

HUME CITY COUNCIL

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2023-2026



hume.vic.gov.au





The benefits of pet ownership for people’s health and wellbeing are well established. Whilst DAMPs are concerned primarily with the management of dogs and cats within the community, it is important to note that pet ownership has a range of positive outcomes for the ongoing physical and mental health of community members, including companionship, reducing loneliness and isolation.

Mayor's Foreword

Dear residents and fellow animal lovers,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2023-2026 Domestic Animal Management Plan. This important plan aims to promote responsible pet ownership and strengthen the bond between humans and our beloved domestic animals.

This plan represents a significant step forward in ensuring the welfare, safety, and harmony between residents and the animals we share our lives with.

Our community has always held a deep appreciation for the companionship and joy that pets bring to our lives. With the privilege of pet ownership comes the responsibility to ensure their welfare and considerate integration into our community.

It is in this spirit that we have developed our Domestic Animal Management Plan – a comprehensive approach aimed at fostering responsible pet ownership. This plan reflects the values and aspirations of our community, emphasising the importance of education, collaboration, and proactive measures to address the challenges and opportunities associated with pet ownership.

Education forms the cornerstone of our plan. We believe that knowledge empowers responsible decision-making and compassionate actions. By providing accessible and comprehensive education programs, we aim to equip our community members with the information and resources needed to understand the needs of their pets, ensure their proper care, and foster positive relationships between other animals and humans.

Collaboration is another vital aspect of our plan. We recognise that responsible pet ownership is a shared responsibility involving the entire community. We will actively engage with local organisations, veterinary professionals, animal welfare groups, and passionate individuals who are dedicated to animal well-being.

Finally, our plan emphasises proactive measures to address the challenges associated with pet ownership. We will focus on initiatives such as pet identification and registration, responsible breeding practices, effective stray animal management, and the promotion of responsible behaviour in public spaces. Through sensible regulations, enforcement, and community outreach, we can create an environment where responsible pet ownership becomes a shared norm.

I express my thanks to those who have contributed to the development of this plan, including our dedicated project working group, experts, and community members. Your insights and passion have shaped this document into a comprehensive blueprint that reflects the aspirations and needs of our community.

Together, let us embark on this exciting journey towards enhancing responsible pet ownership and nurturing a community that cherishes and safeguards the well-being of our animal companions.



Joseph Haweil
Mayor Hume City Council

Contents

Mayor's Foreword	3
■ 1. Introduction and context	5
■ 2. Training of Authorised Officers	13
■ 3. Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation	18
■ 4. Programs to address over-population rates and any high euthanasia rates	25
■ 5. Registration and identification	29
■ 6. Nuisance.....	34
■ 7. Dog attacks.....	38
■ 8. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.....	41
■ 9. Domestic animal businesses.....	44
■ 10. Other matters.....	47
■ 11. Annual review of plan and annual reporting	50

Acknowledgement of Traditional owners

Hume City Council recognises the rich Aboriginal heritage within the municipality and acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung, which includes the existing family members of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk clan, as the Traditional Custodians of this land. Council embraces Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander living cultures as a vital part of Australia's identity and recognises, celebrates and pays respect to Elders past, present and future.

1. Introduction and context

1.1 Purpose of the Domestic Animal Management Plan

The Domestic Animals Act 1994 (the Act) requires councils in Victoria to develop a domestic animal management plan (DAMP), every four years. The DAMP must outline council services, programs and policies established to address the administration of the Act, and councils' management of dog and cat issues in their community. Council must review its DAMP annually and publish an evaluation of the implementation of the past year's actions in its Annual Report. This DAMP will cover the period from late 2023-2026 as opposed to the standard four-year period.



DAMPs should cover the following issues:

- Ensure that people comply with the Act, the regulations and any related legislation
- Minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
- Address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
- Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
- Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
- 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
- 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
- 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
- Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

1.2 Process applied in developing the plan

Hume City's DAMP was developed through extensive community and stakeholder engagement to ensure that it identified and addressed specific animal management issues across the City.

In addition to engagement with community members and stakeholders, the plan has been developed following review and consideration of historical service data, best-practice frameworks and approaches. The development of the DAMP was driven by a multi-discipline project working group across the follow stages.

Stage 1: Community Consultation

A detailed community engagement program was delivered to encourage the community of Hume to have their say on domestic animal management issues. The engagement gathered feedback from a wide cross section of the diverse areas across Hume. Approximately 1,136 people provided feedback. The main consultation method was an online survey, available in English, Turkish and Arabic and was distributed through:

An email campaign to

10,000 residents

with **5,000** households that have a registered animal and **5,000** households that do not have a registered animal

Intercept surveys

conducted at **Craigieburn Festival** and **Sunfest**

Publication on the

Participate Hume

website with promotion through **social media** campaigns



Eight key stakeholder interviews

were undertaken via **telephone** or **Zoom** and an additional **sixty-nine comments** were received via **Councils' social media campaign**



Survey responses



1,128 surveys completed

Online/Intercept

The following information provides a snapshot of the findings from the online survey. A total of 1128 surveys were completed online or through intercept surveys at the Craigieburn Festival or Sunfest.

Cat and Dog ownership



79%

have a **cat** or a **dog**



19.3%

do not have a **cat** or a **dog**



1.7%

unknown **cat** or a **dog** ownership

Awareness of the DAMP and Local Laws

46% were aware that Hume City Council has a DAMP.

63% were aware that Hume City Council has local laws that seek to protect the welfare of cats and dogs as well as the broader community and environment.

94.7% were aware that dog owners are required to pick up their dog droppings.

91.6% were aware all cats and dogs over 3 months old must be registered with Council.

91.6% were aware dogs must be under control of their owners at all times, even in designated dog off-leash areas and dog parks.

87.8% were aware that, all cats and dogs must be microchipped to be registered with Council.

82.9% were aware cats and dogs registrations must be renewed each year by April 10th.

81.5% were aware cats and dogs cost more to register if they are not desexed.

- Awareness of the DAMP and local laws was slightly higher among dog and cat owners than those who did not own pets.
- Awareness of the DAMP was highest in Sunbury, indicating that there is less awareness among more multicultural areas including: Meadow Heights, Greenvale, Roxburgh Park, Gladstone Park, Tullamarine, Westmeadows and Attwood.
- Awareness of local laws was higher among participants who spoke English as their first language (66%) than those who spoke other languages at home (52%).

Concerns with management of cats and dogs

The three top rated concerns in regard to animal management were:

- Impact of cats on fauna and flora.
- Cats wandering at night.
- Owners not picking up after their dog's droppings.

Promoting responsible pet management

The highest priorities identified by community members that Council should focus on in relation to domestic animal programs are:

- More enforcement action for residents who do not care for their pets.
- 24/7 emergency service to report dog attacks and stray animals.
- Discount cat desexing program.

Cat Curfews

Respondents were asked if they support the introduction of a cat curfew.

 **73.7%**
support a **cat curfew**

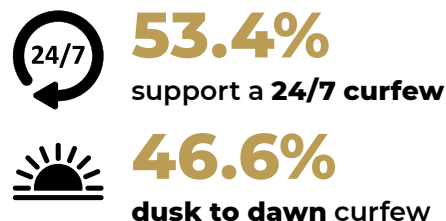
 **18%**
do not support a cat curfew

 **8.3%**
don't know

- Cat owners are less likely to agree that Council should introduce a curfew for cats (**59.8%**) than those who don't own a cat (**84.0%**).
- Level of agreement for a cat curfew is similar among those who own a dog (**74.7%**) versus those who don't own a dog (**76.9%**).

Dusk to dawn curfew or 24-hour curfew

Respondents who supported the introduction of a cat curfew were asked if they want Council to consider a dusk to dawn curfew or a 24 hour curfew.



The feedback received from community members has been used to inform the priorities and actions outlined in the DAMP. A full engagement report which outlines the community feedback is also available.

Stage 2: Council Workshop and Focus Groups

Council officers across various departments participated in a workshop to analyse the community feedback and determine appropriate objectives and actions for the DAMP. These objectives and actions were refined and prioritised across two internal focus groups.

