

Domestic Animal Management Plan

2025 - 2029



October 2025

Public Exhibition of Draft Domestic
Animal Management Plan 2025-
2029: Community Engagement
Report



Engagement overview

Council is legislated to prepare and implement a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP). The DAMP outlines the services, programs and policies the Council has established, or plans to establish, to address the administration of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic), and the management of dog and cat issues in the municipal area. Information, data and feedback gathered in this engagement will guide the future direction of Council's Animal Management service over the next four years.

The first round of community engagement was run from 1 - 31 May 2025. This informed the draft document which has now been out for a second round of public exhibition from 23 September to 22 October.

The purpose of the public exhibition is to provide community the opportunity to read the draft document and provide feedback before Council makes the final decision to adopt the document.

Community was invited to view the draft plan and provide feedback via an online survey on The Loop. 61 contributions were received. A form with an open text box asking the question: **Provide your feedback on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-29 here** was provided.

For a full breakdown of who we heard from, see Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

How did the community get involved?

The below tables outline the ways we engaged with the community and the activities undertaken to promote the engagement.

 61 survey contributions	 753 page views on The Loop page
 2 direct emails to 1519 recipients	 479 total visitors to The Loop page

Online promotion	1 advertisement was run via social media at the commencement of the public exhibition period. • Reach: 5,675 • Engagement: 60 • Link clicks: 30
Other communication activities	• Emails to stakeholder recipients
Direct emails from recipients	• Five (5) direct emails from recipients with feedback

What did we hear?

Question: Provide your feedback on the draft Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025-29 here

Theme	Percent	Count
Cat Curfew (support & opposition)	37.7%	23
Dog management & owner responsibility	26.2%	16
Education, enforcement & Council accountability	23.0%	14
Fees, Fairness & Accessibility	11.5%	7
Wildlife protection & feral animal control	1.6%	1
Total	100%	61

Next steps

Feedback received will be considered and the document updated if deemed necessary. This Draft DAMP will be presented at a Council meeting on 25 November for potential adoption. It is then submitted to the Minister of Agriculture on 4 December as part of Council's legal obligations.

If you have any further questions regarding this project or this report, please email engagement@wyndham.vic.gov.au

Appendix 1: Who did we hear from?

The below highlights who we heard from during our engagement via The Loop survey.

Age Group	%	Count
Under 12	0	0
12-17	0	0
18-24	1.64%	1
25-34	9.84%	6
35-44	32.79%	20
45-54	18.03%	11
55-64	18.03%	11
65+	19.67%	12
Total	100%	61

Gender	%	Count
Female	68.85%	42
Male	26.23%	16
Prefer not to say	5.00%	3
Other	0	0
Total	100%	61

Suburb	%	Count
Hoppers Crossing	26.23%	16
Mambourin	1.64%	1
Manor Lakes	3.28%	2
Point Cook	22.95%	14
Tarneit	3.28%	2
Truganina	6.56%	4
Werribee	22.95%	14
Werribee South	4.92%	3
Williams Landing	1.64%	1
Wyndham Vale	6.56%	4
Total	100%	61

Identity	%	count
A person living with disability and/or someone caring for a person living with disability	11.86%	7
An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	1.69%	1
A person who identifies as LGBTQIA	10.17%	6
Prefer not to say	8.47%	5

Appendix 2: Feedback from engagement

Below is all the feedback received from the engagement.

The updated plan needs to include a response to the following (or integrate this information into the new version):

- What happened to the cats in your statistics that weren't euthanised, reunited or rehomed/rescued? There seems to be a gap in the data.
- Why don't we have stronger messaging about the damage of cats on the environment? Wandering cats are the leading cause of mammal extinction in Australia, that needs to be part of council's messaging. Wyndham is home to Australia's rarest parrot (orange bellied parrot), Australia's rarest reptile (grassland earless dragon), Eastern barred bandicoots (largely extinct in the wild), the striped legless lizard and so much more. We need public education officers from council, telling people about the animals in their local postcode. In addition, we also need flyers and accessible social media ads, informing about cat runs, cat traps, and the need for locals to play a role by keeping cats inside.
- Council must actually address the huge colonies of feral cats. We need clear answers as to why there can't there be a coordinated effort from council to remove these animals (e.g. Reflection Boulevard). Education is not the only piece of the puzzle, council needs to show leadership and remove cats from places where there are large numbers of ferals. We don't want more signage about not feeding feral cats, we need feral cats GONE.
- There needs to be transparency on "targeted cat trapping in ecologically sensitive or high-priority conservation areas." Where are these areas and how often is trapping done? There needs to updates, newsletters, and success stories from council so we know you're actually addressing this and protecting our local ecology. Otherwise it's toothless or useless.

