



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, the Bunurong people, and pay respects to their Elders past and present. Er recognise and respect their continuing connections to climate, Culture, Country and waters.

Contents

Contents

Introduction	5
Legislation Framework.....	6
About Dandenong	7
Animal Management Service Snapshot 2024-2025.....	8
Our Domestic Animal Management plan 2026- 2029	100
Registration and Identification	111
Nuisance Animals	144
Minimising Dog Attacks.....	17
Declared – Dangerous, menacing and restricted dogs	19
Training of Authorised Officers	21
Domestic Animal Businesses.....	21
Other Matters – Emergency Management Plan	25
Review and Evaluation	27



Introduction

Greater Dandenong Council recognises the value of pet ownership and its benefits for health and wellbeing.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2026–2029 has been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act 1994, which mandates that all Victorian councils prepare and review a domestic animal management plan every four years.

This plan outlines Council’s approach to managing dogs and cats within our municipality, focusing on responsible pet ownership, community safety, and animal welfare. It sets out the programs, services, and strategies Council will pursue to:

- Promote and encourage responsible pet ownership
- Protect the community and environment from nuisance dogs and cats
- Deliver effective domestic animal management services

The Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) has been shaped by extensive community consultation, reflecting the values and priorities of Greater Dandenong residents. Council is committed to ongoing engagement, education, and enforcement to create a safe, supportive, and pet-friendly environment for everyone.

The Domestic Animal Management Plan is an endorsed supporting strategy in the Greater Dandenong Council Plan.



Legislation Framework

Under the Domestic Animal Act 1994, every Council must develop and implement a Domestic Animal management plan every four years.

The plan must:

- Evaluate the adequacy of animal control services
- Provide training programs for authorised officers
- Include strategies to:
 - Promote responsible pet ownership of dogs and cats
 - Ensure compliance with legislation
 - Minimise the risk of dog attacks
 - Address overpopulation and euthanasia rates
 - Encourage pet registration and identification of cats and dogs
 - Reduce nuisance caused by cats and dogs
 - Identify and manage dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
 - Review existing Orders and local laws
 - Monitor and evaluate the plan periodically
- Each Council must review its Domestic Animal Management Plan annually and publish an evaluation in its Annual Report.



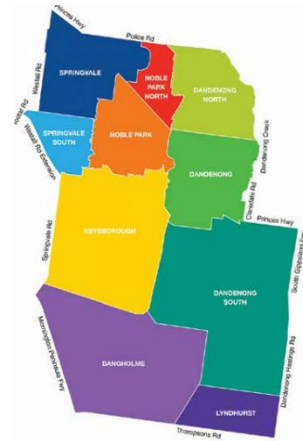
About Dandenong

Located 35km to the southeast of Melbourne, Greater Dandenong City Council covers 129 square kilometres and has a population of over 169,000 people. With the forecast construction of over 7,500 dwellings by 2031, the population is expected to surge to approximately 203,000. Over half of local, occupied private dwellings are fully owned or being purchased by their occupants, while most of the balance are rented. The extent of home ownership in Greater Dandenong – that is, fully-owned or being purchased – is substantially lower than the metropolitan average of 71%.

Greater Dandenong City Council is the most culturally diverse locality in Australia, with residents from over 150 different birthplaces, nearly two-thirds of whom were born overseas. In light of this, it is to be expected that Greater Dandenong Council would exhibit lower rates of pet ownership than the metropolitan or state average.

Our suburbs include:

- Dandenong, Dandenong North, Dandenong South
- Noble Park, Noble Park North
- Springvale, Springvale South
- Keysborough, Keysborough South
- Lyndhurst
- Bangholme

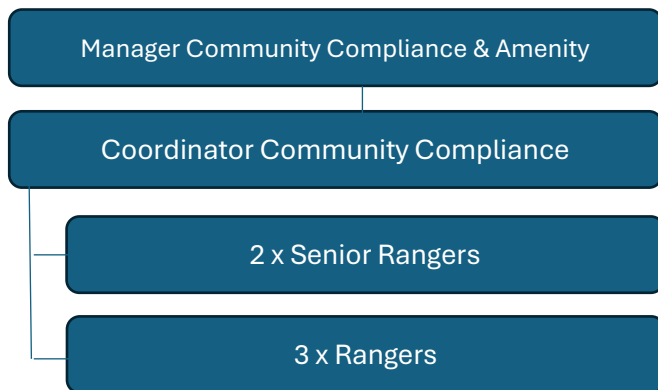


Animal Management Service Snapshot 2024-2025

Greater Dandenong Compliance team have 11 field officers, 6 of those officers have some animal management tasks and 5 of those officer's deal with Animal Management issues solely as their work activity.

