



Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Working towards a safe and liveable community



TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. About our Domestic Animal Management Plan	3
Legislative context	3
Our City	4
Domestic animal ownership in Maroondah	6
2. Our Consultation	7
What we did	7
What you told us	8
3. Maroondah's Animal Management Principles	10
Our Animal Management Team	11
Animal Management Statistics	12
Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures	13
Our Focus Areas	15
Focus area 1 - Training of our officers	16
Context and current situation	16
What the community has told us	16
Priority Actions	17
Focus Area 2 - Responsible Pet ownership	18
Context and current situation	18
What the community has told us	18
Priority Actions	18
Focus area 3 - Animal registration and overpopulation	20
Context and current situation	20
What the community has told us	20
Priority Actions	21
Focus Area 4 - Domestic Animal Businesses	23
Priority Actions	23
Focus area 5 - Nuisance dogs and cats	24
Context and current situation	24
What the community told us	25
Priority Actions	26
Focus area 6 - Minimising the risk of dog attacks	27
Context and current situation	27
What the community has told us	27
Priority Actions	28
Focus area 7 - Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs	29
Context and current situation	29
Priority Actions	29
Focus Area 8 - Other Matters	30
On-Leash and Off-Leash areas	30
Context and current situation	30
Emergency Management	32
Family Violence and Crisis	32
Priority Actions	32
Tracking our progress	32

1. About our Domestic Animal Management Plan

Pets play an important role in the lives of many Maroondah residents. Our most recent animal registration data shows a total of 14,318 dogs and 6,170 cats were registered in the City of Maroondah as of June 2025 – or around one pet per 2.2 households.¹

Council's Draft Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2026-2029 seeks to strike a balance between the needs of pet owners and the broader community. Through consultations with internal stakeholders, partners, residents, and businesses, the DAMP is tailored to reflect the diverse perspectives and concerns of the local community. By focusing on responsible pet ownership, nuisance prevention, and proactive management of animal-related issues, Council aims to create a safe and harmonious environment where pets and people can coexist peacefully.

The development of the Draft DAMP has been informed by:

- Animal management data collected by Council
- Demographic forecasts and population data
- Council Advisory Committees
- Community consultation

Legislative context

In Victoria, councils have a wide range of responsibilities for the management of domestic animals – primarily dogs and cats – pursuant to the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (DAA). These responsibilities include a requirement to prepare a Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) every four years.

In addition to reporting on activities performed when fulfilling responsibilities under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, section 68A(2) requires that each Council's DAMP will:

- Set out a method for evaluating whether the animal control services it provides are adequate to give effect to the requirements of the Act and the subordinate regulations.
- Outline programs for the training of authorised officers to ensure that they can properly administer and enforce the requirements of the Act.
- Outline programs, services and strategies the Council intends to pursue to:
 - promote and encourage the responsible ownership of dogs and cats
 - ensure that people comply with the Act, the subordinate regulations and any related legislation.
 - minimise the risk of attacks by dogs on people and animals
 - address any over-population and high euthanasia rates for dogs and cats
 - encourage the registration and identification of dogs and cats
 - minimise the potential for dogs and cats to create a nuisance
 - effectively identify all dangerous dogs, menacing dogs and restricted breed dogs in the municipality and ensure those dogs are managed in accordance with the Act.
- Provide for the review of existing orders made under the Act and the local law with a view to determining whether further orders or local laws dealing with the management of dogs and cats are desirable.
- Provide for the review of any other matters related to the management of dogs and cats within the municipality that the Council considers necessary.

¹ <https://profile.id.com.au/maroondah/households> (as at 2021)

- Provide for the periodic evaluation of any program, service, strategy or review outlined under the plan.

Council is also required to review, amend where appropriate, and publish an evaluation of the implementation of the plan in the Council's annual report.

Our City

The City of Maroondah:

- Covers a land area of 61.4 square kilometres in Melbourne's outer east and is located 25 kilometres from the central business district.
- Is a predominantly urban residential municipality and includes the suburbs of Bayswater North, Croydon, Croydon Hills, Croydon North, Croydon South, Heathmont, Kilsyth South, Ringwood, Ringwood East, Ringwood North and Warranwood. The City also includes small sections of Kilsyth, Park Orchards, Vermont and Wonga Park.
- Has the strategic advantage of being located at the north-eastern junction of the Eastern Freeway – EastLink corridor. There are two train lines and many bus routes linking the City with other regions. In addition, our sustainable transport links continue to expand with 684km of footpaths and 68km of shared paths.
- Is highly valued for its leafy neighbourhoods, open space, bushland reserves and parks.

People²

- 119,354 residents live here
- Population density is 1945 persons per square kilometre
- Median age is 39
- 25% of residents were born overseas
- 20% of residents speak a language other than English at home
- Residents come from 95 different countries of origin
- 78 different languages are spoken
- Maroondah is located on the land of the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation

Housing

- There are 46,866 dwellings of which:
 - 86% of people live in detached houses
 - 10% of housing is considered medium density
 - 4% of housing is considered high density
- There are 2.53 persons per dwelling
- There are 44,167 households of which:
 - 34% are couples with children
 - 25% are couples
 - 24% are single occupants
 - 11% are one-parent families

² All demographic data sourced from the - [Maroondah 2050 Community Vision](#) from material compiled and presented by .id (informed decisions). <https://id.com.au> and Australian Bureau of Statistics Estimated Resident Population as of March 2025

- Housing tenure:
 - 72% of people are mortgage holders or fully own their home
 - 21% of people are renting
 - 2.4% of people live in social housing

Changes in new dwelling types and average household size in Maroondah are consistent with planning controls established under the Maroondah Planning Scheme, which are intended to promote higher densities of residential development in central areas of Ringwood and Croydon. Over time, these trends can be expected to lead to increased demand for access to public open space in these neighbourhoods – including spaces suitable for exercising pets.