I disagree with a 24 hour cat curfew.

I agree with everything, especially cat curfews and enforcing them. Cats are a nuisance to wildlife, there are no possums in my street anymore because cats keep killing them. They also yowl all night and fight and are often run over. It is not acceptable so I absolutely agree with the draft plan

- 1) hard to read the the draft because of the light print. Please for the next time, use darker print not transparent like print.
- 2) please look at the Calgary model that helps reunited lost pets directly to owners bypassing pound. Lost dog home is cesspool where cruelty to animals continue behind closed doors. Please stop sending them to lost dog home . A lot of owners cannot afford the fees and eventually had to abandon their beloved pets .
- 3) registration fees to be reduced .
- 4) cat curfew to be imposed strictly - fines to the owners .

Very disappointed in the 24 hr cat curfew & particularly without a staged implementation. . I would support an extended hour curfew but feel the 24 hr is excessive. The no. of cat complaints is not excessive compared to dog complaints when dogs are contained.

I am concerned that the 24X7 curfew for domestic cats is a knee jerk reaction that people 'think' will address the number of roaming cats and impact to wildlife, and is not based on any Australian or international studies. Many studies, including The Australian Pet Welfare Foundation review of many Australian and International studies and reports from 2015-2021 has found that curfews do little to achieve the outcome of reducing roaming cat numbers, as stray numbers increase to 'fill the gap'. The study also found there is no evidence to support Domestic-owned cats are not the greatest source of wildlife depredation. International studies consistently find that catch-neuter-release or high-level culling programs are far more successful at reducing roaming cat numbers, however high-level culling programs have been found to be cost-prohibitive. I am happy to provide this study for input to the final policy; however this study was provided to the Climate Futures Advisory committee last year and has clearly been disregarded. What peer-reviewed studies have been used to develop the proposed new policy given that the Australia pet Welfare review of studies indicate that the new policy is likely to make both the roaming issue and the wildlife depredation issue worse?

My feedback is to keep the cat curfew as it is. People cannot afford to transition their cats from outside to inside, source and build cat enclosures in their gardens. I own two cats and abide by the current curfew conditions as do many of my cat owning neighbours. I do not believe that enforcing the proposed rules are going to stop strays and feral cats roaming, this will just put a financial burden on pet owners, stress out the animals involved. Please reconsider keeping the arrangements as they are for Wyndham.

A 24-hour cat curfew can be problematic for cats because it can cause stress, boredom, and a lack of natural stimulation if not properly managed with indoor enrichment, potentially leading to behavioral issues. It is also argued that curfews do not address feral cat populations, are difficult to enforce, and shift the burden of containment onto owners, creating potential for increased costs and impounded cats.

I've had to get traps from Council to catch roaming cats on my property that kill baby birds in their nests at night. I'm all for Curfew that is policed.

I think the 24 hour cat curfew is a good idea, but I don't think it's achievable. People don't care about council or neighbours, and cats that have been outdoor cats would be insufferable if you tried to keep them locked in. Is it better to have an unachievable policy, or a policy that is achievable, even though it may be less desirable? I tend to favour the latter. Measurement of its success (evaluation) by number of captures is not a reliable indicator unless your staff are out all night capturing stray cats. No valid or reliable evaluation makes the whole thing a box ticking exercise.

Instead of a cat curfew, cats should be banned from wandering altogether, for the sake of local ecosystems. I have had numerous instances of finding dead birds and lizards, as well as preventing cats from stalking local wetland birds. It's ridiculous.

I believe that the main purpose should not be changing the current animal laws, but more education for the current laws in place. For example, changing the cat curfew from 10pm to 6am to 24 hours will not work, more education for cat owners in relation to spading and cats having to wear a collar is a more practical solution, along with dealing with the feral cat population, either through spading or re-housing. Dog owners also should be more educated in the picking up of their dogs mess and recall training for all dog owners.