In addition to animal management all field officers also undertake local laws, parking enforcement and school crossings matters.

The animal management structure is set out below:



Animal Registration

Dogs Registered	6187
Cats Registered	3232
Declared Dogs	4
Domestic Animal Businesses	10

Animal Pound Results

Dogs Impounded	376
Dogs Rehomed	50
Dogs Reunited with owners	204
Cats Impounded	779
Cats Rehomed	222
Cats Reunited with owners	51

Customer Service Requests

Animal requests received	2751
Barking Dogs	257
Wandering Dogs	66
Cats not contained	262
Cat trap hire Request	283
Aggressive Dog Reports	158



Our Domestic Animal Management plan 2025- 2029

We have redrafted the exiting plan and identified parts of the expiring DAMP where the community have had their say on where we can develop a program of actions and initiatives throughout the life of the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025- 2029.

This plan is designed to ensure that the animal management service in Greater Dandenong continue to meet the objective of the Domestic Animal Act 1994 and remain responsive to the needs of the community.

The plan reflects insights gathered through community consultation conducted in July 2025. This engagement captured a wide range of perspectives on animal management, animal welfare and the needs of pet ownership across Greater Dandenong. The feedback has helped identified both ongoing and emerging issues, information the redraft of the targeted actions to meet current and future service demands.

This redraft is structured around a number of key areas which align with the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

Key 1: Registration & Identification

Key 2: Nuisance

Key 3: Dog Attacks

Key 4: Dangerous, Menacing & Restricted Dogs

Key 5: Training of Authorised Officers

Key 6: Domestic Animal Businesses

Key 7: Other Matters



Key 1. Registration and Identification

Council currently engages in a range of activities aimed at encouraging the registration and identification of dogs and cats. These include:

- Website information
- Pet News annual publication
- Media Releases
- Facebook Lost & Found page
- Mandatory registration of animals prior to release from pound
- Annual Registration renewal follow-up's
- Microchip database comparison with Council registration records
- Proactive targeted doorknocks
- Proactive patrols of parks / reserves
- Educational displays at community events
- No fee for first registration period for pets registered before reaching 3 months of age
- No fee for first registration period for transfer of registration from another municipality /State
- No fee for first registration period for all animals adopted from a recognised adoption program
- Strays returned to owner where currently registered, and owner can be contacted.

Objectives:

Increase dog and cat registration

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure all impounded animals are registered to their owners prior to release.	Prior to every release	Annually review of registration numbers. Review number of animals being impounded that are not registered.
Undertake door-knocking campaigns to follow up on unrenewed registration	Annually	Review numbers of unregistered animals found
SMS & Email registration renewal reminders to owners of un-renewed pets with mobile numbers and email addresses listed	Annually (March-April)	Review numbers of pets being registered after SMS & Email reminders sent
Investigate improvements to the online registration process	Year 4	Complete online registration process review.
Develop a communications plan to promote the need to update microchip details	Year 3	Communications plan completed and implemented.

