularly.</p> | |
| 12.3 | <p>Identify additional training and development opportunities, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Law and investigation ● Domestic animal handling ● Customer service / managing conflict |
| ACTION UPDATE | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Law and investigation – COMPLETED. Recently completed with an external training provider and will continue to schedule regular ongoing training. ● Domestic animal handling – COMPLETED. Recently completed with an external training provider and will continue to schedule regular ongoing training. ● Customer service / managing conflict – COMPLETED. Conducted in February 2023 and will continue to schedule ongoing training. | |

3. City profile

Our people

Community

Manningham encompasses an area of 113km² with an estimated residential population of 133,135 and is in Melbourne's eastern suburbs in Victoria, Australia. Our western boundary in Bulleen is 12 kilometres from the Melbourne Central Business District (CBD), and our municipality extends to Wonga Park in the east at 32km from the CBD at its furthest boundary.

Manningham covers suburbs of Bulleen, Doncaster, Doncaster East, Donvale, Park Orchards, Templestowe, Templestowe Lower, Warrandyte, Warrandyte South and parts of Wonga Park, Nunawading and Ringwood North.

Manningham has a unique balance of city and country, extending from a major activity centre in Doncaster Hill, along a Green Wedge to horse trails in Warrandyte. 24% of residents live in medium or high-density housing, compared to 33% in Greater Melbourne.

Manningham has a diverse and multicultural community that brings a wealth of languages, music, food and cultural traditions to the area. The three largest ancestries in Manningham are Chinese, English, Australian, Italian and Greek with 40% of people born overseas, compared with 34% in Greater Melbourne. 42% of residents speak a language other than English at home.

Manningham's median age is 43 years with 31% of residents aged 50 and above. Our population is older than both Greater Melbourne (36 years) and Victoria as a whole (37 years) ¹.

COVID-19

Manningham Council continues to proactively address the impacts on its local communities and businesses created as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic, by providing advocacy, targeted strategies and support aligned to Victorian and Federal Government policies and programs. We continue to review and adjust our operations, programs and services to ensure they meet community and business needs through this challenging time.

Future Impacts

The population is forecast to grow to 149,274 by 2036, representing a 12% increase with the suburbs of Bulleen and Doncaster predicted to experience the greatest growth. Increased resident population in Manningham has a flow on effect on the number of

¹ ABS Community Profile ID

dogs being walked in public open spaces and is a key consideration in longer-term planning. This includes providing a balanced approach to ensuring that our open spaces are well managed and shared between dog owners and non-pet owners.

Protection of our natural environment and wildlife from dogs and cats at large will continue to be a priority. We will implement initiatives to increase community awareness and reduce impacts of dogs and cats on the environment.

Dogs and cats

The following table provides a snapshot of dogs and cats in Manningham.

| Manningham dogs and cats | 2023-2024 |
|---|--------------------|
| Population | 134,216 |
| Geographic area of municipality | 113km ² |
| Number of authorised operational officers (FTE) | 9.0 |
| Number of complaints or requests annually <i>(June 23 – June 24)</i> | 4477 |
| Number of registered dogs | 9305 |
| Number of registered declared dogs | 3 |
| Number of dog attacks or rush <i>(July 23 – June 24)</i> | 171 |
| Number of registered cats | 3286 |
| Number of registered Domestic Animal Businesses | 10 |
| Number of Domestic Animal Business inspection | 10 |
| Keeping of animals / excess animals permits issued | 60 |
| Number of infringements | 199 |
| Number of successful prosecutions | 14 |
| Dogs impounded | 153 |
| Cats impounded | 145 |

4. Our programs and activities

The following table provides a summary of domestic animal management programs and services provided by Manningham Council.

