

Community Engagement Report

Domestic Animal Management Plan

2025



Thank you to all the community members who have taken the time to provide feedback on the Domestic Animal Management Plan.

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If you need this information in another format, please call Nillumbik Shire Council on **9433 3111** or email **nillumbik@nillumbik.vic.gov.au**

Acknowledgement of Country

Nillumbik Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the Country on which Nillumbik is located.

We value the significance of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people's history as essential to the unique character of the Shire.

We pay tribute to all First Nations People living in Nillumbik and pay our respects to Elders past, present and future, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

We respect the enduring strength of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people hold a deep and ongoing connection to this place.

Project background

Nillumbik's Domestic Animal Management Plan

The current Domestic Animal Management Plan (DAMP) 2021-2025 was developed in accordance with section 68A of the *Domestic Animal Act 1994* (the Act). Council has a legislated responsibility under the Act to ensure compliance and delivery of animal management services related to community expectations around responsible pet ownership.

Community consultation, involves interaction with our community to better understand the needs and perspectives on the core areas of animal management, animal welfare, responsible pet ownership, Local Laws as well as the importance of educating the community of desexing and microchipping dogs and cats.

This process allows Council to use the insights gained from this consultation to understand community sentiment regarding animal management topics including dogs on ovals, confinement of cats and to identify current issues that are not currently included in the DAMP 2021-2025.

The information gathered through this initial stage of community engagement will support the development of the draft DAMP and enable Council to tailor the revised DAMP effectively.

Community will have an opportunity to provide feedback on the revised DAMP early 2025.

Community consultation ran from 3 June – 14 July 2024

The purpose of this engagement was an opportunity for our community to inform us of what's important to them.

Feedback on the draft plan will be sought from community on a number of matters including:

- animal management services
- programs or strategies
- new Orders that could be made to address responsible pet ownership in the community
- concerns associated with current council policies on animal management.

How we engaged

The below table outlines the various methods used to engage with the community.

	Website	Total of 2,041 visits to the website participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/damp-2025
	Posters	A total of 50 posters were displayed throughout the Shire
	Postcards	A total of 500 postcards were distributed throughout the Shire
	Corflute signage	6 signs displayed at dog parks
	Social media	Social media posts and paid targeted ads
	Newsletter	Nillumbik News
	Pop-up information	Community Safety information sessions estimated 110 visits

Website

- Consultation via participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/damp-2025

Posters displayed at

- Council office
- Vet clinics
- Pet shops
- Libraries
- Hubs
- Local retailers and registered Domestic Animal Businesses
- Community notice boards at Eltham, St Andrews, Hurstbridge, Panton Hill, Smiths Gully

Pop-ups with community

- Eltham North dog park
- Mainly dog park attendees and promoted the consultation with 30 animal owners
- Diamond Creek Regional Play Space
- Spoke with dog park attendees
- Diamond creek trail users
- Playground families and visitors
- Engaged with approximately 80 people

Social media, facebook ads, pet tales

- Pet Tales is posted every two weeks incorporated DAMP during consultation
- Facebook posts
- Interactive fun quizzes
- CSO's sharing the link to Participate during BAU
- TV screen ads - for Hurstbridge Hub, ECRC, leisure centres, Edendale

Postcards

- CSO's Handed out on patrols to residents
Also displayed at:
Vet clinics
Pet shops
Libraries
Hubs
Local retailers and registered Domestic Animal Businesses

Corflute signage

- Eltham North Dog Park
- Adventure Oval Eltham North
- Diamond Hills Reserve Greensborough
- Diamond Creek Dog Park
- Hurstbridge Dog Park
- Wattle Glen War Memorial Park (Wilson Reserve)

Nillumbik News

Published 3 June 2024 "We're inviting the community to provide their feedback regarding domestic animal management and responsible pet ownership through our online survey at [Participate Nillumbik](#) until Sunday 14 July."

What we heard

Below outlines the summary of feedback received.