Stage 3: Public exhibition

The draft DAMP was developed and presented at the 26 June 2023 Council meeting where it was endorsed for Public Exhibition.

1.3 Demographic and Profile of Council

Hume City Council is located 15 kilometres north of the centre of Melbourne and is one of the fastest growing and most culturally-diverse communities in Australia.

The municipality is made up of vibrant and diverse communities including new and established areas, major industrial and commercial precincts and vast expanses of rural areas and parkland.

Hume is a city of great contrasts, including its geography, economy, backgrounds and cultural diversity. Spanning an area of approximately 504 square kilometers, the City is made up of the following suburbs:

- Attwood
- Broadmeadows
- Bulla
- Coolaroo
- Craigieburn
- Dallas
- Gladstone Park
- Greenvale
- Jacana
- Kalkallo
- Meadow Heights
- Mickleham
- Roxburgh Park
- Sunbury
- Tullamarine
- Westmeadows

Hume is bordered by the local government areas of Moreland, Whittlesea, Brimbank, Macedon Ranges, Melton and Mitchell. Council works with neighbouring municipalities to respond to shared animal management concerns, coordinate animal management investigations, and to share best-practice processes and approaches.

In 2021, Hume City was home to 246,850 residents. The population is growing rapidly and is forecast to increase to 389,417 people by 2041. In 2021, there was a higher proportion of children (under 18) and a lower proportion of persons aged 60 or older when compared to Greater Melbourne.

Hume residents come from more than 160 different countries and speak over 140 languages, with 48.8% of people speaking a language other than English at home. The most common languages spoken other than English are Arabic, Turkish and Punjabi.

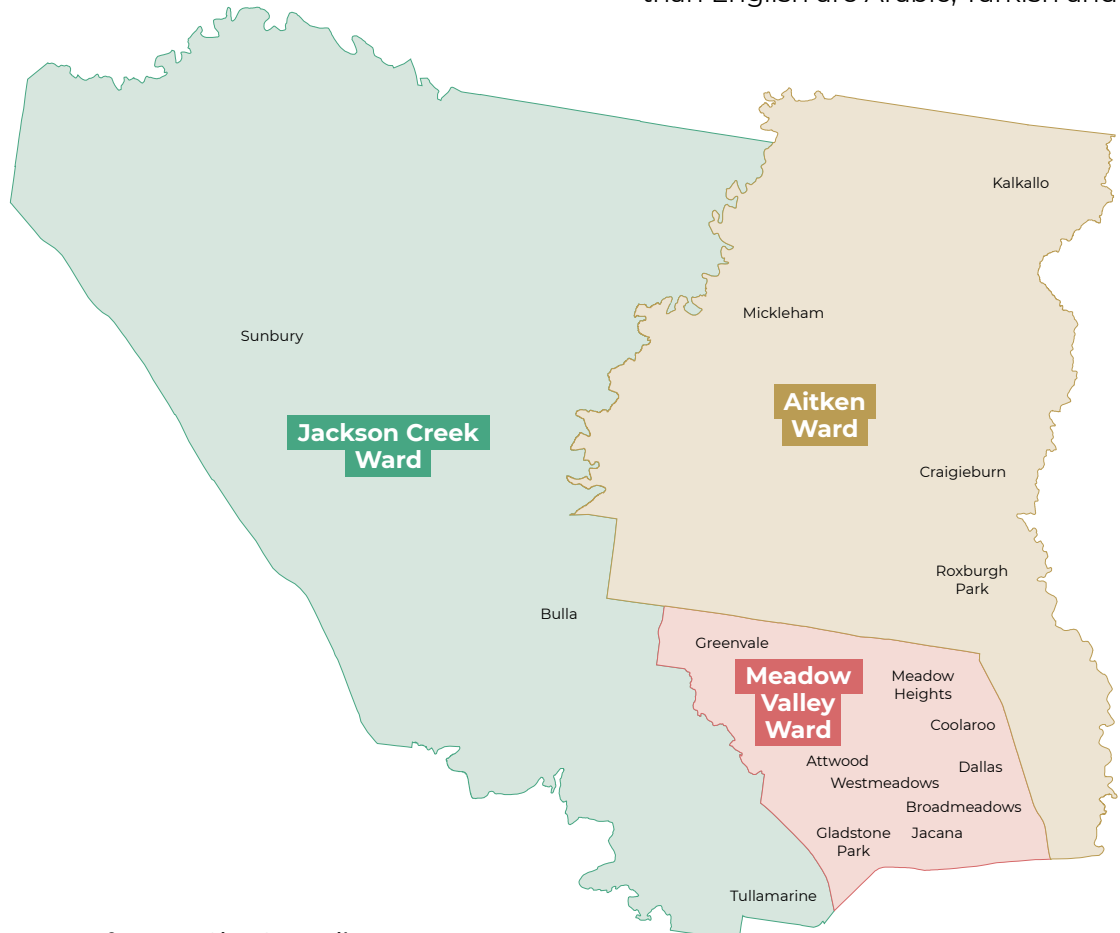


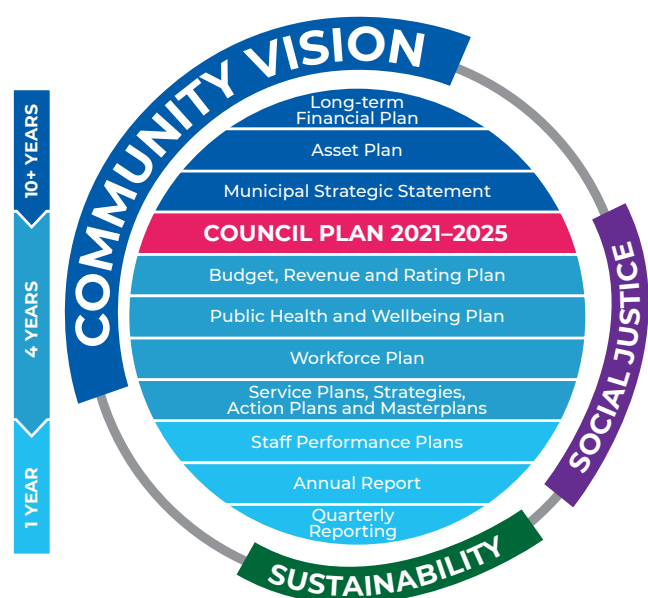
Figure 1: Map of Hume City Council

1.4 Council Plans

Council’s Integrated Strategic Planning Framework (Figure 2) describes how Hume City Council will work towards achieving the vision of the community.

This planning framework consists of a number of integrated long, medium and short-term plans that consider the priorities and resources needed to achieve the strategic objectives of Council. These key Plans provide direction across the many Council services, including domestic animal management.

Figure 2: Council’s Integrated Strategic Planning Framework



Hume Horizons 2040

Hume City’s community plan, Hume Horizons 2040, is the foundation of Council’s Corporate Planning Framework and is a plan for the whole community. Based on extensive community and stakeholder engagement, Hume Horizons 2040 outlines the long-term vision for Hume City, and clearly states the community’s expectations and aspirations for the future.

Under the strategic objective, Strengthen community safety and respectful behaviour there is an expectation that ***‘the health and safety of Hume residents, pets and fauna are protected through responsible and considerate animal management’***.

Hume City Council Plan 2021-2025

The Council Plan takes an integrated approach to planning and includes actions incorporated as part of Council’s Disability Action Plan, Community Safety Action Plan and Pathways to sustainability. This enables Council to align strategies, actions and initiatives across Council’s Strategic Objectives in an efficient and effective way in order to achieve multiple objectives at the same time.

Under Objective 1.3, Promote a healthy, inclusive and respectful community that fosters community pride and safety, there is an action ***‘Finalise and commence implementation of a new Domestic Animal Management Plan to support responsible animal management and safety’***.

1.5 Context and current situation

Council's role in animal management

Hume City Council City Laws Officers provide a range of services to ensure Council meets its legislative responsibilities regarding animal management across the municipality. These officers deliver a range of services, policies and functions to promote and support responsible pet ownership, animal welfare, and positive health, safety and environmental outcomes for the community.

