

Summary of DAMP community consultation

Community Feedback	Council Response
Supplying more dog waste bags around the municipality to ensure healthy, safe and active dogs.	Action 3.2.1 'Investigate benefits of litter bag and rubbish bin locations in high traffic Areas' will address the requests for dog litter bags and bins.
More education rather than monetary penalties would increase the perception and relationships between Council officers and the community.	<p>Council is committed to a program of community education regarding dogs and cats within Yarra Ranges. This includes but is not limited to addressing Council's cat curfew, responsible pet ownership and impacts of dogs and cats on the environment.</p> <p>Action 2.2.2 'Apply warnings to owners of registered animals found wandering in the first instance rather than infringements' directly reflects the Community Safety approach to education and warning before the issuing of any form of infringement relating to wandering animals.</p>
Registered cats found wandering outside of their homes should not be reunited with their owners until a suitable enclosure can be verified by Council officers.	The management of cats wandering and causing nuisance is being actively responded to by multiple actions (3.3.1-3.3.4).
There should be greater consideration by Council regarding individual circumstances of community members prior to issuing infringements.	Through action 1.2.1 'Undertake a review and improvement program of our animal management processes' and action 1.2.2 'Ensure all Community Safety Team members are familiar with relevant processes, policies, and standards'. Council officers are supported to use judgement in certain circumstances if the outcome does not breach a Council policy, procedure or relevant legislation.
Fenced dog parks would make people and dogs feel safer around traffic and busy roads.	Council is currently developing a Dogs, People and Parks Plan which will provide an evidence-based approach to managing on and off leash dog park.
The current Local Law stating that dogs are not permitted within 20 metres of playgrounds, fitness equipment, BBQ or picnic areas is not possible in all parks with Belgrave Lake Park being an example.	A review of Council orders will be undertaken as a matter of good governance and will include a community consultation period, this will include the advertised orders relating to the distance and management of dogs surrounding playgrounds, fitness equipment, BBQ or picnic areas.
There are opportunities to utilise technology such as sensors and cameras to assist with planning and targeting areas for increased cat trapping.	Community Safety will be investigating ways to collect, analyse, and report on data which will be inclusive of technology, to inform our service delivery and decision making.

Summary of DAMP community consultation

Community Feedback	Council Response
The DAMP was an impressive and extensive document which has addressed several ongoing issues which have not previously been visibly actioned by Council.	No response or amendment required however demonstrates positive impact of community consultation and support from community members.
Owners of registered pets should have greater control and responsibility for their animals and be allowed to determine if they wander outside of their property as containing any animal is cruel.	While acknowledging the differing views and opinions relating to the management of domestic animals, the DAMP considers and supports community expectations where they are supported by appropriate data.
There is an opportunity to engage with not only Indigenous communities but include land care and community groups who experience the effects of domestic animals.	While action 4.3.1 'Identify opportunities to proactively engage with our Indigenous community regarding domestic animals and related services particularly impacts to the environment' refers specifically to Indigenous communities, this does not limit the intention to engage with various community groups, organisations or stakeholders throughout the implementation of other DAMP actions.
Council should be utilising terminology from the RSPCA to define the various category of cats (e.g. feral, semi-owned and stray)	The DAMP has been updated to clarify that the terminology and definitions contained are determined by Council. Assessments of each cat are made based on multiple criteria including but not limited to behaviour, health, age, and requests from the registered owner.
The timeframes for assessing cats should be increased to a minimum of 14 days to allow for a cat to become familiar with its environment.	The timeframes for impounded domestic animals are determined by legislation and increasing these assessment times would significantly impact the Council pound provider from being able to house and care for animals over this time.
There is an opportunity for Council to further support the desexing of domestic animals through providing a free desexing service.	Council currently provides discounted desexing vouchers to eligible concession card holders to reduce the cost of desexing and reduces the cost of registration and renewals for desexed domestic animals
The DAMP does not reflect the need for Council to protect wildlife or their habitats from vehicles or buildings within Yarra Ranges.	The Domestic Animals Act (1994) states that a Council DAMP relates specifically to Cats and Dogs and does not cover wildlife or other species of animals.