

## DOMESTIC ANIMAL RELEASE FEES

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Report Author: Manager Community Wellbeing  
Responsible Officer: Director Communities  
Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### SUMMARY

While running the process to tender and appoint a provider for pound services, officers identified that pound release fees were not included in the fees and charges adopted by Council. It is appropriate that Council adopt the fees and charges for transparency.

### RECOMMENDATION

***That Council adopt Fees and Charges for Pound Release Fees as indicated in Attachment 1.***

### RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

There are no related Council decisions to this item

### DISCUSSION

#### ***Purpose and Background***

Council currently contracts a service provider to provide pound and shelter services to animals which are impounded pursuant to the Domestic Animals Act 1994. Owners recovering animals which have been impounded are required to pay a fee, set by the Council, and collected by the service provider.

This is a standard practice in the industry and is used to partially offset the cost to Council for impounding the animal.

Yarra Ranges Council annually sets a schedule of fees and charges, which are adopted by Council, along with the budget. The pound release fees for dogs and cats are not currently included within that schedule.

For transparency, it is recommended that Council publicly affirm these fees and include them in the budget process ongoing.

These fees relate to dogs and cats – other animals and impound costs are already included in the fees and charges adopted by Council.

### ***Options considered***

No other options have been considered.

### ***Recommended option and justification***

For transparency, it is recommended that Council publicly affirm these fees and include them in the budget process ongoing.

This also assists Council in ensuring that these fees are indexed accordingly, as well as allowing the community to provide feedback on those fees, as part of the engagement for development of the budget.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

Council received around \$50,000 in pound release fees in the previous financial year, which were charged to owners recovering animals from Council's pound provider.

These fees should be reviewed as part of the 2026/2027 budget process, as we will be in the first year of the new pound services contract term.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

Not applicable.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

- *Domestic Animals Act 1994*

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

In the previous financial year Council received around \$50,000 in fees from owners recovering animals. This is significantly less than the overall cost of the contract and animal management service.

### ***Social Implications***

These fees are already in effect, but this process will provide transparency to the community.

### ***Environmental Implications***

Not applicable.

### **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

No community engagement has been undertaken in preparing this report and recommendation. As the fees will be included in the budget moving forward, they will be subject to community consultation as part of that process.

### **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

In line with our commitment to continuous improvement, the omission of these items in the fees schedule was detected as part of an internal audit.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

There is a risk of public concern that these fees were not included in the 2025/2026 budget engagement process, however, this has now been identified and will be included in subsequent years.

### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

### **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Proposed Fees and Charges