The purpose of Hume's animal management service is to:

- Implement Council's responsibilities under the Act and the General Local Laws.
- Promote the welfare of cats and dogs.

- Inform and educate the community about the benefits associated with pets, responsible pet ownership and the needs of companion animals.
- Respond to issues raised by the community about nuisance animals, e.g. barking dogs.
- Provide programs and services to support the community to be responsible pet owners, such as free desexing programs, education campaigns and park patrols.
- Provide animal welfare services through Lost Dogs Home.

A high-level summary of the current population and service numbers for domestic animals in Hume City is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Current population and service numbers for domestic animals

Program/Service	Service Level
Identification and Registration	17,865 dogs, 7,024 cats
Identification and Registration campaigns	Annually
Domestic animal complaints	Acknowledge in 2 business days
Dog attack and dog at large complaints	Immediate response
Routine street, park, reserve and creek patrols	Responsive to complaints
Lost Dogs Home	Monday-Thursday 10am-5.30pm, Friday 10am-4.45pm, Saturday 9am-3.30pm, Sunday 9am-12.30pm
Micro-chipping and/or desexing programs	Reduced fee voucher to cover part of the cost of dog or cat desexing available to Health Care and Pensioner Concession Card holders.
After hours emergency service	Lost Dogs Home/On Call City Laws Officers
Domestic Animal Businesses Registered	18

1.6 Domestic Animal Statistics

Currently there are 24,889 registered pets in Hume City, 17,865 dogs and 7,024 cats.

There has been a 3.6% decrease in pet registration since 2018. There are a total of 43 declared dogs, nine declared dangerous, 13 declared menacing, eight restricted breed dogs and 13 guard dogs in the municipality.

Hume has 18 registered Domestic Animal Management Businesses.

In 2020/2021 there were 1,473 animals brought into Lost Dogs Home by the public, surrendered by owners or brought in by City Laws Officers, where 459 have been reclaimed by owners, 132 were rehomed and 245 were euthanised.

The City Laws Officers responded to 80 barking dog complaints, 1,697 domestic animal pick up requests, 193 dogs at large, 109 cat cage requests, and 253 dog attack reports including rushes.

2. Training of authorised officers

To deliver animal services that meet the requirements of the Act, to the level that the community expects, it is crucial to ensure that all Authorised Officers are appropriately trained and have the opportunity to participate in a robust training program.



There was strong support from the community for City Laws Officers to play a role of providing education to the community as well as enforcement when required. There was a desire for increased visibility of rangers in the community.

“Visit the dog parks and off lead areas. View and discuss the issues with pet owners”

2.1 Context and Current Situation

The City Laws team consists of eight City Laws Officers and a trainee, who are supervised by the City Laws Team Leader and the City Laws Coordinator and supported by two administration officers.

All City Laws Officers are multi-skilled and carry out a range of Local Laws and Animal Management duties. Each City Laws Officer is an Authorised Officer of Council, and may enforce any of the following legislation:

- Hume City Council General Local Law 2013
- Domestic Animals Act 1994
- Impoundment of Livestock Act 1994
- Local Government Act 2020
- Road Safety Act – Road Rules
- Country Fire Authority Act 1958
- Fire Rescue Victoria Act 1958
- Environment Protection Act 2017
- Public Health and Well Being Act 2008
- Summary Offences Act 1966

Officer's skills and knowledge are developed through a mix of 'hands-on' training, structured and accredited courses, and industry training, which is summarised in Table 2.

“Have a more visible presence in the community.”

Table 2: Authorised Officer training status - completed and in progress

	Completed	In Progress
Qualifications		
Certificate IV in Animal Control & Regulation	5	3
Certificate IV in Statutory Compliance or Local Government	5	3
Industry Training		
DEDJTR – training and information days	3	5
AIAM Conference	3	5
Animal Handling	8	1
Canine Breed Identification (Department of Agriculture)	2	6
Interview and Statement taking	6	2
Computer skills	10	0
Privacy Training	10	0
Firearms Training	5	3
Induction for new staff	6	5
Conflict resolution	5	3
OH&S Training		
Manual Handling	1	7
First Aid	6	2
Dealing with Aggressive Customers	4	4
Family Violence Awareness	2	6
Situational Awareness Training (annual)	9	1

2.2 Our Planned Training for Authorised Officers

Hume City Council has planned a comprehensive training program for Authorised Officers to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the requirements of the Act and to deliver service in a manner that the community expects.

Table 3 shows the planned training for 2023-2026 and the expected timeframe of each.

Table 3: Planned training of Authorised Officers for the 2023-2026 period

Planned Training (2023-2026)	Expected Timeframe
OH&S	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dealing with aggressive customers Defensive driving Occupational violence prevention Situational Awareness 	Annual or as required
Industry Training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Animal handling Animal assessment Statement taking Evidence gathering 	Annual or as required
Restricted Breed Dog Identification	Every 2 years (or as offered by Department of Agriculture)
Council e-learning opportunities	Annual
Customer Service	As required
Cert IV in Animal Control and Regulation	As required
Cert IV in Local Government (Regulatory Services)	As required
Australian Institute of Animal Management workshops and training	As they are provided
Management seminars/conference	As they are provided
Animal Welfare Victoria seminars	As they are provided

2.3 Our Plan

Table 4 and 5 shows the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 2: Objectives 1 and 2.

Table 4 : Activities under Section 2 Objective 1

Objective 1: Ensure animal management officers have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide planned training of Authorised Officers as outlined in Table 3. Explore other training opportunities in partnership with neighbouring Councils	Annually	No of training programs undertaken
Maintain a training register for individual officers detailing completed and proposed training	Annually	Review training register

Table 5 : Activities under Section 2 Objective 2

Objective 2: Create a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Celebrate team successes via internal and external promotions	Ongoing	Quarterly Social media campaign
Deliver training for in home care service providers focused on animal management and reporting animal welfare	Annually	No of sessions delivered
Quarterly meeting with other Council teams where their work intersects with Animal Management to understand observed trends, complaints or planned work	Ongoing	No of meetings attended

3. Programs to promote and encourage responsible pet ownership and compliance with legislation

During the engagement process, there was a mixed sentiment expressed by community members and stakeholders around responsible pet ownership with 65% of respondents feeling owners in their local area controlled their dog properly, but only 45.5% controlling their cat properly.



The communities' top priorities for services relating to domestic animal programs were:

- more enforcement of local laws for residents who don't care for their pets
 - a 24/7 emergency call service to report dog attacks and stray animals and
 - the provision of a discount cat desexing program.
-

Other opportunities identified were providing education and training to residents, providing and promoting free and/or discounted services, introducing a cat curfew and increasing the provision of bins and bags for pet droppings.

“More education initiatives, e.g. flyers to animal owners with clear info, clear basic signage, program at the library.”

“Additional signage, bags and bins allocated on walking paths for dog owners to pick up after their dogs.”

“Make sure the community is aware of the programs that are available.”

3.1 Context and Current Situation

Council provides information to educate the community about responsible pet ownership and has a number of existing initiatives and programs in place to encourage responsible pet ownership and to address compliance with legislative and regulatory requirements.

Some of these programs include:

- Providing information and advice on responsible pet ownership, including the benefits of desexing, registration and microchipping.
- Following up on unpaid animal registration renewals to ensure pets are registered as per legislation.
- Providing a discounted desexing program to Hume residents who hold concession cards.
- Maintaining, promoting and patrolling the on and off-leash dog parks and fenced in dog parks across Hume City.
- Providing cat traps to residents for free and facilitating the collection of trapped cats.

“It will help stop cats defecating in others properties, reduce cat fights, reduce unwanted litters, reduce cats killed by cars, and above all keep our local wildlife safer”

Cat Curfew

During the engagement process, community members expressed strong support for the introduction of a cat curfew in Hume City (73.7% support), with a slightly higher percentage preferring a 24-hour curfew to a dusk to dawn curfew. The most common drivers for community members supporting a curfew was protection of wildlife, safety for cats and preventing wandering cats doing damage to private property.