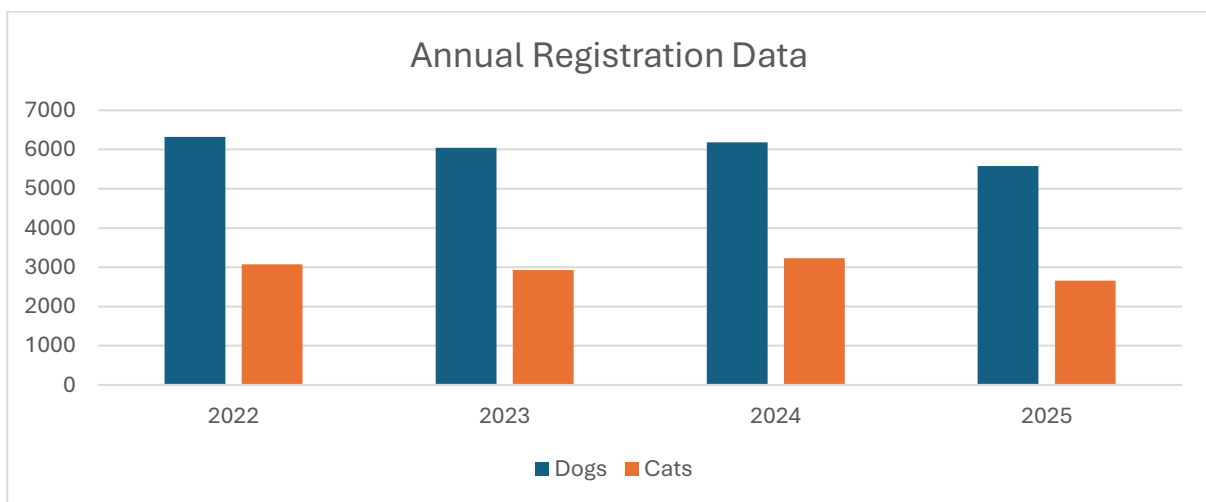
Reduce the number of animals impounded

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop relationships with Rescue Agencies & Volunteer Enrolled Foster Cares as an alternative to impounding	ongoing	Reduction in impoundment numbers
Continually monitor and improve procedures to ensure animals are only impounded if there is no other alternative	Ongoing	Reduction in impoundment numbers
Investigate opportunities to provide low cost/subsidised cat desexing, microchipping & registration to move cats from semi-owned to fully owned	Ongoing	Number of cats desexed as part of program and number of cats impounded over duration of the plan
Investigate holding facilities for animals collected within workday	Ongoing	Reduction in impoundment numbers

Current Situation

All dogs and cats aged three months and over must be microchipped and registered with Council, with registration renewed annually by 10 April. In addition to being a legal requirement, animals found with current registration and a microchip are significantly more likely to be reunited with their owners.

While pet registration increased during COVID, annual registration numbers have declined at a consistent rate.



The decline in annual pet registration may be attributed to rising cost of living pressures and shifting population demographics, including an increase in smaller apartments and townhouses across the municipality.

Community consultation revealed that 68% of respondents had experienced wandering pets in their area.

The percentage of cats being rehomed has decreased due to the rise in the number of cats impounded that are not suitable for rehoming due to disease and temperaments test render them unsuitable for rehoming.

We will explore suggestions where feasible, taking into account the limitations imposed by overarching State Government legislations.

Key suggestions included:

- Enhanced education and promotion of registration requirements, targeting our CALD community in languages applicable.
- Investigate into cost related concerns

Action Plans & Current Activities

The current education activities and programs that Greater Dandenong offer, aimed at promoting responsible pet ownership include:

- Fact Sheets in multi languages
- Brochure stands at all customer service areas, containing a broad range of information booklets (barking dogs etc) some in other languages
- Activities at local festivals and events
- Lost and Found Facebook pages
- Website information
- Annual publication of Pet news (now electronic format)



As indicated earlier there has been a decrease in dog registration from 7453 to 6187 and a decrease for cats from 3545 to 3232 over the last four years. Improved data collection and cleaning up of internal systems has resulted in more accurate reporting.

The number of registered domestic animal businesses (DAB) have continued to remain stable with 10 Dabs', comprising of 6 boarding kennels, 3 pet shops, and 1 shelter and 0 Dog training facilities.

There are currently no registered breeding DABs in Greater Dandenong.

Other activities that will be undertaken to increase registration rates include additional community education and engagement. These will be in person where appropriate and we will also continue to utilise more online, AI driven and digital media forms. Further pro-active patrolling to identify unregistered pets and research into ways of simplifying and expediting the process of registration will also be undertaken.

