Domestic Animal Management Plan

2026 - 2029

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All Victorian councils are required under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 to develop and implement a four-year Domestic Animal Management Plan (the Plan) to guide decision-making related to the management of dogs and cats. The scope of the Plan does not extend to the management of wildlife, livestock, or other introduced species of animals i.e.: fox or non-domestic rabbit.

This four-year plan builds on the 2021–2025 Domestic Animal Management Plan and provides a framework for the planning, delivery, and evaluation of animal management services and programs by Wyndham City Council, in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

The plan must address the following:

- 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 pet ownership of dogs and cats; and
- Ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation; and
- Minimise risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and
- Address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and
- Encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and
- Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and
- Effectively identify all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs and ensure 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 the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats.
- Provide for periodic evaluation of the plan

01

Introduction

The Domestic Animal Management Plan has been developed on the outcomes and learning's from the previous Plan and current service demands. This includes a review of existing data from service requests, dog attacks, registrations and impoundments. During the community feedback and consultation phase with key stakeholders including veterinarians, dog trainers and others service providers, we received 1028 responses. This feedback has contributed to guiding the Plan's development.

Key service demands identified during our community engagement process for the draft DAMPlan have shaped the following themes, which reflect community priorities and will guide Council's delivery of the Plan over the next four years:

- Raise awareness among dog owners about keeping public spaces clean by picking up after their dogs.
- Greater owner awareness of Dog off Leash responsibilities.
- Raise community awareness about the various categories of cats, including owned, semi-owned, stray, and feral cats
- Provide workshops on enrichment and behaviour education for cat and dog owners
- Increase responsible pet ownership communications in hardcopy and digital.
- Promote the benefits of registering cats and dogs to encourage responsible pet ownership.
- Review of cat confinement (curfew) Order to keep cats safe, protect native wildlife, and reduce nuisance and trespassing impacts on the community day and night.
- Offer a range of desexing incentives to encourage responsible pet ownership.

Community Engagement Summary Report can be seen here https://theloop.wyndham.vic.gov.au/draft-damp-2026-30

DOMESTIC ANIMAL STATISTICS AND DATA

	2024/25	2021/22
Number of Registered Dogs	18,774	21,002
Number of Dangerous Dogs*	10	11
Number of Restricted Breed Dogs*	0	5
Number of Menacing Dogs*	20	18
Number of Dogs Impounded annually	961	740
Average percentage of Impounded Dogs identified by tag/chip (COVID trend impact)	71%	85%
Average number of dogs reunited with owners	64%	79%
Number of Registered Cats	7,878	8,063
Number of Cats Impounded annually	1675	1307
Percentage of Impounded Cats identified by tag/chip	13%	11%
Average number of cats reunited with owners	16%	6.5%
Registered Domestic Animal Businesses	10	11
Number of cat trap cages hired per annum	139 (impacted by cat vaccine shortage)	262
Average yearly Animal control service requests received/attended to	3,938	3,645
Cats, kittens and dogs rehomed to rescue groups through the Pound (COVID-19 & the cat vaccine shortage impacted on the number of cats made available to rescue.)	133	336

* Dangerous and Menacing dogs are defined in the Domestic Animals Act 1994 by the outcome of an attack except in the case of dogs kept for the purpose of guarding, which are automatically deemed Dangerous under the Act.

* Restricted breed dogs are defined as dogs that are/or fit the Victorian approved standard for an American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier), Perro de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario), Dogo Argentino, Japanese Tosa, or Fila Brasileiro.

*To declare a dog a restricted breed dog, a trained council authorised officer, must make an assessment against the approved Standard for Restricted Breed Dogs in Victoria.

SUMMARY

There has been an increase in the number of dogs and cats being impounded, however, the number of registered pets has declined. COVID-19 appears to have influenced this trend, as many people sought out dogs, puppies, cats, and kittens as companions during lockdowns. As a result, there has been a rise in unregistered pets, particularly those without microchips, making it more difficult to reunite lost animals with their owners.

A cat vaccine shortage in 2025 affected the number of cat traps hired throughout the year. Wyndham's trapping program continues to contribute to the high number of cats impounded, the majority of which are unowned. Despite this, there has been an increase in the number of microchipped cats and successful reunions with their owners.

02

Training of authorised officers

CONTEXT

The Council is responsible for animal management operations under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, other applicable State Laws and Councils Local Laws. Council's Animal Management team comprises a Team Leader, seven (7) Authorised Officers, and two (2) Pound staff. The team is responsible for enforcing animal-related legislation and local laws.

All Animal Management Officers are competent and trained to perform the required duties under the Legislation. This includes a mix of practical "hands on", in-house training through to structured courses and industry applicable workshops. This includes new training in response to changing community needs and changes in Legislation.

An annual training program that aligns with a Professional Development Agreement (PDA) is developed for each officer. Ranger's training needs are identified and form part of their professional development aligned with current and emerging issues in the community and with their pets.

Authorised Officer Training - Basic	Current (2025)	Planned (state when)
Microchip implantation training Officer 1	Completed	Refresher course as required
Industry & inhouse training • animal handling • animal assessment • aggressive dog handling • animal handling in a pound environment • emergency first aid for domestic animals • statement taking/brief preparation • evidence presentation/prosecution skills, • computer skills • loading/unloading animals domestic/livestock • court etiquette training	Completed	Annual animal handling training
• court warrants, issue and filing • conflict resolution • eLearning opportunities • privacy training • situational awareness training		Refresher courses as required
OH&S training: All officers • use and care of animal control equipment • animal handling induction, • animal handling practical skills/practice • manual handling • emergency evacuation procedures • dealing with aggressive customers • conflict resolution • client interaction • council policies and procedures under OH&S Legislation • mandatory inhouse training	Completed	Annual animal handling training Refresher courses as required

Authorised Officer Training - Basic	Current (2025)	Planned (state when)
(State) Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DECCA) – training and information seminars E.g. Dangerous/restricted/menacing dogs and updating of changes in Legislation: All officers	Officers to attend on a rotational basis.	As offered by DEECA
Council Induction program for new staff: All officers	As required	As required
Australian Institute of Animal Management, Municipal Association of Victoria and Local Government Professionals – training and information days: All officers	As offered by Industry	As offered by Industry
Departmental training/skills and assessment matrix for all activities undertaken	Completed	Annual review
Vocational training where identified	As identified	As identified

SUMMARY

The staff training and skills matrix is reviewed and updated annually to ensure it remains current and aligned with operational requirements. Any new training needs identified during the review are incorporated into the matrix. Each operational staff member is assessed against the matrix to verify and maintain competency, ensuring that all officers possess the required skills and qualifications for their roles

Objective 2.1: Ensure animal management officers are equipped with the skills and training needed to effectively support the community and carry out their regulatory responsibilities.		
Activity	**When**	**Evaluation**
Identify any mandatory, role specific, proposed and individual officer training.	Current and Ongoing	Items identified and placed in the matrix. All training completed for relevant competency Review of annual animal handling & husbandry training against training matrix
Review of investigation, compliance and enforcement processes.	By July annually	Periodic review of officer case files and service outcomes against councils Enforcement Policy.