| Program | Service level to community |
|--|--|
| Promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media promotions (eg. registration renewals) • Website information • Brochures and fact sheets • Council newsletter • On hold messaging • Information provided to vets and domestic animal businesses. • Participation in festivals / events |
| Identification and Registration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual registration renewal notices and follow up process. • SMS Reminders • Online forms for new registrations • Online registration payments • Discounted registration for animals registered prior to the age of 6 months (irrespective of desexing) • Lifetime registration tags • Periodic cross referencing of Microchip Registry databases database with the Manningham Council animal registration database • Follow up sale notifications from domestic animal businesses. • Door knock campaigns – follow up non renewals of registration / identify unregistered pets. • Officers equipped with microchip scanners |
| Desexing initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In conjunction with local vets, supply of desexing vouchers to holders of pension and health care cards. |
| Dog attack (against people or animals); or Dangerous Dog | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate response |

| Program | Service level to community |
|---|---|
| Animal Nuisance Complaints (including barking dogs, wandering dogs, nuisance cats) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complainant will receive initial response within 24-48 hours. • Online help information • Online system for lodging complaints |
| Wandering Cat Complaints | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wandering cat complaints will be investigated and where ongoing issues occur a cat cage may be provided to confine nuisance, unowned or feral cats. • Online system for lodging complaints |
| Animal welfare / cruelty matters | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst Officers are not authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, we will provide support to the RSPCA where required |
| After Hours Services (Call 9840 9333) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 after hours emergency service provided by an on-call Officer. • Includes dog aggression, stray domestic animal pickups and unsecured livestock. |
| Patrols | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patrols of hot spot parks and reserves as required to ensure dogs are under effective control |
| Dog walking facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a Dog Activity Centre at Aranga Reserve • Provision of litter bins in popular dog parks |
| Dog off lead / dog prohibited areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orders are in place restricting dogs off lead to designated areas. • Orders are in place prohibiting dogs in certain areas |
| Cat prohibited areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orders are in place prohibiting cats in certain areas |
| Pound Facilities 620-628 Blackburn Road Doncaster East (Call 9840 9333) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Manningham Pound holds lost pets and is maintained wholly by Council Officers • Open by appointment only. • Lost pets are advertised online. • Partnership with Blue Cross Animal Society to assist in rehousing animals. • We seek to reunite animals with owners at first point, without taking to the Pound. • Animals returned to owners are required to be microchipped and registered with Manningham Council prior to release |

| Program | Service level to community |
|--|---|
| Domestic Animal Business Inspections | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspection of dog trainers, boarding facilities, breeding, and rearing establishments, pounds, and shelters • Annually inspected. • Respond to and investigate complaints |
| Declared Dogs (Dangerous / Menacing or Restricted Breed) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspections and declarations of dangerous, menacing, or restricted breed dogs • Annual inspections • Provision of State Government fact sheets and information |
| Prosecutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council prosecutes offences under the Act and other regulations / local laws using an external solicitor |
| Animal management officers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing training and development of Officers |
| Review of Manningham Council Orders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic review of Manningham Council Orders made under the Act |

5. Local Laws, Orders, and other domestic animal controls

In addition to The Act, Officers enforce the provisions of the City of Manningham Community Local Law 2023.

Keeping Dogs and Cats

The maximum number of dogs or cats over 3 months of age allowed to be kept in residences is three dogs and two cats without a permit.

Dog Waste

People are required to both carry a bag and remove their dog's waste when left in a public place.

Fencing

All dog owners must ensure that the land at which their dog(s) is kept is adequately fenced to prevent dogs from escaping.

Dogs On Lead / Off Lead

Dogs must be on lead in public places, unless in a specified off lead area.

Dog and Cat Prohibited Areas

Manningham Council Orders are in place prohibiting dogs and cats in certain public places.

Cat Confinement Order

Manningham's Cat Confinement Order was gazette and implemented on 1 April 2024.

Section 173 Planning Scheme Exclusions

Section 173 Planning Scheme exclusions are in place that do not allow dogs or cats to be present in designated areas.

6. Consulting with the community

How we consulted

The Plan was developed in conjunction with Manningham Council's City Compliance Team and informed by community and stakeholder consultation and independent research.

A two-phased community and stakeholder consultation approach was adopted to inform the development of the Plan and to gather feedback on the draft Plan.

The community were able to contribute through:

- An online survey seeking feedback on animal management was made available via Council's online engagement portal.
- Hard copy survey - available for completion at Council's Customer Service Centre or mailed out upon request.
- Email - manningham@manningham.vic.gov.au
- Writing to Council - PO Box 1, Doncaster Victoria 3108.

