



DOMESTIC ANIMAL MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025–29



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Executive Report

Hobsons Bay City Council Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) has been developed in accordance with the legislative requirement for all councils to prepare a new plan every four years. This plan outlines Council's strategic approach to managing dogs and cats within the municipality. Key focus areas include community education, the promotion of responsible pet ownership, and reducing issues caused by nuisance animals.

As the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* (DAA) predominantly governs the regulation of dogs and cats, the DAMP is limited to addressing matters related to these species only. Council actively engaged Hobsons Bay community throughout the development of the Plan, seeking input from residents, domestic animal-related businesses, and other stakeholders. Feedback from this consultation helped identify the most pressing issues, which in turn informed us of the strategic direction of the Plan.

Animal management today is a specialised profession that has evolved significantly beyond the traditional role of impounding stray dogs or enforcing regulations. Council now plays a vital role in fostering responsible pet ownership, which is essential to maintaining safe, healthy, and sustainable communities.

In addition to ongoing daily operations, the DAMP introduces several key actions to improve the management of dogs and cats across Hobsons Bay, these initiatives reflect Council's commitment to proactive, responsive, and community-aligned animal management. Key actions include:

- **Annual Communication Plan** - Delivering consistent messaging around responsible pet ownership
- **Barking Dog Resources** - Developing improved tools and processes to manage barking complaints more effectively
- **Operation Documentation** - Introducing comprehensive policies and procedures to guide officers
- **Website Enhancements** - Updating and expanding pet related advice and resources on Council's website
- **Pooch Pouches Initiative** - Promoting responsible waste disposal during dog walks
- **Trainee Officer Proposal** - Building workforce capacity with two new trainee officer roles
- **Cat Containment Exploration** - Investigating the feasibility of introducing cat curfews or containment measures
- **Branding Refresh** - Rebranding animal management vehicles, signage, and webpages for stronger community recognition
- **Enforcement Communication** - Establishing clearer processes for sharing enforcement outcomes
- **Access Initiatives** - Exploring free or low-cost desexing and registration options for vulnerable or disadvantaged residents

- **Dog Off-Leash Review** - Assessing current off-leash areas and orders to align with evolving community needs
- **Microchip Training** - Providing officers with microchip implantation training to improve identification services
- **Enhanced Reporting** - Strengthening annual reporting on the outcomes and impact of the Plan

Additionally, the Plan outlines responsive approaches for managing dog attacks and issues related to dangerous, menacing, or restricted breed dogs, ensuring timely action in line with community expectations.

Introduction

The legislation in Victoria that requires councils to develop a DAMP is the *Domestic Animals Act 1994 (DAA)*.

Section 68A of the DAA states:

68A Councils to prepare domestic animal management plans

(1) Every Council must, in consultation with the Secretary, prepare at 4-year intervals, a domestic animal management plan

(2) A domestic animal management plan prepared by a Council must—

(a) set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services provided by the Council in its municipal district are adequate to give effect to the requirements of this Act and the regulations; and

(b) outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of this Act in the Council's municipal district; and (c) outline programs, services and strategies which the Council intends to pursue in its municipal district—

(i) to promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats; and

(ii) to ensure that people comply with this Act, the regulations, and any related legislation; and

(iii) to minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals; and

(iv) to address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats; and

(v) to encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats; and

(vi) to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance; and

(vii) to effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs, and restricted breed dogs in that district and to ensure that those dogs are kept in compliance with this Act and the regulations; and

(d) provide for the review of existing orders made under this Act and local laws that relate to the Council's municipal district with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats in the municipal district are desirable; and

(e) provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats in the Council's municipal district that it thinks necessary; and

(f) provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy, or review outlined under the plan.

(3) Every Council must—

(a) review its domestic animal management plan annually and, if appropriate, amend the plan; and

(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

Implementation of Objectives – Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP)

The implementation of this Plan is designed to ensure the efficient management of domestic animal issues, with a focus on community safety, legislation compliance, and the promotion of responsible pet ownership.

The plan outlines the following key nine areas of focus:

1. Training of authorised officers
2. Promoting responsible pet ownership
3. Registration and identification of animals
4. Managing nuisance issues
5. Preventing and responding to dog attacks
6. Regulation dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
7. Addressing overpopulation and high euthanasia rates
8. Oversight of domestic animal businesses
9. Other relevant matters (e.g. Council Orders)



The DAMP will be subject to regular evaluation, including an annual review of implementation. Progress will be made, reported through the Council's Annual Report.

It is important to note that this plan does not regulate how Council investigates or enforces local laws or related animal management policies. Instead, the DAMP aims to deliver a series of strategic objectives to:

- Establish and maintain satisfactory compliance levels with relevant legislation and community standards
- Ensure adherence to the DAA
- Provide education to pet owners on responsible pet ownership
- Increase the registration of cats and dogs across the municipality
- Enhance the effectiveness of Council's animal management services
- Improve welfare outcomes for dogs and cats within the community
- Reduce the impact of domestic pets on native bird populations

Domestic animal statistics and data – Hobsons Bay

The following table presents an overview of the domestic animal management services delivered by Council during the 2023-24 period:

	2016	2021	2024
Population	88,778	92,253	93,002
Number of Authorised Animal Management Officers	2	2	2
Number of Domestic Animal Businesses	8	11	7
Dogs within Hobsons Bay City Council			
Number of registered dogs (total)	9,050	11,154	10,472*
Number of registered restricted breed dogs	6	5	0
Number of registered declared menacing dogs	8	5	2
Number of registered declared dangerous dogs (includes guard dogs)	14	7	4
Dogs impounded at the pound	242	195	263
Dogs reclaimed from pound	162	174	225
Dogs adopted	60	16	2
Dogs reclaimed by owner or adopted %	91.7%	97.4%	86.3%
Dogs euthanised	18	3	9
Dogs euthanised %	7.4%	1.5%	3.4%
Customer requests responded to			
Dogs – Barking	79	43	50
Dogs – Pick up	243	150	45
Dogs – Wandering at large	146	75	32
Dog – Attacks	76	89	35
Dog - Rush	25	31	4

	2016	2021	2024
Cats in Hobsons Bay City Council			
Number of registered cats (total)	3,387	4,257	3,781*
Cats impounded at the pound	509	343	407
Cats reclaimed from pound	29	40	6
Cats adopted	134	95	37
Cats reclaimed by owner or adopted %	32%	39.35%	10.6%**
Cats euthanised	342	176	177
Cats euthanised %	67.20%	51.31%	43.49%
Customer requests responded to:			
Cat cage requests	250	218	76
Cats picked up	410	279	61

**2021 marked the mid-point of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which pet ownership surged across the State. However, post-pandemic trends indicate a gradual decline in new pet acquisitions.*

***In addition, prolonged periods of warmer and drier weather in recent years are believed to have contributed to an extended breeding season for cats, resulting in higher-than-average kitten births. This surge has placed considerable strain on shelters, foster care programs, and rehoming services.*

Development of the Plan

This Plan was developed through a comprehensive process informed by community and stakeholder consultation, feedback from Councillors, insights from Council staff, research, and benchmarking. It builds upon previous plans with the goal of delivering continuous improvement in animal management services for the Hobsons Bay community over the next four years, while working within existing budget and resource constraints.

