Domestic Animal Management Plan
2017 – 2021
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Executive Summary

Frankston City Council promotes responsible pet ownership and the welfare of dogs and cats in the community. It also aims to protect the community and the environment from domestic nuisance animals through education and enforcement.

Under the provisions of The Domestic Animals Act 1994 all Councils in Victoria are legislated to have developed a Domestic Animal Management Plan which will be renewed every 4 years. This legislation is guided by Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning. This plan outlines the services, programs and policies the Council has established to address the administration of the Act and the management of domestic animal issues in their community.

During the development of this plan, Frankston City Council embraced the opportunity to engage with stakeholder groups, the broader community and Councils’ Compliance and Safety Team. Consultation included both pet owners and non-pet owners. Feedback and suggestions obtained have been integrated into the Plan’s strategic directions.

Strategies developed have been thoughtfully considered to ensure:

- They are realistic and achievable
- A balance is achieved between needs of pet owners and the needs of the community in general
- Council’s overarching plan and vision is taken into consideration and incorporated where appropriate
- Legislative requirements of the Act are met
Introduction and context

Purpose of the plan

The Domestic Animal Management Plan sets the strategic direction in terms of animal management within Frankston City for the next four years and will allow review on an annual basis if required. It will reflect what Council does in relation to animal management and develop ways to improve current practices and set future directions and action plans.

The Plan aims to increase the relative profile and importance of the domestic animal management function in the local government sector.

The plan will ensure Council has adopted the following standards of animal management:

- Promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
- Ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations and any related legislation
- Minimise the risk of dog attacks on people and animals
- Address and reduce any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
- Minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
- Effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs and ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with the Regulations
- Provide a service to the Frankston Community to improve the municipality’s safety, image and pride
Frankston City Council Demographic Profile

The Frankston City Municipality, located on the eastern shore of Port Phillip Bay approximately 45 kilometres south east of Melbourne, is known for its beautiful coastline, award-winning beaches and natural bushland, vibrant lifestyle, diverse community and growing business, arts, education and health facilities.

The city currently is home to 134,143 (ABS Census 2016) people, which is expected to increase to 152,494 people by 2036. Frankston is ideally located with a stunning aspect next to the Bay and also connected to the rest of Melbourne and state highways by both rail and freeways.

The city also is host to venues, events and attractions such as: Frankston Arts Centre, McClelland Sculpture Park and Gallery, Frankston Waterfront, Sand Sculpting, making Frankston City an even more desirable place to live, work, learn, visit and invest.

As the strength and diversity of the city continues to grow, we will experience increasing attendances at festivals and events and participation in recreation and community groups.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Figures as at 30 June 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>134,143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>56,873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>129.6km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFT Authorised Compliance Officers</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of training per officer annually</td>
<td>Ref FCC learning and development framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered dogs</td>
<td>19,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered cats</td>
<td>6,562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered dangerous dogs</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal prosecutions at court</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal lodgements at Infringements Court</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impounded dogs</td>
<td>1,088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs reunited with owner</td>
<td>895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs adopted through Lost Dogs Home</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other adoptions (Foster Care) 84Y Agreements</td>
<td>133 (Dogs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogs euthanized</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats impounded</td>
<td>567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats reunited with owner</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats adopted through Lost Dogs Home</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cats euthanized</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other adoptions (Foster Care) 84Y Agreements</td>
<td>150 (Cats)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Statistics collected from Council rates records, prosecutions LGPRF, Lost dogs Home contractual reports and Pathway*
Animal Management Programs and Services

Identification and Registration

Services
- Media Releases
- New animal owner packs
- Vet packs
- Facebook
- Website
- Proactive registration door knocks
- Provide education and enforcement for offences committed

Dog Nuisance Complaints

Services
- Provide Barking dog information kits to residents
- Advertise helpful information via Council website
- Provide education and enforcement for offences committed

Dangerous/declared dog Complaints

Services
- Yearly inspection program conducted
- Case review team allocated to assess intentions to declare
- Respond to complaints received
- Provide education and enforcement for offences committed

Routine Patrols

Services
- Patrol register to record complaints received and follow up patrols
- Proactive patrols conducted
- Provide education and enforcement for offences committed ie dogs off leash/unregistered
Pound Operational Hours

Services
- Monday – Friday  10:00am – 6:00pm
- Saturday       9:00am – 1:00pm
- Sunday         9:00am – 1:00pm

Microchipping

Service
- Lost Dogs Home run a discounted microchipping program

Desexing Voucher Program

Service
- Ongoing program provided by Council for pensioner/healthcare/war veteran card holders
- Council legislated compulsory desexing