During the 2021-2025 DAMP projects undertaken to enable registration renewal reminders to be sent via email directly to the owners with a link for electronic payment was successfully implemented. This has streamlined the process for both the customer/owner and also administrative work for council. This has also enhanced the customer service experience and given them a simplistic approach to register their pet. This also aligns with Council sustainability strategies.

Key 2. Nuisance Animals

Objective:

To understand the key issues impacting residents in relation to pet related nuisances and identify effective strategies to minimise their impact.

Current Situation:

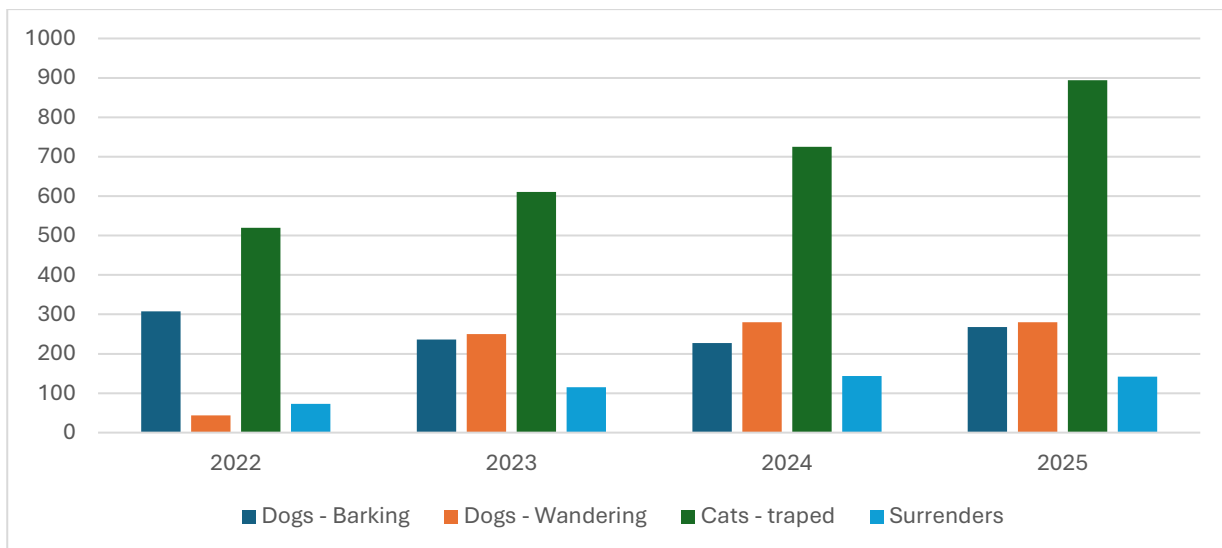
At Greater Dandenong the most common nuisance complaints for animals are wandering cats. The most significant increases during this period relate to:

- Barking dog complaints
- Cats in traps
- Animals not contained

Animal surrenders have also increased; however, these could be attributed to cost of living situation.

Nature of Customer Complaints

- **9.34% Barking Dogs**
- **9.52% cats not contained**
- **5.74% Aggressive dogs**



Action Plans & Current Activities

In relation to nuisance specifically, Council provides the following material:

- Fact Sheets and booklets in multi languages – Barking dogs, Nuisance cats
- Noise Diaries (electronic and hard copy)
- Direct contact with all stakeholders
- Council also provides generic information from State government sources.
- Information on Councils website

Council Rangers also attends community education sessions as well as local festival and events.

Animal Rangers also undertake direct contacts with the complainants and animal owners, assisting them in understanding the causes of concerns, remedies available and the process Council will follow to investigate and action complaints.



Activities undertaken at Greater Dandenong include, but are not limited to:

- Permit system to manage excess animal numbers
- Cat trap hire programs
- Patrols of parks and reserves as required to ensure dogs are under effective control
- Barking dog compliance process
- Enforcement of Local Law provisions governing the number of animals that can be kept on a property without a permit
- Online system for lodging complaints
- Enforcement of Cat confinement order, requiring cats to be confined to their property from dusk till dawn.