A communications plan was developed to coordinate community messaging to help promote the consultation activities through:

- Media releases.
- Social media posts.
- Published on Council's website (Your Say).
- Your Say Manningham database email blast.
- Manningham Matters digital version.
- A3 corflute signs in popular dog parks.
- Translation of key messaging for CALD communities and AUSLAN.
- Key external stakeholders (e.g. vets, shelters, animal groups, domestic animal businesses, environmental groups, sporting clubs etc.) were directly emailed an invitation link to participate in the community consultation activities.

This occurred between 10 May to 27 June 2021.

The draft DAMP was made available to the community between 15 March to 12 April 2022. Comments received during this period were also considered in the preparation of the draft DAMP prepared for Council for its consideration.

What the community told us

A total of 344 survey responses and 5 written submissions were received.

A profile of community respondents identified that:

- 75% pet owners. 25% non-pet owners.
- 66% own a dog.
- 21% own a cat.
- 90% live in the municipality.

Key issues and suggestions highlighted by the community include the following themes:

| Issues | Suggestions |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dogs off lead / not under owner control• Dog waste• Dogs barking• Wandering cats / cats impacting wildlife | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Education and engagement activities to promote responsible pet ownership.• Greater physical presence in the community• Enforce local laws.• Nighttime cat curfew• Provide solutions to address dog waste.• Review provision of off lead areas, including fencing• Improve access to and information on dog training.• Initiatives to reduce dogs barking. |

7. Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership

Current situation

We promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats through a range of education and enforcement initiatives.

Community consultation outcomes identified as important the need to increase education and engagement activities to promote responsible pet ownership, including information on facilities and services available.

We understand the increasing demand for Council services to be delivered online, and for engagement through social media and other digital means.

The promotion of dog friendly and dog prohibited spaces is important in increasing community awareness of where and when you are able to walk your dog.

In addition, the implementation of a cat confinement order across Manningham was proposed as being important.

Current activities

- Social media promotions (e.g. registration renewals)
- Council website information
- Brochures and fact sheets
- Council newsletter
- On hold messaging
- Information provided to vets and domestic animal businesses.
- Participation in festivals and events

Our plan

Objective 1: Promote responsible pet ownership through increased education and information provision

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|-----|---|---------|---|
| 1.1 | <p>Develop and implement a Communication Plan, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Animal registration and identification• Dogs off lead• Promotion of dog friendly spaces• Picking up after your dog• Confining your cat to your property• Impacts of dogs and cats on wildlife | Ongoing | Communication Plan reviewed and implemented annually. |

| | | | |
|-----|---|------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barking dog information • Impacts of dog waste | | |
| 1.2 | Investigate opportunities for education events such as 'Pets in the park', 'Million paws walk' days, and pop-up stations at community events. | 2023 | Officers continue to identify opportunities to educate the community and have attended FOMDAC meetings etc. |

Objective 2: Promote and encourage responsible cat ownership to support implementation of a new 24-hour cat confinement requirement.

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|-----|---|-----------|---|
| 2.1 | Develop and implement a targeted communication and education plan to encourage responsible cat ownership including explaining the benefit of cat containment. Focus on welfare benefits for cats. | 2024/2025 | Suite of communication and education resources designed and implemented. |
| 2.2 | Collaborate with community organisations to provide support and increase options and accessibility of cat enclosures. | 2024/2025 | Establish a working group with the objective of supporting the community to adopt 24/7 cat containment and increasing access to cat enclosures. |

8. Overpopulation and high euthanasia

Current situation

Local Laws Officers work hard to reunite animals with their owners at first point, without taking them to the Pound.

Local Laws Officers manage and run Council's Pound facility. Council's Pound is a safe environment where animals found wandering can be housed for up to 8 days. The Pound is audited regularly, and cleaned daily, including on weekends. Officers have 24/7 access and are 'on call' to attend to animals in our care.

The Pound is not open to the public for adoptions, instead Council has a Section 84Y agreement with Blue Cross. After 8 days of being held in our Pound facility, animals that are suitable for rehoming are transferred to Blue Cross' care for adoption.

The Pound is an old facility requiring constant maintenance to maintain compliance with Code of Practice. Air cooling was implemented in 2020 due to high temperatures being experienced by both animals and staff.

