



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

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Acknowledgement

Frankston City Council acknowledges the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters in and around Frankston City and value and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage and connection to land as a proud part of a shared identity for Frankston City.

Council pays respect to Elders past and present and recognises their importance in maintaining knowledge, traditions and culture in our community.

Council also respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for managing the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the land and waters where Frankston City Council is situated.

Mayor's Message

Frankston City has a proud history of being a community that values responsible pet ownership, protects its natural environment, and supports the wellbeing of all who call our city home, including our much-loved dogs and cats. Our Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026–2029 (DAMP) strengthens this commitment by setting a clear, balanced and forward-looking approach to how we manage domestic animals across our growing municipality.

This Plan responds to what our community told us matters most: keeping pets and wildlife safe, improving compliance and education, reducing nuisance, and creating public spaces that can be shared and enjoyed by everyone. More than 1,300 community members provided feedback during consultation, and your insights have shaped the priorities and actions in this Plan, from improving signage and off-leash guidance to tackling persistent issues such as cat containment, wildlife protection and dog waste.

With our population expected to grow significantly in the coming decades, the way we manage domestic animals must evolve. Our parks and open spaces are increasingly becoming the “backyards” of our community, and this Plan ensures they remain welcoming, safe and accessible for all users. Important initiatives, including strengthened community education, expanded patrols, improved registration systems,



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low-cost desexing programs and enhanced support for vulnerable residents, reflect our commitment to responsible pet ownership and animal welfare.

The DAMP also prioritises emerging challenges, such as state-wide concerns around feral and unowned cats, increased pet surrender rates since the pandemic, and the need to reduce dog attacks through better training, awareness and enforcement. Our focus is on prevention, fairness and proactive engagement, helping pet owners do the right thing while ensuring clear consequences where safety is at risk.

I am especially proud of the strong partnerships behind this Plan, with community organisations, veterinarians, wildlife experts and volunteers, all working toward the shared goal of healthier pets, safer neighbourhoods and a protected natural environment.

This Plan provides a thoughtful and responsible framework for the next four years, balancing the needs of pet owners with the expectations of the broader community. On behalf of Council, I thank every resident who contributed to shaping it. Together, we are ensuring Frankston City remains a place where pets are well cared for, our environment is respected, and our community thrives.

Cr Kris Bolam JP

Mayor, Frankston City Council

2024-2025





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Introduction

Purpose

This Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) provides the strategic framework for Council's delivery of animal management services across Frankston City over the next four years.

We acknowledge the benefits of pet ownership for health and wellbeing, the importance of ensuring animal welfare, and the need to protect the community and local environment from nuisance caused by dogs and cats.

The DAMP is designed to strike a balance between the needs of pet owners and those of the broader community.

Statutory Requirement

Under Section 68A of the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* (Act), every Victorian Council must prepare a DAMP every four years. The DAMP must:

- Set out a method for evaluating whether animal control services provided by Council are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Act and regulations.
- Outline programs for the training of authorised officers.
- Outline programs, services and strategies to:
 - Promote and encourage responsible ownership of dogs and cats;
 - Ensure that people comply with the Act, regulations and legislation;
 - Minimise risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals;
 - Address over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats;
 - Encourage registration and identification of dogs and cats;
 - Minimise potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance;
 - Effectively identify all dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs and ensure that these dogs are kept in compliance with Act and regulations;



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- Provide for review of existing orders made under the Act and Council's Local Laws;
- Provide for review of any other matters related to management of dogs and cats; and
- Provide for periodic monitoring and evaluation of the Plan.

Every Council must review its Plan annually and publish an evaluation of its implementation in its Annual Report.

Strategic Alignment

The DAMP is recognised as a key strategic document in the Council and Wellbeing Plan 2025-2029 under Strategic Outcome 1: Healthy and Inclusive Communities.

Process

The DAMP was developed in consultation with Council's Safer Communities Team, and informed by input from community members, stakeholders, and internal teams to ensure it reflects local priorities, addresses emerging issues, and aligns with best practice in animal management.

Community Engagement

Previous Community Engagement

Insights from prior community engagement shaped the key focus areas of the DAMP. Notable feedback included:

- Community support for increased education on responsible pet ownership, stronger enforcement of off-leash and nuisance animal regulations, fenced off-leash areas, and greater promotion of pet registration and desexing.
- Residents also identified cat containment and wildlife protection as key concerns, which have been addressed through proposed cat confinement Order refinements and education strategies in this DAMP.

The DAMP outlines Council's responsibilities in promoting responsible pet ownership, ensuring community safety, supporting animal welfare, and providing high-quality animal management services.



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Engagement on this Draft DAMP

Between 27 July and 7 September 2025 Council engaged the community on the draft DAMP:

- 1,320 people provided input.
- 974 surveys completed
- 15 written submissions
- 87 photo competition entries
- 331 people engaged at pop ups.
- The community consultation undertaken for this DAMP identified several key issues relating to animals in the community, these were:
 - Majority support for 24-hour cat confinement for the protection of wildlife, preventing cat nuisance and keeping cats safe.
 - Clearer rules, signage and enforcement for dogs in public places.
 - Strong concerns about pets harming wildlife, especially in reserves, wetlands and the foreshore.
 - Dog waste a consistent problem: more bins, compostable bags, more education and proactive patrols and enforcement.
 - Support needed for renters/low-income residents to comply (24-hour cat containment).
 - These issues have been addressed by the Objectives and Key Actions within the DAMP



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Summary of Key Actions

The following provides a summary of the DAMP’s key actions and initiatives.