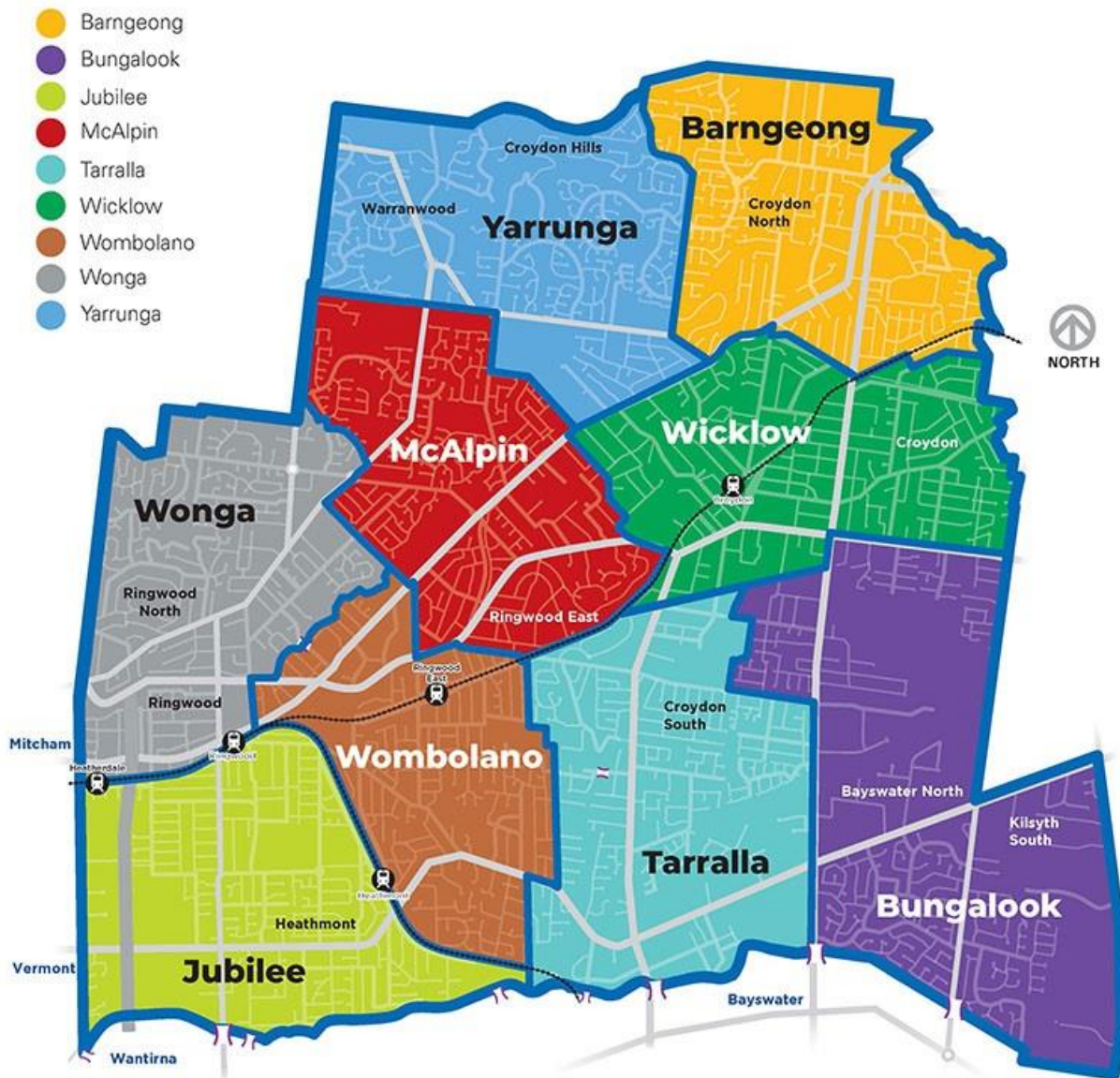


Figure 1. Maroondah City Council Ward Boundary Map

Domestic animal ownership in Maroondah

In 2020, the annual *Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA)* survey of 17,000 Australians asked respondents questions about their pets for the very first time. The responses show that pet ownership rates in Australia are quite high, with almost 62% of survey participants reporting that they owned at least one pet.³

The popularity of dogs and cats as pets is reflected in the number of animal registrations Council processes each year. As shown in Table 1, all registrations have increased significantly since 2017, with dog registrations having risen by 4.4% since 2021, and cat registrations having grown by 22% since 2017.

Animal registrations in Maroondah	2017	2021	2025	Change %
Dog Registrations	13,065	13,720	14,318	+4.4%
Cat Registrations	5,033	5,904	6,170	+4.5%

Table 1 - Number of animal registrations in Maroondah

This increase in pet registrations follows a series of Council initiatives to promote responsible pet ownership, including:

- Animal registration promotional campaigns
- Provision of animal registration information in new resident welcome packs
- Cross-referencing microchip data (Central Animal Records) to follow up on unregistered pets in Maroondah.
- Procedures requiring all reunited and adopted pets to be microchipped and registered before leaving Council's animal pound.

³ Roger Wilkins, Ferdi Botha, Esperanza Vera-Toscano and Mark Wooden (2020) *The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 18*. Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, University of Melbourne

2. Our Consultation

What we did

Consultation was undertaken between 12 March and 11 July 2025. Our consultation included a successful online survey via ‘Your Say Maroondah’ that received 1,043 responses (see Table 2). This was a significantly higher response rate than in 2021, demonstrating strong community interest in animal management issues in Maroondah.

Our Animal Management Officers facilitated a range of pop-up events to raise awareness of Council’s services, the DAMP, and the survey to encourage people to engage and complete the survey. A successful ‘Dogs Day Out’ event at Parkwood Dog Park, held as part of Council’s Celebrate Maroondah program, was positively received.

The full consultation report is available on Maroondah City Council’s online engagement platform, Your Say Maroondah.

	2021	2025	Change	
Visitors	458	1,396	938 more	205% increase
Contributors	398	1,043	645 more	162% increase
Contributions	414	1,059	645 more	156% increase

Table 2 - Your Say Maroondah results comparison 2021 to 2025

Engagement methods	Outcomes
Online survey via Your Say Maroondah	Engaged participants: 1,043 Informed participants: 1,463 Aware participants: 2,613 Survey visitors: 1,396 Survey contributors: 1,043 Survey contributions: 1,059 Total contributions at close: 1,059 Top three traffic sources: 1. Facebook (958 visits) 2. Maroondah City Council website (106 visits) 3. Google (89 visits)
Face-to-face pop-up events	Raised awareness and assisted with online survey.

Engagement methods	Outcomes
REALM - 20 March, 11am-1pm	Engagements: 9
'Dogs Day Out' (Parkwood Dog Park) 22 March, 11am-3pm	Engagements: 60+
Main St Croydon - 27 March, 11am-1pm	Engagements: 10
Railway Ave Ringwood East - 2 April, 11-1pm	Engagements: 15
Eastfield Dog Park - 8 April, 11am-1pm	Engagements: 8
HE Parker Reserve - 14 April, 4.30-6pm	Engagements: 7
Liveability Safety and Amenity Committee - 28 May 2025	Written response to questions provided
Kerrabee Centre participants - 31 March 2025	30 Engagements 4 hard copy survey submissions
Animal Aid - 20 May 2025	Report on recommendations provided
Internal stakeholders - 30 June 2025 - 11 July 2025	• Bushland Management • Parks and Open Space • Sport, Recreation and Events
DAMP cards displayed at customer service centres and facilities across Maroondah	2,000 cards were ordered. Unknown number taken.

Table 3 - Stakeholder and Community Engagement

What you told us

The results from the community consultation process for the DAMP highlight several key findings:

1. Current and Emerging Issues:

- Responsible pet ownership, nuisance complaints, and education are key concerns identified by respondents.
- Top priorities include responding to nuisance dogs, addressing cat complaints, and providing more off-leash areas for dogs.
- Participants expressed concerns about dog attacks, pet registration, microchipping, desexing, and the management of public spaces.

2. Strategic Directions for the DAMP:

- The consultation feedback informs strategic directions for the DAMP, emphasising the need to enhance community engagement and promote responsible pet ownership.

- Focus areas for the plan include dog obedience training, responsible disposal of dog droppings, review of off-leash areas, and addressing nuisance behaviours in both cats and dogs.

The top topics that participants think Council should focus on for community education include:

- Dog on- and off-leash etiquette (672 responses)
- Responsible disposal of dog droppings (587 responses)
- Cat curfew (499 responses)
- Nuisance dogs, including excessive barking or aggression (433 responses)
- Dog obedience training (363 responses)

The consultation results highlight the importance of community input in shaping the DAMP's strategic directions. By addressing key issues and aligning with community expectations, the plan can effectively meet the needs of Maroondah residents while striving to improve domestic animal management practices.

3. Maroondah's Animal Management Principles

Maroondah City Council recognises the important role pets play in the lives of many residents and is committed to delivering domestic animal management services that ensure people and pets can live in harmony, with animals treated with respect and compassion.

Council has established four principles to guide the delivery of domestic animal management services in Maroondah. These principles feature in our current Domestic Animal Management Plan (2021-2025) and continue to guide our approach under the Act.

Principle 1: Council seeks to strengthen its relationship with pet owners and the wider community to ensure the welfare⁴ of pets living in Maroondah.

What this principle means:

- Council works in partnership with the community to assist pet owners and their pets in times of crisis.
- Council seeks support from the community to address the less positive behaviours and attitudes of some pet owners.
- Council aims to identify and support community groups, opportunities and initiatives related to pets in our community.

