**DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017 - 2017**

*Summary of future activities*

# SECTION 1 – TRAINING OF AUTHORISED OFFICERS

**Summary**

It is critical that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills needed to carry out their work as well as having the necessary authorisations and delegations.

**Future Plans**

**Objective 1:** To ensure all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and expertise to carry out their duties and functions of Council.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Conduct annual performance reviews and identify further training needs for individual officers | Coordinator/ Senior | Annually | Performance reviews completed |

**Objective 2:** To successfully induct and manage new staff.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Monitor performance and provide guidance to employees where needed | Coordinator/ Senior | Ongoing | Council Induction and Performance management |

# SECTION 2 – REGISTRATION

**Summary**

Identifying and registering domestic animals is seen as the cornerstone of a successful animal management program.

Pet registration also helps us get your dog or cat home. The chief frustration of AMOs Animal Management Officers is when an animal is micro chipped but the owners have moved and not updated their details. If a dog or cat is not registered with Council and its microchip details are incorrect, it makes it very difficult for us to let an owner know where their animal is if it gets out.

**Future Plans**

**Objective 1:** To increase dog and cat registration rates by 5% each year via education and promotion.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Continue supplying desexing vouchers to low income earners  | Coordinator | Ongoing | Number of vouchers redeemed |
| Include registration, identification and renewal information in rates notices, newsletters, on the web and via social media | Coordinator | Ongoing | Number of promotional activities undertaken |
| Include registration forms, registration and identification requirements, brochures and fact sheets in kits for new residents | Communications | Ongoing | All new resident kits contain pet registration information  |
| Promote registration and the wearing of registration tags via appropriate Council communication channels, particularly by using ‘good news’ stories of pets being returned to their owners because of microchipping and registration | AMOs / Communications | Ongoing | Number of promotions |
| Automatic registration up until next renewal period of cats being desexed via Council’s program  | AMOs | Twice a year | Number of cats registered each year |

**Objective 2:** To increase pet registration by 5% via compliance initiatives

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| Activity | Responsible Officer | When | Evaluation |
| Ensure all registration renewals are followed up each year, with failure to renew infringements issued when applicable | Coordinator | Yearly | By September/October of each year, all owners have received a renewal, a final reminder and, if still no renewal, the property is visited to determine if the animal is residing there |
| Ensure all animals identified from a complaint are registered | AMOs | Ongoing | All details are recorded on Customer Service Requests when AMOs deal with the complaint |
| Ensure a 5% increase in dogs and cats registrations are entered on system each year | Coordinator | Yearly |  5% annual increase  |
| Use text messaging for pet registration renewal reminders | IT  | Yearly | Decrease in number of registration renewal checks by contractor |
| Pet registration renewals emailed to residents who opt in | Coordinator | Yearly | Number of email renewals sent and response rate |

**Objective 3:** To increase pet registration rates by 5% each year using improvements in technology.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Increase use of mobile technology, so AMOs can, for example, search pet registration and customer request databases to identify properties where animals are not registered | AMOs | Daily | Increased number of animals identifiable by registration |
| Provide online registration for pets | AMOs/ Coordinator | April 2018 | Number of residents using online registration |

**SECTION 3 – Nuisance Complaints**

**Summary**

The most common nuisance complaints received by Council relate to barking dogs. (Dog at large and dog attacks are dealt with under Section 4 of this plan as they are not categorised as nuisance complaints.)

The majority of time AMOs spend dealing with complaints relates to barking dogs and it is therefore critical that AMOs strategies and activities are in place to reduce the number of complaints from the public. Barking dog complaints require far more time for the AMO to resolve given the need to substantiate the complaint, which can often lead to frustration by the complainant and dog owner.

**Objective 1:** Reduce the number of nuisance complaints via education

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Provide more information to residents about the Dispute Settlement Centre and, where necessary, organise mediation, providing a summary of the issue to the mediators with details of both parties with their consent. | AMO handling the investigation | Only if both parties agree to the mediation  | Feedback on the mediation from both parties and reduction in ongoing complaints |
| Park Patrols  | AMOs  | Ongoing | Number of park patrols and compliance and awareness  |
| Review enforcement policies and procedures  | AMO | Ongoing | Number of policies and procedures reviewed to ensure compliance with legislation |
| Provide information about cat enclosures and cat nuisance issues to cat owners  | AMOs | Ongoing | Reduction in number of nuisance cat complaints and impounded cats |
| Promote fully fenced dog parks within Banyule | AMOs  | Ongoing | Number of promotions undertaken |
| Develop a new Barking Dog Process | AMOS/ Coordinator | June 2018 | Completion of Barking Dog Process |