Dog and cat impoundments have decreased significantly since the last DAMP was developed. This may be reflective of more people working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic, and less animals found wandering at large.

| Impounded dogs | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Released to owner | 68 | 68 | 131 |
| Rehoused | 7 | 24 | 19 |
| Euthanased | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Total impounded | 75 | 93 | 153 |
| Impounded cats | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
| Released to owner | 10 | 37 | 24 |
| Rehoused | 45 | 60 | 95 |
| Euthanased | 13 | 19 | 19 |
| Total impounded | 68 | 116 | 145 |

*Euthanasia numbers are all in accordance with animals deemed feral, unsafe to rehouse and under humane grounds due to injury or illness by appropriately trained staff.

Community consultation outcomes showed that 52% of respondents reported that they support or strongly support the potential introduction of a 24-hour cat confinement order (where cats are required to be always confined within the owner’s property). Wandering cats and cats impacting wildlife the most common type of cat nuisance noted.

Current activities

- In conjunction with local vets, we supply discounted desexing vouchers to holders of pension and health care cards.
- Manningham Pound facility where animals found wandering can be housed for up to 8 days as per the statutory requirement under the Act, or longer if required.
- Lost and found animals are advertised on Council’s website.
- Animals returned from the Pound to owners are required to be microchipped and registered with Council prior to release.
- Section 84Y agreement with Blue Cross for rehoming or adoption.
- Wandering cat complaints will be investigated and where ongoing issues occur a cat cage may be provided to confine nuisance, unowned or feral cats.
- Whilst Council Officers are not authorised under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986, we provide support to the RSPCA in animal welfare and cruelty matters.
- Enforce the Local Law provisions governing the number of animals that can be kept on a property without a permit.
- Conduct investigations in response to customer requests.
- Enforcement actions include official warnings, infringements, notices to comply and court prosecutions.

Our plan

Objective 3: Introduce a 24-hour cat confinement order across Manningham to support the welfare of domestic cats and protect the natural environment.

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|------|---|
| 3.1 Through further consultation with the community, introduce a pilot 24-hour cat confinement Council order. | 2024 | Consultation undertaken. Order adopted and gazetted |
| 3.2 Develop processes including an educative campaign to support the 24-hour cat confinement pilot. | 2024 | Community Education Campaign developed and implemented. |

| | | | |
|-----|---|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| 3.3 | Implement 24-hour cat confinement order, inclusive of amnesty and education campaign. | 2023/2024 | 24/7 cat confinement implemented |
| 3.4 | Evaluate the pilot cat confinement order. Provide a report to Council identifying successes, challenges, and suggested future direction / improvements. | 2024/2025 and ongoing | Will be completed |

Objective 4: Promote de-sexing rates.

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|-----|---|---------|---|
| 4.1 | Continue to investigate and deliver discounted and easy to access de-sexing services. | Ongoing | We will continue to investigate opportunities to partner with identified welfare bodies to assist with this requirement |

9. Registration and identification

Current situation

All dogs and cats three months and over must be microchipped and registered with Council. Registrations must be renewed annually by 10 April. As well as being a legal requirement, an animal found with current registration and microchip has a much higher chance of being reunited with its owner.

In 2019-2020 there are 13,330 registered dogs and cats in Manningham. This represents a significant decrease of 1,235 animals (8%) since the last DAMP was developed in 2016-2017, this is despite a corresponding resident population increase of 8%.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we were not able to undertake the door knock program since 2019 which has resulted in a drop in animal registrations. Door knock programs in the past have been key in maintaining and encouraging registration compliance.

Community consultation outcomes identified that awareness of current pet registration and microchipping requirements in the community was generally very good, however we will continue to implement initiatives to increase community awareness and compliance with registration requirements.

| Year | Resident Population | Cat Registrations | Dog Registrations | Total registered cats and dogs |
|---------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2020-21 | 124700 | 4413 | 12121 | 16534 |
| 2021-22 | 125827 | 3655 | 10296 | 13951 |
| 2022-23 | 126570 | 3525 | 9901 | 13426 |
| 2023-24 | 129514 | 3286 | 9305 | 12591 |
| | | | | |

- *The decrease in animal registrations is potentially due to demographic and residential changes within the municipality with a shift towards higher density living reducing the pet ownership rates*
- *We also believe that cost of living challenges is also impacting animal ownership.*

Current Activities

- Annual registration renewal notices and follow up process.
- SMS reminders
- Online forms for new registrations.
- Online registration payments.