Principle 2: Council is required by law to ensure residents comply with Victorian Government legislation, while also recognising the changing needs of our service and community expectations.

What this principle means:

- Council has a primary obligation to ensure pet owners comply with Victorian Government legislation, the Maroondah Local Laws, and orders made pursuant to the DAA.
- Council seeks to highlight the personal, social and economic benefits of pet ownership.
- Council will advocate for the welfare of pets and provide access to public spaces.

Principle 3: By owning a pet, owners accept they have an obligation to ensure their animal's welfare and comply with all relevant laws and policies regarding their ownership.

What this principle means:

- Owners have a responsibility to treat their pets humanely and with compassion.

Principle 4: Council recognises that pets are important to many residents and visitors to Maroondah.

What this principle means:

- Council has an obligation to manage the delivery of its animal management service in line with relevant legislation and policies, and to promote responsible pet ownership while being responsive to the needs of pet owners.

⁴ Animal Welfare Victoria states the 5 key welfare needs of animals are:

- **Environment** — the need for a suitable environment (place to live)
- **Diet** — the need for a suitable diet
- **Behaviour** — the need to express normal behaviour
- **Companionship** — the need to consider your pet's social needs
- **Health** — the need to be protected from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

Our Animal Management Team

Domestic animal management services in Maroondah are delivered by Council's Local Laws team. They are 'Authorised Officers' for the purposes of the Act, Maroondah Local Laws and other relevant legislation. All of Maroondah's Local Laws Officers are trained in key aspects of domestic animal control and regulation. In addition, three members of Council's Local Laws team are designated Animal Management Officers who have undergone additional training and are responsible for conducting more detailed inquiries and specialised tasks required by the Act.

Some of the animal management tasks routinely provided by Council's Local Laws team include:

- Collecting stray animals, animals being contained for collection, and lost pets (daytime and after-hours service)
- Reuniting lost pets with their owners
- Administering pet registrations, including annual renewals and registrations for restricted breed, dangerous, and menacing dogs.
- Issuing permits
- Enforcing state legislation and the Maroondah Local Law – for example, dog attacks, seizure of dogs, issuing infringements, appeals and prosecutions
- Patrolling on-leash and off-leash areas in parks and reserves
- Providing advice to pet owners and delivering community animal education sessions
- Inspecting Domestic Animal Businesses and premises housing animals with special registration requirements.
- Ensuring pets in public places – such as parks and walking trails – are responsibly managed by their owners.
- Responding to customer requests and complaints about domestic animals, such as barking dogs
- Overseeing Council's contract for the provision of pound services and related programs

Council has established a range of internal operational procedures to help ensure its domestic animal management services are delivered in a safe, efficient, and consistent manner in accordance with the Act, the Maroondah Local Laws, and other relevant legislation. These internal operational procedures are reviewed annually and whenever any changes are made to the legislation that inform or authorise our animal management activities. To ensure the safety of our community and our Local Laws team, operational procedures are also reviewed following any critical incident.

Animal Management Statistics

Maroondah City Council performs a wide range of activities to promote responsible pet ownership and provide for the appropriate management of domestic animals pursuant to the Domestic Animals Act 1994. Council reviews these activities annually and reports on its performance to the Victorian Government Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. A snapshot of the annual domestic animal management services provided by Council is shown in Table 4.

Animal Data	Service level or measure
Dog registrations	14,318
Cat registrations	6,170
Domestic animal businesses	8
Animals brought into a pound facility by Council Officers:	
Dogs brought in	217
Dogs reunited or adopted	91%
Cats brought in	204
Cats reunited or adopted	75%
Customer requests responded to:	
*Nuisance dogs	839
Dog attacks	72
Dog rushing/menacing	42
Dog barking	104
Stray dogs contained for collection/ dogs wandering	292
**Nuisance cats	371
Cats contained for collection	166

Table 4 - Snapshot of domestic animal management services provided by Council in 2024-2025

*Nuisance dogs is inclusive of off-leash dogs, fencing issues, uncollected dog droppings, etc.

**Nuisance cats is inclusive of roaming cats, cat droppings, etc.

Orders, Local Laws, Council Policies and Procedures

Council is committed to promoting responsible pet ownership and ensuring community safety and amenity by managing domestic animals effectively.

Council has local laws in place to regulate the ownership of dogs and cats and follows good governance principles by regularly reviewing them to ensure they remain relevant.

In compliance with the Act and the Local Government Act 1989, Council has established Orders made under the Act and Local Law provisions. These Orders can be accessed on our website for full details.

Ordinance	Purpose
Community Local Law 2023, Section 6.1 Limits on the number of animals kept	Specifies the number and types of animals that may be kept on properties of 0.50 hectares or less without a permit • Dogs - 2 • Cats - 2 • Large birds - 0 • Domestic birds - 20 • Poultry - 5 • Roosters - 0 • Pigeons - 20 • Ferrets, guinea pigs, rabbits or rodents - 5 • Horses or donkeys - 0 • Cattle, sheep, goats, alpacas or llamas - 0 • Pigs - 0 • Other agricultural animals - 0
Community Local Law 2023, Section 6.2 Animal Housing	Requires the provision of animal housing suitable for the animal's welfare needs, kept in a sanitary condition and good repair, provides shelter, is free from materials that may harbour vermin, is built separately to boundary fences, is adequate to avoid the animal escaping, and does not cause nuisance.
Community Local Law 2023, Section 6.3 Removal of animal faeces	A person in charge of any animal in a public place must carry a litter/waste device to immediately collect and dispose of animal waste in a sanitary manner.
Community Local Law 2023, Section 6.4 Animals at large	The owner or person in charge of an animal must not allow that animal to wander from where it is usually kept
Community Local Law 2023, Section 6.5 Animal nuisance	An owner or occupier of land where an animal or bird is kept must ensure that the animal or bird does not cause a nuisance.
Order pursuant to Section 26(2) of the DAA	• Stipulates how dogs must be controlled in all public places • Dogs must be on a leash on a shared path; within 15 metres of playgrounds, picnic facilities, BBQs, sporting events; and in accordance with signage. • Identifies designated 'leash-free' areas in Maroondah • Identifies designated dog- and cat-free areas in Maroondah

- Cats to be confined to the owner's property from sunset to sunrise.

Table 5 - Summary of Maroondah City Council's animal management local laws and orders

In 2022-23, Council undertook a significant review of its Local Law. The Maroondah Community Local Law 2023 was made under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1989 and remains in force pursuant to section 71(6) of the Local Government Act 2020. Unless repealed earlier, the Community Local Law will cease operation in 2032.

As part of this, Council conducted a major review of the content, including sections related to animal management. As required by section 73(2) of the Local Government Act 2020, this work involved extensive community input consistent with Council's Community Engagement Policy. Further information and a copy of the Local Law can be found on Council's website.

Our Focus Areas

Council has developed a comprehensive program of activities and initiatives it will pursue over the life of the DAMP to ensure animal management services in Maroondah continue to meet the objectives of the DAA and are responsive to the needs of our community. This program is structured around six focus areas highlighted in the DAA, and three additional focus areas:

1. Training of Authorised Officers
2. Responsible pet ownership
3. Animal registration and overpopulation
4. Domestic Animal Businesses
5. Nuisance dogs and cats
6. Minimising the risk of dog attacks
7. Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs
8. Other Matters
 - On-Leash and Off-leash areas
 - Emergency management
 - Family violence and crisis

Activities and initiatives under each focus area have been developed with reference to the requirements of the DAA, the Maroondah Local Law and orders made under the DAA, related legislation, and industry best practice approaches to animal management services.

Importantly, actions in the plan reflect the results of community consultation conducted by Council in March and July 2025, which captured a broad range of views on animal management, animal welfare, and the needs of pet owners across the municipality. This consultation program has helped Council identify ongoing and emerging animal management issues, as well as opportunities to address service demands through actions included in the DAMP.