03

Registration and Identification

With a high proportion of cats and dogs already microchipped, the most effective way to improve the reunification of lost pets with their owners and to ensure compliance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994, is to maximise pet registration with Council.

1. We asked about microchipping and registration in both cats and dogs during the engagement process.

2. You told us:
   a. 89% of cat owners responded they had their cats microchipped and registered
   b. 97% of dog owners responded they had their dogs microchipped and registered.

3. You asked: what would the council provide me from registration fees?

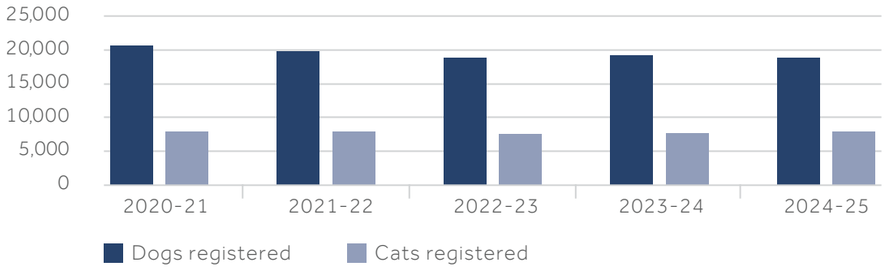
Pet registration with your Council is different from microchip registration. Your Council registration fee provides more than just a lost-and-found service for your pet—it helps fund essential community services that keep pets and people safe. It also funds:

- Facilities such as dog parks and the municipal pound.
- Dog waste bags and bins.
- Staff to respond to animal related enquiries.
- Responsible Pet Ownership information available via publications and website.
- Inspections of Domestic Animal Businesses, such as Pet Shops and Boarding Kennels and Catteries.
- 24/7 animal emergency response service.
- Free information booklets and fact sheet on pet confinement.
- Discount incentive schemes for new registration, such as desexing incentives.
- Monitor and enforce standards on dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs.
- Emergency animal welfare planning.
- Impound fee reduction incentives for registered pets.

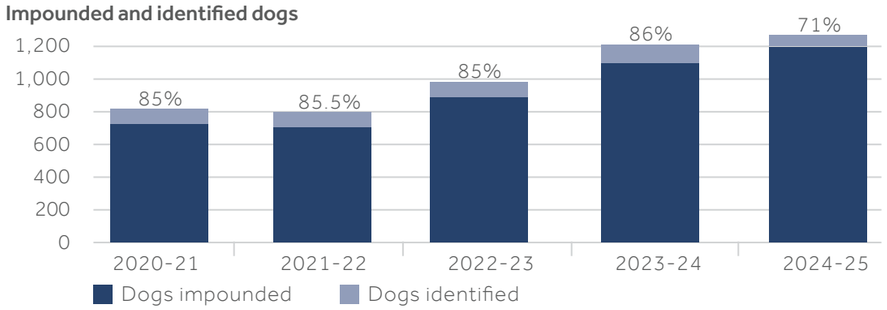
CURRENT SITUATION

Introduced in 2016, Council continues to offer an incentive scheme to encourage and increase voluntary compliance with animal registration. The scheme allows owners of animals not previously registered with Wyndham City to register them free of charge until the next renewal period. Promoting and rewarding pet registration is a more effective and appealing approach than relying on infringements to drive compliance.