Objective 1			
Ensure Authorised Officers possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively.			
1	Activity	When	How we will measure
1.1	Facilitate ongoing skill development for Authorised Officers through the annual performance and development review process.	Ongoing	Training needs identified and incorporated into individual development plans within Council’s learning management system.
1.2	Maintain and improve Animal Management procedures and induction materials for new staff.	Ongoing	Procedures reviewed and updated as required.
Objective 2			
Promote responsible pet ownership through increased education and information provision			
2	Activity	When	How we will measure
2.1	Review and implement communications and education plan, with clear messaging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet registration and identification. • Desexing requirements. • Keeping dogs on leads. 	Ongoing	Communication plan reviewed regularly and implemented.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of designated free roam parks and reserves. • Carrying waste bags and picking up after your dog. • Benefits of cat confinement. • Impacts of pets on native wildlife. • Barking dog information. • Dog attack prevention. • The value of dog training. • Promote Council animal management initiatives. 		
2.2	Evaluate and update existing materials on designated free roam areas and responsible pet ownership.	Ongoing	Resources reviewed and updated as needed.
2.3	Regularly review and maintain up-to-date animal-related content on Council’s website.	Ongoing	Website information reviewed and refreshed annually.
2.4	Develop and roll out a targeted campaign to educate pet owners on the impact of pets on wildlife. Collaborate with relevant partners such as Parks Victoria where appropriate.	Ongoing	Campaign implemented and included in the annual communications plan.
2.5	Provide support for accessible, low-cost pet education initiatives	Ongoing	Programs implemented and supported.



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	to promote responsible ownership.		
Objective 3 Promote and encourage responsible cat ownership to support expanding the current sunset-to-sunrise cat curfew to a 24-hour cat confinement Order*. * Subject to Adoption by Council resolution.			
3	Activity	When	How we will measure
3.1	Develop and implement a targeted communication and education strategy to promote responsible cat ownership, highlighting the benefits of cat confinement, with a focus on cat welfare and protection of the environment.	2026	Communication and education materials developed and delivered.
3.2	Partner with community organisations to enhance support and improve access to free or subsidised cat enclosures for low-income households, older adults, and people with disabilities.	2026	Working group established to assist the community with cat confinement and improve access to enclosures.



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Objective 4

Expand the current sunset-to-sunrise cat curfew to consider extending it to a 24-hour cat confinement Order to support domestic cat welfare and safeguard local wildlife and the natural environment*.

* Subject to Adoption by Council resolution.

4	Activity	When	How we will measure
4.1	Develop supporting processes and an educational campaign to promote cat welfare and responsible containment in preparation for the 24-hour cat confinement Order.	2026	Supporting processes and education materials developed and established.
4.2	Roll out the 24-hour cat confinement Order, including an initial amnesty period and accompanying community education campaign.	2026-2027	24-hour Cat confinement Order adopted and implemented.
4.3	Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the cat confinement Order, and provide a report to Council outlining key outcomes, challenges, and recommendations.	2027	Annual review and reporting completed.
4.4	Continue engaging in state-wide discussions and initiatives related to feral cat management.	Ongoing	Ongoing involvement and representation in relevant forums.



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Objective 5			
Increase the rate of pet desexing within the community.			
5	Activity	When	How will we measure
5.1	Maintain the provision of affordable and accessible desexing services.	Ongoing	Delivery of discounted desexing programs.
Objective 6			
Increase Council's capacity to improve welfare of domestic animals.			
6	Activity	When	How will we measure
6.1	Develop and formalise a strategic plan to guide the long-term provision of Pound services.	2027	Implementation plan endorsed by Council.
6.2	Collaborate with external animal management services, veterinary practices, and rescue organisations to strengthen local animal welfare efforts.	Ongoing	Active and ongoing partnerships established.
6.3	Continue to coordinate pet adoption events with the Lost Dogs' Home to promote pet rehoming and reduce shelter stays.	Ongoing annually	Adoption events delivered annually.
6.4	Identify and implement initiatives to reward pet adoptions from recognised partner shelters.	2027	Initiatives assessed and actions taken.
6.5	Partner with Pets of the Homeless to assist vulnerable individuals in caring for their pets during times of hardship.	2026	Partnership established and operational



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6.6	Facilitate access to low-cost veterinary care for eligible residents through the Lost Dogs' Home Mobile Vet Clinic.	2026	Program supported and delivered.
Objective 7			
Undertake activities to improve rates of registration and identification for cats and dogs in Frankston.			
7	Activity	When	How will we measure
7.1	Introduce SMS reminders for pet registration renewals.	Ongoing	Annual reminder system in operation.
7.2	Review and enhance the pet registration system to improve user experience, data quality, and enable identification of anomalies.	2027	System review completed.
7.3	Strengthen efforts to identify unregistered pets by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing field-based registration checks. Conducting regular microchip audits with Central Animal Records (CAR). 	Ongoing	Monitored through registration compliance rates.
7.4	Collaborate with shelters, veterinary clinics, breeders, and body corporates to promote Council pet registration and microchip detail updates.	Annual	Engagement with partner organisations completed.



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7.5	Continue to promote access to free or low-cost microchipping initiatives.	Ongoing	Promotional activities delivered.
Objective 8			
Enhance patrols, education, and enforcement to support effective domestic animal management.			
8	Activity	When	How will we measure
8.1	Maintain proactive patrols in parks, reserves, and along the foreshore.	Ongoing	Number of patrols conducted.
8.2	Review and refine enforcement procedures for key issues including barking dogs, dog attacks, off-leash offences, and cat containment.	Annually	Processes reviewed and improvements implemented.
8.3	Evaluate and improve how Council collects, analyses, and reports on domestic animal-related requests, including identifying high-issue areas.	2027	Review completed and improvements implemented.
8.4	Ongoing review and update of signage across parks, reserves and foreshore areas.	2027	Signage review completed and updates made.
8.5	Create a 'Barking Dog Kit' with information and tools to help residents address barking dog issues.	2026	Kit developed and made available to the public.
8.6	Provide tailored information to body corporates on preventing pet-related nuisances.	Ongoing	Reduction in complaints from multi-residential properties.



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Objective 9			
Establish a strategic and consistent framework for managing free roam and dog-prohibited areas across the municipality.			
9	Activity	When	How will we measure
9.1	Develop a Dogs in Public Places Policy to guide the assessment, designation, and design of free roam and dog-prohibited areas on Council-managed land.	2027-2028	Policy developed and formally endorsed by Council.
Objective 10			
Promote initiatives aimed at reducing dog aggression and preventing dog attacks.			
10	Activity	When	How will we measure
10.1	Continuously review and enhance Council's procedures for managing, investigating, and prosecuting dog attacks to ensure alignment with best practice.	Annually	Annual review and improvement of processes.
10.2	Communication and promotion of dog attack prosecutions to raise public awareness and encourage reporting of dog attacks to Council.	Ongoing	Actions implemented to support community reporting.
10.3	Develop educational materials and resources to help dog owners prevent aggressive behaviour and attacks.	Ongoing	Tools and resources created and made available to the public.