It is a welcome relief to see action being taken towards pet management, especially in relation to wandering cats. It is a blight on many councils around Australia, that cats are allowed to wander and inflict enormous loss on native species. I fully support the implementation of 24 hour cat curfews. While there is more work to be done, it is a great step forward in changing attitudes, while allowing the council, especially our hard working animal management team, to be in a position to actively manage feral, roaming and nuisance cats and other non-native species.
Bring 24hr cat curfew forward. Cats at night time is a big nuisance.
Hard to keep cats inside when they are used to be outside Owners will end up surrounding them as they won't won't to deal with it.
I am super keen on the 24 hour cat curfew. Our poor wildlife have no chance against cats and trespassing on other property is also an issue. I would like to see installation and maintenance of dog poo bags at local parks to assist with people picking up dog poo.
I don't believe there should be a 24hr cat curfew for many reasons, there is a night cat curfew now which many don't comply with, enforce that first, I think it is an unnecessary infringement on residents in urban suburbs with lower incomes, there are dwellings where catios are not possible, who is going to pay for expensive catios? Council? I also think it will lead to folk not registering or microchipping their pets due to fear of fines they can't pay. Finally I believe it will lead to neighbourhood wars if residents trap other people's cats - there is enough trouble and violence in our area already.
The thrust of the cat curfew seems to be that cats have to be kept indoors at all times and this is definitely not good for the average domestic cat. I could live with a requirement that they be confined on the owner's property at all times except when necessary to not be such as going to the Vet. Our cats have always been on our property but able to use the yard for sleeping and playing and they are not troubled by the birds we have come in and do not hunt them or any other animals because we have spent the time with them to teach them that such behaviour is unacceptable. For the last ten or so years we have had 2 raven families and 2 Magpie families visit us daily and I can show you photos of them and the cats interacting with both parties showing no interest in the others. It all boils down to spending the time to educate your pets properly and that is the big problem. People get pets and have no idea how to look after them properly. Interestingly, every time the Council Team member has inspected our place they have commented on how they would like to come back as a cat and live with us.
It is exciting to see the council recognising the damage that cats do to our environment and neighbourhood. Not only do cats trespass in their neighbours yards leaving behind faeces that can infect people and children with toxoplasmosis, but they kill our native and endangered fauna. The 24hr cat curfew is amazing!

Submission on Proposed Cat Curfew Measures

To whom it may concern,

I write to express significant concerns regarding the proposed extension of cat curfew regulations. While the intention to improve animal welfare is acknowledged, the proposed measures risk being costly, inequitable, and ultimately ineffective without addressing the underlying drivers of pet abandonment and welfare concerns.

1. Pet Surrender and Abandonment in Wyndham: Local data illustrates the scale of the issue in Wyndham and the urgent need for a different policy focus:

In a single property seizure in Wyndham, 48 cats and 1 dog were removed due to neglect and inability to provide adequate care (RSPCA Victoria, 2024). In 2020, Wyndham City's pound reported 10 animal surrenders in one week, compared with a previous average of just two per month & a 15% year-on-year increase, directly linked to cost-of-living pressures (Wyndham Council News, 2020). Wyndham City recently had to resume its cat trapping service after a state-wide vaccine shortage paused intake, underscoring the fragility of existing systems (Wyndham TV, 2023). These figures demonstrate that surrender and abandonment, fuelled by affordability challenges, are the primary animal welfare issues in the region & not roaming cats alone.

2. Impact on Renters: Stricter curfew laws disproportionately affect renters. Many rental agreements prohibit structural modifications, such as cat enclosures or fencing, leaving tenants unable to comply. Without addressing this inequity, renters may be forced to surrender pets unnecessarily, contributing further to abandonment rates.

3. Cost and Policy Effectiveness: The proposed curfew measures are expensive to implement and enforce, yet the return on investment is questionable. Redirecting funds toward proactive, preventative strategies would deliver far greater long-term impact.