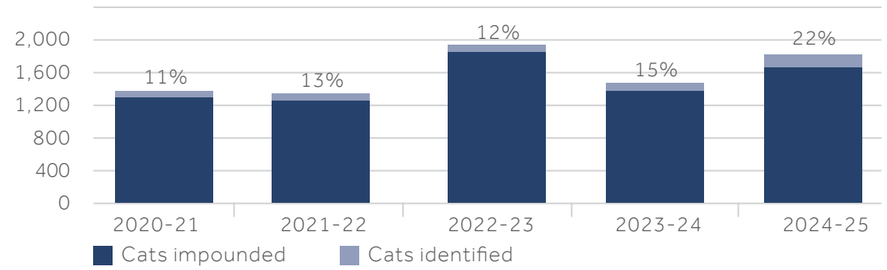
Registered Dogs and Cats



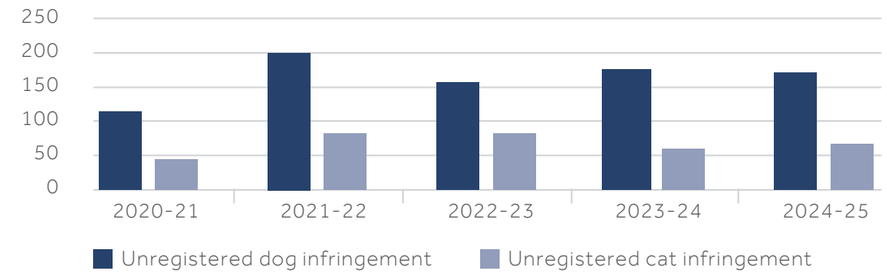
Impounded and identified dogs



Impounded and identified cats



Unregistered infringement Dogs and Cats



OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/ PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Register to Reunite Program:
  - Encourage pet registration by rewarding responsible pet ownership—where possible, return registered pets found in the field directly to their owners to avoid impoundment and associated fees.
  - Use of Council's website and social media platforms to help reunite lost pets with their owners.
  - Promotion of the benefits of pet identification, including microchipping and registration.
  - Free initial registration period for newly acquired or previously unregistered pets.
- Veterinary Incentives:
  - Collaborate with veterinary clinics to deliver discounted desexing vouchers, subsidised by Council, for both cats and dogs.
  - Establish 84Y agreements with vets to enable the direct return of lost pets to their owners.
- Community Outreach:
  - Distribute brochures with the benefits of registration and identification information to local veterinarians, community centres, libraries, and dog training facilities.
- Communication Channels:
  - Utilise media releases, paid advertising, and the Council's newsletter (Wyndham News) to inform residents about their pet registration obligations and the benefits of registration
- Event Engagement:
  - Promote and provide registration services and information at Council run events.
- Education Initiatives:
  - Host information seminars on responsible pet ownership. Promote programs that reunite registered pets with their owners to reduce or eliminate the need for impoundment.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- Issue annual pet registration renewal notices and conduct follow-ups to ensure compliance.
  - Annual registration renewal follow-up, including SMS reminders, phone calls, and doorknocking to encourage timely registration.
- Respond promptly to animal-related service requests to ensure community concerns are addressed effectively.
- Enhance the visibility and presence of Rangers within the community through increased community engagement.
- Conduct random audits to identify unregistered animals throughout the municipality.
- Follow up on animal registrations based on notifications from domestic animal businesses regarding the sale of pets.
- Cross-reference microchip data to identify unregistered animals and follow up accordingly.

- Maintain and audit the pet registration database regularly, updating details such as deceased animals, changes of address, or changes in ownership. This ensures data accuracy and helps avoid unnecessary or incorrect renewal notices that could distress or inconvenience pet owners.
- Ensure all impounded cats & dogs are registered before release, supporting responsible ownership and maintaining compliance.

Encouraging residents to register their pets helps ensure a faster, more efficient reunification process, reducing stress for both pets and their owners.

First Reclaim Amnesty & Hardship Support (Registered Pets)

To increase reunifications and reduce impoundment costs as a barrier to reclaiming pets:

- One free "return from field" per registered animal per year (rolling 12 months). Where a ranger can safely reunite a currently registered and microchipped pet in the field, Council will return the animal without collection/release fees.
- First impound release-fee waiver (Council fee) per registered animal per year. If a registered animal is impounded, Council will waive the Council release fee on the first occurrence each rolling 12 months.
- Hardship path. Owners experiencing financial hardship (e.g., concession card holders or demonstrated hardship) may access fee waivers and/or payment plans for Council-controlled fees.
- Exclusions. Not available for declared dangerous/menacing dogs, cruelty/neglect investigations, or repeat non-compliance during the same rolling year.
- Register to Reunite uplift. Same-day registration/microchip update at point-of-contact qualifies for the amnesty, reinforcing identification and compliance.

Objective 3.1: Increase pet registrations to enhance the identification and traceability of pets within the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
(a) Conduct random audits throughout the municipality	Ad hoc	Conduct a review of pet registration figures prior to and following registration audits.
(b) Review adoption data to ensure all adopted pets into the municipality are registered.	Quarterly	Increase in registration of adopted pets into the municipality.
(c) Conduct a sample review of newly microchipped dogs and cats by contacting microchip registration databases. Cross-check each animal against the Council's pet registration database and follow up on any not listed.	Half yearly	Demonstrate increased pet registrations with Council following the review of cross-referencing with microchip registries.
(d) Implement First Reclaim Amnesty & Hardship Support for registered pets. Promote via renewal notices, website, vets, and social channels.	From 1 Feb 2026; review annually	+10% YoY increase in "returned from field"; +6 pts dog reclaim rate; +8 pts cat reclaim rate; ≥250 hardship supports/year; % of first-time impounds with Council release fee waived.

04

Nuisance

1. We asked what cat issues impact your household?
   a. You told us trespassing cats and cats being out during curfew were more than 60% of your concerns.

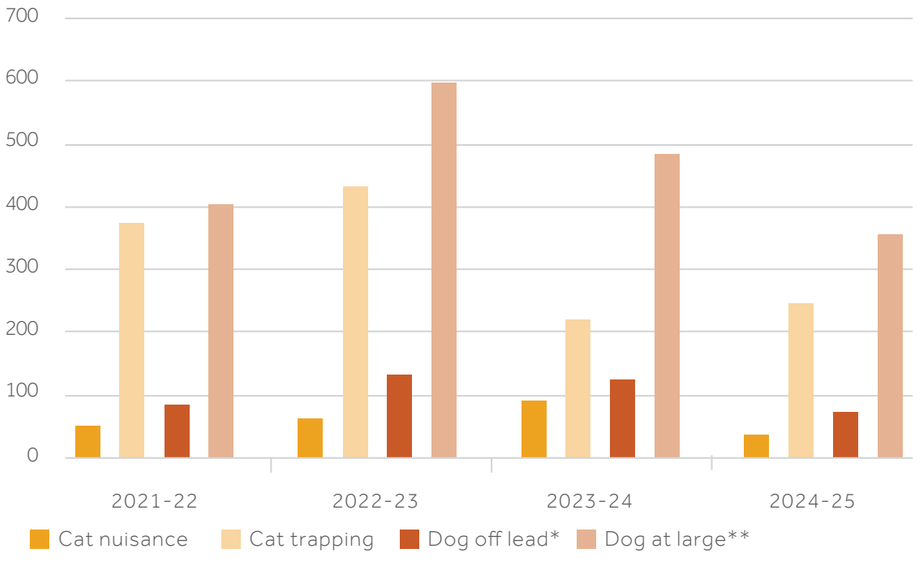
2. What we are doing.
   a. Providing implementation support for a 24-hour cat confinement (curfew) order and assisting cat owners in transitioning their outdoor-roaming cats to remain safely confined within their property boundaries, including backyards, with staged implementation until December 2026.

3. We asked what dog issues impact your household?
   a. You told us dogs running off lead and dog owners not picking up after their dogs

4. What we are doing.
   a. Educating dog owners about their responsibility to clean up after their dogs and issuing warnings or fines, when necessary, along with a higher ranger visibility in the community for dogs walking off lead or without an owner.

Council is guided by the Domestic Animals Act 1994, along with relevant State and Local Laws, to ensure community compliance with current legislation aimed at reducing nuisance and promoting responsible pet ownership. Dog waste bins and bag dispensers will be installed at designated off-leash areas, as outlined in the Dog Off-Leash Plan. Which can be found https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2022-02/Wyndham%20Dog%20Off-Leash%20Plan%20-%20Final%20February%202022.pdf

Rangers aim to inform, educate and communicate to the community their responsibilities with regards to responsible pet ownership. If these approaches are not successful Rangers use written letters, notices, infringements, referral to the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria and sometimes court summonses to ensure compliance with the law. Rangers can also use Building, Planning, and Environmental Health compliance requirements to effectively deal with more complex issues that relate to animal ownership



*Dog off lead = owners walking with their dog off lead.
**Dogs at large = dogs wandering without owners present.

