

2025/26 Progress Report

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

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Summary

All Victorian Councils are required under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 (Vic) to develop and implement a four-year Domestic Animal Management Plan to guide decision-making related to the management of dogs and cats.

Council adopted the Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-29 in November 2025. The Plan reflects previous learnings, current service demands, and 1,028 community responses received during consultation in May 2025.

You can view the Domestic Animal Management Plan here.

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate progress made against the commitments within this Plan.

It represents the first year of work undertaken.






Total Actions	Completed	Progressing	Not Started
20	17	3	0

During 2025/26, Council increased pet registrations by 3 per cent through registration audits, education programs and follow-up activities. Door-knock audits were also conducted throughout June 2026 as part of the animal registration follow-up program to confirm compliance with animal registration requirements. In addition, the First Claim Amnesty program, hardship support and improved use of microchip information helped reunite pets with their owners and promote responsible pet ownership. Animal management officers completed specialised training, a key objective of this plan.

Council also continued its work to reduce animal nuisance. A particular focus has been on ensuring compliance with Council's cat containment rules. This has been supported through education campaigns to encourage responsible cat ownership and by the provision of free cat trap loans and practical information on cat enclosures. While cat nuisance complaints increased as the local cat population grew, barking dog complaints fell significantly, dropping from 170 complaints in 2024/25 to 79 in 2025/26.

To improve community safety, dog attack data was regularly assessed to identify trends and ensure appropriate enforcement action was taken where required. Council carried out targeted patrols were in known hotspot locations, and declared dangerous and menacing dogs were regularly inspected for compliance, of which there are a total of 32 across the municipality.

In addition, to support animal welfare, Council inspected and declared all 10 registered Domestic Animal Businesses operating in Wyndham as 100% compliant. During its first year of implementation, the Council's Animal Management team has completed 17 of 20 planned actions and has made progress on the remaining three.

Training of authorised officers

Objective 2.1: Ensure animal management officers are equipped with the skills and training needed to effectively support the community and carry out their regulatory responsibilities.

Action	2025/26 Status
Identify any mandatory, role specific, proposed and individual officer training. Items identified and placed in the matrix. All training completed for relevant competency. Review of annual animal handling and husbandry training against training matrix.	Completed
Review of investigation, compliance and enforcement processes. Periodic review of officer case files and service outcomes against Council Enforcement Policy.	Completed

All required training items have been incorporated into the Training Matrix. Officers have completed all training relevant to their required competencies, ensuring they possess the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively perform their roles. A review has also been undertaken to confirm that current enforcement processes are aligned with Council's Enforcement Policy. The review confirmed that enforcement actions were evidence-based, proportionate and consistent, with appropriate documentation maintained. Findings from the reviews were used to reinforce best practice and identify opportunities for continuous improvement in service delivery.

Registration and identification

Objective 3.1: Increase pet registrations to enhance the identification and traceability of pets within the community.

Action	2025/26 Status
Conduct random audits throughout the municipality. Conduct a review of pet registration figures prior to and following registration audits.	Completed
Review adoption data to ensure all adopted pets into the municipality are registered.	Completed
Conduct a sample review of newly microchipped dogs and cats by contacting microchip registration databases. Cross-check each animal against the Council pet registration database and follow up where required.	Completed
Implement First Reclaim Amnesty and Hardship Support for registered pets. Promote via renewal notices, website, vets and social channels.	Completed

Door-knock audits were conducted throughout June 2026 as part of the animal registration follow-up program to confirm compliance with animal registration requirements. Adoption data is regularly analysed to ensure newly adopted animals within Wyndham are registered where required. Financial hardship requests are considered on a case-by-case basis, depending on individual circumstances. The First Claim Amnesty program is also used as an educational initiative to encourage responsible pet ownership by promoting animal registration. This is promoted through our website, the use of social media throughout the registration period as well as registration brochures.