Community Engagement Process

Two rounds of consultation were conducted to inform the development of this Plan:

Phase 1 (March - April 2025) - Sought feedback from a broad range of stakeholders on the current 2021 - 2025 Plan and ideas for the upcoming Plan.

Phase 2 - Gather responses on the draft 2025-2029 Plan.

The Phase 1 engagement included consultation with residents, domestic animal businesses, and other key stakeholders to understand community perspectives on cat and dog management in Hobsons Bay. A total of 869 responses were received via the following channels:

Engagement Activity	Responses
Community Survey	869
Email Submissions	02
One-on-one consultations (e.g. market stalls, pop-up sessions)	10
Domestic Animal Business Mail Outs	0

Promotional Channels

Engagement efforts were supported through a diverse range of Council communication platforms, including:

- Face to face sessions across the municipality
- Articles in Council newsletters and website updates
- Facebook advertising
- A dedicated page an online survey hosted on Council's Participate website
- Direct email invitations to stakeholders

Key Findings from Phase 1 Consultation

Feedback highlighted several recurring themes and improvement areas:

- Enhanced infrastructure and enforcement, including clearer signage for on-/off-leash areas, increased Council patrols, and stricter penalties for non-compliance
- Consideration of cat curfews or containment policies, and mandatory de-sexing
- Addressing irresponsible disposal of dog waste
- Calls for stronger compliance and education campaigns focused on:
 - Cat containment
 - Off leash dog rules and responsible control
 - Management of aggressive/dangerous dogs
 - Environmental impact of domestic animals

Suggestions for improvements to public space design, including the creation of dedicated areas for children, cyclists, and off-leash dogs to enhance overall community safety.

NOTE: Feedback from the second round of community engagement will be incorporated following the completion of consultation activities in August 2025.

Hobsons Bay City Council – Demographic and Profile

Hobsons Bay City Council spans 64 square kilometers at the northwestern edge of Port Phillip Bay, located approximately 7 to 20 kilometers southwest of central Melbourne. The municipality includes the suburbs of Altona, Altona Meadows, Altona North, Brooklyn, Laverton, Newport, Seabrook, Seaholme, Spotswood, Williamstown, and Williamstown North.

As of 2024, the estimated resident population is 95,633, and an increase of 3,366 residents since 2021. Over the past five years the population has grown by 3.65% and is expected to increase by 4.2% (to 99,618) by 2029.

One of Hobsons Bay's valued assets is the diverse natural environment featuring over 20 kilometers of coastline and foreshore. This includes a designated off-leash dog beach and access areas for horse exercise.

The local economy is characterised by an expanding base of manufacturing, transport, and logistics enterprises, alongside a mix of small warehouses, light industries, and service providers. Industrial precincts in Altona North, Brooklyn, Newport, Spotswood, and South Kingsville are emerging as significant hubs for freight and commerce. The municipality also hosts some of Victoria's largest manufacturing operations and industrial enterprises.

Animal Management Staffing and Unit Structure

The Animal Management team operates within the **Community Safety and Compliance Unit**, which is responsible for administering Council's **Community Local Law 2025** and overseeing a broad range of compliance services. These services include:

- Parking enforcement
- School crossing operations
- Local Law compliance
- Litter control
- Abandoned vehicle management
- Regulation of unsightly properties
- Footpath trading
- Issuance of accessible and parking permits

The Community and Safety Compliance Unit forms part of the Council's **Corporate Services Directorate**, which is structured as below:

Chief Executive Officer
Director Corporate Services
Manager Corporate Integrity
Coordinator Community Safety and Compliance

Key Roles within the unit include:

Position	Staffing
Team Leader, Animal Management	1
Team Leader, Parking and Local Laws	1
School Crossing and Compliance Officer	1
Animal Management Officers	2.0 EFT
Resource Officer	1.0 EFT
Parking	7.0 EFT
Statutory Review Officer	1
Administration and Support Officer	1
School Crossing Supervisors	63

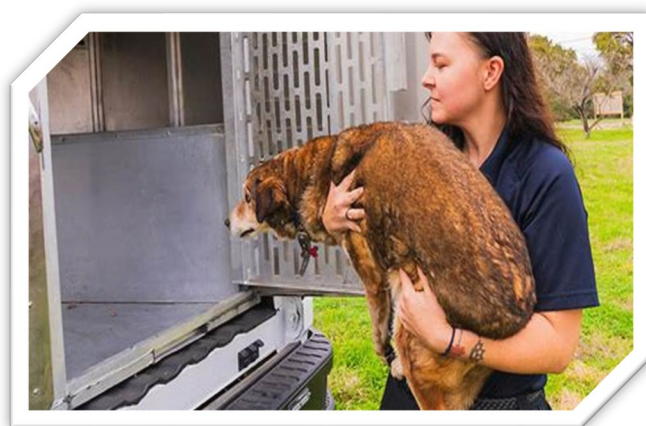
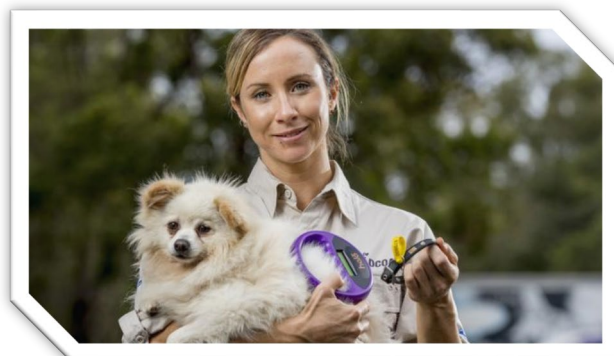
Service Delivery Model

The Animal Management team provides community services daily from 7:00am to 7:00pm, seven days a week. Service and staffing levels are subject to ongoing review during the life of this Plan to ensure they align with community expectations and budgetary constraints.

Strategic rostering ensures service consistency and efficient deployment of resources. Expansion of the delivery service, such as after-hours stray animal collection or meeting seasonal demands during daylight savings periods, would require additional resourcing.

Core Responsibilities of the Animal Management Team

- Promoting responsible pet ownership
- Managing compliance related to domestic animals
- Impounding wandering, surrendered, or abandoned animals
- Investigating dog attack incidents
- Ensuring compliance with legislation and relevant codes of practice
- Processing animal registrations
- Monitoring domestic animal businesses
- Providing advice and support to pet owners and the broader community
- Facilitating the return of lost or wandering animals to their owners when possible
- Responding to after-hours animal-related phone emergencies (dog attacks)



1. Training of Authorised Officers

Under **Section 68(A)(2)(b)** of the DAA Council is required to outline training programs for authorised officers to ensure they are equipped to effectively administer and enforce legislative requirements within the municipal district.

Animal Management officers are situated within the **Community Safety and Compliance Team** are multi-skilled professionals who contribute across a range of compliance areas in addition to animal related matters. These include enforcement of local laws, parking regulations, litter control and more.

To ensure ongoing competency and professionalism, authorised officers participate in regular training tailored to their roles. Core training areas include:

- Animal handling
- Customer service
- Conflict resolution
- Investigation procedures
- Legal Process and Prosecutions



Current & Planned Training

Council mandates that authorised officers maintain appropriate qualifications and skillsets. Officers are provided with targeted and periodic re-training to keep pace with evolving legislative and operational requirements.