CURRENT SITUATION

Our current data

CATS: While it is difficult to determine exact numbers, unowned cats whether urban strays, or wild feral cats are widely perceived as a nuisance by the community and a threat to local wildlife and the environment. These cats also pose risks to owned pets, including the spread of diseases such as Feline Immunodeficiency Virus (FIV) and injuries from territorial fights. Council promotes responsible pet ownership and discourages 'semi-ownership' of cats, where individuals feed cats but do not take full responsibility for their health, wellbeing, identification, or registration. These issues are addressed through enforcement of Local Laws and the *Domestic Animals Act 1994.*

Wyndham City currently enforces a cat curfew from 10 pm to 6 am. Community feedback received during the DAMP consultation indicated strong support for cats to be treated the same as dogs, specifically, by requiring cats to be confined to their owner's property at all times. This approach aims to reduce the impact of trespassing cats on both the community and the environment. The City's Cat Management Strategy is aligned with the State Government's Cat Management Strategy to ensure effective management of owned cats during curfew hours, as well as unowned 'urban' stray, and wandering cats including feral cats, in accordance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* & Local Laws. The strategy also aims to manage community expectations regarding Council's role in addressing nuisance cat issues related to both owned and unowned wandering cats.

DOGS: Barking dog service requests fluctuated during the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent shift to remote working. Complaints increased during lockdowns from 117 dog barking complaints to 215, and again when owners returned to regular work routines, likely due to separation anxiety experienced by pets adjusting to their owners' absence. To help manage and prevent ongoing issues, educational resources and support are readily available from Council, veterinarians, and State Government websites. This information is also provided to all dog owners upon the release of their pet from the Pound, with the aim of reducing future service requests

Excessive barking is caused by but not limited to:

- Separation anxiety.
- Boredom.
- External stimulants (passers-by, wildlife, other dogs barking, cats).
- Territorialism (persons visiting the premises like the postman).
- Communication (please pay attention to me).

Information is available on DEECA's website: http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/pets/dogs/training-and-behavioural-problems/barking

In many cases, dog owners are unaware of their pet's excessive barking, either because they are not home to hear it or have become desensitised to the noise. Council has established processes for managing barking dog service requests, including the use of a barking dog diary and providing educational resources to owners.

Further information about the barking dog diary and how to lodge a complaint can be found on Council's website. https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/animal-complaints-pests/dogs-and-cats

Dogs that are not adequately confined to their premises and found wandering (at large) are considered both a nuisance and a potential hazard to motorists and the public. Council addresses these issues through enforcement of Local Laws and the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Our Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

These include:

Control of nuisance animals - Restrictions and controls on the number of animals to be kept on a residential and rural zoned properties. All excess animal permits require a one-time fee, payable at the time of application.

Animal husbandry – Conditions on excess animal permits for any extra cats or dogs to be desexed. Creation of permits and Notices to Comply to manage animal issues. Provisions to prosecute in the Magistrates Court when required. Mandatory desexing for cats with all new registrations (*unless exempt*) exemption information here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/animal-registration-regulations/mandatory-cat-desexing

A copy of Wyndham City Council's Community Amenity Local Law (2023) can be found at: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/community-amenity-local-law-2023

A copy of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* can be found at: https://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/in-force/acts/domestic-animals-act-1994/088

Domestic Animal Act 1994 Orders:

Council can make orders under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to deal with animal management issues.

Council currently has a "Dog off Lead Order" which are 'dog off lead' areas and sets the conditions of use. More information on 'dog off lead' areas can be found here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/caring-your-pets/dog-lead-areas

Interested in seeing Wyndham City Council's Dog Off Leash Plan? It can be found here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/wyndham-dog-leash-plan

Revision of Councils Local Laws and orders:

Local laws, Council orders, strategies and policies related to the management of domestic animals are reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain effective and aligned with current community needs, expectations and legislative requirements.

OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES.

- Communication Channels:
  - Use media and social media to inform residents on how to report cat or dog nuisance issues.
  - Provide confinement information in hardcopy pamphlets to cat and dog owners upon release of their pets from the pound.
- Education Initiatives:
  - Host information seminars on responsible pet ownership i.e.: purchasing the right dog for the family and breeding regulations.
  - Educate pet owners in rural areas about their responsibilities regarding nuisance animals, including dogs and livestock.

- Assist cat owners in complying with the cat confinement (curfew) by promoting responsible pet ownership and cat welfare, while also protecting native wildlife, the environment, and the community. Highlighting the curfew also helps safeguard cats from disease, dog attacks, and vehicle-related injuries.
- Advice provided to residents with problem pets e.g. excessive barking, anxiety, cat confinement, etc
- Information for cat owners on how to confine their cats to their properties.
- How to transition an outdoor cat to an indoor cat. Cat enrichment activities and general cat information. RSPCA – Rethink Roaming information can be found here. https://www.rethinkroaming.com.au/
- How to source and utilise cost-effective cat runs.
- Take more than the Lead program - Ranger engagement educating dog owners on their responsibilities of picking up after their dog in public.
- Cat trapping and free provision of traps to the community on their property.
  - Education on the safe use of cat traps.
- Raise awareness among pet owners that their animals may be causing disturbances to neighbours.
- Community Outreach:
  - Desexing and registration incentives:
    - Utilising low cost mobile desexing vans.
    - Offer a variety of desexing incentives to help reduce unwanted litters and reduce the cost of pet registration.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES.

- Responding to all wandering dog service requests, aggressive dogs and dog attacks as a priority.
- Educate dog owners on preventing their dogs from becoming a nuisance or posing a threat to the community.
- Patrols of municipality for stray and wandering dogs, including designated off leash areas and areas of high complaints.
- Issuing Notices to Comply to gain compliance after all reasonable steps have been taken to resolve the issue.
- Issuing Infringements and Summons where applicable.
- Investigation of trespassing and nuisance animal complaints.

SUMMARY

The current levels of education and enforcement are designed to strike a balance that effectively promotes compliance and reduces service requests related to nuisance property owners within the Municipality.

ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

Objective 4.1: Reduce cat nuisance impacts on the community and lower service requests.		
Activity	**When**	**Evaluation**
(a) Council to have available education material about cats and how to build or create cat enclosures at minimal cost.	Quarterly	Reduction in nuisance cat complaints or service requests & increase in voluntary compliance.
(b) Offering no cost traps to residents with cat trespass / nuisance problems	Quarterly	Number of cat traps hired and compared to previous quarter.

Objective 4.2. Assist cat owners in the municipality to move to a 24/7 cat confinement (curfew).		
Activity	**When**	**Evaluation**
To educate residents about the cat confinement Order (curfew), its purpose, and how to keep their cats safe and happy indoors.	Current and ongoing	Number of cat confinement (curfew) infringements issued. Quarterly publication of rollout metrics (education reach, cautions, warnings, infringements, hotspot trends) on Council's website.

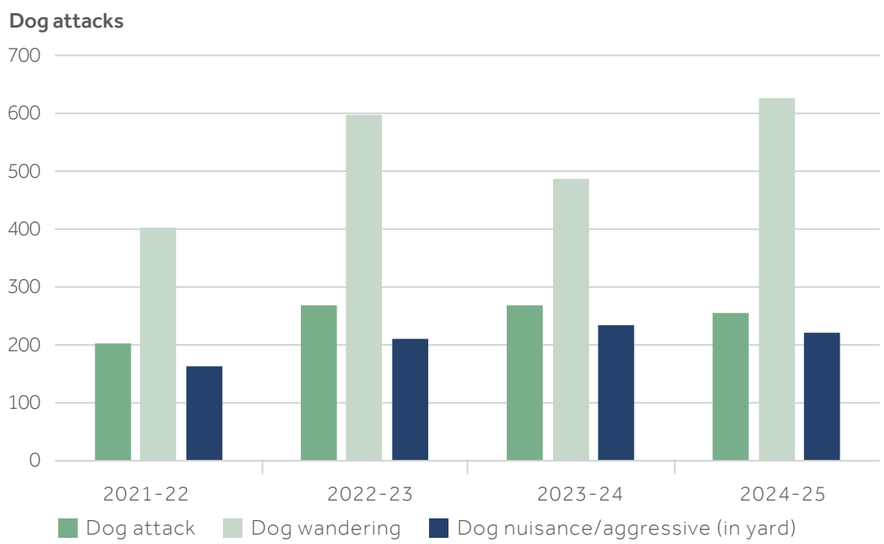
Council will implement the 24/7 cat confinement Order via a four-phase rollout concluding December 2026.
Progress will be reported quarterly on Council's website (see cross-reference below).

Phase	Dates	What happens	Support offered	How we'll measure it
Phase 1 – Education	1 Jan – 31 Mar 2026	Citywide education on the 24/7 confinement requirement; letters to all cat registrants; vets/retail partners briefed.	Free factsheets; "Rethink Roaming" resources; low-cost enclosure guides; translated materials	Website visits; factsheets distributed; social impressions; partner sign-ups.
Phase 2 – Grace & Cautions	1 Apr – 31 Aug 2026	Caution-only approach for breaches; formal written advice issued; no infringements.	On-the-spot advice; referral to desexing/registration incentives; trap-loan for trespass management.	Cautions issued; repeat cautions; service requests trend.
Phase 3 – Final Warning & Targeted Patrols	1 Sep – 30 Nov 2026	Final warning period; targeted patrols in hotspots; repeat breaches recorded.	Officer follow-ups; door-knocks in hotspots; community pop-ups.	Repeat-offender rate; hotspot requests; patrol coverage.
Phase 4 – Full Enforcement	From 1 Dec 2026	Infringements issued in line with the Domestic Animals Act / Local Law; continued education.	Hardship pathways (see Reg & ID); payment plans for eligible residents.	Infringements issued; complaints trend; reunites and registrations.

Objective 4.3. Reduce dog nuisance impacts on the community and lowering service requests.		
Activity	**When**	**Evaluation**
Provide information on acceptable dog behaviour and barking regulations.	Quarterly	Distribution of Dog Barking Factsheets and containment strategies. Reduction in barking complaints.

05

Dog attacks



1. We asked what your major concerns were in relation to dogs.
   a. You told us: The main concerns making you feel unsafe were dogs being walked off-leash by their owners and dogs roaming without supervision. Many of you shared experiences of dogs rushing up while you're walking your own dog, sometimes leading to aggressive encounters or attacks

2. We will:
   a. Promote education and awareness through our website and social media about the importance of keeping dogs on-leash outside designated off-leash areas. Increase ranger presence in the community and prioritise responses to reports of aggressive dogs and dog attacks, reinforcing our commitment to public safety.

CURRENT SITUATION

Our current data

Rangers conduct patrols across the municipality on an ad-hoc basis, with a focus on high service demand areas and vulnerable locations such as schools, sports ovals and playgrounds. All reports of wandering dogs are treated as a priority. When dogs are located and impounded, Rangers take the opportunity to educate owners on responsible pet ownership, including how to properly confine their dogs to their property and the potential risks wandering dogs pose to both the dog, other pets and the community.

The purpose of these measures is to ensure that risks to the community are effectively controlled, minimised, or eliminated altogether. Council's Local Laws, together with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, provide the regulatory framework to manage and address issues related to aggressive dogs.

A copy of Wyndham City Council's Community Amenity Local Law (2023) can be found here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/community-amenity-local-law-2023

OUR CURRENT EDUCATION AND PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Communication Channels:
  - Information on website and social media relating to dog attacks and what action to take.
- Community Outreach:
  - Publication and distribution of pamphlets relating to dog attacks and what to do.
  - Ranger visibility in the community through regular patrols.
  - Providing an after-hours animal emergency response service for dog attacks, aggressive dogs, livestock on roads & injured cats and dogs.
  - Provision of after-hours collection for secured lost or stray dogs.
- Education Initiatives:
  - Council facilitated forums on responsible pet ownership.
  - Information readily available from State DEECA's website: https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/livestock-and-animals/animal-welfare-victoria/dogs/dog-attacks-dangerous-and-menacing-dogs/dog-attacks