Opposition to a cat curfew was higher among cat owners (33%) and slightly higher in the Meadow Valley ward. Those who did not support a cat curfew (18%), reported it is natural for cats to wander, or cruel to keep cats inside. Others felt that cats were not an issue in their communities or felt the task of retraining or confining cats to private property was difficult or impossible.

“Keeps wildlife safe, keeps the cats safe, keeps the neighbours sane”

Dog Off-leash areas

Providing dog off-leash areas is one of Council's initiatives in promoting responsible pet ownership, by providing space for dogs to be socialised and exercised. The following areas within Hume City are designated off-leash areas:

Broadmeadows

- Anderson Reserve
- Broadmeadows Valley Park (including Broadmeadows Dog Park)
- Ripplebrook Reserve
- Seabrook Reserve
- Will Will Rook Pioneer Cemetery

Bulla

- Bulla Recreation Reserve

Campbellfield

- Bolinda Recreation Reserve
- Seth Raistrick Reserve

Coolaroo

- Progress Reserve*

Craigieburn

- Aitken Creek Reserve
- Craigieburn Dog Park – Craigieburn Gardens
- D.S Aitken Reserve
- Hothlyn Drive Reserve*
- Hume Tennis and Community Centre*
- Mt Ridley Conservation Reserve
- Newbury Park
- Vic Foster Reserve

Dallas

- Gibb Reserve*
- Laura Douglas Reserve

Gladstone Park

- Carrick Drive Reserve
- John Coutts Reserve
- Ginifer Reserve

Greenvale

- Bradford Avenue Reserve*
- Drummond Street Reserve*
- Greenvale Recreation Reserve

Jacana

- Jacana Reserve*
- Jacana Valley

Meadow Heights

- Broadmeadows Valley Park - Northern Reach

Roxburgh Park

- Lakeside Drive Reserve

Sunbury

- Emu Bottom Wetlands (excluding Horseshoe Bend)
- Eric Boardman Reserve
- Heysen Reserve
- Langama Park
- Spavin Drive Reserve
- Stewart Lane Nature Reserve
- Sunbury Dog Park
- Sunbury Recreation Reserve
- Bicentennial Park (The Nook)

Tullamarine

- Leo Dineen Reserve
- Trade Park
- Tullamarine Reserve
- Westmeadows Reserve*
- Willowbrook Reserve

*Time restrictions apply – Dogs must be on leash between 8am-5pm Monday to Friday on school days

The following are dog prohibited areas:

Broadmeadows

- Maygar Grasslands

Craigieburn

- Amberfield Grasslands

Kalkallo

- Kalkallo Commons

Somerton

- Somerton Red Gum Reserve

Sunbury

- Albert Road Nature Reserve
- Evan Street Grasslands
- Fullwood Drive Ceremonial Ring
- Sunbury Cemetery
- Tandara Reserve
- The Parkway Reserve (Western Section)

Wildwood

- Marlin Dillion Reserve

Council regularly reviews and updates dog off-leash and prohibited areas as the community continues to grow and expand. Council's website includes an up to date list of designated off-leash areas.

Animal Registrations

Table 6 demonstrates the number of cats and dogs registered in Hume. Unlike other local councils, Hume has shown a decrease in dogs registered since 2018/19 (19,049 down to 17,865 in 2021/22). The rate of unregistered animals in Hume is further discussed in section 5, Registration and Identification.

Over the last two years of records, the figures for both dog and cat registrations have stayed relatively consistent with a small increase in dogs (+357) and cats (+185).

Table 6: Number of cats and dogs registered in Hume

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Dogs	19,049	17,928	17,508	17,865
Cats	6,786	6,824	6,839,	7,024
Total	25,835	24,752	24,347	24,889

Animal related infringements

Table 7 shows the number of infringements issued in Hume. Overall, there has been a decrease since 2018/2019 to 2021/2022 (975 to 940).

Comparing 2020/21 to 2021/22 the figures were relatively stable with an increase in infringements issued for: dogs at large at daytime (305 to 367); failure to register dog/cat (378 to 393); and failure to renew registration for dogs and cats (61 to 77).

COVID-19 had a significant impact on residents and their pets. There was an unprecedented demand to adopt and foster pets during lockdown. Many community members acquired and adopted puppies, and due to an inability to attend puppy classes and obedience training, dogs have not undergone training and missed opportunities to socialise with people. This has resulted in an increase in reports relating to dog behaviour in public.

Animal surrenders have increased across Australia over the past 12 months. Animal Welfare organisations report that the rising cost of living, rental crises, rising veterinary costs and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic have contributed to this trend. In Victoria, the impact of protracted lockdowns on animal socialisation and training opportunities has led to a spike in surrenders attributed to animal behavioural issues.

Stakeholders consulted during the development of the DAMP also reported an increase in behaviour related surrenders amongst people of lower socioeconomic and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, perhaps due to the unavailability of affordable and culturally appropriate education and training resources.

Table 7: Cat and dog infringements issued in Hume

Offence Type	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Dog at large daytime	452	504	305	367
Dog at large night-time	101	110	90	69
Dog not under effective control	3	6	11	9
Fail to register dog/cat	363	628	378	393
Fail to renew registration dog/cat	49	45	61	77
Dog attack non-serious injury	7	9	28	25
Total	975	1,302	873	940

Compliance activities

- Enforcement using Notices to Comply, infringement Notices, Animal Management Agreements and, where required, court prosecution.
- Complaint investigation by Council.
- Follow up for non-renewed pet registrations.
- Random inspections of properties of declared dogs.
- Provision of cat traps to complainants in cases where education and advice has failed to prevent cat trespass.
- Impoundment of dogs or cats found wandering.
- Social media campaign around the registration renewal period.

3.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Orders

- **Section 26 Domestic Animals Act 1994:** Hume City requires dogs to be kept under effective control while in a public place including in designated off-leash areas.

Local Laws

- **General Purposes Law part 41:** Dog Waste on Roads and Municipal Places, outlining management of dog waste in the community.

Policies and Procedures

- Process for issuing notices to comply, infringement notices and filing charges for prosecution.
- Standard Operating Procedure.
- Enforcement Guidelines.

3.3 Our Plan

Tables 8 and 9 show the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 3 Objectives 1 and 2.