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Objective 11			
Ensure declared dogs are properly identified and managed in accordance with legislative requirements.			
11	Activity	When	How will we measure
11.1	Conduct annual inspections of properties with declared dogs to ensure compliance with the Domestic Animals Act, including requirements for secure fencing, appropriate housing, and warning signage.	Annually	Inspections completed each year
11.2	Continue to identify and formally declare dogs as dangerous or menacing where appropriate.	Ongoing	Declarations made in response to qualifying incidents or non-compliance.
Objective 12			
Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses in Frankston are properly identified, registered, and compliant with current legislation and applicable codes of practice.			
12	Activity	When	How will we measure
12.1	Conduct annual compliance audits of all registered Domestic Animal Businesses within Frankston City.	Annually	Audits completed.
12.2	Actively monitor for unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses by reviewing online advertisements, social media, local notice boards, and other sources.	Annually	Review undertaken.



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Objective 13			
Pursue external funding to enhance domestic animal management initiatives.			
13	Activity	When	How will we measure
13.1	Identify and explore potential grant and funding opportunities to support domestic animal management programs.	Ongoing	Relevant funding sources identified and applications submitted where applicable.
Objective 14			
Utilise emerging technologies to enhance the delivery of Council’s domestic animal management services.			
14	Activity	When	How will we measure
14.1	Explore and adopt innovative technologies to improve service delivery and communication related to domestic animal management.	Ongoing	Technology review completed and improvements implemented where applicable.

Frankston City Council Profile

People

Located approximately 40 kilometres southeast of Melbourne’s Central Business District, Frankston City spans an area of 129.7 square kilometres. As of June 2025, the city is home to an estimated 146,515¹ residents.

Frankston boasts a culturally rich population, with 21% of residents born overseas. The most common countries of birth, aside from Australia, include the United Kingdom, New Zealand, India, the Philippines, China and South Africa. English is the sole language spoken at home for 89% of the population, while other languages such as Mandarin, Greek, Filipino/Tagalog, Italian, and Russian are also represented.



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The median age in Frankston is 39 years, aligning closely with the Greater Melbourne average of 37 years. The largest age cohort falls within the 35 to 49 age group, comprising 21% of the population. Notably, the 70 to 84 age group experienced the most significant growth between 2016 and 2021, increasing by 19%.

Frankston is characterised by a mix of housing types, with 21% of residents living in medium to high-density dwellings, compared to 34% for Greater Melbourne. This urban landscape supports a dynamic community structure, accommodating diverse household compositions and lifestyles.

The city is renowned for its natural beauty, featuring 11 kilometres of coastline and over 100 parks and reserves. These open spaces range from small neighbourhood parks to larger regional reserves and conservation areas. These extensive open spaces are highly valued by both pet owners and non-pet owners for recreation and community activities.

The Future

Frankston's population is forecast to grow by more than 22,000 residents in 2046.

Increased resident population has a flow on effect on the number of pets in Frankston. This impacts the number of animal registrations, dogs being walked in public open spaces, cats needing to be contained to properties, dogs potentially barking, and much more.

Our parks need to be welcoming to all members of the community, including pet owners, and cater for various and increased use as they become residents' 'backyards'.

This includes responding to an increased number of domestic animals residing in the municipality and living in apartments, as well as providing a balanced approach to ensuring that our limited open spaces are well managed and shared between dog owners and non-dog owners.

Protection of our environment and wildlife from dogs and cats at large will continue to be a priority. We will implement initiatives to increase community awareness and reduce impacts of dogs and cats on the environment.



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Dogs and Cats

The table below provides a summary of domestic animal data.

Animal Management Data Summary	2016/17	2020/21	2024/25
Human Population	140,601	140,824	146,515
FTE Authorised Officers	12	12	12
Number of requests	N/A	1090	2711
Registered dogs	19,960	15,148	17,528
Registered declared dogs	15	5	3
Dog attacks (including rush)	197	98	256
Registered cats	6562	5395	6187
Registered domestic animal businesses	N/A	N/A	6
Keeping of animals / excess animal permits	N/A	N/A	85
Infringements issued	431	451	1006
Successful prosecutions	82	86	113
Dogs impounded	1088	682	465
Cats impounded	567	556	353



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Supporting Regulations

In addition to The Act, Council enforces the provisions of the Local Law and Council Orders which relate to animal management as outlined below.

Registration, Desexing and Microchipping

All dogs and cats over 3 months of age must be registered, desexed and microchipped.

Dogs and cats exempt from desexing include:

- The owner is a registered breeder and meets all the requirements under the legislation.
- The owner is a current member of an applicable organisation and the animal is registered with that organisation.
- The owner of the animal has written veterinary advice that the health of that animal would be impacted if desexed.

Dog and Cat Numbers

The maximum number of dogs and cats that can be kept without a permit is:

Animal	Number
Dogs	2
Cats	2

Animal Housing and Fencing

An owner or occupier of land must ensure that any structure used for animal housing is:

- Freestanding
- Maintained in a clean and inoffensive condition.



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- Maintained to the satisfaction of Council or an Authorised Officer.

All animal food for consumption is kept stored in a vermin and fly proof container.

Land must be adequately fenced to prevent the animal's escape from the land.

Animal Nuisance

An owner of an animal or an owner or occupier of any land on which any animal is kept must not allow any noise, smell or other emission from the animal to emanate which interferes with the reasonable comfort or convenience of persons who occupy adjacent or nearby land.

Protection of Other Animals and Native Flora and Fauna

An owner of an animal must ensure that the animal does not harm, kill or destroy any native fauna or flora, or any other animal.

Animal Excrement

People are required to both carry a bag and remove their animals' excrement when left in public place (e.g. streets, parks and foreshore areas).

Sale or Rehousing of Dogs and Cats

A person who sells or gives away a dog or cat must provide Council with the name and address of the new owner.

Dogs in Public Places

Dogs must be kept under effective control by the means of a chain, cord or leash held by the owner and attached to the dog while the dog is in a public place, except where otherwise signed as an off-leash area. Public places Frankston City are designated dog on leash, off-leash, prohibited or timed under the Council order.

Dogs are not permitted to be walked off lead in foreshore areas, and during the summer dogs have restricted access to these areas.

