

4th August 2025
Melbourne City Council
Email: animalmanagement@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Domestic Animal Management Plan 2026-2029

Animal Care Australia (ACA) is a national incorporated association established to lobby for real animal welfare by those who keep, breed and care for animals. Our goal is to promote and encourage high standards in all interactions with the animals in our care.

Animal Care Australia is currently recognised by Animal Welfare Victoria as a key stakeholder in the review of Victoria's Animal Welfare Act and its associated regulations. Animal Care Australia is directly consulting and advising during that review, including the future revision of Codes of Practice for the keeping of all pets.

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, companion animals, animals used for educational or entertainment purposes or kept for conservation.

Animal Care Australia is engaged with state governments to develop more appropriate model Local Laws and model Subordinate Local Laws governing the keeping of animals in each state. Nationally, Animal Care Australia is finding Local Councils placing restrictions and permit requirements on their residents which do nothing to improve animal welfare and tend to lead to greater non-compliance.

With this in mind, **Animal Care Australia commends and fully supports Council's position** (outlined on Page 5) in relation to **NO CAPS currently placed on numbers for pets** (other than state-legislated caps on dogs and cats). Animal Care Australia wishes other Councils within Victoria would follow this position and recognises good animal welfare is not about numbers.

In reviewing Council's current Domestic Animal Management Animal Care Australia would like to raise the following points:

Page 11: Objective 1: Ensure the team is suitably resourced and skilled:

Of particular concern is the statement:

"Work with RSPCA Victoria to upskill our staff to manage cruelty related matters to provide a collaborative, timely and effective response to reports of cruelty within the City of Melbourne"

What exactly does this mean? What collaboration is included in the MOU?

Animal Care Australia does not support the methods, or the overall ethos of the RSPCA and these concerns are now being voiced more loudly within the broader community.

It is clear to us the RSPCA continue to call for more funding while continuing to delegate more of the actual responsibility to others in particular, local councils and shelters/ pounds.

We trust this collaboration does not diminish Council's Animal Management Officers' ability to recognise individual circumstances, financial hardships, etc before jumping into 'prosecution is the only solution' mindsets.

Page 13: Objective 1: Increase the number of pet registrations and improve owner's experiences in registering pets

While Animal Care Australia again commends Council on the reduction of many fees associated with pet registration, the following from the table on page 13 does raise a concern:

"Introduce a program that uses data obtained from microchip registries relating to animals within our municipality to identify animals not recorded City of Melbourne's pet registration database, and to follow up on any unregistered animals."

It is our contention that while this reads well in black and white, the actual implementation and subsequent appearance of Council knocking on residents doors, is more likely to lead to people seeking out and sourcing non-microchipped pets, or they will not supply correct details for microchips – to avoid getting door-knocked by authorities.

Council must consider not condemning residents for not registering or microchipping and continue to incentivize registration and microchipping that does not include the use of penalty – other than for repeat offenders.

Semi-owned and unowned cats

Animal Care Australia finds these sections slightly lacking in information relating to the processes of how Council will deal with these cats. Will Council be looking to follow the Cat Management Strategy recently introduced? How will Council ensure a semi-owned or simply wandering cat is not treated as a feral cat? This is particularly important as nearly all cats' behaviour will be indicative of a feral for several days when first trapped or taken into custody.

Rehoming and rescuing of dogs and cats

Animal Care Australia hopes that Council will not be advocating your pounds offload as many of their animals to local private rescue groups. While 'sharing is caring' outsourcing will not "fix" the problem, just transfer it to another part of the animal welfare sector.

In closing:

A number of the objectives outlined throughout the draft DAMP include utilising Council's website for the purpose of notification and education. Animal Care Australia has no objection to this, as it is a modern means of ensuring access to information, however, to find the information less tech-savvy residents need to understand where and how to search for it. Equally, unless residents know it is there, they will not necessarily be any wiser in regard to responsible animal ownership. Such information should be easy to access, should be promoted via mailouts (yes, an old-school approach – but one that does not end up in email junk/spam folders) and as highlighted within the DAMP promoted via leaflets at local pet stores, veterinary practitioners etc.

Animal Management Officers could also visit schools, TAFE, and other community-based groups to actively promote responsible animal ownership and compliance with the relevant laws Council should also closely consult with community-based groups to perform this face-to-face education, especially any pet/animal keeping associations.

Animal Care Australia's primary objective is 'education over regulation' and always commend Councils wherever they seek to further the education of their residents. We recommend viewing our online document: [Council Animal Management Plans](#)

Should you require further details please do not hesitate to reach out as we would be happy to meet with you and further discuss this matter.

Kind regards,



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