Table 8: Activities under Section 3 Objective 1

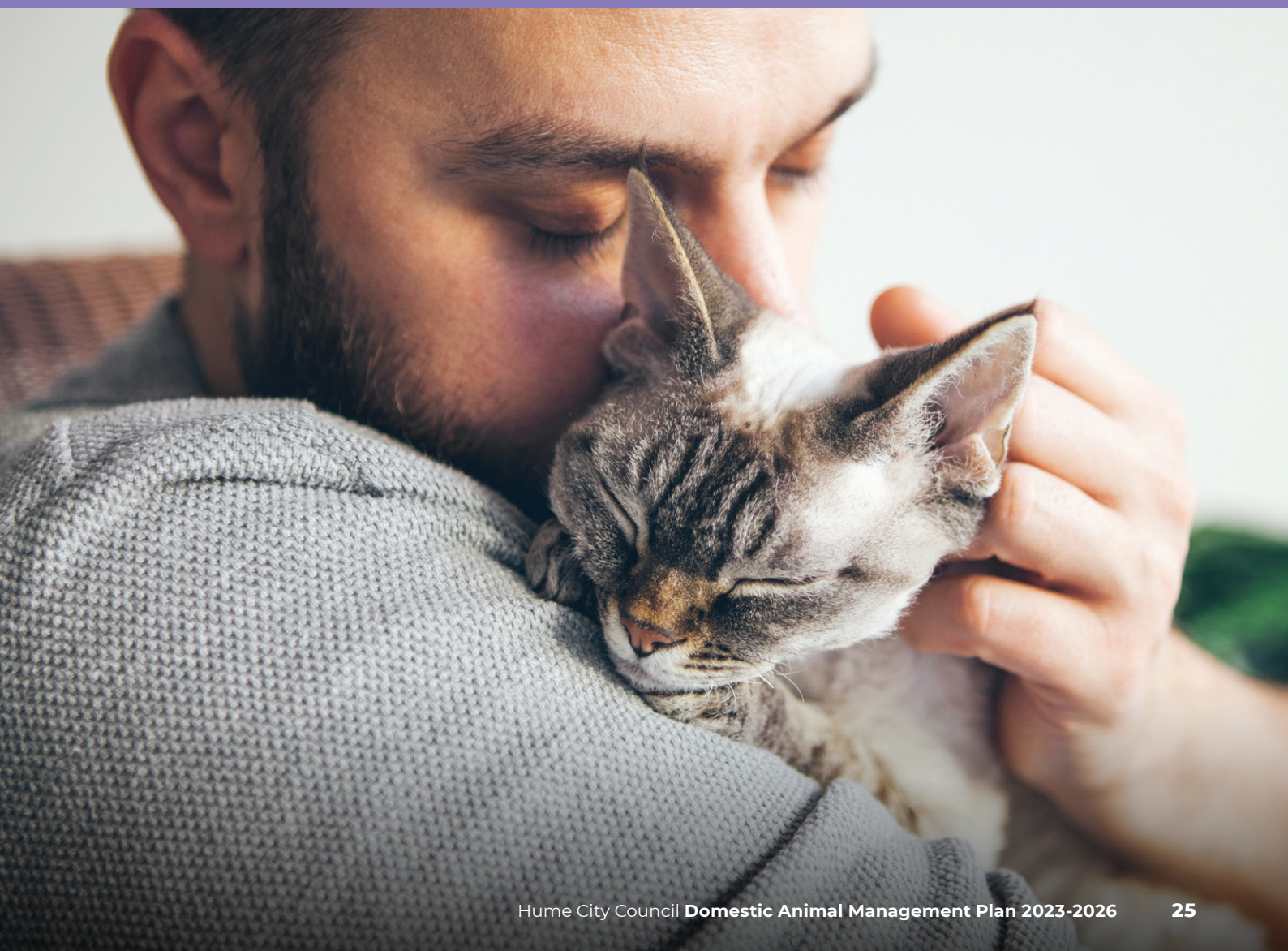
Objective 1: Explore the introduction of a cat curfew and promote an indoor lifestyle for cats		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide cat owners with resources and information about cat enclosures, to encourage cats to stay at home	Year 1	Reduction in complaints
Investigate possible cat curfew models including a dusk to dawn cat curfew or 24/7 and implementation processes	Year 1	Draft model developed for Council consideration

Table 9 : Activities under Section 3 Objective 2

Objective 2: Promote responsible cat and dog ownership		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Create a social media education campaign that talks to all of the elements of responsible pet ownership (registration leading into April, desexing, picking up after your dog)	Annually	Social Media reach
Provide information on selecting the right pet for your family and living arrangement (high density areas, appropriateness of breed)	Ongoing	Social Media reach and website resource access
Review and distribute the 'Preparing for Baby Booklet' to new parents which includes pet management tips	Ongoing	No of booklets distributed
Strengthen partnerships with local dog training businesses to promote and encourage puppy/dog training and behaviour correction	Ongoing	Number of sessions/ opportunities promoted

4. Programs to address overpopulation rates and any high euthanasia rates

The overpopulation of dogs and cats is an issue that presents challenges in the community such as: impacts on wildlife, community and domestic animal health as well as the welfare of dogs and cats if they are stray, semi-owned, or malnourished due to limited capacity of owners to care for them. Particularly, the overpopulation of cats leads to challenges with rates of euthanasia within the stray cat population due to low rehoming rates.



The community expressed concern regarding local euthanasia rates, as well as a desire to explore mandatory desexing and increased education around the benefits of desexing animals to address overpopulation issues.

4.1 Context and Current Situation

The population and euthanasia rates are detailed in Table 10. There has been a significant increase in the number of cats impounded between 2019/20 and 2020/21 (250), and a slight increase in the number of cats euthanised (7) and cats rehomed (19). While noting that there has been an increase in the number of cats euthanised between 2019/20 and 2020/21, there has been an overall decrease in the percentage of cats euthanised as a proportion of all cats impounded.

Table 10: Numbers of cats and dogs impounded and subsequent outcomes

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Cats				
Impounded (brought into Lort Smith by the public, surrendered by owner or brought in by Officers)	542	497	688	938
Returned to owner	53	67	84	80
Euthanasia (feral or unsafe to rehome)	182	162	215	222
Rehomed (adopted)	117	74	99	118
Dogs				
Impounded (brought to Lort Smith by the public, Authorised Officers or surrendered by owner)	1101	986	868	535
Returned to owner	784	718	609	379
Euthanasia (feral or unsafe to rehome)	64	45	27	23
Rehomed (adopted)	81	61	38	14

The number of dogs impounded has steadily decreased each year from 1101 in 2017/18 to 535 in 2020/21. Rates of dog euthanasia are much lower due to the higher rates of reclaiming dogs (70.8%) as compared to cats (8.5%).

Hume is committed to ensuring that as many animals as possible are reunited with their owners. Pets are valued members of the family and it can be distressing for owners and animals when they are missing or being held within the pound.

If an animal can not be reclaimed and is assessed as suitable for adoption ideally, they will be rehomed through the contracted pound service, which continues to make significant improvements in rehoming animals by partnering with dog rescue organisations. Hume City Council provides the following services and programs to establish long-term and secure pet ownership in the community:

- Reduced rate and free desexing for cats through partnership with Second Chance Animal Rescue (SCAR) and the State government.
- Website and social media campaigns to promote responsible pet ownerships, including desexing benefits, registration and microchipping.
- Cat trapping service available to all residents.
- 24/7 hour phone service so registered dogs can be returned immediately.
- Established s84Y agreement with local shelter to rehome surrendered dogs.

From September 2021-October 2022, Hume City Council partnered with the State government and SCAR to provide an affordable cat desexing program for residents. The program also offered free microchipping and registration as well as educational materials and gifts for cat owners. The program was well received by the community and successful in desexing 546 cats: 238 male and 308 female. This could potentially have reduced the number of unwanted cats by 300 000 over a ten year period. The program will be offered in the next financial year.

4.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws

- **General Purposes Local Law**
Keeping of Animals, outlining the number of animals that can be kept.
- **General Purposes Local Law**
Housing of Animals, outlining the conditions under which animals must be kept.

Policies and Procedures

Council has Standard Operating Procedures for the excess of animal complaints, cat trapping, cat complaints and dog surrenders.

Compliance Activities

- Investigating and recording reports of excess animals and hoarding
- Investigating backyard breeders to determine if they need to register as a Domestic Animal Business
- Annual inspections for all declared dogs
- Prosecuting regarding excess animals
- Enforcing registration, microchipping and tag-wearing requirements
- Issuing infringement notices for cats and dogs found at large.

4.3 Our Plan

Tables 11 and 12 show the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 4 Objectives 1 and 2.

Table 11: Activities under Section 4: Objective 1

Objective 1: To decrease the number of stray, abandoned and unwanted cats.		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Consider ways to incentivise cat desexing (gift pack, promotional pack) before registration	Year 1	Incentives implemented and promoted
Educate the community in stray cat management (not feeding, reporting and availability of traps)	Ongoing	Education material produced and distributed

Table 12: Activities under Section 4: Objective 2

Objective 2: To minimise overpopulation rates.		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Research best-practice for Councils to reduce overpopulation (mandatory desexing of cats and dogs)	Year 1	Best Practice report prepared
Explore the introduction of the last litter Program (free desexing female cat if last litter is surrendered)	Year 2	Investigation report prepared
Provide community information around responsible pet breeding/breeding requirements	Year 3	Community information produced and distributed
Promote the health benefits of desexing and the long-term positive outcomes for the environment and euthanasia rates	Year 1	Social media reach

5. Registration and Identification

Pet registration and microchipping are legislative requirements. It provides Council with an understanding of the level of pet ownership and allows for the development of relevant services and programs. It also assists in the safe and quick return of any lost dogs and cats to their owners.



A number of suggestions were made by community members to improve registration uptake in Hume City. These included promoting the benefits of registration, offering discounted registration fees to vulnerable cohorts, and providing information regarding registration in community languages.

