



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

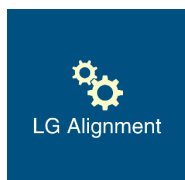
Domestic Animal Management Plan

Yarriambiack Shire Council encourages a working environment which promotes gender equality and models non-violent and respectful relationships.

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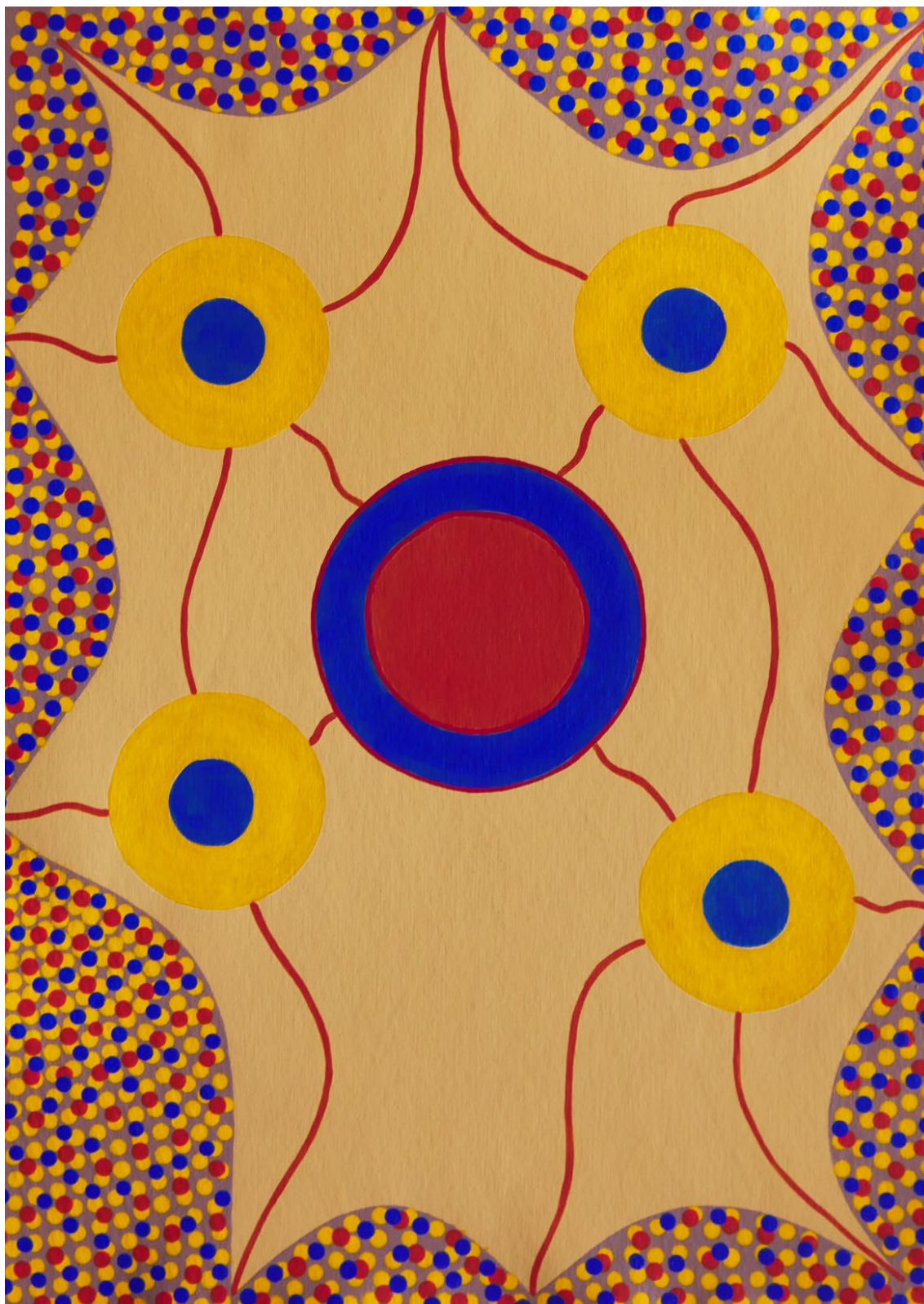
The Yarriambiack Shire Council Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026–2029 was developed in partnership with LG Alignment, this Plan reflects a collaborative approach and reproduction of this document is not permitted without prior written consent from Yarriambiack Shire Council.

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Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Yarriambiack Shire Council acknowledges that the activities of Yarriambiack Shire Council are held under the traditional skies and in the waterways and lands of the Wotjobalk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people.

We pay respects to their Elders past, present and emerging as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.



Mayor's Foreword

As Mayor of Yarriambiack Shire Council, I am proud to introduce our Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) — a plan that outlines how we will continue to manage domestic animals across our Shire in a way that is safe, fair, and compassionate.

Domestic animals, particularly dogs and cats, play an important role in many of our lives — as companions, protectors, and members of the family. Council's role is to ensure that animals are kept responsibly and that the needs of the whole community — both pet owners and non-pet owners — are respected. This plan sets out our commitments to education, enforcement, and proactive animal management to help achieve that balance.

Of course, successful animal management is a shared responsibility. Council can provide support, regulation, and services, but it's the actions of individuals — registering pets, containing them securely, desexing, and providing proper care — that make the biggest difference. I want to acknowledge the many responsible pet owners and animal welfare groups in our Shire who do just that every day.

On a personal note, I recently adopted a rescue greyhound — and it has been a truly rewarding experience. Greyhounds are gentle, affectionate dogs who thrive in a loving home. Rehoming animals like these not only changes their lives but also enriches ours. I encourage anyone considering a pet to look into adoption as a first step.

Thank you to everyone involved in shaping this plan. I look forward to seeing it guide us toward a safer, more responsible, and more compassionate approach to domestic animal management in Yarriambiack Shire.



Mayor Kylie Zanker

1. Introduction

The Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) sets out Yarriambiack Shire Council's strategy for delivering animal management services, programs, and initiatives over the next four years. The DAMP reflects Council's recognition of the significant benefits of pet ownership for individual health and wellbeing, the vital importance of animal welfare, and the need to protect the community and environment from the impacts of domestic animals.

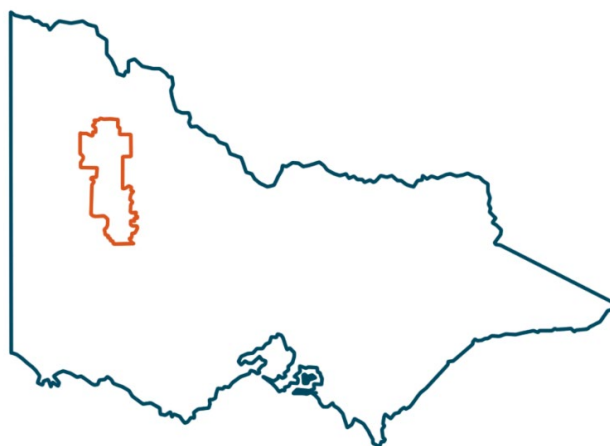
In preparing our DAMP, Council has worked to thoughtfully balance the interests of pet owners with the broader expectations of the community. Extensive engagement with residents and key stakeholders has informed its development.

Council remains committed to best practice in animal management. The DAMP, along with its objectives and actions, will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of the community.

1.1 About our Shire

Our Shire is home to approximately 6,556 residents, with a median age of 52—notably higher than Victoria's state median of 38. This ageing demographic has important implications for service delivery, accessibility, and community engagement.

Covering an expansive 7,158 square kilometres, the Shire has a population density of just 1.07 residents per square kilometre, highlighting the challenges of delivering services across a large municipality.



During the development of the DAMP we invited community members to share what they value most about cats and dogs in our Shire. Their responses highlighted the deep connection between companion animals and community wellbeing.



1.2 Why does Council have a Domestic Animal Management Plan?

Yarriambiack Shire Council considers the outlined objectives detailed in Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* have been successfully achieved. These objectives are detailed below.

Requirements under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* – Councils to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan

Council must prepare a DAMP every 4 years.

This Plan must be provided to the Secretary.

Each DAMP must include the following elements:

- **Service Evaluation:** A method for assessing whether Council's animal control services meet the standards set out in the Act and its accompanying regulations.
- **Authorised Officer Training:** Clear programs to ensure officers are properly trained to administer and enforce the Act's requirements.
- **Planned Programs and Strategies:** Details of Council's intended initiatives, services, and strategies for managing cats and dogs throughout the life of the Plan.
- **Community and Local Law Review:** An opportunity to consider whether current or new Local Laws, orders, or related measures are appropriate based on community needs and preferences.
- **Ongoing Evaluation:** A framework for periodically reviewing and evaluating all programs, services, strategies, and policies included in the Plan.