Number of submissions	707 submissions received
Number of community sessions	2 Pop up sessions
Number of separate submissions	7
Number of website visits	2,041 number of visits to the website

Topics we heard about:

Dogs

- Pets are an important part of our community and family
- Dogs provide positivity to our health and wellbeing
- Sporting ovals are a shared community space for everyone to use
- Sporting ovals are safer areas from snakes
- Dog parks are often overcrowded and create negative interactions with dogs
- Owners are generally responsible with dogs it's a minority that make it difficult for others
- Dog owners help keep areas safer and pick up rubbish
- Parents of sporting children and people exercising on ovals are frustrated with dog urine, dog excrement left and damage done to the grounds/grass.
- Urine and excrement spreading parasites and children run in it
- Dogs cause a nuisance to people, other animals and wildlife
- Barking
- Escaping from properties
- Rushing people
- Dog excrement left on nature strips and public areas
- Request for more environmentally friendly dog poo bags at our ovals
- Dogs recall can be better
- Dog owners are responsible around playgrounds
- Assess dog signage and reconsider rules at Woodridge Linear Reserve
- Assess the usage of Wattle Glen War Memorial Park (Wilson Reserve) would like to see it off leash outside sports times
- Signage needs to be inspected at Griffith Park
- Implement a responsible pet owner test on the website for new pet owners prior to registration
- Childhood education on interacting with pets should be up to the parent and school system. However, it would be nice for Council to add it to existing educational programs.

Cats

- Keep cats indoors/ enclosed to be safe, provide enrichment and protect our Green Wedge Shire.
- Cats can be trained and provided enrichment and kept contained.
- Cats need outside fresh air.
- If a cat curfew is implemented how will Nillumbik support cat owners in transition?
- Residents are frustrated with cats excreting and urinating in their garden and on personal items.
- Notice a significant decline in small birds in our yard such as eastern Spinebill, Fairywrens, Pardalotes and Thornbills.
- Cats are predators and destructive to wildlife.
- Unowned/feral cats are an issue.
- Council should look at desexing programs.
- Many owners have the attitude of allowing their cats to wander.
- Cats should be secured the same as dogs need to be.
- If a 24 hour cat curfew is implemented, please consider the approach. Trapping and officer's resources is costly. Education, support to owners with building enclosures and providing enrichment ideas would be ideal. Offer financial assistance experiencing hardship/low income earners to help transition.
- Keep the current curfew and educate the community add a requirement of cat collar bells.
- Cats should not be locked up 24/7
- Stray/neighbour's cats cause fights, vet bills and stress
- Implement 24 hours curfew with new/ young kitten registrations.
- Cats are nocturnal animals, current curfew is appropriate
- A daytime curfew should relate to keep the cat to the property not inside the house