Dogs are also prohibited in 5 environmentally sensitive reserves:

- Bunarong Park, Frankston.
- Casuarina Reserve, Frankston.
- George Pentland Botanic Gardens.



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- Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve.
- Studio Park, Langwarrin.

There are 33 designated dog off-leash areas, known as Free Roam Areas, across various parks and reserves within the municipality. These areas allow dogs to exercise off-leash, provided they are under effective control. Among these, there are 5 fully fenced free roam areas, offering a secure environment for dogs:

- Melaleuca Reserve, Langwarrin.
- Ballam Park, Frankston.
- Telopea Reserve. Frankston North.
- Sandfield Reserve, Carrum Downs.
- McClelland Reserve, Frankston North.

Additionally, Keast Park in Seaford features a 200-metre stretch of beach designated as a year-round 24/7 off-leash area.

Cat Curfew

The cat curfew starts at dusk and ends at dawn next day. There are penalties for cat owners if their cat is caught during the curfew. The curfew applies every day of the year.

The cat curfew does not mean cats have to be inside. Cats must stay within the owner's property boundary during curfew hours. Cats can still be trapped outside of curfew hours, if the cat trespasses on another resident's property.

Cats are also prohibited in 9 environmentally sensitive reserves:

- Langwarrin Flora and Fauna Reserve, Langwarrin.
- Bunarong Park, Frankston.
- Studio Park, Langwarrin.
- Casuarina Reserve, Frankston.
- Paratea Reserve, Frankston.



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- George Pentland Botanic Gardens, Frankston.
- Seaford Wetlands, Seaford.
- Seaford Foreshore Reserve, Seaford.
- Sweetwater Reserve, Frankston.
- Kananook Reserve, Seaford.
- Pines Forest Flora and Fauna Reserve, Frankston.

Our Services – What We Do

Our current domestic animal management programs and activities.

Program	Services
Identification and Registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual registration renewal notices and follow up process. • Registration door knocks • Lifetime registration tags. • Online portal for both renewals and new registrations. • Periodic cross reference of CAR database with Council’s animal registration database. • Random registration checks during patrols.
Desexing initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desexing voucher scheme for holders of a Pension Card, Healthcare Card or War Veterans Card.
Dog attack complaint (against people or animals)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate response. • Information provided to reduce instances of dog aggression.



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<p>Animal nuisance complaint (including barking dogs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response within 1 day. • Online help information. • Online system for lodging complaints.
<p>Patrols</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Routine patrols of parks and foreshore areas. • Proactive patrols in focused areas as required. Extended patrols during peak / summer periods - with particular focus on foreshore areas.
<p>Pound Facilities Lost Dogs Home 920 Thompsons Road Cranbourne</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost Dogs Home is open to the public from 10.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Thursday, 10am to 4.30pm Friday, 9.00am to 12.30pm weekends (closed Christmas Day and Good Friday). • Online 'lost dog' and 'lost cat' search facility • Community and animal welfare-based outcomes wherever possible – work hard to reunite animals with owners at first point, without taking to the Pound. • First 30 Forever Furry Friends adoption program incentive. • The Pet Sanctuary program offers free boarding of animals for Frankston residents during times of hardship, including homelessness and family violence.
<p>Education and Promotion of Responsible Pet Ownership</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication plan guiding a range of activities across the year. • Dog waste bags in most free roam parks and reserves.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage in parks, reserves and foreshores detailing dog controls. • Discounted dog obedience training.
After hours service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 emergency after hours service through an on-call Council officer. • After hours animal collections are handled by the Lost Dogs' Home.
Animal welfare / cruelty matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASAP, but no less than same day response. • Liaise with and report animal welfare / cruelty matters to the RSPCA for action.
Wandering cat complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has a cat curfew in place between dusk and dawn. • Cat cages are available for the public to utilise, to confine nuisance, unowned or feral cats. • Strict protocols are in place governing the use of these cages to ensure that the welfare of the confined cats is protected. • Online system for lodging complaints.
Domestic animal business inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual inspections to be undertaken in accordance with legislation. • Respond to and investigate complaints.
Declared dogs (dangerous / menacing or restricted breed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual inspections are undertaken in accordance with legislation. • Investigate all reports and complaints related to declared dogs.



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Enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement actions include notices to comply, official warnings, infringements and court prosecutions.
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Training of Authorised Officers

Council’s Safer Communities Team are responsible for Council’s domestic animal management services and activities. Council employs 12.0 FTE Authorised Officers, who during 2024-25 responded to 2,711 domestic animal management requests.

Animal Management services are provided from 7am to 7pm Monday to Friday.

Emergency after hours reports are actioned by an on-call Authorised Officer. After-hours animal collections are handled by the Lost Dogs’ Home.

Current Activities

Given the varied responsibilities within animal management, it is essential that all staff possess the appropriate knowledge and skills to perform their duties effectively.

Council encourages Authorised Officers to obtain a Certificate IV in Animal Control and Regulation, Certificate IV in Government Statutory Compliance, or other relevant qualifications and industry experience.

Staff participate in regular training sessions, refresher courses, and ongoing on-the-job coaching. Authorised Officers typically complete around 30 hours of training each year, covering key areas such as animal handling, court proceedings, and conflict resolution.

New team members are required to undertake a structured induction program, which includes training on Council policies, safety procedures, and an overview of animal management operations and responsibilities.

Council maintains a training register for Authorised Officers, recording their completed qualifications and training. Annual performance reviews are conducted to identify further training and professional development needs, with targeted opportunities offered accordingly.



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Actions for 2026 – 29

Objective 1			
Ensure Authorised Officers possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively.			
1	Activity	When	How we will measure
1.1	Facilitate ongoing skill development for Authorised Officers through the annual performance and development review process.	Ongoing	Training needs identified and incorporated into individual development plans within Council’s learning management system.
1.2	Maintain and improve Animal Management procedures and induction materials for new staff.	Ongoing	Procedures reviewed and updated as required.

Promote and Encourage Responsible Pet Ownership

Education and awareness initiatives play a vital role in promoting responsible dog and cat ownership. Responsible pet ownership includes ensuring pets are properly trained and exercised, microchipped, desexed, registered, and that owners follow relevant regulations and signage.