Objective 1.1: Training of Authorised Officers

To ensure Animal Management Officers have the required skills, knowledge and experience to:

- a) efficiently and effectively carry out their work.
- b) deliver services in a manner which meets community expectations; and
- c) ensure officer and animal safety and welfare.

Officers Training Overview

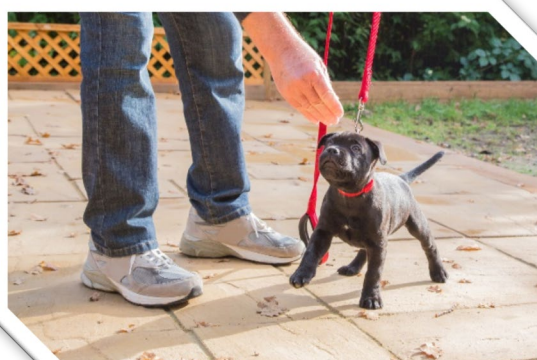
Council ensures authorised officers within the Animal Management team maintain appropriate qualifications and engage in continued professional development. Training is delivered through formal industry events, and internal processes aligned with role-specific requirements. The table below outlines key training components, (status as at 2025), and planned actions.

Approved Officer Training - Basic	Current Status (2025)	Planned
Certificate IV Qualifications Animal Regulation & Management Government (Statutory Compliance) Government (Investigations) Government (Court Compliance)	Officers hold at least a Certificate IV or have 5 years + experience	Training assigned as required and determined through Performance Development Review (PDR)
Animal Management Training Days	All officers eligible to attend	Offered regularly by relevant agency
Industry Training & Information Days (MAV & Local Government Professionals)	All officers eligible to attend	Offered regularly by the industry associations
Situational Awareness	All officers eligible to attend	Refresher training aligned with corporate schedule (by-annually)
First Aid & CPR (Nationally Accredited)	Available to all officers	Refresher training aligned with corporate schedule
Microchip Implanting	All officers to be qualified	Scheduled for 2026
New Staff Induction Include work instructions & animal management familiarisation	Completed by all current staff	New staff inducted upon commencement
Australian Institute of Animal Management – Annual Conference	Officers will have the opportunity to attend	Participation when available and via PDR
Industry training Ongoing Animal handling Animal assessment Statement taking Prosecution Restricted breed dog identification DNA collection	Ongoing	Assigned by PDR process
OH&S Training Dealing with aggressive customers Dealing with aggressive animals Difficult conversations	Delivered as required	Bi-annual refresher
Customer Service & Conflict Resolution	Delivered as required	Annual refreshers

Objective 1.2: Training of Authorised Officers

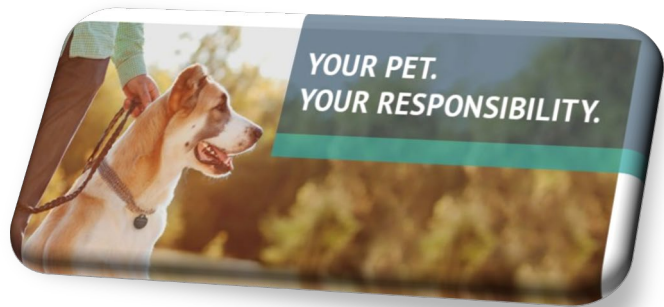
Review working arrangements for staff and associated impact on operations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake ongoing workforce planning and service level reviews To ensure staffing aligns service delivery needs outlined in the Plan	Annually (align with budget planning cycle)	Annually review of service delivery performance to confirm workforce adequacy
Assess impact of increased complaints Relating to domestic animal behaviour in conservation areas and reserves on current workforce	2025-2026	Annual evaluation to ensure additional responsibilities can be managed within current capacity
Investigate the establishment of a Trainee Local Laws/animal Management Officer role. This will include a detailed cost analysis for Executive to consideration	2025-2026	Assessment of proposal role viability and its impact on service delivery outcomes



2. Responsible Pet Ownership

Under **Section 68A(2)(c)(i)** of the DAA Council is required to outline the programs, services, and strategies that promote and encourage responsible ownership of dogs and cats.



Current Context

Responsible pet ownership spans a wide array of consideration, aiming to ensure the wellbeing of animals while safeguarding the community from nuisance and concerns.

Recent community feedback highlighted the need for enhance communication and education across a range of topics, including:

- Identification of designated off-leash parks and reserves within Hobsons Bay
- Importance of maintaining effective control over dogs in off-leash areas
- High numbers of unregistered and un-microchipped cats, key barriers to reuniting lost pets with owners and reducing euthanasia rates
- Community awareness of Council's free cat trap loan service to address nuisance behaviors
- Cat containment/curfews
- Owner responsibilities around cleaning up dog waste in public spaces

In addition, Council pound partner, The Lost Dogs Home (LDH), has recommended increase educational efforts related to:

- Benefits desexing and regular veterinary care, including vaccination
- Proper nutrition for pets
- Understanding the cost of pet ownership (e.g. registration, veterinary care, food)
- Ethical pet adoption through shelters, pounds, and animal welfare organisations

Education Programs for Children

Council collects a levy on behalf of the State Government for each animal registration processed. In 2023–24, Hobsons Bay pet owners contributed over **\$63,000** via this levy. The **Department of Agriculture** has advised that this funding supports **Animal Welfare Victoria's** community initiatives, including responsible pet ownership education programs for children delivered within the municipality.

General Education and Promotional Activities

Council is committed to promoting responsible pet ownership through a variety of ongoing initiatives:

- Public awareness campaigns via Council's monthly newsletter and website
- Park patrols—both proactive and complaint-driven, throughout the year

- Targeted education for complainants and animal owners, addressing issues raised and guiding them on their responsibilities
- Social media campaigns on responsible pet ownership topics shared via Council's Facebook and other platforms

This Plan also proposes the development and implementation of an **annual media and education strategy**, aimed at broadening the reach and enhancing the quality of community engagement around pet ownership practices.

Objective 2.1: Responsible Pet Ownership

Educate and promote responsible pet ownership messaging to pet owners.

Council will implement a range of programs and initiatives aimed at encouraging responsible ownership of cats and dogs, improving community understanding, and reducing animal-related nuisance concerns.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop an annual communication plan to support animal management objectives, with key messaging on: • Benefits of pet registration • Dog control and leash guidelines • Desexing to prevent over population • Cat containment practices • Pet ownership cost • Costs of pet ownership • Ethical adoption options	Annually by 31 July	Communication plan implemented.
Review and update Dogs in Public Places Policy	2025-26	Adoption revised policy
In collaboration with Council's Parks Department, develop and propose a Cat Containment or Curfew Order under the DAA including: • Communications and education plans • Community support resources • Staffing implications and resourcing	2026 - 2027	Reduction of cat nuisance complaints
Investigate the development of a distinct branding for Hobsons Bay responsible pet ownership program including:	2026-27	Community feedback and visibility of campaign

Activity	When	Evaluation
- Website and social media - Effective signage options in public places - Printed materials related to pet ownership		
Promote responsible pet ownership through increased education, awareness and enforcement of the requirement to carry waste bags and pick up after dogs.	Ongoing	Reduction in dog waste complaints
Investigate the sourcing of a supplier of pooch pouches (or similar) waste bags holders for distribution to dog owners.	2026-27	Distribution of pouches provided with new registrations or by request
Explore opportunities with Council's Animal Pound provider to promote initiatives including: "Seniors for Seniors" adoption program (discounted adoption of pets over 8 years of age by Senior card holders) - Free/discounted cat microchipping - Discounted desexing programs - Affordable pet ownership education programs	2027-28	Increased participation rates in these programs Increasing the number of dog and cat registrations



3. Registrations and Identification

Under **Section 68A(2)(c)(v)** of the DAA Council must outline the programs, services and strategies that encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats. Additional relevant subsections of the Act, **68A(2)(a), (c)(i),(ii), (d), and (f)**-are also addressed in this section.