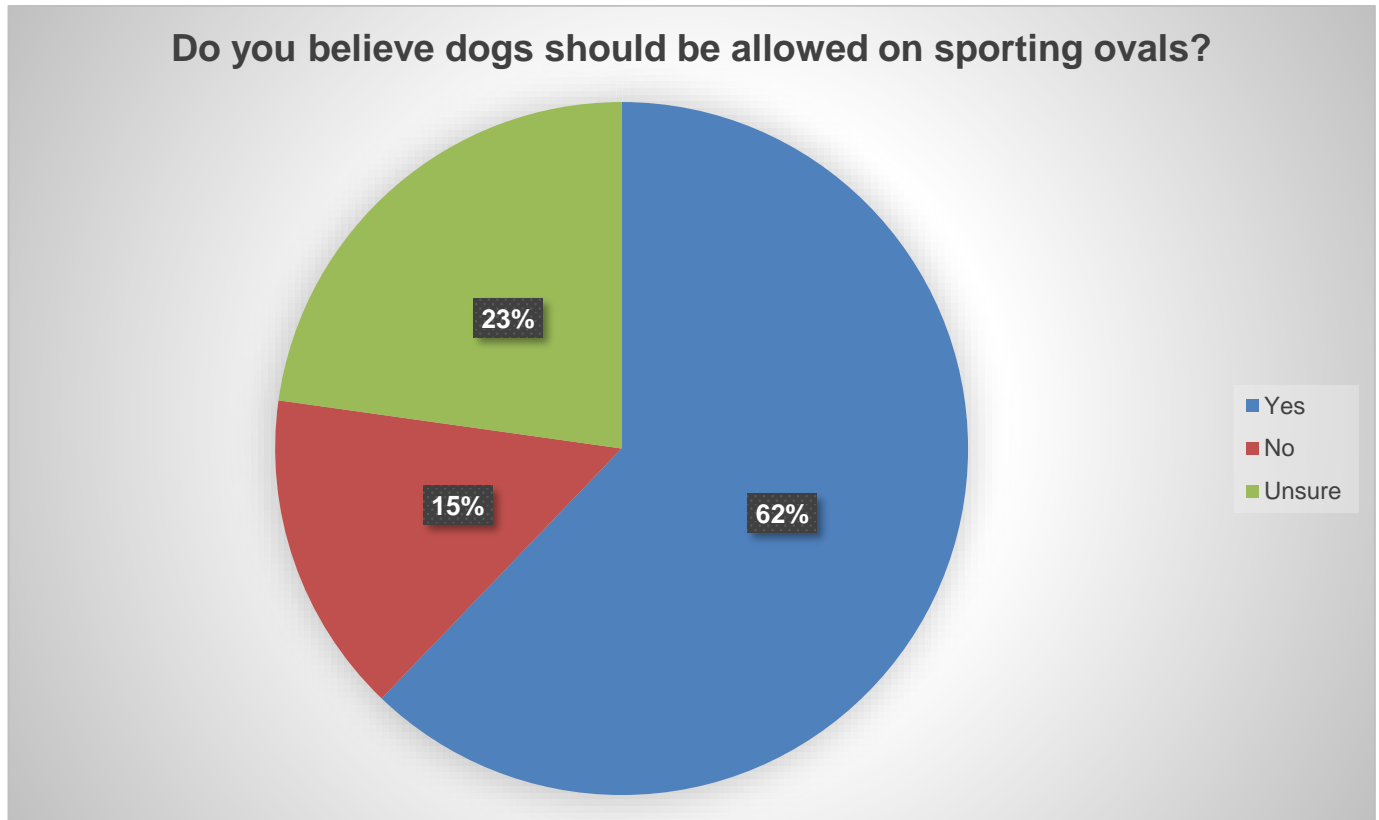
Services provided by Nillumbik that is important to our community

- Great open spaces are available and we are fortunate to have use
- We have a beautiful Green Wedge Shire and should protect it
- Reuniting cats and dogs to the owners
- The Pet Expo annual event
- Pound services
- Education programs especially for children and parents
- Patrols on Diamond Creek trail, nature reserves and parks
- Signage in open spaces
- Response to complaints