“Each year when the registration comes out an information pamphlet should be supplied with info regarding how to take care of a pet, what the animal laws are, where people can go for help and local vet information.”

“Promote animal registration with an amnesty week for people to register their animals.”

“Consider registration discounts for indoor-only cats.”

5.1 Context and Current Situation

There are currently 17,865 registered dogs and 7,024 registered cats in Hume as shown in Table 13.

It can be difficult to capture exact data on cat and dog ownership, as not all cats and dogs are registered. Hume has shown a decrease in dogs registered since 2018/19 (19,049 down to 17,865 in 2021/22*) despite a significant increase in the number of new households in the municipality during this period, 2023 is the lowest year on record for animal registrations since 2002.

As part of the DAMP development process, Council undertook a study to identify the approximate number of unregistered cats and dogs in Hume. Based on an analysis of Council's registration database, the 2023 DAMP survey results and household pet estimates provided through the national 'Pets in Australia' survey, it is estimated that at least 43% of households in Hume City have a cat or dog.

Further extrapolation of this data reveals that at least 33% of households in Hume City have a dog, compared to 15.5% which are currently registered with Council. At least 15% of households have a cat, compared to 6.1% which are currently registered.

Based on this analysis, it is estimated that 20 to 25% of households have an unregistered animal in Hume, or approximately 20,000 unregistered dogs and 10,700 unregistered cats. This equates to \$932,000 in unregistered animal fees for the municipality as shown in Table 14.

Pet registration fees are vital for Council to deliver holistic and responsive animal management services in the municipality and the loss in revenue directly impacts on the scope, scale and quality of services that can be delivered by Council.

Concession rates for registration were accessed by 20% of total registrations of dogs and 24.8% of total registrations of cats.

Table 13: Registration and microchipping numbers of cats and dogs

	Dogs	Cats
Registration Numbers		
· New	427	175
· Renewal	17,435	7,227
Concessions	3,738	1,842
Total	17,865	7,402

*Animal registration year' 10 April 2021 - 9 April 2022

Table 14: Estimated unregistered animals in Hume

	Dogs	Cats
Estimated unregistered animals	20,000	10,700 (excluding feral/ unowned cats)
Estimated animal registration fees foregone	\$670,000	\$262,000
Total fees	\$932,000	

*Estimations for under registration are reliant on 'pets in Australia', averages from Council's animal registration database, DAMP community engagement and Hume's demographic profile

Education and community awareness

- Council officers undertake a proactive role within the community to address animal registration.
- Attending council run events such as festivals and awareness days.
- Development of educational videos – addressing certain aspects of the Local Laws role – including animal management and registration requirements.
- Running and attending non structured 'morning/afternoon tea with a City Law Officers at council community centres' and meeting our community in an unstructured format

5.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws

- **General Purposes Local Law Part 39:** Keeping of Animals, outlining the number of animals that can be kept.

Policies and Procedures

Council has Standard Operating Procedures for investigating unregistered animals.

Compliance Activities

- Providing annual animal registration renewal notices followed up with reminder notices, SMS message, phone call.
- Investigating all unregistered animal complaints.
- Issuing infringement notices for failing to re-register/register.
- Equipping all Authorised officers with microchip scanners and laptops/tablets to check registrations when on patrol.
- Ensuring that all seized or impounded animals are registered and microchipped prior to release.
- Following up registration for cats and dogs purchased from a Domestic Animal Business or animals that have been microchipped.



Reuniting Pets

A heartwarming tale of a local Hume resident and their pet cat has captured the attention of the community. After almost three years of being separated, the owner was overjoyed to be reunited with their beloved male ginger cat, thanks to a microchip.

Initially, the owner had believed their feline friend had passed away due to the extended time since he went missing. However, a community member report about a cat they had observed wandering in their area changed everything.

Following the report from the community member, Council City Laws Officers promptly collected the cat and transported it to the Lost Dog's Home, where the microchip information was analysed. It was only then that they were able to uncover the owner's details, and the heartwarming reunion took place.

This story highlights the importance of microchipping and pet registration. Every pet owner must have their dog or cat registered and microchipped before they reach three months of age. This process ensures that in case they wander off, they can easily be returned to their rightful owner.

This heartwarming reunion story is a testament to the power of microchipping and the importance of registering your pets. Hume City Council encourages every pet owner to microchip and register their pets to ensure that they can find their way back home.

5.3 Our Plan

Table 15 and 16 shows the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 5 Objective 1 and 2.

Table 15: Activities under Section 5 Objective 1

Objective 1: Increase the number of dog and cat registrations		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide information on registration and microchipping in multiple languages and formats using real life case studies (videos, large public signs)	Annually	Social media reach No of translated resources provided
Review animal registration renewals to include information regarding possible infringements for not registering pets, and detailing services provided by Council utilising registration fees	Year 1	Renewal letters updated
Advocate to the Department of Agriculture to allow registration for people experiencing homelessness with a phone number or agency address only	Year 1	Correspondence sent to Department of Agriculture
Undertake an annual modelling exercise to estimate the number of unregistered cats and dogs in the municipality	Annually	Report annually
Partner with domestic animal breeders and veterinary clinics to check and collect animal registrations when an animal is presented	Ongoing	No of cats and dogs registered
Map areas where there are higher levels of unregistered animals	Ongoing	Targeted campaigns promoting registration are delivered to these areas

Table 16: Activities under Section 5 Objective 2

Objective 2: User friendly service to make it easier for residents to register their pets online		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Simplify the online registration system	Year 3	Online registration system modified and simplified

6. Nuisance

Community feedback demonstrated a number of key nuisance themes particularly relating to cat impacts on fauna and flora, cats wandering at night, owners picking up dog droppings, cats wandering or defecating on private property and owners not having their dog under control. Council has a role in protecting the community from unnecessary nuisance from cats and dogs through their services and community education.



6.1 Context and Current Situation

There has been a significant increase in complaints regarding dog attacks (including rushes) with 143 received in 2018/19 increasing to 253 received in 2020/21. There is also a demonstrable increase in complaints regarding domestic animal pick-ups from 1,560 in 2018/19 to 1,697 in 2020/21.

There has been a decrease in complaints regarding barking dogs (101 to 80), cat cage requests (165 to 109) and dogs at large (333 to 193) when comparing 2018/19 and 2020/21 figures.

Table 17: Cat and dog complaints to Council from 2018/19 to 2020/21

Nature of Complaint	2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Barking dogs	101	43	80
Domestic animal pick up	1,560	1,480	1,697
Dogs at large	333	161	193
Cat cage requests	165	150	109
Dog attacks including rushes	143	278	253
Animal violations (includes unregistered dogs/ cats, defecating, off-leash in parks/reserves, and excessive animals)	421	680	452
Total	2,723	2,792	2,784

“I have multiple feral cats sleeping, defecating and killing native birds in my small front yard.”

“My main concerns are dog owners not picking up poo even when bags are provided at the park.”

Hume's current educational and promotional activities surrounding nuisance include:

- Providing signage related to dog control placed in parks.
- Providing information and advice on methods for resolving nuisance in the community.
- Encouraging complainants to speak to the owner of the animal causing the nuisance directly.
- Conducting park patrols and educating the community on local laws.
- Providing dog waste bags and holders at festivals and events.

“Wandering cats upsetting dogs and other pets appropriately contained on private property.”

6.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Local Laws

- **General Purposes Local Law**
Keeping of Animals, outlining the number of animals that can be kept.
- **General Purposes Local Law**
Housing of Animals, outlining the conditions under which animals must be kept.
- **General Purposes Law**
Dog Waste on Roads and Municipal Places, outlining management of dog waste in the community.
- **General Purposes Local Law**
Feeding of Wild Animals, outlining reasons an authorised officer may direct a person to cease feeding an animal.

Policies and Procedures

Council has Standard Operating Procedures for investigating barking dog complaints, wandering dog complaints and cat complaints.

Compliance Activities

- Investigating nuisance complaints and issuing infringements and when necessary prosecuting.
- Undertaking a trial of monitoring excessive barking dog nuisance by utilising electronic monitoring of problem dog barking.
- Partnering with other agencies such as the DJPR, MAV and Victoria Police on broader nuisance issues.