Reducing dog nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate introduction of responsible pet ownership training programs, conducted by qualified trainers in partnership with CGD Domestic animal Businesses	Year 2	Programs in place
Investigate the benefits of the use of digital media in high traffic areas (including online)	Ongoing	Reduction in customer complaints

to increase awareness of dog confinement and key dog attack messages		
Review dog off leash strategy	Annually	Track progress and ensure priorities are still in line with community expectations and requirements.
Investigate the option of mandatory desexing of cats impounded and returned to owns prior to release	Year 3	Increase percentage of desexed registered cats
Review and enhance procedures for barking dog complaints	Year 2	Reduce average investigative time to barking complaints.
Strengthen community education in relation to feeding stray cats	Ongoing	Number of complaints regarding feeding strays. Number of impounded cats
Investigate opportunities to provide low cost / subsidised cat desexing & registration in targeted areas to move cats from semi-owned group to fully owned and prevent unwanted litters	Ongoing	Number of cat nuisance complaints Number of registered desexed cats Number of impounded cats



Key 3. Minimising Dog Attacks

Objective:

Implement targeted programs and strategies to promote responsible pet ownership to minimise the risk to the community and to Council from aggressive dogs on both people and animals.

Current Situation:

Greater Dandenong Council are committed to reducing the risk of dog aggression towards people and other animals in our municipality. To support this all-Animal Ranger officers, treat all reports of dog attacks and aggressive behaviours as a high priority and investigate each allegation thoroughly.

The Domestic Animal Act 1994 classifies attacks not three categories:

1. Rush – where a dog has approached a person to within less than 3 metres in an aggressive manner, displaying aggressive tendencies that may include snarling, growling and raised hackles.
2. Non-serious attack – where a dog has attacked and caused injuries that are not in the nature of a serious injury
3. Serious Attack – where a dog has attacked a person or other animal and caused an injury requiring medical or veterinary treatment in the nature of a broken bone, a laceration, partial loss of sensation or function in a part of the body or an injury requiring cosmetic surgery.

	Rush	Attack	Total
2023	11	63	74
2024	9	40	49
2025	10	41	51

Council has a firm policy of enforcement in cases of dogs wandering dog attacks and rush incidents. Action is taken in all cases of confirmed attacks, where a perpetrator can be identified.

Since the introduction of more fully fenced off-leash areas, Council has seen an increase in the number of attacks in these areas. More work needs to be done to identify how these areas can be made safer. Greater Dandenong have a number of small-breed specific off-leash areas to allow for smaller breed dogs to be exercised in a safer environment.

During the period 2021-2025, Council made 1 Menacing Dog declaration 9 Dangerous Dog Declarations, and no declarations for Restricted Breed dogs. During that period, Council found it necessary to issue 2 destruction orders for dogs that had attacked.

None of the Declared Dangerous Dogs have been recorded as committing further offences, post declaration. 1 Menacing Dog has recorded further offences thus resulting in an increased declaration to Dangerous.

Action Plans & Current Activities

Greater Dandenong Council activity promote:

- Fact Sheets and Brochures (in multi languages) – Dangerous / restricted breed dogs
- Dangerous, Restricted Breed Dog inspections
- Patrols of parks, reserves and paths
- Consistent use of Declaration/ destruction powers

- 24hours / 365 days response to dog attacks / rush complaints
- Education sessions in person at events
- Ongoing contact with all park / reserve users.
- Enforcement activities including official warnings, infringements, notice to comply and court prosecution.
- Collection of found animals.

Reducing dog nuisance complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review dog attack / rush reports to simplify post investigation process in relation to declaration proposals	Ongoing	Accuracy of reports
Review reporting procedure to enable recording of numbers of dog attacks in off leash areas	Year 2	Number of attacks in fully fenced off leash areas compared to number in unfenced
Raise awareness of pet ownership responsibilities by communication the outcome of court proceedings	Year 4	Communication engagement metrics
Publicise key dog attack prevention messages through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular media articles - Website info - Digital media displays 	Ongoing	Number of media articles published Number of displays conducted



Key 4. Declared – Dangerous, menacing and restricted dogs

Objective:

To ensure that owners of dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs are aware of their obligations and comply with all legislated requirements for the keeping of these identified dogs.