4. Recommended Priorities: To address animal welfare and community concerns more effectively, I recommend that resources be redirected to:

1. Educational initiatives & promoting responsible pet ownership, curfew awareness, and the benefits of desexing.
2. Subsidised desexing and low-cost veterinary services & making prevention affordable for households under financial pressure.
3. Support and funding for local rescue organisations & strengthening the safety net for surrendered and abandoned animals.
4. Tenant-focused solutions & incentives for landlords to permit enclosures or support grants to enable renters to comply with best-practice animal care.

Conclusion: Extending cat curfews addresses a symptom rather than the cause. By shifting the focus to education, affordability, and systemic support, policymakers can create a more effective and compassionate framework for improving animal welfare across Wyndham and beyond.

I agree, particularly with the cat curfew extension to a 24hr containment order commencing December 2026.
I strongly disagree with having a 24/7 cat curfew. That is not necessary or right for the cats. The majority of trapped cats are unregistered so the curfew would not necessary have an impact on those numbers but unfairly disadvantage and socially cripple the desexed and registered cats that enjoy going outside during the daytime hours. It appears unlikely that anything would be achieved by the curfew apart from stressing the cats out as they have been brought up to be used to go outside during the day. Make the curfew 10pm to 7am bit not 24/7
Cats should have a curfew. They get out breed and let's not forget the damage to native wildlife. I am going to take the opportunity to share my thoughts on the more than 2 dogs permit. Firstly, your system is broken as acknowledged by your rep who called. At no point were we made aware in writing as to WCC requiring a permit. All our dogs are registered and well looked after. I am a former dog behaviourist so responsible dog ownership is at my core. We still paid for the permit after the fact but it is a rort especially when it is responsible Owners who are most likely to register their dogs in the first instance.
Pls see below a few recommendations which were not fully addresses in the DAMP 2025-29 - Current communication channels for what actions to take in the case of "Dog Attacks" are - website, social media updates, and pamphlets. However these have limited reach and no recall value when the actual event occurs. Instead of (or in addition to) pamphlets, please send Emails regarding what to do if one sees a wandering dog or if someone/their dog is attacked by another dog. - Please provide details (phone and address) of the nearest 24/7 emergency hospital for animals as well as animal emergency Hotline number - To encourage people to pick up after their dogs, please install more dustbins in parks (e.g. Ramson Way), around schools etc. - Provide more state run or subsidised day care centers for dogs (from 8AM to 8PM) to enable people to go to office their offices
Looks like it covers all aspects of cat and dog management
Investing in dogs parks across the municipality is one thing but without proper education just sets dog owners up to fail. The original Saltwater Dog Park is notorious for dogs that aggressively attack and charge at other dogs. The surface of the park is dirt, leading to harbouring of disease. Then the dog park on Boardwalk Boulevard opened, no education, no signage. Go and visit some of the Bayside dog parks, they have invested in correct dog park etiquette signage, owners need educating about what is and is not acceptable dog to dog play and interactions. Why don't you consider investing in local dog trainers to visit these parks and help educate owners. While I am a professional dog trainer, this isn't a plug for more business, it is a sensible approach to providing an environment that without good education, will lead to more ranger visits and aggressive dog complaints. Look at the socials for the local community, you will continue to see over and over again that the council do not support dog owners doing the right thing and there are no consequences for those breaking the rules.