Cat Nuisance Complaints

Services
- Cat cage loan program
- Advertise helpful information via Council website
- Current cat curfew between sunset and sunrise
- Provide education and enforcement for offences committed

Domestic Animal Business

Services
- Inspection program conducted
- Ensure compliant with Codes of Practice
- Respond to complaints received
- Provide education and enforcement for offences committed
Dogs Controlled In Public Areas

Services

• Order in place requiring dogs on lead in a public place
• Orders allowing dogs off leash in 33 designated free-roam areas
• Review of a fully fenced area. (A fenced free roam area will be completed in 2018)
• Respond to complaints received
• Provide education and enforcement for offences committed

Prohibited Areas

Services

• Orders in place to protect native flora and fauna reserves/ environmentally sensitive areas
• Conduct patrols
• Respond to complaints received
• Provide education and enforcement for offences committed

Communication and Education

Services

• Council advertising
• Officers liaison with community stakeholders
• Attend Council events
• Information kits provided by Council
• Provide education and enforcement for offences committed
Identification of Key Issues

A broad consultation process was undertaken to obtain feedback and suggestions in regard to responsible animal management across the municipality. Feedback and suggestions obtained have been integrated into the Plan’s strategic directions.

Community Survey – Responsible Pet Ownership

Council consulted the community during the period from April 2016 to February 2017. The surveys were advertised in the Frankston Leader and Council’s website. Council Officers also conducted patrols and surveyed members of the public. Stakeholders in the Frankston community and Compliance Officers were also given an opportunity to contribute to the survey.

The survey identified the following issues as the key matters of concern in the Community:

The Community has identified the need for a free roam area on the foreshore

- High density housing causing a demand for more free roam areas
- Residents would like to see our beaches more dog friendly with free roam areas
- Untrained dogs and control of dog faeces could be an issue

Need for fenced off leash area

- Dogs to remain under effective control in presence of their owners, a fenced off leash free area has been identified within the 2017/2018 Capital Works Budget

The Community has identified the need for a 24 hour cat curfew

- Concerns about the effects that cats have on the environment
- Acknowledgement of the financial constraints on cat owners to comply

Re-evaluate the dog signage

- Entries to foreshore areas and parks stipulating the requirement in the area
- Off leash rules advertised in parks
- Re-evaluate stencilled signage to identify if effective

Facilities for dogs

- Need for drinking fountains for dogs and bag dispensers filled more regularly

Community Safety Department Contribution
Council’s Community Safety Team provided proactive ideas and strategies based on the feedback received from the Community Survey.

**Improving levels of education, enforcement and communication:**

- Council to provide support to the Responsible Pet Ownership (RPO) Program which educates children from ages 4-12 on living safely with dogs and responsible pet ownership. Educators visit over 2,000 kindergartens and 800 primary schools throughout the state yearly.
- Design an information pack that is easy to read and consolidate informative information, to send to new animal owners, owners of a nuisance dogs and supporting documents with infringements. Cost effective, easy to read and efficient.
- Review the barking dog procedure.
- Prepare clear, concise and consistent template letters for pet owners.
- Utilise Council’s website, newspaper and social media communications.
- Liaise with veterinary clinics, training establishments and puppy schools to provide responsible pet ownership education material.
- Attend Council’s events, utilise the time to positively educate the public and offer registration opportunities.
- Multi - skilling all Compliance Officers to assist with proactive patrols and enforcement.
- Re-evaluate the current dog signage throughout the foreshore and parks.
- Proactive registration door knocks.
- Implement a learning framework to multi-skill officers and enhance investigation techniques.
- Re-evaluate tools of the trade for Compliance and Animal Management Officers.
The Domestic Animal Management Plan

The Domestic Animal Management Plan is part of achieving the Frankston Community Plan, and has a particular link to the long term outcome of a Liveable City.

Animal Management outputs to achieve long term community outcomes

Planned city for future growth
- Registration compliance
- Animal permit compliance

Liveable and Sustainable City
- Review and implement the Domestic Animal Management Plan
- Continue to provide opportunities and support for people to connect and enjoy life with their animals and community
- Enhance amenity, health and safety through Community Safety services provided
- Strive to provide professional high standards minimise risk and enhance community confidence
- Promotion of responsible pet ownership through enforcement and education

Frankston City Council’s Animal Management Service is provided by the Community Safety Department and contributes to the Council Plan and Long Term Community Outcomes through enforcement, encouragement and education.

The main focus of the Domestic Animal Management Plan is to achieve a balance in meeting the needs of the community – including both pet owners and non pet owners.
Learning and Multi skilling

Frankston City Council has developed a framework for learning and multi skilling

- Induction program
- Systems training
- Compliance training
- OH&S
- Job and Core Competencies

A Community Safety Competency Matrix has been designed for in particular Compliance and Animal Management Officers.