Focus area 1 - Training of our officers

Context and current situation

Council is committed to the safety and professional development of its Animal Management Officers. To ensure that Animal Management Officers are well-equipped to handle their responsibilities, Council places a strong emphasis on training.

All staff members are required to obtain or already hold a Certificate IV in Animal Regulation and Management, as well as a Certificate IV in Government Investigations or similar qualification. These qualifications cover essential skills such as animal handling, investigation techniques, report writing, communication, and time management, and align with the services provided by the Animal Management Officers such as working with the community, investigations, complaint resolution, animal pound services, and after-hours emergency collection services.

Core competencies for Council's Animal Management Officers are outlined in below. This continuous training program enhances the expertise of the Local Laws team and underscores Council's commitment to maintaining animal management services that align with industry best practice and current standards.

What the community has told us

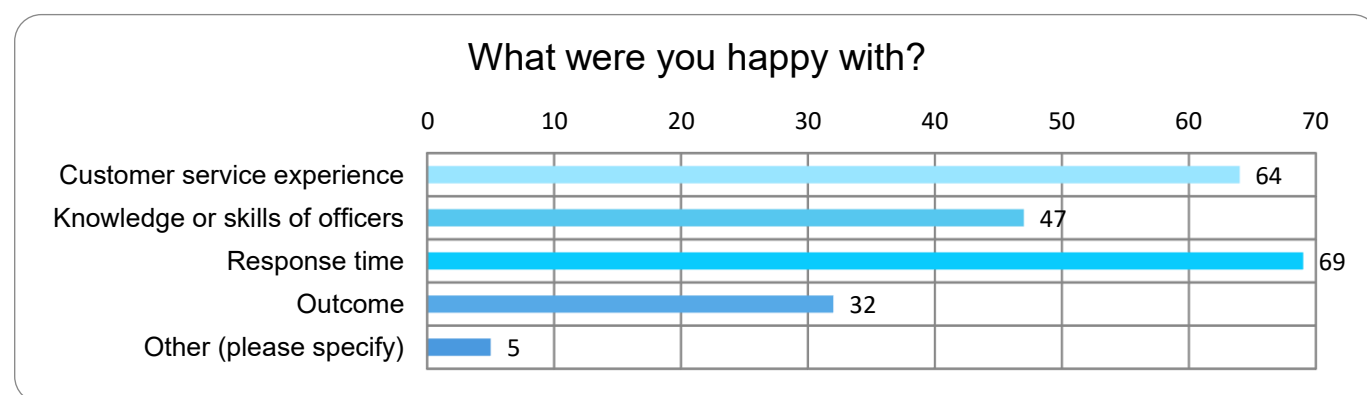
Feedback from our consultation indicates that there is an opportunity for Council to increase the profile of our Animal Management Service and the support provided to the community, with most respondents unaware of the services offered.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral or don't know
Council animal management staff are informative and knowledgeable	5%	16%	73%
Council animal management staff are responsive	6%	18%	67%

Table 6 - Animal Services Profile

Conversely, respondents who had reported an issue to Council's Animal Management Team indicated that the community were happy with our response times, the knowledge and skills of the officers, and the customer service experience they received.

This indicates that while the quality of the service provided is high, public awareness remains low, highlighting the need for increased community engagement.



Priority Actions

Key activities related to the training of Council's Animal Management Officers scheduled to occur over the life of the DAMP are summarised in Objective 1.

Objective 1: Ensure animal management officers have the skills necessary to support the community and effectively perform their regulatory role

Action	When	Evaluation
Certificate IV in Animal Regulation and Management	As required	Training register is up to date
Identify Industry Animal Handling Training opportunities to upskill officers in safe practices	Annually or as offered	Training register is up to date
Certificate IV in Government Investigations	As required	Training register is up to date
Brief Preparation Statement taking	As offered	Training register is up to date
Customer Service/OHS Training	As required	Training register is up to date
Occupational Health and Safety - animal handling, occupational violence, etc.	As required	Training register is up to date

Focus Area 2 - Responsible Pet ownership

Context and current situation

Council is committed to promoting and encouraging responsible pet ownership through a variety of educational programs and initiatives. Council plays a central role in promoting and encouraging responsible pet ownership in Maroondah. While a significant part of this role relates to the enforcement of laws, regulations and other local laws and orders requiring animals to be properly managed, Council is also involved in promoting animal welfare and educating pet owners and other community members to encourage more positive and rewarding relationships with dogs and cats.

Information on responsible pet ownership, including pet registration and the proper disposal of dog waste, is provided through our social media channels, proactive park patrols undertaken by our Animal Management Officers, corflute signage, pamphlets, Maroondah News, and Council's website. These resources and discussions with the public aim to educate pet owners and the community on the importance of proper pet management, compliance with legislation, and promoting animal welfare. Additionally, our officers provide education to residents on the management of nuisance animals, speaking with dog owners about on- and off-leash etiquette and the importance of adhering to the dusk-to-dawn cat curfew to keep cats safe and protect local wildlife.

Maroondah is known for its pet-friendly atmosphere, with a range of parks, reserves, and recreational facilities catering to both pet owners and non-pet owners, including a number of off-leash parks and two fully fenced, dedicated off-leash dog parks: Eastfield Dog Park in Croydon and Parkwood Dog Park in Ringwood North.

What the community has told us

The top five things the community identified as areas for Council to focus on in promoting responsible pet ownership include:

1. On- and off-leash etiquette for dog owners (672 responses)
2. Responsible disposal of dog waste (587 responses)
3. Cat curfew (499 responses)
4. Nuisance dogs – e.g., excessive barking or aggression (433 responses)
5. Dog obedience training (363 responses)

Priority Actions

Objective 1: Increase awareness of on-leash and off-leash parks/reserves for dogs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct proactive and reactive park patrols and educate dog owners about on/off-leash etiquette	Ongoing	Reduced incidence of non-compliance being observed and/or reported
Review website information and update as required	As needed	Reduced instances of dogs off-leash being observed and/or reported

Objective 2: Promote the responsible disposal of dog waste

Activity	When	Evaluation
Footpath stencilling in parks and reserves	As required	Reduction in dog waste being observed and/or reported
Signage audits/reviews	As required	Reduction in dog waste being observed and/or reported
Identify locations that generate a higher number of complaints and undertake proactive and reactive park patrols.	Ongoing	Reduction in dog waste being observed and/or reported

Objective 3: Promote the cat curfew and 'Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife'* messaging among residents

Activity	When	Evaluation
Circulate Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife education material to cat owners in Maroondah.	Commence year 1	Less reports of wandering/nuisance cats
Provide residents of Maroondah information on the benefits of preventing wandering cats to help reduce cat nuisance complaints.	Ongoing	Reduced number of cat-related complaints
Promote alternate cat enclosure ideas and solutions for cat owners.	Ongoing	Information provided to community

Objective 4: Promote dog obedience training

Activity	When	Evaluation
Collaborate with skilled animal management behaviourist to provide guidance and support for residents	Commence year 1	Information and/or guidance delivered
Update website/business directory to list dog training establishments in Maroondah	Year 1-2	Website updated
Lobby State Government to offer reduced registration for dogs that have completed obedience and socialisation training.	Ongoing	Feedback provided to State Government

Objective 5: Promote responsible pet ownership through increased community awareness programs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Develop a communication plan to raise awareness and profile of Council's animal management service and responsible pet ownership.	Ongoing	Comms plan developed and delivered
Provide animal-related social events to encourage responsible pet ownership such as "Dog's Day Out" events.	Every 2 years	Events delivered
Develop programs or initiatives to reward responsible pet ownership	Ongoing	Program developed and implemented

Focus area 3 - Animal registration and overpopulation

Context and current situation

Animal registration is legislated under the Domestic Animals Act. Registration plays a central role in the effective management of cats and dogs in Maroondah. The registration process not only helps reunite lost pets with their owners, but registration fees also support a range of services provided by Council. These services include stray dog and cat collection, pet facilities such as dog parks and animal pound facilities, community education campaigns, audit and compliance activities for domestic animal businesses, payment of a levy to the Victorian Government, and delivery of responsible pet ownership programs in schools and kindergartens.

