

17th July 2025

Chief Executive Officer
Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)
Level 12, 60 Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Email: inquiries@mav.asn.au

Attention: Kelly Grigsby/ MAV Representative,

RE: Concerns Regarding Proposed Expanded Entry Powers for Council Animal Management Officers

Animal Care Australia (ACA), the national peak body representing responsible pet owners and industry professionals, wish to formally raise our concern regarding the recent resolution passed by Hume City Council proposing to increase the powers of their Animal Management Officers (AMOs), specifically the ability to enter private premises without police presence to seize dogs suspected of being dangerous.

As a stakeholder organisation committed to both community safety and animal welfare, Animal Care Australia is deeply concerned by the implications of this decision. While we strongly support effective measures to protect the public from genuinely dangerous animals, we believe this proposed expansion of powers raises serious legal, procedural, and ethical concerns, including:

1. Current Capability Gaps within Hume Council:

To our knowledge, Hume City Council does not currently have a fully operational Animal Management Team. It is unclear whether sufficient recruitment, training, and procedural frameworks are in place to handle high-risk enforcement actions involving potentially dangerous dogs.

2. Concerns Regarding Training and Safety:

The handling of aggressive or dangerous animals requires advanced animal behaviour training, safety protocols, and a clear understanding of appropriate evidence-gathering procedures. Without transparency around the qualifications of AMOs and the internal guidelines that would support such entries, there is significant risk to public safety, animal welfare, and the legal standing of such actions.

3. Legal and Civil Rights Implications:

Entry onto private property without police assistance or a warrant undermines longstanding principles of property rights and due process. The question must be asked: what constitutes sufficient evidence for suspicion, and how is this threshold determined or reviewed before action is taken?

This is a legal function that has traditionally rested with Victoria Police, and rightly so.

4. Precedent for Other Councils:

A unilateral decision by one council to expand its enforcement reach in such a controversial way may set a concerning precedent for other municipalities, without proper oversight or consultation with peak bodies, law enforcement, or animal welfare experts.

Animal Care Australia respectfully urges the Municipal Association of Victoria to engage with Hume City Council regarding these matters and to encourage a state-wide review and stakeholder consultation before any further steps are taken to implement expanded powers of entry. We would also welcome the opportunity to be included in any future discussions or forums relating to the appropriate role and scope of animal management officers across Victoria.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and are available to meet or provide further information as required.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "M Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'M' and a long, sweeping underline.

Michael Donnelly
President
0400 323 843
president@animalcareaustralia.org.au

About Animal Care Australia

As a nationally recognised animal welfare organisation, Animal Care Australia encourages continued development of animal welfare standards and Codes of Practice for animal husbandry, breeding, training, sale, and sporting exhibitions for a wide range of animal species, including pets, animals used for educational or entertainment purposes or kept for conservation, and in particular native birds, reptiles, and mammals.

Animal Care Australia was founded in early 2018 to establish an organisation run solely by volunteers to lobby for real animal welfare. With extreme animal rights and animal liberationist ideologies influencing government legislation, regulation, and policy at our expense and to the detriment of our animals and pets, it has become necessary to provide government with a balancing voice.

By uniting the broad spectrum of animal groups, collectively we offer an experienced, sensible approach to animal welfare.

By educating our members and the public about the importance of treating animals with kindness and respect for their needs and promoting the humane treatment of animals to improve animal welfare outcomes, Animal Care Australia is in the unique position of lobbying and advocating for all animals within our care.

Animal Care Australia provides priority to the following:

- advocating for stronger welfare outcomes
- advocating to increase education of the public in animal welfare and best care techniques
- educate the public on handling their animals with kindness & respect and the importance of their needs
- educate the public in the differences between animal welfare and animal rights