Council is required to:

- Annually review its DAMP and make amendments where appropriate to ensure the Plan remains current and effective.
- Submit a copy of the DAMP and any amendments to the Secretary of the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.
- Publish an evaluation of the DAMP's implementation in the Council's Annual Report, demonstrating progress and accountability.

These requirements help ensure that each municipality maintains an up-to-date strategy for managing cats and dogs, while promoting transparency and continuous improvement.

Did you know?

The nation's first Pet Census took place in Victoria in 2023 to help shape the future of animal welfare and ensure pet owners have the support and services they need.

Data from the Pet Census is aimed to create a clearer picture of pet companionship of all kinds across Victoria, so the Government can continue supporting pet owners and improving pet welfare.

Some key findings from the Census include:

- 58% of Victorian adults own a pet.
- There are an estimated 1.4 million Victorian households with a pet.
- Dogs are the most common type of pet.
- 51% of dog owners acquired their dog from a breeder, compared to 10% of cat owners.
- 28% of cat owners got their cat from a rehoming organisation and 22% from an animal shelter.
- Victorians spent \$6.6 billion on their pets in the year leading up to the census.
- 10% of Victorian adults planned to get a pet in the next 12 months.

1.3 DAMP Development Process and Community Consultation

This DAMP was prepared in close collaboration with Council's Compliance Team and shaped by:

- Consultation with the community and key stakeholders, ensuring diverse voices and local needs are represented. Examples include the published community survey, and Authorised Officers attending engagement listening posts
- Research and benchmarking, providing a data-driven foundation aligned with industry standards and best practices
- A comprehensive review of the previous plan, drawing on existing data sources to assess performance and identify areas for improvement such as complaints, dog attacks, dog and cat registrations, and impoundments.



The DAMP aims to strike a thoughtful balance between addressing legislative obligations by Council with community expectations and stakeholder interests.

What Our Community Said

To inform the development of the DAMP, Council conducted a community survey to better understand local experiences with pet ownership and animal management services. Key findings included:

- 19 total responses, with 18 from residents within the Shire and 1 from outside.
- 94% of Shire respondents reported having pets registered with Council.
- 68% had interacted with a Compliance Officer in the past 12 months with the most common reasons were for contact being assistance with pet registration or requests for cat cages.

Further information on community feedback can be viewed in Appendix 3.

Team Takeaways from the Engagement

Council's Animal Management Team extends sincere thanks to all community members who participated in the DAMP survey and engaged in conversations at our listening posts. Your insights have been invaluable in shaping the direction of this plan. The feedback received has been reflected in our strategies and actions described in section 2.

1.4 Councils Service

Council has two dedicated Compliance Officers to manage and oversee the delivery of our animal management service. Our officers are responsible for managing:

- All domestic animal registrations
- Compliance matters relating to domestic animals such as failure to register, nuisance and emergency responses such as dog attacks
- Patrolling and monitoring dogs off leash areas
- Attending to and maintaining our Council pound.



Chief Executive Officer

Chief Operating Officer

Manager Community Health

Compliance Officer | Pound attendant

***Compliance Officer | Pound attendant**

*New position created during the previous plan

To support our service, Council has an 84Y agreement with the following pounds or rescues. An 84Y agreement under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* is a formal arrangement that allows councils to partner with other organisations or individuals to manage impounded animals.

Here are a list of organisations Council has an 84Y agreement with.

Yarriambiack Animal Rescue	Yellow Door Animal Rescue
Wimmera Mallee Vet Services	Ballarat City Council
Phoenix Animal Rescue	Adoptable Pert Rescue
Horsham PAWS,	Forever Friends Pet Rescue
Starting Over Dog Rescue	Victorian Dog Rescue
Ararat Dog Rescue	

1.5 Review of service

Yarriambiack Shire Council's animal management service is reviewed annually by the Council's Chief Operating Officer. This review assesses:

- The service's alignment with community needs.
- Performance against Council expectations.
- Compliance with obligations under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

1.6 Strategic Investment and Service Enhancement

A key achievement from the previous DAMP was Council's investment in an additional Compliance Officer. This enhanced resourcing has significantly strengthened service delivery by enabling:

- Faster response times to customer requests and call-outs.
- Expanded officer coverage and availability across the Shire.

This investment reflects Council's commitment to continuous improvement and proactive animal management.

1.7 Annual Professional Development Plans

Each year, Council staff participate in a structured Professional Development Plan (PDP) review. This process supports continuous improvement by:

- Assessing current workload, priorities, and operational challenges.
- Providing staff with the opportunity to identify personal and team-based improvements.
- Highlighting training needs and professional development opportunities aligned with role requirements and service goals.

These reviews are not only valuable for individual growth—they also inform broader service planning and improvement, contributing directly to the annual evaluation of Council’s animal management service.

2. Our Plan for the Next Four Years

Appendix 1 contains expanded information on each action item, including due dates and progress updates.

Strategy 1.
"Yarriambiack Shire Council will increase community education in regard to responsible animal ownership"

Action – Run an education campaign targeting dog attack issues.

Action – Continue to promote importance/ benefits of animal registration.

Action – Promote the importance of cat desexing and microchipping by partnering with existing local Animal Rescue groups and Local Vets.

Strategy 2.
"Our Compliance Officers will action work priorities based on priority, risk and community safety"

Action – Compliance Officers will have the required skills and knowledge to make decisions fairly, consistently and proportionate to risk each officer will have a professional development plan based on their individual needs.

Action – Council will leverage technology to streamline complaint management and data analysis. This will help Compliance Officers prioritise responses based on risk and community safety, identify emerging trends, and allocate resources more effectively.

Action – Council will Develop and adopt a formal protocol that classifies incoming domestic animal complaints (e.g., roaming dogs, aggressive behaviour, barking) into priority levels based on risk to community safety and animal welfare. This protocol will guide Compliance Officers in responding promptly and proportionately to high-risk incidents.

Strategy 3.
"We will strive towards pro-active rather than re-active"

Action – Review of current orders and consideration of additional orders for "on lead" areas.

Action – Council will apply for any additional grants to assist in the de-sexing of cats.

Action - Deliver targeted education campaigns and in-person engagement (e.g. at community events, local schools, etc;) to promote responsible pet ownership, registration, desexing, and containment – aiming to prevent issues before they occur.

Strategy 4.
"Yarriambiack Shire Council will improve our animal registration and renewal processes. Making it easier to register and renew your animal registration"

Action – More social media around the time of animal registration renewals promoting importance/benefits of pet registration.

Action – Develop or enhance a user-friendly online platform that allows residents to register new animals, update details, and renew registrations with ease, including mobile accessibility and secure payment options.

Action - Send timely, automated registration renewal reminders to pet owners via their preferred communication method, helping reduce late or missed renewals and improving compliance rates.

3. Training of authorised officers

Council's animal management services are delivered through the Local Laws team, who work closely with key partners and stakeholders to promote community safety, education, and compliance. The team is committed to building strong relationships across the community by providing practical advice, support, and effective regulatory services.

Beyond animal management, the Local Laws team also addresses a wide range of issues to support public safety, environmental protection, and local amenity.

All new staff undergo structured training, including a comprehensive Council induction covering relevant policies and procedures, along with an introduction to animal management practices and programs.

Ongoing development is supported through:

- Regular team training and refresher sessions.
- On-the-job coaching and mentoring.
- Participation in relevant industry bodies and committees, where appropriate.

Council regularly reviews and updates internal procedures to ensure alignment with best practices and evolving community needs.

	Completed	Planned
Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation	Yes - 1 Officer	*
Cert IV in Local Government	Yes – 1 Officer	*
Dangerous Dog – Safe Dog Handling & Bite Prevention	Yes	Yes
Industry Training	Yes	Yes
OH&S Dealing with aggressive customers	Yes	Yes

*Already completed by some existing staff. Should new staff be onboarded, the training will be considered.