Current Situation:

As of 2025, Greater Dandenong has 6 declared dogs living within its municipality. The declaration or deeming of a dog to be dangerous, menacing or restricted is regulated and managed via the *Domestic Animals Act*, this includes how the animal is housed and walked.

Menacing Dogs

Dangerous Dogs

Restricted Dogs

Council endeavours to minimise the risk to the community from declared dogs by administering and enforcing the relevant provisions of the *Domestic Animals Act*, responding to any reports involving declared dogs and conducting thorough investigation into animal aggression reports.

As part of our registration process, pet owners are required to disclose whether their dog is a restricted breed, has been declared menacing or is classified as dangerous.

Action Plans & Current Activities

Whenever a dog has been declared in Greater Dandenong, Officers always supply:

- Fact sheets and Brochures (some in other languages) – housing requirements etc
- Examples in picture format of what is required when owning a declared dog
- Inspections by Rangers for approval requirements

Currently activities include, but are not limited to:

- Assess and declare dogs as dangerous, menacing or restricted breeds.
- Conduct annual compliance property inspections
- Supply and distribution of State Government fact sheets regarding keeping dangerous dogs
- Ensure all dogs declared by Council are recorded on the Victorian Declared Dog Registry
- Firm enforcement in relation to warning dogs
- Respond to complaints



Activity	When	Evaluation
Review policy on when to declare a dog	Ongoing	Policy to remain current with legislation and best practice
Conduct targeted inspections of industrial properties for dogs housed or kept for guarding purposes	Ongoing	Number of guard dogs registered in municipality
Conducted inspections of declared dog properties, check fencing, housing and signage	Annually	Number inspected



Key 5. Training of Authorised Officers

Objective

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the training opportunities that support all staff in developing the skills and knowledge required to perform their roles safely, effectively and in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Animals Act.

Current & Planned Training

To ensure that all staff involved in animal management have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry out their work, a set of minimum training qualifications has been established and is set out in officer role statements. Officers are also encouraged to identify and attend 'in-service' training programs applicable to their roles.

Each officer has an individual annual performance plan, which includes a section related to training and development. Plans are reviewed annually, with training requirements being updated at that time. Responsibility for ensuring that nominated training is completed then becomes a shared responsibility for the individual officer and their supervisor.

Goals

- All staff required to hold a minimum Certificated IV in Animal Control & Regulations
- Staff encouraged and supported to attain higher level qualifications eg Diploma in Animal Management / Diploma in Business Management.
- Staff encouraged and facilitated to attend all in-service training days provided by relevant industry bodies.

Current Status

The animal management team is currently located in the Community Compliance team with approximately 5 FTE authorised officers allocated to the animal management team. This team is supported by a shared administration team.

In 2024-2025, the team responded to 2751 animal management requests, this number continues to increase annually. Animal management services are provided Monday to Friday 8:15am – 5pm, Saturday to Sunday 9am – 5pm and an emergency afterhours service is provided by an on-call authorised officer to handle dog attacks, livestock wandering and emergency services calls.

Officers are also encouraged and supported to undertake other training that may assist them in providing improved services to the community and increase officer safety, situational awareness and conflict resolution.

Corporate training areas:

- Child safe standard
- Bullying and harassment
- Conflict of interest
- Fraud and corruption
- Information Privacy
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Code of conduct

Specialised training areas:

- Situational Awareness
- Conflict management
- First Aid and CPR
- Animal Handling and behaviour
- Aggressive dog handling
- Breed Identification
- Dog Bite safety training
- Law and investigation training



Key 6. Domestic Animal Businesses

Objective:

For Greater Dandenong to implement target programs to register and inspect operation of domestic animal businesses to ensure minimum requirements for animal welfare are met.

Current Situation:

Greater Dandenong Council currently have 10 registered Domestic Animal Businesses, comprising:

- 3 x Pet Shops
- 6 x Boarding kennels
- 0 x Dog Training
- 1 x Shelter



Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) are strictly regulated under the provisions of the Domestic Animal Act and Regulations, as well as specific Codes of Practices created by that legislation. The relevant codes of practice are enforceable under the legislation and are seen as very comprehensive and effective tool for managing such businesses.