- Discounted registration for animals registered prior to the age of 6 months (irrespective of desexing).
- Lifetime registration tags.
- Periodic cross referencing of Microchip Registry databases with Council’s animal registration database.
- Follow up sale notifications from domestic animal businesses.
- We partner with vets, domestic animal businesses and other stakeholders to promote registration of dogs and cats and responsible pet ownership.
- Door knock campaigns – follow up non renewals of registration / identify unregistered pets.
- Council officers equipped with microchip scanners.
- Animals in the Pound must be registered prior to release.
- Enforcement activities including official warnings, infringements, notices to comply and court prosecution.

Our plan

Objective 5: Undertake activities to better identify pet registration non-compliances.

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|-----|--|---------|---|
| 5.1 | Undertake an enhanced door-knock compliance program to follow up on failure to renew registration. | Ongoing | Doorknocks will be undertaken for the current registration renewal period |
| 5.2 | Undertake enhanced activities to better identify registration non-compliance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration checks in the field • Central Animal Records microchip audit • Dog and cat sale notification follow ups | Ongoing | Audits undertaken through reactive investigation and proactive park patrols |
| 5.3 | Investigate feasibility of providing further incentives for registration of young animals that are not yet desexed. | Ongoing | Investigating options to provide reduced registration for under 6 months of age |

10. Nuisance

Current situation

We seek to encourage people to manage their pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet, and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

During the 2019/20 financial year, Local Laws Officers responded to 1,887 requests. The most frequent request types are detailed below.

Dog containment and barking dogs continue to be the most prevalent request types and have increased considerably since the last DAMP was developed.

| Nature of Complaint | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Barking Dogs | 414 | 486 | 516 | 550 |
| Dog containment | 445 | 391 | 421 | 486 |
| Cat trespass/stray | 147 | 128 | 174 | 175 |
| Dog litter | 47 | 53 | 43 | 45 |
| Excess Animal Permits | 24 | 19 | 36 | 60 |
| Cat Cage Requests | 68 | 61 | 89 | 84 |

*The increase in excess animals permits maybe due to the implementation of the Community Local Law 2023 and changes to the numbers and how animals may be kept dependent on the size and type of premises.

Council Orders are in place designating areas where owners can exercise their dogs off lead. There are also Orders in place prohibiting dogs and cats in certain areas. Although patrols are undertaken, community education and voluntary compliance are critical as only a small portion of public open space areas can be patrolled at a time.

Recent community consultation outcomes were weighted towards dog and cat owners with 75% of respondents indicating that they were pet owners. A prominent suggestion was to review the dog off lead areas including provision for fencing.

There was a desire for greater compliance with regulations and enforcement, with dogs being walked off lead / not under control of owner and dogs barking as the most common types of dog nuisance noted.

Dog waste that is not cleaned up by the owner was identified as an issue. Suggestions to reduce the problem included the provision of dog waste bags/bins, public education and awareness, and better enforcement by Council.

52% of respondents reported that they support or strongly support the potential introduction of a 24-hour cat confinement order (where cats are required to be always confined within the owner’s property). Wandering cats and cats impacting wildlife the most common type of cat nuisance noted.

Current activities

- Patrols of hot spot parks and reserves as required to ensure dogs are under effective control.
- Signage in parks, reserves and trails detailing dog controls.
- Collection of found animals.
- Barking dog process.
- Online information.
- Enforce Local Law provisions governing the number of animals that can be kept on a property without a permit.
- A 48-hour response to nuisance complaints.
- Wandering cat complaints will be investigated and where ongoing issues occur a cat cage may be provided to confine nuisance, unowned or feral cats.
- Online system for lodging complaints.
- Provision of a Dog Activity Centre at Aranga Reserve.
- Provision of litter bins in popular dog parks.
- Orders are in place restricting dogs off lead to designated areas.
- Orders are in place prohibiting dogs in certain areas.
- Orders are in place prohibiting cats in certain areas.