4. Registration and identification

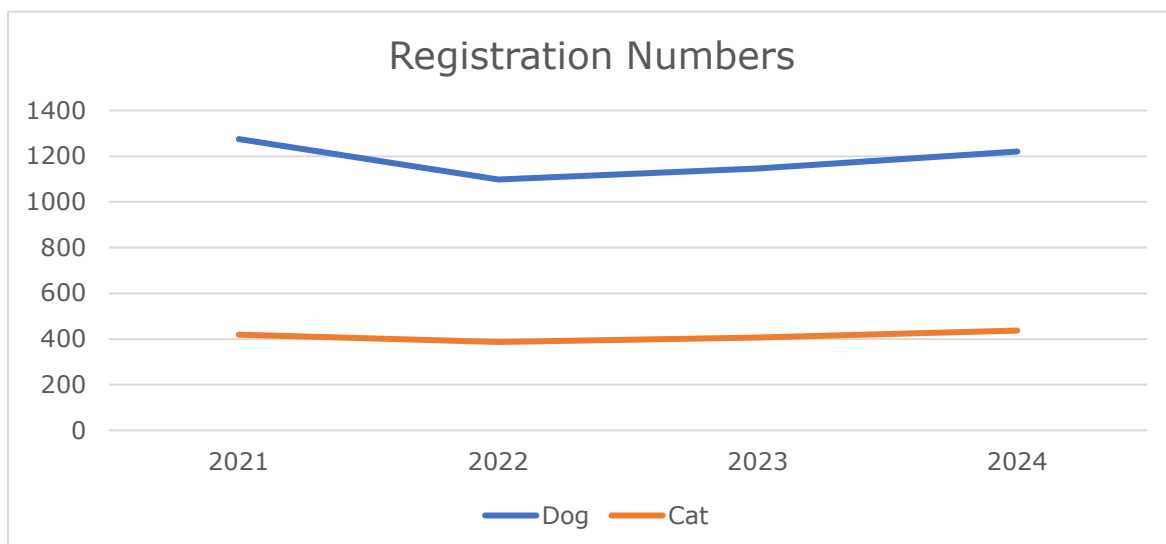
People choose to have cats or dogs for a variety of meaningful reasons—some practical, others deeply emotional. Here's a summary of the most common motivations:

- Both cats and dogs offer loyal, loving company. Dogs often provide constant affection and thrive on interaction, while cats offer a quieter, more independent bond that still brings comfort and connection.
- Pets can reduce stress, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness. Dogs, in particular, encourage physical activity and routine, while cats offer a calming presence with their gentle purring and low-maintenance nature.
- Dogs are great for active individuals or families who enjoy outdoor time and structured routines. Cats are ideal for people with smaller living spaces or busier schedules, as they're more independent and require less hands-on care.
- Dogs, especially certain breeds, can provide a sense of safety and act as natural deterrents to intruders.

	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024	2024 2025
Dogs registered	1275	1098	1146	1221
Cats registered	419	387	407	437
Dogs impounded	-	48	43	46
Cats impounded	-	58	32	50

This suggests a few key insights:

- Dog registration rates are increasing, indicating either improved compliance, population growth, or both.
- There was a noticeable dip in registrations following COVID, likely due to lifestyle changes, economic pressures, or shifts in pet ownership patterns—but the trend is now reversing.



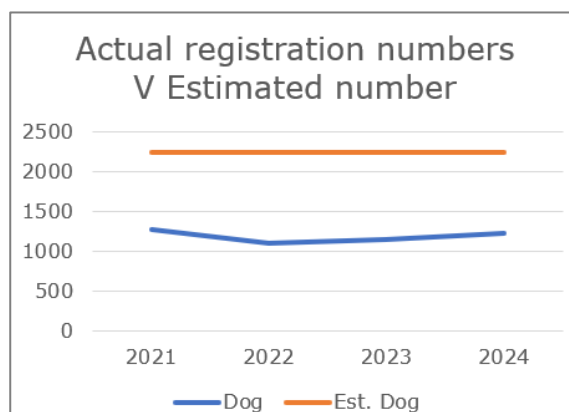
Australia-wide, about 48% of households own a dog and 33% own a cat, with an average of 1.3 dogs and 1.4 cats per pet-owning household. Yarriambiack has around 3,586 private dwellings, so:

- **Estimated dog-owning households:** 1,721
- **Estimated number of dogs:** 2,237 dogs
- **Estimated cat-owning households:** 1,183
- **Estimated number of cats:** 1,656 cats

There are a few key reasons why animal registrations tend to be low, especially in rural places:

Common Reasons for low pet registration

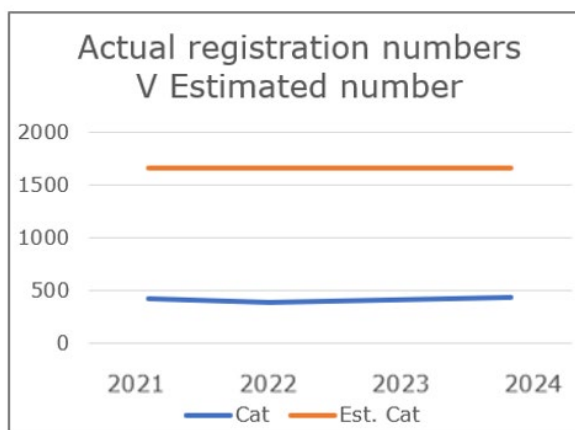
- Many pet owners believe microchipping is enough, not realising that registration provides additional services like emergency planning and local reunification.
- Some people simply don't know it's a legal requirement under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* to register pets over three months old.
- Registration fees can be a deterrent, especially for owners with multiple pets or those unaware of available concessions.
- Annual renewals (due by April 10) are easy to forget, especially if someone has moved or changed contact details.
- Travellers, renters, or those moving between councils may not realise they need to re-register pets in each new area.
- Without understanding the community would be unaware of important programs such as funding dog parks, shelters, and bite prevention programs



Why it Matters

Pet registration helps councils:

- Reunite lost pets faster
- Plan emergency evacuations
- Monitor disease outbreaks
- Fund animal welfare programs and facilities



5. Nuisance

Yarriambiack Shire Council plays a central role in managing animal-related nuisances under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*. Our responsibilities including investigating complaints about nuisance behaviour such as barking dogs, wandering animals, aggressive pets, or overpopulation.

Animal Management Complaints received by Council

Complaint type	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024	2024 2025
Dogs wandering	*	48	45	50
Dog Barking	6	3	2	5
Cat trespassing	*	*	16	13
Feral cats	46	81	124	86

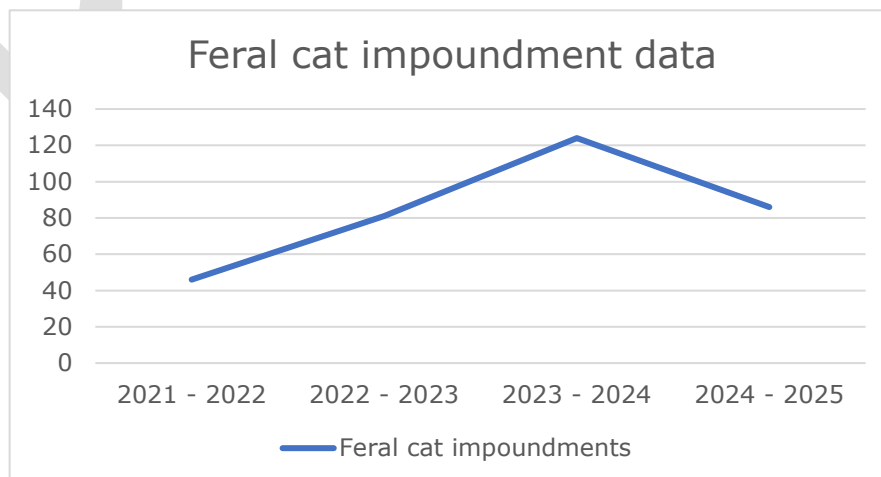
*No data available

5.1 Feral cats

In 2024, Council adopted a new General Local Law which introduced **Clause 26**, addressing the feeding of stray animals on private property.

This clause aims to support the reduction of stray and feral cat populations. Feeding stray animals encourages them to return, which can lead to an increase in population and associated nuisances, including noise, property damage, and risks to public health and wildlife.

As part of this Plan, authorised officers will continue to provide cat cages to the community to assist with humane management and control of feral cats.



6. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breeds

Council is committed to minimising the risk to the community posed by menacing, dangerous, or restricted breed dogs.

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, a dog may be declared **dangerous** if it:

- Has caused serious injury or death to a person or animal.
- Has been declared menacing and the owner has received at least two infringement notices for failing to meet restraint requirements.
- Has been declared dangerous under similar legislation in another Australian state or territory.
- Meets any other criteria prescribed by law.

