

Community Engagement Plan – Phase 2

PROJECT NAME AND CONTACT DETAILS

Project contact: Renee Wilcox	Role: Senior Community Safety Officer – Animal Management
Department: Community Safety	Contact: 9433 3231
Project Name: Domestic Animal Management Plan 2025 - 2029	
APPROVALS	
Manager	Name and Date: Elishia Jansz
Project Sponsor	Name and Date: Renee Wilcox 10/02/2025
Community Engagement Officer	Name and Date: Bianca Caruso

ABOUT THE PROJECT

See the [Community Engagement Policy](#) and [Community Engagement Guidelines](#) for help in completing this plan

<p>Project objective Explain your project in a few sentences</p>	<p>Council is required to review the Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP), which may include implementation of new initiatives and be adopted by Council by December 2025.</p>
<p>Context What is the background of your project and the history of the project/issue? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council reports and resolutions • Previous decisions made • Media involvement • Public concern or controversy • Previous community engagement 	<p>Council will commence to seek community feedback on the Draft DAMP 2025-2029 on a number of matters relating to cats and dogs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal management services • programs or strategies • Introduction of a 24 hour cat curfew, with a 12 month implementation timeframe. • Review of Council's current section 26 order, part 4 to include Wattle Glen War Memorial Reserve. <p>Council officers will encourage the community to register at participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au and take advantage of the opportunity to provide feedback.</p> <p>We can promote community consultation through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • networking • consultation with residents through case investigations • attendance at dog parks • Advertising on corflute signage posted at dog parks • Social Media Posts • Consultation with sporting clubs

Current DAMP was endorsed in December 2020 including these strategies:

- Encourage statutory compliance and promote responsible pet ownership
- Reduce nuisance caused by cats and dogs
- Minimise dog attacks
- Enhance community safety by reducing the number of dogs not under effective control in Councils off lead parks and reserves
- Review Councils animal management service which include Local Laws provisions and existing Orders made under the Act
- Increase registration of cats and dogs
- Ensure authorised officers are appropriately trained to conduct their animal management duties
- Promote the benefits of desexing cats and dogs
- Continue to reunite lost and found cats and dogs to their owners when possible
- Continue to provide assistance to vulnerable community members by caring for their animals free of charge
- To have a plan in place in case of an emergency
- Address the overpopulation of unwanted cats and dogs while minimising euthanasia rates.

Community Engagement Plan timeline (Phase 1 & 2):

3 June 2024 – 14 July 2024

- Phase 1 of community consultation was conducted from 3 June 2024 – 14 July 2024 for a period of 5 weeks, on Participate Nillumbik.
- The community and key stakeholders were invited to provide feedback and inform Council of “what’s important to them” with relation to responsible pet ownership.
- This was conducted through a survey with targeted questions to assist us to understand community sentiment regarding animal management topics including dogs on ovals, confinement of cats and to identify current issues that were not included in the DAMP 2021-2025.

November 2024 – January 2025

Consultation findings collated with Community Engagement Report created.

- Feedback was sought from community on a number of matters including:
 - Animal management services
 - Programs or strategies
 - Review of Councils section 26 orders relating to off leash areas and cat control
- At the end of the community consultation period, 707 submissions were received with 2041 visits to the website and 7 separate submission received for the draft DAMP 2025-2029.

3 March 2025 - 4 April 2025 – Community Engagement

- Phase 2 of community consultation conducted from 3 March 2025 – 4 April 2025 for a period of 5 weeks, on Participate Nillumbik.
- Community engagement will include promoting participation to formulate the DAMP 2025-2029 with QR codes to allow direct access to Participate Nillumbik.
- Consultation will also occur through:
 - networking
 - case investigations
 - pop ups
 - attendance at dog parks
 - advertising on corflute signage posted at dog parks
 - Consultation with sporting clubs

13 May 2025 - PCC meeting

Allow opportunity for community feedback following consultation, with Submissions heard at the Planning and Consultation Committee meeting.

3 June 2025 - Council briefing

Provide Councillor update on community consultation and produce final DAMP for review. following consultation and PCC feedback.

24 June 2025 - Council meeting

Seek endorsement on final DAMP 2025-2029, to be in published and in effect by October 2025.

Pet owners, non-pet owners and the general public are passionate about animal related topics and encouraged to express their emotions and opinions in response to the consultation.

Additional feedback may be received through social media posts, emails, phone calls and councilor correspondence.

Topics that we have seen raised in previous DAMP consultations are:

Dog nuisance issues

- Barking dogs
- Dogs not controlled in leash free areas
- Dog poo in public spaces
- Dogs wandering
- Dog attacks

Cat nuisance issues

- Wandering cats creating nuisance
- Cats wandering and effects on wildlife
- Cats being allowed to be free and controlling vermin
- Allowance on time for cats to adapt to new rules
- Desexing initiatives available to residents.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY THE NEED OR OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you most likely need to undertake community engagement as part of your project.