**Objective 2:** Reduce the number of nuisance complaints using compliance

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Continued implementation and promotion of the cat desexing program in Banyule  | AMOs/ Coordinator | April and August annually | Number of cats desexed/microchipped |
| Implement nuisance abatement activities outlined in the ‘Who’s for Cats?’ program: promote the campaign to ensure that people who are feeding cats take full ownership of cats; website link  | AMOs | Ongoing | Increase in cat registration numbers  |
| In conjunction with residents, trap semi owned/owned cats in response to trespass complaints  | AMOs | Ongoing | Increase in cat registrations, fewer cat trespass complaints and reduction in cats impounded  |
| Ensure complaints are dealt with effectively, efficiently and satisfactorily  | AMOs | Ongoing | Weekly reporting of initial response for animal management complaints  |

**Objective 3:** Use technology to assist in reducing and resolving nuisance complaints

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Investigate web-based online complaint lodgement, including providing better information about what constitutes a nuisance  | AMOs/ Coordinator/ Communications | June 2018 | Online complaints launched and number of online complaints received |

**SECTION 4 – DOG ATTACKS AND CONFINEMENT**

**Summary**

A critical role for Council is to minimise the number of dog attacks due to the potential damage that dogs can inflict on other animals and people.

It is important that Council raises community awareness on how to reduce the risk of a dog attack.

The identification of animals, including declared dogs, is important as is ensuring dogs are contained to their property at all times.

**Objective 1:** Reduce the incidence of wandering dogs and dog attack in the community through education.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Provide information on Responsible Dog Ownership Program | AMOs | Ongoing | Materials provided on website and number of people using the Responsible Dog Ownership Program |
| Provide residents with information on implications for their dog and themselves if their dog attacks a person or animal | AMOs | Ongoing | Reduction in number of dog attacks |
| Promote the importance of training, socialising and desexing dogs at an early age | AMOs | Ongoing | Reduction in number of dog attacks |
| Encourage and provide residents with information on how to report dog attacks whether on public or private property | AMOs/ Communications | Ongoing | Amount of information available via a range of channels |

 **Objective 2 -** Reduce the incidence of wandering dogs and dog attack in the community through compliance.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Patrol and identify properties where containment may be an issue | AMOs | Ongoing | Increased compliance |
| Report outcomes of all dog attack prosecutions to local media to raise awareness of dog attacks and Council’s actions | Coordinator | Ongoing | Number of stories sent to media and number published |
| Concentrate patrols in high risk areas | AMOs | Ongoing | Increased compliance |

**Objective 3:** Reduce the incidence of wandering dogs and dog attacks in the community through technology.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Use Council’s social media to educate the community on the effects of wandering dogs and dog attacks  | AMO | Ongoing | Number of social media posts |

**SECTION 5- DANGEROUS, MENACING AND RESTRICTED BREED DOGS**

**Summary**

A dangerous dog is a dog that has attacked a person or animal or which, in the opinion of a Council, has caused serious injury to a person or another animal.

The owner of a dangerous dog has to meet stronger control provisions, including erecting an approved housing enclosure meeting the requirements of the Domestic Animal Regulations 2015

**Objective 1:** Identify all declared dogs in Banyule using education.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Ensure that Council has effective declaration policies and procedures to minimise declarations being overturned at VCAT | Coordinator | Ongoing | Policy/procedures developed |
| Ensure the owners of known problem dogs are advised of legal implications, where necessary, to minimise risk  | AMOs | As required | Number of owners advised as a result of a complaint |
| Report outcomes of all prosecutions (and regular updates on number of infringements) regarding non-compliance with declared dog identification and keeping requirements to local media to raise awareness about declared dogs | AMOs | Ongoing | Number of media releases and stories published |

**Objective 2:** Identify all declared dogs in Banyule using compliance.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Prosecute where necessary any breaches of the Act | AMOs | Ongoing | Increase in number of successful prosecutions  |
| Ensure that all declared dogs are inspected on a schedule but annual/random inspection | AMOs | Annual | Number of inspections reported annually |

**Objective 3:** Identify all declared dogs in Banyule using technology.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Investigate the availability of relevant products which may assist in the safe keeping of declared dogs, such as enclosures, signs etc.  | AMOs | Annually | Available products identified |

**SECTION 6 – OVERPOPULATION AND HIGH EUTHANASIA**

**Summary**

Banyule Council contracts the Cat Protection Society in Greensborough and the Nillumbik Regional Shire pound as our cat and dog pounds respectively.

**Objective 1:** Reduce the amount of euthanasia rates at Council Pound (feral/unowned cats excepted) and increase the percentage of desexed animals on Council’s database through education.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Continue with the rehousing/adoption program to assist in reducing euthanasia rates | AMOs | Ongoing | Reduction in euthanasia rates |
| Continue to promote the free cat desexing program  | Coordinator/ AMOs | April/ August | Number of cats desexed and microchipped |
| Promote desexing during all animal request contacts | AMOs | Daily | The number of desexed dogs and cats on Council’s registration database |
| Raise awareness about the semi-owned cat population by participating in the ‘Who’s for Cats?’ campaign | AMOs | Ongoing | Reduction in number of stray cat complaints and increase in cat registration numbers |
| Involve breed clubs and rescue services to assist in rehousing animals, particularly surrendered animals | AMOs | Ongoing | Links with clubs and rescue services and number of animals rehoused by them |
| Provide vouchers for subsidised desexing with registration | AMOs | Ongoing | Number of vouchers used |