A dog may be declared **menacing** if it:

- Has caused a non-serious bite to a person or animal.
- Has rushed at or chased a person.

All dog owners are required to declare if their dog is a **restricted breed** or if it has been declared **menacing** or **dangerous**.

	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024	2024 2025
Dangerous dogs registered	0	0	2	0
Menacing dogs registered	3	2	0	0
Restricted breed dogs registered	0	0	0	0

At the time of writing this DAMP, Council does not have any registered dangerous, menacing or restricted dog breeds.

7. Dog attacks

Dog attacks present a serious public safety concern and are treated as a priority. Yarriambiack Shire Council recognises the trauma these incidents can cause for everyone involved and is committed to thoroughly investigating all reported attacks.

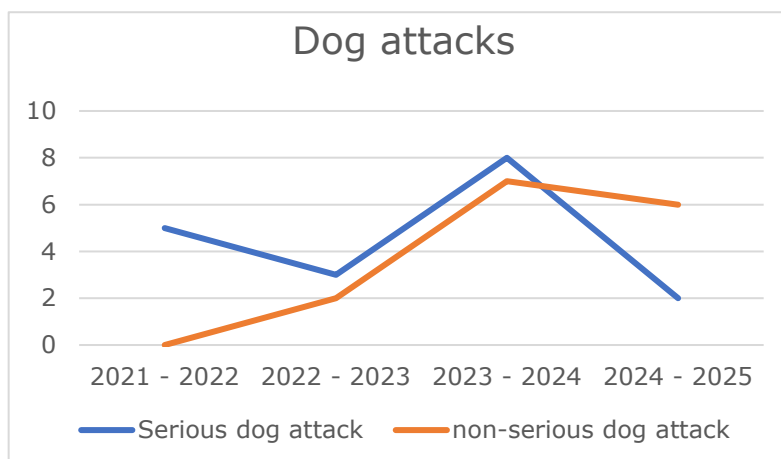
It's important to understand that any dog, regardless of breed or size, can become aggressive, particularly when defending its territory. Such incidents are not limited to dogs classified as dangerous or aggressive; they can involve breeds not typically associated with threatening behaviour.

	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024	2024 2025
Reported serious dog attack	5	3	8	2
Reported non-serious dog attacks	0	2	7	6

What does this data tell us?

Council has observed a rise in reported dog attacks following the COVID-19 pandemic. This trend may be linked to increased pet ownership during lockdown periods, as well as changes in how dogs are exercised and socialised in the community.

Council will continue to explore ways to reduce incidents of dog attacks within the Shire.



Council assesses dog attacks based on the severity of injury caused. The classification of a serious dog attack is guided by the definition of **serious injury** under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, which includes:

An injury requiring medical or veterinary attention involving:

- Broken bones
- Lacerations (deep cuts or tears in skin or tissue)
- Partial or total loss of sensation or function in any part of the body
- Cosmetic surgery to repair damage

If an attack results in any of the above, it is classified as a serious dog attack.

An attack that does not meet the criteria above—such as minor scratches, bruising, or superficial wounds—will be classified as a non-serious dog attack.

"Our team observed an increase in dog attacks and dog rushes after the pandemic restrictions ended."

7.1 Non-serious Dog Attacks

Dog attacks that may not meet the definition of a serious dog attack are still taken very seriously by our team. A common example of a non-serious dog attack is a dog rush.

7.2 Why Dog Rushes Are a Concern

- A rushing dog can cause panic or distress, especially for children, elderly individuals, or those with mobility challenges. Even if the dog doesn't bite, the experience can be traumatic.
- People may trip, fall, or react defensively, leading to accidental injuries. Other dogs may respond aggressively, escalating the situation.
- Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, a dog that rushes at or chases a person can be declared menacing. This designation can lead to stricter control requirements for the dog and penalties for the owner.
- A rush may be a precursor to more aggressive actions. It's often a sign of poor socialisation, fear, or territorial behaviour.
- Frequent rushing incidents can erode public trust in pet safety and lead to increased complaints or restrictions on dogs in public spaces.
-

8. Overpopulation and Euthanasia

Council remains committed to achieving positive outcomes for both the community and animal welfare.

	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024	2024 2025
Impounded dogs euthanised	1	2	4	1
Impounded cats euthanised	4	6	6	3

9. Domestic animal businesses

Under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, the following are classified as domestic animal businesses and are required to be registered with the relevant local Council:

- Breeding establishments for cats and/or dogs
- Dog training facilities
- Pet shops
- Animal welfare shelters
- Dog or cat rearing establishments
- Council pounds or those operated on Council's behalf
- Boarding services for cats or dogs, including:
 - Overnight boarding
 - Doggy daycare
 - In-home pet care services

These businesses must comply with registration and any applicable Codes of Practice to ensure animal welfare and operational standards are maintained.

	2021 2022	2022 2023	2023 2024	2024 2025
Shelter/pound	1	1	1	1
Boarding facilities	1	1	1	1
Breeding/rearing establishments	0	0	0	0
Training facilities	0	0	1	1
Pet shops	0	0	0	0

10. Compliance and enforcement

Yarriambiack Shire has an important role in assessing compliance, and where appropriate enforcing the law in protecting public safety, promoting animal welfare and maintaining community amenity.

"Responding to a dog attack requires calm leadership, procedural rigour, and sound judgement. Officers must protect the public while upholding fairness and legal integrity."

An achievement achieved in the previous DAMP was the establishment of policy and procedure. This has provided a framework for Compliance Officers to apply when considering compliance decisions relating to:

- *The Domestic Animals Act 1994*
- *The Impoundment of Livestock Act 1994*
- The Yarriambiack Shire Council General Local Law 2024



"A connected rural community who values its land and wellbeing..."

Compliance and enforcement matrix

To achieve fair, consistent and proportionate decision making, our Authorised Officers will apply a compliance and enforcement matrix that assesses:

- the risk, or level of impact
- the available evidence, history and community expectations

Level of Risk or Impact (1 - 3)	1 Low	2 Medium	3 High
Evidence History Community expectations (A - C) A • Full cooperation. • The breach no longer poses a risk to community safety. • Low urgency for compliance. • Insufficient evidence.	<i>"The risk or impact on community safety is a low"</i> <i>"I can educate rather than enforce."</i>	<i>"Although the offence is not critical, compliance must be achieved."</i> <i>"The risk or impact requires remedial action for compliance."</i>	<i>"This is significant risk or impact on community safety and remedial action must be achieved."</i>
B • Prior history for a related offence but is willing to cooperate. • The offence may be a reputational risk to Council should compliance not be achieved. • Satisfactory evidence available	Educational approach	General enforcement approach	General enforcement approach
C • Repeat offender. • The offence is a reputational risk. • Full evidence available to support enforcement. • High urgency for compliance.	Significant enforcement approach	Significant enforcement approach	Significant enforcement approach

*Complex investigations or matters with unique or varying circumstances may result in Council deviating from this matrix for a more appropriate and proportionate outcome.

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7.3 Task Profile – Responding to a Dog Attack

Our Authorised Officers play a vital role in protecting the community from dog attacks through regulation, enforcement, education, and proactive animal management. Here's a profile of some of the challenges, responsibilities and obligations that are undertaken every time there is a dog attack in our Shire.