Council supports responsible pet ownership through a combination of education programs and enforcement activities. We also recognise the growing community preference for digital communication and are expanding our use of online platforms, including social media, to reach and engage with residents.

Clear communication about dog-friendly areas and dog-prohibited areas is essential to help the community understand where dogs can be walked and under what conditions.

Expanding the current sunset-to-sunrise cat curfew to a 24-hour cat confinement Order will be supported by targeted community education to raise awareness and promote compliance with the new requirements.



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Current Activities

- Communications plan, guiding a range of activities across the year.
 - Website information
 - Fact sheets
 - Media releases
 - Social media campaigns
 - New registration packs
 - Vet packs
 - Missing or found cats and dogs
 - Barking dog information
 - Benefits of cat confinement (cat safety and environmental benefits)
 - Carrying waste bags and picking up after your dog
- Signage and waste bags in most free roam parks and reserves.
- Discounted dog obedience training. Council offers a partial reimbursement incentive for owners who undertake obedience training for their dogs.
- Publish successful court outcomes through relevant media channels.



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Actions for 2026 – 29

Objective 2			
Promote responsible pet ownership through increased education and information provision			
2	Activity	When	How we will measure
2.1	Review and implement communications and education plan, with clear messaging: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pet registration and identification. • Desexing requirements. • Keeping dogs on leads. • Promotion of designated free roam parks and reserves. • Carrying waste bags and picking up after your dog. • Benefits of cat confinement. • Impacts of pets on native wildlife. • Barking dog information. • Dog attack prevention. • The value of dog training. • Promote Council animal management initiatives. 	Ongoing	Communication plan reviewed regularly and implemented.
2.2	Evaluate and update existing materials on designated free roam areas and responsible pet ownership.	Ongoing	Resources reviewed and updated as needed.



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2.3	Regularly review and maintain up-to-date animal-related content on Council's website.	Ongoing	Website information reviewed and refreshed annually.
2.4	Develop and roll out a targeted campaign to educate pet owners on the impact of pets on wildlife. Collaborate with relevant partners such as Parks Victoria where appropriate.	Ongoing	Campaign implemented and included in the annual communications plan.
2.5	Provide support for accessible, low-cost pet education initiatives to promote responsible ownership.	Ongoing	Programs implemented and supported.

Objective 3			
Promote and encourage responsible cat ownership to support expanding the current sunset-to-sunrise cat curfew to a 24-hour cat confinement Order*.			
* Subject to Adoption by Council resolution.			
3	Activity	When	How we will measure
3.1	Develop and implement a targeted communication and education strategy to promote responsible cat ownership, highlighting the benefits of cat confinement, with a focus on cat welfare and protection of the environment.	2026	Communication and education materials developed and delivered.
3.2	Partner with community organisations to enhance support and improve access to free or subsidised cat enclosures for low-income	2026	Working group established to assist the community with cat confinement and improve access to enclosures.



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	households, older adults, and people with disabilities.		
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Reducing Overpopulation and Euthanasia

Impoundments typically occur when pets stray from their properties, are abandoned, or are surrendered by their owners. Council prioritises positive outcomes for both the community and animal welfare, aiming to return registered pets directly to their owners in the field wherever possible, avoiding the need for impoundment at the Lost Dogs' Home.

Council maintains a contract with the Lost Dogs' Home to care for uncontained dogs and cats, assist in reuniting them with their owners, or rehome them when this is not possible. The Lost Dogs' Home is committed to reuniting healthy and treatable animals with their owners or placing them into new homes. Most animals entering their care are successfully rehomed or reunited. Euthanasia is used only as a last resort, when an animal is suffering from a chronic condition that cannot be alleviated or where quality of life is severely compromised.

Since the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan was developed, there has been a reduction in dog and cat impoundments. However, there is a significant increase in the number of surrendered pets, likely due to unwanted COVID 'pet purchases' in 2020-21 and increased cost of living pressures.

	2016-17	2020-21	2024-25
Dogs impounded	1088	682	465
Dogs reclaimed by owner	895 (82%)	529 (78%)	308 (66%)
Dogs rehoused	170 (16%)	74 (11%)	61 (13%)



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Dogs euthanised	23 (2%)	45 (6%)	67 (14%)
Not specified	0 (0%)	34 (5%)	29 (7%)
Cats impounded	567	556	353
Cats reclaimed by owner	157 (28%)	111 (20%)	61 (17%)
Cats rehoused	220(39%)	205 (37%)	160 (45%)
Cats euthanised	190 (33%)	226 (41%)	104 (30%)
Not specified	0 (0%)	14 (2%)	28 (8%)
Surrendered pets (both dogs and cats)	N/A	29 pets	159 pets

Council is committed to reducing euthanasia rates and addressing pet overpopulation by working collaboratively with the community to increase the number of desexed, microchipped, and registered animals within the municipality.

To support this, Council does not register pets unless they are both microchipped and desexed; and ensures that all animals are registered before being released from impoundment. When an unregistered cat or dog is identified, Council follows up with the owner and provides support to facilitate registration.

Findings from a 2021 community survey of 764 participants indicated strong support for responsible pet ownership. 73% of respondents supported the confinement of cats to their owner’s property at all times. The leading reason for supporting a cat curfew was the protection of native wildlife.

Current Activities

- Council contracts its pound and after-hours animal collection services to The Lost Dogs’ Home which is open to the public every day (except Christmas Day and Good Friday).



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- Online 'lost dog' and 'lost cat' search facility through the Lost Dogs Home.
- Promotion of pets available for adoption through the Lost Dogs Home, including community adoption days.
- First 30 Forever Furry Friends adoption program incentive (free adoption, free registration for 2 years, animals are desexed, microchipped and vaccinated).
- Desexing voucher scheme for holders of a Pension Card, Healthcare Card and War Veterans Card.
- The Pet Sanctuary program offers free boarding of animals for Frankston residents during times of hardship, including homelessness and family violence.
- Liaise with and report animal welfare / cruelty matters to the RSPCA for action.
- Enforce Local Law provisions governing the number of animals that can be kept on a property without a permit.
- Enforce Council Orders governing sunset to sunrise cat curfew, and mandatory desexing of dogs and cats.
- Conduct investigations in response to customer requests.
- Enforcement actions include notices to comply, official warnings, infringements and court prosecutions.