SHOULD WE BE ENGAGING?	Yes	No
Does legislation require Council to engage with the community about the issue? (This includes statutory exhibition periods)	X	
Is the issue politically sensitive? (If Council does not engage the community, is it likely that Council will receive adverse media coverage or complaints?)	X	
Should the community be informed about this issue?	X	
Will the decision being made have a significant social, environmental or economic impact on the community or other stakeholders?	X	
Is this a complex or difficult situation with widely differing views?	X	
Is the decision being made likely to have a financial impact on the community?	X	
Is there, or is there likely to be, strong community concern or interest in the issue?	X	
Is there existing or potential community outrage about the issue?	X	
Has Council asked for community input on this or similar matters in the past?	X	
Would engagement assist Council or Councillors to better understand local values, priorities, needs or issues that relate to your project?	X	

STEP 2: DEFINE THE OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE ENGAGEMENT

NB: Make sure you should submit a [Communications & Engagement Request](#) to develop a Communications & Marketing Plan for your project.

NEGOTIABLE		NON-NEGOTIABLE	
<p>What aspects of the project can be influenced as part of the engagement process?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dogs on oval – off leash (Current leash free areas or potential update of Section 26 order regarding times of usage of park) • Cat Curfew (Requirement to update the Section 26 order DAA 1994) • Dog desexing initiatives • Cat desexing initiatives (targeted cat desexing program) • Training programs for Authorised Officers • Animal Management Services offered 		<p>What aspects of the project can't be influenced as part of the engagement process?</p> <p>Domestic Animals Act 1994</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s10 Animal registration • s29 Dog attacks • s32 Nuisance • 84Y Agreements to seize, receive, retain or dispose of dogs or cats • Council's set fees and charges • Nillumbik General Local Law 1 	
<p>What do we want to find out from the community?</p>	<p>Council will commence to seek community feedback on the Draft DAMP 2025-2029 on a number of matters relating to cats and dogs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal management services • programs or strategies • Introduction of a 24 hour cat curfew, with a 12 month implementation timeframe. • Review of Council's current section 26 order, part 4 to include Wattle Glen War Memorial Reserve. 		
<p>What key information will the community need or want to know?</p>	<p>The timeline of the DAMP</p> <p>Opportunities given for community consultation</p> <p>Topics raised by the first consultation</p> <p>Results</p>		

NEGOTIABLE		NON-NEGOTIABLE	
	Next community consultation Council meeting dates and outcomes		
What messages do you want to give the community?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give supportive messages • We listen to our community • Give opportunity for feedback • Legislative requirement to prepare a DAMP • Promote responsible pet ownership • Promote our animal management services positively • Consultation with the community, government agencies, animal welfare organisations and domestic animal related not for profit charities. 		
What are your engagement timeframes?	DAMP to be completed by October 2025	Is there budget available? Yes (for communications/ advertising etc?)	Amount \$ TBC

STEP 3: IDENTIFY WHO WILL BE ENGAGED

STAKEHOLDERS For assistance refer to the Nillumbik Stakeholders List	WHY ARE THEY STAKEHOLDERS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their interest in the project? • How are they impacted? • How do they impact the project? 	Level of Engagement <u>(IAP2 spectrum)</u>
Nillumbik residents, pet owners and non-pet owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residents will be the voice to influence change • Residents will be personally impacted by change • Animal owners will need to adapt to change • Time taken to implement initiatives (24 hour cat curfew) 	Consult
Domestic Animal Businesses (DAB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May provide feedback to the yearly DAB audit process 	Consult
Animal welfare groups/ charities/not for profit agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animal Justice Party – Political Animal Welfare • Rescue groups with 84Y agreements with Council, foster care animals rehomed from our pound and carers may live in our area • Cat Protection society – our contracted cat shelter/pound • RSPCA may contribute to feedback 	Consult
Wildlife Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Victoria may provide feedback on current cat confinement restrictions • Effects of cats wandering • Dogs in prohibited areas • Wildlife Advocates of Nillumbik 	Consult
Environmental Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landcare groups may provide feedback on domestic animals affecting native wildlife, flora and fauna 	Consult
Internal stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications team – leading consultation, advertising, contribute to drafting final plan • Community Safety Team – animal management and local law services. Draft final plan • Strategic Planning and Environment team - currently working on a project - Threat Abatement Plan for feral cats • Planning Services – land use 	Consult