Step 1: Initial Response

Focus: Prioritising Community Safety and Animal Welfare

Step 2: Investigation

Focus: Collection of Evidence

Step 3: Decision Making & enforcement

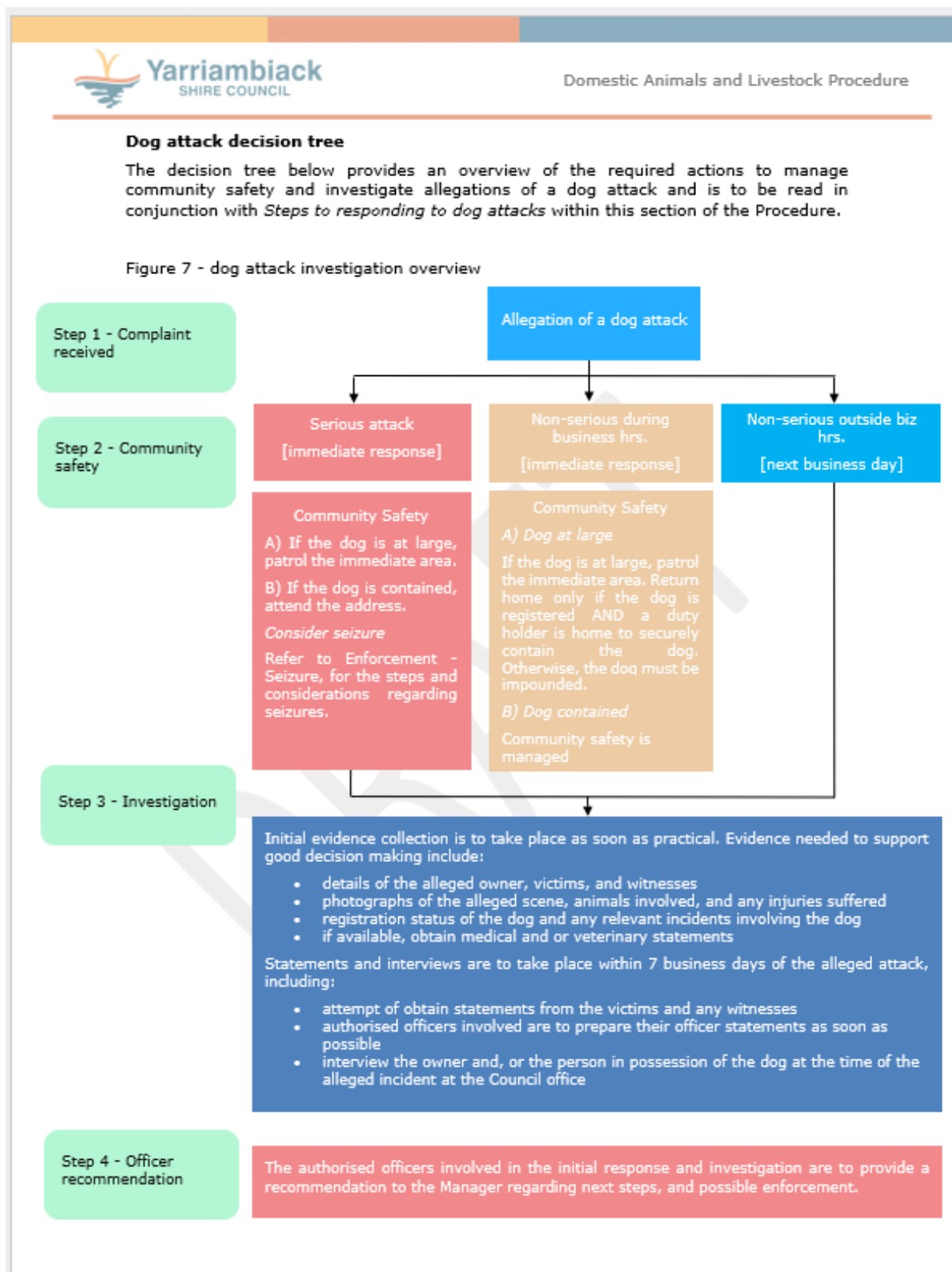
Focus: Determining Fair, Reasonable, and Appropriate Enforcement

Approximate time taken by investigating officers per dog attack

Task	Time (approx.)
Initial response: - Attendance - Securing the scene while managing distressed victims and bystanders - Identification and containment of the dogs involved. - Animal return, seizure or impoundment - Travel to and from the incident - Community engagement	4 hours
Collection of evidence: - Authorised Officer statements - Obtaining impact & witness statements - Conducting formal interviews with victims, owners and witnesses - Documenting injuries, locations and dog behaviour - Recording evidence - If the dog(s) is impounded, then impoundment duties	20 hours
Decision making and enforcement: - Interpreting legislation and council policy - Considering prior history, severity and risk recurrence - Authorised Officers determining appropriate compliance decision - Authorised Officer recommendations - Issuing enforcement - Communication to stakeholders	8 hours
TOTAL	32 hours

To ensure timely, consistent, and lawful responses to dog attacks, Council has developed and implemented clear policy and procedure aligned with the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

These procedures support officers in meeting legislative obligations while prioritising community safety and animal welfare.



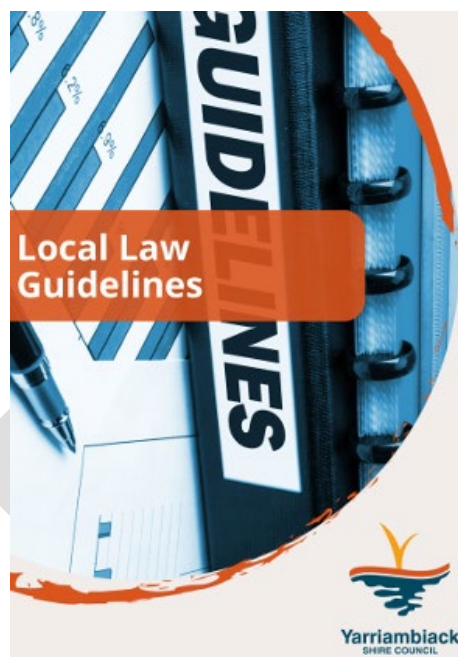
11. Other Matters

11.1 New Local Law

In 2024, Council resolved to bring forward the review of the General Local Law to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of the community.

The objectives of the Local Law are to:

- Protect the amenity of streets and roads, ensure the safety of road users, and promote fair and equitable use of public roads.
- Regulate activities and behaviours in public spaces to prevent harm to peace, order, property, and local amenity.
- Safeguard the environmental health and liveability of the municipality.
- Support the control, protection, and maintenance of Council assets.
- Promote good governance across the Yarriambiack municipal district.



One key purpose of Council's Local Law is to address legislative gaps and respond to local community priorities. Division 3 specifically focuses on:

- Managing amenity impacts from excessive pet ownership per household.
- Prohibiting the feeding of stray animals to support public health and safety.
- Requiring pet owners to clean up after their animals in public spaces.

12. Objectives and actions from previous DAMP

12.1 Authorised Officer Training

Objective: Develop a training policy that clearly identifies minimum training requirements and any additional training opportunities that should be undertaken by Animal Management Officers.

Activity	Status
Identify minimum training requirements by consultation with management and staff	Completed
Identify additional training opportunities by consultation with management and staff	Completed

Objective: Council will encourage officers to undergo further study to obtain higher animal management, welfare qualifications and, where practical, to attend relevant conferences and seminars.

Activity	Status
Identify additional training opportunities e.g. prosecutions training, conflict management, communication / education technique, networking opportunities and conferences.	Completed

12.2 Registration and Renewal Process

Objective: Improve the dog and cat registration renewal process to encourage prompt response to renewal invitations

Activity	Status
Improve accuracy of council pet registration database by ensuring consistency in entry of data and appropriate training of staff members using the system.	Completed
Exploration of alternative methods of payment of renewal notices and issue of reminder notices	Completed

Objective: Increase dog and cat registration numbers by 5% each year.

Activity	Status
Ensure all seized and impounded animals are registered to their owner prior to release.	Completed
Ensure all Animal Registration Renewals are followed up on, and that there are no outstanding registrations.	Completed
Media articles	Completed
Website update	Completed
Ensure that animal complaints are checked for registration compliance as part of the process of dealing with the complaint. Issue of notices to comply for unregistered animals and appropriate follow up in non-compliance continues	Completed

12.3 Nuisance

Objective: Reduce cat impounding rates by 2% per year.

Activity	Status
Provide education material about cat enclosures and nuisance issues to cat owners with registration renewals	Completed
Assist residents with dealing with cat trespass / nuisance problems by purchasing an additional cat cages and provide them to local residents for trapping nuisance cats	Completed
Media release on responsible cat ownership	Completed

Objective: Reduce dog nuisance complaints by 5% each year.

Activity	Status
Review of current orders and consideration of additional orders for "on lead" areas	*Ongoing
Produce barking dog kit and procedure	Completed

Activity	Status
Review the number and placement of dog faeces bag dispensers and increase numbers in areas that require them.	Completed
Media release on responsible dog ownership and nuisance issues	Completed
Ensure ongoing promotion of the health benefits of owning a dog and exercising your dog regularly.	Completed
Ensure ongoing promotion of responsible pet ownership, dog training and dog walking opportunities.	Completed

*A continued action in the new DAMP.

12.4 Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Dog Breeds

Objective: Identify and register all Declared Dogs in the municipality.