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Actions for 2026 – 29

Objective 4			
<p>Expand the current sunset-to-sunrise cat curfew to a 24/-hour cat confinement Order to support domestic cat welfare and safeguard local wildlife and the natural environment*.</p> <p>* Subject to Adoption by Council resolution.</p>			
4	Activity	When	How we will measure
4.1	Develop supporting processes and an educational campaign to promote cat welfare and responsible containment in preparation for the 24-hour cat confinement Order.	2026	Supporting processes and education materials developed and established.
4.2	Roll out the 24-hour cat confinement Order, including an initial amnesty period and accompanying community education campaign.	2026-2027	24-hour Cat confinement Order adopted and implemented.
4.3	Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the cat confinement Order, and provide a report to Council outlining key outcomes, challenges, and recommendations.	2027	Annual review and reporting completed.
4.4	Continue engaging in state-wide discussions and initiatives related to feral cat management.	Ongoing	Ongoing involvement and representation in relevant forums.



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Objective 5			
Increase the rate of pet desexing within the community.			
5	Activity	When	How we will measure
5.1	Maintain the provision of affordable and accessible desexing services.	Ongoing	Delivery of discounted desexing programs.
Objective 6			
Increase Council's capacity to improve welfare of domestic animals.			
6	Activity	When	How we will measure
6.1	Develop and formalise a strategic plan to guide the long-term provision of Pound services.	2027	Implementation plan endorsed by Council.
6.2	Collaborate with external animal management services, veterinary practices, and rescue organisations to strengthen local animal welfare efforts.	Ongoing	Active and ongoing partnerships established.
6.3	Continue to coordinate pet adoption events with the Lost Dogs' Home to promote pet rehoming and reduce shelter stays.	Ongoing annually	Adoption events delivered annually.
6.4	Identify and implement initiatives to reward pet adoptions from recognised partner shelters.	2027	Initiatives assessed and actions taken.
6.5	Partner with Pets of the Homeless to assist vulnerable individuals in caring for their pets during times of hardship.	2026	Partnership established and operational
6.6	Facilitate access to low-cost veterinary care for eligible residents through the Lost Dogs' Home Mobile Vet Clinic.	2026	Program supported and delivered.



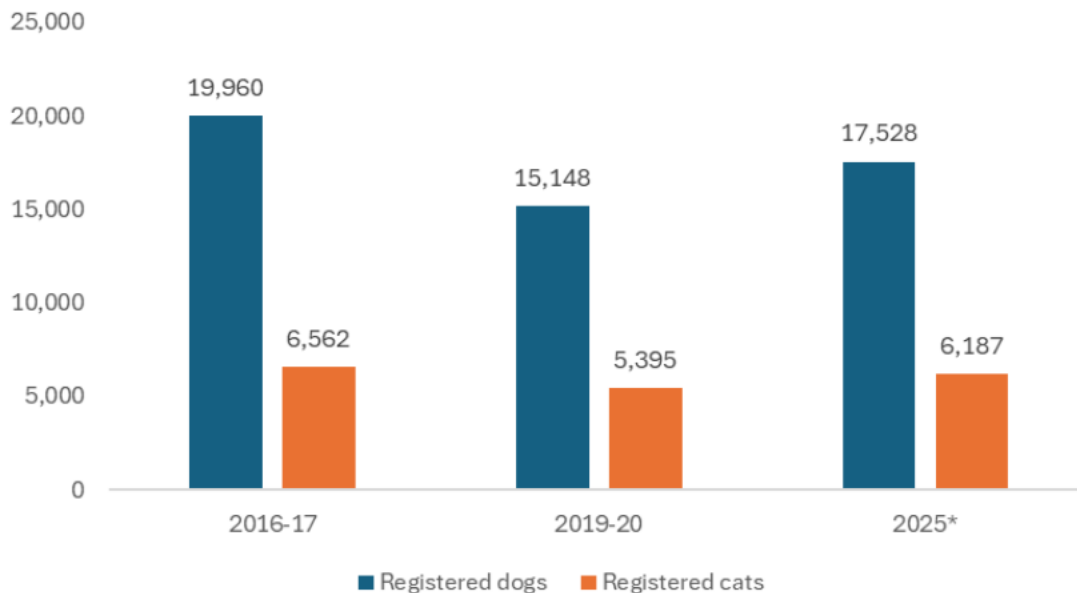
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Registration and Identification

Registering and identifying dogs and cats is a key aspect of responsible pet ownership and essential for ensuring animal welfare. In addition to being a legal obligation, pets with current registration and microchip details are far more likely to be successfully reunited with their owners if lost.

All dogs and cats aged three months and older must be desexed, microchipped and registered with Council. Registrations are required to be renewed annually by 10 April.

Since the previous Domestic Animal Management Plan, pet registrations have increased by 15%, suggesting a rise in pet ownership. This growth is also likely influenced by population increases and the effectiveness of past DAMP initiatives aimed at boosting registration rates in the community.



Current Activities

- Annual registration renewal notices and follow up process.
- Online portal for new registration applications and payment of renewals.



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- Lifetime registration tags.
- Educational media campaigns and online promotions.
- Periodic cross-referencing of Central Animal Records (CAR) microchip database with Council’s animal registration database.
- Registration door knock activities.
- Animals in the Lost Dogs’ Home must be desexed, registered and microchipped prior to release.
- Proactive patrols in the community, where registration is checked and followed up for all interactions officers have with members of the public.
- Enforcement activities including notices to comply, official warnings, infringements and court prosecution.

Actions for 2026 – 29

Objective 7			
Undertake activities to improve rates of registration and identification for cats and dogs in Frankston.			
7	Activity	When	How we will measure
7.1	Introduce SMS reminders for pet registration renewals.	Ongoing	Annual reminder system in operation.
7.2	Review and enhance the pet registration system to improve user experience, data quality, and enable identification of anomalies.	2027	System review completed.
7.3	Strengthen efforts to identify unregistered pets by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing field-based registration checks. • Conducting regular microchip audits 	Ongoing	Monitored through registration compliance rates.