Current Context



In Victoria, it is a legal requirement for all dogs and cats aged three months or older to be registered with Council. Registration must be renewed annually by 10 April.

Registrations include mandatory microchipping and provision of a council issued identification tag.

Registration dramatically increases the likelihood of reuniting lost pets with their owners, particularly when animals are microchipped, wearing identification, and registered in Council database.

Use of Registration Revenue

While registration fees do not fully offset the cost of Council's animal management operations, they contribute such as:

- Collection and return of stray animals to owners
- Operation of animal pound and after-hours collection service
- Enforcement of the *DAA* and *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986*
- Investigation and prosecution of offences (e.g. dog attacks, unregistered animals)
- Monitoring of domestic animal businesses (pet shops, boarding facilities, trainers and breeders)
- Management of animal related complaints (e.g. barking, trespassing and welfare concerns)
- Subsidised desexing scheme, **Adopt, De-sex, Register (ADR)** program
- Distribution of personalised identification tags for registered animals.

An **annual registration audit** helps maintain databased accuracy and drive compliance.

Registration Process and Identification

Pet registration provides Council with essential data to support service planning, policy development, and fulfilment of its obligations under the DAA. Ensuring animals are registered, microchipped, and identifiable significantly improves compliance rates and enables faster, more effective reunification of lost pets with their owners.

Key registration pathways:

- Renewals are issued each year by post, with payment available online, by post, or in person at the civic center
- New registrations are accepted via email, post, or in-person
- **Upgraded registration portal** expected to be launched in **early 2026**

Council collects an annual levy on behalf of the State Government:

- **\$4.51** per dog/cat registered
- **\$20.00** per domestic business registration.

These funds are directed to pet education and ownership programs under **legislated DAA requirements**.

Promotional tools include:

- Website updates
- SMS messaging and on-hold alerts
- Social media campaigns
- Physical signage and message boards

Table 1: Animal registration comparison rates from 2016 to 2025

Registrations	2016 registration period	2021 registration period	2025 (April) registration period
Dogs	9050	11,154*	10472
Cats	3387	4,257	3781
Total	12437	15411	14253

** 2021 reflected peak pandemic pet ownership rates, figures declined post-COVIC.*

System Upgrade

During this Plan, Council will select and implement new registration software to streamline registration, improve customer experience, and enhance data management.

Incentive Programs

Current incentives:

- Free registration for pets transferred into Hobsons Bay from another municipality (for remainder of the current year)

Proposed incentives:

- **Free first registration for puppies and kittens** registered before three months of age (valid until end of current registration year)

Registration Renewals and Compliance Measures

Council issues:

- Annual renewal notices
- SMS reminders and follow-up notices
- Audits for unpaid registrations with subsequent infringement notices where necessary

Compliance activities include:

- Investigation of unregistered animals
- Verification of impounded animals' registration prior to release
- Mobile access to owner records by authorised officers
- Ongoing updates to registration database
- Enforcement of tag display requirements
- Oversight of domestic animal business notifications
- Application of reduced registration fees for microchipped and desexed animals
- Accurate charging of State Government levy

Education and Promotion Initiatives

Ongoing public education activities include:

- Newsletter content and website updates on registration and responsible pet ownership
- Community engagement events
- Subsidised desexing programs
- Patrols targeting compliance
- Informational materials provided to new registrants
- Responsible pet ownership messaging across traditional and social media platforms

Summary and Future Focus

Animal registration continues to be a strategic priority for Council. This Plan commits to:

- Expanding public education around the benefits and legal requirements of registration Issuing of annual registration renewal notices and follow-up overdue notices
- Investigating new incentive programs to encourage higher registration rates
- Promoting the value of registration in improving animal welfare and community safety

Council acknowledges a likely under-registration of animals across the municipality. A targeted effort will be made to raise awareness, improve registration rates, and strengthen compliance through education, technology, and service delivery.

Objective 3.1: Registration and Identification

To increase the number of registered dogs and cats throughout the municipality.

Council is committed to improving registration compliance rates for dogs and cats, in alignment with the DAA. A range of service and enforcement activities will be implemented to promote registration and ensure identification of pets across Hobsons Bay.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Introducing new and improved systems to manage dog and cat registrations	2026	Measure by user experience improvements and ease of registration/renewal
Ensure impounded dogs and cats are registered prior to being returned to their owner as required under the DAA	Ongoing	Increase in total registered pets
Improve online registration forms via Councils website	2025-26	Availability and functionality of web-based registration
Conduct routine registration checks during property visits and in response to customer request	Ongoing	Number of registrations verified or updated
Follow up on newly adopted animals within the municipality to ensure timely registration	Ongoing	Uptake registrations from new pet owners
Explore opportunities to offer incentives (e.g. free or discounted registration fees) to boost compliance	2027	Increase in new registrations linked to incentive programs
Issue SMS registration reminders to pet owners regarding registration	Annually	Reduction in overdue registrations increase in renewal rates
Undertake enforcement action where required, including notice to	Ongoing	Number of enforcement actions leading to registrations

Activity	When	Evaluation
compliance notices, warnings and infringement		
Conduct annual audits on properties with unpaid registrations	Annually	Accuracy and completeness of registration database

Objective 3.2: Registration and Identification

Clarify Local Law policies relating to animal registrations.

To strengthen compliance and support effective enforcement to the DAA and councils Community Local Law, policies and procedures relating to animal registration will be reviewed and clearly identified.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and review standard policies and procedures for: • Unregistered animals Registered animals not wearing identification tags • Applications for registration and renewal • Seizing and impounding of unregistered/unidentified animals • Additional policies and procedures during operational review	2025-26	Updated procedures in place with scheduled annual review to ensure relevance and consistency

4. Dog and Cat Nuisance

Under **Section 68A(2)(c)(vi)** of the DAA, Council must outline programs, services, and strategies to minimise the potential for dogs and cats to cause nuisances in the community. This section also addresses relevant provisions under **Sections 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (ii), (d), and (f)**.