Because of the effectiveness of the tools described above, Council does not have any orders or Local Laws in place in relation to DAB's. Councils Rangers inspect these facilities annually to ensure compliance with relevant legislation and codes of practice prior to registration. Council also responds to and investigate any concerns raised to the operation of these establishments.

The animal shelter operating within this municipality is the Australian Animal Protection Society (AAPS). Council has a formal agreement in place with the AAPS which enables it to operate as a pound. This arrangement allows the AAPS to receive unwanted / surrendered animals and then to provide such animals with veterinary care; to rehabilitate them and to re-home them.



Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct annual compliance inspections on Domestic animal businesses	Annually	Number of Domestic animal business inspections annually
Provide online information, hard copies etc on registering a new domestic animal business	Year 4	Develop online information and information packs.
In consultation with Vets and DAB's, develop an inline "New Pet Pack".	Ongoing	Make available at participating DAB's and vets. – Stock levels at locations



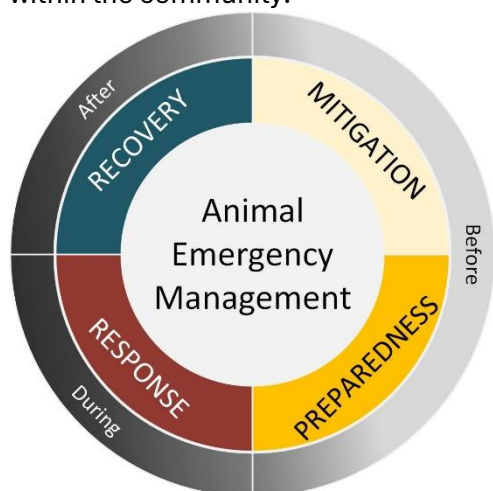
Key 7. Other Matters

Animal Emergency Management Plan

The Greater Dandenong Animal Emergency Management Plan is designed to ensure the safety and welfare of domestic animals during emergencies, such as natural disasters or significant incidents.

This plan outlines coordinated procedures for the safe evacuation, shelter, and care of animals, recognising the important role pets play in the lives of local residents. It also involves collaboration with local veterinary clinics, animal shelters, and emergency services to provide comprehensive support and resources in times of crisis.

The plan is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect best practices and to address emerging risks within the community.



Family violence and homelessness

Family violence and homelessness can significantly impact the welfare of Domestic Animals.

According to the Family Violence Database (FVDB), during the 2023/24 financial year, 325 clients received homelessness services due to family violence through general services, and 528 clients accessed homelessness services through specialist family violence services.

In Dandenong alone, there were 2,313 incidents of family violence reported for that year.

In the same reporting period, RSPCA responded to 221 reports of animal cruelty in Greater Dandenong. Numerous studies have confirmed that in households with companion animals experiencing domestic violence and abuse, there is also a high probability of animal abuse.

A critical aspect of this issue is the role of pets in the lives of those experiencing family violence. Many individuals remain in violent situations out of fear for their pets' safety if they leave them with the perpetrator or due to the lack of access to shelters or accommodation options that will accommodate pets.

Greater Dandenong is committed to exploring and implementing strategies to support these individuals and their pets, ensuring they have safe and accessible options when seeking refuge from

violence. By addressing these concerns, we aim to create a more supportive environment for members of our community experiencing family violence and to reduce incidents of animal cruelty.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue to explore and strengthen agreements with pounds, shelters and support organisations	Year 4	
Education and Awareness: Promote awareness of available services and support for pets affected by FV & more broadly on Council websites and social media	Year 4	Develop online information and information packs.



Review and Evaluation

The Greater Dandenong Council develops both long and short term business plans. This includes annual business plans for each business unit of Council. Business plans are reported against quarterly, with these reports being presented directly to Council. Key activities and indicators are also included into Councils Annual report.

Under Section 68A (3) of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* 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.

Performance monitoring and evaluation process

Council will monitor performance of the objectives that are detailed throughout the Domestic Animal Management Plan by reporting annually through the Council established reporting system, in accordance with the requirements of the Domestic Animal Act and the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework.

A full review of the plan will be conducted every four years. The Secretary of the DEDJTR will be consulted on the major review and then provided with a copy of the adopted plan.