Competencies are the knowledge, skills and attributes which result in superior performance on the job. Competencies are documented on each officer’s performance development plan. There are several types of competencies:

- Job Competencies to perform the job effectively
- Core Competencies are essential organisational skills every employee needs
- Management Competencies which are the key technical skills managers at all levels need
- Leadership Competencies which clearly define what is required of the leaders

Areas of Competency

- Enforcement duties
- Customer service
- Effective communication
- Information and Systems Management
- Policy and Procedures Knowledge
- Financial Management
- Personal Effectiveness/Achievement Orientation
- Planning and Organising
- Problem Solving /Decision Making/ Judgement
- Relationship Building
- Teamwork and Collaboration
- Coaching and developing staff
• People Management

**Further planned development**

- Animal handling skills
- Prosecutions and Investigations
- Performance reviews are conducted mid year and annually. The review gives an opportunity to provide formal feedback to the employee and to reinforce Council’s organisational values

**Animal Management Training for Community Safety**

- Identify and respond to animal behaviour (includes domestic animals)
  
  Box Hill Institute
  
  Held at Animal Aid Coldstream and Glenbrae Equestrian Centre
  
  4 days

- Large Animal Livestock Skills Training
  
  University of Melbourne Dookie Campus
  
  Delivered by 4 Up Skilling Pty. Ltd.
  
  4 days

- Farm workshop with live animal handling
  
  Warner Institute
  
  2 days
Animal Identification and Registration

Council endeavours to ensure domestic pets are registered, microchipped and desexed (when applicable) to facilitate responsible pet ownership, compliance and to help reunite lost pets with their owners quickly.

Current/Ongoing Activities:

- Doorknock campaigns
- Use of newspapers, social media and web site to promote registration requirements
- Desexing voucher program for concession card holders
- Discounted microchip provided by The Lost Dogs Home at the Cranbourne Pound (seasonal)
- Text/email reminders

Planned Activities:

- Encourage the use of the current mobile technology in patrol vehicles to access information such as the pet registration database
- Conduct scheduled enforcement of target areas to address animal management regulations
- Identify opportunities to collect statistical data from Council records to improve efficiency and increase registration income

Addressing over population and unwanted animals:

- All dogs and cats over the age of three months to be registered with Frankston City Council must be desexed and microchipped. (Exemptions apply)
- Council successfully prosecuted 71 cases within the 2016/2017 financial year. Included in this category owners were prosecuted for failing to de-sex and register an animal
Compliance and Enforcement

Council is committed to optimising compliance with the Domestic Animals Act, orders and regulations (State and Local)

Current/Ongoing Activities

- Conduct enforcement action against offenders (inc warning notices)
- Patrols conducted
- Implement new Council Local Laws 2016 No.8
- Review current procedures in order to develop innovative, timely and effective prosecution process
- Research of technologies and techniques to assist in the investigation process
- Streamline enforcement correspondence

Orders currently in place

- Designated dog off leash areas
- Designated prohibited dog and cat areas
- Dogs must be under effective control chain cord or leash in a public place
- Pet owners to remove faeces from public places and carry device to do so
- No more than two dogs or cats to be kept on a residential property without a permit
- Mandatory registration of dogs and cats at age of three months
- Mandatory microchipping of all newly registered dogs and cats
- Mandatory Desexing of all new registered dogs and cats (excluding exemptions under the Domestic Animals Act 1994)
- Efficient response to reports from the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning Hotline and RSPCA
- Dogs and cats must be desexed before sale
Domestic Animal Businesses

Council currently has six domestic animal businesses registered throughout the municipality

- 1 Boarding establishment cattery
- 5 Pet Shops

Current / Ongoing Activities

- Domestic Animal Businesses monitored for compliance
- Investigation of complaints/enforcement action for non-compliance
- Supply and distribution of information regarding Domestic Animal Management Businesses and relevant Codes of Practice

Planned Activities

- Ensure businesses are supplied with all relevant updates of Codes of Practice, Legislative changes and Responsible Pet Ownership material (At least quarterly or as required)
- Introduce more proactive approach to inspections
Declared Dogs

The 2016/2017 year Council recorded 19 dangerous dogs, six menacing dogs and four restricted breed registered dogs kept in the municipality.

Current/Ongoing Activities

- Annual inspections of dangerous/restricted dogs for compliance
- Prosecution of non-compliant owners
- Investigation of complaints
- Ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry
- Supply and distribution of literature and pamphlets regarding the regulations for keeping dangerous dogs

Planned Activities

- Patrol commercial and industrial areas to identify dogs on premises (annually)
- Continue declared dog process (Undertake regular case reviews of investigations, prosecutions and declarations of dogs)
- Continue to promote and respond efficiently to the new DELWP Dangerous Dog Hotline reports
Dog Attacks in our Community

Frankston City Council takes reports of dog attack incidents very seriously. In the year 2016/2017 71 animal matters were successfully prosecuted. Prevention of inappropriate dog behaviour is paramount. Educating the community on keeping dogs securely confined and under effective control is foremost. It begins educating the owner on buying the right breed, correct training measures, responsible ownership around children and understanding the animal.