Activity	Status
Inspect all industrial properties in the municipality for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes	Completed
Educate the community about what is a declared dog	Completed

Objective: Effectively inspect and audit all declared dog premises annual to ensure they are following the keeping requirements.

Activity	Status
Inspect all premises housing declared dogs	Completed

12.5 Dog Attacks

Objective: Decrease number of dog attacks in the community by 2% each year.

Activity	Status
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages (e.g., confinement of dogs to property, leash laws etc) through media articles, mail outs, website info.	Completed
Develop dog attack enforcement and investigation policy	Completed
Create dog attack database	Completed
Run an education campaign targeting dog attack issues	*Not completed

*A continued action in the new DAMP.

12.6 Overpopulation

Objective: Identify all illegally operating Domestic Animal Breeding establishments in the municipality

Activity	Status
Follow up complaints relating to breeding establishments and monitoring of advertisements and excess pet registrations.	Completed

Objective: Identify reasons for euthanasia of unclaimed animals

Activity	Status
Create database to clearly define euthanasia reasons i.e. unable to be rehoused due to health/temperament issues rather than no new home available.	Completed

Objective: Reduce number of animals euthanised by 5% each year (not including wild, feral, or diseased animals)

Activity	Status
Look at offering subsidised cat desexing program	Completed
Continue re-homing programs	Completed

Objective: Reduced number of wild and feral cats in the community.

Activity	Status
Continue to offer cat trapping program to residents	Completed

12.7 Domestic Animal Businesses

Objective: Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses in the municipality.

Activity	Status
Identify all businesses that should be registered DABs in the municipality, using yellow pages (or similar, including online sites)	Completed
Identify businesses selling pets / pet products / services in the municipality. Follow up to determine whether they are and should be registered with council.	Completed
Media release to advise the public of the definition of a domestic animal business	Completed

Objective: Ensure compliance of all registered domestic animal businesses.

Activity	Status
Audit all registered businesses	Completed

12.8 Emergency Management

Objective: To ensure consideration is given to the management of Domestic Animals during emergency events.

Activity	Status
Review all emergency management plans relevant to domestic animals	Completed
Officers to maintain involvement in emergency management groups within the shire to ensure that the needs of domestic animals in the event of an emergency are met	Completed

13. Definitions

TERM	DESCRIPTION
Applicable organisation	An organisation declared by the Minister for Agriculture to be an 'applicable organisation'. Such organisations produce an annual report and have a code of ethics that requires responsible pet ownership in compliance with the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> and its related codes of practice. It is expected that the organisation will take disciplinary action against members who do not comply with the organisation's code. This recognition also means that they are an organisation with high standards of responsible pet ownership to whom the community can look to when buying a pet or when seeking advice on care of a pet.
Authorised Officer	An officer appointed under sections 71 or 71A or 72 of the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> .
Commercial dog breeder	A Minister approved, registered breeding domestic animal business, that has between 11-50 relevant fertile female dogs.
Community Foster Care Network	An organisation that arranges temporary care for cats and dogs in private residential premises and seeks permanent housing for those cats and dogs.
Domestic Animal Business	Any of the following: - a local council pound operated by the local council or a contractor on behalf of the council - a dog and/or cat breeding business, which: - has three or more fertile females - sells animals (whether a profit is made or not) and,

TERM	DESCRIPTION
	- the proprietor is <i>not</i> a member of an Applicable Organisation. • a dog training establishment (where the business is run for profit) • a pet shop, which must be operated in a permanent location that must be open at least 5 days per week • an animal shelter e.g. welfare organisations such as the RSPCA (Victoria) and The Lost Dogs' Home • an establishment boarding dogs or cats (where the business is run for profit to provide overnight, day-care or homecare boarding) • an establishment that is rearing dogs or cats (where the business is run for profit). All domestic animal businesses must be registered annually and comply with the appropriate mandatory Code of Practice.
Microbreeder	A breeder with 1-2 relevant fertile female dogs or cats.
Pet Exchange Register (PER)	It will be a state-wide database. Anyone who wishes to advertise a dog or cat for sale, or to give away, will be required to obtain a source number from the PER and list this number as part of their advertisement. Domestic animal businesses, voluntarily enrolled foster carers, microbreeders, recreational breeders and any other person advertising a dog or cat in Victoria will be on the PER. Once a PER application is approved the Secretary will provide the person with a source number.
Pet Shop	A registered domestic animal business that: • is situated in a permanent location, • open five days a week or more, and sells dogs, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, mice, reptiles or caged birds.
Recreational breeder	A dog or cat breeder with 1-10 fertile female dogs or cats and is a member of an applicable organisation.

14.Consistency with Governance Principles Local Government Act 2020

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
a) Council decisions are to be made and actions taken in accordance with the relevant law;	The Plan is developed in accordance with the <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> and other relevant legislation. It ensures that all actions and enforcement activities are lawful, transparent, and consistent with Council's statutory responsibilities.
b) priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the municipal	The Plan focuses on community safety, animal welfare, and responsible pet

Governance Principle	Section of policy where covered
community, including future generations;	ownership, ensuring the well-being of both current and future residents. Long-term strategies promote sustainable animal management and community harmony.
c) the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the municipal district, including mitigation and planning for climate change risks, is to be promoted;	The Plan supports sustainable practices such as reducing animal-related environmental impacts, managing waste responsibly, and promoting efficient use of Council resources.
d) the municipal community is to be engaged in strategic planning and strategic decision making;	The Plan was developed with community input and includes ongoing opportunities for feedback. Education and awareness programs foster shared responsibility and encourage ongoing participation in animal management decisions.
e) innovation and continuous improvement is to be pursued;	The Plan includes performance monitoring and review mechanisms that support evidence-based decision-making, adoption of new technologies, and continuous service improvement.
f) collaboration with other Councils and Governments and statutory bodies is to be sought;	The Plan promotes partnerships with neighbouring councils, animal welfare agencies, and state government departments to improve regional consistency and effectiveness in animal management.
g) the ongoing financial viability of the Council is to be ensured;	The Plan aligns activities with available funding and resources to ensure efficient, cost-effective service delivery that supports long-term financial sustainability.
h) regional, state and national plans and policies are to be taken into account in strategic planning and decision making;	The Plan aligns with relevant state animal welfare frameworks and regional initiatives to ensure consistency and compliance with broader policy directions.
i) the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.	The Plan commits to regular public reporting, accessible information, and transparent review processes to maintain community trust and accountability.

In giving effect to the overarching governance principles, a Council must take into account the following supporting principles—

Community Engagement Principles	• A community engagement process must have a clearly defined objective and scope. • Participants in community engagement must have access to objective, relevant and timely information to inform their participation. • Participants in community engagement must be representative of the persons and groups affected by the matter that is the subject of the community engagement. • Participants in community engagement are entitled to reasonable support to enable meaningful and informed engagement. • Participants in community engagement are informed of the ways in which the community engagement process will influence Council decision making.
Comment:	Development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan included a clearly defined community engagement process to ensure meaningful participation from residents, pet owners, animal-related businesses, and other key stakeholders. The engagement had a clear objective — to gather input on priorities for responsible pet ownership, community safety, and animal welfare across the Shire. Participants were provided with timely and relevant information through Council’s website, local media, and direct communication channels to support informed feedback. Council encouraged participation from a broad and representative cross-section of the community and provided reasonable support to ensure accessibility to all. Feedback gathered through this process directly informed the content and priorities of the final Plan, demonstrating how community views influenced Council’s decision-making.
Public Transparency Principles	• Council decision making processes must be transparent except when the Council is dealing with information that is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act. • Council information must be publicly available unless— (i) the information is confidential by virtue of this Act or any other Act; or (ii) public availability of the information would be contrary to the public interest. • Council information must be understandable and accessible to members of the municipal community. • Public awareness of the availability of Council information must be facilitated.
Comment:	The development of the Domestic Animal Management Plan has been undertaken in line with Council’s commitment to transparency and accountability. All non-confidential information relating to the Plan has been made publicly available through Council’s website, public notices, and engagement materials. The Plan will be presented for adoption at an open Council meeting, ensuring transparent decision-making. Information has been prepared in clear and accessible language to support community understanding, and