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVIES

- Investigate all reports and complaints related to dog attacks and aggressive dog behaviour.
- Maintain ranger visibility in the community through regular patrols.
- Prioritise responses to reports of aggressive dogs and dog attacks."
- In the event of a serious dog attack, dogs may be classified as menacing or dangerous, as permitted under relevant legislation
- Issuing Infringements and summons that align with Councils Enforcement Policy located here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/wyndham-city-enforcement-policy
- To protect community safety, dogs involved in attacks causing serious injury per the definition in relevant legislation, may be seized when necessary.
- Compliance is further supported through impoundment procedures and follow-up with dog owners to ensure appropriate containment measures are implemented

SUMMARY

To ensure continued community safety, Council will maintain a strict enforcement approach in response to all reported dog attacks and aggressive dog-related incidents within the municipality. This will be supported by proactive measures aimed at preventing dog attacks, improving public safety through visible actions, and promoting responsible pet ownership

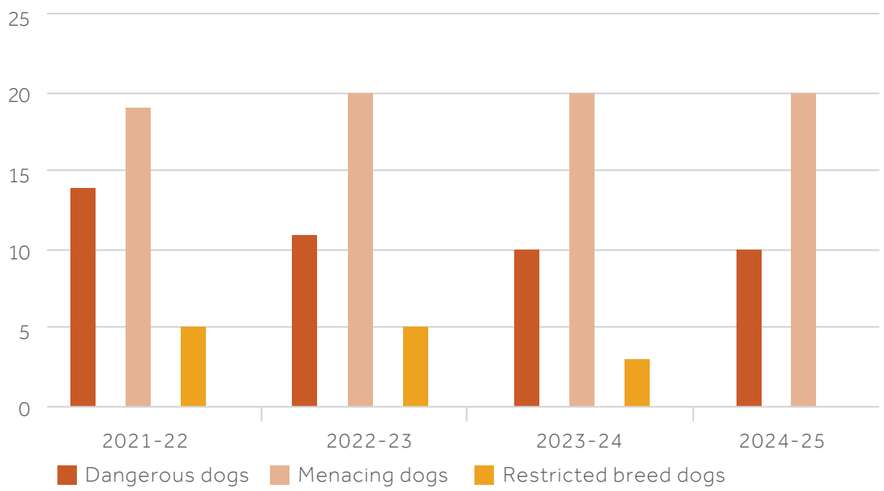
ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

Objective 5.1. Raise community awareness about dog attacks and the importance of reporting incidents promptly		
Activity	**When**	**Evaluation**
Increase community understanding of dog attack incidents and the correct procedures for reporting them to the council.	Quarterly	Review the number of service requests received after communication plan implemented.
Repeat offender tracking	Quarterly	Track the frequency of reports involving the same dogs or owners.
Objective 5.2. Align patrol schedules strategically in areas identified as sensitive or at risk, guided by service requests and incident trends		
Targeted patrolling of high-risk or sensitive area based on service demand	Quarterly	Review incident data before vs after patrols

06

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs



CURRENT SITUATION

Our current data

Wyndham has 10 Dangerous Dogs, 20 Menacing & zero (0) Restricted Breed dogs currently registered in the Municipality.

Rangers conduct both scheduled and unannounced property inspections with this category of dogs to ensure compliance. All findings are documented to support ongoing compliance monitoring in line with legislation and ensuring ongoing community safety.

OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Communication Channels:
  - Information provided to community on websites, media platforms and social media (Council & DEECA).
  - Printed and digital resources for declared dog owners, including factsheets.
- Community Outreach:
  - Direct engagement induction sessions with dog owners upon their dog being declared (or Deemed in relation to Guard Dogs) to explain owner responsibilities.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- Attend all service requests regarding suspected dangerous, restricted breed and menacing declared dogs.
- Inspect all "declared" dogs' enclosures and restricted breed signage.
- Maintaining the State Government data base when declared dogs enter, leave or move address within the municipality.
- Identify declared dogs that have been impounded through the state-managed database.
- Cross-reference all dogs involved in attacks with the DEECA database to identify any declared dogs that have not been notified within the municipality.
- Conducting scheduled and unscheduled inspections and audits to verify that enclosures (where required) meet containment standards.
- Patrol industrial areas for non-registered guard dogs (dangerous dogs by definition).
- Where required, prosecution of non-compliant owners.

SUMMARY

To ensure ongoing compliance to legislation and ongoing community safety, Council officers will conduct inspections of all declared dogs where appropriate. Along with cross referencing any dog attacks against DEECA's declared dog database to identify any dogs listed on the DEECA database that are not registered with Council.

ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

Objective 6.1. Ensure ongoing compliance is attained with all legislative requirements concerning 'declared' dogs.		
Activity	**When**	**Evaluation**
Maintain an inspection regime for all declared, menacing, and restricted breed dogs, with a zero-tolerance approach to non-compliance.	Annual	Inspection program identifies compliance. Prosecution level for non-compliance issues
Objective 6.2. Identify any declared dogs whose owners have not notified Council of their address within the municipality.		
Cross-reference all dogs involved in attacks with the DEECA database to determine whether they are classified as a "declared" dog.	Ongoing	Track number of dog attack incidents recorded against dogs listed on the database.

07

Overpopulation and high euthanasia

1. We asked what was your major concern surrounding cats.

a. You told us that understanding the rules around cat trapping and information and education on feeding stray cats was important to you.

2. We will:

a. Provide information and education on the rules on cat trapping and show you how to safely set and transport the trap. We will also provide information on the impacts on the community, the environment and when feeding a stray cat which contributes to the breeding of the stray cat population.

CURRENT SITUATION

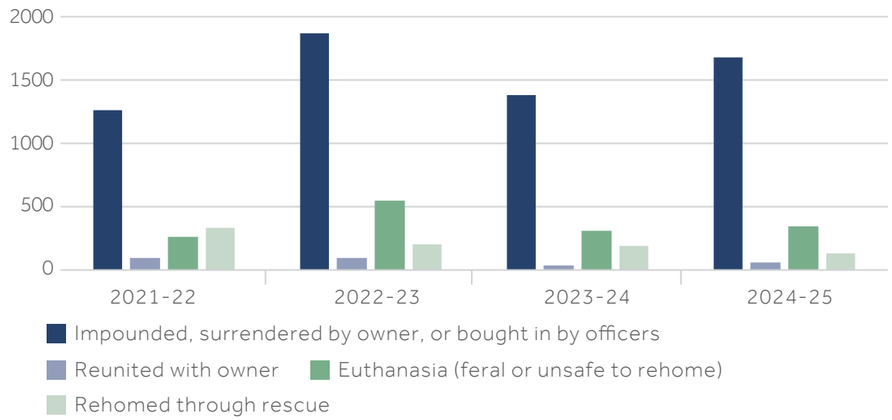
Wyndham's objective is to reunite pets with their owner, support de-sexing, increase the number of identifiable cats and dogs in the municipality by registration, and to explore pathways to re-house unclaimed pets where appropriate.