Current Context

- The DAA provides a legislative framework to address animal-related nuisance issues including excessive noise, trespassing, and wandering. Hobsons Bay City Council has further strengthened this with policies and local laws, including:
- Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP)
- Dogs in Public Places Policy

Hobsons Bay Community Local Law 2025 – Key Provisions

Clause 4.1 Permitted Animals	Residential properties are limited to no more than two dogs and/or two cats
Clause 4.2 Keeping of Animals	Owners or occupiers must keep all animal housing clean, sanitary, and free from unpleasant smells. Shelters and enclosures must be safely built and suitable for their purpose. The area must be kept clear of anything that could attract pests or vermin.
Clause 4.3 Animal Litter	Pet owners/handlers are to remove dog litter from public places and carry a bag to always collect dog litter
Clause 4.5 Pest and Stray Animals	Feeding pests and stray animals is strictly prohibited

Hobsons City Council Order under S.26(2) of the DAA

1. Dogs must be on leash at all times in public places, unless signs indicate otherwise
2. When in designated off-leash areas, dogs must be under effective control by voice command or hand signals
3. Dogs must be on-leash within 20m of organized sporting event; occupied children's playground, organised public meeting or occupied bbq/picnic area
4. Designation or particular locations as dog off-leash areas
5. Restriction of dogs on beaches at certain times/dates

6. Prohibition of dogs at certain locations

- Hobsons Bay Community Local Law 2025
- Council Orders under Section 26(2) of the DAA

Managing Barking Complaints

Council receives numerous complaints annually regarding nuisance barking. Investigations often require:

- Noise log sheets from complainants
- Owner contact and education
- Potential legal action if unresolved

In 2024-2025, Council reviewed the barking complaint process to streamline investigations. The Plan will:

- Provide information resources for dog owners
- Strengthened support tools and streamlined complaint management
- Use of noise-recording technology

These improvements are expected to reduce both complaint volume and enforcement action.

Dog Litter and Hygiene Compliance

Pet waste presents health and environmental risks. Council enforces requirements for pet owners to carry and use waste bags. To support compliance, Council will:

- Distribute **Pooch Pouches**, bag holders attached to leashes
- Monitor waste practices during patrols
- Investigate complaints and issue fines when appropriate

Dog Off-Leash Areas

Community use of off-leash areas continues to grow. During the life of this Plan, Council will review and refine off-leash provisions to:

- Assess effectiveness of existing sites
- Evaluate potential for new off-leash zones
- Establish limits on dog numbers per handler
- Examine environmental impacts on wildlife and conservation areas

This review will involve collaboration between Council departments and community representatives.

Managing Nuisance Cats



Council regularly addresses nuisance cat issues, including trespassing, spraying, and predation on wildlife. Response strategies include:

- Cat trap loan for residents
- Proposed introduction of a cat containment or curfew to reduce wandering
- Promotion of cat enclosures and cat proof fencing
- Desexing education to curb nuisance behaviors

The aim is to reduce nuisance behavior, protect native fauna, and promote safe pet ownership.

Education and Promotion Initiatives

Councils current initiatives include:

- Comprehensive web content on pet nuisance and ownership responsibilities
- Letters to new pet owners via Domestic Animal Business notifications
- DIY resources for cat containment (available online and in print)
- Information on managing barking dogs.
- Desexing education to curb nuisance behaviours

Compliance Measures:

Council enforcement activities include:

- Prompt investigation of roaming, off lead and nuisance behaviours
- Issuing of infringements and reclaim fees
- Ensuring impounded animals are registered prior to release
- Enforcement of fencing requirements under **Local Law 2025**
- Use **Notice to Comply** and legal action for unresolve matters
- Court prosecution where necessary
- Support of mediation where appropriate
- Linkage of complaints to pet registration records
- Oversight of permits for excess animals
- Provision of **mobile technology** to authorised for field investigations

Community Feedback and Future Direction

Community engagement identified key nuisance concerns:

- Roaming and stray cats
- Cats preying on native wildlife
- Dogs off-lead in prohibited areas
- Pet owners failing to lean waste
- Barking complaints
- Stronger enforcement of leash regulations
- Expanded education on responsible pet ownership

The Plan will recommend:

- Implementation of cat containment/curfew order
- Expansion of off leash areas and review off leash control policies]
- Increase use of technology for nuisance monitoring
- Continued investment in community education and awareness
- Assessment of staff resourcing to meet service demands

Objective 4.1: Dog and Cat Nuisance

To investigate and resolve nuisance dog and cat complaints in accordance with established response and resolution time-frames.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review and update policies and procedures for complaint response and resolution timeframes to ensure they reflect realistic service standards	2026	Percentage of complaints responded to and resolved within established timeframes

Objective 4.2: Dog and Cat Nuisance

To reduce the number of nuisance noise and barking dog complaints.

Council will implement targeted initiatives aimed at reducing the volume and impact of barking dog's complaints, focusing on education, early intervention, and improved investigation tools.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and implement an education and awareness campaign encouraging residents to resolve barking complaints using the guidance provided in the barking dog booklet , to be introduced in 2026	Ongoing	Number of complaints resolved without formal enforcement action
Investigate and implement the use of noise recording devices to support barking dog investigations where appropriate	2027	Reduction in investigation and resolution timeframes
Promote community awareness and education encouraging pet owners to seek support from qualified dog trainers and behavior specialist	Ongoing	Overall reduction in barking related complaints

Objective 4.3: Dog and Cat Nuisance

To reduce the number of nuisance cat complaints.

Council will implement targeted measures to address complaints related to nuisance cats, **including education, containment strategies, and service improvements.**

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop and maintain updated educational content on responsible cat ownership and nuisance prevention, accessible via Councils website and social media channels	Ongoing	Reduction in number of cat related complaints
Ensure community access to Councils cat trap hire program, with maximum	Ongoing	Decrease in the number of nuisance cat reports and

wait times limited to two weeks		improved service responsiveness
In partnership with Councils Conservation Team, prepare a proposed Cat Containment Curfew Order under the DAA for Council consideration	2026	Reduction in nuisance complaints and improved protection of native wildlife

Objective 4.4: Dog and Cat Nuisance

To increase the rate of compliance with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994* and Council's Community Local Law 2025.

Council aims to enhance community compliance through a blend of education, enforcement, and targeted programs that address nuisance behaviors and encourage responsible pet ownership

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct routine patrols of parks and reserves to educate residents and enforce compliance	Ongoing (subject to workload and staffing capacity)	Reduction in animal related nuisance complaints
Implement targeted summer enforcement program at the beaches	Every summer season	Decreased in seasonal complaints and observe non-compliance
Deploy A-Frame signage and mobile VMS boards to reinforce messaging around pet ownership responsibilities	Ongoing	Increase public awareness, reduction in complaints
Promote responsible pet ownership through expanded education, awareness and enforcement campaigns focused on: Waste bag carriers and disposals	Ongoing	Reduction in number of complaints relating to dog waste, increase visibility

Activity	When	Evaluation
• Distribution of pooch pouches to registered dog owners • Explore installation of signage, and waste bins in problem areas		
Partner with local veterinary clinics and pound contractors to host desexing events targeting low-income families, aimed at reducing unwanted cat breeding and improving feline welfare	2027	Uptake of program by community members and support from veterinary partners

5. Dog Attacks

Under **Section 68A(2)(c)(iii)** of the DAA, Councils are required to outline the programs, services and strategies in place to minimise the risk of dog attacks on people and other animals. This action also addresses compliance under **Sections 68A(2)(a)(c)(i),(c)(ii)(d), and (f)**.



Reported Dog Attacks (Comparison Overview)

	2016	2021	2025
Number of reported dog attacks	76	89	35

A downward trend in reported incidents has been observed since 2021, though community concern remains high.

Current Context

Dog attacks and aggressive behavior in public spaces represent one of the most serious risks in animal management, affecting community safety and posing challenges for Animal Management Officers. Council investigates every reported incident, and serious cases are prosecuted through the **Magistrates' Court**. Dogs suspected of involvement in attacks may be seized and impounded pending investigation outcomes.