**Objective 2:** Reduce euthanasia rates at Council Pound, through compliance**.**

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Promote microchipping, registration and desexing with pet owners and ensure compliance | AMOs | Ongoing | Increase in registration rates and decrease in euthanasia rates |

 **Objective 3:** Reduce percentage of non desexed animals on database through identification with technology

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Ensure pound processes are followed to ensure all dogs with no ID or chip are photographed so they can be posted on Nillumbik’s Website and Facebook page to increase reunification rates  | All impounding officers | Ongoing | Links to Nillumbik Shire Pound on the Banyule website and number of animals reclaimed and registered |
| Offer free registration for newly adopted cats through our service provider and to residents using Council’s cat desexing program. NOTE: Registration only applies until the annual registration renewal date of April 10 | AMOs | Bi-annually through the desexing program and throughout the year for adopted cats/kittens via Cat Protection Society | Increase in number of animals on the registration database |

**SECTION 7 – DOMESTIC ANIMAL BUSINESS**

**Summary**

Council audits all businesses once a year and there have been no significant issues with compliance. There are no pet shops selling puppies and kittens in Banyule anymore.

Domestic Animal Businesses are inspected at registration renewal time annually and documented on a register for auditing purposes.

**Objective 1:** Ensure, through education, that all Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Banyule are identified, registered and complying with the Code of Practice.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Provide advice to other Council unites when planning applications for domestic animal businesses are received to ensure appropriate conditions are placed on construction, operation, etc | AMOs | As required | All legislative requirements are achieved |
| Provide owners with information on updates to the Code of Practice and other information where necessary | AMOs | As required | All legislative requirements are achieved |
| Promote Oscar’s Law wherever possible to ensure responsible breeding and adherence to Codes  | AMOs | Ongoing | Number of complaint types and number of people identified through Gumtree, Trading Post and Facebook who are irresponsibly breeding dogs or running potential puppy farms |

**Objective 2:** Ensure, using compliance, that all Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Banyule are identified, registered and are complying with Code of Practice.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses within Banyule  | AMOs | Ongoing | Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses are registered and renewed each year |
| Ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are inspected at least annually  | AMOs | Annually | Domestic Animal Businesses inspected and audits completed |
| Investigate any complaint relating to the operation of a Domestic Animal Businesses. | AMOs | When required | Records of and resolution of complaints to achieve compliance |
| Conduct ‘unscheduled’ inspections/audits of each Domestic Animal Business in relation to conditions of registration to determine compliance with the Act, relevant mandatory Code of Practice, and any terms, conditions, limitations or restrictions on that registration | AMOs | Annually | Increase in compliance and decrease in number of complaints |
| Ensure Domestic Animal Businesses are providing information on the sale of animals | AMOs | Ongoing | Sale of animal information received with increased registrations |

 **Objective 3:** Ensure, using technology, that all Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Banyule are identified, registered and are complying with the Code of practice.

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| **Activity** | **Responsible Officer** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Ensure audit documents from inspections are kept electronically against the application on Council’s database | AMOs | Annually | Each inspection can be viewed against application on Council’s database |

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# SECTION 8 – OTHER MATTERS

**Objective 1:** To have plans/contingencies in place in the event of an emergency.

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| **Activity** | **Responsibility** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Develop a program that helps domestic violence victims with transport and short term housing of their pets in an emergency | AMOs | September 2018 | Process in place and number of people assisted |

**Objective 2:** Decrease the incidence of Animal Welfare complaints using education, compliance and technology

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| **Activity** | **Responsibility** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Provide web links to Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986 information, codes (dog and cat private keeping, etc), brochures, etc, via Council’s website | AMOs | Ongoing | Web links added to Council website |
| Investigate complaints of animal cruelty and animal welfare | AMOs | Ongoing | Complaints responded to as per customer service charter |
| Liaise with relevant agencies such as RSPCA in relation to prevention of cruelty issues | AMOs | When needed | Liaison with relevant agencies |
| Educate the community in regards to cruelty issues | AMOs | Ongoing | Reduction in cruelty complaints  |

**Objective 3:** Identifying/harnessing the benefits of pet ownership via education

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| **Activity** | **Responsibility** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Promote the benefits of pet ownership via internal publications and the media | AMOs | Ongoing | Articles in Banyule Banner and media |

**SECTION 9 – REVIEW OF PLAN AND ANNUAL REPORTING**

**Objective 1:** Comply with Section 68A (3) of the Act.

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| **Activity** | **When** | **Evaluation** |
| Provide the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resource Secretary with a copy of the Domestic Animal Management Plan and any amendments to the plan | November 2017 | Copy supplied and signed off |
| Review and report annually on the Domestic Animal Management plan and, if appropriate, amend the plan | Annually | Plan signed off by Council  |