STAKEHOLDERS For assistance refer to the Nillumbik Stakeholders List	WHY ARE THEY STAKEHOLDERS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is their interest in the project? • How are they impacted? • How do they impact the project? 	Level of Engagement <u>(IAP2 spectrum)</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment and Sustainability team – effects of domestic animals in our environmental sensitive areas • Aged and disability services team – access for council services, standard registration, explanation of assistance dogs and free registration. Opportunity for residents to provide feedback other than online • Emergency Management team– Evacuation and relief work and identifying animals • Recreation and Leisure team – dog parks, urban and rural trails, sporting clubs, skate parks, BMX track and sporting grounds • Waste Management team – dog poo issues, bags in parks and responses • Customer Service – experience with services • Parks Team – mowing and dog poo issues 	
Council executive and Councillors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure plan is completed according to requirements and timeline • Respond to related correspondence • Provide briefings • Attend Council meetings 	Involve
Bureau of Animal Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Government contact and governing body of <i>Domestic Animals Act 1994</i> 	Consult
Social dog groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact with groups after prior consultation and concerns raised (Eltham Lower and North groups) 	Consult
Other Local Government Areas (LGA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bench mark with other LGA's • Local surrounding councils – Whittlesea Council, Yarra Ranges, Banyule 	Consult

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other green wedge shires – Baw Baw, Mornington Peninsula, South Gippsland 	

STEP 4: CHOOSE THE RIGHT ENGAGEMENT TOOLS/METHODS

NB: Talk to the Community Engagement Officer for help with this.

TOOL / METHOD	TARGET STAKEHOLDERS	KEY QUESTIONS /INFORMATION
Home Participate Nillumbik	Local community, residents, pet owners and external stake holders	<p>Council will commence to seek community feedback during Phase 2 of community consultation from 3 March 2025 – 4 April 2025 on the Draft DAMP 2025-2029 on a number of matters relating to cats and dogs including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • animal management services • programs or strategies • Introduction of a 24 hour cat curfew, with a 12 month implementation timeframe. • Review of Council’s current section 26 order, part 4 to include Wilsons Reserve in Wattle Glen. <p>Council officers will encourage the community to register at participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au and take advantage of the opportunity to provide feedback.</p>
Agora, emails and meetings	Internal Teams	Request input from relevant departments that integrate with Animal Management services (Rec and Leisure, Environment, Planning etc)
Corflutes at dog parks (QR code)	Local community	Did we get this right, Review Draft DAMP 2025-2029
Social Media posts	Public	Did we get this right, Review Draft DAMP 2025-2029
CSO correspondence through case work and recommend Participate Nillumbik	Public/ local community	Encourage opportunity to participate, provide input.
Other Nillumbik Shire departments sharing the opportunity.	Public/Local community	Consult with sporting clubs, encourage opportunity to participate, provide input.

STEP 5: ENGAGE

This is where you can record a brief description of the engagement activities you plan to implement.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY / TOOL / METHOD	DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED	WHO	HOW WILL FEEDBACK BE RECORDED
Social Media	Commence late February/ early March 2025	Content for promoting.	Comms / Community Safety	Monitor – refer to participate
Agora, Internal Comms	late February/ early March 2025	Content requesting feedback	Community Safety	Documented meetings
CSO correspondence	late February/ early March 2025	BAU -Community Safety	Community Safety	Encourage feedback - Refer to participate
Corflute signage	late February/ early March 2025	Content, graphic design, external referral	Comms/ Community Safety	QR code (track usage)
Pop up sessions	Wednesday 12 March 2025 Saturday 22 March 2025	Existing equipment	Community Safety	QR code and documented feedback

STEP 6: REPORT BACK TO THE COMMUNITY AND COUNCIL

WHAT WILL YOU REPORT BACK?	TO WHOM	HOW WILL YOU SHARE IT?	WHEN	RESPONSIBLE
Summary of Community Engagement	Council	Community Engagement Report Phase 1 – Cr Briefing	4 February 2025	Community Safety
Summary of Community Engagement	Engaged participants	Share Community Engagement Report Phase 1 feedback.	February 2025	Comms
Summary of Community Engagement	Key stakeholder groups	Share Community Engagement Report Phase 1 feedback.	February 2025	Comms
Summary of Community Engagement	Community	Publish Community Engagement Report Phase 1 feedback.	February 2025?	Comms

STEP 7: CLOSE THE LOOP (REPORT BACK TO THE COMMUNITY ON THE OUTCOME)

WHAT WILL YOU REPORT BACK?	TO WHOM	HOW WILL YOU REPORT BACK?	WHEN	RESPONSIBLE
Outcome/decision report of Phase 2 (Draft DAMP 2025-2029)	Council	Community Engagement Report Phase 2 – Cr Briefing	3 June 2025	Community Safety
Outcome/decision report of Phase 2 (Draft DAMP 2025-2029)	Engaged participants	Publish Community Engagement Report Phase 2 outcomes.	Late May/ early June 2025	Comms
Outcome/decision report Phase 2 (Draft DAMP 2025-2029)	Key stakeholder groups	Share Community Engagement Report Phase 2 outcomes.	Late May/ early June 2025	Comms
Outcome/decision report Phase 2 (Draft DAMP 2025-2029)	Community	Share Community Engagement Report Phase 2 outcomes.	Late May/ early June 2025	Comms