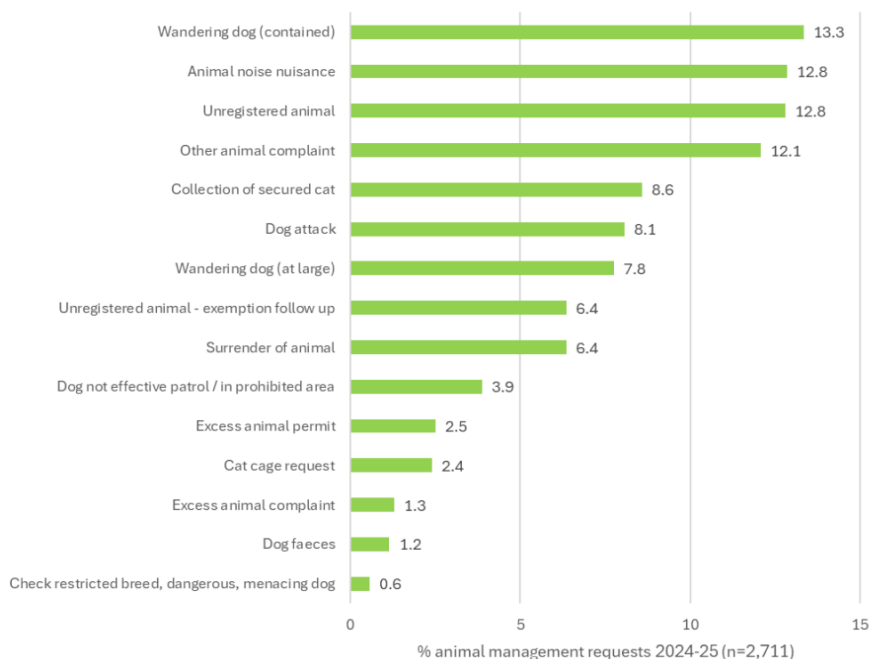
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	with Central Animal Records (CAR).		
7.4	Collaborate with shelters, veterinary clinics, breeders, and body corporates to promote Council pet registration and microchip detail updates.	Annual	Engagement with partner organisations completed.
7.5	Continue to promote access to free or low-cost microchipping initiatives.	Ongoing	Promotional activities delivered.

Nuisance

We hope to encourage people to manage their pets in a way that protects the health and welfare of the animal, maximises the companion benefits of their pet, and minimises potential for nuisance or harm to others.

In 2024-25, Authorised Officers responded to 2,711 domestic animal requests, as detailed below.





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Requests relating to wandering dogs, both contained and at large, remain the most common type of service request. While regular and proactive patrols are conducted, these efforts can only cover a limited portion of public open space at any one time. As such, community education and voluntary compliance are essential components of effective management.

Authorised Officers respond to barking dog complaints by first engaging with the dog owner to identify the underlying cause and offer practical solutions. Council adopts an educational approach as a first step, recognising that many owners are willing to address the issue once they understand the impact and are supported with appropriate tools. Where cooperation is not achieved, enforcement action is taken.

Requests for the collection of secured cats also remain prevalent. Under current regulations, cats must be confined to their owners' properties from sunset to sunrise. Without effective management, unowned and feral cats will continue to pose challenges for the community and local environment. Council remains committed to promoting responsible cat ownership.

There is a clear opportunity to further increase public awareness around responsible pet ownership for both dogs and cats.

Current Activities

- Routine patrols of parks and foreshore areas.
- Proactive patrols in focused areas as required.
- Extended patrols during peak / summer periods with particular focus on foreshore areas.
- Signage in parks, reserves and foreshores detailing dog controls.
- Maps and information about where to safely exercise dogs (free roam, on leash and prohibited areas).
- Dog waste bags and bins in most free roam areas.
- Barking dog process.



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- Council has a cat curfew in place between dusk and dawn. Council’s Parks and Natural Reserves Officers are responsible for regular cat control on Council Reserves.
- Cat cages are available for the public to utilise, to confine nuisance, unowned or feral cats.
- Online system for lodging complaints.
- Enforce Local Law provisions governing the number of animals that can be kept on a property without a permit.
- Enforce Council Orders governing sunset to sunrise cat curfew, and dog controls in public places.
- Conduct investigations in response to customer requests.
- Enforcement actions include notices to comply, official warnings, infringements and court prosecutions.

Actions for 2026 – 29

Objective 8			
Enhance patrols, education, and enforcement to support effective domestic animal management.			
8	Activity	When	How we will measure
8.1	Maintain proactive patrols in parks, reserves, and along the foreshore.	Ongoing	Number of patrols conducted.
8.2	Review and refine enforcement procedures for key issues including barking dogs, dog attacks, off-leash offences, and cat containment.	Annually	Processes reviewed and improvements implemented.



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8.3	Evaluate and improve how Council collects, analyses, and reports on domestic animal-related requests, including identifying high-issue areas.	2027	Review completed and improvements implemented.
8.4	Ongoing review and update of signage across parks, reserves and foreshore areas.	2027	Signage review completed and updates made.
8.5	Create a 'Barking Dog Kit' with information and tools to help residents address barking dog issues.	2026	Kit developed and made available to the public.
8.6	Provide tailored information to body corporates on preventing pet-related nuisances.	Ongoing	Reduction in complaints from multi-residential properties.

Objective 9			
Establish a strategic and consistent framework for managing free roam and dog-prohibited areas across the municipality.			
9	Activity	When	How we will measure
9.1	Develop a Dogs in Public Places Policy to guide the assessment, designation, and design of free roam and dog-prohibited areas on Council-managed land.	2027-2028	Policy developed and formally endorsed by Council.