Our current data

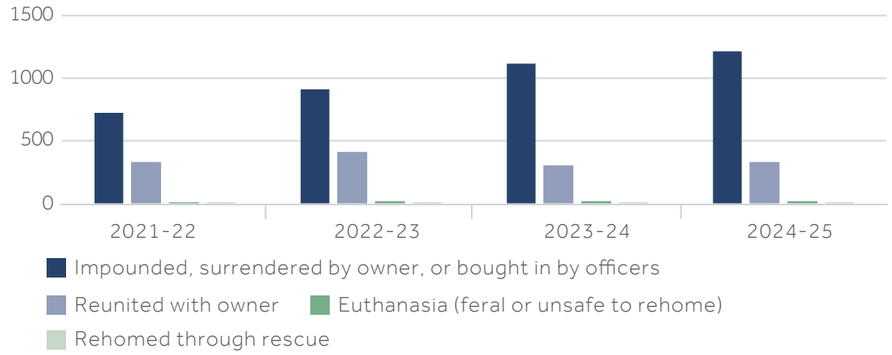
RATES OF REUNITING DOGS

The municipal Pound impounded 961 dogs during the 2024/2025 year, and on average 71% of those impounded were identifiable by microchip and 64% of those dogs impounded were able to be reunited with their owners. Post-COVID, there has been a higher proportion of dogs without microchips, making it difficult to reunite them with their owners.

Cats



Dogs



RATES OF REUNITING CATS.

The municipal Pound impounded 1675 cats during the 2024 -2025 year, and on average 13% of those impounded were identifiable by microchip and 16% of those cats impounded were able to be reunited with their owners. Improvement rates in the number of cats identified via microchip has increased from 11% in 2021/22 to 13% in 2024/25. Council's current registration and desexing incentive, in partnership with local veterinarians, has contributed to this outcome, along with social media campaigns that promote the value of cats as cherished pets and the benefits of pet registration and microchipping.

OUR CURRENT EDUCATION AND PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Communication Channels:
  - Provide descriptions and photos of unidentified animals on Council's Lost Pet webpage and use social media to help locate their owners.
  - Increase public education on the impacts of feeding unowned cats, which contributes to the breeding of stray populations, and raise awareness of Local Law provisions that prohibit feeding unowned animals.
  - Support residents in either taking ownership of stray cat/s or assisting in their removal from the stray population.
- Education Initiatives:
  - Promote Councils mandatory cat desexing.
  - Assisting with discounted and or full cost desexing for cats to people who agree to take ownership of unowned cats or are suffering financial hardship.
  - Council run forums on responsible pet ownership and health benefits of desexing cats & dogs and building cat runs.
  - Council provides a $50 contribution towards the desexing of registered cats and dogs.
  - Provide free cat traps to community members dealing with nuisance or stray cat issues
- Work in partnership with relevant departments to identify high-risk areas for feral and unowned cats in parks, waterways, and conservation zones.
- Community Outreach:
  - Engage foster care networks to support the rehoming of cats/kittens and dogs/puppies where appropriate.
  - Facilitate cat & kitten adoption days in conjunction with the Lost Dogs Home.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- Investigate reports of animal hoarding and provide a variety of support initiatives for the desexing of cats and dogs.
- Targeted cat trapping in ecologically sensitive or high-priority conservation areas.
- Issue enforcement notices to residents who repeatedly feed unowned animals, contributing to stray cat populations.

SUMMARY

Wyndham is committed to ensuring that as many pets as possible are reunited with their owners. Pets are cherished members of the family, and it can be distressing for pets and their owners if their pets are missing. By adding on to Council's $50 desexing incentive, greater opportunities are provided for low-income residents and concession card holders to receive full or partial Council contributions toward the desexing of their registered pets. This approach is expected to reduce the number of puppies and kittens entering shelter systems, ultimately lowering euthanasia rates.

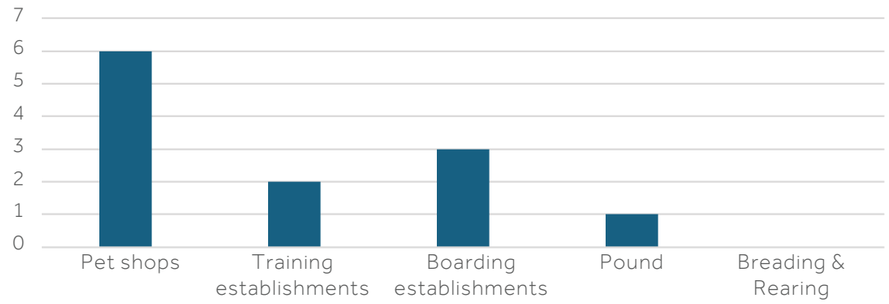
ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

Activity	When	Evaluation
Objective 7.1. Promote awareness of semi-owned cats and the role that feeding unowned animals plays in increasing the stray cat population.		
Community engagement on the impact of feeding unowned cat.	Half yearly	Number of Notice to Comply issued for feeding unowned cats.
Objective 7.2. Maximise the reclaim rates for cats and dogs		
Make use of all available resources to support efforts in locating impounded pets' owners.	Annually	5% increase in reclaim rates
Objective 7.3. Promote the health and welfare benefits of desexing to pet owners		
Utilise the resources available on the DEECA website. RSPCA - Rethink Roaming campaign. Review current desexing incentives	Quarterly	Increase in number of desexed registered pets. Review the allocation of funds for desexing incentives and assess community uptake.

08

Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB's)

Our data



OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Communication Channels:
  - Ensure all relevant Domestic Animal Businesses are notified of any updates or reviews to the Codes of Practice applicable to their operations.
  - Provide education to clarify that a Domestic Animal Business is not limited to commercial premises and may also operate from residential properties.
  - Identify and educate any new Domestic Animal Business.