Our plan

Objective 6: Reduce dog waste in public spaces.

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|-----|--|------|-----------------|
| 6.1 | Partner with the Waste Team to review the number and placement dog waste bins in parks, reserves and on linear trails to ensure that there are sufficient facilities provided. | 2023 | Review complete |

Objective 7: Increase patrols, education, and enforcement activities.

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| <p>7.1 Undertake additional proactive patrols of parks, reserves, sports fields and linear trails to actively enforce against non-compliance of dog controls and to enhance our ability to respond to an increasing number of requests for service in a timely manner.</p> <p>Utilise patrol activities to support ongoing community education initiatives around responsible pet ownership.</p> | 2022 (and ongoing) | Additional patrols implemented |
| 7.2 Review and improve processes in responding to and investigating barking dog complaints. | 2022/2023 | Developed and being implemented |

Objective 8: Ensure a balanced approach to dog off lead areas in Manningham.

| Activity | When | Evaluation |
|---|---------|--|
| <p>8.1 Ensure that provision for dog walking is taken into consideration at part of Council's open space planning processes and to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design options to prevent dogs from straying from off lead areas. • Provision of an additional fenced off lead dog area in an appropriate location east of Mullum Mullum Creek • Provision of lighting in popular dog walking areas, in accordance with Manningham Public Lighting Procedures and Guidelines. • Feasibility of incorporating dog agility equipment within appropriate off lead areas. | Ongoing | Actions incorporated into open space planning and design processes |
| 8.2 Partner with Manningham Infrastructure teams to undertake a signage audit in parks, reserves, sports fields and linear trails, having regard to Manningham City Council Outdoor Signage Strategy. | 2023 | Review completed |
| 8.3 Review existing dog off lead areas including parks, reserves, sports fields and linear trails, to ensure suitability of sites and facilities provided | 2024 | Review completed, plan developed, and |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| | <p>(eg. paths, seating, signage etc) having regard to the increased use of our public spaces by all users.</p> <p>Develop a plan to provide suitable dog off lead areas across Manningham and commit to engage with the community and key stakeholders as part of this review.</p> | | <p>recommendations presented to Council</p> |
|--|--|--|---|

11. Dog attacks

Current situation

Serious dog attacks remain a concern and Council continuously looks for ways to minimise dog attacks on people and animals.

In 2019/20, Local Laws Officers investigated 131 reports of alleged dog attacks or dog rushes and Council successfully prosecuted 1 serious dog attack.

Dog attack and dog rush figures have increased since 2016-17, potentially partly due to the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns in Victoria and increased dog walking in the community during this time.

| | 2020/21 | 2021/22 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Dog attack or rush | 153 | 149 | 176 | 171 |

Community consultation outcomes identified education, access to dog training and enforcement of local laws / greater physical presence in the community as important in minimising dog aggression and attacks in the community.

Current activities

- Patrols of hot spot parks and reserves as required to ensure dogs are under effective control.
- Signage in parks, reserves and trails detailing dog controls.
- Collection of found animals.
- An immediate 24/7 response to reports of dog attacks.
- Information provided to reduce instances of dog aggression and promote dog friendly spaces:
 - Dog off lead and dog prohibited area map.
- Conduct investigations in response to customer requests regarding dog attack, rush or aggression.
- Enforcement activities including official warnings, infringements, notices to comply and court prosecution.

Our plan

Objective 9: Promote initiatives to address dog aggression.

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|-----|--|--------------------|--|
| 9.1 | Continue to develop and refine processes to improve the way Council manages, investigates and prosecutes dog attacks to maintain best practice. | Ongoing | Processes reviewed annually |
| 9.2 | Analyse dog attack data and target hot spots for additional proactive patrols to actively enforce against and minimise dog attacks in the community. | 2022 (and ongoing) | Additional targeted patrols implemented. |

12. Dangerous, menacing & restricted breed dogs.

Current situation

Council strives to minimise the risk to the community from menacing, dangerous or restricted breed dogs.

Manningham had 3 declared dangerous dogs located with the municipality at the start of 2024, by November 2024 all dangerous dogs were relocated outside of the municipality and the new municipalities where the dogs moved to, were notified in line with the relevant legislation.