Responses

Information obtained from DAMP consultation 3 June – 14 July 2024

Dogs on sporting ovals

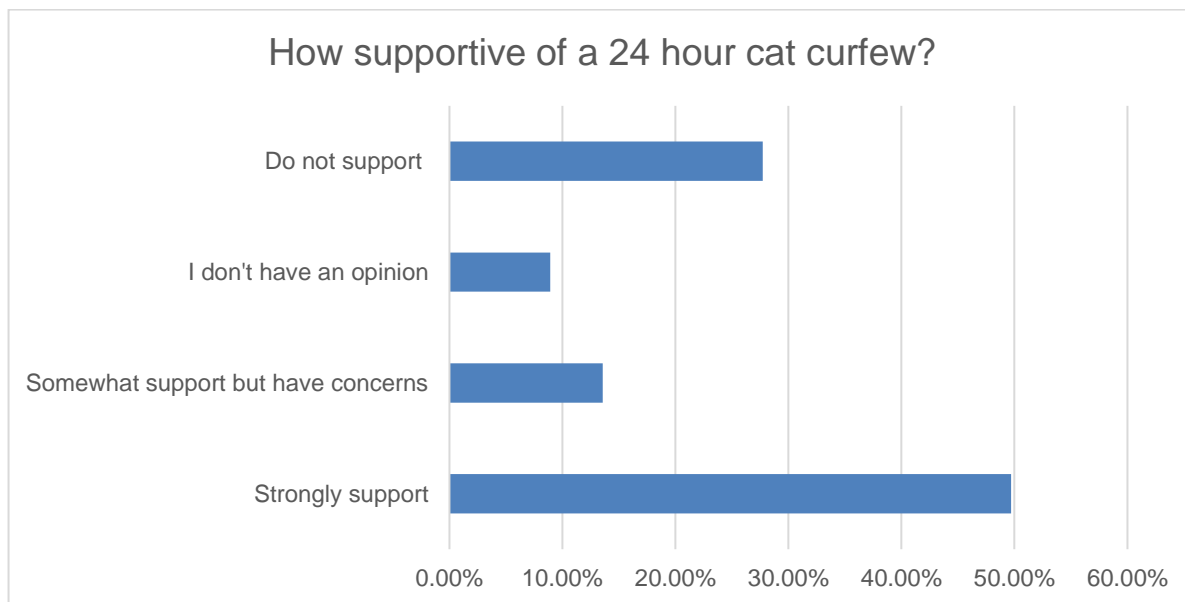


62 per cent (434 respondents) believe dogs should be allowed on sporting ovals in comparison to 23 per cent (159 respondents) do not believe they should be allowed and 15 per cent (105 respondents) are unsure.

93 respondents (13 per cent) indicated they are either a sports club member, player or volunteer.

Cat Curfew

49.71 per cent (346 respondents) are supportive of a 24 hour cat curfew compared to 27.7 per cent (193 respondents) who do not support the curfew. A further 13.56 per cent (96 respondents) were somewhat supportive of the cat curfew but have some concerns with 8.91 per cent (63 respondents) who did not have an opinion.



The main topics that residents and visitors would like Council to provide more information on are:

- Responsibilities of dog owners when walking exercising their dog (46 per cent/293 respondents)
- Cat curfews in your area (38 per cent/255 respondents)
- What 'effective control' of a dog means (33 per cent/227 respondents)
- Dog off leash areas and the rules (20 per cent/150 respondents)

Services to our community that are very important

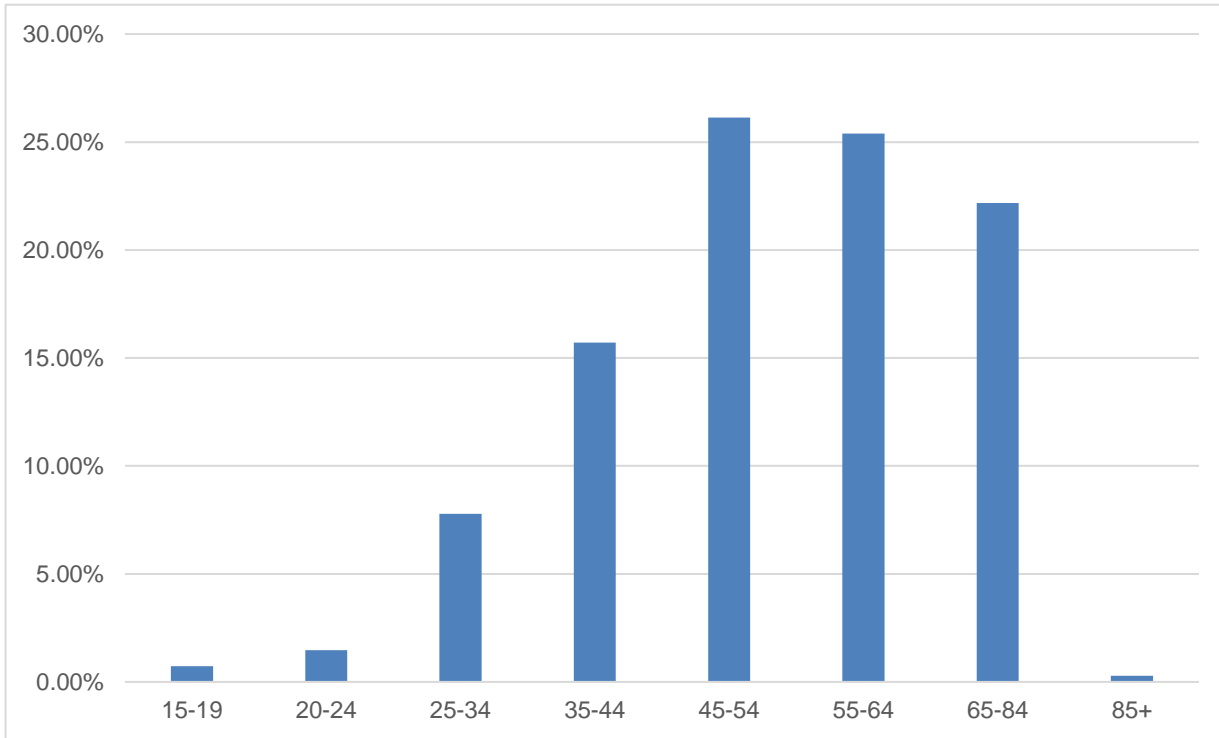
- Provide maintain off lead areas (60 per cent/418 respondents)
- Protect/enforce dog-free nature reserves/environmentally sensitive areas (53 per cent/370 respondents)
- Collect/return stray cats/dogs to their owners (51 per cent/358 respondents)
- Discounted dog/cat microchipping for pensioners (50 per cent/350 respondents)
- Respond to reports of nuisance dogs/cats (47 per cent/329 respondents)