There has been a positive trend in both dog and cat registrations in Maroondah, with an increase of 4.5% since 2021, while the number of cats impounded by Council has remained relatively stable. Despite growth in the resident population and the number of private dwellings, the overall pet ownership rate in the municipality has remained largely unchanged. Council has also conducted data cleansing and microchip cross-referencing to address anomalies in the Central Animal Registration database (microchipping records), such as duplicate records and active entries for deceased animals.

Council continues to review the animal registration program each year prior to the renewal period to improve current processes and increase domestic animal registration compliance rates. Updated processes include SMS notifications, review of animal renewal notices, phone calls to unregistered animal owners, a door-knock program for unregistered animals, and review of social media communication and information provided to residents.

Animal registrations in Maroondah	2021	2025	Change %
Dog Registrations	13,720	14,318	+4.4%
Cat Registrations	5,904	6,170	+4.5%

Table 8 - Registered cats and dogs in Maroondah

What the community has told us

The survey feedback provided an indication that there are high rates of microchipping and/or registration among pet owners in Maroondah.

- 99% of dog and cat owners have their dog microchipped
- 96% of dog owners have their dog registered with Council
- 92% of dog owners have their dog desexed
- 90% of cat owners have their cat registered
- 99% of cat owners have their cat desexed

Respondents to the community consultation indicated positively that Council provides relevant information on the benefits of both microchipping and desexing of cats and dogs.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral or don't know
Council provides relevant information on the benefits of microchipping	9%	45%	41%
Council provides relevant information on the benefits of desexing cats and dogs	10%	43%	43%

Table 9 - Microchipping and Desexing

The two main reasons cat owners gave for not registering their cat were:

- there is no perceived benefit
- the cost of registration.

This highlights the need to continue providing education and activities that help cat owners understand the benefits of registration.

Priority Actions

Objective 1: Increase the number of animal registrations through key messaging on the benefits of registration, what the registration fee covers, and the legal requirements for owners to register.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide education on the importance of registration and microchipping through social media campaigns, corflute signage, SMS messaging, etc.	Annually	Tasks outlined completed
Advocate for the development of a single national microchip and registration database to improve reunification outcomes for lost pets and streamline animal management processes across jurisdictions.	Ongoing	Advocacy undertaken
Review different options for cat registration ID tags to increase usage.	Year 1-2	Reviewed
Review the Additional Animal Permit scheme	Year 1-2	Re-evaluated and considered
Develop strategies to increase new pet registrations	Annually	Developed and implemented
Partner with building managers/owners' corporations to increase pet registrations within multi-unit apartment buildings.	Ongoing	Introduced

Objective 2: Increase awareness of responsible pet ownership among culturally and linguistically diverse households in Maroondah.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Identify the need and produce information regarding registration and desexing requirements in other languages and formats	Year 2-4	Produced as required
Provide alternative language resources on Council education and responsible pet ownership	Year 2-4	Provided

Objective 3: Develop initiatives to educate the community on increasing pet reunification and reducing overpopulation.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Undertake a cost analysis of providing discounted first-year registration for adopted animals.	Year 1-2	Analysis completed
Encourage alternative living solutions and arrangements for potential surrender animals.	Year 1 - 2	Alternatives to surrendering to a pound facility identified
Provide information on updating all forms of ownership information, such as microchip databases and change of address, to increase reunification of pet with owners.	Year 2-4	Information provided to our pet owners
Undertake a review of the benefits of compulsory cat desexing.	Year 2	Review completed
Promote and consider cost sharing/reductions to assist residents in desexing and taking ownership of semi-owned cats to reduce reproduction issues.	Year 2-4	Cost analysis conducted and project scoped
Educate owners on the importance of maintaining animal registration to increase reunification of pets with owners.	Ongoing	Increased registration numbers
Educate the community on the management of unwanted cat litters and the benefits of desexing.	Ongoing	Reduced litters of kittens being surrendered
Provide information on Council's resources for stray cats.	Ongoing	Information updated and provided

Objective 4: Provide accessible information to the public on ways to manage overpopulation.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote confinement of animals to owners' premises for their safety, including requirements of cat curfew	Ongoing	Reduction of animal impounds
Promote Safe Cat, Safe Wildlife education material through social media channels and website.	Year 1	Fewer reports of wandering/nuisance cats

Focus Area 4 - Domestic Animal Businesses

Context and current situation

Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs) must register annually with Council and comply with the relevant Code of Practice where required. They must also ensure that they comply with relevant requirements such as planning and building provisions. Businesses may include boarding kennels, animal breeders, dog training businesses, pet shops and shelters and pounds.

In Maroondah there are eight DABs registered with Council:

- Dog Training - 2
- Animal Boarding - 4
- Pet shop - 2

Priority Actions

Objective 1: Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs)

Activity	When	Evaluation
Monitor Council's registration database to identify potential breeding businesses.	Annually	Database checked and investigations conducted
Pet Exchange Register audits for persons keeping more than three entire females (without Applicable Organisation membership).	Annually	Audits conducted and non-compliance with DAB and additional animal permit requirements investigated
Inspect properties with excess animal permits to ensure they are not a breeding business.	Annually	Inspections conducted
Identify unregistered DABs	Annually	Investigate non-compliance when identified

Objective 2: Annually inspect and audit all registered DAB's

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure annual inspections of all current and new DABs in Maroondah.	Ongoing	Inspections carried out

Focus area 5 - Nuisance dogs and cats

Context and current situation

Nuisance caused by dogs and cats can disrupt a person’s enjoyment and sense of safety in their home and in public places. Council recognises that the majority of pet owners understand the need to manage their pets in a way that is considerate of others. Educating pet owners on nuisance issues and their obligations and responsibilities is a focus of this plan, with dog barking, dog waste in public places and cat wandering all highlighted as concerns.

Council is responsible for investigating complaints of nuisance dogs caused by excessive barking or aggression. Officers investigate complaints, which may involve speaking to the complainant and neighbours, conducting investigations and taking statements to establish if a nuisance has occurred, while working toward resolving nuisance problems.

This provision is found in the Domestic Animals Act and is the primary mechanism for managing barking dog complaints. These complaints are often highly inflammatory, emotive and a major source of neighbourhood conflict. Prolonged instances of barking dogs can have implications to the mental health and wellbeing of residents and neighbours. It is recognised that the there are opportunities for councils to advocate to the State Government on behalf of the residents to ensure that the legislative tools in place to manage these issues are clear, effective and easier to enact.

In Maroondah, cat owners are required to keep their cat confined to their property between dusk and dawn. Council officers provide cat traps to residents experiencing issues with cats roaming and provide information and education on how to safely set up a trap and when this is permitted. If a cat is trapped, officers will collect the animal and attempt to reunite the registered cat with its owner.

The Maroondah City Council Community Local Law 2023 requires that a person in charge of any animal in a public place carry a device for the collection of excrement and must immediately collect any excrement and dispose of it in a proper and sanitary manner.

Complaint Type	2020/2021	2024/2025
Total Dog & Cat Complaints	1,510	2,193
Cat Trap Request	139	158
Dog Barking *	221	104
Cat Complaints General	108	371
Dog Complaints General	324	839

Table 10 - Customer Request data

In 2023, a review of the information provided to residents for reporting dog barking was undertaken. This included new handouts, new template letters, and a barking dog diary. Since then, the number of complaints has reduced by more than 50%.