The majority of incidents stem from dogs that are poorly socialised, inadequately confined, or not under effective control. Reports are received from various sources including victims, veterinary clinics, other councils, and government agencies. Motivations for reporting range from concerns about safety to claims for expenses or as part of being responsible.

While reduced dog ownership post-COVID may be contributing to fewer reported incidents, improved enforcement practices are also credited, Council prosecuted 40 animal-related matters in 2023–24, including two dog attacks.

Investigation and Enforcement Process

Council has established procedures to ensure thorough, evidence-based responses to dog attacks. Investigations require collaboration with victims, witnesses and dog owners, with immediate priorities focused on community safety.

Outcomes may include:

- Issuance of infringement notices
- Declaration of a Menacing Dog
- Declaration of a Dangerous Dog
- Prosecution via the Magistrates Court
- Order of destruction of the dog
- No further action, if warranted

Council reviewed investigations and prosecution policies in 2025, resulting in revised procedures that ensure procedures are impartial, timely and respectful of both public safety and owner rights. Key improvements:

- A formal process for Domestic Animal Act submissions by dog owners
- Clear performance standards for resolution timelines
- Use of an independent senior office (Manager) as the declaration decision maker, uninvolved in the investigation process

Legislative Orders and Local Laws

Council maintains a range of **local laws** to reduce dog attacks and promote public safety:

- Hobsons Bay Community Local Laws 2025
- Policy – management of Dogs in Public Places
- Orders restricting dogs on beaches and identifying off-leash areas

A key initiative under this Plan is the review of existing orders to determine if limitations should be placed on the number of dogs one person may have under effective control at any given time.

Councils Orders, Local Laws:

Council has several related Local Laws and orders in place, designed to reduce the number of dog attacks and increase compliance overall including:

- Hobsons Bay Community Local Law 2025
- Policy -Management of Dogs in Public Places
- Orders - Designated restrictions on beaches
- Orders - Designated off leash areas

A new initiative in this Plan will be to review our orders, to ensure that adequate controls are in place to manage the number of dogs one person can have under effective control at any one time.

Education and Promotion Initiatives:

To prevent attacks and promote safety behaviour, Council provides:

- Online resources about containment, investigation processes and reporting
- Information sheets and brochures about dog ownership responsibilities
- Promotion of early socialisation and obedience training
- Advocacy for dog desexing to reduce aggressive tendencies Brochures/ information sheets.
- Outreach via Domestic Animal Business notifications to new pet owners

Compliance Activities:

Councils' enforcement actions include:

- Immediate response to reports of dog attacks or rushes
- Seizure and impoundment of dogs when required
- Investigations into fencing and containment issues
- Patrols in parks and reserves, focused on off-leash compliance
- Declaration and registry maintenance for menacing and dangerous dogs
- Coordination with other councils regarding relocated declared dogs
- Unannounced inspections of properties housing declared dogs.
- Linkage of all complaints to dog registration records
- After-hours response capabilities for serious incidents

Summary

Dog attacks are one of the most **serious matters** facing the community and Animal Dog attacks are a critical area of focus for Council's Animal Management Officers. Investigative procedures prioritise community safety and uphold legislative requirements. Continuous review ensures decisions are transparent, accountable and evidence based.

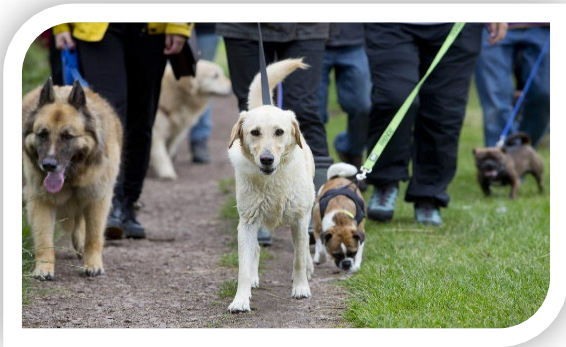
This Plan commits to refining enforcement approaches, strengthening community education, and promoting responsible ownership to further reduce the occurrence of dog attacks in Hobsons Bay.

Objective 5.1: Dog and Cat Nuisance

Reduce the incidents of dogs wandering at large and dog attacks.

Council will implement proactive communication, procedural improvements, enforcement actions, and **public awareness** activities to minimise the risk of dogs causing harm or nuisance in the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop an annual communication plan focusing on: - Containing and control of dogs - Leash requirements - Off-leash area usage	Annually by 31 July	Decrease in reported dog attacks
Review, refine, and implement enhance procedures for monitoring and reporting responses to customer service request	2025	Improve customer satisfaction with request service responses
Apply revised protocols for managing animal nuisance complaints, dog attacks, and declaration (menacing/dangerous), including destruction process	2025	Decrease in non-compliance incidents
Conduct regular patrols of beaches and reserves to monitor leash use and compliance with animal regulations	Every summer	Reduction in observed and reported non-compliance
Investigate the feasibility of referring Court outcomes to Council's communication team to prepare and publish media releases	Ongoing	Establish and use of internal process to communicate enforcement outcomes
Investigate all reported dog attacks, issuing infringement notices for minor attacks and pursuing Court for serious cases	Ongoing	Numbers of infringements issued, and prosecutions undertaken



6. Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs



Under **Section 68A (2)(c)(vii)** of the DAA council is required to outline programs, services and strategies to identify and monitor dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs. This section also addresses obligations under **Sections 68A(2)(a), (c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), and (f)**.

Current Situation

Council actively responds to all reports concerning declared dogs and conducts **annual inspections** of registered properties to ensure compliance with the Act and associated regulations.

Definition of Declared Dog under the DAA

- Declared due to an attack
- Guarding non-residential premises
- Specifically trained to attack or bite

Council may also declare a dog to be a dangerous if:

- It was previously declared menacing and the owner breaches regulations
- It has been declared dangerous in another Australian jurisdiction

Menacing dog:

- Has rushed at, chased, or person or animal causing non-serious injury
- Declared a menacing in another State or Territory

Restricted Breed Dogs includes the following:

- Japanese Tosa
- Fila Brasileiro
- Dogo Argentino
- Perra de Presa Canario (or Presa Canario)
- American Pit Bull Terrier (or Pit Bull Terrier)

Council's authorised officers undertake Canine Anatomy Identification Training under section 98A(4)(b) of the Act to assist in proper breed identification and compliance with restricted breed standards.

Owners of declared dogs must meet strict housing requirements:

- Secure enclosures
- Prominent warning signage
- Use of muzzles and leads in public places

Declared Dog Statistics – Hobsons Bay

	2020/21	2024/25
Declared Dangerous Dogs	4	3
Restricted Breed Dogs	5	0
Declared Menacing Dogs	5	2
Guard Dogs	3	1

Regulatory Oversight

Council is required to register all dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs on the Victorian Declared Dog Register (VDDR), a statewide database where declarations apply for the lifetime of the dog. Properties housing declared dogs are subject to annual inspections by authorised officers.

All properties housing dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs must be inspected annually, by Council's authorised officers, to ensure compliance with the keeping requirements under the DAA.