	Council has promoted awareness of the Plan's availability and purpose through local communication channels. Any confidential information will continue to be managed in accordance with legislative requirements and Council policy.
Strategic Planning Principles	• An integrated approach to planning, monitoring and performance reporting is to be adopted. • Strategic planning must address the Community Vision. • Strategic planning must take into account the resources needed for effective implementation. • Strategic planning must identify and address the risks to effective implementation. • Strategic planning must provide for ongoing monitoring of progress and regular reviews to identify and address changing circumstances.
Comment:	The Domestic Animal Management Plan has been developed using an integrated planning approach that aligns with Yarriambiack Shire Council's Community Vision and Council Plan objectives. The Plan considers available resources to ensure that actions are practical and achievable within existing budgets and staffing capacity. It identifies potential risks to implementation, such as resourcing constraints and changing community expectations, and includes measures to monitor and mitigate these risks. The Plan also establishes a framework for ongoing monitoring, annual reporting, and a comprehensive review every four years to ensure that priorities remain responsive to emerging needs and changing circumstances.
Financial Management Principles	• Revenue, expenses, assets, liabilities, investments and financial transactions must be managed in accordance with a Council's financial policies and strategic plans. • Financial risks must be monitored and managed prudently having regard to economic circumstances. • Financial policies and strategic plans, including the Revenue and Rating Plan, must seek to provide stability and predictability in the financial impact on the municipal community. • Accounts and records that explain the financial operations and financial position of the Council must be kept.
Comment:	<i>Not applicable</i>

Service Performance Principles	- Services should be provided in an equitable manner and be responsive to the diverse needs of the municipal community. - Services should be accessible to the members of the municipal community for whom the services are intended. - Quality and costs standards for services set by the Council should provide good value to the municipal community. - A Council should seek to continuously improve service delivery to the municipal community in response to performance monitoring. - Service delivery must include a fair and effective process for considering and responding to complaints about service provision.
Comment:	The Domestic Animal Management Plan supports the equitable and consistent delivery of animal management services across all communities within the Shire. Services are designed to be accessible and responsive to the diverse needs of residents, including rural and township areas. The Plan promotes good value through efficient use of resources and focuses on continuous improvement through regular performance monitoring, data review, and community feedback. Council's Complaint Handling Policy provides a fair and transparent process for considering and responding to concerns related to service provision.

15. Annual review of plan and reporting

An annual review of the Domestic Animal Management Plan will be conducted by the Manager of Community Health with the Chief Operating Officer. This will be conducted by the end of each calendar year during the life of this plan.

The updated version of the Domestic Animal Management Plan will be published on Council's website.

Council Approved

Adopted:	Ordinary Council Meeting 29 September 2021	Item 15.2
Reviewed:	Ordinary Council Meeting [Date]	Minute Page [number] Item [number]

Appendix 1 – New Strategies and Actions to be Completed

The following action items have been identified as key contributors to achieving our core strategies and enhancing service delivery for the community.

Strategy 1 - Yarriambiack Shire Council will increase community education in regard to responsible animal ownership

Action	Activity	Due date	Status
1.1	Run an education campaign targeting dog attack issues.	2025/2026	
1.2	Continue to promote importance/ benefits of animal registration.	Annually	
1.3	Promote the importance of cat desexing and microchipping by partnering with existing local Animal Rescue groups and Local Vets.	Ongoing	

Strategy 2 - Our Compliance Officers will action work priorities based on priority, risk and community safety

Action	Activity	Due date	Status
2.1	Compliance Officers will have the required skills and knowledge to make decisions fairly, consistently and proportionate to risk each officer will have a professional development plan based on their individual needs.	Ongoing	
2.2	Council will leverage technology to streamline complaint management and data analysis. This will help Compliance Officers prioritise responses based on risk and community safety, identify emerging trends, and allocate resources more effectively.	Ongoing	
2.3	Council will Develop and adopt a formal protocol that classifies incoming domestic animal complaints (e.g., roaming dogs, aggressive behaviour, barking) into priority levels based on risk to community safety and animal welfare. This protocol will guide Compliance Officers in responding promptly and proportionately to high-risk incidents.	2025/2026	

Strategy 3 - We will strive towards pro-active rather than re-active

Action	Activity	Due date	Status
3.1	Review of current orders and consideration of additional orders for "on lead" areas.	2025/2026	
3.2	Council will apply for any additional grants to assist in the de-sexing of cats.	Annually	
3.3	Deliver targeted education campaigns and in-person engagement (e.g. at community events, local schools, <i>etc;</i>) to promote responsible pet ownership, registration, desexing, and containment — aiming to prevent issues before they occur.	Ongoing	

Strategy 4 - Yarriambiack Shire Council will improve our animal registration and renewal processes. Making it easier to register and renew your animal registration

Action	Activity	Due date	Status
3.1	More social media around the time of animal registration renewals promoting importance/benefits of pet registration.	Annually	
4.2	Develop or enhance a user-friendly online platform that allows residents to register new animals, update details, and renew registrations with ease, including mobile accessibility and secure payment options.	2026/2027	
4.3	Send timely, automated registration renewal reminders to pet owners via their preferred communication method, helping reduce late or missed renewals and improving compliance rates.	Annually	

Appendix 2 – Community Consultation Questions

Community Consultation Survey

Consultation subject: DAMP Survey 2025

Closing date: Friday, 18 July 2025



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

Do you live within the Yarriambiack Shire?

☐ Yes, I live within the Yarriambiack Shire.

☐ No, I do not live within the Yarriambiack Shire.

Do you have domestic cats and/or dogs at your home?
Please select the option that best describes you:

☐ I have one or more dogs at my home.

☐ I have one or more cats at my home.

☐ I have both cat/s and dog/s at my home.

☐ I do not have either a cat or a dog at my home.

Are your domestic pets registered with Council?

☐ Yes, my pets are registered with Council.

☐ No, my pets are not registered with Council.

Are you aware that pet registration is a legal requirement under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*? Every cat and dog (at least three months of age) must be registered with your local council.

☐ Yes, I am aware.

☐ No, I was not aware.

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Do you feel safe in the presence of domestic animals in our Shire's open public spaces?

Please select the option that best describes you:

- ☐ I feel safe all the time.
- ☐ I feel safe most of the time.
- ☐ I sometimes feel safe.
- ☐ I rarely feel safe.
- ☐ I never feel safe.

What do you think are the main barriers to responsible pet ownership that people face?

Please select ALL options that apply:

- ☐ Lack of knowledge regarding the Shire's local laws.
- ☐ Lack of consequences when breaking laws.
- ☐ Lack of care for others wellbeing/sense of safety.
- ☐ Deliberate defiance.
- ☐ Sense of self-entitlement.
- ☐ Inability to provide wellbeing resources to their pet/s.

Do you enjoy domestic animals living within our community?

- ☐ Yes, I enjoy domestic animals living within our community.
- ☐ No, I dislike domestic animals living within our community.

Please provide details or examples explaining your answer:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Do you feel there is enough Council Rangers / Animal Management Officers within our Shire?

- ☐ Yes, there is enough.
- ☐ No, there is not enough.

Where would you like to see Council Rangers / Animal Management Officers focus their efforts?

Please rank the following options (1 = most important, 7 = least important):

- ☐ Patrolling.
- ☐ Addressing complaints (barking dogs & cat trespass).
- ☐ Education.
- ☐ Cat trapping.
- ☐ Feral cat management.
- ☐ Preventing and investigating dog attacks.
- ☐ Impounding stray cats/dogs.

Have you had an interaction with a Council Ranger / Animal Management Officer?

- ☐ Yes, I have interacted with a Council Ranger / Animal Management Officer.
- ☐ No, I have not interacted with a Council Ranger / Animal Management Officer.

If so, do you have any comments or feedback regarding your interaction?

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5 of 10

Which of the following responsible pet ownership priorities should Council focus on?

Please mark up to 3 options:

- ☐ Unregistered dogs.
- ☐ Dog attacks.
- ☐ Dogs annoying or intimidating other pets..
- ☐ Dogs annoying or intimidating other people.
- ☐ Uncollected dog poo.
- ☐ Nuisance barking.
- ☐ Off-leash dogs in children's playgrounds.
- ☐ Owners not watching their dogs when off-leash.
- ☐ Dogs off-leash where/when they should not be.
- ☐ Off-leash dogs who will not return to their owners when called.
- ☐ Dogs roaming outside their property (in streets, neighbours' yards).
- ☐ Cats roaming outside their property (in streets, neighbour's yards).
- ☐ Households with too many pets on a property.
- ☐ None.
- ☐ I do not know.
- ☐ Other:.....

Have you contacted Council for a domestic animal issue in the last 12 months?

- ☐ Yes, I have contacted Council about a domestic animal issue in the last 12 months.
- ☐ No, I have not contacted Council about a domestic animal issue in the last 12 months.