Current / Ongoing Activities

- Ensure compliance with dogs controlled by leash in public areas
- Provide educational material
- Impound dogs wandering at large
- Enforcement on relevant animal offences
- Proactive patrols in off leash parks
- Investigate reports of dog attacks
- Enforcement on owners of attacking/rushing dogs
- Seize animals when necessary to protect the Community
- Internal committee of Senior Officers and Prosecutor to make decisions

Planned Activities

- Continue above activities
- Focus on training all officers investigations of dog attacks
- Internal regular prosecution training
- Multi skill Compliance officers to enforce animal offences
Review Plan Outlined

Review and update educational information provided

Council meeting held on Monday 14 August 2017 (OM305) identified the communities need for a trial for a free roam area on the foreshore, a 24 hour cat curfew and to permit dogs on lead in the Central Activities Area. However, after consideration of the public’s requests Council has resolved to not implement these measures for the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2017-2021.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Scheduled</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement fenced off leash area</td>
<td>To be completed in financial year 2017/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-evaluate dog signage</td>
<td>To be completed by 31 March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog drinking fountains to discuss</td>
<td>To be completed by 31 March 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redesign barking dog kits/ new owner kits</td>
<td>Completed July 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess tools of trade for Compliance Officers</td>
<td>To be completed in financial year 2017/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streamline enforcement notices</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal prosecution /investigations training</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal training for Compliance Officers</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review activity</td>
<td>Undertaken at next plan review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When owners pay for their cats and dogs registration fees, Council staff completes a complimentary check to see if microchip details are up to date.

- Council does a complimentary microchip check at the annual Pets Day Out Event.
- All microchip information is owned and managed by 2 major companies, Trovan and National Pet Register. Access to microchip details for any other party other than the companies is restricted unless required by an authorised officer due to a breach of the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

All registered and chipped dogs/cats are returned to their owners by vets and/or Compliance Officers FREE of charge.

- Under the provisions of the Domestic Animals Act 1994 Section 84(D) it is a legal requirement that all lost/stray dogs cats must be handed in to the Council.
- Officers can only check the registration and microchip information via a computer. A safe environment in which to do this and check the animal, the information and relevant history re previous incidents is necessary.
- The Pound offers this environment and access to the information. If everything is compliant, the animal may be returned.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All health card holders can register their animal for minimal fee or free.</td>
<td>Under the State Concessions Act only holders of pension or war veteran cards are entitled to 50% discount. All dogs/cats registered for the first time in Frankston must be desexed Domestic Animals Act 10A, legislative desexing exemptions may apply but are determined under section 10B of the Act. The minimum fee applies to desexed / microchipped dogs and cats other than declared dogs i.e. Dangerous, Menacing or restricted Breed Dogs.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Council should create an allocated section on their website to post lost and found dogs. | - The Lost Dogs Home who provides our Animal Pound service is currently developing a lost/stray website for Frankston’s pets that have been impounded.  
- There are legislative requirements and privacy issues around this type of strategy, however when the Lost Dogs Home site is established, a link can be placed on Council’s website.  
- In accordance with the Domestic Animals Act 1994, if the dog/cat is identified, the Council must contact the owner of the impounded animal within 4 days. The owner of the impounded animal must also attend the Pound facility to formally identify their pet before it is released. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animal owners should get a discounted registration fee if they take an online test outlining responsible animal</td>
<td>- Registration fees are determined by a schedule under the Domestic Animals Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership welfare.</td>
<td>1994, with parameters of the minimum and maximum charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Under the State Concessions Act only holders of pension or war veteran cards are entitled to 50% discount. All dogs/cats registered for the first time in Frankston must be desexed Domestic Animals Act 10A, legislative desexing exemptions may apply but are determined under section 10B of the Act. The minimum fee applies to desexed/microchipped dogs and cats other than declared dogs i.e. Dangerous, Menacing or restricted Breed Dogs.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The State Government department, DEDJTR, has developed a responsible dog ownership course that dog owners can participate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An exemption from desexing for select breeds with an additional registration charge such as neighbouring Councils.</th>
<th>Desexing exemptions are provided for under the provisions of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, 10B.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- An exemption may be provided on medical grounds authorised by a qualified Vet or that the owner is a member of an applicable organisation and the dog/cat is registered with that applicable organisation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>