6.3 Our Plan

Tables 18 and 19 show the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 6 Objectives 1 and 2.

Table 18: Activities under Section 6 Objective 1

Objective 1: Reduce the number of nuisance complaints that arise in the Municipality		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote community training in responsible pet ownership and develop necessary resources	Annually	Social media reach and online resource accessed
Increase number of patrols in dog off-leash areas and on the spot fines	Annually	Number of patrols delivered on a monthly basis
Audit signage and the availability of dog waste bins in public parks to encourage cleaning up after dogs and to ensure effective control	Year 2	Audit undertaken and a signage upgrade works program established

Table 19: Activities under Section 6 Objective 2

Objective 2: Make it easier to report animal management issues to Council.		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide community education on how to report animal-related nuisance complaints and build awareness of Councils investigation process	Annually	Social media reach and resources distributed
Explore remote trap monitoring technology to automatically alert council when a cat is trapped	Year 3	Feasible options are identified and a report is prepared for Council consideration
Explore systems suitable to detect and monitor noise levels to assist with barking-related investigations and prosecutions	Year 2	Feasible options are identified and a report is prepared for Council consideration

7. Dog attacks

.....

Dog attacks against people and other animals, unfortunately, do occur in the local area. Community feedback indicated on leash areas, streets and public dog parks are a particular area of concern for dog attacks and aggressive behaviour. Community feedback suggests management of dog attacks should be addressed through targeting owner behaviours and understanding of responsibilities.

.....



63% of survey respondents were concerned about aggressive dogs in public with the primary concerns reported: wandering dogs or dogs off-leash, dog containment on private property, education and training for dog owners, clear processes and timely response to incidents and enforcement.

Community members named a 24/7 emergency service to report dog attacks and stray animals as their second highest priority for potential animal management programs Hume City Council should provide.

7.1 Context and Current Situation

Over the past year (2021-22) Council has responded to or been alerted to 154 dog attack complaints, compared to 253 in 2020-21. There are currently 43 dogs that are declared as dangerous, menacing or restricted breed dogs in Hume. Complaints were recorded via the telephone, email reporting and reporting via the dangerous dog hotline. In 2021/22 Council had 12 prosecutions, a 71% increase from 2020/21 with 7 prosecutions.

In 2021/22 there were 25 infringements for non-serious injuries dog attacks and 6 infringements for dog rushes. In the 2020/21 period there were 28 infringements for non-serious injuries dog attacks and 2 infringements for dog rushes.

The five highest offenders by breed in 2021/22 were American Staffordshire Terriers, Rottweilers, Staffordshire Bull Terrier Cross, German Shepherds and Staffordshire Terriers.

Current activities undertaken by Council to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals include:

- Encouraging residents to report dog attacks and near misses.
- Responding promptly to complaints about dog attacks and taking appropriate action.
- Investigating dog attack reports and taking an appropriate course of action.

Dog Attack Investigation

Preventing and investigating dog attacks is a critical function of the City Laws Department.

While Council frequently receives reports of dog attacks in the municipality, it is aware that many incidents go unreported. To address this, Council offers a range of ways for community members to report such attacks, and further information is included on Council's website.

When conducting a dog attack investigation, City Laws Officers follow a systematic approach. This typically begins with interviewing the victim, witnesses and the owner of the dog believed to be involved in the incident. During the investigation process, officers diligently review available CCTV footage, gather veterinary and medical reports detailing the injuries sustained by the victim, delve into past incidents or reports relating to the dog, and collect other evidence through surveillance and other pertinent activities.

City Laws Officers have a range of enforcement action at their disposal. These actions may include seizure of the dog responsible for the attack, the imposition of a dangerous or menacing declaration on the dog, and pursuing charges, orders, and compensation on behalf of the victim through the court system.

To ensure effective handling of dog attack cases, all City Laws Officers responsible for investigating and enforcing such incidents possess extensive knowledge and experience in enforcing provisions under the Domestic Animal Act 1994. They undergo advanced training in various areas, including interview techniques, investigation processes, evidence collection, and legal proceedings. This comprehensive training equips them with the necessary skills to navigate the complexities of dog attack cases and ensure a thorough and fair investigative process.

7.2 Our Current Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Policies and Procedures

- Council has Standard Operating Procedures for investigating dog attacks, dog rushes and threatening dog complaints, as well as for the seizure and prosecution of dogs involved in attacks.
- Council operates a 24/7 emergency after hours service to respond to animal related issues.

Compliance Activities

- Issuing official warnings, notice to comply, and infringements.
- Declaring dogs as menacing or dangerous.
- Court prosecution.
- Seeking an order for the destruction of a dog.

7.3 Our Plan

Tables 20 and 21 show the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 7 Objectives 1 and 2.

Table 20: Activities under Section 7 Objective 1

Objective 1: Decrease the number of confirmed dog attacks in the community		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Deliver an education campaign to assist community to identify and manage aggressive dog behaviours	Year 1	Number of education resources developed and shared
Explore the merit of implementing a diversion program for minor first-time offenders (training/education)	Year 1	Feasibility/investigation report prepared

Table 21: Activities under Section 1 Objective 2

Objective 2: Increase community awareness of how to report dog attacks		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Raise community awareness of dog attack reporting, processes and outcomes including the promotion of dangerous dog hotline	Year 1 ongoing	Community education campaign developed. No of reports pre and post awareness campaign
Undertake research to understand areas and times where dog attacks are frequent to guide targeted patrols and the allocation of resources	Year 1 ongoing	Research completed and appropriate strategies developed

“I think increased awareness and training are needed for dog owners. Incidents of people getting bitten by dogs while dog owners just simply walk away.”

8. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

The community's understanding of what constitutes a dangerous or restricted dog may not broadly align with the classifications as per the Act, however it was clear there was community concern about dangerous dogs in the community (particularly off-leash dog parks) and poor management by owners. There was a desire for stronger regulations or restrictions to certain breeds, such as containment on private property, wearing a muzzle and identification collar when outside their property. The community identified a need for more education about dangerous dog breeds and how to care for them.



8.1 Context and Current Situation

Table 22 outlined the number of declared dogs in Hume, with 43 in total, the majority being dogs declared menacing and guard dogs (13 respectively). Seven complaints were received regarding dangerous dogs and six resulting prosecutions.

The number of declared dogs in Hume has decreased from **2016/2017 (78)** to **2021/22 (43)** by a total of

44%

Council administers and enforces provisions of the Act to identify and control dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs to ensure the safety of the community.

Table 22: Declared dogs in Hume City Council

Information	Number
Dogs declared dangerous	9
Dogs declared menacing	13
Restricted breed dogs	8
Guard dogs	13
Total	43
Complaints received re: dangerous dogs	7
Prosecutions re: dangerous dogs	6
Audits conducted re: dangerous dogs	Annually

Hume City Council's current education/promotion activities surrounding declared dogs include:

- Providing education on Council website and Animal Welfare Victoria brochures on dangerous and restricted dog breeds.
- Ensuring owners of declared dogs are aware of their obligations under the Domestic Animals Act.
- Annual inspections for all declared dogs.

"I'd like to see more 'dangerous' breeds wearing muzzles whilst in public with a collar that denotes that they are 'dangerous' as a warning for people and people with pets."

8.2 Our Current Policies and Procedures

Policies and Procedures

- Hume City Council's animal registration form requires all owners to declare if their dog is a restricted breed, has been declared menacing or is a dangerous dog as required under the Act.
- Council has standard operating procedures for the identification, declaration and management of menacing, dangerous and restricted dog breeds.

“As dangerous breed dogs come more into fashion, the owner must be made (to) muzzle the dog in public areas.”

Compliance Activities

- Proactively inspecting dangerous and restricted breed dog sites to ensure compliance of the DAA regulation.
- Ensuring restricted breed and dangerous dog complaints are investigated by a City Laws Officer.
- Maintaining data on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry.
- Annually inspecting properties housing declared dangerous, restricted breed and menacing dogs.
- Conducting patrols by City Laws Officers of industrial areas, parks and wider municipality to monitor dog behaviour and identify unregistered guard dogs.