Education and Awareness Initiatives:

- Council website includes information about declared dog categories and owner responsibilities

- Owners of declared dogs receive comprehensive guidance outlining legal obligations and consequences for breaches

Compliance and Enforcement Activities:

- Investigations and enforcement following dog attacks or rushes
- Accurate recordkeeping on both the VDDR and Council's internal database
- Annual compliance inspections of all declared dog properties
- Inter-Council communication regarding transferred declared dogs
- Proactive inspections of industrial sites to identify undeclared guard dogs
- Issuance of infringements or legal summonses for breaches of the Act

Summary

Council prioritises community safety by ensuring dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are **appropriately identified, managed, and monitored**. Authorised officers will continue to:

- Conduct annual inspections of declared dogs
- Undertake Canine Anatomy Identification Training to maintain regulatory expertise
- Enforce legal obligations and educate owners to reduce risks to the community

Objective 6.1: Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Identify and register all declared dogs within the municipality to ensure that registered owners of declared dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs comply with the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide authorised officers with ongoing Restricted Breed Dog Identification Training to support compliance with the DAA	Ongoing	Completion of training sessions as required
Utilise microchip registries to identify restricted breed dogs or potential matches with the municipality.	Ongoing – review biennially	Regular review and analysis of microchip database
Develop and implement annual communication plan with targeted messaging on	2026, then annually by 31 July	Communication plan delivered and evaluated annually

Activity	When	Evaluation
declared dog's owner responsibilities		
Monitor new registrations to identify potential restricted breed dogs	<i>Ongoing</i>	Number of inspections conducted on identified dogs
Review Councils animal registration data of non-residential properties to detect undeclared dogs	Ongoing	Biennial audit completed and targeted patrols undertaken as required

Objective 6.2: Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Inspect and audit all declared dog premises annually to ensure they are following containment and signage requirements.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Council annual unplanned property inspections of all declared dogs	Ongoing	Compliance with requirements under DAA
Enforce all instances of non-compliance through appropriate regulatory action	Ongoing	Number of enforcement actions taken and improvement in compliance
Provide updated information to declared dog owners regarding their legal obligations as required	Ongoing	Timely delivery of guidance material and confirmed receipt by owners

7. Overpopulation and High Euthanasia



Under **Section 68A(2)(c)(iv)** of the DAA Council must outline services and strategies to address overpopulation and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats. This part is also addressed under **Sections 68A(2)(a), (c)(i)(c)(ii)(d)(f)**.

Victorian Cat Management Strategy – (2025-2035)

The strategy classifies domestic cats into three categories:

Category	Definition
Owned	Cats that are fully dependent on and cared for by a specific person
Semi-owned	Cats cared for by people who do not consider themselves owners
Unowned	Feral or stray cats indirectly dependent on humans, living around urban spaces

Current Situation

Over the last four years Council has made progress reducing unowned cat numbers through:

- Increase availability of cat traps
- Shorten trap program wait times
- Subsidised and low-cost desexing initiatives
- The **Kitten Diversion Program**, with vaccinated, microchips, desexes and rehomes eligible kittens

There was great community support for the program, which saw the number of cats euthanised decrease by 52% and the number of kittens rehomed increased by 140% in the first couple of years of the program, which commenced in 2018.

However, in 2023-24, rehoming efforts were challenged by a spike in unwanted litters across Melbourne, impacting shelter capacity.

Year	Cats/Kittens Euthanised	Cats/Kittens Rehomed
2020-21	176	89
2023-24	177	37

Although the kitten diversion program has proven successful, running the service requires a substantial number of resources, such as:

- Personnel expenses – including animal care staff
- Veterinary services and treatments
- Nutrition, equipment, and general supplies

Key Programs and Initiatives

- **Section 84Y Agreements** with vets and rescue organisations to support rehoming and reunification
- **Desexing Incentives**, including reduced registration fees and vouchers through the *Adopt, De-sex, Register (ADR)* scheme
- **Registration Audits** to identify unregistered pets and breeding operations
- **Community Education** on impacts of feeding semi-owned/unowned cats and benefits of desexing

Semi-owned Cat Management



Many people may not realise that feeding semi-owned or unowned cats contributes to their overpopulation in the community. Providing food sustains these cats and encourages their continued presence without addressing their welfare or population control.

Council will explore mapping feral/semi-owned cat populations in partnership with its pound provider to inform targeted interventions. Community **Local Law 2025** prohibits feeding stray animals, and a community education campaign will reinforce this.

Dog Euthanasia

Dog Euthanasia rates are low. In 2023-24, only 9 dogs were euthanised (less than 3.5% of impounds), mostly due to owner surrender or serious attack investigations.

Ongoing Education and Enforcement Activities

Education and Promotion

- Accessible resources on desexing, excess animal permits, and responsible ownership
- Promotion of impounded animals via Council's Lost Animals in Hobsons Bay Facebook page
- Awareness of State Government initiatives and desexing benefits
- Brochures and materials on DIY cat containment solutions

Compliance Actions

- Enforcement of excess animal and registration requirements
- Investigations into unauthorised breeders
- Distribution of cat traps to manage feral/nuisance cats
- Use of higher registration fees for non-desexed animals
- Expansion of S84Y agreements to increase animal placement options

Summary

Council will continue prioritising desexing, rehoming and responsible ownership through innovated programs, stronger partnerships, and targeted community outreach. Strategic investment in mapping, education, and partnership will be central to reducing overpopulation and maintaining low euthanasia rates across the municipality.

Objective 7.1: Overpopulation and high euthanasia

To reduce the number of stray and un-owned cats in the municipality.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to encourage residents to participate in the cat trapping program	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of cats and kittens trapped
Provide more education via annual media plan and Council's social media pages, about feeding stray cats	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of stray and unowned cats
Work to identify properties with excess cats or hoarders	Ongoing	Compliance with the Community Local Law
Identify organisations/agencies within the municipality that are willing to enter S84Y agreements with Council	Ongoing	Number of agreements in place. Rate of reduction in euthanasia rates.
Explore the possibility of mapping semi-owned, un-owned and feral cat communities, across municipality	2026	Improved understanding of cat population in Hobsons Bay.

Objective 7.2: Overpopulation and high euthanasia

Increase desexing rates for cats and dogs within the community.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to offer desexing discounts through Councils <i>Adopt, De-sex Register (ADR)</i> program	Ongoing	Number of participating pet owners
Host low-cost desexing events in partnership with The Lost Dogs Home and Local veterinary clinics	Ongoing	Number of residents accessing subsidised services
Maintain reduced pet registration fees for desexed dogs and cats	Ongoing	Number of registered, desexed pets
Develop and implement an annual communication plan incorporating messaging on: • Importance of desexing to prevent overpopulation • Health, behavioural, and financial benefits of desexing	From 2026, then annually by 31 July, and by 31 July annually	Completion and rollout of communication plan

Objective 7.3: Overpopulation and high euthanasia

To increase the number of un-identified kittens being re-homed.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the effectiveness and capacity of the Kitten Diversion Program	2026	Number of kittens successfully rehomed

Activity	When	Evaluation
Deliver ongoing education via Council's social media platforms to discourage the feeding stray cats and raise awareness about the impact on community cat populations	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of stray and unowned cats reported
Strengthening partnerships with local rescue agencies to facilitate kitten rehoming	Ongoing	Number of kittens transferred to rescue agencies
Engage with local foster carers to ensure compliance with relevant codes of practice and the Pet Exchange Register	Ongoing	Reduction in the number of unowned and semi owned cats



8.Domestic Animal Businesses

Under **Section 68A(2)(c)(ii)** the *Domestic Animals Act 1994*, Councils are required to outline programs, services and strategies that support business compliance with the Act, in regulations, and any other legislation. This section also meets Councils obligations under **Sections 68A(2)(a)(c)(i), (c)(ii), (d), and (f)**.