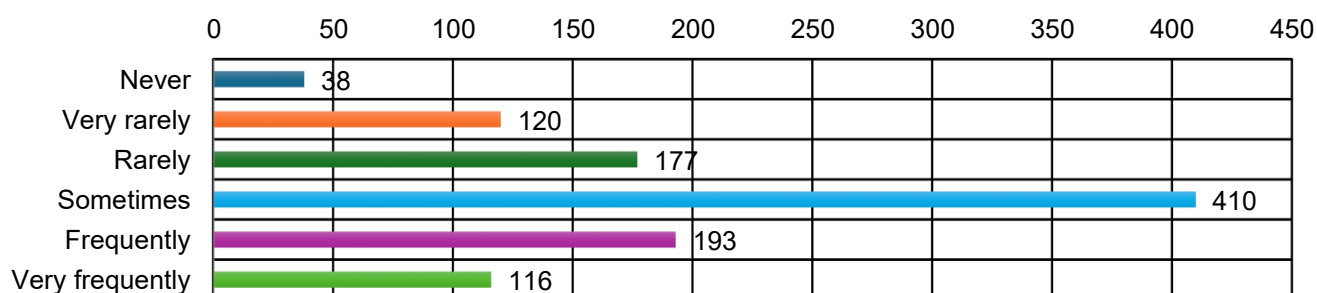
What the community told us

Community feedback indicates that participants have experienced various issues related to nuisance cats and dogs. Concerns regarding cats include attacks on other cats, failure to confine cats at night, cats wandering onto private properties, and injuring or killing wildlife.

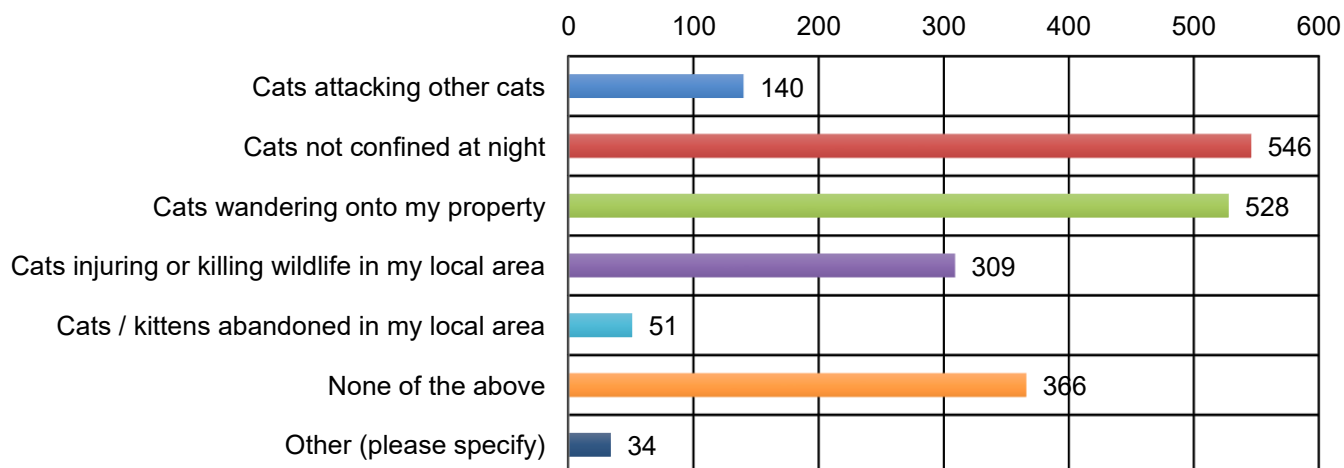
In order of priority the feedback shows that the animal management services Council should focus on include:

1. Responding to nuisance dogs (for example, excessive barking)
2. Responding to cat complaints (for example, roaming)
3. Dog off-leash areas (see separate Off-leash and On-leash section)

Barking dogs



Over the last 12 months have you experienced an issue with any of the following?



Priority Actions

Objective 1: Reduce nuisance cat wandering complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Promote Council's complimentary cat trapping services to assist with nuisance cats.	Ongoing	Program promoted. Cat trap request numbers monitored
Provide information and education on effective cat enclosure solutions.	Ongoing	Information promoted
Promote the benefits of cat desexing and cat confinement and curfew.	Ongoing	Increase in desexing rates and decrease in nuisance/trespass complaints
Review effectiveness of extended cat curfews where they are in place in other Council areas.	Year 1-2	Review finalised and recommendations provided

Objective 2: Reduce nuisance dog barking complaints

Activity	When	Evaluation
Review effectiveness of strategies introduced to assist residents with the reduction of nuisance dog barking.	Ongoing	Resident uptake and feedback on education strategies provided to assist in managing barking dogs
Review and advocate to State Government for clarity in legislation to assess and enforce nuisance dog barking complaints.	Year 1 - 2	Advocacy undertaken, MAV support provided

Focus area 6 - Minimising the risk of dog attacks

Context and current situation

Dog attacks are a serious issue, with most attacks happening at home and often involving children. In 2020/21, Maroondah City Council reported 75 dog attacks, and 72 in 2024/25, a marginal decrease from previous years. It is important to note that any dog can show aggression, influenced by factors such as breed, upbringing, socialisation, training, health, and the behaviour of the victim.

Council is committed to reducing the risk of dog attacks in the community. Our Animal Management Officers use a range of measures to address risks and ensure community safety through education, investigation, and enforcement actions against irresponsible dog owners.

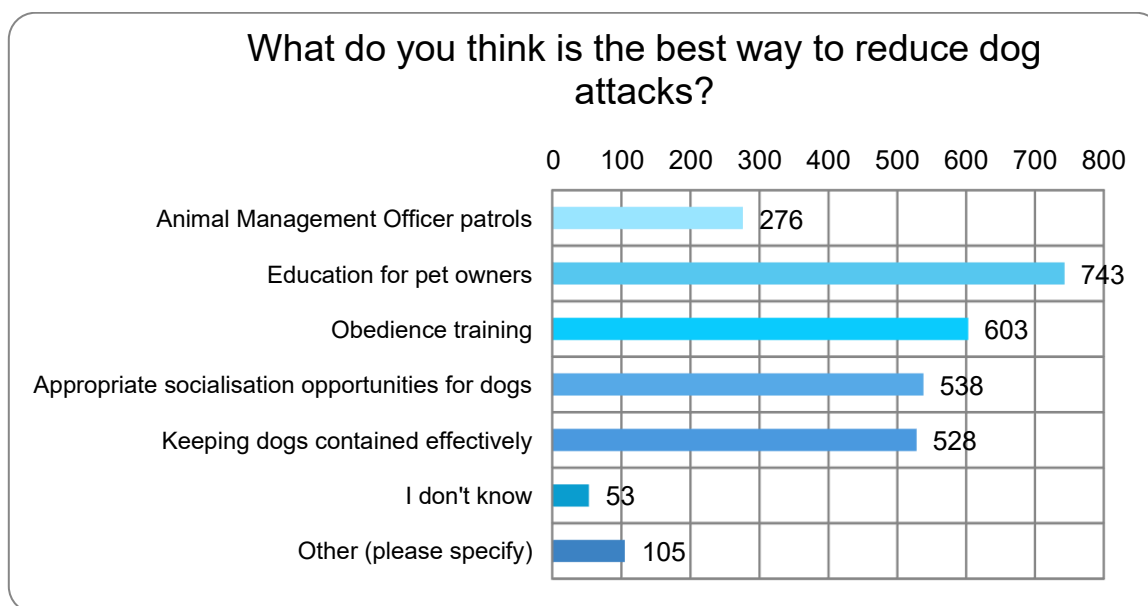
They investigate all reports of dog attacks and take the necessary enforcement action to protect the safety of the community, such as fines, prosecution, or declaring dogs as menacing or dangerous. In extreme cases, Council may seize a dog if it poses a significant safety risk to community safety that cannot be mitigated to the satisfaction of Council.