8.3 Our Plan

Tables 23 and 24 show the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 8 Objectives 1 and 2.

Table 23: Activities under Section 8 Objective 1

Objective 1: Identify and register all declared dogs in the community		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Partner with Local Government Authorities to ensure that Council receives notification of dangerous dogs moving into the municipality	Ongoing	Number of notifications
Ensure all declared dogs are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog registry (VDDR) and that the VDDR is kept up to date	Ongoing	Number of dogs recorded

Table 24: Activities under Section 8 Objective 2

Objective 2: Ensure all declared dogs are compliant to relevant legislation and regulations		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Partner with local general practitioners, medical centres and Police to raise awareness for reporting incidents of dog attacks to Hume City Council	Ongoing	Awareness campaign developed No of dog attacks reported

9. Domestic animal businesses

All Domestic Animal Businesses must register with their local council. Under current legislation (Domestic Animals Act 1994), local councils have the authority to:

- Refuse registration of a business if they fail to comply with the legislation and relevant code of practice.
- Set special conditions on the registration of any domestic animal business.



9.1 Context and Current Situation

There are 18 registered Domestic Animal Businesses within Hume. In 2021/22, Hume received 8 complaints regarding Domestic Animal Businesses. There were 4 Domestic Animal Businesses that were identified as non-registered and 4 notices to comply issued.

Table 25: Domestic Animal Businesses in Hume

Domestic Animal Business Statistics	Number
Registered Domestic Animal Businesses	18
Identified non-registered Domestic Animal Businesses	4
Complaints regarding Domestic Animal Businesses	8
Prosecutions related to Domestic Animal Businesses	0
Notices to comply related to Domestic Animal Businesses	4

Current educational, promotional and compliance activities surrounding domestic animal businesses include:

- Proactively inspecting all Domestic Animal Businesses annually to ensure compliance with the relevant Code of Practice.
- Registering all Domestic Animal Businesses.
- Providing all Domestic Animal Businesses with the relevant Code of Practice.
- Providing education about Domestic Animal Businesses on Council website.

9.2 Our Policies and Procedures

Council has standard operating procedures for investigating domestic animal business complaints and identifying unregistered animal businesses.

Compliance Activities

- Auditing Domestic Animal Businesses annually and upon complaint.
- Monitoring websites advertising the sale of puppies.
- Inspecting premises with over three fertile females registered to determine if they need to register as a Domestic Animal Business.
- Prosecuting on non-compliance.

9.3 Our Plan

Tables 26 and 27 show the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 9 Objectives 1 and 2.

Table 26: Activities under Section 9 Objective 1

Objective 1: Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality by 2026

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify all domestic animal businesses (inclusive of breeding establishments) in the municipality to determine their registration status and education needs	Ongoing	No. Domestic Animal Businesses registered (100%)

Table 27: Activities under Section 9 Objective 2

Objective 2: Ensure all Domestic Animal Business comply with relevant legislation

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct annual inspections and audits of domestic animal management businesses. Where required, act promptly to address matters of non compliance	Annually	No of audits conducted (100%) No of reports investigated (100%)
Increase the partnership opportunities between domestic animal businesses, shelters, vets to build connection and trust with council and each other	Ongoing	Conduct annual visits will all Domestic Animal Business
Update officer inspection templates to ensure alignment to the appropriate Code of Practice	Ongoing	Templates and updated annually

10. Other matters



10.1 Context and Current Situation

Lost Dogs Home

The Lost Dog's Home currently provides care and quality vet services to lost and stray pets on behalf of Hume City Council.

Impounded cats and dogs are housed at the Lost Dog's Home and kept for the statutory period at a minimum, during which time the Lost Dog's Home is required to make every effort to reunite the animal with its owner.

Hume Internally Operated Animal Shelter Facility

There are several benefits for Hume owning their own internally operated animal shelter facility, which were explored during the internal workshop. The benefits were:

- Being visible in the community and raising awareness of animal welfare and a services.
- Ownership and control of operations with a vision to be cost neutral.
- Providing quality in house services and reinvesting any savings into programs and services, resulting in greater service provision.
- Convenient location for residents to access services.
- Opportunity to further develop partnerships with other municipalities, animal rescue and foster groups.
- Expansion of program and service provision, resulting in higher rates of microchipping, desexing and registrations.
- Increasing animal welfare boarding in partnership with Second Chance Animal Rescue.
- Extending outreach programs offered to the community.
- Ability to facilitate education and training opportunities in partnership with Zoo Victoria and not-for-profit organisations at the facility.
- Partnerships with universities to deliver hands on training for veterinary students.

Emergency Management

Council has a Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan which addresses the organisational responsibility of Hume City Council in the planning, prevention, response, relief and recovery from emergencies. The Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee has identified grass and bushfire, flooding and extreme weather events as having a high to extreme risk that could impact upon the welfare of companion animals and livestock within the municipality.

Animal Welfare Boarding Protocol

Hume City Council is committed to supporting those experiencing family violence. The decision not to leave a family violence situation may be related to concerns about the ongoing care and welfare of domestic animals. Currently, Council provides links to an Animal Welfare Boarding Service as required however, Hume City Council is committed to developing a protocol to formalise the use of Animal Welfare Boarding in training and daily practice for Authorised Officers.

10.2 Our Current Policies and Procedures

The Lost Dog's Home has their own policies and procedures with respect to the management of animals impounded on behalf of Hume City Council.

10.3 Our Plan

Tables 29, 30, 31 and 32 show the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 10 Objective 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Table 29: Activities under Section 10 Objective 1

Objective 1: Explore restructure of Local Laws to have a dedicated animal management team		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake a service plan that explores the merit of establishing a dedicated animal management team	Year 1	Service plan report prepared

Table 30: Activities under Section 10 Objective 2

Objective 2: Explore feasibility of Hume to have their own animal shelter facility		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct a feasibility study to investigate the viability of council establishing and operating its own animal shelter facility in the future	Year 1	Feasibility report prepared

Table 31: Activities under Section 10 Objective 3

Objective 3: Emergency management planning for domestic animals as part of the Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure animal management staff are involved in Council's Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan	Ongoing	Animal management is considered and responded to in the Municipal Emergency Relief and Recovery Plan

Table 32: Activities under Section 10 Objective 4

Objective 4: Increase community awareness of animal welfare boarding program		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a protocol for animal boarding and other supports for victims/survivors of family violence	Year 1	Protocols established and promoted

11. Annual review of plan and annual reporting

In line with the Domestic Animals Act, Council must review its DAMP annually and amend the plan as needed. The following activities outline how the Council will meet these requirements.



11.1 Our Plan

Table 33 shows the activities, timeframe and method of evaluation to meet each activity under Section 11 Objective 1.

Table 33: Activities under Section 11 Objective 1

Objective 1: Comply with Section 68A(3)		
Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide the Secretary with a copy of the plan and any amendments to the plan	December 2023 Year 1 and annually	Copy provided to Secretary
Review the Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan	Annually	Plan reviewed annually
Publish an evaluation of its implementation of the plan in Council's Annual Report	Annually	Evaluation report published
Council will undertake a major review of the plan after three years	2026	Major review undertaken

HumeLink

Multilingual telephone
information service

Enquiries 9205 2200

للمعلومات باللغة العربية	9679 9815
بخدمتو تالوونو روهونو	9679 9809
Za informacije na bosanskom	9679 9816
Za informacije na hrvatskom	9679 9817
Για πληροφορίες στα ελληνικά	9679 9818
Per avere informazioni in italiano	9679 9819
За информације на српском	9679 9820
Para información en español	9679 9821
Türkçe bilgi için	9679 9822
Muốn biết thông tin tiếng Việt	9679 9823
For other languages...	9679 9824

Connect with us



Hume City Council

1079 Pascoe Vale Road, Broadmeadows
PO Box 119, Dallas, Victoria 3047



Customer Service Centres

Scan QR code to find locations and hours
or visit hume.vic.gov.au/contactus



9205 2200



contactus@hume.vic.gov.au



hume.vic.gov.au

Follow us on:



HumeCityCouncil