Current Situation

The Act requires **registration of Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs)** with Council. Businesses that must register include:

- Breeding and rearing establishments (with three or more fertile females)
- Pet shops
- Shelters and pounds
- Boarding establishments
- Dog training facilities

Current Registrations in Hobsons Bay

Business Type	Registered Count
Breeding & Rearing	0
Pet Shops	0
Shelters & Pounds	0
Boarding Establishments	5
Dog Training Establishments	2

All DABs must **register annually**, with renewal due in **April**, coinciding with pet registration renewals. Authorised officers conduct **annual audits** to ensure full compliance with applicable codes of practice and legislative standards.

New DAB applicants undergo **pre-registration inspections** before being issued permits to operate.

Compliance Approach

Council takes a collaborative approach with registered operators:

- Support is provided to correct **minor non-compliance**
- Serious or repeated breaches may result in **infringement notices** or **refused registration renewals**

Council actively investigates:

- Reports of **suspected backyard breeders**
- All cats and dogs sold to Hobsons Bay residents, to confirm **microchipping and registration**

Policies, Procedures and Legal Tools

- Pre-registration inspections of all new business
- Annual audits of all DAB premises
- Utilisation of **State Government inspection tools**

Compliance and Enforcement Activities

- Mandatory registration of all operating DAB's
- Annual inspections and documentation of audit findings
- Timely resolution of non-compliance cases
- Enforcement through **infringements and prosecution**, when necessary
- Monitoring of **illegal pet sales and advertising**

Summary

Council is committed to maintaining high standards of welfare and regulation across all **Domestic Animal Businesses**. Annual inspections ensure compliance with relevant codes and legislation. A balance of support, education, and enforcement will be applied to encourage voluntary compliance and safeguard community wellbeing.

Objective 8.1: Domestic Animal Businesses

To identify and register all eligible domestic animal businesses within Hobsons Bay.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review relevant data sources (e.g. business directories, advertising platforms, Council records) to identify unregistered DABs	Ongoing	Number of DABs identified registered, and compliant
Investigate all complaints relating to suspected backyard breeders operating within the municipality	Ongoing	Enforcement and/ or education actions implemented where appropriate

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct proactive monitoring of the illegal pet sales, including online and in-person channels, and ensure sellers are aware of legal obligations	Ongoing	Compliance achieved through education or enforcement action

Objective 8.2: Domestic Animal Businesses

To ensure all Domestic Animal Businesses are compliant with relevant codes and legislation.

Council will engage proactively with proprietors and conduct regular audits to ensure all registered DABs operate in accordance with the DAA and relevant practice codes.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Engage with DAB proprietors to build understanding of legal obligations and support compliance with the Act and applicable codes	Ongoing	Verified compliance with relevant codes and legislation
Conduct annual audits and inspections of registered DAB premises	Ongoing	Audit finding confirmed adherence to standards
Follow up on outstanding or lapsed DAB registrations to determine operational status and confirm regulatory compliance	Ongoing	Accurate registration records, number of active and compliant DAB's



9 Other matters

Under **Section 68A(2)(e)** of the DAA 1994, Council may review additional matters relevant to the management of dogs and cats within its municipal district, as deemed necessary.



Pound arrangements

Council currently engages an external contractor to deliver pound services across the municipality. This includes:

- Management of stray and wandering animals that cannot be immediately returned by Council officers
- Care and processing of animals rehomed via the **Kitten Diversion Program**
- Custody of seized animals arising from investigations or inter-agency requests, including those from **Victoria Police**

This outsourced pound service represents a **significant proportion of Council's animal management operating costs**. While recent initiatives have generated cost savings, reliance on a contractor presents potential risks related to **price fluctuations** and **service continuity**.

To address these challenges, Council will:

- Seek to establish a **long-term, stable, and cost-effective agreement** with the service provider during the life of this Plan
- Investigate opportunities to deliver select components of the service, such as **after-hours and weekend pick-up of stray animals**, in a more **efficient and financially sustainable manner**

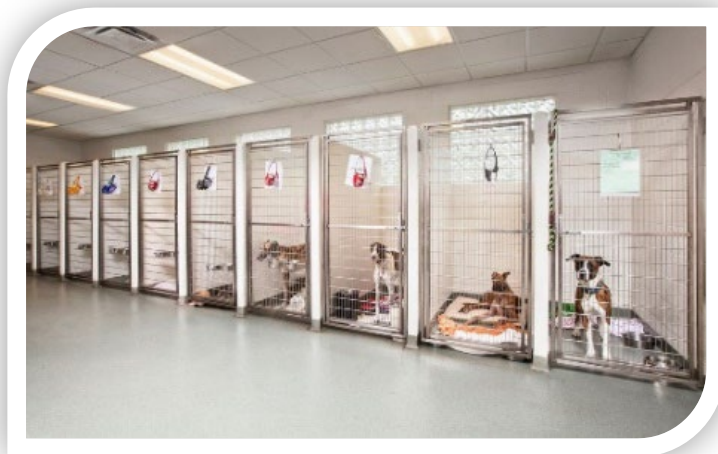
Objective 9.1: Other matters

To provide a more sustainable and cost-effective animal collection and pound service to meet Council's obligations under the Act.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate and negotiate a more sustainable service agreement with council pound service provider	2025-26	New agreement establishes with defined service terms and performance benchmarking
Explore and trial alternative, cost-effective methods for the collection and return of	2025-26	Implementation of new service options and

stray/wandering animals,
including after hours and
weekend solutions

improvement in operation
efficiency



10. Annual review of Plan and Annual reporting

In accordance with **Section 68A(3)** of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994*, Council must:

- (a) Review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and amend the Plan if appropriate
- (b) Provide the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture with a copy of the Plan and any amendments
- (c) Publish an evaluation of the Plan's implementation in the Council's Annual Report

Review Process

The Council will undertake an annual review of this Plan with a comprehensive evaluation scheduled for year four (2029). Action items outlined within the Plan include timelines that will be assessed regularly throughout its duration. Any amendments arising from the review process will be communicated to the relevant State Government Secretary, who will also be provided with an updated copy of the Plan.

Annual evaluation of implementation of Domestic Animal Management Plan (June annually – for inclusion in annual report)

Comments	
For each scheduled activity, was it completed?	Yes / No
If no, provide an explanation for each activity not completed.	
Did you complete any scheduled objective/s in this reporting year? If yes, provide details?	Yes / No
If no, provide an explanation.	
Are any amendments required for the DAM Plan? If so, please describe.	
If DAM Plan has been amended, has a copy been provided to the Secretary?	

Objective 10.1: Annual review of Plan and reporting:
Comply with Section 68A(3) of the Act.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review the Plan amend if necessary	Annually	Amendments made as required
Submit the Plan and any amendments to the Secretary, Department of Agriculture	December 2025, then annually by 31 July	Plan update submitted to State Government
Publish an evaluation of the implementation of the Plan in the annual report.	Annually	Evaluation include in annual report