Evaluation

Evaluation measure	25/26 result	Achieved / Not Achieved
Increase in registration of adopted pets into the municipality.	95.1% of 41 adoption follow-up cases resolved; only 1 infringement issued.	TBC next fin year
Demonstrate increased pet registrations following cross-referencing with microchip registries.	Registrations increased 3% from 26,611 in 24/25 financial year to 27,433 currently.	Achieved
+10% YoY increase in returned from field.	Not achieved; reclaim rate decreased approximately 1%.	Not Achieved
+6 pts dog reclaim rate	83.7% reclaimed vs 83.5% previous year.	Not Achieved
+8 pts cat reclaim rate	16.0% reclaimed vs 13.9% previous year.	Not Achieved
≥250 hardship supports/year	No. of financial hardship requests assessed case-by-case.	
% of first-time impounds with release fee waived	Over 90% of impounded registered dogs had Council release fee waived under First Claim Amnesty program.	

Nuisance

Objective 4.1: Reduce cat nuisance impacts on the community and lower service requests

Action	2025/26 Status
Council to have available education material about cats and how to build or create cat enclosures at minimal cost.	Completed
Offering no cost traps to residents with cat trespass or nuisance problems.	Completed

Objective 4.2: Assist cat owners in the municipality to move to a 24/7 cat confinement (curfew).

Action	2025/26 Status
To educate residents about the cat confinement Order (curfew), its purpose, and how to keep their cats safe and happy indoors. Quarterly publication of rollout metrics (education reach, cautions, warnings, infringements, hotspot trends) on Council's website.	Progressing

Cat numbers continue to increase, and opportunities to strengthen cat management, including trapping education and additional Domestic Animals Act requirements, are being explored in collaboration with other government agencies and relevant organisations. Wyndham City Council remains committed to educating residents on the benefits of keeping cats safely contained. This includes community engagement activities such as attending Bunnings stores to showcase practical cat enclosure designs and displaying enclosure examples and information in local libraries as well as using social media to deliver ongoing educational messaging. There are resources available on our website detailing the way to contain cats under the 'Resources and tips' section - https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/rules-having-pets/24-hour-cat-containment. Council also continues to provide a free cat trap loan service - https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/pets-being-nuisance/wandering-or-trespassing-cats.

Objective 4.3: Reduce dog nuisance impacts on the community and lowering service requests.

Action	2025/26 Status
Provide information on acceptable dog behaviour and barking regulations. Distribution of Dog Barking Factsheets and containment strategies.	Completed

Educating residents on responsible pet ownership and acceptable animal management practices is an ongoing task for Council's Animal Management service. Information factsheets and behavioural management resources are provided to residents where complaints have been received, encouraging them to implement alternative routines, training techniques or containment strategies. There is information on our website regarding barking dogs and action that can be taken - https://www.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/pets-animals/pets-being-nuisance/problems-dogs.

Evaluation

Action	25/26 result	Achieved / Not Achieved
Reduction in nuisance cat complaints or service requests and increase in voluntary compliance.	Cat nuisance requests increased due to growing cat population. Last year we had 71 cat nuisance CRM's rising to 137 this financial year.	
Number of cat traps hired	259	
Number of cat confinement (curfew) infringements issued.	7 infringements issued; 2 paid and 5 referred to Fines Victoria.	
Reduction in barking complaints.	Average complaints reduced from 15 per month to 7 per month. In 24/25 financial year we had 170 barking complaints compared to 79 this financial year.	

Dog attacks

Objective 5.1: Raise community awareness about dog attacks and the importance of reporting incidents promptly.

Action	2025/26 Status
Increase community understanding of dog attack incidents and the correct procedures for reporting them to the council. Review the number of service requests received after communication plan implementation.	Completed
Repeat offender tracking. Track the frequency of reports involving the same dogs or owners.	Completed

Dog attack data was regularly assessed to identify trends and ensure appropriate enforcement action was taken where required. Regular patrols were conducted in identified hotspot locations to increase Council visibility, and repeat offenders were monitored and tracked.

Objective 5.2: Align patrol schedules strategically in areas identified as sensitive or at risk, guided by service requests and incident trends.

Action	2025/26 Status
Targeted patrolling of high risk or sensitive areas based on service demand. Review incident data before versus after patrols.	Completed

Patrols are undertaken in response to reports received from the community, with additional patrols conducted in areas identified as recurring hotspots or locations with a history of higher rates of dog attacks. Presidents Park, Werribee South beach, Werribee River trail and Alcock Rd reserve in Truganina are frequented by rangers, as these areas are highlighted by residents as frequently having dogs at large.