Education for children

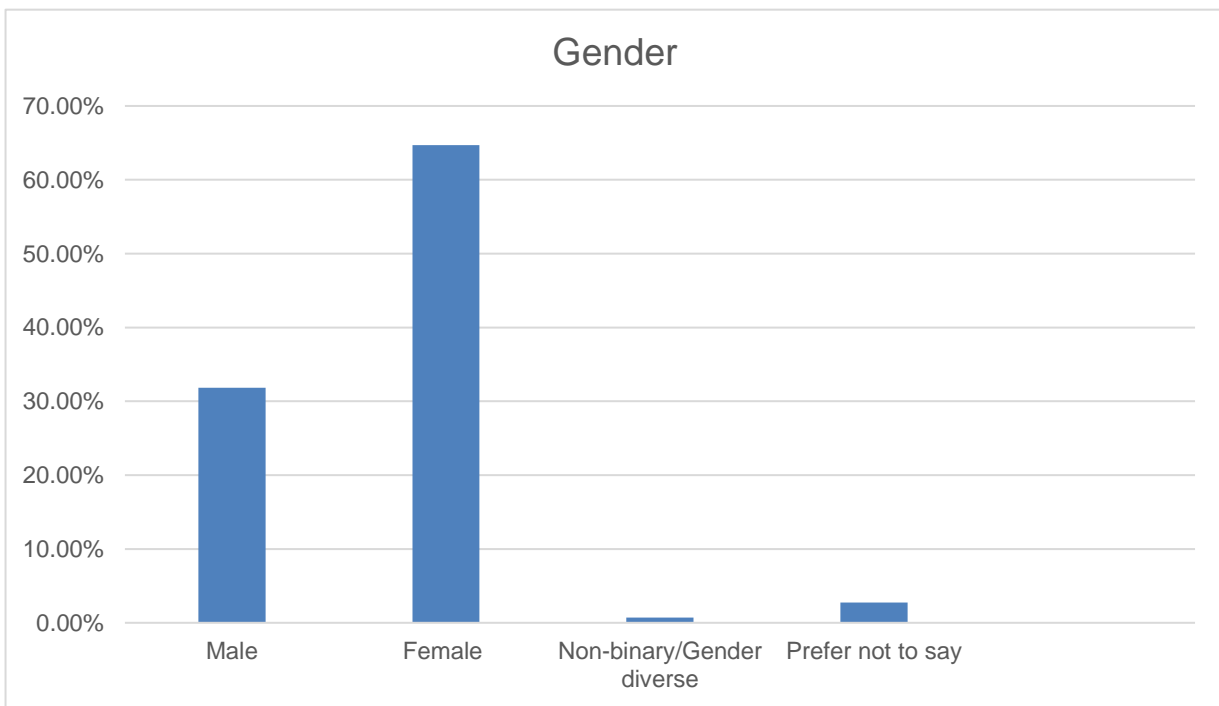
61 per cent (431 respondents) believe that Council should educate children on approaching dogs safely.