I have never seen a ranger at a dog park ever, in my more than ten years as a trainer. More visibility, more visits, make owners accountable for their dogs behaviour and be the first council to force owners to invest in proper training for their dogs.
Overall it is a great plan. Some concerns around Objective 3.1a, being 'ad hoc' schedule could mean once a year or less. A quantifiable schedule should be provided for activities to make council accountable for achieving this plan. Higher ranger visibility has not occurred. I have never, in 8 years of living in this municipality ever seen a ranger and I'm out with my dogs twice a day. Educational activities and ranger patrols should be the highest objectives on your plan, many people with off lead dogs don't care about the rules, only consequences will change this behaviour. No rangers out and about = zero consequences.
As a user of lollipop creek reserves and walking tracks, a number of dog owners in my experience allow their dogs to run off the lead and some will call them and put them on a lead when they see another dog. This is in an on leash area and some dog owners or indeed just walkers feel safe knowing dogs will not be a threat. However, nobody knows a dog's intent therefore any dog off a lead is a threat and should not be tolerated. I believe educating an offender is good but a fine might be a more effective deterrent.
Very thorough, but those that engage in education are usually the ones that need it the least. See if a local businesses can offer reduced cost of supplies needed to build a cattery . Like the discount towards desexing. Like a Bunnings gift card. Do ad hoc checks of dogs in dog parks to check if registration up to date, throughout the year.
I am enjoying the new off leash area near me but still feel unsafe as a number of large breed dogs that rush and bother me and my dog.
If you are going to ask people to pick up their dogs' poo, you also need to install garbage bins to dispose of the bags. Currently in the Ashley Gardens Estate Reserve, there are no bins, so people just leave the bags of poo on the ground. I would suggest bins must be considered in every area that dogs may be walked to reduce the number of bags of poo left lying around.
It looks good, with some reasonable steps to important change, and educate locals. One area that personally I've identified in the past is regarding the process for reporting excess noise from dogs barking. The current process of keeping a diary, and submitting it, as well as the inability to stay anonymous can be a deterrent for many people reporting this. A more accessible step in the interim could help bring more peace to neighbourhoods. Otherwise, looks good
I don't even own a cat, but I think the 24-hour curfew is extreme and borders on cruelty. Permanent lockdown for cats. The dogs at least get a dog park. Cats don't defecate and leave it in the open for people to step in. There is no enforcement of owners picking up poo.

Dog registration fees are ridiculously high in Wyndham council, the council also do not provide payment plan options, moving from Tasmania where there is only one time, single life time registration fee with no annual fees, this feels more like greed. Dogs are part of family and there should not be such high registration fees, sometimes people can't desex their pets due to financial issues and there is no relief, we should be reducing our dog registration fees.
Barking dogs follow-up. The owners might keep dogs quieter for 2 months but then the dogs back barking again. Dogs in our street have barked for last 6 years. Worse on Thursday and Saturday. No need for barking diary, once a complaint sent in cant the neighbours have survey posted then reply by email. Thanks
How are you going to enforce a 24/7 curfew when the night one isn't enforced now? Dogs barking for hours and dog poo is a way bigger problem in our area of Wyndham. Most people seem to care for their domestic cats well, but the feral strays are the issue and since you charge for cat traps no-one is going there so are you hiring a cat catcher?
I don't believe that there is strong enough action there for dog owners who don't take appropriate measures to keep their dogs on leash and contained. Dogs can be a significant risk to the public when not properly controlled. Education is already available, many dog owners simply ignore it. I don't think that a 24 hour curfew is necessary for cats, the current measures are adequate; cats do not represent a significant risk to the public. However, I do think that microchipping and desexing of both cats and dogs should be absolutely mandatory, while they are puppies/kittens, before they are able to reproduce, unless someone has a breeding license and has their premises regularly inspected to protect the wellbeing of the animals. There is no need, given the number of cats and dogs available for adoption, for people to be allowing their pets to breed. Given the overall risk posed by dogs in comparison to cats, and the issues impacting the situation, I don't think this properly addresses the needs to the community.
DAMP is required urgently there is a growing number of stray cats and dog owners appear to have become increasingly lazy in picking up poo.
I am doubtful of the enforcement by trained authorised personnel, as with the current state of the Victorian police on all things to do with the enforcement of public safety. However, I am looking forward to the changes and will remain hopeful that pet owners will be responsible.
no need for this nonsense! We need an aquatic centre and a new plaza with a cinema.
Reinforce the present night curfew and don't introduce a draconian 24 hr curfew which many residents will resist and will only make the night issue worse.
I think having a 24 hour curfew for cats is not humane. Rather allowing out for a period of time supervised is better.
All the areas you are looking at need improvement