What the community has told us

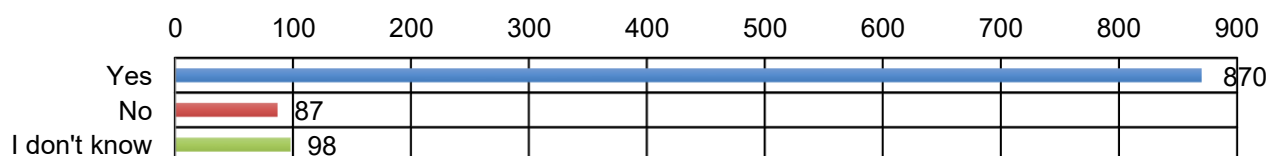
Almost one third of survey participants, or their pets, have been involved in a dog attack or felt threatened by a dog in Maroondah in the past 12 months.

Participants believe that the best ways to reduce dog attacks are:

1. Education for pet owners
2. Obedience training
3. Appropriate socialisation opportunities for dogs
4. Keeping dogs contained effectively
5. Advocating to State Government for stronger powers to ensure dog owners securely confine dogs on their property.



Should Council advocate to the Victorian Government to review legislation that would mean owners who do not keep dogs securely confined to their property would be required to undertake mandatory works, for example to secure fencing and fix gates?



Priority Actions

Objective 1: Increase reporting of dog attacks in the community

Activity	When	Evaluation
Improve public awareness of what a dog attack is and how to report	Ongoing	Reporting mechanism promoted
Timely and thorough investigations of all dog attacks and rushes, with appropriate enforcement actions taken.	Ongoing	Successful prosecution of serious dog attack matters in the Magistrates Court.
Review and advocate to State Government for broader legislation enforcement for dog attacks.	Ongoing	Advocacy undertaken
Advocate to State Government for legislation for mandatory requirements to contain dogs on property.	Ongoing	Advocacy undertaken

Objective 2: Educate the community on safety around dogs and provide owners with opportunities to train/socialise dogs.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Continue working with schools to shape attitudes from a young age through programs like 'Living Safely with Dogs' and 'Pet Town.'	Annually	Information provided
Identify and partner with pet training providers to conduct free dog education/training sessions for owners.	Year 1-2	Training or partnership opportunities scoped and implemented
Develop strategies around behaviour change e.g., education on dog body language, child safety around dogs, and responsible use of off-leash areas.	Ongoing	Strategies developed and delivered
Promote early socialisation and obedience training	Ongoing	Promotion completed

Focus area 7 - Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

Context and current situation

It is essential for all dog owners to recognise that any dog, big or small, can display dangerous or menacing behaviour and that owners should take steps to mitigate this risk to the community. As noted in section 7 on Dog Attacks, Council is committed to reducing risk through education, investigation, and enforcement.

Council also has a role in identifying and managing dangerous, menacing, and restricted breed dogs under the Domestic Animals Act 1994. The legislation sets standards for the housing and control of declared dogs. Council officers work towards ensuring owners of these dogs are aware of their obligations and comply with housing requirements. There has been an overall decrease in declared dogs since 2021.

Classification	2020/2021	2024/2025
Dangerous Dogs	1	4
Menacing Dogs	9	3
Restricted Breed Dogs	1	0
Total	11	7

Table 14 - Dangerous, Menacing and Restricted Breed Dogs

Priority Actions

Objective 1: Ensure the decision-making process for declaring a dog as dangerous, menacing, or restricted breed is fair, non-biased, and considers the principles of natural justice.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure procedures for decision-making regarding the declaration process continue to be fair and consider principles of natural justice.	Year 1-2	Procedure reviewed
Provide clear information on the responsibilities of owning a declared dog to ensure compliance.	Year 1-2	Information developed and provided

Objective 2: Ensure owners and properties housing declared dogs comply with relevant legislation and regulations.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Conduct routine and random property inspections of declared dog enclosures to ensure compliance.	Annually	Inspection of declared dangerous dogs completed
Conduct routine industrial area patrols to ensure any guard dogs are recorded and registered	Ongoing	Patrols completed and guard dogs identified
Develop a resource to ensure restricted breed identification and awareness when monitoring new registrations.	Ongoing	Resource developed and implemented
Ensure the Victorian Dangerous Dog Register is updated regularly and cross-referenced in dog attack investigations.	As required	Completed as part of any dog attack investigation

Focus Area 8 - Other Matters

On-Leash and Off-Leash areas

Context and current situation

Council is dedicated to enhancing services for the City of Maroondah through service evaluations, community engagement, effective governance, and strategic partnerships. Currently, there are 35 public reserves designated as off-leash areas in Council's Local Order (a formal local law regulating public spaces). Council will look to establish a principled and sustainable approach to ensure that planning for designated off-leash areas and dog parks is well aligned with Council's strategic priorities, responsive to current and future community needs, and reflective of best practice approaches.

Priority Actions

Objective 1: Review off-leash parks to align with Council's strategic priorities.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Ensure Council Order is updated to reflect current off-leash areas	Year 2	Council order is updated
Evaluate and review the suitability and signage of current off-leash parks	Year 2	Council order is updated