- 0 declared as dangerous dogs.
- 0 declared as menacing dogs; and
- 0 restricted breed dogs.

Our pet registration forms require owners to declare if their dog is a restricted breed, has been declared menacing or is a dangerous dog.

Local Laws Officers respond promptly to investigate reports involving declared dogs.

Current activities

- Supply and distribution of State Government fact sheets regarding keeping dangerous dogs.
- Annual inspections for compliance.
- Ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.
- Investigation of complaints.

Our plan

- Enforcement activities including official warnings, infringements, notices to comply and court prosecution.

Objective 10: Declared dogs will be identified and appropriately managed

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|------|---|----------|------------------------|
| 10.1 | Conduct annual declared dog property inspections for compliance with the Domestic Animal Act (including but not limited to security of fencing, animal housing and signage) | Annually | Inspections undertaken |

13. Domestic animal businesses

Current situation

Council works in partnership with domestic animal businesses to make sure businesses are registered and complying with relevant regulations.

Manningham has 10 registered domestic animal businesses:

- 1 animal shelters.
- 7 boarding establishments.
- 2 dog training establishments

Local Laws Officers inspect these facilities annually to ensure compliance prior to registration renewal.

We actively seek to identify, investigate, and prosecute any illegal Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Manningham.

Current activities

- Supply and distribution of information regarding domestic animal businesses and relevant codes of practice.
- Inspect and process new Domestic Animal Business applications.
- Annual inspections undertaken in accordance with The Act; and issue annual registration certificates.
- Investigation of breaches / complaints.
- Council issues warnings, infringements, notices to comply or to prosecutes businesses that fail to comply with work plans and the relevant Code of Practice.

Our plan

Objective 11: Domestic animal businesses in municipality will be identified, registered and compliant with current legislation and relevant code of practice.

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|------|---|----------|----------------------------|
| 11.1 | Monitor for businesses that should be registered Domestic Animal Businesses by reviewing advertisements, social media, local notice boards, etc. and ensure they are compliant with legislation | Ongoing | Review undertaken annually |
| 11.2 | Annual audit and inspection of domestic animal businesses in Manningham for compliance | Annually | Inspections undertaken |

14. Training of authorised officers

Current situation

Council's animal management services are delivered by the Local Laws team through the City Compliance, City Planning and Community Unit.

The Local Laws team is comprised of 8 multiskilled authorised officers who operate in designated zones, with approximately 25% of the workload (or 2.0 FTE) allocated to animal management duties. A shared administrative team supports this.

In 2019-2020, Local Laws Officers responded to 1,887 animal management requests.

Animal management services are provided 8.30am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday. An emergency after-hours service is provided by an on-call Local Laws Officer to address dog aggression complaints and animal pick up requests.

Local Laws Officers are also responsible for the running and management of the Manningham Pound Facility.

Current activities

New staff are required to complete Council induction on policies and procedures. On the job training and ongoing coaching is provided. Internal procedures and processes are regularly reviewed and updated.

As we move back into normality following COVID-19 we are in a position of rebuilding the core group of staff. The intention for all staff within Local Laws is to annually complete training as identified in individual development plans.

Our plan

Objective 12: Ensure that Authorised Officers have the skills and knowledge required to effectively administer their role.

| | Activity | When | Evaluation |
|------|---|---------|---|
| 12.1 | Conduct targeted training of authorised officers in accordance with individual staff development plans. | Ongoing | In accordance with Council's professional development plan processes. |
| 12.2 | Continue to review and update animal management procedures. | Ongoing | Procedures reviewed and updated. |

| | | | |
|------|--|---------|---|
| 12.3 | Identify additional training and development opportunities, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law and investigation • Domestic animal handling • Customer service / managing conflict | Ongoing | In accordance with Council's professional development plan processes. |
|------|--|---------|---|

15. Review and evaluation.

Section 68A (3) of the Act requires that

Every Council must—

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

Performance monitoring and evaluation process

Council will monitor performance of the objectives that are detailed throughout the DAMP by reporting annually through the Council's established reporting systems, in accordance with the requirements of The Act and the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.

A new DAMP will be completed on or before 4 December 2025.

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