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

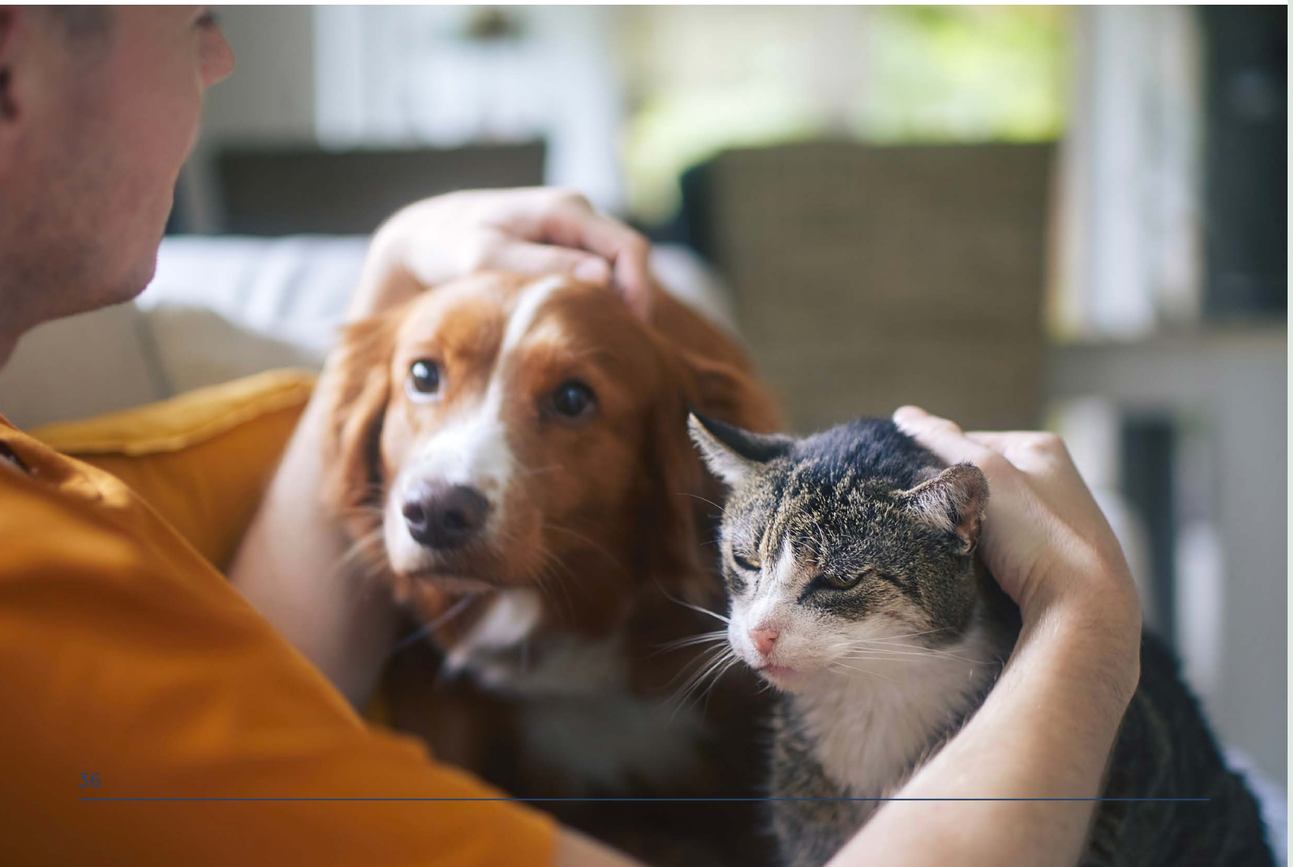
- Identify and ensure the registration of all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality in accordance with regulatory requirements.
- Conduct annual inspections and audits of both existing and new Domestic Animal Businesses in accordance with the relevant Codes of Practice.
- Follow up and issue Notices on any non-compliance by Domestic Animal Businesses to ensure ongoing adherence to their Codes of Practice.
- Collaborate with relevant Council departments to offer guidance on planning applications related to Domestic Animal Businesses.
- Respond to and investigate service requests regarding the operation of Domestic Animal Businesses.

SUMMARY

Council supports the development of new Domestic Animal Businesses within the municipality and will continue to collaborate with operators to ensure ongoing compliance with the Codes of Practice relevant to their operations.

ACTIONS IDENTIFIED

Objective 8.1. Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB's) operating within the municipality		
Activity	**When**	**Evaluation**
Identify all businesses within the municipality that sell pets or provide pet services and are required to be registered as DABs.	Quarterly	Compare the current number of registered DABs with that of the previous quarter.
Objective 8.2. Conduct inspections of each registered Domestic Animal Business to ensure compliance with their relevant Codes of Practice.		
To facilitate achieving 100% compliance, provide inspection checklists to Domestic Animal Businesses prior to inspections.	Annually	Pass rates for compliance inspections have reached 100%.



09

Other matters

Under Section 68A(2)(d) of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, Councils are required to review existing orders made under this Act and relevant Local Laws within their municipal district. This review aims to determine whether additional orders or local laws concerning the management of dogs and cats in the district are necessary.

OUR CURRENT EDUCATION/PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

- Communication Channels:
- Provide information to cat owners and residents regarding cat curfew requirements via digital platforms and pamphlets.
- Publish information on the Council's website and social media platforms about the benefits of pet registration, microchipping, and desexing.
- Information available on Council's website and rolling social media releases regarding Wyndham City's Dog Off Leash areas – that can be found here: https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/caring-your-pets/dog-lead-areas

OUR CURRENT COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

- Conduct ranger patrols in designated off-lead areas to monitor compliance and promote responsible pet ownership.
- Audit the registration database to ensure all cats are desexed prior to new registrations, unless an exemption applies.
- Issue infringements for cats found in breach of the cat confinement (curfew) Order..

10

Under s68A(3) of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, every Council must –

(a) Review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and,

(b) if appropriate amend the Plan; and

(c) provide the Secretary with a copy of the Plan and any amendments to the Plan; and

(d) publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan and its annual report.

Annual review of plan and annual reporting

Council will publish a Quarterly Cat Confinement Rollout Update summarising progress against the Phase timeline in Objective 4.2, alongside standard DAMP KPIs.

The achievement of the Objectives and Activities detailed in this Plan will be reviewed and reported annually.

For more information visit

www.wyndham.vic.gov.au

wyndhamcity
city. coast. country