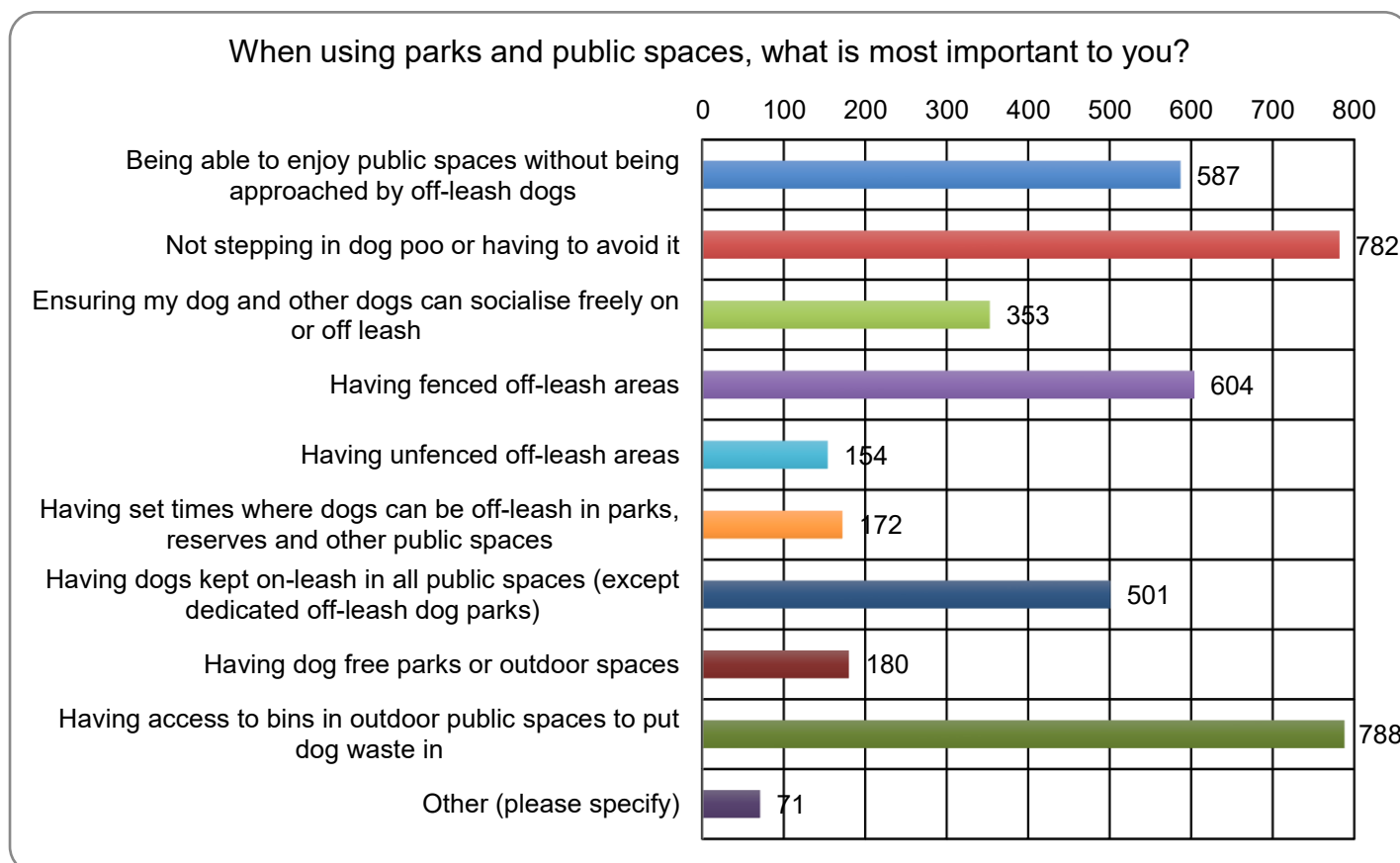
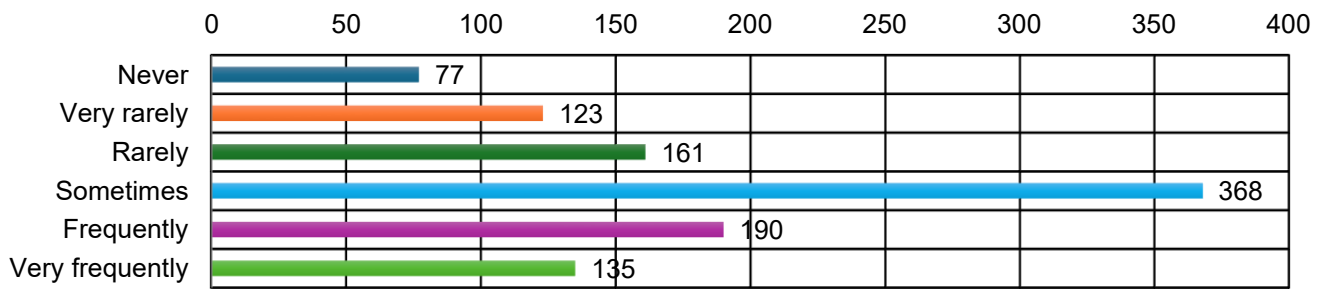


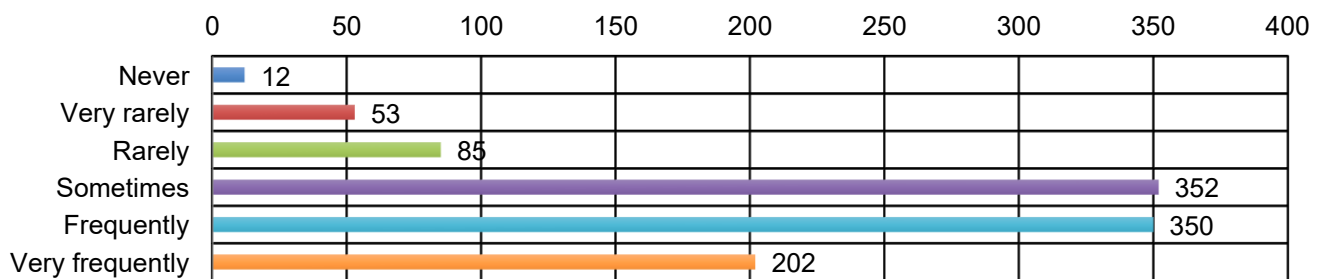
Table 11 - Dogs in Public Spaces issues (answered by pet and non-pet owners)

Dog/s not being controlled in on-leash areas

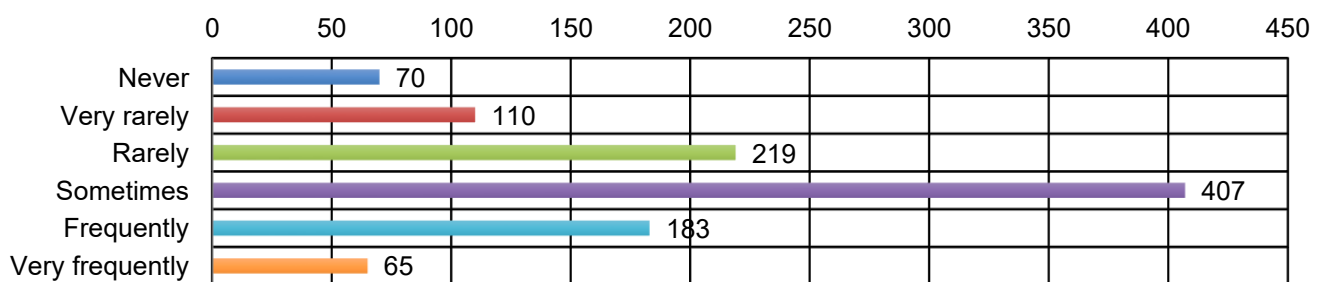


Feedback provided about other themes are highlighted below.

Owners not picking up after their dog in public spaces



Owners picking up after their dog but not disposing waste in bin



Actions addressing this feedback can be found in the responsible pet ownership focus area.

Emergency Management

Council has a role in emergency management, working with community, emergency services, and relief and recovery agencies. Planning for emergencies involves addressing both the immediate relief and long-term recovery needs of the community. The animal management team plays a crucial role in supporting pets and their owners during emergency situations. Council acknowledges the importance of pets as vital sources of support during crises, where pets can provide companionship and solace. Pet registration is essential for Council to plan for and manage pets effectively during emergencies.

The Maroondah Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) can be accessed on Council's website. It includes information on the Eastern Region Emergency Animal Welfare Plan, with our Animal Management Officers participating in training sessions to prepare for emergencies and to support our neighbouring Councils should the need arise.

Priority Actions

Objective 1: Increase community awareness of available services for pets during emergencies.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Provide information to community on looking after pets during emergencies.	Year 1-4	

Family Violence and Crisis

Evidence shows that victims of domestic violence may choose to remain in a relationship if they cannot take their pet with them. Providing an option for pets to be housed or boarded while the victim finds suitable accommodation can be the difference between them staying or leaving a domestic violence situation.

Priority Actions

Objective 1: Increase community awareness of available services for individuals and animals in crisis situations or facing homelessness.

Activity	When	Evaluation
Investigate options to support people experiencing homelessness or crisis situations who own pets.	Year 1-4	Benchmark neighbouring Councils and engage with homelessness support agencies
Increase community awareness and promote services available for people and animals exposed to crisis situations.	Ongoing	Investigate and promote available services

Tracking our progress

In line with the requirements of the Act, Council:

- Reviews the Domestic Animal Management Plan annually to ensure actions and priorities are still relevant and can be completed within available resources.

- Provides the secretary with a copy of the plan
- Provides the secretary with an annual update on progress made against the actions outlined in the plan and any amendments required.

To contact Council



Call

1300 88 22 33 or (03) 9298 4598

SMS 0480 020 200

Translating and Interpreting Service 131 450

National Relay Service (NRS) 133 677



Live chat online

www.maroondah.vic.gov.au



Email

maroondah@maroondah.vic.gov.au

Follow our social media