Dangerous, menacing and restricted breed dogs

Objective 6.1: Ensure ongoing compliance is attained with all legislative requirements concerning ‘declared’ dogs.

Action	2025/26 Status
Maintain an inspection regime for all declared, menacing, and restricted breed dogs, with a zero-tolerance approach to non-compliance. Inspection program identifies compliance. Prosecution level for non-compliance issues.	Completed

Property inspections and regular spot checks are conducted to ensure compliance with relevant legislative requirements. Inspections consisted of enclosure inspections, fencing, ensuring a dangerous dog sign was visible and the property was suitably secure. Where non-compliance is identified, appropriate enforcement action is taken. There were 20 menacing dogs and 12 dangerous dogs at year end in Wyndham

Cross-checking multiple databases and following up on inspection outcomes and registration records has enabled Wyndham City Council to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of declared dogs. System enhancements have also been implemented, including secure editing abilities, a warning message in Tech 1 when changes are being made and a red flag on menacing and dangerous dog animal ID’s.

Objective 6.2: Identify any declared dogs whose owners have not notified Council of their address within the municipality.

Action	2025/26 Status
Cross-reference all dogs involved in attacks with the DEECA database to determine whether they are classified as a “declared” dog. Track number of dog attack incidents recorded against dogs listed on the database.	Completed

Overpopulation and high euthanasia

Objective 7.1: Promote awareness of semi-owned cats and the role that feeding unowned animals plays in increasing the stray cat population.

Action	2025/26 Status
Community engagement on the impact of feeding unowned cats.	Completed

Council liaises with veterinarians to help educate residents about the impacts of feeding and interacting with semi-owned cats. Council issues warnings and Notices to Comply where residents are found to be feeding unowned cats.

Objective 7.2: Maximise the reclaim rates for cats and dogs.

Action	2025/26 Status
Make use of all available resources to support efforts in locating impounded pets' owners.	Progressing

Officers now carry iPads, enabling them to access the animal management system and check microchip details while in the field. The use of social media to promote impounded animals has also proven effective.

Objective 7.3: Promote the health and welfare benefits of desexing to pet owners.

Action	2025/26 Status
Utilise the resources available on the DEECA website. RSPCA - Rethink Roaming campaign. Review current desexing incentives. Increase in number of desexed registered pets. Review the allocation of funds for desexing incentives and assess community uptake.	Progressing

All cats must be desexed to be registered within Wyndham. This requirement provides an opportunity to educate owners on the benefits of desexing, promote responsible pet ownership, and offer the $50 desexing voucher available through participating veterinary clinics. Education activities were also undertaken, including letterbox drops and explanation of how feeding unowned animals impacts neighbourhoods.

Evaluation

Measure	25/26 result	Achieved / Not Achieved
Number of Notices to Comply issued for feeding unowned cats.	5 Notices to Comply issued.	
5% increase in reclaim rates for cats and dogs.	644 cats and dogs reclaimed compared with 740 last year, although percentages improved. 83.7% of collected dogs were reclaimed this financial year compared to 83.5% last year.	Not achieved
Increase in number of desexed registered pets.	14% increase in desexed registered pets.	Achieved

Domestic Animal Businesses (DABs)

Objective 8.1: Identify and register all Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB's) operating within the municipality

Action	2025/26 Status
Identify all businesses within the municipality that sell pets or provide pet services and are required to be registered as DABs. Compare the current number of registered DABs with that of the previous quarter.	Completed

Any business that sells pets or provides pet-related services is required to be registered as a Domestic Animal Business. Council currently has 10 registered Domestic Animal Businesses operating within the municipality.

Objective 8.2: Conduct inspections of each registered Domestic Animal Business to ensure compliance with their relevant Codes of Practice.

Action	2025/26 Status
To facilitate achieving 100% compliance, provide inspection checklists to Domestic Animal Businesses prior to inspections.	Completed

Inspections were conducted at each registered Domestic Animal Business to ensure compliance with the relevant Codes of Practice. All registered DABs were found to be fully compliant.

Evaluation

Measure	25/26 result	Achieved / Not Achieved
Current number of registered DABs	10 registered Domestic Animal Businesses.	
Pass rates for compliance inspections have reached 100%	100% compliance was achieved across all registered DABs.	Achieved

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