It seems to concentrate on what has been done, where is the next four years?
I don't think that forcing cat owners to keep their pets inside 24 hours a day is a sustainable response to addressing the nuisance cat issue. Some people just do not care about the impact their animals have on other animals and responsible pet owners. Unless you are prepared to run surveillance each and every night to correct the issue, it is just blue sky dreaming. The kittens generated by these cats will always be my greatest concerns. It is heartbreaking to me as an animal lover that there is no real solution to this problem. Animal rescue organisations do a great job but definitely need more recognition and support from local government.
I am happy with the suggestions put forth in the plan
proposal for animals in side 24 hours day is ridiculous
Main issue was trespassing cats in my area and providing cat traps free to use on my property would solve my issue as it's the SAME 2 cats.
I am very happy about the proposed changes for cats, as a veterinarian I see all the issues that having them outdoors causes - and I also see how well they can be looked after indoors, and how they can be perfectly happy inside.
I much prefer the 10pm to 6am curfew for cats. It seems inhumane to restrict them completely to indoor access only.
It's great. Thanks
There should be incentive for people to register their pets including reduction in pet registration fees. This could be linked to good record (no nuisance call) that incentivize good behaviors futher
It's a bit rich to ask us to pay registration for cats if you want us to keep them in doors all day and night. Have you ever tried entering or exiting a house with a cat that wants out. This is impossible to achieve it will never work and it's just objectively an absolutely terrible idea. Also who the hell complains about trespassing cats?? I have at least 3 neighbourhood cats come in my cat door and I don't mind they're cats and they're cute whoever complains about that isn't the type of person we want in our neighbourhood they're obviously not animal people so go live where there's no animals if you don't like them that much. I mean honestly get a hobby or something these people seriously and because of these people who I'm guessing complain about everything coz that's the only time they're happy because of them the rest of us have to suffer? If this is implemented I'll have no choice but to move out of this area because this is absolutely insane

No. Absolutely not you can't have a 24 hour confinement for cats. First everyone's houses will stink I know you can get special cat litter and powder that absorbs the smell but who the hell can afford all that crap and it doesn't work. This is the worst idea you've ever had next to ruining Wyndham Vale so we're spending most of our time on the road in complete gridlock coz there's only 2 ways in and out.

Also I have children who always and I mean always leave the door open so does my husband so this is simply untenable

What a stupid idea and unless your providing kitty litter and litter tray bags and deodoriser to stop the house smelling I don't see how you can now ask all cat owners to suddenly have money to provide this. The RSPCA recommends 1 litter tray per cat, where am I supposed to put them my laundry looks like it was added as an after thought it's the size of a toilet there is literally no space and my 2 year old already eats the cat food when we're not looking how the hell do I stop him playing in that and spreading it all over the house?? Terrible absolutely insane idea.

Areas for Improvement

1. Clarity and Readability: While thorough, some sections are text-heavy and could benefit from simplified language or infographics. For example, the training and compliance sections list extensive details that could be easier to digest with tables, diagrams, or flowcharts.

2. Performance Benchmarks: The evaluation activities often state "review" or "increase registrations" but do not always set quantitative targets. Setting specific benchmarks (e.g., "increase cat reunification by 10% within 2 years") would strengthen accountability.

3. Focus on Education vs. Enforcement Balance: The plan relies heavily on compliance actions (e.g., infringements, summons, impoundments). While education initiatives are included, the strategy could further emphasize preventive education (e.g., behaviour workshops, school programs) as a long-term solution.

4. Digital Strategy Opportunities: There is mention of social media and newsletters, but the plan could expand on digital tools like apps for reporting lost pets, geo-tagged ranger patrol updates, or QR-code pet registration campaigns to boost engagement.

5. Future-Proofing: Emerging issues such as climate impacts on animal welfare (e.g., heat stress, bushfire evacuation planning) are not strongly integrated. Including these would help ensure the plan remains relevant over the full 2025-2029 timeframe.

I don't agree that the cat containment policy should change from current to 24hrs. This is unfair to all the ppl who have had their cats have the freedom to be outside during the day for years to just trap them inside forever. Or even then have to pay to enclose their yard. This is an area with large rear yards and to expect this is wrong. I lodge a formal rejection of this proposal.

cats are unfairly penalised

Fully support cats being contained within their property. This will greatly help trapping stray cats and protecting wildlife.

While I hold a differing view on the 24/7 cat curfew, I acknowledge that the council intends to move forward with it. I hope the council will grant cat owners a reasonable period to adapt to this change. It seems likely that the demand for cat enclosures will initially exceed the available supply, and residents should not face penalties as a result.

Furthermore, I would suggest reducing the registration fees for cats, as cat owners receive fewer benefits than dog owners. For instance, dog owners have access to dog parks and dog waste bag stations, while cats will not be present on council property at any time.