Which of the following domestic animal issues have you contact Council about in the last 12 months? Please select ALL that apply:

- ☐ Register a cat/dog.
- ☐ Report a dog wandering without owner or request a lost dog pick-up.
- ☐ Report a wandering or nuisance cat or request a stray cat pick-up.
- ☐ Report a barking dog.
- ☐ Report a dog off-leash when it should not be.
- ☐ Report dog pee not removed by an owner.
- ☐ Request a cat cage.
- ☐ Report a dog attack/rush.
- ☐ Apply for an animal related permit.
- ☐ Surrender a cat/dog.
- ☐ Other:

Have you experienced any of the following domestic animals issues in the last 12 months and NOT contacted Council? Please select ALL that apply:

- ☐ Witnessed or picked up a lost/stray/feral cat.
- ☐ Witnessed or picked up a lost/stray/feral dog.
- ☐ Experienced or witnessed a dog attack/rush.
- ☐ Neighbours' dog barking excessively.
- ☐ Your cat/dog has been lost/missing/escaped.
- ☐ Witnessed dog poo not collected by the dog owner.
- ☐ Witnessed a dog off-leash when it should not be.
- ☐ I have not experienced any domestic animal issues.
- ☐ I have reported ALL domestic animal issues.
- ☐ Other:

7 of 10



Survey Reward

Complementary Raffle

By completing this survey, you may opt into a complementary raffle to win one available FREE dog obedience consultation with *Toni McFarlane Dog Training*.

Complete the details below to enter the complementary raffle - the winner will be contacted by Council using the details provided.

Contact details provided for the complementary raffle will not be recorded in the survey data reports.



Would you like to enter the prize draw to win a free dog behaviour consultation session?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

If you would like us to acknowledge your submission and respond with more information, please provide your contact details below:

Full name:

.....

Mobile Number:

.....

Email Address

.....

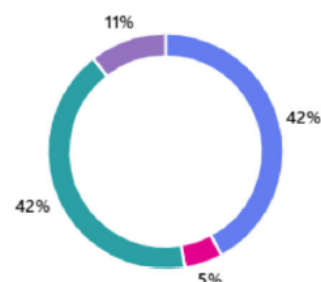
8 of 10

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Appendix 3 – Community Survey results

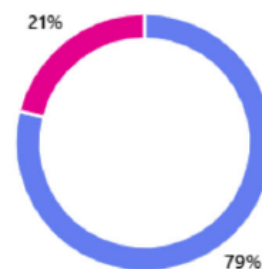
2. Do you have domestic cats and/or dogs at your home?

- | | |
|---|---|
| ● I have one or more dogs at my home. | 8 |
| ● I have one or more cats at my home. | 1 |
| ● I have both cat/s and dog/s at my home. | 8 |
| ● I do not have either a cat or a dog at my home. | 2 |



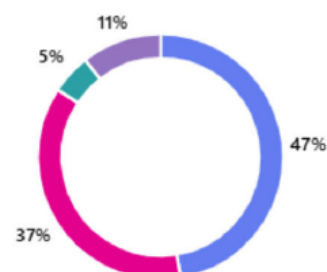
4. Are you aware that pet registration is a legal requirement under the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*?

- | | |
|------------------------|----|
| ● Yes, I am aware. | 15 |
| ● No, I was not aware. | 4 |



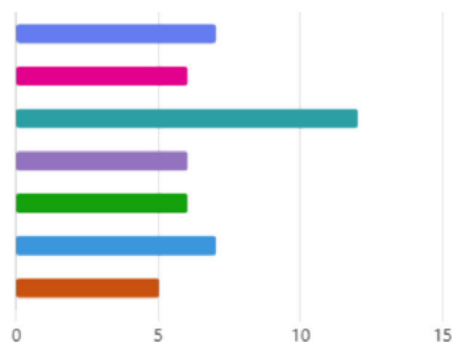
5. Do you feel safe in the presence of domestic animals in our Shire's open public spaces?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ● I feel safe all the time. | 9 |
| ● I feel safe most of the time. | 7 |
| ● I sometimes feel safe. | 1 |
| ● I rarely feel safe. | 2 |
| ● I never feel safe. | 0 |



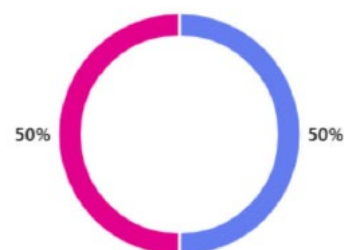
6. What do you think are the main barriers to responsible pet ownership that people face?

- | | |
|--|----|
| ● Lack of knowledge regarding the Shire's local laws. | 7 |
| ● Lack of consequences when breaking laws. | 6 |
| ● Lack of care for others wellbeing/sense of safety. | 12 |
| ● Deliberate defiance. | 6 |
| ● Sense of self-entitlement. | 6 |
| ● Inability to provide wellbeing resources to their pet/s. | 7 |
| ● Other | 5 |



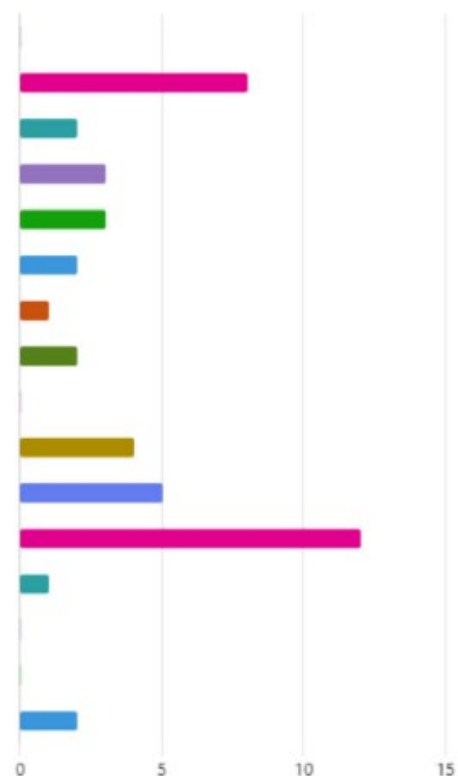
10. Do you feel there is enough Council Rangers / Animal Management Officers within our Shire?

- Yes, there is enough. 9
- No, there is not enough. 9



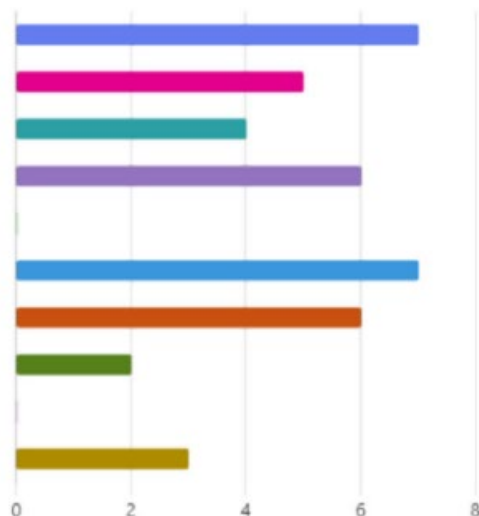
12. Which of the following responsible pet ownership priorities should Council focus on?

- Unregistered dogs. 0
- Dog attacks. 8
- Dogs annoying or intimidating other pets. 2
- Dogs annoying or intimidating people. 3
- Uncollected dog poo. 3
- Nuisance barking. 2
- Off-leash dogs in children's playgrounds. 1
- Owners not watching their dogs when off-leash. 2
- Dogs off-leash where/when they should not be. 0
- Off-leash dogs who will not return to their owners when called. 4
- Dogs roaming outside their property (in streets, neighbours' yards). 5
- Cats roaming outside their property (in streets, neighbours' yards). 12
- Households with too many pets on a property. 1
- None. 0
- I do not know. 0
- Other 2



17. Have you experienced any of the following domestic animals issues in the last 12 months and NOT contacted Council?

- Witnessed or picked up a lost/stray/feral cat. 7
- Witnessed or picked up a lost/stray/feral dog. 5
- Experienced or witnessed a dog attack/rush. 4
- Neighbours' dog barking excessively. 6
- Your cat/dog has been lost/missing/escaped. 0
- Witnessed dog poo not collected by the dog owner. 7
- Witnessed a dog off-leash when it should not be. 6
- I have not experienced any domestic animal issues. 2
- I have reported ALL domestic animal issues. 0
- Other 3



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