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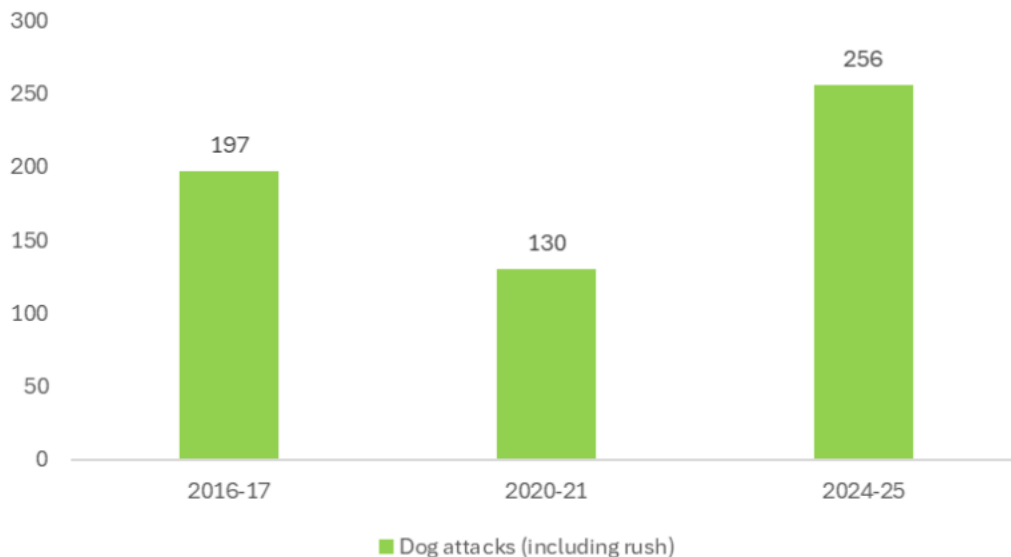
Dog Attacks

Dog attacks remain a significant concern, and Council is committed to reducing their occurrence through proactive education, community engagement, and enforcement measures targeting irresponsible dog ownership.

A dog attack involves a bite or physical injury to a person or animal, while a dog rush refers to a dog approaching within three metres of a person in an aggressive manner -such as snarling, growling, barking, or raising its hackles - without making contact.

In 2024-2025, Authorised Officers investigated 256 reported incidents of alleged dog attacks or rushes, and Council successfully prosecuted 113 cases involving serious dog attacks.

Reducing the risk of dog aggression requires a combination of public education, increased access to dog training, consistent enforcement of local laws, and a visible presence of officers within the community.





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Current Activities

- An immediate response to reports of dog attacks.
- Signage in parks, reserves and foreshores detailing dog controls.
- Proactive patrols of dog off-leash parks and reserves.
- Information provided to reduce instances of dog aggression and promote designated free roam areas.
- Conduct investigations in response to customer requests regarding dog attack, rush or aggression.
- Enforcement activities including notices to comply, official warnings, infringements and court prosecution.

Actions for 2026 – 29

Objective 10			
Promote initiatives aimed at reducing dog aggression and preventing dog attacks.			
10	Activity	When	How we will measure
10.1	Continuously review and enhance Council's procedures for managing, investigating, and prosecuting dog attacks to ensure alignment with best practice.	Annually	Annual review and improvement of processes.
10.2	Communication and promotion of dog attack prosecutions to raise public awareness and encourage reporting of dog attacks to Council.	Ongoing	Actions implemented to support community reporting.
10.3	Develop educational materials and resources to help dog owners prevent aggressive behaviour and attacks.	Ongoing	Tools and resources created and made available to the public.



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Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Council is committed to minimising risks to the community by implementing and enforcing the relevant provisions of the Domestic Animals Act to identify, monitor, and control dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs.

As of 2025, Frankston City Council has 3 declared dogs on record.

Pet registration forms require owners to disclose whether their dog is a restricted breed or has been declared menacing or dangerous.

Current Activities

- Register all declared dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry and carry out annual audits to ensure compliance with the Domestic Animals Act.
- Provide information on declared dogs via Council’s website.
- Investigate all reports and complaints related to declared dogs.
- Enforcement activities including notices to comply, official warnings, infringements and court prosecution.

Actions for 2026 – 29

Objective 11			
Ensure declared dogs are properly identified and managed in accordance with legislative requirements.			
11	Activity	When	How we will measure
11.1	Conduct annual inspections of properties with declared dogs to ensure compliance with the Domestic Animals Act, including requirements for secure fencing, appropriate housing, and warning signage.	Annually	Inspections completed each year
11.2	Continue to identify and formally declare dogs as dangerous or menacing where appropriate.	Ongoing	Declarations made in response to qualifying incidents or non-compliance.



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Domestic Animal Businesses

Council collaborates with Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) to ensure they are registered and operating in compliance with applicable regulations.

Frankston currently has 6 registered Domestic Animal Businesses:

- 1 boarding establishment / day care;
- 4 pet shops; and
- 1 dog training establishment;

Authorised Officers inspect these facilities annually to ensure compliance with the relevant Code of Practice under the Act, prior to registration renewal. Council has the ability to issue notices to comply, warnings, infringements, or to prosecute businesses that fail to comply with work plans and the relevant Code of Practice.

Current Activities

- Information on Council website.
- Provide all Domestic Animal Businesses with relevant Code of Practice.
- Conduct annual property inspections of registered Domestic Animal Businesses for compliance with legislation.
- Conduct investigations in response to complaints to ensure compliance.
- Enforcement activities including notices to comply, official warnings, infringements and court prosecution.
- Actively seek and identify illegal domestic animal businesses and prosecute where appropriate.



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Actions for 2026-29

Objective 12			
Ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses in Frankston are properly identified, registered, and compliant with current legislation and applicable codes of practice.			
12	Activity	When	How we will measure
12.1	Conduct annual compliance audits of all registered Domestic Animal Businesses within Frankston City.	Annually	Audits completed.
12.2	Actively monitor for unregistered Domestic Animal Businesses by reviewing online advertisements, social media, local notice boards, and other sources.	Annually	Review undertaken.

Other Matters

Actions in this section address The Act by providing for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in Frankston City Council.

Actions for 2026-29

Objective 13			
Pursue external funding to enhance domestic animal management initiatives.			
13	Activity	When	How we will measure
13.1	Identify and explore potential grant and funding opportunities to support domestic animal management programs.	Ongoing	Relevant funding sources identified and applications submitted where applicable.



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Objective 14			
Utilise emerging technologies to enhance the delivery of Council’s domestic animal management services.			
14	Activity	When	How we will measure
14.1	Explore and adopt innovative technologies to improve service delivery and communication related to domestic animal management.	Ongoing	Technology review completed and improvements implemented where applicable.

Review and Evaluation

Section 68A(3) of The Act requires that every Council must:

- a. review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the Plan;
- b. provide the Secretary with a copy of the Plan and any amendments to the plan; and
- c. publish an evaluation of its implementation of the Plan in its annual report.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Process

Council will assess the performance of DAMP objectives through annual reporting using established internal systems, ensuring compliance with the Domestic Animals Act and the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.

A new Domestic Animal Management Plan will be developed and adopted no later than 30 November 2029.