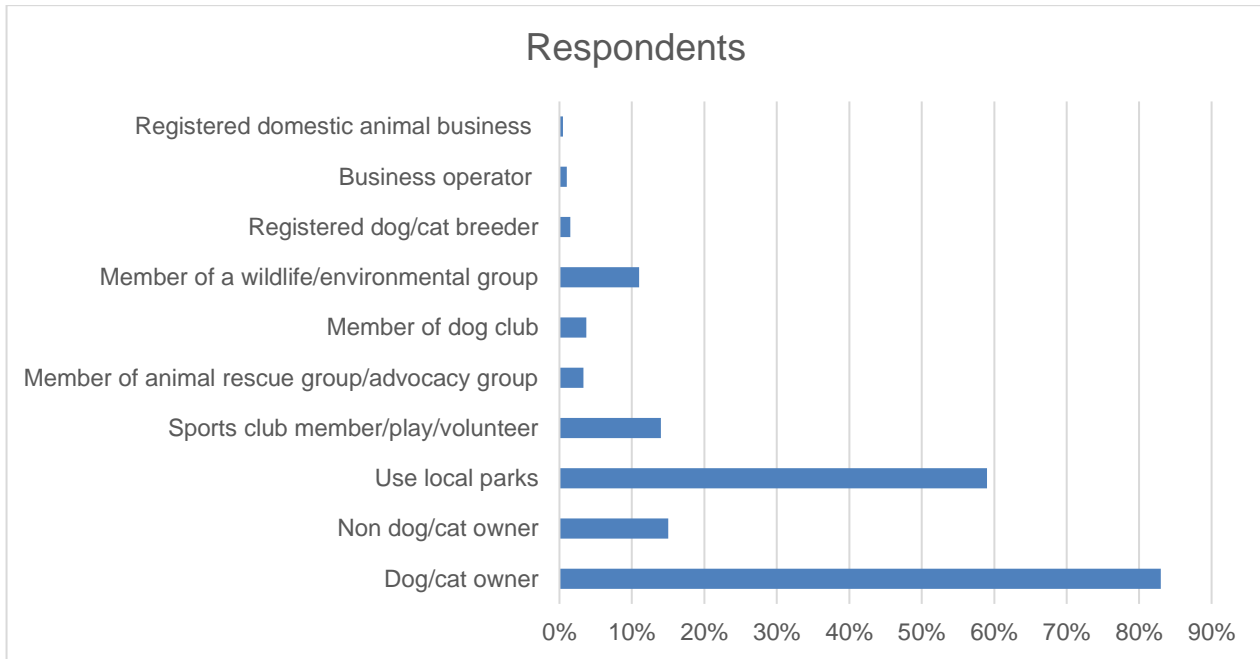
Who we engaged with

Age



Gender





Respondents were given the opportunity to provide a multiple option response to the following:
 Select one or more that describes your link to dogs/cats in Nillumbik

- Dog/cat owner
- Non dog/cat owner
- Use local parks
- Sports club member/play/volunteer
- Member of animal rescue group/advocacy group
- Member of dog club
- Member of a wildlife/environmental group
- Registered dog/cat breeder
- Business operator
- Registered domestic animal business

83 per cent (580 respondents) are dog/cat owners, 58 per cent (406 respondents) use local parks, 15 per cent (106 respondents) are non-dog/cat owner, and 13.5 per cent (93 respondents) are a sports club member, player or volunteers.

The top three ways they heard about the consultation:

- Email - 39 per cent (269 respondents)
- Social Media – Facebook 19 per cent (129 respondents)
- Word of mouth – 17 per cent (119 respondents)

Next steps

Draft a new Domestic Animal Management Plan that will be available for further community feedback early 2025.

It will include the following;

- New barking dog process
- Audit signage at Woodridge Linear Reserve, consult on findings – website page update
- Audit signage at Griffith Park – web page requires update
- Park patrols and trails approach
- Reuniting animals' process
- Cat confinement and educational programs
- Dogs sharing space with sporting clubs
- Waste bins and environmentally friendly poo bags provided by Nillumbik
- Update mapping of dog parks including clear signage indicating areas that are on lead / off lead

How can participants stay informed?

Register for updates or follow the project on Participate Nillumbik
participate.nillumbik.vic.gov.au

For more information contact (Renee Wilcox – Senior Community Safety Officer)
or email (communitysafety@nillumbik.vic.gov.au)

